

The Western Rite: Problems and Possibilities

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for
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The issue of the Western Rite has been of great interest to me for years now. I was raised Anglican and found my way to the Orthodox Church at the age of twenty-one. As I grew-up I very much loved the Anglican liturgy (1928 *Book of Common Prayer*) and my first contact with the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom was not a pleasant one. In spite of that I entered the Church, in a Russian-speaking parish of the Orthodox Church in America, in which the Liturgy was served primarily in Old Church Slavonic. The message was clear to me: I had to let go of the liturgy that had been "home" to me throughout my childhood. I wondered if I could really do that. Would I not miss my favorite hymns and prayers? Perhaps, but I had to let go. This message did not come from any person. No one said to me, "You have to give it up," I simply knew that this was the case, just as I knew that I had to accept worshipping in a foreign language. The priest who chrismated me had become like grandfather to me (he was seventy-four when I met him), and it was simply clear that his parish was where God wanted me to be. In that parish I came to know and to deeply love the Byzantine Liturgy and I was amazed at how quickly I was able to let go of the Anglican Liturgy.

I say all of this because it clearly affects how I look at the issue of the Western Rite. Because I became so deeply aware of the need to let go of the past, I cannot help but see this as a fundamental aspect of conversion. I cannot help but ask myself if others who come to Orthodoxy through the Western Rite are not failing to let go when they need to. This is my *prejudice*, and I need to say it out front. My attitude was reinforced when I visited a Western Rite parish and left feeling very nostalgic, but not like I had been to Liturgy. Instantly I had been able to remember all the prayers I knew as a child, and even what page they were on in the *BCP*, but somehow my experience stopped there. I felt like it was a trap.

I have listened to defenses of the Western Rite and I agreed that what people were saying sounded okay in theory, but something still seemed not right, and I couldn't put my finger on it. That is what led me to write this: the desire to think through the various problems and possibilities. It has become clear to me that the Western Rite cannot be supported simply because multiplicity of rites, including those

of western origin is an historic reality, nor can it be condemned simply because it is not the Byzantine Rite. In the first case one (tacitly) assumes that all rites are equally beneficial in how they express the Church's adoration of the Creator and the Truth she (the Church) has preserved. To support the latter argument one has to claim *a priori* that only the Byzantine rite is genuinely expressive of the Faith. It has seemed to me that one should ask, "Are the particular rites being use actually Orthodox expressions of worship? But in either of the above cases, the assumption is that the contents of the liturgical rites themselves are the only issues of importance. Certainly the texts are important, even the most important part of the liturgy from a dogmatic perspective. However, I have come to believe that the problems that I see are not really dogmatic problems, rather the associations people naturally make, not always consciously, between the rite and their past association with it. My thinking here has been influenced by the writings of Father Alexander Schmemmann, by the report of the commission of the Holy Synod of Russia on the American (1898) *Book of Common Prayer*, and by the classroom lectures of one professor here at St. Vladimir's Seminary.

In spite of my reservations, I have wondered if I might not be wrong, perhaps even hoped that I was, and I have wanted to seriously consider the possibilities of the usefulness of a Western Rite. Having done some research on the history of Latin Liturgy, I have found possibilities in the *Novus Ordo* of the Roman Catholic Church, although some reservations remain. I hope here to state my initial concerns, discuss this ray of hope and finally to provide some tentative conclusions, hoping that others will be moved to provide their insights and experiences.

In 1905 a commission of the Holy Synod of the Orthodox Church in Russia published its review of the 1898 American *Book of Common Prayer* for then Archbishop Tikhon.¹ The commission had thoroughly read through the prayers of the various sacramental offices of the *BCP*, especially the Communion service and the ordinal, comparing them to those of the English *Book of Common Prayer*, and ultimately to the Roman Catholic texts for the same offices; the latter was clearly for the purpose of determining what theological perspectives were being expressed in the Anglican liturgies, whether by omission, alteration, or addition of texts. Aside from the general and well-known problem of Anglican "comprehensiveness," which they

¹ "Russian Observations on the American Prayer Book" *Alcuin Club Tracts* 12, London: A. R. Mowbray, 1917.

observed, the commission made two striking statements. The first of these, while made specifically about the ordinal, is applicable to the entire *Prayer Book*:

But on the other hand, those which we may call latent insufficiencies of the rite - its tendency to leave room for opinions which diverge from the Orthodox form of belief - must not be authorized simply, and with nothing to counteract them, in the hope that they will be neutralized through the adoption of the true conceptions by the new members of the Orthodox Church. In order more faithfully to guard those who use the rite from this effect of the false influences that penetrate it, it would seem expedient not to rest satisfied with the possibility of setting the contents of this rite in its new light. It would be better to remove all possibility of maintaining the old ideas, and directly and firmly to bear witness to the Orthodox conception of ordination, where it differs from the protestant view.²

The commission is saying that there are perspectives behind the texts, but not expressed directly in them, that will sooner or later become a problem. While they are speaking of the ordinal in specific, the principle seems to apply universally. The word "latently" is significant here. First of all, it is not (only) what the texts directly say that is of concern; rather (also) what they don't say – the theological presuppositions that underlie the texts, even when these presuppositions are not directly stated. Secondly, some prayers of the West, even those that were used centuries before the Great Schism, that express a theology that eventually proved to reflect a significant theological divergence between East and West. A good example is the *Exultet*, in which the Augustinian notion of "original guilt" is expressed. Even the *filioque* was first introduced in the Latin text of the Creed four hundred fifty years before Cardinal Humberto laid the forged bull on the altar of Hagia Sophia.³ Just because a hymn or prayer was used before the schism, it does not follow that it is not easily subject to heterodox understanding. Granted, there are prayers in the Byzantine Liturgy which, given a different theological context, could be interpreted differently. The rite itself is not the issue, rather the context in which it exists. A rite is more than the text; instead it includes the overall cultural and theological context in which a liturgical office is served. The orthodoxy of a rite depends on the texts expressing a theology that is correct, as it is understood by an Orthodox community. If it is true that *lex orandi, lex est credendi*, then it works both ways (even though the basic intent is that

² "Russian Observations", p. 19.

