

Abstracts

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“Performing” the Presence of Christ in the Mass. The Liturgical-Theological Significance of Hans-Georg Gadamer’s Concepts of “Symbol”, “Image” and “Sign”

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Abstract: The paper applies Hans-Georg Gadamer’s categories of ‘symbol’, ‘image’ (and ‘sign’) to the ritual world of liturgy. In the author’s view, this Gadamerian view does is helpful for liturgical theology as it allows organising the ritual structure of the liturgy: the rituals (‘images’) centred around the core sacramental act (‘symbol’: transubstantiation) present to the liturgical community the person of Christ, who comes to us through in this core act. The ‘image-rites’ all ‘depict” the God-man who comes among us. Moreover, this approach shows that the various rituals, organised around a centre, are not arbitrary, negligible ornaments of the liturgy, but have an immense function: to illuminate and thus explain, through the optics of Church teaching, the core act performing the divine representation.

Keywords: ritual, liturgical act, symbol, transubstantiation, dramatic gestures, *elevatio maior*, liturgical vestments, *Mysterium fidei*, incense, bell ringing

ALEXANDRE GÁNÓCZY

The Eucharist, the Supper of the Lord. Biblical Theological and Ecumenical Reflections



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Abstract: The Eucharist, the Supper of the Lord has its origins both in the Last Supper and in the meals that Jesus shared during his ministry, as manifestations of God's mercy towards all. It also has the characters of Jewish ritual (thanksgiving, Pesach, covenantal) meals. It is personal encounter with Christ and a communal sacramental meal that creates a sense of fellowship among believers and builds up the Church. Focusing on the biblical theological foundations of the Eucharist bridges the confessional disagreements that arose with the Reformation. The ecumenical insights focus on the personal presence of Christ and reflect the understanding of the Eucharist as memorial (anamnesis) that makes the sacrifice of Christ present. These insights are reflected in the conciliar liturgical reforms and theology. Further liturgical reforms should also be envisaged.

Keywords: Eucharist, Supper of the Lord, Last Supper, table fellowship, memorial, Vatican II, ecumenical dialogue

ENDRE KISS

The Altar as Absolute Centre. The Expression of the Love of the People of God in the Altar Kiss

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Abstract: In the church, in the sacred space of the encounter with God, the altar is the absolute focal point, the *axis mundi*. The altar stands at the centre of the celebration of the Eucharist, itself the heart of the community of believers. The altar embodies Christ and points to his redemptive sacrifice. The study focuses on the centrality of the altar, highlighting a single gesture: the kiss of the altar. This expresses the love of the Church for Jesus. It is a greeting and a sign of love for Christ, a manifestation of reverence, an expression of thanksgiving for the mystery of redemption. It is the kiss of the Church, the bride, to the Bridegroom, Christ. The gesture also reveals the deep and intimate connection of the priest with the sacrifice of Christ. It shows the participation of the person as a whole, body and heart, in the liturgical action.

Keywords: Eucharist, altar, altar kiss, sacred space

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**The “Dogmatics” of Communion – Reflections
on the Two Commingling Rites of the Mass**



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Abstract: Eucharistic communion leads to believers’ union with the Triune God and with the Church through the other communicants. This paper reflects on the dogmatic significance of communion in the light of the two comminglings. The first commingling, that of wine and water, is part of the Offertory, and signifies the incarnation of the Word, who became partaker of our humanity. In the light of this rite, communicants are united with God according to the mode of the incarnation. The second commingling points to the union of the Body and Blood of Christ in the Holy Communion for the salvation of our souls and leads us to eternal life. Those who partake in the Eucharist, experience the outpouring of the Paschal mystery of Christ in the Holy Spirit.

