The Liturgical Movement as Decolonization: An Historical Perspective
Edward Foley, Capuchin

Introduction: Duck or Rabbit

In late 19th century Germany an unnamed illustrator created an intentionally ambiguous animal image published in a popular magazine of humor and satire out of Munich that subsequently became a famous touchpoint in philosophical discourse. The illustration, originally appearing with the caption “which animals are most like each other,” presents a figure that from one perspective appears to be a duck yet from another angle seems to be a rabbit. The image was made famous by the philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein (d. 1951) who employed it in his Philosopher Investigations to illustrate two different ways of seeing: distinguishing between “seeing that” and “seeing as.” Wittgenstein called this second kind of seeing “noticing an aspect.”

When we view this oft studied picture we might say, “It’s a duck.” But after closer scrutiny we might further say, “oh now I see the rabbit.” Such is appropriately understood as a change in our “aspect.” That is because nothing has changed in the illustration and nothing has changed in our physiology of seeing; what has changed is our perception. Wittgenstein paradoxically concludes, “The expression of a change of aspect is the expression of a new perception and at the same time of the perception’s being unchanged.” Significantly, this solving of the puzzle-picture not only relates to one specific “rabbit-duck” picture, but for Wittgenstein helps us to perceive a process for decoding — or what he considers recognizing a “rule” — that can be employed with different pictures and in differing situations requiring some deeper interpretation or decoding. Thus, when we see a string of numbers such as 2, then 4, then 6 then 8, we might suddenly grasp the “rule” — what we might call the “add 2 rule” — so that we can continue the series with 10, then 12, then 14 on our own.

While he did not employ the language of aspect perception or employ the work of Ludwig Wittgenstein in his analysis, Massimo Faggioli analogously helped many of us to look at the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy with a changed “aspect” through his incisive 2012 publication True Reform. Too many folks after the council — including myself — have approached this liturgical constitution with what could be considered a “seeing that” approach, which translates into focusing too much on the ritual outcomes of the reforms outlined in that document such as permission to use the vernacular or the call for liturgical inculturation. However, Prof. Faggioli cajoles us to move being seeing “that” Sacrosanctum Concilium is simply a liturgical constitution instructing the Church how to shape and celebrate reformed worship, and instead prods us into “seeing as,” that is, to view this primordial document of Vatican II as an ecclesiological document for envisioning how to shape and engage with a reformed church. In that spirit Faggioli contends that Sacrosanctum Concilium is an “intertextual document” that lies “at the crossroads of the whole corpus of Vatican II.” This seeing the Constitution “as” an ecclesiological mapping rather than simply about liturgical
reform is, as Wittgenstein would have it, “the expression of a new perception and at the same time of the perception’s being unchanged,” \(^8\) that is, as a document whose content does not change, but about which our perception and the ensuing consequences because of that perception do change.

Intrigued by the insights of Ludwig Wittgenstein, and inspired by the work of Prof. Faggioli, I was motivated when preparing this presentation to explore some fresh aspect, a new decoding frame, a maybe overlooked hermeneutic for revisiting the story of the modern liturgical movement in the West. Sometimes that story is told as a struggle between Roman Catholic conservatives and liberals, or Latinists and vernacularists, or the laity versus the hierarchy. While each of these approaches are useful and yield important insights, such are decided binary inquiries that tend to overlook essential ambiguities and nuances. They are also clearly intramural frameworks, viewing the Western liturgical movement from insider perspectives: even if those insiders have polar opposite beliefs.

In calling us to be missionary disciples, Pope Francis seems to be calling us from this more binary, myopic, insider, emic stance and, instead, to ponder the task of evangelization in view of the needs of the world. Thus, in *Evangelii Gaudium* there is more emphasis on “witness” than conversion [*EG*, no. 75], more concern for befriending than confronting [e.g., *EG*, no. 24], a path for reconciliation across historical divisions that does not erect hard boundaries [EG, no. 100], an ethical impetus for defending and protecting the vulnerable and not simply defending church teaching [*EG*, no. 212], an appeal for building just, responsive and inclusive society and not only strong communities of faith [*EG*, 239], and even the invitation to work with those who have no religious affiliation — not so that we can cajole them into an RCIA process — but to engage them as precious allies in the commitment to defend human dignity, build peaceful coexistence between peoples and protecting creation [e.g., *EG*, no. 257].

I am inspired by what I would characterize as Pope Francis’ *Gaudium et Spes* ecclesiology, that is, one that not only calls for engagement with the world but that characterizes the church’s involvement with the world as a form of dialogue or mutual exchange [*GS*, nos. 40 & 43]. This means that while the church can absolutely contribute to the well-being of the whole human family — and not just global Christianity — at the same time the Church is “abundantly and各种ly helped by the world” [*GS*, nos. 40, 44 and 45].

In that spirit, what happens when we ponder the unfolding of the 19th and 20th century Western liturgical movement not purely as an internal ecclesial affair but as symbolic of larger international movements and societal transformations. In particular, what insights arise if we contextualize this ecclesial revolution, under the guise of ritual change, as part of the larger flow of liberation movements that coursed across the globe so vividly during those centuries? My hope is that such might generate a fresh change of aspect, not simply seeing “that” a liturgical movement occurred within western Catholic-Christianity — a development, though monumental for us insiders, is largely ignored by secular historians — but considering the liturgical movement “as” linked to deeper social currents that might help us better understand where we have been, as well as how we have to act now and where we need to go in the future.

In that spirit, I wish to engage two powerful liberation flows that swept across the 19th and 20th centuries landscape: decolonization and decoloniality. I will suggest how they can be
considered appropriate and even enlightening tools for revisiting the Western liturgical movement.

