



Why are certain liturgical practices we are forced to endure disturbing to the soul? Of the utmost importance for Catholics is to have and use a basic understanding of Thomistic philosophy in the context of liturgy and life. We have been told this by every pope from Leo XIII on, but most modern “Catholic” scholars in most alleged “Catholic” institutions, including seminaries, have resisted. We do not have to take classes in Thomistic philosophy to understand it. We have teachers and writers who can help us. Father Ripperger, an outstanding Thomistic philosopher and teacher at two seminaries, helps us understand here a basic philosophical principle in regard to our sacraments and liturgical practice, answering the fundamental question posed above. Part II will appear next month.

The Liturgical *Agere Sequitur Esse* [One Can Know
the Nature of a thing by the Way it Acts – Ed.] – Part I

The Question of Suitability in the Newer Rituals

by Father Chad Ripperger, F.S.S.P.

It is not outside the scope of experience of virtually all Catholics, that they have attended Mass and something has occurred in which leaves them thinking that something strange was occurring, i.e. that something was done which was inappropriate. This general sense that something unsuitable or inappropriate was done results from the fact that Catholics, after they have formed their minds in the teachings of the Church, develop a capacity to know when things are not quite right. They may not be able to tell you why, but they know what happened was not right, i.e. the thing done was simply not appropriate or suitable. Now these occurrences are not undisturbing to the soul, but **in order to have a clear grasp of what is suitable or not, one must know what it means for a one thing to suit another.** This article, therefore, will consider one of the most important metaphysical concepts which governs liturgical action, viz. the notion of suitability or *conveniens* in Latin. Second, we will consider how the newer forms of Liturgy measure up to suitability by considering a few instances in the newer rituals. [Part II – Ed.]

***Conveniens* or Suitability**

Since the Church, in her wisdom, has pointed Catholic philosophers toward Thomism(1) as a way of avoiding error(2) and providing a truly perennial Christian philosophy(3), we ought, therefore, to look to St. Thomas to learn how he understood the metaphysical notion of suitability. Saint Thomas does not say too much about suitability, and like many other terms and notions in his philosophy and theology, they are used in such a way as to imply a certain grasp on the side of the reader as to their content. Nevertheless, there are a few places and ways he uses the term which gives us a clear idea of what it means for one thing to suit another. Many times, Aquinas uses the notion of suitability in his objections(4) but we cannot use these objections since they do not necessarily represent the thought of St. Thomas himself. However, if we look at the *Tertia Pars* of the *Summa Theologiae* St. Thomas delineates how one thing suits another:

what suits (*conveniens*) each thing is that which suits (*competit*) it according to the notion (*rationem*) of its proper nature; as it suits man to reason because this suits him insofar as he is rational according to his nature.(5)

From this passage we can see a few things operative. The first is that suitability includes two things, viz. the thing and that which is said to suit that thing. Secondly, that something suits something because it suits or befits the notion or concept of its proper nature. In other words, **there is a correspondence between the essence of the thing and the other thing that befits or suits it.** What exactly St. Thomas means by one thing suiting another thing, based upon some correspondence between it and the nature of the thing, can be seen in some of his other works where we see him employing the term:

something is reduplicated in some proposition when I say, insofar as it is that through which the predicate suits the subject; whence it is necessary that in some way it is the same with the subject and in some way it is the same in the predicate.(6)

Here the term “suits” is used to indicate that in a proposition, the predicate suits the subject because they are the same in some way. In other words, **suitability implies some type of identity or sameness between the two things.**(7) This is born out in his statement in a lesser known work on the hidden operations of nature:

Indeed, some hidden operations are found in certain bodies which similarly suit all which are of the same species, as all magnets attract iron. Hence, it remains in this way that operations follow some intrinsic principle which is common to all having the same species.(8)

Here the notion of suitability indicates that those of the same species have something in common and those operations are said to suit those things. There is a close connection between the notion of species and suitability for Aquinas; in fact, the terms species and suitable appear often together in Aquinas’ texts.(9) One last text that gives us an idea of St. Thomas’ notion of suitability has to do with proportion:

