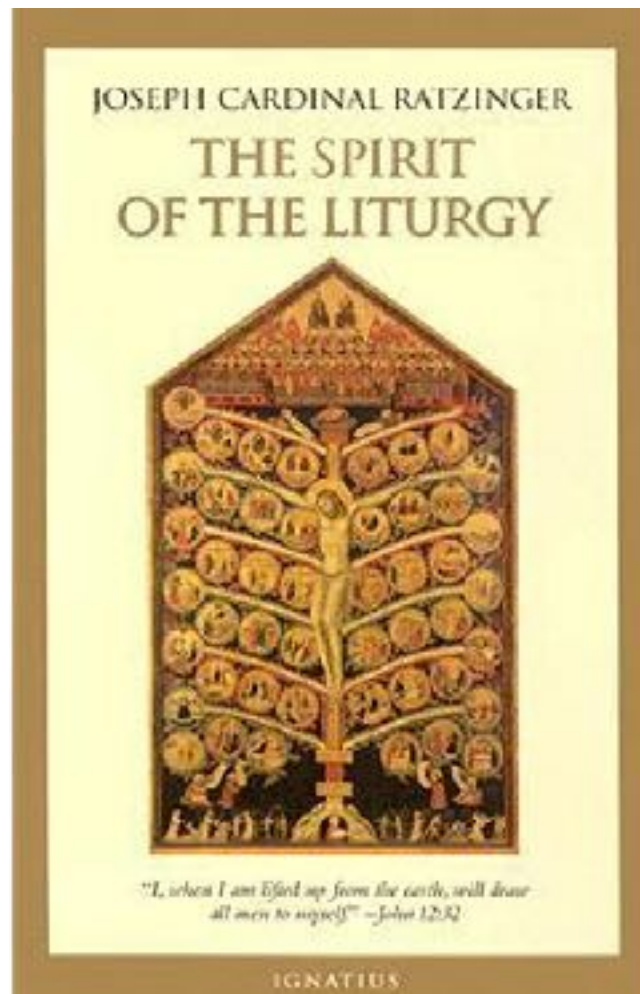


# Study Guide



By:  
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## **Preface**

Ratzinger states that the intention of this book is “to encourage in a new way, something like a “liturgical movement”, a movement toward the liturgy and toward the right way of celebrating the liturgy, inwardly and outwardly” (8).

## Questions

1. What are your expectations for this book?
2. Do you have any questions that you hope Cardinal Ratzinger will answer in this text?
3. In what ways have you seen a “liturgical movement” during your lifetime?

## **Part One: The Essence of the Liturgy**

### **Chapter 1: Liturgy and Life: The Place of the Liturgy in Reality**

Cardinal Ratzinger uses two approaches to introduce the topic of the liturgy in life: *play* and the Exodus event. *Play* for Ratzinger is “a kind of other world, an oasis of freedom, where for a moment we can let life flow freely” (13). The Exodus event for Ratzinger highlights that liturgy — or proper cult — is entirely dependent upon God’s revelation (see Ex 10:26).

Ratzinger then expounds on 3 important aspects of the nature of religion, showing that God’s revelation in establishing a rule for worship, law, and ethics is essential for man’s flourishing in life.

#### Quotes

*"The “service of God”, the freedom to give right worship to God, appears, in the encounter with Pharaoh, to be the sole purpose of the Exodus, indeed, its very essence" (20).*

*"The narrative of the golden calf is a warning about any kind of self-initiated and self-seeking worship" (23).*

#### Questions

1. What does the term *play* signify in its relation to the liturgy?
2. How does the Exodus event describe the essential nature of the liturgy? Has your view on this central event of the Old Testament changed in any way?
3. What is the relationship between liturgy and life? How has the liturgy shaped your own life?

## Chapter 2: Liturgy – Cosmos – History

Liturgy has its place both in the cosmos and in history. In the creation account, the Sabbath is revealed as the pinnacle of God's creation and a sign of the covenant between man and God. The Sabbath reveals how true worship of God — as the soul of the covenant — “not only saves mankind but is also meant to draw the whole of reality into communion with God” (27).