One caveat as we begin: I am aware that the Western liturgical movement was fulminating long before the dawn of the 19th century. I similarly understand that decolonization and decoloniality were not only recent phenomena. However, recognizing that in the limited time frame for this presentation we cannot cover everything, I will largely focus on the liberation and liturgical movements in the previous two centuries as case studies to illustrate my central thesis that the liturgical movement in the West needs to be understood as part of a larger global agenda towards decolonization and decoloniality.

**Definitions**

Moments and movements are notoriously difficult to define. Decolonization like decoloniality could alternately be considered both moments and movements, and thus are no exception to this definitional difficulty. One useful step in defining these two concepts is by contrasting them with each other. Some distinguish between the two based on their intellectual genealogies. While a useful approach, such may be a little too oblique and time consuming for our purposes. A more accessible distinction between the two is provided by the Puerto Rican sociologist Ramón Grosfoguel — among others — who clarifies that we can distinguish between colonialism and coloniality through a quite accessible and tangible measure. Colonialism from Grosfoguel’s perspective refers to situations “enforced by the presence of a colonial administration.” It exists when some occupying country or power is controlling an extrinsic people or land and its resources. Coloniality, on the other hand, continues “in the present period in which colonial administrations have almost been eradicated from the capitalist world-system.” It is the residual colonialization that endures after national independence or the acquisition of political self-determination. Thus, said in a somewhat simplistic way, decolonization is about giving back the land and control over associated resources; decoloniality, on the other hand, is about decolonializing the mind, forms of knowledge, educational systems and even standards of excellence, health and beauty after the land has been returned.

By employing this admitted simple distinction between the geo-political aspect of control over country and resources, and the more epistemic aspect of how one values modes of thinking, values, and even aesthetic standards after the land has been returned, I hope to illustrate that the first stage of the modern western liturgical movement could be viewed as an exercise in “taking back the land,” that is, gaining more national or ethnic or cultural control over the tangible forms of the liturgy, the physical structures of ritual elements such as language and music and art. The second, much more unfinished part of this history of liturgical reform, however, is about confronting the “Romanized” and Eurocentric frameworks for thinking about the liturgy, its structures, aesthetics and theologies. This could be considered more broadly under the umbrella of radical inculturation.

In a preemptive summary, I think Roman Catholics around the globe have been more effective in decolonizing the liturgy than decolonializing the liturgy, that is, more effective in gaining some self-determination over the tangible forms of the liturgy than in establishing truly indigenous ways of praying and thinking and theologizing about worship...
The 19th & 20th Centuries as Centuries of Decolonization

The past two centuries can be appropriately characterized in many ways. There were life-altering revolutions in science, medicine, communications and transportation. It was also a period of social revolutions in terms of gender, ecology, education, health and economics. Unfortunately, the twentieth century also claims the title of the bloodiest century in human history, marked by world wars, terrorism, gulags and genocide. A conservative estimate is that well over 120 million global citizens died in armed conflicts during the last century, and that number skyrockets to almost 200 million when counting those who died because of war and oppression.\textsuperscript{13}

More to our concern, they were the most marked era of decolonization in human history. Spain lost virtually all of its vast colonial empire, established in the 16th century, during the 19th century. Most dramatic were the losses in New Spain. After the Spanish American War of 1898 Spain held no more colonies in the New World, and was even coerced into ceding Guam and the Philippine Islands to the United States. Spain’s loss of virtually its entire overseas empire has rendered it, according to one scholar, “the ultimate imperial demotee of the 19th century.”\textsuperscript{14}

Spain notwithstanding, a map of the world from the dawn of the 20th century is yet a map of vast colonial empires. The British Empire alone stretched across the globe, encompassing approximately 400 million people or a quarter of the earth’s inhabitants. By the end of the 20th century, however, all western empires had virtually disappeared. Maybe most dramatic was the rise of independent nations on the African continent. Before the outbreak of World War I there were only two independent countries on the continent: Ethiopia and Liberia. Today there are 54 with two other territories whose independence is disputed.

It is true that colonies still exist today, although international courtesy does not ordinarily allow such labeling of what the United Nations charter more politely classifies as “non-self-governing territories.”\textsuperscript{15} The United States alone has fourteen so called “territories” under its jurisdiction, from the relatively obscure Wake Island to Puerto Rico.\textsuperscript{16} It is also obvious that every self-governing country in the 21st century does not grant each and all of its inhabitants a free and equal existence: oppression abounds around the globe and in our own society. Nonetheless, the 19th and 20th centuries witnessed massive decolonization across the globe and the reacquisition of control over homelands by hundreds of millions of people. The assertion of self-determination over political institutions in the emergence of legions of new countries was unprecedented in global history.\textsuperscript{17}

Decolonial Goals and Values

What is more to the point of the decolonizing lens for reexamining the 19th and 20th century liturgical movement are some of the goals and values driving this decolonization. Acknowledging the greed, Machiavellianism of every stripe, revenge, and the outright xenophobia that were indisputable factors in this decolonizing turn, there were also positive and enduring human values central to this movement. Three interrelated values come to mind: agency, dignity, and identity.

In classical philosophy, agency is identified as the ability to act voluntarily and intentionally.\textsuperscript{18} Institutions, political and legal systems, educational and even religious
organizations can impede individual as well as social agency. The multiple struggles against colonization in the 19th and 20th century could be understood as affirmations of social agency, with indigenous peoples around the globe asserting their desire to act voluntarily and intentionally across the wide spectrum of local social and political institutions outside the confines of some foreign power. The drive to reacquire control over traditional lands and resources was not only for economic benefit — so that native peoples could share in the power and wealth derived from governing such resources — but also an assertion of the value and right to be free and to act with independence.

