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“RIGHT AND JUST”

**THE “STRUCTURE AND MEANING OF THE LITURGY” (SC 23): A PATTERN FOR
FORMATION AND THE MAKING OF COMMITMENTS.**

Dissertatio ad Doctoratum in Theologia Morali consequendum

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ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviations of Ecclesial Sources Used in this work.

In citing official Roman Catholic documents, the abbreviations will be found in parentheses followed by the number of the paragraph. For example “(LG 11)” signifies *Lumen Gentium*, article 11. When the texts of the Conciliar and Magisterial documents are not to be found in *Acta Sanctae Sedis* or *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* or the series *Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II*; *Insegnamenti di Benedetto XVI*; *Insegnamenti di Francesco* of Liberia Editrice Vaticana; they are taken from the official English online edition: <http://w2.vatican.va/content/vatican/en.html>.¹

AA	<i>Apostolicam Auctositatem</i> , Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity, Vatican II, November 18, 1965
AAS	<i>Acta Apostolicae Sedis</i> (Typis Vaticanis:Roma)
AG	<i>Ad Gentes</i> , Decree on the Church’s Missionary Activity, Vatican II, December 7, 1965
AL	<i>Amoris Laetitia</i> , The Joy of Love, Post-synodal Exhortation of Pope Francis, March 19,2016
ASS	<i>Acta Sanctae Sedis</i> (Typis Polyglottae Officinae: Romae)
CCC	<i>Catechism of the Catholic Church</i> , 2nd Ed. (English translation by various publishers.) the 2nd Latin edition was promulgated on August 15th, 1997, by Pope John Paul II in the apostolic letter <i>Laetamur Magnopere</i> (1st Ed., promulgated October 11, 1992.) Text available online at http://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc/index.htm
CinV	<i>Caritas in Veritate</i> , Encyclical Letter of Pope Benedict XVI, June 29,2009
DCE	<i>Deus Caritas Est</i> , Encyclical Letter of Pope Benedict XVI, December 25, 2005
DF	<i>Dei Filius</i> , The Dogmatic Constitution on the Catholic Faith, Vatican I, April 24, 1870
DH	<i>Dignitatis Humanae</i> , Declaration on Religious Freedom, Vatican II, November 7, 1965
DiM	<i>Dives In Misericordia</i> , Encyclical Letter of Pope John Paul II, November 30, 1980
DV	<i>Dei Verbum</i> , The Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, Vatican II, November 18, 1965
ECS	<i>Ecclesiam Suam</i> , Encyclical Letter on the Church of Pope Paul VI, August 06, 1964
EG	<i>Evangelii Gaudium</i> , Apostolic Exhortation on the Proclamation of the Gospel in Today's World of Pope Francis, November 24, 2013
EM	<i>Eucharisticum Mysterium</i> , An Instruction on Eucharistic Worship published by the Sacred Congregation of Rites, May 25, 1967
EN	<i>Evangelii Nuntiandi</i> , Evangelization in the Modern World, Apostolic Exhortation of Pope Paul VI, December 8, 1975
EdS	<i>Editae Saepe</i> , Encyclical Letter of Pope Pius X on St Charles Borromeo., May 26, 1910
ES	<i>E Supremi</i> , Encyclical Letter of Pope Pius X, October 4, 1903

¹ Throughout the document I have left the quotations in their original form. This means that the ‘masculine’ pronouns are left undisturbed despite the deep personal discomfort. I had gone through the whole document and inserted the conventional “sic” but have been persuaded to leave the quotes in the original. Please read in all cases an included “sic”.

ET	<i>Evangelica Testificatio</i> , Apostolic Exhortation on the renewal of the religious life in the Light of Vatican II, June 29, 1971
EV	<i>Evangelium Vitae</i> , The Gospel of Life, Encyclical Letter of Pope John Paul II, March 25, 1995
FC	<i>Fulgens Corona</i> , Proclaiming a Marian Year to commemorate the Centenary of the Definition of the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception, Encyclical Letter of Pope Pius XII, September 8, 1953
GS	<i>Gaudium et Spes</i> , Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, Vatican II, December 7, 1965
GIRM	“The General Instruction of the Roman Missal.” New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference. <i>Roman Missal: English Translation according to the Third Typical Edition</i> . Wellington: New Zealand Catholic Bishops’ Conference, 2010
LG	<i>Lumen Gentium</i> , Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, Vatican II, November 21, 1964
NA	<i>Nostra Aetate</i> , Declaration on the Relation of the Church with Non-Christian religions, Vatican II, October 28, 1965
OA	<i>Octogesima Adveniens</i> , Apostolic Letter of Pope Paul VI, May 14, 1971
OICA	<i>The Rites of the Catholic Church as Revised by Decree of the Second Vatican Council and Published by Authority of Pope Paul VI</i> . New York: Pueblo Pub., 1976
OT	<i>Optatam Totius</i> , Decree on Priestly Formation, Vatican II, October 28, 1965
PDV	<i>Pastores Dabo Vobis</i> , Post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation of Pope John Paul II, March 25, 1992
PO	<i>Presbyterorum Ordinis</i> , Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests, Vatican II, December 7, 1965
RD	<i>Redemptionis Donum</i> , Apostolic Exhortation to Men and Women Religious on their consecration in the light of the Mystery of the Redemption of Pope John Paul II, March 25, 1984
RP	<i>Reconciliatio et Paenitentia</i> , A Post – Synodal Apostolic Exhortation of Pope John Paul II, December 2, 1984
SCar	<i>Sacramentum Caritatis</i> , Letter to the Bishops, Clergy, Consecrated Persons and the lay faithful of Pope Benedict XVI, February 22, 2007
SC	<i>Sacrosanctum Concilium</i> , Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, Vatican II, December 4, 1963
SNP	<i>Sacerdotii Nostri Primordia</i> , On St John Vianney, Encyclical Letter of Pope John XXIII, August 1, 1959

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1. STATUS QUAESTIONIS

The Sunday Liturgy, the gathering on the Lord's Day, is the centre of Catholic life and understanding. Catholics are a people who gather to worship, be formed by the Word, to be part of the Sacrifice of Christ and to be sent into the world in service of the poor. Yet at every turn people are asking for the liturgy to be more life giving, more "attractive", to show relevance to the young and the questioning. They want the Sunday gathering to welcome and serve the migrant who finds a new language and different expressions of the faith from those they are used to; or on the other hand there are those in the community who ask for a return to a form of the Mass that is governed by strict adherence to rubrics and holds a primacy for a more mysterious and otherworldly formality; or who have a longing for a form of the liturgy in which they can remain silent and 'in their own prayer.'

In the last forty years, especially in the English speaking world, the liturgy has become a battle field on which the core virtues of Christian and Catholic life have often been sacrificed. Charity, patience, catholicity, dialogue, discernment of what is the *sensus fidelium* and the mind of the Church have given way to division, anger, and positions based on power or a narrow reading of the tradition. In the life of the local Church the presenting issue at Diocesan and parish levels is "How should we structure the formation of the community, to make informed decisions in respect of the liturgy, and its relationship to our daily lives?"

Within the community there are those who have found in the Rites of Initiation, especially the Catechumenate, a life giving encounter with Christ. However it is perceived that their ongoing connection to the Church is often short-lived. What is going on, that their formation does not establish a lifelong connection to this community of faith?

In Moral thought there are similar issues. Many find a disconnect between the lives of the faithful, and especially the understandings of their children and young adults, and the public teaching of the Church. A discontent arises both among those who question the moral authority or certain moral positions of the Church, and those who love them and want them 'enforced'. People find many forums to 'vent' this discontent. This can be from the ongoing media focus on the public failure on the part of members of the Church, or a disconnect between what is thought to be the teaching of the Church, especially in respect of social morality, and the demands that "public morality" makes on people's lives. There is tension over the way in which the Church's moral teaching is heard or portrayed, especially at the interface of major life issues and the teaching role of the Bishops, and specifically their relationship with those in public office. There are complex moral issues which become the focus of public debate and legislation, from marriage equality, euthanasia and abortion legislation; to questions of migration, climate change and indigenous rights; to the manner in which truth and reconciliation should be enacted. On top of this people seek formation in respect of issues that arise in their daily lives, questions arising in respect of labour rights, tax evasion, equity of wages on the basis of gender and age; the use of low cost labour to sustain a consumer culture. All of these issues are often too big for the individual, and are outside the ability of the local pastor to

face, or to give an informed expression of the Church's position. The question arises, "What are we called to do?" "How should we face the formation of the community in such moral issues?" "What is involved in this commitment I have made to continue as a practicing Catholic?"

Formation and the consequences of the commitment I live. What does the Church offer us as a framework for engaging in these areas?

The experience of having watched a very strong catechist work over the last fifteen years with adult converts, and how basing the catechesis on a combination of starting where they are at, with their questions; and on a weekly basis reflecting on the interface between the Sunday Scriptures and their lives; sitting on National Liturgy Office bodies, and discussing the Catechumenate and the resistance to implementing it as a central pastoral outreach; working in the governance of an international aid agency and learning the ways of encountering and dialoguing with people with different world views and needs; and the experience of being welcomed in a structured process of powhiri onto marae in Aotearoa New Zealand, where you are 'formed' in a structured process into a person of the place; all coupled with a nagging question from an article read thirty years ago led me to ask:

Surely the Rites of Initiation are a process of formation?

Isn't the whole focus of the Catechumenate to form a person, and community, in a 'way of life'?

Isn't there an expectation that the person, and community, would live in a certain way, that the community would interface with them in a certain way, that their behaviour would change, in a certain way, that they would interact and be formed, in a certain way?

Didn't the Catechumenate of the early Church have more interest in the lives and moral formation of a person, in fact at one stage didn't the person not 'know' of the content of the Mystery until after they had been initiated?

Didn't the Catechumenate have a formative influence on the structure of the Sunday Liturgy; and didn't Vatican II ask that the liturgy should be a prime source for all theological study?

Didn't Don Saliers write something on this?

This was the genesis of the simple question which is the ground of this thesis: "Does the 'structure and meaning of the liturgy' (SC 23) provide a template for moral formation and the making of commitments?"

2. MOTIVATION

The motivation to pursue this topic and seek a simple but authentic template to apply to all aspects of formation and the making of commitments is fundamentally pastoral. When asked to reflect on the reason I wanted to explore this approach, I wrote of three places in which I encounter those who 'witness' to a committed Christian life and I asked, "What formed them?" "What do I know that makes them stand out?" When I identified what it was there was a deep resonance with what I saw in the catechumenate and in the heart of what I was teaching in courses on the introduction to moral thought and introduction to liturgy in the Diocese. I wanted to explore it more, with the intention to have a matrix for pastoral ministry.

Where are the motivations?

Firstly, are two women, who I have known in my life, who I know to be “committed Christians’ and who in our parish and Diocese people just say “she is a saint.” What is it about them, and their personal witness? The fundamental answer is commitment and gentle love and patience. There is the wonderful nun who taught me on my first day at school, and who on all the great events of life, trials and tribulations, has been there, and still fifty five years after that first morning, looks across the Church and smiles, and you know you are in the Lord’s presence. She is faithful, gentle, committed, engaged and she has served her whole life.

Three pews from her is the Mother of a close friend of mine, who buried her daughter and husband in the same week, one in New Zealand and one in England. What characterises her life, how did she survive? She knows, experiences and lives the Paschal Mystery of dying in love. She daily listens to the Word, she in a hidden way serves, but having been crucified and having depended on the love of God, she oozes the freedom and joy of the Resurrection. She is a questioning, welcoming witness of a living faith; and she would not know it, just everyone around her knows it!

Secondly, there is the witness of ministry and it is seen in the memory of events in the foyer of the Alfonsianum thirty years ago, where I was gifted by an introduction to moral thought by Bernard Häring, Louis Veereke, and Sabitino Majorano (aided by Dominic Capone). Why these three? Because it is not what they taught, it is how they formed people. They pastored those they taught. They were concerned, and started their ministry with encounter, welcoming the other. I will never forget the first morning tea and Bernard Häring serving the tea and coffee, and wanting to know about the issues and where people were from and why they were there, and what was it they thought. These men formed by the witness of who they were, more than what they said, yet what they said was wise.

And lastly, the motivation of living with the question: “How do we bring young people to the love of the Lord and to active life in the Church?” How do you share the centre of your life with your sons and their friends?

As this work progressed I saw the witness of community. I realised that there was a pattern being uncovered in the places of ‘new life’ in the Church that I saw. What do San Egidio, the Catholic Workers House, the outreach of the Anselm community of the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Lay Centre where I am living, many chaplaincy groups have in common: in all of them people of diverse backgrounds are willing to pray together, eat together, listen to the Word and worship together, listen and be formed together, and do practical work and service of the poor together. They are willing to be part of a community that welcomes and accepts, listens and debates and loves and serves.

So the pattern I was seeing, the hypothesis that I had made, was in the experiment of life being confirmed, and this was the motivation to attempt to understand what was going on and to commit it to paper.

3. METHODOLOGY

The methodology of this work is expository and comparative. I thought this would be an easy exercise, you would go to the Church's document on the liturgical rites of formation and commitment, and explore where they came from and what others said about them. Unfortunately when I went to that source, the *Rites of the Christian Initiation of Adults*, I found that comment and reference to it was almost non-existent, especially in the official teaching of the Church. So I decided to return to the sources. In this case by applying the practice of 'ressourcement' to the source documents of Vatican II: *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, *Gaudium et Spes*, *Dei Verbum* and *Lumen Gentium*, and the other Conciliar proclamations; and then having identified the key themes of the reformed liturgy to explore all references in the intervening magisterial documentation and to compare the usage and interpretation.

Chapter One therefore examines the direction given for such an exercise by Vatican II;

Chapters Two, Three and Four: identify the themes and patterns in the major source documents, and ;

Chapter Five brings these elements together in an expository text which, using the structure of the Sunday Liturgy as a framework, identifies and outlines the structure of formation, leading to commitment, in the heart of the liturgy.

4. SCOPE AND LIMITATION

A major challenge in writing this thesis has been the scope of what is being suggested.

As soon as the area of interest is the "structure and meaning of the liturgy" all of liturgical study is opened, especially when linking it to the development of the early Church's catechumenate and the formation of the Sunday Liturgy. When this was then linked to a fundamental call for the reform of pastoral and moral theology, the possibilities and implications are endless.

Secondly, the pattern which has been suggested opens areas that seek to explore the structure of initiation and the meaning of baptism; the foundations of moral theology and the relationship of moral theology and ethics, especially with the idea that this structure is offered by Vatican II to 'all of humanity'; the nature of the Paschal Mystery; the role of ministry, missiology and the place and use of magisterial and scriptural insight and in the end the sources of revelation for Christian life and moral formation.

In fact the provision of a structured pattern of formation in the liturgy has raised an enormous range of issues and possible paths of exploration.

This has been fascinating for a 'researcher' and person with an inquisitive nature, however these issues can only be hinted at and left for others to explore.

This study is therefore limited to showing the call of Vatican II to make the link between moral thought, pastoral practice and the liturgy; an exposure of the structural patterns contained in the OICA, the GIRM and *Gaudium et Spes*, and then linking them as a proposed "structure for formation and commitment."

It is vital to note at this point, for the comfort of the reader, that the nature of this study has called for an extensive, 'walking through' of the source documents. This is because often it is the relationship of one paragraph to the next that shows the 'pattern', or, especially in the case of the GIRM, that the same insight arises in three places. This repetition, in Preamble, General Structure and in the detailed exposition of a part of the Sunday Liturgy, is required to show the way in which these ideas are integral to the whole understanding of the Church's position. Secondly, in respect of the core interpretive concepts, the 'development' of the concept in magisterial usage provides the framework for understanding how we are to apply it to the task at hand.

This means that, if you have found this text, you will find the core argument and evidence summarised in Chapter Five, and one would suggest it is the place to go.

5. DIVISION OF SECTIONS

This study is divided into five Chapters with various headings and sub-headings.

The study begins in Chapter One by setting the framework for making the liturgy the foundation of theological thought, based on a specific call of Vatican II to link the liturgy to the heart of moral and pastoral theology. It then identifies and explores the key interpretive tools of the liturgical reform, these are: the norms of interpretation offered by *Sacrosanctum Concilium* 24ff, and the concepts of discernment, dialogue, and the unity of word and deed and the mysteries of the Incarnation and Paschal Mystery.

The Second Chapter focuses on the liturgical rite of formation, the OICA. It examines its earliest form and in this exposition identifies the nature of formation in the early Church. This is important as these early Rites are the basis of understanding for the *Rites of Christian Initiation* as reformed by Vatican II which are grounded in them as their foundational sources. The forms of initiation in these Rites are then shown to be a template for understanding formation and initiation in the life of the Church. This section also shows how the Rites of Initiation and the catechumenate are integral to understanding the structure and form of the Sunday Liturgy.

The Third Chapter takes this element and by an examination of the *General Instruction to the Roman Missal*, outlines and emphasises the structure, pattern and formational nature of the Sunday Liturgy. This study shows that the Liturgy contains the pattern of encounter, formation and the making of commitments by all, and not just as a 'single commitment' but as an ongoing pattern in Christian life.

This insight, that the starting point of all formation is an encounter, 'in the world,' lead to an examination, in Chapter Four of the study, of the structure and mode of encounter with the modern world envisioned by *Gaudium et Spes* 1-45. This study shows a parallel pattern of formation and encounter, and is especially important for exploring the pattern of 'discernment' at the heart of formation.

At the completion of these extended examinations of the sources and the patterns of formation they reveal, the Fifth Chapter of the study brings all of this together. To ensure there is a coordinated and clear exposition of the links, the Fifth Chapter revisits the overall structure of the liturgical reform of

Vatican II. This takes the call of *Sacrosanctum Concilium* 23 seriously, and looks for the direct impact of the liturgical structure and meaning on the nature of moral formation and commitment. Then the concepts of interpretation are linked to formation and all are brought together, on the skeleton of the structure of the Sunday liturgy, to show that the liturgy offers a structure and meaning which can offer the Church, and the wider community, a template for formation and the making of commitments.

6. SOURCES

The primary sources used in this study were dictated by the process involved.

Firstly, a close study of *Sacrosanctum Concilium*² led to the *General Instruction to the Roman Missal*³ and the *Instruction on the Christian Initiation of Christians*⁴ and the OICA. These were studied in terms of their origins and development with specific reference to the *Commentary on the General Instruction of the Roman Missal* of the Catholic Academy of Liturgy⁵, and the classic sources on the origins of the Catechumenate and the Early Liturgy, Jungmann⁶ and Lathrop⁷, Martos⁸ and Yarnold.⁹ And a series of articles by Saliers¹⁰, Smith¹¹, Baldovin¹², Farley¹³, Gallagher¹⁴ and others.

² Second Vatican Council, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, December 4, 1963, AAS 56 (1964) 97-134.

³ *The General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference "Roman Missal: English Translation according to the Third Typical Edition". Wellington: New Zealand Catholic Bishops' Conference, (2010).

⁴ *Ordo Initiationis Christianae Adultorum: Editio Typica*. Rome, Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, (1972). In English in: *The Rites of the Catholic Church as Revised by Decree of the Second Vatican Council and Published by Authority of Pope Paul VI*. New York, Pueblo Pub. Co., (1976).

⁵ Foley, Edward, et al. *A Commentary on the General Instruction of the Roman Missal: Developed under the Auspices of the Catholic Academy of Liturgy and Cosponsored by the Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions*. (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2007).

⁶ Jungmann, Josef A. *The Early Liturgy, to the Time of Gregory the Great*. Translated by Francis A. Brunner. (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1959).

Jungmann, Josef A. *Pastoral Liturgy*. Edited by John F. Baldovin, (Notre Dame, IN: Christian Classics, 2014).

⁷ Lathrop, Gordon. *Holy Things: a Liturgical Theology*. (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1993).

Lathrop, Gordon. *Holy People: a Liturgical Ecclesiology*. (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1999).

⁸ Martos, Joseph. *Doors to the Sacred: a Historical Introduction to Sacraments in the Catholic Church*. (Liguori, Missouri: Liguori Publications, 2014).

⁹ Yarnold, Edward. *The Awe-Inspiring Rites of Initiation: the Origins of the RCIA*. 2nd ed., (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1994).

¹⁰ Saliers, Don E. "Liturgy and Ethics." *Journal of Religious Ethics*, (1979).

Saliers, Don E. "Liturgy in a Culture of Hype: Notes on Restraint and Exuberance." *GIA Quarterly*, vol. 7, no. 1, (1995,) pp. 8–10.

Saliers, Don E. "Afterword: Liturgy and Ethics Revisited." Ed. Anderson, Byron. E. and Morrill, Bruce T. *Liturgy and the Moral Self: Humanity at Full Stretch before God: Essays in Honor of Don E. Saliers*. Minnesota: Liturgical, (1998).pp. 209-24.

¹¹ Smith, Harmon L. *Where Two or Three Are Gathered: Liturgy and the Moral Life*. (Cleveland, Ohio: The Pilgrim Press, 1995).

¹² Baldovin, John F. "The Development of the Liturgy: Theological and Historical Roots of *Sacrosanctum Concilium*." *Worship*, vol. 87, no. 6, (2013,) pp. 517–532.

Secondly, having identified the themes of dialogue, discernment, the unity of word and deed and the Paschal Mystery as being central elements of interpretation, the study explored the development of these concepts in the magisterial opus. This was limited to material from the beginning of the twentieth century but up to and including Pope Francis' statements in late 2016.

Thirdly, the same themes were explored in the recent literature, with the filter of seeking direct links between liturgy and formation.

This thesis has not included a study of all the areas of possible study identified in the 'scope of the exercise' as arising and therefore did not attempt to explore the literature in other areas of theological reflection on formation, discernment, inculturation and the development of doctrine etc.

The study is limited to establishing the structure of the liturgy as a pattern for formation on the foundation of the 'original' sources, the documents of Vatican II and those of their application the OICA and the GIRM.

¹³ Farley, Margaret A. "A Framework for Moral Discernment." *Catholic Theological Ethics Past, Present and Future: the Trento Conference*, Orbis Press, New York, (2011,) pp. 138–146.

¹⁴ Gallagher, Michael Paul. "The Church - World Relationship in *Gaudium et Spes*: Still Relevant?" *Lateranum*, LXXXI, n. 2, (2015,) pp. 369–381.

Chapter One. Vatican II and the parameters of interpretation.

Chapter One will firstly outline the general parameters within which the thesis develops. It starts with the call of Vatican II to place the liturgy at the heart of all theological reflection, which impacts therefore on all pastoral and moral theology, and on the manner in which formation will take place within the Church.

Secondly, it will outline the elements that *Sacrosanctum Concilium* put before the Church for the reform of the liturgy, and the impact of these on the environment of formation.

Then the general tools of interpretation used in the post Vatican liturgical debates, and which are also useful for pastoral and moral formation will be outlined.

1.1: Vatican 2's call to link moral theology and liturgy.

The first published document of Vatican 2, *Sacrosanctum Concilium (SC)*,¹⁵ said that the role that professors of theology play in formation in the Church was primarily the unveiling of the 'mystery' of Christ. This would happen by developing a direct link between the: "expounding of the mystery of Christ and the history of salvation from the angle proper to each of their own subjects...in a way which will clearly bring out the connection between *their subjects and the liturgy*...(and that) this consideration is especially important for ... dogmatic, spiritual, and pastoral theology."(SC 16)

In the document *Optatam Totius*¹⁶, the Decree on Priestly Formation, the Council reiterates and reinforces this link with a direct reference to moral theology. "Likewise let the other theological disciplines be renewed through a more living contact with the mystery of Christ and the history of salvation. *Special care must be given to the perfecting of moral theology.* Its scientific exposition, nourished more on the teaching of the Bible, should shed light on the loftiness of the calling of the faithful in Christ and the obligation that is theirs of bearing fruit in charity for the life of the world. Similarly the teaching of canon law and of Church history should take into account the mystery of the Church, according to the dogmatic constitution "De Ecclesia" promulgated by this sacred synod. *Sacred liturgy, which is to be considered as the primary and indispensable source of the truly Christian spirit, should be taught according to the mind of articles 15 and 16 of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy.*"(OT 16)

With these simple lines the Council outlined a desire for a formal connection between moral theology and the liturgy with four foci.

Firstly, every subject of theological investigation is to focus on "expounding of the mystery of Christ and the history of salvation." (SC 16; OT 16)

¹⁵ *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, Second Vatican Council, December 4, 1963.

¹⁶ *Optatam Totius*, Decree on Priestly Formation, Second Vatican Council, October 28, 1965.

Secondly, it is to achieve this by following a scientific exposition nourished by the Scriptures, while “clearly bring out the connection between their subjects and the liturgy.” (SC 16)

And specifically in respect of Moral theology *Optatam Totius* said: “... Special care must be given to the perfecting of moral theology...” (Which is to be taught with a clear link to) “...Sacred liturgy, which is to be considered as the primary and indispensable source of the truly Christian spirit, should be taught according to the mind of articles 15 and 16 of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy.”(OT 16)

Thirdly, the goal of the theological task is to apply the insights gained so that the Church can bear fruit, in charity, for the life of the world.

Fourthly the Sacred Liturgy is to be the primary and indispensable source of the true Christian Spirit.

The ‘mind of the Council’ was that through the general restoration of the liturgy (SC21) the rich theology of worship, whose heart is the Paschal Mystery of Christ, would be recovered. This would then lead to “...an ever-increasing vigour to the Christian life of the faithful.” This process would, adapt to the need of the times, recognise the elements of change that are involved and would lead to the union of all who believe in Christ. The heart of Vatican II’s approach therefore has a moral and ethical imperative, a renewed or reformed life style, and a positive response to the need for change.

To achieve this, the Council called for a return to the sources, a ‘ressourcement’; so as to recover life giving practices and understandings from the life of the early Church. To facilitate this process it developed a series of principles. (SC 16 and NA 16) These principles are outlined in the next section, and as moral theology is to be based on the “Sacred liturgy, which is to be considered as the primary and indispensable source of the truly Christian spirit,”(OT 16) the same principles provide the framework for moral theology and a formation based on the Liturgy.

1.1.1. The reform of the Liturgy called for in *Sacrosanctum Concilium*

Where did the call for the reform of the liturgical practices of the Church come from and what was involved?

The reform movement has a well-documented history. The call for the reform of the Liturgy was given direction when in the 18th century the "ancient sacramentaries and the *Ordines Romani* were discovered, studied, and published."¹⁷

This scholarship raised new ‘informed’ questions about the structure and practice of the liturgy by focusing on the sacramental life of the early Church.

Given the ‘stable’ nature of the liturgical life of the Church over the preceding millennia, there was a strong reaction when early attempts at reform, such as those at the Synod of Pistoia of 1786, advocated changes based on what had been learned. These included elements such as: "The active liturgical participation of the faithful ...the use of the vernacular...(and) the proclaiming of the

¹⁷ "Pecklers, Keith F., S.J. "Ressourcement and the Renewal of Catholic Liturgy: On Celebrating the New Rite." In *Ressourcement: A Movement for Renewal in Twentieth Century Catholic Theology*. Ed. Gabriel Flynn and Paul Murray, (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2012) pp.318-319.

Eucharistic prayer in a loud, clear voice so that members of the congregation could engage with it,"¹⁸ and suggesting such innovations as proposing that the celebration of both baptism and matrimony should be given 'proper catechetical preparation'.

Today, such elements are seen as the essential prerequisites of liturgical formation and practice. The formation of people to be part of ministries are the obvious examples of the active participation of the laity in the liturgy, however it took time for these ideas to be refined, debated and established.

The call for the reform of the liturgy crystallised in the development of the 'liturgical movement' over the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.¹⁹ While it progressed with a subdued voice, there was a similar muted response from the Papacy. Pecklers observes that the Work of the Tübingen School led to "a new and richer understanding of the nature of the Church and did so by a return to the sources."²⁰ Johan Michael Sailer (1832) taught that 'Christian worship' acted as the "foundation and centre of the Church's life and that it forms the faithful into an organic society"²¹ and he posited a direct link between Christian worship, the formation of the faithful and the formation of the Church. He saw liturgy, formation and life in the Christian community as irrevocably linked.

There was some liturgical change but not to the essence of the liturgical structure. Pius X's changes in Sacramental practice, displayed both change and reaction, but they were based on an understanding that saw the liturgy as the church's most important and indispensable source. "Since we have very much at heart that the true Christian Spirit be revived in all possible ways and that it be maintained among all the faithful, it is above all necessary to provide for the holiness and dignity of the sacred places where precisely the faithful gather to draw this spirit at its primary and indispensable source, that is, active participation in the Sacred mysteries and in the public and solemn prayer of the Church ASS xxxvi (1904) 331."²²

Pecklers says that this concept of the Christian Spirit impacting on the lives of the faithful led Beauduin to "explore what it might mean for the Belgian Church to rediscover Catholic worship as the source of the church's social mission."²³

In the decade leading up to Vatican II, Pius XII and John XXIII, introduced some reforms but they were "few: the Holy Week reform of the 1950s, the new code of rubrical simplification, (1960) the (slight) adaptation of the ritual of adult initiation for the restored catechumenate, the modernization of Part II of the Roman Pontifical, and the early studies of breviary reform."²⁴

However, when the preparatory groups for Vatican II sought to: "Recover the rich theology of worship whose heart was the Paschal mystery of Christ,"²⁵ they turned to the studies of the Liturgical movement and especially the study of the earliest liturgical life of the Church to uncover

¹⁸ Ibid. p. 319.

¹⁹ This is clearly and extensively outlined in: Baldovin, John F., S.J. "The Development of the Liturgy: Theological and Historical Roots of *Sacrosanctum Concilium*." *Worship* 87.6 (2013) pp.517-32.

²⁰ "Pecklers, Keith F., S.J. Op.cit.p.321.

²¹ Ibid.

²² "Pecklers, Keith F., S.J. Op.cit.p.323.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ McManus, Frederick R. "Roman Liturgical Reform." *Worship* 60.3 (1986) p. 195.

²⁵ "Pecklers, Keith F., S.J. Op.cit.p.326.

“The Pastoral dimension of worship as had been evident in the early church; and attention to the church's worship in relation to its mission within the world.”²⁶

They displayed a clear desire to go beyond the reform of certain rubrics, to the reform of the Rites themselves, and this with a pastoral and missiological orientation. Two of the elements that resulted from these reforms are of specific interest to this study: the restoration of the Catechumenate and the reform of the Mass.

However there is a requirement to show that this is the preference of the Council itself.

The Council opens *Sacrosanctum Concilium* with a clear statement of its overall intention: “This Sacred Council has several aims in view: it desires to impart an ever increasing vigor to the Christian life of the faithful; to adapt more suitably to the needs of our own times those institutions which are subject to change; to foster whatever can promote union among all who believe in Christ; to strengthen whatever can help to call the whole of mankind into the household of the Church. The Council therefore sees particularly cogent reasons for undertaking the reform and promotion of the liturgy.”(SC 1)

This is the first paragraph the Council has spoken to the Church and the Council has focused on the reform and promotion of the liturgy with the clear intention of expressing the ‘mind of the Council.’ The Council is seeking a moral and ethical imperative, the renewed vigour of a way of life, ‘the Christian life of the faithful’, and to do so it chose to focus on the reform of the liturgy to engender this strong pastoral response.

The Council seeks to adapt to the needs of the times; and this was seen in the acknowledgment of the need for change; and to seek unity not just with other believers but with the whole of mankind! This is why the Council unequivocally called for ‘reform’; initially, of the liturgy, but in time of the understanding of the Church and its own nature, its understanding of revelation and the relationship of the Church to the Modern World!

To state it clearly and bluntly, Marcel Lefebvre and the Society of Pius X is totally correct. The Council called for reform and change. This was the universal mind of the Council,²⁷ and a call for reform is outlined in the first paragraph of its first declaration to the Universal Church.

What is this reform to consist of?

In respect of the liturgy the intention is outlined in article 21 ff. Firstly, there was a call for a “general restoration of the liturgy itself,” (SC 21) and this was to involve reviewing present practice in the light of principles and practices which have been lived previously. This call clearly had its roots in the Liturgical movement’s focus on historical form, variation, practice and explanation, and it would come to be understood under the phrase a ‘return to the sources’, a ‘ressourcement’. The call for reform in Vatican II reveals the intention of the Council was to restore Christian living by this

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ It was approved by the assembled bishops by a vote of 2,147 to 4 and promulgated by [Pope Paul VI](#) on December 4, 1963. The role of Archbishop Lefebvre in the preparation of the initial documents for the Council and his close working with Pius XII and his influence in the French speaking African Church should not be underestimated. He was fundamentally opposed to the direction of Vatican II and his opposition reinforces the clear choices that the Council Fathers were making.

return to the foundations. To enable this “the Sacred Council establishes the following general norms.”(SC 21)²⁸

These norms state are:

- The reform is in the hands of “the Apostolic See and, as laws may determine, on the bishop.” (SC 22/1)
- “Sacred scripture is of the greatest importance in the celebration of the liturgy.” (SC 24)
- The liturgy is “not a private function, but are celebrations of the Church, which is the “sacrament of unity,” namely, the holy people united and ordered under their bishops.” (SC 26)
- The liturgy is “a communal ²⁹celebration involving the presence and active participation of the faithful.” (SC 27)
- That “each person, minister or layman, who has an office to perform, should do all of, but only, those parts which pertain to his office.” (SC 28)
- There is to be a focus on the role of “servers, lectors, commentators, and members of the choir.” (SC 29)
- All change is to occur so as “to promote active participation, the people should be encouraged to take part by means of acclamations, responses, psalmody, antiphons, and songs, as well as by actions, gestures, and bodily attitudes...(and) at the proper time all should observe a reverent silence.”(SC 30)
- It is to be clear that there are “no special honours” (SC 32) in the liturgy, no privileges for private persons or classes of persons.

There is also a clear intention and direction from the Council that the restoration of the liturgical life of the Church would be dependent on the liturgy itself being seen as a source of formation and instruction. The Council says “although the sacred liturgy is above all things the worship of the divine Majesty, it likewise contains much instruction for the faithful.”³⁰

How will the liturgy offer appropriate worship and direction, formation and instruction?

It will be when it is imbued with “a noble simplicity ... short, clear and unencumbered by useless repetition.” (SC 34) When it incorporates “More reading from holy scripture,” (SC 35/1); and when scripture is reflected upon and directed in a manner in which the breaking open of the Word, the sermon “draw(s) its content mainly from scriptural and liturgical sources.”(SC 35/2)

²⁸ These norms of great import when we note the importance of declarations of Ecumenical Councils. The norms give us confidence that what is written in *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, *Gaudium et Spes*, and the two Dogmatic Constitutions that we have focused on was thought through, debated and consciously promulgated.

²⁹ As Mark Searle says: “the restoration of the communal, of that which had become ‘more or less ‘privatised.’” Searle, Mark. *Liturgy Made Simple*, (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 1981) p.22.

³⁰ *Sacrosanctum Concilium* 33 quoting Trent Session XXII.

To facilitate this scripturally based formation and instruction the Council also produced a norm that says that: "Bible services should be encouraged, especially on the Vigils of the more solemn feasts, on some weekdays in Advent and Lent, and on Sundays and feast days."(SC 35/4)

The reform however was not to be restricted to the addition of a few "bible services," the Council called for the restoration and reform not just of the Eucharist, the Mass; but of the Rites of initiation, funeral, reconciliation; the manner of the prayer of the Church and the Office; and the seasonal nature of the liturgy and life in the Church.

As can be seen the core orientations of the reform express direct choices which had been foreshadowed in the work of those involved in the Liturgical reform of the early 20th century and which Jeffery summarises as:

- "The Christocentric nature of theology and sacramental understanding, with the presence of the Risen Christ being seen in Word, assembly, minister and the Eucharistic species
- The introduction of the vernacular, so that people may worship and hear the Word of God in their own language
- The assurance of the relationship of comprehension and understanding for all the faithful.
- That "the Rites themselves need to be adapted or in some cases "inculturated"³¹ to allow people to participate in liturgical celebrations
- That the full, conscious and active participation of the faithful, is called for by the very nature of the liturgy
- That this participation is seen in the full participation of the baptized faithful in all elements, due to the communal nature of the liturgy, and their baptismal character as "priest, prophet and king."
- Decentralisation and focus on the bishop's role as being the liturgical head of the local Church.
- A call for the quality of noble simplicity in both the Rites, the places we gather and the vessels and elements used in the liturgy.
- That for clarity the Rites should be short, clear and unencumbered by useless repetitions
- The foundation of all on the Word of God, in scripture.
- The awareness that "much of the liturgy, particularly as the average worshipper experiences it, is not text – it is movement, sound, art, music, words delivered through oral speech rather

³¹ Francis, Mark R., CSV. "Another Look at the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy and the Substantial Unity of the Roman Rite," *Worship* 88.3 (2014) p.243.

than through written media...at its most fundamental level, Christian liturgy is not text but action or, as anthropologists would say, performance.”³²

The historical studies of the liturgical movement had five targets that clearly impacted on the Council’s areas of focus. They were the calls for reform in respect of: “Structural change, the Eucharistic prayer, the catechumenate, the Divine Office, and the liturgical year.”³³

The principles expressed in the norms, and these areas of change, can be seen as lying at the heart not just of a reform of outward celebrations and actions, but to be at the heart of a reform of the core understanding of what is being communicated in the ministry of the Church, summarised in the liturgy.

The fact that the fundamental understandings of the Church are contained in what she prays, her liturgy, was at the heart of the call for reform and this is reinforced when the resultant General Instruction uses the oft quoted phrase attributed to Prosper of Aquitaine (+455), the disciple of Augustine of Hippo “*legem credendi lex statuat supplicandi* / the law of prayer is the law of belief.”³⁴ (GIRM 2, 10, 397)

There is contained in the way *Sacrosanctum Concilium* established the process of reform a movement for the Church to engage with the world, and form a people actively committed to this mission. This will be expressed clearly in the Preface of *Gaudium et Spes*, but can be seen here in the first document published by the Council, a full three years earlier. These principles express the concerns of the Council itself, here in embryo, but which will be fully developed during the Council.

The goal of the liturgical reform was not to achieve ‘absolute liturgical uniformity’ but rather, to facilitate a place of celebration, characterised by its continuity with the life of the early church but adapting by the inclusion of local language and custom, so as to provide a framework for the full and active communication of the Mystery within the community, and the proclamation of the Gospel itself.

This is seen in the following passage, which specifically says “the Church has no wish to impose a rigid uniformity in matters which do not implicate the faith or the good of the whole community; rather does she respect and foster the genius and talents of the various races and peoples” (SC 37) and directly applies to the “revising the liturgical books... legitimate variations and adaptations to different groups, regions, and peoples...provided that the substantial unity of the Roman rite is preserved.” (SC 38) This shows a movement from a “context, in which many had equated uniformity with unity, (to one in which) the Council opted to speak of preserving the “substantial unity of the Roman Rite.”³⁵

The question becomes, “How can we enact the principles outlined above while maintaining the ‘substantial unity of the Roman Rite?’”

³² Jeffery, P., O.S.B. "Can Catholic Social Teaching Bring Peace to the "Liturgy Wars"? *Theological Studies* 75.2 (2014) p. 364.

³³ Baldovin, John F., S.J. (2013) Op.cit. p. 527.

³⁴ Migne, Jacques Paul. *Patrologia Latina*. Paris: **51**, pp. 209–10, “...obsecrationum quoque sacerdotalium sacramenta respiciamus, quae ab apostolis tradita, in toto mundo atque in omni catholica Ecclesia uniformiter celebrantur, ut legem credendi lex statuat supplicandi.”

³⁵ Francis, Mark R., CSV. Op.cit. p.247.

At the heart of the debate since the Council is a juxtaposition between two approaches. Mark Francis outlines this in his commentary on *Liturgiam authenticam*. Firstly, there is an approach that proposes that: “the substantial unity of the Roman Rite centres around textual fidelity, not only to the content of the texts of the Roman Missal, but to the form in which these texts appear in the *editio typica* since the Rite itself is “supra –regional,””³⁶

And, secondly, in what seems to be Mark Francis’ own position, that “the very reason for the reform / *aggiornamento* that is contained in the very first article of the Constitution”³⁷ and it is: “...To impart an ever-increasing vigour to the Christian life of the faithful; to adapt more closely to the needs of our age those institutions that are subject to change...to promote the union of all who believe in Christ.”(SC 1)

This relationship between the ‘text’ as the preserver of a stable Tradition, and the text as the giver of the expression of the Tradition to be expressed in the language of this place and time, and in dialogue with the issues of this place and time, is an ongoing tension in the pastoral application of the Church’s moral insights as well. This fundamental question is going to deeply influence the manner in which pastors approach the formation of the community, in respect of issues, and in respect of the fundamental commitments of the OICA. These insights are the foundational premises to proceed with.

1.2. Don Saliers

The question at the heart of this study is: “In what direction does the community move when it tries to form a relationship between ethics and liturgy?”

In Catholic circles it has not been a topic widely discussed, and the general literature has primarily been founded on responses to a seminal article, by Don Saliers³⁸ in 1979 in the *Journal of Religious Ethics*, in which he explored the links between liturgy and ethics and a short comment in a paper in which he returned to the topic in 1998³⁹. The study will now try to explore this question by looking at Saliers approach and one of the responses that opened the debate, that of Harmon Smith⁴⁰.

In the 1979 article Don Saliers⁴¹ provided a number of approaches to be explored and initiated a vigorous debate.⁴²

³⁶ Francis, Mark R., CSV. Op.cit. p.250.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Saliers, Don E. "Liturgy and Ethics," *Journal of Religious Ethics* (Vol.7, no.2, Fall 1979).

³⁹ Saliers, Don E. "Afterword: Liturgy and Ethics Revisited," Ed. Anderson, Byron. E. and. Morrill, Bruce T. *Liturgy and the Moral Self: Humanity at Full Stretch before God: Essays in Honour of Don E. Saliers*. (Minnesota: Liturgical, 1998) pp. 209-24.

⁴⁰ Smith, Harmon L. *Where Two or Three Are Gathered: Liturgy and the Moral Life*. (Cleveland, Ohio: Pilgrim, 1995)

⁴¹ Saliers, Don E. "Liturgy and Ethics," *Journal of Religious Ethics* (Vol.7, no.2, Fall 1979)

⁴² This article has provided a starting point for reflection on the relationship between liturgy and ethics, especially in the ecumenical dialogue between ‘mainstream communities’ since its publication in 1979. A sample of these references are:

Saliers starting point is based on a question that is fundamental to Catholic ethics and its relationship, ecumenically, with Protestant contributions. Saliers starts from the impact on the 'individual' of the relationship between ethics and liturgy, while Catholic responses have a 'communal' emphasis. However it is important to outline Saliers approach, and summarise the response to it, as so much 'formation' is approached from an individualistic perspective, and the challenge of the communal tends to become an 'addition' to the 'real' commitment which is seen as sitting in the individual's faith response.

Saliers started his exposition of the relationship between ethics and liturgy by identifying the four aspects of the prayer experience which he saw as being foundational to liturgy. Saliers saw the prayer experience as being firstly "praise and thanksgiving"⁴³; secondly, involving the recall and representation of God in "relationship to the world and humanity"; thirdly an acknowledgment and confession of the inadequacy of humans in the sight of God and fourthly a mode of intercession. Saliers finds that each of these modes of prayer expresses a foundational disposition or 'attitude' that forms and supports humans in their relationship to God and which are therefore foundational of forming the individual's relationships and orientations to the world and the neighbour.

Saliers sees these dispositions as being at the heart of the formation of affections and virtues and therefore having a direct relationship to the ethical life.

His perspective is that affections and virtues, nurtured by these four foci of prayer, are foundational to the moral life of the Christian as they establish the believer relationally to the saving mystery of Christ. Prayer forms the Christian's affections and the affections are expressed in the virtues of joy and hope, penitence and love of God and neighbour. Note that the affections are within the individual, but they are actually the common affections and virtues, of virtue ethics, and they reflect those articulated in *Gaudium et Spes*.(GS 24,26,30,43,49,92) Saliers, following Hauerwas, sees these virtues as forming the character and identity of the self, and therefore as being deeply formative of the moral subject. This character formation, of the individual, happens in and through the communal activity that is the liturgy. Prayer, is therefore, for Saliers, formative of the character, establishes the fundamental attitudes and values of the Christian, and these in turn will be expressed in the 'fruits' shown in the life of the believer. He expresses this succinctly: "The issue is whether we pray what we mean and mean what we pray without being drawn into the way in which God views the world. The meaning of praying is not a simple matter of saying the words. To pray is to become a living text before God."⁴⁴

Saliers, secondly, having seen prayer and liturgy as formative of individual character, by shaping the "affections and transform(ing) our consciousness so as to make us into new moral beings;"⁴⁵

-Anderson, Byron E. and Morrill Bruce T., eds. *Liturgy and the Moral Self: Humanity at Full Stretch before God: Essays in Honour of Don E. Saliers*. (Collegeville Minn.: Liturgical, 1998). A tribute collection of articles in response to this article, published 15 years after the original.

-Pfeil, Margaret R. "Liturgy and Ethics: The Liturgical Asceticism of Energy Conservation," *Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics* 27.2 (2007) pp. 127-49.

-Steck, Christopher, SJ. "Graced Encounters: Liturgy and Ethics from a Balthasarian Perspective," *Horizons* 30.2 (2003) pp. 255-79.

⁴³ These are all references to elements within his 1979 article: Saliers, Don.E. (1979) Op.cit.

⁴⁴ Saliers, Don.E. (1979) Op.cit.p.181.

⁴⁵ Steck, Christopher, SJ. Op.cit.p.255.

understands that prayer is also: “a response to the world as the arena of moral ambiguity and agency.”⁴⁶ This coupling of individual consciousness and the issues brought forward by the world, is the foundation which enables prayer to be expressed in, with and for others; and secondly enables the awareness that it is ‘only in and through solidarity with those in need that people can mean what they pray in intercession’.

Thirdly, Saliers sees that addressing the world to God displays a moral intentionality, and lastly that liturgical prayer commits the one praying to action because “to intercede without allowing the ministries of the community to be visibly represented in the body renders prayers inadequate in their intent and object.”⁴⁷

Saliers, from this framework sees prayer in a community as necessarily leading to a tension in the Christian moral life. This is because Christian prayer: “in each of its modes-praise, thanksgiving, confession, intercession and others- manifests the double focus of glorification and sanctification.”⁴⁸ The sanctification of the individual believer who prays.

Saliers believes there is an even deeper demand present in Christian prayer due to its fundamental alignment with faith in the face of suffering and ambiguity. Saliers sees prayer as necessarily a “process of transformation, sanctification and glorification by the God to whom all things are returning.”⁴⁹

This element has led others, to call for “liturgical asceticism”⁵⁰ and a “process of moral formation involving *praktikê*, ascetic struggle”⁵¹ and calling for individuals to commit to “sustained practices of daily life undertaken with a conscious awareness on the part of the moral agent of the way in which these disciplines express one’s baptismal commitment rooted within a particular faith community.”⁵²

This form of liturgical asceticism, in the life of the individual, founded on sharing in the life of Christ by a conscious “contemplative awareness of the practices of the worshipping community as *leitourgia*, the work of the people of God at the service of the world,”⁵³ is seen by those advocating the position not so much in the *form* of the liturgy as in its *content*. Ascetic relationships are established from the practice of the liturgy by the development of a consciousness of being interrelated; an awareness of the communitarian nature of all responses; and an eschatological horizon to commitments and a hope in a future fulfilment. It is this particular anthropology that brings the individual into the whole and in so doing entering holiness, ever more like the God who is worshipped. Pfeil calls this radical relationality and emphasises the importance of “liturgical participation, Christians willingly become *synergoi*, or co-operators, co-workers with God.”⁵⁴ People are committed by the oaths of baptism and the fellowship of the table, and live with the central orientations of “thanksgiving...with the responsibility to participate in God’s saving activity in the

⁴⁶ Saliers, Don.E. (1979) Op.cit.p.183.

⁴⁷ Saliers, Don.E. (1979, Op.cit.p.184.

⁴⁸ Saliers, Don.E. (1979)Op.cit.p.186.

⁴⁹ Saliers, Don.E. (1979)Op.cit.p.186.

⁵⁰ A term she has taken from David Fagerberg.

⁵¹ Pfeil, Margaret R. Op.cit. p.127.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Pfeil, Margaret R. Op.cit.p.134.

⁵⁴ Pfeil, Margaret R. Op.cit.p.136.

world.”⁵⁵ These fundamental relationships call the (individual) Christian to act in the world, in a community, after the fashion of Christ, graced by the Holy Spirit.

In this applied model the liturgy and the Christian message are a set of ‘general principles’ to guide a committed life, of the individual, and it is these principles that will direct the person to others, from the position of their ‘personal faith commitment.’ These insights are helpful if formation is approached from the perspective of the individual, but leave the question of the demand of the liturgy on the corporate, Body of Christ, unanswered.

In the 1979 article Don Saliers speaks of the relationship between liturgy and ethics but does not want to see “liturgy regarded primarily as a means to moral exhortation or ethical motivation”, (Pfeil’s position). Why? Because “it loses its essential character as praise, thanksgiving and anamnetic enactment of the mystery of faith.”⁵⁶

This however, implies that the liturgy does not offer us a tool to form a moral stance. This point is strongly picked up by many who cite Saliers and follow him, and the intentionality of this position is articulated clearly in Paul Westermeyer’s contribution to a collection in honour of Don Saliers. Westermeyer cites many theologians in support of the core premise that: “worship loses its integrity when it is regarded instrumentally as a means to something else-even as a means of achieving the most noble of human purposes.”⁵⁷

While underlining this fundamental perspective, there is in Saliers’ article another line of inquiry that is often left unexplored, but which is hinted at and which from the first reading of this article has remained a question to be explored.

In the midst of this approach, based on virtue and character, Saliers notes two other elements:

Firstly Saliers outlines a pattern seen in the letter to the Thessalonians where “St Paul exhorts (the Thessalonians) to a Christian way of life.” Saliers outlines this as a simple, but stepped process. Firstly, the identification of those elements that prevent life in Christ; primarily emotions and vices; Secondly, the replacement of these elements with specific virtues and attitudes, mutual respect and love. There is then an exhortation of the early Christian community, in Thessalonica, to be formed by a manner of living which is described as: “rejoice always, pray constantly, give thanks in all circumstances” and this will be characterised by living with the emotions of joy, gratitude and love, in all circumstances. Paul then says this is not to be just words but rather is to be a life lived prayerfully and with attention to those elements we are thankful for. Paul sees it as having a constancy of living “God’s love in Christ.”⁵⁸ Saliers doesn’t go as far as saying that this ‘way of life’ should be lived corporately, it is generally still interpreted as applying to the ‘faith filled individual’.

However, secondly, Saliers, in this seminal article, poses the following questions: “Can the *liturgical order of language and action* still animate moral imagination and ethical judgement?”

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Saliers, Don.E. (1979). Op.cit.p.187.

⁵⁷ Westermeyer p. 193 quoting William H Willimon, *The Service of God: Christian Work and Worship* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1983) p.42.

⁵⁸ Saliers, Don.E. (1979) Op.cit.. p.182.

and “What traditions and what ecumenically emerging *patterns of worship* are most conducive to moral maturity and social wisdom?”⁵⁹

These questions were the focus in the debate that arose from the publication of Harmon Smith’s work, and the responses to it.

Smith, proposed “...that the separation of liturgy from ethics, of moral theology from worship is artificial, contrived and mistaken – and recent.”⁶⁰

And he starts from what is a conventional stance saying that: “Ethically significant issues typically arise in the presence of competing, frequently conflicting, values and neighbour-claims; and it is only in contexts where persons encounter other persons that humanly important moral matters appear... How these commitments ought to get appropriately expressed in interpersonal relationships is the work of moral philosophy and moral theology.”⁶¹

He then says that: “It is clear that a *shared* conviction of purpose and identity holds the best possibility for yielding constructive resolution of moral conflict,”⁶² and then he links this to liturgy when he says: “...and I believe that worship and the church’s liturgy is the principal resource for that commonality and community between and among Christians.”⁶³

This is the fundamental question that has characterised the resulting debate. Is the liturgy impacting by forming the virtue of the individual or does the liturgy in and of itself form a common communal response. The approach chosen will impact on the manner in which formation processes approach the liturgy and the manner in which formation will be structured.

Smith says that the moral life “Come(s) to life as Christians in a worshipping community, in a tradition, as inheritors of something received”... “That is engendered in a worshipping community, which is nourished in that community, that it expresses itself in perpetuation and extension of such a community ... and that community is the Church.”⁶⁴

As Smith says: “the Church cannot be said to exist without the aggregate of faithful individuals, just as faithful individuals cannot exist without the church.”⁶⁵

He says that the implications of this are that “both theologically, and historically, prayer is the form of worship, and worship is the form of doctrine. Theology and creeds and catechisms emerge from the church’s life of prayer, from its liturgy, from its pious devotion. Indeed, prayer and liturgy are historically anterior to the Bible, ecclesial polity, and all of the accoutrements of institutional Christianity”.⁶⁶

⁵⁹ Saliers, Don.E. (1979) Op.cit..p.187.

⁶⁰ Smith, Harmon L. *Where Two or Three Are Gathered: Liturgy and the Moral Life*. (Cleveland, Ohio: Pilgrim, 1995) p.x.

⁶¹ Smith, Harmon L. Op.cit p.xi.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Smith, Harmon L. Op.cit.p.6.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

Smith says that the one thing the disciples asked of the Lord was “teach us to pray”, and the prayer he taught them was a communal prayer that contains within it a prototype of Christian life and worship.

Smith reinforces this position with a quote from Theodore of Mopsuestia; “Every prayer contains teaching of good works ... He who cares, therefore for perfection and is anxious to do the things that are pleasing to God, will pay more attention to prayer before all other thing...” because “He (i.e. Jesus) made use of these short words as if to say that prayer does not consist so much in words as in good works, love and zeal for duty... prayer is by necessity connected with good works, because a thing that is not good to be looked for is not good to be prayed for...this is the reason why here also He uttered the above words to the disciples who had asked Him how to pray, as if He had said to them: if you care for prayer know that it is not performed by words but by the choice of a virtuous life and by the love of God and diligence in one’s duty. If you are zealous in these things you will be praying all your life.”⁶⁷

Ritual is grounded in the reality of human life, and, says Smith, finds its greatest expression when ritual and worship are linked to the major events of life, especially initiation.

Human actions are full of meaning and human beings attach these meanings to liturgical actions; “we do not understand in order to believe; rather, like our primitive ancestors, we believe in order to understand.”⁶⁸ This challenges the modern environment in which the community that gathers isn’t so much a community as an aggregate of individuals, and that the foundation of moral and community life requires that we “...comprehend the moral life as an identity, an orientation, a definition of who we are which norms and orders our will and desire and action.”⁶⁹ At the base is a willingness on the part of the community, and the individual, to be open to seeing things differently, or in many situations to have a capacity to see things as they really are and are meant to be!

Smith applies his insights directly to the three Lenten gospel readings chosen “for the instruction of the Roman Catechumens “John 4, John 9, and John 11.”⁷⁰ These readings have been used continuously in the liturgy of the Church and they speak of the meaning that is carried in the ritual and practice of Baptism, however, Smith following Raymond Brown, believes that John used the imagery deliberately to give expression to the lived experience of the Johannine Church and as a “a way of doing theological ethics which ...is both generous and clearly commensurate with our confession that God is finally a mystery beyond our comprehension.”⁷¹

This is the foundation of what Smith sees as a “method and design” for Christian praxis and reflection.

Proceeding in this direction demands a deep and extensive conversation with those who know a tension between this methodology and the presumption of a corporate ethics; and, those who are deeply committed to individual justification and salvation; and the ‘necessity or not’ of confessing

⁶⁷ Commentary of Theodore of Mopsuestia on the Lord’s Prayer and on the Sacraments of Baptism and Eucharist quoted at Smith, Harmon L. Op.cit.p.7.

⁶⁸ Smith, Harmon L. Op.cit.p.19.

⁶⁹Smith, Harmon L. Op.cit.p.26.

⁷⁰Smith, Harmon L. Op.cit.p.27.

⁷¹ Ibid.

Jesus as one's Lord and Master. Smith goes into depth on these issues in his book.⁷² He says "Baptism ... is initiation into a community which helps us want the right thing(s), for the right reason(s), and in the right way(s); (and that) Alasdair MacIntyre has persuasively argued that the coherence and cogency of community are presuppositions for rationality and reasonableness."⁷³

From this foundation Smith posits worship as being purposeless in the sense that it: "Neither requires nor is predicated upon some utility which it serves and to which it would therefore be subservient. It is sufficient as its own end, its own *raison d'être* and it requires no purpose beyond itself for authentication."⁷⁴

However: "In another sense worship does have a purpose and is a purposeful action. Worship is purposeful precisely in the measure to which it is true to itself; and it is true to itself when it acknowledges the holiness of God, hears God's word, offers prayer, and celebrates the sacrament."⁷⁵

This pattern is seen not only in religious communities but also in the way in which all communities are essentially formed by common understandings and relationships, and by the symbols and language that carry that meaning. The expression of this ranges from national (istic) celebrations, symbols, flags and hymns; to the racist and class understandings and behaviours engendered on the terraces of football stadia around the world.

Smith says: "My point in all this is clearly not that either church or culture is irreligious. Indeed, the evidence seems irresistible that both church and culture are very religious, the point, instead, is that our religiosity is very largely what is now broadly identified as Post Constantinian religiosity. This generally means that while notions of good and bad, right and wrong and the like are serious commitments, they are also seriously flawed commitments because they are curiously compounded of strands of social and political and religious philosophies which, as MacIntyre has shown are incommensurate, incompatible, irreconcilable and finally unintelligible. Post Constantianism reflects and symbolises the identification of the church with the empire, the state, the secular *cultus*."⁷⁶

It is important that this element is not just left to be stated as it directly impacts on the way in which the liturgy can influence moral thought. This is fundamentally an outline of the reasons that Christianity finds itself separated from cultural and social power.

The Liturgy is being celebrated in an environment in which it is assumed "...that the individual person, rather than the institution or tradition, is the origin and locus of meaning and value and purpose." Secondly, the logical outgrowth of this subjectification of reality, what Mannion calls "the intimisation of society" is that all social phenomena, no matter how impersonal in structure, are converted into matters of personality in order to have a meaning, and this leads to the ecclesial community being a 'friendly gathering place' which in turn leads to the church community becoming a preserve of homogeneity and therefore the 'stranger' is not welcome and the familiar is cultivated and celebrated. And the third impact is the 'politicization' of the church. When we turn to the

⁷² He outlines a series of 6 objections and his response in pages 30-32

⁷³ Smith, Harmon L. Op.cit.p.31.

⁷⁴ Smith, Harmon L. Op.cit.p.39.

⁷⁵ Smith, Harmon L. Op.cit.p.40.

⁷⁶ Smith, Harmon L. Op.cit.p.49.

individualistic and homogenous, the public, institutional arena is often ignored (even rejected) however it does not cease to exist, nor does it disappear altogether; rather it is retained, especially in the absence of subjectivity and intimacy, by working out the procedures of “legal and political conventions by which mutual respect for individual freedom, self-determination and personal autonomy can be created and maintained.”⁷⁷

The call, says Smith, is to return to the core of the Church’s self-understanding, the structure and content of the liturgy as the common framework of the moral life of that community.

The response to Smith’s book⁷⁸ was strong.

Smith was seen to have distanced himself from the studies of Saliers, and others, by specifically offering this: “distinctive focus on the way in which different aspects of the liturgy (confession and witness, greetings, offering and intercession, Scripture and proclamation, and sending forth) form the Christian moral life and can inform the complex moral questions that confront Christians in contemporary society.”⁷⁹

One reviewer commented “surely, the liturgy holds a foundational place in any ethics that would call itself Christian-but the response to moral questions would seem to require, as well, norms that mediate between vision, attitudes, and dispositions and the concrete complexity of moral issues.”⁸⁰

This question leaves the liturgy as impacting at the level of virtue, attitude and core values that enter into the personal orientation of the Christian, who then use normative methodologies, of norm and concrete discernment, for the individual application.

What Smith asks is: “Does the form of the liturgy itself, its structure and actions, its ‘process’ actually hold a distinctive structure and process for Christian ethics?”

Don Saliers returned to this very question in the endnote he wrote to a book of thanks for his work. This note appears 19 years after the article that initiated this debate,

Saliers asks: “What constitutes a continuity of identity in Christian worship? One way or another, worshipping communities settle on basic actions and certain narratives in their practice of Christian worship,”⁸¹ and he identifies the “Extraordinary persistence of what may be called canonical elements and structures across cultures and historical periods.”⁸²

Then he specifically sends us to “patterns of initiation that focus on the life, teachings, suffering death and resurrection of Jesus, culminating in the water-bath and anointing in his name; the holy meal in which the central prayer-action remembers a selective narrative of what Jesus said and did; some form of daily prayer characteristically using the Hebrew psalms...; certain rhythms of the week (oriented on the “Lord’s Day” with its eschatological promise), the day, and the year(with its

⁷⁷ Smith, Harmon L. Op.cit. pp. 51-52.

⁷⁸ Smith, Harmon L. *Where Two or Three Are Gathered: Liturgy and the Moral Life*. (Cleveland, Ohio: Pilgrim, 1995.)

⁷⁹ O’Keefe, Mark. Rev. of *Harmon L Smith: Where Two or Three Are Gathered: Liturgy and the Moral Life*. *Theological Studies* 57.4 (1996) p. 785.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Saliers 1998 Op.cit.p.211.

⁸² Saliers 1998 Op.cit.p.212.

principal feasts and associated Scriptures); and rites of healing, forgiveness, burial and setting aside leaders.”⁸³

And concludes by saying “We must also see that Christian liturgy in every culture and historical period does not simply absorb local culture,”⁸⁴ but rather, from its own structure and content can offer critique and challenge.

These questions hinted at in 1979 and expressed in 1998 lead to the question: Is there a pattern, common to the worship and initiation patterns of the Christian community that persists in an extraordinary way across cultures and ages, precisely because it is formative of the way and manner in which Christians are called to interact with each other, to live a moral life, and to be formed ‘in Christ’?

This in turn has led to two further questions: Firstly, if there is a content to ‘being in Christ’ what are the presuppositions that the tradition offers us for recognising such and its interpretation?

And, what are the sources and interrelationships which reveal Christ, in the historical tradition, and in our time?

To ground the response to these questions this thesis will ask them of the teaching of the Roman tradition in this time and place; the teaching of the last Ecumenical Council, specifically the Council’s teaching on the liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*; the understanding on the nature of the Church, *Lumen Gentium*; Revelation, *Dei Verbum* and the interface of the Church and the modern world, *Gaudium et Spes* and the teaching of the Magisterium since that time.

Secondly, if the liturgy does suggest a cross cultural and cross temporal model, what is the form and structure of this model? This element will primarily be identified by examining the content of the *Rites of Christian Initiation of Adults*, and *The General Instruction to the Roman Missal* and linking it to the first Part of *Gaudium et Spes*.

At the heart of this process therefore are the overarching questions, which have Vatican II and Saliers as their origin: What does the liturgy offer us to understand what is “right and just”? And, How does this interface with the revelation of God in Christ, and the ongoing life of the Risen one in the world?

1.3. The call of Vatican II.

What has gone before is intended to set the scene and the general parameters of the question, in part 1.3 the intention is to identify the call of Vatican II to link moral theology and liturgy; to bring forward the concepts of witness and how this relates to the fundamental model of God’s revelation to humanity, the unity of ‘word and deed’; and then to identify the development of this revelatory concept in the use of the model of ‘dialogue’, and how the two concepts of “the unity of word and deed” and “dialogue” provide a staged framework and content for moral discernment.

⁸³ Saliers 1998 Op.cit.pp.212-213.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

1.3.1. The parameters of the debate.

The development of moral thought since Vatican II has proceeded from a situation that saw the “sources for moral theology as two spheres at either end of two axes. Along the: “Rational claim axis” (Bretzke) pivots human experience and a normatively human anthropology; (and) on the “sacred claim axis”, he situates the sacred texts and the Church’s tradition. The axes intersect in the sanctuary of the conscience, whose work is to guide us in this complex world.”⁸⁵

The primary point of reference and the emphasis given at the interface between these two elements impacts on the way moral theology, in fact theology as a whole, interacts with sources and processes; the priority and order of encounter and the weight given to each element. This in turn will have a wider impact on the treatment of the sources of revelation, the relationship between reason and revelation, Christological and ecclesiological interpretations, and the place of the teaching roles within the church and the interaction with the world outside the Church.

The response to this fundamental issue therefore, influences, at many points, the interrelationships contained within the processes of formation, especially within the Christian community.

The foundational nature of this issue is seen when these two axes are identified as the starting point for the discussion of revelation in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. “By natural reason man can know God with certainty, on the basis of his works. But there is another order of knowledge, which man cannot possibly arrive at by his own powers: the order of divine Revelation. Through an utterly free decision, God has revealed himself and given himself to man. This he does by revealing the mystery, his plan of loving goodness, formed from all eternity in Christ, for the benefit of all men. God has fully revealed this plan by sending us his beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit.”(CCC 50)

The *Catechism* then proceeds, to outline the nature (CCC 51-53)and stages (CCC 54-64)of God’s plan of revelation and leads us to the heart of the Christian message, the fullness of revelation in the person, life, death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ. (CCC 65)

However, it is the dialogue between natural reason and divine revelation which is crucial and this needs to be grounded in the wider context of Vatican II’s understanding of revelation, and its central theme, the unity of ‘deed and word’.

1.4. Deed and word.

The way forward then is to explore the development of this concept and to identify how it is linked at every stage to dimensions of the ethical response to the Word of God. To start the liturgy is often described using a quote from *Sacrosanctum Concilium* 56 as consisting of “the two parts which, in a

⁸⁵ Keenan, James F., SJ. "Fundamental Moral Theology at the Beginning of the Twenty-first Century." *Theological Studies* 67 (2006) pp.99-119.

certain sense, go to make up the Mass, namely, the liturgy of the word and the Eucharistic liturgy, are so closely connected with each other that they form but one single act of worship.”⁸⁶

In a manner characteristic of Catholic theology this displays an understanding based on a “unity in distinction”, an expression that outlines an understanding that is “both/and.”⁸⁷ There is a unity, the Mass; which consists of two distinct elements, the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist. There are similar examples in the Liturgy, places in which a unity is arrived at from the dialogue between two elements: Word and Action, Proclamation and Sacrifice, preparation and completion, arriving and being sent, or the Presence of Christ in the Word proclaimed and in the action of the Sacrament, taken, blessed, broken and given; a series of actions.

This construct can be seen in its fullest development in *Dei Verbum: The Dogmatic Constitution on Revelation* where the words and deeds of Jesus, His life (primarily his teaching and ministry, where his deeds show forth the very understanding and life he is teaching and preaching), His death and resurrection, (the confirmation in Deed of what he had Spoken of as life and love), are shown to be the place of the fullness of Revelation. It is in the unity of words and deeds, or in *Dei Verbum* “deeds and words” (DV 2) that the presence and nature of God is revealed.

As in all theological concepts this phrase, “word and deed” has a history, and a development, and because the unity of word and deed is a constitutive element in understanding the Liturgy and the Rites of Initiation, it is the patterns in these Rites that this thesis is positing as providing the model of formation for human commitments, it is important to follow the development of this concept in the statements of the Roman Magisterium leading up to Vatican II, and how it has been applied since the Council.

The first observation is that this is not just a liturgical distinction, rather it is a fundamental bridge between: the faith expressed and articulated in Words, therefore in the preaching and writing, teaching and documenting of the Church; and Deeds, that is, the faith revealed in the witness, living, application and the judgement of the appropriateness of the response, by human beings.

There are two directions in which this phrase can lead, depending on which is placed first.

The emphasis can be placed, firstly, on the ‘revealed word’, and therefore priority is given to the proclaimed word; or secondly, the priority can be given to the deeds and this will in turn lead to processes that seek to search for meaning, post event or in the face of issues that arise, firstly, in the deeds of life and then seeking, in dialogue and partnership, for understanding and clarity in the light of the Word.

In other words “which is the starting place of discernment: the Word or the Deed?”

In the twentieth century the phrase “word and deed” is first used by Pius X in addressing the social impact of the growth of political parties and the social movements of labour and nationalism. In doing so he challenged the hierarchy of the Church, saying that they cannot be exempt from “exerting ourselves to hasten the work of God – and not merely by praying assiduously... but, more

⁸⁶ SC 56; SCar 44; which is quoted in slightly different words in the GIRM: *The Roman Missal*. Wellington, N.Z.: New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference, 2010. *GIRM* n.28.

⁸⁷ Rowland, Tracey. *Catholic Theology*. (London: Bloomsbury, 2017) p.26; where she links this to the identification of this trend by Karl Barth, and Cardinal Müller.

important still, by affirming both by word and deed and in the light of day, God's supreme dominion over man and all things. (ES 7)

For Pius X, this call does not rest with the individual nor purely as a “natural duty” but rather is driven by “our common interest” (ES 7) and a mix of the “progress of civilization” and the process of aiding humanity to find God as the source of peace in the face of a world situation that he clearly saw as fraught.

Pius X places this reflection in the context of “the greater part of mankind fighting among themselves so savagely as to make it seem as though strife were universal?” (ES 7) Pius X understood that there is a direct link between our “word and deed” and that it involves a direct and clear application of “justice” as the “source of peace.” He continues: “But to want peace without God is an absurdity, seeing that where God is absent thence too justice flies, and when justice is taken away it is vain to cherish the hope of peace. “Peace is the work of justice” (Is. xxii, 17).” (ES 7)

Pius X puts forth a full and universal call to “the party of God” that it will be their work of “word and deed” in the world, that will restore peace to the world. It is clear that he juxtaposes this with other solutions offered by “societies and parties;” to the extent that he clearly does not see the Gospel as bringing this justice and peace in and through political movement and parties, but at the same time he is clear that the bringing of peace and justice is to happen, in the world, and in and through the actions of believers, not just by their praying for it!

This linking of the individual’s personal commitment and chosen actions, in other words their moral life, as the fundamental witness of “word and deed” is reinforced in the opening lines of his encyclical reflecting on the life of Charles Borromeo.⁸⁸ “Sacred Scripture records the divine word saying that men will remember the just man forever, for even though he is dead, he yet speaks. Both in word and deed the Church has for a long time verified the truth of that saying.” (EdS 1)

What do we see linked here?

The ‘divine word’: the place of revelation, the scriptures, identify the ‘just’ person, as the one who is remembered, and it is then, Pius X says, that the community, the Church, sees this not just in recorded words but as being verified both in ‘words and deeds’.

Pius says that words and deeds can ‘both’ verify, but it is clear that it is the actions of a person in the world, what they say and do, that will witness to their commitment and verify the truth of their witness. In fact Pius takes it beyond individual witness to see the Church as having the path which can help humanity find the fullness of justice, and it is by being a form of holiness, renewed and enlivened by the Holy Spirit; and it is the Church’s task is to “conceive, nourish and educate the noble family of the just.” (EdS 1) It is in a communal life and formation and not an external imposition, that the Church is to develop the family of the just and that an identification will be made between holiness and living a just life in the community.

The last element that is made clear in this elucidation is that the whole action, again in the face of the misery of the world, is motivated and empowered by love because: “She (the Church) shows her

⁸⁸ Pius X. *Editae Saepe: Encyclical of Pope Pius X on St. Charles Borromeo*, (26 May 1910).

children in each age the timeliness of the old truth: "For those who love God all things work together unto good, for those who, according to his purpose, are saints through his call." (EdS 1)

This love reveals the union with the saints, and is a source of joy.

Pius X, in 1903 and 1910, firstly, uses the words that are repeated and linked in various combinations over the next century: word and deed, justice, joy, peace, holiness, communal and individual, in Christ and in the power of the Holy Spirit.

His reflections are grounded in a deeply realistic understanding of the situation of the world in which humanity lives. The world is seen as fraught, divided and self-interested and the call to the Church is to interface and witness in this situation.⁸⁹

However this call is not just for the 'saints' and cannot be limited to their exceptional witness. Pius X teaches that the response to the witness of the saint, Charles Borromeo, is to give thanks, by: "Beseech(ing) the Divine Goodness both in word and deed to let Charles now assist by his patronage the Church he loved so ardently and aided so greatly by his merits and example..." (EdS 45)

Forty-three years later Pius XII returns to the same themes, but using a different figure and example. In an encyclical⁹⁰ focused on Mary, and the mysteries proclaimed about her, Pius XII makes a direct link between the self-identity of the Christian and the image of the Virgin Mother. Individuals are called to stand with her, as adopted children, in unity "under the cross of her Son" and to be formed and to act in accord with "her own soul in thought, word and deed." (FC 22)

Pius XII says this identification cannot "consist of mere words, (it) is not to be counterfeit coin of religion or the weak and transitory affection of a moment, but is to be something sincere, true and efficacious." (FC 23)

This will occur when the actions and deeds of the person's life are in conformity and when they have acquired the central virtues. So it is not merely a matter of doing what an individual has been told is right and true, it is a process in which people grow, as persons, in the core virtues of justice, prudence, wisdom, patience, forgiveness etc. With Pius X, Pius XII links this to an inner struggle, in a world of challenges and calls for a turning to "innocence and integrity of life" (FC 23) rather than the self-interest and self-focus which are seen in a world governed by original sin.

The pattern of identifying with witnesses who have lived the way of life characterised by the unity of 'word and deed,' which has been identified by Pius X in Charles Borromeo, Pius XII in Mary, the Mother of the Lord is seen by John XIII in John Vianney. ⁹¹John sees that the witness of the life of the Cure d'Arns can aid in the training of both "youngsters and adults", and calls for "forms that are specially adapted to local circumstance and needs" and which will lead to people, like John Vianney, who through their lives are "a witness in word and deed for Christ nailed to the cross "not in the persuasive language devised by human wisdom, but in a manifestation of spiritual power."" (SNP 84)

There is explicit content seen here.

⁸⁹ Pius X. *Editae Saepe: Encyclical of Pope Pius X on St. Charles Borromeo*, (26 May 1910).

⁹⁰ Pius XII. *Fulgens Corona: Encyclical of Pope Pius XII Proclaiming a Marian Year*; (09 September 1953).

⁹¹ John XXIII. *Sacerdotii Nostri Primordia, Encyclical of Pope John XXIII on St John Vianney*; (01 August, 1959).

The witness will, by words and deeds that show forth the cross and sacrifice, the κένωσις of the Lord; not in words and language alone, the eloquence of a “gong sounding,” (1 Cor 13:1)⁹² but rather in a way of life that provides a mode of witness, in which the unity of words and deeds show forth the virtues and presence of the Holy Spirit’s “spiritual power” (a link to Pius XII).

This pattern of thought was taken up and expanded in the Dogmatic Constitutions of Vatican II, *Dei Verbum* and *Lumen Gentium*⁹³ which use the phrases ‘word and deed’ or ‘deed and word’ in crucial and revealing ways and provide us with the foundational interpretation of this theme.

The phrase had been at the heart of the debate on Revelation in the preparatory stages and the public debates of the Council. As noted at the beginning of this section there are early signs in the first document of the Council, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*: “The two parts which, in a certain sense, go to make up the Mass, namely, the liturgy of the word and the Eucharistic liturgy, are so closely connected with each other that they form but one single act of worship.”(SC 56)

This idea of a close connection developed over the period of the Council and was fully expressed in the two dogmatic constitutions.

Lumen Gentium is a document which displays internal compromises with the parallel usage of more traditional formulations and elements that the next year will be extended in *Dei Verbum* and *Gaudium et Spes*, the document examined more extensively in chapter 4.

Lumen Gentium uses the phrase ‘word and deed’ once and that is in paragraph 14. Addressed to the faithful of the Church, it expresses a more ‘traditional’ emphasis on the necessity of the Church for salvation, and links this assertion to the presence of Christ in the Church and of His being the “one Mediator and the unique way of salvation.”(LG 14)⁹⁴

The Council develops this in two directions.

Firstly in respect of entry into the Church it says that it is “through baptism, as through a door, men enter the Church.”(LG 14) And secondly, the Council expresses the consequent conclusion that as baptism is the unique way of entry “whosoever, therefore, knowing that the Catholic Church was made necessary by Christ, would refuse to enter or to remain in it, could not be saved.”(LG 14)

The extension of this statement must be that those who do not know that the Church “was made necessary” are not included in the exclusion from salvation; it is only those who know, and with such full knowledge, refuse or will not remain in the Church. There is a need for knowledge and a consequent deliberate choice, to not be part of the Church that would exclude a person from being part of Christ.

⁹² Cf also Francis. Post-synodal Exhortation on the Joy of Love, *Amoris Laetitia*, 19 March 2016, AAS 108 (2016) 311-446. nn.89 ff.

⁹³ It is worth noting that these two documents are ‘dogmatic in nature’ that is binding proclamations of an Ecumenical Council. They have the strongest teaching authority in the documents of the Church’s teaching office. Secondly, they were almost universally acclaimed by the assembled Council. The voting shows for *Lumen Gentium*: a vote of 2,151 bishops approving the document and 5 opposed and for *Dei Verbum* 2,344 bishops approving to 6 opposed. These are neither accidental nor debateable teachings of the Church.

⁹⁴ A description used by *Lumen Gentium* six times.

The action of the incorporation of a person into the Church is then described as an action of the 'Spirit of Christ' and the elements that aid in this incorporation into the Body of Christ are the apostolic guidance and teaching of the "Pontiff and bishops"; the "profession of faith, the sacraments, ecclesiastical government and communion."

Homily, Creed, sacrament and communion!

The Council then makes a specific demand on those who are baptised and members of the Church.

Membership of the Body of Christ is not to be an empty membership, it cannot be summarised as 'pay the subscription, make a verbal pledge and then have nothing to do with the deeds of the Gospel'. No the 'hard' word of this document, for the faithful, is the call to "persevere in charity." (LG 14) ⁹⁵This is clarified by the Council as saying that the members of the Church are not members "only in a "bodily manner" and not "in his heart."" (LG 14 referencing Rom. 8:10-11) Membership is not an empty word or a question of enforced compliance; rather it involves an active response, in charity; a movement of the heart, love and commitment.

Then comes one of the most demanding statements of the whole Council.

The faithful, the baptised, are called to respond to the free gift, the grace of life in Christ "in thought, word and deed." There is no word alone, no thought alone, and no deed alone! The baptised are called to respond in all they think, in all they say, and to find a unity between what is professed and what is done. There is to be an inner unity. Formation is to be an all embracing enterprise, and must be both formative of understanding and of what is said and done.

But it is not just to be a choice of lifestyle. The Council says that salvation is contained in the response and the level of expectation is higher of those who 'are in the know'. If the faithful fail to respond: "Not only shall they not be saved but they will be the more severely judged."⁹⁶

A year after the publication of *Lumen Gentium* the second Dogmatic Constitution of the Council, *Dei Verbum* was published and three weeks later the Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*.

It is immediately obvious that in *Dei Verbum* there is a different tone and dynamic. The document has been compared to *Dei Filius*, the Dogmatic Constitution on Catholic Faith, of Vatican I⁹⁷, the antecedent dogmatic statement on the subject of revelation and they have been seen as "much different". *Dei Verbum's* account of God's revelation has been described as "in its *ample content* is soteriologically focused on God-with-us, in Christ, to liberate human beings and lead them into communion with himself."⁹⁸ The Constitution has a central focus on the apostolic witness which is creative of community, the union of believers with the Father and the Son; and the revelation of God

⁹⁵ 'Perseverance' is used six times in *Lumen Gentium* as well; "persevering in one mind in prayer" (LG 59); "persevering in prayer and praise of God" (LG 10); "persevering in charity" (LG 14); "persevering in evangelical counsels" (LG 47) and "persevering, with Mary, to stand at the foot of her son's cross" (LG 58). It is important to note that in none of these is the person persevering alone, as an individual; in all they are in company with other believers.

⁹⁶*Lumen Gentium: Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*. n.14; (21 Nov. 1964). Here referencing the Council of Trent: Dieitur. Sancta (catholica apostolica) Romana Ecclesia: in Prof. fidei Trid., 1. c. et Concl. Vat. I, Sess. III, Const. dogm. de fide cath.: Denz. 1782 (3001).

⁹⁷ *Dei Filius: The Dogmatic Constitution on the Catholic Faith*, First Vatican Council, (April 24, 1870).

⁹⁸ Wicks, Jared, S.J. "Vatican II on Revelation - From behind the Scenes," *Theological Studies*71 (2010) p.640.

which occurs in the combination of “deeds and words”. *Dei Verbum* has an “evangelical content in its opening six paragraphs” and places the gospel as foundational to “all church ministries and apostolates.”⁹⁹

Dei Verbum is seen as so foundational that it has been described as the “first” among the documents of Vatican II, a “text that starts with “hearing the word of God reverently and proclaiming it confidently...” and ends with “the word of God...stands forever.”¹⁰⁰

The importance of the Constitution can be seen in paragraph 2 which is placed here in full. The same form and tone is used in *the Catechism of the Catholic Church* at paragraph 50 when it discusses revelation.

“In His goodness and wisdom God chose to reveal Himself and to make known to us the hidden purpose of His will (see Eph. 1:9) by which through Christ, the Word made flesh, man might in the Holy Spirit have access to the Father and come to share in the divine nature (see Eph. 2:18; 2 Peter 1:4). Through this revelation, therefore, the invisible God (see Col. 1:15, 1 Tim. 1:17) out of the abundance of His love speaks to men as friends (see Ex. 33:11; John 15:14-15) and lives among them (see Bar. 3:38), so that He may invite and take them into fellowship with Himself. This plan of revelation is realized by *deeds and words* having an inner unity: the deeds wrought by God in the history of salvation manifest and confirm the teaching and realities signified by the words, while the words proclaim the deeds and clarify the mystery contained in them. By this revelation then, the deepest truth about God and the salvation of man shines out for our sake in Christ, who is both the mediator and the fullness of all revelation.”¹⁰¹(DV 2)

There is a universality in this statement. The relationship described is between God and all people, and is the fruit of God’s goodness and wisdom; it is God’s choice of self-revelation, fully and completely in Christ, through the action of the Holy Spirit, and it leads to *humanity* having access and sharing in the very nature of God.

Daley says that in *Dei Verbum* there is an “encouragement to read Scripture within the human contexts and the literary forms in which it was originally composed;” and an “attempt to integrate the text of scripture into the larger context of the church’s tradition of interpretation, preaching, teaching, and worship as a single continuous and living expression of God’s self-disclosure in the fleshy terms of human history.”¹⁰²

Dei Verbum unveils the manner in which “the Church teaches us to know and speak of God, and how the Church comes to certainty about what it will teach and how it will teach it.”¹⁰³

At its core the approach is founded upon the understanding that the Church acknowledges “the legitimacy of a more historically conscious, spiritually and liturgically oriented, and existentially

⁹⁹ Wicks, Jared, S.J. Op.cit.p.641.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ A direct reference noted by the Council to the cf. Council of Trent, loc. cit.; First Vatican Council, session III, Dogmatic Constitution on the Catholic Faith, Chap. 2, “*On revelation:*” Denzinger 1787 (3005).

¹⁰² Daley, Brian E., SJ. “Knowing God in History and in the Church: *Dei Verbum* and ‘Nouvelle Theologie,’” *Ressourcement: A Movement for Renewal in Twentieth-century Catholic Theology*. Ed. Gabriel Flynn and Paul D. Murray, (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2012) p. 334.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

focused style of thought,"¹⁰⁴ and it is by the use of such a wide and interrelated approach that the realization of God's plan of revelation, will be seen when 'deeds and words' achieve an inner unity!

This interrelationship and the unity of 'deeds and words', following Chenu, Congar, de Lubac and Daniélou offers a new way of reading theological texts, and therefore of gathering the material for forming communities and individuals in the Christian life.

It is essential that those writing "theology needed to read not just texts concerning the 'great ideas' of the dogmatic tradition, but also liturgical and spiritual texts, and must give primacy of place to the sacred text of scripture, and its tradition of interpretation,"¹⁰⁵ and these texts and sources must be read with "a sense of each text's historical context, within a theological tradition that is still underway, still seeking a deeper understanding,"¹⁰⁶ and this will leave " 'the church' with a conscious awareness of the rootedness of theology in the life of the community as Christ's Body, sent under the Apostles and their successors to be salt of the earth and light of the world."¹⁰⁷

Daley reinforces this understanding by quoting the beautiful passage from de Lubac in *Catholicism*: "in the interpretation of the Old Testament the aspect of historical fulfilment and that of the social community, two aspects that practically coincide, are of prime importance ... the law of 'spiritual intelligence' is the very law of all spirituality, which is never authentic and trustworthy save only as it is not an individualist way, but a spiritualisation of the liturgy - an application, that is, to the life of the soul of the church's life rhythm. For one and the same essential mystery permeates the whole of Scripture and Liturgy, apart from which there is no participation in the mystery of God."¹⁰⁸

A detailed examination of *Dei Verbum* "offers a view of God's self-disclosure in history, and of human speech and thought about God, which in many ways realises the desire of the 'new' theologians."¹⁰⁹ It is the understanding that "revelation ...is an activity of the ever-mysterious and ever-present God in human history, rather than a body of information to be studied."¹¹⁰

This is summarised in the phrase already noted in *Dei Verbum*: the "plan of revelation is realized by deeds and words having an inner unity," (DV 2) and this impacts on the understanding of the place of Scripture and how it is to be used. As Daley says "the truth communicated in Scripture is the truth God wished to reveal in this human, historical way, for "the sake of our salvation." (DV 11) "Scripture, like the Eucharist, is at heart sacramental; it invites us to share God's life, as the written, 'fleshy' part of a much wider tradition of teaching and interpretation realised continually at the heart of the church, which is itself Christ's body."¹¹¹

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Daley, Brian E., S.J. Op.cit. p.341.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Daley, Brian E., and S.J.Op.cit.p.339 quoting: Lubac, Henri De. *Catholicisme; Les Aspects Sociaux Du Dogme*. Paris: Éditions Du Cerf, 1947. English Translation *Catholicism: Christ and the Common Destiny of Man* trans. Lancelot C. Sheppard and Elizabeth Englund, (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1988) p.215.

¹⁰⁹ Daley, Brian E., S.J. Op.cit.p.347.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Daley, Brian E., S.J. Op.cit.p.350-51.

Dei Verbum teaches Christians “to think by the logic of signs once again, as well as by the logic of deduction... to read Scripture and human history”¹¹² as the sources of understanding.

This is crucial; there are two sources of revelation, and both are using the language of ‘sign’, one in words and the other in deeds and the fruit of those deeds. Both need these signs to be interpreted as ‘signs’ and to be applied to human life and history.

However in the first place it is the deeds wrought by God in salvation history that “manifest and confirm the teaching and realities” (DV 2) which are “signified by the words” and then following on, not as a sequential secondary element, but as the completion of the inner unity, “the words proclaim the deeds and clarify the mystery contained in them.”(DV 2) The starting point is the experience of ‘life in God’ and the *sitz-in-Leben* of that encounter is daily life and communal interaction, and it is from this starting point that words are used to express the significance embodied in these deeds, or to proclaim / witness to the life and love contained in the deeds experienced. The whole exercise is focused on giving clear expression to the mystery, which is known, proclaimed and shepherded in the community, the collective, the Church.

The consequence of this is that the fullness of life is not to be identified by teaching alone, nor by compliance, as we have already seen in *Lumen Gentium*, rather it is the fruit of ‘doing’ and then reflecting on the experience and clarifying, enlightening and articulating the mystery revealed in that encounter with the light of the Word. It is in this unified process that God is revealed.

Now where is the source of this interpretation?

The Christian revelation is clear: It is NOT primarily in a book or a law!

Dei Verbum says the words are: “Set forth and shows its power in a most excellent way in the writings of the New Testament,” (DV 17) but the writings have been preserved to reveal something much more profound. The entry into the complexity of human existence of “the Word ... made flesh and dwelt among us in His fullness of graces and truth (see John 1:14). Christ (who) established the kingdom of God on earth, (who)manifested His Father and Himself by *deeds and words*, and completed His work by His death, resurrection and glorious Ascension and by the sending of the Holy Spirit.”(DV 17)

This revelation / manifestation is NOT limited to believers, it is universal. The Council says “He having been lifted up from the earth, He draws all men to Himself (see John 12:32, Greek text), He who alone has the words of eternal life (see John 6:68). This mystery had not been manifested to other generations as it was now revealed to His holy Apostles and prophets in the Holy Spirit (see Eph. 3:4-6, Greek text), so that they might preach the Gospel, stir up faith in Jesus, Christ and Lord, and gather together the Church. Now the writings of the New Testament stand as a perpetual and divine witness to these realities.”(DV 17)

The words of scripture are a witness to a Person and to the events and deeds of His life, a life full of meaning and which reveal the covenantal God.¹¹³

¹¹² Ibid.

Dei Verbum unveils a pattern which is to be seen in all the encounters of salvation history, and fully in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, and specifically in his preaching and healing and his manner of being. What is revealed is that it is in the combined words and deeds of forgiveness, healing, acceptance, love of the outcast and the foreigner; in the deeds and words of the one willing to die for truth and out of love; in the one who preaches and lives a kingdom with a specific content, not of dominance but of service, not of privilege but of identification with the stranger and the poor; not of opulence and riches, but of feeding, visiting, and setting people free from all demons and exclusions; that the mystery is made known.

So what is seen to this point?

The understanding of revelation, in the teaching of the Church has shown a clear development in the twentieth century, and it is seen in the concept of the revelatory nature of the unity of 'word and deed'.

This understanding of Revelation also has a framework and content:

Firstly, it is Christological; it is in Christ, through the Church, that the loving plan and mind of God has been revealed, in the midst of a sad, divided and confused world.

Secondly, this revelation is understood as being a free, gratuitous and loving gift of God, revealed in Christ and the ongoing ministry of the Church. The truth of the "transcendent God,-omnipotent, most wise, most loving"¹¹⁴is revealed here and has been given to all humans from the beginning, and at the same time is a revelation not only of God but of the truth about humanity.

Thirdly, this revelation occurs in two ways, expressed as the "Deeds and words" of God. These 'word and deeds' are vehicles to an understanding that it is in the unity of "deeds and words" that God's loving plan is revealed.

Fourthly, there is a response called for to this revelation and the Council while holding a hope for an explicit membership of Christ, is aware that there are those who have never heard the Word, and yet share in the universal salvific will of God. At the same time the Christocentric nature of God's revelation is reinforced and made central to human history and the relationship of the covenant between God and humanity is underlined.

This understanding is made explicit in the two Dogmatic Constitutions however it is important to underline that it is foundational to the understanding of the Council as a whole, as when in its first document, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, the Council specifically notes that the purpose of writing on the liturgy was to "to strengthen whatever can help to call the whole of mankind into the household of the Church" (SC 1) and through the liturgy to give life to the presence of "God who "wills that *all* men be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth." (1 Tim. 2:4)" (SC 5)

The method of this revelation, as understood by the Dogmatic Constitutions, lies in the unity of Deed and Word, primarily in Christ and the ministry of the Church.

¹¹³ This pattern, based on the contributions of Josef Ratzinger in his role as advisor to Cardinal Frings and the work of Pieter Smulders and the later input of Jean Daniélou and Gabriel Garrone is very well outlined in Wicks, Jared, S.J. Op.cit.pp.640-645.

¹¹⁴ Wicks, Jared, S.J. Op.cit.p.648.

Where is the door, the point of entry into this revelation?

This is developed in the next source, *the Catechism of the Catholic Church*¹¹⁵, when it discusses the question of revelation at paragraph 50 following.

The *Catechism* says that there are two sources of this revelation.

Firstly it says “by natural reason man can know God with certainty, on the basis of his works.”(CCC 50)

And secondly, not in importance but purely in order, it says “but there is another order of knowledge, which man cannot possibly arrive at by his own powers: the order of divine Revelation.”(CCC 50)

Note that the first source of revelation is seen to be the works of God, in other words God’s *deeds* in creation and salvation history and the “ways of approaching God from creation have a twofold point of departure: the physical world, and the human person.”(CCC 31)

The ‘ways’ seen as originating from the physical world are seen by the *Catechism* as “starting from movement, becoming, contingency, and the world’s order and beauty.”(CCC 32)

And those originating from the human person the *Catechism* sees in humanity’s “openness to truth and beauty, his sense of moral goodness, his freedom and the voice of his conscience, with his longings for the infinite and for happiness.”(CCC33)

All of these are seen as the ‘deeds’ or ‘works’ of God and are to be explored and articulated by the application of “natural reason” through which “man can know God with certainty, on the basis of his works.”(CCC 50)

The deeds of God, through the use of words arising from reflection and the resultant articulation, reveal God.

The *Catechism* then describes the second source of revelation, as being in “another order of knowledge,” (CCC 50) which humanity “cannot possibly arrive at by his/our own powers: the order of divine Revelation.”(CCC 50)

This revelation has its origin in the free decision of God to reveal God’s self out of “loving goodness” and it is revealed in “The Word” made flesh in God’s “sending us his beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit.”(CCC 50) This revelation, the incarnation of the Word, the λόγος of John’s gospel, is always, in the teaching of the Church, revealed fully in a specific form, the “Paschal Mystery”; that is in the unity of the words and deeds of Jesus of Nazareth, revealed fully in his life, death and resurrection.

There is a circular inclusion here, and it revolves around the two different starting points of revelation, but both are required to complete the other.

¹¹⁵ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2nd Ed. (English translation by various publishers.) the 2nd Latin edition was promulgated on August 15th, 1997, by Pope John Paul II in the apostolic letter *Laetamur Magnopere* (1st Ed., promulgated October 11, 1992.)

One starts with the deeds of God as seen and understood through human reason. These deeds are then reflected on by humanity as a whole, because of the human need for explanation in words of enlightenment and expression.

The other starts with the free loving gift of God revealed to those who have responded in faith to the gift /grace, who is God's Word made flesh. It is in the Word incarnate, and the unity of the words and deeds of Jesus the Christ that God's very presence is revealed. To those who live in this mystery there is then the call to not just receive this revelation as words, but rather to incarnate the Word in their lives, in the unity of their own words and deeds. What has been heard must be proclaimed, (Mtt 10:27; 1 Jn 1:3), in words, but just as importantly in deeds. It is here that God will be revealed in the world. This is what the Christian community is forming people in when they come to the community, and this is the commitment that the baptised have made.

The process of revelation is therefore an ongoing process, in Christ, with Christ and through Christ; but the consequence of this is that it is also a gradual revelation, both of that which is already seen, but also of that which is being revealed because it is a living relationship and involves the full unfolding of the mystery of God in the world. This revelation occurs through the unity of the deeds and words of the followers of Christ, in the daily, real issues of life; and is grounded in the reality of their being one in Christ by the gift of faith and baptism. It already is, and yet what it is to be is yet to be revealed. "We are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is."(1 Jn 3:2)

There is therefore both a realised and an expectant eschatology involved here, and this is the ongoing tension of life in the Church.

This is summarised beautifully in paragraph 53 of the Catechism: "The divine plan of Revelation is realized simultaneously "by deeds and words which are intrinsically bound up with each other and shed light on each another. It involves a specific divine pedagogy: God communicates himself to man gradually. He prepares him to welcome by stages the supernatural Revelation that is to culminate in the person and mission of the incarnate Word, Jesus Christ."(CCC 53)

In life some start by the reflection upon the revelation available through the deep rational exploration of the deeds of God: the world and the human person; others start from the gift of faith; but both will end up in the same place, an encounter with the fullness of humanity and life in God, revealed in the unity of the words and deeds of Jesus of Nazareth, the WORD made Flesh. Emmanuel, God among us.

The insights of these major teaching documents of the Church have refinements which have been explored in the use of the phrase "word and deed" in the subsequent magisterial teaching.

Firstly, "Where is this revelation to take place?"

John Paul II said revelation is not to be confined to ecclesial or liturgical settings. Rather it occurs in the lives of lay people, as they “bear witness” by the “consistency between your conduct and your faith”¹¹⁶ and this “within the context of your homes, neighbourhood, towns and cities.”¹¹⁷

This occurs by the proclamation of Christ as the light of your life in “word and deed.”¹¹⁸ And it is enabled and characterised by “the specific task of renewing the temporal order, by permeating it with the spirit of the Gospel.”¹¹⁹

But for John Paul II as for Pius X and XII and the Council, this is not a utopian vision.

