

## Catechism on the Liturgy I,18

3. This fourth mode is *educare*, or Education (*ex + ducere*, “to draw out”), and it is a kind of teaching that draws from students things already known but not yet recognized. In this mode, a good deal of the time spent in teaching is to let the student alone, and for the student of the Mass perhaps to let him alone with the Missal and the Divine Office.

So we would do well to examine the Divine Office at this point, since it is such an integral part of the liturgy. Granted, few of the faithful (God forbid that this should apply to priests!) pray the breviary. It is true that many do not experience a higher level of learning than that of Formation and Information. But for those who do rise to the level of Education, the breviary is a marvelous teaching tool of the Church. It draws out the meaning of the feast day, or of the liturgical season, in a way which the missal alone cannot.

The breviary is derived chiefly from the Bible, so that to meditate upon the breviary is for the most part to meditate upon the inspired word of the Sacred Scriptures. As the Psalmist says, “I have been delighted in the way of thy testimonies. I will not forget thy words.” (Ps. 118) The reproach of Protestants – that Catholics do not read the Bible – certainly does not apply to those who use the Breviary. For that matter it does not apply to those who read their missals either.

In the lessons and sermons of the breviary, we can follow the thoughts of the Fathers of the Church, who were and are still the great interpreters of Sacred Scripture. In meditating on these texts, we do not need to fear being led astray by false piety or unsound doctrine. There is no danger of illusions or spiritual aberrations such as one might find in some manuals of prayer, which seek to stir up the sensibilities by appeals to the imagination, but

which at the same time neglect to furnish a sound doctrinal foundation for the learner, without which mere emotion is of no avail.

The missal is not enough for those who wish to be educated in the liturgy. The missal and the breviary go together; each complements the other. If those who love the Mass wish to carry their devotion to it to its logical conclusion, they must inevitably take up the breviary. The Divine Office (which is contained in the breviary) is at once a preparation for the Mass and a prolongation of it. If therefore the missal has taught us to understand the Mass as the Church does, then it makes perfect sense to make use of the Church’s official preparation for Mass (First Vespers, Compline, Matins and Lauds), and it makes just as much sense to continue throughout the day to dwell with the Church upon the theme of the morning Mass, with the Minor Hours, Second Vespers and Compline.

There is moreover, a close correspondence in the content of the missal and the breviary. The theme for each day is the same in both of them, the same mystery of the same saint of the day. The collect of the Mass for a given day appears also as the oration for Lauds, the Minor Hours and Vespers. On days when the Mass is celebrated in honor of some saint, an account of that saint’s life is read in the second nocturn of Matins. The lessons of the first nocturn often correspond to the epistle of the Mass, which is again broken up into brief passages for the short lessons of the Minor Hours. The homily lessons of the third nocturn are a commentary on the gospel of the Mass. Thus in order to pray the Mass completely, one should pray the Breviary. The Mass calls for the breviary.

4. Let us say that the believer has been polished, formed, informed and educated in his faith by the Mass, but yearns for more, desiring to cast his net into deeper waters. For him, there is the deeper water of Institution, which is, according to Senior, the fifth mode of teaching, and its name is derived from the Latin word *instituere*. Institutes are sets of plans. The student who has been polished, formed, informed and educated needs a *vademecum* (literally “come with me”), a summary or synopsis of what he has learned to prompt and correct him when knowledge is put to use, like the classic institutes of Latin by Donatus.

While it would be a mistake to use the *Liber Usualis* as the sole text for doctrine – thus ignoring such important developments as the catechism – this great book can suffice for a *vademecum*.

*The liturgy is at once the mirror of a culture and its culmination. Just as the office of Corpus Christi, in the composition of which St. Thomas surely participated, crowns his doctrinal work, so the hymns, sequences and innumerable poems written by the monks are the cul-*

*mination of their theology. The liturgy had been the motive for the renewal of monastic culture in the Carolingian period, and was also its fruit. During the following centuries, it is in the atmosphere of the liturgy and amid the poems composed for it, in hymnis et canticis that the synthesis of all the artes was effected, of the literary techniques, religious reflection and all sources of information whether biblical, patristic or classical. In the liturgy, all these resources fully attained their final potentiality; they were restored to God in an homage which recognized that they had come from Him. Thanksgiving, Eucharist, theology, confessio fidei, all these expressions, in monastic tradition expressed only slightly differing aspects of a single reality. In the liturgy, grammar was elevated to the rank of an eschatological fact. It participated in the eternal praise that the monks, in unison with the Angels began offering God in the abbey choir and which will be perpetuated in Heaven. In the liturgy, love of learning and desire of God find perfect reconciliation. (Leclercq)*