

The Debate Regarding the Moment of Change in the Holy Gifts in the Context of the Liturgical Theology in the Writings of Schmemmann and Meyendorff with Reference to Eastern and Western Rites¹

Introduction

There has been debate for centuries between West Roman (Latin) and East Roman (Greek) churchmen over the time of change, as well as the nature of change,² of the offered bread and wine³ into the Body and the Blood of Christ. The Latins have maintained that this change occurs when the priest says the words of institution over the bread and wine and their liturgical piety has formed around this idea.⁴ The Greeks have held that the moment of change happens immediately after the invocation of the Holy Spirit on the offered gifts and have also formed their liturgical piety around this theory. An important expounder of this theory was Nicholas Cabasilas of the fourteenth Century.⁵ Both opinions can be traced back to the Fourth Century.⁶ This difference of opinion has continued to this day with writers in the Orthodox Church, such as Augoustinos N. Kantiotes, saying that the moment of epiclesis is the most sacred moment of the Liturgy⁷ and Roman Catholic writers, such as Casimir Kucharek, maintaining that the words of institution effect the change.⁸

This essay will be an examination of this debate with the goal of determining a solution to the debate that is consistent with the liturgical theology of the Liturgy. The essay will come to the issue from the Orthodox perspective and will focus chiefly on the principle Orthodox (Eastern) rites of St

¹ In particular the rites of St John Chrysostom, St Basil the Great, St James, St Mark, St Ambrose of Milan, St Gregory the Theologian, St Clement, St Dionysius, the Roman rite (St Peter), Sarum rite, the Celtic (Stowe) rite, rites of Hippolytus and Serapion, Gallic and Mozarabic (St John) rites and fragments of rites found in the works of St Maximus the Confessor, St Cyril of Jerusalem and Pseudo-Dionysius.

² This relates to the Latin doctrine of transubstantiation, that is the change of the substance but not the accidents of the bread and wine, which Orthodox have been reluctant to accept preferring to speak of transformation without defining exactly how this occurs. See John Meyendorff, "The Eucharist: Symbols, Images, and Reality." in *Byzantine Theology: Historical Trends and Doctrinal Themes* (NY.: Fordham Univ Press, 1974).

³ The wine is always mixed with water for the oblation.

⁴ Casimir Kucharek, *The Byzantine-Slav Liturgy of St John Chrysostom: Its Origin and Evolution* (Allendale, N.J.: Alleluia Press, 1971), pp. 594-605.

⁵ Nicholas Cabasilas, (J. M. Hussey and P.A. McNulty trans.) *A Commentary on the Divine Liturgy*, (London: SPCK, 1960) pp. 69-71.

⁶ Kucharek, *The Byzantine-Slav Liturgy of St John Chrysostom*, p. 617 and St Cyril of Jerusalem, "Catechetical Lectures: Lecture 23" in Philip Schaff (ed.), *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers: St Cyril of Jerusalem* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994) Second Series: Volume 7, p. 154. (PG 33:1116).

⁷ Augoustinos N. Kantiotes, Bishop of Florina, (Asterios Gerostergios trans.) *On the Divine Liturgy: Orthodox Homilies* (Belmont, M.A.: Institute for Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies, 1986) Volume 2, pp. 204-207.

⁸ Kucharek, *The Byzantine-Slav Liturgy of St John Chrysostom*, pp. 613-623.

John Chrysostom and St Basil the Great. It will also take as a starting point for liturgical theology works of Alexander Schmemmann and John Meyendorff. Nevertheless, because the debate is between East and West, the Rites of the Western churches will also be examined considering the work of Dom Fernand Cabrol and considering Casimir Kucharek's interpretation of St John Chrysostom's rite, providing a Western understanding of Eastern Rites. Nicholas Cabasilas in turn provides an Eastern understanding of the Western Rites. John Zizioulas has developed the liturgical theology from Schmemmann and Meyendorff,⁹ especially in terms of ecclesiology. However, his work on liturgical theology will not be addressed directly because the principle elements, which are important for this essay, are adequately expressed in Schmemmann and Meyendorff, with whom Zizioulas remains consistent.¹⁰

This topic has already produced a wealth of literature and it is not the purpose here to retrace all the arguments presented. Rather, the intention is to re-examine the debate from the perspective of Orthodox liturgical theology and to offer an alternate solution to the classical positions in the debate. This essay is as much a critique of the Eastern opinion as of the Western opinion and it seeks to understand the moment of change in the Liturgy in its various rites, assuming that the rites reflect the same Tradition. If they do not reflect the same Tradition then the debate is meaningless, apart from critiques of internal logic, because there is no reason for there to be a shared understanding of the moment of change; the rites are only incidentally similar. It is hoped that it can be shown that rather than focusing on a certain prayer, or formula, that the change takes place in the context of the completed offering, with all its various parts, and with the final "Amen" of the people.

To begin the essay, some time will be spent to highlight the key features of the Liturgy in the various rites. The features to be examined are chiefly those found in the Anaphoras because this is of direct relevance to the offering but some examination of what happens immediately before and immediately after the Anaphora is important to the discussion. The purpose is to show the consistency of the rites considering each rite as a complete whole rather than trying to find some specific phrase(s) or specific order of phrase(s) in each rite. Liturgical theology will be discussed to set the framework from within which the Liturgy is to be understood. This is especially important to determine the purpose of the Liturgy and who are the principle actors. Once this is complete there

⁹ cf. John Zizioulas, *Being as Communion* (New York: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1985), p. 145, footnote 5.

¹⁰ Zizioulas could easily be substituted for either Schmemmann or Meyendorff to the extent of the theology considered in this essay. Another important liturgical scholar, Robert Taft, has, regrettably, not been examined for this essay, due to the constraints of the author, at the time of writing, while living on the Mt Athos with limited library access and finance to buy books. Hence, the scope of this essay has been narrowed to the liturgical theology of Schmemmann and Meyendorff, although it is believed that the position of the essay should stand well in the light of Taft's work also.

will be an analysis of the various positions presently held. Finally, there will be a proposed solution to the debate and how this may reflect on present liturgical piety in Orthodox rites.

