

Fr. Perozich comments —

Fr. Loya is a Byzantine priest. Their liturgy has had mild reforms, not the dramatic ones that we have had in the Latin rite.

I grew up with the traditional Latin Mass from 1951 until 1965 when some changes began to emerge. By 1970, the language of the Mass was English. In 1976 Pope Paul VI issued his changes.

What always attracted me as a boy were the solemnity, the sacred, the mystic, the chant, the music, the Divine Presence, a meeting between God and man. I experience that more now when I celebrate the Traditional Latin Mass than I do when I reverently celebrate the changed rite. Still, I give my best self in prayer to God in both celebrations.

My social formation was good through high school. It encouraged virtue, a fight against the iniquities in the soul, and upright living, battling all evils within, and working for self mastery with the grace and power of Jesus in Word and Sacrament in His Holy Church.

In the early 1970's, the sexual revolution tore down chastity, life long marriage, brought easy divorce, lack of commitment, the external expression of every internal feeling or thought, good or bad.

This new societal tolerance was not good for anyone's formation into a human person let alone a Christian man or woman.

Church leaders not only failed to continue to teach our revealed morality, it began to undermine it or ignore it. It failed to form us according to God's will, rather it proposed tolerance and acceptance of worldly values, ideas, psychological theories, eschewing philosophy and traditional Thomism.

Those growing up after 1970 most likely had only worldly formation, and then as now they enter seminaries to become priests.

Religious orders, diocesan priest assemblies, seminaries were infected with “express yourself”, live out whatever you feel because that is what you are created to be. William Coulson and Carl Rogers with humanist psychology undermined faith and morality. Religious orders were wounded deeply, and now they continue to spread the infection rather than Jesus, the Cure.

<https://www.patheos.com/blogs/kathyschiffer/2012/04/william-coulson-and-the-lcwr-we-overcame-their-traditions-and-their-faith/>

Much of what we experience now in our church is worldly formation. We still have Word and Sacrament as sources of grace. The experience of grace, however, may not be as profound if the mystic, the sacred, the Divine Presence, the holiness, the morality, the life long fight for self mastery is not lived in the mind, heart and will of the man who has become priest regardless of whether he pastors a parish or a diocese.

Men now vie for leadership in the church so that they can teach themselves rather than Jesus Christ. Father James Martin and his supporters are prime examples.

Since such men are in charge now, they suppress discussions of aberrant sexuality as causes of abuse, of restoring the sacred space which formed the souls of so many, and so forth.

Jesus still is in charge of His church. Through His permissive will, allowing man to choose something other than what God inspires, many such men will continue to lead the church, at least for a while.

The evils are all around me. So all around me too is the grace and presence of Jesus. Sometimes, however, I need to search for it among the parishes, the dioceses, the pronouncements from bishops and congregations in Rome.

I am not perfect. I still have temptations. I confess once a week, celebrate Mass every day, pray an hour of adoration before leaving the house, continue with the Divine Office,

devotions. I tell God that I am nothing, that He is everything. I confess to Him that I borrow life from Him, and thank Him for putting up with me in all my imperfections.

God is here for us, even when we do not seem to find Him as clearly as we might have in former times in liturgy and preaching.

As a boy the sisters taught me that “God made me to show forth His goodness, to know, to love, and to serve Him in this world, and to be happy with Him in the next.” That teaching helps to ground me in faith in God and not of faith in myself. (See the selection from St. Irenaeus at the end of this post which illustrates well what sister taught us.)

Seek Him, and you will find Him because really, it is He Who is out there looking for you and for me to form us into the image of Jesus and to grant us eternal life.

MASCULINITY AND THE LITURGY



By Fr. Thomas J. Loya, S.T.B., M.A.

While discussing with me the sex abuse crises in the Church, a friend of mine involved in seminary formation made an alarming statement: "If (for example) there were 40 seminarians in the seminary I would be confident in seeing only three out of those 40 men ordained to the priesthood." The rest, he said — the vast majority — are "too psycho-sexually wounded and disintegrated to even think they could survive or live fruitful lives as celibate priests."

These are very discouraging and alarming odds, yet sadly understandable if we take an honest look at recent history.

Candidates for the priesthood do not come out of the air or beam down from the planet Mars. They grow out of the moral soil of our culture. This soil has been rendered radioactive by the nuclear fallout of the so-called sexual revolution: contraception, divorce, pornography, gender identity confusion, entitlement and narcissism, moral relativism, the breakdown and war on fatherhood and masculinity, attachment and a spirituality of entitlement — add to that a general absence of even minimal ascetical disciplines such as abstaining from meat on Fridays. Generations of young men have been rendered handicapped in the areas most essential to priesthood.