Proportion is nothing other than a certain habitude of two things suiting each other in something, according to which they suit or are different. Moreover, they are able to be understood to be suitable in a two fold way. In one way, from the fact that they are suited in the same genus of quantity or quality, as the habitude of the surface to a surface or numbers to numbers, insofar as one exceeds the other or equals it or even heat to heat, and in this way proportion is not able to be between God and creature, since they do not come together (*convenient*) in a genus. In another way, they are able to be suitable when they are suited to some order, and thus proportion occurs between matter and form, making and made, and other things of this kind, and thus proportion is required between the knower and knowable, since the knowable is as if the act of the knowing potency.(10)

For Aquinas, something is suitable either because it is in the same genus or there is something between the two things according to some order. In the case of being in the same genus, the same thing is found explicitly in the one as in the other. But while St. Thomas does not mention it, in the case of order, one thing suits another because again there is some type of “sameness,” viz. implicitly or in some other way.

Elsewhere, St. Thomas makes different distinctions about the way things are suitable. The first is that things are suitable univocally or analogically.(11) Equivocal suitability is not a real suitability at all, which is why it appears to be absent from St. Thomas’ writings. Univocal suitability occurs when the suitability found between two things is the same. But with analogical suitability, there is something in the two things which is the same and yet there is also something different. However, they suit each other due to that which is the same in each.(12) For example, reasonable acts suit man because man has reason and so reasonable acts and man are univocally suited to each other. Other the other hand, going to the bottom of the sea in a submarine is analogically suited to man. For the exercise of man’s rational powers to craft through his art a machine which makes it possible for him to go to the bottom of the ocean and learn about what is there is a sign of man’s innate desire for knowledge and so he uses those things when he makes in order to learn. However, it analogically suits man in the sense that the normal place for man is not at the bottom of the ocean but on dry land since man is designed to live on dry land rather than on the bottom of the ocean. It suits man, however, to go to the bottom of the ocean because he desires to learn.

The forms of suitability can be divided into that which suits each thing *per se*(13) in that it is a something

intrinsic to both things, or something which is suitable *per accidens*, i.e. not essential but accidental in some way.(14) An example of *per se* suitability is what suits one goose essentially suits another goose whereas an example of *per accidens* suitability would be the fact that it suits a man and a bear to have brown hair.

Finally, a further distinction which Aquinas made is between suitability according to genus, species and accident. This is somewhat the same distinction between *per se* and *per accidens*, but it should be kept in mind that something can suit two different things in two different species provided that they are in the same genus. For example, it suits man and cows to eat since both are in the genus of animality. We can, therefore, say that suitability implies that there is some identity within two things,(15) i.e. there is something in them that is the same.(16) **Unsuitability would then imply the converse, viz. that there is something in the two things which does not fit together due to some difference in them.**

The ability to grasp suitability in things implies that there is a rational power which has the capacity to see them as being the same either explicitly or implicitly,(17) e.g. if one knows what a pen is, one knows explicitly that writing and the pen suit each other. Whereas, some things are suitable in an implicit way, i.e. the rational power has to draw out of the two the similarity that exists, e.g. one must draw out of the way we treat dignitaries a few facts before knowing what kind of action is proper to a dignitary, i.e. one must know what and who are dignitaries and what kind of actions both absolutely and according to local customs suit dignitaries. Once one knows what a dignitary is and what certain forms of action imply dignity, one is then able to bring the two together and know which suits the other, since what is the same in both is the notion of “dignity.” Without the knowledge of both, it is likely that one would do something which is unsuited to the dignitary. But this capacity to grasp the two is a sign of the intellect’s power to penetrate the natures of things. As with our example, when one first meets a bishop and knows that he is a bishop, one knows that he possesses the fullness of the priesthood and is a successor to the Apostles by virtue of his office. This office is that by which the divinely revealed truths are passed on, and so there is something of importance and authority which, by its very nature, God has bestowed on that office. This authority is then represented by the ring which bears the bishop’s insignia and, consequently, to reverence his ring is a sign of the recognition of his authority because one reverences the authority of God as it is present in the bishop.(18)



Liturgical Action

To make our transition to the domain of the liturgical, we should consider one passage of St. Thomas which seems quite important in our given context. In the *Summa Contra Gentiles*, St. Thomas discusses whether it suits God to be a principle or cause of other beings and he makes the following observation:

Moreover, when something suits something *per se*, it is necessary that it is universally in it: as rational in man and to move upward with fire. Moreover, to perform some effect *per se* suits being in act: for each agent acts insofar as it is in act. Therefore, all being in act is born to cause something existing in act. But God is in act, as was shown in the first book. Therefore it suits him to cause some being in act, who is the cause of being.(19)

Here, St. Thomas notes that a being acts insofar as it is in act and this is the import of the Scholastic expression *agere sequitur esse*, i.e. **action follows upon being**.(20) The principle essentially means that **the way a thing is (i.e. its being) determines how it will act or behave**. For instance, a rock cannot engage in rational discourse because its being is not rational. This principle, as we see it used here by Aquinas, also expresses the notion that the cause is somehow in the effect.

These two different ways of looking at the same principle can be reformulated in a liturgical way by the dictum *lex credendi, lex orandi* and *lex orandi, lex credendi*. In the former case, what we believe determines how we pray and this is merely a reformulation of the metaphysical notion that what a thing is (i.e. what we believe) determines the way a thing acts (i.e. how we pray). One cannot deny the truth of this liturgical dictum without denying the metaphysical truth of *agere sequitur esse*.

The second aspect is likewise of prime importance. Because a thing acts the way it is, this makes it possible for us to know those things which are in act. In other words, the nature of a thing is known by virtue of

the way it behaves.(21) For instance, a rock might fall to the ground from a cliff and leave an indentation in the ground. But that indentation would be very different from one caused by a farmer for the sake of farming the ground. By looking at the different indentations, one knows that the one contains purpose or some form of intentionality while the other does not and consequently one can infer that one indentation was caused by a rational being and the other by mere physical laws acting on the rock This second epistemological aspect of the metaphysical principle of *agere sequitur esse*, i.e. one can know the nature of a thing by the way it acts, corresponds to the reversed order of the liturgical principle above, viz. *lex orandi, lex credendi*. **One can know what a particular religion believes by the rituals it performs**

If we return to the passage of St. Thomas above, we see that the proper effect of God is existence. That is, since God is subsistent existence itself,(22) then His proper effect will be existence. St. Thomas notes that it suits God to cause existence and this is because the cause is always in some way in the effect. So too is it with liturgical actions, for **one's belief is revealed in the liturgical actions or ritual**.

Sacraments demonstrate this principle in a most perfect fashion in that the sign performed not only brings about that which it signifies, but in the very signification is contained the sacrament in some implicit way. For example, the "washing" of the sacrament of Baptism is not only caused by the pouring of the water (plus form and intention) but the very pouring of water reveals to us what is occurring on the level of the supernatural, i.e. the soul is being washed or purified of original sin, if it is a child, and original sin and actual sin, if it is an adult. Cognitively, we understand what is happening spiritually by what happens sensorially.

There exists, therefore, a close connection between suitability and *lex orandi, lex credendi* and *lex credendi, lex orandi*. Because on a cognitive level we grasp the nature of a thing by the way it acts, the thing which acts must therefore in some way be reflected or contained in its activity. Just as the essence of a thing is implicitly contained in its accidents and we know the essence by abstracting it from the accidents in our passive intellect in the form of a phantasm, so too in the liturgy do we know or arrive at knowledge of the reality of what is occurring by what the priest and servers do.

Suitability or the notion of suitability implies that in some way there is an identity or a sameness about two things. As this applies to the liturgy, it means that there is a congruity or suitability between the form of liturgical action and the realities and mysteries that are present, i.e. the liturgical action must implicitly or explicitly contain or express what is believed. In other words, there is some form of identity between the thing (*credendi*) and the ritual (*orandi*). This is the principle(23) by which one knows whether a liturgical action is suitable or not.(24) **A liturgical action will be unsuitable precisely to the degree that the action does not reflect the liturgical mystery or reality as understood by the Church or in some way contradicts it**

NOTES

1. The possible citations are numerous, but among others see: Leo XIII, *Aeterni Patris*, passim, but especially paras. 21, 25 and 33; Pope St. Pius X, *Pascendi Dominici Gregis*, para. 45; CIC/83 can. 252, §3 and Sacred Congregation For Catholic Education, *Ratio Fundamentalis*, paras. 79 and 86.

