

# The Future of the Society for Catholic Liturgy: Observations on Associate Membership and the Revised *Statement of Principles*

---

Timothy V. Vaverek

The summer of 2005 marked the tenth anniversary of the foundational meeting of the Society for Catholic Liturgy. As with many organizations reaching that milestone, the SCL finds itself seeking to adapt to new circumstances while consolidating its early growth and preparing to expand its service to members and the community. Signs of this transition have already been evident in the changes made to *Antiphon* in 2004 and 2005 for the purpose of enhancing its usefulness and reputation among scholars, professionals, and others interested in the sacred liturgy. Within the Society, the transition has been marked by decisions in the fall of 2005 to include associate members and to approve a revised *Statement of Principles*.

The Society hopes that the introduction of associate members will diversify its membership and broaden its outreach. Associate members, like full members, must ascribe to the principles of the Society and have the written recommendation of a current member. Unlike full members, however, associate members need not be scholars with terminal degrees or professionals with a comparable level of expertise. This decision will open the Society and its activities to many people already deeply interested and engaged in liturgical matters, but who, until now, have not met the requirements for membership. Application forms and related information may be found at the Society's website: [www.liturgyociety.org](http://www.liturgyociety.org).

The revised *Statement of Principles* expresses the identity and mission of the Society as it looks toward the future. These principles, which are meant to confirm those of the original *General Philosophy* statement, will guide the growth of the Society both in terms of the members admitted and the activities undertaken. Given its fundamental importance to the Society, the *Statement of Principles* warrants careful consideration by all current and prospective members. For this reason, I would like to offer some reflections on the revised statement.

These are personal observations which make no claim to provide an official interpretation of the statement. Others will have differing views or emphases. I present these in order to encourage a renewed consideration of the purpose of the Society, its past, and its future direction in service to the sacred liturgy.

### REVISING THE PRINCIPLES

The process of revising the *General Philosophy* (henceforth: GP) began at a board meeting in 2002. Dr Lauren Pristas noted that the promulgation of *Liturgiam authenticam* (28 March 2001), with its emphasis on the need for new translations of the liturgical books, appeared to require a reconsideration of the Society's assertion that "the most pressing needs in the Church's liturgical life at present are not new ritual forms, texts and translations" (GP 9). Two board members, Fr Cassian Folsom, O.S.B. and Fr Anthony Ruff, O.S.B., were asked at the September 2002 board meeting to propose an emended text of GP 9. After reviewing the matter, they reported that it seemed best for the entire board to take up the discussion at the following board meeting.

At the winter board meeting in 2003, the board reached a consensus that a complete review of the GP was in order. The GP was nearly a decade old, having been written at the Society's foundational meeting in 1995, and it quite naturally reflected the situation in the Church at that time. The board's discussion of changes to GP no. 9 in light of *Liturgiam authenticam* caused the board to see the advantage of expressing the entire GP in language less tied to a particular moment in the postconciliar liturgical renewal. The board appointed its Vice President, Dr Lauren Pristas, together with Fr Michael Carey, O.P. and Fr Timothy V. Vaverek, to prepare a draft based on the board's consensus.

The board considered drafts at the September 2003 meeting and at each subsequent meeting through September 2005. At the winter 2004 meeting, Fr Folsom was appointed to the drafting committee to succeed Fr Carey. At the winter 2005 meeting the board decided that the draft was ready to submit to the membership for consideration. The draft was mailed to all the members, and time was scheduled for the membership to discuss the proposal at the September 2005 business meeting. Based on these comments, some final adjustments were made to the phrasing of the principles, and the statement was mailed to the members for a vote in October 2005. The new *Statement of Principles* (SP) was approved by a 95% majority and was adopted on 1 December 2005.

Throughout the process of revision, the board and the drafting

committee were explicit in their intention to retain the original vision and purpose of the Society. The membership affirmed this intention in their comments on the draft.

## PREAMBLE

The Society for Catholic Liturgy is a scholarly and professional association founded on the following principles which it seeks to advance in its various activities and deliberations:

A distinctive feature of the SCL is its desire to consider every facet of the sacred liturgy. For this reason it has sought to engage not only liturgical experts, but scholars and professionals from diverse fields: theology, architecture, art, music, linguistics, social science, catechetics, etc. It is hoped that an interdisciplinary conversation will broaden and enrich each member's appreciation of the sacred liturgy and the many components that shape its celebration.