³ It should be noted that the Creed was not introduced into liturgical use in the West until the Cardinal Humberto's time, and it was this that led to the issue becoming an "issue."

lex orandi is the guiding principle). If a community is entrenched in a heterodox way of thinking, then it will impose that theology onto "orthodox" texts. The Unia is the perfect example. By the same principle, ambiguous prayers of heterodox origin, if used by Orthodox, could have an orthodox understanding imposed on them; but this orthodox understanding would be *imposed*. The commission of the Holy Synod of Russia seems to have agreed that it is only too likely that a community of converts retaining their old rite will not be able to escape the original meaning of these prayers. Granted, they may consciously reject that heterodox interpretation, but can they really completely reject it while praying those prayers? One portion of the Anglican *Anaphora* seems to be an excellent example:

All glory be to Thee, Almighty God, our heavenly Father, for that thou, of thy tender mercy, didst give thine only begotten Son Jesus Christ to suffer death upon the Cross for our redemption; who made there (by his one oblation of himself once offered) a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world.⁴

There is nothing heretical in this prayer. It is based on the epistle to the Hebrews. Nevertheless, it is the product of a particular controversy, and it must be understood as a rejection of the theology of the Eucharist as sacrifice. It was a polemical statement. Its meaning is demonstrated by article XXXI of the Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion:

The offering of Christ once made is that perfect redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction, for all the sins of the whole world, both original and actual; and there is none other satisfaction for sin, but that alone. Wherefore, sacrifices of Masses, in which it was commonly said, that the Priest did offer Christ for the quick and the dead, to have remission of pain or guilt, were blasphemous fables and dangerous deceits.⁵

Regarding the numerous ambiguities in the *Book of Common Prayer* the commission said:

Considering the origin of the document and the epoch to which it belongs, it must be required to exhibit a definiteness on this question no less than the definiteness which

⁴ *Book of Common Prayer*, p. 80.

⁵ *Book of Common Prayer*, p. 609.

liturgical monuments, hailing from the time of controversies about the Holy Trinity, about the wills in the Person of Jesus Christ, etc., exhibit on these subjects.⁶

The *Book of Common Prayer* reflects the controversies faced by the early Anglicans and their responses, which often included calculated ambiguity. It is equally the reality of the Byzantine Rite that it reflects the ancient controversies, and it reflects the Church's response. While a few hymns are ambiguous, such as the *Monogenês*, their surrounding context allows for only one interpretation. Is it not wiser to not allow the chance for ambiguity, misunderstanding, and the unintentional perpetuation of unorthodox categories of thought, especially among new converts? A rite can be corrected textually, and indeed the Russian Church authorized the use of the *BCP* with numerous corrections, but it still expressed its concerns as we saw above. It is dubious that a few textual amendments are able to erase the entire historical context of any rite. Father Alexander Schmemmann well articulated these concerns in one article saying,

Indeed, one does not have to be an "authority on the West" in order to know that the liturgical development in the West was shaped to a degree unknown in the East, by the various theologies, the succession of which, as well as the clashes of which with one another, constitute western religious history. Scholasticism, Reformation, Counter-Reformation, etc., all have resulted in sometimes radical liturgical metaphorphoses, all have had a decisive impact on worship. Therefore one should speak today not of the Western rite, but of Western rites, deeply, if not radically differing from one another, yet all reflecting, in one way or another, the western theological tragedy and fragmentation. This does not mean that these rites are "heretical" and are simply to be condemned. It only means that from an Orthodox point of view, their evaluation in terms of merely "deletions" and "additions" is, to say the least, inadequate and cannot resolve the tensions mentioned above. And even if in the past this method had a semblance of justification, the acute liturgical crisis that encompasses today virtually all western confessions, makes it obsolete and irrelevant. For the irony of our present situation is that while some western Christians come to Orthodoxy in order to salvage the rite they cherish (Book of Common Prayer, Tridentine mass, etc.) from liturgical reforms they abhor, some of these reforms, at least in abstract, are closer to the structures and spirit of the early Western rite and thus to the Orthodox liturgical tradition, than the later rites, those precisely that the Orthodox Church is supposed to "sanction" and to "adopt."⁷

⁶ *Russian Observations*, p. 7.

⁷ "Some Reflections Upon 'A Case Study'", p. 268-269.

Is it reasonable to expect that people can hold on to their old familiar forms without holding on to the old ways of thinking that go along with those forms. People make subconscious associations and it takes great effort to break those associations. While one may justify one or another practice as being not "heretical" that it at least partially beside the point. The real difficulty with the use of the Western Rite is not any one particular theological point. The question is, why is it so important to these converts to retain these forms, which have the effect of isolating them from the rest of the Orthodox Church? What is or is not happening on the psychological level?

On the other end of the scale, there is much that those who worship according to the Western Rite are missing; feasts, for example, like Theophany, which communicate so well the Church's understanding of Christ's recapitulation of all creation and the Church's and the world's participation in that through the sanctification of waters. While the western forms of worship certainly do not deny this, and in a few cases do express it, it is not the evident foundation of liturgical theology that it is in Byzantine worship. Byzantine theology is highly sacramental, or symbolic. A symbol in the Byzantine mind, is not something that replaces the reality it depicts; instead it communicates that very reality. This, according to Fr. Alexander Schmemmann, is the meaning of the Greek word *mysterion*, the counterpart to the Latin word *sacramentum*.⁸ Material things are used to communicate the reality and presence of realities beyond themselves. Liturgical theology in the Byzantine mind is essentially sacramental theology. All of liturgy is *mysterion*, as Fr. Alexander used the term, and, as a consequence, the Orthodox Church has never dogmatized any numbering of the sacraments, nor any particular list.⁹ Fr. Alexander observed that the liturgy of the Church: "always mak[es] her that which she is: the sacrament of the world, the sacrament of the Kingdom. – their gift to us *in Christ*."¹⁰ Father Alexander's book *For the Life of the World* is his best articulation of the belief that lies at the heart of the Byzantine liturgical mind: that the world itself was created to be sacramental – an epiphany of divine life. In Christ this possibility is restored and it is made reality in the Church's liturgy. When the saving acts of the Lord are commemorated in the liturgical *anamnesis*, remembrance is joined inseparably to the

⁸ Alexander Schmemmann, *For the Life of the World*, (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1973), p. 129

⁹ This is true in spite of the fact that catechisms in the East have resorted to such schemes.

