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Editorial

# Living Inculturation



## THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH"

Christianity believes that not only Christians but also all human beings are created in the image and likeness of God. This implies that God created human beings with dignity, freedom and creativity to be ever with Him. Hence, the cultures created by human beings reflect this image and likeness. So, all cultures contain life giving values and they are worthy to be lived. And so, on the one hand, through the process of Inculturation, Christians play a vital role in giving direction to cultural change through their selective assimilation and cultural continuity. On the other hand, the Church gives guidelines to ensure that the life-giving values of each culture bring transformation in the lives of the Christians (Cf. **INCULTURATION, God's presence in Culture, One World Theology, Vol. 12, 85-86.**).

The relationship between Christianity and Cultures is a dynamic process in human history involving cultural adaptation, accommodation, indigenization, contextualization, inculturation and inter-culturation. It includes challenges and celebration of cultures, dialogue, mutual fecundation, transformation, liberation and conversion. If Christianity has to be relevant today, there is supposed to be that collaboration with people who are rooted in the foundations of culture and are ready to embrace the life-giving truths of Christianity.

Therefore, this edition of the *Searchlight* Magazine titled "INCULTURATION AND THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH II" aims at a continuation, considering guidelines and pastoral implications of the process of Inculturation especially in the life of the local Church. This can be further appreciated in articles such as: Preparation for Inculturation; African Art in the Liturgy; On the Translation of Liturgical Texts into Vernacular; On the use of Vernacular Languages; The use of Symbolism in the Eucharist; Areas of Adaptation in the Roman Rite; La Formation Liturgique du Peuple de Dieu; The Translation of Special Liturgical Texts. In addition, we have also made an overview of the Pontificate of Pope Francis and also given highlights on who Pope Leo XIV is.

**Rev. Fr. Cyril Sangnyuy Kiran  
(Editor-in-Chief)**

**S**o far, we have been reflecting on the whole idea of Inculturation. At this point, we continue to open ourselves to the reality of Inculturation in our local Church and seeking the most adequate means of fostering the idea. Our past two editions have given us a base on which every objective discussion on inculturation can build upon. We have journeyed from "INCULTURATION" in the December edition of 2024, to "INCULTURATION AND THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH" in the April edition of 2025. In this edition, our concern is to push further the discussion on "INCULTURATION AND

# Seminary Affairs

## REOPENING FOR THE THIRD TERM

Saint Thomas Aquinas' Major Seminary-Bambui opened its doors for the Third Term of the 2024/2025 Formation Year on Wednesday 07<sup>th</sup> May, 2025 with the arrival of all the newly ordained Priests and all the Seminarians from the Easter vacation.

This year, the seminary was graced with the ordination of 22 new Priests. They all came from the five dioceses that makes up the ecclesiastical province of Bamenda and from the Archdiocese of Bangui from the Central African Republic.

## DORMITORY COMPETITIONS

The finals of the dormitory competition ended this Formation year 2024-2025 ended with the following winners: for basketball Cardinal Tumi's dormitory was victor against St Felicitas Dormitory; for volleyball, St Peter and Paul's Dormitory won against St Kizito's Dormitory; and for Handball, Donato Squicciarini's Dormitory carried the day against Paul Verdzekov's Dormitory. For Football, Donato Squicciarini's Dormitory logged horns with Blessed John Paul I Dormitory.

## ANNUAL LENTEN PILGRIMAGE

On Saturday 06<sup>th</sup> April 2025, the entire Seminary Community went for her annual Lenten pilgrimage at the *The Fountain of Divine Mercy* Pilgrimage centre Foncha Street Bamenda. We arrived at St John the Baptist Parish Foncha Street at 09:15am and took a Rosary procession to the Shrine in two groups. Upon arrival at the shrine, we had Stations of the Cross and this was followed by prayers, singing, the recitation of the Divine Mercy chaplet and

its litany, and the litany of hope in the Chapel of Divine Mercy. All these activities which took place in the Divine Mercy Chapel was preceded by our passing through the *Holy Door - the Door of Hope*. After this, Holy Mass followed in the Divine Mercy Hall. Holy Mass was celebrated by Fr Marcel Kpudzeka and concelebrated by 12 priests.

In his homily, Fr Marcel Kpudzeka explained that a Jubilee is a time of holiness, forgiveness and renunciation celebrated after every 25 years in the Church. The Jubilee year, also called a Holy year, is a time when we are called to be holy. This is what we seek today. In times of persecution, dryness, difficulties; characterized by insecurities, we need to be holy. Let us commit our wills to the will of God. In the bull promulgated for the Jubilee Year of Hope, the Holy Father urges all the faithful to celebrate this Holy Year where ever they find themselves. Local Churches should make provisions for the faithful to effectively celebrate the year. Chief among these is the Holy Door. A builder or a carpenter perceives a door simply as a passage. But passing through a Holy Door is significant as it points to passing from the certain to the uncertain. Passing through the Holy Door gives the faithful plenary indulgence and also purifies them. we have come for this pilgrimage today certainly with hearts full of fears, anxieties, hopes and aspirations. Let us trust in the Lord and be determined to return renewed. Before the final blessing, one of the sisters at the centre gave a word of welcome during which she recounted the history of the foundation of the pilgrimage centre.

# Notice! Notice!! Notice!!!

Information for the attention of Ex-seminarians and Priests alumni of **Saint Thomas Aquinas' Major Seminary (STAMS Theologicum), Bambui.**

If you wish to collect documents from the secretariat, kindly make your request via the email address provided below:  
bambuiseminary@yahoo.co.uk

Indicate clearly what kind of documents you wish to be prepared for your collection and leave a contact phone number by which you can be conveniently reached when the documents are ready for collection. Your appointment to collect documents should be on working days, that is, from Monday to Friday, during working hours, that is, from 9:00AM until Middy.

Thank you for your understanding and collaboration.  
Sister Secretary

## A PLEA FOR MASS INTENTIONS

We use this opportunity to thank you who have been sending Mass Intentions to our Seminary. We appeal for more intentions. Our Seminary has eleven resident Priests, and ten intentions could be exonerated everyday. Mass Intentions to STAMS could be sent through any Bishop's House or through any member of the STAMS family-Priest or Seminarian. Once the Mass is celebrated, the Mass Offering is used for the upkeep of the Seminary as a whole. Thus, when you send these intentions, besides reaping the assured Spiritual Benefits, you contribute to the upkeep of the Seminary materially. May God continue to bless and reward you for all your kindness towards our House of Formation for future Priests.

**Rev. Fr. Charles BERINYUY SENGKA**  
(Rector)

## A PLEA FROM STAMS LIBRARY

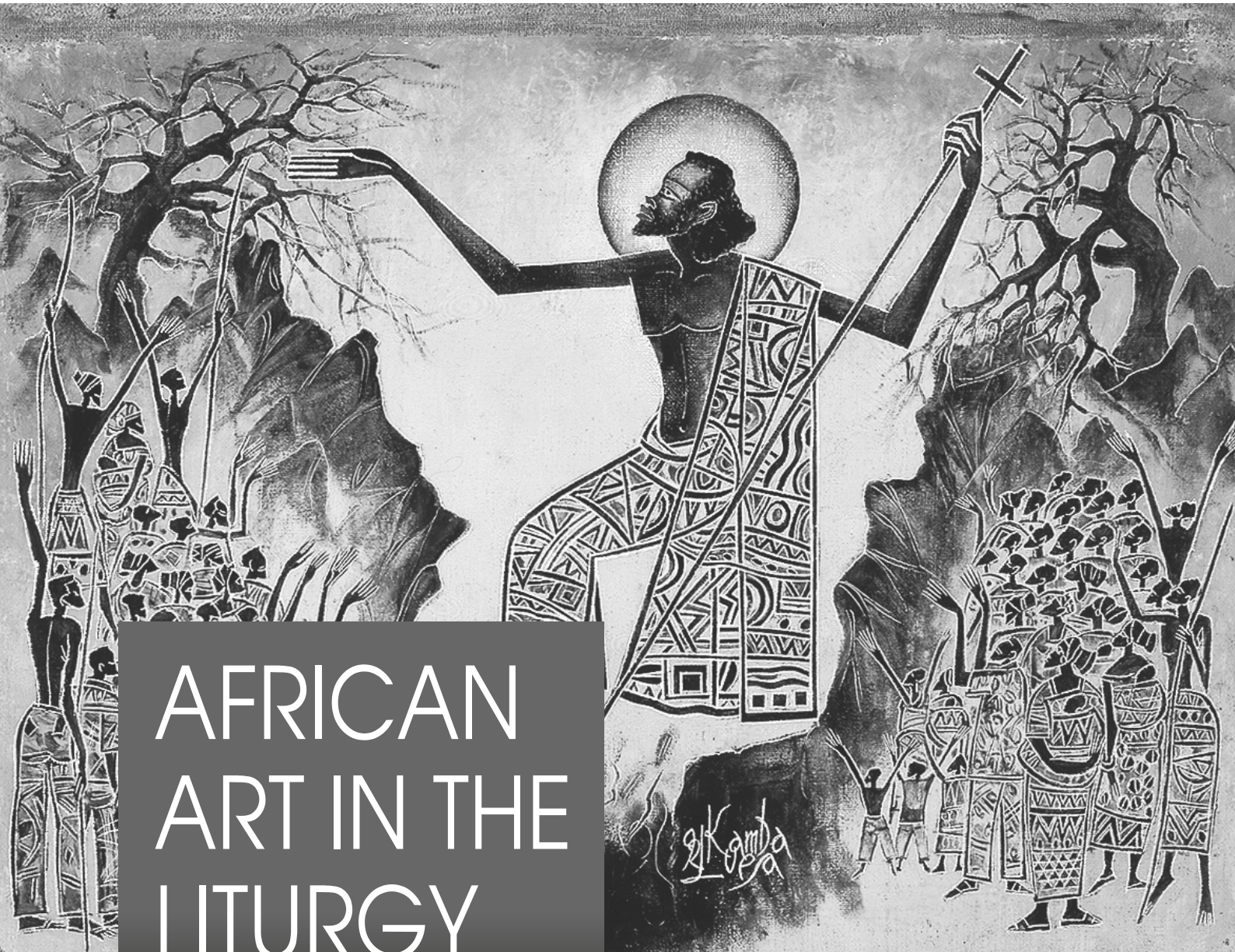
We plead with Priests and Christians to send copies of Sunday Newsletters, Wedding cards, Funeral booklets, Wedding booklets, Invitation cards, Thank You cards, Souvenirs of Religious Professions, Papers, Magazines and any other souvenir cards for preservation in the archive section of the Seminary library. We also use this opportunity to acknowledge, with profound gratitude, having received a good number of these items. However, we remain open to receive even more. You could hand any of these to any member of the STAMS family (priest or seminarian) or, if possible, bring them yourself to the Seminary.

**Fr. Kenneth Ngwobela**  
(Father Librarian)

Dear Readers, we would like to inform you that Subscription Forms for the Searchlight Magazine are now available. To get the form, kindly get to any seminarian from STAMS Bambui and Subscribe for a year or more. Thanks.

## NOTICE! NOTICE!!

Dear brothers and sisters, we would like to remind all those who visit the Seminary, that whenever they come, they should dress decently.



# AFRICAN ART IN THE LITURGY

## INTRODUCTION

All human life is marked by historicity because human beings live in space and time. Our attention will be focused on identifying and bringing out the African artistic values that are incorporated in the liturgy and which help us to participate fully during the liturgical celebrations. But before tasting the fruits of this intellectual work about the African art in the liturgy, it is necessary to clarify our understanding of "African art" and "liturgy". "African art is very symbolic, it points beyond itself to another reality" (Cfr **PATRICK LAFON, *Inculturation the Task of our Time*, 48**). Also, African art speaks to us and expresses the universe and our vision of it; African art encompasses a vast array of creative expressions such as symbols, sculpture, pottery, masks, just to



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**FRANCK ROSEL KAMKOM**  
(Theology III)

name a few. However, our interest is not a question of whether these forms can be adopted to liturgy or not but what they mean. The liturgy is the exercise now on earth of Christ's priestly office, it is not a private devotion but the official public worship of the Church. It is "public" because it is the activity of an assembly (Cf. **RAPHAEL OLAWALE, *Liturgy Handbook*, 33**). The Church has given the opportunity through the inculturation of our African values in the liturgical celebration for an active and full participation. Indeed, the Eucharistic celebration cannot be thought of apart from life, unless it is to remain a superficial reality to the African (Cf. **BÉNÉZET BUGO, *African Christian Morality at the age of Inculturation*, St Paul Publications, Nairobi-Kenya 1990, 81**). Africa is endowed with a wealth of cultural values and priceless human qualities which She can offer to the Church and to humanity as a whole. If worshiping is directed to God it is the worshipping community that has to be raised up to him and that community is made up of the ordinary human beings. The Church in worship has to accept them as they are and at least start from where they are though that does not mean that it must leave them where they are. Yet everyone is aware that it is difficult to lead people from where they are to something better. The gap between culture, music, the visual art etc seem to be widening though both witness to certain fundamental human needs.

Indeed, the African art is the requirement for evangelization, a path towards full evangelization. Therefore, African art is manifested from different manners in the liturgy especially through the Vestments, Sacred Music, dance and Instruments, Language, Painting and Architecture and Names etc. Before explaining these different elements, in brief we shall explain what inculturation is all about for a better understanding of the issue under consideration.

## 1. SOME REMINDERS ABOUT THE CONCEPT OF INCULTURATION

The Synod Fathers considers Inculturation an urgent priority in the life of the particular Churches, for a firm rooting of the Gospel in Africa. Therefore, inculturation of African art in the liturgy has to be taken into consideration from two dimensions; 'compatibility with the Christian message and communion with the universal Church. Care must be taken to avoid syncretism' (Cf. **JOHN PAUL II, *Ecclesia in Africa*, n. 62**). In paragraph 37 of its Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, the Second Vatican Council says, 'Even in the liturgy, the Church should respect and foster the spiritual adornments and gifts of the various races and peoples. Anything

in their way of life that is not indissolubly bound up with superstition and error she studies with sympathy and if possible, preserves into the liturgy itself as long as they harmonize with its true and authentic spirit'.

## 2. AFRICAN ART EXPRESSIONS IN THE LITURGY

Some of these values in Africa as we shall see below are truly a providential preparation for the transmission of the Gospel when incorporated into in the liturgy.

### 2.1. THE LITURGICAL VESTMENTS

The Second Vatican Council talks about bringing the riches of all people into the Church and this is also what is meant by universality. Mass vestments are what the ministers at Mass wear, altar clothes as well as those placed at the tabernacle and credence table may have African designs. This is very practical in most Churches of the ecclesiastical province of Bamenda. The example is seen in Saint John the Baptist Parish Elak-Oku, Diocese of Kumbo. They have vestments marked with the *peace plant* and *calabash* which have a great significance in the African Culture. Furthermore, we use also the African vestments from our different cultures to decorate the Church. As example, we can see some churches in Bamiléké area decorated with material called "Ndop."

### 2.2. THE SACRED MUSIC, DANCE AND INSTRUMENTS

When we talk of introducing our own musical instruments, many people raise opposition said the Archbishop of Onitsha Most Rev. Francis Arinze (Cf. ***Lenten pastoral letter 1973, 23***). The bishop continues that such people think that allowing dancing in the Church is debasing sacred worship and degenerating into what he referred as an "Alleluia Church". In the liturgy there is what is called liturgical dance and liturgical music which enhance the beauty of the liturgy and move people to encounter their God. The Psalmist affirmed that "Praise the Lord with drums and dancing" (**Psalm 150:4**). It is good we praise God with what we have. This is why we have many songs composed in our native languages according to the liturgical norms.

