

The Mystery We Celebrate,
the Song We Sing

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The Mystery We Celebrate, the Song We Sing

A Theology of Liturgical Music

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Introduction

Throughout the years of my professional ministry as a liturgical theologian and musician my primary interest has been to explore *why* the church always sings the liturgy. The singing is not accidental or arbitrary, but a necessary and integral part of the ritual.¹ Liturgical documents, scholarly investigations, and pastoral writings on liturgical music generally take this connection between liturgy and music for granted; few have offered any theoretical explanation for this relationship.² Aidan Kavanaugh has put it this way: “Music is the mode . . . by which the liturgical act gets done.”³ But what, specifically, is the liturgical act that is being done, and why is music the mode of its doing? How is it that music conveys the liturgical mystery to the people who are celebrating it? What exactly is the mystery being conveyed? And what is the essential connection between this mystery and the music the assembly is singing?

Answering these questions meant pursuing theological investigation into the liturgy itself. *Sacrosanctum Concilium* provided my starting point by stating that in her liturgy the church comes together to celebrate the paschal mystery.⁴ My project became clear: I needed to

1. Vatican II, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 65 (1964): 97–134; English trans. taken from *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*, ed. Austin Flannery, OP, new rev. ed. (Northport, NY: Costello Publishing Company, 1992), no. 112; hereafter referred to as SC.

2. Two scholarly works that have addressed the question of why music is so intrinsically related to liturgy are Edward Foley’s “Toward a Sound Theology” in *Ritual Music: An Introduction to Liturgical Musicology*, ed. Edward Foley (Beltsville, MD: Pastoral Press, 1995), 107–26; and Judith Kubicki’s *Liturgical Music as Ritual Symbol: A Case Study of Jacques Berthier’s Taizé Music* (Leuven, Belgium: Peeters, 1999).

3. Aidan Kavanaugh, “Beyond Words and Concepts to the Survival of Mrs. Murphy,” in *Music in Catholic Worship: The NPM Commentary*, ed. Virgil Funk (Washington, D.C.: Pastoral Press, 1983), 99.

4. SC, no. 6.

show how liturgical singing participated in and facilitated ritual enactment of the paschal mystery.

I began with the paschal mystery itself and found the answers I sought in the theological work of Joyce Ann Zimmerman, CPPS,⁵ who defined the paschal mystery as a dialectic tension between the “not yet” (soteriology) and the “already” (eschatology) of human redemption and liturgy as ritual enactment of that dialectic. Musically, this meant that singing, which is integral and necessary to liturgy, must in some way catalyze and facilitate ritual enactment of this dialectic. But how? What gives music, and particularly singing, the power to do this? I needed to identify those properties of music that gave it the capacity to participate in and facilitate enactment of the paschal mystery. Here

5. Joyce Ann Zimmerman, CPPS, “Liturgical Catechesis and Formation in Light of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy” in *Singing Faith into Practice: Essays in Honor of Robert W. Hovda, Series II* (Silver Spring, MD: NPM Publications, 2005), 15–27; “Eucharist: Renewing Worship, Renewing Life” in *Year of the Eucharist: October, 2004–October, 2005*, Essays by the Faculty of the Athenaeum of Ohio (Cincinnati: Athenaeum of Ohio, 2005), 41–45; “Eucharistic Adoration and Missio,” *Liturgical Ministry* 13 (Spring 2004): 88–95; reprinted in *National Bulletin on Liturgy* 37/179 (Winter 2004): 236–45; “Beauty and the Beast: Criteria for Artful Liturgy” in *Postmodern Worship & the Arts, Festschrift* in honor of James L. Empeur, SJ, ed. Michael E. Moynahan, SJ, and Douglas Adams (San Jose, CA: Resource Publications, Inc., 2002), 21–32; “Eucharist and Justice” in *A Book of Readings on the Eucharist* (Washington, D.C.: NCCB Secretariat for the Third Millennium and the Jubilee Year 2000, 2000), 71–78; “Paschal Mystery—Whose Mystery?: A Post-Critical Methodological Reinterpretation” in *Primary Sources of Liturgical Theology: A Reader*, ed. Dwight W. Vogel (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2000), 302–12; “Liturgy Notes,” *Liturgical Ministry* 8 (Spring 1999): 102–8; “A Theology of Liturgical Assembly: Saints, Relics and Rites,” *Liturgy* 14:3 (1998): 45–59; “Liturgical Assembly: Who Is the Subject of Liturgy?” *Liturgical Ministry* 3 (Spring 1994): 41–51; *Liturgy as Living Faith: A Liturgical Spirituality* (Scranton: University of Scranton Press, London and Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1993); “Language and Human Experience” in *New Dictionary of Sacramental Worship*, ed. Peter Fink (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1990), 644–51; *Liturgy as Language of Faith: A Liturgical Methodology in the Mode of Paul Ricoeur’s Textual Hermeneutics* (Lanham, New York, London: University Press of America, 1988).

I found the work of Walter J. Ong, SJ,⁶ Victor Zuckerkandl,⁷ and David Burrows⁸ invaluable. Ong illustrated how sound reveals presence, binds hidden interiorities, and manifests power. Zuckerkandl demonstrated how music reveals the true nature of reality and facilitates our participation in the being-ness of the world. He showed further how music reveals time to be a generative force of existence, a notion that indicated that music shared liturgy's manner of reckoning time. Burrows presented a schema of three fields of human action and described the differential operation of sound, voice, and music within each of these fields. He defined sound and voice as an interaction between force and resistance and articulated how this force-resistance interaction plays itself out in the three fields of human action vis-à-vis a changing center-periphery relationship between self and other. Burrows argued that music functions as entryway into the third field of human action where barriers between center and periphery collapse in an experience of the self's oneness with the whole of reality. The work of these scholars paved the way for me to say that communal singing is necessary to liturgy because it facilitates personal communion and does so through a force-resistance dialectic that parallels the soteriological-eschatological dialectic of the paschal mystery.

STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK

Chapter 1 presents the theological and liturgical foundations for saying that liturgy is ritual enactment of the paschal mystery. The chapter begins with a summary of Paul's understanding of the mystery of Christ, and moves from there to describe the paschal mystery as a dialectic between the "not yet" (soteriology) and the "already" (eschatology) of human redemption. The chapter next examines the term enactment, defining it as ritual remembering whereby a community reenters its founding events in an ongoing and generative

6. Walter J. Ong, SJ, *The Presence of the Word: Some Prolegomena for Cultural and Religious History* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1967); *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (London: Methuen, 1982; rpt., London and New York: Routledge, 1988).

7. Victor Zuckerkandl, *Sound and Symbol: Music and the External World*, trans. Willard R. Trask (New York: Pantheon Books, 1956; Princeton: Princeton/Bollingen 1969; 1973); *Man the Musician: Sound and Symbol*, vol. 2, trans. Norbert Guterman (Princeton University Press, 1973; Princeton/Bollingen, 1976).

8. David Burrows, *Sound, Speech and Music* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1990).

way. The chapter then shows how liturgy mediates past and future existence through present action. Finally, the chapter analyzes the surface structure of the eucharistic rite in order to disclose the rite's deep paschal mystery structure as well as a dynamic of presence that catalyzes this disclosure.