2. Among other see: Leo XIII, op. cit., paras. 18, 21 & 29 and Pope St. Pius X, loc. cit.

3. See the two works of Pope St. Pius X, loc. cit. and *Studiorum Ducem*, passim.

4. Among others see: Is Sent. d. 1, q. 1, a. 2, obj. 2 and III Sent. d. 3, q. 5. a. 1, obj. 1. All translations are the author's own, based on the Leonine edition (*Thomae Aquinatis Opera Omnia*, Iussu Impensaue Leonis XIII, edita., Roma: ex Typographia Polyglotta et al., 1882).

5. ST. III, q. 1, a. 1.

6. III Sent. d. 10, q. 1, a. 1, aa. 1a.

7. Another text which indicates this is that of *In libros physicorum* (l. 3, c. 5, n. 11) where he says: "non enim oportet quod omnia eadem convenient iis quae sunt quocumque modo idem; sed solum illis quae sunt idem subiecto vel re et ratione." Here Aquinas links up the notion of identity, i.e. something which is the same either in the subject or thing and according to concept or notion.

8. *De occultis operibus naturae*, un.

9. For example, see *De Veritate* q. 16, a. 1, ad 1; *ibid.*, q. 20, a. 5; *In posterior analytics*, l. 2, c. 16, n.2 and *In libros metaphysicorum* l.1, c.14., n. 2.

10. *De Trinitate* p.1, q. 1, a.2, ad 3.

11. St. Thomas' distinction between univocal and analogical suitability can be found in: *De principiis naturae*, c.

6; *De Veritate* q. 2, a. 11 and *ibid.*, ad 5.

12. It would appear, therefore, that the distinction between the two forms of analogy, viz. proportion and attribution would be likewise be part of the suitability by analogy. The analogon or analogue would be predicated of the two analogates in analogy by proportion. In attribution, the analogue is intrinsically contained in the primary analogate while contained secondarily and not intrinsically in the secondary analogate. Hence, in order to understand what suits one thing and another in suitability according to analogy of attribution, one would need to understand the primary analogue and how the analogon is predicated of it.

13. See *De Veritate* q. 26, a. 10, ad 9.

14. *Ibid.*

15. In the most abstract consideration, suitability is based upon the principle of identity whereas unsuitability is based on the violation of the principle of non-contradiction; for those things suit each other due to something in each which is the same or identical, whereas those things which are found in the same thing but oppose each other, do not suit each other, e.g. for a man to act irrationally puts rational and non-rational in the same subject.

16. This is why the term *conueniens* is often translated as not only suitable but as “fitness,” and “*agreement, harmony, synonym of consonantia and harmonia, the opposite of differentia and contrarietas*” (Deferrari, Roy: *A Latin-English Dictionary of St. Thomas Aquinas*, St. Paul Editions, 1986).

17. Initially, we can see that since the choice of options in the Novus Ordo are subject to the emotions of the priest or to the emotions of the laity who inform the priest of what they think he should do is a sign that unsuitable things are bound to occur. **In other words, what is suitable is grasped by reason, but when people approach the liturgy from the point of view of emotion or their appetites, then things are bound to occur which are unsuitable because they will not flow from reason but appetite.** This is one of the assets of the Old Rite, viz. the Church told the priest what he can and cannot do and so the liturgy is not subject to the emotions of the priest determining the options.

18. It is unfortunate that such a practice has fallen into practical disuse and it appears to have come at the same time when there has been a collapse in a realist metaphysics and a collapse in the understanding of the nature of the priesthood and episcopacy, both of which help us to see what is suitable regarding bishops and how we should treat them.

19. SCG, I. 2, c. 6, n. 4.

20. Cf. ST. Is, q. 51, a. 2, obj. 1 et ad 1; *ibid.*, q. 77, a. 3 and *ibid.*, q. 80, a. 2 just to name a few instances of this notion as used by St. Thomas.

21. This is based on the fact that because God created our intellect in such a way as to know the natures of things, the metaphysical principles (i.e. the principles of being) are often in our intellect but according to an operative mode. In other words, as a being acts a certain way because of its nature, so the intellect knows the nature of the thing by observing its actions. Consequently, the intellect is able to see the connections between actions and natures because the *agere sequitur esse* is in the intellect not necessarily in an explicit way but in an **operative** way.