Features of the Liturgy in the Anaphora

The anaphora in many ancient liturgies occurs after readings from Scripture and the dismissal of those who are not of the faithful, that is those that are not baptised or not accepted as being in communion with the Church, as recognised by that particular local church.¹¹ Then there are the preparatory prayers for the offering with the prayers of the faithful, or sometimes earlier in a separate rite of preparation or even in the Anaphora itself. The Anaphora is prefaced by asking the Lord, or the Trinity, to be with the people assembled, the lifting up of hearts, or minds, and the call to give thanks to the Lord; these elements are to be found in both Western and Eastern rites.¹² Then the anaphora includes thanksgiving, remembrance of Christ's dispensation, including the words of institution, the Sanctus (or Hymn of Victory), remembrance of saints, living, dead and the Bishop and all the Church, words of offering, and usually an explicit epiclesis. The whole offering ends with the "Amen" of the people.¹³ These parts are generally found in all rites examined¹⁴ but the order of the parts varies between these rites. This variation is important for the discussion of the moment of change as is also the absence of either an explicit epiclesis.¹⁵ After the offering is the preparation for communion, which generally includes the Our Father, a blessing of peace or mercies, the Fraction and a calling to communion, which is commonly phrased as "Τὰ ἅγια τοῖς ἁγίος (The holy to the holy)." No explicit call to communion is made in the Roman rite, nevertheless, the action of breaking the bread, or Fraction, is still present and this is the action that calls to communion as much as the words used.¹⁶ Again, there is a variety of order in these

¹¹ Examining liturgical texts as presented in F.E. Brightman and C.E. Hammond, (eds.) *Liturgies: Eastern and Western* (London: Oxford University Press, 1896) Volume 1: Eastern Liturgies and Dom Fernand Cabrol, *The Mass of the Western Rites* (St. Louis: B. Herder Book Co, 1934), p. 21. See note 1 for rites examined.

¹² Brightman, *Liturgies: Eastern and Western* and Dom Fernand Cabrol, *The Mass of the Western Rites*. The outline of the preface mentioned is found in all extant liturgical text of the rites in note 1.

¹³ See St Justin Martyr, "First Apology", in Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (eds), *Ante-Nicene Fathers: The Apostolic Fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenaeus* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994) Volume 1, Chapter 67, p. 186. [p. 343 Ages] (PG 6:429C).

¹⁴ Examining liturgical texts as presented in Brightman *Liturgies: Eastern and Western* and Cabrol, *The Mass of the Western Rites*. See note 1. The rite of St Hippolytus is the least developed and does not have the Sanctus nor the remembrances but it makes explicit mention of the "holy Church" and the purpose "to gather together in unity all thy Holy ones." (Text quoted from Kucharek, *The Byzantine-Slav Liturgy of St John Chrysostom*, p. 58.)

¹⁵ Such as in the Roman and Ambrosian Rites.

¹⁶ See Pseudo-Dionysius, "Ecclesiastical Hierarchy" in Colm Luibheid (trans.) *The Complete Works* (Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1987) Chapter 3, §13, p. 222, (PG 3:444C). where he does not mention a call to communion but merely the Fraction and communion. Also, Cabrol, *The Mass of the Western Rites*, p. 80.

elements, with the Roman Rite even having the kiss of peace here¹⁷ but the parts are present in all the rites examined.

The inclusion of these features within, or immediately before, in all these liturgical rites points to these features being part of the Tradition of the Church; that is necessary features for a liturgical rite. The variety of wording and order implies that the exact wording and order are not essential rather it is the inclusion of the feature that is important.¹⁸ This allowed a great deal of flexibility in the writing of early Anaphoras¹⁹ and, yet, they maintained a common unity among themselves to achieve the same mystery,²⁰ which is what will be discussed now.

Liturgical Theology

Before beginning with liturgical theology proper, it will be worthwhile to take a moment to consider how the liturgy fits into a broader picture of theology. This is because the Liturgy is not something of itself for itself but part of, if not central to, the divine economy.

The Incarnation and "recapitulation" of all things in Christ is the true "goal" and "aim" of creation according to Maximus the Confessor.²¹ Also, according to Maximus, Christ as man "accomplishes in all truth the true human destiny that He Himself has predetermined as God and from which man had turned: He unites man to God."²² Thus, the goal of life is the union of man to God, which is also known as theosis or deification.²³ This union is an important principle for understanding liturgical theology and this is the conclusion also of Alexander Schmemmann, for whom the purpose

¹⁷ Cabrol, *The Mass of the Western Rites*, p. 79-80. It is immediately before the Anaphora in the Eastern Rites.

¹⁸ Kucharek, *The Byzantine-Slav Liturgy of St John Chrysostom*, pp. 55-56.

¹⁹ Brightman and Hammond divide Eastern rites into four types and each type has a number of known Anaphoras, for example the Syrian rite has 65 known Anaphoras. F.E. Brightman and C.E. Hammond, (eds.) *Liturgies: Eastern and Western* (London: Oxford University Press, 1896) Volume 1: Eastern Liturgies, pp. xv and lvii. A similar situation can be seen with Western rites; see Cabrol, *The Mass of the Western Rites*.

²⁰ The ability for Eastern Bishops to concelebrate with Western Bishops in the Second Century is good evidence to support this because if there was not a significant commonality of rites then it would have been almost impossible to serve together. Kucharek, *The Byzantine-Slav Liturgy of St John Chrysostom*, p. 54.

²¹ Meyendorff, "Jesus Christ: Redemption and Deification" in *Byzantine Theology*.

²² Meyendorff, "Jesus Christ: Redemption and Deification".

