

The Use of Cultural Art in Eucharistic Celebration: An Encounter Between the Christian Faith and Culture

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Abstract

This paper seeks to examine the use of cultural arts in a liturgical environment, with specific interest of the use of the mask. Sometimes when there is a cultural encounter there is difficulty in determining what liturgical expression to use to convey the desired catechetical visual aids. Like the appearance of a masquerade in the celebration of the Mass. The article seeks to enlighten and catechize on the centrality of the Eucharistic celebration, use of the mask (masquerades), and the place of images at worship in the church. Using an expository, investigative and analytic methods, the discourse draws the implication that African cultures are impregnated with the sense of the religious and the holy, so that in Africa attention to culture and the encounter of the Christian faith with other religions go together. For the inculturation of the liturgy, however, this is a reminder that the incorporation of any cultural pattern must face the question of how well its symbolically expressed values harmonize with the Gospel.

Key words: Eucharist, Culture, Mask, Symbol, Worship

Introduction

Christianity is a faith that originated outside of the cultural context of the locations where it is mostly proclaimed. It has always arrived dressed as an alien, and thus has always faced the difficulty of cultural integration. When faced with the need for evangelism, the recurring issue has always been, how to influence the cultural modes of the evangelized. This is due to the constant clash of symbols. The celebration of the Eucharistic sacrifice is expressed in arts and symbols. Art has various meanings and symbols. It is the struggle of the human mind to figure out the divine revelation. It is the effort too, to fathom the image of God as a direction to Christian worship. Images seem to guide the human mind to any meaningful venture. Since art is concerned with images, the artist is a seeker, a person with something to look for and look forward to. According to David Power (1990), it is the image of God, an image which is given to him as a model for imitation. The original image of God in man is the ultimate measure of his perfection not only as an artist but also as a Christian in any culture (p. 40).

Culture begins with art and finds in artistic expression its finest realization. Since art is the fruit of adoration and love, the human artist perceives the call to imitate the Supreme Artist, God. That means art is born of labour and longing. It is the expression of the memory of the paradise that has been lost and of the expectation of the paradise to come. Hence, religious art is never real, but always imaginary (p. 68). Religious art builds the places of worship, gives expression and form to acts of loving adoration and longing expectation. It is inspired by the faith in a reality that does not fail nor falter.

A case in point that is addressed in this article was the presence of a masquerade in the church for a thanksgiving Mass. After the post communion prayer, there was a thanksgiving procession, the Masquerade came in from the door near the sanctuary and joined in the procession to the sanctuary. This occurrence aroused lots of questions, debates and discussions among Christians and non-Christians alike. While some see the adequacy of masquerade joining in the act of worship as desecration or syncretic, others see it as an object of entertainment. For some, the masquerade as an art has not been allowed in worship by the competent authority or any liturgical document, to be used for entertainment at Mass. Others still argued that the Mass setting is not for entertainment.

It is certainly understandable that masquerade is an art of human hands and it has been in the African cultures for centuries. In traditional African society, masquerades were regarded as spirits manifest. They were the spirits of dead ancestors who came back to earth in a masked form. For Godfrey Parrinder (1969) these could be fathers, brothers, uncles, cousins, who long have died, but who returned to earth wearing masks, either to visit their family members, or to participate in some community festivals (p. 101). This long held African traditional masquerade system, was antithetical or against the Christian belief that the dead is either in heaven, or in hell. In other words, practitioners of Christian religion deny that the dead ever appear in masquerades, and they instantly proclaimed the masquerade system as devilish or satanic, while all those who indulged in such practices already had their place in hell. Africans were told to sever links with their traditional system and to close their eyes on their historical past, which they said, never existed, or was ugly and nasty. They were told to discard the religion of their ancestors, which they said was fetish or devilish. There was no prior catechesis, dialogue, re-interpretation and re-writing of what the masquerade is all about. The above incident and the questions it aroused, formed the background and the motivation for this paper. This work aims at exploring how, art and culture could be blended in the Eucharistic celebration.

Clarification of Terms

Culture

Despite the fact that culture exists everywhere, culture does not mean the same thing everywhere and even for all scholars. A consideration of the original

meaning of culture gives us an approximation of the meaning which is decisive for our purpose. Etymologically, culture is from the Latin *colere* meaning to cultivate or to modify nature creatively. It also refers to, as Muller et al (1999) contends, "the activity through which men and women influence the environment in which they live with their physical and spiritual powers, at least partially change it, but at the same time develop themselves as individuals and members of a community" (p.409). Consequently, culture can be described as an essential characteristic of human existence and that means, where there are human beings, there is culture, because the human being is naturally a cultural being (p. 410). Or again, what distinguishes human nature from all other living creatures is culture.

Theological problems arise not only because of typically religious or other related questions, but also from the global human context of those cultures where missionary activity is carried on (p. 410). In other words, the cultures that are at play here, are the cultures of the mission lands and the culture of the Gospel.