Using the example of Mary and the imperatives that arise from the call to live in service of all and out of love for all, John Paul II says this is happening “In a world lacerated by sufferings, contradictions, selfishness and violence.”¹²⁰

It is here that the reality of revelation will take place; again with the familiar motif, it is when the believer “takes on the commitment to be a witness to the risen Christ in word and deed.”¹²¹

These themes were taken up by Benedict XVI.

In building up communion with Christ who is the “unfailing source of every element of ecclesial life”¹²² there is firstly a need for “communion among all the faithful”¹²³ and a “commitment to proclaiming and witnessing to the Gospel”¹²⁴ and this is characterised by “the ardour of love for all, especially the poorest and lowliest.”¹²⁵

And this happens when “God's people are truly prepared to witness by word and deed to the authentic teaching of the Gospel,”¹²⁶ and this is not just a call to the laity. Benedict XVI, when speaking about the formation of candidates for orders, says that the task is “helping them manifest in word and deed the peace and joy of our Lord and Saviour.”¹²⁷

The unity of words or belief; and deeds or actions; is central to the proclamation and revelation of the Gospel.

¹¹⁶ John Paul II. *Celebration of the Word with Priests, Religious and Laity*. St Mary's Cathedral, Halifax. (13 Sept. 1984) AAS 77 (1985) 406-411.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ John Paul II. *Message for the VI World Day of the Sick*, 11 February 1998, *Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II, vol XXII/I 1998*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Roma, (2000) pp. 330-332.n.6.

¹²¹ John Paul II. Address to the Meeting of the Assembly of Organizations for Aid to the Eastern Churches (ROACO), 19 July 1997, *Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II, vol XX/I, 1997*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Roma, (1999) pp. 1538-1542.

¹²² Benedict XVI. “Address to the Bishops of South Africa, Botswana, Swaziland, Namibia and Lesotho on their “Ad limina apostolorum” visit,” 10 June 2005, *Insegnamenti di Benedetto XVI, vol I 2005*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Roma, (2006) pp. 218-220.n.2.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Benedict XVI. *Address to the bishops of South Africa, Botswana, Swaziland, Namibia and Lesotho, on their “ad limina apostolorum” visit*, op.cit. n.3.

The partnership of word and deed, and the element of revelation in and through human reason, can become blurred if it only focuses on the fullness and beauty of the mystery and 'contains' this in the proclamation of the Word and teaching of the Church. This has a direct and limiting impact on the Church's self-understanding and ministry.

However when revelation is limited to being understood as occurring in and through the limited parameters of the actions of the Church and her ministry there is a blindness to the wisdom contained in the fullness of the phrase "deed and word" and the 'silent contemplation' of the eternal Word which leads to a profound awareness "of the plan of salvation that God is accomplishing throughout our history by word and deed."¹²⁸

Benedict XVI, when outlining that the plan of salvation happens by word and deed, makes the link to its revelatory nature by referencing the phrase in *Dei Verbum* 2 we found to be foundational. He says: "As the Second Vatican Council reminds us, divine revelation is fulfilled by "deeds and words having an inner unity: the deeds wrought by God in the history of salvation manifest and confirm the teaching and realities signified by the words, while the words proclaim the deeds and clarify the mystery contained in them" (*Dei Verbum*, 2). This plan of salvation culminates in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, the mediator and the fullness of all revelation."¹²⁹

There is not one without the other. Benedict makes the direct link that the fullness of revelation is in the words and deeds of Jesus of Nazareth, and that this necessarily incorporates the modality of the way of the Cross, and he emphasises that it is the mystery of the cross that makes peace and justice possible. This is going to be reflected in the phrase used in the Preface, immediately before the incorporation of the community into the Paschal Mystery of the Eucharistic Prayer: "it is indeed "right and just".

Benedict then continues to explore the mystery of Christ as the fullness of God's revelation.

The danger lies in not seeing the subtlety of Benedict's teaching and thinking that he is 'only' speaking of the Word revealed in Christ.

Benedict says that disciples are called to be heralds of the mystery in that they are called to "bring peace to the restless human heart" and this can only occur by walking with the one who encases that heart, and seeing the reality of their lives. Benedict says: "The Church's mission springs from this mystery; and it is this mystery which impels Christians to become heralds of hope and salvation, witnesses of that love which promotes human dignity and builds justice and peace."¹³⁰

During the 1990s there were also a series of publications from the Pontifical Commission for Christian Unity, which clarify the meaning of the phrase "word and deed". They are of import as they bring this phrase to the processes of ecumenical dialogue and reinforce the centrality of the Word in its relationship to Christian action and ethics.

¹²⁸ Benedict XVI. Address on the 46th world communications day, *Silence and Word: Path of Evangelization*, 24 January 2012, *Insegnamenti di Benedetto XVI, vol VIII/I 2012*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Roma, (2012) pp. 106-110.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

In reflecting on the role of the apostle, that is leadership in the Christian community, there is a very strong statement on the implications of the unity of word and deed:

The statement says, in what would be universally held among Christian denominations in respect of the one who preaches, there is to be a reinforcing of the primacy of Scripture and its pre-eminent place in the life of the Church. The starting point is in Scripture itself and: “the apostles are described as ‘servants of the Word’ (Acts 6:4; cf. Lk 1:2)”¹³¹

The meaning of this is then explored: “This phrase holds a rich meaning, conveying all that is said in Scripture about God’s action through his Word in creation and in his saving purpose in history. What he says, he does. What he does makes him known to us. There is solidarity between word and deed. This complete interdependence of word and deed in God’s action for us culminates in the coming of the Person who, in his entire being, is the Word of God.”¹³²

There is a complete solidarity, a unity between the word and deed; there cannot be one without the other. God’s self is revealed both in creation and history and ultimately and completely in the words and deeds of a person, the one who is the Word of God.

This is then enriched by a directly linking the insight to the person of Jesus: “‘Service of the Word’ implies the service of a living Person, whose words are always fruitful and whose deeds make him known. Supremely in Christ, words and actions are one. Through the Spirit these deeds and words culminate in the living presence of Jesus in us. It is in this context that the sermon and the sacrament must be understood.”¹³³

These reflections have led the inquiry to the body gathered, the Church and to the liturgy, the ‘sermon and the sacrament’, and the abiding, living presence of Jesus in the Church. Here is the heart of the liturgical reform; it is the unity of the words and actions of Jesus which are revealed in the unity of the words and deeds of the faithful, in the liturgy.

The call is to live, to act, to decide and to be formed in community or communion and the question is :where is the revelation going to continue? This is the subject of another report of the Pontifical Council. “It is in the ongoing life of the Church. When there is faithful witness to Jesus Christ, people hear through the words of witness, the Word of God and know through deeds of love the God of love. To such witness in word and deed all the faithful are called, but not in isolation from each other. To be ‘in Christ’ is already to belong not only to him but also to the whole company of believers that lives by his grace. From the beginning of his ministry Jesus called others to be with him in order to embody God’s loving purpose for the world. So Paul, after the resurrection, was able to call the Church both the body of Christ and the community of the Holy Spirit.”¹³⁴

This is clearly of importance ecumenically, (and one would suggest even between congregations, orders and parishes within the Church community) as the Pontifical Council continues: “Christian communion as *Koinonía* necessarily includes communion in mission. It is communion with God, who

¹³¹ *The Apostolic Tradition*, A report of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, (Singapore 1991) n.55.

¹³² *Ibid.*

¹³³ *Ibid.*

¹³⁴ *The Word of Life*, a Statement on Revelation and Faith, a Report of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (Rio de Janeiro, 1996) n.122.

sent his Son to reconcile the world and sent his Spirit to restore in human beings the image of God. Communion in mission is at the same time the fellowship of those who are sent by their risen Lord and who are empowered by his Spirit to be witnesses of God's love and peace throughout the world. Our proclaiming of God's love includes witness of word and deed, by preaching and serving, by struggling for justice and suffering with the oppressed.¹³⁵

The very nature of the Church gathered for liturgy, therefore calls for an ethical response and orientation, that impacts on all formation and decision making and calls for communion within, and commitment to, a common Mission; to be witnesses of love and peace, justice and suffering, preaching and serving and primarily with the oppressed!

The directional nature of the response to the revelation in word and deed, toward the oppressed was emphasised by Francis as he commenced his ministry as Bishop of Rome "the episcopal ministry and all ministries are certainly for the development of the Christian community, but they are also at the service of communion among the Churches for the evangelizing mission. In this context, I invite you to pay special attention to the young Churches, which all too often work in an atmosphere of difficulty, discrimination and even persecution, so that you may support them and help them to witness to the Gospel with word and deed."¹³⁶

The unity of the Church, and one of the central foci of episcopal ministry and ecumenical mission, is to identify those in difficulty and aid them, and in all situations and commitments to witness not just in statements but in the unity of word and deed.

Francis has applied the same concepts to the areas of personal and medical ethics, but in doing so linked them back to the process of revelation, in and through human reason, reflected in the *Catechism* statement. The call to care for life, 'by word and deed' is not just a matter of faith, but of reason: "Dear friends and physicians, you are called to care for life in its initial stage; remind everyone, by word and deed, that this is sacred — at each phase and at every age — that it is always valuable. And not as a matter of faith — no, no — but of reason, as a matter of science!"¹³⁷

Francis expanded on these themes in another address to Catholic Doctors. He said that it is in the day to day, in the ordinary place of practice that the core elements of ethics as a witness to faith are incarnated. "Your work seeks to bear witness by word and deed that human life is always sacred, valuable and sacrosanct. As such, it must be loved, defended and cared for. Your professionalism, enriched with the spirit of faith, is a further reason to collaborate with those — even from different religious perspectives or thought — who recognize the dignity of the human person as a criterion for their activities."¹³⁸

The faith commitment of the Doctor becomes manifest in actions of love, defence, care, collaboration, and recognition. These are all verbs, and witness to an element beyond pure word and belief.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Francis, Address to the meeting of the Pontifical Mission Societies, 17 May 2013, AAS 105/6 (June 2013) 467-469.

¹³⁷ Francis. Address to The meeting organized by the International Federation of Catholic Medical Associations, Clementine Hall, Rome (20 Sept. 2013).

¹³⁸ Francis. Address to the Italian Catholic Physicians Association, 15 November 2014, *Insegnamenti di Francesco*, vol II/2 2014, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Roma, (2016) pp. 537-539.

Francis then brought all this to a formal teaching in his *Apostolic Exhortation Evangelii Gaudium: on the Proclamation of the Gospel in Today's World*.¹³⁹

The very name tells us this is a response to *Gaudium et Spes*, the Constitution on the role of the church in the Modern /today's world; and it explores themes that are explored in detail in the chapter to follow.

Francis sees that there is no distinction between internal union and the going forth in mission: "communion and mission are profoundly interconnected." (EG 23) He then proceeds to explain how this is to be lived. In the central passage of the document when speaking of 'word and deed,' the revelatory moment, he shows that revelation happens in a certain pattern, order and 'modality'.

Firstly there is the call to take the message of the Gospel "to all: to all places, on all occasions, without hesitation, reluctance or fear. The joy of the Gospel is for all people: no one can be excluded."(EG 23)

Secondly, this is done in a community of disciples and the disciples are proactive and take the initiative in a spirit of joy, because they are loved: "The Church which "goes forth" is a community of missionary disciples who take the first step, who are involved and supportive, who bear fruit and rejoice. An evangelizing community knows that the Lord has taken the initiative, he has loved us first (cf. 1 Jn 4:19), and therefore we can move forward, boldly take the initiative, go out to others, seek those who have fallen away, stand at the crossroads and welcome the outcast. "(EG 24)

Thirdly, the first step to be taken is one of involvement and mercy, the washing of feet, kneeling and loving. And this is the revelatory phrase, it reveals the heart of Christian morality, and formation and the commitment that believers are committing to, but more by the use of the phrase "word and deed" Francis is telling the Church that he sees this as revelatory of God's presence: "An evangelizing community gets involved by word and deed in people's daily lives; it bridges distances, it is willing to abase itself if necessary and it embraces human life, touching the suffering flesh of Christ in others."(EG 24)

This is the origin of what has become a motif of Francis' ministry, "Evangelizers thus take on the "smell of the sheep" and the sheep are willing to hear their voice."(EG 24)

Fourthly, this communal action is characterised by the commitment of the community to a long term, gradual process: "An evangelizing community is also supportive, standing by people at every step of the way, no matter how difficult or lengthy this may prove to be."(EG 24)

Ministry is to be characterised by patience, endurance and the gift of time. Francis also outlines an aspect of expectation: this gradual and patient witness is expecting 'fruit'; he describes it as the community who "cares for the grain and does not grow impatient at the weeds. The sower...does not grumble or overreact...finds a way to let the word take flesh in a particular situation and bear fruits of new life, however imperfect or incomplete these may appear."(EG 24)

¹³⁹ Francis, *Apostolic Exhortation on the Proclamation of the Gospel in Today's World, Evangelii Gaudium*, November 24 2013, AAS 105 (2013) 1019-1137.

And fifthly the manner of this companionship is that of the Master, “the disciple is ready to put his or her whole life on the line, even to accepting martyrdom, in bearing witness to Jesus Christ.”(EG 24)

And lastly the characteristic of all this says Francis is joy, “finally an evangelizing community is filled with joy; it knows how to rejoice always. It celebrates every small victory, every step forward in the work of evangelization.”(EG 24)

Having outlined the rich tapestry of elements that are involved the climax of this paragraph says: “Evangelization with joy becomes beauty in the liturgy, as part of our daily concern to spread goodness. The Church evangelizes and is herself evangelized through the beauty of the liturgy, which is both a celebration of the task of evangelization and the source of her renewed self-giving.”(EG 24)

This paragraph carries a succinct link between the structure and purpose of the liturgy, the revelatory nature of word and deed, and the sources of formation for ethical living in community!

1.5. Dialogue as a mode of encounter.

The Pontifical Commission's document just outlined, as it develops the concept of 'word and deed', uses a single word to describe the process involved, it is 'dialogue.'

This concept has been, over the last 50 years, at the heart of how the phrase 'word and deed' is to be analysed, and the direction for action discerned.

As Joseph O'Malley S.J. said in his keynote conference address at Georgetown University's conference on *Vatican II after Fifty Years*: "Only in the mid-20th century did dialogue emerge as an acceptable form of religious discourse."¹⁴⁰

O'Malley saw this as being the fruit of the pluralism that arose from World War 2 and the need to re-examine "cultural prejudices" of all kinds."¹⁴¹

He observes that in the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium* there was a deliberate movement from: "Words of alienation and condemnation. The church was developing a new language: friendship, brotherhood, sisterhood, and conscience, the dignity of every person, collegiality, reconciliation, and mutuality. Dialogue is the word that captures their spirit. Vatican II represents a language reversal- from monologue to dialogue- in the history of the Church."¹⁴²

The importance of the concept of dialogue can be seen in the polemic that it has aroused. The very use of this term raises tension and it has emerged as a key concept in the discussion of the genuine interpretation of the documents of Vatican II and the evaluation of the changes that emerged from the Council. Some use 'dialogue' as a distinctive tool of interpretation and others see it as a symbol of weakness or concern.

Examples of the impact of this discussion can be found regularly in the blogosphere:¹⁴³"Dialogue, dialogue, dialogue....for many Catholics today, however, the very word dialogue doesn't enjoy the best of connotations. When some hear this phrase, it immediately conjures up memories of theologians of the 70s, 80s, and 90s who apparently imagined that dialogue implied watering down and even rejecting key Catholic truth claims."¹⁴⁴

And after stating that the work of Karl Rahner is in the category that "is surely not what the Church wants to result from dialogue"¹⁴⁵, the writer finishes: "The Catholic way of dialogue has never implied abandoning key tenets of Catholic faith and morals. The objective is to listen to and talk with others in order to promote the truth that Catholics believe is definitively revealed by Christ and entrusted to his Church."¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁰ Ryan, Thomas. "Summary of Interventions." *Proc. of Vatican II after Fifty Years: Dialogue and Catholic Identity*, Georgetown University, Washington DC.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Gregg, Samuel. "Pope Francis and the Catholic Way of Dialogue." *Crisis Magazine* (14 Aug. 2013).

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

The intervention closes with the statement: “there are dangers in any dialogue. If, however, the true end of dialogue is kept in mind and we have faith in the truth of Catholicism, we surely have nothing to fear.”¹⁴⁷

50 years after the Council, in certain circles, the concept of ‘dialogue’ is still being used to describe a form of encounter which presupposes that the fullness of the expression of truth is possessed by a single group or person, and is to be expressed in a single philosophical, theological, linguistic or cultural framework. Often the same people reveal a presupposition, when analysing the encounter of the Church with those around her, that when listening or talking to and with the other, the Church’s role is to promote a truth already possessed.

Is this the understanding of dialogue which was placed before the Church at the Council?

To come to an understanding of “dialogue” there is a necessity to start with a timeline of important events that impact on the development of this concept in Vatican II.

With the death of John XXIII, Giovanni Cardinal Montini was elected Pope on the 21st of June 1963.

Sacrosanctum Concilium was promulgated on 04th December 1963 and in this *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* there is no use of the phrase ‘dialogue’.

On August 6th 1964 Paul VI published his first encyclical, *Ecclesiam Suam*¹⁴⁸(ECS), with the expressed intention of seeking a dialogue with the modern world. He says: “how vital it is for the world, and how greatly desired by the Catholic Church, that the two should meet together, and get to know and love one another.” (ECS 3) In this encyclical Paul VI uses the word ‘dialogue’ 81 times.

Three months later, on 21st November 1964, the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium* was promulgated, and uses the term once, and as will be seen in a ‘traditional’ approach.

One year and three months later on the 28th of October 1965 *Nostra Aetate* is promulgated and on the 07th of December 1965, the last day of the Council, *Gaudium et Spes*. *Nostra Aetate* uses the phrase twice in five short paragraphs, but lays out elements of structure that reflect closely Paul VI’s understanding in *Ecclesiam Suam* and *Gaudium et Spes* uses it twelve times.

1.5.1. Ecclesiam Suam

Paul VI provided a framework for the use of the phrase ‘dialogue’ and it is the starting point for examining each of these contributions.

Paul VI opens *Ecclesiam Suam* by saying that to open an interface with the modern world is “difficult” and therefore he left the detail of such for the “Council” to explore. This is the origin of the structure and format of *Gaudium et Spes*.

Paul VI sets the scene by linking his message to that of Pius XII who in his encounters during the 1950s started with the premise of a gap between divine and human wisdom. (ES 68) Paul VI says that it is important to maintain the understanding that the Church is bringing a message to any

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Paul VI, Encyclical Letter on the Church, *Ecclesiam Suam*, 06 August 1964, AAS 56 (1964) 609-659.

conversations with the modern world and has a message to give. He places this within the framework of what he calls “the dialogue of salvation” (ECS 69, 70-75.)

Paul VI shows that the central mysteries of the Christian faith are all dialogical. Prayer is a dialogue, the incarnation was a dialogue, the history of salvation is a dialogue, Christ’s way of conversation was a dialogue; and Paul VI believes that this leads to the imperative that the Church initiates dialogue with humanity as “God took the initiative in the dialogue of Salvation.” (ECS 72). The foundation of dialogue, therefore, is that it “springs from the goodness and love of God;” (ECS 73) is not dependent on the merits of the person dialoguing with God; and as it is “an appeal of love”, divine communication cannot have within it any coercion, rather it is to be accessible to all and therefore universal. (ECS 75-76) Paul VI also notes that the process of dialogue is slow and develops; it starts with the small things and grows in an atmosphere of trust and friendship.

Paul VI commented on the method of dialogue. He says that there are other methods of human encounter and they include those which are the preference of the partner and they cannot be excluded; and it is on the basis of the ‘others’ preference that in all dialogue, the Church, in fact any party, must be ready to adapt to the “intelligences and circumstances of those being addressed.” Pope Paul says there is a need to adapt, with dignity and variety, to the specific needs of “children, adults and non-believers.” (ECS 78.)

Paul VI sees the Church as being the one ready and willing to adapt and take into account these intelligences, understandings and circumstances of the other. The Church doesn’t arrive expecting to dominate or with a predetermined understanding of what the response of the other should be; this is not the basis of a genuine dialogue.

This has strong implications. Paul VI outlines some of them. The Christian can possess no “bigotry, prejudice, malicious and indiscriminate hostility, and empty boastful speech;” (ECS 79) in fact Paul VI uses the word “detests” to express the response of the Christian to such elements. He also is clear that the Church, and the Christian, will not have conversion as the “immediate object of our dialogue.” (ECS 79)

Paul VI says that dialogue demands “clarity”, it needs to be “Intelligible” and it must use the “highest spiritual and mental powers.” (ECS 81/1)

Dialogue can only proceed fruitfully in a spirit of “meekness,” but coupled with “confidence;” and in a manner that is seeking the good of both parties and is therefore “built on intimacy and friendship.” (ECS 81/2-81/3) The all-encompassing nature of the disposition of the partners to a dialogue is expressed by Pope Paul, they must be “careful to make allowances for the psychological and moral circumstances of the hearer,” (ES 81/4) and to be “wedded to charity and understanding and to love.” (ECS 82)

The result of this form of encounter is that those involved in a dialogue “can complete each other.” (ECS 83)

Paul outlines the modes that the dialogue of salvation can involve. Of necessity it calls for the “adaptation of its mission for the particular age, environment, education and social condition of men’s lives;” (ECS 86) and it thrives on “friendship and most especially on service;” (ECS 87) it cannot weaken our attachment to our faith”, as it is “not about sinking differences” and as such does not

remove the call to preach and proclaim the Good News; but this proclamation Paul VI immediately links to deep ethical presuppositions when he says without dialogue “there is silence, for example, the only voice that is heard is the voice of suffering. By its suffering it becomes the mouthpiece of an oppressed and degraded society, deprived by its rulers of every spiritual right. How can a dialogue be conducted in such circumstances as these, even if we embarked upon it? It would be but “a voice crying in the wilderness.” The only witness that the Church can give is that of silence, suffering, patience, and unfailing love, and this is a voice that not even death can silence.” (ECS 103)¹⁴⁹

Paul’s call to dialogue then provides a clear goal for the process of dialogue, it is to seek peace. This peace will be achieved by identifying common ideals, named as “religious liberty, human brotherhood, education, culture, social welfare, and civic order” (ECS 108) and the fruit of dialogue will be movements of ecumenical dialogue and the aiding of all to meet “legitimate desires.” (ECS 109)

The last element to note is a link to the previous discussion on the unity of word and deed as being revelatory of God. Paul VI says that dialogue is achieved best by a “primacy of service and love” (ECS 110) and that this it is this exposition of the Word by deeds of service and love that is the pattern that is called for within the Church, but without removing the call for filial obedience.

So this is the context in which we need to read all of the consequent discussion of “dialogue,” and it will become the framework in which the structural patterns of ‘dialogue’ in the Liturgy will be interpreted.

This pattern of dialogue was expanded in *Nostra Aetate* and *Gaudium et Spes*, and in the teaching of John Paul II, so the contribution of *Lumen Gentium*, published three months after *Ecclesiam Suam*, should be read as a text which had not yet incorporated this clear direction and foundational understanding.

The concept of “dialogue” is only directly referenced once in *Lumen Gentium* and that is in the context of underpinning the clerical leadership of projects within the Church. In a paragraph which sets the relationships between members of the Church as one of obedience, it says “the laity should, as all Christians, promptly accept in Christian obedience decisions of their spiritual shepherds, since they are representatives of Christ as well as teachers and rulers in the Church.” (LG 37)

The Council uses the concept of dialogue to express the heart of this relationship. “A great many wonderful things are to be hoped for from this familiar *dialogue* between the laity and their spiritual leaders: in the laity a strengthened sense of personal responsibility; a renewed enthusiasm; a more ready application of their talents to the projects of their spiritual leaders.”(LG 37)

So a dialogical expectation has been placed before the Church, in *Lumen Gentium*, but it was interpreted as a *modus internal* to the Church.

This attitude changes quickly in the later documents of the Council, as can be seen in the development of the use of the phrase “dialogue” in *Nostra Aetate* and *Gaudium et Spes*.

¹⁴⁹ There is a powerful parallel here to the witness of meditation in the responsorial Psalm. It is the place for silent reflection on the Old Testament story, of God’s interventions in creation and salvation history. It proceeds in silence, to hear, to listen and then leads to a communal response.

1.5.2. Nostra Aetate

In the Declaration on the Relation of the Church to non-Christian religions: *Nostra Aetate*¹⁵⁰ the starting point is a declaration that the Church's relationship with non-Christian religions, and mankind in general, is to be formed with an attitude in which the Church "considers above all...what men have in common and what draws them into fellowship." (NA 1)

The Council says that the questions which are at the heart of all human conversation; (these questions will be repeated in *Gaudium et Spes*¹⁵¹) arise from the foundations of humanity, what is held in common, and what is sought as the final goal.

The questions shared in common are:

"What is man?

What is the meaning, the aim of our life?

What is moral good, what is sin?

Whence suffering and what purpose does it serve?"

Which is the road to true happiness?

What are death, judgements and retribution after death?

What finally, is that ultimate inexpressible mystery which encompasses our existence: whence do we come, and where are we going?" (NA 1)

With this acknowledgement of a common framework and an understanding that all of humanity is facing the same existential questions, the Council says that there is but one way forward, and this is to regard with "sincere reverence those ways of conduct and of life, those precepts and teachings which, though differing in many aspects from the ones she holds and sets forth, nonetheless often reflect a ray of Truth which enlightens all men;" (NA 2) and the way to display this reverence is to move forward "through *dialogue* and collaboration." (NA 2)

The way forward is then outlined with a structure and a modus operandi.

The structure is one of seeking what is held in common; firstly, by facing the presenting questions and issues for humanity; secondly, by seeking dialogue and collaboration and the progressing of this in a certain modality of encounter and dialogue. This dialogue is to be "carried out with prudence and love... (To) recognize, preserve and promote the good things, spiritual and moral, as well as the socio-cultural values found among these men." (NA 2)

¹⁵⁰ Second Vatican Council, Declaration on the Relation of the Church with Non-Christian religions, *Nostra Aetate*, October 28 1965, AAS 58 (1966) 929-941.

¹⁵¹ "What is man? What is this sense of sorrow, of evil, of death, which continues to exist despite so much progress? What purpose have these victories purchased at so high a cost? What can man offer to society, what can he expect from it? What follows this earthly life?" (GS 10)

The Declaration made these observations with a specific focus to Hinduism and Buddhism and then extends the model when discussing the relationship to Islam with the addition of factors, in the engagement, which include the acknowledgement of the fruit of a “moral life and worship, prayer, almsgiving and fasting,” and the seeking of a way forward by looking for “mutual understanding...social justice and moral welfare, peace and freedom.” (NA 3)

The document then extends the model even further by focusing on the relationship with those who share the Covenant, those of “Abraham’s stock.” (NA 4) And here there is recognition of the impact of “sonship, covenants, worship and promise” (NA 4), which ultimately will lead to full insight in Christ.

The way the Council directs the Church is one directed “to foster and recommend that mutual understanding and respect that is the fruit, above all, of biblical and theological studies as well as fraternal dialogue.” (NA 4)

And all of these encounters and relationships are to be built on the overarching understanding that it is “foreign to the mind of Christ, any discrimination against men or harassment of them because of race, colour, condition of life, or religion.” (NA 5) This is then specifically linked to “human dignity and the rights flowing from it.”(NA 5)

There is a movement here which starts with an acknowledgment and respect for our common humanity and an understanding that, at heart, all peoples are seeking answers to a set of fundamental questions and that the way forward is one of ‘dialogue and collaboration.’ This occurs initially through a sharing of “the ways” arising from philosophical inquiry, within moral and socio-cultural values and understandings; and in a manner characterised by prudent loving, and the seeking, recognising and promoting of all that is ‘good’.

There is a call for this approach to be developed from an interface with all ‘men of good will’ to more specific approaches (here outlined specifically with Muslim and Jewish communities) which develop from the recognition of the common approaches characterised by practices of prayer, almsgiving, fasting and prayer; and then proceeding to a deep fraternal dialogue, based on mutual responsibility growing from a common biblical and theological study.

1.5.3. Gaudium et Spes

Nostra Aetate has placed before the Church an approach which can be seen to adapt by respecting the understanding of the dialogue partner. But it also says the Christian approach to all people and situations is to be based on the promise of open dialogue. This the foundation of all relationships within the community, and is the starting place of all formation and common decisions of commitment.

How does *Gaudium et Spes* develop this understanding?

The first mention of dialogue in *Gaudium et Spes* is in the context of a discussion of atheism, and here the Vatican Council reinforces the universal nature of the mode of dialogue when it says, in the context of those without any religions “the Church sincerely professes that all men, believers and unbelievers alike, ought to work for the rightful betterment of this world in which all alike live; such

an ideal cannot be realized, however, apart from sincere and prudent *dialogue*.” (GS 21) In the same paragraph this is linked to the fundamental rights of human beings.

The Council says that understanding and dialogue will only occur only when humanity is willing to move beyond only sharing technological developments to the development of genuine interpersonal relationships; (GS23) and that these interpersonal relationships are of their nature communal, familial, and political and will impact on organisational and associative structures. (GS 25)

The manner of this dialogue is outlined in *Gaudium et Spes* as one of “love, respect, courtesy and good will;” (GS28) as the Council says these are the elements that engage the commitment of the heart of the human.

It is only by laying this foundation that the Church can then see herself as the servant of Dialogue. (GS 40) In fact it is from the foundation of mutual respect and dialogue that the action of the Church in the World will proceed.

The Council says that it is “the dignity of the human person, and about the human community and the profound meaning of human activity, lays the foundation for the relationship between the Church and the world, and provides the basis for *dialogue* between them.”(GS40)

The foundation of Christian formation, life and mission, lies in a deep respect for all peoples and communities and the characteristic of the encounter of the Church with these peoples is Dialogue.

So what are the demands of this dialogue?

Dialogue demands of the members of the Church that they engage in deep study and formation and the acknowledgment that it is study and formation with will lead “toward civil, economic and social unity” and the Council calls upon everyone, including priests, to have a “joint concern and energy” for this dialogue. (GS 43)

The Council uses the same phrase “dialogue” as the foundational approach for developing understanding between communities and cultures; (GS 56) and when it discusses making direct applications it is into the realm of social justice, industrial conflict resolution (GS 65); cooperation between nations (GS 90) and then ultimately for relationships within the Church herself “by virtue of her mission to shed on the whole world the radiance of the Gospel message, and to unify under one Spirit all men of whatever nation, race or culture, the Church stands forth as a sign of that brotherhood which allows honest *dialogue* and gives it vigor;” and at another place, “such a mission requires in the first place that we foster within the Church herself mutual esteem, reverence and harmony, through the full recognition of lawful diversity. Thus all those who compose the one People of God, both pastors and the general faithful, can engage in *dialogue* with ever abounding fruitfulness. For the bonds which unite the faithful are mightier than anything dividing them. Hence, let there be unity in what is necessary; freedom in what is unsettled, and charity in any case.” (GS 92)

This foundational understanding is developed directly in the decades after the Council, and specifically in two documents, one of John Paul II addressing the Secretariat for non-Christians in

1984¹⁵² and the second a reflection by the Pontifical Council for Inter-religious dialogue in 1991.¹⁵³ The structure and insight of these documents show a common pattern, but also raise the issues of the relationship between faith and the content of truth revealed in Christ, and a more expectant eschatology which sees the Church as journeying toward the fullness of truth in Christ.

1.5.4 John Paul II's address to Secretariat for Non-Christians 1984

The first document entitled "The Attitude of the Church towards the followers of other religions: reflections and orientations on dialogue and Mission" (here after noted as D&M); was delivered as an address by John Paul II at the conclusion of an assembly of the Secretariat for Non-Christians in March 1984.

John Paul II starts by referencing Paul VI's encyclical *Ecclesiam Suam* which he calls "the magna carta of Dialogue," (D&M 1) and outlines that the work since its publication, twenty years before, had focused on the ways and means to opening an appropriate dialogue with non-Christians.

John Paul II opens his exposition by underlining the fundamental importance and "need for Dialogue," (D&M 1, 2) and that the call for dialogue and collaboration is foundational in journeying toward the three elements that were outlined above: reaching our transcendent goal; realising our authentic growth and helping cultures to preserve religious and spiritual values in the face of change.

John Paul II sets the scene by saying that the way of collaborating to fulfil these fundamental human goals is by "presence, respect and love towards all persons." ¹⁵⁴ (D&M 2) He expresses the Trinitarian foundation of this approach: God is the Father of the whole human family, Christ has joined 'every person' to himself and the Spirit works in every person; and that fundamental to these affirmations is that every human being is loved. John Paul II understands this to be the underpinning of all rights and freedoms, which are usually expressed in the understandings of culture and the elements of religious practice.

This is the keystone for John Paul II's understanding of how to move forward.

He says that dialogue has many forms and that each of them is important and cannot be ignored.

Firstly, Dialogue can be in the "doctrinal field" (D&M 4) which leads to an examination of the daily relationships between believers and calls for "mutual respect and common awareness." (D&M 4)

Secondly, Dialogue can be a "dialogue of life" (D&M 4, 29ff) where through "peaceful coexistence and working together," (D&M 4,5) people are led to a sharing and understanding of each other's history, values and forms of experience and prayer. Here John Paul II outlines the difficulties of

¹⁵² Secretariatus Pro Non Christianis. "The Attitude of the Church towards the Followers of Other Religions: Reflections and Orientations on Dialogue and Mission," (Vatican City, 1984).

¹⁵³ Pontifical Council for Inter-religious Dialogue. "Dialogue and Proclamation: Reflections and Orientations on Interreligious Dialogue and the Proclamation of the Gospel", (Vatican City: Vatican, 1991).

¹⁵⁴ John Paul II sees these themes as being fundamental to the understanding of *Ad Gentes* nn.10-12; *Ecclesiam Suam* nn.41-42; *Redemptor Hominis* nn.11-12.

dialogue because of the temptation to “polarization and division,” the impact of historical wrongs and differences and the necessity of forgiveness and placing oneself at the service of the other.

Thirdly, is the “dialogue of salvation.”(D&M 5) John Paul II speaks of this dialogue as walking with others and offering the place, space and time to be a “true witness” and this is achieved by being “closely united with others in their life and work” and by avoiding “exclusivism and dichotomies.” (D&M 5) This phrase “dialogue of salvation” has a history in its use by Paul VI and Paul was very wide in its application.

Fourthly, Dialogue can be a “dialogue for reconciliation ;”(D&M 5) a place in which reconciliation between peoples, and with God, leads to the “coexistence and unity willed by God.” (D&M5)¹⁵⁵

John Paul II sees dialogue as a ‘new attitude’ and as the only way forward in a rapidly changing world. He understands it to be founded ‘not only on discussion’ but on “all positive and constructive interreligious relations with individuals and communities.” (D&M 3) John Paul II is clear that the framework he is outlining is the “theological vision ...inspired by the Second Vatican Council and the subsequent magisterium.” (D&M 6)

John Paul II says that the starting point for a full understanding of the mission of the Church and for the use of this tool of dialogue is the knowledge that “God is love” and that therefore such a love as God has shown us “renders it the norm of life for all.” (D&M 9)

The implications of this for John Paul are that the Church is a “pilgrim people who go forward together with all of mankind with whom they share the human experience.” (D&M 10)

To enable this accompaniment of all people those engaged in dialogue must be deeply aware of the circumstances in which people live and as a consequence the Church will use “appropriate actions or tools”(D&M 11) aware that the Church is “to work for the extension of the kingdom and its values among all men and women.” (D&M11)

John Paul’s vision initially focuses on the preparation and orientation of the Church herself, and this is characterised by simplicity, being a living witness, a liturgical life of prayer and contemplation, and then moves to the engagement in common projects.

The best example of this, John Paul says, is in the simple and focused life of Jesus. “The life of Jesus contains all the elements of mission. In the Gospels, Jesus is shown in silence, in action, in prayer, in dialogue and in teaching.” (D&M15)

John Paul aware of the plurality of resources within the community, calls for the awareness of the gifts that others can bring to the dialogue, the “plurality of services and functions,” (D&M 16) “the variety of Charisms,” (D&M 16) “the tasks of families, of husbands, of wives and of children,” (D&M 16) which will all enable the Church to be a witness in the multiplicity of circumstances of this place and time.

To enable and facilitate this engagement John Paul II uses the pattern seen previously and he offers a ‘living witness,’ St Francis of Assisi as the way forward.

¹⁵⁵ Referencing: *Gaudium et Spes*, nn.24, 29; *Lumen Gentium*, nn. 9, 13, 42).

Francis of Assisi taught, do not “raise arguments or disputes” (D&M 17) rather “be subject to every human creature for the love of God;” ” (D&M 17) and ensure that the other “sees that which would be pleasing to the Lord,” ” (D&M 17) in you, and therefore asks you to announce the Word of God.

In all engagements there needs to be an encounter in “a manner proper to the dignity of the human person and his social nature. The inquiry is to be free, carried on with the aid of teaching or instruction, communication and dialogue.” (D&M18) John Paul reiterates that there will be no “hint of coercion” (D&M 18) or “of a kind of persuasion that would be dishonourable or unworthy.” (D&M 18)

All in all: “Man is the first path which the church ought to traverse in carrying out its mission.”(D&M 19)

So where and how is this dialogue to progress?

The whole second part of this document (D&M 20ff) is structured on a discussion of the mission of the church, where and how she will progress in a manner founded on dialogue.

It starts by discussing the foundations of dialogue, then the forms of dialogue and then, how dialogue interrelates with mission and lastly God’s reign.

John Paul’s starting point is that dialogue is not an opportunistic tactic of encounter, rather, dialogue “arises from the reasons which experience and reflection, and even the difficulties themselves, have deepened.” It is “based on personal and social needs.” (D&M 20) The starting point is fidelity to humanity itself: “In every person and every human group there is the aspiration and the need to be considered responsible subjects and to be able to act as such.” (D&M 21)

The insights of the human sciences reinforce the fact that every human being is aware of their “own limitations,” (D&M 21) and that they do not possess the whole truth but need to “walk together, with others, toward that goal.”(D&M 21) The starting point therefore is openness to a goal, and to walking toward that goal in “mutual affirmation, reciprocal correction, and fraternal exchange” (D&M 21) and it is this that leads the partners in that dialogue to “greater maturity” and “interpersonal communion.”(D&M 21)

For John Paul II this involves a human encounter based on a willingness “to listen to” and to “strive to understand” the other within the “tensions and difficulties” which arise in the sociocultural realities of the world. John Paul II says that it is in the “interdependence of all sectors of society” (D&M 21) that humanity and the Church must live and pursue “a dialogical style of human relationships” (D&M 21) and that it is this that will lead to peace.

This is not an idealistic vision of the world. John Paul is very clear that this dialogue will take place in the face of the limitations of space and time and the moral limitations placed upon those impacted by self-interest and the elements which John Paul has no difficulty in calling “evil.”

However, John Paul is clear that the insight of the Christian is one which proclaims “a glimpse of God in the light of communion and interchange,” (D&M 22) and that, strongly based on the insights of *Redemptor Hominis*, that the “mystery of God and the mystery of mankind;”(D&M 23 referencing cf. RH 8, 10, 11, 13) lead all people of good will to have confidence that all of humanity is capable, and

desiring, of the good. John Paul quotes himself, in the third person: “As Pope John Paul II has said: “man – every man without any exception whatever – has been redeemed by Christ, and because with man – with each man without any exception whatever – Christ is in a way united, even when man is unaware of it: “Christ, who died was raised up for all, provides man” – each man and every man – “with the light and the strength to measure up to his supreme calling.” (RH 14) (D&M 23)

It is in the light of this understanding, and of the underlining presence and power of the Holy Spirit that John Paul talks of “the force of life and movement and continuous regeneration,” (D&M 24) acting “in the depth of people’s consciences and accompanying them on the secret path of hearts toward the truth.” (GS 22; RH 24) John Paul is clear on where and how the Spirit works. He says the Spirit is working “outside the confines of the mystical body” (D&M 24) and “both anticipates and accompanies the part of the Church” (D&M 24) which is engaged in dialogue, and that the whole action of seeking the truth in Christ, the reign of God, is to be seen as being the call to reveal that “the reign of God is the final end of all persons. The Church, which is to be “its seed and beginning,” (LG 5.9) is called from the first to start out on this path toward the kingdom and, along with the rest of humanity, to advance towards that goal.” (D&M 25)

All of humanity is walking toward a goal and it is to be reached, by every person, responding to the Spirit in the depth of their conscience, not in isolation but rather in the modality of accompaniment and listening, and in the face of difficulties seeking that which is true and good in the company of others.

John Paul outlines the elements in non-Christian religions which can be identified as the places of accompaniment, and based upon the understanding of *Gaudium et Spes* where it extends the same to those with no faith beliefs, atheists; he sees these as the seed bed for the Spirit’s movement.

John Paul takes a series of quotes from Vatican II as the foundation of his understanding, and the common task of humanity, they are the identification of:

“Elements which are true and good” (OT 16),

“Precious things, both religious and human” (GS 92);

“Seeds of contemplation” (AG 18),

“Elements of truth and grace” (AG9),

“Seeds of the Word” (AG 11, 15),

And “raise of the truth which illumines all mankind” (NA2).”(D&M 26)

John Paul adds to this the insights which arise from the witness of Christians accompanying others. He sees dialogue as leading to an acknowledging of commonality with others, the sharing of “esteem and love,” (D&M 27) and the deep sharing in the “cultural and social life, exchanges and enterprises of human living,” (D&M 27) and by knowing and sharing in “a sincere and patient dialogue” (D&M 28) the religious and cultural traditions of others can lead to an approach which will “illuminate these treasures with the light of the Gospel.” (D&M 28)

This is the initial place of encounter based on dialogue in the thought of John Paul. It is grounded in the “dialogue of life.” As we have already seen in *Dei Verbum* it is in the unity of the “deeds and words” with a temporal priority to the deeds, that revelation/dialogue occurs. This is explicitly stated by John Paul II: “Before all else, dialogue is a manner of acting, an attitude and a spirit which guides one’s conduct. It implies concern, respect, and hospitality toward the other. It leaves room for the other’s identity, his modes of expression, and his values. Dialogue is thus the norm and necessary manner of every form of Christian mission, as well is every aspect of it, whether one speaks a simple presence and witness, service, or direct proclamation. Any sense of mission not permeated by such a dialogical spirit would go against the demands of true humanity and against the teachings of the Gospel.” (D&M 29)

John Paul II is very clear that this dialogue of life is not a separate spiritual and religious activity but rather is to be lived in the daily life and environment in which people “live and work that of family, social, educational, artistic, economic, or political life.”(D&M 31) Dialogue is the characteristic of a fully human and Christian life.

John Paul II then takes this to a “further level of dialogue” and this is that dialogue which occurs in “deeds and collaboration with others the goals of the humanitarian, social, economic, or political nature which are directed towards the liberation and advancement of mankind,” (D&M 31) and he says clearly that “the field of collaboration can be extremely wide” (D&M 32) and the nature of the encounter and the demand for collaboration is therefore also wide. No one can be a specialist in every area, so there must be, foundational to seeking commitments and understanding in such a wide environment, a “dialogue of specialists” (D&M 32, 33) who can aid people by providing the skills to “confront, deepen, and enrich “our religious and all other insights and aid us by “apply something of their expertise to the problems that must be faced by mankind.”(D&M 33)

John Paul II then moves the conversation to the next level a “dialogue of religious experience.”(D&M 34ff)

Believers of various religious traditions can share the fruit of “prayer, contemplation, faith, and duty” (D&M 35) and John Paul holds that this will naturally lead to “communicating the reasons for our own faith,” (D&M 35) and all of this done in a spirit of “humility and confidence to God who is greater than our heart.” (D&M 35)

John Paul II sees in this encounter, and as one of the fruits of dialogue, a necessary and ongoing call to conversion. He says: “all persons are constantly called to this conversion,” (D&M 37ff) Here he makes a direct link to the path of dialogue as a dynamic of the Christian insight.

This path of dialogue, within the complexity of the world of human existence, will lead people to insights and understandings which call them to move from those positions and /or insights which they thought expressed the truth fully. John Paul sees this as the way in which the person moves “from a particular love because the heart can open itself to one that is more universal.” (D&M 37) He says that “every authentic call from God always carries it an overcoming of oneself. There is no new life without death, as the dynamic of the Paschal Mystery shows.”(D&M 38)

This says John Paul II is the heart of moral formation, “in this process of conversion, the law of conscience is sovereign,” because “no one must be constrained to act against his conscience, nor

ought he to be impeded in acting according to his conscience, especially in religious matters.” (DH3). (D&M 38)

The role of the Church, and the Christian, is to recognise that “the principal agent of conversion is not man, but the Holy Spirit... The Christian is but a simple instrument and co-worker of God.” (D&M 39)

For John Paul II “dialogue thus becomes a source of hope and a factor of communion in mutual transformation.” It is the “mysterious and silent Spirit (who) opens the paths of dialogue to individuals and peoples in order to overcome racial, social, and religious differences and to bring mutual enrichment.” (D&M 44)

1.5.5. Pontifical Council for interreligious dialogue 1991

This framework was reinforced in 1991, on the 25th anniversary of the publication of *Nostra Aetate* when the Pontifical Council for interreligious dialogue published an extensive reflection on “dialogue and proclamation.”¹⁵⁶

At the heart of this document, as its title shows, is the relationship between dialogue and the proclamation of the gospel.

This juxtaposition brings into focus the challenge for the believer of the place of the κερψγμα when it is foundational for the understanding and worldview that the believer brings to dialogue. The understanding of this issue will impact on how the believer understands this κερψγμα, the priority they give to its content and the manner in which they approach the other in dialogue.

As a caricature. On the one hand there is the believer who sees in the Gospel a truth, the content and form of which is immutable, and therefore enters a conversation with a predetermined agenda of conversion or indoctrination which will be expressed in the language they use and their mode of encounter; on the other hand, there is the believer who is willing to remove all content from their conversation so as to “understand the position of the other” and give that position priority to the effective denial of their own faith ‘commitment’.

The way forward as we have already seen, and this is reinforced in this document, is not an either/or rather it is a both/and. The believer has been formed by the Gospel, and sees life through the eyes of the Gospel, but is able and willing to walk with the other in the search for expressions of a common truth compatible with the gift with which they have been graced.

In this document the framework put forward by Paul VI, Vatican II and John Paul II is expanded and elucidated and some of the essential points are amplified and others reflected upon with a degree of caution.

The following is a brief summary of these elements.

¹⁵⁶ Pontifical Council for Inter-religious Dialogue. “Dialogue and Proclamation: Reflections and Orientations on Interreligious Dialogue and the Proclamation of the Gospel”, (Vatican City: Vatican, 1991).

Firstly, the Pontifical Council places the issue of dialogue within the “single but complex and articulated reality” (D&P 2) of the evangelising mission of the church. The document’s first paragraphs say the core question is the relationship between dialogue and proclamation.

The Pontifical Council outlines that the deepening awareness of religious plurality and the complexity of the social situations for interreligious dialogue have led people to reflect on the complexity of dialogue as a model. Therefore the Pontifical Council opens its reflection by saying: “The practice of dialogue raises problems in the minds of many,” (D&P 4c), and posits that the foundation of these problems lie on the one hand by the tendency of some “to think, erroneously, that in the Church’s mission today dialogue should simply replace proclamation;” (D&P 82) and on the other hand to “fail to see the value of interreligious dialogue.” (D&P 4c)

This reflects the position of Gregg which was outlined at the beginning of this section, and shows that even in 1991 the achievement of an understanding of the relationship between proclamation and dialogue was seen as essential. In this document it is possible to identify the tension between those opposed to dialogue as a mode of understanding and those who see such an encounter as primary. It would seem that a solution, as so often in Catholic circles, lies in a “both/and” approach.

Firstly, this document says there is an *order* to dialogue and to the mission of the church. This reflects the pattern which has been seen in the documents above. It commences at a level of human encounter and progresses to one of proclamation and catechesis. The Pontifical Council writes that the mission of the Church has the following order: “Presence and witness; commitment to social development and human liberation; liturgical life, prayer and contemplation; religious dialogue; and finally, proclamation and catechesis.” (D&P 2)

Secondly, it states that there needs to be a clear understanding of the terms the Church uses in respect of her mission and relationship with the world. Note that both the processes of dialogue and proclamation have become subsets of a larger discussion of evangelisation and the relationship and mission of the church in the world.

The first term examined is ‘evangelisation’ which the Pontifical Council says must be read “broadly” in that the focus of evangelisation in the Church is one that “seeks to convert solely through the divine power of the message she proclaims, to both the personal and collective consciences of people, the activities in which they engage, their ways of life, and the actual milieu in which they live;” (EN 18) (D&P 8) and yet this is also to include “the clear and unambiguous proclamation of the Lord Jesus.”

The second term is “dialogue”. This is to be seen in three ways: “Firstly, at the purely human level, it means reciprocal communication, leading to a common goal, or at a deeper level, to interpersonal communion. Secondly, dialogue can be taken as an attitude of respect and friendship, which should permeate all those activities constituting the evangelising mission of the church. This can appropriately be called “the spirit of dialogue”. Thirdly, in the context of religious plurality, dialogue means “all positive and constructive interreligious relations with individuals and communities of other faiths which are directed at mutual understanding and enrichment.” (D&P 9)

The Pontifical Council limits its discussion of dialogue to this third sense, that of interreligious dialogue. Therefore the document itself, while providing insight, is not as broad as the interpretation of dialogue put forward by Paul VI and John Paul II.

It is however useful in that it places dialogue within the frameworks of ecclesial language.

With the understanding that all that follows was presented within the context of “interreligious dialogue” the document outlines a core framework for the Church’s understanding and orientation.

Firstly it believes that “salvation in Jesus Christ is, in a mysterious way, a reality open to *all* persons of good will.” (D&P 15) It reinforces that Christ died for all, and that the pattern of the Paschal Mystery is a pattern which can be identified in the “minds and hearts, rights and customs of all peoples.” (D&P 16) It is not there in its fullness but it provides a place of common language and understanding.

Secondly, the Pontifical Council outlines that it is the effect of grace and the action of the Holy Spirit that has been at work “in the world before Christ was glorified...that impels the Church to enter into dialogue and collaboration.” (D&P 17) This action of the Spirit is to be identified in “whatever good is to be found in the hearts and minds of men,” (D&P 18) and it will be “healed, ennobled, and perfected for the glory of God and the fullness of humanity.” (AG 9 quoted at D&P 19)

Thirdly, the pattern of the relationship of God and humanity can be seen in the ‘covenantal’ pattern. This pattern is seen in the universal covenant of Noah, through the specific covenant with the house of Israel; to the call, through the prophets, for a salvation which would “extend beyond and through Israel to all the nations;” to the specific nature of Jesus’s ministry to those outside of Israel and the Samaritans in particular; and to the ministry to the Gentiles in the early church and the calling of all peoples.

The Pontifical Council notes that this is not a new insight. It sees in patristic writings the idea of a theology of history and says that “history becomes salvation history” (D&P 25) and supports this by quoting from Irenaeus who distinguishes four ‘covenants’ given by God to the human race; in Adam, in Noah, in Moses, and in Jesus Christ.

Fourthly the Pontifical Council reinforces this with excerpts from magisterial teaching focusing on the unity of humanity and that even though “the whole of humanity forms one family...there is but one plan of salvation for humankind, with the centre of Jesus Christ” (D&P 25) and goes further to say that “from this mystery of unity it follows that all men and women who are saved share, though differently, in the same mystery of salvation in Jesus Christ through his Spirit.” (D&P 29) The universal salvific will and the unity of humanity leads the Pontifical Council to emphasise strongly the requirement for discernment and for the acceptance that there will be times in which human enterprises will experience contradiction and blindness. This means that there has to be an openness to challenge and an understanding that not everything which is spoken or understood is a result of grace.

So what is the place of the Church in this understanding?

The church’s role is to be a “sign and instrument of the divine plan of salvation, the centre of which is the mystery of Christ.” (D&P 33) The Church enters this role not with a predetermined and

superior position rather the image used by the Pontifical Council is that of a seed which is silent, containing the fullness in its embryonic state and that the seed of the kingdom needs to grow to maturity. "The Church "slowly grows to maturity (and) longs for the completed kingdom" and that this journey to completion includes the encounter with those who are "related or orientated" to other religious traditions who, and this is vitally important, "insomuch as they respond to God's calling as perceived by their conscience, are saved in Jesus Christ and thus already share in some way in the reality which is signified by the Kingdom." (D&P 35)

The result of this understanding is that the Pontifical Council sees the orientation of the Church to be that of a pilgrim journeying toward the fullness of the revelation in Christ, carrying with her the seeds of that kingdom.

There is to be an ongoing growth of insight into the realities and words that are passed on and this is to occur in study and spiritual experience, the teaching of the bishops, and the dialogue of the Church with the world and others. In this the Pontifical Council returns to the understanding of "the dialogue of salvation".

The document outlines the four types of dialogue that we have previously seen: "the dialogue of life that is the sharing of the joys and sorrows the problems and preoccupations" (D&P 42) of humanity (a direct echo of the opening passage of *Gaudium et Spes*); "the dialogue of action... In which Christians and others collaborate for the integral development and liberation of people"; (D&P 42) "the dialogue of theological exchange where specialists seek to deepen their understanding" (D&P 42); and "the dialogue of religious experience." (D&P 42)

The interesting fact is that the first two forms of dialogue put forward for progressing religious interface and proclamation do not have words! Initially, it is the witness of the deeds of the Christian that open a careful, neighbourly, interface on the positive and negative aspects of human life and which call for collaboration in development and liberation.

This insight is reinforced "the importance of dialogue for integral development, social justice and human liberation needs to be stressed," (D&P 44) and more, the manner in which this is to be done is in "an unselfish and impartial manner." (D&P 44) The initial position of the Church is to stand up for "human rights, proclaiming the demands of justice, denouncing injustice...and joining together in trying to solve the great problems facing society and the world, as well as an education for justice and peace". (D&P 44) The Pontifical Council has linked this immediately to the need for an understanding of culture and the values found in the "wisdom and rich heritage of cultures." (D&P 46) It is in this context that the Pontifical Council sees the power of dialogue. The Council says "interreligious dialogue at the level of culture takes on considerable importance. Its aim is to eliminate tensions and conflicts." (D&P 46)

The orientation of the Christian therefore is seen to require a "balanced attitude." (D&P 47) The Christian is "neither ingenuous nor overly critical, but open and receptive. Unselfish and impartial, accepting of differences and of possible contradictions." (D&P 47) Christians display an openness to the truth, and enter with "the integrity of his or her own faith," and an awareness that this is "an unending process" (D&P 49) and this means that "Christians must be prepared to learn and to receive from and through others" and to be "moved to give up ingrained prejudices...preconceived ideas, and even sometimes to allow the understanding of their faith to be purified." (D&P 49)

When this is translated to the context of formation and specifically the interface with the catechumen, fellow parishioners and the individual Christian in the development of our moral self; the Pontifical Council puts a challenge before the Christian/Church/party who is encountering the other and it is that they must be aware of the obstacles they themselves bring to the encounter of dialogue.

A number of these are described: “an insufficient grounding in one’s own faith...and insufficient knowledge and understanding of the beliefs and practices of the other...socio-political factors...burdens of the past...a wrong understanding of the meaning of terms...a self-sufficiency and lack of openness ...defensive or aggressive attitudes...a lack of conviction with regard to the value of the other...a suspicion of the other’s motives...a polemical spirit when expressing our religious convictions...intolerance often aggravated by association with political, economic, racial and ethnic factors.” (D&P 52)

So the call of proclamation has been placed in a framework that arises from a reflection on the Gospel and the priority of the Spirit, and this has led to a series of pre-conditional understandings in respect of the disposition of the person entering into dialogue. The preaching of the gospel and a full understanding of the “bearing witness to the truth” demands a thorough preparation within this framework.

This document reiterates that the mission of Jesus and the Church is as a seed and this is the beginning of an ongoing prayer for “thy kingdom come”; and the kingdom will be brought about by witnessing, including the witness to faith in Christ. It is people who are able to bring the universal call of life and love to others. From this foundational understanding there are certain qualities which are specific to the Gospel and these are outlined as being the qualities with which the Christian will interface with the other. The Christian should be aware that “the Spirit is with us and supports us in a dialogical encounter;” that they should be “faithful” to bringing the gospel and the message received from Christ into the encounter, initially by deed and accompaniment and the manner in which they interface with the other, not denying the use of words; is that they should be “humble”, “respectful” and “dialogical for in proclamation the hearer of the Word is not expected to be a passive receiver”; and, they are called to be “inculturated, incarnated in the culture and spiritual tradition of those addressed.” (D&P 70f)

1.5.6. The partnership of dialogue

These insights have reinforced the understanding contained in the very word dialogue. There are *two* parties to every dialogue and human encounter.

The understanding of these documents is that the Christian comes to the dialogue as a person who has a formed identity and the dialogue must respect and treasure the gift, the reality, of both parties, in particular ‘the other.’

When a person comes to dialogue they “bring a treasure in earthen vessels” and they meet others with the same understanding, they too are “treasures in earthen vessels”.

It is with this premise and predisposition that the 'process' of dialogue is opened.

One way of expressing this is to return to one of the great understandings of 20th-century religious thought, the "I – Thou" of Martin Buber.¹⁵⁷ A reflection on the thought of Buber offers a bridge between the insights of revelation and those of dialogue.

Buber's core understanding is that a person has a choice when encountering the other: to treat them as an object, a thing, an "it" or to welcome them as a fellow subject.

In the first orientation the other, (person, community, earth, object) is defined by the dominant person, in their own terms, from their perspective or prejudice and, more often than not, with an orientation toward their use. The second way of encounter is to meet the other as "subject" as "Thou."

When a person encounters the other as "Thou", they engage with them as a 'person' with recognition of their own richness, personality, being, giftedness and identity. The person, in their fullness, gifts themselves to the other and receive the other, in their fullness, as a gift: different but richly a gift!

But there is a third, critical, element to Buber's insight and this reflects the insight of *Dei Verbum 2*.

When a person and another person engage in dialogue as "I – Thou" there is revealed a third person, the "Eternal Thou"!

The divine is revealed at the heart of a gifted, mutual, reciprocal dialogue. It is a moment of Revelation.

Therefore the Christian carries Christ to the dialogue. As their identity is Christ; they have become "one in Him, through Him and with Him" in their baptism; so they carry Him in search of the fullness of humanity; the fullness of the word and deed incarnate in the Spirit who was revealed in "Thou", the other!

The way forward is to be aware and receptive to the place of the 'other' and that will therefore mean using one of the four ways of dialogue.

The temptation is to be one who will put a burden on the other, or attempts to pick the mote out of the eye of the other (Matt 7:5) "tie up heavy, cumbersome loads and put them on other people's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to lift a finger to move them;" (Matt 23:4) and this is most often done by declaring a predetermined 'law or norm', rather than the Spirit of the Christ like, adopted child, who in love will walk and accompany, discern and wait for the formed understanding of the dialogue partner.

The Declaration of the Pontifical Council has led to a deepening of the understanding that there are two parties to the dialogue.

The insights offered are primarily in respect of the heart and dispositions of the Christian, and the willingness to seek to understand the manner of *this* partner. This is the way the concept helps the

¹⁵⁷ Buber, Martin. *I and Thou*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1970).

Christian to form their own dialogue with the 'norms' of society and Church, and the way in which they can receive the understanding of the partner, or the catechumen, and the relationship of formation between the pastor, the community and the individual.

This is the way of dialogue and it is the way that reveals the God who has freely chosen this modality to interrelate with humanity.

1.6. Discernment

This framework has one last element that is required to enable progress.

There is the need of a tool that will enable the partners to a dialogue to move forward in those encounters which offer multiple choices and which are susceptible to the impact of ignorance, selfishness or just plain lack of knowledge. The tool that is at the heart of the Christian tradition, and is foundational to moral choice, is "discernment".

This term is often used in moral and spiritual writing, and it reveals a process and form, a structure, more often than not a form of response, to the Scriptures an event or a situation; that enables a person or community to identify among various options the way that incorporates the "voice of God saying 'Do this or shun that'". In other words it is a way of forming conscience.

Margaret Farley has provided a very useful summary¹⁵⁸ of such a framework.

Firstly discernment is a communal process based upon "the fact that all human knowledge is partial and on the conviction that every human person is responsible to seek moral insight, but not alone."¹⁵⁹

This simple insight of a person only having 'partial knowledge' has wide implications. It will impact on the sources from which information is sought, the relationship that the individual has with those sources and the importance the individual gives to them. It will also impact on the relationship between accountability and formation; authority and autonomy in communities and individual responsibility.

Farley lays the heart of discernment in the face of these questions as lying in the three foundational aspects of the experience of moral obligation.

Firstly, there is the experience of moral obligation. Secondly do we really experience or understand free choice; if so where do we experience it and what demands does this call place upon us? Then thirdly what is the motivation/principle of judgement upon which that moral discernment is framed?

Common to human experience is the fundamental understanding of those who have been obliged to take a stand or act in a certain way. To explore this experience of obligation I want to use the experience of obligation that the parent faces at 2 o'clock in the morning in the face of the child in the next room crying.

¹⁵⁸ Farley, Margaret A. "A Framework for Moral Discernment." *Catholic Theological Ethics Past, Present and Future: The Trento Conference*, (New York: Orbis, 2011) pp.138-46.

¹⁵⁹ Farley, Margaret A. Op.cit.p.138.

In this moment of 'call' the parent knows a degree of compulsion. The response will be "shaped by a particular claim, by who generates it, and by the level of capacity that the individual has to recognise it." ¹⁶⁰

The claim of the child who is crying at two in the morning demands a specific response. The child needs personal presence, comfort, a change of diaper or feeding. This call and response is universal, but what will generate the claim upon the individual are the principles of obligation arising from the protection of the innocent.

The basic human, instinctual, response to feed and to comfort the innocent child, and the level of capacity are almost universal. Adults hear and they comprehend.

However at the level of moral obligation, this situation is experienced differently by different people, and this is founded on the nature of the relationship between the person and the child. The response to the cry will differ between the parents of the child or the grandparent of the child who hears the cry but knows a parent is in the next room.

The obligation changes again, and is experienced differently, if the parents of the child are out of the house and the grandparent of the child is babysitting, or, if they are the only adults in the house with the baby.

The experience of obligation changes yet again if the person hearing the crying is the uncle of the child, and the child is in a tent two or three tents away, and he knows that the extended family; the parents, the grandparents and other aunts and uncles are closer to that child.

What is being identified is that the experience of moral obligation is strong but that it will be shaped by a series of factors: by the claim that generates it, by the capacity of the individual to recognise it and ultimately by the influences around that situation.

In these scenarios all of the participants know and would articulate a general principle or rule which is succinctly expressed in the gospel imperative "feed the hungry" but the experience of obligation is nuanced and this impacts on the very first step of the process of moral discernment.

The reflection on these experiences also displays that the acknowledgement of moral obligation can in fact be influenced by elements of perception or the understanding of the situation. The uncle or grandparent will feel enormous guilt if they leave the child crying, thinking someone else was present to care for them; and then find out that they were alone with the child. Margaret Farley says "whatever occasions or generates the experience, it frequently must be probed-to ascertain its authenticity, to understand its content, to discern its gravity, to deliberate about how we shall or shall not respond. Sometimes the experience of moral obligation does not come first but last in a search to understand what ought to be done or left undone, or what kind of person we ought to try to be; when this is the case, moral discernment leads to and yields an experience of moral obligation."¹⁶¹

There are five elements that can be identified in this process:

¹⁶⁰ Farley, Margaret A. Op.cit.p.139.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

Firstly a claim, a demand is experienced; secondly that claim is addressed to the person's freedom, they know they can respond or not, and like the rich young man the person can choose to respond and follow, or go home with a heavy heart; thirdly, it is initially 'unconditional', by which Farley means it is initially NOT accompanied by elements from the circumstances. The niece's cry is heard, and the uncle responds, and it is only when all the circumstances are identified and incorporated into that response that the change in circumstance influence the nature of the response.

For example the feeling of moral obligation which, the uncle initially experienced on hearing the cry of the child that he is babysitting as a cry for food is not 'conditioned'. The demand is known and the person chooses to act or not act. This is the initial demand. It is only then that the circumstances impact on the nature of the response. The uncle may decide to delay the feeding of the child, the demand they responded to, when upon entering the room he experiences a fire, or the intrusion of a snake into the bed of the child. The response is: pick up the child and run or deal with the snake before feeding the child! And having removed that danger, based on the experience of a moral demand to act; they return to the next moral obligation which is to feed the child!

Fourthly, the experience of moral obligation demands that the call upon the person must at least appear to be justifiable and therefore legitimate. As soon as the person gains more information, or upon reflection finds that the claim is false, unfair, egocentric, or, as in the case just outlined, relativized by changing circumstance or competing claims it ceases "to be experienced as a moral claim."

And lastly it can be seen that "a moral claim is experienced as both an obligating demand and a liberating appeal." Even when found to be very difficult the moral claim is still experienced as a call which demands that the person be true to themselves. As Margaret Farley says "it demands something of me. As a form of command and even a call"¹⁶²

One would observe in this analysis the impact that formation, maturity, and the understanding of the circumstance, is going to have on this sense of moral obligation and the accountability for response. The child's eight year old sister is not expected to experience the same level of moral obligation an adult does, or as that expected of a 25 year old cousin also in the camp site.

So this leads to Farley's second area of exploration. The nature of the choice to be made.

Farley sees that "without choice of an action *of our own* (internal or external) in relation to competing alternatives, there is no choice at all. To recognise this, within the experience of free choice, is to discover a complex structure of affections and judgements that are part of what we choose when we choose."¹⁶³

She shows that in making choices "we have competing desires for competing alternative actions in relation to competing objects of choice."¹⁶⁴

When people are confronted with alternative possibilities for action in relation to a situation the real alternatives for choice are accompanied by different emotions or desires. The person's desires are a

¹⁶² Farley, Margaret A. Op.cit.p.140.

¹⁶³ Farley, Margaret A. Op.cit.p.142.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

“a qualifier of alternative actions to be chosen.”¹⁶⁵ So choice is not merely in respect of things or persons but rather choice is in respect of “the free agent’s own actions (in regards to things, persons, states of affairs), so free choice is, more inwardly, concerned with the free agent’s own spontaneous desires for these actions – desires that spring from and expose a disposition of his or her being.”¹⁶⁶ Therefore “choice is, essentially, though partially, the ratification of one desire and the renunciation, or at least deferral, of the other (s).”¹⁶⁷¹⁶⁸

There are a complex group of factors which shape the personal lives and histories and therefore the desires of the one who is to act. Farley outlines the “biological, genetic, societal, familial, environmental, psychological, and neurological factors that give rise to and shape our desires.” Farley says that desires can be in chains, we desire one thing because of another thing we desire which may even be related to a third but she says that ultimately “its intelligibility comes finally from a more radical affective activity, that we call love”. She says “This means that choice is not only of deciding between alternative possible actions but of the desires that we have that have these actions as their objects. Free choice is most profoundly a choice between or among the at least implicitly conscious sources of our desires – that is, our loves.”¹⁶⁹

Farley says that these affections, our human desires and loves, also have a cognitive element within them. They are shaped by reasons: “We can come to understand them (more or less), assess them, evaluate them, identify with them, or deny them. Free choice, then, has as its object not only an external action (and its object,) but complex desires, loves, reasons, evaluations, judgements, and even *moral* judgements along with the very criteria by which such judgements are made. All of these are, or can be, presented to our freedom for ratification, deferral, or denial, and for issuance (or not) into the action to which they lead. This is why free choice is determinative of ourselves, in the deep regions of our being. This is why moral discernment is utterly important in the service of what we do and who we become – individually and together.”¹⁷⁰

Farley then moves to her third element in the process of discernment. The experience of love.¹⁷¹

Farley outlines that people are aware that “human love is a responsive, unit of, affective affirmation of what is loved, but we also know that there are good loves and bad, wise loves and foolish, just loves and unjust.”¹⁷²

Following Toner she says that “human love is first of all a response to what is lovable – to the value, the being, the beauty, or usefulness of whatever is loved” “Love is a union between lover and loved” Love is a response and leads to choice and uniting with that or who is loved precisely as an affective affirmation of what is loved. “If the norm of a just and true love is the concrete reality of the beloved, everything will depend on how we interpret this reality. The reality to be interpreted

¹⁶⁵ Farley, Margaret A. Op.cit.p.143.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ This element will find resonance in Paul VI’s placement of the ‘happenings, desires and needs’ of the person at the base of all moral encounter. Seen in OA 39 and GS 11.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ Farley, Margaret A. Op.cit.p.144; Here she bases her work on that of Jules J Toner S.J.

¹⁷² Ibid.

encompasses both personal and non-personal beings – and the complex realities of their relationships, histories, context, actions, capabilities, *telo*.

Such interpretation is at the heart of moral discernment, and personal and communal formation, and directly influences the commitments we will make and therefore is in the service of moral obligation, free choice, love and desire, and action. In such discernment we need to know not only where to look – that is, to concrete realities, and the forms of right love in relationships with ourselves, our neighbours near and far, the world and universe around us, and with God.

We need also the methods and sources that illuminate what we see – whether contextual analysis, historical – critical examination, principles and narratives, and whether through the lenses of Scripture, communal wisdom, the many disciplines of human study and knowledge, or the experience of particular persons or groups. We need explicitly to anchor and expand what we have seen regarding moral obligation, free choice, love and desire, and action within a theological perspective.”¹⁷³ Ultimately Farley says this cannot be probed “apart from our understandings or beliefs about God, human persons, the universe, creation and redemption, grace and salvation, and the ultimate integration of our loves in relation to what we love above all.”¹⁷⁴

Farley points out that this has to happen not just at the level of the individual’s moral discernment and formation but also at a communal level.

We have identified here a threefold pattern:

Firstly, start with the experience, the reality.

Secondly, analyse the content, the context and the elements involved in and impacting on the choice.

Thirdly, make the choice, as an act of love and commitment. Act in accord with the ‘right and just’ element identified in the heart of reality and experience.

1.7. Summary: Part One.

This is a work focused on pastoral and moral theology, and especially moral theology responding to the call for reform in Vatican II.

There is a direct and explicit call in *Sacrosanctum Concilium* and the documents of Vatican II to place the liturgy in the centre of the renewal of theological study. In *Optatam Totius 16* we have a specific call for the “the perfecting of moral theology” (OT16) and this is to be done with the “sacred liturgy ...considered as the primary and indispensable source of the true Christian Spirit.” (OT 16)

The principles for the reform of the liturgy were written with the expectation that they will have a direct relationship, in principle and structure, to the manner in which moral theology is formed, in fact all aspects of theological study.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ Farley, Margaret A. Op.cit.p.145.

So what are the general principles on which the liturgical reform is based and which therefore impact on the structure and form of our moral theology?

The expressed intent of Vatican II for the restoration of the liturgical life of the church is to be characterised by:

- giving vigour to the Christian life of the faithful
- being a response to the needs of our times
- seeking to create unity among Christians
- Calling all of humanity into the household of God, the body of Christ.

The specific areas calling for major change were:

- the structure of the liturgy,
- the revision of the Eucharistic prayers;
- the revision of the manner of initiation, especially in respect of adult formation;
- a revision of the divine office
- The impact of the seasonal and liturgical year on Christian liturgy and life.

Each of these areas was seen as being interrelated and formative of the others.

The other general parameters which are expressed, so as to impact on the liturgical reform and therefore the parameters of moral theology are that:

- the Christian life is not an individual life rather it is communal,
- the Bishop is seen as central place of unity, teaching and adaptation,
- there is a call for the full, conscious and active participation of the faithful,
- the liturgy is to be seen as:
 - instructional in a manner that is simple and noble,
 - firmly founded in Scripture,
 - reflective of the seasonal nature of the church's life and therefore having the qualities of being both progressive and cyclic in nature,
 - Christo centric,
 - Presented in a manner which can be heard and understood with comprehension in the vernacular, that is the language of the listener.

We therefore, by combining these insights read these elements as guidance for moral formation and decision making.

The discernment and structure of moral formation and decision making is to be: a communal exercise, with magisterial teaching and oversight central. The faithful, both as individuals and communally, have a right, and duty, to be involved in formation and decision making, and the formulation of the Church's position on issues, by full, conscious and active participation.

This formation will be progressive and gradual, recognising the evolution of thought and understanding both in individuals and the community; and, will always be, articulated and adapted to the language, understanding, comprehension and culture of the one listening.

2. These elements are then reinforced when we acknowledge the integration by Vatican II of 'salvation history' in the 'history of humanity'.

There is no separation, rather the fullness of God is revealed in history in two ways: the direction of reason, and the self-revelation of God. These are not contradictory, or exclusive of each other, rather they are complementary elements of the Revelation of God. This means that there is an openness within the Church to engage on either level with the whole of humanity, in a common process of seeking the fullness of life for all human persons.

3. There are three core tools offered to the Church and humanity as foundational to the way in which they are called to proceed to understand the 'way of God' / the 'presence of God' and therefore to see the way of moral decision making.

The first is through an understanding of the Revelation of God in the unity of words and deeds.

All of the deeds and experiences, hopes and aspirations of humanity require reflection so as to gain understanding. There is a need for them to be opened up so that those involved can express the meaning and truth they contain. Human experience calls for reflection and understanding. Human beings have a fundamental orientation to use words to express the inner meaning of the lived experience. So there is a need for humans to analyse, respond to and articulate the meaning of their actions.

At the same time there is always a necessity for people to 'put into practice' the understandings and the expressions of what they hold to be good, true and life-giving: what is 'right and just'. Words, even words that are truthful are empty, if they do not find expression in action. It is by putting words into action that they become life giving.

This unity of Word and Deed is at the heart of the Christian incarnational revelation.

This is the unity which is seen in Christ; one who lived and preached an incarnated love in self-sacrifice. He is one who proclaimed the truth of a situation with a willingness to live this out in its fullness, even to death. This understanding is foundational to comprehending the liturgical unity of Word and Deed in the life of the Christian community. The Christian liturgy is not just a proclamation of an ideal or a Word, it is not a belief system or ritual to be 'performed'; rather, the Christian liturgy is formative of a communion which is then sent on mission to put the Words into action. It is this which is foundational to the moral witness of the Gospel and has the result of seeking to bring life to

the world and at the same time to challenge the world in which Christians live. The daily actions and relationships of the Christian, individually and in community, are expressions of the unity between the words proclaimed in Christ, handed to us in the witness of the early Church and the Scriptures, and the message and understanding contained in the core structure, symbols, rituals, words and actions of the Liturgy. The liturgy is a celebration of the understanding of the meaning of the 'words' and 'deeds' of Christ, and finds life as the lived experience of the community being interpreted by the Word; and by the Word forming the Community so as to Act.

At the centre of this reality is the person of Jesus the Christ. The core faith understanding is that in the word and deeds, the person of Jesus the Christ, there is for the human person a 'way' to 'hear the Word of God' and to be formed by it. It is by becoming one with Him, united with Him, in a life like His, and this has a form: it is the imitation, by inclusion, into the life, death and therefore Resurrection' of Jesus.

The first insight is that the foundational nature and qualities of the Revelation of God's purpose at the heart of the liturgy, and therefore at the heart of moral discernment, can be summarised as:

Firstly, In Christ, through the Church, the loving plan and mind of God has been revealed, in the midst of a sad, divided and confused world.

Secondly, this revelation is seen as being a free and gratuitous, loving gift of God, revealed in Christ and the ongoing ministry of the Church, as the truth of the "transcendent God,-omnipotent, most wise, most loving"¹⁷⁵and this revelation has been given to all humans from the beginning, and at the same time it reveals the truth about humanity.

Thirdly, that this is achieved in two ways, expressed as the "Deeds and words" of God. These "words and deeds" are to be understood not separately but as revealing God in their unity. It is in the unity of the "deeds and words" that God's loving plan is revealed; in fact the unity expressed in the words and deeds of human beings will expose their true understanding, values and moral responsibility.

Fourthly, we have also seen the movement to the awareness that this pattern is common for all human beings, not just Christians. At the same time the Christocentric nature of God's revelation is reinforced and made central, to human history and the relationship of the covenant between God and humanity.

4. So where are the identified sources of this revelation?

There are two points of departure in this venture. Reason and revelation.

We can start from the application of human reason to two major sources of insight.

Firstly our understanding of creation itself with its gifted structures and patterns. Secondly, by encounter with the human person and the community's understandings of the human person. This will be reflected in understandings of truth and beauty, the sense of the moral good, freedom, conscience and happiness. These are complex concepts and are culturally situated and require deep study, formation and openness to all the disciplines of human endeavour.

¹⁷⁵ Wicks, Jared, S.J.Op.cit.p.648.

Secondly there is a need, especially for people of faith, to respond to the divine Revelation. This is seen in the covenantal relationships of God and God's people, historically situated, and reflected upon. It is seen in the Scriptures, which in and of themselves are to be situated and interpreted; and ultimately it is to be fully understood and seen in the words and deeds of Jesus of Nazareth, and in the ongoing presence of His Risen Spirit, in a community, the Church.

There is to be a fundamental orientation of reception of the Word and Deeds of the 'other'; and in this acceptance we are formed in an orientation to see the other, be it creation and the human person, or the Revelation of God in and through the Christ, as a gift, a place of a graced encounter.

There is only one way this is going to happen. It demands a fundamental orientation toward the world and the other of acceptance, love and a willingness to die to self so as to receive the 'Other'. This is the modality of the Cross, or the Paschal Mystery, and the source and summit of this revelation, formation and celebration is the liturgy.

There are therefore 'qualities' that will be found in this orientation.

They are love, defence of the other and their freedom, culture and understanding; care of the other, collaboration and recognition of the other. The Christian, all people of good will, will be proactive as disciples in welcoming the Words and Deeds of the other, even those who at an initial meeting are found to be disturbing. We will listen, see, and come to know the place of the other. We will start with an orientation of mercy, involvement, 'washing of the feet'. We will expect that there are elements of the other we need to come to know, 'the smell of the sheep' so that we can encounter them in a real and human manner. There will be a patient gradualism in this exercise, and there is a presumption that to find the fullness of life and truth is going to involve a total gift of the self. There is also an expectation that the fruit of this exercise will be qualities of happiness and joy.

So to be able to live this fundamental orientation, in the approach of Vatican II, to the unity of word and deed as the source of Divine revelation, the Church community and in the fullness of life for humanity Vatican II offers two other elements that help form our foundational framework.

5. Firstly, we are called to dialogue.

This is a major insight and development of Vatican II.

This 'dialogue' means that there is a necessity for an honest understanding of the person who is the subject of the discussion, you and I, and then of our partners in dialogue. Both must be respected and understood, in their language, custom and circumstance, and both parties to dialogue must be open to the other. This means that there needs to be an awareness, at the beginning of any dialogical encounter, of the prejudices the partners arrive with, their ability or inability to hear and understand the other, or for them to understand us; to translate, and present understandings in a manner which the other can comprehend and respond to.

6. Secondly, all decisions are going to be the result of discernment and this in and of itself has a process. It demands that, for human maturity and honesty, there must be a conscious acknowledgment of the moral demand of the other and the situation. This moral claim and demand must then be responded to, and to respond there is a requirement to discern the correct response to the call. The parties are free in this response; they can choose to ignore it or respond to it. The

circumstances will influence directly the nature of the response, and the level of responsibility that people have, and to discern this there is a need for information and an awareness of the other and their need.

There is an interface therefore between the 'call'/'demand' of the moral obligation, which is expressed in this place and time; and, the liberating appeal to respond. There are always options and alternatives available to people and they need to make an informed choice. This will be heavily impacted on by their knowledge and understanding, but also by their affections, desires, commitments and judgements. At heart, discernment will involve a final choice of doing what is known to be right or just, out of love, for the other who is encountered in this place and circumstance. What is involved here is a full and rich formation of conscience.

These then are the frameworks and orientations that can be brought to the engagement with the Rites of initiation, the Mass; and the Church's understanding of her mission in the modern world as seen in *Gaudium et Spes*.

Chapter Two: The Catechumenate.

The Call of Vatican II has led us to the simple question: “Is there a liturgical site that has formation in the Christian life at its heart?” The answer lies in one of the hidden jewels of the reform that was called for in *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (SC 64) the catechumenate.

The catechumenate was ‘restored’ with the intention of providing a structured and focused process of formation. This is seen both in its origins in the Early Church and the structure and method it uses to form people in the ‘way of life’ of the Christian community. Chapter Two will therefore, after an introduction to the OICA, examine its original structure and content, the impact of the edict of Milan and its place within the sacred liturgy, and then outline the structure and content of the OICA, with the understanding that the OICA is intended to be a process of formation, leading a person to a life commitment. It is best described as moral and ethical formation, within a liturgical form and structure.

Introduction

The *Ordo Initiationis Christianae Adulorum (OICA)*¹⁷⁶/*Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (OICA)*¹⁷⁷ published in the Latin in 1972, was the response to the call of Vatican II in *Sacrosanctum Concilium* that: “The catechumenate for adults, comprising several distinct steps, is to be restored and to be taken into use at the discretion of the local ordinary. By this, means the time of the catechumenate, which is intended as a period of suitable instruction, may be sanctified by sacred rites to be celebrated at successive intervals of time.”(SC 64)

The impetus for the restoration of the catechumenate had two sources.¹⁷⁸ The first arose from the desire, in the German, French and Belgian Churches, to introduce an elongated form of initiation based on the positive pastoral experience of missionary outreaches in the African Church.¹⁷⁹ The second was the result of the liturgical study of the 1930s to 1950s “being officially recognised by

¹⁷⁶ *Ordo Initiationis Christianae Adulorum: Editio Typica.* (Rome: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1972).

¹⁷⁷ *The Rites of the Catholic Church as Revised by Decree of the Second Vatican Council and Published by Authority of Pope Paul VI.* (New York: Pueblo Pub., 1976). (Official English Translation).

¹⁷⁸ “One of the more striking outcomes of the Council was the renewal of the catechumenate and the rites of adult initiation (SC 64-66). It has been observed that without the discovery of the *Apostolic Tradition* in the late nineteenth century and subsequent studies of scholars like F.X. Funk, Gregory Dix, and Bernard Botte, the revival of the catechumenate mandated by the Constitution and especially the shape it took in the 1972 edition of the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* might not have taken place.” Baldwin, John F., S.J. (2013) Op.cit.p.530.

¹⁷⁹ Why this is “odd” is that the proponent of the restoration of the catechumenate, from the African Pastoral perspective, was Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre. This was the only liturgical change that he proposed “in his pre-conciliar submission” and it is “interesting as it comes from the one who after the Council was to be the most prominent voice of opposition to the liturgical reforms enacted in the Council’s name.” McGrail, Peter. *The Rite of Christian Initiation: Adult Rituals and Roman Catholic Ecclesiology*, (New York: Rutledge, 2016) pp.80-81.

Vatican II”¹⁸⁰ and it being one of the elements to be “integrated into the formation for pastoral ministries...and as a guide for all liturgical reforms” (SC 16, 23).”¹⁸¹

As there was a gap of 1500 years between the practice of the catechumenate in the early church and the restoration at Vatican II, it is important to gain an insight into what was intended in the restoration. This will be done by examining the catechumenate in the early church in its two eras: before and after the Edict of Milan of 313. This section will then examine the instruction which accompanied the OICA of 1976.

The catechumenate had been “a distinctive feature of early Christian initiatory practice and it was recovered in the 20th century”¹⁸², primarily as a result of the study of the *Apostolic Tradition* (discovered in the 1890s) and the travel diary of Egeria to Jerusalem. The catechumenal process can be summarised, with the cautions made by Baldovin, as: “A period of instruction, training, and rituals leading up to the sacramental rites of baptism, anointing, and participation in the Eucharist.the length of the catechumenate varied throughout the period, and we must be cautious about assuming that the same rigour was applied everywhere.”...¹⁸³

It is clear that there were “variations in the practices throughout the Christian world, (but) at the same time there are several common features in the catechetical process.”¹⁸⁴ These were: “An *enrolment of names* of the candidates at the beginning of Lent... (The candidates are given various names all of them with a time of expectancy and a gift to come: *competentes* (seekers), *electi* (chosen), and *photizomenoi* (about to be enlightened))... The candidates have *sponsors*, who are called “mothers” and “fathers” by Egeria... who speak up for them...The candidates undergo *daily exorcisms* which were designed to be terrifying experiences. The *Lenten catechesis* is a lengthy exposition of Christian scripture and faith (and) it is closed to those who are catechumens but have not yet reached the stage of enrolment for baptism. Candidates are formally given the *Creed*, which is ritually handed back to the Bishop shortly before Easter. In some places the same procedure was followed by the *Lord’s Prayer*. A series of lectures, elsewhere called *mystagogy*,¹⁸⁵ were given after baptism and Easter week.”¹⁸⁶

These elements and their order show that while “the actual sacramental ceremonies of Christian initiation took different forms in the various churches ... the ritual is clearly meant to instil a dramatic

¹⁸⁰ Metzger, Marcel and Desclee De Brouwer(trans.) *History of the Liturgy*,(Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press,1997)p.7.

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² Baldovin, John F., SJ. "The Empire Baptized." *The Oxford History of Christian Worship*. Ed. Geoffrey Wainwright and Karen B. Westerfield-Tucker. (New York: Oxford UP, 2006) p.85.

¹⁸³ Ibid.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹⁸⁵ “Among the various sacramental theologies, there is one in particular, known as “mystagogy” that seeks to give a theological explanation not only of the sacramental fact, but of each rite making up the liturgical celebration. The church has always had explanations of the liturgical celebrations. Only at the end of the fourth century, however, did that explanation take on the truly distinctive form of mystagogical catechesis. The phenomenon is an extremely interesting one. Its chief representatives are Ambrose of Milan, Cyril of Jerusalem, John Chrysostom, Theodore of Mopsuestia.” Mazza, E. *Mystagogy*. (New York: Pueblo, 1989) p.ix.

¹⁸⁶ Baldovin, John F., SJ. (2006) Op.cit. p. 88.

sense of transformation in the candidates.” As Baldovin observes “the pattern and its consistency also shows that “in the history of liturgical development, structure outlives meaning.”¹⁸⁷

The same actions were present throughout the Churches, but they were interpreted in different ways and with different motifs in various parts of the early Church community and these ranged from “new birth, to washing away sin, to being reborn in the life, death and resurrection of Christ.”¹⁸⁸

In studying the catechumenate in the early Church as the model for the reform of adult initiation, and the Church’s understanding of initiation in general, the authors have shown that the structure and content of the Catechumenate in the Early Church should be understood within two distinct periods, which are separated by the proclamation of the Edict of Milan of 313. There is the early period in which the Church was not ‘officially tolerated’ and was under the threat of periodic persecution and suppression with the accompanying social implications for converts; and the period after the Edict of Milan where conversion became ‘socially acceptable and even desirable’, with the accompanying issues in the understanding of baptism and the processes of initiation.

2.1. The Catechumenate before the Edict of Milan

The earliest documentary evidence of what was involved in the formation before baptism is provided by *The Didache*, and its approach has been described as “a form of extended ethical instruction.”¹⁸⁹

The instruction contained within the *Didache* is called the ‘Treatise of the two ways (*The Didache* chapters 1 – 6)’ and it consists of two distinct ‘ethics,’ one the “way of life” that leads to God and consists of a life focused on love of God and neighbour and the observance of the commandments; and the other, “the way of death”, the practice of evil, that leads away from God. *The Didache* is very specific about the behaviours and ways of life that display this second way, and the earliest catechesis confronted candidates for baptism with a decisive option emphasising a conversion that involved the whole life of the person, and stressed that it was their behaviour that visibly displayed whether they belonged to the ‘way of life’ or ‘the way of death’.

This was not just a ‘suggested’ approach or an optional orientation for initiation. The ethical link was fundamental and was expressed in the way in which the liturgy and Diakonia, or service of those in need, were inextricably connected. In the *First Apology*, Justin Martyr (165), when discussing the Dominical Eucharistic structure in mid second century Rome, directly links the Sunday celebration of the Eucharist to the collection for needier members of the community: “It was the same president of the liturgical assembly who both lead the prayer of that local church and was responsible for the distribution of goods to those most in need. There is a direct link from the earliest days between worship and Christian action.”¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸⁸ Baldovin, John F., S.J. (2006) op.cit. p. 89.

¹⁸⁹ McGowan, Andrew. *Ancient Christian Worship: Early Church Practices and Social, Historical, and Theological Perspective*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2014) p.146.

¹⁹⁰ Pecklers, Keith F., SJ. Op.cit.p.322.

The second characteristic of the early catechumenate was that the liturgical rites were, experienced in a context in which “the candidate knew little about them until just before or even after, (s) he had received them.”¹⁹¹ The basis of Christian formation was a ‘lived experience’ which was reflected upon and understood after it was being lived; so the formation in this ‘experience’ preceded the liturgical rites; rather than the Rites being prepared by direct catechesis and explanation. It was the scripture and the liturgical rites themselves that proclaimed the message by their structure, content, actions and words. What is the impact of this on Christian moral formation?

Firstly, there is no prescribed curriculum of theological content, to be intellectually obtained; rather, the beliefs and understandings of the Christian community were learned in and through a ‘way of life’. The catechumens were formed to act and live in a certain way. They were called upon to stop their participation in certain practices of the surrounding society, due to the ethical and moral understandings that these practices expressed; and to live out their commitment to the ‘way of life’ with the acceptance of the social consequences of this commitment. The impact of this was all-encompassing as life in Roman society was so integrated that public worship, citizenship and the person’s manner of living¹⁹² were deeply and publically interrelated. “The social nature of conversion and baptism and its linkage into the world of ordinary life is seen in the fact that “astrologers, prostitutes, and gladiators could be refused admission to the catechumenate, but artists (who made pagan images) and public officials (who would be involved in enforcing measures against Christians) also fell at hurdles limiting acceptable professions; aspiring Christians working in these spheres would have to change their livelihood in order to seek baptism.”¹⁹³

Secondly, the characteristic elements of this way of life not only impacted on a person’s standing in Greco- Roman society it also differentiated Christians from Judaism. This is because the understanding of God’s relationship with humanity for Christians, and Jews, was expressed in practices such as the days of gathering, places of worship, the inclusion, or exclusion, of Gentiles and many social/dietary and lifestyle constraints and these were publically regulated. Non-compliance led to exclusion. So such characteristic elements as the early church gathering on the day “of the Lord’s resurrection...every Sunday...the two days of weekly fast, Wednesday and Friday, the welcoming of Gentiles, the violation of dietary laws, the mandate of praying the Our Father three times a day”¹⁹⁴; the distinction between the meeting at dawn and the evening meetings;¹⁹⁵ (due to the imperial edicts forbidding ‘night meetings’) led to the “Christian community developing a certain autonomy.”¹⁹⁶

These understandings are seen in the “catechetical schools, like the one in Alexandria under Origin’s direction in the first half of the third century,”¹⁹⁷ coupled with material from the mid third century

¹⁹¹ Yarnold, E. *The Awe-Inspiring Rites of Initiation*, (2nd ed.), (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1994) p.ix.

¹⁹² Jungmann, Josef A. *The Early Liturgy, to the Time of Gregory the Great. Translated by Francis A. Brunner.* (Notre Dame, IN: U of Notre Dame, 1959) pp.74-75.

¹⁹³ McGowan, Andrew. Op.cit.p.151.

¹⁹⁴ Metzger, Marcel. Op.cit. p.27.

¹⁹⁵ Martos, Joseph. *Doors to the Sacred: A Historical Introduction to Sacraments in the Catholic Church*, (Liguori, Missouri: Liguori Publications, 2014) p.249.

¹⁹⁶ Metzger, Marcel. Op.cit.p.32.

¹⁹⁷ Metzger, Marcel. Op.cit.p.34.

(250s). From these sources it is possible to see the “way in which they created or modified certain institutions,”¹⁹⁸ from within Judaic, Greek and Roman society to Christian usage.

It is this combination of a way of life and the teaching contained in an “oral tradition” of preaching, with a formation that is based on what is seen, lived and heard rather than read, that was called the “apostolic tradition”. This is clearly seen in the document of the same name, *The Apostolic Tradition*, a document probably of Syrian or Alexandrian origin. *The Apostolic Tradition* shows the import of this oral tradition, which is passed from one apostle to the next, and: “The contents of this document show that, at this time of oral tradition, it seemed useful to collect the regulations concerning certain liturgical institutions since it treats a succession of the subjects of ordination, Eucharist, baptism, synaxes, and prayer.”¹⁹⁹

The Judaic origins of many of the practices, especially the last four, enable the development of Christian understandings to be identified by comparing the original with the parallels and the departures of Christian from Jewish practice and the biblical liturgical traditions. This is reinforced by the ongoing use of the Scriptures and the imagery of the Jewish Community, in the liturgy and self-understanding of the Church.

However while seeing this ‘community’ both identifying and separating from its Judaic origins it is also clear that within the ecclesia itself, believers from a pagan background were welcomed with the resultant need to: “Provide a more thorough teaching for the new members and especially instruction of the Bible... (As) these new converts were imbued with a religious and philosophical culture often very sophisticated but foreign to biblical categories.”²⁰⁰

This tells us that the biblical tradition was central to the Church’s self-understanding, but: “It is clear from Ignatius of Antioch, Justin c.152 and the *Didascalia* “(that) the focus is on the Sunday assemblies.”²⁰¹

It is in this context, of the Scriptures being proclaimed and explained in community, that: “the focus again is on both preserving “the assembly of the Church” (*Didascalia* 13, 135 – 136) and reading from “the memoirs of the apostles the writings of the prophets (Justin Martyr *First Apology* 6 -7.3; 8)” and then to “celebrate God’s Eucharist and praise God (Ignatius of Antioch *Letter to the Ephesians* 5.3; 13 .1)” and “to hear the word of life and be nourished with the divine food which abides forever.” *Didascalia* (13, 135 – 136)”²⁰²

So there has been identified a clear pattern of gathering, and developing and maintaining the community by reading both from the Old Testament and the letters handed down from the Apostles, followed by the celebration of the Eucharist. This order is not a construct of Metzger’s; it is reinforced by extensive quotes from the *First Apology* of Justin Martyr.

¹⁹⁸ Metzger, Marcel. Op cit. p.32.

¹⁹⁹ Metzger, Marcel. Op.cit.p.34.

²⁰⁰ Metzger, Marcel. Op.cit.p.32.

²⁰¹ Metzger, Marcel. Op.cit.p.36.

²⁰² Metzger, Marcel. Op.cit.pp.36-37.

The *Apostolic Tradition* is a major source for understanding the formation of the Catechumenate is a foundational document and witness to the form of the Early Church and heavily influenced the OICA as reintroduced by Vatican II.

Metzger says: "It is *the Apostolic Tradition* that gives us the best information on baptism. In chapters 15 to 21, it collected the elements of several baptismal rituals; however we do not know in what communities they were in use."²⁰³

Metzger emphasises in his discussion of the preparation for baptism, the developing nature of formation in the catechumenate, that while: "The writings of apostolic times give little emphasis to the preparation for baptism, the documents of the second and third century attests to a well-organised catechumenate."²⁰⁴

The central element of the catechumenate is that it is a process, a 'way' of formation rather than a 'curriculum' of content.

The Apostolic Tradition assigns to the catechumenate a three-year duration in two stages, each being ushered in by an examination of the candidate." The first part of the process calls for an in-depth inquiry in respect of the motivation and moral life of the person: "Those who come forward for the first time to hear the word shall first be brought to the teachers before all the people arrive, and shall be questioned about their reason for coming to the faith. And those who have brought them provide witness about them, whether they are capable of hearing the word. They should be questioned about their state of life: If they have a wife? Is he the slave of a believer? (Chapter 15)"²⁰⁵

This inquiry was "conducted by the teachers in charge of catechesis. The candidates are presented on the basis of trust on the part of the persons who must vouch for them."²⁰⁶

The inquiry focuses on the reasons for the person's conversion, on the person's civic status, especially their profession, and outlines a long list of traits and activities which are incompatible with the Christian faith.