Next, Ratzinger uses the common religious theme of *sacrifice* to explain true worship. The purpose of sacrifice is to surrender oneself to God in order that one may find oneself through a dedication to God. The historical event of Christ's incarnation provided the manner in which the entire cosmos could participate in this perfect dedication back to God. Thus, Ratzinger presents worship as an *exitus* and *reditus* to God.

### Quotes

*"Creation looks toward the covenant, but the covenant completes creation and does not simply exist along with it. Now if worship, rightly understood, is the soul of the covenant, then it not only saves mankind but is also meant to draw the whole of reality into communion with God" (27).*

*"The historical liturgy of Christendom is and always will be cosmic, without separation and without confusion, and only as such does it stand erect in its full grandeur" (34).*

### Questions

1. What is liturgy's place in the cosmos and in history?
2. How does the Sabbath highlight the primacy of the liturgy? What impact would this have on Sunday worship?
3. What is *sacrifice* from Ratzinger's perspective? How does it relate to liturgy?

### **Chapter 3: From Old Testament to New: The Fundamental Form of the Christian Liturgy—Its Determination by Biblical Faith**

In the third chapter, Ratzinger explains how the liturgy takes place in the context of both the struggles of man and society to find atonement, forgiveness, and reconciliation. This is made easier when man comes to find that the only real gift he should give to God is himself.

In the Old Testament, Israel's liturgy was special primarily due to the one to whom it was directed. The Christian liturgy definitively fulfills Israel's liturgy through Jesus' Passion and Resurrection. Real worship has begun.

Ratzinger then continues to discuss the significance of the Greek term "logos." Logos is the word of prayer for man, the dialogue between God and man.

#### Quotes

*"To celebrate the Eucharist means to enter into the openness of a glorification of God that embraces both heaven and earth, an openness effected by the Cross and Resurrection... Everything, then, comes together: the horizontal and the vertical, the uniqueness of God and the unity of mankind, the communion of all who worship in spirit and in truth" (49).*

*Christian liturgy is liturgy on the way, a liturgy of pilgrimage toward the transfiguration of the world, which will only take place when God is "all in all" (50).*

#### Questions

1. What are the unique and important elements of Israel's liturgy?
2. How does the Christian liturgy have an Old Testament foundation? What are the two ways in which Christian worship fulfills Israel's worship?
3. What is the significance of the Greek term "logos" in relation to Christian liturgy?

## **Part Two: Time and Space in the Liturgy**

### **Chapter 1: The Relationship of the Liturgy to Time and Space: Some Preliminary Questions**

The liturgy as present in man's life partakes of time and space. The foundation of the liturgy is in the historical event of Christ's death and resurrection on the Cross. Although this event now transcends time, it is re-presented time and time again in the sacrifice of the Mass for the benefit of man. Quoting St. Bernard of Clairvaux, Ratzinger explains how Christ's sacrifice contains the *semel* (once) in its *semper* (always). In addition, the *semel*, Christ's historic sacrifice, seeks to obtain its *semper*, a world transformed by Christ's love. The liturgy gives expression to the historical situation that it recreates.

#### Quotes

*"Christian worship is surely a cosmic liturgy, which embraces both heaven and earth" (53).*

*"Without the Cross and Resurrection, Christian worship is null and void, and a theology of liturgy that omitted any reference to them would really just be talking about an empty game" (55).*

#### Questions

1. What is the role of time and space in the context of the liturgy?
2. How did Christ's Paschal Mystery change the dynamics of time and space?
3. Explain how Christian worship operates on 3 levels: past, present, and future.

## **Chapter 2: Sacred Places—The Significance of the Church Building**

A part of the space in the liturgy is the Church building — the space in which the sacred liturgy is to be held. In the Old Testament, the synagogue was very ornate to honour the “real presence” of God in the form of the Ark of the Covenant. The synagogue finds its fulfillment in the Christian house of God that contains the “Real Presence” in the Blessed Sacrament.