While the extent to which such individual and social agency has been achieved in the decolonization project is a hotly debated topic, the yearning for freedom and independence was a clear and constant flow throughout the decolonizing project. Such was acknowledged by the United Nations in their 1960 “Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples,” which in part recognizes “the passionate yearning for freedom in all dependent peoples and the decisive role of such peoples in the attainment of their independence.” Agency in service of individual and collective freedom was an undeniable value coursing through the decolonizing 20th century revolution.

Related to the deep-seated desire for individual and social agency in service of freedom was the struggle throughout the decolonizing enterprise for affirming and enhancing human dignity. While there are significantly different understandings of this concept across various disciplines — especially law, philosophy, anthropology, medicine and political science — the concept of human dignity fundamentally underscores the inherent value and importance of every human being who, simply because of their humanity, are worthy of respect. Judeo-Christian revelation asserts that the theological basis for this value is the Genesis teaching that every person is created in the image of God (Gen 1:26-27).

There were few voices that made this connection more clearly than the French West Indian psychiatrist, philosopher and revolutionary Frantz Fanon (d 1961). In his groundbreaking *The Wretched of the Earth* Fanon weds that central defining aspect of decolonization (reacquisition of land) with human dignity, noting: “For a colonized people the most essential value, because the most meaningful, is first and foremost the land: the land must provide bread and, naturally, dignity.” Early in its existence The United Nations understood that recognition of the “inherent dignity … of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world.”

A final positive value that moved the decolonization process forward was the struggle for self-identification. Over the past centuries, the concept of identity has changed radically. As Stuart Hall explains, an Enlightenment concept of identity presumed that a healthy individual had some essential inner core that emerges at birth and develops over time while remaining essentially the same. That essentialist concept of identity evolved to take into account the importance of our interactions with significant others as well as our contexts. Identity here is understood to be formed through the interaction between self and society. The problem with this view of identity, however, is that powerful external forces in society can, to an inordinate degree, define us individually and collectively. One of the colonizing strategies of the European powers of the 17th century was the creation of social identities based on physiognomic traits, reduced to a kind of human color-coding, resulting in categories of “whites,” “Indians,” “Negroes,” “yellows,” and “olives.” Thus the concept of race emerges — especially in the
colonizing efforts of the British Empire — and has become a basic criterial for classifying the world’s population.25

In what some might consider a post-modern move, the contemporary understanding of identity is something that is understood to be historically constructed and not biologically defined.26 One key decolonizing struggle, therefore, concerned people’s freedom to construct their own identities aligned with new historical and political realities.

For leading thinkers such as Frantz Fanon — whose father was a descendant of African slaves and indentured Indians, and whose mother was Afro-Martinician and of white Alsatian descent — this struggle for identity was personal. His *Black Skin, White Masks* tackles many of these questions, exposing the deep alienation that results from such racial categorizing and fundamentally disenfranchises every black person from their own subjectivity, instead sealing them inside a “crushing objecthood.”27 Asserting the right to self-identify, particular as a national culture, was a powerful symbolic struggle in the decolonizing process: no longer Southern Rhodesian but Zimbabwean; no longer inhabitants of the Gold Coast but Ghanaian; no longer West South African but Namibian.

While some consider a national identity as an “imagined community,” forged out of tribal or religious or regional affiliations,28 the importance of being identified with some larger body of folk or creating a “community identification”29 is of enduring significance. The ongoing debates within Native American communities concerning whether they are Sioux or Lakotan, Navajo or Dine, Chippewa or Ojibwe is one indigenous symbol of this in our own country.

**The Liturgical Movement: an overview**

Similar to the dynamics of global decolonization, the liturgical movement had set down deep roots and established important historical developments before the 19th century. In one sense, the Protestant Reformation of the 16th century could be understood as having a central liturgical trajectory in its many moves towards culturally attuned and vernacular worship, accessible preaching, and decolonized forms of vesture, architecture and music. Furthermore, even in the realm of counter-Reformation Roman Catholicism, there were structural and vernacular developments that heralded the broader movement centuries in advance. Throughout the 17th century, for example, vernacular privileges were granted to missionaries from China to Armenia.30 The Synod of Pistoia in 1786, while later condemned by Rome, called for the restoration of a vernacular liturgy where clergy and lay faithful sang the Mass parts together. In the newly independent United States, John Carroll (d. 1815) as the first bishop of Baltimore and the first bishop/archbishop in the U.S. argued for vernacular worship, suggesting that worship in Latin impeded the work of evangelization.31

The first phase of what is now considered the modern liturgical movement was largely a monastic development, first identified with the reestablished monastery of St. Peter at Solesmes in 1833 during the post-Napoleonic era. Dom Prosper Guéranger (d. 1875) led this effort, reacting to progressive Neo-Gallican forces that had introduced great variations in the liturgy across the many dioceses of France. In response, Guéranger embraced the Roman liturgy, placed the Eucharist at the center of monastic life, understood the liturgical year to establish the basic annual rhythm for the monks, and stressed the importance of “Gregorian” chant. Interestingly, “[w]hile Guéranger’s ideas are at the root of many elements in the liturgical movement, our present vantage point shows … that his positions were frequently
undocumented, highly conservative and often incorrect.”32 Later generations of reformers expended serious energy correcting his positions that held sway even a century later. Thus, some do not consider him so much the true founder of the modern liturgical movement as much as its “forerunner.”33

While considered the monastic progenitor of the 19th century liturgical movement, Solesmes was soon followed by many others.34 In Germany St. Martin Abbey in Beuron, founded by the brothers Maurus (d. 1890) and Placidus Wolter (d. 1908) in 1863, was strongly influenced by Solesmes. It became a center for the study of early Christian and Byzantine art, and its monk Anselm Schott (d. 1896) published the first German-Latin Missal for the laity (1884). Maria Laach in the Rhineland was taken over by the monks from Beuron in 1893. This was the home monastery of Odo Casel (d. 1948) and Kunibert Mohlberg (d. 1963), whose scholarship and writings were enormously influential in the movement during the early 20th century. The influential Jahrbuch für Liturgiewissenschaft was founded at Maria Laach in 1921.

Maredsous was another foundation (1872) by the monks from Beuron, but this time in Belgium. The rector of their abbey school, Gerard van Caloen (d. 1932), published the first French-Latin Missal for the laity (1882), and at a Eucharistic congress in 1883 suggested lay participation at Eucharist including the reception of communion during Mass: a radical idea that precipitated his removal as school rector. He also established an influential journal eventually known as Revue Bénédictine. Another important Belgian foundation was Mont César, founded by the monks of Maredsous, which was to produce leading figures in the liturgical movement such as Lambert Beauduin (d. 1960), Bernard Capelle (d. 1961) and Bernard Botte (d. 1980) and the scholarly journal Les questions liturgiques. In England, the Abbey of St. Michael in Farnborough produced the leading liturgical scholar in Fernand Cabrol (d. 1937). His monumental Dictionnaire d’archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie with collaborator Henri Leclercq (d. 1945) paved the way for many future historical liturgical studies. The monks from Beuron also refounded the medieval abbey of Seckau in Austria in 1883, continuing to plant the seeds of liturgical renewal on the continent.

These monastic centers not only sowed seeds of renewal in other monasteries, they also drew in a wide circle of collaborators. Some, like Beauduin, were diocesan clergy who joined the monastic communities. Others, like Romano Guardini (d. 1968), Franz Joseph Dölger (d. 1940), and Anton Baumstark (d. 1948) were academics who collaborated with monastic communities: for example, with the monks of Maria Laach in establishing important scholarly series such as Liturgiegeschichtliche Forschungen.35 There was also significant collaboration with women religious, such as the Benedictine sisters of Holy Cross Abbey at Herstelle, which Odo Casel has served as chaplain for twenty-six years. Outstanding was prolific author Aemiliana Lohr OSB (d. 1972) and her sister Agape Keisgen OSB (d. 1933), whom Katharine Harmon deems two of the “European mothers of the liturgical movement.”36

What is sometimes considered a second phase of the modern liturgical movement was a growing popular interest in its themes that expanded outside the monastic enclosure and beyond academic circles. The symbolic starting date for this phase was the 1909 presentation at the National Congress of Catholic Action in Malines, Belgium, by Lambert Beauduin, a monk from the abbey of Mont César. Entitled “The Full Prayer of the Church” (La Vraie Prière de l’Église),37 this address notably called for the active participation of the laity in the work of the church: not simply the work of the liturgy. The liturgy, in Beauduin’s view, was not some
enclosed arena for the engagement of the baptized, but the indispensable source of piety and spirituality for Christian living. This popularization of the movement was also a parochialization of the movement, for Beauduin believed that the parish was the center of ecclesial life for the baptized, and liturgy was the spiritual engine that sparked parochial living.

Notably, Lambert’s presentation did not occur at some liturgical gathering but rather at a National Congress concerned with “Catholic Action.” Since the majority of conference participants were deeply involved in social apostolates and labor movements, Beauduin can be understood to explore in this presentation what it might mean for the Belgian Church to rediscover authentic Catholic worship as the source of the church’s social mission. Thus, what some consider the “popularization” and “parochialization” of the liturgical movement placed it within a larger social movement addressing rising anti-clericalism, the secularization of society, and the rise of Marxism. Beauduin himself, as a diocesan priest, had served for over seven years as a member of Société des Aumôniers du Travail (Society of Labor Chaplains), which ministered to working class folk and advocated the improvement of social conditions for industrial workers. This ministerial concern for the underprivileged finds its liturgical resonance in Beauduin’s liturgical vision. Already as a novice, he reflected on his privilege as a Benedictine noting, “We are the aristocrats of the liturgy; everyone must be able to be nourished by the liturgy, even the simplest people; we must democratize the liturgy.”

Contextualizing Beauduin’s liturgical vision as part of a larger social vision is concretized by several writers who link his work with that of his Belgium contemporary Fr. Joseph Cardijn, who in 1919 founded a group eventually known around the world as Young Christian Workers. His well-known “see, judge, act” method presumes that before one “acts,” it is necessary to judge in light of church resources. One of those key resources for this judging, thanks to the increasingly popular liturgical movement, was the Church’s liturgy. Cardijn understood the close link between active participation in governing and active participation in the liturgy. His followers “developed retreat materials that used the sacraments to interrelate with its social goals of involving the working class in the liturgy, which was too often seen as a bourgeois activity.”

The modern liturgical movement, of course, was not confined to Europe. Central to this story in the U.S. is the Benedictine Virgil Michel (d. 1938). He was exposed to the liturgical revival when pursuing a Ph.D. in English at the Catholic University of America. There he was influenced by the forward thinking educator and liturgical pioneer Thomas Edward Shields (d. 1921) who considered the liturgy as the “organic teaching of the Church.” In 1924 Michel’s abbot sent him to Europe to study scholastic philosophy: while disillusioned with his philosophical studies he was fascinated by Europe and European monasticism. Already inspired by Guardini’s The Spirit of the Liturgy (Vom Geist der Liturgie, 1918), he visited innumerable monasteries, shipped liturgical books back to Collegeville, and was deeply influenced by Beauduin, then teaching liturgy at Sant’ Anselmo. He was also exposed to various teachings emerging from the ressourcement movement, particularly the Pauline understanding of the
church as the Mystical Body of Christ and the ancient link between liturgy and *diakonia*.\(^{43}\) As one biographer wrote, “He began to perceive that a properly worshipping people, realizing that oneness in The Mystical Christ and actively contacting the living realities of the liturgy, could in time transform a whole society.”\(^{44}\) He was further challenged about ideas concerning the importance of women as critical to an active laity, and the need for publishing, as he perceived that “the real task of a liturgical movement [was] an educational one.”\(^{45}\)