Metzger points out that: "No information is provided about the content of the teaching given during the three years of preparation. In the community, the catechumens form a group by themselves, apart from the faithful. They do not receive the kiss of peace. On the other hand, after the catechetical meetings, the teacher prays and lays hands over the catechumens."²⁰⁷

There is however some insight into how this occurs. Firstly, there is the central role of the sermon. McGowan says that while there may not have been a formal catechetical structure, it is important that the sermon should not be seen as a 'specific literary form', or 'as focused on core kerygma' but rather should be understood as "a conversation". So formation would have taken place in a discussion, a reflection which McGowan characterises as a "collective, dialogical inspiration."²⁰⁸ This

²⁰³ Metzger, Marcel. Op.cit.p.46.

²⁰⁴ Ibid.

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

²⁰⁷ Metzger, Marcel. Op.cit.p.47.

²⁰⁸ McGowan, Andrew. Op.cit.p.75.

form arose because; in the early years of the gathering of the εχχλ.εσια the gathering was a dinner, an αγαπε. So the formation initially took place in a situation and ethos where the sermon took the form of a 'dinner conversation', with the host taking a leading and directional part; as would be expected in a community formed in the pattern of the αγαπε/dinner gathering.

The second sign of the way of formation is revealed in a reflection upon the exchange of the holy kiss. "The fact of the Christian's kiss was not as remarkable as who was doing it."²⁰⁹

The kiss, in both public and private realms, was only shared among those who were in familial relationships. So the exchange of a kiss within a Christian community is saying that: "Membership in the Christian community brought believers into a relationship like that of family members... It was the reworking of an existing practice or convention, for the new purposes of a genuinely new social grouping."²¹⁰

The special nature of this 'holy kiss' helps to understand the way of formation.

The holy kiss is exchanged with: "those at the time of baptism... with the reconciled penitent, the newly baptised and among those continuing to celebrate the Eucharist... the kiss given to a new Bishop after his ordination... After prayers concluding a catechetical assembly... The newly baptised after the post baptismal anointing... Those baptised also share it after prayers... Catechumens (those undergoing instruction before baptism), however, did not kiss, because their kiss, or what lay behind it – physically or spiritually – was not yet pure."²¹¹

During their formation, the kiss was not exchanged with the catechumen. It was 'saved' for after their public commitment. The catechumens therefore lived within the orbit of the community, but were not wholly included for the period of three years. At the end of this time, close to the beginning of Lent "The second phase of the catechumenate" began which was "the immediate preparation for baptism. But there is no indication of its duration. It opens with a new inquiry and then those who are to receive baptism are chosen"²¹² The entry into this final preparation also has a clear moral focus. The *Apostolic Tradition* says: "let their life be examined: have they lived good lives when they were catechumens? Have they aided the widows? Have they visited the sick? Have they done every kind of good work? And when those who brought them, their witness, say yes to each: "he/she has," let them hear the gospel."*(Apostolic Tradition chapter 20)*²¹³

The candidates then experience exorcism, daily, "by the laying on of hands."²¹⁴

When is baptism to take place? "Baptism took place on Sunday... But *the Apostolic Tradition* does not establish an explicit connection between baptism and the feast of Easter."²¹⁵

The distinctive nature of the place of the catechumenate within the community and its importance is reinforced by the fact in the third and fourth century that the mystery of the Eucharist is only

²⁰⁹ McGowan, Andrew. Op.cit.p.55.

²¹⁰ Ibid.

²¹¹ McGowan, Andrew. Op.cit.p.57.

²¹² Metzger, Marcel. Op.cit.p.47.

²¹³ Ibid.

²¹⁴ Ibid.

²¹⁵ Metzger, Marcel. Op.cit.p.47.

explained to the newly baptised they have experienced it. “The catechetical preacher had no need to explain the Mass of the catechumens (liturgy of the word), because, as the name implies, his hearers had long frequented it. It consisted of scriptural readings, Psalms, sermon and prayers, after which the catechumens were dismissed. Then began the Eucharist proper, the principal parts of which were: the preparation of the gifts, the lavabo, the kiss of peace, Eucharistic prayer, the communion”²¹⁶.

The outline of the weekly pattern of life in the Christian community shows that this structural pattern reflects the ‘normal’ understanding of what was involved. While accepting that there was definite fluidity in the pattern of Christian gathering it indicates a division between the Liturgy of the Word and that of the Eucharist. McGowan, supported by Martos in *Doors of the Sacred*,²¹⁷ further hold that, in the early tradition of the community there was a pattern of meeting on Sunday both in the morning, for prayer, and in the evening, in private homes, for a meal. They suggest that the prayer and reflection on the scriptures was in the morning, and the meal and the Eucharist, limited to the baptised, was in the evening, and that it was only as numbers increased, and reclining became impossible at the evening ‘meal’, that the reception of the “sanctified elements,” independently of the banquet, came to be acceptable and therefore allowed for “changes in the Christian meal”.²¹⁸

There is evidence that by the time of Tertullian, at least in Carthage: “The Eucharistic food came to be received primarily at morning gatherings...not at evening banquets where only a fraction of the community could assemble.”²¹⁹

For Tertullian the evening meal was still the most important and primary assembly, but had ceased to be the full agape, the “Lord’s dinner party” / “God’s Banquet”; and, by the time of Cyprian, a half century later, “The significance of the evening banquet for the whole Church had declined...and...the morning distribution of the Eucharist was the primary meeting.”²²⁰

Metzger says: “we recognise in this testimony the organisation of the Eucharistic celebration as it was henceforth transmitted, with the following elements in this order: the liturgy of the Word, the readings and preaching; general intercessions; the kiss of peace and the preparation of the bread and wine; Eucharistic prayer, with the Amen of the assembly (which is said standing); communion, which is also sent to those absent.”²²¹

It is important to note that the structure of the Eucharist has followed and been formed by the practices of the catechumenate. The formation in ‘the way of life’ has had a lasting impact on the form of the Sunday Liturgy.

It is clear then that there was variety in the structure of Christian worship and in community life as a whole, including in Christian initiation, but it was within this complex matrix that the “process of developing conversion, or, more positively, of spiritual growth”²²² occurred. Conversion was

²¹⁶ Yarnold Op.cit.p.40.

²¹⁷ Martos, Joseph. *Doors to the Sacred: A Historical Introduction to Sacraments in the Catholic Church*,(Liguori, Missouri: Liguori Publications, 2014).

²¹⁸ McGowan, Andrew. Op.cit. p.48.

²¹⁹ McGowan, Andrew. Op.cit.p.49.

²²⁰ Ibid.

²²¹ Metzger, Marcel. Op.cit.p.40.

²²² Yarnold Op.cit.p.x.

understood as being both personal but most especially “a progressive deepening of the candidate’s membership of the Christian community...Initiation.”²²³ It was this deepening of involvement in the life and activity of the community that was understood as the formative experience; “an experience calculated to sink into the depths of the candidates psyche and to produce a lasting transformation there.”²²⁴

There is therefore a deep unity in Christian formation between the liturgical celebration and the formation of the individual, within a community. Formation was to be active at all levels of the person’s life; spiritual, psychological and social and was therefore transformative of the person’s character, and their behaviour, in other words moral.

To understand this parallel of moral formation and the processes of initiation it is vital to see the staged nature of initiation.

Initiation, and moral formation, begins with a period of inquiry. (Pre-catechumenate). The liturgical symbol of this is twofold: the gift of the Way of Christ by the giving of the Scripture enacted in a first acceptance of the gospel accompanied by the signing with the cross, and secondly, the gift of a companion (sponsor), someone who walks with and accompanies the individual.

There is one other element that impacts on our understanding of formation; it is the need to recognise the element of secrecy in respect of the “Mystery” at the heart of the Catechumenate. Yarnold in his study, which focuses primarily on the post Constantinian experience, speaks of the practices that ‘had endured’ and which therefore speak of the earlier practice.

The first are those that arose from the secrecy that surrounded the liturgical life of the church. Secrecy and the protection of the community was a characteristic of the pre-Constantinian Church. Yarnold says that: “Even before he gives in his name for baptism, the catechumen has heard mysterious hints of great secrets and privileges that lie before him. The almost daily fast, the daily instructions and moral exhortations, the repeated exorcisms, the recurrent prayers, the constant attentions of his sponsor have all been focused on his impending baptism, and all have conspired to tune him to a pitch of excited anticipation.”²²⁵ Formation occurs in such a manner that the fullness of the mystery does not (should not?) be revealed in the first encounter.

The second insight arises from another name that was used for the catechumen through to the fourth century. They were called “a hearer (audiens, auditor)”²²⁶. The original formative process was based upon listening! Not obeying, not conforming, rather formation through listening.

The third element, which became an ongoing tension as numbers of converts overwhelmed the Church in the fourth century, was that in the early Church it was understood, that “baptism involved such a radical change in life that one would not receive it until one felt completely ready”²²⁷

²²³ Ibid.

²²⁴ Ibid.

²²⁵ Yarnold.Op.cit.p.59.

²²⁶ Yarnold Op.cit.p.6 quoting Augustine *Sermon 132.1* (PL 38.734); Tertullian *de paenitentia*, 6.14 – 15; Ambrose, M: 20.

²²⁷ Ibid. Quoting the *Apostolic Tradition*:17.1

2.2. The Catechumenate after the edict of Milan

The traditions and practices of the catechumenate were so constitutive of Christian life that they didn't die or disappear when it became acceptable and publically 'safe' to be a Christian after the edict of Milan;(313 CE) in fact the fourth and fifth centuries have been called 'the golden age of the catechumenate and baptismal liturgy.' However, there were changes in practice and the approach the Church took to the catechumenate.

Firstly there was the impact of numbers. There were numerous conversions to the Christian faith once it became acceptable. About the year 400, it is estimated, that in a single year, there were as many as 1000 candidates for baptism during the Easter Vigil in large cities such as Antioch and Constantinople.

Secondly, many Christians were still baptised as adults, but as families became Christian, entry into the catechumenate often occurred in infancy, and its duration could last a lifetime.

Thirdly, there is clear evidence of changes in the rites of reception into the catechumenate. The practice of entering the catechumenate in infancy meant there was clearly no choice on the part of the person entering the catechumenate, an element which was quite clear in the entry as an adult. Augustine tells us of his journey which started as a new born: "And I've been signed with the sign of his Cross and seasoned with salt as I came new from the womb of my mother (*Confessions* 1.11)"

Fourthly, and in a change from the earlier times: "During Lent there was "an extensive preparation for the elect, the candidates...but the whole community was associated with them" and there was a much more structured and identified content to the catechesis seen in : "the following program for this catechesis:

- explanation of Sacred Scripture;
- exposition of the resurrection on the faith;
- exposition of the baptismal Creed, article by article, and on Palm Sunday the catechumen recited the creed that had being explained to them
- There were scrutinies: the verification of whether the devil still dominates the candidates and this would be could be judged by their behaviour".²²⁸

But as McGowan has said "what is most striking to the modern reader is the absence, in the pre-baptismal catechesis, of information about baptism itself."²²⁹

And lastly, there was the impact on the Sunday liturgy itself of the Catechumenate. This is most clearly seen in the formularies of the three-Lenten "Sunday liturgies" which show the Lenten Sundays to be dominated by the catechumenate with the Gospels of the Samaritan woman, the man born blind, and the resurrection of Lazarus preceded by readings from the old Testament dealing with the waters of Meribah, purification by water, and resurrection." But there is also the impact on

²²⁸ Metzger, Marcel. Op.cit.p.92.

²²⁹ McGowan, Andrew. Op.cit.p.170.

the structures of welcome, reflection, and the dismissal of the catechumenate and the clear distinction between the 'Mass of the Catechumenate' and the Liturgy of the Eucharist. These distinctions had a continuing impact on the structure of 'The Liturgy', particularly as celebrated in the Western Latin Church.

The sources we have provide two other understandings of the nature of formation in the catechumenate at this time.

Firstly, there was much reflection on the meaning of the term catechumen and that the term "catechumen" is derived from the Greek word "Eco".²³⁰ The formation, even when there were large numbers, was not just to be heard and assented to. John Chrysostom is very clear, when he says that the nature of the formation is that the instruction received "was not only for their ears, but should resonate in their minds and find expression in their lives."²³¹

Secondly, Egeria, in her account of the preparation for baptism in Jerusalem at the end of the fourth century, emphasises how the formation involved accompaniment, and a strong link to Christian living: "Then the candidates are brought in one by one, the men with their "fathers", the women with their "mothers". Then the Bishop one by one asks their neighbours: "is he a good living man? Does he respect his parents? Is he a drunkard or untrustworthy?" He asked them like this about every vice, at least the more serious ones. If the Bishop finds the candidate is free from all these faults about which he has questioned the witnesses, he writes down the candidate's name with his own hand." (Egeria *Peregrinatio* 45)

There are two aspects of formation to be emphasised. There is someone who walks with those being formed. They are a witness to the 'actions' in the life of the catechumen, and, they are co-responsible for the decision of the Bishop, they provide the evidence of a Christian life. Secondly, formation is directed toward a clear change of life, based on a moral formation directed toward a distinctive Christian way of life and it is the 'way of life' that is understood as the outward sign of lived Christian commitment and was the prerequisite for liturgical incorporation into the body of Christ.

This is reinforced by Theodore of Mopsuestia, who says, when discussing the catechumen, that: "the official inquiries into the candidate's way of life from his "sponsor"."²³²

How is all of this to be achieved?

During the Lenten period there was the practice of the catechumen submitting to a series of scrutinies which focused upon "self-searching and repentance." The candidate's focus was on the way of life being strengthened in all that is "upright, strong, and good." (Nn 25, 154)²³³

²³⁰ The online New Testament Greek Lexicon - New American Standard

<https://www.biblestudytools.com/lexicons/greek/nas/> reinforces this point with meanings for εχο including:

- To have (hold) possession of the mind (refers to alarm, agitating emotions, etc.)
- to hold one's self or find one's self so and so, to be in such or such a condition
- to adhere or cling to
- to be closely joined to a person or a thing"

²³¹ Yarnold Op.cit.p.7 quoting John Chrysostom in his baptismal homily 2.1

²³² BH 1 (12)

So if there is this strong focus on the life and actions of the catechumen what is the instruction which is taking place to support this formation and what is its content?

Ambrose speaks of the “daily moral discourse when the history of the patriarchs or the precepts of the prophets were read.”²³⁴ This discourse was in addition to formation in prayer, reflection on the content of the creed, and understandings from the Scriptures read in the community; but it has a clear focus on being a moral discourse!

The Lenten preparation also used external signs that were indicative of being engaged in final preparation: there was fasting: “Your food should be frugal, without intemperance or self-indulgence. Your drink should be more sparing for fear drunkenness should catch you unawares. Keep your body chaste so as to be fit to wear the crown.”²³⁵

The fasting and abstinence are outward signs, of an inner change of heart and a focused approach in all aspects of the catechumens’ life. Accompanying this was a period of deep reflection on the state of the person’s sinfulness and the seeking of forgiveness. The final Lenten preparation is not an external singular/‘once off’ event. This was a period of moral discernment, deep self-reflection and with an honesty which reflected an ongoing element of Christian life, that was to be lived weekly and then annually by the whole community. Cyril of Jerusalem, John Chrysostom, Ambrose, and Tertullian, all make direct links between confession of sin and preparation for baptism.²³⁶ At the conclusion of this process baptism is not solely an externalised liturgical rite; it is the celebration of an extended period of discernment and honesty, formation and accompaniment, which is celebrated solemnly in the Triduum.

There are other indications of the extended and ‘active’ nature of this preparation for baptism in the discussion of the anointings that accompany it. The anointings are seen as a preparation for the moral life: “you are rubbed with oil like an athlete, Christ’s athlete, as though in preparation for an earthly wrestling match and you agreed to take on your opponent.” Ambrose (*Sermon 1 .4*)

Secondly, in Ambrose’s discussion of the prayer over the waters of baptism, there is also a direct parallel made between the blessing of the water, and its transformation to the site in which “the Trinity may become present in the water” (S i.18). The Fathers make direct parallels that just as the bread and wine, by the work of the Trinity, become the body and blood of Christ, and the chrism, after the breathing of the Holy Spirit is not just ointment but the place of Christ’s grace so too “a transformation takes place when the Holy Spirit is called down upon the baptismal water.” (BH 3.9)

That which is ordinary: bread, wine, ointment and water, by the calling of the Holy Spirit becomes the very presence of God, the bread and wine the body and blood of Christ, the transforming water: the place of Christ’s death and resurrection, the chrism the place in which the choice of God is made of His sons and daughters. So too, in the waters of baptism, the work which has been done in the formation; the investigation and the accompanying comes to a point at which, by the gift of the Holy Spirit, in an act of Thanksgiving, commitment and unification with Christ, the person becomes Christ(ian).

²³³ Yarnold Op.cit.p.11.

²³⁴ Yarnold Op.cit.p.12.

²³⁵ Ambrose *De Elia et Ieiunio* 21.79 (PL 14.726)

²³⁶ Yarnold Op.cit.p.16.

The process of formation therefore by the opening of eyes, ears, heart, and by committing to discernment and to seeking understanding can come to this point. However it takes openness to the Holy Spirit and a taking on of the cross of Christ, to move to the deepest, richest form of humanity, to become Christ.

Where does all this take place? Within the liturgy, and on a regular, weekly basis.

The importance of the formative nature of the readings and the sermon, the catechumenal aspect of the Sunday Liturgy, is reinforced in the fact, in most of the Fourth and Fifth century church,²³⁷ that the entrance ritual was very simple, almost non-existent; its purpose being simply to get the ministers into the midst of the community so that the reading and the formation can be started. Both John Chrysostom and Augustine describe the opening of the celebration as being very short with the Bishop entering the church, going to his place, and greeting the assembly (“the Lord (or peace) be with you!”). The readings then began immediately. The *Apostolic Constitutions* indicate that the readings were chosen from the whole Bible and in the following order: Old Testament, Epistles, and Gospel. There was variation in local practice in respect of the number, order and source: “Other sources specify that there were three, five, or seven readings and even twelve readings during vigils. As for preaching, what is said about the contribution of several presbyters and the Bishop corresponds to Egeria’s testimony that often all the presbyters and the Bishop would preach, and sometimes on each reading!!”²³⁸

The importance of the readings therefore can be seen both in their number and extent. This underlines that it was in the liturgy that the instruction took place.

After the readings, there was also a structured response and application: “We know of two forms of general intercessions. First, a series of diaconate prayers (up to 16 or 18) with the repeated responses by the assembly (Kyrie eleison) and a concluding prayer, as seen in the *Apostolic Constitutions* and the Byzantine liturgy. Secondly, the deacon’s call to prayer is followed by silent prayer on the part of the assembly and by a prayer said by the Priest; this form was in use in Rome and North Africa, and a witness to it remains in the present Roman liturgy on Good Friday.”²³⁹

The other interesting element to highlight is the nature of the reflections or homilies. Metzger identifies these levels of content in the homily: “Commentary is moral when it takes the rites as an occasion to formulate rules of behaviour. It is liturgical when it explains the internal coherence of the rites. It is mystical when it fosters a personal relationship with God which is not only on the plane of knowledge.”²⁴⁰

This displays an awareness of the different levels at which the sermon or commentary is to impact, and at the same time shows the interrelationship between all three elements so that what is seen in the internal pattern and coherence of the rite itself is to develop and foster both the ‘personal relationship with God’ and ‘the ‘rules of behaviour’. Liturgically, this growth in relationship always

²³⁷ It is suggested that elements, associated with the Imperial Court, what we see ultimately in the Roman Liturgy and from there, in later centuries, throughout the West were limited to Rome and the Imperial court. The rest of the Church knew this simplicity. The ‘imperial’ additions are primarily the processions with their incense, candles and chants, and the development of vestments beyond the ‘alb’ the being clothed with Christ.

²³⁸ Metzger, Marcel. Op.cit.p.80.

²³⁹ Ibid.

²⁴⁰ Metzger, Marcel. Op.cit.p.87.

happens after the word has been received; broken open and, explained, and this shows the pattern that it is only after the homily, the process of discernment, is the community led to the point of prayer, the place at which the community is called on to commit and act!

Liturgically this is all celebrated using the central symbols of baptism, following Paul in the letter to the Romans, focus on becoming a new person, by dying and burying the old person and, in and with Christ, rising to the fullness of new life.

This unity with Christ, and its communitarian nature, is further expressed in the anointings and the prayer over the chrism in which it is announced to the baptised that the church: “Anoints you with the chrism of salvation, so that, united with his people, you may remain for ever a member of Christ who is priest, prophet and King”.

All aspects of the Christian life, be they the liturgical proclamation of the good news, or active engagement in the living of the gospel in the world, are not individual they are communitarian, “united with his people”, but more, they are lived out by being one in Christ. It is Christ who is acting; it is Christ whose action the community becomes part of.²⁴¹

Thirdly, Chrysostom in his reflection on the putting on of the white garment, as an external sign of this commitment, reinforces this understanding when he links it to the manner in which the baptised lives. He says: “Now the neophytes carry Christ himself, not on their clothes, but dwelling in their souls with his Father and the Holy Spirit has they have descended on them there. They are even more obliged, then, to prove themselves reliable, and show everyone by their scrupulous conduct and careful lives that they wear the imperial badge.” ACW 4.17

What is the badge of being filled with the Holy Spirit and the in dwelling of the Trinity? It is “scrupulous conduct”, it is the moral life.

This whole ethical formation and development has occurred before baptism and it is only now, after baptism, after sealing and after the gift of the Holy Spirit that the person enters into the church and “joins the rest of the community in the celebration of the Eucharist.”²⁴²

This link to the ‘lived Christianity’ and the understanding that the moral life is an essential part of initiation was reinforced by Ambrose in his discussion of the liturgy when he said that the newly baptised, while welcomed to Eucharist, were not able to bring the gifts to the altar or participate in the offertory procession. This was because “this ceremony can be performed only by people who know its meaning and have become established as Christians.”²⁴³

What does it mean to be established as Christians?

It can only mean that the person’s external life having been seen as conforming to all these elements which have found expression in the preparation and the acts of initiation, were found ready to become full members of the body of Christ, the Church, and this happens by being baptised and

²⁴¹ Yarnold points out that the OICA has not included a post baptismal washing of the feet as Ambrose practised. This also could be of interest to us in the sense of the implication on the nature of Christian life as servant, humble, one of humility and willing to serve as being constituent of the baptismal life.

²⁴² Yarnold Op.cit.p.38.

²⁴³ Yarnold, Op.cit.p.40.

welcomed to Eucharist. A person becomes fully human, fully Christian, fully alive, by becoming part of the Eucharistic community.

As has been outlined there are signs that in the earliest practice of the church there was a formal and clear distinction between the liturgy of the word and the liturgy of the Eucharist, accompanied by secrecy and exclusion.

Something happens between the liturgy of the word and the beginning of the Eucharistic Rite!

What is it? In the liturgical rites, it is baptism/confirmation. Becoming one in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, being anointed with the Holy Spirit, being forgiven of one's sin.

There is a very clear outline of both the event and the understanding of the community in Metzger's discussion of the liturgy of baptism. He says that there was a uniformity of approach to baptism from the earliest times and this did not change after the edict of Milan. He says: "Several writers of the second and third centuries allude to baptism, (such as Tertullian) who wrote a brief Treatise on the subject but without much description of the ceremonial. Similarly Justin wrote before him: those who are persuaded and believe that the things we teach and say are true, and promised that they can live accordingly, are instructed to pray and besiege God with fasting for the remission of their sins, while we pray and fast along with them. Then they are brought by us to where there is water, and are reborn in the same manner of rebirth by which we ourselves were reborn... They are then washed in the water in the name of God the Father, Master of all, and of our Saviour Jesus Christ and of the Holy Spirit... This washing is called illumination, since those who learn these things are enlightened within."²⁴⁴

2.3. The Content of the Catechumenate after the Edict of Milan and "the peace of the Church."

To move now from the process of the Catechumenate to its content.

As has already been seen there are not many 'catechetical' sources which focus on the fourth and fifth century catechumenate however those that exist are rich in the extent and depth of the material they contain. The sources exist in the form of: "church orders, homilies, catechesis, letters and stories."²⁴⁵ The changing nature of both the make-up of the Church and its place in society had a deep impact on the understanding and approach they display. The priority of a 'change of life' and a delayed 'explanation' and admission to the full liturgical life of the Church is impacted in the fourth and fifth centuries by the many conversions and the large number of adult candidates for baptism.

This was accompanied by the impact of the change in political and social status of the Church on the liturgical life and the accompanying catechetical patterns of the Church. The sources display a greater flexibility in respect of the candidates and who will be "admitted to the assembly" some are

²⁴⁴ Metzger, Marcel. Op.cit.p.45.

²⁴⁵ Metzger, Marcel. Op.cit. p. 67.

there “even before the inscription into the catechumenate.”²⁴⁶ This led to the clear practice of the catechumen being sent from the assembly at the end of the Liturgy of the Word. The catechumens were welcome to listen to the Word, hence their being referred to as “Hearers” and when the time came for the community to pray, the whole congregation stood and “the Deacon shall ascend the high place and proclaim: “let none of the hearers remain! Let none of the unbelievers remain!”

So there is a three-fold distinction within those assembled on a Sunday. There are those members of society who are welcome to come and ‘to hear’; there are the catechumens; and then there are the baptised.

Once the ‘hearer’ has been inscribed as a catechumen, and therefore “admitted to the preparation for baptism, they could remain catechumens for several years, and often beyond the three-year minimum. For this reason, the catechumens formed an important group in the assemblies. They were seated with the penitents and victims of demoniac possession”²⁴⁷ and, “because of the influx of converts, a very important portion of the assemblies was devoted to teaching.”²⁴⁸

These elements had an impact on the liturgical life of the Church. There were elements added to the pattern seen in the *Apostolic Tradition*. There is a clear emphasis on elements such as “readings, psalmody, preaching, kiss of peace, general intercessions and the concluding prayer, bringing of the gifts, Eucharistic prayer, and communion.”²⁴⁹ There is also the addition, due to Imperial approval, to the liturgy of ‘imperial or societal’ customs evidenced in the addition of processions, incense, position and rank, vesture and chant. All of these reflect the impact of the change in social position of the Church and its link to Imperial patronage, but many are the impact of such simple elements as the size of the place of gathering, the time required to enter and exit, the positioning of those who are members of the Body and those becoming such; and the external signs of unity required when a larger community gathered in several places in the city.

So what has been learned? “Across the centuries but especially in the early period, Christians in different places ... have taken a wide range of approaches to the universal challenge of instructing and initiation new converts, forming the eschatological community through table fellowship, commissioning community leaders for ministries ...(and have left us with)a huge reservoir of texts, practices and theologies.”²⁵⁰

While most of these sources have been in respect of the Eucharist, ministry, ordination and reconciliation, there were enough sources for Vatican II to call for, and initiate the reintroduction of the Catechumenate, as the way of formation in Church life, in the form of the OICA.

2.4. The OICA

The restoration of the Rites of initiation was one of the specific reforms called for by Vatican II. To understand this reform normal practice is to turn to the official documents of the Church for

²⁴⁶ Metzger, Marcel. Op.cit.p.70.

²⁴⁷ Metzger, Marcel. Op.cit.p.71.

²⁴⁸ Ibid.

²⁴⁹ Metzger, Marcel. Op.cit.p.80.

²⁵⁰ Jeffery, P., Obl.S.B.Op.cit.p.354.

information. It is interesting that there is a scarcity of texts or Instructions in respect of the restored Rite of the Catechumenate, or the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, or Christian Initiation in general, and those that are present are difficult to locate.

A search of the Vatican website for: “ Ordo Initiationis Christianae Adultorum, Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (R.C.I.A.) Editio Typica, Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis 1972” the official Vatican citation of the document, offers only one link, and that to the General Directory for Catechesis of 1997.

The one place, in which *the Instructions* are clearly written, is in the volumes of *The Rites*, published in 1976. But reprints, separate instructions, and searches using the usual electronic search engines lead to a remarkable scarcity of ‘hits’; either in the sources of the ancient Church or in reflection upon the revised rites, or in the academic literature.

This observation could raise a number of important questions to be explored in respect of the promulgation and acceptance of this fundamental reform of the Council; however, that is not the purpose of this exercise.

Rather, the starting point is to reiterate the great call of the Vatican II:

“64. The catechumenate for adults, comprising several distinct steps, is to be restored and to be taken into use at the discretion of the local ordinary²⁵¹. By this, means the time of the catechumenate, which is intended as a period of suitable instruction, may be sanctified by sacred rites to be celebrated at successive intervals of time.

65. In mission lands, it is found that some of the peoples already make use of initiation rites. Elements from these, when capable of being adapted to Christian ritual, may be admitted along with those already found in Christian tradition, according to the norm laid down in Art. 37-40, of this *Constitution*.

66. Both the rites for the baptism of adults are to be revised: not only the simpler rite but also the more solemn one, which must take into account the restored catechumenate. A special Mass "for the conferring of baptism" is to be inserted into the Roman Missal.”(SC 64-66)

It is with these paragraphs as a starting point and the ideas seen in the life of the Church in the first five centuries, echoing in our ears, that this exercise will proceed to read the text of the *Rites of the Christian Initiation of Adults*, to seek a form and content for the formation of the followers of the Lord in the “Way of Life”, as officially held by the post Vatican II Church, if not to be found in universal practice.

The call for the reintroduction of the OICA in its ‘foundational form’ was clear so what were the documents that were produced in response to this call?

²⁵¹ This is a phrase that is often quoted by the clergy and Bishops in the discussion of the importance of the ‘catechumenal’ model to influence, not just the liturgical, but all aspects of the Church’s life.

They are: the *Instruction on Initiation*²⁵², and *The Instructions for the Rite of Christian initiation of Adults*.²⁵³ These are the 'sources' which constitute the guidance for the formation of adults entering the Church and which provide the requirements, processes and 'order', of such.

The first observation is that the Preface to the *Book of the Rites* includes an outline of the history of liturgical reform and revisions: "Since the edition of Pope Paul V, in 1614."²⁵⁴ It is in this context that *The Rites* that are included in this volume are specifically framed as being: "...in response to the directives of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council."²⁵⁵

Then with a clear reference to *Inter Oecumenici*, the preface outlines the reasons for Vatican II's reform of the liturgical rites and texts, with the primary aim being outlined as: "To foster the formation of the faithful and that pastoral activity of which the liturgy is the summit and source."²⁵⁶

To this is added a clear direction that the proper implementation of the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* it is to be achieved by the formation of those who follow the Lord.

What is to the initial understanding of "formation"?

The creation of mature men and women, understanding the Gospel and the life in the Holy Spirit; who are formed, 'shaped,' instructed and capable of understanding and putting into practice, the "pastoral activity", of applying the words and deeds of the Lord to the activities of life. In other words, being enabled to make commitments and to act on such.

Moreover, there is a 'cornerstone' on which to build the understanding of how this liturgical enablement is to be made. It is the linking of the liturgy to the formation and pastoral activity which is outlined in the first paragraphs of the Preface of this document. It quotes *Sacrosanctum Concilium* 14: "...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" (SC 14)

The restoration starts from the presupposition that the formation of the faithful, and the applications that will impact on all pastoral activity, will be characterised by the full and active participation of all the people, and what is more, that the liturgy is the primary, and indispensable source of such formation.

The source of the true Christian spirit, and therefore of those elements needed for moral beings to make decisions and act, is to be found in the involvement of a full and actively participatory 'people', the whole community, and the utilization of the form offered by the liturgy: expressed in its Rites, and the texts given for guidance and formation.

There is one other statement made in the Preface which directs our thought. The liturgy is to be a source of instruction, and this is underlined by the quoting of *Sacrosanctum Concilium* 33: "Although

²⁵² *The Rites*: Op.cit.pp.3ff.

²⁵³ *The Rites*: Op.cit.pp.13ff.

²⁵⁴ *The Rites*: Op.cit.p.vii.

²⁵⁵ Ibid.

²⁵⁶ *Instruction on the proper implementation of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (inter Oecumenici)*, (September 26, 1964) n.5.

the liturgy “is principally the worship of the divine Majesty, it likewise contains much instruction for the faithful.”²⁵⁷

What follows is a general summary of the principles of the reform of Vatican II. These principles are: the centrality of Scripture which is to be used to understand and form the life of the Christian, both as an individual and community. Secondly, the reinforcement of the call to active participation, both liturgically and in the life of the community, social and in the service of those in need.

There is contained therefore at the heart of the formation of the individual and community a communal vision. It is not ‘authoritarian,’ nor is it ‘clerical’ or ‘hierarchical;’ as its primary orientation is participatory, communitarian and active.

The preface then provides the guidelines for the renewal of the Rites of initiation.

The key words are that the: “Restoration of the catechumenate” is intended “as a period of suitable instruction.”²⁵⁸ What we have learned from the study of the early Catechumenate is to impact as it is that practice which is to be restored.

There are also insights to be gained from the comments made when discussing the Rite of Confirmation. The Rite of Confirmation is not to be purely spiritual or liturgical; it is rather to be framed to the formation of the person and to action, with properly ordered deeds. This is underlined by the linkages made to the Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium*: “...reborn as sons of God, they must profess before men the faith they have received from God through the Church,”²⁵⁹ and, “...as true witnesses of Christ, (they are) more strictly obliged to spread the faith by word and deed”.²⁶⁰

The formation of the Christian is ultimately directed toward ‘action’ and ‘deeds’ and the spreading of the faith which will be achieved by the unity of the “words and deeds” of believers.

2.5. The Instruction on Christian Initiation

The Rites of Initiation reformed by Vatican II come with their own *Instruction*, and this is the document which provides the tool of interpretation for the liturgical rites.

The *Instruction* focuses on the “Christian” initiation of men and women, and therefore leaves open the question of whether the same principles can be applied to all of humanity, or is this formative of a distinctively Christian ethic and morality?

The introductory paragraphs have a clear focus on the role of the Holy Spirit, and the adoption of the baptised as sons and daughters of God, and this is foundational to the Church’s understanding.

The initial position, arrived at from the nature of the document and its focus, and secondly the content of the first paragraph, is that *the Instruction* is focused on the realm of Christian initiation and therefore has the presupposition of supporting a process leading to, or formative of, such an orientation and commitment.

²⁵⁷ SC 33 quoted at *The Rites* Op.cit.p.viii.

²⁵⁸ SC 64 quoted at *The Rites* Op.cit. p. x.

²⁵⁹ LG 11 quoted at *The Rites* Op.cit.p.xi.

²⁶⁰ Ibid.

However, the place of starting the process of formation and initiation, is “in the world”, among the non-baptised, among ‘men and women of good will’ who are seeking and searching and have been led to the door of the Church.

The *General Introduction to the Instruction* starts therefore with the overarching *hope* of initiation, and there is an understanding that these ‘sacraments’, signs and deeds, words and actions, are a doorway to free humanity from “the power of darkness”. This very phrase can be reframed. The sacraments are a portal of enlightenment, they are the words and deeds that enable people to have light cast upon the elements of their lives that need light and provides a framework to do this. Such enlightenment is intended to raise human beings: “From (our) natural condition to the dignity of adopted children.”²⁶¹

And this adoption will have two fruits, it will enable people to: “Bear witness to him before all the world and eagerly work for the building up of the body of Christ.”²⁶²

The *Instruction* underlines that the whole life of the Church, and the formation of the Christian individual, happens by incorporation into the Body of Christ and the Church. The mission of the Christian is constitutively linked to the mission of the whole, and it is by being incorporated into a whole, into the life of Christ, that they will share in the fullness of life, enlightenment, and understanding.

The dignity of the Christian lies in becoming part of a “holy nation, a royal priesthood”, a “house in which God lives in the Spirit.”²⁶³

This is the given starting point for the inquiry.

There is in the Christian vision, an understanding that life is to be lived, and the Christian formed, corporately and communally, with the primary orientation of becoming sharers and reflectors of: “God’s own life.”²⁶⁴

This ‘life’ is then given its foundation in the Paschal Mystery. There is a pattern that is constituent of the Christian lifestyle. It is a baptism that: “...produces all these effects by the power of the mystery of the Lord’s passion and resurrection.”²⁶⁵

And even more directly, “Those who are baptized are engrafted in the likeness of Christ’s death.”²⁶⁶

Christian initiation is a formation that focuses on the unification of all in the manner of Christ’s witness, his passion and death in faithfulness to the truth, love and self-giving love and this is reinforced when the *Instruction* examines the offices and ministries of baptism.

²⁶¹ *Instruction on Christian Initiation*:2; quoting Romans 8:15; Gal 4:5; Council of Trent, 6th session, Decree on Justification, Chapter 4, Denz. 796 (1524).

²⁶² *Instruction on Christian Initiation*: 2 quoting *Ad Gentes*, Decree on the Church’s Missionary Activity, Second Vatican Council, (December 7, 1965) n.36.

²⁶³ *Instruction on Christian Initiation* n.4.

²⁶⁴ *Instruction on Christian Initiation* n.5 quoting 2 Peter 1:4.

²⁶⁵ *Instruction on Christian Initiation* n.6.

²⁶⁶ *Instruction on Christian Initiation* n.6, quoting Romans 6:4-5.

Firstly, *the instruction* says initiation will have two elements: “Instruction and the preparation for baptism.”²⁶⁷

It repeats that this is a concern of all God’s people, and then specifically names catechists and lay people working with priests and deacons. The width of those involved in the community of formation is strengthened when in a reference to the actual celebration, *the Instruction* talks of those who are actively a part of the celebration being: “The people of God (represented not only by parents, godparents, and relatives, but also, as far as possible by friends, neighbours, and some member of the local Church).”²⁶⁸

The commitment to a life in Christ, enlightenment, will be the result of a process of formation, which will include the active participation of a whole community, and specifically, those who know the person, their culture, environ and background, their issues and individuality. In this act of incorporation, there is to be a specific and clear intersection between the specificity of the individual’s situation, place and environment, and the communitarian nature of the mystery.

This is reinforced, when the *Instruction* outlines the place of the sponsor or “godparent.” They are the ones who will: “Assist in the final preparation ...help in persevering in the faith and in his life as a Christian.”²⁶⁹

And because they will have developed a relationship with the candidate they will be in a position to: “Testify to the faith of the adult candidate.”²⁷⁰

The movement into a way of life, in which the candidate will make decisions according to the Spirit and the Word of God is NOT done alone; nor is the support of the community expected to be ‘general’ and non-specific.

There is a companion, a mentor, a person who walks with the candidate and helps them prepare and persevere in the ‘life’ they have undertaken.

There is an underlying moral presumption. This way of life will have its authenticity witnessed to by faithful perseverance and this requires a sponsor who will be an on-going companion and guide, not just in the preparation but a person’s on-going living of the Christian call.

The qualities of the companion are outlined, they are to be: “Mature,”²⁷¹ because they need to “Undertake this responsibility.”²⁷²

This first quality is one that will be taken up by John Paul II, Benedict XVI and Francis on a number of occasions. ²⁷³The formation, instruction, action and living out of the Christian life are all elements

²⁶⁷ *Instruction on Christian initiation* n.7.

²⁶⁸ Ibid.

²⁶⁹ *Instruction on Christian Initiation* n.8.

²⁷⁰ Ibid.

²⁷¹ *Instruction on Christian Initiation* n.10.

²⁷² Ibid.

²⁷³ Among the multiple references to this theme in the Pontificates of John Paul II, Benedict XVI and Francis:

- *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, Post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation of Pope John Paul II; (March 25, 1992): nn. 28,41,60,74,76.

that require “co-responsibility”. The godparent needs to be mature because they are not called to be a dispassionate advisor a sacramental “bit-player” or a detached instructor. The one who instructs and prepares the Christian for action is going to be part of their life, and to some degree, unspecified here, responsible!

Secondly, they themselves need to be fully initiated, to: “Have received the three sacraments of initiation.”²⁷⁴

This means that they must be open to the Spirit, formed, prayerful, alive with the Word of God, and living a life united to the Paschal Mystery of Christ. This is not a matter of having ‘been done’, these are people who are seen as fully formed, a living Christ, to walk with the catechumen.

Thirdly, they are to be: “A member of the Catholic Church.”²⁷⁵

They are members of this community and because this is the place of communal instruction and formation, and therefore to be able to share the understanding of the Community and the fullness of the Tradition’s understanding; they need to be part of the Church.

These elements are clearly challenging to all areas of the Church’s life, especially the ‘educational’ systems that focus on Catholic formation.

The Instruction is talking of a specific character of mature Christianity, which can be seen, is witnessed in the life of the sponsor who is entering into a long term, co-responsible relationship of formation and action. However, the core understandings can be applied clearly and directly to the lives of all humanity.

A person needs to be part of the whole, to be gifted with a mature, wise, member of the community to guide and instruct, to be supported in decisions and actions, and to persevere in a life that the community would express as ‘best practice.’ These are the elements involved in all ‘successful’ formation processes.

The Instruction then approaches elements that focus on the liturgical requirements of place, time, minister and emergency.

There are no other elements in *the Instruction* that need to be highlighted, but there is one more aspect suggested from the elements discussed in respect of the support offered and the place of

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- Benedict XVI, *Church Membership and Pastoral Co-Responsibility* Address at the Opening of the Pastoral Convention of the Diocese of Rome, Basilica of Saint John Lateran, 26 May 2009, *Insegnamenti di Benedetto XVI, vol V/1 2009*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Roma, (2010) pp. 899-906. (4 usages).
 - Address to the Participants to the General Chapter of the Congregation of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, Clementine Hall, 8 November 2014, *Insegnamenti di Francesco, vol II/2 2014*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Roma, (2016) pp. 508-510.
 - Address to Bishops appointed over the past year: Pope Francis, Clementine Hall, (Thursday, 18 September 2014).
 - Address to the 66th General Assembly of the Italian Episcopal Conference: Pope Francis, (Synod Hall, Monday, 19 May 2014) n 2.

²⁷⁴ Ibid.

²⁷⁵ Ibid.

formation within the community in the last paragraphs of the *Instruction*.²⁷⁶ This bridge is provided by instructions on the adaptations that can be made by conferences of Bishops.

In these paragraphs there is an instruction for Bishops to: “Compose for their local rituals a section corresponding to this one in the Roman Ritual, adapted to the needs of their respective regions.”²⁷⁷

The Instruction then refers to this being done: “Carefully and prudently”²⁷⁸ considerate of “a country’s distinctive culture”²⁷⁹ and allows that this culture “may suitably be admitted to divine worship.”²⁸⁰

This is a clear welcoming of an awareness of the distinctive elements that the local cultural understandings and *taonga*²⁸¹ bring to a community and the Church. There is a requirement of careful and prudent evaluation, but it is not prescribed, in fact, *the Instruction* welcomes the fruit of that evaluation.

If the link made in the first paragraphs of the Preface is correct, the need to see such a cultural openness will also move, through worship and sacramental life, to the evaluation of, and the content of, the instruction and preparation of people for the Christian life.

There is another aid of evaluation in this paragraph: “Existing local rituals”²⁸² can be retained as long “as they conform to the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*,”²⁸³ and “correspond to contemporary needs.”²⁸⁴

The implication is that the expressions of the Church’s understanding and the wording of the instruction and preparation are not to be ‘fossilized’, rather they are to be reformed and used as the established expressions, after they have been examined in the light of the latest Conciliar (and other Magisterial teaching), and contemporary need!

The application of this guideline to the formation of the moral life is interesting. Local expressions, or forms of expression of ritual, or moral position, will be retained as long as, they conform to the richness of the latest teaching of the Church and contemporary need.

The instruction and preparation for the sacraments cannot be fossilized, and similarly, neither can the expression of the moral guidance of the community.

However, this doesn’t make just any expression valid.

There is a twofold evaluation placed here: the richest and latest expression of the Conciliar and magisterial teaching; and that expressed in dialogue with contemporary need.

²⁷⁶ *Instruction on Christian Initiation* nn.30 – 33.

²⁷⁷ *Instruction on Christian Initiation* n.30.

²⁷⁸ *Instruction on Christian Initiation* n.30 /2.

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁸¹ In Te Reo Maori *taonga* means a treasure, and has a width of meaning. A person, an object, the language, a river/a mountain(te awa/ te maunga), a ritual, are all seen as *taonga* to be protected /respected and passed from one generation to the next.

²⁸² *Instruction on Christian Initiation* n.30 /3.

²⁸³ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

To make a quick application, as an aside. The universality of communication, the development of medical interventions, the change in the economics of health care delivery, all of these have changed substantially since the time of Vatican II. There have been many magisterial teachings and insights and contemporary need is ever changing. Therefore the many statements of Pius XII may, or may not, be relevant, or the best expression of the understanding of the Body of Christ!

There is one other phrase of real interest in this *Instruction*: “Adapt and augment...so that Ministers may fully understand the meaning of the Rites and express this effectively in action.”²⁸⁵

The whole purpose of *the Rite*, and this instruction, is that the ministry of the Church lead to “understanding” and to “action”. This is a thoroughly incarnated approach to initiation, worship, liturgy, and to formation in the Christian life.

The key characteristic of the Bishop’s responsibility is to ensure that in all aspects of Christian life there is understanding and that it leads to action.

How more concisely can the moral leadership of the pastor in the church or the Church’s moral mission be expressed. The role of ecclesial leadership is to aid in finding full understanding, formation, and with the resultant commitments made, to act!

2.6. The Rites of Initiation

The Rites now proceed to outline the full process and content of the Christian initiation of Adults.

The first insight is that initiation: “Is intended for adults.”²⁸⁶

There are several qualifying phrases, which enable us to understand who is intended by this phrase ‘adults’, and what is presumed to be their capacity and ability.

Firstly, they are capable of hearing: “They hear the preaching of the mystery...;”²⁸⁷

Secondly, this implies that the preaching has been prepared and delivered in such a manner that the language, understanding, and structure of comprehension of these ‘adults’ has been taken into account. The preacher, the one proclaiming the mystery, has in this framework an obligation and a duty, to articulate the mystery in such a way that ‘adults’ in this place, time, and circumstance, ‘can hear’ it.

Thirdly, there is a presupposition that the one who is hearing is capable of being formed and of being conformed to and live Christ; and that they are adults, capable of making moral decisions, in accord with their God-given dignity.

They are adults and are to be treated as adults. The message is brought to them, not with its own language, terminology, and presuppositions. Rather, it is a ‘mystery’ that is to be brought to these ‘adults’ so that they might ‘hear’ it.

²⁸⁵ *Instruction on Christian Initiation* n.30 /5.

²⁸⁶ *Christian Initiation of Adults* n.1.

²⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

From this starting point, there is outlined an understanding of what happens in the hearts of those who are 'adult' and who 'hear': "The Holy Spirit opens their hearts"²⁸⁸ and "They freely and knowingly seek the living God and enter the path of faith and conversion."²⁸⁹

This is what is involved in mature, 'adult' human reasoning and decision-making, when it is focuses on the fundamental orientation of a person's life.

The 'adult' opens their heart, and in all situations and all decisions is required to examine their core understandings, orientations and priorities. In fact, the first step in all moral decision making, and life choices, is to accept the need to open the heart and acknowledge that all adult human beings have to challenge their presuppositions, prejudices, and self-interest. There is a need for a challenge to the heart.

And how is this to be done? "By freely and knowingly seeking...entering the path...of conversion."²⁹⁰

The first step lies in the verbs and adverbs involved, rather than the content. In all 'adult' action there is a call to seek 'freely' and 'knowingly'. In all situations there is at least a theoretical openness to entering a path of conversion.

With these two steps as presuppositions the important elements of the content involved in this framework can be outlined. It is essential that it is understood that this is 'intentional language', these verbs have been chosen by the Church. If it was the intention of the writers they could have asked for a response in "obedience" to the voice of God's call or to "accept" the mystery with faithful hearts and so live in the heart of the Church seeking ever deeper understanding.

The Church didn't, she invited adults to 'seek'!

'Seek' carries an element of non-completion, of open quest and a questioning, that will be fulfilled, or at least directed, by the simple formula: 'open the heart' and 'freely and knowingly walk on the path of conversion'. This starting point carries the understanding that all the presuppositions and understandings brought to the process of formation are open to being challenged. The adult engaged in walking this path will be called on to change, to convert: their heart, knowledge, and opinion to conform with the mystery that they see revealed.

In the end, it is: "the truth that will set you free." (Jn 8:32)

However, at this stage, the truth is not predefined, rather it is an invitation to a 'free and knowing' seeking; with a presupposition that the adult will hear in their own language, time and understanding, and that as all humans are able, will seek and be open to conforming to the truth that is found.

There is, therefore, NO instant or predefined content and answer to this directing of the core understandings and choices of life. Rather there is a call to align the person's character, choices and actions so as to live the fullness of life, and this will happen by the formation of the human conscience and then the conforming of resultant actions to the decisions made.

²⁸⁸ Ibid.

²⁸⁹ Ibid.

²⁹⁰ Ibid.

To do this requires support, the strength of companions and the acceptance by all involved that it is highly likely that it will take time and patience before the individual comes to a clear conclusion and understanding, it will be at: “The proper time.”²⁹¹

This is quite specifically said at the start of the next paragraph: “This order includes not only the celebration of the sacraments of baptism, confirmation, and the Eucharist but also all the Rites of the catechumenate.”²⁹²

Conversion, understanding and the fullness of the search will not be fulfilled by submitting to the concluding sacramental Rites. It calls for the full engagement in a process which involves the ‘rites of the catechumenate’, and these rites are now outlined.

The *Instruction* starts by stating that this understanding is a result of: “Contemporary missionary work throughout the world,”²⁹³ and will display an: “Accommodation to local traditions.”²⁹⁴

As an example: Ngā iwi Maori of Aotearoa have a fundamental understanding of land and place in which a person’s very identity is attached to a single place. This influences practices in respect of burial, birth, and family/whanau relationships. This is starkly different to the approach of the post-colonial immigrant population; and for the Church, in OICA or moral formation to come with a Eurocentric approach, and to not be aware of the background of the ‘inquirer’ is going to lead to a fundamentally flawed response.

Therefore to enable the specific needs of the local to happen, there must be adaptation at various levels. These are specifically listed. They are by: “Individuals, parishes and missions,”²⁹⁵ and it will involve the adaptation of the very structure of the Rites so as to accommodate: “A complete or common form”²⁹⁶ or a form: “Adapt(ed)... for one person.”²⁹⁷

There is an understanding of a commonality of process that will give all a pathway to commitment and living the Christian life, but from the very start there is clear recognition that the language, and the needs of the local community and the individual, will be taken into account and expressed in the way this is put into practice. It will be adapted to the person, place and time.

The core theological understanding is not changed; rather the form, language, and process of delivery display a willingness and desire on the part of the Church to walk with the local and the individual who with an open heart are on a free and knowing pathway, seeking the living God.

So what is the “structure of this initiation”? “It takes place step by step, in the midst of the community of the faithful.”²⁹⁸

²⁹¹ Ibid.

²⁹² *Christian Initiation of Adults n.2.*

²⁹³ Ibid.

²⁹⁴ Ibid.

²⁹⁵ *Christian Initiation of Adults n.3.*

²⁹⁶ Ibid.

²⁹⁷ Ibid.

²⁹⁸ *Christian Initiation of Adults n.4.*

Initiation into the Christian life is not a momentary intervention, a single event or decision; rather it is an expression of a commitment that arises 'step by step', and each of these steps requires a discernment of what needs to be done, and a decision and a choice to act.

This understanding was clearly seen in the first reflections on *the Constitution (Sacrosanctum Concilium)* even before the Rites of Adult Initiation had been finalised. The direct intention of the Council was commented upon by Ambrose van de Walle's in 1966 when he wrote: "This was emphasised during the Council: "Baptism constitutes the sacramental bond of unity between all who are born again through it. Yet, baptism by itself is only the beginning. For its whole aim is to lead to the fullness of life in Christ."²⁹⁹

This happens he says because: "Man discovers and receives this gift of God in Christ in and through the act of faith. This "believing" does not arise through hearing somebody speak *about* God, but only through being moved inwardly *by* God... (and the place of such encounter is) liturgical worship (which) is simply the realisation of the Church at the point where she is most herself: the encounter with God in Christ."³⁰⁰

Faith is not a thing imposed from outside, rather faith is a: "*Mutual* personal relationship between God and man, as a personal encounter, as a community of persons."³⁰¹

Secondly, and vitally to the understanding of the role of the Church, and recognising the Holy Spirit's influencing and guiding of this process, it is to be 'in the midst of the community'.

In the context of liberal individualism, this is an insight that will require deep reflection.

What are the roles of the individual and what are the roles of the community?

At the beginning of the Rite, there is no doubt that the fundamental understanding of the Christian community is that the individual comes to commitment and conversion, yes as an individual, BUT in the midst of a community, and with the support, guidance and support of the community.

GS 16's individual hearing the voice of God saying "do this and shun that" is therefore not to be interpreted as occurring with the subject isolated and alone, neither in the formation and preparation, nor in the decision itself; the individual is perceived to be within, and formed by, being in "the midst of the community."

The next element is that this commitment is to be lived, "as a witness." That it is to be lived: in a manner which is publically seen and acted upon in the lives of the faithful. The Rite places at the forefront of the catechumens' formation and decision-making a life which is lived "together" and in which the: "Faithful reflect upon the value of the Paschal Mystery, renew their own commitment, and by their example lead the catechumen to obey the Holy Spirit more generously."³⁰²

The decision to live this life, and to act in accordance with this mystery, is expressed in a single word, *conversion*. The result of this process of reflection is that the person is led to see life in, through and

²⁹⁹ Van De Walle, Ambroos-Remi, O.P. "How We Meet Christ in the Liturgical Community." *Concilium* 12 (1966):27.

³⁰⁰ Van De Walle, Ambroos-Remi, O.P. Op.cit.p.20.

³⁰¹ Ibid.

³⁰² *Christian Initiation of Adults* n.4.

with Christ, as relevant and able to be committed to; and from that point on there is to be an on-going life characterised by acts of renewal and recommitment, in the face of multitudinous options and decisions.

This fundamental option, is not a once and for all, it is subject to on-going renewal, and is to be found and lived out in witness and discussion, the seeking of understanding and responding to the demands of others. It will be a life of personal recommitment, in the face of changing circumstances, which, in time, will find expression in the deeds of the Christian's life. The catechumen cannot be formed by "an example", without the example being externally lived, in the manner of the life, decisions, and commitments of the one who is the witness.

This is a deeply profound reality and impacts on all aspects of the Community's life. It is the unity of the individual in the corporate reality of the Body of Christ that is then lived liturgically: "The Church's liturgical worship is the worship of Christ himself, in the Son's relationship to the Father, in and through his Church alive in his Spirit."!!³⁰³

This simple pattern can be summarised as: seek, reflect on what is seen or found so as to renew or realign the decision and commitment, and then put it into practice. Or as Cardinal Cartijn would have said: "See, Judge, Act"!!

This insight should not be unexpected.

The *Instruction* of the Central Commission of the Council, of Vatican II on 17th of November 1964 contains the phrase: "Commencer par les faits; - Porter un jugement chrétienne à la lumière de l'Évangile et de la tradition catholique des Pères jusqu'à documents contemporains du Magistère; - Indiquer des orientations concrètes pour l'action"³⁰⁴

These thoughts and insights are summarized in the *Instruction*: "The rite of initiation is suited to the spiritual journey of adults, which varies according to the many forms of God's grace, the free cooperation of the individuals, the action of the Church, and the circumstances of time and place."³⁰⁵

The Rite, consciously and directly, talks about stages in 'a journey' and these qualified by the circumstances of time and place.

What are these stages?

The first stage is an inquiry. The approaching of another with a question, a need or a desire, arising from the events of life.

The second is a stage of 'wishing to become', and being companioned as a catechumen. This implies a hope, a desire, a seeking, but NOT an arrival, a commitment or a decision.

³⁰³ Van De Walle, Ambroos-Remi, O.P. Op.cit.n.21.

³⁰⁴ Gigacz, Stefan. "1964 - Schema XIII Adopts See, Judge, Act - JosephCardijn.com." JosephCardijn.com. Web. 28 July 2013.

"...start from the facts; - bring a Christian judgment in the light of the Gospel and Catholic tradition from the Fathers up to contemporary documents of the Magisterium; - indicate concrete orientations for action."

³⁰⁵ *Christian Initiation of Adults* n.5.

The third stage is a 'preparation', a preparing for the sacraments, or the public witnessing to the content and celebration of the mystery. This implies a willingness to be formed and instructed, but also that this is to be undertaken freely and knowingly. It is a process of adult accompaniment, care, sharing and the seeking of understanding culminating in a free choice.

The fourth stage is to be initiated, to publically stand and commit to a way of life and action.

The manner in which these stages are described in the Rite is one of: "Investigation and maturation."³⁰⁶

The process has the character of growth, of seeking understanding, of dialogue, of formation, of sharing information and insight, and also of appropriateness and maturation.

These processes are punctuated by rites and celebrations of progress. There is an order and a process that guides and facilitates the path to commitment.

2.6.1. Inquiry.

The first period is: "Inquiry."³⁰⁷

The starting point of the inquiry are the questions, the desires, the hopes, the personal needs and the seeking of the individual, revealed in the happenings of their life. At the heart and foundation of catechesis and formation are the questions of the person at the heart of the process.

Formation starts with the situation, the need, the question of the individual. Practical moral theology and ethics is a process which starts with 'the inquiry' of the person.

"What do I do in this situation?" or, "this is the situation I am in, what have I done?"

The first step in aiding the individual is to gain a clear expression of what their core needs and desires are. In the same way as some come to the OICA with the need to explain a loss or grief, or the desire for a place to seek a mature life commitment, or others look for forgiveness or community; so it is in the moral life: some start seeking a world view, and others a specific guidance and solution to a moral issue or a human need. The response to such situations needs to be nuanced. This starts with the need for those accompanying to help the person to articulate and comprehend the real question.

This is not the time for 'solutions' to be imposed. "You must believe this...!" There may be a call for an exposition of the 'church's understanding', later in the process; but the initial response involves the ability to hear, to listen, and to suspend judgment.

³⁰⁶ *Christian Initiation of Adults n.7.*

³⁰⁷ *Christian Initiation of Adults n.7a.*

2.6.2. Core Formation.

This leads immediately to an insight in respect of fundamental personal and moral formation. “The second period, which begins with this entrance into the order of catechumens and may last for several years, includes catechesis and the Rites connected with catechesis.”³⁰⁸

The clear understanding is that formation, the coming to an understanding, being catechised, can be a long term process. It may ‘last for several years’.

The presumption is that adult human formation is not an instant or short term process. There can’t be a presentation of a formulae or a ‘catechism’ that will have the answer for every person or place succinctly expressed in one phrase, with a set of ‘official’ answers. This does NOT imply that there will not be a common position on core elements of Christian life and morality; what it does imply is that formation will not occur by predefinition and asking people to affirm positions in a quick and immediate manner. The process of formation can take ‘several years’; and is going to be accomplished by a process that displays two elements.

Firstly catechesis, and secondly the: “Rites connected with catechesis.”³⁰⁹

The Rites are connected to the catechesis; they do not have a life independent of the timing, understanding, and the life of the people involved in the catechesis. The Rites are the liturgical, public expression of the stage of the process the person has arrived at, and therefore what they are able and willing to publically commit to. So the public element of the catechesis is timed and staged in relation to the progress of the catechesis. The deeds are an outward expression of an inward reality.

The extension of this is that the public statement of a person’s position on any particular issue, is made in a public ‘rite’ and is directly related to the progress the person has made in their formation.

The ‘ritual’ expression of a public position and therefore accountability needs to be able to take account of the position, formation, understanding, and ‘maturity’ of the person. Traditionally in discussing moral accountability we discuss, ‘understanding, intention and freedom’: “Another important foundation of Christian morality is the understanding of moral acts. Every moral act consists of three elements: the objective act (what we do), the subjective goal or intention (why we do the act), and the concrete situation or circumstances in which we perform the act (where, when, how, with whom, the consequences, etc.).”³¹⁰

The third stage in OICA, and this has a parallel in all formation, occurs when the person has come to the conclusion to commit to that in which they have been catechised. They have explored, starting from their need expressed in questions of inquiry, situated in their place and culture; and they have come to a position of seeking commitment, and at this point they enter into a shorter period of: “Purification and enlightenment or “illumination.””³¹¹

³⁰⁸ *Christian Initiation of Adults* n.7b.

³⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

³¹⁰ USCCB. *Morality: United States Catholic Catechism for Adults.* ; *Morality.*

³¹¹ *Christian Initiation of Adults* n.7c.

2.6.3. "Illumination."

This is a period in which the catechumens prepare to act. At the conclusion of this time they will publically proclaim and commit to what they have seen as 'right and just'; as the core meaning of life.

In the OICA the whole meaning of life is focused in Christ. There is a call to action and to living in a community which has been shown, in formation, to witness to a way of life, and to possess the ability to aid, a person to comprehend the full content of the decisions they are making and to discern the actions required of them in life.

This insight parallels the same requirement in all processes of formation and commitment.

As a person comes to a public proclamation of a decision in respect of a position or an issue or how they are going to act, they need to be aware of, and willing to live with, its consequences. To do this a person needs to take a time of clear and focused examination, ensuring that they are fully informed and enlightened as to the consequences of their decision and action.

This full "illumination" should occur before a person stands in the full glare of public expectation and accountability and they should not do this before they are aware of what the consequences are going to be. However, it is not the consequences that ultimately give power to such a decision. That comes from the completeness of a whole process.

St Thomas More knew the consequences of his decision, and he was in a position to take his stance because he was very clear of the issues at hand and the impact and import of his public witness. He knew the question being asked of him and its social consequences therefore his inquiry needed to be full. Before he arrived in the position of needing to make this a public declaration he spent years being shaped by the prayer, formation and catechesis of John Fischer, Erasmus, the scriptures and the law; this formation led him to catechise himself and to be catechised as to what he was called to say and do. His catechesis was long and thorough. Then in his home at Chelsea, and in the Tower, he spent a period, which was much shorter and intense, when he decided whether he would submit to the King or witness to the truth. He was enlightened, and knowing the consequences, he 'went public'. He would have understood the consequences at all stages in this process, but it was the full process of formation that enabled him to make a full, conscious and mature decision to act.

An analysis of the lives of Maximillian Kolbe, Suzanne Aubert³¹², Oscar Romero or Francis Douglas³¹³ would show a similarly staged approach to their major decisions and actions, and as with Thomas More, three of these were martyred for their decisions, and the fourth is a saint of the poor, followed by thousands.

³¹² For the life of the Venerable Suzanne Aubert, visit <http://suzanneaubert.co.nz/>

³¹³For a short biography of the martyr of the confessional and solidarity with his people in the Philippines, visit: <https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/5d23/douglas-francis-vernon>

2.6.4. Commitment.

The emphasize on these elements is important because these are elements that the Rite makes explicit in the fourth stage of the OICA.

The decision is made, it is publically proclaimed, but there is a response from the community, and this response is the fruit of the partnership that has underpinned the whole process. The community sees and witnesses to the truth of what is being done and what has been decided. The decision of the individual is now in the public forum, exposed to the light of public critique and comment. At heart the moral, and Christian, life is NOT individual, it is dialogical and communitarian.

2.6.5. Mystagogia.

The Rite displays this in a fourth period, the post commitment. The ‘mystagogia’, in which there is a: “...deepening (of) the Christian experience, for gaining spiritual fruit, and for entering more closely into the life and unity of the community...”³¹⁴

The “spiritual fruit and Christian experience” is discovered in the experience of community, it is characterized by a common life. The understanding of the fully Christian life is seen in “fruit” and in “life”: and “unity”.

These elements are expressed publically and communally, and this is by the recognised actions which display the qualities, character and the accountability of the individual for the commitment taken.

Neither Christian initiation nor ultimately any formation is, in its fullness, a private matter. The final witness to its authenticity is public and clearly seen.

This insight underlines the fundamental tension that has lain in Western moral thought for the last centuries. It points directly to the question of whether morality lies entirely in the individual, is dictated from without, is an intellectual construct, a purely rational thought and conclusion, or a communal conformity?

The structure of the OICA gives directions for developing an authentic framework. It is to be founded on the understanding that moral responsibility lies in full and true dialogue. This dialogue is at once both *internal* to the subject, grounded in an examination of the person’s own presuppositions, cultural demands, and presuppositions; and *external* in that it requires partnership within the community, ‘catechesis’ and formation, over an extended period of time; and that ultimately it is *public*, both in its place of proclamation and decision, and in its living out. This *public* element is to be understood as the deepest self-expression, understanding, and commitment of the individual proclaimed and expressed in the public forum; not as a legalistic conformity.

This unity is outlined in the conclusion of this paragraph as it elucidates the process involved:

“Thus there are four continuous periods:

³¹⁴ *Christian Initiation of Adults* n.7d.

...*hearing* the first preaching of the Gospel

...complete *catechesis*

...*illumination* and profound *preparation*

...*experience* of ...sacraments and of the community.”³¹⁵

The nature of the inter-connection within the life of the community is emphasized by linking the process to both the content and the pattern of time with which the ‘Paschal Mystery’ is inserted into the life of the Christian community. *The Rite* speaks of the right time for the preparation for initiation being in Lent and the structured liturgical life of the community being such that it enables the catechumen to come to commitment.

This concept of ‘appropriate time’ is another element which characterises the understanding of formation. “There is a time for every purpose under heaven” (Ecclesiastes 3: 1-3) and there is an appropriate time and place for the community to aid the individual to come to decisions and commitments.

Similarly, in process of formation there are times for coming to certain decisions and the characteristics of the appropriate time influence elements of freedom and responsibility.

Teenage adolescents are not at the right time and place in their moral, psychological and social development for certain questions, and similarly, their pastor or grandparent will not necessarily understand the pressures or issues they face in cultures dominated by peer pressure and mass communication. Therefore there should be no surprise over the inter-generational tensions that arise in the interaction between mores, authority and the seeking of personal freedom.

There is a time and a season, and the wisdom of the community is to know how to companion people in the appropriate way for that season.

The call to share in the ‘Paschal Mystery’, to sacrifice oneself in love, forgiveness, truth and life, will appear different to the 18-year-old than to his 84-year-old grandfather, and many of the elements involved in the issues they have in common, will not have an impact at all on the 6-year-old nephew. It is therefore not appropriate to walk with them with the same expectation. The one walking on the road to Emmaus, will hear each of the companions tell their story, and then using the ‘sources’ will explain and unpack the issues they are facing; but more, while tempted to walk on, all parties to the discussion are ultimately called to sit at table, share bread and a meal, and show that being taken, blessed, broken and given; is going to be the ultimate criteria for authentic human existence, decision making and entering into the heart of the ‘Paschal and Christian’ mystery.

The rite now proceeds to unpack each of the four stages.

This is NOT a study of the OICA, this exercise is seeking insight into the content and form of how a person is to be formed and come to commitment and it is with this focus the exercise will now examine the patterns within the Rite and its *Instructions*.

³¹⁵ *Christian Initiation of Adults* n.7d.

There has been a strong pattern revealed in the overview of the *Instruction* and the first 8 paragraphs of the *Rite* proper; what can be seen in the Rite itself?

The starting point is that during the time of evangelisation: “In faith and consistency the living God is proclaimed, as is Jesus Christ, whom he sent for the salvation of all men. Thus those who are not yet Christians, their hearts opened by the Holy Spirit, may believe and be freely converted to the Lord.” It continues: “they sincerely adhere to him who is the way, the truth and the life, and who fulfils all their spiritual expectations, indeed goes far beyond them.”³¹⁶

The Church’s starting point is that the gift of salvation and life is universal. The Living God was sent for all, to all, and there is a direct intent and content in that sending, it is the entry into a way of life, a truth that is applicable to all situations, and is characterised as being able to bring life. More, the fullness of such a way, truth and life is going to be found in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus the Christ and the action of the Holy Spirit.

This initial call is universal. And in this call, there is a content that answers the longing of all human hearts.

The human heart is responding to the free gift of God, a living and loving God; and the initial step of evangelization is realizing that the one responding to the gift is initially, unaware of the origin and source of this longing and desire.

The Holy Spirit is the initiator and is active in the hearts of “those who are not yet Christians”; and this is expressed by people knowing that they are seeking a way of life that will express truth and that will bring life.

Human beings are aware that the way they are living at present is not answering this deep call, this searching. They are aware that they are seeking change. They are often NOT aware that this is the call of God, quietly calling in the inner depth of every human heart, and they are often NOT aware of what the content of their conversion will be.

The starting point of all full human maturity is the awareness that people are seeking life, truth and a way of living that enables them to life to the full.

There will, of course, be those who do not seek such a fullness of life, who are opposed to seeking truth, either because of prejudged positions and/ or self-interest; but the starting point of all moral exploration is an awareness that humanity, as a whole and as individuals, when given the chance, is always seeking to understand, and be more aware of the truth of the situation; is seeking to bring life and wholeness, healing and forgiveness, rather than death, division, hurt or retribution; and lastly, that there is a fundamental part of our human awareness seeking a ‘pattern,’ a consistency, a fabric, a ‘way’ to aid us in living and decision-making. There is a search for a ‘good’ in most human activity, even if the perception of that good is often misguided.

Therefore we start with the presupposition that a conscious acknowledgment of the presence of God is not a precondition for the journey. Christians will proclaim what they know, that this is all an

³¹⁶ *Christian Initiation of Adults* n.9 quoting: *Ad Gentes*: Decree on the Missionary Activity of the Church n.13.

action of a God of love and life; but at heart, it is *the longing* that is the starting point and that has been known from the very earliest days. The two classic references being:

“As the deer pants for the water, so my soul longs after you” (Psalm 42); and: “quia fecisti nos ad te et inquietum est cor nostrum donec requiescat in te”.³¹⁷

This call contains a second element. Human beings experience a desire, a call to seek; and it is often a movement away from the inadequate, or the false, the element that is hurtful or causes harm; individually or socially. These inadequate and harmful choices or situations have a theological name and a social reality. They are inadequate choices, lifestyles, hurt or bitterness; they are ‘sin’.

This is where the *Rite* leads us. We know ourselves to be ‘called away’ from the inadequate, the hurting, the harmful, the wrong (sin) and to be ‘drawn to’ what we hope, seek, want and express as truth, life, and love.

This deep starting point of human seeking as, the foundation of moral life, is expressed succinctly in the *Rite*: “Each one feels himself called away from sin and drawn toward the mystery of God’s love.”³¹⁸

It is important to see that these paragraphs while naming the drive and call, in Christian language and understanding, do NOT presuppose conversion or an understanding of the Christian message. They speak of a fundamental human yearning and seeking, which is common to all “people of good will,” and which is therefore a starting point for all moral evaluation and choice.

Human beings seek that which is right, just, good and truthful, and this is expressed as life-giving and loving. The catechumens enter the time of inquiry, called “pre-catechumenate”, and this is the place of the normal interface between the Christian Community and the ‘world’. This is a place of talking, listening, discussing, debating, with people of good will, on all issues, and the seeking of a common understanding.

The *Rite* says: “The pre catechumenate is set aside for this evangelization, so that the true desire of following Christ and seeking baptism may mature.”³¹⁹

The naming of God is not a prerequisite or a pre-condition. Rather, openness to dialogue and to ‘seeking’ is the foundation, as is the willingness of the community to engage.

This movement is going to be achieved through human contact and engagement, by the care of ministers of the Church (acting as mentors, companions), but also in the engagement of people who, enable individuals to: “Meet with families and communities of Christians with greater ease.”³²⁰

Inquiry and formation does not therefore progress in isolation or with an individualistic or one-on-one focus of support. From the beginning the OICA, and moral thought, is seen to be a communal inquiry, a seeking and listening between those who are willing to engage; not to “convert” but to “listen”, to “explain”, “to help”, to “cooperate” and “accompany”; and more there is a suggestion

³¹⁷ ‘You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in you!’; S. Augustine, *Confess.* I, 1: PL 32, 661; and quoted at GS 21.

³¹⁸ *Christian Initiation of Adults* n.10.

³¹⁹ *Christian Initiation of Adults* n.10.

³²⁰ *Christian Initiation of Adults* n.11.

that this discussion (while having a hope of conversion), as with the search for a moral position; requires a partnership with those who are open, and receptive to discussion even though they don't share a common belief.

Again, using a phrase that is familiar; there is a call for such inquiry and discussion to progress according to local circumstances and to adapt to "local conditions and opportunities."³²¹

There is a last insight from the structure of the pre-catechumenate. The time of should be carried out: "At meetings and gatherings of the local community, on a suitable occasion of friendly exchange" and where the "inquirer is presented by a friend, is welcomed and received."³²²

The words are important for the choices involved. This conversion experience and the environment for achieving moral clarity and choice, is NOT a pressured or isolated experience. It is open, communal, transparent, and it will ensure that the one approaching and inquiring, seeking and debating, is supported by a friend and is welcomed and received.

The ritual and its tone have the ability to be summarized in the words of a popular hymn: "Come as you are, that's how I want you."³²³

There is here no formula or presupposition of behaviour or position. The starting point is openness to the love and life of God who is moving the heart to ask the question of what is life, love, truth, and where is the way, the truth and life?

The starting point of all formation and commitment is the same. It is the openness that is founded on a recognition that the human heart is on a journey, is questioning, and is seeking that which is 'right and just'.

2.7. Catechumenate

This preparation has led to the place where, in ecclesial language, a "catechumenate" can commence. This is celebrated in a *Rite* of many parts and the Catechumenate itself can extend over many months or years. It is not a single ceremony or ritual, it is a Rite and the *Instruction* starts by telling us that: "The rite of becoming a catechumen is of very great importance."³²⁴

The starting point of this process of formation is a communal celebration and it involves a commitment to dialogue, based on a request on the part of the catechumen and a graced response on the part of the community.

Becoming a Christian, living and being formed in the Christian life and ethic, is not private, nor is it an event of legalistic compliance. To live the Christian life, and therefore to live morally as a Christian, and to be formed on this basis for living, decision making and the making of commitments, is of its very nature communitarian, public, 'graced' and dialogical.

³²¹ *Christian Initiation of Adults* n.12/2.

³²² *Christian Initiation of Adults* n.12/3.

³²³ Brown, Deidre, O. I.B.V.M. *Come as You Are*. Paul Girr O.Carm. Spectrum Music, CD.

³²⁴ *Christian Initiation of Adults* n.14.

Nor can it be a process of shared ignorance; rather the intention is that it is to be established so that the individual is: "Grounded in the basic fundamentals of the spiritual life and Christian teaching."³²⁵

However even before a person takes the step of entering into the catechumenate there is a presupposition of possessing the basic tools of understanding and analysis, and an openness seen in the first steps of a process that will mature. And more, a certain predisposition of the heart is called for: "The first sense of repentance and the practice of calling on God and praying; and the first experience of the society and spirit of Christians."³²⁶

There is a call for openness, a willingness to self-examine and challenge one's own presuppositions, and to be influenced at the deepest level by the lived experience and witness of others' lives and community.

This is the starting point for gathering, and being formed within the community of worship and action. There is a willingness to acknowledge that the catechumen may have misunderstood or not fully perceived or have the wrong orientation. This challenges the starting point of the processes of formation. The one who is seeking and the companions of that person and the one who is leading, pastoring, or forming; all require a quality of 'repentance', a willingness to acknowledge, in and of themselves, that at an individual and communal level, there may be elements that require a 're-formation' of their presuppositions and base perceptions.

Now the evaluation of this openness and its impact on inclusion in the community and/ or the *Rite* of formation are clearly placed in the hands of one group: "It is the responsibility of pastors to judge the external indications of these dispositions."³²⁷

However this does not negate the understanding of communal co-responsibility. This is underlined by the enrolment in the register of the catechumen, not only of the name of the candidate and the minister but that of the sponsors. The process of seeking, examining, forming, walking in the community, is not minimalistic, nor is it formulaic; it is 'pastored', it is open and developing, and it happens within the order and care of the community.

Such is to be the place of all formation and the making of all commitments and the taking of any responsibility: open, not time limited, ordered and cared for, aware of needing the core skills and processes of others, and open to the possibility that the person's understanding and (possibly) that of the community may need to experience a metanoia, a change of heart. All these elements are recognized here at the beginning of the *Rite*.

This openness and 'pastoral solicitude' are reflected in the wording of the *Rite* and also provide a framework for the impact of the 'affective' on the moral decision and formation. The *Instruction* in describing the structure of instruction and guidance in the formal time of formation for the living of a 'moral and Christian' life uses deeply maternal and familial imagery: "welcomed by the

³²⁵ *Christian Initiation of Adults* n.15 quoting *Ad Gentes* n.14.

³²⁶ *Christian Initiation of Adults* n.15.

³²⁷ *Christian Initiation of Adults* n.16 quoting *Ad Gentes* n.13.

Church...with a mother's love and concern...joined to the Church...part of the household of Christ³²⁸ ...nourished with the Word of God...helped by liturgical celebrations."³²⁹

Coupled with this expression of warm inclusion and nurturing is the understanding that those seeking and being formed are already offered the life of the community as a right. The community freely recognises them and the gifts of the community are freely given, and this is expressed in offering marriage and burial, even though the person is not formally initiated.

This was made clear in *Lumen Gentium*: "Catechumens who, moved by the Holy Spirit, seek with explicit intention to be incorporated into the Church are by that very intention joined with her. With love and solicitude Mother Church already embraces them as her own." (LG 14)

The presuppositions of dialogue and formation are: inclusion, care, formation, warmth, gifting and seeking the best, presuming the good, the offering of the community's treasures, life, and support; and while the catechumen walks at their pace, they will be supported and linked, within the community to commitment, a fuller understanding and public witness.

There is a clear orientation and form to formation. There is not an external dictate; rather the approach is one of a deep and profound 'walking with', a journeying at the pace of the one seeking, exploring and authentically looking for the Way, the Truth, and Life.

In the world of instant solutions and answers this reflects a deep insight expressed by Kōsuke Koyama³³⁰: the way of revelation, as seen in the Judaeo-Christian experience of God, is one of a God who walks and journeys with the people; and God's revelation is found in the one who walks at the pace of the people, three miles an hour, and was willing to sit on a hillside or by a lakeside and discuss and debate, to instruct and to teach, who would step aside for a night of stillness to discern the will of "Abba" and ultimately will reveal the fullness of God's love, when "he was nailed down". There is a willingness, in this way of living, to see and respond to the pace, and the need, of the one being walked with.

Secondly, this accompaniment takes place over an "extended period"³³¹. It is of the very nature of human growth and formation that humans 'grow' to maturity. Insight and commitment therefore take time and this impacts on their ability to make informed choices and therefore to act responsibly.

The *Rite* then suggests four core methodologies that can be used during this extended period:

Firstly, there is a presumption that those involved in aiding and supporting the person seeking that which is "right and just"; will display a knowledge of the issues, implications, wisdom and insights of the community, in a manner appropriate to the person. This is referred to as 'in stages and integrally'; but the parallel with the foundations of a curriculum are clear to see. A student can't study advanced elements of a subject in the first lesson, they need the foundational building blocks, and a mentor, who can identify their need and advance their progress in an ordered and helpful manner.

³²⁸ Christian Initiation of Adults n.18 quoting *Lumen Gentium* n.14 and *Ad Gentes* n.14.

³²⁹ *Christian Initiation of Adults* n.18.

³³⁰ Koyama, Kōsuke. *Three Mile an Hour God*. (London: SCM, 1979).

³³¹ *Christian Initiation of Adults* n.19.

Secondly, the core elements of the human, and Christian, journey are not purely intellectual and content based. An integral part of the journey is being involved in the lives of those who are witnessing to the Christian life. The witness of others and their example, and an awareness of the fruit of their choices, is central to a focused and real choice or decision. This can be seen in the hospice movement, where volunteers see the example of life-giving supported dying as a strong witness to the ethic of life; or watching the sanctity of ordinary people who through St Vincent de Paul, serve on a regular basis the poor and those in need. The witness of others living a similar path is as formative as any lesson or book.

Thirdly, there is the way decisions and commitments are made and acknowledge the liturgical celebrations. These are the external expression of an internal movement in the public forum. In the Catechumenate this is achieved by being involved in the Liturgy of the Word and blessings.

These insights can be applied directly to moral evaluation. This underlines the import of public meetings, of freedom of assembly and speech, as requisite elements in enabling people to question and engage with those involved in public life, and to facilitate public debate and discussion. Those advocating change, especially of moral positions, need to express their views publically and clearly, and to be involved in encounters which aid not only the individual but the community as a whole to evaluate, to be informed and to commit to a position.

As the witness of the catechumen is public and this reinforces their journey, at the same time it aids the whole Christian community in its own commitment. In a direct parallel, moral debate demands a response not just of the one making a proposition, but also of those who read, listen, respond and question.

Fourthly; the catechumen is called to a formation grounded on 'doing', which is to be expressed in the testimony of their lives and the public profession of their faith. This provides an interesting challenge to many processes of formation. The implication of this is that some may not be fully mature and formed, and they will be asked, to act, witness and proceed at the level of their understanding and commitment. Formation occurs by acting 'in the light and strength of our convictions.' So it is with both those who are young and coming to maturity, and with those seeking to understand.

In all areas of discernment individuals and communities can only come to public commitment and act in accord with that decision at their appropriate level of understanding. Living in a deeply individualistic world that is characterised by relativism; this catechumenal format and structure challenges with a discordant understanding: the person acting will have a companion, a mentor/ sponsor, the loving care of a community and Church; and will have made a series of public commitments and strengthening's that will have aided in the reinforcement of their resolve. They will also have a way of evaluating the level of their understanding, that is much richer than rules and prohibitions, it will include the witness of others and deep reflection in prayer and silence. So the full understanding of 'freedom to act' occurs within a supportive and formed way of life and being.

There is one other element, which is made clear in the Eucharist, if not explicitly in the OICA. There is always a community waiting to lift the person up if they should fail. To forgive, to welcome back, and to support unconditionally and with the love of Christ. The prodigal, in his initial request of the Father, thought he had made the right decision, which reflected the level of his understanding of his

desires, wants, and wishes. Experience taught him he was wrong, and he returns to the Father, and the Father's unconditional love. But the beginning of the parable does *not* tell us of the Father doing all in his power to stop him making a terrible mistake; rather the Father divides the estate, and spends his days watching and waiting, until when his Son is a long distance off and he runs to embrace him.

As the *Rite* says: "Nothing can be determined a priori."³³²

This is human, real and living formation in a living, real and human environment.

2.8. Period of Purification and enlightenment

After the period of extended formation, the Rite moves to a focused time of purification and enlightenment, this is customarily Lent. So it is with all moral formation and making the decision to commit. Having spent long years living and being formed, day by day, week by week, in the moral life of the community, there comes a specific event, challenge, problem or concern, and the resultant need to make a decision, a commitment, a public profession of a choice, by word and deed.

There is a parallel between the formation of the OICA and the making of all commitments.

The first insight is that the period of enlightenment is a focused time; as the OICA says, when reflecting on Lent there is a need for a time that is: "A preparation for baptism...a time of penance...renews community...makes ready to celebrate."³³³

The understanding is that it is the community, as much as the individual, which is part of the *Rite* and this celebration.

Secondly, it is marked by "Intense preparation of heart and spirit."³³⁴

And thirdly, it will be characterized, in the end, by a choice: "An election ...by God... (and a) pledge of fidelity."³³⁵

There is a clear process, in the OICA which reflects the elements involved at the core of human responsibility and commitment.

It starts with a focused time of preparation, of heart and spirit, within the community; it calls for a focused 'time and season', with a conscious understanding that a full and faithful choice is being made.

This is reinforced, and the link is made between the liturgical celebration and the nature of commitment being ultimately 'moral'. This occurs in the first lines of the next paragraph: "Before the

³³² *Christian Initiation of Adults* n.20.

³³³ *Christian Initiation of Adults* n.21.

³³⁴ *Christian Initiation of Adults* n.22.

³³⁵ *Ibid.*

election is celebrated, the candidates are expected to have a conversion of mind and morals...the election...are the turning point of the whole catechumenate.”³³⁶

Here is the crunch; the pattern of the OICA is focused clearly on a conscious formation of the “mind and morals” of the catechumen. The core element that is being identified is that Christian conversion is a moral conversion; it is a formation for a way of life and is focused on enabling the individual, in the community, to live ‘morally’. In fact all processes of formation and decision-making ultimately must be ‘moral’, must reflect an ‘informed decision of the person’.

This is a moment of informed decision making. This election is a ‘conversion of mind and morals’ and is the pivotal moment of conversion and initiation. It is clear however that the Rite has moved beyond an intellectual conformity and assent. The moral choice involves an all-encompassing and definitive expression of the person’s identity.

To understand the decision to follow the Christian life is the result of a clear, structured and framed process that focuses on one purpose, the conversion of the mind and the life of the person “heart and soul.”

So conversely to know how to form and convert the ‘heart and soul’ of the Christian, in fact any person of good will, follow the pattern, structure and form of the catechumenate. This claim is made on the basis that at this point the catechumen are not initiated Christians, they are people of good will, fellow travellers on the road of God’s grace.

During the next stages, as the elect progress to the sacraments of initiation at Easter, there are processes in which the public commitment and celebration is related to that which has already occurred in the heart of the catechumen.

The catechumens are called the “*competentes* or the enlightened or *illuminated*”³³⁷ as they prepare for the fullness of enlightenment in baptism by being further illumined by the light of faith.

However, it must be emphasised that this is not a purely spiritual or segmented element of life. The OICA does *not* say, there is a mystery that is only available to the elect. The enlightenment has occurred and has been committed to *before* the Rites of initiation and baptism; it is a process focused on the conversion of mind and morals; not a spiritual mystery as in the supernatural or insights that are extra to life in its fullness. No, at its heart this process is deeply human and incarnational, it occurs in the mind and heart, the life of the person.

This is reinforced with even greater clarity in the next paragraph of the *Instruction* where it says that this spiritual process and preparation will be achieved by two clear and precise elements: “The examination of conscience and by repentance ...and also to enlighten those minds and hearts by a deeper knowledge of Christ the Saviour.”³³⁸

It is the examination of conscience, coupled with repentance for those elements that have been discerned as not being ‘right and just’ and then the enlightening of those formed minds and hearts

³³⁶ *Christian Initiation of Adults* n.23.

³³⁷ *Christian Initiation of Adults* n.24.

³³⁸ *Christian Initiation of Adults* n.25.

by knowledge of Christ, that prepare the individual for the complete union, in Christ, with the Father.

This is clearly in an order. Formation leads to a change of mind and moral, which in turn will be clarified and strengthened by an action of the conscience and repentance in light of the moral decision “do this, shun that.” (GS 16) This call is heard in the inner sanctum; and having heard the voice of God, a person is open to being enlightened by the deeper knowledge of Christ.

The process does NOT have a presupposition of faith BEFORE one can be moral, rather there is a presupposition of a formed moral conscience and, a person who through a structured process of formation, has arrived in a position make a public commitment, in the catechumenate to Christ, and the deeper knowledge of His illumination, but for others to a morally integrated position.

The Catechumenate is offering a guide for a process of moral formation and formation of conscience, which it sees as a precondition to a public commitment to Christ in Baptism.

This period of focused preparation and enlightenment is therefore vital.

It is directed toward a commitment, a decision; but it has, in itself, a content of process and form.

It deliberately examines the conscience for: “Anything that is weak, defective or sinful;”³³⁹

But only so that it may be: “Healed and reveal what is upright, strong and holy.”³⁴⁰

In this framework, the examination of conscience is not an exercise of external compliance or judgment; rather it is a revelation of understanding, the result of self-examination, and it occurs in an environment of supported care, formation, and guidance, and leads NOT to an issue of exclusion, external judgment or compliance, but rather to a healing, a revelation and a movement to internal and communal holiness and strength.

What are the aids that the Church offers to this process? Firstly, there is an appropriate and full sharing of the Christian message and insight, as outlined above, and these insights are supplemented by a sharing of several ‘aide de memoire’ given by the Church, the community, to heal and reveal, to strengthen and lead to holiness.

They are the: “Ancient documents of faith and prayer (...the Creed and Lord’s Prayer).”³⁴¹

These statements of creedal and spiritual content are not perceived as intellectual gifts. They are understood as God’s gift offered within a time apart in prayer, reflection, silence, recollection, fasting, works of mercy and special prayer to open the mind, ears and mouth.

To come to a full and public commitment in Christ, the person needs to reach a point which is focused and specific; where they are “aware”, prepared and ready to make a public proclamation of their understanding and choice.

2.9. Sacraments of initiation

³³⁹ *Christian Initiation of Adults* n.25/1.

³⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

³⁴¹ *Christian Initiation of Adults* n. 25/2.

“The sacraments of baptism, confirmation, and the Eucharist are the final stage in which the elect come forward and, with their sins forgiven, are admitted into the people of God...”³⁴²

The celebration of inclusion into the Paschal Mystery comes at the point where the person can publicly acknowledge that they are choosing to live in Christ “the way, the truth and the life”. The person has been formed, by living through the process that leads to this public proclamation. The proclamation is essential, but it doesn’t stand on its own. The process of establishing the understanding of what is right and just, has happened before the Vigil. What is happening in the celebration is the recognition of the work of the Spirit in the world, through the ministry of the Church; a proclamation of what has happened in the lives of the elect, and a recommitment and reunification by the whole community to the mystery of God’s active love and life revealed in Christ.

The process that led the neophyte to this, and which renews the life and commitment of the believers gathered is one of deep and focused conscience formation. This happens, by the work of the Spirit and the ministry of the Church, in the world, in the first instance, in the lives of those who have NOT yet passed through the waters of Baptism and onto the Cross of Christ; and then through an annual recommitment, using the same process of the ‘baptised’. This is Lent.

So all are focused on a commitment to a moral life, it is fundamental to a relationship with Christ.

The process of the formation of the moral conscience is the action of the Holy Spirit working in the hearts and minds of all people of good will. It is NOT predicated on having been baptized into Christ. The insight of the Christian message is that life is available for all, if people engage in a clear and structured formation of the mind and heart; and that this should, if the ministry of the Church is alive in Christ, lead all to see the fullness of human existence in Christ and the love of God revealed in Him. But, to come to a moral position is NOT dependent on such a conscious proclamation.

2.10. Period of Post-baptismal catechesis or Mystagogia

The last phase of the catechesis and formation, are the formal processes of initiation, the period of post-baptismal reflection on the reality of what has happened. The putting into words the deeds experienced in the midst of the Church at Easter and the period of Catechumenate that preceded it. The Mystagogia.

The Mystagogia is characterized by three elements: “Meditating on the gospel, sharing in Eucharist, and performing works of charity.”³⁴³

The three elements co-exist. Firstly, both as individuals and community there is a need to discern what to do, how to act and how to be a moral being and this is liturgically facilitated by an on-going meditation on the Gospel, and a deep and constant commitment to being united in the Eucharist. This commitment has two elements, it is the awareness that all that is done is undertaken together, in the Body, in the corporate, and the consequences of all actions are also communal. Secondly, that

³⁴² *Christian Initiation of Adults* n.27.

³⁴³ *Christian Initiation of Adults* n.37.

all is done, “In Him, with Him, and through Him” the one who was willing to lay down His life in service and sacrifice, was willing to give his very self to the Father for the sake of the others. These are the preconditions of Christian charity and service. Active faith involves a commitment to reflection and prayer, worship and thanksgiving and being modelled on Christ, which will find its authentic expression in a commitment to service and sacrificial agape. Faith is not an exercise in reflection and prayer, worship and thanksgiving alone, faith is not lived “by just talking about it”, rather it is shown by DOING the resultant works of charity.

“But someone will say, “You have faith; I have deeds.” Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by my deeds. (James 2:18)

How does this happen on an on-going basis?

It is by a sharing of the experience as the *Rite* says :“(It)...is increased by the way he lives; they draw a new sense of the faith, the Church, and the world.”³⁴⁴

The *Rite* says that once a person is living in this formed and consistent way of life, and has celebrated this incorporation into Christ, the Church can offer a deep and rich understanding and insight into the faith, the Church, and the world. This is an aid, a deepening, it is not a prerequisite, and maybe this is the challenge to the Church and her own approach in many spheres. The Church needs to speak to the world where it is at, and make a clear distinction between when she is talking with the eyes of Risen faith, and when offering deep insight into the human condition from having followed the process of human inquiry into truth and life.

The *Rite* gives other insights into formation by discussing the role of the ministers and their part in the process: “The community must always be ready to fulfil its apostolic vocation by giving help... in the various circumstances of daily life”³⁴⁵ and “...the apostolate of the Church and all its members is directed first to making known to the world the message of Christ through their words and deeds and to communicate his grace”³⁴⁶ and there is a call to all committed disciples to “...give the catechumens the example of their own renewal in the spirit of penance, faith, and charity...”³⁴⁷ This is primarily done through the lived example of “...the sponsor (who) is to be a man or woman who knows the candidate, helps him, and witnesses to his morals, faith and intention.”³⁴⁸

It is in their words and deeds, characterised by prayer, penance, faith and charity, that the ‘moral witness’ of a person is displayed in daily life. The heart of the moral person is displayed in the deeds that witness their Christian commitment and which are seen to be ‘real’!

This has completed the introduction in which the full and general overview of the intent of the OICA has been outlined.

There are now over 300 paragraphs of the *Rite* which outline the liturgical application of this insight.

³⁴⁴ *Christian Initiation of Adults* n.38.

³⁴⁵ *Christian Initiation of Adults* n.41.

³⁴⁶ *Christian Initiation of Adults* n.41/1 quoting *Apostolicam Acutositatem* n.6.

³⁴⁷ *Christian Initiation of Adults* n.41/4.

³⁴⁸ *Christian Initiation of Adults* n.42.

Clearly, the process and insights uncovered by this close study of the *Introduction* could be reinforced by a detailed examination of every stage and paragraph. However this would only serve to emphasise the core elements that the study of the *Introduction* has offered.

What has been found is that:

The catechumenate is a structured, adaptable process of formation. It involves a commitment, over time, and in a way characterised by accompaniment and patience, to walk with a person as they examine their own lives, and compare it to the life of the community.

The catechumenate emphasises the importance of the scripture and meditation, joint discernment and communal understanding and support.

The catechumenate shows that formation is as much about what is seen and done as about what is spoken and heard.

The catechumenate shows that formation is a staged process and can requires public support and expressions of commitment.

The catechumenate shows that the character of a person is deeply influenced by the form and nature of the formation experiences they join and especially those they complete to the point of commitment. However the catechumenate also shows that formation, is NOT a process leading to a single event, it underlines that all formation requires ongoing formation and revisiting on a regular basis.

Lastly, the study has shown the form and structure of the catechumenate to be closely linked to the *Introduction* and entrance rites, and the Liturgy of the Word of the Sunday Liturgy. So this is the next step, to examine the Sunday Liturgy, and the GIRM, for parallel understandings.

Chapter Three: The Liturgy

3.1. The General Instruction of the Roman Missal³⁴⁹ (GIRM)

In this study the relationship between deed and word, initiated by *Dei Verbum 2*, provided the bridge to the structure of the *OICA* and the processes of initiation. The insights gained from understanding the link between the Catechumenate and the *OICA* and the Liturgy of the Word now lead us to the Sunday Liturgy.

The public commitment of new, formed members of the Body of Christ is at the heart of and the meaning of the Paschal Celebration of Easter and its meaning rests in the incorporation into the Paschal Mystery celebrated in the Triduum, the life, death, burial and Resurrection of the Lord. This means that as Christians: “we must turn our gaze first and foremost upon the Christ of Easter, who is risen and lives on as the glorified head of His Church”³⁵⁰; and from that understanding comes insight into the weekly gathering of the Community: the Easter/Sunday Eucharist.³⁵¹

The fruit of the process of formation in the *OICA* is an on-going commitment to re-formation and life within the community, so as to recognise and serve the Risen Christ, with a specific focus on the Sunday Liturgy.

This can be summarised in a key element of interpretation, which was expressed in the four-fold nature of the presence of Christ in *Sacrosanctum Concilium*⁷ and which Jungmann expressed in the affirmation: “Christ is not a past but also a present being,”³⁵² and this is the reason for the “centrality of Sunday, that it is the Day of the Lord,” the “day that reminds us that we are redeemed and favoured ones, and therefore on Sunday we must celebrate together the Sacrifice of Redemption the memoria passionis.”³⁵³

So the next element in this study is to examine the Rite of the Roman Mass, the place in which Christ is present and our redemption is celebrated, on a weekly basis, from the two-fold perspective contained in that celebration: the form/*structure*/and process involved, and the *meaning* contained in this process.

The structure of this investigation will be to follow that given by *The General Instruction to the Roman Missal (GIRM)* itself.