¹⁰ *For the Life of the World*, p. 8.

offering (sacrifice) of the Holy Gifts, thanksgiving and glorification of God. The events are made truly present among the people, the Gifts becoming "antitypes" (*symbols* as we used the term above) of the Body and Blood of Christ and their liturgy is joined with the liturgy in heaven. That the very term that the Church preserved for herself as a proper name, "Orthodox," means simultaneously "rightly believing" and "rightly glorifying" demonstrates a fundamental presupposition behind Byzantine worship: that how one believes intellectually and how one worships go hand in hand. Worship must involve the entire person. For this reason we use incense to reach the sense of smell, music to touch the ears, Ikons to touch the eyes. Certainly the West never denied this, but the very reality of the *missa privata* demonstrates that worship was understood differently. The Byzantine liturgical mind simply does not think in categories of "primary" and "secondary importance," not to mention place the use of incense and music at the Divine Liturgy on a secondary level.¹¹

Having expressed my basic concerns, I'll turn to the "ray of hope" I mentioned. I had also been bothered by the obvious fact that what I had witnessed and read about did not reflect the Latin liturgy from before the Schism, especially the "Liturgy of St. Tikhon," which is the *Book of Common Prayer* with certain amendments. In Europe, however, the Western Rite communities have tended to use reconstructed rites, like the Gallican. These have the disadvantage of being artificial, and therefore not very useful; there has not been a living succession of worshipping communities using those rites. It seems obvious that if Orthodox are going to use a western liturgy, it should be one of genuine Orthodox roots, well-attested, well understood by the clergy and the laity, and a *living* rite. Does such a creature exist?

In order to answer this we must turn to the Roman Mass of the pre-Schism Church. The *Ordo Romanus Primus (Ordo I)* provides a relatively detailed description of the Pontifical Liturgy around the year 700.¹² It makes an excellent primary reference, but we must rely on earlier sources in order to understand the basic development of Roman liturgy. *Ordo I* gives a description of the pontifical order;

¹¹ Certainly, one considering the relative dogmatic value of incense or music at Liturgy would have to consider them secondary to the dogmata of the Incarnation and Resurrection; but this is beside the point. Such distinctions are foreign to the liturgical ethos of the Byzantine Rite and therefore the Orthodox Church as a whole.

¹² Klauser, pp. 60ff; see also pp.47-51.

but at Rome there coexisted-existed a presbyteral sacramentary, which while patterned on the original Gregorian Sacramentary (essentially a *pontificale*), it in turn influenced later editions of the same.¹³

The Roman Liturgy at the time *Ordo I* was the stationary liturgy, the remnants of which can still be found in missals up to our own time. As in Constantinople, the bishop began at a station away from the basilica where the Liturgy was to be celebrated and processed to that church. In the *Ordo Romanus Primus* the starting point is the Lateran Basilica. The various liturgical books, linens, vessels, etc. were carried in the procession and the Pope was supported by deacons on either side. Arriving at the basilica, they went to the sacristy where, following Byzantine court ritual, the Pope was vested in the vestments he wears today, with the exception of the stole, mitre (tiara) and pectoral cross. Meanwhile the assisting clergy processed directly to the altar and took their places in the apse. We should mention here that the sanctuary had a free-standing altar with seats for the clergy in the apse behind the altar, including, of course, the Pope's cathedra. An acolyte carried the Book of Gospels to the altar and a sub-deacon placed it on the altar.

When the Pope was ready he gave a signal and seven torches were lit, incense was placed into the censer, and the introit was begun by the choir. The procession formed with thurifer (a sub-deacon) leading, followed by the seven torches and then the remaining deacons and sub-deacons. The Pope was last, again ritually supported by deacons. Part way up to the altar, a sub-deacon and two acolytes met the Pope, bringing to him a vessel with particles of the *Sancta*, (Holy Gifts) from the previous papal Mass. The Pope removed the amount he would use for the current Mass and the rest was stored in the sacristy at the Lateran. The *Sancta* he kept he added to the chalice just before Communion as a *fermentum*, a kind of leaven. This was to show the connection between each celebration of the Eucharist. In a like manner, just before Communion, fragments the Host (Lamb) were sent out as *fermentum* to the parishes in Rome to show the connection their celebrations to the principle celebration by the Pope. Arriving at the altar, he signed his forehead with the cross, and gave the kiss of peace to his concelebrants down through the deacons. He then signaled for the introit to end and knelt in the apse. At the end he venerated the Gospels and altar, and turning to the East followed along with the *Kyrie*. He turned to

¹³ Klauser, p. 58.

face the people to begin the *Gloria* and turned toward the East again. Facing the people, he greeted them with "Peace be to all! Let us pray!"

At this juncture we need to step back approximately two hundred years. At this time the "prayers of the faithful" still existed and were offered at the beginning of the Liturgy of the Faithful. They took the form that is found still on Holy Friday. The outline of the formula was always the same and silent prayer followed this bidding, followed in turn by a collecting prayer (*collecta*). During the prayer the Pope stood in the apse, facing East, in the *orans* position. All together gave their "Amen." In this way, they prayed for the clergy, state, and so forth. On penitential days, they knelt for these prayers. The deacon gave the signals for kneeling and standing saying, "Let us bend the knee!" and "Arise!" This particularly is still found in the prayers on Holy Friday. While this form of prayer provided plenty of opportunity for personal prayer, it was quite lengthy. Pope Gelasius liked the Byzantine style litany, which had been imported via Gaul and Northern Italy; he ordered that the litany replace the Roman form. Probably at the same time, the prayers were moved to the beginning of the Liturgy of the Catechumens. It was either Gregory or one of his immediate successors that further reduced the litany down to the *Kyrie*, although the litany itself has survived at Pascha. We can return now to where we left off.