### 2.3. THE LANGUAGE

As far as worship in the liturgy is concerned, the language plays an important role as it is a means of communication. For centuries, Latin was the official language for public worship in the Catholic Church of the West. With the coming of the Second Vatican Council, opportunities were given to

integrate the use of vernacular in the liturgy for proper worship and this has been of great advantage to the Africans as they do not feel like strangers during Liturgical Celebration especially with the indigenous priests celebrating the liturgy. Since the end of the Council the use of the vernacular in public worship has been extended to every rite provided that the translation is approved by the Bishop's conference and is ratified by Rome. In the Church, this refers to making the Gospel speak to the people in a language they best understand. One can take as examples; the translation of the Bible, Lectionary and Missal into pidgin English and various African languages for a conscious, full and active participation.

#### 2.4. PAINTING AND ARCHITECTURE IN THE CHURCH

According to the Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC2502), the Church views art as a powerful means of expressing faith and communicating the Gospel message, with Sacred art specifically aiming to glorify God and encourage adoration. Sacred art and architecture including paintings have a catechetical function, leading the faithful from seeing to contemplation to adoration of God. Painting can express more than words and is an effective way of communicating the Gospel message, especially in a culture of images.

In most of our African churches especially in the Ecclesiastical Province of Bamenda, the artists with sufficient talent have painted holy scenes on the walls. Everything that was said about statues above holds good here. The beautifying of the building and decoration of the Church create a favorable atmosphere for worship. The decoration can be done not only on the walls but even on the doors and windows like the cathedral of Buea and the parish church of Elak-Oku.

#### 2.5. THE NAMES

The Catechism (CCC2158,59) emphasizes the importance of names, stating that everyone's name is sacred, an icon of the person and demands respect as sign of their dignity. The Church cautions against giving names that are foreign to Christian sentiment, she encourage the use of names of saints and biblical figures as these names can serve as role models and inspire faith. Names are taken at Baptism. It is a traditional and praiseworthy practice in the Church to take the names of saints who then serve as patrons

and models for us. But it is not a norm that we must pick a saint's name at Baptism. Today, the Church gives us the possibility to use our names received at birth for Baptism. An example of beautiful baptismal names include: Bamenjo in Nso which means "avoid what is bad", Bemsi in Kom which means "praise", Afukeze in Wum which means "God's gift". But the taking of names of saints remains always highly recommended, they are not foreign names. Apart from the fact that we can translate many of them into our local languages, there is a deeper fact that the saints are of the same household of the faith as we are. Names give us a sense of belonging.

#### CONCLUSION

The African art is manifested in the liturgy through dance, language, instruments and other means as mentioned above. These African values that we incorporate in liturgy are to encourage an active and fully participation of the people of God since the liturgy is an activity of the assembly. The African art forms arise from a basic need, namely to embody aspects of cult worship (Cf. **FRANCESCO ABBATE, *African Art and Oceanic Art*, Octopus Books, London 1972, 15**). Thanks to the Inculturation, the use of these African art can be a way of valorization of the African cultural values which was a neglected something in the liturgical context. Also, the African art in the liturgy is the breach between tradition and modernity in order to renew the liturgy and make it more appealing. Therefore, the African art in the liturgy helps the souls to commune with God in a way that is real, concrete and meaningful (Cf. ***Sacrosantum Concilium* n. 123**).





# AREAS OF ADAPTATION IN THE ROMAN RITE



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**EMMANUEL ANJEH**  
(Theology II)

## INTRODUCTION

The Constitution of the Second Vatican Council on the Liturgy *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, had in mind an inculturation of the Roman Rite when it gave norms for the adaptation of the Liturgy to the mentality and needs of different cultures. Faced with the reality and undeniable fact that change and development are constant and that they affect all domains of life, the Roman Liturgy is not an exemption to this obvious truth. Till date the Roman Liturgy has experienced much development; these modifications adapted to the liturgical life of the Church, suit that era or time, making the liturgy more understandable, fostering active and conscious participation of the faithful. It is true that every aspect cannot be modified or made to suit present contexts.

### 1.1. DEFINITION OF TERMS

For the sake of proper understanding of the concept under consideration, it is worth making clear certain concepts considered to be of prime importance in this article.

#### 1.1.1. Roman Rite

The Roman Rite is the manner of celebrating the Holy Sacrifice (The Holy Mass), administering sacraments, reciting the Divine Office and other activities used by Roman Catholic Christians. It originated in the city of Rome and evolved over the centuries. The Roman Rite is the most spread in Christendom. It is one of the most ancient liturgical traditions.

#### 1.1.2. Adaptation

Adaptation generally means to change something to suit another. In the context of the Roman Rite, it is flexibility and adjustments made to liturgical practices to better align with different cultural, social or pastoral contexts. This concept is grounded or based on the fact that while core elements of the liturgy remain constant, some aspects can be adapted to meet the needs and traditions of different communities. These might include incorporating local languages, music or cultural experiences to the liturgy, aimed at making the liturgy meaningful and more participatory to the faithful.

## 1.2. ADAPTATION IN THE ROMAN RITE

We will look at areas open to adaptation in the Roman Rite and the extent to which these adaptations can go.

### 1.2.1. Translation of Liturgical Texts

This is one of the most significant measures

of inculturation. Guided by directives from the Holy See and in accord with the variant literary genres of liturgical books, translations could be made from the original Latin (Church's language) to English, other international, national, and ethnic languages that exist (cf. VATICAN II *Sacrosanctum Concilium* n. 53). In our local context this has been extended to "pidgin English" and other vernaculars like *Nso*, *Kom*, *Bakossi* and many others where the entire parts of the Lectionary, Missal, Bible have been translated into local languages. These translations must be attentive to the relationship between the original text and the liturgical action. They must consider the place of oral communication and sensitivity to the literary qualities of the living languages.

### 1.2.2. Adaptation in the Celebration of the Sacraments and other Ceremonies

A form of adaptation will be very necessary in public gatherings such as Holy Mass, marriages, funerals which bring Christ's faithful together. Worthy of note is the fact that the Roman Missal is a sign and an instrument of unity of the Roman Rite in different languages. In this same regard the Holy Father, Pope Saint John Paul II maintains that; "Episcopal Conferences have the right to lay down rules suitable enough to the traditions and character of the people, such as the gestures and postures of the faithful during the Liturgy, manner of veneration of the altar and the book of the Gospels, their songs, materials for the sacred vessels, liturgical furniture and sacred vestments". (cf. *Ecclesia in Africa* n.62). Thus in relation to these, adaptations can be made within the Eucharistic Celebration. Regarding the other sacraments and sacramentals, adaptation could be made on the texts, gestures and even the ordering of the rite. An opening for this is given by the indication of "alternative formulas" in the Roman Missal and other rites.

The Episcopal Conference, in permitting these adaptations must ensure that they correspond to local customs, promote and preserve core values (cf. VATICAN II *Sacrosanctum Concilium* n.59). There is also the possibility of making adaptations on the rite of blessings of persons and places. By extension, the Episcopal Conferences should pay attention to the regulations of their particular region (cf. VATICAN II *Sacrosanctum Concilium* n.59).

### 1.2.3. Adaptation on the Liturgical Year and the Liturgy of the Hours

With inculturation, local Churches can adapt the Liturgical year to incorporate cultural and traditional elements while maintaining the core structure and meaning of the universal calendar. Particular regions, countries, religious institutes can

celebrate unique feast days, solemnities or observances that are relevant to their local history, culture or patron saint. Pertaining to the Liturgy of the Hours, there can be adaptations for pastoral reasons or religious heritage such as using simpler language or shorter formulas to facilitate the participation of the faithful or members of the said communities.

## 1.3. PROCEDURES OF ADAPTATIONS

We shall now look at some of the methods or steps followed to arrive at the acceptance and implementation of these adaptations when proposed.

### 1.3.1. The Role of the Episcopal Conference

Episcopal conferences have the great task and role of ensuring that liturgical adaptations are actualized according to the mind of the Church. They have the mandate to prepare liturgical books and decide on the translation of texts within their region, and with the approval from the Holy See, they can publish for the usage of the community (Cf. VATICAN II *Sacrosanctum Concilium* n. 69). This presence and follow up from Episcopal Conferences apply to Religious institutes and individuals in the adaptation and translation of liturgical texts.

### 1.3.2. The Role of the Faithful

Enhancing the active participation of the faithful in the liturgical celebration is what the Church aims at achieving. For this reason, the liturgy is adapted to best suit the religious mindsets of the faithful so that they can better comprehend the sacred mysteries celebrated. The Christian faithful should be well informed about certain developments, and they should equally be prepared for their introduction into the liturgical celebration (cf. VATICAN II *Sacrosanctum Concilium* n.69).

## CONCLUSION

As an instrument of universal salvation, the Church seeks out new ways and methods daily to bring the Gospel values to all humankind. By so doing, the Church seeks out means of dialogue between the rich and beneficial traditions of the local cultures and customs of the people and by this fostering active and conscious participation of the faithful in the celebration of the mysteries of Christ. In the process of inculturation and adaptation, care must be taken not to compromise the teachings of the Church. Commenting on this, Cardinal Robert Sarah says: "the development of some liturgical symbols is necessary sometimes; however, if man goes so far as to confuse the temporal and the eternal, he turns his back on the essential justification of the liturgy." (cf. Robert Cardinal. Sarah, "*God or Nothing*", p. 107).

# LA FORMATION LITURGIQUE DU PEUPLE DE DIEU



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## INTRODUCTION

L'Église a la charge d'annoncer la Bonne Nouvelle de Jésus Christ à tout homme et dans toutes les cultures. La rencontre entre l'Évangile et la culture, par le processus de l'Inculturation, présente les enjeux déterminants pour leur mutuelle compréhension. De fait, on entend par Inculturation, Dieu qui descend et entre dans la vie, les comportements moraux, dans les cultures et coutumes des hommes pour les libérer du péché et les introduire dans la Vie Trinitaire. (Cfr Cardinal Robert Sarah et Nicolas Diat, *La Force du Silence*, Fayard, Italie 2017, p 352) Ceci étant, quels sont les enjeux de la formation liturgique du peuple de Dieu en vue d'une meilleure compréhension de l'inculturation ? À partir de certains problèmes postmodernes liés à l'implémentation de l'inculturation et la mécompréhension de la liturgie, nous présenterons quelques points doctrinaux

concernant une bonne formation liturgique.

## 1. QUELQUES OBSTACLES À LA CÉLÉBRATION LITURGIQUE

Le pape François déplore la situation actuelle où l'homme moderne a perdu la capacité de s'engager dans l'action symbolique qui est une caractéristique essentielle de l'acte liturgique. (Cfr François, *Desiderio desideravi* (19 Juin 2022), n. 27.) Chaque liturgie contient plusieurs symboles qui forment son unité et expriment les mystères humano-divins qui y sont célébrés.

Par ailleurs, l'homme moderne souffre de l'individualisme qui exalte son égo et bloque son ouverture vers l'autre et vers Dieu. Tout homme ou toute culture qui se renferme en elle-même refuse la Lumière du Christ qui vient l'illuminer. De plus, la postmodernité est à la recherche des valeurs sur lesquelles s'accrocher, car elle se trouve avec l'homme perdu sans

valeur morale, essayant de se reconforter dans le subjectivisme et le gnosticisme. Du point de vue liturgique, le laxisme et le culte du bruit sont deux obstacles majeurs à l'inculturation de l'Évangile : la liturgie est plus folklorique et festive où l'évènement humain est mis en avant du mystère de Dieu. Comment y remédier ?

## 2. CONSIDÉRATION GÉNÉRALE ET BUT DE LA FORMATION LITURGIQUE

Le concile Vatican II insiste sur la formation liturgique des pasteurs et du peuple de Dieu pour une meilleure implication consciente dans chaque acte liturgique, car la liturgie est le sommet auquel tend l'action de l'Église, et en même temps la source d'où découle toute sa vertu. (Cfr Concile Vatican II, *Constitution sacrosanctum Concilium* (4 décembre 1963), n. 10.) La formation est extérieure en ce qui concerne le déroulement de la liturgie, sa beauté, sa chorégraphie, son

uniformité, ses rubriques et ses normes. Elle est surtout intérieure en ce qu'elle forme le cœur à recevoir la grâce divine et à témoigner de l'Amour de Dieu en tout lieu.

Toutefois, le Cardinal Robert Sarah fait remarquer que la Liturgie n'est pas le lieu pour promouvoir sa culture. C'est le lieu où ma culture est baptisée, où ma culture s'élève à la hauteur du divin. (Cfr Cardinal Robert Sarah et Nicolas Diat, *La Force du Silence*, p 350) Le but de la participation à la liturgie n'est pas d'exposer sa culture et ses coutumes, mais de participer à leur élévation. Chaque élément culturel n'a son plein sens dans la liturgie que lorsqu'il manifeste la gloire de Dieu sans exaltation folklorique inutile.

### 3. QUELQUES PISTES DOCTRINALES DE FORMATION À LA LITURGIE

C'est dans le souci de retrouver cette importance de la liturgie que le Pape François dans sa lettre intitulée *Desidero desideravi* (J'ai désiré d'un grand désir) du 29 juin 2022, s'interroge, nous interroge et interroge un monde en dégradation progressive : Comment retrouver la capacité de vivre pleinement l'action liturgique ? Il les invitait à ne pas oublier qu'avant tout, que la liturgie est une vie qui forme et non une idée à apprendre. Le Saint Père propose donc deux pistes de réflexions : la formation pour la liturgie et la formation par la liturgie.

#### 3.1 La formation pour la liturgie

En tant qu'enseignant, le ministre consacré devra bien se former à la liturgie pour pouvoir la transmettre au peuple de Dieu. Sur ce point, l'Instruction *Eucharisticum Mysterium* (Le Mystère de l'Eucharistie) du 15 août 1967 souligne la nécessité d'une catéchèse nécessaire pour que le mystère eucharistique

imprègne peu à peu l'esprit et la vie des fidèles. (Cfr *Eucharisticum Mysterium*, n. 5) Dans sa Conférence Internationale sur le Clergé donnée à Rome en 2005, le Cardinal Robert Sarah soutenait déjà que le souci de la beauté dans la liturgie est une préoccupation pastorale, dont il faut trouver les modalités pour une meilleure formation. L'Instruction met l'accent sur une initiation dès le bas âge, tout ça lorsqu'il s'agira de préparer les enfants à la première communion, pour que celle-ci leur apparaisse vraiment comme une insertion plénière dans le corps du Christ. (Cfr *Eucharisticum Mysterium*, n. 14). Cette formation est processus croissant dans la vie du chrétien. Elle est accentuée dans les séminaires et les instituts de théologie. Chaque discipline théologique est ordonnée à la liturgie afin de ressortir le mystère du Christ et l'histoire du salut. Pour ce faire, les clercs dans les séminaires et maisons religieuses acquerront une formation liturgique à la vie spirituelle (...) de telle sorte que la vie des séminaires et des maisons des religieux soit profondément façonnée par l'esprit de la liturgie. (Cfr *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, n. 17)

#### 3.2 Formation par la liturgie

Le Concile Vatican II avait déjà souligné la nécessité de la formation en liturgie. La liturgie prend toute son importance lorsqu'elle est célébrée en tant qu'œuvre du Christ prêtre et de son corps qui est l'Église, l'action par excellence dont nulle autre action de l'Église ne peut atteindre l'efficacité au même titre et au même degré. (Cfr *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, n. 7)

Mais comment sommes-nous formés par la liturgie ? Premièrement par une attitude de contemplation de la création. La nature exprime la majesté, la grandeur, la gloire de Dieu, cette magnificence de Dieu que saint François d'Assise dans la simplicité et l'émerveillement, mais qui nous

entraîne sur une voie parfois étroite, ou Dieu se révèle un Dieu qui aime sa création. À cet égard le Pape affirme : Si les choses créées sont une partie si fondamentale, si essentielle, de l'action sacramentelle qui réalise notre salut, alors nous devons nous disposer en leur présence avec un regard neuf, non superficiel, respectueux et reconnaissant. (Cfr François, *Desidero Desideravi*, n. 46)

Une autre manière par laquelle nous sommes formés par la liturgie consiste en une disposition intérieure qui nous permettra de comprendre les symboles ou alors tout le contenu liturgique. En d'autres termes, il s'agit de se faire petit, de se laisser initier aux symboles liturgiques comme le signe de croix, l'agenouillement, les positions liturgiques, tout comme nous sommes initiés à certains de nos rites traditionnels, parfois sous l'encadrement parental. « Le reste est l'œuvre de l'Esprit (...) En grandissant, nous aurons d'autres moyens de comprendre, mais toujours à condition de rester petits. » (François, *Desidero Desideravi*, n. 48)

### CONCLUSION

Au terme de cette réflexion sur la nécessité de la formation liturgique du peuple de Dieu, il va sans dire que la formation liturgique est indispensable pour le peuple de Dieu car comme l'assure le Pape François, la pleine mesure de notre formation est notre conformation au Christ. Je le répète : il ne s'agit pas d'un processus mental abstrait, mais de devenir Lui. (Cfr François, *Desidero desideravi*, n. 41) Il n'est point question d'une démonstration humaine, mais de se laisser porter par le mystère célébré.



