



FORMING THE YOUTH IN AND FOR THE LITURGY IN THE LIGHT OF ST. POPE JOHN PAUL II'S APOSTOLIC LETTER DILECTI AMICI

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This paper is an exploration of the elements for developing a program of liturgical formation according to the principles and themes indicated in Pope John Paul II's Dilecti Amici. It is in line with the celebration of the 2019 Year of the Youth, as it endeavors to get to know the youth better in view of ministering to them more effectively. Indicated in the paper is a general overview of the current situation of the youth, highlighting such features as those pertinent to their interests and capacity for liturgical participation. By learning the proper exercise of their ministry and being imbued with the true spirit of the liturgy, they will be able to bring themselves and the people whom they serve to a more devout and fruitful participation in liturgical celebrations. The paper offered an exposition of Pope John Paul II's Apostolic Letter Dilecti Amici to bring to clearer light his vision for young people in and for the Church and cues that are pertinent and relevant for the liturgical formation of the youth today. Moreover, the paper articulates some considerations and indications for forming young people in and for the liturgy to help them grow spiritually in their formative years and thus equip them with the needed skills and values to make a positive impact on the Church and on the society both now and in their future.

Keywords: Youth, Liturgical Ministry, Pope John Paul II, Dilecti Amici, Church

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INTRODUCTION

The Church needs to search for and rediscover the world of young people afresh. The presence and involvement of young people in the life of Catholic communities have always been held important by the Church. With varying degrees of emphasis, popes and other leaders of the Church, local and universal, have always acknowledged that the youth are the future of the Church. On account of this, youth formation bears significant implications for the future of the Church. Patient and continuous effort to understand and engage them better will keep the Church young and relevant.

This paper is an exploration of the elements that should go into developing a program of liturgical formation for young people. The understanding and drawing near to them and accompanying them are the initial steps in the Church's mission toward the youth that can be best exemplified through Saint Pope John Paul II's Apostolic Letter *Dilecti Amici*¹ issued in 1985 to establish the annual World Youth Day. This document was chosen as the basis of this study on the liturgical formation because it is programmatic in terms of the Church's desire to deal with young people as "*the hope of the Church*"², through guiding them and tapping them to get involved in an enlightened and fruitful way in the affairs of the Church and of the society.

CONNECTING WITH TODAY'S YOUTH

In this fast-paced world, it is undeniable that young people are eager to grow fast and easily. Upon reaching the age of cognition, young people tend to begin to ask questions about

existence and future possibilities. While most young people may be desirous of autonomy in many aspects of their lives, they would need support and direction as they face the many challenges that the world poses on them. Back then, Filipino youth are not only personally religious; they are also inclined to actively participate in religious organizations regularly³. In Asia, especially among Filipino youth in comparison with their counterparts in other continents, religion is still considered important as revealed in their interest in religious activities and rituals. In a study commissioned by the Catholic Bishop's Conference of the Philippines – Episcopal Commission on Youth (CBCP-ECY), it was proved that Filipino Catholic youth of today have remained firmly rooted in their Catholic religious tradition, have believed mostly in its teachings about faith and morals, and have actively participated in its normative religious services⁴. However, there have been unexpectedly high incidences of youth involvement in criminality, illegal drug use, and involvement in promiscuous sexual activities. Therefore, the interest of the youth in joining and participating in Church-related activities has declined.

It is then imperative for the young people to be accompanied by their parents, the school, as well as their respective Christian communities so that they may not be misled through countless deceptive voices in our world today. Thus, to respond to the needs of young people and to guarantee that their basic human rights are recognized and enforced, young people's active and meaningful participation in their respective societies and democratic practices and processes

¹ John Paul II, Apostolic Letter *Dilecti Amici*, to the Youth of the World on the Occasion of the International Youth Year (31 March 1985). Henceforth, this document shall be referred to as *Dilecti Amici*.

² *Dilecti Amici*, n. 16

³ Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines-Episcopal Commission on Youth (CBCP-ECY) and the Catholic Educational Association of the Philippines (CEAP), "The National Filipino Catholic Youth Study", Manila 2015, 16, published in http://www.ceap.org.ph/upload/download/201511/3193812473_1.pdf accessed June 3, 2017.

