The Effects of Liturgy on Culture

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The Effects of Liturgy on Culture

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It would not be a terribly provocative statement to claim that religion and culture have mutual influence.[1] A society's religion has been one of the dominant forces—if not *the* most dominant—in shaping cultures since the origin of man, and this holds true even today: no matter how hard many commentators try, it is impossible to understand the culture of the Islamic State without considering the Salafist form of Islam that reigns there. If one expands the concept of "religion" to include "actual religion"—that is, the combination of religious, philosophical, and ideological components that comprise the *Weltanschauung* which helps determine a person's actions—then "religion" would be the dominant force in shaping all cultures.[2] (Thus we could say the respect for—at times apotheosis of—democracy and freedom in America are key components of the "actual religion" that shapes much of American culture.) With a deeper look, we could see how different aspects of religion affect cultures in different ways; for the purposes of this paper, I will highlight how *liturgy* in particular affects culture. Of course, these terms, and others related to them—ritual, feast, festivity, etc.—are interpreted in a variety of ways, so I will begin by discussing these terms and defining what they mean in the context of this paper. In particular, that will mean explaining that the liturgy evaluated here is the Christian liturgy, primarily the Catholic liturgy, but also referencing, at least for the purpose of examples (which are necessary, since the relations between religion and culture "can only be studied in the concrete, in their total historical reality"), that of other liturgical Christians.[3] After the definitions, I will briefly summarize the converse of the main topic, here covering how culture also affects liturgy (since there is mutual influence between the two, as between religion and

[1] For an analysis of two thinkers that emphasize this interplay, see R. Jared Staudt, "'Religion and Culture' and 'Faith and the Renewal of Society' in Christopher Dawson and Pope Benedict XVI," *Logos: A Journal of Catholic Thought and Culture*, 16:1 (2013), *Project MUSE*, EBSCO*host* (accessed December 7, 2015): 31-69.
[2] For the idea of "actual religion," see Quentin Faulkner, "Cult and Culture at the Millennium: Exploratory Notes on the New Religion," *Soundings: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 79 (3/4): 402.
[3] Christopher Dawson, *Religion and the Rise of Western Culture* (London: Sheed & Ward, 1950), 4.

culture in general). The effects of liturgy on culture will then be evaluated under four headings: direct cultural outgrowths of the liturgy, indirect cultural outgrowths of the liturgy, the cultural effects of principles taught or inculcated by liturgy, and the influence of the liturgy's spiritual effects on culture. Each of these will be more exactly described at the appropriate points in the paper. Finally, I will conclude by summarizing all that has been examined in order to attempt to provide a synthetic view of how the liturgy affects not only the Church but the greater, extra-ecclesial culture as well.

The first necessary definition is that of *culture*. In common usage, we might think of two basic definitions of culture: first, the general set of traditions, rituals, views, and idiosyncrasies of a particular group (one might think of, for instance, "Hispanic culture" or "Israeli culture"), and, second, the idea of "high culture," often characterized by the fine arts and wine and cheese parties. (Of course, "culture" is used in larger compounds to refer to cultivation, such as in "horticulture" or "agriculture," and it can also have that sense when referring to human culture since, per Virgil Michel, one definition of culture is "the application of human endeavor and of reason to the natural abilities of man for the development of the best that is in him."[4]) The second meaning of culture—the one characterized by Bach, Shakespeare, and da Vinci—will definitely play a part in this investigation, but the first meaning is more key. To define culture, we might start with a definition put forward by Christopher Dawson: "A culture is a common way of life--a particular adjustment of man to his natural surroundings and his economic needs."[5] In his view, the environment plays a key role in forming culture, though interactions with other

[4] Virgil Michel, "Christian Culture," in *Orate Fratres* 13 (May 1939): 296, qtd. in Roland Milliare, "The Spirit of the Liturgical Movement: A Benedictine Renewal of Culture," *Logos: A Journal of Catholic Thought and Culture*, 17:4 (Fall 2014): 142.

[5] Christopher Dawson, *The Age of the Gods: A Study in the Origins of Culture in Prehistoric Europe and the Ancient East* (London: Sheed & Ward, 1933), xiii.

cultures, or new beliefs and philosophies, also shape a culture.[6] Joseph Ratzinger has a similar view, with culture being "the social form of expression, as it has grown up in history, of those experiences and evaluations that have left their mark on a community and have shaped it."[7] These experiences and interactions with environment and other cultures lead to the development of "localized customs and habits that are typical of a population group," and such customs and habits result in the creation of various artefacts as well, whether directly material (such as architecture, tools, and visual artwork) or things such as typical forms of greeting, social interaction, or festivals.[8] Combining all of these, we might define culture as the customs, forms, and habits of a particular population group, which develop based on the group's beliefs, ideas, and experiences, along with the artefacts deriving from those customs, forms, and habits. It is important to say that defining a particular population group is very difficult, and there can be overlapping cultures: for instance, an Irish Catholic in Boston might take part in Catholic, Irish American, and Bostonian cultures, among others. The wider cultures may affect the more narrow cultures, and vice versa, to varying degrees, and any individual may partake of certain cultures in varying degrees. The cultures discussed in this paper will be primarily extra-ecclesial—for example, the culture of a town or nation rather than a parish—though sometimes the culture of a particular congregation will be discussed as well.