# MUSIC ARTICLE

## PRACTICAL LITURGICAL MUSICAL INCULTURATION

### INTRODUCTION

In the last edition of our tract on Liturgical Musical Inculturation, we saw its possibility and the appropriate styles of music for the Liturgy. Based on the fact that the Church has permitted that each nation should have its own proper music for the parts to be sung within the Liturgy with melodies proper to them (Cf. *Musicam Sacram* n. 5), we shall in this edition limit ourselves to practical ways through which liturgical musical inculturation can have more firm grounds within our local Church of Bamenda and beyond.

### 1. INCORPORATING INDIGENOUS MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

The rich musical heritage of our local church especially through instruments like drums, xylophones, flutes, *ngombi* (a local string instrument) among others are central to our local identity. The use of these instruments should be encouraged especially in parishes and Churches where western instruments are gradually taking the place of the instruments that express our culture. When this is done, we can then truly be living the exhortation of "Ecclesia in Africa" which says, "music, dance and gesture can serve as powerful means of expressing the beauty of the divine in African Culture." (*Ecclesia in Africa*, 63)

### 2. USE OF LOCAL LANGUAGES IN LITURGICAL MUSIC

The General Instruction of the Roman Missal emphasizes the importance of local languages in the liturgy as it fosters greater connection between the liturgical acts and the people. In our country, "Masses" are composed in some local Languages such as *Lamnso*, *Kom*, *Noni*, *Pidgin English* just to name a few. This practice not only supports inculturation but also deepens the cultural relevance of the liturgy in a very practical way. The Liturgy is must be the People's encounter with God in a language and style that speaks to them personally. Benedict XVI supports this when he says; "The language of the people must be

present in the Liturgy in order to deepen their active participation." (*Sacramentum Caritatis* n. 42).

### 3. INTEGRATING TRADITIONAL AFRICAN HYMNS AND MELODIES INTO THE LITURGICAL MUSIC REPERTOIRE

Our Local church should continue to incorporate traditional hymns into the liturgy. These hymns should reflect our local spirituality and cultural experiences. This is in order to meet the Church's goal which according to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* is to "contribute to the full participation of the faithful" (CCC, 1156). Traditional African melodies as has been the case in some areas, should be reworked with liturgical texts to suit the purpose of worship without undermining their cultural relevance.

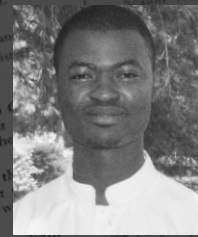
### 4. BALANCING CULTURAL EXPRESSION WITH LITURGICAL INTEGRITY

The one common challenge in liturgical musical inculturation could be issue of preserving the integrity of the liturgy while allowing local cultures to express themselves. The musical composition and their rendition should therefore serve the purpose of worship, glorifying God and sanctifying the participants at the liturgy. The Liturgy should transcend local cultural influences while still embracing them in a meaningful way. Here, we simply mean that more attention should be given to the Liturgy and not just to the culture for its own sake. Culture is not the end, but a means to a more fruitful Liturgy. *Musicam Sacram* reminds us that the integrity of the Liturgy should never be compromised by a purely cultural expression (Cf. *Musicam Sacram* n. 49).

### CONCLUSION

The Local Church of Bamenda and Cameroon is uniquely positioned to lead the way in Liturgical Musical inculturation. By embracing local musical traditions, encouraging active participation and balancing cultural expression with liturgical integrity, our local Church can foster and enhance a deeper and more meaningful worship experience for the faithful.

# ON THE TRANSLATION OF LITURGICAL TEXTS INTO VERNACULAR LANGUAGES



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## INTRODUCTION

Christ the Redeemer did not come to universalize Jewish culture or make it superior to other cultures. He came so that all people and nations may experience the Father's love in their own culture, tradition, and language. It is for this reason that Pope John Paul II remarked: "Revelation is proclaimed satisfactorily and becomes understandable when Christ speaks the tongues of the various peoples and they can read scriptures and sing the liturgy with their own expressions, as though repeating the marvels of Pentecost" (JOHN PAUL II, *Orientalis Lumen*, n. 25). We shall explore the principles laid in *Liturgiam Authenticam*, nn. 19-31, regarding the translation of texts into vernacular languages.

### 1. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

While maintaining the golden principles of unity, adaptation, and noble simplicity as seen in *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (Sacrosanctum Concilium, 1, 34), let us proceed to see what *Liturgiam Authenticam* presents to us under the three main principles of Respect of the Original Text, Non-Alteration, and Noble Simplicity and Orthodoxy.

#### 1.1. RESPECT OF THE ORIGINAL TEXT

Faithfulness and accuracy supersede arts when it comes to translation of sacred texts like the scripture and other liturgical texts. For this reason, this principle calls for faithfulness to the original text when translating into the vernacular (Cf. *Liturgiam Authenticam*, n. 20). This faithfulness does not mean a static or lifeless representation. A prudent dynamism is permitted in rearranging words and syntax to ease vernacular flow, done precisely. Recourse should be made to the bishops, who may consult the Dicastery for Divine Worship in case of doubts. Recourse is to be made always to the Latin Typical Edition, and words from ancient languages like the Aramaic *Alleluia* and *Amen*, the Greek *Trisagion* sounded on the 6<sup>th</sup> day of the passion and the *Kyrie eleison* should be

deliberated upon or adapted in the local language with changing the structure. Furthermore it is not permitted for translations to be made from other translations it is necessary to back to the original texts composed in Latin, Greek and Aramaic (Cf. *Liturgiam Authenticam*, nn. 23-24).

#### 1.2. PRINCIPLE OF NON-ALTERATION

The Sacred Liturgy engages the whole person—body, mind, and spirit—through active and conscious participation. Translation into vernacular languages should consider signs, symbols, and gestures, allowing them to speak for themselves without explanatory notes not found in the *editio typical* (Cf. *Liturgiam Authenticam*, nn.28). The Catechism of the Catholic Church states that "no sacramental rite may be modified or manipulated at the will of the minister or even the community, but only in obedience of faith and with religious respect for the mystery of the liturgy" (CCC, 1125). T. S. Lukong also emphasizes that "no sacred minister on his own may change or alter the Liturgical Books approved by the Holy See" (TERENCE LUKONG, *Salus Animarum*, Sons Digital Press, Nigeria, 2024, 15; Cf. Can. 846). Words like *Adam*, *Anthropos*, and *homo* which show collective nouns and gender be maintained. Moreover, 'persons of the Holy Trinity', 'Son of Man', fathers, and others – expressing technical relations – are to be preserved without alteration or paraphrasing. Also the use of masculine and feminine, gender of angels and demons, feminine pronoun for the church and other aspects be preserved. The translation should not restrict the full sense of the original text, and the theological and philological structures should be maintained (*Liturgiam Authenticam*, nn.30-31a-g).

#### 1.3. PRINCIPLE OF NOBLE SIMPLICITY AND ORTHODOXY

The translation should be simple and understandable to the common mind (Cf. VATICAN II, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, n. 34). Dignity, beauty, and

hunger and thirst for the living God will be quenched by the translation, and faith and devotion will spring forth. Given language changes and the obsolescence of some words, constant revision of liturgical books must be restricted, as translations are meant for broad use, not just for a locality. The character of texts should be maintained in the course of translation, and faith and morals should be preserved to ensure doctrinal orthodoxy. In addition homilies and catechesis have as task to make the faith intelligible to all people of different gender, race, class, religion and other differentiating factors without prejudice in the process of interpretation of discrimination (Cf. *Liturgiam Authenticam*, nn. 26-28).

## 2. TRANSLATION OF PARTICULAR TEXTS

Given that we have had a tour through the general principles guiding the fruitful translation of liturgical texts into different vernaculars, we shall now proceed to examine how they are applied to particular texts.

### 2.1. THE TRANSLATION OF BIBLES

Prior to *Divino Afflante Spiritus* in 1943 by Pope Pius XII, the Church reserved ownership of Bibles only to clerics and Churches. Since then the Church has encouraged that the word of God be made accessible to the people particularly in the native languages (PATRICK L. *Inculturation-the Task of Our Time*, 39). For this task to be effectively executed ensuring easy assimilation on the part of the faithful, uniformity and stability are to be ensured so that only one approved translation be found in every territory (*Liturgiam Authenticam*, nn. 36-37). Vatican II laid emphasis on this and went ahead to suggest that it will be worth it if the translation of the Bible is done in collaboration with those from other denominations (*Dei Verbum*, n. 22). In the course of translating, the *Tetragramatan* which translate to Latin 'Lord' should be translated into words that express the same meaning. Words like the Hebrew *Adam*, Greek *Anthropos* or Latin *homo* in which the original text employs a single term in expressing the interplay between the individual, the universality and unity of the human family or community; this property of the language of the original text should be maintained in the translation (Cf. *Liturgiam Authenticam*, n.30). Faithfulness to the Latin Vulgate is to be preserved especially concerning the intelligibility it grants to words that depict images and action of heavenly bodies in human form, these include: *ambulare, brachium, digitus, manus, vultus Dei, caro, hornu, os, semen, vistare*. This is done to prevent a rather abstract or vague vulgar words. And personal pronoun avoided in words like *anima* and *spiritus* unless there is strict necessity (*Liturgiam Authenticam*, nn. 43, 50-59).

### 2.2. THE TRANSLATION OF THE LECTIONARY

The lectionary is designed to present God's Word in manageable portions for the faithful (Patrick L., 43). It holds significance not only for Catholics but also for other Christian groups that focus solely on

Scripture during worship (PAUL VERDZEKOV, 12). The provision of vernacular lectionaries is partly due to the *Editio Typica*, which offers only references; the actual translation into local languages is managed by bishops' conferences (Cf. SACRED CONGREGATION FOR DIVINE WORSHIP, "Decree", in *Sunday Lectionary in pidgin*, 14). Scripture passages in prefaces must align precisely with those in the biblical lessons, including thematic titles. The incipit, or opening words, should closely follow the vernacular biblical translation and should not be altered. Variations in translation, such as repeated words like *satiari* or *caritas*, can weaken the text, and inconsistent terminology for addressing God, such as *Domine* or *Omnipotens aeterne Deus*, may hinder the faithful's relationship with God. Maintaining consistency in translation preserves clarity, reverence, and the connection between the congregation and the divine (*Liturgiam Authenticam*, nn. 45a-c, 51).

### 2.3. THE MASS RITE

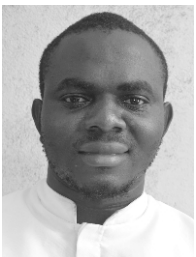
The translation of the Mass Rite is essential to promote active participation by the faithful, who understand their local language best (PATRICK L., *Inculturation-the Task of Our Time*). As 1Cor 14:1-19 states, "pursue this love, but strive eagerly for the spiritual gifts, above all that you may prophesy. For one who speaks in a tongue does not speak to human beings but to God," emphasizing that liturgical language should be understandable for effective worship. John Paul II noted that, like Paul, we are not condemning the gift of tongues but highlighting that a foreign language hinders participation, as the liturgy is the source and summit (*Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, cited by Thomas Nash in *Biblical Roots of the Eucharist*, Sophia institute press, Manchester New Hampshire 2015, 220). The connection between the proclaimed Word and the response depends on intelligibility, allowing the congregation to worship God as rational beings (CONGREGATION FOR DIVINE WORSHIP, Decree, Second *Editio Typica* 44-45 in the *Sunday Lectionary in pidgin English*, 31). Therefore, translating the rite into the people's familiar language is crucial, and any revisions to the approved vernacular texts should only occur for justifiable reasons, as they are well established among the faithful (*Liturgiam Authenticam*, nn. 63-64). While expressing the necessity of a suitable translation of texts to be sung by the priest or deacon, caution is needed in order to prevent the meaning of the text being usurped (*Liturgiam Authenticam*. 60-61)

## CONCLUSION

Finally, the translation of liturgical texts into various vernaculars is an arduous but rewarding task. In a way, we can assert that the object of God's love is bound in language. He created man by the word, and still, by the word in various vernaculars, He dialogues with man.



# PREPARATION FOR INCULTURATION



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## INTRODUCTION

The Church, guided by the Holy Spirit, stands at the crossroads of tradition and adaptation and is called to weave the eternal truths of the Gospel into the rich tapestry of human cultures. In its sacred mission, the Church is tasked with bringing the eternal truths of the Gospel into the ever-evolving contexts of human societies. This sacred task of inculturation is not merely a response to modernity but a continuation of the Church's mission to proclaim Christ in every age and context.

This article seeks to view how the Apostolic Letter *Vicesimus Quintus Annus* of Pope John Paul II, commemorating 25 years of *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, illuminates the challenges and opportunities of the mission of the Church, urging a deep and discerning engagement with the cultural realities of our time, emphasizing the Church's responsibility to shape and guide these cultural exchanges, particularly within the liturgy. As the Church navigates these complexities, a profound and well-prepared approach to liturgical inculturation becomes indispensable for ensuring that each adaptation authentically represents the Gospel while maintaining the unity of the Church.

### 1.1. THE FOUNDATIONS OF LITURGICAL INCULTURATION

The Second Vatican Council's *Sacrosanctum Concilium* laid the theological and pastoral framework for liturgical renewal, emphasizing both the immutable essence of divine worship and the need for adaptation in accord with the diverse expressions of human culture (cf. *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, n. 7). Far from being a rupture, this vision reflects the organic development of the liturgy, which has always drawn from local traditions without compromising its sacred identity.

Pope John Paul II, in *Vicesimus Quintus Annus*, reminds us that the adaptation of the liturgy to different cultures is a necessary and delicate endeavour (cf. *Vicesimus Quintus Annus*, n. 16). This process must be carried out with theological precision and pastoral sensitivity, ensuring that every adaptation deepens, rather than dilutes, the sacramental mystery. Hence, "the adaptation must take account that in the liturgy, there is a part that is unchangeable, because it is of divine institution, and of which the Church is the guardian." (cf. *Vicesimus Quintus Annus*, n. 16)

The Church, as both guardian and interpreter of the sacred rites, must discern between legitimate cultural expressions and innovations, while guarding against innovations that could jeopardize the liturgical integrity. The process of inculturation, therefore, requires a careful balance between honouring local traditions and remaining faithful to the doctrinal and theological foundation of the liturgy. This task is inherently delicate, and any adaptation must respect the essence of the liturgy, avoiding changes that could obscure the spiritual meaning inherent in the rites.

### 1.2. THE ROLE OF BIBLICAL AND LITURGICAL FORMATION

The key to a successful inculturation is

robust biblical and liturgical formation. Without a profound grasp of the theological and scriptural foundations of the liturgy, attempts at adaptation can become superficial or even erroneous. Pope John Paul II asserts that “the most urgent task is that of the biblical and liturgical formation of the people of God, both pastors and faithful” (*Vicesimus Quintus Annus* n. 15). This responsibility begins in Seminaries and Theological Institutes but must extend to the entire ecclesial body, forming clergy and laity alike in an authentic liturgical spirituality.

The Vatican II Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium* underscores the fact that “the liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; it is also the font from which all her power flows” (*Sacrosanctum Concilium* n. 10). This realization demands a catechesis that goes beyond the mere mechanics of worship to cultivate a deep sacramental consciousness. When properly formed, the faithful will not perceive inculturation as a rupture with tradition but as a deepening of the encounter with Christ, made present in the Eucharist and the other Sacraments.