⁴ CBCP-ECY, "Summary and Conclusions," National Filipino Catholic Youth Study 2014, p. 44.





is of crucial importance. Meaningful youth participation and leadership require that young people and young people-led organizations have opportunities, capacities, and benefits from an enabling environment and relevant programs geared toward their development in all aspects. Furthermore, they have demonstrated the potential to build bridges across communities, to work together, to manage conflict, and to promote peace. The youth are vital stakeholders in conflict and peace-building and can be agents of change. They can also provide a foundation for rebuilding lives and communities, contributing to a more just and peaceful society.

SAINT POPE JOHN PAUL II AND THE YOUTH

To recall Saint Pope John Paul II's lengthy pontificate, he is very devoted to dealing with young people. He was also explicit in letting them know of how much he relied on them for the present and future well-being of the Church and the world. Indubitably, this commitment from His Holiness is in line with the United Nations (UN) Organization's proclamation of the International Year of the Youth in 1985. The Pope and UN recognized the period of youth as "*a key stage in the life of every human being*," a special possession "*belonging to everyone and humanity*," rather than a "*personal property*".⁵ This apostolic letter is in line with the story of the Rich Young Man which can be found in the three Synoptic Gospels (Mk 10:17-22, Mt 19:16-22, and Lk 18:18-23). Saint John Paul II used the story as its starting and constant point of reference, specifically the conversation of Jesus with the Rich Young Man. For the saintly pope, he considers their conversation as "*the most complete and richest in content*" and that it shows a "*more universal and timeless character*" that is relevant for all times and generations.

⁵ Dilecti Amici, n.1

The story is generally about radical discipleship – to imitate Jesus in unconditional and radical self-denial for the good of others (selling what one has and giving to the poor). This is to say that regardless of status, place, and race, young people can relate their daily lives with the rich young man. To follow Jesus in discipleship, young people must learn to love others with the same self-sacrificing love that Jesus showed. It involves being inconvenienced, hurt, deprived, and at the same time, personal engagement and self-denial.

Therefore, it is a must for young people to realize the value of discipleship. By giving up material treasures that are fleeting and transitory, these can be exchanged for something valuable and constant like eternal life and salvation. As they discover their abilities and potentials for future self-realizations, they will be able to follow Jesus in whatever path they discern, whether the calling to the priesthood, the religious life, or to the lay state.

HELPFUL THEMES FROM THE *DILECTI AMICI*

Some helpful themes can be drawn from Pope John Paul II's Apostolic Letter which are helpful to consider in view of devising a program for the formation of young people for liturgical ministries.

A. YOUTH AS A SPECIAL TREASURE

It is already established how St. Pope John Paul II expresses his warm affection to the youth, and therefore encourages their involvement in the Church and the society. It is a fact that youth is the most significant and the most crucial stage in the life of an individual. It is during this stage that we get to unlock one's potentialities and abilities, but at the same time,





it is a period when we insistently ask about our meaning and purpose – *What must I do so that my life may have full value and meaning?* The Pope counsels the youth to place themselves, therefore, in the presence of Christ and make him the confidant of the questionings of their youth⁶. Those who are entrusted therefore with guiding the youth—parents, teachers, pastors, and youth ministers—will do well to refer the youth to Christ, his words, his life, and examples, in finding answers to their questions about life’s meaning and purpose.

B. ON MORALITY AND CONSCIENCE

To shed light on how conscience is defined, the Holy Father says: *“it is where time and eternity meet;” “it is the most important dimension of time and history”*. It is that *“interior treasure whereby man continually goes beyond himself in the direction of eternity.”* Man carries with him this treasure, the deposit of good and evil, across the frontier of death, so that, in the sight of him who is holiness itself, he may find the ultimate and definitive truth about his whole life: *“after that comes judgment”*.⁷ The Holy Father pleads with young people to allow themselves to be equipped with sound principles by which their consciences can work with *“mature clear-sightedness,”* by which now and in their adulthood they will be known as *“persons of conscience,” “persons of principles,” “persons who inspire trust,”* and *“persons who are credible.”*⁸