Chapter 2 presents the musical explorations that enable us to say that music—and specifically liturgical singing—participates in an essential way in liturgical enactment of the paschal mystery. The chapter explores the relationship between music and personal presence, between music and participation in being, between music and the experience of time, and between music and the force-resistance tension embedded in human relationships.

Chapter 3 establishes correlations between the theological and liturgical foundations of chapter 1 and the musical investigations of chapter 2. This chapter shows how liturgical singing is an integral mode by which the Christian community encounters and appropriates the paschal mystery because it (1) enables the assembled community to become present to God, to themselves, to one another, and to the liturgical action in which they are engaging; (2) opens them to the deepest level of participation in being, that of their identity as Body of Christ; (3) immerses them in time as a transforming force of Christian existence; and (4) works out within and among them the soteriological-eschatological dialectic of the paschal mystery through the force-resistance dialectic of sound and song.

Chapter 4 identifies some pastoral implications and challenges flowing from a theology of liturgical singing as enactment of the paschal mystery. This chapter extrapolates beyond the more narrow scope of the three preceding chapters and demonstrates practical and pastoral applications of the theology I have developed.

PARAMETERS OF THE BOOK

Common speech often uses the terms "liturgy" and "worship" interchangeably in reference to public prayer events within organized religions. In this book I distinguish between the terms, using "liturgy" to refer to normative patterns of public prayer that have a codified, formal, repetitive structure, and "worship" to refer to liturgy as well as to forms of uncoded, unstructured, and nonrepetitive public prayer. Within these parameters, "worship" includes private, individualized devotional acts, whereas "liturgy" encompasses only acts of worship that are public and communal. Liturgy is communal worship formally

structured along ritual patterns laid down by the norms of a given worshiping tradition. Its form, although open to adaptation and development, is not arbitrary, but fixed; it “preexists” the local community that enacts it. The liturgical ritual I explore here is that defined by postconciliar Catholic understanding and practice.

Numerous terms such as church music, sacred music, liturgical music, ritual music, and so forth, have been and are used to denote music used in Christian worship. Because of its denotation as music integral to the reformed liturgy of Vatican II, I use the term “liturgical music.” Furthermore, I focus on vocal music, and principally on music sung by the assembly rather than by cantor or choir. For Catholics liturgical music is primarily vocal and is directed toward enhancement of the words to which it is united. The music under consideration here, then, is communal singing that *is* the rite, that is, sung elements through which the assembly enacts the rite by singing it (for example, the acclamations sung during the eucharistic prayer); and communal singing that *undergirds* the rite in a significant way, that is, sung elements that support the rite’s underlying movement toward personal presence and intentional participation (for example, the hymns or songs that accompany the entrance and Communion processions of the eucharistic liturgy).

I do not pursue a comprehensive investigation of the nature of music (no study can); rather, I explore aspects of music that explain its integral connection with liturgy’s enactment of the paschal mystery. I examine aspects of the nature of sound, of voice and word, and of music and song from a generalized perspective rather than from the more specific angle of the liturgical functions of certain forms of music or musical elements. Because of the limited scope of this book, I do not address the sociology of music, or specific ethnomusicologies, or even the psychology of music. Nor do I pursue the science of acoustics (although I do explore the nature of sound), or the philosophy of music (although I do touch upon philosophical issues). Rather, I explore phenomenological elements of sound, voice, music, and song that support my conviction that communal singing is integral to liturgy because it enables the assembly to participate in ritual enactment of the paschal mystery.

Because my aim is to articulate a theology of liturgical music in terms of music’s relationship to ritual enactment of the paschal mystery, this book is not concerned with specific ritual elements within the liturgy (for example, the entrance procession or the gospel

acclamation), but with the entire rite as a single action. Nor is it concerned with the specific functions of music within the rite (for example, the purpose and placement of processions and the subsequent function of music in relation to these processions), but with the deep structure that engenders music's integral relationship with the rite as a whole. Rather than examining the surface structures of the liturgical rite, I explore its deep structure—the paschal mystery being enacted beneath and through the surface structures. In terms of liturgical music, my intent is to pursue how it is that this “not-at-hand” depth structure is encountered through the “at-hand,” embodied phenomenon of communal liturgical singing. Hence, I explore the integral relationship between music and liturgy through a methodology of theological speculation rather than functional analysis.

In 2004 Liturgical Press published *The Ministry of Music: Singing the Paschal Mystery*⁹ as part of its reedited and expanded Collegeville Ministry Series. That book was a practical, pastoral implementation of a theology of liturgical music based on living and celebrating the paschal mystery of Christ. *The Ministry of Music* outlined only briefly, however, the theological core that lay at its heart: that there is an intimate relationship between the paschal mystery we celebrate in liturgy and the music we sing for this celebration. This present book offers a deeper look at a theology of liturgy as enactment of the paschal mystery and the role music plays in that enactment. This book is intended for liturgical music scholars, graduate students, music directors, and anyone seeking a deeper theological understanding of the role of music within the liturgy. Its content is geared toward an audience prepared to grapple with the theology, philosophy, and musicology it presents. In the final chapter I identify pastoral implications and challenges this study generates, but those seeking more thorough pastoral application of the theology presented here are directed to other related writings, in particular *The Ministry of Music: Singing the Paschal*

9. Kathleen Harmon, *The Ministry of Music: Singing the Paschal Mystery*; Collegeville Ministry Series (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2004).

Mystery; The Ministry of Cantors,¹⁰ and my Music Notes column in *Liturgical Ministry*.

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Finally, I wish to thank Joyce Ann Zimmerman, CPPS, friend and colleague, who graciously assisted me in editing this work for publication, and who in both scholarship and Christian living continually shows forth what it means to embrace the depths of the paschal mystery.

10. Kathleen Harmon, *The Ministry of Cantors*, Collegeville Ministry Series (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2004).

Chapter 1

Understanding the Paschal Mystery

Since Vatican II the term paschal mystery has become paradigmatic for understanding the meaning of Christian life and identity.¹ It was through the paschal mystery that Christ achieved his mission of redeeming humanity and giving glory to God. It is the paschal mystery into which all members of the church are immersed through baptism. It is the paschal mystery that marks the mission of the church, the Body of Christ grafted onto Christ through baptism into his death and resurrection.²

The paschal mystery can be defined as the mystery of the Cross, an image that emphasizes the self-giving death of Christ as the means of our salvation. The paschal mystery can also be described as a *transitus*, emphasizing Christ's experience of "crossing-over" from death to resurrection and correlating with the passing-over of the Israelites from the slavery of Egypt to the freedom of the Promised Land.³ A third way of describing the paschal mystery, and the way we will use here, is as the dialectic tension we experience between the "already" of redemption completed in Christ and the "not yet" of salvation still being worked out within and among us. This description opens a way for us to see the paschal mystery not only as the experience of Christ but also

1. Jeffery Kemper, "Liturgy Notes," *Liturgical Ministry* 8 (Winter 1999): 46. *Sacrosanctum Concilium* uses the phrase paschal mystery eight times: nos. 5 (twice), 6, 61, 104, 106, 107, 109. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* structures its entire presentation on liturgy around the notion of paschal mystery (see Part II, and especially nos. 1067, 1068, 1085, 1104, 1164, 1165, 1362–64).

2. Vatican II, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 65 (1964): 97–134; English trans. taken from *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*, ed. Austin Flannery, OP, new rev. ed. (Northport, NY: Costello Publishing Company, 1992) no. 6; hereafter referred to as SC.