The next major definition is the liturgy. To an outside observer, especially one trained in ethnology or comparative religion, it may seem that the liturgy is merely the Christian form of ritual. We may think of ritual as a culture's structured activities which are distinguished from

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[6] For instance, see Dawson's explanation of the five main types of cultural change in Dawson, *The Age of the Gods*, xvi-xix.

[7] Joseph Ratzinger, *Truth and Tolerance* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2004), 60, qtd. in Staudt, 36.

[8] André Droogers, "Feasts: A View From Cultural Anthropology," in P. Post, G. Rouwhorst, L. van Tongeren, and A. Scheer, ed., *Christian Feast and Festival: The Dynamics of Western Liturgy and Culture*, Liturgia condenda 12 (Leuven: Peeters, 2001), 84.

the everyday, often set aside as sacred, and often considered as rooted in the divine and with effects which transcend human action.[9] Many contemporary cultures would, of course, drop the references to the divine while retaining the structured, extraordinary elements of ritual. In the American culture, for instance, we may think of the ritual of the changing of the guard at Arlington National Cemetery. However, in most ancient cultures, ritual was predominantly, if not completely, rooted in the divine. Mircea Eliade highlights this with his conception of ancient rituals as being primarily *imitatio dei*, an imitation of the prototypical acts of divinities or divine ancestors.[10] Even more, the ritual reflects and represents the hierophanies, instances of the breaking-through of the divine into the earthly world, which is what "ontologically founds the world."[11] For these cultures, without religion, and without religious ritual, the world is groundless. Christopher Dawson agrees in general, describing how religious rites sanctified all the vital moments in the lives of early cultures; he even proposes that many elements of civilization, such as agriculture, began as religious ritual.[12] In many ways, we can see Christian liturgy as a particular form of ritual: it is, after all, structured activity, distinguished as sacred and separated from the everyday, and rooted in the divine, with effects transcending human actions, effects which, if they do not found the entire world, at least found the Church.[13] From the outside, perhaps only the structured activity is seen; perhaps the liturgy is only seen as the

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[9] Cf. the definition of C. Bell, *Ritual theory, ritual practice* (New York/Oxford 1992), 13, qtd. in Martin J.M. Hoondert, "The Appropriation of Gregorian Chant in the Netherlands, 1903-1930," in Post et al., *Christian Feast and Festival*, 649.

[10] See Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion*, trans. Willard R. Trask (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1959), 95-104, 167-168.

[11] Eliade, 21.

[12] See Christopher Dawson, *Enquiries Into Religion and Culture* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2009), 242. Cf. Dawson, *Enquiries*, 80-82, and Dawson, *Progress and Religion*, 108-109. The larger idea of the importance of religion and ritual for the beginnings of ancient civilization is found in Dawson, *Progress and Religion*, Chapter V, "Religion and the Origins of Civilization," 95-116.

[13] See Pope John Paul II, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* (Boston: Pauline Books & Media, 2003). Per §3, "The Church was born of the paschal mystery," and the Eucharist is "the sacrament of the paschal mystery," and so, per §1, "The Church draws her life from the Eucharist."

"public work," as an action of the Church.[14] The liturgy is truly the public, official worship of the Church, but it also includes the divine element, for it is "an exercise of the priestly office of Jesus Christ."[15] We might want to use the definition of Cyprian Vagaggini: "The liturgy is: *the complexus of the sensible, efficacious signs of the Church's sanctification and of her worship*."[16] In this definition, the sanctification would highlight the divine action, and the worship would highlight the human action, the action of the Church; I would still also emphasize the structured and official nature of liturgy. Of course, this brief discussion does not cover the entire reality of the liturgy, and many of the spiritual effects, in particular, will be discussed below, but it should provide an adequate starting point for the later investigations.