The first thing we should notice is that the *Kyrie* has replaced the litany and there is no time between the bidding and the collect. All then sat for the lessons. As in the Byzantine rite, the deacon received a blessing ("The Lord be in your heart and upon your lips...") before taking the Gospels out to the ambo, accompanied by lights and incense. After the reading it was offered to the clergy to venerate as in the current Byzantine Liturgy. Already in the time of the *Ordo Romanus I*, the sermon had fallen by the wayside, or at least it was not in the Liturgy of the Word. The dismissal of the catechumens was also gone at this point. The Creed had not yet been introduced (it was introduced by the Franks about the time of the Great Schism).

The Liturgy proceeded with the offertory. The seven acolytes with torches, who all this time had remained before the altar in a row, now lay down their torches, for they were needed to assist in setting the Holy Table. They would carry the loaves in *sindones*, or large linen cloths. At one time all the faithful had brought their own gifts, but by this *Ordo*, the clergy collected the gifts from the faithful. The Pope collected the gifts of the aristocracy. The wine, and a little water, was poured first into a chalice and then a larger vessel called a *scyphus*. At the end of the offertory the

Pope and his assistants all washed their hands, as in the Byzantine rite when many bishops serve. This, of course, is the source of the *lavabo*. When the offertory antiphon was finished the Pope said the "prayer over the Gifts" aloud. This is the prayer that later became the "secret," being silenced.

For the Canon (*Anaphora*) the attending clergy stood around the altar, the sub-deacons in front facing the altar, deacons behind in ranks, with acolytes next to them, and the attending bishops and priests at their seats in the apse. The Pope stood at the altar facing to the West. While the preface was sung, the Canon itself was said in a voice only audible in the sanctuary, while all bowed their heads. There were still neither elevations nor genuflections with the Words of Institution. At the final exclamation, "By Whom..." the archdeacon raised the chalice while the Pope held the oblations to the edge of the chalice. The *Pater Noster*, newly transferred from just before communion, was then said or sung by the Pope, and this was followed by the *Pax*. The Pope returned to his seat and the Lamb was broken into pieces (by whom exactly?) while the choir sang the *Agnus Dei* (which Pope Sergius I had recently introduced from the Greek Liturgy!). To avoid confusion, this does mean the hymn as it is known in the Latin Liturgy, not the prayer, "Divided and distributed." The paten and chalice were taken to the Pope at the cathedra for him to do his own fraction, with the prayer "Let this commixture." This may have been a new addition. After Communion, the Mass ended simply with the *postcommunio* and the dismissal, "*Ite, missa est.*"

Ordo I provides a fairly detailed description of the ceremonies, but not of the prayers themselves. While the Roman Canon would have certainly been used, having been established from before, the time of St. Ambrose of Milan, other prayers may not be so easily determined without further evidence. In spite of the limitations, we can see that *Novus Ordo* follows the model of early Roman liturgy well. In evaluating the *Novus Ordo*, we must remember that the early Roman liturgy was a model, not a straight jacket. There must be adaptations, since we do not live in the fourth or sixth centuries. Neither the stations nor the practice of the fermentum are used, while the Creed is, at least on Sundays and feasts. After a simple opening, either the *asperges* or a penitential rite follows. *Novus Ordo* curiously retains the *Kyrie*, now a redundancy, since the prayers of the faithful have been returned to their proper place. The *Kyrie* is followed, of course by the *Gloria in Excelsis*, and then the collect. A responsorial psalm comes between the Old Testament lection and the epistle, which is in turn

followed by the alleluia verses which introduce the Gospel. After the Gospel and homily follow the prayers of the faithful and then the offertory. This has resumed something of the quality of the offering of the faithful in the present Catholic practice in America¹⁴; that is, the people, as they enter place a host into a container to be taken to the altar at the offertory procession. While I have found no particular evidence for the particular *orationes super oblata* used in *Novus Ordo*, they are quite appropriate. The Anaphora follows and in turn the communion and a simple dismissal.

Enrico Mazza provides an excellent discussion of the history and theology of the various Canons provided with the *Novus Ordo*. The Roman Canon, he says, is attested to by St. Ambrose of Milan, who considers it already to be fairly fixed and normative, indicating that it went back two generations before him (to the first half of the fourth century); the time required for something to be regarded as traditional.¹⁵ It appears also that there may have been a Greek forerunner to the Latin original of this Canon itself.

Mazza's discussion of the theology of the Roman Canon demonstrates that it is much closer to the Byzantine *Anaphoras* than one is at first inclined to believe. First, the three Latin terms referring to the Gifts most likely correspond to the Alexandrian Anaphora of St. Mark, even though they are listed in opposite order. *Dona*, then refers to *thysias*, *munera* to *prospora*, and *sacrificia* to *evcharisteria*. Dating from the time in which gifts other than bread were offered. Thus the *dona* were the offerings for the reposed, the *munera* for the living, and *sacrificia* are the Holy Gifts themselves. The term *illibata* says that they are unblemished "in good condition."¹⁶ Thus they are useful for being *figurae* of the Lord's Body and Blood.¹⁷ If Mazza is correct, the relationship between *sacrificia* and *evcharisteria* implies that the Gifts themselves are understood as thank-offerings, or sacrifices of thanksgiving. This, of course, corresponds with the theology behind Byzantine Anaphoras. That the prayer asks God to accept the offerings of His people demonstrates that no magical understanding

¹⁴ Any other places???

¹⁵ Enrico Mazza, *The Eucharistic Prayers of the Roman Rite*, (New York: Pueblo Publishing Company, 1986), pp. 58-59. Any one seriously interested in the Western Rite should especially read chapter three – thoroughly.