Upon his return to Collegeville, with the support of Abbot Alcuin Deutsch (d. 1951), he founded the publication *Orate Fratres* (today’s *Worship*),\(^ {46}\) and established the Liturgical Press. His ministry with Native Americans during a period of personal recuperation (1930-1933) and the devastating effects of the Great Depression (1929-1939) motivated him, in the last stages of his young life, to focus on the relationship between liturgy and social issues. Symbolic of this focus was the well documented connection between Michel, his Benedictine community and the Catholic Worker movement, including a personal relationship with Dorothy Day (d. 1980).\(^ {47}\)

While Michel was at the onset of the liturgical movement in the U.S., he was certainly not its sole advocate. For example, The Liturgical Arts Society was established in 1928 by architect Maurice Lavanoux (d. 1974) who gathered artists, architects and clergy to a series of meetings at the Benedictine priory in Newport RI. The organization launched *Liturgical Arts Quarterly* in 1932. Also important were multiple organizations not directly founded as liturgical think tanks, but whose work supported and nourished this movement, especially in its link with social justice issues. Numerous educational and Catholic Action groups fall under this category, many of which had sizeable contingents of women.\(^ {48}\)

As had already occurred in Europe, conferences, seminars, and study weeks began to proliferate around liturgical topics in the U.S. Mont César had already organized one in 1910. Most notable for the U.S. were the “Liturgical Weeks” that began in 1940, and flourished during the years of World War II with topics such as “Catholic Liturgy in Peace and Reconciliation,” that drew over 1300 people to New Orleans in 1943. The 1949 meeting in St. Louis drew almost 4400, while the 1965 week, held at three different sites (Baltimore, Portland and Chicago) drew over 11,000.\(^ {49}\) These study weeks were the progenitor of the Liturgical Conference: independently constituted in 1943 and still going strong. In Europe the First French National Liturgy Congress was held in 1945, the same year as Canada’s first maritime Liturgical Week. A Liturgical Congress in 1946 took place in Maastricht Holland, the First German National Liturgical Congress and one in Luxembourg occurred in 1950. The first Irish liturgical meeting was held at Glenstal abbey in 1953, and the Australians had a liturgical week in 1955.\(^ {50}\) The impact of such gatherings was not simply cumulative but sometimes more immediate. At the German Congress in 1950 Guardini gave a presentation on the Easter Vigil, which soon led to the Bishops of Germany, France and Austria formally petition to move Holy Saturday celebrations from morning to the evening, resulting in the 1951 restored Easter Vigil. The power of these study weeks triggered the Europeans to establish the First International Liturgical Study Week at Maria Laach in 1951.

Organizations promoting vernacular in the liturgy began to emerge, even during World War II, including the English Liturgy Society founded by Samuel Gosling in 1943. The St. Jerome Society (later Vernacular Society) was founded by H. A. Reinhold during the 1946 Liturgical Week in Denver. The enduring force behind this group, that at its peak had 10,000 members,\(^ {51}\) was Colonel John K. Ross-Duggan (d. 1967), sometimes dubbed “Mr. Vernacular.”
As in Europe, parishes became key places where the liturgical movement was engaged. One important pastoral experiment was the *Missa recitata* [Latin, "dialogue Mass"], which encouraged the people's participation in reciting the prayers of the Mass together, and in responding to the priest. Requiring the permission of the local bishop, over twenty-five percent of the Roman Catholic parishes in Chicago had introduced the *Missa recitata* by 1939, and while not as popular as in Germany (where by the middle of the century it had become normative in as many as seventy-five percent of the parishes), its popularity spread. One vibrant parish that modeled this norm was Holy Cross Church in St. Louis, pastored by the legendary Msgr. Martin Hellriegel (d. 1981).

The World War II era also witnessed the development of several important liturgical centers and academic programs. Anticipating all of these was the Pius X School of Liturgical Music which Justine Ward (d. 1975) and Georgia Stevens (d. 1946) founded in 1916. This institution “was a leading force both in the restoration of chant and in liturgical renewal ... until it closed in 1969.” Other centers included *Centre de Pastorale liturgique* in Paris (1943), The *Liturgisches Institut* of Trier (1947), and the *Abt-Herwegen-Instituts* at Maria Laach (1948).

In the Summer of 1947 Michael Matthis began “The Liturgy Program” for undergraduates at Notre Dame, that expanded into a graduate program there in 1965. In 1947 a chair in liturgy was established at the University of Trier, held for decades by Balthasar Fischer (d. 1980). The first doctorate in “liturgy” seems to have been awarded from this faculty to John H. Miller C.S.C. in 1955 under Fischer’s direction. Other graduate programs developed at Institut Catholique (1956), Sant’ Anselmo (1961) and Catholic University of America (1970). The faculties that populated these programs were a veritable who’s who of 20th century liturgical scholarship.

As you may have noticed, I have not spent much time dwelling on official documents or liturgical rites, largely because they did not trigger this movement as much as they were a result of it. The one exception was Pius X’s (d. 1914) *Tra le Sollicitudini* (1903), whose call for the “active participation [of the faithful] in the sacred mysteries and the public and solemn prayer of the Church” was central to Beauduin’s “liturgical manifesto” of 1909: a theme repeated in Pius XI’s (d. 1939) *Divini cultus* (1928). *Mystici Corporis* (1943) of Pius XII (d. 1958) confirmed the *ressourcement* recovered understanding of the church as a mystical body, so important to the vision of Virgil Michel. *Mediator Dei* (1947) from the same pope quickly assumed centrality as the so called *magna carta* of the liturgical reform, providing new legitimacy to the movement. One notable pushback from the Vatican on the eve of Vatican II was John XXIII’s (d. 1963) *Veterum Sapientia* that not only championed Latin as the universal language of the Church in communications and worship, but also warned bishops against those who might write “against the use of Latin in the teaching of higher sacred studies or in the [celebration of] the liturgy.” Ironically, less than 2 years later *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (1963) will erase this teaching.