Finally, we should clarify the meaning of feast, festival, and festivity. To some researchers, "festival" is a more important concept than "liturgy" in exploring religion's relationship with culture. We might begin by borrowing a definition from Paul Post:

> By "feast" we refer to the moment in which, or the occasion on which people, in the structuring of time and the course of an individual's life cycle, as groups or as a society, give special (that is to say, in a way which breaks through the everyday) ritual form to occurrences that mark personal and social existence, doing so from faith, a religious, philosophical or ideological orientation which makes sense of life.[17]

In many ways, this definition overlaps with that of ritual (a term which the definition itself utilizes), particularly the emphasis on the distinction from the everyday. Many more elements could be brought in to describe feast, but I will incorporate a train of thought from Josef Pieper, who connects festivity to worship and even culture, providing a first look at how liturgy, at least in its underlying principles, can affect, or even be necessary for, culture. In one work,

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[14] See *Catechism of the Catholic Church* [CCC], 2nd ed. (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2000), #1069, 1071.
[15] Second Vatican Council, *Sacrosanctum Concilium* §7, in Austin Flannery, ed., *Vatican Council II*, Vol. 1, *The Conciliar and Postconciliar Documents*, new revised ed. (Northport, NY: Costello Publishing Company, 1998), 5.
[16] Cyprian Vagaggini, *Theological Dimensions of the Liturgy: A General Treatise on the Theology of the Liturgy*, trans. Leonard J. Doyle and W.A. Jurgens (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1976), 27.
[17] Paul Post, "Liturgical Movements and Feast Culture: A Dutch Research Program," in Post et al, *Christian Feast and Festival*, 37.

Pieper begins by quoting a passage from Plato's *Laws* discussing how recurring feasts were given by the gods to restore men from their fatigue, and the Muses (that is, the fountains of the arts) were given as festal companions.[18] This highlights two essential components of festivity: rupture from the everyday and worship. For Pieper, there can be no real festivity without a religious basis, and worship is the fulfillment of festivity: "the ritual festival is the most festive form that festivity can possibly take."[19] This worship helps ground festivity in two ways. First, there is the fact that worship includes, and necessitates, an "assent to the world," that is, one's approval of the world as it is, as God made it, which is a key theme for Pieper: after all, celebrating a festival is nothing else than "*to live out, for some special occasion and in an uncommon manner, the universal assent to the world as a whole*."[20] Second, worship involves a rapturing, "a shattering of man's ordinary, 'normal' relationship to the world."[21] Despite this emphasis on the festival's being a break with the normal world, though, Pieper does not find it contradictory for there to be an "eternal festival": after all, the basis of festival (the assent to the world and divine worship) is always present, though not always made explicit.[22] (This idea could be seen in an older tradition of the Roman liturgy where every day that was not a specified feast day was still called a *ferial* day, that is, a festal day.) Festival, though, goes beyond itself: it is also the basis for leisure, which likewise involves a break with the ordinary world and a basis in affirmation of the world and divine worship.[23] Leisure is that which has no end beyond itself, that which is "useless"; worship and festival, too, are "useless." (We might think of the

[18] See Plato, *Laws* 653C-D, qtd. in Josef Pieper, *Leisure: The Basis of Culture*, trans. Alexander Dru (New York: Pantheon Books, 1952), 19.
[19] Josef Pieper, *In Tune With the World: A Theory of Festivity*, trans. Richard and Clara Winston (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1965), 24. See also Pieper, op. cit., 25-28.
[20] Pieper, *In Tune With the World*, 23. See also Pieper, op. cit., 20-21.
[21] Pieper, *In Tune With the World*, 31.
[22] See Pieper, *In Tune With the World*, 23, 37-38, 64-65.
[23] See Pieper, *Leisure*, 42-4, 56-59.

"extravagance" of liturgical worship, whose spirit is exemplified in the woman who poured out costly perfume to anoint Jesus' feet.)[24] In Pieper's view, true culture only comes to be through leisure, for culture is "everything that lies beyond the utilitarian world"; yet he goes even farther to assert "culture lives on religion through divine worship."[25] (This "uselessness" also characterizes contemplation, which Pieper argues, following St. Thomas Aquinas, is the only true happiness.[26]) To summarize Pieper's view in terms of our topic: true culture is found only in the leisurely festival of divine worship, which is exemplified in the liturgy.

After this digression on Pieper, and with the necessary definitions complete, we can now move fully into the investigation of the reciprocal effects of liturgy and culture. Before analyzing liturgy's effects on culture, the main topic of this paper, it would be worthwhile to give a brief overview of culture's effects on liturgy. The liturgy is composed of a mixture of unchangeable and changeable elements; while the inner, spiritual reality is unchangeable, many of the more exterior elements are changeable, and these changeable elements are often affected by extra-ecclesial cultures.[27] Besides the many instances in which the wider culture affects the language of a particular liturgical service (whether a strictly liturgical language, such as Latin, Old Slavonic, or Coptic, or a vernacular language), the wider cultures often have strong influences on liturgical arts, whether musical, visual, or verbal (such as the style of Latin poetry used in, for instance, the sequences or the Office hymns). As we will see below, the liturgical arts can affect the arts of the wider culture, but that culture may further develop those artistic