3. See Irmgard Pahl, "The Paschal Mystery in Its Central Meaning for the Shape of Christian Liturgy," *Studia Liturgica* 26:1 (1996): 19–20; hereafter referred to as "The Paschal Mystery in its Central Meaning." Also, Patrick Regan, OSB, "Paschal Vigil: Passion and Passage," *Worship* 79:2 (2005).

as the defining pattern of *our own* identity and living. The tension between the “not yet” and the “already” of salvation marks daily Christian experience; it also defines the deep structure of Christian liturgy.

PASCHAL MYSTERY IN THE TEACHINGS OF PAUL

The notion of paschal mystery is derived primarily from the Pauline tradition. St. Paul uses the term mystery (Gk. = *mystérion*) to refer to the plan of God conceived before creation for the salvation of the world (Eph 1:3-10; 3:9-11; Rom 8:2-30) and fully realized in the life and person of Jesus Christ (2 Cor 1:20) through whom all things are reconciled to God (Col 1:13-20; Rom 5:9-11).⁴ For Paul there exists only one mystery, the mystery of Christ, and Paul feels compelled to lead all peoples to grasp this plan hidden for all eternity in God (Eph 3:9-11).⁵

Despite his certainty about the decisiveness of the Christ event for salvation, Paul remains acutely aware, however, of an incompleteness about human salvation. Humankind still struggles to be saved (1 Thess 5:9; 1 Cor 3:3; 10:12-13). Built into the human condition is the “not yet-ness” of “*our ‘unfinished business’* in completely conforming ourselves to Christ.”⁶ The fullness of time has already arrived in the life, death, and resurrection of Christ. God’s salvific plan is already fulfilled (Gal 4:5); the “new creation” is already present (2 Cor 5:17); “the end of the ages” has already come (1 Cor 10:11) because Christ has

4. See Günther Bornkamm, “*mystérion*” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, trans. and ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1967) 4:802–28; Joyce Ann Zimmerman, “Liturgy Notes,” *Liturgical Ministry* 8 (Spring 1999): 102–8, for a summary of the Pauline concept and its use in the mystagogical writings of Cyril of Jerusalem, Ambrose of Milan, Theodore of Mopsuestia, and John Chrysostom; William G. Thompson and Joyce Ann Zimmerman, CPPS, “Mystery” in *The Collegeville Pastoral Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, ed. Carroll Stuhlmueller (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1996), 657–61; and Joseph A. Fitzmeyer, SJ, “Pauline Theology” in *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, ed. Raymond E. Brown, Joseph A. Fitzmeyer and Roland F. Murphy (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1990), 1382–1416. For examples of *mystérion* in the Pauline and Deutero-Pauline writings, cf. 1 Cor 2:1-2, 7; 4:1; 13:2; 14:2; 15:51; Rom 11:25; 16:25; Eph 1:9; 3:3, 4, 9; 5:32; 6:19; Col 1:26, 27; 2:2; 4:3; 2 Thess 2:7.

5. This and all subsequent citations are from NRSV.

6. Zimmerman, *Liturgy as Living Faith: A Liturgical Spirituality* (Scranton: University of Scranton Press, London and Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1993), n. 49, 157; italics original.

definitively overcome sin and death. Yet we still live in a world struggling for salvation, marked by sin, and cursed by death. This living both in the “not yet” (soteriology) and in the “already” (eschatology) of redemption is distinctive to Pauline eschatology.⁷

Paul clearly perceived the “not yet”–“already” tension built into the process of human salvation. He also perceived the intimate connection between the mystery of Christ and the community of those who have been baptized into Christ. For Paul, baptism radically transforms our identity. Baptism immerses us in the death and resurrection of Christ (Rom 6:3-5), transforms us into being the Body of Christ (1 Cor 12:12-13, 27), and missions us to collaborate with Christ in bringing God’s salvific plan to fulfillment (Col 1:24-25). For Paul, God’s hidden plan of salvation revealed and fulfilled in Christ requires our collaboration. Salvation is not a single act (i.e., Jesus’ death on the cross) but an ongoing process whereby we must cooperate with God to bring the divine plan of salvation to completion not only for ourselves but for the whole world.⁸ We have a part to play in the plan.

The paschal mystery, then, includes the entire saving mystery of Christ—his life, mission, passion, death, resurrection, ascension, sending of the Spirit, and promised return at the end of time—and *our* participation in that mystery. The paschal mystery is not only a past event related to the historical Christ; it is also a present event unfolding in our lives today and in the life of the church as a whole. We have a part to play in the plan.

7. For discussion of biblical and systematic notions of soteriology and eschatology see A. Yarbro Collins, “Eschatology and Apocalypticism” in *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, ed. Raymond E. Brown, Joseph A. Fitzmeyer, and Roland F. Murphy (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1990), 1359–364; Dermot A. Lane, “Eschatology” in *The New Dictionary of Theology*, ed. Joseph A. Komonchak, Mary Collins, and Dermot A. Lane (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1990), 329–42; John J. Collins, Carolyn Osiek, and Zachary Hayes, “Eschatology” in *The Collegeville Pastoral Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, 261–68; Dianne Bergant, Mary Ann Getty, and Robert J. Schreiter, “Salvation” in *The Collegeville Pastoral Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, 867–71; Francis Schüssler Fiorenza, “Redemption” in *The New Dictionary of Theology*, 836–51.

8. Getty, “Salvation” in *The Collegeville Pastoral Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, 870: “Salvation is a process to be finally realized rather than a single act. Although this process is initiated by God, it requires cooperation with God’s grace, as Paul warns the Philippian: ‘work out your salvation with fear and trembling.’”

PASCHAL MYSTERY AS DIALECTIC TENSION OF CHRISTIAN LIVING

The term dialectic can refer to the tension or opposition between two interacting forces or elements. It can mean a process of argument in which opposing ideas are pitted against one another to arrive at truth. Hegel applied the term to the process of change in which an idea or concept is subsumed and fulfilled by its opposite. Following a different tack, French philosopher Paul Ricoeur develops the notion of dialectic as an ongoing tensive interplay in which neither pole ever disappears or becomes subsumed by the other; rather, both poles remain ever present, and it is their ongoing tension that generates new understanding, new meaning, and new ways of being.

Ricoeur's dialectic approach forms our basis here for describing the paschal mystery as a dialectic of soteriology and eschatology.⁹ The tension between redemption already completed and salvation not yet