The *General Instruction* is divided into parts:

- Preamble and Introduction.

³⁴⁹ “The General Instruction of the Roman Missal.” New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference. *Roman Missal: English Translation according to the Third Typical Edition*, (Wellington: New Zealand Catholic Bishops’ Conference, 2010) pp.16-69.

³⁵⁰ Jungmann, Josef A. and John F. Baldovin (Ed.). *Pastoral Liturgy*, (Notre Dame, IN: Christian Classics, 2014) p.341.

³⁵¹ Jungmann, Josef A. *Pastoral Liturgy*. Op.cit.p.342.

³⁵² Ibid.

³⁵³ Ibid.

- Chapter I: The Importance and Dignity of the Celebration of the Eucharist
- Chapter II: The Structure of the Mass, Its Elements, and Its Parts

Chapter II is then divided into its constituent parts, reflecting the parts of the liturgy itself:

- The general structure of the Mass
- The introductory Rites
- The liturgy of the Word
- The liturgy of the Eucharist
- The Communion rite
- The concluding rites.

This inquiry will examine the structure and meaning contained in these essential chapters.

3.2. The GIRM 2000: the document

The official interpretation of the Sunday Liturgy is the *General Instruction to the Roman Missal*³⁵⁴ which is contained in the *Roman Missal: English Translation according to the Third Typical Edition*³⁵⁵ which was published in 2010. This is the approved translation of the Latin Missal published in 2002,³⁵⁶ which in turn was the “renewed” and “revised edition of *The General Instruction of the Roman Missal*” developed after Vatican II which had its first edition in 1970³⁵⁷ and a second edition in 1975.

There is great continuity between this GIRM and the GIRM 1975, and the liturgists and rubricists therefore focused on any significant variations. This study will summarise them before approaching the document in detail³⁵⁸.

Firstly, there has been a “slight” movement toward uniformity of practice; however it is accompanied by a respect for: “The practices and needs of local churches and diverse peoples.”³⁵⁹

³⁵⁴ “The General Instruction of the Roman Missal.” New Zealand Catholic Bishops’ Conference. *Roman Missal: English Translation according to the Third Typical Edition*.,(Wellington: New Zealand Catholic Bishops’ Conference, 2010).

³⁵⁵ *Roman Missal: English Translation according to the Third Typical Edition*,(Wellington: New Zealand Catholic Bishops’ Conference, 2010).

³⁵⁶ *Missale Romanum : ex decreto sacrosancti œcumenici Concilii Vaticani II instauratu mauctoritate Pauli PP.VI promulgatu Ioannis Pauli PP II cura recognitum Editio Typica Tertia*, Typis Vaticanis A.D. MMII.

³⁵⁷ Huels has provided a very detailed, canonical analysis and outline of the changes in this edition: Huels, John M. “The New General Instruction of the Roman Missal: Subsidiarity or Uniformity?” *Worship* 75.6 (2001) pp. 482-510.

³⁵⁸ These notes are based on the insight of John Huels.

³⁵⁹ Huels, John M. Op.cit.p.508.

Secondly, there are eight more norms than previously and they focus on: “the necessity of maintaining, considering, respecting, or adapting the law in accord with the practices, customs, culture, traditions, needs, language, and abilities of various peoples and regions in the Church.”³⁶⁰

Thirdly, this GIRM maintained a strong continuity with the GIRM of 1975, but makes a clear link between the liturgy and the life of the Church: “The main body of GIRM 2002 continues to reiterate and expand on the text of GIRM 1975. To begin with, GIRM 2002 repeats the foundational understanding of the celebration of the Mass as the “high point” of the dynamic between God and humanity, as well as the “centre of the whole Christian life for the Church...” (GIRM 2002:16)³⁶¹

Fourthly, There is a strong emphasis on the presence of Christ in the Mass “in his Word” (GIRM, 27) but with the understanding that the liturgy of the Word and the liturgy of the Eucharist are “so closely interconnected that they form but one single act of worship.” (GIRM 28) The celebration takes place at “the table of the Word” and the “table of the Eucharist.”³⁶² This is a direct reference to DV 21 which teaches that the Scriptures are to be venerated like the Lord’s Body, and that in the liturgy the Church offers to the faithful the bread of life from both the table of the Word and that of the Eucharist.

This leads to the awareness, that while our liturgical and ecclesial/moral “Christian” lives are of one piece, a unity; they are to be established in what is said and what is done and in a relationship with the culture and place. This is the time and place, the location, in which Christ becomes present in the unity of deed and word.

The fact that this is the third edition since Vatican II underlines that the understanding of the liturgy and the Christian life lives in a framework that expects to be “influenced by the ongoing reform of the liturgy set in place by *Sacrosanctum Concilium*” and secondly by the deep realisation that this displays that: “There is much discontinuity in the history of the Mass,”³⁶³ and that all theological reflection on the liturgy must be aware of, and work with, insights that show diversity, growth and change.

In setting the scene of this ‘developing liturgical life’ and the corresponding impact on Christian living, and formation, it is important to acknowledge that for the: “First six or seven centuries (we do not find) a good amount of documentation on the structure and workings of the liturgy itself,”³⁶⁴ but that certain consistencies can be identified. The first and most important is that among the practices of the early church there was: “a particular ritual, which had basic features-although it was in a process of structural evolution and theological and ethical development.”³⁶⁵ This ritual / rite was: “an act of the community as a whole” and it involved “the blessing of bread and wine, which is

³⁶⁰ Ibid.

³⁶¹ Pierce, Joanne M. "The Liturgy of the Word in the New General Instruction of the Roman Missal." *Liturgical Ministry* 12.Summer (2003) p.143.

³⁶² Foley, Edward. "Chapter II: The Structure of the Mass, Its Elements and Its Parts." *A Commentary on the Order of Mass of the Roman Missal: A New English Translation Developed under the Auspices of the Catholic Academy of Liturgy* ; General Editor, Edward Foley ; Associate Editors, John F. Baldwin, Mary Collins, Joanne M. Pierce ; Foreword by Roger Mahony., (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 2007) p.115.

³⁶³ Moore, Gerard. "The Mass through the Ages." *Liturgical Ministry* 16.Winter (2007) p. 11.

³⁶⁴ Following Gerard Moore.

³⁶⁵ Moore, G. Op.cit.p.12.

shared among the members,”³⁶⁶ it is this ritual that defines the community: “as a people who remember Jesus and are incorporated into his Body.”³⁶⁷ And this rite has: “ethical implications for those who participate in it.”³⁶⁸

Scholars have identified a structure emerging, especially in the writings of Justin Martyr. In the *First Apology*, he gives us “details of a Eucharist following Baptism and of a Sunday Eucharist.”³⁶⁹ It has a structure: gathering; readings; a discourse from the president on the readings; prayers of the faithful, standing; the kiss of peace; the presentation of bread and wine; the prayer of thanksgiving, with the assent of the great amen of the assembly; communion of those present, and of those absent taken by deacons; collection for distribution to the poor.

This pattern, or common style of prayer, persists across the centuries and can be identified clearly in the development of the Eucharist in the West.³⁷⁰ It is this ritual that is at the heart of the GIRM 2002.

3.3. The preamble to the *Institutio Generalis Missalis Romani* / General Instruction of the Roman Missal³⁷¹

The General instruction starts with an introduction. This examination of *The Institutio Generalis Missalis Romani (IGMR) / General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM)* on it with the following focus: firstly on the *process* of the liturgy as a pattern for formation and making commitments and secondly on the elements of *content* that should be taken into account as individuals, and the community, undertake formation and are re-formed in their commitment to Christ.

The GIRM opens with the following statement: “As Christ the Lord was about to celebrate with the disciples the Paschal Supper in which he instituted the Sacrifice of his Body and Blood, he commanded that a large, furnished upper room be prepared (Luke 22:12).”

Lumen Gentium says that the Eucharist: “is the fount and apex of the whole Christian Life ;”(LG 11)³⁷² and here *The General Instruction* starts by making one statement which contains a series of important linkages. This is the Lord’s work. There is an inextricable link between what is happening here and the Paschal Mystery and that the understanding of this Mystery is deeply connected to the sacrifice of his Body and Blood.

Here within the first two sentences, the GIRM places the Paschal Supper and Mystery within the context of the Lukan narrative. Luke 22:12 must be read in the light of the preceding verse: “When you enter the city, a man carrying a jug of water will meet you. Follow him to the house he enters, and say to the owner of that house, ‘The Teacher asks, “Where is the guest room, where I may eat the Passover with My disciples?’” And he will show you a large, furnished upper room. Make the preparations there.” (Luke 22:10-11)

³⁶⁶ Ibid.

³⁶⁷ Ibid.

³⁶⁸ Ibid.

³⁶⁹ Ibid.

³⁷⁰ The pattern is clearly outlined in a series of tables in Baldovin, John F., S.J. (2006) Op.cit.pp.77-130.

³⁷¹ The English text of *The General Instruction of the Roman Missal* is that of the published version of the New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference. Published in the *Roman Missal* (Wellington, NZCBC, 2010)

³⁷² LG 11, quoted in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* n. 1324.

With the addition of the previous verse, there is an awareness of the full setting of the “process,” the start of the formation which is contained in the preparation of the Paschal meal. The GIRM provides the setting of the event. Firstly it is situated: “In the city”, in the midst of the ‘daily life.’ This event is not situated at the Temple or in the synagogue.³⁷³ Secondly, the supper is prepared by disciples who are sent to people who are in the city, and are outside the group of believers, in fact the one facilitating the process is ‘a man carrying a jug of water’, an indication of the poor or a slave, as this task is not one undertaken by a free citizen.

The Paschal Mystery, the mystery of salvation, or “life in Christ”, is to be found in the city, however, it happens within the expectations of the culture: the customs and festivals, the language of the place and time; the Passover and Jerusalem. They are to prepare the Passover!

Next, the Paschal Mystery can only be celebrated in a situation that has been “prepared” and there are elements to see within this preparation.

Living life fully in Christ will be in the midst of the events, order, presuppositions and tensions of our cultural and social structures; it will be in the temporal sphere of the ‘city’ and the community will be called, not to a “pre-prepared”, “controlled” answer; rather they are called to prepare a room in which the Paschal Mystery, / feast can be revealed. Christians, disciples, are sent to prepare and they are sent to prepare in the city!

The GIRM then states clearly that the gift at the heart of the celebration is the sacrifice of Christ, and it leads directly to a doctrinal summary of all that is: “...consistently expressed in the formulas of the Mass.”

The Instruction says that it is these formulas, and the celebration of this memorial, that accomplish our redemption.

This formula incorporates the key insight of moral formation. Human beings are responding to the gift of redemption, and that redemption is to live life in the full, in the light of how we were created, and in unity with the definitive expression of the love of God and the fullness of life: the life, death and resurrection of the Lord.

Humanity seeks to make commitments that will lead to life in the fullest, and to respond to the gift of life in its fullness poured out in Christ.

The *General Instruction* clearly indicates that to see that redemption: look to the formulas of this celebration. (GS 2) It then reinforces this immediately by emphasising that all the elements involved are the work of the Spirit, and it is the Son and the fullness of God who are seeking to reconcile us to him.

The text is very clear: the understanding of the Church is that the task of bringing this “salvation to the whole world” (GIRM 2) is entrusted to the church.

There is therefore, a fundamental question: “What is understood by salvation?” Is it in the world, of the world, a new world, or a continuity of this world? The starting point provided by the *GIRM* is

³⁷³ These were not places where Passover was celebrated; it was celebrated in the domestic, the familial recommitment to the Covenant, in the midst of the quotidian.

that the formulae of the Eucharist are seen by the Church as capable of revealing the mind of God and that the intention of God is that the gift of the fullness of life, and love, salvation, is not just a gift/grace for the Church, but is intended for the whole world!

The first two paragraphs of the GIRM therefore give confidence to the understanding that the model being developed is not to be seen as exclusively ecclesial. It might have an ease of applicability and clarity within the ecclesial community and among the faithful; but the GIRM says that the mystery contained in these formulae is intended, in the mind of the Father, to bring a pattern of salvation to all of humanity, the whole world.

This is reinforced when after outlining the central role of the ministerial priesthood in the liturgical expression of this ministry *The General Instruction* reinforces the universal applicability of this Eucharistic model to all peoples. It focuses on: “The royal Priesthood of the faithful” (GIRM 5) and then says that the unity of the faithful emerges from their being in a unity of understanding and heart with “the ministry of the Bishop and the Priests.” But even at this first step, the ministry is not entirely hierarchical; the GIRM focuses on the importance of the People of God. Why? Because it is the people of God who are “to present to God the prayers of the entire human family”. There is an intersection between the prayers of the entire human family, the people of God and the people gathered in this place, a people living in the midst of the people of this time.

There are two more elements to be emphasised in this paragraph.

Firstly, this people, that is the faithful, in the first instance, but it applies to all people of good will, bring this prayer and are united in these formulae of salvation, in a specific way. They are “brought together in unity” and then they: “Grow constantly in holiness by conscious, active, and fruitful participation in the mystery of the Eucharist.”³⁷⁴

The Rite is not understood as a once and for all, static unity. Rather, the intention is to bring together a community that will *grow* in unity and holiness. To use the words of Benedict XVI, we know that to: “enter through that door is to set out on a journey that lasts a lifetime.”³⁷⁵

This is a journey, a passagata, a hikoi³⁷⁶ of growth toward unity. The image contained here is that the baptised are gifted with a robe which they will grow into in time. Formation takes time and will have an appropriate pace.

This phrase also tells us how it is to be done? It occurs in a process that is described as: “Conscious, active and fruitful”. (GIRM 5)

The process of liturgical participation and the entry into the commitment that enables the sharing in the fullness of salvation is brought about through the formulae of the liturgy. It is a process that

³⁷⁴ GIRM 5 quoting SC 11.

³⁷⁵ Benedict XVI, Apostolic Letter in the form of Motu Proprio, “Porta Fidei”, to initiate the Year of Faith, 11 October 2011, *Insegnamenti di Benedetto XVI, vol VII /2, 2011*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Roma, (2012) pp. 403-416. n.1.

³⁷⁶ A hikoi in Maori and New Zealand Culture is when you deliberately and publically walk from one point to another, to carry a message and to make a point. The great hikoi of Whena Cooper was when a woman in her 70s walked 600 kilometres from her home in remote Northland to Parliament to protest the loss of Maori land. She was joined in the last miles by thousands who flocked to the justice of her cause and message.

demands of the participant, a conscious intellectual involvement and an active and committed engagement to be fruitful, and neither can be abdicated or replaced by subservience or passive attendance.

There is also a deep insight into the processes of formation and commitment that bring life to the heart of the Church.

Paragraph 7 says that in difficult times the Church placed the emphasis it did on its sacramental understanding of the Eucharist by returning to the: "Ancient and approved authors" which preceded the liturgical commentaries of the Middle Ages."(GIRM 7)

This is an insight into methodology and the way that is being put forward to understand the relationship between the liturgy and the deeper understandings of the moral life, both elements called for by Vatican II. This is a direct reference to the movement of "Ressourcement" seen in Vatican II.

The direction is to go back beyond the "form" of the Middle Ages and ask questions of more ancient texts. In this study it is the primitive Catechumenate, which was the process for the formation of Christians in the "Way" of Christ. It was however also a formation for the living of the moral life centred upon the Scriptures and liturgical formation, contained in the Sunday Liturgy and for making a commitment to a way of life.

This approach was identified by Yves Congar who saw the tension between continuity and the restoration of elements from the deep past as a 'Dialectic'. He said that: "Tradition...comprises two equally vital aspects, one of development and one of conservation...there is a sort of tension or dialectic between purity and totality, neither of which should be sacrificed. It is understandable that the Magisterium, whose chief mission is to keep and transmit a deposit, should be more concerned with the purity, and that this should be its duty...but it is also part of her mission to display the Gospel as extensively as possible to mankind, which is growing ceaselessly, not only externally and numerically, but also internally."³⁷⁷

The study of such insights from the past, the GIRM says is where will be found the: "norm of the holy Fathers," (GIRM 9) and the source of liturgical documents to be studied is very wide and all-encompassing, both geographically and historically. The GIRM says it includes the: "entire past ages" (GIRM 9) and "All the ways in which her one faith has been expressed in forms of human and social culture so greatly differing among themselves, indeed, as those prevailing in the Semitic, Greek, and Latin regions."(GIRM 9)

There is to be found here, in the GIRM, a "normative" description of the way of life of the Church and for forming people to make commitments focused on the life and mission of the Church. This form can provide a pattern for the lives of Christians today, a pattern for walking the life of Christ and being in the world; based on the previous discussion and a normative pattern for all humanity to live life in its fullness.

The heart of this process can be seen in paragraph 9.

³⁷⁷ Congar, Yves and A. N. Woodrow (trans). *The Meaning of Tradition*, (New York: Hawthorn, 1964) p.110; quoted at Jeffery, P., Obl.S.B. Op.cit.p367.

Having identified the "norm of the holy Fathers" as providing an understanding of what was done in the past, the GIRM suggests that, what has been handed to the present day Church, can speak to the diversity of places in which the Church finds herself. 'The norm' is not culturally contained; it is rather a tradition that can be: "expressed in forms of human and social culture so greatly differing among themselves" (GIRM 9): Liturgically it says, and this is to be extended to the language and cultural mores and norms of all human communities, this: "allows us to see how the Holy Spirit endows the People of God with a marvellous fidelity in preserving the unalterable deposit of faith, even though there is a very great variety of prayers and rites." (GIRM 9)

It is equally possible for the great variety of languages, cultures and expressions of identity; to express the identified moral norms of the (Christian) community and to form people for true commitment.

This adaptability, or inculturation, is at the core of the thinking of the writers of the GIRM, as they move, while clearly protecting the "deposit of faith", to ask how there can be an "Accommodation to New Conditions".³⁷⁸

The General Instruction says that the pronouncements of the Second Vatican Council, speaking: "in a far different time in world history" (GIRM 10) (than the Council of Trent), was able to bring forth: "Proposals and measures regarding pastoral life that could not even have been foreseen four centuries earlier "(GIRM 10)

However this is immediately to be balanced with an awareness of the "need to conserve and preserve: the unity of the Roman rite, the unity of the Church, the authority and laws of the Church, and the integrity of the faith."³⁷⁹

There is an important balance here. The teaching and formulations of the Tradition must be able to be adapted and speak in the language of this time and place, but there is also a demand of each moral decision maker, to take that which is understood bring it clearly to: "proposals and measures regarding pastoral life.'(GIRM 10)

This is where the application of the teachings and formulations of the tradition to elements that could not have been seen previously is made.

This is why the moral life is not normative in the sense of a static law, prescribed and legislated; it is interactive, dialectic, an understanding must be brought to the pastoral life and concern of our times.

Secondly, this paragraph provides a foundation to the insight that the liturgical life of the Church has a direct and profound relationship with the "pastoral life" of the Church. This is identified when the *GIRM* says: "The Council of Trent had already recognised the great catechetical usefulness contained

³⁷⁸ We note that this is not a new phenomenon. Jungmann in discussing the early liturgy says that "as the church moved she took up the language of the community so that they could understand and participate, Latin". He also notes that there was "a penetration in the choice of readings and prayer and tradition of "national and local elements": Jungmann, Josef A. *Pastoral Liturgy*.op.cit. (2014) p. 372.

³⁷⁹ Jeffery, P., *Obl.S.B. Op.cit.*p.366. Making reference to the call for the "lengthy, cautious and deliberate process of inculturation outlined in the 1994 document *Varietates Legitimae*.

in the celebration of Mass but was unable to bring out all its consequences in regard to actual practice.”(GIRM 11)

The Church does not worship in a sphere that is isolated and remote from pastoral life, with its decisions and issues, its challenges and concerns; rather the liturgical life of the Community is expected to interact and interface with those pastoral concerns.

What is the methodology contained within the liturgy that enables this?

The Liturgy is called to speak to the proposals and measures of the pastoral life, and more, to gather the insights of previous epochs and all cultures!!

The GIRM brings this study to one of the sources of the genesis of this thesis.

What is to be the range and scope of this ‘catechetical usefulness’?

Firstly the GIRM says that: “The Eucharistic Sacrifice is in the first place the action of Christ himself, whose inherent efficacy is therefore unaffected, by the manner in which the faithful participate in it.”(GIRM 11)

And then quoting the Council it relates this understanding to the use of the vernacular and certain questions of liturgical practice and proceeds to call for the use of the Mass as a catechetical support: “ Nevertheless, ..., it ordered, on the other hand, pastors of souls to put appropriate catechesis in its place: "Lest Christ's flock go hungry . . . the Holy Synod commands pastors and each and all of those others having the care of souls that frequently during the celebration of Mass, either personally or through others, they should explain what is read at Mass; and expound, among other things, something of the mystery of this most holy Sacrifice, especially on Sundays and feast days."(GIRM 11)

This call to catechesis is extended beyond the structure and liturgical formation of the Mass, to its structure as formative of the Body of Christ, and of those who follow Christ, and are formed by His Word, come to the Altar and are sent back into the world to live the Way the Truth and the Life.

The core of this understanding is outlined in paragraph 12 where based on the call for the safe use of the vernacular in all sacramental celebrations the GIRM outlines that this is: “so that the people may more fully understand the mystery which is celebrated.” (GIRM 12)

The next two paragraphs outline the intended pattern for the involvement of the faithful in the Mass. It is one of: “Fuller participation in the Holy Eucharist” (GIRM 13); And, " It is driven by pastoral zeal” (GIRM 14) and it states that this is based upon the hope of bringing to fruition elements that had been hoped for in the 400 years since the Council of Trent such as: “the homily to be given on Sundays and feast days” (GIRM 13); “the reception of the Lord’s Body from the same sacrifice” (GIRM 13); “communion under both kinds” (GIRM 14); and what is common to these belated actions is an ethos of participation, real involvement and the link to pastoral considerations.

Here at the beginning of this “liturgical instruction” there is an understanding that can be taken to the examination of formation and the making of commitments. In all matters there is a relationship between what has been given and is protected, and the ‘newness’ of the situation in which it is lived. An element may be seen as core, but its expression is not to be seen as static; rather, all elements

are to be examined and new things adopted, not just in their expression, but in themselves. This dynamic is expressed in Paragraph 15: "In this manner the Church, while remaining faithful to her office as teacher of truth, safeguarding "things old," that is, the deposit of tradition fulfils at the same time the duty of examining and prudently adopting "things new." (cf. Mt 13:52)(GIRM 15)

This formulation of the interrelationship between what is received and what is new is of vital importance for the formation of positions and the making of commitments. The GIRM provides a clear and concise expression of approach: "For part of the new Missal orders the prayers of the Church in a way more open to the needs of our times,"(GIRM 15) and it then names places: "in which tradition and new elements are appropriately brought together." (GIRM 15)

The General instruction also says that while a great number of expressions: "have remained unchanged, numerous others have been accommodated to the needs and conditions proper to our own age, and still others, such as the prayers for the Church, for the laity, for the sanctification of human labour, for the community of all nations, and certain needs proper to our era, have been newly composed, drawing on the thoughts and often the very phrasing of the recent documents of the Council."(GIRM 15)

The GIRM is responding to, the "attitude toward the new state of the world as it now is, it seemed to cause no harm at all to so revered a treasure if some phrases were changed so that the language would be in accord with that of modern theology and would truly reflect the current state of the Church's discipline". (GIRM 15)

The GIRM itself has provided an insight into the way in which the GIRM is to be read; and at its heart this is a direction to engage in understanding the Gospel in the light of modern theology and the new state of the world.

The GIRM also calls on believers to lead the community to full active and conscious participation in the movement of salvation, by and through, a dialogue between what has been received and what the world offers to our understanding.

3.4. Chapter I: The Importance and Dignity of the Celebration of the Eucharist

These general insights are then applied in the next chapter where the *General Instruction* focuses on the Church's understanding of her liturgy, the Eucharist and the Mystery they reveal.

The opening phrases of chapter 1 give clear direction.

The celebration of the whole Mass, not just the liturgy of the Eucharist, is an action, not just of Christ but of: "Christ and of the People of God" (GIRM 16); and is "the centre of the whole of Christian life." (GIRM 16)

Therefore any understanding of a "Christian life" starts and finds its central meaning here. The paragraph then goes one step further.

This is not just about life within the Church, and for Christians. While it is the central reference point for the Church, it is also the: "... high point both of the action by which God sanctifies the world in Christ and of the worship that the human race offers to the Father." (GIRM 16)

These words have been chosen carefully by the writers of the instruction so can be taken as they are written. The Mass is the framework within which the relationship of God with the world, in Christ, is to be understood. And more, it is a sign of the universal worship of the human race. There is contained in the Mass, not only a pattern for Christians, but also the place which reveals how and where the action of God is patterned in this world, and more, how humanity can be formed to best respond to this divine initiative.

This is a core understanding. The Mass cannot be a sign of the universal worship of the human race if it only includes those who have heard of Christ, or have experienced the pattern of the Mass or its content.

It must be the opposite, that in the Mass can be identified the pattern that will be revealed in authentic human life and activity and therefore shows forth the way in which all people can participate in "the universal worship", which to some extent must correspond to the pattern and content of the Mass.

The next paragraph provides a tool for unpacking this mystery of the Mass as the pattern of understanding and worship, and as the model of full Christian life, (which one can in all references mean moral life). The GIRM says that the whole mystery of redemption is celebrated firstly in a seasonal and liturgical calendar, but more, the GIRM says that: "the other sacred actions and all the activities of the Christian life, these are bound up with it, flow from it, and are ordered to it"³⁸⁰

There is no element of (Christian) life then that is separate to the pattern of the Eucharist. Or more explicitly, there is in the Christian disposition no understanding of worship as being separate to the lived and ordered life in the world and of the person, and their moral life which is not intrinsically patterned upon the life of Christ. This can be translated to say that for the Christian, initially, and for all of humanity; the whole mystery of life, salvation, the true and full meaning of life; therefore of moral being and order, understanding and structure is, bound up, flows from and is ordered to "the structure, order, understanding and meaning of the Mass."(GIRM 16)

The GIRM sees this as so central that in the development of this theme in paragraph 17 it moves very quickly to emphasise the importance of the celebration and its order, so that each participant, aware of "their proper order", can draw fruit from it.

The understanding of the order of the celebration is not just to ensure a compliance with good order or to ensure that a rubric has led to its proper celebration; rather its importance is that the celebration and its order, enables those gathered to draw fruits 'abundantly' from this life.

This is a way of life, a structure of understanding and development that is not a system of worship designed to placate a distant God; rather, this is a way of worship and a structure that enables

³⁸⁰ GIRM 16 quoting:SC10; cf. *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests, Second Vatican Council, (December 7, 1965) n. 5.

people to be formed so as to share in the abundance of God's love for the world and to draw the fruit of this salvation abundantly, in their lives.

Now to enable this to happen, in the liturgy, and within the Church, the way forward is clearly articulated.

Let all within the assembly, participate: "in such a way that it leads to a conscious, active, and full participation of the faithful, namely in body and in mind, a participation fervent with faith, hope, and charity," (GIRM 18) and this is: "a call which is required by the very nature of the celebration and to which the Christian people have a right and duty in virtue of their Baptism"³⁸¹

A direct link is being made between the understanding of the structure and nature of the celebration, which is described as consciously, actively and fully participating, in mind and body, and with the fervour of faith, hope and charity. The link between them is made directly in baptism.

Here lies the core of this thesis: to understand Christian commitment, and ultimately the fullness of human life, there is in the structure and nature of the Mass a template that links the Rites of initiation, the OICA, the Mass and the acts of formation and commitment, in a seamless whole.

This level of universality, and its ability to provide a template for all, is reinforced, in paragraph 19 where the GIRM says that even when people can't fully understand or actively participate, there is an "efficacy and dignity" within the Mass which shows the way of salvation.

So, even when people don't understand the content, or do not have the ability to enter into full active and conscious participation, they are able, by sharing in the form of the Mass, and by uniting themselves in some way with the community which lives in fidelity to the structure, to be linked with the action of Christ, and the fullness of life.

There is therefore great importance in unveiling the structure that embodies this fullness of understanding and reveals the fullness of life, not only in Christ, but for humanity.

The GIRM says that because, and it is rare that anyone is ever in a situation where they can, people don't enter fully into the conscious and full understanding and with all their heart, mind and soul linked to the mystery, does NOT mean that they are unable to share in the mystery. The safeguard is that there are those who are members of a community that live, or attempt to live, the mystery so structured.

So it is in all moral commitments. The individual or any community never has a full, total, and conscious understanding of the content and implications of their decision or all the elements influencing their living out the commitments they have made, yet by working carefully within the structure and framework, people can participate in the understanding of the community. This is not an abdication to the community, nor is it a call to a subservient obedience to the community; it is rather a link that calls all to participate, as strongly as they can, but to have faith in the support of the community, of the whole.

Life is ultimately an act of Christ and of the Church, and those ministering fulfil their own principal function by always acting for the sake of the people's salvation.

³⁸¹ GIRM 18 quoting cf. SC.14.

So how does this occur? What are the means by which this is happening in our midst?

It is by the means of: “signs” (GIRM 20),

Signs, are “forms and elements” (GIRM 20) that “are chosen and arranged” (GIRM 20) and then are placed in “the circumstances of persons and places” (GIRM 20) so as to enable people to “effectively foster active and full participation” (GIRM 20) and respond to their needs.

The structure, the arrangement, the form and interrelationship of the elements, have to do two things: they are to foster a full and active participation and to respond to the needs of the people and they do this by being interspaced with the circumstances of the people.

The needs of the people will be responded to when, in the circumstances of the person and their place, they are able to enter into full and active participation with the signs and forms, the elements that have been chosen and arranged. Which elements are these? The form and content of the Mass!!

Is this a *general* instruction? That is its designation. However, in each local Church, the original Roman document has been taken and produced as the GIRM for the local Church. For those involved in the preparation of English Language Missals, it is well known that there is little change from the original form; however here in paragraph 22 it says that “the: Celebration of the Eucharist in a particular Church is of the utmost importance,” (GIRM 22) and this is reinforced in the fourth chapter: “the different forms of celebrating Mass” which provides a strong understanding that the: “Eucharistic celebration is inherently adaptable to a variety of circumstances.”³⁸²

The full and genuine significance of the Rites and texts need to be grasped so as to lead to the active and fruitful celebration of the Eucharist. Pastoral effectiveness will be enhanced when it is in correspondence with the prescribed elements and the spirit of the liturgy.

This understanding is shows that the content, the structure and the form are themselves formative. They will lead to the effective understanding and wholeness of life and understanding of salvation. The accommodations and adaptations for the local will enhance and enable the effectiveness of the form, not replace or restructure it, because it is the structure and form, which carry the message!

In these paragraphs there is a careful protection of the form and the whole, and an underlining of the importance of preserving the liturgical structure, and consequently the moral content of the liturgy, and therefore any formal adaptation is to be carefully examined and discussed.

It is not intended that these formal adaptations be about mere trimmings, a different fringe or colour, word or order; rather it is about the places in which there is an interaction with the very structure of the liturgy which is carrying the message of salvation and the pathway to the fullness of life.

³⁸² Connell, Martin, and Sharon McMillan. "The Different Forms of Celebrating Mass (De Diversis Formis Missam Celebrandi)." In Edward Foley, Nathan D. Mitchell, and Joanne M. Pierce (ed.) *A Commentary on the General Instruction of the Roman Missal: Developed under the Auspices of the Catholic Academy of Liturgy and Cosponsored by the Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions*, (Collegeville, MN: Pueblo, 2007)p.224.

The GIRM says that the form and the structure is the framework that will carry a code of understanding that can form humanity, definitively as Christians, but more as human beings, to make the commitment that leads to the *fullness of life* found in God's revelation, His Son.

3.5. Chapter II: The Structure of the Mass, Its Elements, and Its Parts

The next section of the GIRM is very repetitive. Having outlined the general principles in the introduction, it now gives a general structure, and then returns and repeats much of the insight in a detailed treatment of each section of the liturgy.

For this study, the general themes could have been extracted, but the intention is to show the structure and meaning. Part of that is the way in which the structure is reinforced by the repetition in the GIRM, but more importantly that the insights gained are not dependent on one verse, taken out of context, rather they can be seen to be consistent, and repeated.

Therefore the reader might find the next sections, repetitive, but they have been included to enable a clear and faithful analysis of the text to underpin the findings in Chapter 5.

3.5.1. The General Structure of the Mass

So the next stage is to walk through the structure of the Mass, identifying the key elements of structure and form, and the meanings they carry that reveal the message of salvation and how we are formed to bring it to life.

Again the intention is to seek two insights: the first of order and process, the second, of distinctive content. The *General Instruction* focuses not just on 'rubrics' that are to be followed it also provides a "theological commentary, exhortation, and clear prescriptions"³⁸³, and it is these that are important to the task at hand.

The first insights are in respect of the General structure of the Mass. The opening paragraph, (GIRM 27) is: "Notable...For its stress on the assembly and how Christ is present therein".³⁸⁴

The first insight of the Christian message is that the person and presence of Christ, as formative and giver of the fullness of life, is found within a "People of God"; that is in a collective of individuals who are "called together." Christ, his salvation, and the fullness of life, are from the very beginning not going to be found in an individualism or isolation. The first insight is that the gathering is of its very nature communitarian, and: "in an outstanding way there applies to such a local gathering of the holy Church the promise of Christ: "Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in their midst" (Mt 18:20)."GIRM 27)

But more, there are four ways in which the community will be able to seek, find and identify the formative presence of the Risen Christ: "Christ is really present in the very assembly gathered in his

³⁸³ Foley, Edward. Op.cit.p.113.

³⁸⁴ Foley, Edward. Op.cit.p.114.

name, in the person of the minister, in his Word, and indeed substantially and uninterruptedly under the Eucharistic species.”³⁸⁵

So within the structure, form, and understanding that are revealed; Christ will interface with the community in itself, in the direct intervention of the minister, the proclamation of the Word and then in the form and nature of the Eucharistic celebration.

This insight is given more structure in the next paragraph, where it is stated that: “The Mass consists in some sense of two parts, namely the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist.” (GIRM 28)

These are two elements, but they have an interconnectedness that means that they are one act of worship. It is the interconnected workings of the two, as part of one action, that means that it is not possible to understand the celebration as a whole without the Word, and it will not possible to understand the Word without the Action, the commitment to the Eucharistic Mystery. At times each or both will, says the GIRM, be an instruction to us, “do this, shun that” but they may also provide a refreshing of what is already known, and doesn’t need to be instructed anew.

There is also though a phrase, often overlooked in this paragraph, but essential to our overall project: “There are also certain rites that open and conclude the celebration.”(GIRM 28)

As is often the case, the setting of the scene and the dénouement are vital to the understanding of the drama and to seeing its form and purpose.

So the GIRM starts with the introduction.

The place of the ‘introduction’ is often given little attention.

Michael Witczak opens an article on these rites saying: “The introductory rites of the Mass *by themselves* are not important.”³⁸⁶ He points out that in the liturgy of the early church the community gathered and proceeded immediately into the readings, so any rites of gathering were initially very simple. It was only as the assembly grew that the gathering rites become more elaborate. This occurred primarily after the Constantinian edicts³⁸⁷, when introit chants were added to facilitate the procession of the ministers; and the prayers of preparation which “originally were prayed in the sacristy, moved firstly to being prayed during the procession from the sacristy to the altar, and finally at the arrival at the foot of the altar.”³⁸⁸

³⁸⁵ GIRM 27, quoting Cf. SC 7; Paul VI, Encyclical Letter, *Mysterium fidei*,(September 3, 1965): Acta Apostolicae Sedis 57 (1965) p. 764; Sacred Congregation of Rites, Instruction, *Eucharisticum mysterium*, (May 25, 1967) n. 9: Acta Apostolicae Sedis 59 (1967) p. 547.

³⁸⁶ Witczak, Michael G. "To Celebrate Word and Sacrament Worthily: Revisiting the Introductory Rites" *Liturgical Ministry* 12.Summer (2003) p. 133.

³⁸⁷ The history of the mid fourth century addition of the Kyrie and its transition, placement and usage is well outlined, in detail, in: Baldovin, John F. (1986) Op.cit.pp.334-47. And of the Gloria in: Witczak, Michael G. Op.cit.pp.133-41.

³⁸⁸ It is interesting that “the inclusion of an act of penitence for the whole assembly is one of the novelties of the order of the Mass introduced in 1969. “Up to that time, the penitential texts had been private prayers of the priest and the ministers.” Witczak, Michael G. Op.cit.p.140.

Two hymns were then added, one, the Kyrie,³⁸⁹ which as the GIRM 2002 says “is a chant by which the faithful acclaim the Lord and implore his mercy. The other, a festive hymn “originally associated with the bishop’s Mass on Christmas” which became a part of festive Masses, the Gloria; culminating in a prayer “addressed to the Father, through the Son, and in the Holy Spirit.”³⁹⁰

These observations have focused on the rubrics, the role of the ministers and the prayers of the liturgy.³⁹¹

There are however accompanying actions that precede this and impact in a dialogical pattern.

The entrance starts, when the people have gathered. (GIRM 47-48) It involves a chant that has the purpose says the GIRM: “to open the celebration, to intensify the unity of those gathered, to set the theme of the season or particular celebration, accompany the procession”³⁹².

Who is this assembly?

It is the community of the “ordinary people” who gather from and in the midst of their ordinary lives: “Authentic Christian liturgy permits and confers dignity upon our complicated human life –with a grace that requires time and restraint...The liturgy of Word and Eucharistic celebration knows our everydayness and the ambiguities and complexities of those who come.”³⁹³

Cardinal Bernadine expressed this in a letter to the Archdiocese of Chicago; when he said that the Christian life, the understanding of the Rites, and the roots of the assembly’s rituals are received from and within the very ordinary: “from our parents and grandparents...we do them over and over, and we teach our children to do them. Thus do we discover what it is to be a Christian and a Catholic...the liturgy is not an “extra,” something nice that may give us good feelings. It is our life, our very spirit. It is the source of our identity and renewal as a Church.”³⁹⁴

This has a strong impact on the understanding of the first protagonists named in the liturgy. “The Christian assembly is not some passive “ritual object, “for whom or upon whom ministerial acts are performed. On the contrary it is *agent* and *event*, a *real symbol*, a *corporate ritual subject*...without the assembly there is no church. Now church is sacrament, i.e. symbol, a way of presence” Mitchell

³⁸⁹ There is an interesting comment made by Baldovin where he notes that the Kyrie was originally “an acclamation employed in pagan worship, adopted in the cult of the Roman Emperor, who was called Kyrios or Lord.” Baldovin, John F. “Kyrie Eleison and the Entrance Rite of the Roman Eucharist.” *Worship*, vol. 60, no. 4, (1986,) p.335.

³⁹⁰ Witczak, Michael G. Op.cit..136.

³⁹¹ Jungmann made interesting observations on this before Vatican II in his works, especially *Pastoral Theology* where he says that the liturgy had been seen as an “affair for the priest” and that the role of the faithful was only to assist until all had “been completed conscientiously”. He saw that the consequence of this was that we focused in ecclesial life on ensuring “the minimum conditions of a Christian life were assured,” liturgically and morally. Jungmann saw, before Vatican II, that there was a need to ensure that instead of life in the Church, for the laity, being a mere trickle there should have been a great flood. He uses the image of feeding the hungry and sating the thirst of the laity he says “the well-stocked larder must be opened up: it is at hand in the liturgy of the Church.” He also says that: “The liturgy gives us a concise picture of the Christian world of faith in strong simple lines.” Jungmann, Josef A. Op.cit. (2014) p.335.

³⁹² Witczak, Michael G. Op.cit.p.135.

³⁹³ Saliers, Don. (1995) Op.cit.p.9.

³⁹⁴ Mitchell, Nathan. “Plenty Good Room” the Dignity of the Assembly,” *Worship* 70.1 (1996) p.66.

continues “both as *gathering* of the church and as an *event* in the life of the church, the liturgical assembly actualizes the church and is a symbol of God’s presence.”³⁹⁵

Therefore the very gathering, and who and how those assembled are welcomed, is a symbol of the self-understanding and orientation of the community. “It is both pastorally and theologically imperative that the Sunday assembly be – or become- a place where *all* the baptized faith can find a home.”³⁹⁶ This idea was given new life when Benedict XVI raised the idea that the liturgy of the Word should be open to all who seek, that it could be a courtyard of the gentiles,³⁹⁷ this underlined the imperative that the community be reminded that: “the Christian assembly is neither a community of the like-minded nor a coterie of the comfortable, but an ingathering of *all* members of the local parish who stand before God, offering thanksgiving and praise.”³⁹⁸

The authentic symbol of the gathering of the assembly lies in the manner in which the poor, those in need, “the *stranger* and the estranged”, are welcomed and included. It is the whole assembly, (while acknowledging the presiding role of the priest, which is also an emphasis of the revised GIRM), who “celebrates and offers the sacrifice of Christ.”³⁹⁹

This orientation at GIRM 27 is reemphasised at GIRM 78 in respect of the orientation of the Eucharistic celebration. It is the people gathered, those assembled with Christ, who are the actors in the Eucharist. The first gathering of the “body of Christ” and of “Christ really present” is in the assembly. This is specifically those assembled, in this place and at this time, for this specific Eucharistic celebration. This means this gathering with its ethnic, economic, and situational characteristics is the place in which Christ, really present, has gathered for this act of thanksgiving.

This interrelatedness is reinforced in the next phrase where in the midst of the assembly the minister both acts and speaks, within the unity, but in a distinct manner.

The entrance is immediately followed by the: “Salutation of the altar and of the people gathered together.” (GIRM 49-50)⁴⁰⁰

The significance of the people saluted is clear: “For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them” (Matt 18:20) but the significance of the altar is found in GIRM 296 “The altar on which the Sacrifice⁴⁰¹ of the Cross is made present under sacramental sign is also the

³⁹⁵ Mitchell, Nathan. Op.cit. pp. 66-67.

³⁹⁶ Mitchell, Nathan. Op.cit.p.67.

³⁹⁷ Benedict XVI, *Address to the Roman Curia*, 21 December 2009, AAS 102/I (January 2010) p.40 is the origin of a number of references that can be followed at <http://www.cultura.va/content/cultura/en/dipartimenti/ateismo-e-non-credenza/discorso-di-fondazione-di-benedetto-xvi.html>

³⁹⁸ Ibid.

³⁹⁹ Foley, Edward. Op.cit.p.114.

⁴⁰⁰ Witczak, Michael G. Op.cit. p. 135.

⁴⁰¹ It is interesting that the nature of the sacrifice in the Mass, and the language to express it was much debated, before Vatican II and there was much criticism of Jungmann for underemphasising the sacrificial nature of the Mass. But what does he say: “Perhaps we ought to be a little more reticent about the notion of sacrifice than we have been since the Council of Trent under pressure of defence of the doctrine against heresy. The Mass is a sacrifice, but it is a memorial of the Lord, a memorial of His person, of His life and work, of His Passion and self-oblation for us in sacrifice. It is itself a sacrifice which even we are permitted to carry out and present along with Him. “Do this for a memorial of me” and these are the words with which our Lord

table of the Lord to which the people of God is called together to participate in the Mass, as well as the centre of the thanksgiving that is accomplished through the Eucharist.”⁴⁰²

Or as Mark Searle so beautifully writes: “the liturgy brings us to the realization that there is no love without sacrifice, no life except through death to “life as we know it.”⁴⁰³

So what is the nature of the encounter of the gathered people? It is a dialogue. The sign of the Cross is made together, with a common proclamation and response; the people are greeted by the priest, and the people respond; and then there is an introduction to the Mass of the day. “By this greeting and the people’s response, the mystery of the Church gathered together is made manifest.” (GIRM 50)

This gathering and the elements contained within it, provide a framework for the beginning of any formation. Dialogue, welcome, recognition of the primacy of those who have come to be formed.

There are a number of elements that the structure of the introductory rites offers. Gather, greet, and recognise: outline the question, the mystery of the day, and do all this in the name of the Father, Son and Spirit, and under the sign of the Cross.

The response of the assembly also takes a distinctive form “sing, respond, confess, make the sign of the cross’ ; the role of the ministers is to accompany the priest and to carry objects of significance : cross, candles, thurible, the Book of the Gospel; and the role of the priest, on behalf of and within the assembly is to enter, venerate and acknowledge the altar with bow, kiss and incense, to direct the celebration, to join in the chant, Confiteor and Gloria, make the sign of the cross, greet and address the Collect the proclamation, in prayer of the focus of the assembly.

This elucidation of the gathering and celebration; shows the “amazing diversity...in order...number and gestures, and the combination of public and private elements.”⁴⁰⁴

At the same time it is a united celebration, the action of a united body.

We tend to make distinction between the roles of the parts of the Lord’s body.

Bluntly this is wrong.

This is the ‘dance’ of a single entity, the Body of Christ in this place and time, gathering, encountering, praying, and with gesture and word, forming a single body of praise and worship. As Witczak says for the liturgy to ‘work’: “each person takes his or her own parts only” and “the members of the assembly should know the liturgy and participate in it fully, with their parts clearly indicated by the rubrics (nn29-31). Words and actions work together to praise God and to respond to God’s presence.”⁴⁰⁵(n33)

presented us the Sacrament.” Jungmann, Josef A. and John F. Baldovin(Ed.). *Pastoral Liturgy* (Notre Dame, IN: Christian Classics, 2014) p.339.

⁴⁰² Witczak, Michael G. Op.cit. p.135.

⁴⁰³ Searle, Mark. Op.cit.p.27.

⁴⁰⁴ Witczak, Michael G. op.cit. p. 133.

⁴⁰⁵ Witczak, Michael G. Op.cit.p.138.

Here in the midst of the GIRM there is a repetition of the theme already outlined above of the revelatory nature of the unity of word and deed.

It is important however to ensure that there is an understanding of the structured nature of the single entity, the 'body of Christ'. The "full and active participation of the 'holy people of God'" is more clearly outlined at GIRM 112 where three active players, contributors, are named with each having a specific role: "the presidency of the Bishop, the gathering of priests, deacons and lay ministers, and the full and active participation of the faithful – give rise to what IGMR 2002 calls "the pre-eminent expression of the church.""⁴⁰⁶

The model of church which is envisaged is one with multiple contributions under the presidency of the Bishop. This is not a Congregationalist nor a Presbyterian model and this impacts on the understanding of those who will actively participate in the community's pastoral life and formation. There is an expectation of the service of the Bishop and all ministries, and the active participation of the laity as a foundational prerequisite for living the Christian life. There is also a seeking of unity, and active direction and life under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The symbol of this unity is the person of the Bishop. GIRM 112 articulates this essential relationship in the Eucharist of the local church, when it says there is: "One Bishop, one altar, one prayer in which all participate fully and actively within their own order."⁴⁰⁷

The form of the introductory rite has led us to a pattern for Christian living, and for the nature of the gathering that will facilitate commitment.

There is a gathering, an assembling; there is a greeting and acknowledgement of the other; there is a recognition of ministry within the body, there is a taking of the example and place of the symbolic nature, embodied in the altar, and the sign of the cross; there is a placement of all in the context of thanks for mercy; the acknowledgement, in the text of the Gloria, of asking for forgiveness, seeking peace for all; and then there is the clear articulation of the theme of the gathering on this day, articulated in the Collect.

The GIRM proceeds at this point to outline the various elements that are part of the Mass.

It presents them in the level of importance, as seen in the liturgy.

Firstly the breaking open and use of the Word of God.

There is no understanding, no community, and no entry into the life of Christ without the instruction of the Word of God. In the liturgy, it is in the Sacred Scriptures that Christ is present and speaks directly to his people.

What is to be the attitude in respect to the Word received?

The Word is to be: "Listened to reverently by everyone." (GIRM 29)

Why? Because the Scriptures: "are an element of the greatest importance in the Liturgy." (GIRM 29)

⁴⁰⁶ Connell, Martin, and Sharon McMillan. Op.cit. p. 225.

⁴⁰⁷ Connell, Martin, and Sharon McMillan. Op.cit.p.226.

It is so simple and stated so clearly. The initial disposition of all members of the community gathered is to be one of open listening and receptiveness. Those assembled do not arrive with THE answer, already decided, waiting to jump out ready formed. All must listen, and all are listening, firstly and above all, to the Word of God, speaking directly in the Scripture.

But there is another element.

The GIRM says that while all can hear the scripture and that it must be understandable to all peoples in every age and place it extends this view saying that: “a fuller understanding and a greater efficaciousness of the word is nevertheless fostered by a living commentary on the word.” (GIRM 29)

That is, by the Homily and a reflection on the living response seen in the lives and actions of the faithful. This community does not allow a perfunctory surface reading of the text, nor a personal interpretation, as the starting point of understanding and formation. There is an expectation, that the fullness of meaning of the scripture will be sought as part of the content of formation. This will be opened in paragraphs 65 and 66 where it shows us that the intention of the homily is to nurture Christian life, to open up: “the mystery being celebrated”(GIRM 65) and to show the direction for: “the particular needs of the listeners.”(GIRM 65)

The reading of the scripture is, therefore, related, of its very nature, to be broken open so that its meaning can give life of this community who have listened. It is not an unwrapping of a distant erudite mystery, but rather it is intended to interface with the lives of the people listening. It is to form, and inform, the minds of the listeners so as to enable them to form a response to live a committed Christian life, in the real matters of this world.

The General Instruction then talks of the parts pertaining to the priest, and gives primacy to the great prayer of the Eucharist and then to the “presidential prayers” in which the prayer of those gathered is proclaimed by the presider. (GIRM 30) There is a bringing together of the prayer of the people and the insight of the liturgy, in a common proclamation. The liturgy doesn’t directly offer solutions to the issues of life; rather, it seeks the insight of Scripture, and its application for the life of the people. This is a community that comes to an understanding, having been enlightened by the scripture, and these insights are proclaimed in the presider’s prayer.

This insight in respect of the scripture extends, to all the elements of the rite itself. (GIRM 31)

There is a desire that these insights be explained and proclaimed, again in a certain way. It is: “loud and clear” (GIRM 32); and then it is to be received “attentively”. (GIRM 32)

There is not to be a lot of other noise, singing, or music. There is an expectation that the presider when outlining the word of God and its applicability to the life of the community will, having discerned the Word of God, be proclaiming it in a manner which embodies its import and that all will listen, receive and absorb.

The GIRM is clear that it is the role of the priest, to proclaim the prayer, insight and the Gospel, in the name of Church and the assembled community, and that he is to pray that this ministry will be exercised with “attention and devotion.”(GIRM 33)

The form and tone of the presider's role and the receptiveness of the community speak of relationship, care, preparation, wisdom and understanding, courage, and therefore do not speak of authoritarian or immature relationships. The attentiveness of the faithful is to be directed to the one who has prepared, prayed, studied and speaks in the person of Christ. The minister is to be the one who takes the Word of God and breaks it open so that those listening can be formed to live a life of Christ. The GIRM is placing a rich and deep interconnectedness on the role of the Word in the formation of the People of God.

So how is this to occur? What are the indications of the *modus operandi* in the GIRM's description of the relationship between the presider and the faithful gathered?

The indications are made immediately, in the next paragraph. "The celebration of Mass by its nature has a "communitarian" character." (GIRM 34)

And the nature of the interrelationship is indicated by the way in which this community is to be developed; it is in a series of "dialogues between the Priest and the assembled faithful." (GIRM 34)

In addition there is to be a commonality of proclamation; the *Instruction* says it is: "the acclamations (that) are of great significance." (GIRM 34)

Again the Rite is not calling for conformity to a position that is imposed, rather, the GIRM suggests, at every level of the Church's life; there is a movement through dialogue, awareness and commonality to a position which can be lived in common. The acclamation is the fruit of that dialogue and common understanding. Formed by scripture, reflection and prayer; the acclamation expresses the unity which is sought. However, the aim of the liturgy is "not simply outward signs of communal celebration but to foster and bring about communion between Priest and people," (GIRM 34) and it is this unity that is to be expressed in word and acclamation. The gestures which are used are to be specifically directed, says GIRM 42⁴⁰⁸, to ensure an "embodiment (that) illuminate the various parts of the Mass...contribute to the fundamental principle of active participation (and)...will contribute to the common spiritual good."⁴⁰⁹

The aim of the whole process is one of formation. The formation of a communion, becoming one in mind and heart, so as to be able to live in a community of common understanding and purpose.

It is as if the GIRM has been written and structured to the purpose of our investigation because it immediately progresses to discuss the core participants in this communal action; not from the perspective of the minister, but that of the faithful. *The Instruction* is very clear what the perspective and mode of engagement for the faithful are to be: "The acclamations and the responses of the faithful to the Priest's greetings and prayers constitute that level of active participation that is to be made by the assembled faithful in every form of the Mass, so that the action of the whole community may be clearly expressed and fostered." (GIRM 35)

The road to communion is one of active participation, and that is to be expressed "in every form of the Mass." The faithful are called to active participation in the gathering, in the development of the community and the formation of the catechumen, in the proclamation and reflection on the Word of

⁴⁰⁸ Referencing SC 34.

⁴⁰⁹ Foley, Edward. *Op.cit.*pp.128-129.

God, in the profession of the core tenants of the faith that will lead to prayer, the prayer for the identified needs of the Church, the world, the poor, and then to 'active participation' in the one sacrifice of Christ to the Father in the Spirit. Each and every part, says GIRM 35 is to lead to 'active participation' so that it can be seen that the life of the Christian is communal and that the action the Church is called to is one of common action, for the common good, and this is to be understood, expressed and fostered by the process and manner of 'the action' of the community.

Christian life is a life committed to a participatory action within a community, with all being called to unity and action together. It is not a subservient obedience, but nor is it a compromise of individual positions. It is a formed communion, based on the recognition and participation of a community in a way of life which results from a formed and structured dialogue and discernment and is to be expressed in the resultant actions.

Other interesting elements which can be drawn from this section: There are parts of the liturgy, and of the communal process of formation and commitment, that are best assigned to the whole, and some in which there needs to be the clear distinction and support of individual contributions. However all that happens in the community occurs with the presumption that they are part of a movement to communal action which has been outlined in GIRM 33-35.

These insights are important as they suggest sources and the type of processes that may influence formation and the decision to commit. For example when discussing communal prayer the Instruction says: there are parts that are: "Most useful for expressing and fostering the active participation of the faithful" (GIRM 36), and "which are assigned to the whole gathering." (GIRM 36)

And these "include especially the:

- Penitential Act, (the examination of the participant's thoughts and actions, of what has been done or not done, their prejudices and presuppositions.)
- The Profession of Faith, (the summary of the core understandings of salvation and revelation which are held as foundational to the unity of the community. In other words the community's 'self-evident' or agreed principles for being part of the Body of Christ.)
- the Universal Prayer(the prayers that are prayed after the discernment has been made in the light of the readings and the Word has been broken and proclaimed, that summarise the needs of the World, the Church, the local community and those in need)
- The Lord's Prayer(the core elements of which acknowledge the deep unity and fundamental communal nature of human life as 'children of God' ; that the role of humanity is to seek to hallow the name of the one who holds all in being and to live according to the understanding of the kingdom of God, revealed in the Son, in our daily lives; and that this is done by discerning the will of God and doing it; acknowledging all of creation, but especially our fellow human beings, as being graced and gifted by God; everything that is, is manna, a bread from heaven, and that the core element to bring this to fruition is going to be by being channels of the forgiveness of God for all; and that this community is seeking in all things not to be led away from truth, life and forgiveness "into temptation" but rather to be led to life, that is revelatory of the glory, the $\delta\omicron\zeta\alpha$, the power and the reign of God)

How much more can be said?

In so many magisterial documents we bypass what is before us because we don't do elementary exercises such as this, the breaking open of the words contained in a simple phrase: "Other parts, most useful for expressing and fostering the active participation of the faithful, and which are assigned to the whole gathering, include especially the Penitential Act, the Profession of Faith, the Universal Prayer, and the Lord's Prayer." (GIRM 36)

This paragraph contains, an outline of the understanding of the active participation of the faithful and their involvement, an outline of all the elements contained in moral decision making, formation and making commitments: self-examination, clarity of the core principles to be included in discernment, a proclamation of the common tasks to be done, and a prayer that interprets the whole ethos of the people of the kingdom and therefore the direction and content of the 'way of being', all expressed in the central foci of our prayer.

The GIRM now proceeds to another level. The process of discernment and decision making is not a purely intellectual exercise of assessment, examination, listening and applying; this communal action is directed to a series of communal proclamations and chants. There is to be the formation and use of a common voice, a common response, a common joyful outburst of proclaiming, with one voice, the expression of a unified heart, which will lead to a common and unified action.⁴¹⁰

This unified action, the coming together is not, however, to be characterised by a uniformity of culture and language. Rather in coming to a "loud and clear voice" (GIRM 38), there is an understanding that: "the voice should correspond to the genre of the text itself." (GIRM 38),

And in linking this to the gathering it is also made clear that it should also give consideration to the: "Characteristics of different languages and of the culture of different peoples." (GIRM 38)

There is to be a consideration of the circumstances, the character of the time and place, and the people gathered, and then of their culture and language; and this should influence the form of the interaction which leads to communal action. This is to be a characteristic of the matrix needed for the formation of decisions for common action, a common moral life.

Having found such direct and clear guidance in the words of the GIRM for our study, it would be take a great leap of faith on the part of the reader, to say that the next paragraphs give a direct link to formation! The GIRM proceeds to outline the importance and centrality of singing for liturgical unity and action. It is possible to 'draw a long string' and talk of 'singing from a common hymn book, or in unison' but there are two insights that can be drawn by taking an analogy between singing and the moral life. These are not direct applications but raise two interesting questions to be explored:

⁴¹⁰ GIRM 37 incorporates the list of the Rites or acts, which are done in common, and with one voice; and often accompanying common action; such as the Gloria in excelsis, the Responsorial Psalm, the Alleluia and Verse before the Gospel, the Sanctus (Holy, Holy, Holy), the Memorial Acclamation, and the chant after Communion; the chants at the Entrance, at the Offertory, at the fraction (Agnus Dei, Lamb of God) and at Communion.

Firstly in discussing singing the GIRM says that: “Due consideration for the culture of peoples and abilities of each liturgical assembly” (GIRM 40); and a link is made between the level of singing and the solemnity in the celebration.

Not all celebrations require the full degree of solemnity. There are times when simplicity and the use of the simple form of the action will lead to the fullness of result; there are other times when it is important that each step is celebrated, emphasised and investigated. There is not a presumption of uniformity of expression and language; rather the appropriate form of expression is determined by the solemnity of the day and the task, the ability of the faithful, and the culture and language of those involved.

Secondly, taking this one step further, in discussing the form of the singing, paragraph 41 discusses the place of the Gregorian chant to the Roman liturgy. It gives this form of chant a full and ‘proper’ place but it doesn’t exclude other kinds of sacred music: “provided that they correspond to the spirit of the liturgical action and that they foster the participation of all the faithful.”(GIRM 41)

So one asks, is it not also the case in respect of the content of the expressions of the moral teachings of the Church. Importance and a ‘proper’ place is to be given to those elements that have been received from the Roman tradition, but they are not to be seen as excluding other kinds of form, content and contributions. In fact, the element that gives them acceptability is their correspondence to the purpose at hand, that being that: “all the activities of the Christian life are bound up with it, flow from it, and are ordered to it.”⁴¹¹

The ‘it’ being the Eucharist, therein ensuring and ‘fostering of full participation (in such a life) of all the faithful.”

At the end of paragraph 41, there is the pronouncement of the key ‘symbols’ of the common life in Christ. It is not that everything must be uniform and without distinction in the celebration, or in the way that life in Christ is to be lived, but rather the GIRM points out, there is to be recognition of the elements that express the core unity of the community. In discussing the more frequent coming together from various cultural, linguistic, philosophical and political systems the elements that are held in deep commonality are emphasised. This is especially interesting in the light of the exposition given in respect of GIRM 36 above: “It is desirable that they know how to sing together at least some parts of the Ordinary of the Mass in Latin, especially the Profession of Faith and the Lord’s Prayer, according to the simpler settings.” (GIRM 41)

Again, there are clear and precise ‘symbols’ of unity and commonality to be checked against. They are the professions of common faith and prayer; but are described as being in a “simple settings”, neither in their full complexity, nor in the fullness of the whole magisterial content or even the Catechism in all its detail. The movement to unity acknowledges the key symbols of unity and then seeks a communion of active and common participation rather than obedience to elements that are not understood.

There are similar insights to be gained in the exposition of the gestures to be used in the Liturgy. They are not of “Private inclination or arbitrary choice.”(GIRM 42)

⁴¹¹GIRM 16 quoting SC 11.

Rather they are signs of: “the unity of the members of the Christian community gathered” for they express “the intentions and spiritual attitude of the participants and also foster them.” (GIRM 42)

The intention of the common actions, the gathering and of being in community, is to form and create unity and to gain clarity of the intentions and direction of the faithful gathered, and then to act in unity.

The last general direction is one that again can aid the reflection on the environment of discernment, formation and commitment. The communal gathering is not always achieved with the externally expressed songs, words, discussions, proclamation or praise. An essential element in the preparation for carrying out the common action is: silence and reflection, so as to prepare for the task at hand. It is here that the person and community are able “to receive the full sound of the voice of the Holy Spirit” and to unite their personal prayer “more closely with the word of God and the public voice of the church”.⁴¹²This insight leads to a whole exploration of contemplative ethics and prayer as foundational to Christian ethics.⁴¹³

The GIRM now enunciates and outlines the individual parts of the Mass.

The structure and content of this chapter of the GIRM is approached with a deliberate exegetical format; of seeking elements firstly of the form and process, and secondly the content to enlighten a pattern of what is required to come to a common action, and communion. Therefore the exercise will highlight words and process that might aid in seeing “this element is necessary to enable ...” or “this element does this or that...”

3.6. The Individual Parts of the Mass Paragraphs 46 -90

3.6.1. The Introductory Rites (paragraphs 46 – 54)

The very first words of paragraph 46 lead to the starting point. They indicate clearly a process and a form of action: “The Rites that precede the Liturgy of the Word, namely, the Entrance, the Greeting, the Penitential Act, the Kyrie, the Gloria in Excelsis (Glory to God in the highest) and Collect, have the character of a beginning, an introduction, and a preparation.”(GIRM 46)

These elements are “a beginning, an introduction and a preparation, as is required in all processes of formation. The assembly does not arrive with a ready answer; rather there is a gathering for the celebration of a process with a start, and that start is one of “preparation”. The GIRM outlines the purpose of the preparation: “Their purpose is to ensure that the faithful, who come together as one, establish communion and dispose themselves properly to listen to the Word of God and to celebrate the Eucharist worthily.”(GIRM 46)

The action of the Christian community is not individual, it is communal. The community does not seek to stand on an individual’s position or focus, rather there is a coming together, so that there can be a unity in the core elements of the gathering: listening to the Word of God and celebrating the Eucharist.

⁴¹² Foley, Edward. Op.cit.p.133.

⁴¹³ Billy, Dennis J., C.Ss.R. *Contemplative Ethics: An Introduction*. (New York: Paulist, 2011).

The need to prepare, to seek unity and communion is not as an end in itself, rather, it has the purpose of preparing to be formed, by listening, and then to celebrate by giving thanks.

Firstly, there is a need to prepare the place and the community.

The Central symbols in the preparation are Christological. The assembly gathers in a place speaking of the presence of Christ. There is a gathering which is characterised by being surrounded by light. In a consecrated church there are lights at the door, and on the walls, and at the altar; symbols of Christ the light; which will be reinforced when this presence is symbolised by the use of lights in the processions of the minister and the Gospel.

The altar will be clothed in white, as will the minister, as are *all* the baptised. This “links the symbolism of the altar to Christ, as the colour white is richly symbolic in the tradition, evoking, for example, Christ Transfiguration... and the Resurrected one. There is also strong resonance between the colour white and the newly baptised”⁴¹⁴, who have been clothed in Christ.

There is a cross to be followed, and to be placed in the sanctuary, a cross which is symbolically taken upon the assembly at the beginning of the Mass, and which is placed upon the book of the gospel, and the gifts at the offertory, over the gifts at the Eucharist, before being placed upon the congregation as they are sent into the world.

There is a certain form and content to this preparation. It has been noted that the intention of these Entrance, and Communion, processions and their texts has been made “stronger” so that the “integrity of the relationship between the music we sing for the liturgy and the mystery of Christ the liturgy celebrates”⁴¹⁵ is made clear.

The entrance song can be the antiphon from the Roman Missal, the psalm from the Roman Gradual⁴¹⁶, the seasonal antiphon, a song from a collection of psalms or antiphons or a suitable liturgical song. The intention is that the selection of the music and the singing will bring a unity of focus and purpose to the voices of those gathered, will show ‘joy of heart’ and “highlight more clearly the ‘communitarian’ nature of the procession.” (GIRM 86).

So the gathering of the Christian community, is focused for the liturgy seasonally, and deliberately seeks to build that community by proclaiming with one voice what they have in common, doing so in a spirit of joy, but most importantly by doing so in the Spirit of the Paschal Mystery, the Cross.

The next point to be made from the liturgical introduction and gathering is that first three options of the texts to be used are universal. The form shows the desire of the Church that the words and deeds used in the gathering of the Church are “broader than the confines of a particular church space or parish community.”⁴¹⁷ The gathering is in the name of the universal Body, but in the particular place and language of this community.

⁴¹⁴ Connell, Martin, and Sharon McMillan. Op.cit.p.229.

⁴¹⁵ Harmon, Kathleen. "The Entrance and Communion Songs Part 1: Implementing the Vision of GIRM." *Liturgical Ministry* Fall (2004) p. 217.

⁴¹⁶ It is interesting to note that there is NO vernacular English translation of the Roman Gradual.

⁴¹⁷ Harmon, Kathleen. Op.cit.p.217.

This is emphasised by the fact that the texts to be used are 'liturgical' they are "not neutral texts, but interpretive texts that place a liturgical frame around the given celebration."⁴¹⁸ "The directives of the GIRM are not arbitrary. The GIRM wishes to preserve the power of the liturgy to pull the gathered Church into the mystery of Christ unfolding through the liturgical year"⁴¹⁹ and it does this by the use of gestures, actions, words and song. Applying this to the process of formation puts emphasis on the importance of the manner in which those involved gather, the words that are used and the awareness of the overall 'plan of formation'. The Gestures of welcome and gathering and the 'song and joy' which are brought to the gathering will either make or mar the process.

This gathering and the nature of the antiphons and texts is communal and is intended to gather the people in such a way that those present are "transformed into the body of Christ dying and rising for the salvation of the world" and that this is done in such a way that any common music with a "personal salvation focus is at odds with the ecclesial and missiological demands of the liturgy."⁴²⁰

The intention of the liturgy is to lead the community "into a spirituality (a way of living in which the liturgy informs the actions and choices of daily life)."⁴²¹

This is not a retreat from daily life into a 'personal spiritual bubble' rather it is this understanding of commonality that has brought all these people to the door, the interface between the everyday and this privileged place of gathering.

3.6.2. The Entrance

So how to start? "When the people are gathered"

A people gather. There is a conscious and deliberate action by each individual to seek out the company of others. It is together that those gathered are 'the people', the ones who have been called and responded. People seek others throughout life but here there is a deliberate choice of who is to be gathered with. It is as a member of "the people." Also, it is NOT primarily an action of the minister which initiates the gathering; it is "when the people are gathered".

There are two moments involved in this phrase:

Firstly, the choosing to gather, implying the presence and choice of others. Christians do not remain in the singular. Christians do not find meaning or purpose in the singular. It is not "I" think, therefore "I" am", rather it is "we the people gather, therefore we are!"

Secondly, where and with whom the individual chooses to gather is a constituent part of the formation. It speaks of who the person is willing to commit to and this will directly influence the decisions and actions that they will choose.

⁴¹⁸ Ibid.

⁴¹⁹ Harmon, Kathleen. Op.cit.p.218.

⁴²⁰ Ibid.

⁴²¹ Harmon, Kathleen. Op.cit.p.219.

The purpose of the people gathering is explicitly expressed: “Its purpose is to open the celebration, foster the unity of those who have been gathered, introduce their thoughts to the mystery of the liturgical time or festivity, and accompany the procession of the Priest and ministers.”(GIRM 47)

The gathering is not random, unstructured, or individual.

It is focused with the purpose of seeking and creating a common mind and unity among those who have gathered, and secondly, it has content. It is deliberate, from the first moment and the first words, even before the greeting, it is to introduce a focused element to this community, and it is defined by this season, this festivity, or this ‘life event’: new life, marriage, death. The very nature of liturgy carries a deliberate statement of purpose: ‘why we are here’, ‘what is it that we are focusing on’ ‘what is the issue, the content that we are seeking understanding and unity around?’

The next paragraph now outlines how this is to be done. It is not a proclamation of one party or the clergy or an individual. It is a dialogue, and of its nature therefore implies an interaction between more than one person, within the community.

The starting point of this dialogue is the “The Entrance Chant” (GIRM 47) or introit which: “Is sung alternately by the choir and the people or similarly by a cantor and the people, or entirely by the people, or by the choir alone.”(GIRM 48)

It is an action of dialogue, and to the extent that the ‘minister’ is focused on this instruction, the voice of the clergy within the Church’s understanding is one of service in the dialogue. The prime actors here, in the gathering and the setting of the scene and the announcement of the purpose of the gathering, are “the people” either on their own or in dialogue with those supporting and serving them and their gathering.

This emphasis and focus is reinforced when the issue of there not being any singing is addressed. The role of declaring the purpose and focus of the gathering of the community is to be: “Recited either by the faithful, or by some of them or by a reader; otherwise, it is recited by the Priest himself, who may even adapt it as an introductory explanation (cf. no. 31).”(GIRM 48)

The proclaimer of the purpose of the gathering is in descending order of preference: the faithful as a whole, some of the faithful, one of the faithful, or, if there is no other choice, the priest!!

What are the essential elements that the gathering has revealed?

The Christians gather as a people, communally, not individually. The gathering is for a purpose, and that there must be preparation for that purpose. The purpose for which the people gather will be expressed in the initial dialogue and the people gathered have a central and constitutive part in proclaiming that purpose.

It is also clear that the “gathering” is not the purpose of the Assembly. The gathering is directed toward formation by listening to the Word of God; and not to listening alone, it then leads to a Eucharist, of full commitment, when with, through and in Christ the community will be called to be a sacrifice, a gift, in and through Him to the Father.

3.6.3. Reverence to the Altar and Greeting of the Assembled People

Having gathered and having declared the general purpose of being together, the Rite focuses on the ministers who will lead the celebration, who will facilitate the process of discernment and celebration, and commitment’.

The first element that the GIRM highlights is an action. The ministers (Priest, deacon and the ministers): “Reverence the altar with a profound bow.”(GIRM 49) And “Moreover, as an expression of veneration ... then kiss the altar itself; and if appropriate, also incenses the cross and the altar.”(GIRM 49)

This has placed at the heart of the gathering a symbol which gives clarity to the nature of the formation and celebration.

The symbolic understanding is that all is centred on the altar, and the Cross. This whole exercise will be a movement of sacrifice so as to be formed and to be in a position to make a commitment to act. The individual and the community, need to embrace this core element of understanding; to know that they willing to sacrifice, to die, to serve, to be broken, by the truth and the call that emanates from listening to the Word and being gathered as one people. This two fold nature, word and people gathered, is reinforced by the fact that: “the same word (*salutatio*) (is used) for greeting both the altar and the people (and) is Christologically appropriate.”⁴²²

Symbolically therefore those gathered are told, why they are here, and they are shown what is going to be involved in being here. This gathering will lead to the altar, to embracing the Cross; with the attendant meaning of dying to self, and committing to the direction which will come to be understood as the authentic expression of love and truth.

Now as if to ensure that no one can be confused; the first symbol of Christian formation and initiation is repeated every time the community gathers. Those gathered take the Cross of Christ onto their whole body, their whole self. (GIRM 50) “When the Entrance Chant is concluded, the Priest stands at the chair and, together with the whole gathering, signs himself with the Sign of the Cross.”(GIRM 50)

The sign with which the gathering starts, especially when combined with the optional sprinkling of water, are reminders of how the community was constituted. The first common action of the assembly, the signing of the body with the sign of the cross, is a symbolic identification with this assembly’s core understanding; it is the cross of Christ and the incorporation into Christ by baptism (Romans 6) that leads those gathered to say that “we will stand, with our bodies, where Jesus stood.”⁴²³ Those gathered are saying that they will stand with all who are scapegoated, victims of exclusion, false accusation, libel, hatred and violence; “the sign of contradiction that has become the Christian boast (Galatians 6:14) looms large over the Eucharistic liturgy, the sacrament of Christ’s once – and – for – all sacrifice on the cross.”⁴²⁴

This all-embracing symbol needs to be referenced to the first movement of formation from the OICA. At the beginning of the Rite of Becoming Catechumens, those coming to the Church community, take the cross of Christ onto their eyes, ears, mouth, heart, hands and feet. There is a

⁴²² Foley, Edward. Op.cit.p.139.

⁴²³ Moore, Gerard, S.M. "Liturgy and Justice: The Justice Dimension of Our Prayers." (2008)

⁴²⁴ Foley, Edward. Op.cit.p.140.

fundamental necessity for all to open all their senses to the understanding that to follow the way (to find the truth and live the life) they are going to need to face the breaking open of their closed or pre-judging senses and background.

There is an additional element that has its foundation in the OICA. In the Rite of Becoming Catechumens, it is the sponsor who blesses the eyes, ears, heart and feet: “the signs are made by the catechists or by the sponsors.”⁴²⁵

The signing of the cross, both in OICA and here in the assembly, means that for formation to occur there is a recognition that everyone needs to be aided by others. Humans are not able on their own to open their eyes, ears, and heart and their other senses. Others are needed to aid them. But it is more than that. The obligation and privilege of formation in the Christian way of life is given: “to the sponsors and the assembly,”⁴²⁶ and this is expressed explicitly, at the beginning of the catechumenate, when the celebrant asks the following questions and the assembly responds with “we do”: “Do you testify that they have chosen Christ as Lord and that they wish to serve him alone? “ And: “Are you ready to help them come to know and follow Christ?”⁴²⁷

The Minister, the representative of the Church, and the whole gathering, are called upon to open their eyes, to open their ears, break open their hearts, to aid their brothers and sisters to see and hear clearly. Ultimately, those gathered will be asked to commit their hands and feet to the actions called upon them by listening to the Word of God and celebrating the liberating union in self-sacrifice of Christ.

So, why does this assembly gather? Why with this group of people? What gives them the confidence to leave their prejudices at the door and die to self, to listen to the others gathered here, to the Word that will be preached and the demand that will be put on them?

There is only one reason. It is the recognition, in faith, of the presence of Christ, here in the assembly. This primal presence of Christ in the Assembly is seen clearly when the GIRM says: “Then by means of the Greeting, he signifies the presence of the Lord to the assembled community. By this greeting and the people’s response, the mystery of the Church gathered together is made manifest.”(GIRM 50)

The Community gathers here because the Lord is present, it is here that the community “will find the words of everlasting, (or the fullness of) life”; it is here that the Holy Spirit, the source of full wisdom and knowledge dwells, it is here that those who will welcome the sinner, the poor and the needy, are guaranteed to be meeting, “to be made manifest”. It is here that the full mystery of the Church, the sacrament of Christ present in the world, so strongly outlined in *Lumen Gentium* is going to be ‘made manifest’.

So there are two elements to be drawn from these understandings for the formation of a Christian. This gathering is the place to come, this is the place believers ‘know’ they can and will encounter the risen Lord, present in the world, in this community. It is here that the overwhelming mystery of the Church is incarnated, given flesh, in this place and time. It is that grounded.

⁴²⁵ *Christian Initiation of Adults* n.85, *The Rites*, (New York: Pueblo Publishing Co, 1976) p.45.

⁴²⁶ *Christian Initiation of Adults* n.81.

⁴²⁷ *Christian Initiation of Adults* n.81.

The manner of this revelation is important. It is the issues and the needs of this place and time that are recognised. They are not “defined” not “enforced”, are not “dictated”: rather they are “made manifest”. They are already here in the gathered community, this portion of the Body of Christ gathered, and the interface between the ‘mystery of the Church’ and the needs and issues, the questions and the gifts, of this person/ these persons, will be made manifest in the dialogue that is about to happen. This is a vital insight.

This act of “making manifest” involves a dialogue between a gift, “the mystery”, and a reality of need, limitation, culture and communal tension. The mystery of the Church is not a given to be implemented, to be imposed, it is a wonderful reality to be made manifest, in the same way as the glory of God is made manifest in the words and deeds, the life, death and resurrection of the Lord.

There is another element of general import of this statement. The ‘mystery’ of any organisation is its ‘Geist’ or in Māori its ‘Wairua’, an expression of the foundational reality on which it is founded. In all human organisations, from the family to the state, the true meaning of the organisation will be ‘made manifest’ in its gathering and the manner in which its members interact, are formed and make commitments.

There is a fundamental choice, therefore, represented at the heart of this greeting. It is the fundamental moral and ethical dilemma that is faced in all human communities. Is the ethic that we live by:

- Purely individualistic and relativistic?
- What I want to believe and think and therefore do?

Or is there another element, a foundational orientation, “the mystery of the organisation, the community” that is made manifest in the gathering? The name of this mystery is the Spirit.

All social constructs presume this. No Parliament or legislator believes that it makes up the foundational presuppositions, every day, from scratch. There is a constitution or a common Bill of Rights, and this is expressed in phrases such as “God-given” or that “we hold these truths to be self-evident... Endowed by their Creator...”⁴²⁸

There is a cultural imperative, expressed as the ‘mystery’ which is being made manifest. The power of the insight of this phrase from the GIRM is that it makes us aware that the organisations in which people are willing to gather, the family, the city, the state, the political movement, the religious body, all carry an innate mystery; a set of understandings and presuppositions that must be acknowledged or at least must be interacted with, and this happens by the simple action of walking in the door and sitting down. The understandings will be made manifest in the way the eyes see, in the words that are allowed to be spoken and that are listened to, and ultimately in the actions that the hands and feet of that organisation, family, state are willing to commit to act upon.

There is therefore a foundational ethical framework in any human gathering, and that ethical framework will be exposed, expressed and find life in the acts of a community. It will be made manifest, in the very act of gathering.

⁴²⁸ United States Declaration of Independence July 4, 1776.

The powerful insight of the GIRM, is that for full human interaction and for the formation of a community there is a need for: a gathering, to which all are welcome to walk through the door, into a place in which a dialogue is guaranteed to take place, and in which from the first moment, all present to put aside their pre-judgements, and to open their eyes, ears and hearts, and aid their neighbours to do the same. It is then that they will discern the presence of the WAY, TRUTH and the path to LIFE, abiding in their midst. That He is present is an act of faith; that we need to act in this process is an understanding and methodology that is manifest in the diverse attempts of human societies to find such mechanisms.

So is it good enough to just gather, and for people to sit and to open their hearts, ears, eyes and to passively wait?

The answer is: No!

The agenda of the day, the purpose of the gathering needs to be clearly and succinctly put before those gathered: "After the greeting of the people, the Priest, or the Deacon, or a lay minister may very briefly introduce the faithful to the Mass of the day." (GIRM 50)

"Of the day". There is an on-going pattern and structure to aid in the ongoing formation of the community, and it is the elements specific to this particular gathering that are going to be highlighted. Major feasts and celebrations; points of transition: birth, marriage, death; examples of living this way, (saints), are going to be celebrated; there are specific anniversaries that speak of the make-up of the community; the dedication of the Church, the ordination of the Bishop. The Mass of the day will be chosen, structured and have a clear focus: all choices have been made with the express intention of making 'manifest' elements of the mystery of the Church, and to form the community gathered at this place at this time.

Automatically when facing this demand there is a response: 'yes I see all this but I did not make this conscious decision, I am born into a community. I don't consciously make that decision, fully and with full awareness or even at times, I am acting in a way that is counter to my fundamental understanding". Yes, that is the human condition. Sometimes, individuals consciously choose not to follow the understanding of the mystery that is known to be true, they choose to close their eyes and ears to the call and demand of those around them, be it the request of their partner, husband, wife, child; or the call to influence the political sphere, or the cry of those in need, or the request of the refugee for a home. Human beings all know that this fundamental call to open the self to the call of the other is not something they can or do at all times and moments.

The Liturgy responds immediately to this reality. "The Priest calls upon the whole community to take part in the Penitential Act." (GIRM 51)

As a community, and as individuals, there is a recognition that there are times in which in "my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done, and in what I have failed to do;"⁴²⁹ they have not opened their eyes, ears and hearts, that they have not responded or challenged themselves to see the mystery of the Risen Christ manifest in this place and time, or in the assembly which they form.

⁴²⁹ *The Roman Missal*, (Wellington, N.Z., New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference, 2010).

This 'non-completion' is a foundational element in the ethical exercise and is, at heart, one of the reasons for gathering to be formed and to recommit and reunite themselves with the one who has been faithful even unto death. The ecclesial community sees this recommitment as an essential element of its being in that in the same paragraph it says that: "From time to time on Sundays, especially in Easter Time, instead of the customary Penitential Act, the blessing and sprinkling of water may take place as a reminder of Baptism. (GIRM 51)

A "reminder of Baptism": a reminder of being united in the death and resurrection of Christ, of dying to self and being born to newness of life. (Rm6): a reminder of the commitment that was made with a person was born into a community that is the place of the mystery, the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit and the Risen Body of Christ.

This reminder of Baptism is a reminder that nothing can stand between us and the love of God made manifest in Christ Jesus; (Rm 8:38): our sin, our blindness, our deafness will not and cannot stand in the way, "Death and sin, where is your sting", (1Cor 15:55); we are united and forgiven, by our incorporation into Christ.

Therefore people are able to come together as a community as long as they are committed to responding, to consciously putting aside prejudice and presuppositions, and recommitting to the fundamental understanding of the community.

The Christian community therefore is founded on the need for a continual return to the source, to the incorporation into Christ. Dying to self, being buried in a death like His, so that all may share in the fullness of life, the gift/grace of God.

This offers an insight into the formation process in any community. There is a necessity of return to the foundational understanding. It is essential, regularly, especially at moments of great import, to return to the common "wairua", the common foundational structure: and to enable a recognising and acknowledging of where individuals, and the community as a whole, have departed from the foundational understanding in what has been said and done, and to enable a recommitment.

This raises the question, that the Church has an important role in asking, "what if the foundational presuppositions are flawed?" This is the question of invincible ignorance and the formation of an erroneous conscience on the foundational presuppositions of a faulty worldview or a totally self-focused control of the decision-making process by an individual or a small group. There is a need for those who are custodians of the vision, to themselves be challenged, formed and have a structure of authenticity around them.

3.6.4. The Kyrie, Eleison

Being aware of the need for such an examination of core motives, the authenticity of commitment and the consistency of actions, there is also an awareness, whenever the community gathers, that the solving of the multiple implications of this is beyond any one person. Human beings are left in the position of accepting the inability of a single individual or community to ponder and articulate "all" the elements that stand in the way of being formed for a common goal and commitment. Therefore they can either abandon the process completely, as much of our society does; or there is a more radical position to take.

Again the evangelical and liturgical insight of the Gospel has impacted on our society, and has seen light in the face of the most difficult examples of structural impasse, and has become an aid in facilitating truth and reconciliation.

The solution is to proclaim that Mercy is a gift, as Shakespeare would have it: "The quality of mercy is not strain'd, it is, twice blest: It blesseth him that gives and him that takes"

And where is situated? It is... "above this sceptred sway... It is an attribute to God himself"

Shakespeare then connects this mercy directly to the temporal sphere and to the implementation of the virtue of justice: "Though justice be thy plea, consider this, That in the course of justice none of us Should see salvation: we do pray for mercy; And that same prayer doth teach us all to render The deeds of mercy."⁴³⁰

The experience of humanity faced with elements such as Rwanda and post-Apartheid South Africa, has led to a situation, seen in Shakespeare's insight, and lived out daily in the liturgy, that no one can expect pure justice, rather all are called to "truth and reconciliation" and to show mercy and forgiveness, and this is a pure gift and movement of the Holy Spirit. This is not penitential. The acclamation and cry for the Lord's great gift of mercy "is done after the act of penitence."⁴³¹

Jungmann saw this and expressed it succinctly: "The very first cry is the Kyrie Eleison. It is like a calling down of Him who must lead our sacred work".⁴³²

Or in the words of the GIRM, it is: "A chant by which the faithful acclaim the Lord and implore his mercy." (GIRM 52)

There is a commitment to gathering, to dialogue, to the formation and the celebration, that is why the community has gathered, and they start by 'clearing the decks', by being the channels of the 'mercy of God' to each other.

The community is now in a position to start the process of formation.

It hasn't been easy, but the liturgy has given a whole series of foundational elements for the formation of the person, in a Christian context for certain, but also as a foundation for making commitments.

3.6.5. The Collect

The liturgy now approaches the point of transition from the gathering to the formation, from the penitential to the Liturgy of the Word, and its content. As Jungmann says: "as soon as we have finished praising God in the Gloria the song of praise changes and becomes again a cry to him: "Through Him who sits at the right hand of the Father."⁴³³

⁴³⁰ William Shakespeare, "The Merchant of Venice", Act 4 scene 1.

⁴³¹ Foley, Edward. Op.cit.p.142.

⁴³² Jungmann, Josef A. (2014) Op.cit.p.339.

⁴³³ Ibid.

This transition starts with a simple prayer. The summarising introduction of the Introit set a scene of expectation, but here, at the Collect, there is a formal prayer and it is a prayer of the gathered community, in fact it is the prayer of the “universal” community (every gathering of the Church on this day prays this prayer). It is articulated by the Priest, after a period of silence, and it is intended to do two things: Firstly, it is to ensure that the assembly “Become aware of being in God’s presence” and that they may “call to mind their intentions.” (GIRM 54) This is to be achieved by a silence “long enough to help the community to be conscious of being in God’s presence and to formulate their own prayer.” Where is this presence of God to be found, and their intention to be identified?

Individually, it is to be found in the ‘silence’. This is the inner sanctum: “There he is alone with God, Whose voice echoes in his depths.”⁴³⁴

There is in this call the first full resonance to the formation of conscience; it is the call to silence, to inner contemplation, to the awareness of the two elements named as active here: the presence of God, the source of life, love and truth; but also to the identification of the individual’s intention. Here is the echo of GS 16. There is not an awaiting of a mystical revelation, nor are the gathered going to seek a compromise between competing needs and wants; rather there is a seeking of a clear articulation of the individual’s intentions in the presence of God, who has called all into unity and a common body.

From this place then: “The Priest pronounces the prayer usually called the “Collect” and through which the character of the celebration finds expression.”(GIRM 54)

This reinforces the understanding that this is a common celebration, for a common intention, and that the nature of that celebration is articulated, made clear and placed before the gathering.

For the Christian gathering this reiterates that this is the place in which what is to be done and heard is proclaimed and this will be both a formation in the way of understanding, and an entering into the full life of the Trinity, the very life and understanding of God.

The GIRM, echoes Joseph Jungmann’s insight that: “the collect ... sums everything up, always ending with the words “per Dominum nostrum” ... “Whose reign knows no end.”⁴³⁵ He says: “By an ancient tradition of the Church, the Collect prayer is usually addressed to God the Father, through Christ, in the Holy Spirit, and is concluded with a Trinitarian ending.”(GIRM 54)

This expresses the intention of the gathered people of God, to be united in this common-mindedness and to participate in the one action, of Christ to the Father in the Spirit. And this is affirmed by: “The people, joining in this petition, make the prayer their own by means of the acclamation Amen.”(GIRM 54)

The people are an “assembly gathered”, aware of the presence of God, which is shown by their “Standing before the Almighty One (which) is a sign of God’s covenant love... and our dignity as

⁴³⁴ GS 16, referencing at footnote 10. “Cf. Gen. 2:22-24, Prov. 5:15-20; 31:10-31; Tob. 8:4-8; Cant. 1:2-3; 1:16; 4:16-5, 1; 7:8-14; 1 Cor. 7:3-6; Eph 5:25-33.”

⁴³⁵ Jungmann, Josef A. (2014) Op.cit.pp.339-340.

adopted children of God by baptism ... (And that) we are familiar with God, something that is God's doing, not ours".⁴³⁶

However it is the centrality of Christ in all these prayers and relationships to "the Father in the Spirit" which reinforces the Christian understanding that Christ "is at the apex of our human life, showing the way for us out of sin... a concrete image (for our day)... Above all a personal ideal; and here is the finest ideal in personal form."⁴³⁷ And this viewpoint is of "fundamental theological importance" as all the mysteries and dogmas emanate and find their meaning in "the person of Christ".⁴³⁸

The suggestion has been made that the reason that the Greek of the Kyrie has been retained is to reinforce the fact, in the face of the 'lingua franca' of Rome being Latin, that this assembly is made up of different cultures, and levels of education, and all can enter into the 'sacral' language of the Kyrie. And more, that the sacral call for Mercy echoes the call of the Canaanite woman in Matthew's Gospel, a sinner, one from outside the "chosen People" of Israel; one like all of those gathered, an outsider who calls out for Mercy from the Lord. (Matt 15:22)

The intention of the assembly, proclaimed by joining together in a common intention and celebration, is that all are confident that they are entering into the very nature of the relationship of the Trinity. And those gathered affirm this by saying Amen. The elements that have led to the second part of this affirmation and the "Amen" are: a people have gathered, have acknowledged and opened their eyes and hearts to their need for healing and mercy, they have shared the presence of God in silence and named their own needs and then affirmed the common purpose, expressed in the collect. These are the elements that have led them to say that the presence of God is in this assembly.

The collect gives one more insight to the process that is being undertaken: "At Mass, only a single Collect is ever said." (GIRM 54)

There is a single intention, focus, and celebration. There is one matter on the agenda!

Again the liturgy gives a series of insights for formation which can be extrapolated to the common usage of 'people of good will'.

When people gather for issues of importance, they stop, they are still and they acknowledge the intentions within their own hearts. Then there is a public proclamation of the intention of this gathering, and what is more, especially if it is an issue of import and depth, they limit the 'agenda' to one matter and have that clearly placed before those who are gathered.

⁴³⁶ Moore, Gerard, S.M. "Liturgy and Justice: The Justice Dimension of Our Prayers." (2008): Moore adds that the gathered assembly that stands for the Collect, and for the entry, Gospel, Eucharistic Prayer, Communion and dismissal is an assembly that allows that while we often look at the assembly and attribute "different social "standing" to rich, poor, old, young, educated, uneducated... (But that) the collect prayer (the fact of standing and making petition itself) asks why do these differentiations mean so much to us when they mean nothing to God. In fact they obscure God's way."

⁴³⁷ Jungmann, Josef A. (2014). Op.cit. pp.339-340.

⁴³⁸ Jungmann, Josef A. (2014). Op.cit. pp.339-341.

3.7. The liturgy of the Word

The preparation is now complete and the GIRM says those gathered now come to: “The main part of the Liturgy of the Word” and it “is made up of the readings from Sacred Scripture together with the chants occurring between them” and “the Homily, the Profession of Faith, and the Universal Prayers that develop and conclude it.”(GIRM 55)

And there is a specific and explicit purpose to the liturgy of the Word and it is that in: “The readings, as explained by the Homily, God speaks to his people,”⁴³⁹ and “Opening up to them the mystery of redemption and salvation, and offering spiritual nourishment, Christ himself is present through his word in the midst of the faithful.” (GIRM 55)

This is the core focus of the Christian life. There is, individually and communally, a place in which there can be an awareness and understanding and the ability to enter into the fullness of the life and the love of God for humanity and creation.

God speaks “to his people” directly. There is outlined here in the GIRM a movement from a way of being Church in which “the faithful are merely looked after and led, the object merely of pastoral care, but not really themselves the church,”⁴⁴⁰ to an assembly that are the recipients of direct communication from God.

There is a need to understand the phrase: “Thus the call to perfection belongs to the very essence of the Christian vocation.” (RD 4) Christians are recipients of a ‘call’ that has content.

It is a call to ‘perfection’!

Christians are not called to mere adequacy, and are certainly not called to pragmatic self-interest, political expediency or opinion poll based policy. John Paul 2 says in *Redemptionis Donum* that all of humanity, in creation, is called to the same perfection as those redeemed In Christ: “Redemption gives back to God the work of creation which had been contaminated by sin, showing the perfection which the whole of creation, and in particular man, possesses in the thought and intention of God Himself. Especially man must be given and restored to God, if he is to be fully restored to himself. From this comes the eternal call: “Return to me, for I have redeemed you. (Is. 44:22)”” (RD 4)

John Paul 2 is linking two elements⁴⁴¹: redemption and the promise contained in the heart of creation and he does this by a reflection on the call of the rich young man. The call to Evangelical perfection reflects an extension of what Jesus taught in the story of the Good Samaritan. “Christ’s words: “If you wish to be perfect, go, sell what you have, and give to the poor...” clearly brings us into the sphere of the evangelical counsel of poverty, which belongs to the very essence of the religious vocation and profession”. (RD 4)

⁴³⁹ GIRM 55 quoting at footnote [57] of the GIRM Cf. Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium* n.33.

⁴⁴⁰ Jungmann, Josef A. (2014).Op.cit.p.342.

⁴⁴¹ Cf *Catechism of the Catholic Church* nn.50 ff.

There is here a twofold hermeneutic for the seeking of the truth to be our guide, and then a filter of Christian insight to aid in the analysis of the result. The two fold sources of our guide⁴⁴² will be contained firstly in the words and deeds, the life death and resurrection of Christ, the redemptive act; and, secondly in the creation which of, and in its wholeness, has 'perfection'.

The filter of interpretation is "if you wish to be perfect, go, sell what you have, and give to the poor..."

This is a formula of analysis and discernment. The result sought, "to be perfect" is universal. The method to get there makes no distinction of the type of good sought: physical, intellectual or spiritual. It simply says whatever a person has and possesses, give it freely to the identified poverty of the other.

The application of this as a method of discernment leads into challenging and interesting arenas. A person has an idea, a possession, a resource of any nature; the call is take it, sell it and give to the one who has nothing; the one in poverty, and the result will be a sharing that will lead to perfection.

The openness of this call and the width of understanding it gives to the place of the Word of God in the midst of the community means that at the heart of Christian discernment and the formation necessary for commitment are an enormous range of possibilities as to what is considered relevant content.

The content⁴⁴³ includes the whole understanding of what can be obtained from the content of the 'perfection of creation' united with the "mystery of redemption and salvation".

The whole range of insights included therefore are those offered in a Summa Theologia, BUT, it also means this must be coupled with all that is contained in the encyclopaedia of human wisdom. It is clear this is not going to be satisfied with a summary, a proclamation or a legalistic stance. Humanity is now in the realm of Sophia, (Wisdom), and the action of the Holy Spirit hovering over the chaos of creation, coupled with the righteous fear of the Church, and those gathered are asked to look to all these sources to gain enlightenment. And the manner which expresses a willingness to enter into this realm of uncertainty is a faith founded on the affirmation that "it is very good!!"

Where does this Spirit hover, where does she work and create? Acts 2:1-3 tells us clearly, that it was when the believers were gathered, in fear and unknowing, in an upper room that the Holy Spirit appeared. Again the movement, as understood by the GIRM is Spirit led.

It is: "By silence and by singing," (GIRM 55) that the people will be led to making the wisdom their own, to seeing the core of the faith expressed in the Creed, and will pour out the elements that have been identified as: "The needs of the whole Church and for the salvation of the whole world." (GIRM 55)

The Universal Prayers of the community are specifically the fruit of having identified the needs that the community is called to act on, to do, and these are always going to be the alleviation of the identified needs of the Church and those elements that will bring life and truth to the whole world.

⁴⁴² This is reinforcing our understanding of the two fold sources of revelation, reason and revelation, discussed above, and seen in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* n.50.

⁴⁴³ Based on the understanding of John Paul II expressed in RD 4.

And where are these found and identified? The GIRM says in silence and in singing, in communal prayer and worship.