The commitment to an interdisciplinary approach is not merely one of the practical order, as if the SCL desired to be interdisciplinary chiefly in order to examine "how to do" liturgy in a technically or aesthetically more proficient way. The purpose, rather, is to discover each discipline's relation to the paschal mystery of Christ encountered in the sacred liturgy. The paschal mystery is the source and summit of Christian life and all creation, so every discipline is ordered to it in some way. In light of each discipline's relation to the paschal mystery, numerous relations among the various disciplines are revealed. The Society is seeking, therefore, to allow the sacred liturgy to inform our understanding of each discipline and, in turn, to be able to place each discipline at the service of the liturgy. This service must be carried out with the utmost care so that human and created goods are ordered in the sacred liturgy in a manner that authentically represents and inspires the life of the Church. Properly effected, this not only leads to a more authentic expression and appreciation of the sacred liturgy; it also transforms the practice of our disciplines outside the liturgy. In this way, the encounter with the paschal mystery in the sacred liturgy renews the world. The Society desires to gather scholars and professionals to promote this kind of liturgical renewal.

Too often in recent decades, liturgy has been misunderstood as a field to be left to liturgical specialists whose training, in many cases, has lacked depth, breadth, and authentic ecclesial formation. In short, we have lived through an era marked by liturgical ideologues and ideologies. A particular constellation of ideologies gained ascendancy in the first decades following the Second Vatican Council, and

attempted to identify itself with what its proponents called the “true spirit” of the council. That generation is now passing. For younger generations, it is increasingly clear that the future of liturgical renewal lies not in the canonization of positions advocated by popular experts in the postconciliar period, regardless of their legitimate and enduring achievements, but in the faithful implementation of the Second Vatican Council in light of forty years of postconciliar experience and of nearly 2,000 years of Catholic history. In order for this to happen, scholars and professionals must come to a deeper appreciation of many more aspects of the sacred liturgy than has generally been offered in recent decades. To do this without falling into a new ideology requires careful attention to the nature of the liturgy, the guidance of the Church, and the wide range of disciplines that affect our experience of the liturgy. The Society hopes to provide an opportunity for just this kind of interdisciplinary exchange and education.

As a scholarly and professional association, the Society for Catholic Liturgy is involved in promoting a number of principles, but not in establishing an ideology or in lobbying ecclesiastical authorities to take specific actions. The distinctions here are crucial. The SCL has, from the beginning, desired to promote a vision which accords with the teachings of the Church and allows for legitimate diversity. For this reason, the Society has always sought to leave room for such diversity among its members and to provide a forum to express a wide range of ideas. At the same time, the Society has refused to lobby on behalf of specific initiatives with the bishops or the Holy See. Other organizations devote time and energy to drafting position statements and to seeking to influence the decisions of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops or the Roman Curia. It is their prerogative to engage in such activities – and it is the prerogative of individual members of the Society – but these are not activities for the SCL as a whole. In this way, the Society hopes to promote authentic renewal without establishing itself *de facto* as a partisan or ideological group.

## PRINCIPLE I

belief that the primary purpose of the sacred liturgy is to worship God, who continues the work of redemption and sanctification through the sacred mysteries of Christ handed down to us in and through the Catholic Church;

Since the Society is concerned with the liturgy, it seems appropriate to state first the basic understanding of the liturgy and its role in salvation history. It might appear obvious to state that the sacred liturgy is

primarily the worship of God through participation in the mysteries of Christ. After all, this is the consistent vision of the Church renewed in our time at the Second Vatican Council (see *Sacrosanctum concilium* [henceforth: SC] 5-10 and *Lumen gentium* [henceforth: LG] 26). Yet it is important to make this explicit.

In our day, marked by a certain subjectivism and utilitarianism, it would be easy to reduce the sacred liturgy to little more than a celebration of a particular congregation's fellowship, or a manifestation of its faith experience, or an expression of mutual support within the community, or an opportunity to catechize the faithful. These dimensions are certainly not lacking in the sacred liturgy, but they are subordinate to (that is, they derive from and are ordered to) the worship of the Trinity in and through the paschal mystery of Christ. If these or any other subordinate dimensions were placed theoretically or practically above divine worship, the result would be devastating to the celebration of the liturgy. In that case, the worship of God would become the means for some other end. This utilitarian approach, at best, would be an attempt to make use of the worship of God to promote other ends; at worst, it would reveal that those ends, not God Himself, are the real object of worship. A tendency to exalt subordinate dimensions of liturgy, particularly the congregation, is evident not only in the theoretical considerations of some liturgical authors, but in the practical cases of churches whose architectural features depart from ecclesiastical norms and of "priestless parishes" that view priests as "outsiders" or "unnecessary" for their congregational liturgies. The Society aims to avoid such distortions by stating clearly what is primary to the liturgy.