9. I am indebted to Joyce Ann Zimmerman, CPPS, for this notion. Conceiving of the paschal mystery as a dialectic tension between soteriology and eschatology is the seminal insight driving all her theological work and writings. See her "Liturgical Catechesis and Formation in Light of the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*" in *Singing Faith into Practice: Essays in Honor of Robert W. Hovda, Series II* (Silver Spring, MD: NPM Publications, 2005), 15–27; "Eucharist: Renewing Worship, Renewing Life" in *Year of the Eucharist: October, 2004–October, 2005*, Essays by the Faculty of the Athenaeum of Ohio (Cincinnati: Athenaeum of Ohio, 2005), 41–45; "Eucharistic Adoration and *Missio*," *Liturgical Ministry* 13 (Spring 2004): 88–95; reprinted in *National Bulletin on Liturgy* 37/179 (Winter 2004): 236–45; "Beauty and the Beast: Criteria for Artful Liturgy" in *Postmodern Worship & the Arts, Festschrift* in honor of James L. Empeur, SJ, ed. Michael E. Moynahan, SJ, and Douglas Adams (San Jose, CA: Resource Publications, Inc., 2002), 21–32; "Eucharist and Justice" in *A Book of Readings on the Eucharist* (Washington, D.C.: NCCB Secretariat for the Third Millennium and the Jubilee Year 2000, 2000), 71–78; "Paschal Mystery—Whose Mystery?: A Post-Critical Methodological Reinterpretation" in *Primary Sources of Liturgical Theology: A Reader*, ed. Dwight W. Vogel (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2000), 302–12; "Liturgy Notes," *Liturgical Ministry* 8 (Spring 1999): 102–8; "A Theology of Liturgical Assembly: Saints, Relics and Rites," *Liturgy* 14:3 (1998): 45–59; "Liturgical Assembly: Who Is the Subject of Liturgy?" *Liturgical Ministry* 3 (Spring 1994): 41–51; *Liturgy as Living Faith: A Liturgical Spirituality* (Scranton: University of Scranton Press, London and Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1993); "Language and Human Experience" in *New Dictionary of Sacramental Worship*, ed. Peter Fink (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1990), 644–51; *Liturgy as Language of Faith: A Liturgical Methodology in the Mode*

come constitutes the very core of the paschal mystery; it both explains how this mystery can belong to Christ and to us and describes how we experience this mystery in our lives. The reality of resurrection (the eschatological fulfillment of redemption) does not erase the reality of death (the soteriological state in which we find ourselves); rather, the two stand as ongoing polar opposites in the process of Christian living and transformation. Their dialectic tension can be articulated as numerous polar opposites—as not yet-already, soteriology-eschatology, this world-the next, death-resurrection, and so forth.

The paschal mystery that characterizes Christian living and Christian liturgy is an *ongoing tense interplay* between death and resurrection, sin and redemption, fidelity and infidelity. We experience this polar tension in multiple ways in daily life. At some points (often when least expected) the resurrection side of the mystery dominates our experience as, for example, when peace negotiations between warring nations or tribes arrive at some settlement, or reconciliation occurs between a disaffected parent and offspring. At other points (and this perhaps most of the time) the dying side of the mystery overwhelms us as we struggle; for example, through the prolonged illness of a terminally ill spouse, or as we watch on the evening news the report of yet another terrorist bombing of innocent people and feel powerless before the overwhelming presence of so much evil in the world. But at no point in our living does either pole ever cancel out the presence of the other. Both remain, and it is their *creative tension* that generates our movement forward in discipleship and fidelity. Struggling with tensions such as sin-reconciliation, unity-disunity, justice-injustice, etc., forces us to grapple with our identity as Body of Christ and allows the self-emptying of the paschal mystery to become progressively more formative of our self-understanding and behavior.

PASCHAL MYSTERY AS DEEP STRUCTURE OF CHRISTIAN LITURGY

One of the principal contributions of *Sacrosanctum Concilium* was recovery of the early church understanding of liturgy as the privileged enactment of the paschal mystery. The mystery of God's saving action reached its climax in the death and resurrection of Christ. The liturgy enables us to enter and participate personally in this mystery, not by

of Paul Ricoeur's *Textual Hermeneutics* (Lanham, New York, London: University Press of America, 1988).

applying past merits earned by Christ, but by actually making the saving events of Christ present here and now. Four avenues of exploration can help us understand how liturgy is able to do this: (1) the notion of enactment, (2) the concept of time, (3) a hermeneutics of liturgical enactment, and (4) an analysis of some liturgical rites.

*Notion of Enactment*¹⁰

Enactment as ritual remembering. Enactment is a form of ritual remembering in which the meaning and power of a past event become actualized in the present. There is a substantive difference between this kind of remembering and the remembering of reminiscing or storytelling. The latter is simple retelling or dramatization; enactment, on the other hand, is *anamnesis* (Greek; Hebrew root: *zkr*), a form of remembering through ritual celebration by which a people actualize the power of their founding events in the present and for the future:

[A]namnesis is the simultaneous evocation of the past, present, and future dimensions of human reality. Those who “make memorial”—especially with others in the context of religious ritual like the Passover—not only call the past into the present, but in doing so are affected by that past in such a way that their future is also changed.¹¹

In dramatization or reenactment the past that is retold, regardless of its importance for those engaged in the retelling, remains in time past. Every year on Christmas Day, for example, residents of Washington’s Crossing, Delaware, act out George Washington’s wintry transport of troops across the frozen Delaware River on December 25, 1776.

10. I use the term “enactment” rather than “reenactment” because the latter is sometimes applied in a way that defines liturgy as only dramatic re-presentation of past events (as in, for example, Eucharist as “reenactment” of the Last Supper). Liturgy, however, is always more than “reenactment”; it is *actualization* of past events in present and future temporalities.

11. Mark R. Francis, CSV, “Remembrance, Pastoral-Liturgical Tradition” in *The Collegeville Pastoral Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, 825. See also Pahl, “The Paschal Mystery in Its Central Meaning,” 20: “Through making remembrance, which the people in the case of both instituting actions [i.e., Passover and Eucharist] are commanded and empowered to do (Ex. 12:14; Lk. 22:19; I Cor. 11:24, 25), God opens up the possibility for the people again and again to make themselves present to the unique saving event to which they owe their existence and from which they draw the strength to live, and thus to become partakers in that event’s abiding effect.”

Although the original happening has importance for Americans, it is nonetheless an event that is external to those reenacting it. They are not Washington and his troops. One factor that attests to this exteriority is the attention paid to historic costumes, boats, and other artifacts in the reenactment: the authenticity of the dramatization is evaluated in direct proportion to the realism of these artifacts. The actors must clothe themselves with historical garb (in other words, hide their true identities) for the ceremony to seem real. This very attention to historic detail indicates that the ceremony is a reproduction or representation of a past event that, outside of this reproduction, no longer exists. Such dramatization is not ritual enactment but simple representation, its meaning and staging every year as limited by a discrete and transitory moment in time as the original event it represents.

The distinction between enactment and dramatization can be further clarified by examining the referents of each. We can act in or observe the reproduction of Washington's crossing of the Delaware and be reminded of the heroic greatness of one of the founders of the United States of America. We can reflect on the sufferings of those revolutionaries who struggled through this nation's founding war. But these reflections remain about persons and events no longer present and demand no action on our part in response. The remembering does not necessarily catalyze transformation of values and behaviors on the part of those doing the remembering. By contrast, the referents of *anamnesis* include not only the founding person or event being remembered, but also the present enactors, for enactment has as much to do with their being and identity as it does with that of the founding person or event. Ritual enactment leads a people to encounter anew who they are and who they are meant to be and in so doing invites them to choose new ways of being that deepen their identity.

Enactment as entry into originary events. Not every event from the past can be enacted; enactment happens only in relation to events that are originary to a people, that bear enduring paradigmatic meaning, and that carry eschatological significance.

The term "originary" bears a different nuance from the word "original" and is not to be confused with it. "Original" implies that an event is once-and-only, time bound, and finished. "Originary" implies that an event continues through time and affects ongoing identity.¹² Originary

12. Cf. Zimmerman, note 3 on p. 78 in *Liturgy as Language of Faith*.

events can be defined as those historic happenings, actions, and/or persons bearing three significant levels of import. First, such events are inaugural, that is, they set into motion the beginnings of a people.¹³ They are looked upon as the person(s) and/or event(s) that brought a people into existence and determined their sense of identity. Thus, the Exodus event inaugurated the Israelites as God's chosen people, and the Christ event inaugurated the church as Body of Christ.