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[24] See John Paul II, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, §§47-48.
[25] Pieper, *Leisure*, 61.
[26] See Josef Pieper, *Happiness and Contemplation*, trans. Richard and Clara Winston (New York: Pantheon Books Inc., 1958), 93, 13.
[27] See Second Vatican Council, *Sacrosanctum Concilium* §§21, 37-40, in Flannery, 9, 13-14. The changeable parts would more correspond to the aspect of worship, while the unchangeable would more correspond with the aspect of sanctification, to draw on Vagaggini's previously-cited definition, though this partition is not exact in every respect.

influences and later bring new elements back into the liturgical arts; the interplay between liturgy and culture is an ever-developing cycle of influence, not one-way channels. There are rules to be followed, though, when the liturgy adapts art forms from culture: the art must be worthy of the liturgy in order to be adapted.[28] In general, effects of culture on the Church, and most particularly on her liturgy, must be sifted: the wider culture cannot be blindly adopted. As the *Catechism* says, "The Church is catholic, capable of integrating into her unity, *while purifying them*, all the authentic riches of cultures" (emphasis added).[29] Thus the arts and language of wider cultures can affect the liturgy; in addition, various views of the wider cultures, inasmuch as they are adopted by those in the Church responsible for shaping the liturgy, may also become incorporated into the liturgy, particularly the homily.[30] In short, as said above, the relation between liturgy and culture is not unilateral; however, when culture affects the liturgy, the influences of culture should be sifted and purified before being incorporated into the liturgy.

Now that we have briefly seen how culture can affect the liturgy, we can begin the main portion of our investigation: the effects of liturgy on culture. First are those that I would call direct cultural outgrowths of the liturgy.[31] By "direct cultural outgrowths of the liturgy" I refer to those cultural elements and artefacts which have their roots in the liturgy itself. One category of such outgrowths would be festivals and holidays. The direct relation—that is, the necessarily liturgical relation—of many festivals and holidays is no longer retained in contemporary societies, in which case I would characterize them, as celebrated today, as indirect outgrowths: for instance, St. Patrick's Day in America is predominantly celebrated with Guinness, green

[28] See Second Vatican Council, *Gaudium et Spes* §62, in Flannery, 967, and Second Vatican Council, *Sacrosanctum Concilium* §§123-4, in Flannery, 35.
[29] CCC #1202; cf. #1204-1206.
[30] This can be connected with Wicker's view of the mediating nature of liturgy, discussed later in this paper.
[31] The direct and indirect cultural outgrowths of the liturgy derive primarily from the external, mostly changeable aspects of the liturgy; the internal aspects are the root of the spiritual effects of the liturgy discussed further on.

popcorn, and parades, not with any Mass in honor of St. Patrick, but the origin of the day is liturgical, as the feast day in honor of St. Patrick in the liturgical calendar is what designated March 17 as "St. Patrick's Day." Depending on the given culture, though, the direct relation is sometimes still obvious: among the Orthodox and Byzantine Catholics, Pascha (Easter) is a day of grand feasting with the parish community, complete with ham, yeasty bread, and red eggs, but it is always preceded by a long period of liturgical services (usually Matins followed by Divine Liturgy), and the festive character is heightened by the fact that most of the foods eaten that day were restricted throughout Lent due to the fasting rules tied to the liturgical season. (Such liturgically-based festivals are not solely Catholic or Orthodox: for instance, St. Martin was viewed as a "national saint" by the Reformed Dutch in the early 20th century, so his liturgical feast day was celebrated with a festival.[32]) Such festivals and holidays, originally liturgically-based, can inspire many other aspects of culture: for Christmas alone, one could think of the crèche instituted by St. Francis of Assisi or the Adventmarkt in German-speaking countries. Besides the wider festal traditions and seasons that can emanate from liturgical feasts, such feasts can also become holidays in the culture at large which can act as anchors of the concept of time; even just the weekly festival of Sunday—especially in countries such as Austria, where most businesses are closed—gives a profound shaping to a culture's view of time. A culture with a weekly holiday on Sunday, or a weekend on Saturday and Sunday, is a very different experience then a Communist culture with a seven-day workweek. Festivals are one of the key components in forming a culture's worldview, and if the festivals are solely or primarily liturgically-based, this can give a profoundly religious and liturgical direction to the entire cycle of time and life. Additionally, if one considers the so-called "life-cycle festivals," such as celebrations of births,

[32] See John Helsloot, "An Element of Christian Liturgy?: The Feast of St. Martin in the Netherlands in the 20th Century," in Post et al, *Christian Feast and Festival*, 493-518.