Proper formation allows the faithful to perceive inculturation not as a break with tradition but as a deepening of their encounter with Christ. When they are properly formed, they will understand the liturgy as the living embodiment of Christ's presence in the Church and will approach its adaptation with a spirit of faithfulness rather than one of mere convenience.

### 1.3. THEOLOGICAL PRINCIPLES OF ADAPTATION

Inculturation is not an indiscriminate adoption of cultural elements but a theological engagement that discerns what is essential and what is mutable. Throughout history, the Church has adapted to different cultural contexts while maintaining fidelity to apostolic tradition. This principle is evident in the early Christian adoption of Greco-Roman linguistic and philosophical frameworks to articulate the faith (cf. BOUYER LOUIS, *Liturgical Piety*, 89). Similarly, the various liturgical families; the Roman, Byzantine, Syro-Malabar, and others demonstrate how cultural diversity can enrich rather than fragment the universal Church.

Pope Benedict XVI, in *Sacramentum Caritatis*, emphasizes the need for theological discernment, warning against arbitrary modifications that could distort the sacramental nature of the liturgy. He states: “the liturgy is always a source of life, but it is also a source of truth, which must be preserved without distortion” (BENEDICT XVI, *Sacramentum Caritatis*, n. 54). The challenge of inculturation, then, is to balance cultural expression with doctrinal purity. While cultural elements such as language, music, and art can vary, the essential sacramental signs the bread, wine, water, oil, and words of the liturgy must remain intact, ensuring continuity with the Church's living tradition.

### 1.4. ADDRESSING CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES

Modern society's rapid transformations

present new challenges to liturgical inculturation. Among these are the increasing roles of lay ministers, the integration of digital technology into worship, and the pastoral care of marginalized communities. As Pope John Paul II noted in *Vicesimus Quintus Annus*, “new problems have arisen or have assumed new importance” (*Vicesimus Quintus Annus*, n. 17). These challenges demand thoughtful theological and pastoral responses that engage the modern world without compromising the Church's mission or integrity.

The digital age, for example, has brought about online liturgies. While these can serve a beneficial purpose in times of necessity, they must never replace the communal, incarnational nature of the Eucharist. Antonio Spadaro stresses the importance of critically engaging with digital technologies: “the digital medium must serve the liturgy, not redefine it according to transient cultural trends” (ANTONIO SPADARO, *Cybertheology: Thinking Christianity in the Era of the Internet*, 102).

### 1.5. POPULAR DEVOTIONS AND THE LITURGICAL LIFE

A significant aspect of inculturation is the integration of popular devotions into the liturgical life of the Church. These expressions of faith, deeply rooted in local traditions, serve as bridges between culture and the Gospel. However, while popular devotion is “rich in values” (John Paul II, *Vicesimus Quintus Annus*, n. 18), it must be continually evangelized to align with authentic Christian faith.

The *Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy* reiterates that popular piety, should “be rightly regarded as a treasure of the People of God” and thus, when properly oriented, would lead the faithful to a deeper participation in the liturgy (CONGREGATION FOR DIVINE WORSHIP AND THE DISCIPLINE OF THE SACRAMENTS, *Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy*, Vatican Press, n. 10). The pastoral challenge is to purify and direct these devotions so that they complement rather than compete with the Church's sacramental life. This calls for a renewed emphasis on liturgical catechesis, helping the faithful see in the liturgy not just a ritual, but the source and summit of Christian life.

### CONCLUSION

The future of liturgical renewal hinges on the Church's ability to prepare and process effectively the task of inculturation. This work is not merely administrative but profoundly theological, requiring a careful balance between fidelity to tradition, pastoral prudence, and a willingness to engage diverse cultures with an evangelizing spirit. As the Church moves forward, it must embrace the mission of inculturation with confidence and humility, ensuring that every adaptation of the liturgy serves to deepen the faithful's encounter with Christ. Inculturation, in this sense, becomes not just a pastoral necessity but a sacred calling, one that unites the rich diversity of human cultures with the unchanging truth of the Gospel.

# RANDOM THOUGHTS ON THE PROCESS OF INCULTURATION IN THE DIOCESE OF KUMBO

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It can be said that the Second Vatican Council did not only discuss and recommend "inculturation" as a concept and left its application to some future time but the Council itself initiated the application of the process of "inculturation". A good number of theological and especially ecclesiological concepts have been inculturated into the Church by the Second Vatican Council in line with the tradition of several and many of the previous ecumenical councils of the Catholic Church. For the purpose of this discussion, a key ecclesiological concept like "the Church as the people of God" is inculturated into the Church from both the Old Testament and New Testament usage and reality.

Other images for the Church such as the church as the Bride of Christ, the Church as God's building, the Church as the sheepfold, etc are inculturated into the Church with the same background equally of both the Old and New Testaments usage.

## 1. The Church as the People of God

The development of the image of the Church as the people of God by the Second Vatican Council can be gleaned from the reading of *Lumen Gentium* nos. 9, 13 and 16. The gathering together of the People of God began at the moment when sin destroyed the communion of men with God and that of men among themselves. The gathering was therefore God's reaction to the chaos provoked by sin (CCC n. 761). The Second Vatican Council and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* state that the remote preparation of the people of God begins when God calls Abraham and promises that he will become the father of a great people and with Israel's election as the people of God (CCC 752). From this point one can fast track to the inculturated concept of the people of God as understood and taught by the Second Vatican Council (LG nn. 9 and 10) as the New Testament People of God:

- The people of God is not the property of any one people. Jesus Christ acquired a people for

himself from those who previously were not a people.

- One becomes a member of this people not by physical birth but by faith and baptism

- This people has for its head Jesus, the Christ

- Its law is the new commandment to love as Christ loved us.

- It's mission is to be sent to be salt of the earth and light of the world and to preach the Gospel to all nations. (Mt. 5:13 – 14; 28:19)

- It's destiny is the kingdom of God which has begun by God himself on earth ... (cf. Lk. 17:12; *Redemptoris Missio*, n.15.)

These statements are reflections which derive from the OT and are employed by Vatican II to mark the NT people of God which is a continuation of the OT people of God.

## 2. The Structure of the Church

In the study of the various models and structures of the Church the pyramidal model as one of the structures of the church is considered to have been the most prevalent model before the Second Vatican Council. The Second Vatican Council partially suppressed this model in favour of a more concentric model which Pope Paul VI outlined in *Ecclesiam Suam* in 1964 (ES nn. 96 – 98) and which does not eliminate or keep away the hierarchical structure of the Church as an intra-Church reality. In fact, this structure deals more with the relationship

between the Church and the world. It conceives of humanity and everything human as consisting of four concentric circles around the central point which is Jesus Christ Himself and around whom the Church and the world find themselves (cf. ES n. 96). The first and the all-encompassing of the concentric circles is that of all mankind as such or the world and this circle embraces all things human: common nature, human life with all its gifts and problems (cf. ES, nn. 97 – 98). The second of the concentric circles is made up of those who adore the one, Supreme God. These include the Hebrew people, the Moslems, and the followers of the great African Traditional and Asiatic Religions (ES, n. 107 -108). The third of the circles is that of Christianity and the fourth and the last circle consists of the children of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church (cf. ES n. 109). It is to be noted that the Second Vatican Council employs a similar scheme of classifying mankind, with few modifications, when it considers the levels of incorporation into the Church (LG, nn. 14 -16). As indicated already, this structure does not necessarily and totally suppress the pyramidal structure of the Church. Rather when it comes to the concentric circle of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church, this circle must be conceived of as the base of a cone-like structure or the base of a pyramidal structure which accommodates the hierarchical structure of the Church. This was referred to above as an intra-church reality. Personally, therefore, I am interpreting the Second Vatican Council as proposing a structure of the Church that is both in the form of a circle at the base and pyramidal or conical in a hierarchical manner. The presence of Christ at the centre does not change this structure because He is at the centre both of the base and of the conical structure implanted on it; He is the centre for the laity and of the rest of the hierarchy. The cone-like structure or the pyramidal structure accommodates the various levels of the hierarchy of the church.

### 3. The Structure of the Church and Inculturation

The structure of the Church with a concentric base and a conical (or pyramidal), hierarchical projection can be taken to be a given, where collegiality is the way of functioning at all the clerical levels of the hierarchy and active participation or synodality, as it has come to be understood today, the way of functioning and operating between the higher levels of the hierarchy and the lower levels. That is the kind of model and structure that the Catholic Church has promoted and exploited since Vatican II especially in the Ecclesiastical Province of Bamenda. It is in this context of expressing and actualizing both collegiality and active participation in the life of the Church in Africa that the First Synod of Bishops for

Africa proposed for inculturation and restoration the concept of the Church as God's Family which was already mentioned among other images of the Church by *Lumen Gentium* (cf. LG, n. 6) as its guiding idea for the evangelization of Africa. "*The Synod Fathers acknowledged it as an expression of the Church's nature particularly appropriate for Africa. For this image emphasizes care for others, solidarity, warmth in human relationships, acceptance, dialogue and trust. The new evangelization will thus aim at building up the Church as Family...*" (*Ecclesia in Africa*, n. 63). The Synod further made the following declaration which constituted the bed-rock of Small Christian Communities in the process of Evangelization. It stated:

*"Right from the beginning, the Synod Fathers recognized that the Church as Family cannot reach her full potential as Church unless she is divided into communities small enough to foster close human relationships. The Assembly described the characteristics of such communities as follows: primarily they should be places engaged in evangelizing themselves, so that subsequently they can bring the Good News to others; they should moreover be communities which pray and listen to God's Word, encourage the members themselves to take on responsibility, learn to live an ecclesial life, and reflect on different human problems in the light of the Gospel. Above all, these communities are to be committed to living Christ's love for everybody, a love which transcends the limits of the natural solidarity of clans, tribes or other interest groups.*" (EA, n. 89)

### 4. Inculturation in the Diocese of Kumbo

The impression has been given especially among priests themselves in the Diocese of Kumbo that there is a kind of dormancy or passivity about inculturation; nothing is being done; Kumbo is lukewarm and very far behind with inculturation, there is very little happening as far as inculturation is concerned, etc. On the other hand, the major cultural associations in the Diocese have claimed that the purpose of inculturation in the Diocese of Kumbo is the 'assimilation' of their rich cultural heritage. Their greatest worry seems to be the understanding of 'assimilation' as an 'annihilation' or 'obliteration'. It must however be said that the process of inculturation can only be realized in an on-going manner, respecting the criteria of compatibility with the Christian message and communion with the universal Church and avoiding syncretism (cf. EA, n. 62). The impressions mentioned above can be troubling because there is a lot that has happened about inculturation in the right direction and which in fact has nothing to do with either 'assimilation', 'annihilation' or 'obliteration' and which may not be given its real value in the area of inculturation!

*continued on page 23*



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- Ø Agricultural Production Technology (AGP)

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- Ø Urban Planning (UPL)
- Ø Roads And Civil Engineering (RCE)
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# Vox Pop

In your opinion, what has been done about inculturation in our local Church?



Inculturation is the integration of our African values into Christian values. It helps us appreciate more the Gospel values and enhances our worship. To this, our local church has embraced this aspect of inculturation for the spread of the Gospel. Some practical examples can be seen in our lectionary procession, offertory songs and even taking some of the readings in our local languages for better understand and the fostering of divine worship. Through these practices, there has been an increase in faith in our local church.

**BASILE FOTABE, PHILOSOPHY 1, SAJOPAMS MAMFE**



At the humble beginnings of evangelization in Africa, the missionaries used translators to pass across the Gospel Message to our People. Masses were celebrated in Latin and sometimes doctrine taught in Latin as well. As time went on, the missionaries started learning the local languages in order to disseminate the gospel to Christ's faithful. Recently we have witnessed in our Church Province the singing of songs and translation of the Bible in the vernaculars at Liturgical Assemblies. This a positive note about inculturation in our Local Church.

**Nicolas MUA, St John Paul II Mission Station, Ntarikon**



I think that liturgically, Inculturation has been lived in our local Church through the adaptation of our culture into Catholic worship. The Liturgy in our local church has incorporated local languages, traditional music and instruments, gestures and even attire. In Nso for example, the Bible and even the Roman Missal has been translated into Lamnso the lingua franca of the people. However, some challenges still remain, there is need for more liturgical books to be translated and I think it is being considered. With this, I think we can be truly cultural and at the same time truly Christian with no contradictions.

**Danintar Nelly  
Student, SAC Nso.**



Inculturation refers to the integration of our local cultures with the teachings of the Church. This approach respects and values the rich cultural traditions of communities while helping people grow in their faith. Our Local Church has developed several strategies for this integration to be successful. One of the most prominent efforts is the use of indigenous music and art in our liturgical celebrations. Songs and music are sung in a variety of indigenous languages. Traditional instruments like Shekere, Balafon, Ekwe and Gong are also used. This has gone a long way to enhance active participation in the liturgy

**SIYIR KINYUY JOCIEN, PhD student at the University of Buea.**



Inculturation is an ongoing process to incorporate good african values into the faith. This practice is evident in our Local Church with the use of our local languages, traditional music, dance and symbols in liturgical celebrations. Worthy of note is the adoption of the church in the neighbourhood ( S.C.C), wherein proper education is being done and effectively put into practice when they gather for small christain community Masses. In this way, there is consciousness in liturgical celebrations and everyone participates which in turn leads to an increase in faith in these communities.

**LILEN MALVIS, KUMBO.**



On the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the close of the II Vatican council, the Synod of Bishops defined inculturation as the intimate transformation of authentic cultural values through their integration in Christianity in the various human cultures. The incarnation of the Word was also a cultural incarnation. Our local Church has understood this fully Christian anthropology, which finds meaning only in relation to faith and has expressed it practically in the provincial pastoral plan. The *Inculturation Commission* has been formed with the specific aim of making Christians feel at home with culture and culture at home with Christians. One can see this visibly in her liturgical assemblies in forms like hymns, and translation of biblical texts.

**Basil Dor Yokwei, Rome.**



Inculturation involves bringing some aspects of a culture into dialogue with the Gospel. In our Local Church, this process has taken varied forms such as the translation of the Sacred Scripture into our local languages, lectionary processions, the use of our traditional songs particularly in the liturgy. This is also visible with some traditional groups like the Samba dance group which expresses some of these forms of inculturation.

**GHUN LARRY, Third Year Student Bambili Studying Computer Engineering**



Inculturation is the blending of local cultures with the christian or precisely the catholic faith. In our Local Church, inculturation has been taken up in various ways. Some aspects would include; the use of indigenous languages in liturgical worship such as Nso, Bakossi and Bassa, traditional music and instruments and dances which are expressed in the lectionary procession and at times offertory processions. All of these enhances participation in liturgical worship.

**Mrs MFORTEH ELIZABETH ACHUO, Marketing Manager SOBA Finance Yaounde.**



In my opinion, the Local Church has done so much in the area of inculturation which includes; composition of songs in different cultural languages, translation of the Bible in different vernaculars, bidding prayers being taken in the dialect, drumming, dancing styles and presentation of the Word of God during lectionary procession. However, I think there is still a great need for proper, education and careful orientation on this subject in our local church in order to enhance proper understanding of what inculturation actually is.

**Madame Kesiki Geraldine, Chief of bureau for pedagogy and curricular activities, Nguti, and member of the DPFT, Mamfe.**



On the issue of inculturation in the local church, I would say it has been very impressive, drawing from the fact that the Church is one. In our local church, much has been done. I say so looking at the lectionary procession which is usually very much culturally inclined and certain masses sung in the mother tongue of some tribes. Also, we could cite the display of cultural dances during celebrations. This creates an avenue for the people of God to be well integrated in the Eucharist and converse with their Maker in a more profound way.

**DR. KUM CARLOS CHI, Holy Family Parish Alakuma**



A lot has been done to blend our culture and that of the Church. The lectionary procession these days is also a clear proof of how effective our local culture is present in the Church. The Lectionary procession is done while traditional hymns are chanted in the local dialect as they walk solemnly to the Altar. This enhances active participation during Mass. The Chasuble Priest wears today carry markings of cultural origin with threads that represent our traditional fabrics.