Second, these persons or events are seen as paradigmatic for all time. They shape the pattern of daily existence and of behavioral choices and they determine the face of the future. Thus, the Israelites understood that they must be faithful to the covenant living to which their identity as God's people called them and that the God who had saved them from Egypt would always act on their behalf at decisive future moments. Thus, the Christian community believes that because of the Christ event the outcome of self-sacrificing death will always be resurrection, and that the pattern of faithful Christian living is the ongoing challenge to surrender to this mystery of death and resurrection.

Third, these persons or events carry eschatological import, that is, they bear upon the ultimacy of time and meaning.¹⁴ Originating in the past, they disclose in the present the shape of the future. For Israel, Moses and the Exodus event set history on a definitive course for which a salvific future was guaranteed. For the church, the Christ event stands in the same light: both historical and transhistorical, the paschal mystery of Christ pushes all creation forward to its assured redemption in the plan of God.¹⁵

Because originary events inaugurate identity and mission, because they are paradigmatic for all time, and because they bear eschatological import, they are not restricted by chronological time boundaries—that is, by the separation of time into past, present, and future—but remain perennially present and active. Once-and-for-all events that

13. What Theresa F. Koernke refers to as "the charter event which has brought the group into existence" in "An Ethics of Liturgical Behavior," *Worship* 66 (January 1992): 27. See also Pahl, "The Paschal Mystery in Its Central Meaning," 20.

14. Alexandre Ganoczy, *An Introduction to Catholic Sacramental Theology*, trans. William Thomas (New York/Ramsey: Paulist Press, 1984), 109.

15. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 1085.

give meaning to the past, the present, and the future are continually existent and bear defining force on the meaning of existence.¹⁶

Enactment as generative. Through ritual enactment a community enters its originary events in an ever fresh, generative way.¹⁷ Ritual enactment makes the events active in the present and determinative of the future because it enables the community to enter and experience its defining origins in a way that recommits the community to specific action born out of that identity. The originary events remain ongoing and operative because enactment continually reconstitutes the identity and mission that the events catapulted into history. Thus enactment is ritual activity that has to do with the ongoing presence and power of events originary to a people's identity and mission and has to do with transformation of life, that is, with the appropriation of new ways of living prompted by the new self-understanding derived from the ritual confrontation with and recognition of identity. Enactment generates the future by transforming current self-understanding and consequent behavior.

Liturgy as Christian ritual enactment. The preeminent means whereby the Christian community enacts its originary events is the liturgy.¹⁸ Liturgy is the privileged activity whereby the church

16. Ganoczy, *An Introduction to Catholic Sacramental Theology*, 109. Alexander Gerken states it thus, "The ultimate remains," *Theologie der Eucharistie* (Munich: Kösel, 1973), 57; quoted in Ganoczy, *An Introduction to Catholic Sacramental Theology*, 109. See also *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 1165: "When the Church celebrates the mystery of Christ, there is a word that marks her prayer: 'Today!'—a word echoing the prayer her Lord taught her and the call of the Holy Spirit. This 'today' of the living God which man [*sic*] is called to enter is 'the hour' of Jesus' Passover, which reaches across and underlies all history."

17. See Walter Brueggemann, *The Message of the Psalms: A Theological Commentary* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1984), n. 10, 197: "In psalm study, the crucial work of Mowinckel suggests that in the cult something genuinely new was wrought. That is, the cult is not mere replication, but is a generative action."

18. See for example, *SC*, no. 2: "For it is through the liturgy, especially in the divine Eucharistic Sacrifice, that "the work of our redemption is exercised. The liturgy is thus the outstanding means by which the faithful can express in their lives, and manifest to others, the mystery of Christ and the real nature of the true Church," (see also nos. 5, 6, 61, 102); *Eucharisticum mysterium (Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 59 [1967]): no. 25: "Whenever the community gathers to celebrate the Eucharist, it announces the death and resurrection of the Lord, in the hope of his glorious coming"; *The Milwaukee Symposia: A Ten-Year Report* (Washington, D.C.: National Pastoral Musicians Association and Chicago: Liturgy

encounters and celebrates the paschal mystery as her mystery and chooses ongoing surrender to its call. In and through the liturgy the church enacts the death and resurrection of Christ as a present, ongoing event. This death and resurrection is not external to the community celebrating it, but is the very substance of their Christian living. We need not bring external artifacts of costume and makeup to the enactment; we need bring only ourselves and our lives as they are for the enactment is, in fact, a celebration of our identity. We are not observers at a memorial dramatization but participants in an enactment of self-understanding and self-actualization. The portrayal of the crossing of the Delaware is a celebration of Washington's life, Washington's struggles, Washington's victories. By contrast, liturgical enactment of the paschal mystery is celebration of our life and identity as Body of Christ. What we engage in when we celebrate liturgy is not reproduction or representation or dramatization, but *anamnesis*.

As enactment of identity, liturgy is an ontological moment: it has to do with being and identity. But liturgical enactment is also an existential moment in that the remembering involved—*zkr*—is always directed toward subsequent action:¹⁹ It has to do with how we choose to live. The enactment actualizes a tradition of laws and values and engages our recommitment to these. In the case of Christian liturgy, what is actualized is God's covenant with humankind established in Christ and mediated through the church. Participation in liturgy renews this covenant and transforms our living according to the values inherent in this covenant. In the case of the annual celebration of Washington's crossing of the Delaware, the ceremony demands no action, either of

Training Publications), no. 28: "All liturgical preparation begins in simple recognition of one event at the heart of every liturgy: the paschal mystery"; Louis-Marie Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament: A Sacramental Reinterpretation of Christian Existence*, trans. Patrick Madigan, SJ, and Madeleine Beaumont (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1995), 477: "[O]ne cannot understand the anamnesis *except by starting from the 'paschal mystery' of Christ, and not from anything anterior to it*" (italics original); Zimmerman, *Liturgy as Living Faith*, 89: "[L]iturgy is a privileged manifestation of the Paschal Mystery, a door to our own self-understanding"; Pahl, "The Paschal Mystery in Its Central Meaning," 37–38: "[T]he liturgy brings to expression the core of Christianity, which is the paschal mystery."

19. See Zimmerman, *Liturgy as Living Faith*, 12–13, for a discussion of the levels of meaning of *zkr* in Deuteronomy and the significance of *zkr*, which leads to action.

actors or observers, beyond the doing of the dramatization itself. In the case of liturgical enactment, however, the consequence of ontological remembrance is existential action where being and doing interpenetrate. Every liturgical enactment enables us to see ourselves more clearly as Body of Christ (being) and graces us to choose more fully how we will act in the world as that Body (doing).