birthdays, weddings, etc., liturgical bases for these—such as Baptismal, First Communion, and Nuptial liturgies—can encompass the entirety of one's life in the liturgy, from infant Baptism to a funeral liturgy.[33]

While festivals and holidays provide key structure to a culture's world-view, a culture is also filled with artefacts; in particular, we might consider those artefacts commonly linked to "high culture," such as music, visual art, and literature. Many of these are created specifically for liturgical use; they could thus be termed sacred art. Such art helps mediate the culture of the Church to the extra-ecclesial culture, for we could probably say that *all* liturgical art becomes part of the culture to some extent; they are thus much more obviously "direct cultural outgrowths" than the festivals previously discussed. One way such outgrowths mediate the Church's culture is that sacred art—that is, art created specifically for liturgical purposes—must have an ecclesial aspect: it must be tied to the Church's tradition.[34] Of course, as we saw above, the liturgy itself is inculturated, so liturgical art will be formed both by the ecclesial tradition and the extra-ecclesial cultures. Thus Gregorian chant, Renaissance polyphony, and Greek chant are all connected to the Church's tradition, yet they are all distinct inculturations of liturgical music. Despite the influence of extra-ecclesial culture on such art, though, the ecclesial aspect is paramount, and so such arts can be strong channels to mediate the Church's culture and tradition to the wider culture. For instance, we can consider how liturgical art bleeds out into the wider culture. Gregorian chant has thus become a best-seller among classical music CDs; icons, which often cover every spare inch in an Orthodox or Byzantine Catholic church, also line the walls of

[33] See, for instance, Gerard Lukken, "Infant Baptism in The Netherlands and Flanders: A Christian Ritual in the Dynamic of the Anthropological/Theological and Cultural Context," in Post et al., *Christian Feast and Festival*, 551-580, and Paul Post and Louis van Tongeren, "The Celebration of the First Communion: Seeking the Identity of the Christian Ritual," in Post et al., *Christian Feast and Festival*, 581-598, for views of the cultural influence of infant Baptismal and First Communion liturgies in the Netherlands.

[34] See Aidan Nichols, *Redeeming Beauty: Soundings in Sacral Aesthetics* (Aldershot, Hants: Ashgate, 2007), 65, 68.

Eastern Christians' homes, or, it seems, appear someone on the wall in every business in Greece. The literary art of the liturgy—its prayers and its poetry—also have some bleed-through; one often hears "Remember man, thou art dust, and to dust thou shalt return" outside the Ash Wednesday liturgy alone. However, the literary arts play more into what I categorize as indirect outgrowths, as will be explained below. One of the largest effects of the liturgical arts, outside of the liturgy proper, is when it influences personal prayer. St. Josemaría Escrivá advised that all prayer should be liturgical, and many have taken that advice.[35] Besides the use of liturgical services at home, particularly the personal use of the Liturgy of the Hours, various aspects of the liturgy can also be incorporated into private devotions. We might think of Byzantine Rite "paraliturgical services" which are structured similar to liturgical services and borrow hymns from the liturgy but are often prayed at home. Even informal prayer may borrow from the liturgy: for instance, the common prayer for the dead, "May the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace," is derived from the funeral liturgy.[36] Another way liturgical art, and culture in general, can affect the extra-ecclesial culture is when mediated through the worshippers. When a congregation gathers for a liturgy—thus becoming what Brian Wicker calls a "liturgical assembly" as opposed to being the "community of faithful" when outside the liturgical service—all the congregants share the same liturgical culture, including its artwork; thus, members of all the different strata of the wider culture share a common culture in the liturgy.[37] The culture of the liturgy shapes the culture of the "community of the faithful" (that is, the same people while outside the liturgical service itself), and the "community of the

[35] See St. Josemaría Escrivá, *The Way* #86, in St. Josemaría Escrivá, *The Way, Furrow, the Forge* (New York: Scepter Publishers, Inc., 2001), 20.
[36] *The Order of Christian Funerals* §§81, 223, in Allan Bouley, ed., *Catholic Rites Today: Abridged Texts for Students* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 569, 589.
[37] See Brian Wicker, *Culture and Liturgy* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1963), 46-47. For Wicker's divisions of "liturgical assembly," "community of the faithful," and the remainder of society, see *Culture and Liturgy*, 45.

faithful" can then act as a leaven to transmit this culture to the greater society.[38] Christians who participate in the liturgy, then, help to mediate the liturgical culture to the wider, extra-ecclesial culture. As mentioned above, one of the key ways the liturgy can "translate vision into actuality" is through liturgical art.[39] We can thus see that, as direct outgrowths, the liturgy can affect the wider culture through festivals and holidays, music, visual art, and verbal art (that is, prayers and poetry).