The sacred liturgy is a privileged expression of Christian life and worship, hence it is rightly called the source and summit of the Church's mission and Christian life. Thus, the countless non-liturgical expressions of Christian life and worship flow from and back to the liturgy. This connection between daily Christian life and the sacred liturgy is vital for each member of the Church and essential for the renewal of the Church envisioned by the Second Vatican Council (see SC 1-2 and 9-13). It is a connection rooted in the fact that Christian life is nothing other than the living out of the same mysteries of Christ that we celebrate in the liturgy. The Christian who understands, in this way, that his life is hidden in Christ is able to perceive the intrinsic connection of daily life to the faith and worship of the Church. Such a person lives in body and soul, albeit imperfectly, the mysteries of Christ both during and outside the liturgy as a ceaseless worship of God in Spirit and truth (see Jn 4:23-24; Rom 12:1).

The connection between life and liturgy is not so clear to a person

who does not understand the mysteries of Christ. For such a person, the liturgy may be the worship of God, but there is no intrinsic connection to daily life. Worship is experienced as something to be done on Sunday or during daily prayer. The spiritual life is considered something lived alongside of, or in the midst of, daily life, but not as daily life itself. The council saw clearly, and called upon Catholics to recognize, the need to live the paschal mystery fully, consciously, and actively at all times as the means to glorify God and foster personal sanctification, the renewal of the Church, and the salvation of the world. Yet it is extremely rare to find that the sacred mysteries of Christ, and above all the paschal mystery, are the foundation of preaching, catechesis, or adult formation. To the great detriment of the Church, the sacred mysteries have not even been a principal theme in most liturgical formation. The phrases “paschal mystery” and “mysteries of Christ” are largely unknown to, or carry the vaguest of meanings for, the faithful. It is little wonder that, without being able to draw on a living knowledge of the mysteries of Christ, people attempt to make the sacred liturgy engaging or relevant through the introduction of gimmicks and all variety of novelties. These efforts cannot establish a lasting link between life and liturgy, and hence must constantly change in order “to reach the people.” Results are superficial and ephemeral because they misdirect the faithful from the heart of the liturgy and their own lives: the worship of God through the sacred mysteries of Christ. The Society is committed to directing attention back to this most fundamental truth.

## PRINCIPLE 2

respect for Catholic liturgy in all approved rites and usages from the apostolic period to the present day;

The Society is concerned with Catholic liturgy in its diverse expressions. Catholic liturgy is not limited to particular times or places. It encompasses the various liturgies of the eastern and western churches as these have been recognized by the Catholic Church. These liturgies no doubt reflect the relative strengths and weaknesses of the cultures that shaped them, but, beyond cultural considerations, these liturgies authentically express the mysteries of Christ and the life of the Church.

It has become fashionable in some quarters to exalt one of the Church’s liturgies over another, or simply to denigrate entire periods of the Church’s liturgical life. At times, this tendency has led to unauthorized efforts to introduce into a particular liturgy certain

liturgical symbols or elements proper to another liturgy. Attempts have been made, again without authorization, to drop elements from a liturgy because they were deemed “outdated,” or to insert entirely new elements. These efforts have frequently shown a disrespect, or even an arrogance, that would place contemporary judgments over the common and authoritative judgment of the Church regarding one of her most precious and carefully guarded treasures. No one has the right to take liberties with the liturgy as it is presented to us by and in the Church. No one has the right to declare liturgical practices “corrupt” or “wrong” if they were or are approved by the Church. In the case where one personally judges this or that element to be or to have been inappropriate, an attitude of respect for the universal Church and the particular church which worships or worshipped in that fashion must be maintained. To be a member of the *communio sanctorum* is to be bound to all Catholics in and by “the holy things” of the faith, which certainly include approved liturgical rites.