The mechanism inside this silence is then elucidated. In an all-important phrase in the GIRM, for the understanding and practice of the Liturgy of the Word, and all formation. The GIRM says the liturgy of the Word is to be: “Celebrated in such a way as to favour meditation, and so any kind of haste such as hinders recollection is clearly to be avoided.”(GIRM 56)

There is to be: meditation, recollection, a seeking of wisdom. And then the one, who acts in this stillness, and in the place of their recollection, is identified. It is, within the assembled congregation, that by the: “Action of the Holy Spirit, the Word of God may be grasped by the heart”. (GIRM 56)

The action of a community, in meditation and stillness, will enable a congregation to grasp the Word of God. But where will they grasp the understanding? In the heart, which is the place where in the “Depths of his conscience, man detects a law which he does not impose upon himself, but which holds him to obedience. Always summoning him to love good and avoid evil, the voice of conscience when necessary speaks to his heart: do this, shun that.” (GS 16)

And the GIRM is clear it is then that: “A response through prayer (The Universal Prayer) may be prepared.” (GIRM 56)

This is truly a whole, a unity: the preparation, the listening and proclamation, the silence, before, during and after the Word is proclaimed and the homily, creed and prayer; but at this introductory stage this provides a rich and foundational platform for our understanding and progress. The Word of God and the discernment of its meaning and import, along with its impact on the lives of those gathered is communal, it is read, reflected on and discerned for prayer in the heart of the community; it is the place in which the Holy Spirit brings all wisdom, in respect of creation and redemption to the table of the Word, and it involves a direct and expected involvement of silent prayer, deep within the stillness, and the hearts’ of the community gathered.

Fourthly, it will lead to a clear assessment of what is needed for the life of the Church and the community, and this will be expressed in the Universal Prayer of the community gathered.

One could make note that this is clearly NOT a passive or reticent community of the laity, being told what to do. This is a gathering, as in the earliest gatherings of the Church, with the hope and expectation that from Quito to Manchester and Soweto to Eketahuna, the Holy Spirit will lead the Church in the discernment of the appropriate action in this place and time.

3.7.1. The Biblical Readings

The GIRM now progresses to break open the understanding of the Readings, and it provides the insight into the content and process of formation.

The starting point. The readings, the Word is: "Spread before the faithful, and the treasures of the Bible are opened to them"⁴⁴⁴.

What are these readings? Firstly they are readings specifically chosen, and at times edited, so as to provide insight and formation. There is a choice of specific readings for specific feasts and occasions; and the manner in which Old Testament readings and Gospels are linked is to show the development of key ideas or the fulfilment of earlier promises; and the lectionary was reordered so as to enable the faithful to share in the richness of the Scriptures as a whole.

Therefore there are a variety of forms or literary genre included in the Scriptures. Some Scripture is history, some law, some prophetic utterance, some wisdom from the communities surrounding the 'people of God', some hymns, some letters to individuals, some letters to communities, some the recording of visions; and lastly a specific form, the Gospel, which is written with the intention that others might believe.

The readings and their origins may be described in secular terms as: history, law, wisdom sayings, ethical instructions, expressions of people's understanding of cosmology, the origins of illness and expressions of situated ethical control. It was only late in the formation of the Jewish and Christian communities that decisions were made on what should be included in the Canon of the Scriptures.⁴⁴⁵

When these understandings are combined with those of the *Catechism* (CCC 50) which sees human reason as a source of insight we can take the same sources as those who formed the scriptures did to be the sources to aid our formation and discernment. There was no limitation on the sources of the canon of scripture, rather the insights of history, law, ethical instruction, our understandings of the cosmos and medicine, can and should interrelate with the insights of the Gospel.

There is to be "one essential connection between the two "orders" (the clergy the laity)⁴⁴⁶, in the one church and it is the Word, as can be seen clearly in the GIRM 1975 (introduction n.5) and GIRM 2002 (n.5): The Church is: "the people of God...gathered together by the Lord, nourished by the word." And at another place "both orders are one Church, clearly identified as "a people called to bring to God the prayers of the entire human family".⁴⁴⁷

The Lord is present in the proclamation of the Word, "God himself is speaking to his people, and Christ, present in his own word, proclaims the Gospel." (GIRM 29)

⁴⁴⁴ GIRM 57 quoting: footnote 60: Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium* n.51.

⁴⁴⁵ Brown, Raymond E., S.S. *An Introduction to the New Testament*, (New Haven: Yale UP, 1997). The Anchor Yale Bible Reference Library says: "Finally, however, by the late 4th century in the Greek East and Latin West there was a wide (but not absolute) accord on a canon of twenty-seven books" (page 15); and again when discussing how the canon is supported, there is an interesting observation, "the Roman Catholic Church decided canonicity on the basis of long steady use in the liturgy, not on scholars" judgments about who wrote or copied what." (page 52)

⁴⁴⁶ These comments are based on the analysis of: Pierce, Joanne M. Op.cit.pp.142-47.

⁴⁴⁷ Pierce, Joanne M. Op.cit.p.142.

Foley makes the distinction between the Readings and the Gospel clear when he says that the “scriptural proclamation in the liturgy is a God act, and the proclamation of the gospel is a particularly Christological event.”⁴⁴⁸

The centrality of this Christological moment is emphasised when *The General Instruction* says “the reading of the Gospel is the highpoint of the liturgy of the Word.” (GIRM 60)

This is emphasised by the interaction between the words and the gestures of both the minister and the assembly. There is the preparation of the one to proclaim the gospel by a blessing or prayer; the assembly stands, the gesture of being in the Lord’s presence; they greet, either in procession or while standing, the Gospel with a special acclamation; and gestures, symbols and actions, “marks of reverence” surround this proclamation. They include “a gospel procession with lighted candles, the use of incense, as well as signing the book with the sign of the cross before and kissing the book after the proclamation.”⁴⁴⁹ All of these are signs of Christ present: Christ on the way, Christ the light of the world, Christ the anointed one, Christ the crucified, Christ the beloved.

The word of God in the readings is coupled with Christ engaging directly with this congregation by means of the Gospel proclaimed, and in the homily, a “Commentary on the word”. The homily is intended to foster: “a fuller understanding and greater effectiveness of the word.” (GRIM 29)

In fact the words of Paul VI strongly reinforce this when he says that preaching is meant to bring hearers “to the knowledge of the relevance of God’s word to human existence.”⁴⁵⁰ This is reinforced when the GIRM 29 says that the “homily is not only *in* the liturgy but, at its core, is *of* the liturgy and is itself a liturgical act.”⁴⁵¹

The Word is proclaimed in a communal setting, and not as a closed book, rather it is to be explained, opened as a treasury. The treasury will bring out riches, treasures, taonga⁴⁵², “new and old” and they are from all elements in both Testaments and salvation history. While it is clear that the readings of the celebration have been deliberately chosen and therefore are to be proclaimed and not changed, they are to be read, in the face of the people, “men and women and children old enough to understand” (Nehemiah 8:2).

This reception of the Word is therefore not private, it is a public act; and while the readings for proclamation are set; there is an understanding that the wisdom that comes from these readings and their insight, is being ‘spread out,’ being ‘opened’ ; that is linked, unpacked, understood, interconnected, and seen in their context and relationships, and then as taonga.

In fact all the dialogues and other acclamations are both: “signs of the communal celebration” and “foster and bring about the communion between priest and people;” (GIRM 34)

⁴⁴⁸ Foley, Edward. Op.cit.p.117.

⁴⁴⁹ Foley, Edward. Op.cit.p.151.

⁴⁵⁰ ES.91 quoted at: Foley, Edward. Op.cit. p. 117.

⁴⁵¹ Ibid.

⁴⁵² A taonga in Māori culture is a treasure which could be anything from a word to a memory. This is the current modern definition which differs from the historical definition that was noted by Hongi Hika as “property procured by the spear” [one could understand this as war booty or defended property]. Tangible examples are all sorts of heirlooms and artefacts, land, fisheries, natural resources such as geothermal springs [1] and access to natural resources, such as riparian water rights and access to the riparian zone of rivers or streams. Intangible examples may include language and spiritual beliefs.

This is especially true of the Creed and the prayers of the faithful. The prayer of the faithful is “a response to the Word of God and clarifies its connection to the “office” of the “baptismal priesthood” (GIRM 69) of the laity.”⁴⁵³ This intercession is for all humanity”⁴⁵⁴ and there is a “sequence of intentions.”⁴⁵⁵

In respect of the gestures that accompany the proclamation of the Word. They are not “personal or arbitrary choices” as they stress the “common posture” and the unity of the gathered Church. Such is seen in the processions and actions, and also “more fully than in GIRM 1975” in the section on silence, that accompanies the proclamation of the Word. This is not to be seen as a private time of non-involvement but rather as a deep communal place of meditation and reflection.

This was reiterated when the GIRM 2002: “added a new section on silence during the Liturgy of the Word” (GIRM 56); offering a “ritual space for “meditation” on the readings so that, through the work of the Holy Spirit, “the word of God may be grasped by the heart and a response through prayer may be prepared.”⁴⁵⁶

There is also a new emphasis on the ambo as “always” (GIRM 58) being used as the place of proclamation, and it being the place for the proclamation of the Gospel as “the high point of the Liturgy of the Word.” (GIRM 60)

The modifications also see the profession of faith as being a “response” to the word of God, proclaimed in the readings and explained in the Homily (GIRM 67); and also an expression of the “great mysteries of faith.” It is seen as a recital of the “rule of faith” in a “formula approved for liturgical use” (GIRM 67)”⁴⁵⁷ and these “great mysteries” of faith are explicitly connected to those “mysteries” to be “celebrated in the Eucharist.”” (GIRM 67)

The next insight is how this treasure is to be unfolded. It is very clear: “The function of proclaiming the readings is by tradition not presidential but ministerial. Therefore the readings are to be read by a reader, but the Gospel by the Deacon or, in his absence, by another Priest.” (GIRM 59)

In the GIRM 2002 there is specific mention of “readers...instituted acolytes and readers...non instituted readers...psalmists...choir...cantor... exercising his or her “proper office.”” The “duties of the lector” include “carrying the Book of the Gospel in the entrance procession if there is no deacon...reading the psalm if there is no psalmist...reading other antiphons of the Mass if they are not sung”⁴⁵⁸. It also says the “alb is the “sacred garment common to ordained and instituted ministers of any rank” .⁴⁵⁹

The book of the Gospel is to be carried into the church, slightly elevated,(GIRM 120,133,172,175,194); to be venerated with a traditional kiss or cultural sign of reverence (GIRM 134), it is to be “truly worthy, dignified and beautiful” (GIRM 349) as it is a “sign and symbol of heavenly realities.”

⁴⁵³ Pierce, Joanne M. Op.cit.p.146.

⁴⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁶ Pierce, Joanne M. Op.cit.p.145.

⁴⁵⁷ Pierce, Joanne M.Op.cit.p.146

⁴⁵⁸ Pierce, Joanne M. Op.cit.p.147.

⁴⁵⁹ Ibid.

This is an action of the community, and within the community, therefore the appropriate ministerial structure is to be followed. There are two elements linked here. The ministry of the reader is seen and welcomed and is made distinct from the role of the minister of the Gospel, the Christ figure in the liturgy. The minister, reader, is bringing the insight of the Testaments and salvation history, and one would suggest the understanding of creation and wisdom and the minister of the Gospel, the clear insight and gift of the Christ.

“They are a gift given” to the assembly and the appropriate response is one of acclamation and to: “Give honour to the Word of God that they have received in faith and with gratitude.”(GIRM 59) The response is one of gratitude, (another word would be thanksgiving/Eucharistia) and the message received is received in faith.

The highpoint, for the faithful, is the reading of the Gospel. (GIRM 60)

There is a specific manner with which the faithful receive the Gospel, it is with ‘great reverence’ and a trusting ‘honour’; and it is expressed in acclamations, the posture of standing ‘free’ before our God, and marks of reverence, candles and incense. This is an act of faith that says that in this proclamation Christ is bringing the Word of Life to the community, and is a critical insight and distinction in the formation of the Christian conscience.

The story of salvation history and wisdom, expressions of God’s interaction with humanity in creation, are brought to the table and proclaimed before the community, as a gift which is not dependent on faith. However for the faithful, and especially in this proclamation of the Gospel, the believer has a firm belief that they are encountering: “the risen Christ”: “since it is He Himself who speaks when the holy scriptures are read in the Church.”⁴⁶⁰

The manner of receiving these readings and insights gives us clarity to the process. The GIRM is clear that after the readings there is a psalm, that is “an integral part of the liturgy of the Word and holds great liturgical and pastoral importance because” (GIRM 61) the Psalm is there to enable this particular reading to be meditated on, and therefore it “should correspond to each reading.”(GIRM 61) So that: “It fosters meditation on the Word of God.”(GIRM 61)

The role of the one receiving the Word of God therefore is not passive. It is to hear and then to engage, to respond, firstly in meditation, in the taking of this word into the heart; and then to be formed, to integrate and to respond with a public proclamation of the voice, responding with a psalm. It includes the understanding that the Old Testament reading, the identification of God’s work in salvation history, requires meditation and discernment.

The response is to be that of the whole person, it is sung. This is not a purely intellectual exercise of analysis, reflection, or learning; it is a meditation, and it is to be responded to by the whole person; within the community, with a cantor aiding in the mediation. Note the minister of the meditation is not the one who has proclaimed the reading, given the information or insight, it is one who can aid and support meditation and reflection, within the community and with the whole person engaged.

⁴⁶⁰ SC 7 “not only in the person of His minister, “the same now offering, through the ministry of priests, who formerly offered himself on the cross” [20], but especially under the Eucharistic species. By His power He is present in the sacraments, so that when a man baptizes it is really Christ Himself who baptizes [21]. He is present in His word, since it is He Himself who speaks when the holy scriptures are read in the Church.

Again, an interesting element to add to our insight of process and content of formation.

This process is showing that individuals and communities come to a full insight when they take the information, read and proclaimed to them, to heart, and meditation. To do this it is advantageous to recognise the place of stillness and silence, and then to respond, by proclaiming what has been heard and understood. This will be aided by those with specific charisms for specific ministries, a person who can help in responding wholly, body and soul, mind and heart, in silence and in voice; and as part of a community.

So the reception of information is not totally an intellectual exercise of hearing and uncritically accepting what the person has been told! Rather the community is taking the wisdom proclaimed and integrating it in a way that is best called 'meditation'; but not on their own, rather under the ministry of facilitation and within the community. It is interesting, especially the GIRM for the USA, the extent to which insight is given as to whom and in what way this reflection can be best facilitated. The minister reads or proclaims the Word, and then there are several paragraphs on the way in which this is to be meditated upon and received. This focus on the meditation on the word, which is "new in IGMR 2002"⁴⁶¹ reemphasises the fact that the Word of God and the gospel of Christ require deep reflection, and personal integration. A deep insight into discernment at the heart of formation.

The reception of the Gospel reflects the insight and trust the Christian community has in respect of the presence of Lord and His on-going ministry of preaching and the formation of His Body, the Church. The mode of response to the readings and the reception of the Gospel reinforce the depth of this understanding. The default position is that the community welcome them and reflect on them in silence and in song, with their whole being, mind heart and voice; and this has been described as "essentially lyrical,"⁴⁶² not legalistic, dry, of the intellect alone. At the same time, the nature of the gift is almost understated. The GIRM says that by the use of the: "Alleluia or another chant ...the gathering of the faithful welcomes and greets the Lord who is about to speak to them in the Gospel." (GIRM 62)

A simple and deeply profound statement for the Christian, here is the place of encounter with the Lord, as the disciples did at Capernaum; but not only so as to be formed by the story of salvation history, creation and common wisdom, but more importantly, the disciple will be asked to stand, and choose, and with the Lord to "steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem" (Luke 9:51) and to do this symbolically by taking the cross onto their thoughts, lips and into their heart. Christ is to be welcomed in what they think and say and are!

Having heard the Lord speak to the community, the Rites then move to the homily.

Does the homily teach or tell us what the readings mean or the teaching of the Church or what we MUST do? No.

To understand the homily, it is the word meditated upon and the Lord speaking to the community that remains the core understanding of the liturgy of the Word. *The General Instruction* says that a

⁴⁶¹ Foley, Edward. Op.cit.p.153.

⁴⁶² Foley, Edward. Op.cit.p.155.

homily is: "Part of the Liturgy and is strongly recommended,"⁴⁶³ it also says it is: "Necessary for the nurturing of the Christian life". (GIRM 65)

It is to be, as with all liturgical actions, directed to "the glorification of God and the sanctification of people... (And therefore) preaching must be a doxological act...The homily itself is an event of divine presence, since in liturgical preaching the priest-presider is acting in persona Christi... The homily is more an encounter of the living Word of God than an instruction about that Word."⁴⁶⁴

What is to be the focus that enables this to happen?

The GIRM outlines it as: "An exposition of some aspect of the readings from Sacred Scripture or of another text from the Ordinary or the Proper of the Mass of the day," (GIRM 65) and this with the clear focus that it: "Should take into account both the mystery being celebrated and the particular needs of the listeners."⁴⁶⁵

This was reiterated in the Preamble to the Lectionary of 1981 where it said that: "the proper response to the Word of God is an active one, "not only during Mass but in (our) entire Christian life." (N.48)⁴⁶⁶

Again it is the qualifying elements of the paragraph that are of interest.

The homily is not compulsory, but it is 'necessary' for a specific purpose, and that purpose is nurturing the Christian life. The homily is to take the readings and, within the community, give life and energy to the "Christian" life. There is a specific and interesting qualifier in the next sentence. It is not to be just about the mystery or to be confined to an explanation or unwrapping of that mystery; rather the purpose is the facilitation of a dialogue between the mystery and the "particular needs of the listeners."

What more succinct direction can be found for the formation of a Christian conscience and the role of the Church in such? It is to "take into account" both the "mystery" and the "particular needs of the listener"!!

This is the ministerial role of the Church. This is the element that the GIRM and the Church place clearly before the ministers and the faithful. Ministry is to be the interface between the mystery and the needs of the faithful, the community gathered.

While the GIRM outlines exceptions for grave reasons, it says that the Homily, this voice of the Lord and this interface of the mystery and the needs of the faithful, is to be part of every major celebration of the Community, especially when there are great numbers, Sunday Mass or Masses of Obligation. (GIRM 66)

This is the challenge that the ministers of the Church need to take to prayer and to their practice.

⁴⁶³ GIRM 65 quoting: SC 52; and the Code of Canon Law, can. 767 §1.

⁴⁶⁴ Foley, Edward. Op.cit.p.148.

⁴⁶⁵ GIRM 65 quoting: Cf. Sacred Congregation of Rites, Instruction, *Inter Oecumenici*, (September 26, 1964). 54: Acta Apostolicae Sedis 56 (1964), 890.

⁴⁶⁶ Foley, Edward. Op.cit.p.149.

They are NOT asked to expound upon the mystery alone, nor are they asked to tell or exhort or to teach, they are asked: “To take into account *both* the mystery being celebrated and the particular needs of the listeners.”(GIRM 65)

In other words, the ministers are there to aid the assembly in the formation of their conscience, so as to enable them to be in a position to respond to the particular needs of their lives and to form a moral decision about what to do or not to do!

It is interesting that McGowan in his discussion of early Church practice outlines that the idea of the “sermon” has to be carefully nuanced if it is to be read in the light of the church’s earliest practice. As was seen earlier, his work “suggests that the quest for an early Christian sermon may lead neither to a specific literary form, not to a core kerygma, but rather to a conversation ...such occasions of collective, dialogical inspiration at the communal meal will also be the crucible within which various discourses were shared, extended as well as the brief, the scholastic as well as the charismatic.”⁴⁶⁷

When looking at this from the point of view of content one could ask “surely the teachings of the Church, the Creedal pronouncements, the magisterial insight, must be at the heart of this seeking of understanding?”

But a reading of this GIRM would again suggest the answer is “No.”

The interrelationship is between the Word of God, the mystery of Christ, proclaimed; and the needs of the faithful. This is the relationship at the heart of the formation of the community of Christ and the aid to the community and individual within it.

This is reinforced in the way in which the GIRM introduces the next section of the Structure of the Mass. All are aware that the Homily is followed by the Creed. The GIRM introduces the Creed with the following words: “The purpose of the Creed or Profession of Faith is that the whole gathered people may respond to the Word of God proclaimed in the readings taken from Sacred Scripture and explained in the homily and that they may also call to mind and confess the great mysteries of the faith by pronouncing the rule of faith in a formula approved for liturgical use and before the celebration of these mysteries in the Eucharist begins.”(GIRM 67)

The Creed is a response to the readings and the explanation of the Homily. This occurs by an honouring and confessing of the mysteries of faith. And this responding and honouring, confessing and proclaiming; follows the formation for action, and is focused toward the celebration of the mystery, already revealed, in the Eucharist that follows.

The Mystery has been unpacked in this assembly, for this day, for this group of the faithful. The assembly then in a sign of unity expresses the mysteries of its common faith; this is not a ‘test of loyalty’ on the part of the laity rather, “the whole gathered people” (GIRM 67) “everyone gathered, ministry and assembly”⁴⁶⁸ proclaim “the Paschal mystery, that mystery which permeates the whole of Eucharist and also Sunday itself.” (SC 106)⁴⁶⁹

⁴⁶⁷ McGowan, Andrew. *Op.cit.*p.75.

⁴⁶⁸ Foley, Edward. *Op.cit.*p.158.

⁴⁶⁹ Foley, Edward. *Op.cit.*p.159.

The creed is a symbol of unity as the community turns its focus to the celebration of the mystery that unites the community, and to a commitment to living in reality what all disciples will find, that the commitment to following the Word, on the road to Jerusalem, involves gifting themselves to the Father in union with a crucified Lord.

So there is one last piece of the puzzle that is the Liturgy of the Word.

3.7.2. The Universal Prayer or Prayer of the Faithful.

This is described as being a summary in which: “The people respond in some sense to the Word of God which they have received in faith;” (GIRM 69) it is also described as offering: “one of the broadest missionary perspectives to be found in the IGMR 2002;”⁴⁷⁰ and as the place where the faithful are “Exercising the office of their baptismal Priesthood.” (GIRM 69)

The faithful bring to prayer their understanding of the needs that have been exposed as necessary for the salvation of all.

The element which is characteristic of this prayer is that it is focused. While it is for the salvation of all, it is focused on those who are to influence or act for the achievement of the commitments that the community has discerned. The community is aware from the meditation on the Word what the needs of the faithful are; now there is an expression of the specific way in which the community is going to respond to those needs.

The intentions of the prayer are clearly directed!

The Church prays for: “Holy Church, for those who govern with authority over us, for those weighed down by various needs, for all humanity, and for the salvation of the whole world.”⁴⁷¹ These foci are reiterated in GIRM 70.

The understanding is that these are the specific groups who are capable of responding to the identified needs. The only other groups who are mentioned are those who are impacted on by a ‘particular’ celebration, “such as a Confirmation, Marriage, or at a Funeral” (GIRM 70), and are therefore the focus of the support, care, actions and love of those gathered.

The understanding and commitment of the Christian community are not focused on the individual and their need alone. There is a deep awareness of the need for communal support, firstly from the brothers and sisters in faith, then by those with the ability to influence and change, and then by those in need themselves. This reiterates the call in *Ad Gentes* for the faithful: “To have a lively awareness of the responsibility to the world.” (AG: 35, 36)

There is also an awareness that the prayer and focus of prayer of the Christian can never be limited to “our need” it is always to be challenged by the “needs of the entire world.” (GIRM 55) The response to need, or the initiation of an action to answer that need, is yet again challenged by the Lord’s call to the rich young man: “what are the needs of the poor go and satisfy them and then come follow me!” The Lord makes the same demand of the Church community in the Twenty-first

⁴⁷⁰ Foley, Edward. Op.cit.p.160.

⁴⁷¹ GIRM 69 quoting Cf. SC.n.53.

century. Is the community aware of the needs of the poor and the needy, the “salvation of the whole world” (GIRM 55)? If not pray for such an insight and respond, before you respond to your own need and desire; however moral and good it might be!

But how is this to happen when the call is to pray and make the discernment, “communally?”

How can there be an awareness of the prayer to be prayed, when there are hundreds gathered and the meditation has only just been done?

This is the place of ministry. And, the words of the GIRM provide guidance: “The intentions announced should be sober, be composed with a wise liberty and in few words, and they should be expressive of the prayer of the entire community.”(GIRM 71)

Here is a directive which can colour *all* expressions of position or insight, intentions or desire for action. There is a need to be aware of those who can put these understandings into action, there is a need to be aware of those who are in need, there is a need to be aware of the poor of the world; and then there is the need to express these needs and desires in a manner that is ‘sober’, ‘wise and in a few words.’ The ultimate check is that this expression should then be guaranteed by the test of having the support of the ‘entire community’.

This test is interesting. “I want, I will”, is rarely expressed soberly or in few words, and it normally needs to be expressed strongly and with high energy because the test of the whole community’s support would rarely be passed; without its honesty and goodness being transparent!

The other element that this paragraph offers is the place for the expression of such an intention for action. The prayer, needs to be able to be: “Announced from the ambo” (GIRM 71)

While the Lord’s word or call is heard in the inner sanctum of the heart, the word that is heard for action **MUST** be able to be announced in public and have passed the test of public acceptance and prayerful support, from the place reserved for the Word of God.

Thomas More and John Fisher went to the stake for a private decision of conscience, but it was because they had proclaimed it before the King and the Community, in public, that they were both accountable and knew that the Church would know and support their action. They had brought it to both the public and the ecclesial forum. Henry the Eighth, as history has shown could stand before neither in his actions or intention!

These are the understandings which are offered by the GIRM for the Liturgy of the Word.

What can be gleaned from the liturgy of the Word to apply to the task of moral discernment and formation?

3.8. The “Hidden” section of the *General Instruction to the Roman Missal*

The liturgy of the Mass now enters a phrase of transition. And twice the GIRM outlines how the community is to proceed. “When the universal prayer is over, all sit, and the Offertory Chant begins. An acolyte or other lay minister places the corporal, the purificator, the chalice, the pall, and the Missal on the altar.” (GIRM 139)

And at a second-place: “After the universal prayer, while the Priest remains at the chair, the Deacon prepares the altar...” (GIRM 178)

Having finished a structured approach to the liturgy of the Word, *The General Instruction* immediately moves onto the liturgy of the Eucharist and as can be seen its first instructions are in respect of the preparation of the altar.

The commentaries on *The General Instruction* do exactly the same thing. They move directly from the Universal Prayer to the preparation of the altar.

There is only one major difficulty with this framework within *The General Instruction*. It ignores the fact that whenever there is a baptism, confirmation, marriage, consecration to a life of virginity, or ordination to be celebrated, in its normal time and position, this is the point at which the celebration when it is to take place.

BETWEEN THE LITURGY OF THE WORD AND THE LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST.

In each of the major celebrations of initiation, or of a conscious commitment to the Christian way of life, there is a focused reflection on the conscientious decision which is being acted on, and that reflection consists of the readings, homily and a time of prayer. There is then a ritual of public commitment, in the midst of the community, in which the individual commits to a way of life. This is then cemented and completed by the intimate union with Christ in the liturgy of the Eucharist.

The amazing element is that there is no mention of this in the *Instruction* and there is only one exception contained in *the Missal* itself, and that is in the third part of the Easter Vigil of the Sunday of Resurrection and as has already been seen this is the prototypical liturgy.

So what do the pattern and content of these rituals reveal about the Christian life and the manner in which formation is to be crowned by a public commitment to live it fully? This can only be a summary ⁴⁷²but it is important that it is identified that the elements contained in each of the rituals carry the same characteristic pattern and content.

3.8.1. The place of Commitment.

A summary of the framework which accompanies the public rites of commitment, baptism, confirmation, marriage, the three ministries in orders, consecration to a vowed life all show a similar pattern: this will be summarised in Diagram 1.

⁴⁷² The detailed study of these rites would have added another 50 pages to this document, so it was decided, as the focus of the study is the Sunday Liturgy, to only present here a summary of what they have in common.

All commitment rites take place in public, and preferably on the Lord's Day, Sunday, at the main Gathering of the community. All of the Rites have a guidance such as this:

"If possible, baptism should take place on Sunday, the day on which the church celebrates the Paschal mystery. It should be conferred in the communal celebration for all the recently born children, and in the presence of the faithful... Who are all to take active part in the rite?"⁴⁷³

The clear intention is to link the rite to the community, to the celebration of the Lord's Day and for the communal aspect of Christian life to be emphasised. They are in practice ignored, "for pastoral reasons."

In all celebrations the person is called by name, they are asked if they have come there freely and after a time of focused reflection; and this question is asked publically and responded in the face of the community. It normally contains, in two or three questions a summary of what is at the heart of the commitment that is being publically proclaimed.

The readings of the Mass are chosen to give meaning to the commitment, and the homily focuses on the response to the Word and the Risen Christ that this person/ these people are making. The Rites include guidance on the key aspects of the way of life being chosen and all focus on the presence of the Lord in the call, the response and the way of life, the deeds that this will elicit in the life of those making the commitment.

All of the Rites contain an element of the renewal of baptismal commitment and a white garment is involved, or a special garb that talks of the specific nature of the place of commitment. Many religious and episcopal commitments will involve the taking of the cross, or the bearing of the cross.

Between the readings and the commitment a homily or instruction will specify the nature of the commitment.

And then the person (s) will stand in the midst of the community.

The prayer is normally a litany or part of one, and focuses therefore on the Company of the Saints and that it is the mercy and gift of God that will enable this commitment to flourish.

There is then a combination of words of promise and gestures which carry the symbolic message of the commitment being made. This can be an exchange of rings, the placement of hands in those of a superior, the laying on of hands, the anointing with oil, or being buried in the waters of baptism.

The commitment having been publically made the community proceeds to the Eucharist and at the end of the Mass there is a blessing and a conscious sending into the world to serve.

⁴⁷³ *The Rites of the Catholic Church* as Revised by Decree of the Second Vatican Council and Published by Authority of Pope Paul VI. (New York: Pueblo Pub., 1976).n.32.

Diagram 1: Comparison of Rites of Commitment.

Rite of Infant Baptism	Rite of Confirmation	Rite of Ordination	Rite of Consecration to life of Virginity	Rite of Marriage ⁴⁷⁴
	Presumption of the Full rite of Baptism	Presumption of the Full Rite of Baptism and Confirmation	Presumption of the Full Rite of Baptism and Confirmation	Presumption of the Full Rite of Baptism and Confirmation ⁴⁷⁵
		Clothed in White	Clothed	Clothed in White
Called by Name	Called by Name			Greeting of the "Bride and Groom" by name
Sign of the Cross on the Forehead				
Liturgy of the Word: readings, psalm and Gospel	Liturgy of the Word: readings, psalm and Gospel	Liturgy of the Word: readings, psalm and Gospel	Liturgy of the Word: readings, psalm and Gospel	Liturgy of the Word: readings, psalm and Gospel
	Presentation of the candidates : Called by Name	Called by Name	Called by Name	Asked by name if have come freely
Homily	Homily	Homily	Homily	Homily
				Called by Name
Intercessions : Prayer of the Faithful		Inquiry as to intention	Inquiry as to intention	Inquiry as to intention

⁴⁷⁴ There is a variation in the order of marriage from the other rites, but the content and placements have a similar form.

⁴⁷⁵ Can. 1065 §1. "Catholics who have not yet received the sacrament of confirmation are to receive it before they are admitted to marriage *if it can be done without grave inconvenience.*"

Litany	Litany or Veni Spiritus	Litany	Litany	Litany
Anointing with oil of catechumen				
Blessing of the Water				
Renunciation of Sin and Profession of Faith	Renewal of Baptismal Promises	Formal profession of faith before ordination.		
Baptism				
	Laying on of Hands	Laying on of Hands	Pledge with enfolded hands	Taking of Hands
Anointing with Chrism	Anointing with Chrism	Anointing with Chrism		Exchange of Rings
	Sign of the Cross on Forehead	Gifted with the Book of the Gospel		
Clothed with White Garment		Vested with Stole and Chasuble		Clothed in white
Lighted Candle		(Bishop: ring, staff, seat)		Often a candle lighting
	Liturgy of the Eucharist	Liturgy of the Eucharist	Liturgy of the Eucharist	Liturgy of the Eucharist
	Reception of Communion			Reception of Communion
Sent to live the life of Christ	Sent to live the life of Christ	Sent to live the life of Christ	Sent to live the life of Christ	Sent to live the life of Christ

3.9. Liturgy of the Eucharist

The General Instruction moves from the universal prayer to the preparation of the gifts for the Eucharist but before this it provides a clear articulation of what is to be celebrated.

The lens of interpretation is an affirmation that: “at the Last Supper Christ instituted the Paschal Sacrifice and banquet” (GIRM 72) and while “respecting the once – and – for – all sacrifice on the cross” the instruction upholds “the belief that the sacrifice is yet “continually made present to the church as a sacrament of this sacrifice.”⁴⁷⁶

The instruction says that the sacrifice “is continuously made present in the Church whenever the priest, representing Christ the Lord, carries out what the Lord himself did and handed over to his disciples to be done in his memory.”(GIRM 72)

It is important to read this phrase: “in the larger theological framework set out in *Sacrosanctum Concilium* that “every liturgical celebration... Is an action of Christ the Priest and of his body, which is the church.” (SC 7)⁴⁷⁷

Foley emphasises this insight with reference to *Sacrosanctum Concilium* speaking of “Christ perpetuating the sacrifice of the cross by entrusting it “to his beloved spouse, the church,” (SC 47) a theological position reiterated in *Eucharisticum mysterium* (EM 3a).”⁴⁷⁸

The understanding that the fundamental nature of the Christ event has been brought to the community in a ‘liturgical /ritualistic form’ rather than as an attempt at a historical re-presentation is well outlined in Foley’s commentary⁴⁷⁹ on these paragraphs. It is a symbolic formula which brings the Christ presence directly and ‘really’ into the lives of those gathered.

Symbolic language and gestures, and the instruments used, all convey meaning which can change in their interrelationship with the assembly and the understandings both theological and social of the time. The task of the liturgical reform was to enable the return to the Christological foundation of the Paschal Mystery.

The GIRM proceeds to the Eucharist, the second part of the Mass the: “fount and apex of the whole Christian life,” (LG 11) or in the words we are more familiar with the: “Source and summit of the Christian life!”(CCC 1324)⁴⁸⁰

The GIRM situates the Liturgy in a specific form, place and direction which gives general patterns and insights for wider application.

Firstly, it is entirely Christo-centric.

The GIRM starts at a specific place in Christ’s ministry, the Last Supper; and it uses two terms to describe what is happening, it is: “Paschal Sacrifice and banquet” (GIRM 72)

⁴⁷⁶ Foley, Edward. Op.cit.p.162.

⁴⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁸ Foley, Edward. Op.cit.p.163.

⁴⁷⁹ Foley, Edward. Op.cit.pp.162-165.

⁴⁸⁰CCC. 1324 quoting its own translation of LG 11.

These are not recording historical memories they are the mode of understanding the action which is happening in the Liturgy, “The Sacrifice of the Cross is continuously made present in the Church.” (GIRM 72) And this action: “Carries out what the Lord himself *did* and handed over to his disciples to be *done* in his memory.”⁴⁸¹

It is essential to identify and give emphasis to this extension into the actions and deeds of the Eucharist.

The GIRM has spoken much of listening, instructing, teaching, receiving, forming. But at the heart of the Liturgy of the Eucharist and the moral decision-making process is “*doing*”!

People are judged on what is done, on the action which is taken, or what it is decided not to take. Here in the first lines of the GIRM’s reflection the Church’s understanding of Eucharist is made clear.

The second half of the Mass is about what the Lord *did*, and what disciples are called to *do*, in his memory.

This ‘action’ has a shape and a content indicated in the introductory phrase “paschal sacrifice and banquet” and in the “sacrifice of the Cross” but it also has content in the phrase that follows; those gathered are called to take: “The bread and the chalice, gave thanks, broke the bread and gave it.” (GIRM 72)

The GIRM is clear that it is because of the Lord’s command to “Do this in memory of me” that the “The Church has arranged the entire celebration of the Liturgy of the Eucharist in parts corresponding to precisely these words and actions of Christ” (GIRM 72)

Therefore what follows is not accidental, it is intentional, structured and framed for a reason and purpose. What is that meaning?

Paragraph 72 gives some insight. The Bread and wine are the same as He took, the Prayer is the one of thanksgiving, and is his prayer; the offering made is the body and blood of Christ, and a sharing in his sacrifice; and the fraction and Communion, are focused on the unity of the faithful and their commitment to the same call and challenge that the apostles received from the hands of Christ.

This remembering, this process of *αναμνησις*, in and of itself is linked to behaviour and seeks a change of behaviour on the part of those involved in the celebration. The intention of the Prayer is “not simply wanting a memory to be revived; he wanted us to be prodded into action” and the Lord’s commission intends “that by the imitation of his actions of the Last Supper his memory was to be made operative.”⁴⁸²

There is a drive to action, but this is not just any action rather it is that the very way of life of Christ, with its distinctive character, that is to be put into practice.

Christian worship therefore is not to be described in a restrictive way as passive worship/adoration nor as a simple remembering, nor as involving an individual’s decision to change alone; rather it is a

⁴⁸¹ GIRM 72 quoting Cf. Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium* n.47.

⁴⁸² Ibid.

call to action and the action that is called for is the dying to self, the proclamation of the good news, to be crucified out of love, and this is to be made operative in the body of Christ gathered.

So in a similar way to the Liturgy of the Word, there is both a form/process and content.

The ordinary bread and wine are taken, as a symbol of those gathered, and the Lord present; and thanks having been given are broken and shared so as to show the unity and commitment to the same action as Christ revealed and left with the Apostles.

This is an action which is Communal, structured and follows a deliberate and informing process.

Firstly: This is NOT an individual action.

Secondly, it has a prescribed pattern which commences with the taking of the ordinary, the bread and wine. This happens before the thanksgiving, which happens before the breaking, which happens before the sharing in the unity, which happens before being sent to proclaim and to act.

But, thirdly, in all of this, it is “the action” of Christ coupled with the commitment to act, in an established manner and pattern that forms the way of life and truth, the focused and valid way forward to action.

3.9.1. The Preparation of the Gifts

Where does this distinctive action start?

Firstly, *The General Instruction* focuses on the “gifts” that are needed for the formation of the Risen Christ in this place and time; and then secondly, it clarifies the process of preparation, a pattern of making the environment ready and how to take these gifts, so that they will become not just random ‘elements’, but, “Christ’s Body and Blood.” (GIRM 73)

“First of all, the altar or Lord’s Table, which is the centre of the whole Liturgy of the Eucharist, is made ready.” (GIRM 73)

The very words used to describe the place being prepared, provide an understanding of what is going to be expected of those gathered, if they are to find the way to the presence of Christ, “the Word of God, spoken in the heart of the believer, in the heart of the Church, the community gathered”. For this to happen there is going to be an ‘altar’ *and* a ‘table’.

The altar speaks of sacrifice, of finding the essence and offering / returning it to the one from whom it has been received. Sacrifice is an acknowledgement of giftedness and that all that is possessed is an undeserved gift to be returned to the giver. It is a recognition that all is ‘graced’. This recognition then demands a response of gratitude, of ‘giving thanks’; a whole hearted response of gratitude to the ‘Other’.

The ‘table’ speaks of gathering, so as to be fed, to be sustained, to be given life, to be of health and it also speaks of the communal. Rarely when speaking of the table do people speak of being fed on their own; a table is a place of communal eating, of gathering and social interaction.

So the very naming of the place of preparation is speaking of the attitude required and a manner of being. Those gathered are being formed, are being prepared to acknowledge their dependency on others, in particular, “*the Other*”, for the gifts they offer, and the life they are living, and this acknowledgement calls forth a willingness to share, to give back, to thank, and to acknowledge “The one who has given.” However, this must be combined with the awareness that this is communal, it happens at the table, in a place of shared sustenance; with the underlying presumption that what will happen here is focused on giving life, sustenance, and is a joint action and is the communal responsibility of all those gathered.

This idea can be extended. The gathering at the table, and the bringing of the gifts, as it is a meal image, reconnects to all that has been seen in the preparation of the Liturgy of the Word. No meal, no table fellowship, in fact no sacrifice, just ‘appears’. The gifts presume someone has laboured to produce, procure or to provide the materials.

The call to table presumes that someone has the skills to prepare the gifts, to labour to ensure they are prepared, cooked, presented in a manner that is sustaining and life-giving. It also presumes the simple labour of preparing the table, ensuring that all that is required is present for the next step. It also asks questions of the appropriate time and place. All these are contained in the image of the table and “being called to the table”. There are in all communities also going to be understandings, of who is called, who is welcomed and where they will be placed, ‘at the table’.

So it is in the Christian community. The Table, the altar is ‘prepared’. The elements that are seen as essential are named. They are firstly those that are required to enable the sacrifice and meal (the altar and table) to be ‘effective’ and then they are those core elements that are required as the ‘content’ of the gift and worship, the ‘bread and wine’.

The elements to be placed on the altar are named: “On it are placed the corporal, purificator, Missal, and chalice.” (GIRM 73) The elements required for the action, and: “The offerings are then brought forward.” (GIRM 73)

What are these offerings? They are specified and yet they are wider than our normal expectation:

They are: “The bread and wine to be presented by the faithful.” (GIRM 73)

And then the elements, that the Church is saying are not now used, (but is almost saying it would be better if they were) are specifically mentioned. These are the gifts of the faithful, their offerings, their labour, their contribution, their very being, “Even though the faithful no longer bring from their own possessions the bread and wine intended for the liturgy as in the past, nevertheless the rite of carrying up the offerings still retains its force and its spiritual significance.” (GIRM 73)

These additional elements, are non-symbolic, they are real elements offered, which can only be described as the core elements required to solve the practical needs of the world: “Even money or other gifts for the poor or for the Church, brought by the faithful or collected in the church, are acceptable; given their purpose, they are to be put in a suitable place.”(GIRM 73)

They are placed “Away from the Eucharistic table.” (GIRM 73)

But they are placed there ready for being used in the action which the faithful are called upon to do as the Risen Body of Christ!

The importance of who brings and presents these gifts at the altar was seen by Jungmann, "It is not an exaggeration to say that this change of affairs ("seeing the whole liturgy, the presentation of the sacrifice, as a matter for the faithful along with the priest") is of immense significance." It is the church here and now in this place, not just the Church universal, who presents the gifts. He quotes Leo the Great "O Christian know your dignity" ... we all together raise our voices, we all together say AMEN; and it is "real people of flesh and blood who are caught up in the liturgy, ("real people of the material world itself, of trades and professions")." "In short", it is in the presentation of the gifts "when the symbolism of the liturgy, which through its sensuous elements reaches out into all the world and then draws the world back into itself again, constantly comes into its own."⁴⁸³

There is an all-embracing nature to the gifts presented: firstly the symbolic, the bread and wine; secondly, the mention of the process of giving, collecting to be used, and especially at the spiritual level, the "carrying up" and lastly, the physical elements, those things required to carry the Risen Christ and the spiritual significance into the very actions of daily life.

This preparation is accompanied by singing and chant, which the instruction links to the Entrance Chant, (GIRM 74) which the introductory clauses have showed to be a focusing chant, with a focus of creating community, and expressing the core framework and content of this specific gathering.

The purpose of this structured preparation is then referenced; it is done in this manner and with these formulae and actions: "To signify the Church's offering and prayer rising like incense in the sight of God." (GIRM 75)

So this is not just a hope or an entreaty. No the offering, the life gifts of the congregation, are brought together as one, for the purpose of offering, of giving, of committing to the unified act of thanksgiving, worship, commitment and understanding.

How can this happen?

It happens because of the commitment, in ministry (the priest) and life (the people due to their baptism) to living this pattern of life and decision making.

The community are committed in baptism to an ordering, a way of life and formation according to this pattern. This is of such dignity that the outward sign is 'incense'. Every element of the celebration, the gifts, the service, the action together with those gathered have been prepared and gifted, are all 'anointed' / 'chrismated', and offered to the Father.

This community is at the heart of something so 'human' and yet entirely 'mysterious' that again it makes the response significant. It is the natural response if this is 'real and true', and it is seen in the action of the priest. It is an action with enormous implications, that this is nothing to do with us; this is the action of the Lord.⁴⁸⁴ The priest (and the community in unity with him) "Washes his hands ..., a rite in which the desire for interior purification finds expression." (GIRM 76)

⁴⁸³ Jungmann, Josef A. (2014). Op.cit.p.345.

⁴⁸⁴ Matt 27:24 where Pilate washing his hands of Christ, this is Christ's free gift.

The community is bringing all they are and have, recognising such as graced/ a gift and committing to an act of thanksgiving and worship, commitment and ordering so that Christ may act in and through them, and they in and through him! This will require an 'interior purification' to enable those gathered to grasp and act in its full meaning and implications. The lavabo, the washing of the hands of the priest is seen as a communal unity that parallels the Kiss of peace that was placed here in the third and fourth century, and still remains in some Eastern rites. It is the call, from scripture in respect of the offering at the Temple being extended to the Eucharist; be reconciled before approaching the altar.

Each of these elements speaks of intentionality in approaching the altar, and this being qualified by a conscious awareness of who the participants are, and of their moral and spiritual position, in respect of the Lord and their neighbour, as they are placed in and with the gifts,.

3.9.2. The Prayer over the Offerings

All of this preparation finds its completion in a prayer. This prayer presumes that the preparation has been completed, all the gifts required are present, and the congregation is ready to make the full commitment proclaimed in the Eucharistic Prayer. GIRM 77 is very clear that all has to have been done, before the Eucharist can proceed, and that this is NOT an action of the priest alone, it is a communal action and conclusion, "The people, joining in this petition, make the prayer their own by means of the acclamation Amen."(GIRM 77)

3.9.3. The Eucharistic Prayer

Now to the centre of the whole celebration. Again this is a participatory action. It, therefore, includes words and phrases that reflect the essence of Christian Action, the heart of the formed Christian approach to choice and action.

The first insight is that whatever the community is now going to find in the Eucharistic Prayer is an expression of the core insight of Christian self-understanding: "Now the centre and high point of the entire celebration begins" (GIRM 78)

And the Church knows that it is going to be expressed in the: "Eucharistic Prayer itself."(GIRM 78)

The first caution is to understand that this is the name of the section of the liturgy and that this is not going to be limited to the words of the prayer that is prayed. This section of the liturgy is a series of prayers, and it includes and involves actions that carry the meaning in the same way as the words do. The words and the actions together are revelatory.

The code of interpretation used to gain an understanding of this prayer and action is contained in the description of the Eucharist Prayer, "The prayer of thanksgiving and sanctification." (GIRM 78)

The Eucharistic Prayer begins with those who participate once again being asked, not to make a passive act of consent or just to be present while another acts on their behalf. They are specifically

asked, in fact “called upon;” “To lift up their hearts towards the Lord in prayer and thanksgiving.” (GIRM 78)

The whole community are united in the prayer of the Priest as “He addresses in the name of the entire community to God the Father through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit.” (GIRM 78)

And more. “The meaning of this Prayer is that *the whole congregation of the faithful joins with Christ* in confessing the great deeds of God and in the offering of Sacrifice.” (GIRM 78)

The whole Body of believers present are called upon to jointly participate, and the manner of participation is “That everybody listens to it with reverence and in silence.”(GIRM 78)

So this is a joint action, of the whole body, priest and people, and the silence and reverence are not passive, rather all are engaged in meditation and offering. This is the action of Christ. This is the point where the deeds of God are revealed and the whole community, priest and people, are joined in Christ’s one act of sacrifice.

There is here a fundamental insight into the Eucharistic understanding and a movement from the “Catholic” understanding of the Middle Ages to Vatican II. The understanding contained in the phrase “Body of Christ” which had been seen by Augustine as the Church, the body of believers gathered, and which had been transferred almost exclusively to the “Eucharistic species”; is central to the direction that the Council takes when it returns to the Augustinian insight of a “profound identification of the Community gathered as the Corpus Mysterium.”⁴⁸⁵

As Baldovin says it was only “De Lubac’s finding (expressed in the identification of the community with the mystical body of Christ) that made it possible to conceive of a Eucharistic ecclesiology as opposed to one that is based primarily on hierarchical structures- an ecclesiology that can be read throughout the Vatican II documents, in particular *Sacrosanctum Concilium* and *Lumen Gentium*.”⁴⁸⁶

Benedict XVI re-expressed this insight with great power when he wrote: “The great Bishop of Hippo, speaking specifically of the Eucharistic mystery, stresses the fact that Christ assimilates us to himself: “The bread you see on the altar, sanctified by the word of God, is the body of Christ. The chalice, or rather, what the chalice contains, sanctified by the word of God, is the blood of Christ. In these signs, Christ the Lord willed to entrust to us his body and the blood which he shed for the forgiveness of our sins. If you have received them properly, you yourselves are what you have received.” Consequently, “not only have we become Christians, we have become Christ himself.” We can thus contemplate God’s mysterious work, which brings about a profound unity between ourselves and the Lord Jesus: “one should not believe that Christ is in the head but not in the body; rather he is complete in the head and in the body.” (SCar 36)

It is with this understanding that the *Instruction* distinguishes the main elements of the Prayer.

Again, it starts with a dialogue.

⁴⁸⁵ De Lubac, Henri, SJ. and Simmonds, Gemma(trans,) *Corpus Mysticum: The Eucharist and the Church in the Middle Ages*,(London: SCM, 2006).

⁴⁸⁶ Baldovin, John F., SJ. (2013) Op.cit. p. 524.

The initial engagement is NOT an instruction, or a fixed prayer or a dogmatic exposition; it is a dialogue.

The content of this dialogue starts with a statement of the Lord's presence, in the community gathered. "The Lord be with you".

This greeting is addressed to the faithful gathered, and in the response shows recognition of Christ present in the Spirit, and in the minister.

Secondly, the action is one of meditation and spiritual uplift, not limited to intellectual assent or subservience, "Lift up your heart".

And it is clear where and how the heart is to be directed. It is to be directed: communally, "We"; and, "We" lift them (the hearts of the faithful) up to the Lord!

There is a seeking, a lifting, and a hope that in this action that the individuals, within the community, will come to a deep insight of the Lord's will.

Now there is a clear link that is crucial to our investigation.

The expectation would be, as it is the core meaning of the word "Ευχαριστια" that we are going to be called to thanksgiving, and so we are: "Let us give thanks to the Lord our God."

But it is the response of those gathered that reveals the core meaning that this whole exercise has been seeking and which has been given as the "name" of this thesis. In five small words, it expresses the moral and ethical direction and centrality of such to the Christian life. The united community responds with one voice saying: "It is right and just".

In these words is revealed that the only response to giving thanks to the Lord our God, is to become one in the prayer of Ευχαριστια (thanksgiving), the source and summit of Christian life, and the appropriate response, expressed in this dialogue, is doing that which is "right and just". In these three words are summarised the moral and ethical demand. True thanksgiving to the Lord will be to *do* what is right and just.

The Eucharist is therefore not speaking purely of faith, worship, belief or an intellectual consent to 'revealed truths'. In what follows the community will proclaim what is the core of what is "right and just". To discern what is right, what is true and to be done; and then what is just, what is balanced and legitimate; they are offered this one direction "Give thanks to the Lord our God".

But in the first line of the Preface, this idea is developed. Each and every Preface starts with the same introduction, (and if there is a gift in the new English translation of the Missal it is the reappearance of this uniform start to this prayer). The first lines of every preface starts: "It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give thanks to ..."

Here is the foundational understanding of truth and justice, of the right thing to be done, and it is 'always and everywhere' it is a universal insight, and it is to give thanks.

Now comes the challenging part for the Christian. This thanks is not without content or form. This is not thanks as one would give to Grandma for the cheque you received for Christmas or for the tenth

year in which you written thanks to the in-laws for the gift of handkerchiefs received at Christmas. This is thanks and the Rite leads to the understanding of what is right and just, according to the intersection of two elements:

Firstly, it is seasonal, time and occasion appropriate.

The GIRM states that the thanksgiving will be: “(Expressed especially in the Preface).” (GIRM 79a)

And that the preface will be focused either on: “The whole work of salvation or for some particular aspect of it, according to the varying day, festivity, or time of year.”(GIRM 79a)

The preface, therefore, is specific, but in its specificity, it is also interconnected with and related to the whole work of salvation. This makes the core of the “*lex orandi lex credenda*” call so potent. Sunday to Sunday, feast to feast and season to season, the Church gains from these great prayers, the insight into what is right and just, the content of our salvation.

There is often, in the prayer of the preface, a full expose of a theological point, succinctly and directly expressed. An example of this is the link between the sacrifice of Christ and its direct impact on our lives as seen in Sunday Preface IV: By his birth we are reborn. In his suffering we are freed from sin. By his rising from the dead we rise to everlasting life. In his return to you in glory we enter into your heavenly kingdom.”⁴⁸⁷

As Irwin says this preface reveals that: “it is the very same sacrificial death and resurrection that we experience through the words, symbols, gestures and actions of the Mass.”⁴⁸⁸

There are multiple places in the liturgy in which a prayer can be taken to display belief. In fact once a person starts observing the liturgy becomes a source book of every mystery and dimension in the life of the Christian, both individually and communally.

But there is here also an added dimension. In the words, symbols, gestures and actions the Church is not just thinking about the Paschal Mystery: “but we truly experience it and participate in it (literally) “take part in it.””⁴⁸⁹

There is a whole study here, a bringing together of the core elements of the faith that will structure and form the “meditation of our hearts, and the words of our lips”, to reverse the order of Psalm 19:14; and therefore reveal the element that will be of thanksgiving to God, and be ‘right and just’.

This was brought closely to mind when on the Sunday I was writing this section the Prayer over the offerings said: “We pray, that the deeds by which we serve you, May be worthy of these sacred gifts.”⁴⁹⁰

The link is again made, that our deeds, our actions, the place in which we serve the Lord are to be formed, informed and made worthy, by the gift we are offering in Deed and word.

⁴⁸⁷ Irwin, Kevin W. Op.cit. pp.7. 10-11.

⁴⁸⁸ Irwin, Kevin W. Op.cit.p.7.11.

⁴⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁰ Prayer over the Offerings of the Mass of the Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time.

The preface, therefore, is all important in framing the deeds, the knowledge of what is 'right and just' in this particular celebration and this gathering of the community.

There are hints as to this framework even if we limit ourselves to the prefaces specific to the Eucharistic prayers, and therefore universal in their applicability: There are phrases here that link words and deeds, meditation and action, what is right and just and the manner of putting this into practice: "Through your beloved Son, Jesus Christ. Your word through whom you made all things, whom you sent as our Saviour and Redeemer, Incarnate by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin... Fulfilling your will and gaining for you a holy people, He stretched out his hands as he endured his Passion So as to break the bonds of death and manifest the Resurrection"⁴⁹¹

What is in these highlighted words?

They reveal that what is 'right and just' is the fruit of an action of love. Not selfishness or self-centeredness; rather it is love and *αγαπε*. There is an attitude and a quality of acting that both reveals and enables a person to be faithful to that which is "right and just". It will be displayed by an act of love and it will be revealed to be an act of love.

There is here a strong connection with the Johannine pattern of Word and Creation. The revelatory word of God is found in a person, the Word made flesh, and is found in "all things that you have made"; creation. The core and fundamentally characteristic element of the Christian message is that what is revelatory of God's work, is firstly incarnational, and secondly the incarnational element is found not just in the revelation in Jesus of Nazareth, but also in the pattern and foundational revelation of 'all things' of creation.

This has a strong impact on our moral quest. Believers are not looking either to those with a special revelation or insight, the tohunga, shaman or holy one; nor are they bound by the interpreter or protector of a sacred law or insight. The fundamental belief is that to find what is 'right and just' is found in two great sources. The life, death and resurrection; the words and deeds; the revelation in the Word made flesh; who is Jesus the Christ, and who is risen and lives among us, in the Church, by the power of the Holy Spirit. And secondly, there is no contradiction between what Christ reveals and what is first revealed in creation, in all things. This first act of revelation though, is again incarnational. Within the creation-based revelation God is not revealed external to the world in which we live, rather, God is revealed in and through the creation (which was made clear in the exposition of Pope Francis in *Laudate Si*). There is no seeking what is "right and just" anywhere other than in this world, in this place, in this time, in this contingency of choice, weakness, faith, hope and love.

There is always an insight to be articulated if a person writes in the light of the scriptures used in the Church, and the day this Preface was prayed was on the day the Church read the readings of Deuteronomy and Luke.⁴⁹²

There are two ideas which help in the understanding of these elements from the Preface of Eucharistic Prayer 2.

⁴⁹¹ Preface of Eucharistic Prayer 2.

⁴⁹² 15th Sunday in ordinary time year C; Deut 30:10-14; and Luke 10:25-37.

In Deuteronomy, the core insight is that the incarnational, immanent element of revelation has been understood as part of the Judeo-Christian heritage from the beginning. "Moses says to the people: For this command that I enjoin on you today; Is not too mysterious and remote for you. It is not up in the sky, that you should say, 'Who will go up in the sky to get it for us?

And tell us of it, that we may carry it out?'

Nor is it across the sea, that you should say,

'Who will cross the sea to get it for us?

And tell us of it, that we may carry it out?'

No, it is something very near to you,

Already in your mouths and in your hearts;

You have only to carry it out."(Deut 30:10-14)

The command of the Lord, what is 'right and just' is not remote, distant or obscure; it is "already in your mouths and in your hearts". The elements that have to be moved are those hearts, and the attached hands and feet: to act.

The Gospel of this day reiterates this insight. The Lawyer, to test him, asks the Lord: "...what must I do to inherit eternal life?" And the answer is known to all followers of Moses, Jew or Gentile: "You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your being, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbour as yourself."(Luke 10:25-37)

How more succinctly can the insight of the Preface be expressed.

The human response and the foundation of the moral choice is to "love". Love the Lord your God, in fact, one could suggest a strong rewriting "that which you love with all your heart, and soul and mind, is your God!"

But this 'love of God' is NOT associated with a mystical or another worldly seeking, or with a blind obedience or lack of engagement. It is to be lived in the most incarnational of directions. It is so incarnational and grounded in the here and now. "You must love with your whole being, heart, mind and strength, and you must love your neighbour as yourself".

However, this being grounded in the here and now, in the inner construction and working of the individual and our psyche and personality, is not totally individualistic; it is always aware of and framed by, the demand of our neighbour.

So the Love of God is deeply grounded, and is found in the depth of the human relationship with the here and now and with the responsible action of each person's heart, mind, strength and being. It is 'in history' it is 'in creation' it is 'in relationship' it is in 'carne' in the flesh and blood of this place and time, that humanity will find the "love of God."

Our life and moral direction is not out of this world, is not 'super' or 'supra' natural, it is rather in the depths of the stillness of the human heart that the Lord will speak of those insights, those calls to see the hand of Christ calling, and the real meaning of creation.

Thirdly, in this preface these insights are then given a greater depth and content, especially for the person of faith.

There is 'content' to the revelation in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. In all aspects of encounter, with the world, with the realities of the person's own life, and the neighbour, a person is 'sent'. There is a vast difference in attitude and response involved in this little phrase. Jesus was 'sent'. Sent as a 'saviour and redeemer.' By being incorporated into Christ, by baptism, believers are also sent, to share the same message, to bring to their lives and the world, and the neighbour the same gift, 'salvation and redemption'. This is the fundamental qualifier of all that is done.

The faithful are called to share an insight into a God, the fullness of life and love that is fundamentally life-giving, forgiving, a bringer of truth and life. They are to display a willingness to serve and to welcome, to break down all barriers of prejudice and legal construct between peoples. They are sent, not just to preach this, a Saviour could just preach the Good News, but the Lord, and believers as part of Him, are sent not just as 'saviour' but as a 'redeemer'. The redeemer is willing to act, to put the word into flesh, to act on the insight, the belief and the truth that has been seen, or which has been revealed to them and to 'pay the price' for the freedom and life of the other.

The Preface gives insight into this: Firstly it shows that this sending is 'in history' it is 'in-carnate', en-fleshed; it is in time and space; but it is enacted in two words, "Fiat" and "Blessed". It is the work of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is not without an expressed and identified content to the message.

The Holy Spirit is the life-giving spirit who hovers over the chaos and brings order to creation. The Spirit is the order, the life-giving, the pattern that is discerned in creation.

And, the Spirit is the message of 'being blessed' being loved, being held as one who is the image of God, the one to be able to revive the fullness of life and love. The very greeting to Mary, 'blessed' is a proclamation of what is, not a proclamation of exception. She, like all of the creation, is fundamentally gifted with life and love, and is the one who is able to hear and receive in 'all her heart, and mind and strength' the reality of that proclamation. She hears the word 'Blessed' but much more importantly she is willing to make a response and it is one of action.

"You are blessed", and the response is "let it be". The action of the Holy Spirit occurs when in the depths of the heart the human being hears the word of God say "do this or shun that", the true redeeming and saving moment is the response of "let it be". Putting it into action.

This has another aspect to be identified.

This is all the action of the Holy Spirit. This Spirit is not amorphous or individual. Of all the aspects of the scriptural revelation, there is a clear content to the presence of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of the Risen Christ; the Holy Spirit is the on-going presence of the one and same Christ who walked and preached in Galilee. The content of the Word that will be spoken is known, revealed. The Holy Spirit is the fullness of the words, deeds, life, death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. There will not be any contradiction.

The New Testament also reveals the insight that this Spirit has the specific qualities of patience, wisdom, understanding, forgiveness and perseverance.

Then, the last phrase of this preface provides more content to the analysis.

This whole action of love and life-giving, this being sent and responding in action is done as a 'holy people'.

There is a temptation in all this to make it individual, but the core insight the liturgy is offering is that people are to make their response, come to understanding and insight, to decide and to act, NOT alone, but rather in the midst of a 'holy people.'⁴⁹³ The word given is given in and through, with and among, a people. More it is most clearly seen in the response, not of an individual decision and 'self-righteousness'. The test of the lawyer, the test of true moral decision making is: 'what is the impact of this on my neighbour, as for myself?' and then in the ultimate call of the Lord, ""Go and do likewise."

What is the "likewise"?

It is to see the need of the neighbour and act on it with mercy and love!

This brings us to the last insight.

To act in such a way is to stretch out the hands and endure, united with the Lord, a passion like His and by being united with Him to break the bonds of death, isolation, legalism, ethnic and social hate or separation.

The story of the Lawyer in Luke, speaks of the insight that the Lord's call, of incarnated love and life, means that the social conventions of isolation and order, based on placing limitations on love and who is acceptable to have the fullness of life, are to be broken.

This breaking of the social conventions, the breaking of the restrictions of self-interest and self-aggrandisement; the breaking of the control of the lives of others for the social and material betterment of the minority or a certain class or race or gender group, are all to be done, so that ALL, the neighbour and self, can share in the fullness of life and love.

This demand, in fact, provokes a response, and the response will be one both internal and external. Self-interest and self-protection will mean that it is experienced as an internal sacrifice; but externally this is also a social, economic and political choice, that will necessarily challenge the established orders. It will of necessity call forth opposition and will lead to a sharing in the Passion and death of the Lord.

This then is the core and crucial command that is structured into the liturgy. The Church can preach and believe, she can teach and identify the heart of the GOOD News, but in the end, at the crucial moment, are those people who are the Church willing to take their little bits of bread and wine, themselves, and commit them to action, here and now, in this world, for the betterment of our neighbour, knowing that they are deliberately 'turning their face toward Jerusalem' and all that entails!

⁴⁹³ Lathrop, Gordon. *Holy People: A Liturgical Ecclesiology*, (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1999).

The content of the Eucharistic prayer continues with the proclamation of the acclamation Holy, Holy, Holy, by all who are gathered into this action of seeking what is 'right and just'.

The GIRM highlights that the "Holy Holy" is part of the Eucharistic Prayer, and an action of the priest and the people. Again the Holy people are united in all that is happening. The assembly, and the Christian, in all actions are united, in the action. They are not dependent upon an intermediary or a caste of interpreters, they are one in the action, of Christ, and this is the primary reference point of all interpretation and insight.

The prayer proceeds with the reinforcement, in word and symbol, of what has already been unpacked. This is all the work of the Holy Spirit and this is seen in that with the Priest, those gathered, the Church, are said to: "implores the power of the Holy Spirit that the gifts offered by human hands be consecrated, that is, become Christ's Body and Blood and that the unblemished sacrificial Victim to be consumed in Communion may be for the salvation of those who will partake of it."(GIRM 79)

The work is that of the Holy Spirit, acting in and through human hands, offering the gifts that are 'fruit of the earth and work of human hands'. This is a focused action with one intention, the 'salvation of those who will partake of it'. The whole action is based upon the unity of the Body of Christ in the here and now. And what gives unity to the Church, the Body of Christ, is the living and proclaiming of the fullness of life and love, revealed in Christ Jesus, and lived here and now by His body gathered because of the indwelling of his Holy Spirit.

This is reiterated in the next phrase in the GIRM. In reading the commentaries on the institution narrative and consecration it is emphasised: that this is an action of Christ that the gathered Church is united in; that in this being unified in His words and actions, those gathered are one in His offering and that there is a fundamental unity and stability in the nature and form of all human insight. This will ultimately find resonance and its foundational shape in the mystery of Christ. The quality of the mystery revealed in Christ is that it is fundamentally sacrificial. It and all actions of the human person leading to the fullness of life are going to demand a unity with the one who is willing to give rather than receive, serve rather than be served, die to self so as to find the fullness of life. The GIRM says this clearly: "The institution narrative and Consecration, by which, by means of the words and actions of Christ, that Sacrifice is effected which Christ himself instituted during the Last Supper, when he offered his Body and Blood under the species of bread and wine, gave them to the Apostles to eat and drink, and leaving with the latter the command to perpetuate this same mystery."(GIRM 79d)

This focus on the sacrificial and self-emptying, coupled with the being united with Christ, in His Body, is reemphasized in the next paragraph when discussing the anamnesis, the call from Christ to do this in memory of Him, when it says that this is part of his ministry and life among us: "Especially his blessed Passion, glorious Resurrection, and Ascension into heaven." (GIRM 79e)

This whole unity and its foundational element as a 'life model' for the Christian are now brought into clear focus when the GIRM in describing 'The oblation', the community gathered making its offering in union with the whole Church talks of the Church's intention. Here is the meaning or intention of this whole action and it is: "The Church's intention, indeed, is that the faithful not only offer this unblemished sacrificial Victim but also learn to offer their very selves, and so day by day to be

brought, through the mediation of Christ, into unity with God and with each other, so that God may, at last, be all in all.” (GIRM 79f)

Therefore we can say the Eucharist is not an external exercise of obedience or ritual, it is the intention of the Church that those present are “offering their very selves.”(GIRM 79f) The “offering of our very selves” (GIRM 79f) is of the nature and core understanding of human life and existence. This is ‘the way’, the pathway, the methodology of coming “into unity with God and with each other.” (GIRM 79f) This expresses succinctly and concisely, the moral quest. Human beings are seeking a way that is “right and just” that will lead them into unity with each other, and here it is. From a purely humanistic perspective it is “to offer our very selves;” (GIRM 79f) but with the eyes of faith there is an even greater result from this “offering of our very selves” (GIRM 79f) it is that God, the fullness of life and love, may “at last be all in all”. (GIRM 79f)

Here is a succinct and precise summary of the moral task.

The secret of human formation and commitment is to discern what the person is called to do in this place and time, using all wisdom and insight, and then to bring the seemingly insignificant elements of our daily existence, and unite them to Christ and to offer them in service of our brothers and sisters. This is necessarily going to demand sacrifice and giving.

The last two sections of the Eucharistic Prayer then bring this congregation and these individuals into the wider sphere. Neither the individual, nor the local community, are arrogant enough to believe that they en flesh the fullness of the needs and challenges, the hopes or aspirations of humanity. Nor are they capable of finding the solution within the limited resources of this portion of humanity to all the issues facing humanity. Rather, all are called, in the intercessions, to unite ourselves with all the other parts of the “Church” and humanity, and call for their full participation in the actions required for bringing about that which is ‘right and the just’. The task of demythologising the language can aid in understanding what the Church is calling the Church to be.

There is to be communion with the ‘whole Church’ and that implies and incorporates people of every race and nation. It means that the very act of offering the self to the neighbour leads to the demands that are the needs and hopes of all humanity, the whole Church, and they must be incorporated in all decision and actions.

But more, this extends to: “Both heaven and of earth and that the oblation is made for her and for all her members, living and dead”. (GIRM 79g)

At one level this great mystery can be read in its simplest form as saying; until the burden of what has been done in the past is eased, humanity cannot find the level playing field of love and service that will lead to unity and justice and the ability to act rightly. This is the insight witnessed to by the Waitangi Tribunal, and the Truth and reconciliation commissions in various parts of the world. Those who are dead, those who have gone before us, the victims of injustice, those who are in heaven and are the living and the dead, call for the healing of injustice and inhumanity that are to be identified in the prejudices and blindnesses with which people have walked into the assembly and which were outlined in the opening sections of this study. The on-going injustice of racism and inequity, based on slavery and colonialism, are simple examples of where humanity needs to heal the call of the dead for respect for the neighbour, before they can step forward in unity with their descendants.

There are therefore various levels to this offering and sacrifice and it includes those who have gone before us and therefore the Church in heaven and on earth. All are part of the equation if the Church is going to be able to share and: "Participate in the redemption and salvation purchased by the Body and Blood of Christ."(GIRM 79g)

The prayer then comes to the great proclamation, that once all of this has been fulfilled the Church will be united in the great hymn of the glory of God, who will be 'all in all' and which will be summed up in the great affirmation of the people : "Amen". Those gathered are one in this whole exercise, they are united in the one action of Christ and committed to the sacrificial demand to bring that which is "right and just" to this world.

3.9.4. The Communion Rite

Aware of the core demand to act with and for each other and this in a sacrificial manner, the second element of the preparation returns. The community is now reminded that the: "Eucharist is the Paschal Banquet;" (GIRM 80) and that all are therefore directed to experience the unity of the Table, but more, they are being fed so as to be able to act in accordance with the understanding that has just been outlined.

This is the meaning of the fraction rite and communion: It is firstly: "That in accordance with the Lord's command his Body and Blood should be received as spiritual food;" (GIRM 80) and secondly that this is the means: "By which the faithful are led more immediately to Communion."(GIRM 80)

There are two elements. The faithful are being given strength and food so as to be able to act and in this same action it is intended to bring them into a unity of purpose so that they will do this together, not alone and separate. This all proceeds with the understanding that the sacrificial nature of the Eucharist and being called to the table are inextricably linked both in action and in word. Both are actions of joining together as the body of Christ, being blessed, broken and *given* and in the Spirit united as one gift to the Father and to the world.

3.9.4.1. The Lord's Prayer

These general outlines are reemphasised in the explanation of the Lords' Prayer in GIRM 81. There are three phrases of significance in this paragraph: "In the Lord's Prayer a petition is made for:

- daily bread, which for Christians means principally the Eucharistic Bread
- purification from sin, so that what is holy may in truth be given to the holy
- For deliverance from the power of evil for the whole community of the faithful."
(GIRM 81)

There is a call for this way of life to be the characteristic of every day and every element of human lives. The community doesn't just gather for feasts or specific anniversaries or rituals. This is the heart of a way of life, a daily bringing of the self to unity with the sacrificial way of life. The believer doesn't do what is "right and just" or identify with Christ just on Sunday. It is a daily "way of life" a formation for a moral life.

Thus, it continually calls the believer to a re-examination of the purpose and intention of what is being done and what is failing to be done, so that all members of the Body are focused on what is at the heart of the holy, 'that which is right and just'.

And, there is yet another emphasis that this is the pursuit of a way of life that will end with God. Everything, all in all, is lived within a community of the faithful; it is not a prayer to 'my Father' or for 'my daily bread' it is a call to "OUR Father" and for "OUR daily bread".

3.9.4.2. The Rite of Peace

There is, therefore, a full intention and focus that the whole of life, all moral decisions and all the elements of such a life would be united, focused, gifted and formed and this is not for the purpose or benefit of an individual or a privileged or identified group separately and apart. No. The rite is clear and explicit: "There follows the Rite of Peace, by which the Church entreats peace and unity for herself and for the whole human family, and the faithful express to each other their ecclesial communion and mutual charity before communicating in the Sacrament."(GIRM 82)

There is one goal and hope, peace and unity for all, and specifically, while the community prays for such in the Church, she also seeks this for the 'whole human family'. This is a universal call, and should and must be able to be expressed as accessible to the 'whole human family'. And again, to achieve this it expresses a commitment to unity, communion and the putting of this into action. The use of this word "mutual charity" has found great development in the writing of Benedict XVI where we know that: Caritas / Charity is: "love in service of others" (DCE 36) and "always manifests God's love in human relationships "(CinV 6) and Benedict sees the call to "Love in truth — caritas in Veritate" as being the "great challenge for the Church in a world that is becoming progressively and pervasively globalized. The risk for our time is that the de facto interdependence of people and nations is not matched by ethical interaction of consciences and minds that would give rise to truly human development. Only in charity, illumined by the light of reason and faith, is it possible to pursue development goals that possess a more humane and humanizing value" (CinV9)

And that is the call both for the Christian and the all people of good will. Illuminated by reason and faith, they are called to charity, and that means to put that love into action. This putting love into action is described as being mutual. All are called within the community to reconciliation and healing. Faced with opposition they are not to look for the martyr or the confessor within the community, nor individualism or ritual isolation, rather the call of the Liturgy is for 'mutual' care and unity, and where this is not mutual: "Leave your offering before the altar and go and be reconciled with your brother".

This mutual, joint, communal element is foundational for the 'sharing of the one bread and cup'.

These insights call for a re-examination of much of our ecclesial life in the West, in particular, where the major lines of division and isolation, lie in the inability to break open the issues within those gathered around the table and to seek mutual Caritas: "love in action".

The sign of this mutual action is left to: "Be established by the Conferences of Bishops in accordance with the culture and customs of the peoples."(GIRM 82)

The Church in Aotearoa New Zealand would offer the Church universal the meaning contained in the sign we use to exchange the sign of peace. There is a handshake, but we also share a holy kiss and a hongi.

The Hongi says that we share the life breathe, the wairua, the Spirit, the Holy Spirit, who gives us all life and unity, who makes us a people and who gives us the ability to stand, to speak and to serve.

3.9.4.3. The Fraction of the Bread

What understanding does the GIRM offer in respect of our commitments from the fraction rite; Firstly there is the reminder that the, “breaking of the bread “is central to all Christian understanding; this is *the* “gesture”: “Done by Christ at the Last Supper, which in apostolic times gave the entire Eucharistic Action its name.” (GIRM 83)

And it “Signifies that the many faithful are made one body (1 Cor 10:17) by receiving Communion from the one Bread of Life, which is Christ, who for the salvation of the world died and rose again.” (GIRM 83)

There is no ability to act or live with the fullness of life other than by being united with others. Here the community brings to the proclamation of a faith belief the understanding that this is founded on, and made possible by, a united community, of mutual charity and love, which is Christ. This is the ordinary statement of the life of the Church. All are committed, in baptism, and they live this by coming to the table and sharing with their brothers and sisters, in all the multiplicity of their cultures, languages, and states of spiritual being.

This is the way and the form of life. It is not purely a decision to be united, a form of commonality. That could be formed by ethnic, racial, political or economic distinctions and interests. NO this is a decision to be one Body, one community based upon a way of life and an understanding of the way to live rightly and justly. This is summarised as a life lived in the sacrifice of service and self-giving to the neighbour.

The GIRM summarises this in the next paragraph: “The Priest breaks the Bread and puts a piece of the host into the chalice to signify the unity of the Body and Blood of the Lord in the work of salvation, namely, of the Body of Jesus Christ, living and glorious.”(GIRM 83)

The centrality of this unity of the Body, formed by the sharing in the sacrifice, the pouring of the blood, in service and love of the other, is reinforced in the prayer that accompanies it. “Lamb of God you take away the sin of the world” all division, prejudice, individualism and selfishness, “have mercy on us”. This is prayed twice; and then there is the proclamation of what will be the fruit of this understanding; as the GIRM says: “The final time it concludes with the *Dona nobis pacem (grant us peace)*.”(GIRM 83)

The people, who seek what is right and just, those elements that will bring unity and peace, make decisions and actions that will heal and bring life in the fullness. It will be when all are united in one body, willing to share in the Way of Christ, which is to lay down one’s life for the neighbour, and are

willing to commit themselves heart, mind, strength and being to the service of the other; it is then that God is revealed in their very midst.

3.9.5.4 Communion

How do people become united, how are they strengthened to act?

The preparation for communion says with three interconnected actions. They “Makes an act of humility,” (GIRM 84) “Receive the Lord’s Body (GIRM 85) and “Partake of the chalice.” (GIRM 85)

All as signs of the “Participation in the sacrifice actually being celebrated.” (GIRM 85)

There is a purpose and focus to the humility and prayer, to the receiving and partaking, and it is to be in active and full “participation” in the sacrifice of Christ being celebrated.

This is the action that all are partaking in. There is a wonderful liturgical challenge coupled here with the moral imperative. This is not passive, this is not subservient silence and abeyance, and this is not individual piety and prayer.

There is a form of worship called for, which reflects the moral predisposition of the Body gathered and the individuals within it. They are called to “participation in the sacrifice”. They are called to an active carrying of the Cross, they are called to the active linking of the disciples with each other, they are called to active forgiveness of the thief they are standing next to, they are called to active submission to the will of God that they have discerned, even in the face of existential isolation and abandonment, they are called to the sacrifice of the suffering servant, they are called to the Sacrifice of the Lamb, all in the sure and certain hope of the resurrection, in Christ Jesus.

This is a highly demanding, but deeply involving call.

So it is in the Christian moral life that mirrors and reflects such an understanding, formation and commitment. It is the participation in the sacrifice. It is not unreflected obedience to a set of rules or regulations, nor is it individual preference and choice; it is sacrifice to the right and the just, in this place and time, in union with the Body of Christ, and in the way of the Holy Spirit, who says blessed be those who in imitation of the Mother say “Fiat, let it be”.

Again the unity and consistency of this framework and interpretation is reinforced, solely by moving to the next paragraph in the GIRM: “While the Priest is receiving the Sacrament, the Communion Chant is begun, its purpose being to express the spiritual union of the communicants by means of the unity of their voices, to show gladness of heart, and to bring out more clearly the “communitarian” character of the procession to receive the Eucharist.”(GIRM 86)

A community, in communion, a unity of voices, with gladness of heart, in a procession, are called to the table. This is designed and framed to express the “communitarian” character of how the Christian receives the Eucharist.

This is how to live the Christian life, and is foundational to the way of acting as a formed and committed member of the Body of Christ.

There is a necessity of seeking a unity of voice, which will happen when there is a gladness of heart. This gladness will happen when the community have overcome the divisions and tensions within the body, when all are one. It is then that the community will be willing to walk together, to process, to have a common direction, because they have come to this point at the end of a deep and profoundly structured pattern of preparation, formation, discernment, decision making and commitment. The community is united in its purpose, they are sure that this is the call of the Lord and they are one with Him.

This is deeply profound, and this deep and solemn unity and common action lead to two things: "The Priest and faithful pray quietly for some time," (GIRM 88) and then they pray: "The Prayer after Communion, in which he prays for the fruits of the mystery just celebrated." (GIRM 89)

This is an inclusion with the introductory prayer or Introit. There has been a focus on a specific feast, season, Mass, celebration or need. And now the congregation have come to a common understanding and commitment and they pray that they would live and receive the 'fruits of this mystery'. They have celebrated a nuptial Mass and they pray for the couple and their loving life together; they have celebrated a Requiem, and pray for the gift of Eternal life for the one who has died and support for the grieving; they have prayed the 15th Sunday of the year and then pray that they like the Samaritan would see their neighbour in all in need and that their prejudices would be removed. They pray that the 'fruit', actions that arise from this celebration, will come to fruition in their lives.

Again the unity of the community is emphasised, and that this is all an action of life and communion "The people make the prayer their own by means of the acclamation Amen."(GIRM 89)

3.10. The Concluding Rites

The General Pattern of the Mass is concluded with the concluding rites.

This paragraph speaks of the announcements and blessings and with one interesting phrase, the community is sent on its way.

The phrase that is of use to our study is: "The Dismissal of the people by the Deacon or the Priest, so that each may go back to doing good works, praising and blessing God."(GIRM 90)

The community are sent, to return to that which they were expected to be doing, by their baptism, which is "doing good works and praising and blessing God". The Christian life is a continuum of action and praise. Christians worship in and through their good works and they are motivated to continue doing their work, because they are acting with the knowledge that they are doing it for the praise and blessing of God who is so revealed.

But the important, last insight of this chapter is that the community is called to live their worship, and the Christian Life in their daily life. This understanding is contained in that name that has popularly been given to the Sunday Liturgy: "the Mass". The term has its origin here in the dismissal

rite, with the text, in Latin “*Ite, missa est*, where the word *missio* means “sending forth.””⁴⁹⁴ The community is sent, in the words of the Roman Missal, into the world “to love and to serve the Lord.”

⁴⁹⁴ Irwin, Kevin W. *Op.cit.*p.7.

Chapter Four: Gaudium et Spes 1-45

The fourth part of the study asks the question: "If the liturgy is the source and framework for our theological and moral reflection, what is the Church's understanding of the methodology and presuppositions of the encounter of faith with the modern world?" This of course would be an enormous study but the starting point must be the seminal magisterial document on the "church's relationship to the modern world": the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et Spes* of Vatican II.

This *Pastoral Constitution* was structured in two Parts. The Church's understanding of the nature and form of the relationship with the modern world was developed in chapter 1 (GS 1-45) and then the Council applied these insights to a group of major issues of the time that it had identified, in Part Two. This study would limit itself to *Gaudium et Spes* 1-45.

Why is it so important?

Because, "ever since the *Haec Sancta* decree at the 1415 Council of Constance, conciliar decisions have been considered the highest teaching of the Church. Thus, Vatican II's documents, such as *Gaudium et Spes*, are normative for all members of the Church, from the Pope to laity."⁴⁹⁵ This primacy of conciliar declarations has led to an ongoing reflection on the meaning and significance of *Gaudium et Spes*.

In the last years there has been much reflection on the interpretation of *Gaudium et Spes*, due, in large part, to the 50th anniversary of its promulgation occurring in December 2015 and this Constitution has been described as the "touchstone for understanding the vibrancy and diversity of Catholicism today,"⁴⁹⁶ and, as having "a major impact on the theological-and epistemological developments of Roman Catholic theology."⁴⁹⁷

The major contributions have focused on: the processes that occurred in the life of Schema 13⁴⁹⁸ and its redaction; the insights available from the posthumous publication of the diaries of major contributors;⁴⁹⁹ the exposition of the impact of leading Cardinals⁵⁰⁰ and their hopes for the Church, especially Cardinals Frings, Lercaro⁵⁰¹ and Suenens and, due to their later roles, analysis of the

⁴⁹⁵ McGinley, Dugan. "Dialogue and the Spirit of Vatican II: Reading *Gaudium et Spes* Fifty Years Later." *Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics* 50.1 (2015) p.110.

⁴⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁷ Boeve, Lieven. "Beyond the Modern-Anti-Modern Dilemma: *Gaudium et Spes* and Theological Method in a Postmodern Context." *Horizons* 34.02 (2007) p.292.

⁴⁹⁸ The name of the Schema prepared by the Preparatory commission and discussed throughout the life of the Council.

⁴⁹⁹ Congar, Yves. *My Journal of the Council* (Adelaide: ATF, 2012).

⁵⁰⁰ Especially, Cardinals Frings, Lercaro, Suenens.

⁵⁰¹ Behind these two Cardinals are the work of Josef Ratzinger for Cardinal Frings; and Annibale Bugnini for Cardinal Lercaro, working with a group including "Martimort, Jungmann, Vagaggini, Schmidt, Wagner and Bonet, and this writer, with Bugnini as secretary. At the direction of Paul VI, Cardinal Lercaro had summoned this informal group." As reported by the writer of the review of Bugnini's book Frederick McManus in: McManus, Frederick R. Op.cit.p.195.

contributions of Josef Ratzinger and Karol Wojtyla. This has given rise to reflections on the impact on the work of the leading theologians of the period, dogmatic and moral,⁵⁰² in particular Rahner, de Lubac, Ratzinger, Congar, and Häring.

Many have identified there is a change in 'perspective' or 'approach' in the documents of Vatican II, which have their origins in a series of factors: the directions given to the Council by John XXIII; the inner workings of the Council process, the movement from the scholastic frameworks that underlined the prepared preparatory documents of the Curia, presented at the first session; and the input of many, influential 'fathers' of the Church.

These changes have been seen to be founded on the deliberate: "Choice of (an) overall theological anthropology,"⁵⁰³ which has as its core element the understanding of the relationship of the Church and the world.

There has been division in respect of the resultant documents, on the one hand it has been seen as having been a "too far reaching adaptation of Christian faith to the modern, secular world, putting at risk the specificity or identity of Christian faith,"⁵⁰⁴ and on the other hand as revealing a willingness, on the part of the Church, to listen openly to the situation of people in the world, which has led to "an awakening to historical consciousness and a renewal of the role of conscience in the moral life ... arising from lively pre-conciliar developments and influences."⁵⁰⁵ This latter interpretation has led to the Church being "Engaged in an attempt to *understand* and *communicate* its place and role in the modern world thereby expressing its wish to cooperate unreservedly with humankind in reaching its destiny, in order that "human persons might be saved" and "human society be restored"."⁵⁰⁶

This outreach to the world was seen in the extra-conciliar contributions of Cardinals Frings and Lecarno before and early in the life of the Council. Their approach, sought a reform of the church so as to enable it to witness as followers of "Christ's passion and poverty". Their hope had been to orientate the Church in such a way that the Church would "Find parallels in the Church's poverty and relationship to the poor."⁵⁰⁷

They had hoped that this orientation to the world, coupled with an understanding of the Church as the fundamental sacrament, would be seen as a *modus operandi* for collegiality and ministry in the world. They were not entirely successful but their efforts are reflected in many passages of the documents. Accompanying this orientation to the world certain methodological changes have been identified.

The relationship between Josef Ratzinger and Cardinal Frings is well articulated in: Gaal, Emery De. "The Theologian Joseph Ratzinger at Vatican II His Theological Vision and Role" *Lateranum* LXXVIII.3 (2012) pp. 515-48.

⁵⁰² For interesting and accessible insights: Wicks, Jared, SJ. Op.cit.pp.637-50.

Some of the more notable are initially Hubert Jedin, Gérard Philips, and Yves Congar, Joseph Ratzinger, Karl Rahner, Pieter Smulders, Josef Geiselmann, Romano Guardini, Jean Daniélou, Jacques Dupont, Edward Schillebeeckx, Bernard Häring.

⁵⁰³ Gallagher, Michael Paul, SJ. "The Church - World Relationship in *Gaudium et Spes*: Still Relevant?" *Lateranum* 81.2 (2015) p.369.

⁵⁰⁴ Boeve, Lieven. Op.cit. pp. 292-293.

⁵⁰⁵ Massaro, Thomas, SJ. "The Church in the Modern World: *Gaudium et Spes* Then and Now." Rev. of *The Church in the Modern World: Gaudium et Spes Then and Now. Worship*90.4 (2016): 375.

⁵⁰⁶ Boeve, Lieven. Op.cit.p.294.

⁵⁰⁷ Gaal, Emery De. Op.cit.p.534.

There was a fundamental change in the manner of encounter, which can be identified in the consistent call to an approach of “dialogue”. This methodology calls for a framework based on listening and understanding before offering judgment.

The origins of this framework have been identified in the foundational orientation of all the documents of Vatican II, and its approach as a ‘Pastoral Council’, willing and open to making a response “to the new contexts, intellectual and cultural created by modernity” and expressed in the two catchphrases “aggiornamento and ressourcement”. These are not to be seen as an external novelty or one possibility among many; rather it has been seen that “In *Gaudium et Spes*, the bishops believed that the “proper presentation of the Church’s teaching” (GS: 21);”⁵⁰⁸ required this openness to the modern world, and while seeking out a conversation with the treasures and insights of the tradition, they also sought to express the fruit of this dialogue as a common way forward for humanity. DeGaal has shown that before Vatican II had opened John XXIII had referenced Cardinal Frings’s Genoa speech of November 1961, written by Josef Ratzinger, and that it already contained a number of elements that were going to appear in the frameworks of Vatican II.

De Gaal sees these as being firstly “the incarnational nature of Catholic truth”; secondly, that “Councils are always in some way influenced by “contemporary circumstances”” and that this is expressed in John XXIII’s call for aggiornamento and an examination of “the cultural and intellectual world of today”; thirdly, that there was a desire for “profound changes vis-à-vis Vatican I”; fourthly, this also included a willingness to include the fruit of a reflection on what is seen as a “novel sense of unity” in humanity, with an accompanying “technically unified culture and unified language of European-American provenience”, which are described as “another koine” a ‘sign of the times’; and lastly, the confrontation of a “worldwide perspective of relativism that denies all absolutes and admits only relativities.” This is accompanied in Ratzinger, through Frings, calling for the Council to “strive to open the Church “as the truly spiritual people born of the Spirit and water”, to “the total fullness of the human spirit”.”⁵⁰⁹

These themes, deeply influential in the formation of *Gaudium et Spes*, have also characterised the work of Josef Ratzinger over the next 50 years.

These then are not isolated elements. There is a general approach that these themes summarise, and while it is not a ‘system’ it was as Ratzinger has written: “At the Council the proponents of this theology [on the basis of Sacred Scripture, the Fathers of the Church, and the great liturgical heritage of the universal Church] had been concerned about nourishing the faith, not only of the last hundred years, but on the stream of tradition as a whole.”⁵¹⁰

Michael Gallagher quotes John O’Malley when he says: “The novelty of Vatican II lies in its option for a new ecclesiastical style of invitation rather than dialectic.”⁵¹¹

⁵⁰⁸ McGinley, Dugan. Op.cit.p.108.

⁵⁰⁹ Gaal, Emery De. Op.cit.pp.515-48.

⁵¹⁰ Ratzinger, Josef. *Dogma and Preaching. Applying Christian Doctrine to Daily Life*. (San Francisco: Ignatius, 2011)p.382. Quoted at Gaal, Emery De. Op.cit.p.515.

⁵¹¹ J. O’Malley, What happened at Vatican II, (Cambridge Harvard University Press, 2008) p.305. Quoted at: Gallagher, Michael Paul, S.J. Op.cit.p.381.

Gallagher identifies that this approach of listening and then seeking to express understandings, is fundamental to understanding the underlying structure of the first four chapters of *Gaudium et Spes*, the four chapters which are going to be examined in this reflection. He points out that: “Christ, while mentioned frequently, enters more explicitly at the end of each of the first four chapters of the text, thus crowning and illuminating the text’s account of the human situation today.”⁵¹²

This fundamental orientation of *Gaudium et Spes* is summarised most eloquently in a quote of Archbishop Wojtyla in the debate on this text, where he says that in approaching the world the Church should: “avoid ecclesiastical language: otherwise the intended dialogue with the world would simply be soliloquy. (“Caveamus autem, ne schema nostrum soliloquium fiat”)⁵¹³

Therefore the approach which is brought to this document is one in which it is to be read with the ‘mind of the Council’ as desiring not to speak from without, ‘about’ humanity in the modern world; but rather, to speak ‘with’ and ‘to’ humanity in the modern world. This dialogical presumption is a fundamental tool of interpretation.

There is in the heart of *Gaudium et Spes* an inner dialogue which can be summarised in the famous quote of St Irenaeus: “Gloria Dei est vivens homo.” This is not a self-fulfilment call for each human⁵¹⁴, but rather a call to see the face of God in the ‘living human being’ and the face of that fully living human being in Jesus the Christ. John Paul 2 summarised this insight in *Dives in Misericordia*: “The most important basic principle of Vatican II is its establishing a deep and organic connection between theocentrism and anthropocentrism. The more the Church’s mission is centred upon man – the more it is, so to speak, anthropocentric – the more it must be confirmed and actualized theocentrically, that is to say, be directed in Jesus Christ to the Father.” (DiM: 1)⁵¹⁵

This also provides an inner link to the development of moral theology as this orientation has been described as a: “general shift in *ethical* methodology wrought by the Second Vatican Council ... displayed in the distinctive results in each of these important fields, as the operations of conscience and a new openness within the Church circles to dialogue with diverse cultures and learning from human experience (has) shaped Catholic intellectual life and pastoral practice.”⁵¹⁶

This approach has not been universally accepted and many “anti-modern” critics of *Gaudium et Spes* have questioned “projects of rationality and emancipation...leading to self-created truth and empty freedom... (and that) authentic truth and freedom are not self-made but given, not empty but bound to the positive determination of it in Christian revelation.”⁵¹⁷

These criticisms have been applied to the document itself, or by others, have been expressed as the “tragic one-sidedness of the last conciliar debates consisting in the fact that they were dominated by

⁵¹² Gallagher, Michael Paul, S.J. Op.cit.p.370.

⁵¹³ Ibid. Quoting Acta Synodalia Sacrosancti Concilii Oecumenici Vaticani Secundi, vol III, pars V, cura et studio ARCHIVI CONCILII OECUMENICI VATICANI II, (Civitas Vaticana Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1977) p.299.

⁵¹⁴ Reardon, Patrick Henry. “The Man Alive.” *Touchstone Archives: The Man Alive*, (Sept.-Oct. 2012) Web. (28 April. 2017).

⁵¹⁵ Gallagher, Michael Paul, S.J. Op.cit.p.371.

⁵¹⁶ Massaro, Thomas, S.J. op.cit. p. 375.

⁵¹⁷ Boeve, Lieven. Op.cit.p.296.

the trauma of backwardness and a pathos to catch up with modernity, a pathos which remained blind for the inherent ambiguity of today's world." ⁵¹⁸

There has also been a direct critique of the very concept of theology being engaged in "dialogue", especially in the late – modern context, even "of the principle of dialogue itself." ⁵¹⁹

The way through this tension needs to be careful. Boeve suggests that both the modern and anti-modern responses, at their extreme, need to remember that: "*Gaudium et Spes* called us to read the signs of the times, "interpreting them in the light of the Gospel," (GS4) a hermeneutical endeavour of re-contextualization of Christian faith in the current, so-called 'post-modern' context." ⁵²⁰

The Church therefore while accepting that there is a disconnect between elements of culture and Christianity, and that there is no immediate link between 'being human' in general and 'being Christian' must witness in an environment of pluralism and critical consciousness while seeking an understanding of "the intrinsic link between faith and theology, and history and context, the principle of dialogue should not be given up." ⁵²¹

Boeve sees that one key for this reading would be that of "interruptive otherness" a concept that he sees as describing the revelation of the divine in the Old Testament and in the "whole Christian narrative." Being: "permeated by interruption on behalf of God, through the confrontation with otherness-and this includes our own narratives. ...In no way is the Christian narrative allowed to close itself. For it is precisely at these moments that the God of love breaks the narrative open. Interruption functions here as a *theological category* that recognizes God's initiative. Ultimately, the resurrection of the Jesus who died on the cross is the paradigm of interruption. God interrupts the closing of Jesus' narrative, by the religious and political authorities, by radically opening it. It is precisely here that God makes clear that the narrative of the one who lives like Jesus, professed by his disciples as the Christ, cannot be closed in death. Rather, such a narrative has a future beyond death. Following Jesus means engaging with the challenge of the other who interrupts our narratives." ⁵²²

This idea has a traditional Catholic expression in the words of St Augustine: ""if you have understood, then what you have understood is not God." ⁵²³

There is always a radical disconnect when there are attempts to 'control' or limit the narrative.

Pluralism and dialogue demand that people: "encounter the challenges of other communities...to become aware of their particular narrative identity and truth claims...in a public forum... that involves real dialogue and confrontation, in an attempt to forge a way of living together in

⁵¹⁸ Quoted by: Boeve, Lieven. Op.cit. p. 296.

⁵¹⁹ Boeve, Lieven. Op.cit.p.297. The foundation of the tension over its use can be seen that while the word is used only once in *Lumen Gentium*, and not at all in *Dei Verbum*; it is used 12 times in *Gaudium et Spes* and 12 times in *Unitatis Redintegratio* the Decree on Ecumenism, the document which opens saying "The restoration of unity among all Christians is one of the principal concerns of the Second Vatican Council." (*Unitatis Redintegratio* n.1) A concept that many conservative Catholics could not engage with.

⁵²⁰ Boeve, Lieven. Op.cit. p. 299.

⁵²¹ Boeve, Lieven. Op.cit.p301.

⁵²² Boeve, Lieven. Op.cit.pp.303-304.