¹⁶ Mazza, p. 60.

¹⁷ *Figura* being a term used by St. Ambrose, like *antitype* is used by St. Basil. See Mazza, p. 70.

is possible. "A prayer for acceptance is a solemn proclamation that God is supremely free and remains transcendent even in regard to a cult which he himself has prescribed..."¹⁸ Furthermore, "there can be no approval of a sacrifice without simultaneous approval of its offerer."¹⁹ The intention of the Roman Canon is shown here to be just that of the Byzantine Liturgy. Compare the language of the Roman Canon with that of the *proskomidê* prayer in the Liturgy of St. Basil:

ROMAN CANON (LITERAL)

Be pleased to look upon these offerings with a gracious and kindly countenance, and accept them as it pleased You to accept the offerings of Your just servant Abel, and the sacrifice of our father Abraham, and that which Your great Melchizedek offered to You, a holy sacrifice, a spotless offering.

PROSKOMIDÊ PRAYER, BAS²⁰

...Through the greatness of Thy mercy, accept us as we draw near to Thy holy altar, so that we may be worthy to offer to Thee this reasonable and bloodless sacrifice.... Receive it as Thou didst receive the gifts of Abel, the sacrifices of Noah, the whole-burnt offerings of Abraham the priestly offices of Moses and Aaron, and the peace-offerings of Samuel.

Another point that Mazza makes regards the phrase, "and all faithful (literally "orthodox") guardians... As in the Byzantine Rite, according to Mazza, this phrase is not intended to refer to the entire people as it is often interpreted; rather it refers to the hierarchs.²¹ It is comparable to the prayer "Among the first..." in the Byzantine Liturgy.

A question of great interest to Orthodox is whether or not the Roman Canon can be understood to contain an epiklesis. Mazza's conclusion is that it does not. However, this is because an epiklesis would be redundant. Of course he explains matters presupposing the doctrine of transubstantiation; nevertheless his essential point is that the theology of the Roman Canon predates that theology, as well even as the theology of *anamnesis*. Instead, he finds a theology of mimesis, or analogy, in which the Eucharist is a copy of the Last Supper and Golgotha. Anamnesis, he says, overlooks the Last Supper, and transubstantiation ignores also the Cross and

¹⁸ Mazza, pp.60-61.

¹⁹ Mazza, p. 60.

²⁰ The Divine Liturgy according to St. John Chrysostom with Appendices, (South Canaan, PA: St. Tikhon's Seminary Press, 1977), pp. 126-127.

²¹ Mazza, pp. 62-63.

Resurrection. In the theology of the Roman Canon, however, the Upper Room is the starting point and nothing is excluded.²² Ontologically, Mazza concludes the content of the Eucharist is the content of those events. He refers to the Ambrosian and Mozarabic uses of the term *figura*, which is essentially translation of *symbolon* or *antitypos*, to state that the bread and wine are inherently understood to be the Body and the Blood, because in the Eucharist we do what He did.²³ While the term *figura* is not found in the Roman Canon itself, Mazza understands that it is behind that Canon. Because it is not actually in the Canon confusion arises and a specific request that the Gifts may "become" the Body and Blood becomes necessary, as in the paragraph *Quam Oblationem*.²⁴ Mazza is suggesting a theology, found in St. Ambrose, like that found in the Liturgy of St. Basil, in which just before the consecration, the Gifts are referred to as *antitypes*, and the Holy Spirit is asked to manifest them to be the Lord's Body and Blood. This is certainly clearer than the Roman Canon on this point. However, we may not immediately say, therefore, that the Roman Canon is deficient on this point. Nicholas Cabasilas, whose commentary on the Byzantine Liturgy is still standard, clearly says that the prayer *Supplices te rogamus* has the same intent.²⁵ Cabasilas also observes that the Byzantine Liturgy is clearer, partly because the *Supplices te rogamus* in the Roman Canon is separated from the Words of Institution. Already, in his time, however, the Words of Institution were understood in the West as being themselves and alone consecratory. This is seen by the fact that he was pointing out that the Latins don't realize that they too pray for the Gifts after the Institution narrative.²⁶ The *Supplices Te* prayer again is demonstrates a closeness to Byzantine liturgy that in the Roman Mass that is easy to overlook. It runs:

Humbly we implore You, almighty God, bid these offerings be carried up by the hands of Your holy angel to Your altar on high, before Your divine majesty, so that those of us who by sharing in the sacrifice of this altar shall receive the sacred Body and Blood of Your Son, may be filled with every grace and heavenly blessing.

²² Mazza, p. 69.

²³ Mazza, pp. 69-70.

²⁴ Mazza, pp. 70-71.

²⁵ Nicholas Cabasilas, *A Commentary on the Divine Liturgy*, (London: SPCK, 1977), pp. 76-79.

²⁶ Interestingly enough, alternatives to the Roman Canon in the Novus Ordo do contain a clearer epiklesis.

These thoughts are also expressed in the *proskomidê* prayers of both the Liturgy of St. Basil and St. John.²⁷ "Having received it upon Thy holy, heavenly, and ideal altar..."²⁸ The prayer also is a request for the benefits of Holy Communion, similar to, yet significantly different from the analogous prayer in the *Book of Common Prayer*.

In many other basic regards, the Roman Canon clearly reflects the same theology as the Byzantine Anaphoras. There is the commemoration of the living and the departed. The Roman Canon has a more extensive list of particular names of local Saints than the either Byzantine Anaphora. The Roman Canon, of course contains the Institution narrative, which is considered consecratory in its effects,²⁹ and an *anamnesis* of the Passion, Resurrection, and Ascension of Christ, which effectively draw into themselves the anamnesis of Christ's entire earthly life. Only the eschatological dimension is missing, but this would not be denied. The Roman Canon, set into the context of the *Novus Ordo*, establishes a real point of contact between the liturgies of East and West.