However, the influence of the liturgy is not restricted to such direct borrowing: a vast number of cultural elements are indirectly outgrowths of the liturgy, and the liturgy can become so ingrained in a culture that it affects even minor elements of a cultural artefact. We already saw above how many festivals and holidays receive solely an impetus from the liturgy while then developing in such ways that the liturgical origins are barely noticeable. Thus, while the "Christmas season" in contemporary American culture still often reflects Christian or liturgical elements such as the crèche—despite the fact that, temporally, it more properly aligns with liturgical Advent than the liturgical Christmas season—Easter in this culture is primarily dominated by chocolate, bunnies, and pastel colors than the Resurrection of Christ. There can thus be a wide range of indirectness in these outgrowths. Besides the festivals and holidays, these liturgical effects are very easy to see in the artefacts of the so-called "high culture." Thus, while some musical settings of liturgical texts were meant for liturgical use, others were meant for performance, such as Verdi's *Requiem*. There are even works inspired by the idea, rather than the text, of the liturgical services, like the *Requiem* of Brahms. Another way the liturgy can affect music is when music used in the liturgy inspires music in the wider culture, such as the influence of Greek Orthodox chant and Gregorian chant on the composers John Tavener and

[38] See Wicker, *Culture and Liturgy*, 45-46, 182-183.
[39] Wicker, *Culture and Liturgy*, 181.

Arvo Pärt, respectively. In visual art, too, there is an overlap of liturgical art and non-liturgical art, besides the borrowing of techniques and motifs from liturgical art in non-liturgical art, even something as simple as a halo, deriving from icons. In literature and other verbal arts, we can see the influence of liturgy, for instance, when the characters of Dostoyevsky attend the Orthodox liturgy. Film incorporates liturgical references as well: we may think of the famous Baptism montage in *The Godfather*. Countless examples could be multiplied to represent these artistic indirect growths, but we might characterize them in this way: First, various stylistic elements originally developed in liturgical art may be incorporated into, or inspire further development in, art in the wider culture. Second, cultural artworks may reference the liturgy.

So far, what has been covered merely refers to the external aspects of liturgy, particularly the more artistic aspects, and these are influential; however, the liturgy is much more than mere art. We saw a bit more of the liturgy's power and influence when investigating festivals and holidays inspired by the liturgy and how these can ground the entire sense of time of a culture, as well as helping give shape to their festivity and their rest. It can show a great deal about a culture's world-view whether their festivals are inspired by religion (particularly the liturgy) or another source, such as politics (e.g. the May Day festivals in Communist countries as "celebrations of labor"). In some cultures—though this is rare today—the liturgy could provide a shape for all of the social structure or for the culture's economy. Ritual in non-Christian religions often had this effect, such as in Egypt, where foreign conquerors had to act in accord with the established religion and its rituals "in order that the machinery of Egyptian civilization should continue to function."[40] In many ancient cultures, the temple provided the basis for economics, the intellectual culture, and even the city itself.[41] Such was not often the case in

[40] Christopher Dawson, *Progress & Religion: An Historical Enquiry* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1931), 116.
[41] See Dawson, *The Age of the Gods*, 129-136, 111-117.

Christian societies, though, in Europe, the monastery sometimes acted similarly to the ancient temple, with a city forming around it; after all, the monastery was not only a liturgical center, but the scriptoriums were where intellectual culture was preserved, and monasteries often had fields and workshops in order to be self-sufficient.[42] In some cities, the cathedral also became the center of civic life in a way similar to the temples of ancient times.[43] Liturgically-based festivals could also sometimes have effects on economics and class; André Droogers analyzes a Lutheran parish anniversary feast in this regard.[44] However, in general, the Christian liturgy is not usually as impactful in economic and social spheres as many non-Christian religious rituals were, though churches could sometimes act as marketplaces, and ranks of the clergy are often key societal ranks. Thus, these aspects are another way liturgy can affect culture, although they are rare in having much effect today. We might say that the custom of tithing one's income during liturgical collections affects one's worldview, and the social rank of clergy is not altogether disappeared, though more influential within the "community of faithful," to resume Wicker's term, then in the culture at large.