⁵²³ St Augustine Sermon on the New Testament LII.ben.n16 Reflecting on Matthew 3:13.

difference...Toleration implies an active, dynamic project in which Christians, on behalf of their interrupting God and in their own terms, participate.”⁵²⁴

The call to encounter the world in which we live, with its plurality of interpretations, insights, “joys and sorrows,” must lead to a fundamental willingness to break open the established cultural power or dominance, or alternatively to remain in the constrained nature caused by self-interest or prejudice (sin). To engage in this process is only possible if an individual or community are willing to empty themselves, open their eyes, ears and hearts, in a way of life that is kenosis, an interruption that unites them with the one who is bound.

For all these reasons *Gaudium et Spes* should be opened carefully to discover its insights in these areas; but it can also be seen that the direction of all formation, the sources used, the manner of engagement with the wisdom and issues of the world, the expectations in respect of the nature of commitment, are all going to be influenced by the manner in which the Church understands the relationship with the world in which all this is to take place. The methodology of this section, follows the same pattern as the previous two chapters; it asks “is there a structure in *Gaudium et Spes* that reveals a way of formation, and if so, what is the direction it gives to influence formation and commitment?”

4.1. Gaudium et Spes 1-3: Preface

The starting point of *Gaudium et Spes* is clearly stated in GS1. The Council approaches its task by encountering all issues that are "genuinely human"(GS 1, 77, 87)⁵²⁵ and these are described as the "The joys and hopes, the grief and anguish of the people of our time, especially of those who are poor or afflicted, are the joys and hopes, the grief and anguish of the followers of Christ as well."(GS 1)

The Council makes no distinction between the people of the age and the followers of Christ. The encounter with the realities of human life is the starting point of the "Journey to the kingdom of their Father"(GS 1) and it is meant for “every man (person).” (GS 1)

This starting point has become an accepted starting point in ecclesial thought and orientation as seen in the address of Pope Francis to the Bishops of Latin America on his trip to World Youth Day.⁵²⁶ Having said that the recollection of these words from *Gaudium Spes* 1 is the appropriate starting point for his address he widens the application of the opening phrase of *Gaudium Spes* 1 which he sees as the “basis for our dialogue with the contemporary world.”⁵²⁷

⁵²⁴ Boeve, Lieven. Op.cit.p.305.

⁵²⁵ Boeve, Lieven. Op.cit. p. 305.

⁵²⁶ Francis. “Rinnovamento della Chiesa e Dialogo con il mondo attuale” Meeting with the Coordinating Committee of the Episcopal Conferences of Latin America, in the Study Centre of Sumaré, on the Apostolic Journey to the xxviii World Youth Day, 28 July 2013, *Insegnamenti di Francesco, vol I/2 2013*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Roma, (2015) pp. 114-123.

⁵²⁷ Francis. "Rinnovamento della Chiesa e Dialogo con il mondo attuale." Op.cit.p6

Francis describes in expansive terms where and with whom this dialogue is to be engaged. It is not in an isolated place nor is it to be undertaken by a subgroup of the leadership of the Church; rather he sees that dialogue with the contemporary world requires a response to the “Existential issues of people today, especially the young.”⁵²⁸

This can only occur if there is a willingness and ability to engage in a manner characterised by “Listening to the language they speak.”⁵²⁹

The communication will speak explicitly to “all human beings... (With the intention) to express the Church’s views “In a manner appropriate to the *current* generation;” (GS4)”⁵³⁰ it is such an approach to dialogue that “Can lead to a fruitful change “and it must take place with the help of the Gospel, the magisterium, and the Church’s social doctrine.”⁵³¹

The official teaching of the Church does not offer a message to be ‘dictated’ rather this dialogue, says Pope Francis, but must be open to the fact that “The scenarios and the areopagi involved are quite varied. For example, a single city can contain various collective imaginations which create “different cities”.”⁵³²

Francis starts in the public space, the areopagi, the place of public debate, and with the issues that arise there, the existential issues of the dialogue partner. Francis says: “If we remain within the parameters of our “traditional culture”, which was essentially rural, we will end up nullifying the power of the Holy Spirit. God is everywhere: we have to know how to find him in order to be able to proclaim him in the language of each and every culture; every reality, every language, has its own rhythm.”⁵³³

The dialogue to be engaged in therefore has moved in the 60 years since Vatican II to a wide understanding in respect of the starting point, the place of engagement, the language and presumptions of engagement.⁵³⁴ The very starting point of Vatican II in the first line of *Gaudium et Spes* has found a placement in Magisterial teaching that, having its seed in GS 1, is now one of deep and non-judgemental engagement with the world, as it is, and with a prejudice of starting with the ‘sitz-in-Leben’ of the dialogue partner as the foundational place, rather than the internal presuppositions of the Church community.⁵³⁵

It is with these foundational premises that there can be an understanding of the Pastoral Constitution as being addressed “to the whole of humanity”(GS 2) and that this must be the orientation taken by the Church in her “presence and activity”(GS 2) “in the world of today.” (GS 2)

⁵²⁸ Francis. “Rinnovamento della Chiesa e Dialogo con il mondo attuale.” Op.cit.p.3.

⁵²⁹ Ibid.

⁵³⁰ Boeve, Lieven. Op.cit.p.294.

⁵³¹ Francis. “Rinnovamento della Chiesa e Dialogo con il mondo attuale.” Op.cit.p.3.

⁵³² Francis. “Rinnovamento della Chiesa e Dialogo con il mondo attuale.” Op.cit.p.3.

⁵³³ Ibid.

⁵³⁴ In fact there is a fundamental question as to whether the approach of “dialogue” is even available in the ‘postmodern’ world. This questioning has been well articulated in: Boeve, Lieven. Op.cit..pp.292-305. Where he then offers a wider perspective and approach.

⁵³⁵ Note the element that will be raised later that Francis sees the elements of the Gospel, magisterium and social doctrine which the Church as partner in dialogue carries with her.

The Council tells us that it is "the world," (GS 2) "the theatre of our history, the heir of our energies" (GS 2) which will be built up or brought down by our "tragedies and triumphs." (GS 2) The "theatre of history is the same world, that the Christian eyes see as "sustained by the Maker's love," (GS 2) but seen with the clear understanding that it has "fallen into the bondage of sin," (GS 2) and has been "emancipated now by Christ." (GS 2) There is no separation here, there is no dualism, this is a fully incarnational vision. Here is "An important hermeneutical note, insisting that theological anthropology and cultural phenomenology go totally together in this pastoral constitution."⁵³⁶

There are in these insights elements that impact directly on formation. There is no division between the doctrinal and the pastoral; rather there is an ongoing search for understanding, insight and articulation of the gift of God in human life and this insight is going to grow and change as the Church interprets the reality of human history. There is a presupposition of gradualism, developed in the first 4 chapters of *Gaudium et Spes*, expressed in the language and insights of the 1960s, especially in the second part of the Constitution. In the sixty years since these insights have been applied in various formats, and times and places, both in the teaching of the Roman Pontiffs⁵³⁷ and local episcopal conferences.⁵³⁸

The desire for clarity over the understanding of the status of the document can also be seen at the core of Karl Rahner's⁵³⁹ critique of *Gaudium et Spes*, where he sought to ensure clarity on the force of the teachings of *Gaudium et Spes* in the moral – dogmatic area. He asked if they were "binding norms"⁵⁴⁰ or not? Rahner saw the guidance given in *Gaudium et Spes* as an "instruction" which he understood as intended to: "shed light on the present situation of the world and issue warnings, admonitions and directives to help people shape their lives... not a binding law or enduring valid dogma...neither are they norms deduced directly from the principles of the Gospel that have unambiguous binding force and are meant to be applied directly to concrete situations", rather the approach should be one in which "the Church is not... simply a repository of revealed universal truths; but like the Christ whose body and sacrament it is, the Church has the pastoral function of shepherding."⁵⁴¹ This leads to the role of the Church being to "guide its members in more concrete ways than those for which simply reiterating binding norms and principles would allow."⁵⁴²

Rahner's caution and open response to the nature of the *Pastoral Constitution* is important.

It calls for an awareness not to become too doctrinaire in the application of specific phrases and insights, but it also calls for the understanding that the guidance of "instructions" calls for a deep element of discernment and wisdom, which is only going to be achieved by accompaniment, dialogue and good "shepherding". This is a theme that has been used as a 'slogan' to characterise the approach of Francis since he said at the Chrism Mass in 2013 that priests need to be

⁵³⁶ Gallagher, Michael Paul, S.J. Op.cit.p.373.

⁵³⁷ John Paul 2 will quote *Gaudium et Spes* 22 over 200 times in his collected statements.

⁵³⁸ Examples being the USCCB document on the formation of Conscience.

⁵³⁹ As seen in Rahner, Karl. "On the Theological Problems Entailed in a 'Pastoral Constitution'." *Theological Investigations. Vol. X, Writings of 1965-67*, (New York: Crossroad, 1973) pp. 293-317.

⁵⁴⁰ Peterson, Brandon R. "Who Is He to Judge?" *America* 7-14 December (2015) pp. 19-22.

⁵⁴¹ Peterson, Brandon R. Op.cit.p.21.

⁵⁴² Peterson, Brandon R. Op.cit.p.22.

characterised as “shepherds living with ‘the smell of the sheep,’”⁵⁴³ and which he repeated in his exhortation “Evangelizers thus take on the “smell of the sheep” and the sheep are” willing to hear their voice”. (EG 24)

The Council says that the Church’s ministry is therefore the world of every man and woman, full of “joys and hopes, griefs and anxieties.” (GS 1) but it also calls for the Church’s response to reflect the manner in which Christ emancipates the world. He is the one who breaks “the stranglehold of evil” (GS 2) and shows us how to renew the world, “and to reach its fulfilment,” (GS 2) “according to God’s design.” (GS 2) How? By the manner of crucifixion, dying out of love for the other.

So where is the starting point for the Council? The Council starts in the depth of the world as it is experienced, in the very problems and questions of humanity. These questions are then outlined very clearly, (added to those of GS 10) they are:

- “How to deal with our own discoveries?
- How to face the trends which are in the world?
- What is the place and role of humanity in the universe?
- What is the meaning of individual and collective strivings?”(GS 3)

Gaudium et Spes posits these existential questions as the starting point both for the Council and for humanity. The Council’s perspective is not confined to “religious” perceptions and/or language; rather it is in total solidarity with humanity and the Church seeks to start this dialogue with the questions of all human persons. The Council says that, our common humanity, is the starting point for every human being’s inquiry, and therefore for every Christian. There isn’t a Christian ethic separate to human ethics, rather, Christian ethics are deeply embodied and start with the questions that are common to all human persons.

This is reinforced when the Council says that the “focal point”(GS 3) of its total understanding will be humanity itself and that all aspects of the human person are to be brought into focus when the Church and/or the Christian and/or any human person seek to face the issues and problems, both collective and individual, which come their way.

These insights are reinforced when the teachings of the Magisterium are examined as a commentary on these paragraphs.

What is the understanding of the “joys and hopes, griefs and anxieties” of humanity?

As has been seen Francis starts in the rich diversity of the human environs, and expresses a willingness to see the diversity of the starting point and the impact of the socio political situation, on the questions that people will ask. If there is an unwillingness to see such, or people are caught in the strictures of “the parameters of our “traditional culture,””⁵⁴⁴ “we will end up nullifying the

⁵⁴³ Francis, “Pastori Secondo il Cuore di Dio”, Homily at the Chrism Mass in the Vatican Basilica, 28 March 2013, *Insegnamenti di Francesco, vol I/I 2013*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Roma, (2015) pp. 47-50.

⁵⁴⁴ Ibid.

power of the Holy Spirit."⁵⁴⁵ Francis outlines and elucidates the richness and width of *Gaudium et Spes*' identification with all of humanity when he says: "God is everywhere: we have to know how to find him in order to be able to proclaim him in the language of each and every culture; every reality, every language, (and that each) has its own rhythm."⁵⁴⁶

What is the model that the Church will bring to this endeavour?

The starting point as outlined in *Gaudium et Spes* is clear.

It is always the person of "Christ who entered this world to give witness to the truth, to rescue, not to sit in judgement, to serve and not to be served."(GS 3)

The modality of formation and making a response to the problems of this world, both for humanity as whole, and for the Christian in particular, is to give witness to the truth, to seek the truth, to explore the truth; in a specific modality which is to not sit in judgement but rather to accompany, and then to serve "Particularly those who are poor or in any way afflicted."(GS 1)

If the understanding is left at this level everyone can say "yes" I will attempt to do this. But what is the modality with which this is expected to proceed?

The document for the Formation of the Clergy gives an insight into how this Christocentric approach will proceed. It will be by an immersion in the world and then specifically by the use of the instruments of social communication which are but one example of the instruments available to the disciples, which are outlined by: "the Decree *Inter Mirifica*, later followed by the new Code of Canon Law, which has more properly called them "instruments of social communication": (they are) "the press, the cinema, the radio, the television and the other instruments with similar characteristics."⁵⁴⁷

But secondly, and most importantly: How will these be used? ⁵⁴⁸

In a manner which ensures a move from "communication to communion"⁵⁴⁹ and by seeking to be involved in the "educating and caring for the human person, the whole person, both as humankind and as Christian."⁵⁵⁰

There is a foundational orientation outlined here; the use of the instruments of this world so as to facilitate communion with others in their entirety.

This involves recognising that: "The Church has, in fact, welcomed with open arms those instruments (of social communication) as "marvellous inventions of today which have a powerful effect on

⁵⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁷ Congregation for Catholic Education, Guide to the Training of Future Priests Concerning the Instruments of Social Communication (19 March 1986) p. 7.

⁵⁴⁸ We note that in paragraph 7 of this instruction these insights are directed specifically to "The proper and direct object of the initiation and specific education". This is directly relevant to our link to the Rites of Initiation.

⁵⁴⁹ Congregation for Catholic Education, Guide to the Training of Future Priests Concerning the Instruments of Social Communication (19 March 1986) p. 3.

⁵⁵⁰ Ibid.

people's minds"⁵⁵¹ and as "wonderful fruits of human work and ingenuity, the gift of God from whom every good comes."⁵⁵²

This same orientation can be applied to all the 'instruments' or 'inventions' which arise from the minds of humanity and which are the fruit of human work and ingenuity. They are to be used as they are, as reflections of "every good" which comes from God.

The Congregation then provides three directions with which to focus the activities in the use of those elements that are "good".

Firstly, it speaks of the need "to train those concerned in the correct use of the instruments of social communication in their pastoral activities."⁵⁵³ Those things which 'are good' are to be accurately and directly used.

Secondly, as there is a call to ensure that those using the instruments, and who are "masters and guides of others," will ensure good use "through instruction, catechesis, preaching."⁵⁵⁴ The instruments recognised as 'good' are to become the foundational tools in the core catechetical and evangelical outreaches of the Christian community, the ways of formation.

Then thirdly, and most importantly, there is a call "to get them (the ministers of the Church) into a state of mind in which they will be permanently ready to make the necessary adjustments in their pastoral activity, including those demanded by the inculturation of the Christian faith and life in the different particular Churches, in a world psychologically and socially conditioned by the mass media."⁵⁵⁵

This orientation toward inculturation has become foundational to understanding "The documents of Vatican II, and specifically the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, (and to) understanding this process of updating, adapting, or inculturating Catholic worship."⁵⁵⁶

So the place where this inculturation has been most tangibly felt has been in the area of liturgy and then in the call to find a language that understands and expresses the cultural diversity in areas of ethics.

This is understood as offering a: "Formal recognition that human culture needs to be taken into account in both understanding and celebrating the liturgy ... in the more anthropological sense that would be enunciated in later documents of the council especially *Lumen Gentium* and *Gaudium et Spes*. The most mature conciliar reflection on the relationship between culture and the Gospel is found in *Gaudium et Spes* 58..." "Nevertheless, the Church has been sent to all ages and nations and, therefore, is not tied exclusively and indissolubly to any race or nation, to any one particular way of life, or to any set of customs, ancient or modern."⁵⁵⁷

⁵⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵⁵² Ibid.

⁵⁵³ Congregation for Catholic Education, *Guide to the Training of Future Priests Concerning the Instruments of Social Communication* (19 March 1986) p.20.

⁵⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁵⁶ Francis, Mark R., CSV. Op.cit.pp.240-241.

⁵⁵⁷ Francis, Mark R., CSV. Op.cit.p.241.

These insights lead to the understanding that the foundation for speaking to the people of our age, and for formation within the community, is to use the instruments and tools, the insights and diversity of the age, to form a communion with humanity, and to engage in an education and care for the whole person in all the complexity of the lives of each individual and community.

This generally positive expectation of encounter is given a caution, however, in the insight of John Paul II when he says: “The Church-without identifying herself with the world or being of the world-is in the world and is engaged in dialogue with the world. (GS 3, 43, 44)”⁵⁵⁸ (RP 2)

This reality will lead to intra-ecclesial tensions because there is a diversity of opinions within the Christian community which have to be faced. He says: “It is therefore not surprising if one notices in the structure of the Church herself repercussions and signs of the division affecting human society. Over and above the divisions between the Christian communions that have afflicted her for centuries, the Church today is experiencing within herself sporadic divisions among her own members, divisions caused by differing views or options in the doctrinal and pastoral field. These divisions too can at times seem incurable.”⁵⁵⁹

There is an element of caution raised and it is recognizable when there is division, the place where the ‘unchallenged’ elements that remain ‘in the world’ can be clearly identified. The Christocentric focus of the Preface of *Gaudium et Spes* underlines the way the Council returns to its core focus in the Prefaces’ concluding paragraph.

The Council declares the solidarity of the Church with all of humanity by identifying the Church with the single “noble destiny of humanity”(GS 3) and recognises that there is a “Godlike seed which has been sown in man,”(GS 3) and therefore the Council offers “the honest assistance of the Church in fostering that brotherhood of all men which corresponds to this destiny of theirs” (all of humanity)(GS 3) and seeks to answer the “deep question over what it means to be fully human.”⁵⁶⁰

The depth of this commitment and solidarity with the world is seen in the way the Council then reinforces the manner of this solidarity and assistance. It will be in no other way, or for no other purpose, than “to carry forward the work of Christ under the lead of the befriending Spirit,” (GS 3) and will therefore be, on the part of the Church, a model offered by the Church to all of humanity, a specific “way” which is “to give witness to the truth, to rescue and not to sit in judgment, to serve and not to be served.”(GS 3)

The starting point of *Gaudium et Spes* is clearly an immersion in the world, and a seeking to be a servant of the peoples of this world, and to be such by offering the way of the Suffering Servant, the Crucified one, who knows the cost of witnessing and standing alongside, “especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted.”(GS 1) These are the people who in the first line of the Constitution the Council had made its chosen partners; in the search for “truth” (GS 3) and she will accompany them always resisting the temptation to “sit in judgment.”(GS 3)

⁵⁵⁸ At this point John Paul II makes a footnote support of quoting : Cf Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes*, 3, 43 and 44; Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, 12; Pope Paul VI, Encyclical *Ecclesiam Suam*: AAS 56 (1964), 609-659.

⁵⁵⁹ Francis, Mark R., CSV. Op.cit.p.241.

⁵⁶⁰ McGinley, Dugan. Op.cit.p.108.

As the Lord said to Nicodemus, in the Gospel of John, immediately after the Lord has offered Nicodemus a new birth and a new life: “God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn (in some translations: judge) the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.” (John 3:16-17)

The structure of *Gaudium et Spes* now moves into four sections which, firstly, “lays the groundwork for all that follows and calls all Catholics to a mature level of responsibility. It expresses a positive view of human nature but also recognizes the need for God’s wisdom to purify our intellectual knowledge.”⁵⁶¹ It does this by expounding the: “Wonderful manner (in which) conscience reveals that law which is fulfilled by love of God and neighbour”⁵⁶²(GS 16) and that it is central while acknowledging the reality that “Conscience frequently errs from invincible ignorance without losing its dignity (GS 16).”⁵⁶³

Secondly, the Constitution seeks to understand the community of Mankind. (GS 23-32)

Thirdly, to discuss Man’s activity throughout the world, (GS 33-39) and,

Fourthly the Role of the Church in the Modern World (GS 40-45).

The very structure of this first part, therefore, has a pattern which can be clearly identified. The starting point is firstly, internal to the individual and the individual’s development as a human person. Secondly, it moves to how a person is formed and lives in a community, and then, thirdly how this community, this collective, will be sent to work, to act in the world.

4.2. Gaudium et Spes 4-10: Chapter 1:

The Preface of *Gaudium et Spes* (GS 1-3) has provided a starting point for the place in which formation is to start and that it is to be as an accompaniment of humanity. But in what direction are we to proceed?

The first section of the Constitution (GS 4-10) is entitled “An introductory statement” and it starts with “The Situation of Men in the modern world.”(GS 4)

The starting point is ‘situational’. It is to be with humanity ‘in the modern world’, and because of the diversity of time and place, it will therefore need to interface with the myriad of ways in which humanity presents itself.

To give focus to this understanding it is possible to name the places the Council could have started and which it chose NOT to start.

The Council did not start with an idealised vision of humanity. It did not start with a theological anthropology, nor with an advanced Christology or with one or other philosophical approaches to seek an understanding of humanity. Rather the Council started in a language that reflects the time

⁵⁶¹ Ibid.

⁵⁶² Ibid.

⁵⁶³ Ibid.

and place, as seen in the Constitution's 'unredeemed use of masculine priority of language', (the Situation of man), a clear usage of the language of the early 1960s. The Council says it started in a way that has been a "duty" (GS 4) that the "Church has always had" by "scrutinizing the signs of the times," (GS 4) and then seeking "to interpret them in the light of the Gospel" (GS 4) using the "language intelligible to each generation." (GS 4)

This opening sentence has several implications.

Firstly there is an order in the process. The initial starting point is scrutinizing the signs of the times and then, secondly, interpreting them in the light of the Gospel.

Secondly, this is to be done in a language that is intelligible to this generation, and it must therefore impact on the mode of 'doing theology'. If the Church has always used "language intelligible to each generation" (GS 4) it is necessary to be able to seek and to find, in all the statements and engagements of the Church, in each generation, the signs of the language of THAT generation.

However this involves a clear acceptance that language changes.

The intelligibility of statements therefore must rest in the place in which that language and concept was written or spoken. The task of the Church is not to repeat each and every statement in its original language, but to 're-express the truth contained in a statement in a way that is "intelligible" to this generation.

The Council says the questions are "perennial" (GS 4) but they are being asked "about this present life," (GS 4) "the life to come" (GS 4) and our "relationships...one to the other." (GS 4) To respond to this diversity the Council says there is a need to be so informed, and formed, that it is possible to "recognise and understand" the world in which we live." (GS 4) There is no separate insight or language that the person of faith has access to, there is no exclusive insight in the mode of the Gnostic here, rather the community of believers are called to live in the world with its "explanations, its longings, and its often dramatic characteristics." (GS 4) To follow the Council therefore, and its identified primary task, the starting point is to be deeply immersed in the formation, wisdom and insight of both the Church and the world in which we live. It is then and only then, that the Church is able to engage in "interpreting them in the light of the Gospel." (GS 4)

The structure of this first sentence has therefore given guidance on how to face the core issues of the world around us and formation within it.

Start with humanity, in the situation of the men and women of our time and place, and then read and interpret their joys and hopes, griefs and anguish and bring the language of this time and place to the 'marketplace', Francis' areopagi, Benedict's "the courtyard of the Gentiles"⁵⁶⁴; and then "carry

⁵⁶⁴ Benedict XVI, "La Luce che apre gli Occhi dell'uomo" Homily at the Mass for the Closing of the 13th Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, 28 October 2012, *Insegnamenti di Benedetto XVI, vol VIII/2 2012*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Roma, (2012) pp. 501-505.

forward the work of Christ under the lead of the befriending Spirit.”(GS 3) The befriending Spirit is in the world, ahead of those engaged in this process, so that they are able to “interpret in the light of the gospel.”(GS 4)

So what are the characteristics that the Council saw as prevalent at the time of writing, sixty years ago? The Council identified that time as one of “cultural and social transformation” (GS4) and in so doing identified this in very concrete political and economic terms: “hunger and poverty, social and economic conflict ;”(GS4) which it combined with oblique references to the role of women and ecology in Section 9 of the Constitution.

One could also ask: “what are the characteristics that impact on the community now, in this time and place, in light of what has happened since the Council sat?”

Men walking on the moon, the fall of the Berlin Wall and State Socialism, the rise and fall of the European community, the event and repercussions of 9/11; the question of Islamic fundamentalism, unseen at the time; the event of a Polish Pope and his long pontificate, the advent of Climate Change, the technological age of the internet, the change in markets and Globalisation, the rise of China, the change in gender and sexual politics in the West, Brexit and Trump; none of this long list would have been seen, they were not even present, at the time of the writing of the Constitution. So what were the questions that the Council thought those responding to the Constitution should be aware of?

The Council raises some interesting insights on the perspective of the ‘modern’ that was pervasive of the mid Twentieth Century, and which is still pervasive of the fundamental ‘language’ of the women and men of our age.

The Council called its time a “new stage of history,” (GS 4) and saw this as being a characteristic of the “whole world” (GS 4) and impacting on thought both as “individual(s) and collective(ly).”(GS 4) This ‘newness’ was seen in the way of thinking and speaking, a language, that impacts on people’s “decisions and desires” (GS 4) and their judgements in “respect of things and people.”(GS 4) It is the language of the time and place that is so pervasive and in light of what has already been seen, it is the language that must be used to dialogue, with the men and women of each epoch. This is the language of this “Situation in the Modern World”. This must be the language of formation if there is to be a responsible and mature commitment.

What are the characteristics, seen by the Constitution, for engaging in discussion with the ‘modern’?

Firstly, the Council identifies this as an age with a presumption of “growth”, an age in which humanity sees unfettered growth and the “exten (sion) of his (our) power in every direction” (GS 4) as a presupposition of life.

Secondly, the Council sees an inability on the part of the modern community to “always succeed in subjecting it (the world) to our own welfare.”(GS 4) This is of course a fundamental ethical proposition. The Church proceeds from a presupposition that progress is to be directed to the

welfare of all, or in the language of Catholic social teaching “the common good”⁵⁶⁵ and not to that of the acquisitive drive of the individual or a privileged group.

Thirdly, the Council sees a fundamental uncertainty at the heart of the ‘modern’s’ mentality. This is named as being both in the “deeper recesses of our own minds” (GS 4) and as being a fruit of when we “lay bare the laws of society,” (GS 4) only to be “paralysed by uncertainty about the direction to give it.”(GS 4)

There is a fundamental dis-ease at the heart of the modern.

Fourthly, the Council recognised the socio-economic-political environment as being characterised by the fundamental gap between on the one hand the “abundance of wealth, resources and economic power” (GS 4) and on the other “a huge proportion of the world’s citizens still (being) tormented by hunger and poverty... (and) total illiteracy.”(GS 4)

Fifthly, the Council identified the innate tension in the thought of the modern between a “keen ... understanding of freedom” (GS 4) and “yet at the same time (experiences of) new forms of social and psychological slavery.” (GS 4)

Sixthly, the Council says that the situation of the ‘modern’ is characterised by a world that seeks solidarity and yet is “most grievously torn into opposing camps by conflicting forces,”(GS 4) and that these forces are “political, social, economic, racial and ideological.”(GS 4)

Lastly, the Council recognises that all these “key concepts” are able to take on diverse expressions and “quite different meanings in diverse ideological systems.”(GS 4) It also identified that humanity is trying to answer this complex matrix of factors “without a corresponding spiritual advancement,” (GS 4) and with an inability to identify “permanent values and adjust them properly to fresh discoveries.”(GS 4)

This is the complex situation in which the language of the Church’s dialogue must proceed. It has been noted that these elements are “both the cause and effect of our technical and scientific age and should be counted as one of the “profound and rapid changes ... spreading by degrees around the whole world,” (GS: 4) a direct result of the ability of ideas and technologies to spread.⁵⁶⁶

The element that is rarely articulated is that to answer this fundamental situational matrix, as outlined by the Second Vatican Council, and preceding the bringing of the light of the Gospel into the equation, the Church must form herself, by the use of the charisms of the Body of Christ, so that she comprehends, and is articulate in respect of all these issues and frameworks. This will impact directly on the focus of formation within the community and who will be part of the processes involved.

John Paul II recognised this when discussing the ministry of Universities, but he saw the order differently. He said that the Universities’: “aim is to cultivate frank and open dialogue with the different sectors of the university”⁵⁶⁷ but he saw the starting point as being by “proposing

⁵⁶⁵ CCC 1898 and 27 other references in Part Three: Life in Christ.

⁵⁶⁶ Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People. "People on the Move: Pastoral Care of Human Mobility in the Universities of Europe." (April. 2004).

⁵⁶⁷ Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People, “People on the Move”; N° 94, April 2004; “Pastoral Care of Human Mobility in The Universities of Europe.”

appropriate ways to arrive at a personal encounter with Christ.”⁵⁶⁸ This study suggests that the starting point seen by the Council is not different in content, rather in order of encounter. The frank and open dialogue is the starting point, and that, with a world characterised by: a presumption of growth and the parameters of power; the interrelationship of change and growth with ‘the common good’ and welfare of all; the impact of a ‘milieu of uncertainty’ and a gap on all levels between those that have or control and those in need, and the realization that there are forms of slavery beyond the physical and economic and when coupled with economic and social division we live in a divided and conflictual world. The last element outlined is that the variety of ‘ideological systems’ that are seen are all attempts to answer this *sitz – in – Leben* of the modern.

It is not a question, for the Council, of ‘judging’ it is rather a question of recognising and seeking an understanding of all these frameworks so that a conversation can be entered into, but as has already been seen in the Preface, what is involved is more than being able to enter into a conversation, rather this is seen as the foundational starting point for a movement to communion with the men and women of our times.

The Council even outlines the characteristics of change in this process when it recognises that “the mode of thought” (GS 5) of the modern and the “intellectual formation” (GS 5) of our time “is ever increasingly based on the mathematical and natural sciences” (GS 5) and “in the practical order” (GS 5) by “the technology which stems from these sciences.”(GS 5)

Vatican II recognises a series of implications of this mode of thought. It is formative of the manner in which society interprets the impact of technology, the use of historical knowledge and couples it with the growing ability to plan and project into the future; using “advances in biology, psychology, and the social sciences”(GS 5) and developments in “technical methods”(GS 5) and that this enables human society to “exert direct influence on the life of social groups”(GS 5) The result is that this in turn leads to the ability to “forecast(ing) and regulate(ing) our own population growth.”(GS 5) The Council says human society has moved from “a rather static concept of reality to a more dynamic, evolutionary one.”(GS5)

This in turn has led to a “new series of problems ... calling for efforts of analysis and synthesis.”(GS 5)

At no point in this articulation does the Council judge this situation, rather the Council leaves us asking: “What are the implications, and what is the perspective that persons or communities, starting with these presuppositions, bring to the formation of a person, a position or commonality?”

It is within this framework that the Council then identifies some of the impacts of this manner of thinking, starting with the impact on “traditional local communities such as families, clans, tribes, villages.”(GS 6)

In reflecting on this the Council noted that the Church, in the course of her history, “Has used the different cultures to spread and explain the Christian message, to study it and deepen it.”⁵⁶⁹

⁵⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁶⁹ Pontifical Commission for the Cultural Patrimony of the Church. *Ecclesiastical libraries and their role in the mission of the church*, (19 March, 1994).

Therefore the impact can be mutual but there is a need to recognize the insights traditional culture *can* offer, and in fact the language and culture of so many communities *must* offer, to the mode of communicating, elucidating and developing the understanding of the Gospel.

The Council notes that the spread of an industrial society impacts in a radical way on the “ideas and social conditions established for centuries,” (GS 6) by demanding migration to the city and by enabling through social communication and media the rapid “circulation...of thought and feeling.”(GS 6)

In this discussion the Council spoke of the issues of migration and the impact on socialization, personal development and relationships, and how when coupled with the application of the concepts of evolution to “economic and technological progress” (GS 6) undergird a whole movement that is part of “the (perceived) advantages of an industrialized and urbanized society.”(GS 6)

In fact this whole framework is seen as one of the characteristics of the modern world, one of the ‘signs of the times,’ in which the mobility of humanity, defines an extended portion of society with their concomitant issues: “the various sectors which may be grouped under the common denominator of mobility; ... migrants, refugees, nomads, circus people, pilgrims, tourists, international students, and those who travel by air, by sea, or by land.”⁵⁷⁰

The reflection on these phenomena led the Council to come to the conclusion that: “This complex phenomenon is amplified by globalization and, in that context, we must immediately emphasise that it is not so much the dimensions and pace of mobility that matter, as the nature of the change it works in man.” (cf. *Gaudium et Spes*, 6–8) ⁵⁷¹

The Council is asking people of good will to recognize the wide number of groups, all with characteristically distinct issues, needs, questions, hopes and joys. As this chapter proceeds, again without judgement, the Council speaks of these situational elements leading to change in “attitudes and in human structures.”(GS 7)

The first impact the Council sees is the calling into question of “accepted values” (GS 7) and the impact of this on “the institutions, laws and modes of thinking and feeling as handed down from previous generations.”(GS 7)

The Council sees these developments of ‘perceptions’ and their impact on thought patterns, as having both positive and negative elements. The Council, while not making a judgement, sees that these elements influence a view of development that can be characterised as proceeding: “Rapidly and often in a disorderly fashion”; but this can also lead to an awareness that is “combined with (a) keener awareness ... of the inequalities in the world beget or intensify contradictions and imbalances.”(GS 8)

It is only now that we hear the Council make the link to religion when it says: “Finally, these new conditions have their impact on religion.”(GS 8)

⁵⁷⁰ Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People. *“People on the Move: Pastoral Care of Human Mobility in the Universities of Europe”*, (April. 2004).

⁵⁷¹ Ibid.

This framework can lead to an openness to a “more vivid sense of God” (GS 7) for some and for others a “denial of God or of religion, or the abandonment of them.”(GS 7) The characteristic of the section is however that this is a place of encounter, a starting point for discussion, and the very place in which the Church seeks to engage with “the modern.”

The Council articulates the impact of this on the heart of the “individual person” (GS 7) and names this as leading to “an imbalance between an intellect which is modern in practical matters and a theoretical system of thought;”(GS 7) and a mind that “can neither master the sum total of its ideas, nor arrange them adequately into a synthesis.”(GS 7)

The Council sees that this can lead to people living in a situation of “imbalance between a concern for practicality and efficiency, and the demands of moral conscience.”(GS 7) The Council says that this cannot be left in the sphere of the individual as these factors also impact on the “conditions of collective existence and the requisites of personal thought, and even of contemplation.”(GS 7) The Council therefore names “an imbalance between specialized human activity and a comprehensive view of reality.”(GS 7)

The Council sees the recognition of this inner tension as the precondition for all communication and dialogue, as it impacts on life at all levels and on the structures of the: “family, ... population, economic and social pressures, ... difficulties ... between succeeding generations, ... new social relationships between men and women...between races and various kinds of social orders; between wealthy nations and those which are less influential or are needy; finally, between international institutions born of the popular desire for peace, and the ambition to propagate one's own ideology, as well as collective greed existing in nations or other groups.”(GS 7)

This is the framework in which all formation takes place, and the demand on the community that it raises and the roles within the community are immense. It is this matrix which must influence the structures and approaches of pastoral encounter and moral analysis, formation of the community and the public pronouncements and interface of the Church.

What are the characteristics of the situation that arises in such circumstances?

The Council sees it leads to “mutual distrust, enmities, conflicts and hardships” (GS 7) and while acknowledging that “man (is) at once the cause and the victim” (GS 7) and outlining the difficulties from which humanity begins its search for meaning, it then proceeds to articulate an inner hope and to name the sources of progress and commonality.”⁵⁷²

The Council, again without referencing the Gospel, or religious language, points out that there is a growing conviction that “humanity can and should increasingly consolidate its control over creation” (GS 9) and that it is in the hands of humanity to “Establish a political, social and economic order which will growingly serve man and help individuals as well as groups to affirm and develop the dignity proper to them.”(GS 9)

⁵⁷²This theme was taken up by John Paul II when he referenced this paragraph in speaking of the University as being a place where intergenerational and interdisciplinary communities can: “offer its members intense community experience. (And should) strive to be a training ground for future experts who will take up key positions in the human family. John Paul II. *Address to the students of the University of Santo Tomas*, 18 February 1981, AAS 73 (1981) 329-334.

The time of the Council is reflected in the examples used, when it references the “road to progress” (GS 9) as being seen in the independence movements of the 1950s and 60s and the growing desire of developing communities to “participate in the goods of modern civilization, not only in the political field but also economically, and to play their part freely on the world scene.”(GS 9)

The Council names the barriers to this participation, they are: situations where people are “hounded by hunger,”(GS 9) where the needs of “women (to) claim for themselves an equity with men before the law and in fact;”(GS 9) are not recognised; where the work of “Labourers and farmers seeking not only to provide for the necessities of life, but to develop the gifts of their personality by their labours and indeed to take part in regulating economic, social, political and cultural life;”(GS 9) is opposed; and where there is an awareness that “for the first time in human history all people are convinced that the benefits of culture ought to be and actually can be extended to everyone.”(GS 9)

The Council says that these outward ‘demands’ are in fact an expression of “a deeper and more widespread longing: which is that persons and societies thirst for a full and free life worthy of man; one in which they can subject to their own welfare all that the modern world can offer them so abundantly” (GS 9) and that this includes the hope to “bring about a kind of universal community.”(GS 9)

This vision of humanity, in all its complexity is then placed even more strongly on the foundations of the reality of existence.

The Council just says directly and clearly “since all these things are so, the modern world shows itself at once powerful and weak, capable of the noblest deeds or the foulest; before it lies the path to freedom or to slavery, to progress or retreat, to brotherhood or hatred.”(GS 9)

The Council extends this, “moreover, man is becoming aware that it is his responsibility to guide aright the forces which he has unleashed and which can enslave him or minister to him. That is why he is putting questions to himself.”(GS 9)

Here again is the heart of this study.

Where do the questions that need to be faced in respect of the ‘situation of humanity, individual and communal’ arise? They arise from the very complex heart of the world that the Council has just outlined.

The characteristics of these ‘situations’ are that they are not simple nor are they in the hands of the Magisterium to define. These are the issues that appear in the lives of individuals and communities, and they are complex and can give rise to both positive and negative outcomes.

The Church’s engagement with the world starts therefore with the acknowledgment that the issues that are to be faced arise in the heart of the socio-economic and political reality. Secondly, the issues are to be addressed at all levels, they are not to be limited to the decisions of individuals or the impact on them; rather there is a need to be aware of the impact on the ‘realpolitik’ of individuals, families, communities and nations, and then to the specific socio-politico economic groups within those groupings which the introductory paragraphs identified, particularity “farmers,” “women,” “newly independent nations,” “the afflicted and those in need.”

Over the next fifty years some of these areas of concern have developed to the point that the aspirations of women were described by the Vatican spokesperson at the 2nd Conference for Women as: "This longing for a fully human and free life is at the root of the *great* woman's liberation movement. And it is certainly not by chance that this movement is set in a context of civilization crisis. Have not women often carried out a decisive mission at the great turning-points of history?"⁵⁷³

Here a whole movement is described as 'great' and the impact of the search for a 'fully human and free life' is seen as a point of movement at a moment of crisis in civilization and a 'turning point of history'. There is in this approach by the Church a recognition that society is always faced by change, and that this change is grounded in history and in the concomitant social interactions.

The Council now proceeds to face this 'situational' angst and hope.

It does so by naming the "heart of man" as the site of possibility and hope.

The approach of the Council is deeply grounded. There is no idealism suggested as a starting point.

Rather the Council acknowledges that there is a "basic imbalance which is rooted in the heart of man." (GS 10) There is an acknowledgment of humanity's limitations⁵⁷⁴ and at the same time an awareness of the "desires" (GS 10) that are found in the midst of human existence and being "summoned to a higher life." (GS 10)

This inner tension is known by all and leads to a humanity that "often does what he would not, and fails to do what he would." (GS 10) The Council sees that there is a tension between "manifold attractions," (GS 10) "inner divisions," (GS 10) "practical materialism," (GS 10) and the impact of "unhappiness," (GS 10), and believing that people will be emancipated "solely by human effort" (GS 10). This inability to order or control these elements can lead to "despair of any meaning to life" (GS 10) and a prominence being given to those "who think that human existence is devoid of any inherent significance and strive to confer a total meaning on it by their own ingenuity alone." (GS 10)

It is in the face of this 'situation' of modern humanity in the lives of every individual, community and nation that the Council, now, finally, for those who have been reading every word with a deep interest and concern says: It is now, and only now, once the human community has placed before itself the lives and concerns of those who are the partners in the project of life, that the community is in a position to posit the deep existential questions and offer the Church's perspective and contribution. There is here a deep insight into the process of formation and the deeply pastoral awareness that is required to walk with others in a formative dialogue.

In the time since the promulgation of this Constitution people have gained deeper insight into the scope of the application of this paragraph and the tools available to aid its implementation has widened.

⁵⁷³ Cordes, Paul. "Statement at the Plenary Session." Second World Conference on Women, (Copenhagen. 22 July 1980).

⁵⁷⁴ This is a theme that John Paul II will take up often and he will specifically reference this passage e.g. John Paul II. Post – Synodal Apostolic Exhortation on reconciliation and penance in the life of the Church today, *Reconciliatio et Paenitentia*, 02 December 1984, AAS 77 (1985) 185-275. n.17.

Firstly there is an expressed awareness that it is “peoples everywhere,” ALL people who “thirst for a full and free life worthy of the human person” and *Gaudium et Spes* says that this thirst will find its expression in two ways: Firstly in the development of: “Political, social and economic institutions which will help individuals and nations to affirm and develop their dignity;” (GS 9) and secondly in the acknowledgment, especially by Christians, that there is a unique perspective brought to the table when the “Church responds with the perspective of *salvation history*.”⁵⁷⁵

The Church is called upon to articulate, in a language that can be understood, that the Word of God is present and part of this development. This occurs in the Word’s presence in the giving of life, in having been part of “the world’s history – our history” and having made it complete; and in the way “through the power of his Spirit, Christ is now at work in our hearts and in our world”. How does this occur? By the manner in which the Spirit: “inspires, purifies and strengthens those noble longings by which we strive to make earthly life more human.”⁵⁷⁶

Secondly, the ability to contribute rests on the deep human aspiration, which is refined in the life of the Church, to provide a ‘very wide’ scope and focus to the search for understanding.

This starts with the focus being beyond that of the individual, in fact, beyond local, national or communal self-interest. The Church calls on people of good will to focus on “the aspiration of millions of human beings...” and their aspirations “(who)...as an individual and as a member of society craves a life that is full, autonomous and worthy of his nature as a human being.”⁵⁷⁷

And the nature or content of this focus?

This is clearly expressed in John Paul II’s use of this paragraph of *Gaudium et Spes* and his amplifying the call of his predecessors. In the first place he quotes Paul VI: “I want to repeat with him (Paul VI)—if it were possible in an even stronger tone of voice—that the present Pope wishes “to be in solidarity with your cause, which is the cause of humble people, of the poor.” (Paul VI, *Address to Peasants*, 23 August 1968) The Pope is with these masses of the population that are “nearly always abandoned at an ignoble level of life and sometimes harshly treated and exploited.” (*ibidem*)

And he continues, “Adopting the line of my predecessors John XXIII and Paul VI, as well as that of the Second Vatican Council (cf. *Magistra*; *Populorum*; [Gaudium et Spes](#), 9, 71 etc.), and in view of a situation that continues to be alarming, not often better and sometimes even worse, the Pope wishes to be your voice, the voice of those who cannot speak or who are silenced, in order to be the conscience of consciences, an invitation to action, in order to make up for lost time which is often time of prolonged suffering and unsatisfied hopes.”⁵⁷⁸

The focus of all people of good will, and the Church’s approach, is based on the desire to start at the feet of the poor, the abandoned and those who have no voice. And, this is not just in aiding individuals, but it is to act on behalf of the ‘masses of the population’.

⁵⁷⁵ John Paul II. *Homily at the Eucharistic Celebration*, Brooklyn, New York, 06 October 1995, *Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II*, vol XVIII/2, 1995, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Roma, (1995) pp. 755-760.n.5.

⁵⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷⁷ John Paul II. *Address to a meeting with the Diplomatic Corps accredited to Uganda*, Kampala, 08 February 1993, AAS 85 (1993) 943-947.

⁵⁷⁸ John Paul II. *Address at meeting with Mexican Indians*, Cuilapan, Mexico, 29 January 1979, AAS 71 (1979) 207-210.

It is here at the end of paragraph 10 that the Council summarises these concerns in a series of questions and offers the first statement of her solution, these “the most basic questions” (GS 10) are:

“What is man?

What is this sense of sorrow, of evil, of death, which continues to exist despite so much progress?

What purpose have these victories purchased at so high a cost?

What can man offer to society, what can he expect from it?

What follows this earthly life?”(GS 10)

And it is here that the Church states that it “... firmly believes that Christ, who died and was raised up for all, can through His Spirit offer man the light and the strength to measure up to his supreme destiny.”(GS 10)

The Church says directly that it is Christ who is “the key, the focal point and the goal of man, as well as of all human history.”(GS 10) The Council’s starting point is that “beneath all changes there are many realities which do not change and which have their ultimate foundation in Christ” (GS 10) and that the “Council wishes to speak to all men in order to shed light on the mystery of man and to cooperate in finding the solution to the outstanding problems of our time.”(GS 10)

There is universality in this position, it is offered to all of humanity; and there is content, it is going to be linked to Christ and His Spirit, and then, there is a way of encounter described, and it has two characteristics.

Firstly, it is going to be ‘*cooperative*’ and secondly, it is going to be focused on ‘*problem solving*’.

It is vital that these two words be read in the light of all that has so painstakingly been outlined in the proceeding paragraphs; but it needs to be nuanced by a third element that the Sixth General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops (1983) and John Paul II identify; it is the need for a deep personal honesty and awareness, which is expressed as “the fact that there can be no union among people without an internal change in each individual. Personal *conversion* is the necessary path to harmony between individuals.”⁵⁷⁹ What is required is openness to the insight of the other and the limitations of my own position, and then willingness, however painful, to change.

Problem solving will be immersed in and use the language and skills of humanity. This demands that the partner of cooperation, the Church, is well formed and knowledgeable in all the issues and perspectives, concerns and contributing factors that the Council has just been outlining. These have been spoken of in terms that are almost entirely the terms of ‘this reality’, ‘this situation’, and have emphasised the need to use the language of this age.

Secondly, it has started at the point of ‘the reality of doubt and questioning’. The ‘big issues’ are not faced and spoken of as being areas of the “Church’s expertise”. Rather the core existential questions

⁵⁷⁹ John Paul II. “*Reconciliatio et Paenitentia*,” (2 December, 1984) n.4.

are related to and arise from the normal demands of life, and they are seen and identified as being the result of the complexity of human life, social and individual.

Francis, almost 50 years after this paragraph was written, has repeated the call to all of humanity to face this central question: 'how are we formed and how do we express our identity?' He speaks of three elements which, in our day, can inhibit this formation:

Firstly the atmosphere of relativism. This produces a situation in which many find themselves coping with so much ongoing and continuous change that it leads them to lose sight of the elements that should and can remain constant.

Secondly, the challenge of being drawn toward 'fads', in all areas of life. Francis sees this as equally applying to the latest pastoral programme as to the latest gadget. Fads are offered to be engaged with before they have been tested, before the benefits of changing from the tried and tested have been clearly identified. The danger is that this can lead to an enormous diversity of approaches and therefore no consistency or communion. It also means that people are being influenced to change at all times, rather than seeking real values.

The last element Francis outlines is that often the uncertainty and multiplicity of choices leads to a retreat into legalistic frameworks or articulations. He expresses deep caution in this approach, because: "the apparent security to be found in hiding behind easy answers, ready formulas, rules and regulations"⁵⁸⁰ can be deceptive.

Returning to the Constitution, it is in this context, that the Church says she has a contribution of 'religious insight' to make. It is Christ and his Spirit who have the insight into the 'mystery of man'. The Church does not claim an institutional prerogative; rather she offers the insight of the risen Christ and his Spirit, of whom she is the sacrament "in this world". There is a direct correlation here with the understanding of humanity that is partnered as "humanity in the world", with all its complexity; richness and diversity. This is the first time since paragraph 3 that Christ has been mentioned, and the Christological reference there was in the context of "Christian believers want(ing) to have a conversation with all of humanity...the drama of human history...and making the human person the centre or hinge (of) this whole reflection."⁵⁸¹

Gaudium et Spes wants to engage in a cooperative dialogue with men and women where they are, in the midst of what for many is a "sad and sinful world"⁵⁸² but in which there is a movement of hope and searching.

4.3. *Gaudium et Spes* 11 -22: PART I THE CHURCH AND MAN'S CALLING

4.3.1. *Gaudium et Spes* 11

⁵⁸⁰ Francis. Address to the Meeting with the Asian Bishops at the Shrine of Haemi, 17 August 2014, AAS 106 (2014) 714-718.

⁵⁸¹ Gallagher, Michael Paul, S.J. Op.cit.p.375.

⁵⁸² A phrase often used in sermons and lectures by Bishop John Mackey (11 January 1918 – 20 January 2014) the 9th Bishop of Auckland, New Zealand.

Gaudium et Spes then proceeds to the first part of its reflection on the role of the Church in the Modern World.

This, the formal part of the Document, is divided into two parts (GS 11). The First Part (GS 11-45) which focuses on the “The Church and Man’s Calling” and is divided into four chapters and the second Part (GS 46-93) which faces, some “Problems of special urgency”.

So the first Part,⁵⁸³ follows a process of development from the formation of the individual, based on the dignity innate to every human person; through the second step, the formation of individuals and the issues that arrive from life in community; and then to the resultant activity and action in the world, and lastly, the role of the Church in such: Firstly, the Council focuses on The Dignity of the Human person. (GS 11-22)

The starting point in paragraph 11 is a fundamental statement of faith.

It places at the foundation of the search for personal dignity the understanding that there are two dynamics at work as the “people of God” (GS 11) respond to their vocation. The first is that the Church proclaims she “is led by the Lord’s Spirit ;”(GS 11) but, at the same time, the Church posits that it is the same Spirit who “fills the earth.”(GS 11)

From this perspective of faith the people of God,⁵⁸⁴ “labours to decipher authentic signs of God’s presence and purpose.”(GS 11) This act of “deciphering”, (GS 11) is an act of discernment consisting of two elements. Firstly, it is the discernment of the “presence of God” (GS 11) but secondly it contains a “purpose.”(GS 11) What then follows are three places in which believers are to make this discernment: they are firstly in the events, “the happenings” (GS 11) of life; secondly in the needs (GS 11), that will be elucidated very clearly later in *Gaudium et Spes*; and thirdly in the desires, (GS 11) that is the hopes and aspirations not only of the people of God but also of all “men of our age.”(GS 11)

It is in these paragraphs that *Gaudium et Spes* offers the insight into discernment, that is at the very heart of any formation that is personal and responsible. Formation that will lead to a personal commitment requires that the person, or community involved, is part of the process of knowing the truth and demand of the response. Formation is not therefore the repetition of previously ‘packaged’ ideas or approaches; it requires discernment that this is ‘right and just’.

Here at the very starting point, it is made clear that the discernment required will be a joint action. Christians, with the eyes of faith, will look for God’s presence and purpose but, at the same time they will labour to decipher authentic signs along with the other people of our age. *Gaudium et Spes* is very clear that the aim is to shine “a new light on everything” (GS 11) and that this “everything” is the “design for humanity’s total vocation,” (GS 11) and is directed toward “solutions which are fully human.”(GS 11) The Council is offering both an insight of faith and an accompaniment with all the people of this time and place toward a full humanism.

⁵⁸³ This study will be limited to the first part: “The Church and Man’s Calling” (GS 11-45)

⁵⁸⁴ (note the collective noun),

As Michael Gallagher summarised it “The key question is not simply “what is man?” but “what does the Church think of man?” (GS11)⁵⁸⁵

To achieve this the Council has identified its starting point. “First of all,” (GS 11) there is to be an assessment of “those values which are most highly prized today and (secondly or consequently) to relate them to their divine source.”(GS 11) The Council says that the values which are “highly prized today” (GS 11) have their foundation in the “endowments conferred by God on humanity” (GS 11) and that these values “are exceedingly good.”(GS 11) The Council acknowledges there are difficulties and barriers to their “rightful function” (GS 11) but says that in looking at the “values” of this time there is a presumption that they are exceedingly good. These values are responses to the happenings, hopes and desires of human beings and it is these events, hopes and desires which need to be orientated aright. Part of the theological and philosophical tradition has been the awareness that the desire for beauty, justice and truth are good, but that they can be tainted by selfishness, arrogance, racism et cetera. The questions that lie at the heart of hope and desire are summarised in a set of questions which *Gaudium et Spes* names “What do we think of humanity?”(GS 11)

“What needs to be recommended for the up building of contemporary society?”(GS 11)

“What is the ultimate significance of human activity throughout the world?”(GS 11)

The Council says that the people of God and the human race are engaged in a joint project in which they will “render service to each other.”(GS 11) This is an approach of deep mutuality. The Church is not setting herself up as an entity separate to the world; rather she is showing herself to have a religious mission, but ultimately with a “supremely human character.”(GS 11)

From the very first interpretations of this dual approach, the Magisterium has been aware of the innate tension lying in this orientation. This can be clearly seen in Paul the VIth's encounters with the “various ideologies” (OA 36) which are humanity’s response to the questions raised by the events, hopes and desires experienced. Pope Paul says the Christian “will draw from the sources of his faith in the Church’s teaching the necessary principles and suitable criteria to avoid permitting himself to be first attracted by and then imprisoned within a system whose limitation and totalitarianism may well become evident to him too late if he does not perceive them and their roots.”(OA 36)

Paul the VIth also called on humanity to go “beyond every system” (OA 11,36), “beyond every ideology,” (OA 37) “beyond every relationship based on force,” (OA 43) “beyond nationalist limits,”(OA 17,46) and even “beyond a false sense of equality before the law;” (OA 23) and all this said while displaying a pessimism born of his living through the recent history of State totalitarianism and faced with militant extremism that would kill his friend Aldo Moro. But in doing so he still clearly enunciates that this, going beyond every system, has to be done “without... failing to commit ourselves concretely to serving our brothers and sisters.”(OA 4, 36)

Paul has interpreted *Gaudium et Spes* 11 with a strong emphasis on the fact that “in the very midst of our options” (OA 36) there is an identifiable and specific character to “the Christian contribution to a positive transformation of society,” (OA 36) including the transformation of “mentalities of knowledge, organisations and society.” (OA 20) The way in which the transformation will proceed is by the identifying, applying and acting on positions that are the result of focused discernment. (OA

⁵⁸⁵ Gallagher, Michael Paul, S.J. Op.cit.p.375.

4, 15, 35, 36) *Gaudium et Spes* was initially positive in respect of the partnership of the Church and society, while acknowledging that the two different tendencies provide a tension in developing a working partnership.⁵⁸⁶

Paul VI, directly, calls the process of response, “discernment.” (OA 36) This manner of response was focused on by John Paul II in many reflections and by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith when they wrote: Firstly that “to “practise the faith” means more than private religious obligation and devotion” rather it “touches every aspect of life – cultural, economic, social and political”⁵⁸⁷; and secondly, in so doing it requires direction and principles of reflection. John Paul II saw these as lying, in the foundations of this paragraph of *Gaudium et Spes* “solutions that are fully human.” ([Gaudium et Spes](#), 11)”⁵⁸⁸ And then proceeding using the “social teaching that presents *principles for reflection, criteria for judgement as well as directives for action* (Cfr. Congr. pro Doctrina Fidei, [Libertatis Conscientia](#) 72 ss.)”⁵⁸⁹

What are these principles?

The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith outlined them and they are placed here as they impact on the manner of interpreting all the teaching of the Church including *Gaudium et Spes*.

Firstly the Congregation offers a set of “*principles for reflection and criteria for judgment and directives for action.*”⁵⁹⁰ These focus on “seeking the “profound changes demanded by situations of poverty and injustice”⁵⁹¹ and to “serve the true good of humanity.”⁵⁹²

The fundamental principles, established on the supreme commandment of love, are “the full recognition of the dignity of each individual,⁵⁹³ a knowledge and respect of “natural rights and duties”⁵⁹⁴ especially” freedom;” an awareness that “persons are the active and responsible subjects of social life” and that the “the *foundation* of man's dignity, lies in the interface between the *principle of solidarity* and the *principle of subsidiarity.*”⁵⁹⁵

The Congregation expresses this “as the obligation to contribute to the common good of society at all its levels” and this will lead to a position that “is opposed to all the forms of social or political individualism” and to saying that “neither the State nor any society must ever substitute itself for

⁵⁸⁶ I would note here the parallel with the OICA in which the first action includes a welcome of the person approaching the Church, as they are, and at the same time an awareness that there is a gift being offered within the Church, and insight of interpretation which enables the opening of eyes and ears to seek the truth and the way forward.

⁵⁸⁷ John Paul II. *Address to a meeting with the Bishops of the Episcopal conference of Indonesia*, Djakarta, 13 October 1989, AAS 82 (1990) 175-180.n.3.

⁵⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁹⁰ Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. "Instruction on Christian freedom and liberation: "The Truth Makes Us Free", (1986) n.72.

⁵⁹¹ Ibid.

⁵⁹² Ibid.

⁵⁹³ Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. "Instruction on Christian freedom and liberation: "The Truth Makes Us Free", (1986) n.73.

⁵⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁹⁵ Ibid.

the initiative and responsibility of individuals and of intermediate communities". Therefore "The Church's social doctrine is opposed to all forms of collectivism."⁵⁹⁶

The Congregation then outlines "the Criteria for judgment, to be applied as "the basis of *criteria for making judgments on social situations, structures and systems*" and to ensuring that no "situations of life ... are injurious to man's dignity and freedom."⁵⁹⁷

These are: the "Primacy of persons over structures"⁵⁹⁸, the recognition of "the spiritual and moral capacities of the individual"⁵⁹⁹, "the permanent need for inner conversion"⁶⁰⁰ and that all decisions are to "be at the service of man."⁶⁰¹

There is a deep realism in the exposition of the tensions of wealth and power, the temptation to individualism and the manipulation of the social order, which leads the Congregation to say that "it remains true however that structures established for people's good are of themselves incapable of securing and guaranteeing that good"; rather there is a need for "Moral integrity as a necessary condition for the health of society."⁶⁰²

Therefore at the heart of all formation and commitments in the social order there is a need: "in a true and immediate sense, (for) a voluntary act which has its source in the freedom of individuals. Only in a derived and secondary sense is it applicable to structures."⁶⁰³ This means that social structures cannot be made a priority on the basis of national interests nor can there be anything that will "attack the cultural identity of the people;"⁶⁰⁴ and therefore there can be no cooperation with "groups which by force or by the manipulation of public opinion take over the State apparatus and unjustly impose on the collectivity an imported ideology contrary to the culture of the people."⁶⁰⁵ It is here that there is then a call to the intellectuals of the community to aid in this analysis.

So the "Guidelines for action" are that: "action must be in conformity with human dignity and facilitate education for freedom;"⁶⁰⁶ that "there can be no true liberation if from the very beginning the rights of freedom are not respected,"⁶⁰⁷ that people of good will "must condemn with equal vigour violence exercised by the powerful against the poor, arbitrary action by the police, and any form of violence established as a system of government,"⁶⁰⁸ and that they cannot "accept the

⁵⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁹⁷ Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. "Instruction on Christian freedom and liberation: "The Truth Makes Us Free", (1986) n.74.

⁵⁹⁸ Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. "Instruction on Christian freedom and liberation: "The Truth Makes Us Free", (1986) n.75.

⁵⁹⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰⁰ Ibid.

⁶⁰¹ Ibid.

⁶⁰² The elements outlined in this and following paragraphs when directly quoted are to be found in the document of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. "Instruction on Christian freedom and liberation: "The Truth Makes Us Free", (1986) nn.74-78.

⁶⁰³ Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. "Instruction on Christian freedom and liberation: "The Truth Makes Us Free", (1986) n.75.

⁶⁰⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁰⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁰⁶ Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. "Instruction on Christian freedom and liberation: "The Truth Makes Us Free", (1986) n.76.

⁶⁰⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁰⁸ Ibid.

culpable passivity of the public powers in those democracies where the social situation of a large number of men and women is far from corresponding to the demands of constitutionally guaranteed individual and social rights.”⁶⁰⁹

The Church will support the “struggle for justice: in which the “the action which she sanctions is not the struggle of one class against another in order to eliminate the foe... (but rather)...This action is a noble and reasoned struggle for justice and social solidarity”⁶¹⁰ that utilises “the path of dialogue and joint action”⁶¹¹ and is focused on “establishing a new social and political order in conformity with the demands of justice.”⁶¹²

The Church also teaches that “justice must already mark each stage of the establishment of this new order”⁶¹³ and that there is also a need to ensure that “there is a morality of means.”⁶¹⁴ While armed struggle is seen as possible as a “last resort to put an end to an obvious and prolonged tyranny which is gravely damaging the fundamental rights of individuals and the common good;”⁶¹⁵ there is a call for “a very rigorous analysis of the situation”⁶¹⁶ and to ““passive resistance” that shows a way more conformable to moral principles and having no less prospects for success.”⁶¹⁷ There is also a total condemnation of “crimes such as reprisals against the general population, torture, or methods of terrorism and deliberate provocation aimed at causing deaths during popular demonstrations. Equally unacceptable are detestable smear campaigns capable of destroying a person psychologically or morally”.⁶¹⁸

And lastly, who are to be the agents in all this application? It is not the role of the pastors to “intervene directly in the political construction and organization of social life. This task forms part of the vocation of the laity acting on their own initiative with their fellow-citizens.”⁶¹⁹ The focus of these interventions will be on: “improving and raising the conditions of human life in this world”; by “Social action, which can involve a number of concrete means”⁶²⁰ and which will “always be exercised for the common good and in conformity with the Gospel message and the teaching of the Church.”⁶²¹ These initiatives will be characterised by “collaboration”;⁶²² the “acquisition of the essential technical and scientific skills”⁶²³ and “the moral formation of character and a deepening of

⁶⁰⁹ Ibid.

⁶¹⁰ Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. "Instruction on Christian freedom and liberation: "The Truth Makes Us Free,"(1986) n.77.

⁶¹¹ Ibid.

⁶¹² Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. "Instruction on Christian freedom and liberation: "The Truth Makes Us Free", (1986) n.78.

⁶¹³ Ibid.

⁶¹⁴ Ibid.

⁶¹⁵ Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. "Instruction on Christian freedom and liberation: "The Truth Makes Us Free", (1986) n.79.

⁶¹⁶ Ibid.

⁶¹⁷ Ibid.

⁶¹⁸ Ibid.

⁶¹⁹ Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. "Instruction on Christian freedom and liberation: "The Truth Makes Us Free", (1986) n.80.

⁶²⁰ Ibid.

⁶²¹ Ibid.

⁶²² Ibid.

⁶²³ Ibid.

the spiritual life.”⁶²⁴ All of this will be coupled with “the political prudence needed for guiding and running human affairs” .⁶²⁵

4.3.2. *Gaudium et Spes* 12

Gaudium et Spes after this introductory paragraph then moves to the starting point of its discussion, “The dignity of the human person.”(GS 12-22)

The Council’s starting point is to reintroduce the first question it asked in paragraph 11.

“What is man?”(GS 12) Or as we would ask “What is humanity?”

The response is a unified understanding of both the Church and humanity at large: “According to the almost unanimous opinion of believers and unbelievers alike, all things on earth should be related to humanity as their centre and crown.”(GS 12)

The exact expression of humanity being “crown and centre” (GS 12) will lead to “many divergent and even contradictory opinions.”(GS 12) But this divergence has as its foundation either overconfidence or despair says the Council. The challenge is to find a position in which all can be confident of the skills and attributes of humanity but have this understanding coupled with the realism of humanity’s limitations.

The image which the Scriptures and the Council use is that of a sentient being: aware, capable of knowing and loving, and, the mastering and use of the resources around them. But this description, summarized in the phrase “created “to the image of God,”” (GS 12) is not to lead human beings into egocentric beliefs or into isolation. The Church sees that the insight that human beings are of their very being communitarian and seeking “companionship” and “interpersonal communion” (GS 12), provides the direction which leads to the full potential of human life.

This is *the* Christian starting point for all discernment. It is an understanding of humanity that is aware of the “tendency” to selfishness, arrogance and egocentricity but which posits a vision of all people as capable of knowing and loving, and of mastering, in a communal commitment, the fundamental orientation of “being very good.”(GS 12)

The Council sees the tension as being between being made in “a state of holiness” and the tendency, driven by self-centredness and a lack of knowledge and ignorance of the fullness of the picture, to ignore the full call of humanity. The Council says that both from revelation and “experience”; from the observation of others and “when we plunge into the depths of reality whenever we enter into our own hearts ;”(GS 14) there is an awareness of an inclination toward evil which is shared by all.

4.3.3. *Gaudium et Spes* 13

⁶²⁴ Ibid.

⁶²⁵ Ibid.

To understand this inclination the Council again starts from the framework of human experience. All are aware that they are “split” (GS 13) both “individual and collectively.” (GS 13) All know in their lives a “dramatic struggle between good and evil.”(GS 13) All live with a fundamentally positive self-image which the Church acknowledges and names but still need to deal with those elements, “blocking our path to fulfilment” (GS 13): sin.

The Church’s starting point of deliberation and discernment is one of deep realism, the accepting of people as they are, and facing the events of daily life in the world with deep hopes, aspirations and desires. In facing the events of daily life, in the world, the challenge is to find and face the “call to grandeur in the depths of misery, both of which are part of human experience.”(GS 13) Human beings must find “their ultimate and simultaneous explanation in the light of this revelation.”(GS 13)

The fundamental human characteristics, to be found in believers and unbelievers alike, outlined in the Pastoral Constitution, are described as: “a capacity for spiritual depth; wisdom in the sense of a capacity to arrive at self-transcending or humanizing knowledge; moral conscience as an inner sanctuary of the guiding voice of God; authentic freedom as a journey away from deception and towards options of goodness;(and) the shadow of mortality which is both a source of anxiety and a possible invitation to discover God’s promise of fullness.”⁶²⁶

Gallagher and Steck⁶²⁷ add a sixth element to the insight of the Council, derived from the insight of Hans Urs von Balthasar: “The human capacity of wonder and for an imaginative exodus forms self through the encounter with beauty in various forms.”⁶²⁸

The Pastoral Constitution is calling for an approach that encompasses the hopes and desires that are common to the experience of all of humanity and then seeks to form a dialogue with the revelation that the Church offers.

4.3.4. *Gaudium et Spes* 14

The movement to an authentic response to this dialogue starts from the premise that there is to be no division within humanity.

The language of revelation in and through creation and human experience and the language of religion are not to be separated.

The Council says “though made of body and soul, humanity is one.”(GS 14) The seeking of meaning, truth and direction, must be lived in this world. It is in the material that all are called to respond and live life.

The Council uses the phrase “the elements of this material world ;”(GS 14) which “reach their crown through us, and through us raise our voice in free praise of the Creator.”(GS 14) This is a proclamation of the dignity of humanity and finds that this very dignity means that all can “glorify God in our body.”(GS 14) All are called to allow the interior qualities, those found in the depths of reality and in “our own heart” (GS 14) to be the place where each will seek the direction forward.

⁶²⁶ Gallagher, Michael Paul, S.J. Op.cit.nn.375-376.

⁶²⁷ Steck, Christopher, S.J. Op.cit.nn.255-79.

⁶²⁸ Gallagher, Michael Paul, S.J. Op.cit.n.376.

The Christian revelation says that when a person enters into the depths of their own heart they will “discern our proper destiny beneath the eyes of God.”(GS 14) This is what will enable them to know the way forward and to be free of “physical or social influences” (GS 14) by seeking always to lay “hold of the proper truth of the matter.”(GS 14) The truth of the matter is that in this incarnate existence, in the experiences of human life, all humans can be confident in achieving that which they seek: to find the meaning of these very incarnated happenings and events, of their hopes and aspirations, and of their desires.

4.3.5. *Gaudium et Spes* 15 - 18

So how is this discernment to be made? What forms the heart?

All people “judge rightly that by our intellect we surpass the material universe, for we share in the light of the divine mind.”(GS 15)

The Council says that entry into the divine mind is to be found by “relentlessly employing” (GS 15) our talents, our intellect, including those seen in the “practical sciences and in technology and the liberal arts.”(GS15) It is in the “probing of the material world and subjecting it to ourselves ;”(GS 15) it is in “searching for more penetrating truths and finding them;” (GS 15) it is by the use of “intelligence which is not confined to observable data alone” (GS 15) but rather by humanity gaining insights into the divine mind by seeking to understand “reality itself as knowable.”(GS 15)

The “intellectual nature” (GS 15) of the human person is being perfected by wisdom and by allowing the mind to be influenced by a “quest and a love for what is true and good.” (GS 15) This enables a person to move from the observable data into the realities which are “unseen”.

The Council calls for a deepening of wisdom and it characterizes this as being achieved when the “discoveries made by man are further humanized.”(GS 15) The wisdom which is being sought is beyond observable data and beyond economic necessity, it is found when an intersection is created between all those things found through the “employing of our talents” and the fruit of the quest to discern that which is to be loved and is true and good. Wisdom, love, truth, goodness; these are realities which are included in, but which transcend, pure measurement. The name of this transcendence says the Council is the “Holy Spirit” (GS 15) who leads us “by faith to the contemplation and appreciation of the divine plan.”(GS 15)

It is in the all-embracing communitarian context of incarnated reality, and by using the fullness of human talents, the fruit of science, philosophy and wisdom; and by welcoming the insight of truth and goodness, love and wisdom; that people will come to a place where “in the depth of our conscience, we detect a law which we do not impose upon ourselves, but which holds us to obedience.”(GS 16)

Now it is possible to see that in the still wellspring of the heart formed by wisdom and intellect, searching for the good and truth, humanity “detects a law” (GS 16) that they do not impose on themselves. This is expressed as an impetus to do this or shun that. The word heard, in the heart formed, the conscience, is a call to act, (or avoid acting). Conscience here in *Gaudium et Spes*16 is a call to “love good and avoid evil.”(GS 16)

This is a human being's very dignity, the inner core and sanctuary. The word that is heard is very succinct and profound and it has a content "love of God and love of neighbour." (GS 16)

The first point is that this is not an individual or subjective judgment. Of its very nature, the one deciding is joined "with the rest of humanity in the search for truth, and for the genuine solution to the numerous problems which arise in the life of individuals from social relationships." (GS 16) The reality is all people are accountable for what they know and understand and this means that they have "turned aside from blind choice" (GS 16) and have worked and striven to be "guided by objective norms of morality." (GS 16)

It is obvious and clear that no single individual, nor group, will have command of all the information, all the knowledge, all the wisdom, all the facts that are required to make an informed decision. The Council very clearly and succinctly says, that as a consequence "conscience frequently errs from invincible ignorance without losing its dignity." (GS 16) But what the Council asks is that all have a deep care for "truth and goodness" (GS 16) and are always seeking to remove the blindness that can come from ignorance but also from "habitual sin." (GS 16)

The theme of conscience and its ability to impact on all areas of thought was a strong theme in the teaching of John Paul II. He often emphasised the need for the formation of conscience "lest it become "a force which is destructive of the true humanity of the person, rather than that holy place where God reveals to him his true good;" (RP 26) and he would return to the interconnectedness of "the moral conscience, the search for truth and the desire to make a responsible use of freedom". He said that "When the conscience is weakened the sense of God is also obscured"⁶²⁹ with the resultant loss of "this decisive inner point of reference". (RP 18) John Paul II saw the core element impacting on this being a loss of "the sense of sin "and that this impacts on "the basis of man's interior dignity" and, at the same time, of his "relationship to God." (RP 18)

So in the development of *Gaudium et Spes* this is the point where what is "good" is known and it has been made clear that which should be done or not done; and the community have been warned of the positive, and possibly negative, elements that are at stake.

Gaudium et Spes now asks what are the conditions and elements that are required to enable this to happen, to enable the insight of what is to be done and what is to be avoided, to be taken and to be actually done or avoided.

As has been noted there has been critique of the document as a whole and this paragraph in particular.

The critique comes at the level of the complexity of *Gaudium et Spes*, the structure and then the theological content.

Gallagher summarised this well: "Cardinal Angelo Scola has pointed to a certain fragmentary character as a weakness of this whole text, and he also questioned the wisdom of leaving Christological horizons until the end of each chapter...It is well known that Josef Ratzinger found paragraph 17 on human freedom to be lacking in philosophical or theological depth and in danger of

⁶²⁹ John Paul II will return to this theme often with phrases such as "confused and obscured": John Paul II. "Reconciliatio et Paenitentia," (2 December, 1984) n. 26.

being semi-pelagian but his critique is always balanced by praise even with reference to this paragraph.”⁶³⁰

Gallagher also points out that at heart the strongest critics find the gap to be based on: “Lacking the intellectual foundations from the older Catholic traditions and therefore dangerously innocent about modern culture.”⁶³¹

So where does the Constitution lead us?

Firstly; to the question of choice and freedom.

It is “only in freedom that we can direct ourselves toward goodness;”(GS 17) it will be in our “own decisions” (GS 17) and “loyalty to what we know to be right and just by the use of “knowing and free choice that is personally motivated and prompted from within,” (GS 17) that people will achieve both what our humanity and what God has willed.

People are to choose what is good and then “through effective and skilful action” (GS 17) they are to put it into practice. Ultimately, the right action must be, in and of itself, an act of love and life. To seek life and love is therefore of the very nature of a right action. To use theological language it is a “grace of God.”(GS 17) The Council in promoting and proclaiming this reality says that this is, at the same time both a “free choice” (GS 17) and to the eyes of faith an act of “God’s grace,” (GS 17) an act of God’s love.

The Council has placed the challenge of putting into practice what is known to be right and just, from the formed conscience, into the framework of freedom. It now, in paragraph 18, starkly outlines the choices involved by uncovering “human existence” at its deepest level.

The image and language which it uses is the “riddle” (GS 18) of death. Vatican II says that freedom and meaning are exposed in their starkest reality when people have to face the physical realities of “pain... And the advancing deterioration of our body.”(GS 18) Here is exposed the fundamental question of “perpetual extinction.”(GS 18) Human beings “abhor and repudiate the idea” the idea of the “utter ruin and the total disappearance of our own person.”(GS 18) This anxiety and dread lead them to the hope that they are not and cannot be “reduced to sheer matter.”(GS 18) The challenge contained in facing “all the endeavours of technology,” (GS 18) all the progress and understanding, the fruits of exploration and science, every possession that we have, is that human beings must face this “anxiety” (GS 18) expressed in the “desire for a higher life which is inescapably lodged in our breast.”(GS 18)

It is here that the answer lies to the question: “What is worth pursuing? Is it rational to pursue the good and the true, the right, and to make choices for love and life?”

How do people respond so as to be freed from “perpetual extinction and annihilation” (GS 18) or so as to find something beyond the vision of “earthly misery” (GS 18)?

⁶³⁰Gallagher, Michael Paul, S.J. Op.cit.p.379.

⁶³¹ Ibid.

The Christian faith says it is by being part of the restored wholeness given by “an almighty and merciful saviour” (GS 18) and by responding to the call of the “sharing of divine life” (GS 18) that all will find the answer to this basic challenge of corruption.

But how was it to be achieved?

By being united with Christ and his loved ones in his “victory when he rose to life, for by his death he freed us from death” (GS 18) and this anxiety.

Gaudium et Spes has come to a fundamental choice.

If what is right and good is known, the person knows what should and should not be done.

The response is a free choice coupled with an act of faith leading the person to acting decisively in the face of the fundamental orientation to annihilation and extinction by using a positive choice to the promise of life and love.

As Moses put before the people on entering the Holy Land, the place of living the covenant: “I place before you a choice this day life or death, and I say choose life.”(Deut: 30:19).

4.3.6. *Gaudium et Spes* 19

The Council now annunciates the call which lies at the heart of human dignity. “The root reason for human dignity lies in our call to communion with God.”(GS 19)

The call says *Gaudium et Spes* 19 is to “converse with God,” (GS 19) to accept that all are created in “God’s love and, are constantly preserved by it” (GS 19) and that to “live fully is to live according to the truth” (GS 19) because “we freely acknowledge that love (of God) and devote ourselves to this.”(GS 19)

The alternative which the Council chooses to discuss is atheism. As has been pointed out, the response here at *Gaudium et Spes* 19 to the question of atheism is a clear insertion by the Council, and its periti, as any references to atheism were: “practically absent in the prepared texts for Schema 13 until its dramatic highlighting in Pope Paul VI’s first encyclical *Ecclesiam suam*, published just a month before the third session began” and secondly that “this crucially important text described atheism as the most serious problem of the present time and at the same time advocated an approach of dialogue before all the great challenges of the world.”⁶³²

In discussing atheism *Gaudium et Spes* 19 describes it as “expressly denying God ;”(GS 19) by “contending that everything can be explained by a kind of scientific reasoning alone” (GS 19) or by “altogether disallowing that there is any absolute truth.”(GS 19)

The discussion of atheism outlines that among our confreres the unwillingness to follow the dictates of conscience which lead to a choice for life and love, can often be laid at the feet of believers and a variety of other causes. People react against religious beliefs because of the poor explanation of

⁶³² Gallagher, Michael Paul, S.J. Op.cit.p.377.

those beliefs, or it can be because believers themselves “neglect their own social teaching on the faith, teach erroneous doctrine, or are deficient in their religious, moral or social lives.”(GS 19)

In effect, believers fail to witness to the love of God. At the heart of the Council’s critique of atheism, there is a challenge to hear that the fundamental choice of the believer, which has been conscientiously informed, in freedom, is to be, expressed in a total commitment lived out in words and deeds. It is a witness in ‘life’ that provides an example of the impact of belief in the religious, moral and social lives of the one positing a ‘conscientious position’.

The Council says that atheism is often not an expression of individualism, but rather “atheism often takes on a systematic expression” (GS 20) which sees the “desires for human independence to such a point that it poses difficulties against any kind of dependence on God” (GS 20) or interdependence with others. Secondly, the Council points out that when people see themselves as an “end unto ourselves” (GS 20) or as “the sole artisan and Creator of our own history,” (GS 20), in other words when they have an overemphasis on individual freedom or an overconfidence in human choices being able to lead to the full “liberation of humanity, especially through economic and social emancipation;”(GS 20) it can lead to governmental structures of state atheism. In this document, there is a direct confrontation with these “ways of thought and action” (GS 20) as not supporting the full liberation of humanity.

The Council sees that it is the Church’s obligation to both “God and man” (GS 21) to oppose all “doctrines and actions” (GS 21) which “contradicts reason and the common experience of humanity and dethrone humanity from its native excellence.”(GS 21) Note that the Church has not returned to Revelation at this point. She says that it is because of her loyal devotion to both God and man that her solution is to reiterate that this is a contradiction of reason and common experience and is in opposition to any firm belief in our native excellence.

What interests then is the manner of the response of the Council to this challenge. It is approached at the level of pastoral and intellectual interaction.

The first has been noted by Gallagher: “The three sections on atheism remain striking...because this topic is first mentioned only after a rich introduction concerning the human vocation to love. In the Latin text the word ‘amor’ appears three times before the significant word ‘tamen’ introduces the topic of unbelief... The approach not only to atheism but to faith seems of permanent value, seeing faith in relational and responsorial terms, as recognition of a call to communion of love with God.”⁶³³

Having set the pastoral tone and interface it is possible to approach the intellectual encounter.

Again there is a clear pattern.

The Council does not confront with a challenge or an anathema; rather the approach is relational and commences with a commitment to enter into dialogue by approaching atheism from the perspective of the ‘other’. The call of the Church to people of faith is firstly to seek the “hidden causes for the denial of God” (GS 21) and secondly to face clearly and honestly “the weighty questions which atheism raises” (GS 21) and then thirdly “motivated by love for all, (the Church) believes all these questions ought to be examined seriously and more profoundly” (GS 21). It is in

⁶³³ Gallagher, Michael Paul, S.J. Op.cit.p.377.

the context of love, and the dignity of the human vocation to love, that the Council in its discussion of unbelief; approaches “not only atheism...but faith in relational and responsorial terms, as recognition of a call to communion of love with God.”⁶³⁴

The Council is not promulgating a view from without; she is entering into a dialogical partnership and companionship even with those who publicly proclaim an atheistic position. The Church is promulgating that humanity was “made an intelligent and free member of society by God...” (GS 21) and as such all are “called as a son/daughter to commune with God and share in God’s happiness.”(GS21) But in doing so all are going to “remain to ourselves an unsolved puzzle” (GS21) and therefore cannot “escape the kind of self-questioning... especially when life’s major events take place.” (GS21) So the answer to atheism, to a non-ability to choose for life and love, “is to be sought in a proper presentation of the Church’s teaching as well as in the integral life of the Church and her members.” (GS21) It is in the unity of word and deed that the remedy is to be found.

The manner and answer of the Church approach is to be a series of actions.

Firstly “led by the Holy Spirit” (GS21) believers are to always be “renewed and purified... ceaselessly.” (GS21) Secondly, they are to make “God the Father and his incarnate Son present and in a sense visible... chiefly by the witness of a living and mature faith” (GS21). This will be made visible by “seeing the difficulties clearly and mastering them;” (GS21) by proving “it’s fruitfulness by penetrating our entire life, including its worldly dimensions, and by activating us toward justice and love, especially regarding the needy.” (GS21) And lastly, the Council says the thing which “will most reveal God’s presence” (GS21) will be a community who are “united in spirit as they work together... And prove them a sign of unity.” (GS21)

In this context, the Council again will not allow a separation of believers from those who are in this case described as atheists. It says “the Church sincerely professes that all people, believers, and unbelievers alike, ought to work for the rightful betterment of this world in which all alike live; such an ideal cannot be realized, however, apart from sincere and prudent dialogue.” (GS21)

It is at this point that is found the “the most highly praised paragraph of *Gaudium et Spes*”,⁶³⁵ (GS 22) the core affirmation of how and where the fullness of humanity is to be seen.

4.3.7. *Gaudium et Spes* 22

The Council proclaims that it is “only in the mystery of the incarnate Word that the mystery of man takes on light,”(GS 22) it is in “Christ the Lord” that the “mystery of the Father and his love fully reveals humanity to humanity’s self and makes our supreme calling clear.”(GS 22) It is “in him that all the aforementioned truths find their root and attain their crown.”(GS 22)

The Council expresses this by quoting all the well-known and traditional verses from Scripture but its first emphasis is that Christ the Lord “the image of the invisible God” (GS 22) is “himself the perfect man.” (GS 22) The image that is placed before the world is that the divine likeness, which Christ restores to humanity, is not an “annulment of human nature” (GS 22) but rather is “the very fact

⁶³⁴ Ibid.

⁶³⁵ Ibid.

that it (humanity) has been raised up to a divine dignity in our respect too.”(GS 22) The incarnation is where “the Son of God has united himself in some fashion with every human being.”(GS 22) This mystery is then represented in a deeply incarnational and “in the world” (GS 2, 40, 43, 44, 48, 57) manner. The Council says “he worked with human hands; he thought with the human mind, acted by human choice and loved with a human heart.... He has truly been made one of us.”(GS 22)

Christ shows what it is to be human and reveals the action of God reconciling all to himself and in a specific action; “by the free shedding of his own blood.”(GS 22) The power of this proclamation is that the Son of God, the one who has united himself in some fashion with every human being, “loved me and gave himself up for me” (GS 22) and it was “by suffering for us that he not only provided us with an example for our imitation,” (GS 22) but also that he “blazed the trail, and if we follow it, life and death are made holy and take on new meaning.”(GS 22)

There is an interesting summary of this position in de Gaal where, seeing the direct input of Ratzinger in *Dei Verbum* 2 and *Gaudium et Spes* 22 and coupled with “a merger of Ratzinger’s and Rahner’s thoughts”, and with clear echoes of Martin Buber, he starts with a quote from St Augustine and says: “Revelation has a Thou as its subject: Jesus Christ – and revelation occurs through his Body, which is also the Church,”⁶³⁶ he says “It is Christ taking the initiative in revealing both God to mankind and mankind to itself.”⁶³⁷

The whole direction for the Christian says the Council is to be “conformed to the likeness of that Son who is the firstborn of many brothers and sisters” (GS 22) and having “received the first fruits of the Spirit” (GS 22) all become “capable of discharging the new law of love.”(GS 22)

The transformation from knowing what is to be done or not to be done in the face of meaninglessness and death, egoism and selfishness, is made possible, by one simple act. It is by being “linked with the Paschal mystery and patterned on the dying Christ that all will hasten forward to resurrection and the strength which comes from hope.”(GS 22)

The temptation is to believe that this is only for Christians. The Council does not support this proposition.

It immediately says “all this holds true not only for Christians but for all people of goodwill in whose heart grace works in an unseen way.”(GS 22) Since “Christ died for all men, and since the ultimate vocation of man is in fact one, and divine, we ought to believe that the Holy Spirit in a manner known only to God offers to every man the possibility of being associated with this paschal mystery.”(GS 22)

The Church has reflected on this paragraph and has seen⁶³⁸ this insight as the fulfilment of the “ancient longing of the Psalmist,” expressing the hope of all the people of the Covenant, and here is

⁶³⁶ Gaal, Emery De. “The Theologian Joseph Ratzinger at Vatican II His Theological Vision and Role.” *Lateranum* LXXVIII.3 (2012) p. 529.

⁶³⁷ Ibid.

⁶³⁸ Pontifical Committee for International Eucharistic Congresses. 48th INTERNATIONAL EUCHARISTIC CONGRESS. “The Eucharist, Light and Life of the New Millennium”. (Guadalajara, Mexico. 10-14 Oct. 2004).

a full humanism, a revelation of humanity to itself: “At the same time, *God and man that he is*, he (Christ) reveals to us also the true face of man, ‘fully revealing man to man himself’.”⁶³⁹

This fulfils the deep “yearning”: “In the heart of every human being, but especially in a person who by faith has already been touched by God. This yearning to contemplate the face of God is not in vain because Christ has not departed, but has fulfilled his promise: “*I am with you always, to the close of the age.*”⁶⁴⁰

This is clearly going to leave the question: “Where and how is He with us, in such an ongoing and intimate manner?”

It is here that is found the powerful proclamation for all peoples that “The mystery of mankind and it is a great one, as seen by believers in the light of Christian revelation;” (GS 22) is that: “Through Christ and in Christ, the riddles of sorrow and death grow meaningful;” (GS 22) Christ has destroyed death and he has: “Lavished life upon us so that as sons/daughters in the Son, we can cry out in the spirit; Abba, Father.”(GS 22)

4.4 *Gaudium et Spes* 23 -32: CHAPTER II THE COMMUNITY OF MANKIND:

From this foundational premise, of formed personal responsibility, Vatican II leads directly to the realisation that the “I/ego” is not formed nor does it act in isolation. The Council sees that the world in which we live leads us from a consideration of the individual to that of the communal. What is it that leads the Council to this realisation? The Council’s starting point, is founded on an awareness of the characteristics of the modern world, and “One of the salient features of the modern world is the growing interdependence of humanity.”(GS 23)

The Council identifies that this interdependence has come about “chiefly by modern technical advances” (GS 23) and identifies that these advances have called for a dialogue which has led to “a deeper level of interpersonal relationship” (GS 23) and a “demand for a mutual respect for the full spiritual dignity of the person.”(GS 23) From the distance of a half-century it can be seen that at the time of Vatican II the call for the recognition of human dignity had been recently expressed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights⁶⁴¹, and this Declaration has been seen to directly influence the Church’s teaching.⁶⁴² Respect for human dignity is seen by the Council to couple with the Christian revelation’s “promotion of communion between peoples” (GS 23) which in itself leads to a “deeper understanding of the laws of social life which the Creator has written into man’s moral and spiritual nature.”(GS 23)

The Council outlines core principles from the Church’s teaching about human society with an emphasis on the “more basic truths, treating their foundations under the light of revelation” (GS 23) and identifying those “implications having special significance for our day.”(GS 23)

⁶³⁹ Pontifical Committee for International Eucharistic Congresses. 48th INTERNATIONAL EUCHARISTIC CONGRESS. “The Eucharist, Light and Life of the New Millennium”.(Guadalajara, Mexico. 10-14 Oct. 2004)n.15.
⁶⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁶⁴¹ Adopted by the United Nations General assembly on 10 December 1948 at the Palais de Chaillot in Paris.

⁶⁴² Cited in footnote 1 to chapter II are : John XXIII, encyclical letter, *Mater et Magistra*, May 15, 1961: AAS 53 (1961), pp. 401-464, and encyclical letter *Pacem in Terris*, April 11, 1963: AAS 55 (1963), pp. 257-304; Paul VI encyclical letter *Ecclesiam Suam*, Aug. 6, 1964: AAS 54 (1864) pp. 609-659.

The following paragraphs therefore provide a summary of the Church's understanding of human society.

The first insight is the unity of humanity. The Council declares that all humanity, "constitute one family and treat one another in a spirit of brotherhood" (GS 24) and that while people "live all over the face of the earth" (GS 24) all are "called to one and the same goal, namely God himself." (GS 24) Therefore all races, cultures and languages have the same goal and that is God and Godself. This defines how people should approach each other, as individuals, and in their communal structures.

The first direction is that the "love for God and neighbour is the first and greatest commandment; "(GS 24) and as people "grow daily more dependent on one another, and to a world which will become more unified every day, this truth proves to be of paramount importance." (GS 24) Given the individualistic characteristics of the "modern" this definition of humanity calls for a counter witness by the Church and a demand for community. This understanding defines how people need to approach each other. The likeness which all share reveals that human beings are "the only creatures on earth that God has willed for itself,⁶⁴³ ...cannot fully find ourselves except in the sincere gift of ourselves." (GS 24) This is a stark challenge to all who would pursue their individual power, success, control, or wealth or that of their nation, or interest group at the expense of others. This exposes a core tension lying at the heart of humanity; on one hand self-interest, taking for myself and my own interests and acquiring resources at the expense of others; and on the other hand a faith based belief of what is often called altruism or as the Council sees it the 'sincere gift of ourselves'. Here-in lies a fundamental option between the gospel and "the world"; but it is not closed to "people of good will."⁶⁴⁴

The "social nature" of humanity makes it evident that "the progress of the human person, and the advance of society itself, hinge on one another." (GS 25) All people are in need of a social commitment and it is "through our dealings with others, through our reciprocal duties, and through fraternal dialogue that we develop all our gifts and are able to rise to our destiny" (GS 25). It is this call which expresses itself in the call for that which is right and just.⁶⁴⁵

The Council outlines that some duties arise from humanity's innermost nature and these are primarily those duties which are accepted because of the links to family and the political community. But there are a second group of obligations people take on and which mean that "for various reasons we are willing" (GS 25) to develop reciprocal ties and mutual dependencies which find expression in "associations and organisations, both public and private." (GS 25)

⁶⁴³ Be clear in the reading of this quote: the only creature that God willed for the creature's own self!

⁶⁴⁴ These are not distant or 'theoretical' choices; as we have seen in public debate in the last years, where on the one hand we see the response of some 'technology philanthropists' and their understanding that their wealth is not for their own power and aggrandisement; and on the other hand we have seen individuals and nations that want to erect 'self-interested' borders and barriers in respect of their interaction with the world, normally characterised by the maintaining of the exploitation of those who are poorer, less advantaged, or 'different' by language, religion or economic situation. These are not simple issues as they then interface with elements of security, international economic arrangements, migration, the rights of movement, the independence of states. They are never as simple as self-interest will portray.

⁶⁴⁵ This theme under the title of "socialisation" was seen as foundational in all aspects of formation for ministry and is especially engaged with in footnote 15 of the Congregation for Catholic Education. "*Guide to the training of future priests concerning the instruments of social communication*," (19 March. 1986). Ftnb. 15.

Ultimately these ties and dependencies are the result of “our free decision” (GS 25). But what are the factors that influence these free choices, public and private, personal and organisational? How do people make these decisions freely and morally when they know that they are often closed and are diverted from doing what they know to be the ‘good’ and are spurred onward by “the social circumstances in which we are immersed”(GS 25) to make decisions which do not fulfil the love of neighbour and of God? Vatican II names the dilemma as arising from “the disturbances which... occur in the social order... from the natural tensions of economic, political and social forms” (GS 25). This has its source in the deeper level where people are diverted from what is good by “pride and selfishness, which contaminate even the social sphere.”(GS 25) The Council calls all people to overcome these structural elements and says this can only be achieved by a choice for the good and the moral and that cannot be achieved without “strenuous efforts and the assistance of grace.”(GS 25)

This is a fundamental choice. At a personal and communal level the elements which are right and just are known. They will be those conclusions which in the depth the heart have been heard, after the process of discernment and formation, saying “do this, shun that!” However, the Council says, human beings are still faced with the inner call of selfishness. There is a need to act, to commit, and this demands a call of love/grace; a commitment to a “strenuous way of life.”(GS 25, 64, 66, 82, 84) In fact what is needed at this point is a dying to self, a burying of self in a commitment to the ‘other’, be that another individual or collective, and a rising to a new way of life. This is the choice which paragraph 26 puts very clearly before humanity.

This follows the same pattern as was outlined in the discussion of the formation of conscience in GS 16 and in the ongoing reflection of the Magisterium. (cf. RP 26)

At the same time as the need to act is put before the believer and those people of good will, the Council aids us with an outlining of elements that strengthen our commitment.

The Council names them as a: “Growing awareness of the exalted dignity proper to the human person, since we stand above all things, and our rights and duties are universal and inviolable.”(GS 26)

These inviolable rights are then outlined. They can be summarised as those things which are “necessary for leading a life truly human.”(GS 26) These are: “food, clothing, and shelter; the right to choose a state of life freely and to found a family; the right to education, to employment, to a good reputation, to respect, to appropriate information, to activity in accord with the upright norm of one’s own conscience, to protection of privacy and rightful freedom even in matters religious.”(GS 26)

So the best of the human person must be based on a “social order and its development must invariably work to the benefit of the human person if the disposition of affairs is to be subordinate to the personal realm and not contrariwise,” (GS 26) says the Council.

The social order must be founded “on truth, built on justice and animated by love; in freedom it should grow every day toward a more humane balance.”(GS 26)

This is a very strong foundation for the common project of humanity in the ethical sphere. It is founded on a strong personalism based on universal and inviolable rights and duties, clearly

outlined, which will be focused both on the individual and the communal. The Council translates this into religious language when it says that this is the work of “God’s Spirit, who with a marvellous providence directs the unfolding of time and renews the face of the earth, (and) is not absent from this development.”(GS 26)

A communal life starts with a “reverence for man”, (GS 27) considering “every neighbour without exception as another self,” (GS 27) and by “taking into account first of all their life and the means necessary to living it with dignity.”(GS 27)

The driving force within this Christian vision is that this modality is to be lived “without exception” (GS 27) and even more that there is to be a positive choice, a prejudice, for a group who are now named by the Council: “The old person abandoned by all...the foreign labourer unjustly looked down upon...the refugee, a child born of an unlawful union and suffering for a sin they did not commit...a hungry person who disturbs our conscience.” (GS 27)

The Council presents a very clear list of exact demands which are put forward/elucidated under the understanding of the dignity of every human being.

Firstly, it involves anything that is opposed to life itself. The list it creates is that which one would expect: “Any type of murder, genocide, abortion, euthanasia or wilful self-destruction, whatever violates the integrity of the human person, such as mutilation, torments inflicted on mind or body, attempts to coerce the will itself”. (GS 27)

But it then includes in the list: “Subhuman living conditions, arbitrary imprisonment, deportation, slavery, prostitution, the selling of women and children; as well is disgraceful working conditions... (Places where people) are treated as mere tools for profit, rather than as free and responsible persons.”(GS 27)

In strong terms the Council expresses these to be elements that “poison human society,” (GS 27) “do more harm to those who practice them than those who suffer from the injury” (GS 27); and ultimately are a “supreme dishonour to the Creator.”(GS 27)

Then comes the even more demanding call, which Pope Francis will challenge us with in *Amoris Laetitia*. (AL 112,118) This is that respect and love should be “extended to those who think or act differently than we do in social, political and even religious matters.”(GS 28)

And the way ahead is to “enter into dialogue with them.”(GS 28)

The Christian dimension in respect of this dialogical approach to the protection of human rights and dignity is expressed by the understanding that: “God alone is the judge and searcher of hearts and for that reason forbids us to make judgements about the internal guilt of anyone.” (GS 28)

The Council has returned to the perennial question: “does the teaching of a loving and merciful Lord and the making welcome of those who are different to us, or have a different perception of truth, overwhelm the truth and goodness that has been revealed to us and that we know?”