In this context, Niebuhr et al (2015) describes five types of relationship between Christianity and culture. All these types are demonstrable, though they sometimes overlap. The five models are: Christ against culture; Christ of culture; Christ above culture; Christ and culture in paradox; and Christ the transformer of culture (p. 415). For our purpose, the terms of these typologies may change to better describe pastoral situations. We may speak of the Christianity/culture relationship in terms of: conflict because of opposing values, vigilance is necessary; association in the sense that culture virtually serves as a vehicle of expansion of Christianity; value difference in which Christianity is far superior to the world; coexistence which normally little friction, with occasional tensions; or Christianity as agent and changer of culture (p. 516).

The Meaning of Art

Among the ancient Greeks and the Romans, the Greek *Techne* and the Latin *Ars*, meant a trade, or profession in the sense of a skilled job or craft. Art is like other forms of craft in that it requires some forms of skill. In a wider sense, art is any embellishment of ordinary living that is achieved with competence and has described form. This trait is no different from the position that discourse on art avows that nothing is a work of art unless it is deemed to be intentionally formed.

Worship

Worship deals with the value attached to a particular object or subject. An object has a value depending on the sacredness or importance attributed to it. The change reached the era when "th" was dropped to accommodate and mean worship, that is a kind of ritual response given to a deity. There are grades and kind of worship. Vagaggini (1976), classified worship according to object or subject worshipped. Basically, we have profane and religious worship. In

profane religion or cult, we have the cult of ancestors, of fatherland, of the arts and of the philosophers. In religious worship on the other hand, is having a relation to God and to moral life (p. 350). Religious worship refers only to God (latría). It refers to the other creatures only in so far as the creature shares the divine life in some way (*dulia*). Worship in the sacred sense means reverence, respect and love of the divine, God or gods.

Symbol

Symbol is derived from two Greek words *sym* (together) and *ballein* (to throw). The symbol then as the word implies, is a throwing or bringing together or combination of an abstract idea and a visible sign. Symbolism is the basis of human communication. For by nature, man/woman is a *homo symbolicus*, a symbolizing, conceptualizing and meaning seeking animal. He or she is capable of using it in the course of one's religion, art or culture. To appreciate, this subject matter today, we need to know that African art is an indigenous artistic work. Thus, it is not borrowed from outside. It is intertwined with the entire culture of the African people. It is in this way to be identified which African cosmology and hence seeking for inculturation, glared.

Eucharistic Celebration

This is made up of two words namely; Eucharistic and Celebration. Eucharistic is an adjective. Etymologically, the term Eucharist comes from the Greek noun *eucharistia*, which means "thanksgiving" and the Greek verb *eucharistein*, meaning "to give thanks." It is a prayer of thanksgiving for the *mirabilia Dei* (the mighty works of God) done in and through Jesus Christ. The term celebration is derived from the Latin infinitive *celebrare*, which means "to crowd," "to repeat," "to frequent," "to keep (a festival)." It connotes an atmosphere of merry making, reunion, assembly and festivity.

For the purpose of this work, Eucharistic celebration means the church's public prayer of thanksgiving to God the Father for the wonderful work of creation, salvation and sanctification accomplished by him through Jesus Christ in the unction of the Holy Spirit. Through it the community of believers is mercifully sanctified and edified by God and renders glory to God through the Son in the unction of the Holy Spirit with the practical effect of altering the extra-liturgical life of its members.

After looking at the definition of terms which will direct the thinking pattern of this article. It now dwells at the Eucharistic celebration that drew the incident of the case study of this write-up.

The Eucharistic Sacrifice

The Eucharistic celebration is both the Lord's Supper and the sacrifice of his body. There is good reason for mentioning the meal aspect of the Mass first, since in its basic structure, the Mass is a rite derived from a meal, not from a sacrifice. As a memorial of his pasch, the Lord left his Church the Eucharist, that is, the prayer of thanksgiving over bread and wine as elements of a meal. He

wanted to remain present with his community under the form of bread and wine as representing his body, that is why he bade her to do in memory of him. It is important, then, that in celebrating the memorial of the Lord, we give careful consideration to the meal aspect of the Eucharist.

Behind this meal form, however, lies the reality of the sacrifice of Christ and the Church. Sacrifice here is to be taken in the proper sense of self-giving; it does not refer primarily to the external accomplishment of a sacrificial ritual. In the Eucharist, therefore, the church enters into this total self-giving of Christ, and we individually attempt to enter into it as fully as we can. When we do this, the Mass becomes our sacrifice to; it becomes the community's expression of their complete surrender to God and his will.

The Eucharist as a Communal Celebration

The Eucharistic sacrifice, the only kind that concerns us here, is the highest act of the virtue of religion and of public worship. It is the natural manifestation of the interior and spiritual sacrifice by which a rational creature offers itself completely to God and declares its nullity before Him who is its nothingness before Him who is all.