**MR. NCHE RENE, Mbinfibe Mission Station, Holy Family Parish Alakuma**



Pope St. John Paul II's Ecclesia in Africa (1995), urged African churches to "root the Gospel in African soil" while keeping faith in tact. In the local Church of Bamenda, inculturation is progressing with visible signs, some of which include; the use of local languages, traditional music, and dance during Mass like Lectionary procession. More so, the increasing acceptance of traditional names as baptismal names, the effort to translate liturgical text into native languages. More can be done to deepen faith without compromising doctrine. Our local Church is embracing culture, but caution remains.

**MISS NDOFOR PIERINA, St Augustine Mission Station, All Saints Parish, Bayelle**



Inculturation goes beyond the liturgy and incorporates our daily lives. Much has been done in inculturation in our local church. The creation of the inculturation commission to ensure the continuous follow up of inculturation is a great step done by our local church. Hence, people need to comprehend the reality of inculturation as a gift to the church. We must learn to Christianize our cultures so to enhance our faith and the spread of the Gospel.

**Miss CATHERINE DIONE, CUIB BUEA.**

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Since the First Synod of Bishops for Africa, a number of scholarly works on inculturation have been realized by priests from the Diocese of Kumbo. One can only mention a few: Fr Marcel Gham's doctoral thesis on inculturation done in a University in Spain; Fr Paul Biya Ndi's Masters work on inculturation based on Acts 15 done in a university in German and Fr. Pontianus Tardzenyuy's doctoral thesis, the '*Pastorality in the Theology of Liberation according to Jean-Marc Ela*' done in a university in Italy. These works stand out as essential signposts at the level of the design, conception, creation and elaboration of models of inculturation. These have certainly charted part of the course that needs to be followed, making sure that what is old is not thrown out simply because it is old or simply in order to bring in the new. The old in this case would refer to the *depositum fidei* which must be guarded and protected in the process so that the outcome of this formalization is a true and real continuation of that deposit of faith and that the results of the formalization are essentially a preservation, elaboration, continuation and clarification of the same *depositum fidei* which has come down to us through Sacred Scripture, the Sacred Tradition and the Magisterium of the Church. In this case, preservation needs to be ensured through continuity in the new. This is an inevitable starting point.

Inculturation like the science of engineering can be conceived of in two major phases or segments or criteria as the First Synod of Bishops for Africa put it (cf. EA n. 69). The first segment refers to the formalizing of concepts and the conception, design and creation of models and samples. The second segment deals with the realization and practical applications of the designs, models, and the various creations which assure and maintain communion with the universal Church (cf. EA, n. 62). In the Diocese of Kumbo the works cited above contribute to the first segment. However, these works were not done in isolation because as these studies were going on there was also a lot of work going on in the realization of the second segment at the same time. In fact, in some cases the work on the second segment was already completely achieved or in progress before the works mentioned above were conceived and realized. This was work that was essentially in consonance with the instructions of the Second Vatican Council and the First Synod of Bishops for Africa. Some of the realizations in this area even preceded the First Synod of Bishops for Africa and at least one case in the Church of the Ecclesiastical Province of Bamenda preceded both the Second Vatican Council and the erection of the Ecclesiastical Province. Reference is being made here to the foundation in 1964 of the Catholic Women's Association which has become the back-

bone of the proclamation of the Gospel to women in a way that is typical of the ecclesiastical Province which has in the course of time become national. It is maintained here that the foundation of the CWA was a very important work of inculturation.

In another instant, the Diocesan Youth Apostolate, the Family Life Apostolate, various forms of the Health Apostolate, the Catholic Education Apostolate, the formation of the Samba Groups (which eventually gave birth to the Catholic Men Association), the gradual transformation or integration of the Chong Groups into what has now become the Women of the Exaltation of the Cross (WEC), were taking shape and functioning in an inculturated way before the First Synod of Bishops for Africa. One can equally include here the development of the Diocesan Social welfare Apostolate as one of the typically Kumbo initiatives in the inculturation and practice of the faith. Out of the various models of these Apostolates that were available Kumbo had opted for specific models which had received a new identity and can be considered as things which are Kumbo Diocesan. These were and remain inculturations of the faith. That is why the Bishop of Kumbo in the second Quinquennial Report of the Diocese of Kumbo (1987 – 1992) cited *Christifideles Laici*: "*Church communion, already present and at work in the activities of the individual, find its specific expression in the lay faithful's working together in groups, that is in activities done with others in the course of their responsible participation in the life and mission of the church.*" (Christifideles Laici, n. 29). He went on to note that during the Quinquennium, many more of these have been introduced or created in the Diocese. The list of the created associations which he gave included: The Catholic Men Association (CMA), the Diocesan Choir Association, the Holy Family Movement, John Paul II's Pilgrims Association, the Bongkisheru or Children of Light, Bible Study/Groups, The Samba Society, the Chong Society, the Kisooch Society, the Kintam Society and the Twins' Parents Association (cf. Second Quinquennial Report of the Diocese of Kumbo, pp. 80 – 84). In this group and at the Provincial level must be included the translation and publication of the complete lectionary and some of the Rites into Pidgin English. This is an inculturation that happened before the First Synod of Bishops for Africa. It must be noted that this is coming in here not in the sense that the Diocese of Kumbo was the architect of this inculturation but rather in the sense that the Diocese of Kumbo was an early beneficiary of the project. While this was going on at the Provincial level, work on the translation of the Bible and other liturgical texts into local languages was going on openly in the Diocese of Kumbo. That is why the bishop could report at the

end of the second Quinquennium of the diocese as follows:

*"During the quinquennium we have continued to make the Word of God more available to the faithful not only through the provision and use of the Bible but also through the translation of the Bible and portions of it into the local languages. A major event in this area has been the publication of the New Testament translated into Lamnso, the vernacular of the Nso Tribe whose Christian population is about two thirds of the total Christian population of the Diocese. The translation which was initiated about 20 years ago by a representative of the Summer Institute of Linguistics (S.I.L.) became an inter-Confessional project in 1983. It was published by the Bible Society of Cameroon. The Lamnso New Testament "Sa'aka Nyuy wo Jung" was launched during an Ecumenical Celebration on Kumbo Cathedral grounds on Sunday, 16th September, 1990.*

*We have since revised the Sunday Lectionary in Lamnso using this new publication. There are plans to embark on the translation of the Old Testament into the same language. We have also initiated since last year, contacts with the other Christian Churches of the Donga-Mantung Division to embark on a similar project into Limbum which is the language of the Wimbums a major tribe in that Division. We hope these two new projects will become a reality during the next quinquennium" (Second Quinquennial Report of the Diocese of Kumbo, p.113).*

In the meantime, the

translation of the Old Testament into Lamnso was completed and the translation of the New Testament into Limbum was also completed and the translation of the Old Testament into Limbum is being initiated. The translation of the entire Lectionary into Lamnso has also been completed and is in the process of pre-test leading to its publication. This translation was preceded by the translation of some of the rites into Lamnso including the Rite of the Holy Mass with the Eucharistic prayers. The Rite of Holy Mass had also been translated into Limbum and was in use. It was also around this time that work on what was initially known as the "Procession with the Book of the Gospels" was finalized and acquired its present structure as the "Lectionary Procession". As a "Procession with the Book of the Gospels" it was used at the Holy Mass celebrated by Pope St. John Paul II at the Bamenda Airport in August 1985. As for inculturated liturgical music into local languages this seems to be taken for granted and as common place but must constitute part of the package of the inculturation of the faith.

The second big area of the inculturation of the faith in the diocese of Kumbo is the contribution to the realization of the Provincial Pastoral plan which as it is commonly known began in Kumbo and was already in process before the other dioceses in the province came in. As far back as 1985 the Bishop of Kumbo, following the Tenth Annual Seminar of the Bishops of Cameroon which held in Maroua from 7<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> January, 1985,

started to identify some pastoral problems which needed immediate attention. This initiative set into motion a process of consultation and reflection among the clergy and the religious. This went on for a couple of years was one of the issues discussed at the First Diocesan Synod of the Diocese of Kumbo in 1988. There are two resolutions to this effect in the *Interim Document of the First Diocesan Synod of the Diocese of Kumbo*. The Diocesan Synod was held from August 31<sup>st</sup> to September 4<sup>th</sup>, 1988 at St. Augustine's College, Kumbo and the Interim Document published on March 19, 1989. In Resolution no. 3 we read: "It is at the end of all this that a Diocesan Pastoral Plan will be drawn up. It will, therefore, take some time before the Diocesan Pastoral Plan becomes a reality" (n.3). We also read in the same document: "The Synod encourages the creation, formation and building up of small Christian communities, where Christians can find mutual support in living their faith and in tackling their problems" (n. 25). These were, of course, necessary and compelling steps in the realization of a Diocesan Pastoral Plan.

By 1991 the Bishops of the Ecclesiastical Province of Bamenda published the first Provincial Pastoral Plan (cf. Circular Letter KD/A-103/91/13 of 24<sup>th</sup> April 1991).<sup>1</sup> This was an offshoot of the work that was already going on in the Diocese of Kumbo. The Provincial Pastoral Plan identified fields which were to be considered priorities

<sup>1</sup>Ecclesiastical Province of Bamenda, *Pastoral Plan*, SOPECAM, Yaounde, 1991.

without neglecting other aspects of the life and mission of the Church. These priorities included: Christian Marriage and Family Life, Children and Youth, Catechetics and Catechists, Primary Evangelization, Second Evangelization, Biblical Apostolate, Vocation Promotion, Renew Process and Pastoral Agents and Structures. Other developments, however, took place which resulted in the reconfiguration of the Provincial Pastoral Plan that was published in 1991. Among these developments were the First Synod of Bishops for Africa (1994) and the publication of *Ecclesia in Africa* (1995). From this point on the Provincial Pastoral Plan was re-designed in terms of Small Christian Communities, 16 Commissions and Committees at various levels. This work was spearheaded by the Bishop of the Diocese and Fr Ferdzefer Cyprain Tatah who was at the Coordinator of the Diocesan Pastoral Formation Team. In the course of this process, the Bishop described the Pastoral Plan as follows: "The Pastoral Guide is a presentation of 16 committees which have to be formed on the various levels of the Diocese starting from the grassroots – Small Christian Community, Mission, Parish, Diocese – in order to effectively implement all the directives and orientations of the Synod. These committees correspond to all the major themes and preoccupations of the African Synod." (Diocese of Kumbo, *Third Quinquennial Report, 1992- 1998*, p.122). The document "The Pastoral Guide towards the Implementation of the African Synod which was published by the Diocese of Kumbo in 1998 became the preparatory document for the 7<sup>th</sup> Catholic Convention of the Ecclesiastical Province of Bamenda which took place in Sacred Heart College, Mankon from the 17<sup>th</sup> to the 21<sup>st</sup> of March 1999. The Convention resulted in the production of a new Provincial Pastoral Plan which among other things summarized the orientations of *Ecclesia in Africa* into 19 pastoral commissions. (cf. Diocese of Kumbo, *Fourth Quinquennial Report, 1999 – 2003*, pp. 97-98) The ecclesiastical Province of Bamenda is about to celebrate the silver Jubilee of the implementation of this Provincial Pastoral Plan and this celebration coincides with the 40th anniversary of the implementation of the same model in the Diocese of Kumbo. This is a huge aspect in the process of the inculturation of the faith both in the Diocese of

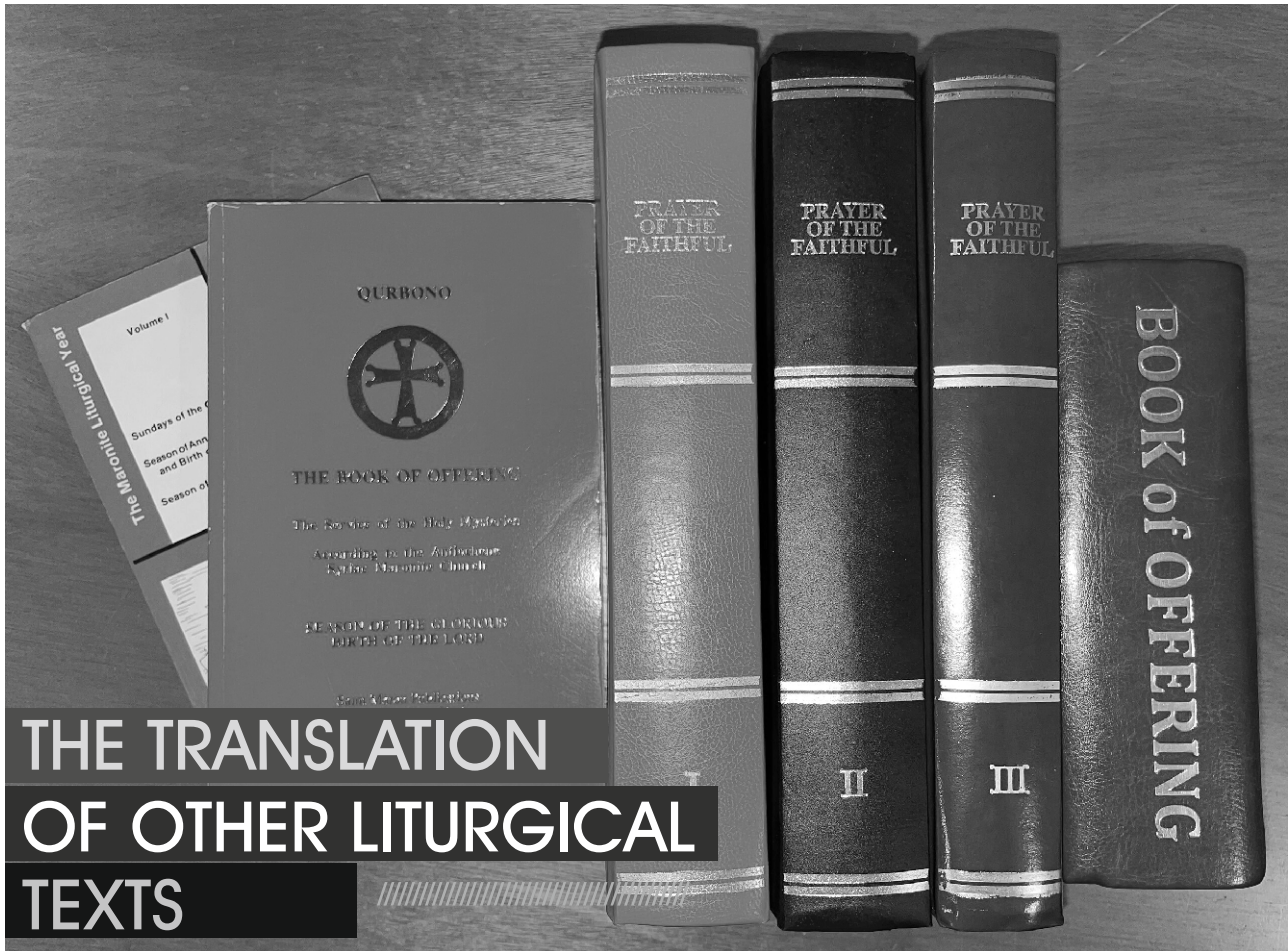
Kumbo and in the Ecclesiastical Province of Bamenda.

Since the implementation of the pastoral plan was initiated, catechesis has been done in the Small Christian Communities. The heart of every Small Christian community has been Bible Sharing and it is a community prays and listens to God's Word (cf. Ferdzefer Cyprain Tatah, *Understanding Small Christian Communities*, p. 35). Pastoral formation teams, mission pastoral councils, parish pastoral councils, the Diocesan pastoral council, diocesan pastoral week celebrations, etc. have become more effective and dependable structures of evangelization. The financial self-reliance of many parishes has improved considerably and more funds are raised for various parish and diocesan projects especially when these begin from the SCCs. These are structures and practices which have become so natural in the Diocese that one may not even pause to think that they are major aspects of the inculturation of the faith in our local Church.<sup>2</sup> They make a whole lot of difference between our local and the other local churches yet they are a particular expression of the one deposit of the faith of the Catholic Church. One cannot fail to mention the celebration of Chrism mass and the *cathedraticum* that is now associated with it.