C. “LET THE YOUNG KNOW THAT THEY ARE LOVED!”

As guides to the youth, older people (e.g. teachers, mentors, youth guides) must be firm on how they look at our young people. Going back to the story of the Rich Young Man, there was an interesting

description of Jesus’ demeanor toward the young man, and it says, *“Jesus, looking upon him, loved him.”* The Holy Father urges each young person to discover this look of Christ and experience it in all of its depth. Young people, all people for that matter, need this loving look, the Pope said, *especially at the moment of trial, humiliation, persecution, defeat, when our humanity is, as it were, blotted out in the eyes of other people, insulted and trampled upon. At that moment the awareness that the Father has always loved us in his Son, that Christ always loves each of us, becomes a solid support for our whole human existence.* Therefore, this look of love is to be sought in God’s Word in the Scripture, in the Sacraments, especially in the Eucharist, and in the love of family and friends. The family, school, and parish are enjoined in leading the young people to these places and situations where they can experience what the young man in the Gospel experienced: *“Jesus, looking upon him, loved him.”*

D. “FOLLOW ME!”: VOCATION TO THE PRIESTHOOD AND RELIGIOUS LIFE

Undeniably, it is during the period of youth when they may feel a calling to a particular vocation in the community of God’s People. *“Follow me!”* is what Jesus says to young people, so as His Holiness, if there will be a point in time when young people are called to the priesthood or the religious life by which through the profession of the evangelical counsels—chastity, poverty, and obedience—a man or a woman recognizes as his or her own *“the programme of life which Christ himself lived on earth, for the sake of the Kingdom of God”*. By professing religious vows, such individuals commit themselves to bear a particular witness to the love of God above all things, and likewise to that call to union with God in eternity which is directed to everyone.

⁶ Dilecti Amici, n.5

⁷ Heb 9:27.

⁸ Dilecti Amici, n.7

⁹ Mt 19:12.





In line with this possibility of being called to the priesthood or the religious life, St. Pope John Paul II remarks: *“If such a call comes into your heart, do not silence it! Let it develop into the maturity of a vocation! Respond to it through prayer and fidelity to the commandments!”*

**E. “FOLLOW ME!”: CALL TO CHRISTIAN DISCIPLESHIP
IN THE LAY STATE**

While priestly and religious vocations have kept their character and their sacramental and charismatic importance in the life of the People of God, the Second Vatican Council also gave renewed importance to the universal sharing of all the baptized in Christ’s three-fold prophetic, priestly, and kingly mission, (*tria munera*), as also to the awareness of the universal vocation to holiness. This broadened perspective on vocation has led to a realization of the fact that every human life vocation, as a Christian vocation, corresponds to Jesus’ call in the Gospel to “come and follow him,” to be a disciple. This evangelical call can also be responded to by striving to bring about the transformation of the whole of temporal reality according to the spirit of the Gospel. It is in this context that we can locate the apostolate of the laity, which is inseparable from the very essence of the Christian vocation.

**F. “FOLLOW ME! I CALL YOU STILL TO ANOTHER LOVE.”:
THE VOCATION TO MARRIAGE**

Alternatively, responding to the call to marriage rather than to the priestly or religious vocation does not entail breaking off one’s conversation with Christ in this extremely important phase of one’s youth. The Holy Father tells young people that Jesus’ call to *“Follow him”* may yet be a call to still another love. To set out on the path of the married vocation means to learn married love day by day, year by year: love according to

soul and body, love that *“is patient, is kind, that does not insist on its own way... and does not rejoice at the wrong”*: love that *“rejoices in the right”*, love that *“endures all things.”*

To parents, teachers, pastors, formators, and youth guides, the Holy Father addresses the appeal to assist the young people in discerning, nurturing, and supporting their response to God in whatever vocation they may take soon.

G. BE CUSTODIANS OF HERITAGE

The Holy Father urges the youth to be custodians of heritage. The heritage that one received [e.g. from parents, family, childhood neighborhood] becomes a person’s permanent link with those who passed it on to them and to whom they owe so much. Then, the individual will continue to pass on the same heritage. Their horizons continuously expand, along with their heritages – the small world they live in proceed to a new and bigger world as they move from the comfort of their homes to their school, community, and workplace. Whatever they do to that ‘new world’, they leave something of itself in the person. Their influence on the people around them lasts for quite a long time.

The Holy Father is challenging the youth to always be aware of and to gradually experience their social bond that is wider than that of the family, and to share in the responsibility for the common good of that larger family which is the earthly ‘homeland’ of each person. The prominent figures of one’s national ancient and modern history also serve as guides to young people to help foster the development of that social love, more often called ‘love of country’.





H. WORK: RECOGNIZING, DISCOVERING TALENTS, AND USING THEM CREATIVELY

The importance of work in the life of a human person is such that through it, a man not only transforms nature, adapting it to his own needs, but also achieves fulfillment as a human being and, indeed, in a sense becomes ‘more a human being’¹⁰. Youth, the Pope says, is a privileged time in a person’s life for discerning talents. It is also the time when one can determine, based on discovered talents, which path of human activity, work, and creativity to take in one’s adult life. The Holy Father wishes young people to be able to “discover themselves along these paths” and he counsels them that once they discover which path is properly theirs, to pursue it with interest, diligence, and enthusiasm.

This is where the school takes responsibility for the formation of young individuals. School and education must prepare them adequately for work. It should also be reckoned that work itself is a school in which great and important values are learned: it has an eloquence of its own which makes a valid contribution to human culture.¹¹ The Holy Father acknowledges and commends the role schools play in the intellectual, moral, and spiritual development of the youth. It is also in schools where they get to hone their talents and inclinations and develop friendships as well.

I. THE NEED FOR SELF-EDUCATION, CAUTION AGAINST VICES, ETC.

The Pope calls the attention of young people to the need to undertake the task of their own education, supplementing the education that is accorded them by their family and the school which will always be incomplete. Education in the family and at school can only provide them

with a certain number of elements for the work of self-education. The Pope here is referring to the young people’s inborn “sense of truth” that must be used for their exercise of true freedom. Being truly free here “does not at all mean doing everything that pleases me, or doing what I want to do”. To be truly free means rather “to use one’s own freedom for what is a truly good”. To be truly free means “to be a person of an upright conscience, to be responsible, to be a person ‘for others’.

This kind of self-education toward the ability to exercise authentic freedom is necessary to arm the young person against the threat that is posed on him by the world around them. Among many of such threats, the Pope identifies the following:

- bitter criticism;
- skepticism regarding traditional values, which can easily degenerate into extreme cynicism;
- a type of entertainment business that distracts people from a serious commitment in life and encourages passivity, selfishness, and self-isolation;
- the bad use of advertising techniques, which plays upon the natural tendency to avoid effort and promises the immediate satisfaction of every desire; and
- flight from responsibility by recourse to the fantasy worlds of alcohol and drugs, in short-lived sexual relationships without commitment to marriage and family, in indifference, in cynicism, and even in violence.

J. YOUTH: TIME FOR GROWTH IN STATURE AND WISDOM

Youth is the time of psychophysical development. The Holy Father stresses that this growth in mind and body must be accompanied by ‘growth’

¹⁰ John Paul II, Apostolic Letter *Laborem Exercens*, n. 9

¹¹ John Paul II, Apostolic Letter *Laborem Exercens*, n. 9





in ‘wisdom and grace.’¹² It is a process of growth that “brings with it the gradual accumulation of all that is true, good, and beautiful, even when this growth is linked ‘from outside’ to suffering, the loss of loved ones, and the whole experience of evil that constantly makes itself felt in the world in which we live.”¹³ Anchored on the words from the book of Proverbs, “Acquire wisdom, acquire insight... Do not forsake her [i.e. wisdom] and she will keep you; love her and she will guard you”¹⁴. To heed this counsel includes several concrete measures:

- contact with nature
- contact with the achievements of humanity, showcasing truth, goodness, and beauty
- contact with people (of different cultures, disciplines, arts, and sciences) through which they can learn the truth about man
- contact with others – new contacts, companionships, and friendships; developing wider social circles
- contact with God – by prayer, opening one’s heart and conscience to the One who knows them better than they know themselves; by reading and meditating on the Scriptures.

K. YOUTH AS HOPE OF THE CHURCH: MISSION, PEACE, UNITY

The reason for the special attention that the Church and the ministry give to the young, is that the Church sees her hope for the future in them. They are deemed to be ‘agents of peace’. In the face of the many situations of misery around the world — the hundreds of thousands of people living in extreme poverty and are even dying of hunger, the possibility of calamities and catastrophes on a truly apocalyptic scale, the

many cases of violation of fundamental human rights, the existence of so much systematic violence and the murder of innocent people, the many blatant acts of abuse of men and women, the many cases of torture and torment inflicted on human bodies and human consciences, are some of the modern dilemmas facing our youth. At this point, the Holy Father interprets for the young people the words of the Apostle through which Christ answers their questions, as a confirmation and a challenge for them.

We must make the young people strong for the struggle against evil, the real evil: everything that offends God, every injustice and exploitation, every falsehood and deceit, everything that insults and humiliates, everything that profanes human society and human relationships, every crime against life, and every sin.

L. “DO WHATEVER CHRIST TELLS YOU”

The general message of Pope John Paul II to the young people of today: “*Do whatever Christ tells you*”. He assures young people this so that—against the background of the difficult times in which we live, they “may always be prepared to make a defense to anyone who calls [them] to account for the hope that is in [them.]”¹⁵ He urges them to be active and to take up their responsibilities in all the fields open to them in the world. This is because the Church and the society rely on them for the future.

This, too, is the message of the Church to all young people of all times, of parents to their children, of teachers and formators to their students, and indeed all who care for the young people and the future of humanity and of the world, because Christ alone is the Way, the Truth, and the Life¹⁶, and he alone has the Words of eternal life¹⁷.

¹² This is in reference to the words with which the Gospel speaks about the youthful years of Jesus of Nazareth: “And Jesus **increased in wisdom and stature**, and in favour with God and man” (Lk 2:52).

¹³ Dilecti Amici, n.14

¹⁴ Prov 4: 5-7.

¹⁵ Dilecti Amici, n.17

¹⁶ Jn 14:6.

¹⁷ Jn 6:68.





CONSIDERATIONS AND INDICATIONS FOR FORMING YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE LITURGY

1. LITURGICAL-SACRAMENTAL CELEBRATIONS AS INTRINSICALLY FORMATIVE

One indication and evidence of how the Holy Father and the Church rely on our youth is to begin their formation in and for the liturgy. The goal of a liturgical ministry is not only to learn the proper exercise of their ministry but also to be imbued with the spirit of the liturgy that can bring themselves and the people whom they serve to a more devout and fruitful participation in liturgical celebrations. Schools and parishes have perennially contented themselves with this, resting in the thought that the liturgy and the sacraments are formative elements in themselves¹⁸. Liturgical-Sacramental celebrations are intrinsically formative in nature – presupposing that exposing young people to the Mass and other sacraments as frequently as possible will produce good results in terms of their formation as Catholic Christians. It is true that the liturgy in general and the sacraments are objectively efficacious in the sense that God alone, not human effort or merit, is the ultimate cause of the grace given in the sacramental rite¹⁹. This, however, does not discount the necessity of the appropriate personal disposition of the recipient as an indispensable condition for greater fruitfulness of liturgical and sacramental participation.²⁰

¹⁸ Second Vatican Council, Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium* on the Sacred Liturgy (4 December 1963): AAS 56 (1964) 97-138. Eng. tr.: Vatican Council II. The Conciliar and Post-Conciliar Documents, ed. Flannery, 1-36. Henceforth, this document shall be referred to as SC. SC 59: “[The sacraments] do indeed impart grace, but, also, the very act of celebrating them most effectively disposes of the faithful to receive this grace fruitfully, to worship God duly, and to practice charity. Also Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) 1128: “From the moment that a sacrament is celebrated in accordance with the intention of the Church, the power of Christ and his Spirit acts in and through it, independently of the personal holiness of the minister.”

¹⁹ Episcopal Commission on Catechism and Catholic Education of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippine, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, (CCC), Manila 1994, n. 1128. Henceforth, this document shall be referred to as CCC.

²⁰ CCC 1128.

2. THE NECESSITY OF PROPER DISPOSITION

The Vatican II Liturgy Constitution offers a very important reminder and it says, “*before men can come to the liturgy they must be called to faith and conversion.*”²¹

It is necessary to develop a proper disposition to those who are engaged in the liturgical apostolate, as well as those in charge of guiding people to Christian maturity such as pastors and Catholic educators. The abovementioned Conciliar text affirms that there should be a very close connection among the preaching of the word of God, the journey of faith and conversion, and liturgical participation. The statement further states that in this relationship, the preaching of the word of God and the journey to conversion are fundamental conditions for initiating people into the liturgy. Another way to express this relationship is that the preaching of the Word of God and the journey of faith reach their culmination in the liturgical celebration.

The call to faith (which is the purpose of the proclamation of the Word of God) and the conversion of the heart (which is the response of man to such call) are essential conditions for a program of liturgical formation that truly serves its purpose. Children and youth must be helped to develop these fundamental attitudes and values that are a condition to a living personal encounter with God.

3. LITURGY AS PERSONAL ENCOUNTER WITH GOD

The liturgical and sacramental actions are a personal encounter between God and man: God who reveals himself in words, gestures, and rituals which manifest to us his active presence, and the

²¹ SC 9.





man who responds to the action of God with faith and actions through which interpersonal dialogue and communion are established.

4. MAN'S RESPONSE IN THE SACRAMENTAL ACTION

It is worthwhile recalling once more what the Liturgy Constitution says: "*But in order that the liturgy may be able to produce its full effects, the faithful must come to it with proper dispositions.*"²² Only when there is an initial religious disposition of the human subject, does his participation in the liturgical celebration become a worthy expression of his desire for grace and of his will to encounter Christ. If this desire is not there, the sacrament (even if validly celebrated and received) cannot develop into a genuine and mutual encounter. "The sacraments presuppose faith," says the Liturgy Constitution.²³

Faith, which is the necessary disposition for the fruitful celebration and reception of the sacraments, is as much a personal decision as it is a gift from God²⁴. The sacraments also "nourish, strengthen, and express" that faith. As believers, we should be responsive to the liturgical-sacramental celebration. The words, objects, and actions work together to create in the faithful an opening so that they can allow Christ to come in and bring their Christian life to greater maturity.

5. PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1. BRING THE YOUTH TO ENCOUNTER CHRIST

It is and it should indeed be the goal of those who minister to the youth to put the young ones not only in touch but in communion and intimacy with Jesus Christ²⁵. This entails

awakening or, perhaps, reawakening, forming, and animating the young people's faith and Christian life through Liturgy. Moreover, it also develops accompaniment for the young people who long to encounter Christ, and they want to have someone to walk with them in their questioning. They want a first-hand experience of God, and they want that experience to be connected to their everyday lives. Young people must first be helped to develop proper dispositions for a liturgical encounter with the Lord, thereby enabling them to foster and fulfill the "*missio ad gentes*" in which all sectors of the Church have a share. Pope Francis articulates this desire of the Church to usher in the youth toward this personal encounter with the Lord that will eventually urge them to go out in an apostolic stance. "*I invite all Christians, everywhere, at this very moment, to a renewed personal encounter with Jesus Christ, or at least openness to letting him encounter them.*"²⁶

A. A MINISTRY OF ACCOMPANIMENT

Like the disciples on the road to Emmaus²⁷, young people are often filled with questions. This has been emphatically pointed out by Pope John Paul II in the *Dilecti Amici*²⁸. They long to encounter Christ, and they want to have someone to walk with them in their questioning. They want a first-hand experience of God, and they want that experience to be connected to their everyday life.

Young people are to be helped and accompanied in their encounter with God in the sacramental life of the Church, in

²² SC 11.

²³ SC 59.

²⁴ Episcopal Commission on Catechism and Catholic Education of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, *Catechism for Filipino Catholics* (CFC), Manila 1997, n. 149.

²⁵ *Catechesi Tradendae*, n. 5.

²⁶ Pope Francis, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* on the Proclamation of the Gospel in Today's World (24 November 2013), n. 33. Henceforth, this document shall be referred to as EG.

²⁷ Lk 24:13-35.

²⁸ *Dilecti Amici*, n. 3 and n. 5.





prayer, community, in the Word, nature, service, witness, friendship, acts of kindness, hospitality, silence, creativity, art, and music. Ministries on behalf of the youth should be retaught so that these can be venues for a series of encounters and opportunities to reflect on these experiences. Those who are engaged in ministries on behalf of the youth should be, as they were, architects of encounter for young people.