Very different from the picture provided by the *Ordo Romanus Primus*, as well as the reformed rite of Vatican II, the services currently used in the Western Rite in America are based on the Tridentine ritual.³⁰ It is easy to see throughout what the Tridentine Mass has preserved ritually that once had a practical purpose. The procession was to get the celebrants and liturgical implements into the church. the *lavabo* was to wash the crumbs off the fingers of the celebrants necessary because leavened loaves were still in use. The *Kyrie* is all that remains of the prayers of the faithful.³¹ At the same time, the *Asperges* and preparation prayers at the foot of the altar, which are included in the text of the Liturgy "of St. Gregory" are not present.³² What stands out, perhaps even more, is the fact that the altar is not against the wall, which seems to most to be the trademark of a traditional western temple. In fact, the

²⁷ We shall ignore here the modern debate about the prayer in CHR; it is standardly understood to have the meaning we imply here.

²⁸ Liturgy of St. Basil.

²⁹ One must wonder how far a well-educated Roman Catholic would push that point.

³⁰ *St. Andrew's Service Book*, from St. Andrew's Orthodox Church (AOCA) in Eustace, FL, is a single volume containing both the Anglican and Roman Rites.

³¹ The *Book of Common Prayer* from the beginning reduplicated the form of the prayers of the faithful, containing both the *Kyrie* and the Prayer for the Whole State of Christ's Church.

³² *Service Book*, pp. 229-232.

altar against the wall is a result of celebrations for small groups in parishes in Rome beginning around the sixth century. It was not until around the year 1,000 that the practice spread outside of Rome. At the same time retables and other decorations were added. The *Ordo Romanus I* presumes no reredos, or any of the other decoration now considered "traditional."³³ Many other ceremonies never had a practical function, but their earlier forms can be seen here. Unfortunately, most of what is now considered traditional, was changed from the *Ordo I* when the Mass came to be seen as the priest's action alone.³⁴ It is from this point that the private mass grew with much impetus in the monasteries, to allow priest-monks to execute their office as priest. In the case of the Anglican rite, Tridentine ritual has been imposed on the rite from the Roman Mass, and the sacrificial prayers as well. The Anglican liturgy is clearly a late comer, a direct product of the English Reformation, not of "Catholic" England, which would be much more accurately presented in the Sarum liturgy. This applies both to the Eucharist and to the Office. In the case of the Eucharist the Canon in the *Sarum Missal* is the Roman Canon. The Anglican rite form of the Eucharist as it is currently used simply has no place in the tradition of "western Orthodox liturgy." From examining both the Roman and Anglican Rites currently used, it appears that the proponents believe that the Tridentine *ordo* reflects "traditional" western liturgics. The *Ordo Romanus Primus*, however, provides us with a picture of a much healthier, vibrant western celebration of the Eucharist, and one much closer in form, and theological content, to the Byzantine Rite.

Based on what we have said, the Western Rite would best be served by the *Novus Ordo* of Vatican II, and the current practices should be dropped. While *Novus Ordo* is not, cannot, and should not be, a perfect reproduction of early Roman liturgy, this rite has several major advantages over the liturgies being used. First of all, it is a living rite, not an artificial reconstruction. It is the actual Liturgy of the Latin Rite today. While it is the product of a reform, that reform took place in the context of a community that is in living continuity with communities before it. As a result of this, there are naturally elements of more recent use, based on contemporary needs. On the other hand the Gallican Liturgy has not been used for centuries. The *Novus Ordo* also has the advantage that there is no need to overhaul the texts and impose on them

³³ Klauser, pp. 100-101.

³⁴ Klauser, p. 101.

a theology that simply is not there. In spite of the Schism, the prayers of the Roman Mass, especially the Canon have changed insignificantly.³⁵ They do not reflect theological controversies reflected in the Anglican Canon, nor do they even directly speak of many of the other problems rooted further back in Western Church history, like the doctrine of original guilt. From what we have seen, the Roman Canon, as seen from a Roman Catholic perspective, presents a very Orthodox understanding of the Eucharist. A third advantage then, springs from the first two: the *Novus Ordo* resolves the problem of the tension between the need for a rite that reflects authentically Orthodox, pre-Schism, western liturgy, with the need for living liturgy. The final advantage of the *Novus Ordo* is that it would compel the proponents to step beyond simply hanging on to what is familiar to them. Were it to become the rite used, it would force them to face the issues of theology and liturgical history that come with a Western Rite.

Were the *Novus Ordo* adapted for Orthodox use, I should recommend that its rubrics generally be adhered to for the solemn celebration of the Mass, either the presbyteral or pontifical order as appropriate occasion.³⁶ We should determine where we would find the original or the modern rubrics more appropriate to our use. This would require a more in depth study both of *Ordo I* and the rubrics of *Novus Ordo* than we can make here.³⁷ However, I can make several suggestions, some general and others more specific. First the general suggestions.

Ordo I indicates that the celebrant (Pope) faced East much of the time. It would seem appropriate to retain this practice as it corresponds to Byzantine practice. The Roman Church has eliminated the minor orders, and where the *Ordo I* presumes them, it would seem appropriate to make use of those orders, in so far as we have retained them.³⁸ It would also be most appropriate that a simplified Gregorian or

³⁵ *Filioque*, would have to be dropped from the Creed of the *Novus Ordo*, but then it is not reflective of the fourth century Roman liturgy (nor is the use of the Creed as a whole).

³⁶ I remain very uncomfortable with the "low mass." This seems reduce music and so forth to the level of decoration. It seems that the essence of worship in the Orthodox, not just Byzantine mind, calls for a solemn celebration of the Eucharist on all occasions.

³⁷ I very strongly feel that if Western Rite is to be used, it must be well researched and understood, both in its theology and its praxis, and not allowed to be a "comfort zone."