### Quotes

### Questions

1. Have you ever been to or seen a synagogue? What parallels can you draw from that with today’s Church buildings?
2. What are the three innovations Ratzinger speaks of when explaining how the synagogue is fulfilled in the Christian house of God?

### **Chapter 3: The Altar and the Direction of Liturgical Prayer**

The priest facing east during the Eucharistic Prayer is essential for celebration of the liturgy. Whereas facing the people — *versus populum* — is meant to emphasize the communal meal aspect of the liturgy, Ratzinger says that "the turning of the priest toward the people has turned the community into a self-enclosed circle" (80). In contrast to this, Ratzinger emphasizes the fundamental importance of facing east as a pilgrim people processing toward the Lord who is to come again. When this is not possible, the cross can serve as an interior "east" of faith because ultimately, the Lord is the point of reference.

#### Quotes

"The turning of the priest toward the people has turned the community into a self-enclosed circle" (80).

"Looking at the priest has no importance. What matters is looking together at the Lord" (81).

#### Questions

1. Why is facing east essential in the Christian liturgy?
2. What are some practical ways that we can begin to rediscover this ancient practice of facing east?



## Chapter 4: The Reservation of the Blessed Sacrament

The reservation of the Blessed Sacrament emerged in the second millennium as a result of a significant development in Eucharistic theology. As the fulfillment of the Ark of the Covenant, the tabernacle became the true holy of holies that housed the Real Presence of God. Eucharistic Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament finds mutual support with Eucharistic Communion.

### Quotes

"This deepened awareness of faith is impelled by the knowledge that in the consecrated species *he* is there and remains there. When a man experiences this with every fibre of his heart and mind and senses, the consequence is inescapable: "We must make a proper place for this Presence" (89).

"Communion only reaches its true depths when it is supported and surrounded by adoration. The Eucharistic Presence in the tabernacle does not set another view of the Eucharist alongside or against the Eucharistic celebration, but simply signifies its complete fulfillment" (90).

"A church without the Eucharistic Presence is somehow dead" (90).

### Questions

1. Why is the reservation of the Blessed Sacrament essential for true liturgical worship?
2. What has been the value of Eucharistic Adoration in your own journey of faith?

## **Chapter 5: Sacred Time**

The liturgy is related to time. By His incarnation, Christ drew time into the sphere of eternity and filled time with His powerful presence. In the liturgy, we live in a “between” time, through signs between shadow and reality. Sunday, the Day of the Resurrection, fulfills the Sabbath in bringing God’s covenant into time. Easter and Christmas are two important times in the liturgical calendar that highlight how Christ is the bridge between time and eternity.

### Quotes

"All time is God’s time” (92).

“Sunday is thus, for the Christian, time’s proper measure, the temporal measure of his life” (97).

### Questions

1. What is time? And why does it seem so elusive in our daily lives?
2. How has time influenced your life as a Christian? Sunday Mass, Easter, Christmas, the whole liturgical calendar, etc?

## **Part Three: Art and Liturgy**

### **Chapter 1: The Question of Images**

Christian images are intended to be sacramental (make historical events present), eschatological (hope for world to come), sacred (come from prayer and lead to prayer), liturgical (draw us eastward to Christ), incarnational (God became flesh so material can now depict God), christological (all leads to Paschal Mystery), trinitarian (Holy Spirit gives us the gift to see Christ in and through the icon who leads us to the Father).

Today there is a crisis in art. Man is no longer elevated to the sublime resulting in a blindness of the spirit of man. Art is a gift. It is not something which is capable of being mass produced. There is a present need for art to lead man to prayer.

#### Quotes

“Art is always characterized by the unity of creation, Christology, and eschatology” (125).

“Today we are experiencing, not just a crisis of sacred art, but a crisis of art in general of unprecedented proportions due to a blindness of spirit that makes sacred art impossible” (130).