²³ See Pseudo-Dionysius, "Ecclesiastical Hierarchy", Chapter 3, §13, pp. 222-3. (PG 3:444D). "and calling the human race, through this beneficent love of man, into participation with Himself and His own good things, provided we are united to His most Divine Life by our assimilation to it, as far as possible; and by this, in very truth, we shall have been perfected, as partakers of God and of Divine things." (translation of John Parker, *Dionysius the Areopagite*, Works (London: James Parker and Co, 1897).)

of worship is to “express the Church as the unity of that Body whose Head is Christ.”²⁴ Schmemmann also makes an important statement that “its purpose is that we should always ‘with one mouth and one heart’ serve God, since it is only such worship which God commanded the Church to offer.”²⁵ This statement will play an important part in the theme of this essay and in the goal of understanding the moment of change. Another statement of relevance from Schmemmann is that “[t]he Eucharist is *the* Sacrament of the Church; i.e. her eternal actualisation as the Body of Christ, united in Christ by the Holy Spirit.”²⁶ This stresses the Eucharist as the actualisation of the union. Meyendorff also makes a couple of valuable statements that will help build the framework of the argument of this essay:

The mystery of the Church, fully realized [sic] in the Eucharist, overcomes the dilemma of prayer and response, of nature and grace, of the divine as opposed to the human, because the Church, as the Body of Christ, is precisely a communion of God and man, not only where God is present and active, but where humanity becomes fully "acceptable to God," fully adequate to the original divine plan; prayer itself then becomes an act of communion, where there cannot be any question of its not being heard by God. The conflict, the "question," the separateness, and the sinfulness are still present in each individual member of the Church, but only inasmuch as he has not fully appropriated the divine presence and refuses to conform to it; the presence itself however is the "new testament in my Blood" (Lk 22:20), and God will not take it away. Thus, all Christians — including the bishop, or the priest — are individually nothing more than sinners, whose prayers are not necessarily heard, but when gathered together in the name of Christ, as the "Church of God," they are a part in the New Testament, to which God has eternally committed Himself through His Son and the Spirit.²⁷

As a manifestation of the Church’s unity and wholeness, the Eucharist served also as the ultimate theological norm for ecclesiastical structure: the local church where the Eucharist is celebrated was always considered to be...the whole Body of Christ manifested sacramentally and including the entire "communion of saints," living or departed.²⁸

We can see in Meyendorff that the Eucharist is the realisation of the Church as acceptable to God according to the divine plan. We can also see that that whole Church, “the ‘entire communion of Saints,’” is manifested in the Eucharist (or Liturgy). Finally of interest is that the prayers are heard

²⁴ Alexander Schmemmann, *Introduction to Liturgical Theology* (London: Faith Press Ltd, 1966), p. 20.

²⁵ Schmemmann, *Introduction to Liturgical Theology*, p. 20. Dumitru Staniloae, (Robert Barringer trans.) *Theology and the Church* (Crestwood, N.Y.: St Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1980), p. 53, also sees the Church as founded precisely through common understanding, i.e. the same or one mind, or in other words one mouth and one heart. This reflects the Trinitarian reality of one will, one mind and unity in all things.

²⁶ Schmemmann, *Introduction to Liturgical Theology*, p. 20.

²⁷ Meyendorff, “The Eucharist: Eucharist and the Church” in *Byzantine Theology*.

²⁸ Meyendorff, “The Eucharist: Eucharist and the Church”.

“when gathered together in the name of Christ, as the ‘Church of God.’” This indicates that the offering is accepted not because of some particular prayer or phrase said by a particular individual but the collective prayer of those assembled as the Church of God. This conforms with Schmemmann’s statement that God commands to offer with one mouth and one heart. Meyendorff also agrees with Schmemmann that the Church is actualised or realised in the Eucharist, i.e. in the Liturgy. Meyendorff also connects the Eucharist with the communion of God and man with the divine plan. This matches well with the union of God and man and the true human destiny in Christ that we see in Maximus.

To summarise, the place of liturgical theology for this essay is to understand the goal of Creation as the union of all things in Christ, that this is achieved through man’s union with God in Christ by the Holy Spirit and this union with God is the purpose and result of the worship of the Church, especially the Liturgy and the participation in the Eucharist. Communal prayer is the key to effecting this union when the faithful are gathered together as the Church of God²⁹ with the Bishop, around whom the Church gathers and is constituted,³⁰ and with the entire communion of the saints.³¹ Now to use this framework for helping us to determine the features of the Liturgy and especially that of the change of the Gifts.

Connecting Liturgical Theology to the Liturgical Texts

The liturgical theology just outlined should be reflected in the rites of the Church, if it is indeed the theology that underlies these texts. Here the texts of the rites of St John Chrysostom, St Basil, St Mark, the Roman Rite and the rite as found in the Apostolic Constitutions will be considered in the light of the outline of liturgical theology presented. The texts will not be quoted in full but only if a phrase or so is particularly relevant. The main purpose of this examination is to see the principle features and how they reflect the liturgical theology outlined above. The Roman Rite is included because if this liturgical theology is indeed consistent with Apostolic Tradition then it must also be reflected in a Western rite and not be something only found in Eastern Rites.

²⁹ See also Matthew 18:20, “For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in their midst.”

³⁰ St Ignatius of Antioch, “Epistle to the Ephesians”, in Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (eds), *Ante-Nicene Fathers: The Apostolic Fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenaeus* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994) Volume 1 Chapter 2-5, pp. 50-51 [pp. 99-101, Ages] (PG 5:646-649), and “Epistle to the Smyrnaeans”, Chapter 8, pp. 89-90 [p. 177, Ages] (PG 5:713).

³¹ cf. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 237.