At this point the Council teaches us that: “The teaching of Christ even requires that we forgive injuries, and extends the law of love to include every enemy, according to the command of the new law.”(GS 28)

The core anthropology sitting at the base of Vatican II is that the Church is proclaiming that all human beings “possess a rational soul,” (GS 29) “are created in God’s likeness,” (GS 29) “have the same nature and origin” (GS 29), and: “Have been redeemed by Christ and enjoy the same divine calling and destiny and therefore... must receive greater recognition in their basic equality.”(GS 29)

This does not distract from the diversity and variance of “physical power... and intellectual and moral resources” (GS 29) but that variance does not give grounds for any type of discrimination be it: “Social or cultural...or based on sex, race, colour, social condition, language or religion.”(GS 29)

In fact the Council teaches that every type of discrimination “is to be overcome and eradicated as contrary to God’s intent”(GS 29) and makes specific reference to the rights of women saying that fundamental personal rights are to be universally honoured.

The result of this focus and directed commitment is to say that moral decisions are to be founded on the basis of the equal dignity of persons and the call that humane and just conditions of life be brought about for all. It is interesting that the Council uses the phrase “humane and just” which we can translate as ‘right and just’ as the liturgical introduction to the Preface.

The challenge the Council demands of all people, and all institutions, public and private, “social or political,” is that all must safeguard the basic rights of every human being. The Council identifies major barriers both at the level of the individual and the collective. The Council outlines that “Rapid change, the ignorance of trends, individual laziness and individualistic morality; the making light of social laws and precepts and norms of social life; the failure to observe social niceties as belonging to the primary duties of humanity” (GS 30)

Leading to the demanding reality that everyone is called, on an ongoing basis, to “cultivate in ourselves moral and social virtues.”(GS 30)

This task, the Council suggests, is going to be achieved only by ongoing formation and education in the areas of culture and the utilisation of the resources of the present time so that all youth of every social background may be educated and informed. The Council outlines the conditions required for this to be achieved. It will be by a willingness “to develop a sense of responsibility and to be conscious of our dignity,” (GS 31) the need to spend ourselves for God and for others; the protection of the basic freedoms in which every individual can “consent to the unavoidable requirements of social life, take on the demands of human partnership, and commit ourselves to the service of human community.”(GS 31) Therefore it is by committing to “common endeavours” (GS 31) that the individual will have a reason for living and hoping.

Vatican II then (GS 32) re-expresses all this in terms which are fundamentally covenantal.⁶⁴⁶ The Council says that this communitarian character has been part of salvation history from the very beginning of creation and that here are a people who were not made for life in isolation but to build

⁶⁴⁶ This is another element to be developed at another time as the covenantal nature of God’s relationship with humanity is not started in the Sinai covenant of the Decalogue. There is the covenant with Abraham and his descendants a bond that was interpreted as national, ethnic or cultural covenant bonds; but in the covenant with Noah we have a covenant with all of humanity; which must lead us to also recognise the covenantal relationship in Adam and the new Adam, not just with humanity but with the creation itself. The seeds of the universal relationship in an unbreakable covenant have been expressed in the hopes of the Judeo-Christian faith since the first understandings were expressed.

social unity. It is within this understanding that all were chosen “not just as individuals but as members of a certain community.”(GS 32)

By referencing the covenant relationship established on Sinai the Council says that this communitarian character “is developed and consummated in the work of Jesus Christ.”(GS 32) Outlining a number of examples of Jesus’s connection and presence with publicans and sinners, and the sanctifying of human ties the Council outlines all are to commit themselves to treating one another as brothers and sisters, to becoming one and united and that this is an action with a quality that is summarised in the example of Jesus who “offered himself for all even to the point of death.”(GS 32) This is the work of the Spirit, this is a work which Christ does through His body, the Church, and this is how He bestows different gifts on the earth. Paragraph 32 almost summarises the liturgy in that it says that it is through the Word made flesh, by the work of the Spirit, by gathering around the common table and fellowship, by offering ourselves even to the point of death, that men and women are made possible to “render mutual service according to the different gifts bestowed on each.”(GS 32)

The Council finishes chapter 2 by saying that it is through this solidarity⁶⁴⁷ which must be “increased until that day in which it will be brought to perfection.”(GS 32) that all are called to offer Glory to God not as individuals but as a “family beloved of God and of Christ our brother.”(GS 32)

4.5. *Gaudium et Spes* 33- 39: CHAPTER III: MAN'S ACTIVITY THROUGHOUT THE WORLD

The Council therefore provides a clear focus that humanity’s “labours and native endowments” (GS 33) lead to the ceaseless striving to “better our lives” (GS 33) or to live life to the full. The pursuit of this with the “help of science and technology” combined with “social contacts” will lead to a “single world community.” (GS 33) At the same time the Council raises a number of questions which are foundational to all human activity. It asks: “What is the meaning and value of this feverish activity?”

How should all these things be used?

To what goal are the strivings of individuals and societies heading?” (GS 33)

Gaudium et Spes says that the “heritage of God’s Word” (GS 33) is the source of insight from which the Church draws “moral and religious principles” (GS 33) but without always having “a solution to particular problems.” (GS 33) God’s Word is the interface between moral and religious principles and

⁶⁴⁷ This is succinctly expressed by Schilderman and Felling: “This, once again, validates the ecclesiastical applicability of the principle of subsidiarity (Leys 1995, 117-119, 191-194). But, there is an even more fundamental theological argument to be adduced. In the course of Vatican II, the concept of solidarity emerged as a typical soteriological expression of the function of the Church (Rauscher and Nawroth 1974, 212-213). Solidarity is put at the basis of a theological anthropology (*Gaudium et Spes* 31, 55, 61, 90), and expresses the incarnatory bond of God and man in Jesus Christ (*Gaudium et Spes* 32, 92 fl). In reference to Jesus’ radical solidarity with man, solidarity is understood as a sign of salvation, and one that points to the human striving for freedom and justice (Eichinger 1994, 319-323). From this dogmatic frame of reference, it seems false to locate the institutional form of the Church at right angles to her identity as mystery.” Schilderman, J.A. Van Der Ven, and A.J.A Felling. "Professionalising the Shepherds." *Journal of Empirical Theology* 12.1 (1999)p. 84.

particular problems and does not arrive with a pre-packaged solution but rather is revealed as the fruit of the interplay of 'word and deed', experiences lived and solutions sought.

The Council is clear that humanity labours to "better circumstances... through a monumental amount of individual and collective effort (and that this) accords with God's will." (GS 34) In their daily lives, through activities, both individual and collective, humanity will fulfil the mandate to firstly "subject to ourselves the earth and all it contains", and secondly "to govern the world with justice and holiness." (GS 34) All are to do all this while acknowledging God as "Lord and Creator of all." (GS 34) The aim says Vatican II is the "subjection of all things to humanity so that the name of God would be wonderful in all the earth." (GS 34)

The desire to better the circumstances of humanity and to subject all things in the world is part of "the whole of everyday activity" (GS 34) and is to be focused in a way "which appropriately benefits society" (GS 34) and this will only be achieved by "men and women performing their activities." (GS 34) The unfolding of the Creator's work is done not in a manner which is in opposition to humanity but rather says Vatican II through the "works produced by humanity's own talent and energy... the work of the rational creature... are a sign of God's grace and the flowering of God's own mysterious design." (GS 34) This is a partnership. There is "no God's work" and "human work" in opposition to each other but rather at the heart of all is the "responsibility which extends to... building up the world... through the welfare of our fellows..." (GS 34)

The depth and scope of human responsibility lies in the understanding that all "human activity... takes its significance from its relationship to humanity, it proceeds from humanity, it is ordered toward humanity." (GS 35) Vatican II says that people "learn much... cultivate our resources... by going outside of ourselves and beyond ourselves..." in a relationship which is focused on justice, brotherhood and a humane disposition of social relationships." (GS 35)

This approach is summarised in a powerful "norm of human activity" (GS 35) and it is this: "That in accord with the divine plan and will, it harmonises with the genuine good of the human race, and it allows humanity as individuals and as members of society to pursue their total vocation and fulfil it." (GS 35)

There is one act of creation. The talents of all are to be brought together for the good.

How is this to be achieved?

Vatican II says that firstly it is to be done progressively and "gradually." (GS 36) Secondly, it is to be done in an autonomous manner, earthly affairs are to be ordered by an understanding and unfolding of "their own laws and values which must be deciphered, put to use, and regulated by humanity." (GS 36) Vatican II then calls for a "methodical investigation within every branch of learning... In a genuinely scientific manner... in accord with moral norms..." (GS 36) when this is followed it will "never truly conflict with faith, for earthly matters and the concerns of faith derive from the same God." (GS 36) It is the job of humanity to "penetrate the secrets of reality with a humble and steady mind" (GS 36) and this will only be done when the sciences are given their "rightful independence..." and the arguments and controversies they spark..." (GS 36) are explored and debated.

The Council is at pains to say that the independence of temporal affairs does not deflect people from the presence of the Creator but rather shows them the “stability, truth, goodness, proper laws and order” (GS 36) which are endowed and live within all created beings.

As has been seen in many parts of this exposition, Vatican II then outlines in GS 37, having put forward this very positive view, that all must be aware that often “the order of values is jumbled and bad is mixed with good, (and) individuals and groups pay heed solely to their own interests, and not to those of others.” (GS 37)

The Council teaches that this will leave everyone in a situation where they are always struggling; in fact it says everyone will “wrestle constantly if we are to cling to what is good.” (GS 37) The Council outlines this under the Pauline expression, “the world” (Romans 12:2) but it says that what it means by “the world” is: “That spirit of vanity and malice which transforms into an instrument of sin those human energies intended for the service of God and humanity.” (GS 37)

The Council ensures that everyone is aware that: “All human activity (is) constantly imperilled by our pride and deranged self-love and must be purified and perfected by the power of Christ’s cross and resurrection.” (GS 37)

The challenge which is put before everyone is summarised as ‘the Paschal mystery of dying to self so as to serve the good and the other’. Everyone is capable of loving those things created by God, the task is to “respect and reverence them as flowing constantly from the hand of God”... we are to use and enjoy them with a “detachment and liberty of spirit” which is expressed as a “true possession of them, as having nothing, yet possessing all things.” (GS 37)

Paul VI returned to this integration in a speech to religious, but it can be applied to the whole community: To share in the mission of the Church requires “openness to collaboration” (ET 50) and it is a pre-condition of involvement in all areas of the Church's mission “scriptural, liturgical, doctrinal, pastoral, ecumenical, missionary and social.”(ET 50) In partnership, and under the leadership of the bishops, all undertake the “Church’s activity” which “continues that of the Saviour” and this is to seek “the good of men,”(ET 50) “by entering into the activity of Christ Himself”.(ET 50) Paul VI says this will lead all to the “eternal kingdom” but more immediately he asks everyone to “give splendid and striking testimony that the world cannot be transfigured and offered to God without the spirit of the beatitudes.”(ET 50)

It is this combination of the Paschal mystery and the incarnation that reveals a developed vision that the Word of God’s creative hand is active in and through humanity and that this occurs in the world with its mixture of right and wrong, good and bad and malice and virtue. This leads to the understanding that in the incarnation of God’s Word, in Christ, he was “made flesh and dwelt on the earth of humanity.” (GS 38) There is not a revelation outside of history. Revelation occurs in the world, and it is in this world with its mixtures of motivations, that God has revealed Godself as a “God is love” (GS 37) and has taught that “the new command of love is the basic law of human perfection and hence of the world’s transformation.” (GS 37)

So what is the way forward?

The Council says that there is only one way forward and it is contemporaneous with the way of those who believe in “divine love”.

And what is this “way of love”?

All are called to “establish a universal brotherhood... (And) this is a charity not to be reserved for important matters but which must be pursued chiefly in the ordinary circumstances of life.” (GS 38) It is by opening ourselves and “shouldering the cross... (That) those who search after peace and justice... by allowing Christ to work in the hearts of humanity through the energy of his Holy Spirit...(and) to be animated, purified and strengthened in our noble longings;” (GS 38) will be able to recognise that the “gifts of the Spirit are diverse and that” within the human family, “God summons some to dedicate themselves to the earthly service of humanity and... to put aside love of self and to bring all earthly resources into the service of human life.” (GS 38)

The primacy of love and that love as the instrument both of salvation and universal human reconciliation and unity is emphasised by John Paul II. Firstly he reemphasised the revelatory pattern of Christ, in which can be seen He who “dwelt in the world; (he entered into the history of the world) summing it up and recapitulating it in himself.”(RP 10) and revealing to us “that God is love.” Then, he understands that this was not a passive revelation, a thing of knowledge or belief alone, rather Christ “gave us the new commandment” of love” and not just to Christians, but rather he showed the “certainty that the path of love is open for all people, so that the effort to establish universal brotherhood is not a vain one”.(RP 10) In a direct reference to GS 38 John Paul II says that this all happens in and through Christ who “brought salvation to all and became “reconciliation for all. In him God reconciled man to himself.”(RP 10)

Where is the pledge of this love? “The Lord left behind a pledge of this hope and strength for life’s journey and that sacrament of faith where natural elements refined by humanity are gloriously changed into his body and blood, providing a meal of solidarity and a foretaste of the heavenly banquet.”(GS 38)

Where God is preparing “A new dwelling place and a new earth where justice will abide... which surpasses all the longings for peace which spring up in the human heart... So that what was sown in weakness will be invested with incorruptibility...” (GS 39)

This has shown that it is with charity and with the expectation of a new earth that our lives will “stimulate our concern for cultivating this one.”(GS 39) It is a ‘both /and’ says Vatican II. It says: “while earthly progress must be carefully distinguished from the growth of Christ’s kingdom it can contribute to the better ordering of human society when we “obey the Lord, and in His Spirit nurture, on earth, the values of human dignity, brotherhood and freedom, and indeed all the good fruits of nature and enterprise will lead to (the understanding that)... on this earth the kingdom is already present in mystery and when the Lord returns it will be brought into full flower.”(GS 39)

Here in paragraph 38 we have the first direct reference in *Gaudium et Spes* to the link between the Word and the Eucharist at the heart of humanity’s activity throughout the world.

4.6. *Gaudium et Spes* 40-45: CHAPTER IV THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH IN THE MODERN WORLD

This leads to the question: “if one can see and follow the Lord in the created realm what is the role of the Church in the modern world?”

Gaudium et Spes asks the same question in chapter 4. The role of the Church in relation to the world can only be understood if there is an entry into a fruitful “dialogue between... the Church and the world” (GS 40, 43) and if all that has gone before in respect of “the dignity of the human person... the human community... and the profound meaning of human activity” (GS 40) is seen as the foundation of this relationship. The starting point for understanding the role of the Church is that “she exists in the world, living and acting within it.”(GS 40)

While acknowledging that the eschatological purpose of the Father’s love “can be fully attained only in a future world,” (GS 40) Vatican II says that because the Church is: “Already present in this world... Is composed of humanity... is a member of the earthly city... is called to form the family of God’s children during the present history of the human race.” (GS 40)

The Church’s role must be “constituted and structured as a society in the world... and equipped by appropriate means for visible and social union... (it is to go) forward together with humanity and experience the same earthly lot as the world does.”(GS 40)

The Church sees herself as “the leaven... the soul of human society” (GS 40) with the task of renewing everything in Christ and transforming the human, (God’s), family.

The Church believes that in all that is done “the earthly and the heavenly city penetrate each other” (GS 40). This insight is “accessible to faith alone and remains a mystery in human history” (GS 40) and believers will certainly recognise that there is “a great disarray until the splendour of God’s children is fully revealed” (GS 40) but the Church is clear that there can be “no false opposition between professional and social activities on the one part, and religious life on the other.”(GS 43)⁶⁴⁸ The role of the Church is to bring the light of life and love to this world especially by “healing and elevating ... the dignity of the person... by strengthening the seams of human society... (And) by imbuing the everyday activity of humanity with a deeper meaning and importance.”(GS 40)

As these qualities can be seen in the lives and actions of other Christian Churches and ecclesial communities the Church believes, in fact is “convinced”, “that she can abundantly and variously help the world in the matter of preparing the ground for the Gospel.”(GS 40) This is to be achieved by utilising “the talents and industry of individuals and human society as a whole,” (GS 40) and will occur when we follow certain principles “of mutual exchange and assistance... which are in some way common to the world and the Church.”(GS 40)

The Council then outlines these principles.

The Council sees “the growing discovery and vindication of humanity’s own rights” (GS 41) which show to humanity “the meaning of its own existence and the innermost truth about itself.”(GS 41) The Church sees in humanity’s seeking and “yearning to know” a common seeking to understand the meaning of our life, our activity and our death.

⁶⁴⁸ McGinley, Dugan. Op.cit.p.109.

The Council asserts that Christ is the “perfect man” and that following in his footsteps humanity becomes more perfectly human. The deep link between the incarnation and the Paschal mystery is reinforced when the Council says: “For by his incarnation the Father’s Word assumed, and sanctified through his Cross and Resurrection, the whole of humanity body and soul, and through that totality the whole of nature created by God for humanity’s use.”(GS 41)

It is this which the Church sees as the “anchor of the dignity of human nature against all tides of opinion.”(GS 41)

Now this anchor has got characteristics and they are deep and profound:

The “freedom of the children of God”

The “sacred reference for the dignity of conscience and its freedom of choice”

The constant advice that “all human talents be employed in God’s service and humanity’s”

And finally there is a commendation that all this be done in a spirit of “charity of all”. (GS 41)

The second principle is that of the “rightful autonomy of the creature”. (GS 41)

The Church “proclaims the rights of humanity” and says that these rights should be “everywhere fostered.”(GS 41) The Church balances though the idea of a “false autonomy” with that of the spirit of the Gospel in which human dignity is protected only when that autonomy is lived with an awareness of the other’s calls upon it, and these are the demands of the communal unity “of the human family which is greatly fortified and fulfilled by the unity founded in Christ of the family of God’s children.”(GS 42) It is at this fundamental level of the service of “the structure and consolidation of the human community according to divine law” (GS 42) that the Church’s true “function, light and energy” (GS 42) will serve humanity “especially those designed for the needy such as works of mercy and similar undertakings.” (GS 42)

The Church is clear that she has “no proper mission in the political, economic or social order.”(GS 42) But she does have a role in supporting and being involved in social movements especially those which will show an “evolution toward unity... wholesome socialisation and association in civic and economic realms.”(GS 42) The Church is to show the world “that an authentic union, social and external, results from a union of minds and hearts, namely from that faith and charity by which her own unity is unbreakably rooted in the Holy Spirit... Charity is put into vital practice.”(GS 42)

There is then “no particular form of human culture or any political, economic or social system the Church by her very universality can be identified with” (GS 42) rather “she must form very close bonds between diverse human communities and nations... and overcome all strife between nations and races.”(GS 42) So the task which the Council affirms for the Church is to be always willing to assist and promote, under any kind of government, the “recognition of the basic rights of the person and the family, and the demands of the common good and the free exercise of the Church’s mission.”(GS 42)

At this point the Council does describe Christians as being “citizens of two cities”(GS 43) and calls on them to strive to “discharge their earthly duties conscientiously and in response to the gospel spirit”(GS 43) and outlines that this will be done in each one’s own “proper vocation.”(GS 43)

It is this unified vision that the Church sees for her role in the modern world.

She will not accept a “split between the faith which many profess and their daily lives.” (GS 43) There can be “no false opposition between professional and social activities on one part, and religious life on the other.”(GS 43) Following in the footsteps of Christ who worked as an artisan Christians are called to: “Give proper exercise to all our earthly activities and to the humane, domestic, professional, social and technical enterprises by gathering them together into one vital synthesis.” (GS 43) To God’s glory.

So, both socially and individually all will “keep the laws proper to each discipline, and labour to equip ourselves with a genuine expertise in the various fields.”(GS 43) We will “devise new enterprises and put them into action” but all this will be done as the “function of their well-formed Christian conscience to see that the divine law is inscribed in the life of the earthly city.”(GS 43)

Again the question becomes one of dialogue in the face of diversity.

The Council outlines that “frequently and legitimately, with equal sincerity, some of the faithful disagree with others on a given matter.”(GS 43) The Council says that “no one is allowed in the aforementioned situation to appropriate the Church’s authority.”(GS 43) It then shows the way forward which would be to “enlighten one another through honest discussion, preserve mutual charity and caring above all for the common good.”(GS 43) This mutual charity is not expressed purely in word. This is not a moral teaching to be imposed nor is it to be debated purely theoretically. Rather it is by “our daily conduct and concern” that the “world will judge the power and truth of the Christian message” (GS 43) it is “by our lives and speech” that we will recognise and witness to the Gospel.

The foundation of this witness is “unremitting study” (GS 43) founded by “establishing dialogue with the world and with people of all shades of opinion.” (GS 43) It is to be achieved by seeking to move toward “civil, economic and social unity “and it is by attempting to erase every cause of division.” (GS 43) The church “realizes that in working out her relationship with the world she always has great need of the ripening which comes with the experience of the centuries... and this (this will lead to a) “purifying and renewal of Mother Church herself.”(GS 43)

The Council clearly and directly accepts that the Church has “profited by the history and development of humanity... the experience of past ages, the progress of science, and the treasures hidden in the various forms of human culture,”(GS 44) and it is by the exploration of these that “new roads to truth are opened” and helped by the “ideas and terminology of various philosophers... by the clarification of their wisdom... by adapting the Gospel to the grasp of all as well as to the needs of the learned”(GS 44) that the Church becomes more and more able: “To express Christ’s message in its own way... in each nation... in a living exchange between the Church and the diverse cultures of the peoples... in different institutions and specialties.”(GS 44)

So what has been learned is that the task of responding to any situation and any problem in the world is a task for “the entire people of God ;”(GS 44). Yes, especially pastors and theologians, but there is a task to “hear, distinguish and interpret the many voices of our age, and to judge them in the light of the divine word.”(GS 44)

The church requires a profound humility as she develops this to its fullness. Vatican II says: that the Church: “gratefully understands that in her community life no less than in her individual children, she receives a variety of helps from people of every rank and condition, for whoever promotes the human community at the family level, culturally, in its economic, social and political dimensions, both nationally and internationally, such a one, according to God’s design, is contributing greatly to the Church as well, to the extent that she depends on things outside herself. Indeed, the Church admits that she has greatly profited and still profits from the antagonism of those who oppose or persecute her.”(GS 44)

The Church therefore has only “a single intention: that God’s kingdom may come, and that the salvation of the whole human race may come to pass.”(GS 45)

It is here therefore that the Church sees herself as the universal sacrament of salvation; it is when she simultaneously manifests and exercises the mystery of God’s love.

The Council summarises this teaching in the coincidence of the incarnation and the Paschal mystery. When it says that it was: “God’s word... (By whom all things were made) who was himself made flesh... (So that as) the perfect man ... he might save all people and sum up all things in himself” (GS 45)

Christ is “the focal point of the longings of history and civilisation, the centre of the human race, the joy of every heart and the answer to its yearnings.”(GS45).

Enlivened and united by His Spirit all journey toward the consummation of human history. This will come when, and if, history can be established in Christ, the one who gave himself in love and for the service of those in need.

Chapter 5: The Liturgy: a Pattern for Formation and the making of Commitments.

Introduction:

The 'quaestiones disputatae' of this thesis is: "Is there a structure at the heart of the liturgy that contains a template for formation in the Christian life, and if there is, can it be applied to all moral formation and the making of commitments and life-choices?"

Chapter 1 of the thesis outlined the call of Vatican II for the reform of the liturgy and the establishment of a strong relationship between the liturgy and all theological thought. Finding that the liturgical Rite of formation, the *Rites of Christian Initiation of Adults*, had featured minimally in the life of the Church since Vatican II, this section of the study looked at the key elements of the Rite, and how the concepts contained within them have developed in the teaching of the modern Church. This essentially was a 'return to the sources' exercise in respect of the processes at the heart of formation: dialogue, discernment, and the concepts of God being revealed in the lives of those who make a Christian commitment in baptism.

Chapter 2 of the thesis focused on the structure and development of the OICA. The first thing that it found was that the OICA, the adult catechumenate, is a structured process, with the expressed purpose of formation. The OICA very purpose is to be the process of formation in the Church, culminating in a commitment to living the Christian life. The formation starts by engaging with a person, in an open and accepting manner, and gaining an awareness of their fundamental needs and questions. The community then provides them with a companion to accompany them, to pray with them, and to involve them directly in the life of the community and their Christian life. Formation in the OICA occurs primarily by the one being formed witnessing what is said and done in the community, coupled with a common searching for wisdom and understanding; and the primary method of such searching is, by a communal reflection on the Scriptures, and being formed in prayer. This pattern is a process of 'discernment', characterised by a willingness to wait and allow time for formation to mature, while supporting the freedom of the other and being non-coercive in all dealings with each other. The heart of the process is an on-going reflection on sources of understanding, within a community, and the acceptance on the part of the formation community that they also will be formed, and that their witnessing will be life giving.

Secondly, this process of formation is seen to provide the foundation of the Liturgy of the Word, which when combined with the 'breaking of the bread' and the 'agape meal', is the structural heart of the Sunday Liturgy, "the fount and apex of the whole Christian life." (LG 11)⁶⁴⁹

⁶⁴⁹ It is interesting to note, in respect of authentic translation, that the official Vatican translation of *Lumen Gentium* 11, is as included here, but the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, uses a translation that many are more familiar with "The Eucharist is "the source and summit of the Christian life."" (CCC 1324)

In Chapter 3 of the thesis, this idea was explored and it led to the understanding that the Liturgy is the foundation of a Christian world view and provides the template for Christian prayer, worship and community formation. It is distinctive in its structure, order and content, and yet the Mystery that it reveals is also able to be seen reflected in the lives of all people of good will.

Chapter 4 of the thesis provided a reflection on *Gaudium et Spes* 1-45 which is the seminal understanding of the Church's relationship with the 'modern world,' and shows that this Pastoral Constitution of Vatican II shares a structural form which parallels that of the OICA and the Sunday Liturgy. Its starting point is the world in its complexity, and with a deep awareness of the inner tension of human life and understanding, sin; the *Constitution* proceeds through a focused process of conscience formation, to understandings of fundamental human rights, the need for common action, and links these ideas to the Christological foundations of self-sacrificial service of humanity.

An outline of Chapter 5.

Chapter 5 of the thesis brings these elements together to show how the Sunday Liturgy offers a pattern for formation and commitment.

This will be done in four parts, structured on the call of *Sacrosanctum Concilium* 23 to place the "structure and meaning of the liturgy" (SC23) at the heart of theological analysis:

Firstly there will be a summary of Vatican II's understanding that the "Structure and meaning of the Liturgy" (SC 23) is the primary reference point of all theological thought, including therefore the formation of Christians, the Christian community and ultimately of all of humanity.

As part of this section and laying the foundation for how the structure and meaning of the Liturgy is to be interpreted, the four key interpretive frameworks of Vatican II will be outlined. They are: the process of Discernment; the process of Dialogue; the unity of Word and Deed revealing the Paschal Mystery; and the dual sources of revelation and their expression. The reflections on these themes are to be used to interpret all aspects of the exposition of the relationship between the liturgy and formation.

Secondly, the common "*structure*" at the heart of the three sources, the Rites of the Christian Initiation of Adults, *the General Instruction to the Roman Missal* and *Gaudium et Spes* 1-45 will be identified and the pattern of formation therefore made clear. This is based on the detailed study in Chapters two, three and four; but that material will not be repeated here, rather the outlining of the interpretive frameworks and the Structure and meaning of the Liturgy, will show their major contributions.

Thirdly, and most importantly, the "*meaning*" that the Liturgy contains for formation and the making of commitments will be outlined, by walking through the Sunday Liturgy and explaining the process of formation and commitment contained within it.

And lastly these elements will all be brought together to offer a generic pattern for formation and the making of commitments based on the structure and meaning of the liturgy.

5.1. The Call of Vatican II:

5.1.1. The call of Vatican II to link all of theology to the liturgy.

What did Vatican II say in respect of the relationship between the liturgy and theological thought?

The Second Vatican Council was a very clear it hoped that the processes of change it initiated would enable the Church to better engage with the world. The Council saw the reform of the liturgy as a key element in enabling this to happen. As part of this reform the Council asked the Church to integrate the study of the liturgy, in a very specific way, into the heart of all theological reflection.

The Council said that the sacred liturgy should “be taught under its theological, historical, spiritual, pastoral, and juridical aspects”; and that in pursuing “the mystery of Christ and the history of salvation from the angle proper to each of their own subjects” all theological disciplines “must do so in a way which will clearly bring out the connection between their subjects and the liturgy,” and this pertained “especially ... (to) professors of dogmatic, spiritual, and pastoral theology.” (SC 16)

The Council’s connecting of all theological thought to the Liturgy, was not only a reflection of one of the foundational expressions of the Church’s self-understanding, “*legem credendi lex statuat supplicandi* / the law of prayer is the law of belief,”⁶⁵⁰ but it also expressed a methodological insight. The Council saw that the source of renewal of the Church would be the reform of the liturgy, and that the reform of the liturgy, and the other sacred sciences in partnership with it, would only proceed successfully by “careful investigation,” and when “theological, historical, and pastoral” (SC 23) studies were guided by the “the general laws governing the structure and meaning of the liturgy.” (SC 23)

So what are those “general laws”?⁶⁵¹

Conclusions 1: Moral Theology and the Liturgy.

1. Moral theology and all processes of formation are to have the “structure and meaning of the liturgy” at the heart of their exposition and structure.

⁶⁵⁰ Migne, Jacques Paul. *Patrologia Latina*. Paris: **51**, pp. 209–10, “...obsecrationum quoque sacerdotalium sacramenta respiciamus, quae ab apostolis tradita, in toto mundo atque in omni catholica Ecclesia uniformiter celebrantur, ut *legem credendi lex statuat supplicandi*.”

⁶⁵¹ All of these sectional conclusions will be asking the question: “what does the structure and meaning of the liturgy” offer moral thought, formation and the making of commitments?)

5.1.2. The general principles of SC 24-46.

Vatican II presented these “general laws” as a series of norms, (SC 24-46) and they provide the foundational principles for formulating a response in which moral and pastoral theological studies are intentionally connected to the liturgy. They therefore are the background ‘matrix’ within which the relationship between the liturgical reform and the understandings of all other disciplines are to be framed.

The first norm says that all theological reflection should start from a “warm and living love for scripture,” because scripture is to be the foundation of all teaching and inspiration; as “it is from the scriptures that (the) actions and signs (of the liturgy) derive their meaning”. (SC 24) So the love and study of the scriptures is to be the primary tool of interpretation for all theological reflection, and a ‘loving’ reflection on the scriptures will be the primary form of formation.⁶⁵²

Secondly, nothing in the liturgy, and moral formation, can, ultimately, be private⁶⁵³. All ecclesial activity and reflection is to be directed to forming a “sacrament of unity,” (SC 26) and that sacrament is a community of human beings, who are understood to be “the holy people united and ordered under their bishops.” (SC 26) Therefore, while recognising the concerns and abilities of individuals, the ultimate focus of all Christian life and formation, is a moral and ethical goal, it is that everything will “pertain to the whole body of the Church;” and will “manifest it and have effects upon it.” (SC 26) The overall focus of formation is the good of the whole body, the common good. This will happen by creating a community with the Bishop as the focus of unity, and this is repeated constantly in the documents. However, this unity will only be created by the “the presence and active participation of the faithful,” (SC27) where the “faithful” is not to be read as individual persons, rather as the faithful gathered, the communal, which is “to be preferred, so far as possible” to the “individual and quasi-private.” (SC 27)

To enable this to happen the Council says it is essential that anyone who has “an office to perform, should do all of, but only, those parts which pertain to his office.” (SC 28) As the Council recognises the different ‘offices’/roles within the community it also describes how they are to be exercised. It is with “sincere piety and decorum”, “deeply imbued with the spirit of the liturgy” and in a “correct and orderly manner.” (SC 29) Formation therefore requires the involvement of those with special roles and understandings, different “Offices;” but at the same time, it will be characterised by a certain way of engagement, an identified set of virtues.

Formation therefore has as its goal a ‘commitment’ within a ‘unified community’, aware of and directed towards the ‘common good’. This will be achieved by the active participation of the faithful, with recognition of the special gifts some bring to the process and in a manner that identifies certain virtues, piety, decorum, and simplicity, in the lives of the faithful.

⁶⁵² It is important to note that the wording of SC 24 does not limit the focus on the scriptures to an intellectual understanding, It is essentially linked to an affective formation and response: “a love of” the scriptures.

⁶⁵³ This norm encapsulates the inner tension between a Catholic perspective, which of its very essence is communitarian and seeks a common good, and the prevailing culture of individualism. There are many places in which the insights expressed in this thesis direct us to a deeper study of fundamental theological positions which can only be indicated as footnotes for further debate and study. This fundamental relationship between the individual and the communal, especially in the formation of moral positions, is one.

The Council emphasises the wide variety of ways, in which people can contribute, “by words, deeds and silences.” (SC 30) Active participation, in all aspects of Church life, demands the recognition, not only of the role of those in “Sacred orders,” but of the way in which “the words, deeds and silences” of the faithful contribute to Church life, without any supporting “special honours or external display.” (SC 32) The balance must be made between recognising the contribution of all, and at the same time, appreciating and including the special roles and insights which certain individuals bring to the community, by expertise and commitment.

Thirdly, while the liturgy is centred on the “worship of the divine Majesty” it also “contains much instruction for the faithful. For in the liturgy God speaks to His people and Christ is still proclaiming His Gospel.” (SC 33) The liturgy itself, on a week by week basis, and in its very ‘structure and meaning,’ provides instruction for the community. This thesis posits that this is not limited to ‘spiritual’ matters but that the structure of the liturgy also offers a process which can form the ‘way’ in which the community forms new members, re-forms existing members, heals and re-incorporates ‘sinners’, evaluates moral positions, acts internally and in relationship to others, and reaches a common commitment to action.

Fourthly, the role of the presider within the assembly is clarified. The Bishop, or the priest ministering in His place, “presides over the assembly in the person of Christ (and the prayers that he articulates) are said in the name of the entire holy people and of all present.” (SC 33) This makes clear that there are parts of the liturgy “when things are read” which were written for our instruction,” (Rom. 15:4)” (SC 33) and it is the role of the presider to ensure they are heard. It is also clear that the presider is to recognise the presence of Christ in those gathered by ensuring that “the visible signs used by the liturgy” are clear and ordered, and that when the people “pray or sing or act, the faith of those taking part is nourished and their minds are raised to God, so that they may offer Him their rational service and more abundantly receive His grace.” (SC 33)

It is therefore a form of presiding, in which while leading and ‘overseeing’ the formation and the bringing to commitment of all, does so in a way that is at once interrelated to and on behalf of a community, The overseer is to ensure good instruction and that the ‘signs of the liturgy’ are clearly articulated. These are the preconditions for enabling the “structure and meaning of the liturgy” to form the community. Because this is so important the Council is clear. The instruction and style of presiding are to be characterised by a “noble simplicity; they should be short, clear, and unencumbered by useless repetitions;” and all instruction “should be within the people’s powers of comprehension, and normally should not require much explanation.” (SC 34) It is the same when bringing people to commitment, and in all formation; all interactions should be comprehensible, short, clear and simple.

Fifthly, to ensure that there is an “intimate connection between the words and rites” (SC 35) the Council called for multiple readings from “holy scripture.” The intention of having multiple sources is to provide points of view that are “more varied and suitable.” The readings are then to be aided by sermons and preaching which are characterised by “exactitude and fidelity,” based on the “scriptural and liturgical sources.” However this preaching is not to stand in isolation. The intention of the readings and sermon is to reveal the “wonderful works in the history of salvation, the mystery of Christ, ever made present and active within us, especially in the celebration of the liturgy.” (SC 35)

There are three sources of information directed to formation: they are to be found in revelation, the history of salvation and the liturgy. *Gaudium et Spes* and the *Catechism*, are clear that there is a great width of insight contained in these sources, it is important therefore to understand the content and nature of these sources. The source documents used in this thesis have shown that revelation and the history of salvation are connected to all avenues of human seeking, wisdom, and the interface with the philosophies and understandings of the time. The two sources, revelation and the history of salvation, are much wider than an approach that restricts the scriptures to an isolated or religious usage, a liturgical aid. The history of salvation and the revelation contained within God's covenantal relationships with people in provides a wide and complex matrix of thought which reinforces the need for the talents of the whole community to be brought to bear on these sources. Formation is to be supported by multiple sources and it is an awareness of the variety of ways God is revealed and the study and interpretation of these sources that enables those being formed to clearly see and to commit.

Sixthly, all communication within the Church must be comprehensible so as to enable the active participation of all. The Council saw the use of the "mother tongue," the vernacular, to be "frequently of great advantage to the people," (SC 36/ 2) because, as the GIRM says, the active participation of the faithful is to be based on the "conscious, active, and full participation of the faithful, namely in body and in mind, a participation fervent with faith, hope, and charity." (GIRM 18) The same understanding applies to all processes of formation.

This insight from the GIRM also reveals that while intellectual comprehension and involvement is an essential prerequisite for the "conscious, active and full participation" of the community, for there to be such a participation in the liturgical and moral life, there must also be the involvement of the fervour of faith, hope and charity of the faithful. Therefore all formation must include frameworks in which the development of the affections and virtues are part of the actions involved. Commitment is not founded upon an intellectual affirmation and understanding alone; commitment involves a total formation, which involves the intellect, affections and pastoral application.

However, it is also important to understand that entry into the mystery is not dependent on a person having a 'full consciousness' or a 'full understanding' or that they are committing with 'all their heart'; rather, as in all moral engagements, there is a necessity to recognise the particularity of the individual's situation, training, maturity and giftedness, and the way in which this impacts on their ability to engage. The variations in talent, understanding or motivation are not to lead to judgements in which those less endowed in any area are called to abdicate their ability to contribute of join the community; nor is it a call to a subservient obedience to the community, nor to a paternalism on the part of those in leadership or ministry; nor can it lead to a new form of Gnosticism in which only the 'fully engaged' are welcome in the community.

The call for comprehension is to be seen as an expression of the protection of the least in the community and is to be associated with the call in the norms of the Council to protect the core elements of commonality and the universality within the proclamation. The challenge of translating concepts and ideas, into different languages and cultural milieux, and to different levels of

comprehensibility, is a vital task for all theological reflection, but especially for moral theology,⁶⁵⁴ and for those supporting those in formation and making commitments.

Seventh, as a norm for the liturgy and this applies to moral formation and evaluation, the Council says that it “has no wish to impose a rigid uniformity in matters which do not implicate the faith or the good of the whole community.” Rather the Council says that the Church will “respect and foster the genius and talents of the various races and peoples.” (SC 37) The criteria of judgment for ensuring this occurs is that all adaptations will “harmonize with the true and authentic spirit” of the liturgy. (SC 37) This means there can be “legitimate variations and adaptations to different groups, regions, and peoples” (SC 38) and specifically “adaptations, especially in the administration” (SC 39) of the various components of the liturgical life of the Church and that indeed “in some places and circumstances, an even more radical adaptation of the liturgy is needed.” (SC 40) If and when this is required there will be a need for the “competent territorial ecclesiastical authority” to involve the “Apostolic See”. (SC 39) The application of this norm to moral formation provides a deep challenge in the face of cultural diversity and the manner in which the Church’s moral teaching and processes of formation have become so deeply wedded to the expressions of Western European thought and cultural practice.

Eighth, *Sacrosanctum Concilium* then provides more norms emphasising the role of the Bishop. The Bishop is named as the “high priest of the flock’ (SC 41) and while these norms stress his liturgical ministry they are accompanied by the call for his ministry be reinforced by the active and living ‘witness’ of the liturgy of the cathedral church, as a “pre-eminent manifestation of the Church.” The whole phrase is important as it links, the nature of the Church, the role of the Bishop, the interrelationship between those in ministry and the faithful, when it says: “the pre-eminent manifestation of the Church consists in the full active participation of all God’s holy people in these liturgical celebrations, especially in the same Eucharist, in a single prayer, at one altar, at which there presides the bishop surrounded by his college of priests and by his ministers.” (SC 41) The consequence of this understanding is clearly expressed by Mitchell who writes that the ‘gathered assembly’ is not to be seen as a passive “ritual object, “for whom or upon whom ministerial acts are performed. On the contrary the assembly is *agent* and *event*, a *real symbol*, and the place and embodiment of the sacrament.” It is the assembly that is the place “both as *gathering* of the church and as an *event* in the life of the church, the liturgical assembly actualizes the church and is a symbol of God’s presence.”⁶⁵⁵

The dialogue between the Presider and the ‘assembly’ is the place that the liturgy offers for moral formation and decision-making, and it is also the place in which the unity the presider proclaims is made incarnate. But there is more involved in this understanding, the assembly and the talents and charisms of contained within it, are an integral part in all of the Church’s sacramental response and action, including the formation of members for all degrees of commitment and action in the Church.

⁶⁵⁴ This clearly can lead to a deep study of the foundations of linguistics and especially the relationship of language to cultural norms and as the carriers of ethical value systems. As has been seen in the liturgical movement of the last 60 years words are not politically neutral, and the control of the language of presentation, and the form of the communication, is an area that needs careful reflection, especially in ‘mixed communities’ such as the Church. When this is not approach adequately we face the danger of retreating into ethnic and language ‘ghettos’, or of reverting to a ‘dead language’ as a guarantee of conformity.

⁶⁵⁵ Mitchell, Nathan. op.cit: 66-67.

These norms therefore speak of a way of life and witness based on a communal understanding and interaction, the formation and active inclusion of the faithful; and emphasis that the priest, in the local situation, acting on behalf of the Bishop and in relationship to the Bishop, is to establish “a sense of community within the parish, not only in the important place of the” common celebration of the Sunday Mass, (SC 42) but also in the commitment of all believers to aid others in the Christian ‘way’.

Lastly, the Council was very clear that the intention of the “the promotion and restoration of the liturgy,” as the outward sign of the reform of the life of the Church in the world, was to show forth the “movement of the Holy Spirit in the Church” (SC 43), and to ensure that “pastoral-liturgical action may become even more vigorous in the Church.” (SC 43) The liturgical reform was intended to form a community deeply involved in the world, with pastoral outreach and energy. The liturgy is therefore intended to form and lead the community to a common ethic, action and way of life. This involvement requires formation on how to decide, to discern, and to act so as to aid others in their involvement and commitment. These are the elements that specifically involve formation in the ethical and moral sphere. The way offered by the Council to achieve this is by the study and the development of, and experiments in, the “liturgical science, sacred music, art and pastoral practice” (SC 44) all of which is to be done in a manner of the “closest collaboration.” (SC 46)

These are the norms upon which the Council saw the liturgy was to be developed, reformed and taught, and based on *Sacrosanctum Concilium* 23’s understanding that moral and pastoral theology is to have the structure and norms of the liturgy at its foundation, these are the general norms which provide the matrix for uncovering the implications for moral theology, formation and aiding those coming to a commitment.

5.1.2.1 The Hermeneutic of the Liturgical Reform

Before we progress it is important to note that in addition to these norms *Sacrosanctum Concilium* and the Instructions developed to implement its call for reform use a set of understandings as a consistent mode of interpretation.

The first is that the Paschal Mystery of Christ is the central instrument for the interpretation of the liturgical action (SC 5, 6, 61, 104,106,107,109) and therefore of all Christian life and activity.

The second, more clearly seen in the GIRM, is the embracing of the concept of dialogue, evidenced by the manner in which the core structure of the Post Vatican II liturgy is characterised by a dialogical engagement between the presider and the assembly.

The third is seen in the depth of instruction in the GIRM in respect of the relationship of the Word and the Homily and the Universal prayer. Here the need for a clear process of ‘discernment’ to enable the application of the Word to the life of the community is evident.

Fourthly, the very structure of the liturgy, the dual parts of Word and the Action, of thanksgiving and sacrifice, returns the liturgy and moral decision-making to the very heart of God’s self-revelation, the unity of word and deed as evidenced in the *Dogmatic Constitution on Revelation, Dei Verbum* 2.

And finally, is another question of methodology. The reform of the liturgy at Vatican II was achieved, by a methodology that focused on a “... Return to the sources” a ‘Ressourcement’. (SC 35(2), 50, 92(b), 121) It was from uncovering the ‘sources’,⁶⁵⁶ especially in the life of the early Church, that the revision of “The Rite of the Mass;” and the Rites of Initiation (SC 64-70), especially the adult catechumenate; (SC 64) proceeded. In the same way, sixty years after the end of the Council this study has ‘returned to the sources,’ the source documents developed at the Council, and as a response to the Council, to provide a foundation for identifying a way forward.

Vatican II has called for moral thought and pastoral practice to be formed by the ‘structure and meaning of the liturgy.’

This study now identifies the ‘structure’ in the foundational documents *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, the *Rites of the Christian Initiation of Adults* and the *General Instruction to the Roman Missal*; and then using *Gaudium et Spes* 1-45 and more recent Magisterial teaching, as a tool of interpretation, exposes the process and meaning that the liturgy offers moral formation and the making of commitments.

Conclusions 2: The Norms of *Sacrosanctum Concilium*

1. The primacy of Scripture as the source at the foundation of all moral thought and formation.
2. That all formation and preparation for commitment, while engaging the individual, is essentially communal and directed toward the creation of unity and the common good.
3. All processes of formation require the presence and active participation of the faithful, while recognising the gifts of members of the community to offer special insight and ministries.
4. The liturgy itself can be a rich source of instruction for moral and Christian formation.
5. All processes of formation can benefit from ‘overseeing’, in the Christian context by the Bishop, the pastor and teacher.
6. Formation should be based on multiple sources of insight; and all sources of insight need to be explained and applied. The sources of formation, in a Christian context include Scripture, the liturgy and the fruit of human wisdom and experience.
7. All communication and instruction in formation is to be comprehensible, to those involved, so as to enable active participation. Therefore they should progress using appropriate languages and cultural symbols, to aid comprehension.
8. There is not to be rigid uniformity in formation, especially in matters that do not impact on faith or the ‘good of the whole community’.
9. That people are formed, and morality learned, as much by the lived example of others in the community, as by Words.

⁶⁵⁶ The nature of the catechetical practices in the early church, including its changes, has been seen in the church orders, homilies, catechesis, letters and stories that have been discovered, or closely studied, over the last 150 years. The impact of this study, on liturgical science and on the origins of Christian formation, reinforces the importance of understanding that the liturgical rites, both prayers and actions, are carrying the meaning of the Gospel and the study of texts and their meaning and structure.

5.1.3 The structure and meaning of the Liturgy.

Vatican II calls for all pastoral and moral theological reflection to be guided by the “the general laws governing the structure and meaning of the liturgy,” (SC 23) and the study has outlined these ‘general laws, the norms;’ and now progresses to identify the structure of the liturgy.

The first task is to identify the signs of ‘structure’ which are contained in the documents themselves. These are often overlooked, so let us make them clear.

Vatican II when calling for the restoration of the Catechumenate says: “The catechumenate for adults, comprising several distinct steps, ... this, means the time of the catechumenate, which is intended as a period of suitable instruction, may be sanctified by sacred rites to be celebrated at successive intervals of time....” (SC 64)

And, *The General Instruction to the Roman Missal (GIRM)* opens Chapter 2 which has the revealing title: “The Structure of the Mass: Its Elements and Its Parts,” (GIRM 27) by quoting *Sacrosanctum Concilium* 56: “The Mass consists in some sense of two parts, namely the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist, these being so closely interconnected that they form but one single act of worship.” (GIRM 28)

The GIRM then adds immediately that both the table of “God’s word and of Christ’s Body” (GIRM 28) are to be prepared so that the “faithful may be instructed and refreshed.” (GIRM 28)

The GIRM also notes, almost as an afterthought, “There are also certain rites that open and conclude the celebration.” (GIRM 28)

Therefore both the *Rites of Initiation* and the *General Instruction the Missal*, recognise a structure, which provides worship to God, formation and instruction to the faithful, forms a community and enables the full and active participation of all in the Paschal Mystery of Christ. There is a structure in the liturgical texts which is directed to the formation and full commitment of the faithful in Christ.

The fact of this structure can be identified in other ways. There are indices and chapter headings to both the GIRM and the OICA which outline their structure and order.

However to underline the integral nature of this structure a simple ‘word search’ of words that signify “sequence and order,” that is that one element should follow from those that precede it or lead to those that follow, will help. The use of such words indicates an intentional structure. They often also indicate the stages of development or a hierarchy of structure.

A word search of the *General Instruction to the Roman Missal* shows that the word “then,” which indicates an action that follows its predecessor, is used 111 times, and of these 101 are specifically in respect of the relationship between actions or as guidance for when ministry is to proceed. The word “after”, an indicator of an element following that which precedes it, is used 117 times and only 7 of these are not in respect of order and ministry, and the word “before”, again an indicator of structure, is used 60 times and only 12 are not in respect of order and ministry.

There is evidence therefore that elements of the liturgy follow each other in a consciously chosen, specific, and structured sequence of constituent elements, actions, and words. The structure of the

Liturgy is not an accident; it can be clearly identified and it is foundational to the understanding of the liturgy.

This is clearly reinforced when the *Catechism* says: "The liturgy of the Eucharist unfolds according a *fundamental structure* which has been preserved throughout the centuries down to our own day. It displays *two great parts that form a fundamental unity*: - the gathering, the liturgy of the Word, with readings, homily and general intercessions; - the liturgy of the Eucharist, with the presentation of the bread and wine, the consecratory thanksgiving, and communion. The liturgy of the Word and liturgy of the Eucharist together form "one single act of worship"; The Eucharistic table set for us is the table *both* of the Word of God and of the Body of the Lord. Is this not the same movement as the Paschal meal of the risen Jesus with his disciples? Walking with them he explained the Scriptures to them; sitting with them at table "he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them." (CCC 1346, 1347)

5.1.3.1. The Early Church: the Catechumenate and the Sunday Liturgy

To identify the elements arising directly from this structure, its origin is important. This is especially the case as it is directly linked to formation. The origins of the distinction, between the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist, within a unified act of worship, as outlined here in the *Catechism*; is to be found in the practice of the second to the fourth centuries.

The Liturgy of the Word was the formative event in the life of the ecclesial community, most often celebrated in the early morning of the first day of the week. All would gather for the reading of the Scriptures and their being "broken open" by the Bishop and the presbyters. This had a dual focus, the formation of the catechumen and the on-going formation of the baptised. The Eucharist/ breaking of the bread/the *αγαπε* was celebrated in the evening, and only the baptised attended, those who had made a formal commitment. This practice varied and developed, and in time the two elements 'became one' but there was an extended period in the practice of the Church, in which the 'formation of the catechumen' was the clear focus of the Liturgy of the Word. The consistent order at the heart of the Liturgy preserves this memory and it helps explain, and interpret the structure and meaning of the first part of the Sunday liturgy, and its subsequent relationship with the Liturgy of the Eucharist.⁶⁵⁷

So there is a structure at the heart of the Church's liturgy but it is not only a structure. As already noted above, Vatican II and the GIRM expect this structure to be approached with a specific set of interpretive tools. The documents of the Council, coupled with the OICA and GIRM, place these tools very clearly before the Church. The knowledge that it is in the unity of Words and Deeds,(DV 2) Scripture and Eucharist,(CCC 1346; SC 56) that the presence of God is revealed, leads, in turn to a critical need for an accurate process to enable the discernment of what the Word is calling the community to do. (GIRM 65) This is reinforced by the need to understand what the needs, desires and the real happenings of people's lives are ,(GS 11) of the possible ways of occur made in a mode of genuine dialogue,(ECS 69,70-75,81; LG 37; NA 2,4) collaboration (SC 46;NA 2; GS 36-40; D&P 7;ET

⁶⁵⁷ This is important given that the twentieth century restoration of the catechumenate, both being an active process of adult formation in 'the way' of Christian living, took the ancient form as its template.

50) and co-responsibility.(GIRM 61,62,71)⁶⁵⁸ The heart of this understanding is that all members of the community need to be willing and able to see the Lord present, incarnate in the events of life and the community, and to know and be committed to an agreed way forward This will only happen when the analysis of all the events and actions, of the Christian community are characterised by the Paschal Mystery,(SC 5,6,61,104-107,109;GS 22,41,45;CCC 1115,1171,1239,1260) a dying to self in loving service of the other. In addition to this focus on the understanding of these mysteries in the lives of believers; the Council also understands that the Mystery of Christ's redemption can also be identified, if unconsciously, in the lives of all people of good will. (GS 22; D&P 15, 17, 47)

The link between all these themes can be clearly identified in the following paragraph from the *Catechism*: ""Since Christ died for all, and since *all men* are in fact called to one and the same destiny, which is divine, we must hold that *the Holy Spirit offers* to all the possibility of being made *partakers, in a way known to God, of the Paschal Mystery.*" *Every man* who is ignorant of the Gospel of Christ and of his Church, but seeks the truth and does the will of God in accordance with his understanding of it, can be saved. It may be supposed that such persons would have desired Baptism explicitly if they had known its necessity." (CCC 1260)

The mystery revealed in Christ is directed to all of humanity, and life will be found, in Him, with Him and through Him; by any person seeking truth and understanding, forming and being true to the decision of their conscience, and committing to witnessing to the conclusions in their words and deeds.

So what does the structure of the Liturgy tell us in respect of formation and the making of commitments?

The first thing to highlight is that the two fold structure of the Liturgy identifies that the Liturgy of the Word has its origins in the Church's process of formation and discernment, the catechumenate; and that the Eucharist is then the place where those who are 'committed' gather. The distinction between the two elements formation and commitment is at the heart of the 2-fold structure of the Liturgy. The structure of the Catechumenate, and therefore the Liturgy of the Word is *the* process of formation in the Church, and this directly influences our understanding of the gathering and the Liturgy of the Word as it is here that men and women are welcomed with their deep, existential questions, to come to an understanding of the 'right and just' way forward.

Coupled with this is the understanding that by focusing on the purpose of the first part of the Liturgy as being linked to the rebirth of the OICA/catechumenate, it also reinforces the most ancient understanding: Christian formation is directed to a 'way of life' (Didache) which is communal and contains certain expectations. This will be the understanding of the manner of formation to which the Liturgy of the Word will be directed. However it is important to note that the post commitment life of the Church, the Liturgy of the Eucharist, while maintaining the element of ongoing formation, is focused on the action, the deeds of Christ, a life of sacrificial self-giving in active service.

⁶⁵⁸ Benedict XVI, "*Church Membership and Pastoral Co-Responsibility* Address at the Opening of the Pastoral Convention of the Diocese of Rome, Basilica of Saint John Lateran, 26 May 2009, *Insegnamenti di Benedetto XVI, vol V/1 2009*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Roma, (2010) pp. 899-906.

Secondly, the OICA contains an understanding that the formation in this 'consistent way of life' is founded on a simple formula: the reflection on the scripture by discussion and instruction, coupled with accompanying the sponsor in the active living of their life, in prayer and service. The way of formation is to focus on a person's way of life and to support them as the Scriptures and prayer influences their character and behaviour and this in turn will be expressed in their active involvement in the ministry and outreach of the community.

The way in which this happens is by a regular gathering and a communal listening to, and breaking open of, the scriptures, under the leadership and formation of the 'apostle.'

Thirdly, this formation is not a one-off event. The whole community, but particularly those in the OICA, live this formation seasonally, in Christ. Formation is an on-going focus of the lives of all in the community. But it has the character of 'growth and development' as it follows the cyclic development of the mystery of the incarnation in the seasons of the Church's liturgy. The *Catechism* summarises this: "The one Paschal Mystery" (CCC 1171) unfolds, with the quality of 'gradualism,' during the liturgical year in a "cycle of feasts surrounding the mystery of the incarnation (Annunciation, Christmas, and Epiphany)" (CCC 1171) but at the same time "they commemorate the beginning of our salvation and communicate to us the first fruits of the Paschal Mystery." (CCC 1171) The liturgical celebrations of the mysteries of the incarnation, in this seasonal cycle, gradually reveal the fullness of the Paschal Mystery to which they are inextricably linked. The ordinary rhythm of Church life is therefore formative. The seasonal pattern, through Advent and Christmas, with the emphasis on the Incarnation; the Feasts, with their focus on one aspect of the mystery; Ordinary time in which the 'mystery' is revealed in glimpses; will through the pattern of reflection and guidance, lead the individual, and the whole community, to see and proclaim the fullness of the direct revelation in Christ, which is liturgically celebrated in the Paschal Triduum.

Conclusions 3: The Catechumenal structure of the Liturgy.

1. The Liturgy is structured with several distinct steps, and the structure shows that formation involves both Word and Deed. Formation will include Word, intellectual formation and presentation in words, written and spoken; but it also requires the witness of authentic deeds, a formation through action.
2. The fullness of formation will be seen when a community is brought together and sent on mission once formed.
3. The patterns contained in Christian formation are not just for Christians, but offer a model for all people of good will.
4. The starting point of all formation is the existential questions that are common to all people.
5. That all formation is primarily focused to living a 'way of life', and it will be characterised by being able to walk at the pace of those being formed, therefore it is gradual, developmental and is characterised by a progressive 'seasonal' development of understanding and commitment.
6. That formation is an on-going element of life and the re-formation of the community will follow the same pattern as the original formation of new members.
7. All those involved in the processes of formation are to be actively involved.
8. That formation is about inner change and growth, and this is expressed in external symbols and rituals of progress and support.
9. There is a common structure of formation to be seen in the OICA, the GIRM, Gaudium et Spes 1-45 and the seasonal life of the Church's year.

Diagram 2: A Comparison of the Structure of the Sunday Liturgy, the Rites of Christian Initiation and *Gaudium et Spes* 1-45

The Sunday Liturgy (GIRM)	OICA (up until the Lent)	OICA (Lent and the Vigil)	OICA simple form	<i>Gaudium et Spes</i>																		
Community gather #46 Entrance #47 Introduction#47-48	Community gather #70 Entry into the Church #90 (free choice) Introduction #68-72		Community Gather #244 Reception #245-250 (free choice).Entry into the Church #251	Situation of humanity in the modern world (GS 1-7)																		
Reverence of Altar and Greeting of People #49-50																						
Sign of the Cross #50	Sign of the Cross #83ff																					
Penitential Rite #51	Exorcism #		Prayer and penitential #254	Situation of the heart of humanity (GS 10)																		
Collect																						
Word <table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <tr><td>Silence</td><td>#50</td></tr> <tr><td>Biblical readings</td><td>#57-60</td></tr> <tr><td>Psalm</td><td>#61</td></tr> </table>	Silence	#50	Biblical readings	#57-60	Psalm	#61	Word <table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <tr><td>Silence</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>Biblical readings</td><td>#92ff</td></tr> </table>	Silence		Biblical readings	#92ff	Word <table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <tr><td>Silence</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>Word</td><td>#161,</td></tr> <tr><td>And</td><td>168,1</td></tr> <tr><td>Homily</td><td>74</td></tr> </table>	Silence		Word	#161,	And	168,1	Homily	74	Word #253	Sources of Wisdom and the presence of God's Spirit (GS 11-15)
Silence	#50																					
Biblical readings	#57-60																					
Psalm	#61																					
Silence																						
Biblical readings	#92ff																					
Silence																						
Word	#161,																					
And	168,1																					
Homily	74																					
			Presentation of Creed and Our Father #181-190																			
Gospel #62	Gospel #92		Gospel #191																			
Homily #65	Homily #92		Homily																			
Creed	Scrutiny		Profession of faith #199																			
Prayer of the Faithful (universal Prayer) #67-68	Prayer #94ff		Litany #214																			
Commitment			Commitment : Baptism (#220-222), anointing (#224) and confirmation (#227-231)	Free choice to converse with God (GS 18-21) Accept the Incarnate Word (GS 22)																		
Liturgy of the Eucharist #72ff			Eucharist #232-234	Eucharist #271-277																		
The Lord's Prayer #81			The Lord's Prayer	The Lord's Prayer																		
Sign of Peace # 82			Sign of Peace	Sign of Peace																		
Communion #84-87			Communion	Communion																		
Concluding Rites, being sent #90ff			Concluding Rites, and Mystagogia #235-239	Concluding Rites																		
				Agents of peace (GS 39,46,48,77,659,78)																		
				Live in the Community of the Church, committed to love of neighbour and God (GS 23-29)																		
				Put it into action (GS 35) In the world (GS 36.660)																		

⁶⁵⁹ Especially GS 77 which is a hymn to peace as foundational to the life and virtue of the Christian

⁶⁶⁰ The manner of this engagement is outlined in the following paragraphs: it will occur gradually and by collaboration in Christ (GS 36-40); by using all disciplines and expertise (GS 43) and in unity with all other disciples in the world for the salvation of all (GS 43 -45).

Diagram 3: A comparison of the structure of the Sunday Liturgy, the Rites of Initiation, *Gaudium et Spes* 1-45 and the seasonal cycle of the liturgical year.

GIRM	OICA	<i>Gaudium et Spes</i>	Seasonally
Gather and prepare #46-48	Gather and prepare # 70-90	(GS 1-7) Ftnb661	Advent
Penitential Rite #51	Exorcisms	Dis-ease at the heart of humanity(GS 10)	Lent
Liturgy of the Word	Word revealed in two sources	Word in humanity	Word made flesh Christmas
Gospel	Gospel	(GS 21)	At the heart of all seasons
Homily	Homily	Dialogue	At the heart of all seasons
Prayer	Prayer	Openness to Spirit	At the heart of all seasons
Eucharist	Commitment :Baptism, confirmation and Eucharist	Choice for Christ (GS 22,32,39)	Paschal Mystery /Easter
Communion	Welcome into community	(GS 23 ff)	Pentecost
Go to love and serve	Mystagogia and lived out	(GS33 ff)	Ordinary time

⁶⁶¹ Recognising the Lord, 'incarnate', present in the exigencies of the world, its joys and its sorrows, its reality.

5.1.4. The tools of interpretation:

5.1.4.1. The process of discernment.

The first process that is offered to interpret our understanding is 'discernment' and it is used to describe two aspects of interpretation within the processes of formation. Firstly it is used to describe the process of formation, in its entirety. Everything involved in formation focuses on 'discerning' the way forward, the authentic choice, and all the elements that will influence that choice. Secondly, it is applied more specifically to the homily. In this context it is used to describe the process in which the Word of God, the scriptures, are heard and a 'discernment' is made as to how the meaning of these scriptures should be applied to the lives of this congregation, on this day. Discernment is the process at the heart of the homily. It reveals what the Lord is saying to this people, here and now.

Using the first understanding of discernment reveals that formation is a process of mutual discernment. The one being formed is to be supported in discerning what their needs and desires are, and whether the community, and its message of a 'way of life,' will help them live life to the full. The community in this process is also involved in discernment, as it is part of their on-going formation and in addition the welcoming of new members involves 'discerning' their readiness to commit to the life of Christ within the community.

So: What is discernment?

The structure and connected process of *Gaudium et Spes*, (Part One: GS nn.1-45), can offer both a process and content to this discernment.

The characteristics of discernment outlined here are founded on the response that the Council made for an understanding of how to engage in "deciphering the authentic signs of God's presence and purpose." (GS 11) The Council identified that this deciphering has to happen in three places: firstly, in a close examination of "the happenings" (GS 11) of daily life. Secondly, in the identification of the needs of the individual and community; and thirdly, in understanding the desires that express the hopes and aspirations of the people of God, in our age.⁶⁶²

Firstly, the Council identified the starting point as an examination of the lived happenings, desires and needs of those involved, these are the "joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties" (GS 1) with which *Gaudium et Spes* encounters the world. Secondly, once identified, these elements are to be analysed through an examination based on "those values which are most highly praised and relating them to their divine source." (GS 11) *Gaudium et Spes* summarises this very succinctly. It says that the "rightful function" (GS 11) of this analysis will occur when there is a willingness to go beyond any single system or ideology so as to let every aspect of a person or community's life be examined in such a way that their needs, desires and happenings, expressed in cultural, economic, social and political insights, are exposed to the supreme commandment of love. The primacy of love

⁶⁶² These three starting points show that commitment is not achieved by the implementation of authoritarian statements; rather commitment is to be the fruit of formation and will be based on an understanding gained by a reflection upon the happenings, hopes and desires, in the light of the Gospel, an idea founded in Paul VI's writing. (OA 39)

and sacrifice is underlined. This in turn will reveal “the full ... dignity of the individual, the knowledge and respect of natural rights and duties especially freedom, and awareness that persons are the active and responsible subjects of social life, and that the foundation of human dignity lies in the interface between the principle of solidarity and the principle of subsidiarity.”⁶⁶³

It is this ongoing interface between people’s lives and the Paschal Mystery of love that has led the Church to identify the following as the core principles of this discernment: “the primacy of persons over structures,”⁶⁶⁴ the recognition of the “spiritual and moral capacities of the individual;”⁶⁶⁵ the “permanent need for inner conversion”⁶⁶⁶ and that all decisions are to “be at the service of humanity.”⁶⁶⁷

The response in any process of discernment and formation based on these principles will reveal the twin elements which create the inner tension of human life: being created in the image of God and therefore seeking companionship and interpersonal communion, and, the awareness of the human tendency to selfishness, arrogance and egocentricity.

However *Gaudium et Spes* declares that the “elements of this material world... reach their crown through him (humanity), and through him raise their voice in free praise of the Creator.” (GS 14) There is at the heart of discernment recognition of the shared destiny of creation and humanity, and that it is humanity that is called on to make reasoned and ethical commitments on behalf of creation and humanity.

At the heart of this searching for the good and true, and humanity’s very dignity, lies the awareness that this common task reveals humanity’s ability to “judge rightly that by our intellect we surpass the material universe, and share in the light of the divine mind.” (GS 15) This ability finds its home in the voice heard in the sanctuary of the heart, the conscience, and the message it contains: “love of God and love of neighbour.” (GS 16) This is not a subjective judgement, nor is it focused on the individual’s personal gain; rather it is a judgement that is revealed by joining “with the rest of humanity in the search for truth and the genuine solution to the numerous problems which arise in the life of individuals and social relationships.” (GS 16) This involves turning away from “blind choice” (GS 16) and as a result of formation finding life “guided by objective norms of morality.” (GS 16)

What are the conditions and elements required to enable this authentic discernment to happen?

Firstly, freedom and choice. It is “only in freedom that we direct ourselves toward goodness,” (GS 17) and therefore human decisions need to be based on what has been freely seen and chosen to be right and just.

But this is not an irrational or blind faith. It is faith seeking understanding, in a reasoned and structured manner.

⁶⁶³ Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Instruction on Christian freedom and liberation*, 22 March 1986, AAS (1987) 554-599; n.73.

⁶⁶⁴ Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, op.cit:75

⁶⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁶⁷ Ibid.

In discussing atheism, *Gaudium et Spes* is very clear that it is the Church's obligation to both "God and man" (GS 21) to oppose all "doctrines and actions" which "contradict reason and the common experience of humanity and dethrone humanity from its native excellence." (GS 21)

The Council is consistent. The process of discernment is always to be relational and reemphasises the need for a commitment to enter into dialogue with those of all understandings, with the Council saying that it is the Church that must find the hidden reasons people hold for opposition. The Church is promulgating the understanding that all people were "made an intelligent and free member of society by God" and that human beings will always "remain an unsolved puzzle to ourselves." (GS 21)

The way forward is to be led by the Holy Spirit (GS 21) who enables the community to be "renewed and purified ceaselessly" (GS 21) so that the relationship with the incarnate Son, present and visible, especially in the poor and those in need, of any kind, will be able to "penetrate our entire life including its worldly dimensions, and activate us toward justice and love, especially regarding the needy." (GS 21) Who is involved and how they are to engage in this discernment is also outlined by the Council: "The Church sincerely professes that all people, believers, and unbelievers alike, ought to work for the rightful betterment of this world in which all alike live; such an ideal cannot be realised, however, apart from sincere and prudent dialogue." (GS 21)

The framework that the Council uses is to make a direct connection between Christology and a full humanism. It says that it is in the "mystery of the incarnate Word that the mystery of man takes on light." (GS 22) Christ the Lord is "the image of the invisible God" (GS 22) however the place of initial encounter with his life and example is "deeply incarnational" and "in the world." (GS 2, 40, 43, 44, 48, 57) The manner of His witness is thoroughly 'human', "he worked with human hands; he thought with the human mind, acted by human choice and loved with a human heart, he has truly become been made one of us" (GS 22) and to this is 'added' the element that makes the full revelation, it is fully revealed in the specific action of "the free shedding of his own blood." (GS 22) The manner in which he loved and gave himself for us is specific, it was "by suffering for us that he not only provided us with an example for our imitation but blazed the trail, and if we follow it, life and death are made holy and take on new meaning," (GS 22) and "This holds true not only for Christians but for all people of goodwill, in whose heart grace works in an unseen way." (GS 22)

This is a crucial clause for the understanding that this mode of decision-making, formation and the making of commitments is applicable to all. The Council says "Christ died for all people, man offers to every man the possibility of being associated with this Paschal Mystery." (GS 22) "At the same time, God and man that he is, he (Christ) reveals to us also the true face of man, 'fully revealing man to man himself'." ⁶⁶⁸ It is in Christ and through Christ and with Christ that the riddles of sorrow and death grow meaningful.

Formation is to occur in the world and is not in conflict with a full humanism. What is critical and distinctive of the Christian understanding is the way of relating and finding the fullness of human life. It is revealed in the Paschal Mystery, to freely die in the service of love and truth.

⁶⁶⁸ Pontifical Committee for International Eucharistic Congresses. 48th INTERNATIONAL EUCHARISTIC CONGRESS. Guadalajara, Mexico. 10-14 Oct. 2004. "The Eucharist, Light and Life of the New Millennium", n.15.

Gaudium et Spes 23 to 32 show that having been shown the way to “a deeper level of interpersonal relationship,” (GS 23) and to the mutual respect for the full spiritual dignity of the person; people become aware that the fullness of understanding, will only happen by the promotion of “communion between peoples” (GS 23) and by a seeking a “deeper understanding of the laws of social life which the Creator has written into man’s moral and spiritual nature.” (GS 23) This means, authentic processes of discernment are predicated on leading people of all races, cultures and languages to realise that they constitute one family and are increasingly dependent on each other. This fundamental interdependence must therefore be at the base of formation. “The progress of the human person, and the advance of society itself, hinge on one another”, (GS 25) and it is in recognizing these reciprocal duties, and through fraternal dialogue, that human beings “develop all our gifts and are able to rise to our destiny.” (GS 25) This recognition coupled with the appreciation of a community’s “distinctive culture”⁶⁶⁹ is strongly acknowledged in the *Instruction on Christian initiation*. The Instruction calls for the church community to “carefully and prudently”⁶⁷⁰ display a deep consideration of “a country’s distinctive culture”⁶⁷¹ and to ensure that the elements of the local culture are enabled to “suitably” interface with the living tradition of the Church.

These are not just adaptations to language and culture, however important these are, the adaptations that are called for are those that will enable formation in a manner that will also “correspond to contemporary needs.”⁶⁷² The formative processes of the Church, in all areas, are not to be ‘fossilized’ presentations; rather the formative response, will be the fruit of the dialogue between the established expressions of the Church’s understanding, sourced from the latest Conciliar and magisterial teaching, and contemporary need.

So based upon this “awareness of the exalted dignity proper to the human person” and a deep awareness of the human “rights and duties which are universal and inviolable,” (GS 26) the Council articulates a series of starting points which are non-negotiable and which are necessary for leading a truly human life. It is these that provide the basis for all formation and commitments. These rights and duties, start with a commitment to provide the most fundamental needs of a person or community. This is the provision of “food, clothing, shelter”⁶⁷³, the right to choose a state of life, freely, and to found a family, the right to education, to employment, to a good reputation, to respect, to appropriate information, to activity to accord with the upright norm of one’s own conscience, to protection of privacy and the rightful freedom even in matters religious.” (GS 26)

These are the first steps in formation but they will only happen if all aspects are worked in a way that is “founded on truth, built on justice and animated by love; in freedom (that) it should grow every day toward a more humane balance.”(GS 26)

There are then clear principles provided by *Gaudium et Spes* 27 to underpin formation and discernment and they, without exception, start from the protection of life and then move very quickly to recognizing examples of where the gift of life is violated. The Council names the following as places where the application of these principles reveals immorality or barriers to authentic

⁶⁶⁹ *Instruction on Christian Initiation* 30 /2

⁶⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁶⁷¹ Ibid.

⁶⁷² Ibid.

⁶⁷³ Echoing Matthew 25

formation as a 'child of God': subhuman living conditions, imprisonment, deportation, and slavery, the selling of women and children into prostitution as well as disgraceful working conditions where people are treated as mere tools for profit rather than as free and responsible persons." (GS 27) As the way forward in the face of such barriers the Council calls for the forgiveness of injuries, including those of the enemy (GS 28) and the removal of any type of discrimination "social or cultural, based on sex, race, colour, social condition, language or religion." (GS 29)

This leads to a clear direction to moral theologians in respect of the process of discernment. The Council says all are called on to "cultivate in ourselves moral and social virtues" (GS 30) and this demands a willingness "to develop a sense of responsibility, be conscious for our dignity." (GS 31)

The place and manner in which this is to happen is in the world, and by the application of humanity's "labours and native endowments," (GS 33) the ceaseless seeking to "better our lives" and doing this with "the help of science and technology" combined with "social contacts." (GS 33) The Church is outlining the "moral and religious principles" that are to be applied, but, will not prescribe "a solution to particular problems," (GS 33) rather she offers a set of principles which are to be applied, by discernment, to arrive at the right and just decision and a formed human being.

All of this can only occur when there is a fundamental commitment by human beings to taking "responsibility which extends to building up the world through the welfare of our fellows." (GS 34)

All activity takes its "significance from its relationship to humanity, it proceeds from humanity, it is ordered toward humanity," (GS 35) and human activity, specifically 'work', involves the cultivation of "our resources by going outside of ourselves and beyond ourselves." (GS 35) This reveals the kenotic element that is involved in formation. There is a way of being and acting which is part of the formative process and the Council says that: "the norm of human activity is this: that in accord with the divine plan and will, it harmonizes with the genuine good of the human race, and that it allows men as individuals, and as members of society, to pursue their total vocation and fulfil it." (GS 35)

Human activity and affairs have an "autonomy" (GS 36) that rests in the understanding that "created things and societies ...enjoy their own laws and values which must be gradually deciphered, put to use, and regulated by men" (GS 36) however the Council holds that this autonomy "harmonizes ... with the will of the Creator." (GS 36) The very nature of created things means that they "are endowed with their own stability, truth, goodness, proper laws and order," and humanity "must respect these as he isolates them by the appropriate methods of the individual sciences or arts." (GS 36) The consequence of all this is that when "every branch of learning is carried out in a genuinely scientific manner and in accord with moral norms, it never truly conflicts with faith, for earthly matters and the concerns of faith derive from the same God." (GS 36)

The Church and humanity are therefore to partner in unveiling the truth contained in creation and to form communities and individuals in the light of the findings. This will be done progressively and "gradually;" (GS 36) and it will involve the discovery of the patterns of each science according to its own laws; and will by seeking to "penetrate the secrets of reality with a humble and steady mind." (GS 36) However, this will only occur when the sciences are given their "rightful independence," (GS 36) and all the gifts received and the controversies perceived are explored and debated.

This whole partnership is in need of humility which is made possible by all involved in formation continually being self-examining. This is put rather graphically in *Gaudium et Spes* when it says “all human activity (is) constantly imperilled by pride and deranged self-love and must be purified and perfected by the power of Christ’s cross and resurrection” (GS 37) but this leads to the understanding that: “Redeemed by Christ and made a new creature in the Holy Spirit, man is able to love the things themselves created by God, and ought to do so. He can receive them from God and respect and reverence them as flowing constantly from the hand of God. Grateful to his Benefactor for these creatures, using and enjoying them in detachment and liberty of spirit, man is led forward into a true possession of them, as having nothing, yet possessing all things.” (GS 37)

True discernment therefore calls for the love of all the elements of this world, but it is with a deep respect and reverence that will mean the use and enjoyment of these elements will be with a detachment that displays a willingness to acknowledge their true use, the needs and requirements of others, and not to remain in selfish possession.

Therefore in all areas of the Church’s mission “scriptural, liturgical, doctrinal, pastoral, ecumenical, missionary and social” (ET 50) there is to be an “openness to collaboration” (ET 50) and this in itself will lead to “human perfection and the world’s transformation,” (GS 37) but only when it is founded on an understanding of “the primacy of love (and) the new command of love.”(GS 37)

The role of the believer in the modern world, individually and communally, especially when entering into any activity of formation or seeking to make a commitment to act with other parties, is to enter into the “dialogue between the Church and the world.” (GS 40, 43) This dialogue is to be established on the basis of respect for “the dignity of the human person, and about the human community and the profound meaning of human activity” (GS 40) and the orientation of the Church is to “go forward together with humanity and experience the same earthly lot as the world does... (And) to act as the leaven, the soul, of human society.” (GS 40)

It is here that the Council emphasises the critical link between the incarnation and the Paschal Mystery, the Word and the Eucharist: “For by his incarnation the Father’s Word assumed, and sanctified through his Cross and Resurrection, the whole of humanity body and soul, and through that totality the whole of nature created by God for humanity’s use.” (GS 41)

Within creation, the human person, following the way of Christ, willing to serve the other in the world, can provide the “anchor of the dignity of human nature against all tides of opinion” (GS 41) and this reveals the heart of all formation. It lies in the: “freedom of the sons of God, ... (in) a sacred reverence for the dignity of conscience and its freedom of choice, ... that all human talents are to be employed in God’s service and humanity’s, and that all is to be done in the spirit of charity for all.” (GS 41)

And all of this is to be expressed in the second principle of discernment, which is the “rightful autonomy of the creature.” (GS 41)

This means all involved in formation must recognise and protect “the basic rights of the person and the family, (and) the demands of the common good and the free exercise of the Church’s mission.” (GS 42) Both socially and individually all people of good will are to “keep the laws proper to each discipline, and labour to equip ourselves with a genuine expertise in various fields” (GS 43) so as to

be able to “function in their well-formed Christian conscience to see that the divine law is inscribed in the life of the earthly city.” (GS 43)

The Council summarises the intersection of all these themes, the centrality of Christ, the understanding of the incarnation and Paschal Mystery; human liberty and responsibility, the deep immersion in humanity and a full humanism based on the primacy of love; in a framework of understanding grounded in the kenotic, self-giving love and service of Christ, all lived in the complexity of joy and sorrow, hope and an awareness of the fruit of our choices. This is summarised in a paragraph of Gospel proclamation:

“For God's Word, by whom all things were made, was Himself made flesh so that as perfect man He might save all men and sum up all things in Himself. The Lord is the goal of human history, the focal point of the longings of history and of civilization, the centre of the human race, the joy of every heart and the answer to all its yearnings. He it is Whom the Father raised from the dead, lifted on high and stationed at His right hand, making Him judge of the living and the dead. Enlivened and united in His Spirit, we journey toward the consummation of human history, one which fully accords with the counsel of God's love: "To re-establish all things in Christ, both those in the heavens and those on the earth" (Eph. 11:10). (GS 45)

Ultimately therefore formation will consist in choosing to make a commitment to follow the way of Christ who as “God’s word (by whom all things were made) who was himself made flesh so that as the perfect man he might save all people and sum up all things in himself.” (GS 45)

The OICA sees this same pattern when after a long period of formation, founded on reflection on the Word, learning to meditate and discern and to live in the light of the understandings and frameworks discerned, the person, as the Council does in *Gaudium et Spes*; will be called to take a time of focused preparation, and to commit. However, the impact on the person’s life needs to be identified before a person comes to the place of public commitment. Public commitment comes when the person and the community have discerned that they are formed in Christ. This can only occur at a time when the person is ready.

The OICA teaches us that before someone makes such a public declaration or decision there must be clarity that they are enlightened or illumined. The public declaration of a decision in respect of a position or an act needs the person to know what they are doing, and be aware of and willing to live with both the consequences and the impact of the decision on their concrete situation and circumstance.

The OICA also reveals that even after a decision or commitment has been made there is a need to continue to be aware of the implications and consequences of such a commitment. In the catechumenate this is the ‘mystagogia’ which focuses on the impact of the individual’s relationship to the community and unpacks the depth of mystery which has been celebrated.

The OICA aids the understanding of discernment by offering four interrelated and ongoing aspects of formation and the making and maintenance of commitments. There are those factors which are *internal* to the subject and which can only be made known by the examination of the presuppositions and cultural demands the subject carries internally, by a personal self-examination in respect of their prejudices and barriers to accepting the other; there the elements which are

external elements that are exposed in the partnerships within the community and that call for a deepening of information, resources and companionship; there are the elements that are public, the decision is to be lived out, in the public forum; and this happens whether the decision is to act or not to act; both involve a moral decision; both need to be the fruit of a full discernment; and lastly, these internal, external and public elements are not only interrelated but they are also ongoing. This means that with every decision comes the ongoing need to maintain the commitment, to die to self, to serve, to face the consequences and the demands that result, in other words, the content and the pattern of the Paschal Mystery becomes the ongoing methodology of a moral life.

This exploration of the complex reality of discernment is at the heart of the call to apply the Scriptures to the issues and life of the community gathered. It also makes clear that the Christian life cannot be reduced to a 'set of norms' or to 'blind obedience'. Formation is not a simple process. It is complex, and involves the bringing to bear of all the wisdom, experience and awareness of the whole community⁶⁷⁴.

Conclusions 4: Discernment.

1. The starting point of discerning the way to proceed, in formation and moral decisions, is to identify the "happenings", needs and desires of the parties involved.
2. The criteria of judgment will ultimately be the law of love, of God and neighbour, and sacrifice.
3. All involved in discernment are to be recognised as free, active and responsible subjects.
4. Discernment is to have at its foundation the work of the intellect, the primacy of conscience, freedom and choice, and aims to unveil the truth in creation and human wisdom, in dialogue.
5. Discernment is a rational process; nothing will contradict reason and the common experience of humanity.
6. The aim of discernment is the betterment of the world, in a fully human manner, recognising human dignity, reciprocal rights and duties, cultural diversity and fraternal dialogue.
7. There are non-negotiable elements at the foundation of moral discernment. They start with the provision of the essentials of life, and do not allow for violations of human dignity.
8. Discernment will involve the human sciences, studies, with their own laws, and will apply them with a deep respect and reverence for all the elements of the world.
9. The processes of discernment require collaboration, respect autonomy and proceed with a primacy of love. Discernment is an ongoing process; it is aware of and responds to the impact of the decisions made and the positions held. It involves an on-going commitment.

⁶⁷⁴ It is at this stage of the Liturgy that the Church professes its faith in a series of summarised and concise statements: the Creed. It will do the same in praying for the coming of the kingdom in the Lord's Prayer. The OICA sees these as the appropriate symbols for expressing the full sharing of the Christian message and insight, and they are given as 'aide de memoire' in the process of initiation. These "Ancient documents of faith and prayer (...the Creed and Lord's Prayer)." (Christian Initiation of Adults: 25/2) are seen as carrying within themselves a summary of the understanding of the world that is foundational to the choice of the way of life, in Christ. The knowledge of the complete *Summa Theologica* is not required, however, the gifts that the whole community have are being promised, to all members of the Church, to aid in discernment, decision-making and the living out of our commitments.

5.1.4.2. The process of dialogue.

Ecclesiam Suam, Gaudium et Spes and the documents of The Pontifical Commissions⁶⁷⁵, show that at the heart of the structure of the liturgy, the formation of the OICA, and the formation and the encounter of all human beings, is the process of discernment, which has just been outlined, and it, in turn, has at its heart a distinctive mode of encounter: 'dialogue.'⁶⁷⁶

Ryan observes that in the *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church: Lumen Gentium* there was a deliberate choice not to use: "Words of alienation and condemnation" but rather "The church developed a new language: friendship, brotherhood, sisterhood, and conscience, the dignity of every person, collegiality, reconciliation, and mutuality,"⁶⁷⁷ and he concludes by saying that, "Dialogue is the word that captures their spirit. Vatican II represents a language reversal- from monologue to dialogue- in the history of the Church."⁶⁷⁸

The focus on dialogue is a key element in the structural patterns of the reform of the Liturgy⁶⁷⁹ as they appeared. The concept made its formal appearance in Paul VI's encyclical *Ecclesiam Suam*⁶⁸⁰ and was refined during John Paul II's pontificate. The concept of 'dialogue' starts with the understanding that all people are to be approached as partners, with a readiness to adapt to their need by taking into account the intelligences, understandings and circumstances they carry. Therefore all authentic encounters will have a specific character: the partners will approach each other with clarity, combining the virtues of meekness and confidence, (ECS 81/2-81/3) and the understanding that they are seeking the good of both parties and looking for a relationship "built on intimacy and friendship." (ECS 81/3) This will be enabled by allowing for "the psychological and moral circumstances of the hearer" (ECS 81/4) and engaging with a mentality "wedded to charity and understanding and to love." (ECS 82) Dialogue seeks to "adapt the mode of the mission to the particular age, environment, education and social condition of men's lives;" (ECS 86) and will be characterised by a willingness to listen and to share the silence; especially when it is expressing the voice of suffering.

⁶⁷⁵ Pontifical Committee for International Eucharistic Congresses. 48th INTERNATIONAL EUCHARISTIC CONGRESS. Guadalajara, Mexico. 10-14 Oct. 2004. "The Eucharist, Light and Life of the New Millennium".

- *The Apostolic Tradition*, A report of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, 55; Singapore 1991.
- *The Word of Life*, a Statement on Revelation and Faith, a Report of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity 122. Rio de Janeiro, 1996.

⁶⁷⁶ Twice when outlining the content of discernment in formation *Gaudium et Spes* leads us to see that at the heart of discernment is: "a sincere and prudent dialogue" (GS 21) with "people of all opinions; and "Dialogue between the Church and the world." (GS 40,43)

⁶⁷⁷ Ryan, Thomas. "Summary of Interventions." Proc. of Vatican II after Fifty Years: Dialogue and Catholic Identity, Georgetown University, Washington DC.

⁶⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁷⁹ As witnessed by the 25 direct examples of dialogical interaction between the assembly and the ministers in the Sunday Eucharist.

⁶⁸⁰ *Ecclesiam Suam: Encyclical Letter on the Church* of Pope Paul VI, August 06, 1964.

Dialogue is at the heart of all genuine partnerships of formation. Dialogue has the goal of seeking peace; by identifying common ideals. Paul VI outlined these: “religious liberty, human brotherhood, education, culture, social welfare, and civic order” (ECS 108) and with the expressed intention of aiding all to meet their “legitimate desires.” (ECS 109)

Paul VI said that dialogue is best achieved by a “primacy of service and love” (ECS 110) and that this is the pattern that is called for of the Church. It is important to note that dialogue is not based solely upon an exchange of words; rather, it includes the witness that comes from the unity of the words and the deeds of those involved, particularly in service and love.

Nostra Aetate and *Gaudium et Spes*⁶⁸¹ identify the starting point of dialogue in the set of questions common to all of humanity, believer and non-believer alike. These have been outlined above but *Nostra Aetate*'s form clearly provides an expression of the basis of the commonality required in dialogue:

“What is man? What is the meaning, the aim of our life? What is moral good, what is sin? Whence suffering and what purpose does it serve?” Which is the road to true happiness? And ultimately the mystery of our existence: whence do we come, and where are we going?” (NA 1)

These common questions, and the seeking of a common response, are the starting point of a dialogue which will “reverence all ways of conduct and of life, precepts and teachings even though they differ from the expressions of the Church.” *Nostra Aetate* calls for a commitment on the part of the Church and all people of good will to seek the truth in the hearts of others, and therefore to enable all to move forward “through dialogue and collaboration.” (NA 2)

This commitment calls upon everyone involved to not just hear a different voice but to develop common practices and investigations. Dialogue, and the collaboration it demands, will not be achieved just through words. They occur by sharing in a “moral life and worship, prayer, almsgiving and fasting,” (NA 3) and commence by coming to an understanding of “the ways” of moral inquiry and the socio-cultural values and understandings of the other, in a manner of prudent loving, and the seeking, recognising and promoting of all that is ‘good’. The Council is clear that it is this pursuit of “mutual understanding...social justice and moral welfare, peace and freedom,” (NA 3) that will ultimately lead to the covenants of worship and the promises expressed fully in Christ.

‘Dialogue and collaboration’ are therefore undertaken with the intention of seeking the rightful betterment of this world by respecting the fundamental rights of human beings.

⁶⁸¹ And in *Gaudium et Spes* they are expressed as: “How to deal with our own discoveries? How to face the trends which are in the world? What is the place and role of humanity in the universe? What is the meaning of individual and collective strivings?” (GS 3) “What is man? What is this sense of sorrow, of evil, of death, which continues to exist despite so much progress? What purpose have these victories purchased at so high a cost? What can man offer to society, what can he expect from it? What follows this earthly life?” (GS 10)

Dialogue has at its core the commitment to take human interaction beyond the sharing of technological developments, to the development of genuine interpersonal relationships. (GS23 This is to happen at all levels, communal, familial, and political and therefore will impact on organisational and associative structures. (GS 25)

Dialogue is an act that is founded on an attitude of “love, respect, courtesy and good will;” (GS28) and the Church sees herself as the servant of such a Dialogue. (GS 92)

Entry into formation based on such an encounter of dialogue therefore presupposes preparation: which in turn involves a requirement for “deep study and formation” and an awareness that this also involves the “seeking of civil, economic and social unity;” (GS 43) and a commitment to the provision of the “joint concern and energy” (GS 43) that is required for such an engagement. Dialogue necessarily entails the development of understandings between communities and cultures; (GS 56) and a commitment, by the Church, and all involved in dialogue, to ensuring its ethical application. Areas where dialogue had already been seen to bear fruit (sixty years ago) were identified in *Gaudium et Spes*, as: protecting those in the care of groups and individuals (GS 79), social justice, (GS 90) industrial conflict resolution (GS 65); and cooperation between nations (GS 90).

The major barriers to dialogue and collaboration are identified as the limitations that are imposed by ‘self-interest’.

The Council understands that dialogue requires the identification of all the “elements which are true and good” (OT 16), and that these are seldom acknowledged in, political, economic and social analysis. The Council calls them: the “precious things, both religious and human” (GS 92); the “seeds of contemplation” (AG 18), the “elements of truth and grace” (AG9), and identifies these as the “seeds of the Word” (AG 11, 15), and says that it is their inclusion which will result in the formation of people who will seek to “raise the truth which illumines all mankind” (NA2).” (D&M 26)

Dialogue is also a way of acting. It is most clearly revealed in the attitude and spirit which guides the conduct of those involved. Dialogue calls for concern, respect, and hospitality toward the other while leaving room for the other’s identity, their modes of expression, and their values to influence the engagement. Dialogue is often a simple ‘presence’ and witness, revealed in service; before it is a direct proclamation of the understanding of the ‘receiving’ party. John Paul II says dialogue is the heart of moral formation: as in all encounters of dialogue the law of conscience is sovereign, and “no one must be constrained to act against his conscience, nor ought he to be impeded in acting according to his conscience, especially in religious matters.” (DH3).

These understandings directly parallel the way of formation revealed in the OICA. In dialogue there is an expectation of “mutual transformation”. It is the place in which “the mysterious and silent Spirit (who) opens the paths of dialogue to individuals and peoples in order to overcome racial, social, and religious differences and to bring mutual enrichment.” (D&M 44)

The patterns of dialogue also recognise the contribution of those who enable the ‘breaking open’ of the wisdom of the age and of those gathered. In the life of the Church these are the ministers, the Bishop or priest and the catechists. This ministerial role, is called on to carry the wisdom of the Tradition, the magisterial element of the church’s contribution, but more, he or she is also to be a

witness to the 'method' of Christ, the one who listens and does not judge, who seeks the opening of eyes, healing of hearts and the bringing down of barriers.

5.1.4.2.1. Dialogue in the Liturgy.

This is graphically seen in the examples which the Church has chosen, over the centuries for the Lenten formation of the Catechumen in the OICA. These are contained in the Lectionary readings, for the three Sundays of Lent, when catechumens are in their final preparation for making a commitment to Christ. They each have a strong illustration of a dialogue. The woman at the well and the man born blind are not disciples, they are people, encountered in the midst of their daily lives, who ask the questions which arise from their daily need and desires. Both of them were ostracised and socially isolated by norms and social conventions; the woman needing to gather water at midday when the other women are not there, due to their judgment ;(John 4:1-42) and the blind man left begging on the side of the road. (John 9:1-12)

The Christ figure meets them 'where they are at' and starts the conversation, a dialogue, at the point of their need. The same is true of the Gospel of the Raising of Lazarus. (John 11:1-44) It is in facing the delay of the Lord's appearing and His resultant non-appearance at the death and funeral of her brother, which caused the questions and anger of the sister to arise.

Christ meets the people in these encounters with an open heart, a clear focus and a willingness to face their reality. It is only then that he asks questions and listens, which in turn leads to references to the scriptures and tradition, "you say worship at Jerusalem and we say on this mountain;" and then, at the appropriate time, to the deep personal call: there will be "a well of life within you," (John 4:14) "stand up," "see and follow me", and "Lazarus come forth."(John 11:43)

Life and light, insight and wisdom, are the result of a process of genuine dialogue.

This same pattern of dialogue lies at the heart of all processes of discernment. The Church's teaching reveals that the moral life begins with the dialogue of integral development, social justice and human liberation and in a particular fashion; it is achieved in a way that is seen to be "an unselfish and impartial manner." (D&P 47) The orientation of the Christian/ the person of good will, is to have a "balanced attitude," neither ingenuous nor overly critical; rather open and receptive, unselfish and impartial, "accepting of differences and of possible contradictions." (D&P 47) There is a call to always go forward with an openness to the truth, and while entering the "unending process" (D&P 49) of such an encounter with "the integrity of his or her own faith," (D&P 49) to be faithful to the engagement even in the face of difficulty and rejection.

Why is this understanding of 'dialogue' so important?

All these rich understandings of dialogue are of vital importance because one of the major changes, as indicated by Ryan at the beginning of this section, is that Vatican II, and specifically the liturgical form of encounter, has made a deliberate choice to be dialogical. The patterns of dialogue are at the heart of the liturgical "structure and meaning" and all the factors that have just been outlined are the deep moral and ethical presuppositions contained in the "dialogues of the Liturgy." The actions and prayers of the liturgy must be read with all these understandings. There are at least twenty

five⁶⁸² times in the Sunday Liturgy in which the form of proclamation and the interrelationship between Christ present in the Minister and Christ present in the Assembly, Word or Eucharist, are framed in a dialogical greeting or a doxology. Whenever a pattern such as this is used, in the Liturgy or in human moral encounter and formation, it is a call to apply all the principles of dialogue, outlined in these last pages, to the active involvement in the prayer or action that follows:

“The Lord be with you.”

“And with your Spirit.”

Conclusion 5: Dialogue

1. All formation is called on to use the structures of dialogue.
2. In dialogue all people involved are to be seen as partners; and all involved are to be ready to listen and adapt to the needs of the other, to build upon an expectation of intimacy and friendship, and to adapt to the social conditions of the dialogue partner.
3. The goal of dialogue is peace. Peace founded on the recognition of fundamental human rights and needs.
4. Dialogue is NOT just a process of words; the primary witness in dialogue is the witness of life, service and love.
5. Dialogue starts with the existential questions, needs and desires of human beings.
6. True dialogue will build on collaborative action with the attitude of love, respect, good will and courtesy.
7. Dialogue demands the deep study of all elements involved, especially of the partner’s positions.
8. Dialogue will always respect the conscience of the other, even if deeply opposed.
9. Those who enter a process of dialogue are willing to enter an ‘unending’ process.
10. Dialogue will ultimately lead to the discussion of truth, human worth and religious insight.

5.1.4.3. The unity of Word and Deed: revealing the Paschal Mystery.

The third interpretive insight of this study has been the; the unity of Word and Deed revealing the Paschal Mystery.