Keywords: Eucharist, communion, commingling (*commixtio*), incarnation, Paschal mystery

JOSEPH VERHEYDEN

Looking for Traces of Early Christian Liturgical Praxis at Unexpected Places? A Note on James 2,3

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Abstract: In a warning against partiality, the Epistle of James illustrates in a stereotypical way the treatment of wealthy and poor individuals in a Christian gathering. This essay focuses on the command to the rich person (σὺ κάθου ὧδε καλῶς, Jas 2,3). Καλῶς is rendered either as “good/comfortable” or “in a good spot”, or as “please”. Dale C. Allison cites the proposal of James Hardy Ropes that καλῶς is a „polite idiom in the sense of ‘please,’ ‘pray’” that can be paralleled with the phrase στῶμεν καλῶς, „stand we all fairly” or „please, let us stand” in Greek liturgies. This paper examines this possibility in the light of several Greek and Syriac liturgies (the Liturgy of St. James, the Liturgy of St John Chrysostom, the Liturgy of Antioch and the Liturgy of the Syrian Jacobites, the Syriac Anaphora of James) and argues that such a translation of καλῶς and its connection with liturgical practice cannot be excluded.

Keywords: Epistle of James, rich and poor, Greek liturgy, Syriac liturgy, στῶμεν καλῶς

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The Reform of the Blessing of Abbots and Abbesses and the Ecclesiological Significance of the Ordo benedictionis abbatis et abbatissae (1970)

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Abstract: In view of the principle of *lex orandi, lex credendi*, liturgical books are the essential embodiment of conciliar theology. This paper examines the reform of the rite of the blessing of the abbots and abbesses in the Roman Pontifical (1970), with reference to its ecclesiological aspects. The rite reflects the role of the abbots and abbesses in and towards the monastic community, avoiding the confusion with the episcopal ordination. At the same time, it includes references to abbot ordinaries. Further, it also points to the role of the community, i.e. of lay men and women in the election of the abbot and abbess.

Keywords: Roman Pontifical, abbot, abbess, blessing, ordination, ecclesiology

ISTVÁN PÉTER

Changing Liturgies in the service of the Eternal God

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Abstract: The historical overview of the life of the Hungarian Reformed community in Bucharest in the 19th century discusses the role of its ministers (Imre Sükei, Albert Péterfi, József Dimény), the growth of the community, the tensions related to the shared use of the Lutheran church, and the building and inauguration of the Reformed church. The paper also addresses the liturgical life of the community, the challenges coming from a very different religious environment, and the unsuccessful attempts to draft a reformed liturgical agenda.

Keywords: Reformed Church in Bucharest, Reformed worship, liturgical reforms, Imre Sükei, Albert Péterfi, József Dimény

TOBIAS NICKLAS

A Sermon on the Earliest Eucharistic Tradition (1 Cor 11,23-26)



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Abstract: Dealing with several, apparently disparate issues in the ecclesia in Corinth that share the lack of inner unity as fundamental problem, Paul responds with the construction of a common ‘identity’. This is based on the shared relationship with Christ, the Crucified and Risen One, regardless of Corinthians’ differences and the diversity of their gifts. This relationship is expressed in a particularly dense manner through the image of the “body of Christ” into which the members of the ecclesia are baptised. The metaphor is not limited to the idea that members work together to create a greater whole. Every baptised person becomes part of the body of the Crucified and Resurrected One, who – as the Eucharistic tradition recalled in 1 Cor 11,23-26 shows – gives himself – his body – to the assembled ecclesia. The sermon on Maundy Thursday attempts to apply these insights and to show what they could mean for the church today.

Keywords: 1 Corinthians 11,23-26, body of Christ, Eucharist, sermon, Maundy Thursday

SZABOLCS ANDRÁS

Epiklesis and Creed. On the Filioque Issue in the Context of the Liturgy

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Abstract: The Filioque controversy has long been a source of theological debate with liturgical implications. This study examines the interrelation between the Filioque clause, the epiclesis, and creedal practices in the Catholic tradition, from a historical and theological perspective, tracing the liturgical, doctrinal, and political implications of the controversy. The Filioque clause of the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed has its roots in Western theological traditions, especially through figures like Alcuin, who asserted thereby the dominance of the Frankish Empire in the religious and secular sphere. Liturgically, the clause became a pivotal expression of faith, in Charlemagne's reforms and the 794 *Admonitio Generalis*. This paper explores the theological dimensions of the Filioque, contextualized by liturgical practices and historical power dynamics, the central role of the clause in shaping liturgical identity and unity, and the differences in the Catholic and Orthodox perception of the Holy Spirit's procession and role in the Eucharist, with implications for contemporary ecumenical dialogue. The findings call for a deeper appreciation of the liturgical and theological practices underpinning the Christian faith.