### Conclusion

The truths and the practice of the inculturated faith speak for itself as well as the actual evangelization of our cultures. The conversion process in relation to cultures operates silently like yeast in the dough! As the people are evangelized the cultures and their former social structures are being evangelized along with the people. And if we have taken time to mention some of these realizations in the field of inculturation it is not meant to lead to the conclusion that we have done enough. Rather, it is meant to encourage all the agents of evangelization to do more and to continue to make real use of the structures and methods that have been put in place and to forge inculturation into other areas applying the same principles that have been applied in the areas that are mentioned here. To God be the glory.

<sup>2</sup>Fr Ferdzefeh Cyprain Tatah had explained in 2008 that Small Christian Communities were founded by Jesus Christ and what has been adopted is an inculturation of the NT model. He wrote: "Jesus is the founder of the SCCs. This can be verified in the itinerant Community that trod the dusty roads of Palestine with Jesus; in the gathering of the early Christians which formed in Jerusalem after the first Pentecost (Cf Acts 2:42-47;4:32-37) and in those groups that sprang up in the Gentile world largely as a result of Paul's work (Jerusalem Lk 24:52-53; Antioch Acts 11:19-30; Ephesus, Ephesians 1:1-12; 6:21-24; Philippi, Acts 16:11-24; Corinth, Acts 18:1-11)". (Ferdzefe Cyprain Tatah, *Understanding Small Christian Communities (SCCs)*, Printing and Communications Centre, Kumbo, 2008 p. 5.



## THE TRANSLATION OF OTHER LITURGICAL TEXTS



BLESSED EFFIOM  
(THEOLOGY III)



ANTOINE NSANYUY  
(THEOLOGY III)

### INTRODUCTION

The translation of liturgical texts into the vernacular is a complex and laborious process but an essential one for the enrichment of liturgical celebration among different peoples. Shifting from the "sacred" liturgical languages to the languages of the people is essential for deepening their connection with Christian worship. *Sacrosanctum Concilium* n. 28 asserts: "the use of the vernacular tongue in the administration of the sacraments and sacramentals can often be of considerable help to the people." In 1919, Benedict XV issued *Maximum Illud*, followed by

*Propaganda Fide's* instruction *Qui Institutum* in 1920, outlining two significant rights of the faithful: to receive religious instruction and prayers in their language and to confess in their language. Through such translations, the Gospel becomes more ingrained in the people's lives and cultures. Pope Benedict XVI observed; "the people pray with their own local prayer books, prepared in accordance with the heart of the people," which reflects the transition from classical liturgy to more accessible and heartfelt language [BENEDICT XVI, *Address to Parish Priests and Clergy of Rome*, (14 Feb 2013), 283-294]. This article explores how translating liturgical texts can serve as a true path to enhancing inculturation.

### 1.1. DEFINING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LANGUAGE AND CULTURE IN THE LITURGY

Translations are typically approximations due to differences in language and culture. Translation is inherently interpretative, and it is difficult, if not impossible, to achieve a "literal" translation, through such a translation which is discouraged. Words carry different connotations in different languages, especially when they change cultural contexts. Despite this, accurate translations are vital for the liturgy because they are central to transmitting faith to the faithful (cf. ARCHIMANDRITE EPHREM, "Translating

Liturgy," in *Logos: A Journal of Eastern Christian Studies* Vol. 39 (1998), 191-224). *Liturgiam Authenticam* n. 47 insists that translations must respect the authority and integral content of the original texts. This helps create a "sacral vernacular" with its own vocabulary, syntax, and grammar tailored to divine worship. In this way, culture shapes liturgical prayers, while the liturgy also influences culture.

### 1.2. THEOLOGICAL AND DOCTRINAL CONSIDERATIONS IN TRANSLATING LITURGICAL TEXTS

To introduce vernacular translations into the liturgy, "a profound biblical culture is needed" to prevent damaging misunderstandings [GEORGE CARDINAL PELL, *Liturgical Translations and Two Instructions in Perspective*, (14 February 2014), n.11]. Pope Pius XI emphasized that the liturgy is "the most important organ of the ordinary Magisterium of the Church." Translation must allow the people to access the beauty, profundity, and spiritual wealth of the liturgy. This is where the development of a "sacral vernacular" becomes necessary. The liturgy is rich in technical terms that originate from Scripture, and these terms should maintain their scriptural or traditional meanings in translation. Pope Paul VI stressed that liturgical texts should draw inspiration from the Bible (cf. PAUL VI, *Apostolic Exhortation, Marialis Cultus*, (2 February 1974), n. 30)]. Moreover, translations must adhere to the Church's doctrine since the liturgy expresses the faith of the Church (CCC 1124). Finally, *Sacrosanctum Concilium* highlights the importance of safeguarding the continuity of worship practices in translation.

### 1.3. PRESERVING SACRED VOCABULARY AND TERMINOLOGY

When translating liturgical texts, it is essential to preserve the original meaning and emotional connotations of sacred words. Difficult words may require the use of one or several vernacular terms or even the creation of new words. The

translation of liturgical texts is not an exercise in creative innovation but a process of faithfully rendering the original texts into the vernacular. The texts must be translated integrally, without omissions or additions. Translators must also avoid psychologizing sacred texts, which could reduce theological virtues to mere human emotions (*Liturgiam Authenticam*, n. 54).

### 1.4. THE CHALLENGES OF TRANSLATING ECCLESIASTICAL TEXTS

The question of whether translation is possible has been a long-standing challenge, particularly when translating sacred texts used in divine worship. Many "ordinary speech" translations of liturgical texts have been criticized for not remaining faithful to the living tradition of the liturgy, reflecting more contemporary idioms. One major challenge is maintaining theological accuracy. Ambiguities in translation can lead to misunderstandings of core doctrines. Another challenge lies in the nuances of language. Liturgical texts in Latin, Greek, or Hebrew contain idiomatic expressions and theological concepts that lack direct equivalents in other languages. Additionally, words evolve over time, which can result in either overly literal or excessively interpretive translations. Cultural variations in language further complicate translation as words shift across different contexts and among diverse communities.

### 1.5. PRACTICAL APPLICATION: MAINTAINING PRECISION AND TONE IN TRANSLATIONS

Every translation involves some degree of distortion, making it critical to maintain precision in expressions, words, and tone. The theological and linguistic richness of the original texts must be uncovered and retained. Not only should concepts be faithfully translated, but also the specific words and expressions that convey a distinctive liturgical tone. Liturgical texts are intended to be proclaimed orally and heard. This justifies the

importance of accuracy in translation (*Liturgiam Authenticam*, n. 59). Translators must exercise a careful judgment in selecting words, ensure proper vernacular usage, and maintain consistency in key terms. Words that express aspects of the mysteries of faith, such as grace, salvation, and sanctification, must be translated with utmost precision (*Liturgiam Authenticam*, n. 55).

### 1.6. THE IMPORTANCE OF MUSIC IN LITURGICAL TEXTS

Music is often described as "food for the soul," and St. Augustine famously said, "he who sings well prays twice." This defines the importance and significance in the liturgy. The Church recognizes that "the musical tradition of the universal Church is a treasure of inestimable value, greater even than that of any other art" (VATICAN II, Dogmatic Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (4 December, 1963) n. 112). Music elevates the liturgy, providing it with a solemn atmosphere, and Sacred Scripture also affirms the importance of sacred song (Col 3:16, Eph 5:19). Liturgical music not only contributes to the solemnity of worship but also fosters unity among the faithful, expressing their shared faith and charity through harmonious voices (*Liturgiam Authenticam*, n. 61). Sacred music also helps the faithful glorify God and sanctify themselves, as noted in *Sacrosanctum Concilium*. n. 112.

### CONCLUSION

As Jacques Maritain observed in 1965, translators must respect the words chosen by the original author, even at the expense of clarity. When translating inspired or liturgical texts, "the exact equivalent must be used, even at the price of obscurity, a blessed obscurity, because it bears the grandeur of the divine" (Letter to PAUL VI, March 1965, quoted in *Catholic World Report*, in August 1992, p. 11). By adhering to these principles, translators can ensure that liturgical texts become a true pathway to inculturation.

# THE TRANSLATION OF SPECIAL LITURGICAL TEXTS



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## INTRODUCTION

*Liturgian Authenticam* which is the Fifth Instruction from the Congregation of Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments "For the Implementation of the Second Vatican Council on the Correct Ordering of the Sacred Liturgy" contains instructions on the Constitution of Vatican II *Sacrosanctum Concilium* n. 36 which states "the use of the Latin Language, with due respect to the particular law, is to be preserved in the Latin rites. But since the use of the vernacular, whether in the Mass, the administration of the sacraments, or in other parts of the liturgy, may frequently be of great advantage to the people, a wider use may be made of it, especially in readings, directives and in some prayers and chants... Translations from the Latin for the use in the Liturgy must be approved by the competent territorial ecclesiastical authority already mentioned" *SACROSANCTUM CONCILIIUM* n. 36.

The norms regarding the translation of special types of texts, as outlined in *Liturgiam Authenticam* (63-69), emphasize the importance of fidelity to the original languages and the proper theological expression in liturgical translations. Which address particular considerations for certain categories of texts used in the liturgy and offer detailed guidelines to ensure that these texts are rendered accurately in the vernacular languages, maintaining both their doctrinal integrity and liturgical function. The texts under consideration will include; the Eucharistic Prayers, the Creed or Profession of Faith, the *Praenotanda*, and texts of a Rubrical and Juridical nature.

### 1. EUCHARISTIC PRAYERS

In *Liturgiam Authenticam*, the Eucharistic Prayers are considered as very essential components of the Mass and the central liturgical texts which require accurate and faithful translation. To this effect, translated Eucharistic Prayers must remain as close as possible to the Latin original. This calls for precision in both the doctrinal and theological

language, ensuring that the liturgical prayers, especially those used in the Eucharistic celebration, remain true to their original meaning. (cf. **CONGREGATION FOR DIVINE WORSHIP AND THE DISCIPLINE OF THE SACRAMENTS, Fifth Instruction "for the Right Translation" *Liturgiam Authenticam*, nn 63-64**) To expound on this, Kilmartin stresses the importance of the Eucharistic prayers in conveying the core theological truths of the faith, especially the nature of the Eucharist as a sacrificial act (cf. **KILMARTIN EDWARD J. *The Eucharist in the West: A History of the Roman Rite*, Liturgical Press, London 1998. 173**). He argues that alterations in the wording of the prayers can have profound theological implications. In this context, he highlights the importance of faithful translations of the liturgical texts. Accurate translation is crucial to ensure that the theological richness of the original Latin prayers is preserved in the vernacular (cf. *ibid*). O'Connell adds that "this is because the Eucharistic prayers are not merely ritual words but expressions of faith that shape the community understanding of the sacred mysteries" (**O'CONNELL JAMES, *The Celebration of the Eucharist: A Study of the Ritual of the Mass*. Liturgical Press, London 1989, 128**).

### 2. THE CREED

The Creed or Profession of Faith is a response by the faithful to the word of God proclaimed in Sacred Scriptures and explained in the homily. It recalls and confesses the great mysteries of the Faith, by means of the formula approved for use in the liturgy. (cf. **CONGREGATION FOR DIVINE WORSHIP AND THE DISCIPLINE OF THE SACRAMENTS, Fifth Instruction: *Liturgiam Authenticam*, n. 65**). *Liturgiam Authenticam* thus emphasizes the need for a precise translation of the Nicene Creed, ensuring that it maintains doctrinal clarity and accuracy. Pope Benedict XVI, in the same light, points out that the Creed is not simply a declaration of personal belief, but a communal proclamation that anchors the Christian faith in tradition (cf. **BENEDICT XVI, *The Spirit of the Liturgy*,**

Ignatius Press, Indiana 2000. 121). Both *Liturgiam Authenticam* and Benedict XVI's reflection, call for careful attention and fidelity of the vernacular translation to the original Greek/Latin text in the liturgical translations to avoid a distortion of the original greek/latin text. This is particularly important since the Creed is a central statement of the Christian faith, used in the liturgy to affirm belief.

### 3. PRAENOTANDA

The 'Praenotanda' refers to the introductory sections of the liturgical books that explain the norms and guidelines for the celebration of the liturgy. These texts serve to guide both the celebrants and the faithful in the proper understanding and execution of the rites. It is therefore necessary to translate the *Praenotanda* with fidelity. These texts, though more instructional in nature, must still adhere to the theological and pastoral vision of the Church. (cf. CONGREGATION FOR DIVINE WORSHIP AND THE DISCIPLINE OF THE SACRAMENTS, Fifth Instruction *Liturgical Authenticam*, nn 66-67). Also, the Instruction cautions against overly free or paraphrased translations, insisting that the *Praenotanda* should preserve the intention and clarity of the original Latin. However, adaptations can be introduced by the Conference of Bishops, provided that they have received a *recongnitio* from the Apostolic See. According to Bourke, *Praenotanda* are essential for understanding the proper way to celebrate the liturgy and for preserving the integrity of liturgical practices. They thus serve as both pastoral and theological tools that assist those involved in the liturgy in adhering to its correct form and intent. (cf. BOURKE VERNON J, *The Sacred Liturgy: A Guide to the Rites of the Church*. Sheed & Ward, 1962, 45).

### 4. TEXTS OF A RUBRICAL OR JURIDICAL NATURE

The rubrical and juridical texts provide the norms for the conduct of liturgical celebrations, detailing the specific actions, gestures, and rituals involved. *Liturgiam Authenticam* emphasizes that these texts, although they may appear more procedural than doctrinal, must still be translated with care and fidelity to the original Latin (cf. CONGREGATION FOR DIVINE WORSHIP AND THE DISCIPLINE OF THE SACRAMENTS, Fifth Instruction *Liturgim Authenticam*, n. 69).

These rubrical texts, which govern the manner of celebrating the liturgy, translated from Latin to the Vernacular, must correspond in every part to the titles, the ordering of texts and the system of numbering that appear in the *editio typica*. According to Paul Griffith, the rubrics play an essential role in conveying the theological and pastoral meaning of the liturgy. These texts ensure

that the liturgy is carried out correctly and in harmony with the Church's liturgical tradition. (cf. GRIFFITH PAUL, *Liturgy as a Pastoral Ministry: An Introduction to the Liturgical Tradition*. Herder 2002, 72).

Furthermore, the Instruction stresses that the juridical texts, which include official decrees or canonical laws related to the liturgy, must not be paraphrased but should be translated as closely as possible to the original Latin (cf. CONGREGATION FOR DIVINE WORSHIP AND THE DISCIPLINE OF THE SACRAMENTS, Fifth Instruction *Liturgiam Authenticam*, n. 68). Griffiths Paul points out that rubrics and juridical norms are pastoral tools, facilitating a liturgical experience that is both reverent and accessible. He emphasizes that these texts, while having a legal and procedural role, must also be understood in terms of their pastoral impact. The goal is to ensure that the liturgy is celebrated in a way that nurtures the faith of the participants and strengthens the community's connection to the Church's tradition. (cf. GRIFFITHS PAUL, *Liturgy as a Pastoral Ministry: An Introduction to the Liturgical Tradition*, New York 1993, 73).

### CONCLUSION

The norms set forth in *Liturgiam Authenticam* regarding special types of texts (numbers 63-69 of SC) emphasize the importance of maintaining both theological and liturgical integrity in translations. By adhering to these principles, the Church ensures that the liturgy remains a true expression of the faith while also being comprehensible and accessible to the people of God in their different cultural contexts. These norms not only uphold the doctrinal unity of the Church but also serve to enrich the liturgical experience for all who participate in it.