Liturgy is the ritual enactment and reaffirmation of Christian identity as Body of Christ engaging in and being engaged by the paschal mystery. The essential core of Christian liturgy, its ontological referent, and its structural underpinning is the paschal mystery. This understanding is the primary liturgical recovery of Vatican II and is the deepest meaning of *Sacrosanctum Concilium's* liturgical mandate concerning full, conscious, and active participation of all the faithful in the liturgy. Because of and through liturgy we can encounter the paschal mystery as our own and can appropriate its challenges into our daily living. As "summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed" and "fountain from which all her power flows,"²⁰ liturgy both grounds our identity as Body of Christ, and leads us toward the eschatological fulfillment of that identity.²¹

Concept of Time

Paul Ricoeur's investigations into time and narrativity help us understand how both liturgy and Christian living enact in the present the historically past Christ event.²² Ricoeur builds his speculations about time on the reflections of Augustine found in the *Confessions*.²³ For Augustine the past that is no longer and the future that has not yet come to be are nonexistent; only the present is. All three temporalities nonetheless do exist in the soul as memory (past), attention (present), and expectation (future). Thus, for Augustine, time in all its modes exists as a threefold present: the "present of things past, the present of things present, and a present of things future."²⁴

Augustine uses the recitation of a psalm to exemplify his point:

20. SC, no. 10.

21. Thus, Pius XII could rightly say in *Mediator Dei (Acta Apostolicae Sedis 39:14 [1947])*: no. 29, that the most pressing duty of Christians is to live the liturgical life.

22. See Zimmerman, "Paschal Mystery—Whose Mystery?"

23. Augustine, *Confessions* XI, 14:17–28:37; trans. taken from *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 1, ed. Philip Schaff (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1974 rpt.).

24. Augustine, *Confessions* XI, 20:26.

I am about to repeat a psalm that I know. Before I begin, my attention is extended to the whole; but when I have begun, as much of it as becomes past by my saying it is extended in my memory; and the life of this action of mine is divided between my memory, on account of what I have repeated, and my expectation, on account of what I am about to repeat; yet my consideration is present with me, through which that which was future may be carried over so that it may become past. Which the more it is done and repeated, by so much (expectation being shortened) the memory is enlarged, until the whole expectation be exhausted, when that whole action being ended shall have passed into memory. And what takes place in the entire psalm, takes place also in each individual part of it, and in each individual syllable: this holds in the longer action, of which that psalm is perchance a portion; the same holds in the whole life of man [*sic*], of which all the actions of man are parts; the same holds in the whole age of the sons of men, of which all the lives of men are parts.²⁵

At the beginning of the recitation, all the psalm is in the future; as he prays, some of the psalm remains in the future while some passes over into the past. Yet because of memory and expectation, all the psalm continually exists in the present. Augustine shows us that time is not measured by external motion (as, for example, the movement of the sun through the day), but by the inward and fixed element of the mind. The crucial verb, then, is not “‘to pass’ (*transire*) but ‘to remain’ (*manet*).”²⁶ Augustine moves time beyond chronology by opening up a deeper temporality. Ricoeur develops Augustine’s thinking by applying his dialectical approach: the three modalities of time—memory (past), attention (present), and expectation (future)—stand in dialectic tension with one another. Time is an action by which the mind actively creates the presence of the past, the present, and the future.

This analysis throws new light on our understanding of liturgical time and participation in the paschal mystery. The Christ event stands both in the past historically and in the future in terms of the Second Coming. We live in the present between the past and the future modes of this event. Liturgical time is the dialectic of our present with the past and the future of the mystery of Christ. Liturgical time, then, is participatory action. What mediates the past and the future of the

25. Augustine, *Confessions* XI, 28:38.

26. Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, vol. 1, trans. Kathleen McLaughlin, and David Pellauer (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1984) 18; quoted in Zimmerman, “Paschal Mystery—Whose Mystery?” 307.

Christ event is an integrating present that is the *action* of the baptized community engaging in the dialectic of Christian memory, attention, and expectation.²⁷ As an action in the present, liturgy unfolds in chronological time, but as an act of *anamnesis* liturgy opens up the deeper dynamic of time as our actualization in the present of the past and future dimensions of our identity and mission.

A Hermeneutics of Liturgical Enactment

The word “hermeneutic” comes from the god Hermes whose task was to carry messages from the other gods to human beings. In communicating these messages Hermes was swift and direct, but he could also be a thief, a trickster, and a bargainer. Negotiating with him, then, required the art of interpretation, that is, that art of perceiving the message, understanding its meaning, and making sense of its application to one’s life.

We use Paul Ricoeur’s textual hermeneutics here to elucidate how it is that liturgy enacts Christian identity and mission. Applying his method to the specific text which is liturgy (“text” here meaning not just what is written, such as, for example, the Sacramentary, but the whole rite as it is actually celebrated) enables us to understand how liturgy enacts past originary Christian events in present and future modes.

To begin, it is important to note that for Ricoeur “text” is broader than what is written and includes any enduring sign of human existence, such as works of art, music and dance, ritual and liturgy. All texts—rites, monuments, archives, artifacts, etc.—are documents of human existence and all participate in a dialectic of past, present, and future (that is, of the originary event that gave rise to the text, of the present context of the text user, and of the possibilities for actualization of new self-understanding opened up by the text). It is also important to note that “understanding” is not so much an intellectual activity having to do with ideas and concepts as it is an ontological activity having to do with self-understanding and self-actualization. Understanding is not a process of the mind alone; it is even more a process of the heart and the will.²⁸ Hermeneutics deals not only with how we interpret a “text” but also with how that “text” interprets us

27. Zimmerman, “Paschal Mystery—Whose Mystery?” 310–12.

28. Zimmerman, *Liturgy as Living Faith*, n. 3, 149.

by challenging our self-understanding and our way of living in the world.

Ricoeur's hermeneutic method encompasses three interpretative moments (participation, distanciation, appropriation) that establish a dynamic relationship between us and the text, leading to deeper understanding of the text. The three interpretative moments do not unfold chronologically, but are present as ongoing dialectics that act upon one another in such a way as to move us deeper into the meaning of the text (and therefore into self-understanding and self-actualization).

Participation. Participation is a moment of "pre-understanding" originating from our immersion in being as mediated through a particular tradition.²⁹ Such pre-understanding derives from two perspectives, that of belonging and that of communication. Belonging is our preconscious sense that our very being belongs to being and to Being; we apprehend that we belong to the whole of what is. Through communication we experience this belonging as intersubjective and intratemporal. Belonging is apprehended through the cultural monuments—texts, rites, documents, archives, etc.—that comprise tradition. Tradition implies a certain connectedness with others and with history that is also a connectedness to ourselves. All interpretation takes place within a tradition that both enables communication of the originary events giving rise to the tradition and grounds our identity. This tradition establishes the parameters out of which our initial interpretation of a text is made; we construct meaning out of "guesses" among the possible meanings that the tradition suggests.

In terms of liturgy, we who live within the Christian tradition share through baptism an identity that immerses us in the paschal mystery and unites us ontologically with Christ and with one another as Body of Christ. Our interpretation of the text of Christian existence is shaped, then, by our self-understanding as Body of Christ. The originary event for the Christian tradition—the paschal mystery—is encapsulated in the present through liturgical enactment. From our participation in the accumulated meaning of liturgy throughout tradition and from our participation in Christian living, we bring pre-

29. For Ricoeur, lived experience is itself a "pre-comprehension of what is to be articulated" (S. Skousgaard, *Language and the Existence of Freedom: A Study in Paul Ricoeur's Philosophy of Will* [Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1979], 78), quoted in Zimmerman, *Liturgy as Language of Faith*, 88.

understanding to the liturgical celebration, implicitly grasping the reference to originary Christian events expressed in sacramental form.