**The Liturgical Movement as Decolonization**

This admittedly brisk romp through some of the highlights of the modern liturgy movement nonetheless provides sufficient frames for pondering this largely “in-house” development through the broader lens of decolonization. As previously noted, colonialism can be identified through the presence of a colonial administration, and the process of
decolonization is the process of returning control over the land and associated resources to the original inhabitants and their heirs. I further suggested that three values broadly driving the decolonizing revolution were agency, dignity, and identity. Let’s consider those in terms of the goals of the liturgical movement.

It was Lambert Beauduin who seized upon Pius X’s call for the active participation of the laity in the Church’s liturgy as a central theme in the liturgical renewal: this could be considered a heralding of the reacquisition of the laity’s agency in the central prayer of the church. While for centuries the baptized well exercised their agency in private and popular devotions, Lambert’s stress on active participation challenged the existing perception of the baptized as pious observers of clerically enacted ceremonies, and newly defined them as essential collaborators in this worship. The multiple experiments in what he considered the “democratization” of worship — with bi-lingual missals in Latin and German or Latin and French, the development of the dialogue Mass, the vernacular singing of hymns during worship such as the German Hochamt or High Mass — all of these are markers of the baptized assuming agency in the church’s official worship. This development achieves full official recognition in Pius XII’s Mediator Dei, which unequivocally teaches that the baptized with Christ are subjects (not objects) of worship: a teaching enshrined in Sacrosanctum Concilium symbolized by the “we” language in today’s liturgical texts, rather than the clerical “I,” formerly so dominant.

Another notable shift in agency over the decades has been relocating key decision making authority about the liturgy away from Rome and back to local church’s and national conferences of bishops. By addressing the issue of episcopal collegiality – a topic never tackled by the first Vatican Council (1869-1870) – Vatican II (1962-1965) affirmed the local bishop as chief liturgist of the local church and the cathedral and parishes as privileged representing the visible church in the world (SC nos. 41 & 42). Vatican II also gives bishops’ conferences new authority for regulating worship within its territories. While that authority has eroded over the past three decades, Pope Francis (b. 1936) recently reaffirmed the agency of national conferences of bishops regarding the approval of vernacular texts in his Magnum Principium (2017), which now imbeds in canon law the authority of conferences of bishops to prepare liturgical books in the vernacular, suitably accommodated to the region, and to approve their publication after being confirmed by the Holy See.60

The second frame about “identity” seems more complex. One could argue, for example, that Guéranger, in strictly realigning the prayer at Solesmes with the liturgy of Rome, was searching for a more universal identity, distinctive from the many local identities communicated in the Neo-Gallican forms of worship that proliferated through France in his age. Similarly, one could consider the subsequent monastic phase of the liturgical reform as both a search for and a reaffirmation of monastic identity. For example, realigning Benedictine life, around the Eucharist and Liturgy of the Hours instead of the many accretions that had accumulated in the daily round of prayer, could be considered a way of expressing and creating a more authentic Benedictine identity.

Finally, the popularization phase of the liturgical movement and its stress on the agency of the laity could be understood as a reassertion of the distinctive and even foundational vocation and role of every baptized in the church and in the world. Previous to this, liturgy was “too often seen as a bourgeois activity, with its pomp, courtly dress, and ceremony.”61 Liturgy, like access to the scriptures and even holiness, were only for the special few. Opening the
liturgy to ordinarily folk — especially workers, women and the young — was an invitation to construct a personal and collective identity through public worship. The engagement with a liturgical spirituality invites individuals and communities not only to be more active in ritual events, but to begin to perceive the liturgy of their own living, the liturgy of the world in which they live and work, and embrace what Vatican II affirmed as their own call to holiness. The vernacularization and parochialization of the liturgical movement allowed this self-identification to take place more clearly in a particular cultural-context: not as some homogenized identity, but one specific to language, context, place and parish. Finally, the intertwining of liturgical and social concerns also spurred their identity of the baptized as agents of change in the world: what Pope Francis in another era calls “missionary disciples.”

Related to the promotion of liturgical agency and identity — especially for the baptized — is, of course, worship’s capacity to both rehearse and enhance the very dignity of all the baptized. Their dignity is not bestowed upon them by the clergy, not derived through some other ecclesial or secular deputation, but comes from being created in the image of God, and incorporated into Christ’s own mystical body. In the pre-Vatican baptismal rite, each child was anointed “with the oil that sanctifies in Christ”; today that rite honors each child by chrismating them priest, prophet and king.

By engaging the faithful at the heart of the church’s most solemn worship, it unequivocally announces their baptismal dignity and esteems their presence and participation as a unique expression of the very presence of Christ. The liturgical movement understood that that presence and participation of the baptized was not rubrical icing on the cake but at the ecclesial heart of the matter: a longitudinal movement to invite the faithful from the ceremonial periphery to the Eucharistic center.

One example of this concerned communion. In 1910 Pius X lowered the age for children to receive communion. The movement’s concern not only to move communion of all the faithful, including these newly admitted children, back into the celebration of the eucharist, but also make the people’s communion an integral part of the rite could be understood as another telling way the church expressed esteem for all the baptized by acknowledging another ancient teaching that reemerged during the ressourcement movement: that the people not only received the body of Christ, but were verily affirmed as the body of Christ.