The ‘word’ is often emphasised as the core element in moral discernment and judgement, and it often dominates processes of formation with resources focused on written sources and lectures of talks, again dominated by words. These are often disconnected from the situation of those gathered or facing the issue, what people are doing or have done, or should do; or are left as an objective norm to be applied.

⁶⁸² There are more when other rites or elements particular to a season, feast or celebration are added.

The insight of the liturgy, reflecting the unity of *Dei Verbum 2*, is that the word can be preached, framed as a series of norms, and even 'dictated', but there comes a point at which a commitment, a step beyond 'knowing,' and words is called for.

There are many examples of 'people of good will' who witness to the same understandings, as those revealed in the Gospel. Without consciously naming that they are one in the Paschal Mystery of Christ or responding to the Holy Spirit; but that is what is happening.

This understanding is shown in the moment when, without words, and without knowing that they are revealing the way of Christ, a person acts in a way that is right and or just.

This will be an action of self-sacrifice, and the deep Christian insight is that it will also be an action of *αγαπε*.

People can conform to words and manifestos, or they can be judged as having broken the written laws and be punished; but at the deepest level, the giving of oneself to the other in response to the call of what is 'right and just', if it is to be life-giving and fully human, is an action, an act of love.

Human beings are not creating virtue. They become virtuous in response to the gift that has been received, and is revealed, when they respond in love to the other. This is the graced moment. It is here that the Holy Spirit; the patient, knowing, loving Spirit of Christ hovering over the darkness, changes the heart from one willing, or not, to recognise the truth and what is right, to one who is willing to do it.

The scriptural understanding of this insight is clearly seen in the story of rich young man, who has 'conformed' to all elements of the law: has tithed, 'done what he was told to do' but when faced with the final challenge, to go and sell all you have and give it to the poor (a poor who are always with us and therefore this call is universal) and come follow me. And the young man went away sad because he was very rich, and this call to self-giving was too great a demand.

Here is the ultimate challenge of Christian moral formation. Is a person willing, on a 'daily basis,' to be part of the coming of the kingdom, not just by knowing or professing ,in words, what should be done; but by doing it in the specific form of "following me" to Jerusalem and the Cross.

The study of the liturgy tells us that this cannot be done alone. It is necessary to have the witness of the One who shows that it can be done, and others who are on the 'road' with us.

In the events of witness in the Gospel, particularly the post Resurrection stories which show Jesus of Nazareth as the "Risen Christ," it is the fearful disciples who met the one who had 'done it'. He is the primal witness. He is the one who was faithful even unto death. He is the Gospel, He is the Good News.

This is the heart of the Christian understanding, and the primary and initial proclamation, it is He who died, who is Risen. The development of this Resurrection revelation shows a solid bridge to the revelatory presences of Christ in the Liturgy (SC 7) and then to the place of revelation in the process of formation.

Firstly, it is seen in the Johannine understanding that Christ is the Word made flesh and proclaimed in the midst of the community. This is the first revelation of the Risen Christ; he is present in the *Word*.⁶⁸³

Secondly, because no one individual has all the skills and resources required to 'bring in the Kingdom', others are needed. This is the second revelation of the Risen One. The charisms of the Holy Spirit are distributed in the community of the baptised, the Risen Christ lives and is revealed in a community, the *Assembly*, the Church, the Risen Body of Christ.

Thirdly, because there is the need for the members of the community to have their eyes opened, their ears unstopped, and their hearts made free; there is a need for a ministry of healing, teaching and leadership. This is the third revelation of the Risen One in the *ministry and leadership* of the Body of Christ, the Church. It is here that He continues to heal our blindness, deafness and hardness of heart.

Fourthly, because there is the ongoing need within the body of Christ, to have one walk with us and support us as we too walk the road that necessarily leads to Jerusalem and Calvary, we are in constant need of being fed and healed. Here is the fourth revelation of Christ, He is revealed in the *Paschal Sacrifice of bread blessed, broken and given*. He unites us with Himself, and we become one in His action and gift of thanksgiving to the Father.

The Post-Resurrection story of the road to Emmaus witnesses to these same understandings. Firstly, He shares their story and the scriptures, the *Word*; then he gathers with them around the table, the *community* is formed 'where two or three are gathered in my name'; and thirdly he is recognised, as Risen in the *breaking of the bread*; and it is He who does these things, he *ministers*. However there is still one element left to fulfil the revelation. There is the necessity for the two disciples to make a free choice to return to Jerusalem, the place of crucified witness and the community, so as to proclaim what has been seen: "And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven gathered together and those who were with them, who said, "The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!" (Luke 24:33-25) The process of the Liturgy is lived out in the lives of disciples and is revealed in the complex of the presences of Christ outlined in *Sacrosanctum Concilium* 7.

So it is in the moral discernment, formation and the making of commitments. There is a need to recognise the 'Other', in the words that are spoken, the community gathered and in a willingness to serve them and to be broken in care and attention to the reality involved at the heart of the situation or issue at hand. There is still though one more element required the commitment that knowing what to do a person is willing to do it, with courage and knowing that it involves risk and sacrifice. This is the Paschal Mystery revealed at every stage, die to self and there will be revealed the fullness of life.

Conclusions 6: The Presence of Christ in the Community.

1. What is seen, known, heard and read has ultimately, if it is seen to be 'right and just,' to be done!
2. The unity of our words and our deeds, the putting into action of that which has been discerned to be morally right, or the commitment that has been freely made after formation; will reveal the presence of God, and the fullness of life.
3. The putting into practice, doing what is known to be right and just, will always involve love and sacrifice. The revelatory nature of the union of word and deed, will ultimately involve others, the community; ministry and entry into the Paschal Mystery, of dying to self out of love of the other.

5.1.4.4 The sources of revelation.

The words and deeds of God in Salvation History are recorded in the Scriptures of the Old Testament, and the fullness of Revelation in the words and deeds of Jesus recorded and handed on in the Gospel. In addition there are the letters which record the life, understandings and the issues arising in the early Church. These are the sources that the liturgy of the Word calls upon when responding to the call to “spread before the faithful, the treasures of the Bible.” (GIRM 57 quoting SC 51) However, there is a need to clarify the relationship between the Scriptures, and the sources of Revelation, that are to be placed before the community.

The *Catechism* (CCC 50) identifies two sources of revelation, and each of them is offered in the Liturgy of the Word. The two sources are named. Firstly the encounter of humanity with God by the use of “natural reason,” (CCC 50) and secondly, the “utterly free” revelation by God in “his beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit.”(CCC 50)

The first source of revelation is identified as having two places of departure: “the physical world, and the human person.”(CCC 31) The *Catechism* says that human reflection upon the reality of the physical world, especially from the perspective of “movement, becoming, contingency, and the world's order and beauty,” (CCC 32) and the human person especially from an examination of humanity’s “openness to truth and beauty, his sense of moral goodness, his freedom and the voice of his conscience, with his longings for the infinite and for happiness;”(CCC33) will lead to ‘glimpses’ of God’s action. This is especially seen in the events of the history of salvation and creation.

Where are these insights gathered and placed before us? In the story of the people of Israel’s encounter with the Lord, and in their reflections on moral goodness, creation, the longings of the human heart and in the on-going experience of ‘people of good will’ who respond to the same ‘glimpses’ of God.

The *Catechism* then proceeds, to outline the nature (CCC 51-53)and stages (CCC 54-64)of this, God’s plan of revelation, and leads us to the heart of the Christian message, the second source, and the fullness of revelation, the words and deeds, the person, life, death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ. (CCC 65)

The first source is a compilation of the wisdom of humanity, distilled from human experience and expressed in law, history, myth, wisdom sayings, proverbs, prayer and prophecy and placed before the community to articulate the insight of revelation contained in the life events of salvation history and human wisdom.

Liturgically this occurs in the First reading of the Liturgy of the Word. The response to hearing these stories is to meditate and reflect and to respond with a communal acclamation. But more importantly, the readings from Torah and the Prophets are directly linked to the full revelation in Christ, brought to the community by listening to Christ in the Gospel. The insights revealed in creation, and the understandings of the Gospel are to be united and Christ takes the needs of this people, the wisdom seen in the readings, and He discerns and proclaims the Gospel of salvation. This is seen in the manner in which, in the Post Vatican II reform of the Lectionary, there is a direct link between the Old Testament reading and the Gospel. It is Christ who is the interpreter and who gives

the “fuller understanding and a greater effectiveness of the word,” (GIRM 29) by making it a word which is “relevant to human existence.”(ES 91) It is Christ Risen and present in the Word, the Minister and the Assembly who makes the link between the hopes and aspirations of humanity, the glimpses that have been experienced and then expressed in their ‘reasoned’ understandings, and reveals the fullness of life in God, found in Jesus of Nazareth.

In addition to the ‘scriptures’ it is important to see that in the process of discernment there is the ability to include the wisdom of other traditions, ways of thinking and investigation, among the sources of wisdom and revelation. This was identified in *Nostra Aetate* and the Pontifical Council for Inter-religious Dialogue’s document: “*Dialogue and Proclamation: Reflections and Orientations on Interreligious Dialogue and the Proclamation of the Gospel*” of 1991. In these reflections dialogue starts with the common experience of humanity and both documents call for a deeper understanding to be made available by a common reflection on the wisdom contained, specifically, in Hinduism, Buddhism,(NA 2) Islam (NA 3) and the experience of ‘the people of the covenant.’ (NA 4)

5.1.4.4.1. The process to discern the Voice of the Risen Christ.

Within the structure of the Liturgy of the Word there are also dialogues and acclamations (Psalms and Gospel acclamations) which are to be “signs of the communal celebration and to foster and bring about the communion between priest and people.” (GIRM 34) The response and the interpretation are therefore not personal or arbitrary, rather, the proclamation of the Word, with its associated silences, meditations and responses, is always dependent on the ministry of multiple members of the assembly in their “proper office”, and demands a response to readings which come from multiple sources. However, the process leads all to the same lens of interpretation: “the reading of the Gospel (which) is the high point of the Liturgy of the Word” (GIRM 60) and where “the Risen Christ speaks through the holy scriptures.” (SC 7) There is an additional element that helps in understanding this process. The GIRM describes an element in the liturgy that is “an integral part of the Liturgy of the Word and holds great liturgical and pastoral importance, because it fosters meditation on the word of God.” (GIRM 61) It is the “responsorial Psalm.” (GIRM 61) The Psalm is coupled with a period of meditation and this shows that the acceptance of the message is based on a meditation which provides the place for the “action of the Holy Spirit.” It is the Holy Spirit who ensures that “the Word of God may be grasped by the heart,” (GIRM 56) and to ensure that this can occur, “any kind of haste is clearly to be avoided.” (GIRM 56) After the meditation, the Psalm is sung. It is also important to note that it is the silent meditation that leads to a ‘communal’ response, the singing of the Psalm.

There is a process and order here. *Listen* to the insight gained from history, law, the prophets; the communities around, their proverbs and wisdom; *receive* it; *meditate* upon it; *respond* to it in a common acclamation, and then *interpret* it in and through the direct revelation of God, the ‘words, deeds, life and death of Jesus’, the Gospel.

There is one more step, the message heard is to be *applied* so that it might provide that which is “necessary for the nurturing of the Christian life” (GIRM 65) of the community and the individuals gathered. This is achieved in the homily which is to “take into account both the mystery being celebrated and the particular needs of the listeners.”(GIRM 65)

The application of this liturgical insight to the sources and the processes of formation and the making of commitments will be made clear by the inclusion of elements from the development in *Gaudium et Spes*.

The second Vatican Council was clear that Christians need a keen awareness of the “diversity and difference of opinion even within the Church” (GS 43) and it is only by “unremitting study” and “establishing dialogue with the world and the people of all shades of opinion” (GS 43) that Christian communities, and any individual, can develop relationships with the world. The essential character of this encounter is understood when the elements to be included in such a dialogue are outlined. The Council: “is very clear that it is in the Church’s mind that she has “profited by the history and development of humanity, the experience of past ages, the progress of science, and the treasures hidden in the various forms of human culture.” (GS 44) This is reinforced when the Council talks of the necessity of exploring all of these sources, aided by the “ideas and terminology of various philosophers, by the clarification of their wisdom, by adapting the Gospel to the grasp of all, as well as to the needs of the limited.” (GS 44)

The interface and the inquiry are to be wide. The engagement in formation and preparing to make commitments, requires a recognition that there is an enormous depth to wisdom and that while the Church “shares in the light of the divine mind,” (GS 15) human wisdom is achieved “by relentlessly employing his talents” (GS 15) through making “progress in the practical sciences and in technology and the liberal arts,” (GS 15) and recognising the victories that have been won by the “probing of the material world and in subjecting it to himself.” (GS 15) The Council calls for an ongoing searching “for more penetrating truths” and then emphasises that human “intelligence is not confined to observable data alone, but can with genuine certitude attain to reality itself as knowable, though in consequence of sin that certitude is partly obscured and weakened.” (GS 15)

Where are these certitudes to be found? In similar sources to those found in the Old Testament readings shared in the Liturgy of the Word: in the history, science, law and wisdom of our time; in the expressions of poets and prophets, and in the theories and expressions of understanding that are used to express order and an understanding of the world.

It is on this foundation, after meditation and reflection in the light of the Gospel, that the “intellectual nature of the human person is perfected by wisdom,” (GS 15) a “wisdom (which) gently attracts the mind of man to a quest and a love for what is true and good.” (GS 15) And it will be “steeped in wisdom” (GS 15) that humanity “passes through visible realities to those which are unseen.” (GS 15) In seeking to be fully human, and with the eyes of faith, believers can see that it is the “Holy Spirit” who leads them “by faith to the contemplation and appreciation of the divine plan,” (GS 15) revealed in these elements.

There is one more element to add to the understanding of the revelatory process. Coupled with the centrality of the scriptures as the formative agent in the lives of believers, both in their initial formation and the ongoing formation of the Sunday Liturgy, Pope Paul VI in *Ecclesiam Suam* offered an important insight as to how the revelation occurs, and therefore how we can expect it to continue. Paul VI said that the characteristic way in which God has revealed Godself in human history is in “dialogue.” (ECS 72, 78)

With this element the process is clear but so too is the necessity of pursuing this in a community and by dialogue. Wisdom is to be the fruit of an open exchange and sharing of the insights of all, as none hold all the elements required. The role of the Church is to gently serve, to bring to the table, to enable the other to speak and share, to facilitate the reflection and meditation, and then to offer the gift of the Gospel as a 'lens' of clarity and interpretation, so as to apply the wisdom revealed to the needs of this place and time.

This speaks of the complexity involved in making an 'informed and applied' moral decision and commitment. Moral and pastoral theology is therefore not able to be a practice that remains detached. The wisdom of philosophical ethics, the norms of the legal system, the objective truths seen and identified over time and experience, are all to be sources and resources, but the formation is ultimately to be the fruit of the bringing together of such a rich plethora of sources, which are then applied to the needs of the community in this place and time, and enable a 'conscientious' decision to commit to the life of the Gospel.

Liturgically this proclamation of the 'way forward' and the implications of what has been discerned is the role of the homily and the Universal Prayer.

Conclusion 7: Sources of Revelation.

1. There are two sources of insight and 'revelation' to be incorporated in all formation and moral thought.
2. Firstly: natural reason. Which focuses on the understanding of the physical world, and the human person. Therefore it includes reflections on creation, human longings, the patterns revealed by sciences of all descriptions, and the fruit of artistic insight and inspiration.
3. Secondly: the free gift of God's self-revelation in the person of Jesus of Nazareth and the Gospels, which share the Paschal Mystery and the story of the Incarnation seen in the words, deeds, life, death and resurrection of the Lord. These sources will also include the wisdom of the contemplatives.

5.1.5. The Catechumenate as the archetype of formation and of commitment.

From the earliest time the integrated structure of the Catechumenate was seen as the way of forming the individual and the community, and it is this pattern that has been restored by the OICA. All members of the community lived 'the way' that they had chosen, with all its ethical and moral, social and communal implications. They were aware that there were certain behaviours and occupations which were incompatible with Christian life, and that an integral part of the Christian life is a willingness to self-examine and to be 'evaluated' in respect of their "reason for coming" (*Apostolic Tradition* 15) and that all aspects of the Christian life involve "an in-depth inquiry," (*Apostolic Tradition* 15) conducted by the individual and those in charge of the catechesis.⁶⁸⁴

Additionally, at the heart of the catechumenate, with the understanding that there were behaviours that were clearly incompatible with then Christian life, the faithful knew they were living a response to the Spirit; and the Spirit, is a force of love, life and free choice, who brings a freedom from a legalistic or socially imposed conformity.

The life of the community therefore had at its heart a conscious process the intention of which was to form and sustain disciples, by a liturgical process, as people with the character of Christ, virtuous persons. This formation would be displayed, publically, in the way of life of the individual, primarily arising from their incorporation into the Body of Christ, within the community. The nature of this formation was recognised from the earliest times. The catechumens were formed by listening to, and reflecting on, the Scriptures and hearing the teaching of the apostles and prophets, and this led to the careful preservation of these stories, homilies, and understandings. The intention of this manner of formation was to ensure both the ongoing unity of the Church, the "preserving the assembly of the Church" (*Didascalia* 13) and the continuity and authenticity of the way of life, among believers.

This pattern of initiation involved ongoing processes of inquiry and renewal both by the person involved and the formator, the sponsors, the 'leaders of the community' and the catechumen's neighbours,⁶⁸⁵ those who are living in the same reality as the inquirer.

This pattern worked well in the first two and a half centuries when the Church lived with the element of 'hiddenness' and separation; but after the Edict of Milan, when the Sunday gathering became the place where all were welcome, it had to adapt. Many joined the catechumenate and remained there for a life time. This elongation of the catechumenate was caused by the impact of understandings of forgiveness, the nature of baptism and when combined with the movement to infant baptism, in time, it led to the decline of the catechumenate as a whole.

However the examination of the structure contained in the processes of the post-Constantinian OICA and the OICA of Vatican II; show that the core elements required for formation, and the symbols that carry the meaning, remain in the Liturgy. Within the catechumenate the core symbols are always seen as outward signs of an inner change. For example; the fasting and abstinence

⁶⁸⁴ Metzger: op.cit: 46

⁶⁸⁵ *Instruction on Christian initiation* : 7

involved were seen as outward signs of an inner change of heart. The scrutinies of Lent focus on the preparation of the inner being. Christian life was formed more by an internal 'Examen', than conformity to a set of external norms. However, at the same time, there was a need for the inner change to be revealed in external actions and there was a necessity to be 'seen' doing what is right and just. This 'outward sign of an inner reality' is explicitly named by Ambrose when reflecting on the example of the external anointings; he saw them as the preparation of the athlete for action, for *doing* that which is right and good. (Ambrose *Sermon* 1, 4)

The link between inner formation, and the outward ways of life was reinforced, in the understandings expressed in external symbols. For example when John Chrysostom said that the post baptismal clothing with Christ, symbolically seen in the white garment; was more than external, it is, the sign of the internal change of "being filled with the Holy Spirit and the Trinity indwelling", (ACW 4.17) and this internal change will be displayed in "scrupulous conduct," (ACW 4.17) the moral life.

Formation therefore calls for the "Full and active participation by the people of God." (SC 14) The source of the Christian Spirit lies in the liturgy, the sharing of the common life of the faithful, and it is this that "contains much instruction for the faithful." (SC33) The whole formative process occurs over time and it is the extended formation that enables the "spread of the faith by word and deed." (LG11)

Thirdly, the structure of catechumenal formation is intended for mature adults. The movement to infant baptism and the decline in conscious adult formation was a result of the interface between Christianity and the events of history in the late fifth century, and the philosophical understandings used at that time to express the Mystery. It has however had a consequential impact on the core understandings of formation and responsibility which have moved from an adult conscious interrelationship of responsible believers; to a sacramental theology that focused on the structure and actions of sacramental rites on 'unresponsive subjects'.

Fourthly, the formation has at its core the weekly celebration of the community, which is itself focused on Easter. As Jungmann says: to gain an understanding "we must turn our gaze first and foremost upon the Christ of Easter, who is risen and lives on as the glorified head of his Church; and from that understanding we will gain insight into the weekly gathering of the community: the Easter/Sunday Eucharist."⁶⁸⁶

The manner in which this understanding is to be expressed is recognised in the Catechumenate to include the need for adaptation to the "practices and needs of local churches and diverse peoples," ⁶⁸⁷ however, again in the model of "both/and" outlined earlier in the thesis, this will be with the understanding that there is a framework, which can be consistently seen in the first seven centuries, and this was revived at Vatican II. The catechumenate is to be seen as being grounded within "a particular ritual, which had basic features although it was in a process of structural evolution and theological and ethical development."⁶⁸⁸

⁶⁸⁶ Jungmann, Josef A. *Pastoral Liturgy*. Op.cit.:342

⁶⁸⁷ Huels, John M. op.cit:508

⁶⁸⁸ More op.cit: 12

This ritual referred to is the central formative act of the community, the weekly gathering which involved “the blessing of bread and wine to be shared among its members; and it was from this that people remember Jesus and were incorporated into his body and that had ethical implications for those who participate in it.”⁶⁸⁹

The preamble to the GIRM expresses this clearly when it speaks of the Sunday Eucharist as the “font and apex of the whole Christian life (LG 11)” and as providing the Christian understanding of “ecclesial life”/Christian life. Where does the ‘life’ of the Christian, the ethical and moral expression of belief take its form, expression and understanding? From the Sunday Eucharist! And the simplest description of where and how this occurs in the Sunday Eucharist is seen in the most ancient of sources. The consistent message of these sources is that the meaning of Christian life is to be found in the weekly celebration, being formed by the hearing of the readings and the breaking of Word and prayer. (*Apostolic Constitutions*, John Chrysostom, and Augustine).

This is the heart of the catechumenal process.

⁶⁸⁹ Ibid.

5.2. The Process of Formation that enables the making of a Commitment.

Having established the call of Vatican II to make the 'structure and meaning of the liturgy' our framework and having outlined the principles of interpretation, the study summarises the findings that a detailed analysis of the source documents has brought, by bringing them together on the framework of the structure of the Sunday Liturgy.

5.2.1. The Introductory Rites

5.2.1.1 The gathering.

"The rites before the liturgy of the Word have a "character of a beginning, an introduction, and a preparation" (GIRM 46)

The starting point of the Sunday Liturgy, the OICA and of *Gaudium et Spes* 1-45 and the 'way' of formation is the same.

It is the encounter with people, as they are, with their issues and concerns, 'at the door'.

People are met specifically in the Catechumenate, and in all places that the Church commences her mission, 'where they are at'. In fact all encounters start with what *Gaudium et Spes* calls those things that are "genuinely human" (GS 1, 77, 87) and which it summarises as the "the joys and hopes, the grief and anguish of the people of our time, especially those who are poor or afflicted." (GS 1)

The 'Hopes and desires" (GS 10, 11; ES 109) of the human person, *Gaudium et Spes* and *Nostra Aetate* say can be expressed as a series of questions, which were outlined above.⁶⁹⁰

Benedict XVI and Francis have enriched this understanding when they identify the starting place of encounter as being the concerns and understandings of all those who come to the "courtyard of the gentiles,"⁶⁹¹ or who appear in the areopagi with its varied scenarios. Francis says that within a "single city", generation or community there can be "various collective imaginations"⁶⁹² and that it is essential to understand "the existential issues of people today, especially the young, by listening to the language that they speak." (Rio de Janeiro July 2013) This requires the ability to recognise the variety of issues that impact on the life of a single person or community. The starting point of Christian encounter and worship is "in the world," (GS 2) within the "theatre of our history, the heir of our energies." (GS 2)

⁶⁹⁰ Cf page 24 of this chapter.

⁶⁹¹ Benedict XVI, Address to the Roman Curia, 21 December 2009, AAS 102/I (January 2010) p.40. Is the foundation of a number of references that can be followed at <http://www.cultura.va/content/cultura/en/dipartimenti/ateismo-e-non-credenza/discorso-di-fondazione-di-benedetto-xvi.html>

⁶⁹² Francis. "Rinnovamento della Chiesa e Dialogo con il mondo attuale." Op.cit:3.

This is the context in which people gather and therefore is the place where individuals and the Church start their encounter.

The fundamental orientation of *Gaudium et Spes* follows a similar pattern. Based on an intentional “dialogue with the world”⁶⁹³ its methodology is to read the signs of the times and “interpret them in the light of the Gospel.” (GS 4)

The questioning, seeking, human being is also the starting point for the inquiry of the OICA, the gathering of the Liturgical community and of the person who confronts the realities of life that call for formation and decision making as outlined in *Gaudium et Spes*.

There follows the specific manner in which the person is to be welcomed and encountered. It is in a “dialogue”. The way forward in this dialogue is to be the imitation of the person of Christ who: “entered this world to give witness to the truth, to rescue, not to sit in judgement, to serve and not to be served.” (GS 3) This is the modality of formation and response, welcome and inclusion.

For the community to respond in this manner involves training and the presence of people who are both willing to walk with and make the necessary adjustments to the pastoral need that is seen. This will be based on the Church’s understanding that while there is a “single noble destiny of humanity” (GS 3) and that the manner of authentic human activity in the world will be the seeking out, and serving of the peoples of the world with a willingness to embrace the cost of witness and to stand alongside them as they face the challenges of life. The Gospel expresses this as “taking up the cross of Christ, and following Him.” (Matt 16:24)

Gaudium et Spes understands this process to be accompanying people in a staged growth; firstly, by the formation of conscience; secondly, by understanding the need to live in community; thirdly, by a commitment to activity in the world and fourthly by the preaching of the Gospel.

The fundamental starting point in *Gaudium et Spes*, the GIRM and OICA therefore is that the church is to stand alongside and in solidarity with whoever walks through the door, and walk forward with them.

The first element of gathering and of formation is to recognise those with whom we gather and the questions they bring?

The liturgical reform emphasised this when it spoke of the right for all parties to be able to comprehend what is being said, to be able to express their hopes and needs and to be understood by the gathered community. This will be achieved by the use of the vernacular in all communication, liturgical and moral. The OICA speaks of an awareness of the local issues, and the needs of the inquirer, leading to the pastoral imperative that people must be met “where they are at” with the recognition of their cultural, economic, gender, and socio political differences.

The presupposition of all ecclesial processes therefore is that nothing is to stop a person from coming to the door of the Church, entering to listen and being welcomed and cared for. This is the promise that the Body of Christ makes. As Benedict XVI says: the Sunday gathering of the Church is an “ingathering of all members of the local parish who stand before God offering thanksgiving and

⁶⁹³ Gallagher, Michael Paul, SJ. op.cit:370.

praise”⁶⁹⁴; it is not an assembly of the like-minded, or the comfortable, nor is it to be ethnically, socially, economically or politically homogenous.

This is the starting point of formation; a welcoming of the parties ‘as they are’ and with an attitude that is non-judgemental. The example of Christ in the Gospel makes this clear. A person was “caught in the very *act* of adultery” (Jn 8:3) was “brought to the front of the crowd” (Jn 8:4); with the expectation that Jesus would pass judgement. Jesus’s response is: “where are your accusers, neither do I judge you” (Jn 8:11).

This parallels the way people are to be welcomed at the liturgical celebration and to the place and form of formation and the manner in which communal decision-making is to be made.

The process does not start with a detached examination of the act, even though the act and the circumstance may be clear and in full sight of the community. Rather, the model that is offered by the scriptures is of an encounter, characterised by acceptance and forgiveness, which starts with the person, and then progresses with the ‘love’ that the Paschal Mystery will reveal. This is coupled with the clear understanding that this type of encounter enables the other person to continue in life having experienced the fullness of forgiveness, love and life, and with this strength to change and go away to “sin no more.” (Jn 8:11)

The OICA says that the ‘way of encounter’ of the whole Christian community during of the period of Inquiry is to be one of welcome. It emphasises that this is particularly at the moment of first encounter, symbolically, at the door. These insights are applicable to the workings of all gatherings within a community.

Firstly, what is revealed is a primary orientation of co-responsibility. In the OICA, the person who walks with the one who “comes as they are”, the sponsor, is both the witness and an agent of formation in the ‘way of life’ of Christ and when the GIRM (61, 62, 71,91ff) speaks of the recognition of the diverse and complementary ministries that are required for the Liturgy to fulfil its core task, it is this accompanying, witness and forming that it is recognising.

Secondly, the ‘way’ of formation understands that those who meet a person at the door and agree to accompany them are committing to being involved in the life of the person. This includes an active sharing in their prayer life and service of the poor, and ‘to the best of their ability’ answering their questions from the wisdom of living the message.

Thirdly, all responses are to be adapted to the local and contemporary needs (*Instruction on Christian Initiation* 30 /3) (echoing the call in the GIRM 37ff from SC 26) so as to establish a dialogue between the ‘Tradition’ and the local and the needs of the person who is ‘on the way’.

However this is a dialogue and there are also expectations of the person entering into the process of formation. They need to be ‘willing and capable of hearing.’ Secondly, all involved must approach and treat each other as adults, with the deep awareness that it is only then that they will be able to encounter “the Holy Spirit who opens their hearts.” (CIA 1) Thirdly, all that happens in formation is to be a “free and knowing seeking of the living God and an entry on a path of faith and conversion, “(CIA 1) As the Council declares: “the human person has a right to religious freedom... (and is) to be

⁶⁹⁴ Benedict XVI, *op.cit.*

immune from coercion on the part of individuals or of social groups and of any human power...whether privately or publicly, whether alone or in association with others.” (DH 2)

The Christian understanding of formation therefore is based on the presupposition that moral growth will take time, accompaniment and change. It presupposes an adult interrelationship, open and supported, conscious and accompanied. It involves openness on the part of all parties to dialogue, but at the same time awareness that all parties may require support and guidance, from the beginning, so as to be able to form a decision and to act.

The OICA reinforces this when it describes the formative processes as being dependent on a manner described as ‘freely and knowingly.’ (CIA 1) There is an invitation to live in the way of Christ, not an imposition. It involves an awareness of *καιρος*, the ‘proper time,’ and therefore, while maintaining a formal integrity, it proceeds, step by step, according to the order prescribed; however, it will proceed, in the midst of the community adapting to the needs of the individual. This is because it is in mutual, personal relationships, that God is encountered and revealed.

All of this understanding has been gained, before the person has walked through the door! These are the core understandings that are involved in having open doors to the Cathedral.⁶⁹⁵

Benedict XVI recognises the complexity of this when he writes: for a person to “enter through that door is to set out on a journey that lasts a lifetime,”⁶⁹⁶ and John Paul II summarised the manner in which the dialogical encounter is to progress: Firstly do not “raise arguments or disputes,” (D&M 20) rather, “be subject to every human creature for the love of God;” (D&M 20) secondly, ensure that in all dealings with the other there is no “hint of coercion” or “of a kind of persuasion that would be dishonourable or unworthy.” (D&M 20) Thirdly, there are to be no opportunistic tactics, rather, the dialogue is to be “based on the personal and social needs,” (D&M 20) of the other, and is to proceed in fidelity to humanity itself which is to: “walk together, with others, toward that goal” (D&M 21) with a willingness “to listen to” (D&M 21) and to “strive to understand” (D&M 21) always recognising the interdependence of all involved. The encounter with the other, the formation of the members of the community, and the discernment of a moral decision will be founded on the “normative description of the way of life of the church and initiation which is received from the past ages but which is adapted to the circumstances of the modern world.” (GIRM 9) It is this recognition of what is given and the needs of the situation that provides the Church with the ability to respond to the various “proposals and measures of a pastoral nature” (GIRM 10); that “could not even have been foreseen” in previous times⁶⁹⁷ and which, also appear as distinctive issues to be understood in the life of the person and the community being accompanied!

The GIRM doesn’t make specific note of these diverse characteristics of the community gathering for the Liturgy, it only says that the “faithful who come together as one, establish communion and

⁶⁹⁵ This is a reference to the change in perception of the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit in Palmerston North, Aotearoa/New Zealand, from the simple action of having the front doors open for the whole of the year of Mercy; a practice that has been continued, as people find a home in the Church, find a welcome and a listening ear, and see the witness of people of prayer.

⁶⁹⁶ Benedict XVI Apostolic letter *Motu Proprio data Porta Fidei* (2011) op.cit.n.1.

⁶⁹⁷ The GIRM specifically says “four centuries earlier” which is making the point that the liturgical reforms of Vatican II have at their heart an awareness of the response to the changing situation since the Council of Trent. This awareness is clearly part of the formation of the GIRM as the same element is referenced in GIRM 6, 10 and 15.

dispose themselves properly to listen to the Word of God and to celebrate the Eucharist worthily;” (GIRM 46) but the Church’s understanding of the ‘inner disposition’ called for in this encounter has been provided in *Gaudium et Spes*, the OICA and the Magisterial teaching as outlined in this section. This is the nature of the community that now ‘enters’ the place of assembly.

Conclusion 8: The Gathering, the start of formation.

1. The gathering teaches formators to start with people where they are: with their issues, and real life questions.
2. The way forward in formation is to be by an ‘intentional dialogue’ so that all the elements involved in the dialogue partner’s questions are understood.
3. There is a preference to support and form solidarity with the poor, those in need and the stranger.
4. Formation is open to all, the parish with the open doors, includes all people within the boundary, regardless of their belief or situation; all are welcome to enter the dialogue of formation.
5. Formation meets people ‘where they are at’.
6. Formation will provide a companion for anyone coming to the door.
7. Formation will adapt to the local need and circumstance.
8. The only demand on the dialogue partner is that they capable and willing to listen and hear.
9. Formation takes time and is never to be time limited.
10. When commencing a partnership of formation it is entering a journey that lasts a lifetime, and is to progress at the pace of the partner.
11. Formation is not a place for disputes, arguments, coercion; rather all involved are to be treated with the Love of God.

5.2.1.2. The Entrance into the Assembly

We are now ready to enter the Assembly.

The Rites of the Liturgy are divided into four parts: the Introductory Rites, the liturgy of the Word, the Liturgy of the Eucharist, and the Concluding Rites.

Each has a specific purpose and character and “The Rites preceding the Liturgy of the Word, namely the Entrance, Greeting, Act of Penitence, Kyrie, Gloria, and collect, have the character of a beginning, introduction, and preparation.”(GIRM 46)

“The Entrance” opens, with a simple introductory phrase “after the people have gathered.”(GIRM 47)

It is the gathering of the diverse members of the community that is the signal for the liturgy to commence and this initiates the singing of a chant which “is to open the celebration, foster the unity of those who have been gathered, introduce their thoughts to the mystery of the liturgical season or festivity” and to “accompany the procession of the priest and ministers” (GIRM 47).

The Liturgy therefore commences with the clear articulation of the purpose of the gathering and all hear the same message, including those who are going to serve the community by proclaiming the Gospel and facilitating the discernment and commitment; and all of this happens in the midst of the

community. The purpose of the gathering, as in all discernment and formation, is specifically and publically proclaimed. Liturgically, it is the 'naming' of the season or particular celebration. In formation it is naming the issue or situation at hand.

The element to be emphasised is that the intention of this focus is to "foster the unity of the community." The people who have gathered are diverse but they are to have a common focus.

The coming together and the being formed in such a unity of purpose, is described with a specific series of verbs: "gather...greet... recognise...sing... respond...confess... carry...acknowledge the altar... make the sign of the cross... greet and address" (GIRM 49-51): and each of these is an action with a specific character and content.

Firstly, they clearly articulate the qualities of dialogue, outlined above. The intention is to form the assembly of the Risen Christ and this is recognised in the initiating dialogue between the assembly and the minister. "The Lord be with you;" "And with your Spirit". It is even clearer when the Bishop presides and greets the community with the Post Resurrection greeting of the Lord: "Peace be with you". (Jn 20:21) The Risen Body of Christ is recognised in the dialogue between the Apostle and the disciples gathered.

Secondly, there is the acknowledgement that the bringing together of this group of people is the work of the Holy Spirit. This is a unity founded on: "The presidency of the Bishop, the gathering of priests, deacons and lay ministers, and the full and active participation of the faithful – give rise to what IGMR 2002 calls "the pre-eminent expression of the church.""⁶⁹⁸

Thirdly, the gathering and the statement of intention are linked. This is something common to all successful acts of human decision-making. An assembly of people seeking a common outcome starts with a clearly articulated expression of the purpose the community has gathered for.

Fourthly, the ministers proceed to the "salutation of the altar and the people gathered together." (GIRM 49-50) They articulate, in action and word, an element common to all successful human encounters, but made explicit within the Christian assembly; all open and successful human encounters involve sacrifice and tolerance, forgiveness and, at times painful honesty.

The symbols that surround the dialogue of welcome and gathering also reveal that there can be no understanding of what is 'right and just' without there being a conscious relationship to those who live in the same place and time. There can be no movement to unity of mind and action without some form of sacrifice on the part of one, both, or all parties involved. There can be "no love without sacrifice, no life except through death to "life as we know it."⁶⁹⁹ The way to life, love, truth, justice and peace is going to be sacrificial, or to use the theological motif, involve the person in the "Paschal Mystery."

This understanding is reinforced in the elements that are carried and the words of greeting which form these actions of greeting. The ministers carry and wear the symbols of the crucified and Risen One. They follow a cross; they carry, the Easter light of the one who was crucified, buried; and then Rose again. They carry the Book of the Gospel, the living Word; and a thurible that burns the oils of

⁶⁹⁸ Connell, Martin, and Sharon McMillan. *Op.cit.*: 225

⁶⁹⁹ Searle, Mark. *Op.cit.*:27.

the Chrismating, and they are clothed in the alb of baptism, clothed in Christ. Those who wear the alb are those who have gone onto the cross with Him, been buried with Him, and risen to new life with Him; they are the baptised.⁷⁰⁰

This core orientation is made explicit, in word and deed, when the first greeting to the assembly is 'the sign of the Cross'.

This is a repetition of the first symbol used in the OICA. When entering into formation the "Taking of the Cross" was the first thing those entering the Catechumenate are asked to do; to accept onto their eyes, ears and heart, the sign of the cross, and with their hands to grasp, and their feet to follow, the cross of Christ. The central act of the Rite of Election, on the first Sunday of Lent, is that the Bishop anoints the elect with the oil of Catechumen; on their head, heart and hands. The following of Christ and the formation of a person involves three elements, an intellectual understanding and choice, the alignment of the emotions and affective orientations and finally a willingness to act, "to put the hand to the plough," (Lk 9:62) "to take up the cross." (Mk 8:32; Matt 16:24; Lk 9:23)

In this symbolic opening of eyes, ears, heart and hands there is an articulation of the prerequisite of all open dialogue, common activity and decision-making. There is a need to face and remove all prejudices, so as to be open to seeing, hearing and being moved by the need of the other, the acceptance of the truth displayed as the answer to the inquiry and the formation that is required.

To be able to follow the call of *Gaudium et Spes* the individual and the community must be able to see and hear the signs of the times and the situation of humanity in the modern world, (GS 4) and to do so with an open and non-prejudiced heart and mind. This attitude of engagement precedes the interpreting of the elements by insights revealed in the light of the Gospel. The "perennial" (GS 4) questions raised by the partner in the dialogue call for a partner who is willing to see and hear their questions as the expression of this time and place. All parties to processes of discernment, decision-making and formation, are required to face their presuppositions and prejudices.

Conclusion 9: Entering into an Assembly.

1. Formation starts when the people have gathered, not when the minister is ready. Formation is of its nature communal.
2. At the start of all processes of formation there is a clear statement of the intention and focus of the community gathered.
3. The best communities of formation, though not necessarily the easiest to minister to, are NOT homogenous; they are diverse.
4. The formation community seeks and expects the active involvement of all those gathered.
5. All formation progresses in the 'light of the Cross'; meaning that those involved are ready to serve, to carry others, to love, to accept, knowing that this is often difficult and requires love and sacrifice.
6. The sign of the Cross is the pattern of all formation: people must start by acknowledging their prejudices, the areas they are closed to seeing, hearing or are not willing to engage in; and then to be asked and supported to move past them; this requires love and sacrifice, the Cross.
7. At the heart of the community of formation is the altar, of sacrifice all parties must be open to dying to self, and to the possibility and need for 'conversion'.

5.2.1.3. The Penitential

This openness and honesty will necessarily expose the interior 'ill ease' or 'dis-ease' of the parties to the dialogue and reveal, and demand engagement with, a "new series of problems which call for efforts of analysis and synthesis." (GS 5)

Gaudium et Spes identifies some of the elements that are prerequisites for full engagement in the process.

They include: being ignorant of the impact of propositions on the understandings of the dialogue partner; (GS 6) being blind to the social and economic consequences impacting on a peoples' ability to be involved in processes of formation or to understand the issues involved; an awareness of the disproportionate impact on those who carry the burden of being refugees and the poor. (GS 7) These concerns are expressed by the Council as the need to have a "keener awareness of the inequalities in the world;" (GS 8) the innate "contradictions and imbalances" that lie in, and between, members of society and communities. Other elements identified as impacting on engagement in formation are the frequent "imbalance between an intellect which is modern in practical matters but does not have a theoretical system of thought which can master the sum total of its ideas, or arrange them adequately into a synthesis;" (GS 8) an "imbalance (that) arises between a concern for practicality and efficiency, and the demands of moral conscience; ... between the conditions of collective existence and the requisites of personal thought" (GS 8) and the "imbalance between specialized human activity and a comprehensive view of reality." (GS 8)

Gaudium et Spes couples all these insights to the complex issues arising from "population, economic and social pressures", and the imbalances expressed in intergenerational, gender, and racial conflict and "collective greed." (GS8)

The Council says these are the factors that have a tendency to lead to "mutual distrust, enmities, conflicts and hardships" (GS 8)

These are complex issues that people bring to the door of the Church and to formation. This matrix reveals the depth of work involved in establishing the foundational understanding of the environment/situation in which an ethical response and formation is to occur. However, liturgically, these elements can be summarised in a simple formula. When a person opens their eyes and ears, their heart, to the reality of their own prejudices, and the situation in which they live they will say: "I /We have sinned in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done and in what I have failed to do."

This is the insight expressed liturgically in the *penitential rite*. At the heart of all human thought and interaction is the common reality of inadequacy; that will only be resolved by an action that is best described as 'dying to self' (interest) with the accompanying acknowledgment that to live this sacrificial element is dependent on a willingness to know and accept loving forgiveness, mercy, an act of grace, the gift of 'another'.

All men and women are aware that they are both the cause and the victim of 'sin'; which many people of goodwill will identify, with believers, as selfishness, self centredness, greed and blind self-interest.

The Christian understanding of the Paschal Mystery reveals that the free gift of mercy enables individuals and communities to overcome the innate tendency to be blind to the needs of others, deaf to the pleas of the needy, and to be inactive due to selfishness; this free gift is revealed when a person is willing to accept the 'grace' that enables them to die to self, in love of the other.

The song of mercy, the Kyrie, and the content of the Gloria, both express this.

The way forward, says *Gaudium et Spes* 10, is cooperative problem-solving using the language and skills of humanity. It is in cooperative dialogue, that the Church sees the Spirit moving in the world.

A parallel exposition is to be found in the OICA. The starting point of the catechumenate and the Sunday Liturgy is in the world. The place of encounter is among the non-baptised, men and women of good will, who share the common questions of humanity, outlined in *Gaudium et Spes* and while the OICA commences with a "hope" of initiation; people are met at the doorway, in a Spirit that recognises it is a portal, not a destination with a predetermined time or expression.

The focus of the Christian dialogue in the OICA and of those welcoming, whoever comes to the door of the Church, is to: "Bear witness before the world and eagerly work for the building up of the body of Christ." (AG 36), and the pattern of this engagement is made clear, it will reflect: "a pattern that is constituent of the Christian lifestyle it is "a baptism that produces all these effects by the power of the mystery of the Lords' passion and resurrection;" (Instruction on Christian initiation: 6) and that this ultimately involves being "engrafted in the likeness of Christ's death." (Instruction on Christian initiation: 6)

The repetition of these understandings from the process of initiation, at the beginning of every gathering of the faithful, shows that all believers are in constant need of being renewed and re-formed. The moral life is not achieved in a once and for all decision or profession. The formation of the human, and the Christian, is an ongoing process, which deepens and enriches, the more it is lived and reflected upon, publically witnessed to and lived, and accompanied by others. It has a character that is seasonal, that is, appropriate to the time and need, and involves a continuous life of internal conversion. So the important question is how?

Initially, for most people it occurs in a sequence of insights and glimpses, which gradually as a person lives the insight of self-giving love more deeply, leads them to see more clearly the Paschal revelation in the life, death and resurrection of Christ.

This is summarised succinctly in the *Catechism*: "In the liturgical year the various aspects of the one Paschal Mystery unfold. This is also the case with the cycle of feasts surrounding the mystery of the incarnation (Annunciation, Christmas, and Epiphany). They commemorate the beginning of our salvation and communicate to us the first fruits of the Paschal Mystery." (CCC 1171)

The penitential rite reflects this willingness to engage in a deep examination of the self, and to possess honesty in respect of "what I think, and what I have done or what I have failed to do."

Formation and the making of commitments must also start with such a deep self-examination. The fullness of the moral character, as with the understanding of the full revelation in Christ, is usually the result of having seen 'glimpses' in the moments of life, but then realising that they are the "first fruits of the Paschal Mystery". This is one of the core skills taught in the catechumenate, and it is

emphasised in the final preparation for baptism and initiation, where the fuller internal examination, that is the focus of the scrutinies of Lent, provides the core meaning of the accompanying, fasting, prayer and service of the poor.

The Penitential Rite⁷⁰¹ which had its origin as a ministerial preparation before approaching the altar and with Vatican II has become part of the liturgy of the whole community, reveals the need, of all, to be aware of the barriers to involvement in the assembled Body of Christ and to hearing the Word and being formed.

There is, then, a preparatory stage in the Christian life, and formation as a Christian and a human being: it is honest self-evaluation and regular and full Examen. All people come to situations and circumstances, formation and decision-making, with a set of understandings, many of which need to be challenged.

Authentic dialogue is dependent upon both parties to the conversation entering into a process of honest self-evaluation and examination. One of the gifts of the recent crisis in the ministerial church has been an awareness that ALL, from the perpetrators, to those 'overseeing' the community, can be blinded by the presuppositions or habits they carry and can therefore avoid actions, or act, in ways which are counter to the Gospel. Ordination or public commitments do not exempt anyone from the need to form, and reform; and to examine their conscience, before making decisions on whether to act or not to act. This carries the concomitant obligation of acknowledging that people often do not possess all the elements necessary for living the fullness of their commitments. This awareness is a requisite part of formation or to a person being in a position to make an authentic decision or to act responsibly.

This is a process that will not be instant; it may "last several years."⁷⁰²

Conclusion 10: Examen.

1. The process of formation, if it has helped people to face their prejudices and areas of unwillingness to engage, will expose those areas where people need forgiveness, reconciliation and healing.
2. The process of Examen, will lead to an awareness of those things which have been done or not done, said or not said.
3. The process of formation will share an unqualified acceptance and forgiveness in the face of such realities.
4. This also allows those involved in formation to be aware of the issues and areas, of which they are not aware!

⁷⁰¹ in its original form it was a ministerial self-examination : cf. Witczak, Michael G. Op.cit.p.140.

⁷⁰² Christian Initiation of Adults: 7b.

5.2.1.4. The collect

After the processes of encounter, and (the entrance and penitential Rite) have being completed, the liturgy places before the gathered community a very clear summary of the purpose for gathering. The Collect. This may be expressed in the prayer from the 'proper of the day' and therefore be in harmony with the seasonal celebration and formation of the church universal; or it may focus on the particular reason for this gathering of the community such as a marriage, ordination, or funeral. In Western meeting traditions this would be called the "agenda". In the scientific tradition this is called the "hypothesis". In political spheres this is called the "bill to be debated". It is an articulation of the issue around which the group has gathered.

The Collect, has two roles to perform as the climax of the introductory rites. It is a "collecting" of the "prayers of the community by the presider,"⁷⁰³ so as to bring unity to the community, and in doing this the prayer fulfils the second goal, the expression of the "character of the celebration." (GIRM 54) At each gathering of the community there is to be a unity of purpose. So one aspect of the faith is celebrated, one feast, one purpose, is placed before the community, and it is in the light of this declared focus that the Liturgy of the Word "follows." The Collect sets the agenda for the formation of the community and those within it.

After the preparatory work has been done, and the issue at hand has been clearly identified; the community is in a position to seek wisdom and understanding. Without this clarity there is no focus of the mahi⁷⁰⁴ at hand.

So it is in formation and the making of decisions and commitments. There is a need for a "clearing of the boards," an honest examination and evaluation of the 'heart and mind' to identify prejudices and barriers to dialogue and then the common focus can be expressed to provide clarity of direction. The purpose for the community's gathering, or the issue to be resolved is articulated, and it is affirmed by the common response of those assembled: "Amen."

Conclusion 11: Collect – The Purpose.

1. All formation requires a restatement of the purpose of the gathering, the intention of the community's gathering, and the form of the proceedings.
2. There is the understanding that the process of formation is based on collective and co-operative dialogue.
3. There is a single focus to each gathering, but there may be a seasonal and developmental structure to the overall formation.
4. The intention of the statement of purpose is to build and maintain unity in the formation group.

⁷⁰³ Foley, Edward. "Chapter II: The Structure of the Mass, Its Elements and Its Parts." *A Commentary on the Order of Mass of the Roman Missal: A New English Translation Developed under the Auspices of the Catholic Academy of Liturgy*; General Editor, Edward Foley; Associate Editors, John F. Baldovin, Mary Collins, Joanne M. Pierce; Foreword by Roger Mahony., (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 2007) p.145.

⁷⁰⁴ Mahi is a word in Te reo Maori that means "work".

5.2.2. The Liturgy of the Word

5.2.2.1. “Your word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path”. (Ps 119:105).⁷⁰⁵

The heart of the Liturgy of the Word, and the OICA catechesis, is the *proclamation* of the Word of God accompanied by a *meditation* in which, with open hearts and minds, those present focus on how the Sunday scriptures will impact on their lives; and in the OICA on the lives of the catechumen, their sponsors and catechists.

The history of the development of the Liturgy of the Word, with its clear link to the formation of the catechumen, provides the insight that what happens in the hearing and reflection upon the Scripture has as its focus *formation in the Christian life and ethic*. This understanding reveals that a hearing and reflecting, in common, is an essential element of formation and reveals that moral development and moral formation cannot be based upon shared ignorance but rather must be grounded on seeking after truth and insight, together. In the Church community the fundamentals of the spiritual life and Christian teaching are contained in the Scripture and the Liturgy. This insight though is also of import for the wider community as it underlines the fact that all moral decisions require an openness to being informed.

There is therefore a *co-responsibility* called for between the one who is being formed and their mentors and companions, to ensure that all are aware of what is going on in the heart of the individual and the questions and issues that the scriptures are resonating with. This evaluation is not limited to the catechumen. This is the fundamental role of the scripture in the ongoing formation, reformation and guidance of all members of the Christian community. This principle is also to be applied to all those who would help in the formation of decision-makers and individuals. Living within a community is neither minimalistic nor formulaic rather it requires an integrated, informed and ongoing formation for all those who hear the Word.

The liturgy of the Word consists of two elements: firstly, the *proclamation* of texts that carry the insight and secondly, an *‘interpretation’* so as to elucidate the insight which they contain. It is a fundamental understanding that it is this combination that enables the revelation of “The mystery of redemption and salvation, and offer spiritual nourishment, by Christ himself present in his word in the midst of the faithful.” (GIRM 55)

There are several elements that need to be emphasised in respect of the use of the scriptures in this exercise of seeking insight and understanding so as to provide the ‘food for instruction and reflection’ and ‘interpretation’.

Firstly, the community has *prepared* the Liturgy of the Word. The ‘treasures of the Bible (that) are to be opened’ have been specifically chosen, and at times edited, so as to provide insight and formation, in respect of the feast, season, or the event at hand. The scriptures are not used ‘randomly.’ They are focused to the question or event at hand, they are chosen by those who know their meaning and origin, and it is often the provision of interrelated texts that will give an ‘authentic’ expression of the Word of God.

⁷⁰⁵ This quote is a little long for a title, but it expresses the way in which the Word of Scripture, and of the Lord revealed in creation and the history of salvation, is to guide the path of life, the practical journey with the Lord.

Secondly, the scriptures, the sources of insight, are themselves not uniform in their origin or form. A wide variety of forms or literary genres are included in the Scriptures, and they need to be understood and interpreted according to the form, in which they were written, and the place and time of their writing. The forms include: history, law, wisdom sayings, ethical instructions, hymns and proverbs, the insight of prophets and lawyers, and the fundamental understandings of the people expressed as creation myths and expectations of hope.

The recognition that this diverse group of writing have been gathered as the source of wisdom and insight, and having passed through the processes of acceptance as 'canonical' by the fruit of Rabbinic and Ecclesial wisdom, have become treasured sources of wisdom; does not remove the fact they are fundamentally, legal and ecclesial documents, prophetic utterances, myths, and hymns and proverbs. There are also contemporary sources of such insight that do not lie in the canonical scriptures. They will be the place where the Church will find the expression of "contemporary needs"⁷⁰⁶ that the *Introduction to the Rites of Initiation* says are to be part of the discernment. It is here that will be found contemporary expressions of wisdom and of the encounter with God.

The GIRM sees the community gathered as a community who in the hearing of the Word seeks an understanding that resonates with the hopes and prayers of all humanity. The reception of the Word is expected to be comprehensible and relevant to all peoples as this is the primary site where God speaks, not only to the community of believers, but to all of humanity. It is therefore necessary, in the process of finding and expressing the relationship with God, in the modern world, that the sources of this time and place are recognised as sources of inspiration and instruction. It is here that God speaks to his people, and proclaims the Gospel.

The insight of faith is that, in the Canonical Word, God is speaking directly to the people, individually and communally, and calling them to that "perfection belonging to the essence of the Christian vocation."(RD 4)

Conclusion 12: Proclamation and Meditation.

1. The content of formation will be two fold, it will have elements of information and 'proclamation', of understandings and points of view, but it will also have interpretation and application of those insights.
2. The resources are 'prepared' for the purpose of forming and supporting the understanding of those who are present.
3. The resources of formation are multi-sourced.
4. There is a need for 'reflection' and 'mediation' on the sources of information: they need to be listened to, received, meditated on, responded to, interpreted and applied; and this is a process best engaged in by the whole formation community.

⁷⁰⁶ *Instruction on Christian Initiation* 30 /2

5.2.2.2. The Gospel

Another change in the liturgy, reflecting the insight and direction of this study, was the manner in which the Lectionary of the Post Vatican II Liturgy balances an Old Testament passage with the Gospel of the day.

The juxtaposition of the Old Testament readings with the Gospel tells us that the insight of the Gospel has its foundation in the reflection on the sources of the Old Testament, the life of the Church and human experience, and then directly reveals, to the eyes of faith, the revelation of the Lord in the person, words and deeds, life, death and resurrection, the Paschal Mystery, of Christ.

The two are not contradictory or in conflict, one sees “in a mirror dimly” (1Cor 13:12), and they are both a revelation of the same loving and life giving, covenantal God, in relationship with His people. The additional element of the Gospel is that God is ‘Emmanuel’ and among us, in His Risen Body, the Church and the Spirit, and to the eyes of faith has a specific modality of encounter and life.

The breaking open of the Word is an action of Christ, in the assembly, and is achieved through the ministerial gift to the community. But the liturgy tells us that it is focused on the Day, the Hour, the reason for the gathering, and then through a focused and directed act of discernment, reveals the elements that are ‘right and just’ and which the Church, authorities, the needs of the poor and the tradition, demand be responded to by those gathered.

The Gospel is the place where the Risen Christ speaks directly to those who believe. This is underlined by all the liturgical actions that accompany its proclamation. The actions are the same as were seen at the gathering at the beginning of the Liturgy, where the Risen Christ was recognised in the Assembly and the Minister. They are: standing to recognise the Lord, a dialogue recognising the Lord in the Assembly, the Minister and the Gospel; a sign of the Cross, surrounded by the light of Christ, and anointed with the chrism, in the form of incense. This symbolically brings to bear on the issues and lives of the community the contradiction of the kingdom and the Cross. He has walked with us on the road, we had glimpses of his presence, now in the breaking open of the Word and the Bread, he speaks clearly and directly and when our eyes are opened we know Him; and it is at that moment that “He vanished from their sight.”(Lk 24:31)

Conclusion 13: Christ speaks in the Gospel.

1. The insight and revelation of Christ is gradual, even in the Gospel readings of the year. In formation therefore the fullness of insight should not be expected immediately; rather those involved get glimpses in the words and deeds spoken of in the Gospel stories; and in time, at Easter, they will come to comprehend the fullness of the revelation, and then be in a position to make a commitment.
2. The Gospel is always linked, as a fulfilment, to the Old Testament ‘glimpses’ and hopes, and the insights of human wisdom.

5.2.2.3. The homily

The process and form of the liturgy has brought us to the homily, and as in the sermon on the Mount (Matt 5:3-12) and the Transfiguration, (Mk 9:2-8) this is where Christ can be seen taking this community up the side of the hill, sitting them down, offering the insight into the fullness of creation⁷⁰⁷, the law and the prophets. It is here that the same Christ brings ‘good news’, to all who will follow Him and who will sit and listen. That is a free gift to each and every one present.

The Gospel is to be proclaimed and preached with the understanding that here the ‘real presence’ of Christ is revealed as the fruit of the dialogue with those who are gathered. The presumption of encounter which the Gospel brings is exactly the same as the historical encounter between Christ and the people of his place and time. In the Gospel Christ brings a challenge and a specific understanding to the table of the Word. It may be summarised as the “fundamental elements of the kingdom of God” and it contains ethical presuppositions and insights. They are clear but do not come with a predetermined moral and ethical solution or application.

It is therefore essential to understand that the first presence of Christ in *Sacrosanctum Concilium* 7, “in the person of His minister”, is vital, to enable understanding, discernment, facilitation and the proclamation of the living Gospel, in this place and time.

The homily is not an additional element, rather it is the place where the fruit of the act of discernment and application is spoken; it is where the message of the Living Christ is, after careful reflection, is taken and proclaimed. It is here that the wisdom of the Scriptures, the Magisterium and the Tradition, are brought to bear upon the concerns of those gathered which have already being identified and articulated. They are however, as in all aspects of the liturgy, and moral discernment, to be articulated with the foundational understanding of the framework of dialogue.

To expect the parish priest of Eketahuna⁷⁰⁸ to have the fullness of insight and/or understanding and/or knowledge to bring a full and rich articulation and understanding to aid the moral discernment and/or decision-making or even the formation of all present, is to undervalue the richness of what may be required. This is why people live in community and why Christians live in a community of believers. It also has the direct implications on the role of the Bishop to ‘oversee’ what is taught and the formation of all so that, while it includes ensuring that the Parish Priest of Eketahuna is interpreting correctly, it also implies that he is not to be the only one who articulates the understanding and/or wisdom of the Gospel. Within the local Church, and within the Church universal, there is a need for an ongoing, deep and rich dialogue to bring the Gospel to an interface with the wisdom and the problems of the world in which we live.

⁷⁰⁷ The symbolic links in the setting of the Transfiguration show the centrality of the seventh day, the fullness of creation, but also the day of the Community’s gathering, the Sunday, and here the elements outlined in the first reading, the Law and the Prophets are taken and the fullness of God’s glory is seen. In Matt 17:12 this revelation of the $\delta\omicron\xi\alpha$ of the Lord is directly linked to the crucifixion and dying, the Paschal mystery.

⁷⁰⁸ A very small community of 15 to 20 farmers living in an isolated situation and visited by the Pastor of the neighbouring towns of Pahiatua and Dannevirke, up to 70 km away, on the south-eastern part of the North Island of Aotearoa/New Zealand.

This dialogical nature of the homily has its first expressions says McGowan in the “collective, dialogical inspiration” that took place in the pre-Constantinian church. McGowan suggests that formation would have taken place in a ‘discussion’, a reflection on the scriptures led by the local bishop and presbyters. In such a dialogical model, there were a variety of understandings, or responses to the readings, offered to those gathered. It was probably limited to the ministers, but it was not limited to a single interpretation or a single voice of proclamation.

If this insight is extended, it offers an insight as to how the sharing of the wisdom and problems of the world, especially with the wider dialogue required at the heart of formation, can combine the insights that the lawyers, philosophers, scientists, economists, psychologists and counsellors, anthropologists, the prophets and contemplatives who are called into this process can offer. They need to be welcomed as the dialogue partners of the one who is to proclaim the Gospel, with the explicit recognition that these dialogue partners have a vital role to play in the discernment of the way forward.

At the level of the church universal this impacts on the roles, and the mode of engagement, of groups such as the Pontifical Councils and Academies⁷⁰⁹, Caritas, Catholic academics and Universities and associations of professionals. The need has been seen to create these essential partnerships as they are required by the processes of discernment, for the universal Church; but the same applies to the, National, Diocesan and local communities, and this extends to ensuring that the Church also knows those who are to be the agents of application who can direct the community to the resources and the methods of effective implementation!

The required relationships have a direct consequence when it comes to the application and implementation of the Gospel that is to be preached in the homily. The discerning and preaching of the living Word cannot be limited by the experience and wisdom of the minister. The minister’s ‘job’ is to ‘dialogue’ and ‘discern’ and then ‘proclaim’ a living Gospel for the Assembly; so building on the insight of *Gaudium et Spes* 43 the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF) was clear that those responsible for the application and implementation of moral insight will not directly be the pastors of the Church as they are not to “intervene directly in the political construction and organization of social life” rather this is the task “of the laity acting on their own initiative with their fellow-citizens.”⁷¹⁰ The application of the Gospel and moral insight is to be directed to “improving and raising the conditions of human life in this world”; by “social action” and “can involve a number of concrete means.” It will “always be exercised for the common good and in conformity with the Gospel message and the teaching of the Church.”⁷¹¹ However, it is recognised that these partnerships, especially those focused on the application of Gospel and Moral insights, require processes of “collaboration”, firstly, in the “acquisition of the essential technical and scientific skills”⁷¹² and secondly, in “the moral formation of character and a deepening of the spiritual life;”

⁷⁰⁹The Pontifical Councils for: the Laity, Justice and Peace, migrants and itinerant peoples, health and pastoral care, interreligious dialogue, culture and social communication. The Pontifical Academies of : social science, science, Life, St Thomas, Theology, Fine Arts, Archaeology, Cults of Martyrs and Latin.

⁷¹⁰ Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. “*Instruction on Christian freedom and liberation: "The Truth Makes Us Free"*, 1986:80.

⁷¹¹ Ibid.

⁷¹² Ibid.

and all of these elements will be coupled with the exercise of “the political prudence needed for guiding and running human affairs.”⁷¹³

There is a need for dialogue and collaboration so that the Gospel message may be discerned, the applications identified and the community harnessed to act. It is this bringing to the fore of the fruit of the meditation upon the Gospel, the preaching and the clear application that completes the process of the discernment of what is “right and just”!

Conclusion 14: The Fruit of Discernment.

1. The fruit of discernment in the processes of formation require a ministerial input and the proclamation of what has been discerned as ‘right and true’ for the here and now.
2. This though will be the fruit of a communal process, and will involve the need for wisdom wider than that in the formation group. In Church terms this requires the wisdom of many groups and skills, depending on the issue, and will also need an awareness of the scope and ‘level’ of need. Discernment and the application of insight therefore need to be cooperative and open to the wisdom of other voices.
3. The discernment of the messages contained in the resources used will be focused on this world and the provision of realistic applications.

5.2.2.4. The universal prayer: the Application

All that has preceded this point in the Liturgy of the Word has involved the requirements for being formed to make a choice and therefore it has focused on the relationship between the preparation, the identification of barriers to discernment, sources of wisdom, the Gospel, the Homily, and the discernment of what the assembly is called to do. Now we come to the identification of where and how this is to be applied.

It is important to be able to articulate the wisdom and understanding that is found in the dialogue between the wisdom of the world and the Word of the Gospel; but the core framework of *Dei Verbum* 2 is clear, it will not be revelatory of God’s presence, or bring the fullness of life and love, unless it is applied and acted upon.

Where and how is the formation that has been gained, as a result of this discernment process, to be applied? The liturgy again is clear.

“The people” (GIRM 69) will exercise “their office of baptismal priesthood” (GIRM 69) by responding “to the Word of God which they have received in faith.”(GIRM 69) They will do this by praying the Universal Prayer, or Prayer of the faithful. The form of the Prayer provides four “series of intentions” (GIRM 70) with which to discern and express the application of the Word received, to this place and

⁷¹³ Ibid.

time, and the needs, desires, and questions of this community. In other words it identifies what is required to bring the “way, the truth and the life” to reality, and having identified what is involved in the Gospel for the community, the liturgy now asks the community to decide how and by whom it is to be done! The points of focus are simple:

- “For the needs of the Church
- For public authorities and the salvation of the whole world;
- For those burdened by any kind of difficulty;
- For the local community?”⁷¹⁴

It is the response to these four points of reference, which will lead to the understanding of what is to be proclaimed as the “right and just” activity that the community must take, to respond to the question that was framed at the time of gathering, has been the focus of the study and meditation, the proclamation of the Gospel and the process of discernment.

When put through this simple filter the response will be :“ as a community the Church must...as a community we need the public authorities to...as a community we can identify these people who are burdened and we need to...as a community we can see in our local community the following needs and therefore...”

Then, in public, before the whole assembly, we ‘pray’ for what needs to be done and who needs to act! As if to underline the importance of this the GIRM is clear to enunciate that the intentions prayed for will be the fruit of a process that is “sober, composed with a wise liberty and in few words expressive of the prayer of the entire community.” (GIRM 71) The other elements that show the importance of this contribution of the Prayer of the Faithful is that it is proclaimed from the ambo, the place reserved for the proclamation of the Word. (GIRM 71) This application is therefore seen as the proclamation of the fruit of the Liturgy of the Word and the voice of the Lord calling the community to action. This is the expression of “the duty of the faithful: to cooperate in the missionary activity of the church and to have a “lively awareness of their responsibility in the world.”(GIRM 36, 69)⁷¹⁵

Conclusion 15: Application to Life.

1. It is the role of those being formed, of the people of the group, to ultimately decide on how the insights offered and discerned are applied in their lives.
2. This is where they are deciding how what they have heard and learned will impact on their lives.
3. The places which they will need to examine are: the relationship to the local community, those in authority, the local church and those in need.
4. When the person has applied what they have ‘heard’ and seen what the consequences are for these relationships, they are in a position to make an informed decision and commit, or not, to the hoped for result of the formation.
5. In the community the one who has broken the Word to discern, will join the People, in forming the Prayer of the Community, with its accompanying expectations of action.

⁷¹⁴ These elements are taken from GIRM 70 quoting SC 53.

⁷¹⁵ Foley. *Op.cit.* p.160.

5.2.2.5. The commitment

The community now understands what it is called to do, and who is to do it. What is now required is a public commitment, to act and to live the decision made.

There are two elements that occur at this point of the liturgy and they both underscore the nature of the commitment, especially in the Christian Community. The first is the communal *recitation of the Creed* and the second are the Rites of *Commitment*.

First the Creed. Before the prayer of the faithful which is a public proclamation of what has been agreed to happen, the community recites the creed in a common voice. But what is the Creed? It is the 'Words' of commitment, its origin being the baptismal promises and the recitation of the common beliefs of the community. It is the condensation in words of the promises of baptism, and the understanding of what is happening in baptism.

Secondly, though they are not included in the GIRM, rather they are in the Roman Pontifical, which says that they are understood as being in the ministry of the Bishop, are all the liturgies of commitment. Baptisms, ordinations into ministry, marriage, consecrations to religious life, confirmation, are all celebrated at this point. They all have a common form: after being formed by the word, and having discerned the appropriate response, and it being a life choice, the individual and or the community are called to make a formal commitment. It will be a public proclamation, a Word, of commitment, but more it is a commitment to act. The Rites articulate, in Word and symbolic deeds, the understandings of what the person(s) will do to live their commitment to the Gospel and Christ Risen in the Body of the Church.

The fact that all commitments are celebrated here, at the place of baptism, and before the Eucharistic Liturgy, is no accident. The placement reinforces the understanding which has been preserved in the Church from the experience of the fourth and fifth century catechumenate. At that time, many would spend their whole lives in the catechumenate, unwilling to take on the responsibility and challenge of Christian commitment. What the Church understands is that those gathered on a Sunday, those gathered in any formation, must come to a point at which they make the most fundamental choice; will I do what I know is right and just or not!

In the light of Christ there is the understanding that commitment will always involve dying to self, going into the tomb with Christ, so as to rise to the fullness of life, a life of forgiveness and self-giving love of the brothers and sisters. This is the life revealed in baptism, the entry into the Paschal Mystery and it is expressed in the *Catechism*: "The essential rite of the sacrament follows: Baptism properly speaking. It signifies and actually brings about death to sin and entry into the life of the Most Holy Trinity through configuration to the Paschal Mystery of Christ." (CCC1239)

This is why it is at this point that all commitments in the Church's life are made. The commitment to act is the fruit of the processes of formation and discernment in the Liturgy of the Word, and it comes before the Eucharist.

Conclusion 16: Commitment

1. The place of commitment comes after the word has been shared, understood, reflected on, the implications discerned and the application understood.
2. What is now required in a process of formation is the commitment, to act on what has been seen to be the way forward as an action or position, or more importantly as a life choice.
3. The placement by the Church in the liturgy underlines the fact that any commitment of such importance means making choices which impact on other possible choices, both positive and negative.
4. It is therefore of the nature of commitment that it is both a choice for the fullness of life, and a choice that involves the sacrifice of elements that are known to be 'good'. The commitment to act, to choose a way of life, if authentic, is always sacrificial, and displays the fundamental character of the Paschal Mystery.
5. Therefore the formation for, and the decision to commit, require that the person is free, informed and is acting out of love.

5.2.3. The Liturgy of the Eucharist

5.2.3.1. The Eucharist: the Act of thanksgiving and commitment to sacrificial love in community.

The Mystagogia of the OICA teaches that there are three coextensive elements to the ongoing living of the Christian life, once someone has been formed and have made a public commitment. They are: “*Meditating* on the Gospel, *sharing* in the Eucharist, and *performing* works of charity.” (CIA 37)

The weekly gathering, as has been seen, provides in the Liturgy of the Word a meditation on the sources of insight and understanding and the Gospel. Now a community of individuals which has been formed and who made a free and knowing commitment, are pledged to being broken for truth and in forgiveness, and are willing to offer everything to the service and love of the other’s need; and to actually doing what is good, right and true. They have made that public commitment in Baptism.

The Rite speaks of the “Christian” character of the individual being increased by “the way they live” (CIA 41) and this occurs in the circumstances of daily life. It is in the unity of the words of understanding and commitment with the deeds of a person’s life that the fullness of the human character is revealed.

The manner, in which this happens, expressed liturgically, is when the whole community makes a commitment and is con-joined as the body of Christ in sacrifice and service.

This requires humility (GIRM 84) and a willingness to “participate in the sacrifice actually being celebrated.” (GIRM 85) The fullest expression of full and active participation is to be found in a response of the faithful which cannot be passive or subservient; rather it is formed, mature and articulate.

The Catholic understanding of the Eucharist is founded on the belief that this is the identification with the one “paschal sacrifice” of Christ, (GIRM 72) and that what occurs in the community takes place in and through “an action of Christ the priest and of his body, the Church.” (SC7) The Liturgy of the Eucharist, is not a memory of a past event, rather it is the presence of the ‘one’ event revealing the love of God in “the sacrifice of the Cross continuously made present in the Church.” (GIRM 72) The Church is one with “what the Lord himself did and handed over to his disciples to be done in his memory.” (GIRM 72) The GIRM has spoken much, in reflecting on the Liturgy of the Word, of listening, instructing, teaching, receiving and forming. But at the heart of the liturgy of the Eucharist, and this expresses the fruit of formation and choosing to be one in Christ, is the commitment to doing. The focus of the Eucharist is a dialogue that results in action. The dialogue between Christ and his Body, assembly and minister, is the locus where the Paschal Mystery continues. Or more exactly, it is in the Paschal Mystery, that the words and deeds, life death and resurrection, the dying on a cross, the place of ultimate self-giving of Christ; the source of life and love; is revealed.

The link between the incarnate response and the Paschal Mystery, both in Christ and the life of the Church, is strongly expressed in two paragraphs of the *Catechism*. Firstly: “Jesus’ words and actions during his hidden life and public ministry were already salvific, for they anticipated the power of his Paschal Mystery. They announced and prepared what he was going to give the Church when all was

accomplished. The mysteries of Christ's life are the foundations of what he would henceforth dispense in the sacraments, through the ministers of his Church, for "what was visible in our Saviour has passed over into his mysteries."(CCC 1115)

And, secondly: "Sacraments are "powers that come forth" from the Body of Christ, which is ever-living and life-giving. They are actions of the Holy Spirit at work in his Body, the Church. They are "the masterworks of God" in the new and everlasting covenant." (CCC 1116)

This then can be extended to all people of Good Will. While *Lumen Gentium* offers that such people "can attain to salvation" when they "sincerely seek God and moved by grace strive by their deeds to do His will as it is known to them through the dictates of conscience;" (LG 16) *Gaudium et Spes* and the *Catechism* says that: "Since Christ died for all, and since all men are in fact called to one and the same destiny, which is divine, we must hold that the Holy Spirit offers to all the possibility of being made partakers, in a way known to God, of the Paschal mystery," (GS 22/5; CCC 1260) and that "Every man who is ignorant of the Gospel of Christ and of his Church, but seeks the truth and does the will of God in accordance with his understanding of it, can be saved".(CCC 1260) The Paschal Mystery has been seen in glimpses by people of good will, to the extent that they have the possibility of being partakers in this Mystery; and the glimpses have been revealed in the salvation history of the people of the covenant; but they are fully revealed in the assembly, the ministry and the Word, with their attendant symbols, gestures and words.

This revelation occurs in the "source and summit," (CCC 1324) the "font and apex of Christian life" (LG 11) the Liturgy which has at its heart two sources of meaning "Paschal sacrifice and banquet." (GIRM 72) It is "the sacrifice of the cross that is continuously made present in the church" (GIRM 72) and at its heart it "carries out what the Lord himself *did* and handed over to his disciples to be *done* in his memory." (GIRM 72 quoting SC 47)

The Eucharist therefore is about doing what the Lord did and what disciples are called upon to do in his memory. Knowing "what is to be done," what is required, "what is right and just" those present are called upon to commit to joint action. This is proclaimed and enabled, by the Lord, in a set of actions which revolve around the sacrifice of the cross. Those gathered take "the bread and the chalice, give thanks, break the bread and give it." (GIRM 72) From the moment of gathering, through the greeting of the Gospel proclaimed and the central prayer and action of the Eucharistic Prayer, to the final dismissal, it is the following and taking on of the Cross, the conscious entry into the Paschal Mystery, which gives meaning and direction to the whole Liturgy.

So it is in human living and formation. All growth moments call for a free giving of self to the other in love and sacrifice. It is therefore clear that "the entire celebration of the liturgy of the Eucharist in its parts corresponds precisely to the words and actions of Christ." (GIRM 72)

What do the signs and actions teach us?

Firstly, it is the ordinary bread and wine, the lives and resources of the people gathered, which are taken, blessed, broken and given.

Secondly, it is an action of the Holy Spirit, in the midst of a community, following a prescribed pattern, which speaks of the manner of living which is conformed to the Paschal Mystery. The liturgy calls for the bringing to the table of the very being of the members of the community, carried in the

gifts, which are the resources, life and commitment of the members of the community. The bread and wine are the symbols of the lives of those gathered the gifts which will be acted upon by the Holy Spirit.

The Central symbols of the Eucharist are: an altar, at the centre of a community, which has been made ready, in preparation for the action of self-giving and commitment. (GIRM 73)The nature of the action will be one of sacrifice, on an altar, but at the same stage it carries the significance of gathering around a table. There is a mutual dependency on the others gathered, and their willingness to offer their gifts, but more importantly on the Spirit who enables and acts in the $\alpha\nu\alpha\mu\nu\epsilon\sigma\iota\sigma$, and the Christ who is present in the midst.

The origins of the gifts to be given are clear. They come from the very place of creation: “they are the fruit of the earth and the work of human hands”⁷¹⁶ and they reveal the creative Word that has been spoken. There then takes place an action; they are taken, blessed, broken and given in the transformative power of the Holy Spirit, acting within those willing to be part of the Paschal Mystery. It is in these simple gifts and actions that the Holy Spirit provides the fullness of life revealed in Jesus Christ to the world.

The preparation of the gifts provides a symbolic link that speaks of the two sources of revelation being united, the bread and wine of creation “...bread and wine to offer, fruit of the earth and work of human hands;” and the Lord who reveals the Pasch; “It will become the Bread of Life and the Cup of Salvation.”(Jn 6:35-40) It also reveals that the words and beliefs are to be given life, “made flesh,” in the deeds and the actions which reveal the presence of life and love, of God, the very midst of the ordinary.

The second insight in the preparation of the gifts is that those present are willing to place the resources of the community, and the individual, at the service of the common understanding. The *General Instruction to the Roman Missal* speaks of the money and resources / gifts being brought forward by the faithful to enable the service of the poor and the maintenance of a community of service. (GIRM 73)The elements brought forward in the procession of the gifts, are symbolic of the everyday lives and resources of the faithful being placed at the service of a collective, to be given to those in need. The washing of the hands tells us that there is nothing left; all has been placed upon the altar.

Then, in the Eucharistic Prayer we come to the “centre and high point of the entire celebration.” (GIRM 78)

5.2.3.1.1. The Eucharistic Prayer.

The Eucharistic Prayer continues in the same pattern as has been identified in all aspects of the liturgy. It is not an instruction.

The prayers of the preparation of the gifts and the dialogue opening the Preface reveal that the fruit of the process of gathering is that all the resources of the community’s ordinary lives are

⁷¹⁶ *Roman Missal: English Translation according to the Third Typical Edition*. Wellington: New Zealand Catholic Bishops’ Conference, 2010; n.23; p.519

symbolically brought together in the bread and wine as a single communal offering. This is a recognition that the resources of people's lives are themselves gifts and therefore that the returning them to the one who gives them, "give thanks" is the appropriate response. However, full thanksgiving involves "lifting up our hearts and minds," it is interpersonal, communal and affective; and it is the combination of the two aspects that enables all to see what is "right and just" and to respond to the moral demand. This again reflects the pattern of formation and commitment.

That which is truly right and just, is then clarified in the body of the preface. The Preface always links these understandings to the fullness of the Christian life, and the interaction of the Incarnation and the Paschal Mystery. Following seasonal patterns, and those of the occasional feasts, it tells us that the element which is truly, "right and just, our duty and our salvation" is ultimately revealed in Christ.

Every preface has as its starting point a statement, "It is right and just", in other words it is morally correct, because it is a formulated position, the result of discernment and choice; but by saying "It is right and just our duty and our salvation" it makes clear that the ethical and the religious combine and that it is here that thanksgiving to God and worship become an ethical imperative.

That which is "truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, is always and everywhere to give you thanks,"⁷¹⁷ by offering all that we have been given, life, resources, time and our talents to be taken, blessed, broken and given in an action that puts into practice that which has been discerned as right and just, the fruit of the Liturgy of the Word. This can be done in exceptional circumstances by an individual, as an act of martyrdom, but by and large it is going to be in the daily decisions and commitments of the individual within the community that a person, committed to the support of their neighbour; will do that which has been discerned as morally correct. The commitment revealed in the liturgy is that the resources of the individual, their understanding and commitment, time, property, their very selves are with one word committed to the need of the other. When an individual says within the community "Amen", to recognising the body of Christ in the Eucharist and the Community gathered, when they affirm that it is in them/Him and with them/Him and through them/Him that the glory of God's love and life is brought to this world: the response is to freely proclaim the great "Amen." Here the acceptance of the fruit of moral discernment and the commitment to action is publically proclaimed.

The 'success' of formation will ultimately be revealed in the action that is taken, or avoided, and it is here and here alone, that the action can be evaluated. At the end of this process it is the insights of the Gospel that bring us the richest form of evaluation and formation.

All will ultimately be "right and just" by 'following' the pattern of Christ which is always an action of love and *αγαπε*, not selfishness or self-centredness. The Eucharistic interpretation in John 13:1-17 makes this clear: it will be those, who are willing to get down from the table, take off the outer garment and wash the feet of those with whom they are gathered, serve the need of the other, who will be revealed to be fully alive and to reveal the totally incarnational God. God is revealed in and through creation and there is no seeking what is right and just anywhere other than in the world, in this place, in this time, in this contingency of choice, weakness, faith, hope and love. It is in the 'real

⁷¹⁷ Preface 1 of the Passion of the Lord: *Roman Missal: English Translation according to the Third Typical Edition*. Wellington: New Zealand Catholic Bishops' Conference, 2010; n.43; p.547

world,' the world where Christ is incarnate, present in the hungry and the thirsty, the stranger and the naked, the sick and the imprisoned;(Matt 25:31-46) that a fundamental choice, an ethical choice, the Paschal choice, is put before the person: "I offer you life or death." (Deut. 30:19) However this choice has changed in Christ to: "I offer you life through death," a death to ignorance, self-interest, and complacency.

Conclusion 17: Committing to total Gift, in action.

1. All commitments are a commitment to act, to live in a certain relationship or manner of action, expressing core understandings and beliefs, the fruit of formation.
2. To enable this to happen the person must place (all) the resources they have at the service of the commitment.
3. These are the ordinary elements of life, but they normally require or involve others, and their committing their resources, and selves to the same enterprise.
4. So all commitments are ultimately communal and need the support of others, and their willingness to gift and commit themselves and their resources to the action.
5. In such a commitment, nothing is left out, it is a giving of the person's very self, but it is at the same time, very ordinary, it is the 'bread' of their being that is given and committed.
6. The only way that this can be life giving then is that the person, and all their resources and gifts are 'taken, blessed, broken and given' to the other, or to the task (which will always be to the people involved) which has been committed to. This is to enter into the Paschal Mystery.

5.2.3.2. The Communion

This fundamental understanding of formation and the necessity of communal involvement is summarised in the GIRM when it says that, after having gathered, prepared, sought insight, discerned, applied and committed (the actions of the gathering, liturgy of the word, and Eucharist) there is now an action that displays the nature of full commitment: "the Communion chant is begun, its purpose being to express the spiritual union of the communicants by means of the unity of their voices, to show gladness of heart, and to bring out more clearly the communitarian character of the procession to receive the Eucharist." (GIRM 86)

In the introduction to the prayer after Communion it then says that to: "Bring to completion the prayer of the People of God, and also to conclude the entire Communion Rite, the priest says the Prayer after Communion, in which he prays for the fruits of the mystery just celebrated." (GIRM 89)

The prayers tell us that there is a quality to moral actions and it is that they are fundamentally an action of the whole community, or at least will have an impact on the life of the whole community. It is therefore the hope that the unity of the preceding words and deeds will lead to a fruitful life and gift. The nature of this life and gift is again expressed publically, and in a manner which is dialogical. It is consequential; it is expected to happen, to be given flesh.

Moral commitments and decisions are to have consequences in the lives of others and the wider world. These are not private decisions or acts, they are public, and of their nature involve the input and reflection of others. One way of expressing this is that when a situation appears, it is seen, judgements are made about it and actions are taken; the next step is an awareness of the consequential demands and questions, and the judgments that need to be made in respect of the fruitfulness of the choices and actions that were made, and the life or death that resulted. This is in effect an audit that impacts on the next step of the process, starting all over again facing the new presenting issue, or the continuation in service and witness in the world of that which has been discerned to be 'right and just'.

Communion tells us that Peace and unity in the community, and within the individual, is the fruit of being in a position to walk with others to the altar and simply, but profoundly, accept that the part of the Lord's body given to me, the blood poured out and consumed by me, is also the simple gift and resource of my brother or sister, recognised and accepted.

The 'other' has become part of the very fabric of the life of the one who has received, and by saying 'Amen' they are recognising the gift, in Christ, of the other. But the other who is received, is one who has been willing to be broken and given, and has not asked to whom the gift will be given.

Here is the heart of Christian ethics and ultimately moral decisions in humanity. A person is willing to give to the other, and to act in respect of what is known to be right and just, within the community, simply on the basis of the other person's humanity and need.

Conclusion 18: Commitment to Act in community.

1. The fullness of commitment is to belong to a community in which there is a commitment to act together, communally and publically.
2. This is a community in which the commitment is to freely give, and to freely receive; what the other requires and that which is needed to fulfil the discerned commitments.
3. This is a community in which all are committed to being taken, blessed, broken and given and it is reciprocal.
4. To enable this level of commitment all must be aware of what is right and just, and be willing to give the resources so that those identified can act.
5. This is how the community is sent into the world, as a community, focused, resourced, knowing who, where and what needs to happen, and willing to act, in the world for the good of the others.

5.2.3.3. The being sent

The liturgical process as a framework for formation and the making of commitments now reaches its last stage.

The elements which have been developed in the process and the pattern of the liturgy reappear and qualify the direction of a person's life.

The community is now sent into their daily lives to live what they have committed to. They are sent as members of a number of identifiable groups: as individuals, families, ministry teams, parish or chaplaincy communities, or as the local, diocesan or universal Church but they will all hear the same simple command: "Missa", "Go" "You are 'sent' into the world. The nature and content of the response will be dictated by the 'happening', 'need' or 'desire' that has been identified by the community and what is required to be done to respond appropriately.⁷¹⁸ This will demand the concomitant commitment to finding the resources and the other people who are needed to respond adequately.

Secondly, the community is sent in the sign of the Cross. The Paschal Mystery is again the qualifier of the nature of the response and the way in which the commitment will be enacted. The patterns of the Paschal Mystery will be the framework in which the community will respond in the world, in which the love of God will be made incarnate.

Thirdly, when the episcopal dismissal is reflected upon: The dialogue involved can reveal the nature of the commitment.

In the first dialogue: The Bishop, the apostle says: "Blessed be the name of the Lord", and the response is: "Now and forever". The commitment involves a proclamation that it is the 'name, the full identity, of the Lord, the Christ that is directing this community. The dialogue of the blessing is a repetition of when the Risen Christ sends the disciples, now recognised as the real presence of Christ, into the world.(Jn 20:19-23) The response of the Assembly proclaims that all aspects, are contained in Christ. There is nothing, no situation, it is 'now' and 'forever' that does not require the committed love and witness of this community, its words and deeds, to be given.

All aspects of human history, call for the 'name' to be revealed, the Christ who is the Good News to be taken forth.

In the second blessing the Bishop, the apostle says: "Our help is in the name of the Lord" and the response of the Faithful is "who made heaven and earth". This takes the understanding revealed in the first blessing, that the Lord is revealed to be in all places, to the proclamation that His 'name' is our help. His name, his "way, truth and life" are the one source of help. Therefore guidance, grace, wisdom, strength and direction; our help, is in His Risen presence. This presence is the Holy Spirit and her gifts, the one who is the love of the Risen One and whose specific gifts are present in His Risen Body, the Church. The assembly's response proclaims that the place of this interface is "on earth as it is in heaven." It is already fully revealed in heaven, but this phrase, using its references to the Our Father, asks that it would be in the here and now of everyday life.

This full response on the part of the faithful, the Assembly which is the Risen Body of Christ enables the Bishop to say: "Go and baptise in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit", with the Paschal sign of the cross, and in all times and places.

⁷¹⁸ These will be identified as the end and the means needed to achieve the goal, to be and to act in a certain way.

Fourthly, the process of being sent carries the same pattern as all of the formational process revealed in the first part of the Liturgy. It is dialogical, and therefore all the elements that have been identified as necessary for effective dialogue are now to be lived in the variable elements of daily life. This dialogue is the pattern of encounter and support, and of communal life.

Lastly, there are two elements involved in what the community is asked to do. They are seen in the instruction: "Go in peace to love and to serve the Lord" or in the latest translation: "Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life". Peace and fullness of life will be revealed in those who will love and serve, or expressed another way, in those who give worship by the things they say and do!

The Liturgy is a pattern of formation that has led to 'a' commitment and then to a weekly and annual re-commitment to bring to reality the 'way, the truth and the life' in Christ. This is the source of peace, love, service and of actively giving glory to God in our daily lives; and it has from its earliest days, and in its fundamental structure, followed a process of careful formation.

Diagram 4: “The Structure and Meaning of the Liturgy” as a template for formation and the making of commitments.

<i>Stage</i>	<i>Element in the liturgy.</i>	<i>Corresponding element in formation and the making of commitments.</i>
1.	Encounter at the Door	Meet the person ‘where they are at’; in their language, culture, with their fundamental questions, their happenings, needs or desires.
2.	Greeting : Opening dialogue	Full moral decision making, conscience formation and growth happen in a mutually chosen community. Moral formation and decision making carry the full understanding of a ‘dialogue’.
3.	The taking of the Cross in the OICA, and the sign of the Cross.	There is a need for ‘sacrifice’ and change in every moral process and decision. The first step in moral formation is the recognition of the prejudicial stances that each party to the dialogue carries. Self-awareness is foundational.
4.	Penitential Rite	Self-examination will inevitably lead to a need for forgiveness and reconciliation at the beginning of the formation, especially if the ‘other parties’ are directly involved.
5.	Collect	The identification and focus on a single issue or event is beneficial for discernment and for formation to be productive.
6.	Liturgy of the Word	Information needs to be gathered from: a wide number of sources, coupled with the wisdom of those who are informed, and then to be assessed according to the core values and understanding of the community.
7.	Psalm	The community is actively involved in discernment by common meditation and the sharing of insight and response.
8.	Gospel	The example and witness, the words and deeds, of the Lord, offer ‘the’ example and way of life that while not giving direct precepts offers principles and understandings for discernment.
9.	Homily	Discernment is established when the happenings, desires and needs of the community, are examined in the light of the understandings and wisdom of the community, and within the framework of the laws of each discipline involved, the fundamental rights of others, the protection of the vulnerable and all with the focus on what is life-giving and loving.
10.	Commitment	The decision to act in accord with that which is right and just is publically made.
11.	Prayer of the Faithful	The community discerns who and what are involved in the application of the insight so that the best response and action should take place.
12.	Procession of Gifts	The resources of the community are pledged to the action discerned.
13.	Eucharist	The words are given Flesh, by joining in the ultimate commitment to service, and sacrificial action, with and in Christ.
14.	Communion	The unequivocal commitment to be taken, blessed and given in service of those here, and the poor; is made publically and intentionally. The person will act to serve the other.
15.	Sent	This is a community that does what it says, and brings life.

General Conclusion:

This study has shown that following the structure and the meaning of the Liturgy can provide a framework for formation and the making of commitments which is *structured* and involves a series of staged elements. They are in order:

The Structure

- being called by name, welcomed and included, in a way that recognises the culture, level of understanding, hopes and joys , worries and concerns of the person or community being encountered;
- a willingness to enter processes of self-examination and self-evaluation; with the awareness that the starting point of formation and of a willingness to commit to joint action, is an awareness and acknowledgment of the prejudicial positions carried and the areas of understanding to which the individual or community is blind, deaf, will not speak of or acknowledge in their hearts; or the opinions that they are not willing to listen to. The prejudicial elements will mean there are sources of formation and options for action that will not be engaged with;
- as a result of an honest “Examen” the individual and community will be aware of areas for which they must seek forgiveness, reconciliation and the healing of the actions done or undone, and the thoughts and words that stand in the way of a common commitment;
- the collecting of the thoughts of all, and bringing them to a common focus, and then declaring, with clarity, the purpose or the issue at hand;
- the study and acceptance of the wisdom of humanity, and the Church, along with the gift of Christ’s message in all its richness and complexity, so as to discern with clarity and full knowledge that which is right and just. This involves the necessity of engaging with those who understand and are the sources of wisdom and enable a full judgement to be made. The primary filter of evaluation and clarification of all the information gathered is going to be, the challenge “how does the response show forth the love of God and love of neighbour?”
- The direct application of the findings of this discernment process to the situation and needs of the community; and the happenings and the identified needs and desires that the community or individual have;
- the tools for identifying and proclaiming what is to be “done” and for assessing “how” it is to be done is the identification of what is called for from: the church community, the local governmental structures, those in need, both locally and universally, and the local community;
- a commitment by all in the community to placing themselves and all their resources, time and being at the service of those in need; to place themselves and their resources upon the altar;

-a uniting in the action of Christ; which is a re commitment and willingness to totally sacrifice, to die to self in love and service of the other, and in thanksgiving to the one who is the source of all the gifts that are ultimately given to humanity to be shared;

-a willingness to come to the altar and receive the commitment of the others in the assembly to be Christ to my need, and for my resources and skills which have been given freely to be called upon and used. This lives in the deep knowledge that to live in Christ is to freely give in love to the other, regardless of the cost. This is the foundation of unity in the community, and peace. So at the heart of the moral life, which has been formed in this way, is a commitment to unite with others in the community to bring peace, and service and then ultimately, going forth to do what has been discerned as 'right and just'.

This template is staged and can be applied in each element to all processes of formation, and in preparing for all commitments, firstly by those "called in Christ" and then by all people of Good Will.

The Meaning

This structure also carries a series of *meanings*, which can be summarised as follows:

Firstly, moral formation in general and Christian formation in particular, involves the full, active participation of several parties. All those involved, the individual, the community, those who engage in dialogues, the providers of information and guidance, and those who partner in putting the understanding into practice, are "co-responsible" for the journey of discernment, formation, commitment and implementation.

Secondly, at all stages, consciously or unconsciously, moral formation, and Christian formation in particular, follows the pattern of the Paschal Mystery, a willingness to die to self-interested responses, and to serve the other, so as to be able to identify truth and life giving decisions.

Thirdly, within these processes of formation there is a presumption of mature, adult responsibility. All involved are to be treated as adults with the understanding that the preparation of moral decisions and authentic life decisions will take place gradually, in a staged manner using appropriate language, cultural imagery and will respond to the needs of the person. Formation is always to be a free process, there is no coercion, and it is patterned as a 'seeking', a journey, with an emphasis on patience.

Fourthly, there is an awareness that formation is always to proceed in 'dialogue,' aware of the place and time, the contemporary needs and the issues of the community and the one being accompanied.

Fifthly, the movement of formation works through reflection and the development of insight to a position of moral choice and conscience formation. There is a primacy given to reflection on the actions involved; it is only then that it proceeds to a conscious profession of the Christian message. Formation as a staged process involves the recognition of the events, needs and desires of a person's life; reveals the person, or community's hopes, the issues to be resolved; then through reflection, deep personal honesty and seeking reconciliation of issues that confuse or alienate, by formation and service in the community, and worship, leads to the formation of character which will

find expression in a public choice, to act on what is right and just. This can be summarised in a pattern of: “see/judge/act” with a closing of the hermeneutical circle by the addition of “reflect”.

Sixthly, moral formation and Christian formation in particular is not an individual/private affair. Rather it ultimately demands communal formation and support and is aided by there being a series of public proclamations of progress, which ultimately culminate in incorporation into the life of the community by a full public commitment, for the Christian into the Risen Body of Christ, by baptism.

The task of the moral theologian and the pastor is the creation of a community in which this open, free, conscious exploration of that which is “right and just” becomes a way of life; and to progress in the knowledge that the gifts involved in this discernment are present in the body of Christ gathered. This demands that all move beyond ‘telling others what is to be done’ to a pattern of gathering, opening, studying and dialoguing, discerning and forming, and then committing to “doing that which is right and just” in this place and this time. This is not limited to the formation of ‘new members’, the study has shown that the pattern of the weekly celebration of the Easter Mystery demands this ongoing formation as the ‘way of life’ of the Christian community, in all its structures, forms and situation. It is this form of life that will be lived on the road to Jerusalem where the Risen Christ will be revealed.

Concluding statement:

The findings of this study can be summarised in the knowledge and proclamation that when this process of formation, the uniting of the discerned words of what is ‘right and just’ with the commitment to sacrificial actions that will give them flesh; when the Words and Deeds are united; when the two parts of the Liturgy are expressed in their ultimate unity; the very plan of revelation is realised, as *Dei Verbum* says:

“This plan of revelation is realized by deeds and words having an inner unity: the deeds wrought by God in the history of salvation manifest and confirm the teaching and realities signified by the words, while the words proclaim the deeds and clarify the mystery contained in them. By this revelation then, the deepest truth about God and the salvation of man shines out for our sake in Christ, who is both the mediator and the fullness of all revelation.” (DV 2)

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