Keywords: Filioque, Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed, epiclesis, Alcuin, Frankish Empire

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The Reading of Scriptures in the Eastern Liturgy



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Abstract: The Eastern liturgy is essentially rooted in the reading and proclamation of the Word of God. The reading of the biblical texts – the Gospels and the Epistles – plays a fundamental role in the services, as the Word of God is considered an active revelation that interacts with the faithful. This study examines how the reading of the sacred texts is integrated into the liturgy of the Orthodox Church and its function in the transmission of grace, spiritual formation, and mystical communion between God and humans. The study analyses the history and development of biblical readings, their structure, theological importance and their role in the liturgical life of the Orthodox Church, using patristic teachings and the contributions of contemporary theologians.

Keywords: liturgy, Word of God, Scripture, theology, revelation, spiritual education, communion

MIKLÓS SZABÓ

**The Weight of Words: A Historical Overview
of the Good Friday Prayer for the Jews**

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Abstract: The paper proposes a historical overview of the Good Friday prayer for the Jews, which reinforced negative stereotypes. The prayers and the accompanying gestures (or the lack thereof) point to the problematic way in which the Catholic Church understood Jews and Judaism. The long road to reconciliation led to closure only after Vatican II. The new form of the supplication acknowledged God's covenant with Abraham as foundation for Israel's salvation, moved away from a supersessionist theology which emphasised the blindness and stubbornness of the Jews and their rejection of Jesus, offered a more positive view of Judaism and acknowledged its intrinsic value. However, certain expressions of the prayer still expressed a Christocentric perspective. A new controversy arose after Pope Benedict XVI modified the prayer (2008). The essay asks whether the changes in the Good Friday prayer reflect indeed a theological evolution in the Church's understanding of Judaism, or whether these changes are merely superficial. The historical overview of the supplication for the Jews is important because liturgy both expresses and shapes faith.

Keywords: Good Friday prayer for the Jews, reform of the Good Friday liturgy, *Opus Sacerdotale Amici Israel*, *Nostra Aetate*, *Missale Romanum*, Pope John XXIII, Pope Benedict XVI

ZOLTÁN OLÁH

A Heart of Flesh Instead of a Heart of Stone. An Old Testament Heart Transplant?

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Abstract: In the aftermath of Pope Francis's encyclical *Dilexit nos* on the cult of the Sacred Heart, the paper explores the significance of the biblical notion of the heart. It focuses on the prophetic words in Ezekiel 36,26-27 on YHWH replacing Israel's heart of stone with a heart of flesh as a form of metaphoric speech. It focuses on the notion of the heart in the Hebrew Bible, as the core and essence of the human person, in the cultural, Near Eastern context of the Bible. The author argues that the heart of stone in Ezekiel refers to idolatry. The heart of Israel was petrified when it turned away from the life-giving God to idols. God removes and breaks this heart of stone just as the idols, and replaces it with a new heart, a heart of flesh. The words of the prophet remind believers of the need to move away from contemporary idols to the living God.

Keywords: heart, leb(ab), Hebrew Bible, Ezekiel 36,26-27, idolatry

ANNA FARMATI

The Easter Mystery in the Office Hymn Translations

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Abstract: The study examines the Hungarian translations of a medieval easter office hymn, *Ad coenam Agni providi*, and, after uncovering the layers of meaning of the original hymn, analyzes how and why the textually faithful translations in medieval codices differ from those in early Protestant hymnals, and why these can be considered more as paraphrases.