From Decolonization to Decolonialization of worship
This brief analysis suggests definite parallels between the process of decolonization across global societies in the past two centuries and the liturgical movement, which was its own form of decolonization. Instead of giving back the land or complete control over various constructed and natural resources, the liturgical movement was about gaining control over language, shared participation, dialogic forms of ritual, and indigenous forms of music and art and architecture as well as some limited episcopal control over the administration of the liturgical terrain in a given diocese or country. Thus, using the non-parochial lens of decolonizing for considering a decidedly in-house Catholic-Christian development such as the liturgical movement can allow us aptly to consider that development as a form of decolonization. This centuries long process certainly enhanced the agency, identity and dignity of Catholic Christians, especially the baptized. That is a legacy to be lauded.
While this analysis might provide some satisfaction, even delight about the gains of this rather remarkable movement, a turn from the decolonizing lens to that of decoloniality is more sobering. As previously noted, decoloniality is concerned with those often hidden forms of knowledge, educational systems and even standards of excellence, health and beauty that persist long after the land has been returned. In liturgical terms this means the Romanized forms of theology, a Romanitas spirituality, and standards for language, music and architecture that not only persist but dominate contemporary forms of official Roman Catholic worship.

To be frank, given that the Roman Catholic Church is not a democracy, given the fundamental principle that the liturgy is our first theology, and given the ongoing debates about the so called “substantial unity of the Roman Rite,” I do not believe that a decolonialized Roman Catholic liturgy in the Latin Rite will ever be fully achieved.

That is not the end of the conversation, however. In my view, the always unfinished work of authentic inculturation beckons us to push the boundaries of authentic liturgy in the Roman Rite toward increasingly decolonialized worship in a spirit of eschatological hope. Strides can be made because they have been made. In these closing moments I offer brief glimpses of two striking examples that have emerged since Vatican II at the heart of Eucharistic worship.

The first concerns the Misa ng Bayang Pilipino, composed in 1975 under the leadership of Filipino scholar an friend Anscar Chupungco (d. 2013). While approved by the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of the Philippines in 1976 and publicly celebrated by members of the Filipino hierarchy—including the current Archbishop of Manila—MBP was never officially approved by the Vatican.

While the adaptation largely follows the structure of the Roman Rite with a few notable exceptions, e.g., moving the sign of peace up before the opening collect, it is the text of the Eucharistic Prayer that displays an authentic attempt to craft the prayer in indigenous thought patterns, attentive to Filipino social and cultural patterns.

The Pagbubunyi (“Exaltation”), for example, is a reimagined preface according to a Filipino traditional act of homage. This solemn speech exalts the achievements of the person being honored. The people applaud or shout Mabuhay (“Long Live”) to affirm the praise articulated by the leader.69 MBP’s adaption of this form employs a typical Filipino social pattern expressing modesty before a higher ranking person.70

My former student, Jess Malit, draws our attention to the use of the idiomatic expression kapos ang dila, literally “the tongue is too short,” symbolizing Filipino modesty and

Ama namin
ikaw ang tanging kapuri-puri
at siyang dapat pasalamatan.
Kapos ang aming dilang magpahayag
ng iyong kapangyarihan
at walang hanggang awa.
Kaya nga ikaw na lumikha sa tnan
Ay amin ngayong ipinagbubunyi

Our Father
you are the only one who is praiseworthy
And is to be thanked.
Our tongues fail us when we speak
of your power
And everlasting mercy.
That is why we exalt you
because you have created everything.
deference. Next Malit contrasts this “exaltation” with other creation centered prefaces, commenting:

True to the Filipino social pattern, the text does not stress the importance of created things themselves, but the personal relationship between the Creator and the creature. Thus, the prayer does not dwell on the sun, the moon and the stars, nor on rivers, mountains and flowers in the fields, but on humanity’s attitude towards God.72

A second example, closer to home, comes from the pen of mentor and friend Nathan Mitchell. Mitchell was one of a handful of people commissioned by the International Commission of English in the Liturgy to create an original Eucharistic prayer in contemporary English. While eventually rejected, Mitchell crafted a text less grounded in Roman rhetoric and Latinized concepts, and more in lyrical and richly metaphorical language. I quote here his preface, post-Sanctus and consecratory epiclesis:

Blessed are you strong and faithful God, all your works, the height and depth echo the silent music of your praise. In the beginning your Word summoned light, night withdrew and creation dawned.

As ages passed unseen water gathered on the face of the earth and life appeared.

When the time at last had ripened, and the earth grown full in abundance, You created in your image woman and man the crown of all creation. You gave us breath and speech that all creation might find a voice to sing your praise, so now with all the powers in heaven and earth we chant the ageless hymn of your glory …

All Holy God how wonderful the works of your hands. You restored the beauty of your image when sin had scarred the world.

As a mother tenderly gathers her children You embraced a people as your own and filled them with a longing for a peace that would last and a justice that would never fail.

Through countless generations Your people hungered for the bread of freedom, from them you raised up Jesus the living bread in whom ancient hungers were satisfied.

He healed the sick though he himself would suffer. He offered his life for sinners though death would hunt him down, but with a love stronger than death he opened wide his arms and surrendered his spirit.

Father, let your Holy Spirit move in power over us and over our earthly gifts of bread and wine That they may become the body and blood of Jesus Christ Our Lord.
We could spend a few hours on these short paragraphs, highlighting various decolonializing elements. Let me briefly underscore just three:

First, there is the not so subtle disruption of patriarchal order in the preface, by mentioning women before men in this reimagined creation narrative. That disruption is continued when the Holy One is imaged not as a God of Hosts but as a mother tenderly gathering her children. Second, there is a striking personification of the theologically potent ideas of sin and death; critics were especially unhappy with death’s agency to “hunt” Jesus down. Finally, and most subversive, the prayer for the Spirit over the gifts and over the people are joined in a single epiclesis underscoring the hoped for transubstantiating event in both: bread changed so that people, in turn, can be changed into the very Body of Christ.