22. Among others, see *De ente et essentia*, c. 4, nn. 6 and 7.

23. That is not to deny that there are other principles operative in the liturgy but this is one of the most fundamental principles governing the liturgy since at the most fundamental level of metaphysical reflection on the nature of liturgical action, this principle is present and governing the action.

24. It must be pointed out, of course, that there will be various degrees in which the action contains the liturgical mystery or reality. It may be something which can only be grasped after a certain amount of reflection or it may be immediately stated, as when at Mass a prayer makes explicit reference to the sacrifice of Christ on the Cross or when during the words of Consecration the priest says, “For This is My Body,” this is an immediate and explicit referent (after all it is a sign) to the reality present. **XXX**

From the President...



A happy and blessed New Year to all our members and readers! The board sent a follow-up letter to Cardinal Castrillón Hoyos in December. If we do not hear from him in 90 days, we will send another letter with updates and another request for action of some kind.

For clarification, in last month's newsletter when I called for our Una Voce chapter to be visible in

charitable activities, I did not mean we should take on new apostolates. Our primary apostolate and the reason we were founded is to perform particular spiritual works of mercy relating to the Traditional Mass and traditional Catholic spirituality. However, when our members are active in corporal works of mercy, I ask you to let me know so that we might publish the activities without revealing names. Also, if the membership would contribute ideas of how we might be visible as a chapter from time to time beyond the booth at Family Fair, the board and membership can consider them.

Support from within our diocese

A small number of diocesan priests have mentioned to me or other members that they support the Indult Mass being provided in this diocese. They see no problem and are praying for us. We must pray for them, too. They are filled with charity and a sense of justice toward this endeavor of ours and do not see that providing the Traditional Mass is any reason for divisiveness or discord.

These priests are overworked and under-appreciated. If they can take the time to read our newsletter and care for us in their hearts, we must give them the support of our prayers that they remain steadfast in their vocations and courageously speak the Gospel to their flocks.

Based on my conversations with other chapter leaders around the country and leaders of Indult communities in other dioceses, I have come to understand how very important it is for the priest(s) who will ultimately serve our community to have friends among the diocesan clergy. We must thank God for the work of the Holy Spirit in these priests of our diocese. God works in His way which is not our way, and we must realize that He is preparing things for us if we will be patient, charitable, faithful, and steadfast in holding to the Pope and the Magisterium. **In fact, the greater the difficulties we suffer, the clearer it is that Satan is threatened by our purpose.** For that reason alone, we must not ever weaken in our resolve. Too many souls depend on our being where God wants us to be.

Father William Korte to speak in January

Father William Korte, pastor of St. Peter parish in Fulton, Missouri will speak on the vocation of the laity in the Church. Vatican II was quite explicit in charging the laity with evangelization and witnessing to the Faith. This is no more than what we as Christians are charged to do in the Gospel, but the Council brought our role to the forefront in a way not done before in the Church. These exhortations have been ignored as many bishops and clergy much of the time have centered the laity's attention on inappropriate and illicit participation around the altar, or in taking over parishes. Father Korte will speak to us of the complementary role of the priesthood and the laity in the Church, and how we are called to holiness. He will speak to us of Blessed Jose Maria Escriva, a 20th century saint, soon to be canonized, who began what is now the Opus Dei Prelature with the laity in Spain. How to be happy, how to be holy, how to witness in our everyday life simply and without complication – don't miss it! **Bring friends – this is too important to shrug off.**

About Father Korte: He was born in Florissant, Missouri and raised on a farm near Steeleville. Father attended St. Thomas high school seminary in Hannibal and from there went to the theologate at the Pontifical College Josephinum in Columbus, Ohio. He has been a priest for 18 years and a pastor for over 13. In addition to being pastor of St. Peter parish in Fulton, Father is presently chairman for the ministry of priests in the Jefferson City diocese.