Within the Catholic Church at present, this principle means that the Society values the witness of the existing eastern and western liturgies. Without wishing in any way to foster a mixing of the rites, the Society believes that much can be learned through a deep appreciation of what is common and distinct among the liturgies. In a particular way within the Roman Rite, this means that members of the Society respect: the Tridentine use both in its preconciliar form and in its current application under the indult; the Roman Missal in its various editions published after the council; and the liturgies of the Anglican use. One need not celebrate the liturgy in other rites or uses in order to respect them. One must, however, recognize them as valid and licit liturgical expressions within the Church today and, as valid expressions of the sacred liturgy, the proper object of our respect.

### PRINCIPLE 3

desire to support the faithful celebration of the sacred liturgy according to the Roman Rite and to promote a better understanding of its origin, development, and current status;

The Society for Catholic Liturgy, in fact, is focused on the liturgy of the Roman Rite. We seek to promote its celebration in a manner that is faithful to both the spirit and the rubrics of the ritual. By praying in accord with the Church, we enter most fully into her mystery, which is the mystery of Christ.

Spirit and rubrics are expressive of each other; they cannot be opposed. In this way, one avoids a false separation which has sometimes

been asserted between what is theologically sound and pastorally prudent. One ensures also that the faithful receive that to which they are entitled: the sacred liturgy celebrated according to its proper spirit and ritual. The emphasis here is not on a narrow uniformity, but on fidelity. The Roman Rite provides numerous options for its celebration. Each of these expresses legitimate diversity. Thus, fidelity and diversity coexist.

A deeper awareness of a given rite's history and current status can give rise to a greater appreciation of the spirit and shape of the liturgy. This is essential if we are to adapt the goods of the world for use within the liturgy while avoiding the introduction of elements foreign to the Roman Rite. This studied appreciation will promote genuine renewal in the manner of celebration and guide the prudent use of approved options.

While the vast majority of members of the SCL celebrate the Roman Rite according to the liturgical books promulgated after the council, the term "Roman Rite," in this principle, also includes the approved preconciliar liturgy and the Anglican use.

#### **PRINCIPLE 4**

conviction that the sacred liturgy's incarnational nature and central role in shaping Catholic culture require fostering the beauty and fittingness of music, art, architecture, language, and other elements integral to the spiritual profundity and ceremonial dignity of the rites;

This principle expresses the Society's commitment to an interdisciplinary approach to the study and practice of the sacred liturgy. God chose to offer us salvation through the Incarnation of the Word made flesh. The mystery of the Incarnation, in which divine and human natures are united in the Person of the Son, is reflected in the Church, in which human elements are vivified by the Holy Spirit (see LG 8). In this way, the Church is constituted as the Body of Christ, and the sacraments are established as means of conveying the life of Christ to those who believe (see LG 7).

Because the paschal mystery celebrated in the sacred liturgy is the source and summit of Christian and ecclesial life, it is of paramount importance that the material and human elements used in the liturgy serve as icons or windows leading to participation in the mystery of Christ. If these elements are not carefully selected and shaped to represent the mysteries celebrated, there is a very real danger that they may misdirect the faithful toward something other than the worship

of God in Christ. For this reason, it is essential that one be aware of the various elements that contribute to the liturgy, their distinct natures, and the meaning of their roles within the liturgy. Only in this way can these elements be chosen properly and adapted for use within the liturgy.

The sacred liturgy does not take place in a museum in order that antiquarians may admire its venerable cultural artifacts, nor does it take place in a gallery in order to please the *cognoscenti* with all that is novel and fashionable. The sacred liturgy takes place within the heart of the Church, and it presents to the faithful the worship of God in signs and symbols borrowed from daily life, but given new meaning through their approved usage by Christ and the Church. Some signs and symbols in the liturgy are established by Christ and can never be changed. Examples include: bread and wine for the Eucharist, a man and woman for marriage, and water for baptism. Others are culturally conditioned in a manner that permits them to be changed as the Church makes her pilgrimage through time and space. These include: musical styles, wording of prayers, and the design of buildings and vestments.

To adapt new elements or to retain old ones properly, it is necessary to have a precise understanding of their origin and function, as well as the ways they affect those celebrating the liturgy. If one does not carefully discern the beauty of each element, that is, its authenticity as an embodiment of a particular art, and its fittingness for use in this particular way within the liturgy, there is a real danger of interjecting something ugly or foreign. At the very least, this will serve as a distraction for the faithful, welcome or not. As such, it will inhibit full, conscious, active participation in the mysteries being celebrated. In the worst case, a series of mistaken choices could produce a liturgical celebration so thoroughly at odds with the nature of the sacred liturgy as to misdirect the faithful at a very deep level. The result of repeated exposure to such a distorted celebration would be to render the faithful unable to interpret the authentic symbols of the Church's liturgy. In an extreme form, it might even give them a false way of interpreting the meaning of the liturgy and their daily life.

In the period following the Second Vatican Council, there was often a naïve willingness to introduce styles of music, art, architecture, and so on, from the secular world with little or no alteration. It was believed that failure to adopt these standards would consign the liturgy to irrelevance. Moreover, refusal to adopt them was alleged to be rooted in a false piety or aesthetic that envisioned the secular order or the world as an evil place. The proper respect for creation was claimed to necessitate opening the Church to the world. It must be

acknowledged as well that this period in western culture was characterized by love of novelty and conviction that a new age was dawning. A systematic rejection of the old establishment was supposed to lead to a new world that was free, spontaneous, and harmonious. This zeal for secular standards can be understood not only as part of the changes in western culture, but also as a reaction to some false pieties among Catholics, such as Jansenism, which had fostered a negative view of the goods of this world. After the council, every effort was made to present this embrace of the world as entirely in keeping with the true conciliar spirit.

It is regrettable that those caught up in the movement to secularize the Church and her liturgy failed to recognize that, whereas it is indeed an error to consider the world solely a place of evil, it is likewise an error to consider it a place of uncorrupted innocence. The world is a fallen place and, as such, is touched by human sin and error in many ways. The world, along with all that is in it, is in need of redemption. What is good in the world needs to be perfected in Christ; what is evil awaits purification in Christ. This means that secular elements such as music, art, and architecture cannot simply be introduced into the sacred liturgy. Secular elements must be examined, purified of erroneous tendencies, and have the good in them perfected in the light of Christ. Only then can they be considered appropriate for use within the Church's worship.

Forty years later, as 1960s folk music still echoes in some parishes, it is evident that those who sought to make the sacred liturgy most up-to-date thereby made it most quickly outdated. We have irrefutable empirical evidence that the search for relevance based on ephemeral secular fashion consigns one to almost immediate irrelevance. The tragedy here is that, rather than attempt to bring the faithful into contact with the established signs and symbols of the liturgy, enormous effort was put into introducing all sorts of innovations which have too often neither fed the faithful nor lasted. Catholics in many places have been left in an impoverished state and have yet to be introduced to the spirit and meaning of the liturgy as the Second Vatican Council urgently desired. This is true not only of laity, but also of seminarians and clergy.

This situation cannot be remedied simply by reintroducing cultural elements from our past, although these no doubt will play an important role. It will be necessary to carry out the precise and burdensome work of discerning how contemporary elements can be transformed for use within the liturgy. Such adaptation, however, cannot take place without knowledge of the sacred liturgy, mastery of the various elements themselves, and submission to the guidance of the

Church. The Society is committed to fostering this undertaking.

### PRINCIPLE 5

determination to foster interdisciplinary liturgical study and practice according to rigorous scholarly and professional standards;

The Society recognizes that there is an ever-present temptation to accept facile assessments and solutions, rather than to engage in the demanding work required for authentic liturgical renewal. Only by insisting on scholarly and professional standards that are well established philosophically, and are practiced with dedication, can we hope to arrive at an adequate understanding of the liturgy and the directions that will foster genuine renewal.

The time for quick fixes or packaged programs is over; so, too, for the obsession with external elements, false dichotomies between the “old” and “new,” and the resultant politicization of every liturgical action. Liturgical renewal can take place only through a careful appropriation of the tradition, a deep appreciation for the various elements that contribute to the celebration, and a discerning judgment of how the old and the new can be brought together in a fashion congruent with the nature of the liturgy and the authority of the Church. An interdisciplinary approach is essential. And it must exhibit a consistently high caliber of expertise.

This determination explains the Society’s decisions to distinguish between full and associate membership and to require that applicants have the support of a current member. Full membership is limited to those who have attained a terminal degree in their academic field or a comparable level of expertise in their profession. Associate membership is open to those who have a high degree of competency, but lesser credentials. The recommendation seeks to establish that the applicant holds to the principles of the Society and desires to explore the relation between the sacred liturgy and his discipline both theoretically and practically.

The Society’s desire to promote interdisciplinary liturgical study finds concrete expression in its efforts to publish *Antiphon: A Journal for Liturgical Renewal* and to host an annual conference.