The rites of St John Chrysostom and St Basil the Great are the same in structure with only the “secret” prayers differing,³² so they will be treated together, although the distinction will be kept because the wording of the secret prayers also helps to see the connection of these rites to the liturgical theology. The Anaphoras begin with a call to peace.³³ Peace is essential to unity and it is a constant theme of the petitions of the faithful; there can be no unity if people are at war with each other.³⁴ Thus, the Anaphora begins with the preparation for unity. Then the faithful are blessed in the name of the Trinity with grace, love and communion thus focusing the goal and source of our life being the Trinity. Then the faithful are to lift their hearts to the Lord. Thus, bringing the core of their being to the Lord, which is necessary for our union with Him. Then the faithful are asked to give thanks to the Lord, which, as they respond, is the proper attitude for all that God has done.³⁵ If we are not thankful then we would be indifferent to the Lord’s dispensation and not in the right frame of mind to receive the gift of union with God. It is of grace and not earned. This also helps us to have the humility needed to accept God as all in all and so unify Himself with us.³⁶ Then this thought is continued into remembering and praising God and Who he is, which enables us to imitate Him.³⁷ This praise is also shared with the angels and we also unite with them in singing this hymn.³⁸ Again, we see the idea of union in this feature of the liturgy. Next, there is a remembrance of Christ’s dispensation,³⁹ the words of institution, and His command, which is to “do this in

³² Also differing are the Words of Institution, as said aloud, and the Hymn to the Mother of God following the Epiclesis.

³³ The Kiss of Peace is another feature immediately before the Anaphora. It comes immediately after the blessing of the priest of “Peace to you” and it happens when the deacon calls, “May we love one another that with one mind we may confess.” The words exchanged in the kiss are “Christ in the midst of us.” “And He was and is and will be.” Here we can clearly see the connection between peace, unity, being of one mind, and the presence of Christ. “For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in their midst.” Matthew 18:20.

³⁴ Pseudo-Dionysius, “Ecclesiastical Hierarchy”, Chapter 3, §8, p. 218, (PG 3:437A): “For it is not possible to be collected to the One, and to partake of the peaceful union with the One, when people are divided amongst themselves. For if, being illuminated by the contemplation and knowledge of the One, we would be united to an uniform and Divine agreement, we must not permit ourselves to descend to divided lusts, from which are formed earthly enmities, envious and passionate, against that which is according to nature. This unified and undivided life is, in my opinion, established by the holy service of the ‘peace,’ which establishes like in like, and separates the Divine and unified visions from things divided.” (Parker translation.)

³⁵ Pseudo-Dionysius, “Ecclesiastical Hierarchy”, Chapter 3, §7, p. 218, (PG 3: 436D).

³⁶ This is evident in the text of the silent prayer in St Basil’s rite. “...σοὶ προσφέρειν ἐν... πνεύματι ταπεινώσεως (offer unto thee with...[a] spirit of humility).”

³⁷ Pseudo-Dionysius, “Ecclesiastical Hierarchy”, Chapter 3, §12, p. 221. (PG 3:441C).

³⁸ Maximus the Confessor, “The Church’s Mystagogy” in George C. Berthold (trans.) *Selected Writings* (Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1985), Chapter 24, p. 207, (PG 91:696).

³⁹ St John Chrysostom’s rite merely mentions “the dispensation” but St Basil gives a history from creation.

remembrance of me." Thus, connecting and uniting the liturgy with that supper instituted by Christ Himself.⁴⁰ The Gifts are then elevated and offered to Him in imitation (i.e. union) of Him. Immediately after the elevation there is an epiclesis prayer that the Spirit may come upon the gifts and all the faithful and make them into the Body and Blood of Christ, so that by partaking of them we may have the communion of the Holy Spirit. St Basil's rite also makes clear the union of all.⁴¹ This reflects perfectly the statement of Schmemmann that the Eucharist is the Church's "eternal actualization as the Body of Christ, united in Christ by the Holy Spirit." The offering continues, in St John Chrysostom's rite, for all the Saints, all the faithful in all circumstances of life.⁴² In St Basil's rite, the epiclesis prayer continues for us to find "grace with" (that is union with) all the Saints and all the faithful. The offering (or prayer) highlights the Mother of God as first among the Saints and then also the Bishop and finally finishes with the doxology:

And grant us with one mouth and one heart to glorify and praise Thine all-honourable and majestic name, of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages.

This doxology is given the peoples' "Amen." Here we can see both the phrase "with one mouth and one heart" of Schmemmann, as quoted above, and the "Amen" of St Justin. The offering is now finished with the consent of all the faithful present.⁴³ Thus, the closing phrase of the epiclesis and offering prayer confirm that the offering is made to unite the faithful with all the Saints,⁴⁴ with their Bishop and with all faithful Christians in all aspects of their lives. This matches perfectly with goal of Creation and the liturgical theology as discussed above. The gathering is truly that of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church⁴⁵ in the name of Christ and as such, according to Schmemmann, the offering is accepted regardless of the individual sins of each because it is confirmed as being the worship that God commands the Church to offer in "one mouth and one heart."⁴⁶ The following

⁴⁰ Pseudo-Dionysius, "Ecclesiastical Hierarchy", Chapter 3, §12, p. 221, (PG 3: 444A).

⁴¹ "Ἡμᾶς δὲ πάντας, . . . , ἐνώσας ἀλλήλοις εἰς ἑνὸς Πνεύματος Ἁγίου κοινωνίαν (...do thou unite all to one another unto communion of the one Holy Spirit,...)." See also rite of St Hippolytus.

⁴² This is indicated with the repeated phrases "And again [ἔτι may be better translated as 'still'] we offer unto thee..."

⁴³ Kucharek, *The Byzantine-Slav Liturgy of St John Chrysostom*, p. 643.

⁴⁴ See Pseudo-Dionysius, "Ecclesiastical Hierarchy", Chapter 3, §9, p. 219, (PG 3:437C): "that when the worshipful symbols have been placed on the Divine Altar, through which (symbols) the Christ is signified and partaken, there is inseparably present the reading of the register of the holy persons, signifying the indivisible conjunction of their supermundane and sacred union with Him." (Parker translation.)

⁴⁵ See St Hippolytus' rite while not mentioning the names of the Saints and the Bishop it does make it clear that it is an offering of the holy Church.