#### Questions

1. What is the proper relationship between art and liturgy?
2. How can we help fix the crisis in sacred art?
3. What are your favourite images of sacred art? How do they lead you to God?

## Chapter 2: Music and Liturgy

Another form of art employed in the liturgy is music. When man comes into contact with God, mere speech is not enough. The verb “to sing” highlights this fact, since it is one of the most commonly used words in the Bible (309 times in O.T., 36 times in N.T.). The Church, keeping the Psalms as the model for liturgical prayer, sings Her prayers with Christ out of love.

Next, Ratzinger looks at the topic of enculturation with liturgical music. “Artistic freedom” has broken loose into sacred music as it no longer develops from prayer. Since liturgical music should be at the service of the Word (so said the Council of Trent), the only music that has a place in Christian worship should be music that integrates man by drawing him to what is above.

### Quotes

“*Cantare amantis est*”, says St. Augustine, singing is a lover’s thing (142).

Does it integrate man by drawing him to what is above, or does it cause his disintegration into formless intoxication or mere sensuality? That is the criterion for a music in harmony with *logos*, a form of that *logikē latreia* (reason-able, *logos*-worthy worship) of which we spoke in the first part of this book (151).

### Questions

1. What is the value of music in a liturgical context?
2. How would you describe the current state of liturgical music today? What direction are we headed?

## **Part Four: Liturgical Form**

### **Chapter 1: Rite**

Man is always seeking the correct manner of worshipping God. Rite, classically defined as “an approved practice in the administration of sacrifice,” outlines a particular way in which proper worship has formed amongst a specific group (Roman, Maronite, Chaldean, etc). Although rites can embrace cultural traditions, they are not the products of enculturation. Rather, rites are “forms of the apostolic Tradition and of its unfolding in the great places of the Tradition” (164).

#### Quotes

"We know how we should truly glorify God—by praying and living in communion with the Paschal journey of Jesus Christ, by accomplishing with him his *Eucharistia*, in which Incarnation leads to Resurrection—along the way of the Cross" (160).

For Christians, then, “rite” means the practical arrangements made by the community, in time and space, for the basic type of worship received from God in faith (160).

“The greatness of the liturgy depends—we shall have to repeat this frequently—on its unspontaneity (*Unbeliebigkeit*)” (166).

“Yes, the liturgy becomes personal, true, and new, not through tomfoolery and banal experiments with the words, but through a courageous entry into the great reality that through the rite is always ahead of us and can never quite be overtaken” (169).

#### Questions

1. How would you explain the emergence and validity of various rites in the Catholic Church to someone who is new to the idea?
2. Why are rites not just products of enculturation?

## Chapter 2: The Body and the Liturgy

Man participates in the liturgical form through his body. In this chapter, Ratzinger covers seven topics:

1. Active participation — the real “action” in the liturgy in which we are all supposed to participate is the action of God himself (173). External actions are secondary.
2. The sign of the cross — the most basic gesture of Christian prayer.
3. Posture — the bodily gestures of kneeling (humility), standing (victory) and sitting (recollection) are bearers of the spiritual meaning, which is precisely that of worship.
4. Gestures — the *orans* posture (arms extended), hands together, bowing, striking the breast.
5. The human voice — has an essential role to play in the liturgy of the Eternal Word.
6. Vestments — liturgical attire must show that the priest stands in the place of Christ with an eschatological orientation to our future transformation in Christ.
7. Matter — matter comes through sacred signs and through the sacraments. In the liturgy of the Word made flesh, matter is the vehicle for the divine.

### Quotes

The real “action” in the liturgy in which we are all supposed to participate is the action of God himself. This is what is new and distinctive about the Christian liturgy: God himself acts and does what is essential" (173).

“Liturgy can only attract people when it looks, not at itself, but at God, when it allows Him to enter and act” (199).

### Questions

1. Why are external actions secondary for active participation in the liturgy?
2. What topic did you find most beneficial to your understanding of the spirit of the liturgy?