³⁸ I am trying to protect against the tendency found in Roman Catholic Churches in America to allow the Mass become "folksy" or casual in some other way. The use of minor clerical orders facilitates an

other form of western chant be used, in a way that people could at least chant the responses. This means the emphasis of liturgical chants over metrical hymns. This was the vision of the preconciliar documents to Vatican II.³⁹

More specifically I would recommend the following: For the sake of closer fidelity to the more primitive *ordo* the *asperges* and penitential rite could be dropped in Orthodox usage without marring the character of the *Novus Ordo*.⁴⁰ One could argue easily in favor of and against the retention of the *Kyrie* and Symbol of Faith. I should recommend the elimination of the *Kyrie*, but the retention of the Creed. The *Kyrie* is redundant, but the Creed is indeed a recollection of the common faith of the people, not provided in the Roman Canon.⁴¹ I would definitely recommend the use of leavened bread, baked by a family in the community (as is done in many Antiochian parishes already), this would have even more significance, and again, would be completely in accordance with *Ordo I*, and at the same time, not contrary to Vatican II's rite.⁴² This could also be the occasion for encouraging people to bring other gifts for distribution to the poor.⁴³ For the sake of congruity with primitive (and therefore pre-Schism) Roman practice, I recommend that the Roman Canon alone be used. On the same basis, it seems most reasonable to follow the practice of *Ordo I* of not genuflecting and elevating the Gifts at the Words of Institution; they would be elevated at the doxology at the end of the Canon. This would also avoid what could be seen as an over-emphasis of the Words of Institution from an Orthodox perspective. Finally, while the *Novus Ordo* itself is an excellent liturgical rite, the English translation used in Roman Catholic Churches leaves much to be desired. Aside from being a relatively free translation, it often gives the impression of believing that the faithful are only able to understand very short phrases. It would be better to

orderly celebration of the Eucharist. Certainly, were a Western Rite parish large enough, numerous people could be ordained into minor orders.

³⁹ Klauser, p. 156.

⁴⁰ At the same time, this would not be strictly necessary either. They could be retained as logical developments within the framework of the primitive rite.

⁴¹ Perhaps on ferials the *Kyrie* could be retained and the Creed omitted.

⁴² The seal used in the Byzantine Liturgy would have no real meaning, but as a way to show the bread to be set apart for a special use, it or some other seal, could be used.

⁴³ I emphasize this reason and that my choice for leavened bread is not because I think there is anything wrong with *azymes*.

use a more literal translation, as provided by Enrico Mazza.⁴⁴ Compare, for example, the *Te Igitur*:

LITERAL TRANSLATION

Therefore, most merciful Father, we humbly beg and entreat You through Jesus Christ Your Son, our Lord, to accept and bless these gifts, these offerings, these holy and spotless sacrifices which we offer You first for Your Holy Catholic Church, that You may grant her peace and protection, unity and direction throughout the world, together with Your servant N., our holy father,⁴⁵ and N., our bishop, and all faithful guardians of the catholic and apostolic faith.

ICEL TRANSLATION

We come to you, Father, with praise and thanksgiving, through Jesus Christ your Son. Through Him we ask You to accept and bless these gifts we offer You in sacrifice. We offer them for Your Holy Catholic Church, watch over it, Lord, and guide it; grant it peace and unity throughout the world. We offer them for N. our Pope, for N. our bishop, and for all who hold and teach the catholic faith that comes to us from the apostles.

Aside from the fact that the more literal translation has more of a liturgical sound to it, the ICEL translation has obscured two points that Mazza made; first about the relationship between the Latin terms for the Gifts, and secondly about the significance of the "guardians of the catholic and apostolic faith." In each of these cases, the more literal translation more adequately communicates the theology from an Orthodox perspective. If *Novus Ordo* is ever implemented, ICEL translations should be avoided.

Could the 1979 *Book of Common Prayer* be used as an alternative for Anglican converts? Based on the same scholarship as Vatican II's *Novus Ordo*, it reflects similar changes to the earlier *ordo*, and it is thus much more orthodox in its basic structure and the content of many of the new prayers than previous editions of the *Book of Common Prayer*. Other prayers and rubrics, however, still reflect heterodox views, and the entire book still enshrines Anglican "comprehensiveness," making various items optional, and thereby raising serious questions of how those and other items are

⁴⁴ Mazza, p. 49. Mazza provides the literal translation with his commentary.

⁴⁵ While in the context of the Roman Church this refers to the Pope, it must be remembered that this is also the appellation given to the Patriarch of Moscow, for example. It does not imply a Roman understanding of the papacy. I say this because the term has been eliminated in the *St. Andrew's Service Book*. The title would be quite appropriate for the Patriarch of Antioch.

(should be) understood theologically.⁴⁶ The structure of the liturgy is essentially a Roman structure, with a few Byzantine elements added, like the opening doxology, and the option for the *Trisagion* in place of the *Kyrie*.⁴⁷ The Old Testament lesson has been reintroduced, followed by a responsorial psalm, although the alleluia before the Gospel is not firmly provided for. The Creed follows the Gospel, still including the *filioque*, which is ironic since it had been deleted in trial service books, and is being deleted in other parts of the Anglican Communion. For the prayers of the faithful, various options for litanies are provided, including litanies from the Byzantine Liturgy. The eucharistic prayers, while they have much clearer epikleseis, still avoid any reference to the Eucharist as making present the Sacrifice of Golgotha. The sacrifice is solely of peoples' lives and goods.⁴⁸ The new *Prayer Book* also carefully avoids the invocation of Saints and even eucharistic prayer D, of "eastern" character, changes the phraseology of the commemoration of the Theotokos, in order to eliminate reference to her perpetual virginity. Given that the original Anaphora of St. Basil does not ask for the intercession of the Saints, it would be strictly fair to demand this of prayer D in the revised *BCP*; however, the original presumes the intercession and invocation of the Saints, and therefore, if the new *BCP* were to be used in Orthodox circles, something would have to be done to provide for this. Such rewording of ancient texts to avoid certain theological issues demonstrates that the 1979 *BCP* carries on the Anglican tradition of a "theology of imprecision" as opposed to simply "imprecise theology." Because of this, even of the new rites would have to be substantially modified, imposing on the rites a theology that is not there.⁴⁹ For this reason, in spite

⁴⁶ Fr. Paul Schneirla makes numerous observations in his article, "Some Orthodox Reflections on the Proposed Book of Common Prayer" in SVTQ vol 22, no 2/3 (1978), p. 124. We have based many of our comments on his.