Distanciation. While participation in a tradition grants us certain parameters for authentic interpretation, it is only the first moment of interpretation. Ricoeur's second methodic moment is distanciation. Standing in dialectic opposition to participation, distanciation is an *analytic* moment allowing us to step aside from the moment of belonging to reflect on its meaning and to uncover new possibilities for living that it offers. While participation is largely unconscious, distanciation is conscious, deliberate, interpretive activity. Without the deliberative, analytic activity of distanciation, the new possibilities for existence opened up by the text remain buried in the comfort zone of our already existing interpretations.

Distanciation is an interpretive moment directed toward the internal structure³⁰ of a text in itself (for example, a musical composition, a painting, a liturgical document, a given celebration of liturgy). And because every text is an objectification of the relation of belonging, its interpretation is immensely fruitful for our continued living of the tradition that produced the text. Disclosure of its depth structure, then, is fundamentally an analysis of human existence, for it arises from existence (participation) and moves toward renewed existence (appropriation), the third methodic moment.

In terms of liturgy, distanciation is the activity of interpretation directed toward disclosure of liturgy's deep structure. Liturgy is a concrete text that objectifies the originary event of the paschal mystery and our fundamental identity as Body of Christ. Authentic liturgical interpretation, then, yields greater understanding both of the paschal mystery and of Christian identity. One moment of this hermeneutic activity is scholarly study, but another moment is what we enter each time we engage in liturgical celebration. By entering into the objectification of the Christ event, which is liturgy, we open up new possibilities for appropriating it: we discover ourselves, both as we are and as we can become.

30. For Ricoeur structure means more than simply observable data (which belong to a "surface" structure). Zimmerman states, "'Structure' is a depth dynamic that makes something what it is. The closer we come to grasping a text's deep structure, the closer we come to entering the human existence documented by the text" (*Liturgy as Living Faith*, n. 6, 149).

Appropriation. Distanciation is dialectically related to participation in Christian existence because it opens up new possibilities for Christian living. The third interpretive moment, appropriation, stands in dialectic position on the other side of distanciation (and in turn becomes a new moment of participation). In the moment of appropriation, we choose among the many possibilities for living that distanciation opens up in order to make the meaning of the text our own. Distanciation allows us to encounter other possibilities opened up by the text and to choose new possibilities for our present situation. This very choosing is the moment of appropriation; our encounter with the text culminates in self-interpretation: we understand ourselves better, or differently, or perhaps even for the first time.³¹

Appropriation signifies a change in us which ultimately brings about a change in the world. Appropriation is the subjective counterpart to distanciation; it is not, however, response to the author but to the text, that is, to the world of possibilities that the text opens up. Moreover, appropriation gives precedence to the world projected by the text over any projection by us as reader onto the text. Appropriation requires a relinquishment of ego; it is defined by a loss of our old self in order to find and actualize a new self.

Liturgically, appropriation is our choosing new ways of living out the paschal mystery in our daily Christian living. Interpreting the originary event, which liturgical celebration makes present in objectified form, we see afresh our identity and mission as Body of Christ. What we interpret and reappropriate is Christian self-understanding; what we choose is a new way of being Christian. This new way of being which grace continually creates is *ourselves as Body of Christ*, and every moment of appropriation becomes a new moment of participation. The pathway to new appropriation of self is always relinquishment of old self-understandings. For grace to work we must consciously choose to let go of self. We must die in order to rise.

Application to liturgy. Ricoeur's textual hermeneutics offer us a way to understand how liturgy enacts in the present and for the future the originary paschal mystery event. Liturgy is a text of Christian ex-

31. Zimmerman, *Liturgy as Living Faith*, 43: "The ultimate goal of interpretation is a new self who lives a new human existence with new situations and new possibilities. The interpretive process proceeds from a participation in human existence (objectified as a "text") to a distanciation from existence in order to recognize new possibilities for appropriation."

istence arising from the originary paschal mystery event. Because of our participation in Christian existence, we pre-understand both the text and its originary event (participation). The celebration of liturgy allows us to encounter the meaning of this originary event in terms of its possibilities for our present situation (distanciation). The ritual encounter with the paschal mystery generates new levels of self-understanding and self-actualization of Christian identity and mission (appropriation). Between the past of the originary event and lived tradition and the future of new ways of configuring that tradition stands the present of liturgical enactment, itself generated by the past and in turn generative of the future.

Specifically, liturgy (our ritual enactment of the paschal mystery) and Christian living (our lived enactment of that mystery) bear the same deep structure, that of the dialectic tension between soteriology and eschatology. As ritual enactment, liturgy provides the moment of distanciation in which the paschal mystery dialectic of soteriology and eschatology is made available for our interpretation. Our daily Christian living then becomes a new appropriation of that mystery as lived enactment. The two forms of enactment—liturgy and daily living—continually interact with one another to shape ever-deepening understanding of Christian identity as participation in the originary paschal mystery event.³²

Liturgy and Christian living are the dialectic poles of an ongoing interpretative engagement in identity (Body of Christ) and meaningful action (paschal mystery), an engagement that constantly and progressively deepens our self-understanding and transforms our behavior. This means three things. First, it means that all Christian living is a reflection of a previous reading of liturgy. Second, it means that every celebration of liturgy re-figures the past as a fresh beginning. Third, it means that “*Christian living is the content of liturgy.*”³³ Liturgy and

32. In light of Ricoeur’s assertion that all texts are documents of human existence that carry the possibility of transforming present and future self-understanding, we could say that the yearly dramatization of Washington’s crossing of the Delaware (see above) is in fact enactment. By its being a text encountered in a present situation, it carries new possibilities for self-understanding and self-actualization. However, we wish to reserve a cultic specificity to the term enactment. Enactment is cultic encounter with “texts” that are originary to a community’s identity, paradigmatic for all time, and eschatological in import. Not every text can be enacted in this cultic sense (see above).

33. Zimmerman, *Liturgy as Living Faith*, xi (italics original).

Christian living bear the same ontological referent. Liturgy is not an activity isolated from the rest of life; rather, liturgy is life.

*Analysis of the Eucharistic Rite*³⁴

Analyzing the surface structure of a liturgical rite provides a way to uncover the deep structure that underlies the rite. The term “deep structure” is drawn from the field of linguistic analysis and refers to the identity that makes a thing or text what it is. This identity is “not-at-hand,” that is, it is not readily available to sense perception, but is disclosed through the surface structures, the “at-hand” phenomena that yield access to a thing’s deep structure. Deep structure is abiding and defining; surface structures are the variable “at-hand” clues to this abiding “not-at-hand” identity.

The broad surface structure of the eucharistic rite is fourfold: introductory rites, Liturgy of the Word, Liturgy of the Eucharist, and concluding rite. The introductory rites bracket the demands of daily Christian living so that we may enter ritual activity. Through these introductory rites God calls us to ritual presence.

The Liturgy of the Word is the first major structural element of the rite. Its climax is the proclamation of the gospel. This is evidenced through ritual elements such as our posture of standing, our responses before and after the proclamation, and our singing of the gospel acclamation. What we acclaim in the gospel proclamation is the “*personal Presence* of the One being proclaimed.”³⁵ The divine Presence who called us to presence in the introductory rites becomes a living, personal Presence showing us here and now what it means for us to be the Body of Christ. The proclamation of the gospel confronts us with the Ideal whom, as Body of Christ, we are called to become. The Liturgy of the Word, then, draws us into an intensified divine Presence and an intensified self-presence that is soteriological in function as the person of Christ present in the gospel calls us to new possibilities of being his Body in the world.