# THE USE OF SYMBOLS IN THE EUCHARISTIC LITURGY

(THE ACTS OF "BREAKING" BREAD  
AND "SHEDDING" BLOOD)



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## INTRODUCTION

In relation to the Christian faith, symbol refers to physical signs, objects, actions, or words that represent deeper spiritual truths or realities. These symbols serve to convey the invisible, divine, and transcendent aspects of the Christian faith in a tangible and more realistic way. Symbols are integral parts in the Christian liturgy. It is important to note that these symbols are rooted in the culture of a particular people at a given time in history. The faith cannot be received in a cultural vacuum. The use of symbols enable the faithful to actually relive more actively the core mysteries of the redemption and sanctification of humanity. The Holy Eucharist is the sacrament in which the bread and wine are consecrated and become the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. In the Eucharist, Jesus

Christ is truly present—body, blood, soul, and divinity under the appearances of what was formerly bread and wine. (Cfr CCC 1322-1419). The visible consecrated bread and wine is both a symbol and a reality; a symbol because it points to a reality which is beyond their mere appearances and a reality because Christ is truly present.

## 1. HISTORICAL AND BIBLICAL FOUNDATION OF THE EUCHARIST

The institution of the Holy Eucharist is found in all the four Gospel accounts particularly in the following passages: Matthew 26:26-28, Mark 14:22-24, Luke 22:19-20, John 6:53-58. Christ instituted the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist with the use of bread and wine as its proper matter. In ancient Judaism, bread and wine constituted a kind of staple food with a deep significance, both as essential sustenance (Cfr Deut 8:3) and as symbols in religious rituals (Cfr Ex. 12:15-20, Lev. 23:6-8 and 1 Cor 5:6-8). Wine was seen as the gift of God which brings joy, (Cfr Ps. 104:15). Their role in Jewish life and worship predates Christianity and forms a significant context for understanding their later use in the Christian Eucharist. The "give us this day our daily bread" of the Our Father prayer and Mary's complaint to Jesus about the shortage of wine at Cana, also tell us much about the importance of bread and wine to the Jews.

## 2. KEY SYMBOLS IN THE EUCHARIST

The Holy Eucharist is the Body and Blood of Christ under the appearance of bread and wine. Though in the Eucharist we see, touch and taste bread and wine, yet, it is not merely bread and wine we receive but our Lord Jesus in His majesty and splendour (Cfr PAUL VI *Mysterium Fidei*, n.19).

### 2.1. The broken bread as a symbol of Christ's body broken for humanity

In the institution of the Eucharist, Christ "breaks" the bread and "gives" it to His apostles. These actions are symbolic actions and a representation of Christ's selfless sacrifice on the cross for the salvation of the human race. The bloody self-sacrifice of Christ on the Cross is thus the same as the unbloody self-sacrifice of Christ on the altar during Mass. Our saviour bequeathed the Eucharist to the Church as a symbol of unity and charity with which He wished all Christians to be joined among themselves, hence as a symbol of that one body which is broken and given of which He is the head. By means of the mystery of the Eucharist, the sacrifice of the cross which was carried out on Calvary is re-enacted in a wonderful way and it is constantly re-enacted and its salvific power is applied to the sins we commit daily (*Mysterium Fidei*, n.27). In the sacrifice of the Mass, we do not only obtain spiritual benefits for ourselves, but also for the dead, that God may have mercy on them and grant them eternal rest. (*Mysterium Fidei*, n.30). Jesus is the bread of life (Jn 6:35); and so the Holy Eucharist is the food that gives eternal life.

### 2.2. Wine as the Blood of Christ which is Shed

Wine symbolizes the Blood of Christ, which was shed for the forgiveness of sins. In the Old Testament, the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer could cleanse people's bodies from ceremonial impurities (Cfr Lev 17:11); the Israelites were saved from death temporarily in Egypt by the blood of lambs on their door posts (Cfr Ex. 12:13-28); but by shedding His own blood, not the blood of goats and calves, Christ entered the Most Holy place once for all time and

secured our redemption forever (Heb 9:12-15). Just as Moses made the Old Testament sacred with the blood of calves, so too Christ sanctified the people of the New Covenant by the shedding of His blood when he instituted the mystery of the Eucharist (Cfr PAUL VI *Mysterium Fidei*, 3 September 1965, n.28). By shedding His blood for the salvation of all, Christ inserts Himself into every human culture and can purify them and shape them to become bearers of salvation. The sacrifice of Christ therefore stands over and above every other cultural bloody sacrifices.

## 3. THEOLOGICAL INTERPRETATIONS OF EUCHARISTIC SYMBOLS

It should be noted that what has been considered in this article as symbols are the acts of "breaking" and "shedding". It is not the Eucharistic Body and Blood that have been referred to as symbols. Though as we shall see there are interpretations that misrepresent the Eucharistic species for the "symbols". In this context the Eucharistic Species are viewed diversely across different traditions. The core of these varying views lies in considering the bread and wine in the Eucharistic celebration as symbolic representations. This clashes with the Christian and Catholic view of transubstantiation.

### 3.1. Transubstantiation versus Symbolic Interpretation

The Church believes that during the Eucharistic celebration, the bread and wine undergo a substantial change, whereby they are essentially transformed into the Body and Blood of Christ. The outward appearances of bread and wine remain the same; this transformation results in the real presence of the risen Christ (Cfr POPE FRANCIS, *Desiderio*

*Desideravi*, n.46). The Church's doctrine states that the Eucharist is the Body and Blood of Christ and imparts grace to those who receive it. On the contrary, many Protestant denominations interpret the Eucharist symbolically, considering the consecrated Bread and Wine as if they were symbols and not really the Body and Blood of Christ. This view emphasizes the symbolic nature of the bread and wine after consecration, representing Christ's body and blood, and sees the Eucharist as a way to remember and honor his sacrifice. (Cfr RICHARD JOHN, *The Mystery of the Eucharist: Real Presence or Symbolism*, July, 2020, p. 5.). In this light, Pope Francis clarifies that the Eucharist is not simply a representation of the Lord's Supper but the Lord's Body and Blood. The Church understands that everything visible in Jesus, his words, gestures, and the concreteness of the incarnate Word has passed into the celebration of the sacraments. There is a dynamic relationship between the Christian message and the various cultures, which seek to communicate the Gospel in a way that resonates with the cultures and all peoples. Therefore, when Catholics consider any form of inculturation in the area of the Eucharist, they must take into consideration the Catholic understanding of what is real and what is symbolic about the Eucharistic species. The Eucharist cannot admit of the "clashing" of symbols or the confusion between what is real and what is a symbol. In real terms and with reference to African Traditional Religions, the process of Inculturation can easily appreciate and appropriate the shedding of blood because of the corresponding effect in the shedding of blood in various animal sacrifices and its effects on and for the people. On the other hand "the breaking of bread" may be misunderstood in the same context for the following reasons. Pope Saint John Paul II testified in *Ecclesia in Africa*: "African Cultures have an acute sense of solidarity and community life. In Africa, it is unthinkable to celebrate a feast without participation of the whole village. Indeed, community life in African Societies expresses the extended family. It is with ardent hope and prayer that Africa will always preserve this priceless cultural heritage and never succumb to the temptation to individualism, which is so alien to its best traditions" (*Ecclesia in Africa*, n.43). This sense of solidarity is bonded and fortified by blood ties, clan and tribal heroes. In other words, kinship bonds are so strong such that the "breaking of bread" if not carefully explained can produce the wrong effect as a symbol of the rupture of these bonds rather than as a common distributive participation in the one bread that is broken for all to share.

### 3.2. The Role of Faith in the Eucharistic Symbolism

The Christian faith defines the understanding of the Eucharist, shaping the beliefs about the real and the symbol in the Eucharistic act. The Eucharist imparts grace, a gift from God that heals human nature and allows participation in the life of Christ. The real presence of Christ makes the Eucharist a sacrifice, a communion, and a pledge of future glory in the Christian dispensation. The Eucharist is a means that communicates grace to be received in the Catholic Christian tradition. The Eucharistic symbols of breaking bread and pouring wine signify the Body of Christ that is "broken" for all and the Blood of Christ that is shed for all.

### CONCLUSION

The Eucharist, also known as Holy Communion, is central to the Christian faith and commemorates Jesus' Last Supper with his disciples. The Church believes that the Eucharist is the real Body and Blood of Christ under the appearance of bread and wine. The Eucharist employs symbols inherent in the eating of the "broken bread" and drinking the wine poured forth. The broken bread symbolizes Christ's body broken for humanity, and the "poured wine" symbolizes the blood He shed for the forgiveness of sins on the cross. While the Church believes in the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist through transubstantiation, other Christian denominations view it as a symbolic representation of Christ's sacrifice. Taking communion reminds Catholic Christians of Jesus' sacrifice on the cross. By which they receive grace which strengthens faith, promotes unity and issues spiritual nourishment.

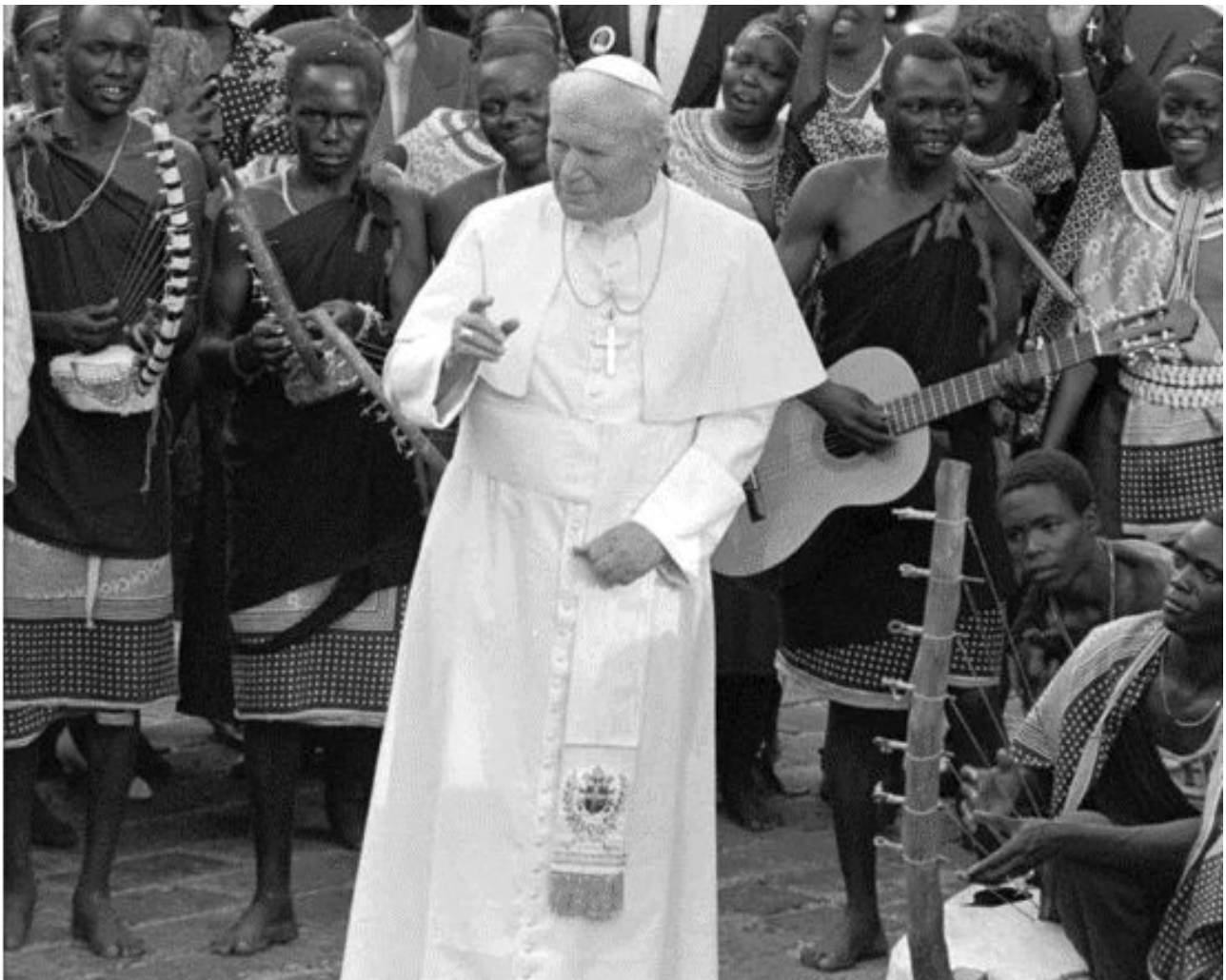


# INCULTURATION AS REFLECTED IN THE VISITS OF THE POPES TO AFRICA



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## INTRODUCTION

In the history of the Catholic Church in Africa, four Popes have paid official visits to this continent. It began with Pope Paul VI and has continued up till now with the reign of Pope Francis. Seeing the beauty and values of the African cultures, these Popes have, time and again, encouraged and promoted

inculturation in the Church of Africa. In this article, we are bringing out the ways in which the Popes showed their approval of inculturation in Africa.

### 1.1. Pope Paul VI

Pope Paul is the first Pope to have paid a visit to the African continent during his reign as the Supreme Pontiff of the Roman Catholic Church. He set the stage for the process of inculturation in Africa. In his visit to Uganda in 1969, Pope Paul VI made great emphasis on inculturation in the African context. He mentioned among others, the possibility of integrating the Christian faith with local African traditions and culture. His aim was to bring to the awareness of the Ugandans and to Africa at large the fact that their various cultures can contribute in a great way to their understanding and living of the Christian faith. The fruit of this integration can be seen in the lives of the Martyrs of Uganda, to whose shrine the Pope made a pilgrimage, as a sign of the Church's recognition and celebration of the African Church History.

Again, the Pope encouraged the use of local languages in the liturgy. To show his concern for the Ugandan culture, he made an effort to include the local language and customs in some of his speeches and activities during his visit. He was thus asserting in a special way that Africans will be more connected to their faith if they are able to express it in their own languages and customs.

Furthermore, the Pope called on the entire African Christian community to carry out full and active participation in their faith. In this light, Africans should take steps towards developing a Church that is governed by Africans themselves. The culture is African, known by Africans and only Africans can implement their culture in the best possible way. In his speech, the Pope said "as far as We are concerned, the Church – although under very different conditions – already follows this method, by preparing bishops, clergy, religious and laity, native to the territory in which she carries on her mission of faith and charity; and We are confident that a beginning can soon be made in instituting a local Hierarchy in those other African countries where, up to now, this

has not been possible." (Address of Pope Paul VI to the Parliament of Uganda, Kampala, Friday 1<sup>st</sup> August 1969).

### 1.2. Pope John Paul II

In the footsteps of Pope Paul VI, Pope John Paul II continued the process of inculturation that had been ignited in Uganda. Through his addresses in various African countries, especially during his visit to Cameroon in 1995, he made this evident. The Pope's main purpose for this journey to Cameroon was the celebration of the Synod for Africa, whose working session took place in Rome the previous year. (Pope John Paul II's Address, Yaoundé 1995). He believed that Christianity and culture are intrinsically linked and that faith and culture should be interwoven. He explained that the communion shared between the Churches with different cultures will lead to the enriching of the Church and the various cultures as well. Commenting on the final document of the African Synod of Bishops, the Pope said "the African Synod, which during this week is taking place on your continent, wishes to present you with the final document (*Ecclesia in Africa*), the result of its work. Among the topics highlighted, that of inculturation deserves special attention, for it is linked to the proclamation of the Good News to the peoples and nations of your continent, as well as their entrance into life according to the Gospel. Nations take life from their culture. The Gospel is inscribed in cultures and renews them." (Homily at the Mass in Yaoundé, 15<sup>th</sup> September, 1995).

The Pope explained that culture consists in the art of cultivating the vine of the great African continent, the inculturation of all that confirms Christ's presence in your African cultures, and thus in your languages, your literature, your songs and your dances, in the way you celebrate the Eucharist, and also in the way you live your daily lives. The Pope noticed with great joy, during the mass, the originality of the African culture that filled the environment. The manner of bringing bread and wine to the altar in an African style, that is, with an accompaniment of singing and dancing which is not found on other continents. (Homily at the Mass in Yaoundé, 15<sup>th</sup> September, 1995).

