

# THEOLOGIA PRIMA

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## #1 WHY STUDY THE LITURGY?

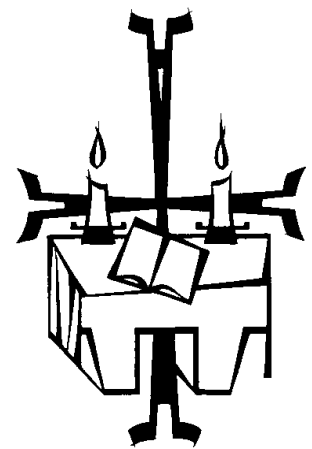
It's official: the US Bishops finally approved the new translation of the Roman Missal. Some of you may have heard rumors that we would never see it and some of you may be wondering what I am talking about. While, we do not yet have the final text, it has made it to Rome where it will likely receive a *recognitio* or approval. As we get closer to implementing these revised texts, the Bishop's Committee on Divine Worship has asked that every diocese begin to catechize priests, deacons, religious, and laity about the forthcoming changes.

This column is an attempt to compliment the diocesan efforts to catechize parish families on the liturgy and the revised texts. Over the course of the coming year, I will present some general catechesis on liturgy, the theology of Sunday, the parts of the Mass (i.e. Sprinkling Rite, Eucharistic Prayer, the *Lectionary*, etc), and the purpose of the new translations. Hopefully, these articles will inspire and engage the reader to ponder more deeply the paschal mystery celebrated in our communal gatherings, the liturgy.

So why reflect on the liturgy? I think the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* provides an answer for us. It states, "The liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; it is also the fount from which all her power flows" (§10). Our entire life is directed to God. It is here, in our worship, where we meet God. It is the place we share our joys and sorrows. It is the place where our personal stories meet the story of the whole Church, and it challenges us to continue to share the story of Christ's passion, death, and resurrection.

The liturgy is also the source and summit of the Christian community's theology. Here we encounter Christ and he becomes present to us. Because of this, the theological tradition often describes the liturgical action as *theologia prima* or primary theology. It is the principal public work of the Church. All other theology is a reflection on this central encounter with Christ. It is also in the liturgy that the community gives expression to its faith in and love for God. Our real and graced encounter with Christ in worship challenges us and calls us to proclaim the good news. We study the liturgy (rituals, sacraments, texts, symbols, etc.) to deepen our awareness and understanding of God's life in us and our life in God.

I look forward to reflecting with you on the liturgy in the coming months. The next article will begin our exploration by asking: "What is liturgy and why do we celebrate?"



For more information regarding the revised *Roman Missal* please visit <http://www.usccb.org/romanmissal/>. Also visit [www.dioslc.org/ministries/liturgical](http://www.dioslc.org/ministries/liturgical).