Latin Mass Magazine

Latin Mass Magazine – a Journal of Catholic Culture is a quarterly publication of Keep the Faith, an organization which provides audio-visual productions of Catholic topics, among which are Bishop Fulton Sheen's television programs, Msgr. William Smith's audio cassettes on the Fundamentals of Moral Theology, and cassettes by Michael Davies and the late Dr. Willaim Marra. Keep the Faith also sponsors talks by priests. This magazine is a must have for every serious Catholic who wants to be thinking and acting as Christ commands us within our Faith and today's culture. It has articles of interest on the liturgy, home schooling topics, history, politics, etc. To subscribe call 201-327-5900, fax: 201-327-7618, or on line at www.latinmassmagazine.com.

Need for Donations

I know that we are all getting hit up for money by every charitable organization in the world after



September 11. Yet can we all not make a little more of a sacrifice for the holy work our chapter has been given by Christ to be present at Family Fair? **Thanks to every one who donated money after the last newsletter came out. Two priests sent us a total of \$30 to help us with our booth.** Members gave generously at our December meeting. But I ask everyone to see what kind of additional sacrifice you might make to have every household receiving this letter to send a mere \$10 to make our booth a success. We also may have a chance to bring in priests to speak at our meetings more often. We need money to fund their travel. Your generosity is generosity towards God. Thank you from Jesus and Mary and all children of God benefiting from our work, and remember to save and send your Best Choice labels for us.

Pray for the Fraternity Apostolate in Tulsa

On January 9 at 9:45 a.m., Father Gabet, F.S.S.P. will be meeting with Bishop Slattery to ask his approval for keeping Father Hathaway, F.S.S.P. with him permanently as an assistant. It seems that an East Coast bishop reneged on bringing in the Fraternity to help with a Latin Mass apostolate there, which means that Father Hathaway is available to stay in Tulsa. Father Gabet works very hard and needs help. We need more time with Father Gabet which we can get if Bishop Slattery says yes to retaining Father Hathaway in Tulsa. The parish of St. Peter in Tulsa prays for our Una Voce chapter every week. Let us return the charity. Please remember to pray for Father and Bishop Slattery during the time they are meeting as well as now.

Since Bishop Slattery became bishop of Tulsa six or seven years ago, 21 priests have died, 26 have retired, while 13 have been ordained and 14 have come to Tulsa from other dioceses. Three more priests will be ordained in June. The bishop has been able to avoid closing parishes due to the 14 who have come to him from elsewhere and he tells us the future looks hopeful. Bishop Slattery has been very good to St. Peter’s from the beginning and deserves our prayers. His vicar is Father Brankin, who built the shrine of St. Therese in Collinsville, 25 miles north of Tulsa. This shrine is an awesome church, a truly holy place, and merits a trip when you can arrange it. Father Brankin is a holy priest and terrific confessor, as are the Fraternity priests. If you attend Mass at a Fraternity apostolate, please write the bishop and thank him for providing Fraternity priests and allowing the Indult Mass. **Now would be a good time to write to Bishop Slattery: Roman Catholic Diocese of Tulsa, P.O. Box 690240, Tulsa, OK 74169-0240.** If you go to the Benedictine Monastery of Our Lady of the Annunciation of Clear Creek, you might also mention that in your letter to the bishop. Bishop Slattery’s presbyteral council was opposed to him providing the Traditional Mass, bringing in the Fraternity, and allowing the Clear Creek Foundation. That didn’t stop him. He is reaping many graces because of it, all to the welfare of the Catholic Church in the Tulsa diocese.

Family Fair News

Family Fair is the last weekend of February from Friday, 2/22-Sunday 2/24. We will be asking for sign-ups at our February meeting so please have in mind what you would like to give in the way of your time. We try to keep the commitments to 3 hours, but we accept any times, less or more, that people are able to give. Our teens had great experiences at the booth last year and I hope we will see them participating again this year. Your president is there most of the time. **XXX**

Barbara A. Schoeneberger

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Phil. 2:8-10 He humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross. For which cause God also hath exalted him, and hath given him a name which is above all names: That in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth.

Luke 1:31-32 Behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and shalt bring forth a son; and thou shalt call his name Jesus.

Matthew 1:21 And she shall bring forth a son: and thou shalt call his name JESUS. For he shall save his people from their sins.



Luke 2:34 And Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother: “Behold this child is set for the fall, and for the resurrection of many in Israel, and for a sign which shall be contradicted.”

January is the month of the Holy Name of Jesus.