⁴⁷ Schneirla, p. 122. The burial office also contains such Byzantine elements as the Paschal troparion and the kondakion and ikos from the tone 6 canon. Due to the "theology of imprecision," however, it is not possible to find any particular meaning in these. They come across as nice ways to do something different, Byzantine style.

⁴⁸ Schneirla, pp. 122-123.

⁴⁹ Aside from the direct avoidance of the intercession of Saints, the office of Baptism is an excellent example. The form of chrismation has been reinstated, but the option for using it at all, as well as for blessing the oil indicate that this is not considered a fundamental part of Christian initiation. It also seems to reflect a lack of understanding of the very content of Chrismation. The form is there, but it lacks substance.

of the progress made, the *Book of Common Prayer* still seems unsuitable for Orthodox worship.⁵⁰

While an examination of the *Novus Ordo* greatly alleviates many of my concerns, they are not wholly alleviated. I have only looked at the Eucharist here, and I am not certain that other rites might not preserve some "latent deficiencies." The more concrete problem, however, is isolation. No matter what rite one uses, unless we are speaking of the reunion of the entire Roman or Anglican Churches to Orthodoxy, which seems highly unlikely unless many things radically change, especially in the case of the Anglicans, communities using the Western Rite will be isolated. They will neither be in communion with their roots, nor fully identifying themselves with the common life of other Orthodox Christians. The phenomenon of the Roman Catholic Unia demonstrates how artificial such unions are. The Byzantine Rite Catholics have been held in suspicion and derision for centuries both by Roman Catholics and by Orthodox. Furthermore, they have imposed a Latin theology and many Latin practices on the Byzantine Rite.⁵¹ The result is something that is neither fish nor fowl. It is unreasonable to expect a different result among Orthodox Uniates, even with *Novus Ordo*. While the theology of the Roman Canon is perfectly Orthodox, there are still elements in the Byzantine Liturgy, especially the hymnography, that reflect elements of Orthodox theology not found in western liturgy. It would be artificial to impose Byzantine hymnography on a Roman Mass. How for example, would one celebrate the Transfiguration? This feast is of much greater importance in the Orthodox Church than in the West, because of Palamite theology. While converts to Orthodoxy celebrating the Western Rite, would not ever liturgically deny Palamite theology, they would have no liturgical contact with it, unless it were somehow imposed onto the Roman propers for the day. Other feasts, whose significance from an Orthodox perspective would be lost, would be Theophany and the Exaltation of the Cross,⁵² Great Lent and Pascha.

⁵⁰ In the area of the Office, supplements to the 1979 BCP for the Daily Office provide for the reintroduction of antiphons on the biblical chants like the Magnificat. I was only able to glance at a copy of the office, but it seems very historically based, especially on the Sarum Use. Notations indicate where the antiphons have been changed from that use and why. At first glance an excellent work.

⁵¹ Looking at the documents of Vatican II, this does not seem to have come from "on high" rather from something closer to a grass-roots level.

⁵² Unless old forms for Roman celebration of this feast can be found and used.

The Western Rite is the product of the desire among converts to be a part of the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, while retaining their own familiar forms of worship. They wish to have their cake and eat it too, so to speak. They justify their use by pointing out the obvious reality that for centuries before the Schism the western rites were part of the life of the Orthodox Church. However, they do not take into consideration that problems do not manifest themselves as problems instantly. What is in the context of the conflicts of one century Orthodox, becomes heresy in the conflicts of another century. Were Justin Martyr judged by the standards of the Council of Nicea, he would be considered a modalist heretic. He did not have to face the issues in the context of the disputes of that era, in which the Church's Faith concerning the Holy Trinity had to be clearly expressed and defended. Saints Augustine of Hippo, venerated as a Saint of the Orthodox Church, was not able to see where his understanding of original guilt would lead. While he personally need not stand up to the judgment of the twentieth century, we on the other hand, cannot ignore history since his day. The proponents of the Western Rite also fail to recognize the basic psychological phenomenon that habits are based on associations people make. To retain one habit, in this case a form of worship, leaves one very open to retaining the patterns of thought that go with that "habit."

At the same time, the *Novus Ordo Missae* of the Second Vatican Council provides the only hope for an authentic, living, essentially Orthodox western liturgy.⁵³ It is the union of pre-Schism liturgy and living liturgy. It is well attested to, based on solid evidence of the past, and properly served, it follows in a genuine Roman liturgical tradition. *Novus Ordo* would force its users to learn Roman liturgical tradition, its music and its ceremonies, not to mention its theology. It would not, however, be a liturgy with which they were wholly familiar and comfortable. It would thus force them to confront the issues of liturgical history and theology raised by the introduction of a Western Rite. In the end, one might ask how adapting to *Novus Ordo* would differ from adapting to the Byzantine Liturgy. Many in the Western Rite left the Episcopal Church partly due to the reforms of the *Book of Common Prayer*. They have treasured their "traditional" Anglican liturgy. Would they ever be able to

⁵³ Assuming that the offices and other sacramental rites are of equal quality in the reforms of Vatican II, everything we are saying would apply to them also, although some Sarum uses *might* be useful, especially in the case of Baptism and the Daily Office, to the extent that they themselves reflect more clearly pre-schism rites, as well as living uses.

be comfortable with *Novus Ordo*? If they, or Roman Catholic converts, are not able to accept *Novus Ordo*, it would leave them even more isolated than they are now.

Already sacramentally isolated from contemporary western Christians and liturgically and somewhat spiritually isolated from the vast majority of Orthodox, they would also be isolating themselves from their own tradition and the very point of historical, eucharistic contact between East and West. In the end, this would be the greatest disaster of all, for they would be rejecting exactly what they claim to be seeking.