B. A WELCOMING ENVIRONMENT

An environment where they feel at home, where they share and dialogue about their ideas and questions, where they can share gifts in ministries, service, and leadership should be fostered in liturgical ministry. Whether in school or in parish – better if in both – young people need to see disciples living their faith in witness and service. Bringing the youth to moving and meaningful experiences of liturgical celebrations will entail modeling on the part of their parents, teachers, and youth guides. Seeing these significant persons devoutly participating in liturgy will help young people to appreciate the essence of what it means to be a Catholic community: we are a people of the table, a people of the Eucharist²⁹.

C. COLLABORATION AMONG SCHOOL, PARISH, AND FAMILIES

Sharing at the table of the parish or the school chapel must echo the experience of gathering at the table of the home. The youths' experience of the home as the domestic Church is foundational to their formation as disciples. Schools

and parishes have a rich opportunity to inspire and engage parents by building relationships and providing crucial support for families. The school and the parish can best minister to the youth if this is done in close collaboration with their families. Liturgical celebrations, especially the Eucharist, organized with the involvement of the young people's families, are a rich opportunity for this. First Communion, Confirmation, commissioning for youth liturgical ministries, celebrations of the school, and parish feasts are some of the possible venues for collaboration between school, parish, and the family that can be capitalized on for initiating the youth in liturgy and firming up their continuous liturgical formation.

D. LITURGICAL CATECHESIS

It is a need for a youth ministry for a catechetical formation that is explicitly liturgical and sacramental – a liturgical catechesis. It should be anchored on the catholic doctrine, moral values, and worship tradition, for these are the essential components of the Catholic Faith, specifically³⁰:

- a. Initiation to the rites, symbols, and prayers of the celebration;
- b. Initiation to liturgical expressivity; and
- c. Initiation to a sense of the assembly.

Children and young people need to be instructed in these to help that faith continue to grow throughout their lives. The goal is to bring the love of Christ to the young people by helping them understand and appreciate the rich tradition that is their Catholic faith.

²⁹ EG, n. 13.

³⁰ A. J. Chupungco, "Liturgical Catechesis," in *Liturgy for the Filipino Church. A Legacy of Life and Teaching*, ed. J. M. Manabat, Manila 2014, 329-332.





CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the study done, the following recommendations are offered for fine-tuning the Church's ministry to young people, especially in the area of forming the young in and for the liturgy:

1. The family serves as the foundation in forming the character of a person. They are the first institution that is accountable for the holistic development of youth who face various life challenges. Every family member plays a vital role in creating a community where love resides. Parents, to become effective agents of formation in the family, must be continuously taught and formed. For this to be realized, parents must be involved in the implementation of the youth formation program in school.
2. The youth needs to engage in the Church community since the Church is the place *"where God's people meet Jesus in word and sacrament"* in a concrete way. The Church must provide a setting in which young people can gather to express and discuss their needs and fears. A youth-friendly Church community is one that listens to them, tries to respond to their needs, and accompanies them in their growth as disciples. As the Church wants the youth to commit themselves to the Church's life, the Church must likewise commit herself to the development of the youth.
3. Catholic schools are called to be a living faith-community where adolescents can deepen their understanding of the Catholic faith both inside and outside of the classroom. Campus ministry should employ effective ministerial strategies on behalf of the youth including effective religious education, service projects, retreats, and other activities. Catholic education and campus ministry must work together to strengthen and empower the youth to use their gifts and talents in the wider Church community.
4. The youth needs to go beyond their family, parish, and school communities to serve the greater Church community. It is recommended that they must be given opportunities to reach out to other people. Service organizations are communities where youth can learn about joyful giving while being spiritually challenged to love others as Christ does.
5. Liturgical participation and ministry can be powerful and effective venues for both the discernment of vocations for young people, as well as for their conscience and moral formation necessary in facing the many challenges that face them today and in the future. These two objectives must be consciously considered in forming, guiding, and accompanying young people in their liturgical life and involvement.

The indications and recommendations for forming the youth in and for the liturgy that were brought forth in this paper took the themes of the apostolic letter into consideration seriously; hence, the liturgy and liturgical participation may truly be a dialogue of faith and life with Jesus Christ who "looks at them with love" as he did at the Rich Young Man (Mk 10:21). May our young people today not "turn away" but joyfully and eagerly offer their treasure—which is their youth—to Jesus, and follow him unreservedly.





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