⁴⁶ See also Maximus the Confessor, "The Church's Mystagogy", Chapter 1, p. 187, (PG 91:659).

prayers confirm that the Gifts have changed because they refer to the offering being accepted and that the faithful will be worthy of partaking of the Body and Blood of Christ. It is in the completeness of these prayers that the gathering is manifested as the Church and so makes the offering acceptable, if indeed the gathering is that of the Catholic Church in Christ.⁴⁷ Could it not be so? There are reasons that it is not an acceptable offering. Here are a few cases in which the offering may not be acceptable: (1) If the gathering is not together with the Bishop because it is not a gathering of the Church according to St Ignatius of Antioch;⁴⁸ (2) If among the Saints those who are condemned as heretics by the Councils are mentioned then the gathering is not united with the communion of ‘true’ Saints, so it cannot be transformed into its true reality as the Holy Church;⁴⁹ (3) If the Bishop is not united with the other Orthodox Bishops then the offering is also not acceptable because each local church with its Bishop is the One, Catholic Church and so the same Church and each Bishop is the one Christ.⁵⁰ Each local church is in the other.⁵¹ Thus, the disunity of a Bishop, and with him the local church, with other Bishops implies a disunity of the One Church and One Lord⁵² in the local church and so the Church cannot be realised in that local church as united in Christ;⁵³ (4) If non-Orthodox are present at the offering then a question can be raised that the gathering for this Eucharist is not that of the Church because it is gathered with those not belonging to the Church; it is not one mind as the Church. Another reason for the great care in the early Church to exclude such persons from the assembly.⁵⁴

When the Church, which is the Body of Christ, is manifest and so becomes Christ then too the Gifts offered become the Body and Blood of Christ because it is He Who offers and is offered. At this stage the faithful are immediately called to communion to fulfil this manifestation.⁵⁵ The faithful

⁴⁷ cf. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 145.

⁴⁸ St Ignatius of Antioch, “Epistle to the Smyrnaeans”, Chapter 8, pp. 89-90. (PG 5:713).

⁴⁹ cf. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, pp. 116-117.

⁵⁰ cf. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, pp. 154-157.

⁵¹ This unity is reflected in Apostolic Canon 34 and in the organisation of Metropolises and Patriarchates to preserve and manifest unity.

⁵² Ephesians 4: 3-6.

⁵³ We can see here the importance of the diptychs in the early Church and the meaning of removing a Bishop’s name from these, which may have more that symbolic effect. See Cabrol, *The Mass of the Western Rites*, p. 129-30.

⁵⁴ Pseudo-Dionysius, “Ecclesiastical Hierarchy”, Chapter 3, §7, p. 217, (PG 3: 436B). “This utterly pure voice rejects everyone failing to be of one mind with those entitled to participate in the most divine things.” (Luibheid translation).

⁵⁵ Pseudo-Dionysius, “Ecclesiastical Hierarchy”, Chapter 3, §12, p. 222, (PG 3:444A).

now dare to say the prayer of the Church, Our Father, as adopted sons of God in Christ,⁵⁶ as a realisation of their manifestation as the Church.

What of the Roman Rite and that of St Mark? Do they also reflect this liturgical theology? Both these rites begin the offering prayers with the blessing “the Lord be with you” rather than the Trinitarian blessing in St John Chrysostom’s and St Basil’s rites. Does this matter? No, because it reflects a different aspect of the same liturgical theology and emphasises the presence of Christ with the faithful and that the offering is His. It looks rather to the means of offering rather than the goal of the offering. The next point of difference with the Eastern Rites is that the memory of the Saints, Bishop and faithful occur before the words of institution and in the case of St Mark’s rite before the angelic hymn. The memorials are of similar form and style as the Eastern rites but located earlier. Does this matter? Not in the context of seeing the offering prayer as completed and acceptable when it has addressed the necessary features. The order of these is less important, although not irrelevant, than the inclusion of the features within the offering prayers.⁵⁷ The position of the memory of the Saints and faithful here, though, is a problem for Nicholas Cabasilas’ commentary of the Liturgy because he says that these prayers are made because the gifts have been accepted.⁵⁸ He describes them as thanksgiving and supplications that are now sure to be heard because the acceptance of the gifts.⁵⁹ However, this is cannot be the case with the position of these prayers in the Roman and St Mark’s rites, so we cannot accept that they are included in the rite as prayers of thanksgiving and supplication once the gifts have been accepted. Rather the different position conforms with the position in this essay that the memorials are done as part of the process of manifesting the union of the Church. In the Roman Rite these prayers begin “we offer for thy holy catholic Church” then continues “And all here present” and then with “Communicating with...the memory of the ever glorious Virgin Mary” and lists other Saints. This matches with the form of these prayers in the rites of St John Chrysostom and St Basil. The text here points towards unity of offering rather than thanksgiving and supplication. The prayers for the different situations of our lives reflect that Christ unites with our whole life in all its various aspects and not just at a moment in Church. St Basil’s

⁵⁶ Cabasilas, *A Commentary on the Divine Liturgy*, p. 87.

⁵⁷ The Gallic, Celtic and Mozarabic rites have the diptychs just before the preface but after the gifts have been placed on the Altar and the Offertory prayers. This may not be within the standard Anaphora but the connection to the offering is sufficient to demonstrate the same theological idea. See Cabrol, *The Mass of the Western Rites*, pp. 129-30.

⁵⁸ Cabasilas, *A Commentary on the Divine Liturgy*, pp. 83-84. This parallels the understanding of St Cyril of Jerusalem in “Catechetical Lectures: Lecture 23”, who however may be interpreted in line with the thoughts of this essay, p. 154, [p. 357 Ages]. (PG 33:1116).

