

# The Stirrings of the Spirit

The roots of theological and liturgical  
renewal

# The Beginnings of Liturgical Reform

- French Benedictines, Dom Prosper Guéranger established monastery in 1832
- Trying to recover from French revolution
- Promoted Gregorian Chant and the use of the Roman Missal, saw middle ages as definitive
- Centralized Eucharist as premier worship
- Sought to increase lay participation in Mass

# The Liturgical Movement

- Inspired by Dom Guéranger
- Called for a return to seeing the Church as the mystical body of Christ
- In scholarship, sought a return to the sources of Christian thought, the early Church
- Tension between Eucharist as sacrifice and Eucharist as communal meal
- Led to much liturgical experimentation

# Tra Le Sollecitudini—Pope Pius X, 1903

The Church has always recognized and favored the progress of the arts, admitting to the service of religion everything good and beautiful discovered by genius in the course of the ages—always, however, with due regard to the liturgical laws. Consequently modern music is also admitted to the Church, since it, too, furnishes compositions of such excellence, sobriety, and gravity, that they are in no way unworthy of the liturgical functions (5).

# Looking Back for Inspiration

- Gregorian Chant promoted
- Middle ages idealized, Pius X was strongly anti-modernist
- “The language proper to the Roman Church is Latin” (7).
- “The liturgical text must be sung as it is in the books . . . and always in a manner intelligible to the faithful who listen” (9).
- “Singers in church have a real liturgical office . . . therefore women, being incapable of exercising such office, cannot be admitted to form part of the choir” (13).

# Reflection

- People have a strong tendency to see what they want to see and hear what they want to hear. We refer to this in scripture study as “eisegesis,” reading our biases into the text, as opposed to “exegesis,” drawing meaning out of the text.
- Discuss examples of this in your faith experience.

# Pope Pius XII—1939-1958

- Pope Pius XII was enormously influential in establishing the modern Catholic church. Many controversies surround his pontificate, but two documents hold special significance for the development of modern Catholic thought.
- *Divino afflante Spiritu*—Inspired by the Holy Spirit—on biblical scholarship
- *Mediator Dei*—between God and men—on the Sacred Liturgy

# *Divino afflante Spiritu*—1943

- “often called the ‘Magna Carta’ of Catholic biblical scholarship” (*America*, September, 1993).
- Shifted Catholic biblical scholarship from the Latin Vulgate to original sources
- Recognized advances in archaeology and historical research
- Allowed textual criticism using original languages
- Allowed historical-critical method when properly informed by Tradition and the magisterium
- Forerunner to *Dei Verbum*



# *Mediator Dei*—1947

- “Laid the foundations for the liturgical reforms of the Second Vatican Council” (catholic culture.org, dictionary).
- Emphasized centrality of the Eucharist
- Defended role of the clergy
- Elevated Liturgy of the Hours
- Promoted greater participation by the laity
- Recommended better liturgical catechesis
- Warned against liturgical experimentation

# Reflection

- Many aspects of Catholic practice that we take for granted today came about from a desire of the faithful for a more meaningful worship experience. What parts of our shared liturgical life bring you closest to God? Can you relate to the experiences of the early Christians as recounted in the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles?