Title: A Study of Selected Arts and Symbols in Catholic Liturgical Worship

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Abstract: This thesis investigates the various art forms and symbols used in Catholic liturgical worship. It also describes, and discusses the use of Symbols in Catholic Liturgical Worship. Many types of art forms exist in Shrines, Churches and other religious places of worship. The Catholic Church is not an exception to this existence of art forms. The existence of these forms of art has become a source of agitation to people who are not conversant to its aims and purposes in religious worship. These have generated a lot of controversies which have resulted in forms of iconoclasm (destruction of religious images), and even to wars and conflicts among peoples and religions. Examples were in England during the English Reformation, and then more severely in the English Civil War, in Flanders in the Beeldenstorm, and in France during the Wars of Religion. In contemporary times, there have been some agitations by some Charismatic groups as to the importance of Arts (images, statues etc.) in liturgical worship. Based on these, a lot of misconceptions are labeled against art works used in religious worship. From the above elucidation, one can ascertain that the use of arts and symbols in liturgical worship has generated a great deal of controversy. The current research therefore sought to explore and ascertain the relevance of arts and symbols in Catholic liturgical worship, to trace the origin of arts in Catholic liturgical worship, and to identify the art forms and symbols used in the Catholic liturgical worship. It also exposes the meaning attached to images and symbols used in worship. To achieve these objectives the researcher made use of qualitative method of research, administration of questionnaire; interviews and observations to study the arts and symbols. The main target populations for this thesis are members of the Catholic Church. In this, emphasis is laid on the different groups that make up the church. The priest, religious, lay people and the different societies like the charismatic groups. Accessible Population refers to group of people who were accessible to me in the course of conducting this research. They are the ones that responded to my questionnaires. In all 80 copies of the questionnaires were distributed but 40 copies were returned. Convenience sampling was employed by the researcher in the execution of the project. About 50% of accessible population was used as sample for the study. The main findings are as follows, 1. Quite a number (50%) of respondent were ambivalent (not sure) about the religious dogmas (Christian Beliefs) connoted to Christian arts and crafts. 2. A substantial number (20%) of respondent were ignorant and in total oblivion about the theological, philosophical meaning inherent in Catholic arts and symbols. Based on these findings the researcher made the following recommendations. 1. There is need for education and enlightenment on the part of religious leaders. ASchool of arts and theology should be established not only by government but also other relevant agencies like Catholic institutions, and Christian bodies, to help in educating the ignorant and the illiterate. 2. Regular conferences and seminars should be organized by catholic institutions such as laities group and other societies (charismatic groups) to help in the eradication of ignorance on the part of populace.

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aspect of the liturgy from architecture to sacred music, the preservation or reestablishment of continuity with traditional Catholic worship, and the overwhelming need to enrich and “celestialize” the often sterile and impoverished vocabulary of contemporary liturgical life. There is good reason, then, to return to a careful study of the Book of Revelation and to ask what this book is really teaching us about our life as Christians here and now and about the essential vocation of the Church, which is the glorification of God and the sanctification of souls in time of tribulation. Sacred art points us to the Heavenly realities. Sacred music is the highest form of art since it uses the human voice. Bread and wine are signs of what they actually become, namely, the Body and Blood of Christ. The use of bread symbolizes that Christ’s Body provides our basic sustenance. With the above brief reflection on the many signs and symbols used in liturgical worship, we must make one more very important point. The signs and symbols used in the Liturgy, especially the Sacraments, actually bring about what they signify. Rather, the reality of worship takes place and God is made present through these signs and symbols. The oil actually brings the Holy Spirit, the water actually cleanses sins, the bread and wine actually become Christ Jesus, etc. Symbols, icons, liturgy and architecture must all be reduced in order for people to better understand their faith. If the design of the church building affects worship and worship informs belief, is this reductionism in our churches not in part responsible for the recent study which found Catholics to be quite ignorant of their faith? EACW states that “the rejection of certain embellishments which have in the course of history become hindrances... has resulted in more austere interiors, with fewer objects on the walls and in the corners.” Art and Iconography In retrospect, titling the statement Environment and Art in Catholic Worship seems to have been a misnomer since there is even less on the subject of art than on architecture.