Talking about the use of the local languages, the Pope explained that the Lord commanded his Apostles to go into the whole world so that all the earth might see God's salvation. In the first place, he was thinking about the proclamation of the Gospel. The Pope said "the Word of the living God is always linked to the words of man. The Church has of course communicated the Gospel, in the words of men who belong to clearly defined peoples or countries. It is still the same today." (Homily at the Mass in Yaoundé, 15<sup>th</sup> September, 1995).

### 1.3. Pope Benedict XVI

In a special way, Pope Benedict XVI lauds the indispensable role played by culture in the process of the primary evangelization of the African people. The seeds of faith sown in the early years of evangelization would not have sprouted had it been the Good News was not transmitted to the people in a language they could understand. The Pope recognized this fact when he said "I would also like to speak of the African catechists, the inseparable companions of the missionaries in evangelization. Laity in the midst of laity, they were able to find in their ancestral languages the words of God which would touch the hearts of their brothers and sisters." (Pope Benedict XVI, Address to Cardinals and Bishops, Yaoundé 2009).

Also, Pope Benedict XVI went further to applaud the growing number of African bishops and the fact that the hierarchy of the Church in Africa is highly made up of Africans themselves as compared to the previous years. As the number of bishops from the African continent increased, it was accompanied by a growth in theological reflections. The Pope exhorted African theologians to find ways of explaining the mysteries of Christ in a language that suites the various cultures in which they find themselves. The Pope says: "it would be well for your theologians today to continue to probe the depth of the Trinitarian mystery and its meaning for everyday African life." (Pope Benedict XVI, Address to Cardinals and Bishops, Yaoundé 2009). In this light then, if theological courses, catechesis and even the preaching of the Word of God are delivered in the vernacular, it would be a great step towards inculturation.

### 1.4. Pope Francis

Pope Francis has acknowledged the good values that are contained in the cultures that exist in Africa. He says "the culture of poor neighbourhoods, steeped in this particular wisdom, has very positive traits which can offer something to these times in which we live; it is expressed in values such as solidarity, giving one's life for others, preferring birth to death, providing Christian burial to one's dead; finding a place for the sick in one's home, sharing bread with the hungry and so on" (Address of Pope Francis, Nairobi, Kenya, 27<sup>th</sup> November 2015). He tells the African people, "thank you for reminding us that another type of culture is possible." These words show the unique character of the African culture. These are values which are imbedded in the African culture and the Pope asks us Africans to bring these values into their Christian lives and practice them since they are in line with the teachings of the Church.

### CONCLUSION

Looking at the trend of inculturation in Africa from the first ever visit of the Pope to the African continent, we can acknowledge a growth in this domain and hope to find better ways of implementing the process in our Christian life.





# THE LIFE OF POPE FRANCIS

Pope Francis was born Jorge Mario Bergoglio in Buenos Aires, Argentina, on 17 December 1936. Italian immigrant parents; Mario (his father), an accountant employed by the railways and Regina Sivori (his mother), who was a committed wife dedicated to raising their five children. Much is not known about the early life of Jorge Mario Bergoglio. However, his short life story shows that he graduated as a chemical technician and then chose the path of the priesthood, entering the Diocesan Seminary of Villa Devoto.

## **His Formation Journey to the Priesthood**

On 11 March 1958 he entered the novitiate of the Society of Jesus, popularly referred to as Jesuits. He completed his studies of the humanities in Chile and returned to Argentina in 1963 graduating with a degree in philosophy from the Colegio de San José in San Miguel. From 1964 to 1965 and also in 1966, he taught literature and psychology at Immaculate Conception College in Santa Fé and at the Colegio del Salvatore in Buenos Aires respectively. From 1967-1970 he studied theology and obtained a degree from the Colegio of San José.

On 13 December 1969, he was ordained a priest by Archbishop Ramón José Castellano. He continued his training between 1970 and 1971 at the University of Alcalá de Henares, Spain, and on 22 April 1973 made his final profession with the Jesuits. Back in Argentina, he was novice master at Villa Barilari, San Miguel; professor at the Faculty of Theology of San Miguel; consultor to the Province of the Society of Jesus and also Rector of the Colegio Máximo of the Faculty of Philosophy and Theology. On 31 July 1973 he was appointed Provincial Superior of the Jesuits in Argentina, an office he held for six years. He then resumed his work in the university sector and from 1980 to 1986 served once again as Rector of the Colegio de San José, as

well as parish priest, again in San Miguel. In March 1986 he went to Germany to finish his doctoral thesis; his superiors then sent him to the Colegio del Salvador in Buenos Aires and next to the Jesuit Church in the city of Córdoba as spiritual director and confessor.

#### **His Appointment as Bishop and Cardinal and Subsequent Election as Pope**

Cardinal Antonio Quarracino, Archbishop of Buenos Aires, wanted Fr. Jorge Mario Bergoglio as a close collaborator. So, on 20 May 1992 Pope John Paul II appointed him titular Bishop of Auca and Auxiliary of Buenos Aires and was consecrated Bishop on 27 May 1992 by Cardinal Antonio Quarracino. He chose as his episcopal motto, *miserando atque eligendo* (By having mercy and by choosing mercy), and on his coat of arms inserted the IHS, the symbol of the Society of Jesus.

On 3 June 1997, he was raised to the dignity of Coadjutor Archbishop (Bishop with the right of succession) of Buenos Aires. Upon the death of Cardinal Quarracino, a few months later, he succeeded him on 28 February 1998, as Archbishop, Primate of Argentina and Ordinary for Eastern-rite faithful in Argentina who have no Ordinary of their own rite.

Three years later at the Consistory of 21 February 2001, Pope John Paul II created him Cardinal. In October 2001 he was appointed General Relator to

the 10th Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops on the Episcopal Ministry. This task was entrusted to him at the last minute to replace Cardinal Edward Michael Egan, Archbishop of New York, who was obliged to stay in his homeland because of the terrorist attacks on September 11th. At the Synod he placed particular emphasis on "the prophetic mission of the bishop", his being a "prophet of justice", his duty to "preach ceaselessly" the social doctrine of the Church and also "to express an authentic judgement in matters of faith and morals."

He was appointed president of the Conference of Bishops for Argentina in 2008, a position he had denied in 2002. He was a participant in the conclave that elected Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger pope in 2005, and he took the name Benedict XVI. Before his election as Pope on March 13, 2013 (upon which he took the name Francis, inspired by the life of St. Francis of Assisi), he served in the following positions at the Vatican: he was a member of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, the Congregation for the Clergy, the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, the Pontifical Council for the Family and the Pontifical Commission for Latin America. He died on April 21st, 2025.





## THE LIFE OF POPE LEO XIV (HABEMUS PAPAM)

### INTRODUCTION

The Church since the death of Pope Francis on 21<sup>st</sup> April 2025, was without a Pope. After the burial of the late Pope, the Universal Church was praying and asking the Holy Spirit to guide the Cardinals to elect the next successor of St. Peter. This prayerful longing came to fruition on May 8<sup>th</sup> 2025 when Robert Francis Cardinal Prevost was elected the 267<sup>th</sup> Pope of the Catholic Church, taking the name Leo XIV.

### 1.1. BACKGROUND

Hailing from the far South Side of Chicago, Prevost is one of three children born to Louis and Mildred (Martínez) Prevost, a school principal and a librarian, respectively. He was born on 14<sup>th</sup> September 1955 of Chicago. Prevost was raised in Dolton, Illinois, a suburb in Chicago. He attended a local Catholic elementary school and served as an altar boy. He had aspirations to the priesthood from a young age and later entered St. Augustine Seminary High School in Holland, Michigan, graduating in 1973. From there Prevost enrolled in Villanova University near Philadelphia, earning a B.A. in mathematics in 1977. That same year he began his novitiate in the Augustinian order and took his solemn vows four years later. Prevost studied theology at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago. From there, he was sent by his superiors to Rome to study Canon Law at the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas (Angelicum). He was ordained a priest on June 19<sup>th</sup> 1982 in Rome. From the aforesaid institution the future Pontiff obtained his licentiate in 1984 and in 1987 he defended his doctoral thesis on "The Role of the Local Prior in the Order of Saint Augustine".

### 1.2. MISSIONARY WORK IN PERU AND MINISTRY IN CHICAGO

In 1985 Prevost began missionary work with the Augustinians in Peru, and he was quickly made chancellor of the territorial prelature in Chulucanas. From 1987 to 1988 he served as director of vocations and missions of the Midwest Augustinian Province of Our Mother of Good Counsel in Chicago. From 1988 he spent a decade in Peru as director of an Augustinian seminary in Trujillo. During this time, he had many roles there, such as teaching canon law, Patristics and Moral Theology at "San Carlos y San Marcelo" Major Seminary while serving as a parish priest, prefect of the diocesan seminary in Trujillo, and judicial vicar of Trujillo Archdiocese. In 1999, Prevost was elected Prior Provincial of the Order of St. Augustine's Province of Our Mother of Good Counsel based in Chicago. Two and a half years later, during the Ordinary General Chapter of the Order of Saint Augustine, he was elected the Prior General and given a second mandate in 2007.

### 1.3. BISHOP OF CHICLAYO (2014–2023)

A new phase of Prevost's ministry came with his appointment on 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2014 as the Apostolic Administrator of the Peruvian Diocese of Chiclayo. Following Prevost's appointment as Apostolic Administrator of Chiclayo, he was consecrated a bishop on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2014, at St.

Mary's Cathedral in Chiclayo by Archbishop James Green, Apostolic Nuncio to Peru. The year after he was named Bishop of Chiclayo. In accordance with a diplomatic treaty, Prevost became a naturalized Peruvian citizen before becoming bishop. He chose "*In Illo uno unum*" for his episcopal motto. These words used by St. Augustine meant "although we Christians are many, in the one Christ we are one". From 2018 to 2023 he served as the second vice president of the Peruvian Episcopal Conference, a member of the Economic Council and president of the Commission for Culture and Education.

### 1.4. APPOINTMENTS FROM THE VATICAN

On July 13, 2019, Pope Francis appointed Prevost as a member of the Congregation for the Clergy, and on 21<sup>st</sup> November 2020; a member of the Congregation for Bishops. On 15<sup>th</sup> April 2020, he was also appointed the Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese of Callao in Peru. On January 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023 bishop Prevost was called to Rome by Pope Francis to be the Prefect of the Dicastery for Bishops; a role that put him in charge of selecting bishops around the world. Again, he was also appointed president of Pontifical Commission for Latin America.

### 1.5. ELEVATION TO A CARDINAL

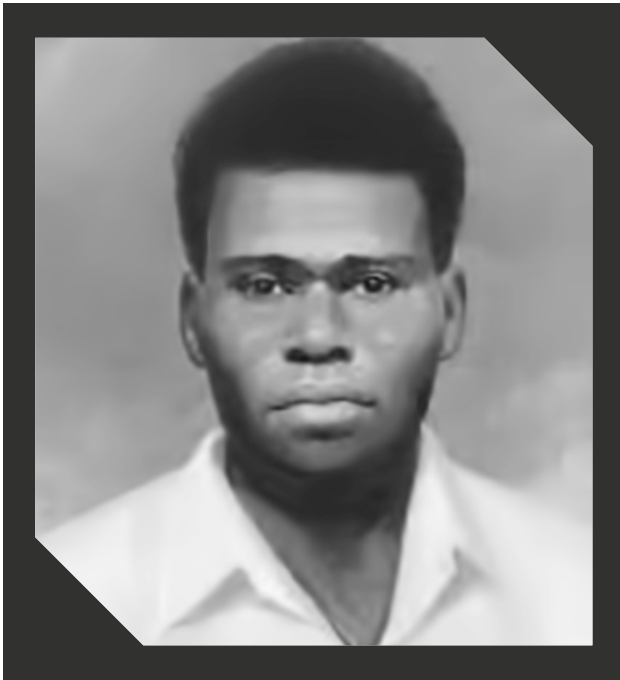
It was in the Consistory of 30<sup>th</sup> September 2023 that bishop Prevost was created a Cardinal by Pope Francis and assigned the Diaconate of St. Monica, his Titular Church. He participated in the Pope's most recent journeys and in the first and second sessions of the Synod on Synodality. Furthermore, on 4<sup>th</sup> October 2023, Pope Francis appointed him as a member of the Dicasteries for Evangelization, for the Doctrine of Faith, for the Eastern Churches, for the Clergy, for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, for Culture and Education, for Legislative Texts, and of the Pontifical Commission for the Vatican City State.

### 1.6. FIRST NORTH AMERICAN POPE

The election of the US Cardinal Robert Prevost in the Conclave of 8<sup>th</sup> May 2025 was a historic event in the Church. The New Pontiff has dual citizenship, that is United States and Peru (naturalized). He is the first Augustinian Pope and the first from North America. He took the name Leo XIV, which immediately suggests his commitment and concern to addressing social issues affecting the Church and the world. We can as well glean from his first words as Pope a tone of hope, reconciliation and focus on Christ as a source of unity and peace for humanity: "Peace be with all of you", "The world needs Christ's light. Humanity needs him to be the bridge so that God and his love can reach us."

# Peter To Rot:

**Papua New Guinea's First Saint and Defender of Faith**



Peter To Rot (1912–1945) stands as a powerful symbol of faith and resistance in Papua New Guinea's history. Born in Rakunai, New Pomerania, to one of the region's first Catholic families, To Rot's life was marked by devotion, service, and ultimately, martyrdom during the Japanese occupation during World War II.

Peter To Rot was the third of six children born to Angelo Tu Puia, a respected village chief, and Maria Ia Tumul, both early Catholic converts. Baptized soon after birth, Peter was raised in a household where faith and service were central. His father, recognizing his son's potential, sent him to the local mission school in 1919—a rare opportunity at the time. Known for his honesty, helpfulness, and agility, Peter was well-liked in his community. In 1930, Peter began his studies at Saint Paul's College, Taliligap, a training center for catechists established by the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. By 1933, he was commissioned as a catechist for his home parish in Rakunai, where he assisted the parish priest, Father Laufer, and became a respected teacher and organizer.

On November 11, 1936, Peter married Paula Ia Varpit. The couple had three children, though only one survived into old age. Their marriage blended Catholic tradition with local customs, and Peter's

commitment to his family and faith would become central to his legacy. The Japanese occupation of New Britain in January 1942 was a turning point for To Rot and his community. With foreign missionaries interned, Peter was entrusted with the spiritual care of his village. He organized prayers, catechized adults and children, officiated at marriages, visited the sick, and supported prisoners of war and the needy. As the occupation intensified, Japanese authorities grew hostile to Christianity, eventually banning all religious gatherings by 1944. Undeterred, To Rot continued to minister in secret, holding clandestine services in a makeshift "bush church," keeping meticulous records of baptisms and marriages, and risking his life to sustain the faith of his people.

A defining aspect of To Rot's resistance was his outspoken defense of Christian marriage. The Japanese legalized polygamy to curry favor with local tribes, but To Rot, rooted in Catholic teaching, denounced the practice as contrary to the faith. His refusal to compromise made him a target for authorities and collaborators, including his own brother, who ultimately denounced him.

In late 1944, To Rot was arrested after being reported for holding secret religious services and possessing Christian objects. He was sentenced to two months in the Vunaiara concentration camp, where he endured harsh treatment and isolation. Despite pleas from his family to renounce his ministry for safety, he remained steadfast: "I have to fulfil my duty as a Church witness to Jesus Christ," he explained. On July 7, 1945, To Rot was killed in prison—first by lethal injection, then forcibly suffocated and struck on the neck when the poison proved slow. His body bore clear signs of violence, and he was buried in Rakunai with a chief's funeral, though the ceremony was held in silence due to fear of Japanese reprisals.

Peter To Rot's witness inspired generations. He became a symbol of courage, especially for married couples and catechists, and was venerated as a martyr by the Catholic Church. His beatification by Pope John Paul II in 1995 was a moment of national pride. In 2025, Pope Francis approved his canonization, making To Rot Papua New Guinea's first saint. His feast day is celebrated on July 7, the anniversary of his martyrdom, and his example continues to encourage Christians in Papua New Guinea and beyond to stand firm in faith and defend the sanctity of marriage, even in the face of persecution.