MA Comprehensive Examination
Liturghtical Studies and Sacramental Theology
March 2009

Day 1

Answer FOUR of the following eight questions.

1. Thomas Talley studies the various liturgical seasons in his work, Origins of the Liturgical Year. Describe and evaluate his contribution to our understanding of one such liturgical season of your choosing.

2. Discuss the relationship between history and eschatology in the context of a theology of "Christian Feast."

3. Provide a brief historical sketch of the development of the marriage ritual in the Roman tradition. Evaluate the 1969 Marriage Ritual in light of this historical development.


6. Irwin utilizes the concept of "symbolic engagement" in his Context and Text. Discuss this concept and its relationship to his overall methodology.

7. Compare and contrast the historical development of both the monastic and the cathedral orientations to the Liturgy of the Hours giving specific elements that bring to light the spirituality of each.

8. Number 29 of the praenotanda of the Liturgy of the Hours states that "Sacred ministers have the liturgy of the hours entrusted to them in such a particular way that even when the faithful are not present they are to pray it themselves with the adaptations necessary under these circumstances." Explain the theological, historical, and pastoral ramifications of this statement.
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Day 2

Answer FOUR of the following eight questions.

1. James Dallen identifies three main periods in the evolution of the Sacrament of Reconciliation: Ancient, Medieval, and Modern Penance. Describe the major ritual shifts and changes in practice that mark this evolution in the West from the ancient model to the eve of the Council of Trent and identify some of the theological suppositions that induced these shifts and the theological consequences they effected.

2. The history of the practice of anointing the sick is closely connected to the evolution of the sacrament of reconciliation. Outline the historical development of anointing, indicating its consequences on both the theology of that sacrament and its liturgical practice and demonstrate how knowledge of these facts influenced the post-Vatican II renewal of the Rite for the Anointing of the Sick.

3. The post-Vatican II Order of Christian Funerals is the result of a renewed appreciation for the relationship of Christian death to the Paschal Mystery, baptism, and the Eucharist. Demonstrate the truth of this statement using some examples from the revised rites.

4. In the current discipline concerning initiation in the Roman Rite the following rules apply: 1. A priest who baptizes anyone with the use of reason (usually age seven and older) must also confirm and give that person communion immediately and normally within a single celebration of the Eucharist. 2. A priest who baptizes an infant in danger of death must also confirm the infant but is forbidden to give communion. 3. A bishop who baptizes an infant under normal circumstances is not to confirm the infant and is forbidden to give communion. Referring to liturgical history in the West, the recent recovery of a theology of Christian initiation, and the post-Vatican II liturgical reform, comment on these seemingly contradictory rules and offer some critique.

5. The historical facts indicate that the Roman Rite in the period just before the Second Vatican Council was less "Roman" than is usually supposed and was in fact the product of centuries of hybridization. Demonstrate this by reference to the historical data and offer an example of how knowledge of this reality led to the recovery of a more traditional liturgical practice of the Roman Rite after Vatican II.

6. The restoration of the catechumenate in recent years is the result of painstaking historical study and theological reflection on the liturgical tradition. Select one of the catechumenal rites in the current Roman liturgy and trace its historical background, and explain both its theological significance and its pastoral application.
7. Using the texts of the Eucharistic Prayer of the Apostolic Tradition and the current Roman Rite Eucharistic Prayer II (both attached), discuss how Eucharistic praying patterns of the early Church inform and are enriched by recent theological/liturgical reflection on the Eucharist.

Day One

Answer four of the following eight questions within four hours.

1. It has been argued that the Roman Canon contains no explicit invocation of the Holy Spirit. The GIRM 2002 states that the epiclesis is one of the constitutive parts of the Eucharistic prayer. Explain

2. Compare and contrast the patristic emphasis and the medieval emphasis in the theology of and practice of the Eucharist.

3. Kenneth Stevenson’s To Join Together: The Rite of Marriage provides many salient points in the discussion of the marriage liturgy. Outline his argument and evaluate his presentation and his theological suppositions.


5. Discuss the main features of the marriage liturgy in the Orthodox Church that John Meyendorf presents in his Marriage: Orthodox Perspectives.

6. Present a critical discussion of the contributions of two theologians to the work of liturgical inculturation.

7. Discuss the approach to liturgical inculturation presented in Varietates legitimate (1994) and offer some reflections on the ecclesiology of the document.

8. Discuss the ways in which liturgy can be considered as foundational for the pursuit of justice. The School of Theology and Religious Studies
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Day Two

Answer four of the following eight questions within four hours.

1. Compare and contrast what the Council of Trent decreed about the Eucharist and what Vatican II decreed about the Eucharist.

2. Explain the emphasis given to the communal nature and celebration of the sacrament of Penance in the post Vatican II reform of the sacrament, specifically the emphasis given to the proclamation of the Word and the other parts of the sacrament as experienced communally.

3. In Taft’s Beyond East and West, he presents a variety of articles that deal with common liturgical issues that the churches face. What does he state about historicism and anamnesis? What are some other key points that he addresses?

4. Present a critical discussion of the contributions that ritual theory can make to the study of liturgy. Include specific references to the work of two scholars in your discussion.

5. Identify significant moments in the story of the emergence of an African American style of Catholic worship and reflect on the contributions and challenges that have accompanied this development.

6. Discuss Teresa Berger’s methodological approach for engaging in the study of liturgical history and offer your reflections on this approach.

7. Critique the approach taken by Thomas Talley in his book, Origins of the Liturgical Year, indicating the strengths and weaknesses of his study with special attention to his treatment of Sunday and Pascha.

8. Describe the circumstances which led to the separation of Confirmation from Baptism and of Eucharist from Baptism in the Western Church and explain the theological significance of the celebration of these three sacraments in a single liturgical action.