In the Liturgy of the Eucharist, the second major structural element of the rite, Ideal Presence becomes Real Presence. Through our recitation of the narrative of salvation (eucharistic prayer) and our procession to the messianic table, we recognize that we already are, truly and

34. I am indebted to Zimmerman here for this analysis that she details in ch. 7 of *Liturgy as Living Faith*.

35. Zimmerman, *Liturgy as Living Faith*, 106; italics original.

fully, the Body of Christ. The Liturgy of the Eucharist is an eschatological moment: it celebrates who we already are and invites us to rest in the joy of that becoming.

The very soteriological-eschatological dialectic that characterizes both the paschal mystery and its ritual enactment in liturgy is captured, then, in the tension between the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist, that is, in the tension between our confrontation with the Ideal we are called to become and God's fulfillment of that Ideal in the messianic banquet. Our pre-understanding is challenged by our encounter in the gospel with the Ideal who is Christ, and we face the not-yetness of our human struggle to be the Body of Christ. The liturgy does not leave us there, however, but invites us forward into the originary story (the eucharistic prayer) and the reaffirmation that we already fully are the Body of Christ: it is ourselves we come to recognize in the breaking of the bread.³⁶ Thus the totality of the mystery—both the dying and the rising, both the not-yetness of our salvation and the already of our redemption—are fully present in the ritual enactment of who we are and who we are meant to be.

The concluding rite is a moment of recognition on our part that we have become “for others.”³⁷ We are sent on our way with renewed self-understanding, ready to live in a way that makes a difference in the world. Together the introductory and concluding rites bracket the ritual moment, allowing us to set aside our participation in Christian living and enter ritual enactment of our identity, and sending us back into living with a new appropriation of what this identity means. What has been recovered is our self-understanding that the dialectic between soteriology and eschatology, between the “not yet” of our uncompleted conformity to Christ and the “already” of our grace-given union with him that unfolds as the deep structure of the rite, is the text of our own Christian lives.

36. Thus Augustine could write: “If you are to understand what it means to be the Body of Christ, hear what Paul has to say: ‘Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it’ (1 Cor 12:27). If you are the body of Christ and members of it, then it is that mystery which is placed on the Lord’s table: you receive the mystery, which is to say the Body of Christ, your very self. You answer Amen to who you are and in the answer you embrace yourself. You hear Body of Christ and answer Amen. Be a member of Christ’s body, that your Amen will be true” (Sermon 272 [Migne, PL, vol. 38] 1247; translation by Zimmerman, *Liturgy as Living Faith*, 101).

37. Zimmerman, *Liturgy as Living Faith*, 109–10.

Analysis of the surface structure of the eucharistic rite reveals a deep structure that is the paschal mystery. The import of such disclosure is significant, for if the deep structure of liturgy is the paschal mystery, then the deep structure of liturgy is a dialectical unfolding of the tension between soteriology and eschatology. In other words, the dialectic that defines the paschal mystery also defines the ritual enactment of that mystery.

Dynamic of Presence. Analysis of the surface structure of the eucharistic rite further reveals that what draws the disparate elements of the rite into a single, unified, and complete action is an unfolding dynamic of presence, initiated by God and responded to by the assembly gathered for worship.³⁸ This dynamic begins with the Divine Presence calling us to cultic presence through the introductory rites. The very action of the introductory rites constitutes us as community by transforming our sense of "I" to a sense of "self-in-community."³⁹ Each of us brings to the gathering an individualized awareness of participation in Christian existence. The introductory rites transform these singularized self-understandings into communal self-understanding so that we recognize our identity as Body of Christ gathered to enact the paschal mystery. This transformation of self-awareness occurs at God's initiative. Cultic presence is presence to the God who calls and presence to one another as the community gathered by God into the one body of the church.

The Liturgy of the Word introduces a shift in the enactment as our focus moves from several persons (God, presider, assembly) to one (reader); our posture switches from standing to sitting and standing; our attention turns from presider's chair to ambo; and our activity changes from preparation to receptivity. The complex of actions as a whole reveals that the entire Liturgy of the Word centers on the word that is proclaimed, and particularly on the gospel. Every action of the Liturgy of the Word either leads up to or flows from the gospel understood as the proclamation of a living Person present in such a way that the word becomes relevant for this particular community in this particular time.

The Liturgy of the Word reveals Christ as the Ideal Presence whom we are in the process of becoming. The proclamation makes Christ present in such a way that he can be encountered by us here and now,

38. Zimmerman, *Liturgy as Language of Faith*, 180.

39. *Ibid.*, 181.

and the very action of the Liturgy of the Word enables this encounter. Through our public assent, ritualized in posture and acclamation, we unite ourselves with the One being proclaimed. Christ is personally present in this proclamation, and so are we.

The Liturgy of the Eucharist introduces a further shift in the enactment as our focus turns from ambo to altar, and from Lectionary to bread and wine; our activity changes from receptivity back to preparation; and our engagement changes from active listening to active offering. Structurally, the eucharistic prayer is the central point around which the action is organized. The rites of preparing the gifts and of Communion frame this central section. Our actions of offering gifts and of eating and drinking the Body and Blood of Christ occur, then, in the context of the telling of the story of salvation. In this narration we encounter anew God's saving action in our favor. In the Communion rite we consume the Body and Blood of the one who brings salvation, and self-in-community is transformed into self-in-community-in-Christ: "Human presence and divine presence are commingled in . . . the fullness of Presence to presence."⁴⁰

The concluding rite instigates a final shift in enactment to blessing and dismissal. The dismissal sends each member of the assembly forth to praise God by doing good works.⁴¹ The dismissal calls us to affirm what we have just celebrated in the eucharistic action through a life that reflects its meaning. What we affirm at this point is not something taking place in the concluding rite itself, but the whole action that has preceded and will follow it. All the elements of the eucharistic rite are structured to lead to this final "Amen" on our part. To what are we saying "Amen"? Nothing less than our decision to appropriate possibilities for Christian living opened up by our having entered once again into God's Presence and been reminded that we are the Presence of Christ visible in the world today.

In the Liturgy of the Eucharist we celebrate our real Presence as Body of Christ. Through the blessing and dismissal of the concluding rite we are sent forth with new self-understanding to be this Presence for others. "Presence, then, is a key not only to understanding the deep dynamic of Eucharist but is also a key to how we live the Paschal Mystery in our daily lives."⁴² The dynamic of action that the eucharistic

40. *Ibid.*, 183.

41. *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* 2002, no. 90.

42. Zimmerman, *Liturgy as Living Faith*, 110.

liturgy unfolds is that of the interpenetration of divine and human presence as God makes Godself known and we take on that Godself in becoming Christ.

Liturgy is, then, a ritual in and through which human presence is given over to Divine Presence. The purpose of all liturgy is that we, the community of the baptized, transform our self-understanding and our mode of living. Ultimately, we come to see ourselves as God's Presence in the world, and choose to act accordingly. The deep structure of both liturgy and Christian living is the paschal mystery tension between soteriology and eschatology, between the not-yetness of human sin and weakness and the already of human gracefulness and glory. In both liturgy and life, what reveals the mystery and its power is the dynamic of personal presence, the ever-Presence of God and the becoming-ever-more-faithful presence of the Body of Christ.