⁵⁹ Cabasilas, *A Commentary on the Divine Liturgy*, p. 83.

rite has the following phrase, “Be Thou Thyself all things to all men” within these prayers and this phrase confirms the understanding expressed here. The angelic hymn and the words of institution are similar to St John Chrysostom’s and St Basil’s rites then there is a prayer of offering. After this the Roman Rite does not pray for the descent of the Holy Spirit but rather asks for the Gifts to be acceptable and that the faithful as shall partake of the Body and Blood of Christ be filled with every heavenly grace and blessing. What is this heavenly grace and blessing other than the Holy Spirit? He is not mentioned by name but in effect.⁶⁰ Earlier in the offering there is a prayer for the gifts to be changed just before the words of institution with similar wording to St Basil’s epiclesis without explicitly mentioning the Holy Spirit. After this, there is another memorial for the living and the dead and for fellowship with the Saints. Finally there is a doxology that says that through Christ come all good things and glory and honour go to God through Him in the unity of the Holy Spirit. This doxology again matches perfectly with the liturgical theology presented above and the role of the Holy Spirit is also addressed, although the focus is on Christ. Here is a quote from Dom Cabrol based on the Roman rite but that expresses very well the liturgical theology of this essay:

As has been seen already in the texts of SS[sic]. Justin and Hippolytus, the Eucharistic prayer of the second and third centuries ended with a doxology to which the people responded "Amen." This was a solemn act of Faith in the whole Eucharistic Mystery just unfolded before their eyes. Therefore this doxology is clothed with importance and unaccustomed solemnity, as it should be. It is first an act of Adoration to the Trinity in Whom and by Whom the Mystery is accomplished. It is also a formula admirably summing up the whole of Christian worship: Glory and honour rendered to the Father, by the Son, in the Holy Ghost.⁶¹

This fits in very well with all that has been said earlier and unites the Roman rite with the Eastern Rites. The rite is accepted through prayer and this prayer covers all the features seen in the Eastern rites. The rite of St Mark ends the offering with an epiclesis similar to that is St Basil and St John Chrysostom’s rites. Both the rites of St Mark and Rome now proceed to the Our Father and communion, thus signifying the completion of the offering.

The Apostolic Constitutions provide us with another rite that is similar to those of St John Chrysostom and St Basil. The prayers are more detailed than these rites but otherwise the structure is the same with the hymn of angels, the words of institution, the offering, the epiclesis and the memorials being in the same order. What is interesting and different is that after the doxology and peace from the High Priest, the deacon continues petitions with the faithful with the first petition asking God to accept the offering. Thus it appears here that the offering has not yet been

⁶⁰ Cabasilas, *A Commentary on the Divine Liturgy*, p. 76.

⁶¹ Cabrol, *The Mass of the Western Rites*, p. 75.

accepted. The prayer continues to a second doxology and “Amen”. Then the rite moves to communion with the proclamation “the Holy for the Holy,” without the Our Father being said. Thus, the rite in the Apostolic Constitutions conforms to the liturgical theology outlined above and reinforces the completion of the prayer with the peoples “Amen.” If the offering was accepted before with the words of institution or the epiclesis then the petitions of the deacon would be wrong in asking for them to be accepted.

The Moment of Change

The moment of change has been regarded in the West to coincide with the words of institution and in the East with the epiclesis. Which is correct? Are both of them correct? Nicholas Cabasilas makes a good argument from the text of the Roman rite that the offerings could not be changed by the words of institution because then it would be unnecessary for the prayer “command these things to be carried by the hands of the holy Angel to thy alter on high,” which he argues strongly that can only mean to ask that the gifts be changed; no other meaning would make theological sense.⁶² Also, immediately before this prayer and after the Institution there is a plea that the Bread and Chalice be accepted, which would hardly be appropriate if the Bread and Chalice were already the Body and Blood of Christ. Casimir Kucharek in turn makes a strong argument that the epiclesis by itself cannot affect the change because liturgies without an epiclesis, such as most of the Western rites, would have no change of the elements and hence be invalid Eucharists, a conclusion that cannot be accepted because the Canons in these rites predate the Schism by hundreds of years.⁶³ However, Cabasilas addressed this issue with finding the epiclesis in another prayer of similar intention after the words of institution.⁶⁴ It can be better argued, though, that the form of epiclesis in the Roman Rite, which, while not making specific mention of the Holy Spirit, comes immediately before the words of institution.⁶⁵ The prayer to which Cabasilas refers can be said rather to be a completion of the epiclesis, or a conclusion to the whole offering.⁶⁶ Thus, according to those who argue for an epiclesis change, the change would happen in the Western rite before the words of institution, thus

⁶² Cabasilas, *A Commentary on the Divine Liturgy*, pp. 76-79.

⁶³ Kucharek, *The Byzantine-Slav Liturgy of St John Chrysostom*, p. 622.

⁶⁴ Cabasilas, *A Commentary on the Divine Liturgy*, pp. 76-79.

⁶⁵ John Wetherell, *Lex Ordani Lex Credendi* (Cambridge: St Joan Press, 2005), pp. 29-30. The prayer being: “Quam oblationem tu, Deus, in omnibus, quaesumus, benedictam, adscriptam, ratam, rationabilem, acceptabilemque facere digneris, ut nobis Corpus, et Sanguis fiat dilectissimi Filii tui Domini nostri Jesu Christi. (O God, deign to bless what we offer, and make it approved, effective, right, and wholly pleasing in every way, that it may become for our good, the Body and Blood of Your dearly beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.)

⁶⁶ Although, it would be better to say that the offering ends with the doxology as in the Eastern rites, as argued below.

maintaining the same problem regarding the latter prayers. The text of Western Rites therefore negate both the argument for change with the words of institution or with the epiclesis.