Now, generations of young men have been rendered handicapped in the areas most essential to priesthood: chastity, a deep, mystical sense of manhood, fatherhood, spousalhood and the ability for self-donation and mature intimacy with humans and with God the Father. Herein lies the source of the sexual abuse and vocation crises in the Church.

Tightening the Dallas Charter, stricter Safe Environment policies, routing out the bad guys, holding hasty summits, transparency, accountability and full disclosure are simply bureaucratic default positions that focus on after the fact. These

measures play to the secular media and make it appear that we as Church are really doing something about this crisis. But these measures will not get to the origins and healing of the problems. It will require a soul-level transformation of Church and society. This is a tall order.

In the meantime, priestly formation must retrieve two essential pillars of the spiritual life that have gone missing: the mystical and the ascetical. With the help of tools like St. John Paul II's theology of the body, the writings of the Church Fathers and the spiritual wisdom and praxis of the Desert Fathers and great mystics of the Church, candidates for the priesthood must come into a mystical and palpable understanding that they are to be men in the fullness of everything that manhood means such as being a husband and father.

Seminarians and priests cannot be urged to run from their sexuality but rather to run headlong into it — into its mystical, sacramental and revelatory nature. But even this will not be sufficient.

The place where priesthood finds its fullest identity is at the altar, the Eucharist. If priestly formation can be transformed to immerse a candidate into the deep, mystical understanding of his husbandhood and fatherhood, then it becomes critical that the priest finds a congruency at the place that most defines his priesthood.

The liturgy of the Church is the ultimate context for the mystical meaning of human sexuality, of complementarity, which is a sharing in the relationship of the bridegroom Christ and His bride, the Church.

Classic Church architecture, art, ritual, gesture and text preserved this fundamental nuptial character. After the Second Vatican Council (but not actually because of the Council itself) this nuptial character was all but obliterated when in the liturgy of the Latin rite, the priest began facing the people and the

separation between the holy of holies (sanctuary) and the nave disappeared.

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Pope Benedict XVI realized the essential connection between the deep meaning of the male priesthood and the altar. The Holy Father's *motu proprio* giving permission for priests to offer the liturgy facing the altar (facing east — *ad orientem*), far from being some throwback to the "old days," was one step on the way toward restoring the ancient, yet ageless, nuptial character of the Latin rite liturgy.

If mystical manhood, fatherhood, husbandhood and the nuptial character of the liturgy and the priesthood can be re-integrated, it will help men to know who they are as priest-men and how to be that for their bride. Those who cannot relate to this will know that they simply need not apply.

Father Thomas J. Loya, S.T.B., M.A., is pastor of Annunciation Byzantine Catholic parish in Homer Glen, Illinois and host of two radio programs, Light of the East on EWTN radio affiliates and Beyond the Veil on [Radio Maria](#). He is an internationally recognized speaker on the Church's teachings on human sexuality through the [Tabor Life Institute](#), which he co-founded.

From the treatise *Against Heresies* by Saint Irenaeus, bishop

(Lb. 4,13-14,1: SC 100, 534-540)

The friendship of God

Our Lord, the Word of God, first drew men to God as servants, but later he freed those made subject to him. He himself testified to this: *I do not call you servants any longer, for a servant does not know what his master is doing. Instead I call you friends, since I have made known to you everything that I have learned from my Father. **Friendship with God brings the gift of immortality to those who accept it.***

In the beginning **God created Adam**, not because he needed man, but **because he wanted to have someone on whom to bestow his blessings**. Not only before Adam but also before all creation, the Word was glorifying the Father in whom he dwelt, and was himself being glorified by the Father. The Word himself said: *Father, glorify me with that glory I had with you before the world was.*

Nor did the Lord need our service. **He commanded us to follow him, but his was the gift of salvation. To follow the Savior is to share in salvation**; to follow the light is to enjoy the light. Those who are in the light do not illuminate the light but are themselves illuminated and enlightened by the light. They add nothing to the light; rather, they are beneficiaries, for they are enlightened by the light.

The same is true of **service to God**: it adds nothing to God, nor does God need the service of man. Rather, he **gives life and immortality and eternal glory to those who follow and serve him**. He confers a benefit on his servants in return for their service and on his followers in return for their loyalty, but he receives no benefit from them. He is rich, perfect and in need of nothing.

The reason why God requires service from man is this: because he is good and merciful **he desires to confer benefits on those who persevere in his service**. In proportion to God's need of nothing is man's need for communion with God.

This is the glory of man: to persevere and remain in the service of God. For this reason the Lord told his disciples: *You did not choose me but I chose you.* He meant that his disciples did not glorify him by following him, but in following the Son of God they were glorified by him. As he said: *I wish that where I am they also may be, that they may see my glory.*