Beyond even the cultural outgrowths of liturgy so far discussed, the liturgy also has cultural influence through its teaching and principles. We mentioned above how the "community of the faithful" can mediate between the culture of the liturgy and the extra-ecclesial culture; however , we can also say that the liturgy itself has a mediating role: the speculative thought of theologians helps forms the liturgy, which in turn forms the congregation, who in turn form the wider culture; Wicker thus states that the liturgy "stands midway between the speculative insights of the theologian and the purely practical problems facing the average man,"

[42] See Dawson, *Religion and the Rise of Western Culture*, 68-9.
[43] See Dawson, *Religion and the Rise of Western Culture*, 202. Dawson also describes the Carolingian city as a "temple city," in ibid., 195.
[44] Droogers, 79-83.

though he also states other aspects of culture, such as literature, can perform the same mediating function.[45] In its mediating power, the liturgy can convey Church teaching, such as economic and social messages; thus, drawing from liberation theology, one could speak of the "prophetic-subversive dimension of the liturgy."[46] Though the Scripture readings and the liturgical texts, but particularly through the homily, which is "an integral part of the liturgy," the Church's social doctrine is transmitted to the faithful and inculcated in them: "Through the celebration of the sacraments, especially Eucharist and Reconciliation, the priest helps the faithful to live their social commitment as a fruit of the mystery of salvation."[47] The liturgy is one of the key channels through which the Church's doctrine reaches the faithful, and it nourishes the faithful (as well as the clergy) in the Christian *Weltanschauung*. (Of course, such effects necessitate the willing, active receptivity of those participating in the liturgy to be effective.) Besides the direct teaching through the homily, even just hearing the Scripture readings of the liturgy, in order to "swim in the Lord's law," or hearing the Church-ordained prayers can affect the individual's worldview, and through the individual, the worldview of the culture.[48]

Besides merely being a channel of the Church's teaching, the liturgy can give shape to culture through various principles. Some of these border on spiritual effects, so there can be leeway regarding how they are viewed. For instance, the liturgy is meant to be "the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; it is also the fount from which all her power flows."[49] If this is lived out, a culture's entire being would be centered around the liturgy, and

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[45] Wicker, *Culture and Liturgy*, x.
[46] M. Puga, "Het collectief gedenken in de liturgie van de basisgemeenschappen in Latijns-Amerika," in *Concilium* 31:3 (1995): 78, qtd. in Wiel Logister, "A Small Theology of Feasting," in Post et al., *Christian Feast and Festival*, 155; see also Logister, 155-156, 159, 163-164.
[47] *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* §41, in Bouley, 204; Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* (Washington, D.C.: USCCB Publishing, 2007), §539.
[48] Seraphim of Sarov, *Spiritual Instructions* §23, in ed. and trans. Seraphim Rose, *Little Russian Philokalia: Vol. I: St. Seraphim of Sarov* (Platina, CA: Saint Herman Press, 2008), 41.
[49] Second Vatican Council, *Sacrosanctum Concilium* §10, in Flannery, 6.

the liturgy would be the guiding element of the culture's entire life, as in the ancient temple cities and older cultures centered around ritual mentioned above. Though this may rarely, if ever, be lived out completely, it may break through in some moments, particularly grand festivals, when the entire society ceases its normal activities and focuses all effort on the liturgy. Another principle is that, through the Liturgy of the Hours, all of time is to be sanctified; if this is lived out, then God's presence will fill every hour, and remembrance of this will put a peculiar spin on every man's actions.[50] This is one of those principles that borders on spiritual effects, for, regardless of whether most people keep it in mind, the recitation of the hours by clergy and monks, at the very least, does convey a sanctity onto time itself. We might also take the liturgy as a model for how the greater society should be structured.[51] Other possible principles are the predominance of the spiritual over the material and how the material can be used as an instrument for God's purpose, as in the Sacraments, as well as the importance of signs and symbols for human communication and understanding.[52] In many ways, the liturgy may just instantiate certain principles inherent in Christianity and the Church's teaching as such; however, we may use the words of Dom Virgil Michel and say, "The liturgy is the ordinary school of development of the true Christian, and the very qualities and outlook it develops in him are also those that make for the best realization of a genuine Christian culture," and so, by imitating in daily life the principles he learns in the liturgy, the Christian can form culture in a truly Christian way.[53]

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[50] See Second Vatican Council, *Sacrosanctum Concilium* §88 in Flannery, 25: "The purpose of the office is to sanctify the day." Cf. Second Vatican Council, *Sacrosanctum Concilium* §94 in Flannery, 26-27, and CCC #1174.
[51] See Wicker, 61, and Virgil Michel, "Christian Culture," *Orate Fratres* 13 (May 1939): 301.
[52] See Michel, 302, and CCC #1145-1152, especially #1146: "As a social being, man needs signs and symbols to communicate with others, through language, gestures, and actions. The same holds true for his relationship with God." Quentin Faulkner includes "symbolizing" as a key word in his definition of culture: see Faulkner, 406.
[53] Michel, 303; see also Michel, 304.

We have now seen some of the cultural outgrowths of the more external aspects of the liturgy; we have seen how the liturgy, through its teaching and through principles inherent in it, can affect worldviews. There remains one major area to investigate: the spiritual effects of the liturgy. What has been discussed so far may explain the liturgy's cultural effects if it is only "the whole body of ceremonies of the Church's public worship and the complexus of Church laws regulating that worship"; however, this is merely an "arbitrary limitation of the liturgical reality."[54] We cannot fully analyze the liturgy—we do not even analyze its primary element—without looking at the spiritual nature of the liturgy and its effects. Such spiritual effects can affect culture, for society is not solely material: instead, as Pope St. John XXIII taught, it is "primarily a spiritual reality."[55] To exhaustively describe all the spiritual effects of the liturgy would far exceed the scope of this paper, but we can highlight those which most effect culture. (In general, these spiritual effects influence culture through the "community of the faithful," in Wicker's term: the liturgy affects those present there, and, in living out the personal effects of the liturgy and the principles it teaches them, they affect the culture.) We might think of the presence of Christ: though "Christ is always present in his Church," He is present "especially in her liturgical celebrations," though recognizing His presence in the liturgy can be training for recognizing His presence in the world at large and acting accordingly.[56] The liturgy actualizes the events of salvation history in the past, making the worshippers spiritually present at those events; at the very least, this could foster a general connection to the past which would influence a person's actions.[57] The power of the liturgy binds the Church together; it is through the Holy Spirit's work at the liturgy, and the Eucharist in particular, that the Church becomes a

[54] Vagaggini, xx.
[55] Pope John XXIII, *Peace on Earth (Pacem in Terris)* (Washington, D.C.: USCCB Publishing, 2003), §36.
[56] Second Vatican Council*, Sacrosanctum Concilium* §7, in Flannery, 4.
[57] See CCC #1104.

"sacrament of unity" for the world.[58] The liturgy is directed toward the end times, when all will be gathered in the new heavens and the new earth; it provides a foretaste of the heavenly liturgy that will be celebrated then in its fullness, and it even joins the earthly liturgy to the Church in heaven.[59] This not only helps Christians see the world in light of the fullness of history and of the connection to those in heaven: it also "increases, rather than lessens, *our sense of responsibility for the world today*."[60] Of course, these are only a few, selected spiritual effects of the liturgy, but the power they have on worshippers is even greater than merely instilling principles of Christianity through the teaching of the liturgy, and thus they can have even greater effects on culture, even if this is hard to see for the outside observer. Though these effects have greater influence when worshippers are receptive to them, they still have objective effects which can be more powerful than the effects of simple principles that a worshipper learns through liturgy.

In conclusion, this paper has investigated many aspects of the bilateral relationship between liturgy and culture (itself a subset of the wider interaction between religion and culture), focusing in particular on the effects liturgy has on culture. After a definition and discussion of three important terms or groups of terms—culture, ritual and liturgy, feast and festivity—a few of the ways culture can affect liturgy were mentioned, particularly through the arts. The effects of liturgy on culture were separated into four rough categories: direct cultural outgrowths of liturgy, indirect cultural outgrowths of liturgy, cultural effects of principles taught or inculcated by liturgy, and the effects on culture of spiritual effects of liturgy. All of this, of course, is only a partial investigation, as even an investigation of a particular culture—for instance, the effect of the Roman Catholic liturgy on medieval Spanish culture—would far exceed the limits of this

[58] See John Paul II, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* §24; CCC #1097, 1108.
[59] See John Paul II, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* §§18-19; CCC #1090.
[60] John Paul II, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* §20.

paper. In general, it is obvious that liturgy can affect culture in a surprising number of ways: it can give anchor points for the concept of time via feasts; it can provide sacred art forms to be incorporated into the wider culture; it can spark the creation of new artistic works by the wider culture; it can mediate Church teaching and provide an ideal model for society; it can bind society members together through spiritual bonds. It might even be helpful to recall Josef Pieper's view mentioned above about how worship, as the greatest form of "assent to the world," helps found festival, leisure, and culture itself, all of which are "useless" in the sense of having no end outside themselves. Such are only a few of the many ways liturgy effects culture. It is thus completely untrue to claim that liturgy's effects stay circumscribed within the walls of a Church: they bleed out into the wider culture in an extraordinary number of ways. Though the effects on festival, art, and many of the artefacts of culture are great, it would be better to say that the effects of liturgy on culture are most important in their effect as mediated through the worshippers at liturgy, as it helps form in them a biblical-Catholic worldview, for, as Dom Virgil Michel writes,

> Where the liturgical spirit flourishes in the hearts of men, it will not be satisfied to remain hidden there, but will needs burst forth openly in the world into the most abundant fruits of human endeavor or into a true Christian culture for the glory of God and the greater sanctification of men.[61]

[61] Michel, 304. For an analysis of Virgil Michel's thought, particularly how it relates to liturgy's effect on culture, see Milliare, 130-144.

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