So, it seems that neither the words of institution themselves nor the epiclesis itself are sufficient for the change of the gifts.⁶⁷ Another solution must be found otherwise the argument will continue unsolved. The first question that needs to be addressed is whether an offering once accepted can still be offered? Why this question? Because both the Roman rite and the rite of St John Chrysostom⁶⁸ continue to make the offering after the various moments of alleged change. The change must mean that the offerings have been accepted and received because once changed into the Body and Blood of Christ they could not be rejected and the change means that they have been received on the heavenly Altar, which is Christ Himself, because this reception is the change into Himself.⁶⁹ Once something has been accepted and received then the act of offering is finished; the gift is now the possession of the receiver and no longer something that can be, nor needs to be, offered to him. So, it would seem that that in both rites the change cannot occur before the end of the offering. In both cases this only occurs with the doxology. So, it would seem that the time of change should be regarded as the end of the doxology and specifically the confirming “Amen” of the people.⁷⁰ Note: this would make the participation and place of people essential to the Liturgy because without their consent the offering would not be complete and accepted. This fits well with the liturgical theology of Schmemmann and Meyendorff, the structure of the texts, as outlined above, and also with the understanding of the community that can be seen in the work of Zizioulas.⁷¹ Meanwhile in St Basil’s rite, while the text doesn’t continue to say “we still offer to thee” as in St John Chrysostom’s rite, there is petition of the priest after the epiclesis that his sins do not cause the Spirit to be withheld from the Gifts, which would be quite out of place if they were already transformed. Cabasilas argues that this prayer refers to receiving the grace of the Spirit when communing. However, the text tends to indicate that the Grace is withheld from coming upon the Gifts rather withheld from coming from the Gifts. Also, the prayer is both out of place in his interpretation and worded in a manner unlike other prayers for worthy communion in the rite. Rather, the prayer is a

⁶⁷ See also Cabasilas, *A Commentary on the Divine Liturgy*, p. 72.

⁶⁸ In St John Chrysostom’s rite the phrase “Ἐτι προσφέρω σοι τὴν λογικὴν ταύτην λατρείαν” (We still offer to Thee this rational worship) appears twice after the invocation of the Holy Spirit and it parallels the wording before the invocation, which implies a continuance of that same offering of worship, including the gifts set forth, and not another offering nor type of offering.

⁶⁹ Cabasilas, *A Commentary on the Divine Liturgy*, pp. 77-79.

⁷⁰ cf. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 218.

⁷¹ See Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, p. 214-225, where Zizioulas considers the indispensability of the laity.

conformation that the fulfilment of the offering does not depend on the priest's moral state, which Cabasilas also makes clear,⁷² and it fits well in this place with liturgical theology outlined above.

What of the evidence regarding the need and effect of the words of institution and the epiclesis prayer? First it should be said that they are needed, the words of institution, which show the effective power of the Word⁷³ and the epiclesis at least in some form with the same meaning if not explicit wording, which shows that the Word is effected by the Spirit. So, this evidence could be read not as saying that the words or prayer isolated on their own or immediately at the time they are said cause the change but rather that these things do have the effect that is attributed to them when the entire offering with all its features is completed and confirmed by the people.⁷⁴ There are many things that need to be said in the offering prayer and because they cannot be said all at once it would make sense that they are said in turn and then fulfilled at the end. Also to reinforce the moment of change being at the doxology, the invocation of the Spirit in the rites of St John Chrysostom and St Basil the Great,⁷⁵ is a double invocation both upon the gifts and upon us. Firstly the offered bread and wine are specified upon which the Spirit is to descend and then the "us" upon whom the Spirit is to descend is specified and the prayer of this double invocation ends with the doxology.

The Liturgy of the Pre-Sanctified Gifts is also of interest because the gifts have already been sanctified and transformed into the Body and Blood of Christ. Here, after the entrance of the Holy Gifts has been completed the deacon begins the entreaties that we find immediately after the "Amen" of the doxology and the blessing in the rites of St John Chrysostom and St Basil the Great. This supports the understanding that entire offering prayers until the "Amen" are needed for the change of the anti-types. If the Gifts were changed at the epiclesis then it would have been appropriate to complete the Pre-Sanctified Liturgy from this point.

⁷² Cabasilas, *A Commentary on the Divine Liturgy*, pp. 102-105. St Cyril of Jerusalem, "Catechetical Lectures: Lecture 23", p. 153. [p. 355 Ages] (PG 33:1109), comments on the washing of hands that also symbolises the purity of sins, which confirms that even though it is known that the priest is a sinner and this does not affect the prayer yet there are symbolic actions and prayers to "confirm" this.

⁷³ St Ambrose of Milan, *De mysteriis*, ix, 51-54 (PL 16:407).

⁷⁴ This is also supported by a quote of St Athanasius the Great found in the writings of Patriarch Eutychius (552-65AD) quoted in Thomas F. Mathews, *The Early Churches of Constantinople: Architecture and Liturgy* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1971), p. 158: "... and as long as the invocations and the prayers are not said they remain merely the bread and the cup; but once the great and marvellous prayers have been finished, then the bread becomes the Body and the cup Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ."

⁷⁵ Also found in the rite of St Mark but the "us" are remembered before the invocation in this rite.

Thus, it would seem that the best time to consider as the moment of change is with the “Amen” of the people at the end of the offering. This understanding of the moment of change would mean that all the principle liturgical rites of the Church are sufficient and correct because as said above they all have the features required but in different orders or wording. The rites are not in question, only the later interpretations.

What does this mean for Church Practice?

It has little relevance to the correctness of the way the Liturgy is performed today because it is almost always completed, at least the offering, so the Gifts are changed and communed as the Body and Blood of Christ, all other matters being equal. However, the Greek custom of blessing the antidoron during the commemoration of saints, which is not the custom in the Slavic churches nor on Mt Athos, may need to be re-examined because if the blessing is intended to be over the consecrated gifts,⁷⁶ then this stage of the offering would not be appropriate. If, however, more in line with Slavic thinking, the blessing is to connect the antidoron to the offering then the custom can be appropriately maintained.

The main area that may need addressing is in convert parishes where there is the desire to have everything said out-loud and so the people are joining the deacon’s “Amens” as the “Amens” that confirm the offering by the people. This practice diminishes the importance of the “Amen” at the end of the doxology, which, as shown above, is properly the confirming “Amen” of the people. It also shows a misunderstanding of the structure of the offering prayers. The Apostolic Constitutions have no “Amens” in the epiclesis and the prayer continues grammatically through the epiclesis without space for “Amen” as also the case for the prayers in the rites of St John Chrysostom and St Basil. In St Mark’s liturgy there is an “Amen” of the people following the first part of the epiclesis but after the second part there is no “Amen” until that of the doxology. So, it appears that the deacon’s “Amens” are not formally part of the prayer nor fit its structure, which properly ends with the “Amen” of the doxology and, as such, it would further disrupt the structure of the prayer by having the people say them because this would tend to formalise the “Amens” into this part of the rite.⁷⁷ However, multiple “Amens” in themselves do not necessarily show the end of the prayer but

⁷⁶ Kucharek, *The Byzantine-Slav Liturgy of St John Chrysostom*, pp. 632-3.