### PRINCIPLE 6

commitment to the virtues of prudence, patience, and charity.

As indicated above, the Society recognizes that liturgical renewal demands careful consideration and implementation if it is to achieve

its purpose. Prudence is the virtue by which a person judges here and now how best to advance toward a goal. Prudence can take into account the imperfect present situation as well as past failures and successes in order to determine a path actually capable of leading a person forward. In the present case, this requires understanding the spirit and shape of the sacred liturgy, appreciating the various elements that affect its celebration, and attending to the specific communities of faith currently participating in the rites. It also requires recognizing that our efforts to promote liturgical renewal do not take place in a vacuum and that we must consider the concrete implications of our words and actions. At the end of our considerations, as at the beginning, prudence requires disciplined engagement with contrary opinions and fidelity to ecclesiastical authority. When programs of renewal close in on themselves or lose sight of the liturgy, the faithful, and the Church, they become ideologies which cause damage and, in the end, fail to achieve the renewal they seek.

Patience is that virtue by which we wait, even in suffering, until the right moment to speak or act. It is the means by which we are able to spend the time necessary to understand a situation, to discern a possible direction of movement, and to do the difficult work of preparing others to participate. Sometimes it allows time for others to catch up; sometimes it allows time for us to reconsider our actions and thereby avoid or minimize damage. Always it is meant to be a participation in God's providence, which patiently disposes all things to their ends. Authentic liturgical renewal will take decades, rather than years, and it will never be definitively accomplished. The only alternative is a hasty and superficial pursuit of an unattainable liturgical utopia, which indeed will make for an extraordinary waste of time and energy.

Charity is the greatest of virtues. It is nothing less than a participation in God's own love. It refuses to look at others as objects to be manipulated or enemies to be despised. It views fellow Christians as brothers and sisters in the Lord, children of the same Father, to be treated accordingly. This shapes the work of the Society and its members by keeping before us the goal of the sacred liturgy: the praise of God and the salvation of souls. This love alone has the power to purify our learning and art, temper our rashness, strengthen our timidity, and move us along the path of providence to the renewal of both the sacred liturgy and the Church. It is the love which stands as the source and summit of the liturgy, which guided the fathers of Vatican II, and which even now is bringing all things to their completion. The practice of this virtue alone has the power to draw people into a more authentic experience of the liturgy.

## CONCLUSION

The liturgical, catechetical, and pastoral programs that sprang up immediately after the Second Vatican Council often failed to implement the council's directives and renew the Church's evangelical witness. This was because such programs embraced misbegotten ideologies rather than the gospel proclaimed by the Church and the fathers of the council. The damage already done cannot be undone by repeating the mentality and tactics that proved so disastrous.

The authentic theological and pastoral renewal that found expression at Vatican II has been slowly developing for more than a century, especially since the efforts of Leo XIII and St Pius X to restore Catholic life and worship in the face of modern secularism. Since the Second Vatican Council, the Church has struggled to continue that renewal even as modernity has given way to the "postmodern" period. The monumental effort of John Paul II guided the Church during this period of ecclesial and cultural transition by following the authentic sources of renewal. The renewal continues in our day, although it has not yet blossomed to the extent hoped for by the fathers of the council. Ecclesial renewal tends to unfold in unexpected ways. Few would have imagined in 1950 that Catholic efforts in the face of twentieth-century totalitarianism would have borne fruit in two popes: one from Poland, another from Germany. No one can now imagine how the efforts of the postconciliar period will bear fruit in the twenty-first century.

As the postconciliar period and its controversies recede into history, the Society for Catholic Liturgy hopes to contribute to authentic liturgical renewal by committing itself to continue the efforts already begun by and within the Church. This requires living the paschal mystery of Christ fully, consciously, and actively. Conversion of heart and mind are the preconditions for our participation in renewal. This will lead to a transformation of our judgments and actions in Christ. The renewal of the sacred liturgy and of the various elements that contribute to its celebration cannot be achieved in any other way. The Society for Catholic Liturgy is confident that the *Statement of Principles* provides a path that will guide it toward this kind of liturgical renewal. You are welcome to join in this effort and to encourage others to do so.

---

*Fr Timothy V. Vaverek, S.T.D., is President of the Society for Catholic Liturgy and Pastor of St Joseph's Church in Waco, Texas.*