Notice that these decolonializing elements, like those in MBP, were achieved especially and essentially through the crafting of original texts. ICEL once had a standing committee for the composition of original texts, a committee that was dismantled after Liturgiam Authenticam (2001) instructed that “the work of translation is not so much a work of creative innovation as it is of rendering the original texts faithfully and accurately into the vernacular language. While it is permissible to arrange the wording, the syntax and the style in such a way as to prepare a flowing vernacular text suitable to the rhythm of popular prayer, the original text, insofar as possible, must be translated integrally and in the most exact manner, without omissions or additions in terms of their content, and without paraphrases or glosses.”

Subsequent to that document, ICEL was handed new statutes by the Vatican in 2003 according to which there is only one standing editorial committee and a serious of unofficial subcommittees ... none of which are authorized to even consider original texts.

If decolonializing efforts for authentic inculturation are to continue, the authority again to compose original texts according to national rhetorics and cultural social patterns needs to be restored and encouraged.

Conclusion

The history of the liturgical movement is not a closed book. We have experienced a forerunner stage in the work of Guéranger, we remember the monastic initiatives and then Beauduin’s popularizing-democratizing-parochializing impetus that led to a period of what could be consider the decolonization of the Roman Liturgy.

So metaphorically we have our land back: our vernacular, contextually attuned musics and vesture architecture and ritual actions. Yet, the Roman Rite we celebrate across the dioceses of the Church in the U.S. maintains a colonialized mind, a colonialized spirituality, a colonialized theology. The hard work of the decolonialization of the Roman Rite is the next great phase of the liturgical movement that lies before it.

With hope and humility, dignity and determination, agency and grace we move forward. Through Christ our Lord.
“Welche Thiere gleichen einander am meisten,” in Fliegende Blätter (23 October 1892).

Although it was previously used by the psychologist Joseph Jastrow in Fact and Fable in Psychology (Boston & New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1900), fig. 19.


This illustration is from Stephen Law, “Do you see a duck or a rabbit: just what is aspect perception?” Aeon Newsletter (31 July 2018) online at https://aeon.co/ideas/do-you-see-a-duck-or-a-rabbit-just-what-is-aspect-perception.


Ibid., pp. 149 & 153.

Wittgenstein, xl = p. 196.

Still enlightening in this regard is Thomas O’Meara’s “The Origins of the Liturgical Movement and German Romanticism, Worship 59 (1986) 326-53.

Walter Mignolo, for example, places the origin of decoloniality at the very dawn of modernity and coloniality. See his “Epistemic Disobedience and the Decolonial Option,” Transmodernity (2011) 44-65, here 46.

Britta Saal elucidates: “While postcolonial critique undertakes an extension of Foucault, Gramsci, Derrida, and Lacan, while it realizes the problem of Orientalism (Said) and finally departs in its reflections from the postcolonial situation in India, decolonial critique has its roots in Latin America. It is based on approaches by critics of Eurocentrism like Jose Carlos Manategui, on dependency theory and on liberation philosophy.” Britta Saal, “How to Leave Modernity Behind: The Relationship Between Colonialism and Enlightenment, and the Possibility of Altermodern Decoloniality,” Budhi: A Journal of Ideas and Culture 17:1 (2013), 49-80, here 60.


Ibid.


Ibid.


Hall, p. 598.


Hall, p. 612.


What follows draws heavily about the Funk article cited above.


The address was developed and published in his 1914 work *La Piété de L’Église: Principes et faits* (Louvain: Maredsous, 1914), later translated by Virgil Michel as *Liturgy: The Life of the Church*, 3rd ed. (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2002 [1929]).


40 First made explicit in Cardijn’s his 1930 pamphlet *La JOC et la détresse intellectuelle et morale de jeunes travailleurs*.

41 Funk, pp. 700-701.


43 Pecklers, “Ressourcement,” p. 322.

44 Marx, p. 36.

45 Marx, p. 219.


48 Many of these are documented in Harmon’s splendid *There were also many Women there*, cited above.

49 Funk, p. 705.


52 Ibid., p. 55.

53 Ibid.

54 Ibid., pp. 58-59.


56 Other first such degrees included the first doctorate in liturgy from the Institut Catholique in Paris in 1964 to Robert Ledogar; the first doctorate in Sacred Liturgy (SLD) conferred by the Pontifical Liturgical Institute (San Anselmo) in Rome in 1962 to Adaikalam Lourdes under the direction of Cipriano Vagaggini on “Pastoral and Liturgical Enrichment of the Tamil Marriage Ritual”; and the first Ph.D. in theology with a concentration in liturgy in the US was awarded to my teacher Ralph Keifer from the University of Notre Dame in 1972. His dissertation, directed by Aiden Kavanagh OSB, was entitled “Oblation in the First Part of the Roman Canon: An Examination of a Primitive Eucharistic Structure and Theology in Early Italian and Egyptian Sources.”

58 Online at http://w2.vatican.va/content/pius-x/it/motu_proprio/documents/hf_p-x_motu_proprio_19031122_sollecitudini.html
59 Online at https://www.papalencyclicals.net/john23/j23veterum.htm
61 Funk, p. 701.
63 Cf. Lumen Gentium, chapter V.
66 Cf. Sacrosanctum Concilium, no. 7.
70 Ibid., 105.
71 Ibid., 105 modified.
72 Ibid.
73 Liturgiam Authenticam, no. 20, online at http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccdds/documents/rc_con_ccdds_doc_20010507_liturgiam-authenticam_en.html