⁷⁷ This process seems to have happened with the “Amens” at the words of institution where the deacon originally said them and later the people, see Kucharek, *The Byzantine-Slav Liturgy of St John Chrysostom*, p. 603.

can show a continuous consent throughout the prayer,⁷⁸ so they are not invalid but rather they are unnecessary and, for the reasons above, it is best that they are not formalised into the rites.

Another issue for Western converts is the use of the Roman and other Western Rites. These do not have an explicit epiclesis, as mentioned above, so those from the Eastern rites have thought it necessary to add an epiclesis to make the Western rites “correct”. Such additions, however, are unnecessary and somewhat blasphemous regarding the correctness of the rites because the Anaphoras in these rites have been largely unchanged from the time when the Western and Eastern churches were in full communion. As mentioned above, an epiclesis is redundant in these rites, which already have sufficient prayers to provide the same effect as an epiclesis. Nevertheless, including an epiclesis may not make the rite invalid, except for the reason just mentioned, but again it continues a poor understanding of the Liturgy and the rites. It would be best to use the rites without an epiclesis but also avoiding later Roman customs of piety focused on the change immediately on the words of institution.

The ancient practice of excluding non-communicants from the offering of the gifts should be reconsidered for reinstating in the churches today. There has grown as custom now of using the Liturgy as a time for evangelisation and deliberately bringing non-believers to see the offering in hope that they may be converted by this. However, this is quite contrary to early Church practice and seems more in common with Evangelical “seeker” services. The theology of the Liturgy would rather reinforce the ancient practice that the purpose of the liturgy is to manifest the Church through the union of all those present with the entire Church in Christ. This is only possible with those that are baptised and not excommunicated from the Church and, so, from Christ.⁷⁹ To permit members of schismatic churches and heretical churches to communion or to being present at the Eucharist would imply that they are members of the Church and hence united in one mind to Her, which would contradict them being called ‘schismatics’ or ‘heretics’. The problem here is not with an individual’s sins but with the ontological status of the gathering with which they belong. If this gathering is not properly able to realise itself as the Church because of the communal schism or heresy then neither can those associating themselves with this gathering be in the Church.

⁷⁸ The rites of St Mark, St James, St Gregory and St Dionysius that have such continuous “Amen” of the people.

⁷⁹ Nevertheless, there is an ancient practice of those faithful, who either for minor reasons should not communion or who have completed a sufficient proportion of a penance but not yet considered ready for communion, being permitted to gather with the rest of the faithful during the offering. These people are united with the Church through faith and a life of repentance and being willing to be united with Christ, even though for some temporary reason they should refrain from communion itself.

Finally, acts of piety, such as prostrations and bows, should be reserved, or continued, to the “Amen” of the doxology rather than only done during the prayer of offering with its section of epiclesis. Reverence should be maintained for the whole offering to the “Amen” moreover the blessing immediately after, which is a confirmation of the completion of the offering.

Conclusion

Having examined liturgical theology as has been presented by Schmemmann and Meyendorff, with reference to the Fathers, this essay has considered a number of rites in regard to this theology. It has been argued that the theology is consistent with the rites and that the purpose of the rites is to manifest the Church through union of the local community with Christ. Schmemmann and Meyendorff see this in the Eucharist and, specifically, in partaking of the Body and Blood Christ.⁸⁰ The Body and Blood must be present before one can partake of them. This presence is effected by the union of the gathering with Christ’s offering, which is manifested by the completion of all the features found in the prayers of the Anaphora by the priest, to show that its Christ’s offering, and with the consent of the people at the confirming “Amen,” to sanction the action as that of the whole gathering, hence manifesting and uniting all as the Church with Christ. Only thus is the context suitable for the bread and wine to become, and must become, the Body and Blood, so that the actualisation of the Church can be completed in the partaking of the Eucharist. This reflects the realisation of the Church in the Eucharist as Schmemmann and Meyendorff maintain in their liturgical theology. The bread and wine changing at some other point because of certain words, whether understood as having power in themselves said by a priest or prayed by a priest as isolated from the people, would not be consistent with the liturgical theology of Schmemmann, who understands that worship is “the public act which eternally actualises the nature of the Church as the Body of Christ.”⁸¹

This understanding of the Liturgy shows that the debate about the change is in many ways a false debate. Both sides are expressing moments that are not consistent with the liturgical rites nor with liturgical theology. The solution to the difficulties of both arguments moreover the strengths of both arguments is to see the fulfilment of the words of institution and epiclesis prayer at the end with the “Amen,” thus maintaining the effect of these features and removing the problems associated with the order and text of the various rites. The principle problem seems to have been the need to see the

⁸⁰ Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, pp. 143-150, develops the idea of being one by sharing one bread.

⁸¹ Schmemmann, *Introduction to Liturgical Theology*, p. 12.

change happening immediately the words or prayer were said rather than being fulfilled together at the end.

If Liturgical piety is to be shaped around the understanding of the moment of change as with the “Amen” of the people after the doxology of the Anaphora then the importance of the role of the laity would be greatly enhanced and each member of the congregation would have a definite sense of involvement with the offering in contributing his or her voice to the communal “Amen”. It would also help to provide a greater sense of bond between the priests and the laity because the priest must wait for the laity’s “Amen” before the mystery is complete; they are offering the sacrifice together and need each other. This does not diminish the role of the priest but rather unites it with the people and thus all are united as one in Christ.

Abbreviations

PG Patrologia Graeca

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