Keywords: medieval hymnology, easter office hymn, *Ad coenam Agni providi*, early Protestant hymnals

XÉNIA JONICA

“The Timing of the Speeches is Determined by the Season, the Locals and the Surroundings!” A Popular Mission Agenda in the 20th Century

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Abstract: Popular mission was an important pastoral instrument in the 20th century, aimed at reviving and deepening religious life. This paper explores the practice of popular missions in Transylvania in

the first half of the 20th century, after the foundation of the Transylvanian Priestly Missionary Association with the approval of Bishop Gusztáv Károly Mailáth (1901). It focuses on the Handbook for Popular Missions of Balázs Lajos and Sándor Gálffy, which details the indispensable elements: the sermons and teaching of various groups, the Holy Mass, the Stations of the Cross and the Holy Rosary, ringing the penitential bell, morning and evening prayer, evening and festive devotions, silence, fasting, confession, and the organisation of religious associations.

Keywords: popular mission, Transylvanian Priestly Missionary Association, Bishop Gusztáv Károly Mailáth, Handbook for Popular Missions, Balázs Lajos, Sándor Gálffy

MÁRTA BODÓ

Life-Giving Words



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Abstract: What does a good homily look like? The words of God give life; the words of the priest have a similar power. There are several aspects to a good homily; communication and sharing personal experiences and stories. For a priest to give a good homily he must be silent, he must first be a listener. Those listening to the homily are not only looking for authenticity, truth, reliable information, but also for words with transcendent meaning.

Keywords: preaching, homily, communication

GYÖRGYI SZATMÁRI

In Winter and in Summer, in Heaven and on Earth... The Messages of the Transfiguration During the Liturgical Year

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Abstract: The paper examines the narrative of the Transfiguration (Matt 17,1-9; Mark 9,2-10; Luke 9,28-36) within the liturgical year. In the Roman liturgy, in addition to the Feast of the Transfiguration in summer (6 August), the pericope is also read on the second Sunday of Lent, in winter or early spring. In the Liturgy of the Word this passage, heard twice a year, is associated with other readings. This paper proposes a biblical-spiritual-liturgical approach, paying attention to the context of the readings, asking how contexts shed light on the liturgical readings, who and what should we listen to, and how should we listen to the Gospel. The analysis starts from the oldest gospel, Mark, read in Year B, as a basis for comparing the Synoptics passages, and highlights the particularities of the parallel narratives. Then, in the light of the readings of Years A, B and C, I attempt to shed light on the context of the scriptural passages and summarise the message of the Transfiguration from winter (or spring) to summer.

Keywords: Transfiguration, Matthew 17,1-9, Mark 9,2-10, Luke 9,28-36, liturgical year

SÁNDOR FAZAKAS

**What Happens in the Sacred Space? Reflections
on the Joint Use of Theology and Architecture
to Shape Worship Space**



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Abstract: This paper discusses the understanding of sacred space from the perspective of Protestant theology. According to this view, sacral or liturgical space is a space that is primarily a space of worship. The liturgical reforms of different eras have attempted to express an essential theological insight through the shaping of space and the use of architecture and the visual arts: that space has the function of framing the interaction between God and man. In our modern age, however, profane spaces – a public square, a school auditorium, or the scene of a mass tragedy – can fulfil this function in a completely spontaneous way, especially where people are conscious of their existential fragility. The modern sacred spaces of our time, on the other hand, consciously seek to express, with ecumenical commitment, transcending denominational specificities, that sacred-liturgical spaces are not only an expression of verbal religious communication or spiritual experience, but also signs of the intersection of the immanent and the transcendent.

Keywords: sacral and liturgical space, religious experience, fragility of human being, spiritual practice, communion

GUSZTÁV KOVÁCS

**Feast in the Burnout Society: Byung-Chul Han
on Excessive Positivity**

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Abstract: This paper explores the disappearance of the feast, the loss of the ability to celebrate and the “catastrophe” that engendered this phenomenon, in light of the writings of Byung-Chul Han, especially *The Burnout Society* (2019) and *The Disappearance of Ritual. A Topology of the Present* (2023). Through Han’s insights, the paper points at ways in which the compulsion to positivity and productivity diminish our capacity for celebration and explores ways to reinvent the feast looking beyond productivity and positivity.

Keywords: Byung-Chul Han, feast, burnout society, excessive positivity

ISTVÁN ANDRÁS

Mysticism as a Path of the Cult and the Exchange of Values in the Age of Christian Fulfilled Nihilism

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Abstract: Postmodern age can be described as an age of fulfilled nihilism, marked by the idea of the death of God and driven by the devaluation of values and the search for new Values. The only path open to reason and faith will be the path of nihilism. Christians must follow the path of Christian fulfilled nihilism. This path, this age, is not an age of annihilation, of nothingness, not even a path of godlessness, but the beginning of something new. It is an opportunity for Christianity, because it can redefine its values. It will be the path of Christian fulfilled nihilism. The question remains: how is the path of nihilism to be travelled? I argue that mysticism can be the path of Christian fulfilled nihilism. Cult plays an important role in that, as immersion in mysticism connects the person to the Sacred, an experience from which new values can be drawn.

Keywords: fulfilled nihilism, Christian fulfilled nihilism, mysticism, cult, values

KORINNA ZAMFIR

**Annunciations in the Gospel of James.
Theological and Iconographic Perspectives**

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Abstract: The Gospel of James (GJ) has had a major contribution to the development of Mariology, the emergence of the Marian feasts, the iconography of Mary, the Nativity and the cult of Saint Anne and Joachim. The influence was direct in the East and mediated by the Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew in the West. This essay explores the annunciation scenes of the GJ as intertextual reworkings of the infancy gospels in Luke and Matthew, intertwined with Jewish traditions and ancient views on women's occupations, and the iconographic reception of these scenes: the annunciation at the well, to the spinning virgin, and hybrid scenes (evoking both settings, to Ann and Mary, the Maria gravida type). The continued use of traditions linked to the GJ in Western liturgy, despite its formal rejection, points to the contradiction between enduring liturgical commemoration and the silencing of the underlying textual traditions (T. O'Loughlin). The impact of the GJ shows that a sharp distinction between 'canonical' and 'apocryphal' is not helpful for understanding the roots of Christian faith and liturgical practice.

Keywords: Gospel of James, Annunciation, iconography, annunciation at the well, annunciation to the spinning virgin, Maria gravida

ENIKŐ HEGEDŰS

**The Veneration of the Virgin Mary
from the Perspective of Cultic Representations:
Two Transylvanian Devotional Images**



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Abstract: The paper explores the cult of the Virgin Mary in Transylvania in light of two prominent cultic representations, the late Gothic – early Renaissance devotional statue of Csíksomlyó (Șumuleu Ciuc, 16th century) and the icon of the Piarist (former Jesuit) Church in Kolozsvár (Cluj, 17th century). Both played a major role in the Marian devotion over centuries. The cult of Mary in Transylvania and the use of these devotional representations was connected with the Franciscan and Jesuit mission.

Keywords: cult of the Virgin Mary, statue of the Virgin of Csíksomlyó, icon of Mary of the Piarist Church in Kolozsvár

STELIAN VERES

Marian Devotion, Marian Societies, Marian Processions in Kolozsvár (Cluj) in the 18th and 19th Centuries

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Abstract: Devotional associations and processions played a significant role in the religious life of Kolozsvár (Cluj) in the 18th and 19th century and were important manifestations of the cult of the Virgin Mary. This paper discusses some major annual processions, like those with the weeping icon of Mary, linked to the Jesuits, and the fluctuating evolution of the Marian societies. These manifestations of the religious life of the city evolved in connection with the Habsburg policies regarding the religious orders, the suppression of the Society of Jesus and its later restoration in the early 19th century. Locally Bishop Gusztáv Károly Mailáth and Béla Bíró, dean of St Michael's Church, had a major role in the revival of Marian devotion.

Keywords: Marian devotion, Marian societies, Marian processions, Jesuits

OTTILIA LUKÁCS

Psalms of Lament, Enemy-Psalms: Do They Have a Place in Prayer?



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Abstract: The psalms of lament, and notably imprecatory or enemy-psalms seem to have no place in Christian prayer. The missal and breviary exclude or censure them by omitting the problematic verses. The essay pleads for the importance of laments and enemy-psalms (E. Zenger's 'Gerechtigkeitspsalmen', W. Brueggemann's 'psalms of disorientation') notably for believers and communities experiencing deep crises, pain and injustice, by analysing Psalm 137 from the perspective of cultural trauma and cultural memory theory. The psalm reflects the trauma of the destruction of Jerusalem and the Babylonian captivity, deeply embedded in cultural memory, a major identity marker of the Jewish community. Psalms of disorientation enable a traumatised community facing despair, suffering and injustice to work through the trauma they have experienced together with God. These psalms cry out to God amid injustice and trauma, becoming expressions of trust in God.

Keywords: psalms of lament, enemy-psalms, psalms of disorientation, Babylonian captivity, cultural trauma, cultural memory, Psalm 137

SZABOLCS ORBÁN OFM

The Liturgy: A Timeless Source for Learning to Pray – In the Footsteps of Saint Francis of Assisi

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Abstract: The prayers, the scriptural passages and liturgical texts pervade all the writings of Saint Francis of Assisi. Francis was literate, with a degree of education, yet without theological formation. His knowledge of Scriptures, prayers and other religious texts that permeate his prayers stems mainly from the liturgy and the Liturgy of the Hours (esp. following the reform of Breviary of Pope Innocent III). The Breviary, in addition to biblical passages, also included a significant number of patristic texts that would not otherwise have been available to him. Memorising the heard scriptural passages, liturgical texts and prayers allowed their incorporation into his prayers. St. Francis creatively combines the fragments of liturgical prayers, scriptural passages and patristic texts learnt from the liturgy with his own words. The process is well illustrated by the Breviary of the Mysteries of the Lord and the exposition of the Lord's Prayer. The liturgy is the source of Francis' spiritual life and prayer.

Keywords: Saint Francis of Assisi, prayer, liturgy, Liturgy of the Hours

ISTVÁN CSONTA

Do We Pray What We Believe? Prayer Modes and the Path to Contemplative Prayer



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Abstract: The paper discusses the forms of prayer – vocal prayer, meditation and contemplative prayer –, focusing on the particulars and practice of contemplation and discussing in some detail the Ignatian Examen. Meditative prayer was met with some distrust in the Catholic Church, due to its formal similarities with the practice of meditation in Eastern religions. The Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church issued by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *On Some Aspects of Christian Meditation* (1989, under Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger) expressed certain concerns. Nonetheless the various forms of meditative prayer, in particular the Ignatian Examen offer a good way to experience the depths of prayer.

Keywords: vocal prayer, meditation, contemplative prayer, Ignatian Examen, *On Some Aspects of Christian Meditation*

RÉKA JÁKY CSONTA

The Method of Bibliodrama in the Liturgical Catechesis of Catechumens

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Abstract: This study explores the use of the bibliodrama in the liturgical catechesis of catechumens. Liturgical catechesis provides the formation needed for the reception of the sacraments. In the bibliodrama, catechumens become active partakers in their religious and spiritual development. Through interactions with their peers, participants experience the message of the dramatised biblical text, which speaks to them personally, in their particular situation of life. They encounter the text as the word of God and confront their own inner processes at the same time.

Keywords: liturgical catechesis, catechumens, bibliodrama

LÁSZLÓ HOLLÓ

**Active Participation in the Life of the Church.
The Reorganisation of the Roman Catholic Status
in Transylvania after the Regime Change of 1989–90**



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Abstract: The “*participatio actuosa*” in the liturgy has important consequences for the engagement of lay persons in ecclesial practice. This paper details the stages that led to the reorganization of the Roman Catholic Status, a body in which clergy and laity collaborated in the church, after the fall of the Communist regime, in the Diocese of Alba Iulia.

Keywords: Roman Catholic Status, Diocese of Alba Iulia, lay participation