It is this interior dimension of self-giving that the General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM) has in mind when it calls for the "conscious, active, and full participation of the faithful...inspired by fervent faith, hope and love (no. 3). When the people of God gathers for the celebration of the Mass, it is not an amorphous, undifferentiated mass of ind? but is "hierarchically organized" by virtue of their baptism. The General Instruction further says that:

It is extremely important that the celebration of the Mass, or Lord's supper, be so ordered that the ministers and the faithful who participate in it, each exercising his proper role, may derive in fuller measure the fruits for which Christ the Lord instituted the Eucharistic sacrifice of his body and blood and entrusted it to his beloved spouse, the church, as a memorial of his passion and resurrection. This is the kind of participation the church wants and the celebration calls for by its very nature.

Unity and Communal Action

For emphasis, this point must be stressed, that no one participates as an individual. Participation as a member of the body and handing oneself over to the communal actions are essential components of participation in the celebration. The participation is the common spiritual good of the people of God, that must be served, not with private inclination or arbitrary choice. Such communitarian action both expresses and fosters the spiritual intentions of the participation. The participation in the Eucharistic celebration must lead to deeper union with God and with our brothers and sisters, and so the manner in which the celebration is enacted must be expressive of this union. Any appearance of singularity or division must be carefully and unambiguously avoided.

The Theology of Participation

Participation in liturgy is both internal and external, which means that, full participation engages the person's mind, heart and body. The GIRM emphasizes that the celebration of the Eucharist is not the action of the priest or any minister that the people attend or watch. Rather, it is an action of the whole community and the people's participation is not presumed, but is also constitutive of an important meaning of the action.

The goal of the responses and acclamation at the Eucharistic celebration is the interplay of both internal and external participation, never having one without the other. The participation at Mass should not solely be defined by the outward things that are done, nor can it be reduced simply to participation by silence and inward reflection and adoration on the part of the people.

The Cultural Works of Art

The Eucharistic celebration has set the pace by setting participation in specific functions within the communal celebrations. Let us now turn to the case study, which is masks and statues (the Masquerades) and the role or function they can take part in the Mass.

Masks and Statues (Masquerades)

Traditional or cultural art in Nigeria today is a continuation of the past artistic heritage. They are imbued with the same philosophical and psychological traits that are found in every other cultures. Though they are creation of two centuries, yet provide links between the past and the present.

Abadom et al. (1990), assert that, masks and statues are the most commonly represented of present day art forms. In the traditional belief, they provide a forum for interactions between the gods, the living and the dead. These interactions result and influence events that are of significance in the distribution and exercise of power and order. They are significantly used in adjudication, executing decisions, divination and agricultural rites. They have been used too, at fertility and burial rites, as well as control of women, illness and crime. It is not surprising, therefore, that some masks and statues were in the past fully utilized as emblems of powerful secret societies.

Apart from the religious functions, masks and statues were and are still important instrument of entertainment and social integration. In their usage as decorative elements, they form part of shrine furniture in some traditions. They also exist as records of social and natural environment.

In some African cultures, a spirit inhabits a mask upon its creation. When a man puts on a mask and costume, they give up their own being. The identity of the spirit now takes over. Sometimes these spirits represent someone who had died a long time ago. Other times, it could be an animal of any natural forces. In wearing the mask or costume, the entire identity is concealed because the mask is now the focus point no longer the person putting it on.

Elimin Masquerades

Among the Esans, the *Elimin* masquerades are organic to their myth of creation. In this way, they function as the major stabilizer of the people's destiny. As far as the people are concerned, they are ancestral spirits who periodically visit their living forebears in masquerade forms. Their visits are regarded as spiritual interventions to the world of the living and as a result are highly venerated. They are symbolic resurrection of the ancestors.

Egwu Masquerade

To the Ifeku-Ibaji, the *Egwu* masquerade symbolized both the ancestral shrine as well as represented the resurrected spirits of a dead elder, whose appearance and performance played a protective and regulatory role in the affairs of the living. Specifically, it governed the laws which were irrevocable and punishable by death.

Masquerade in Igbo concept

Mmanwa is a traditional masquerade of the Igbo people of South Eastern Nigeria. The word *Mmanwa* is a combination of two words *Mmuo* which means Spirit and *Onwu* which means death. The purpose behind the *Mmanwa*, therefore, is to create physical representations of spirits and ancestors through the adornment of the masks. They are performed only by males in exclusive secret societies and invoke ancestral spirits. Men are solely responsible for the creation, care, and use of the masks. The induction of members into mask making societies serves as a male rites of passage. Since men are masqueraders, they are buried within their homes so their spirits may be close to their families and return to the earthly world from time to time to offer spiritual advice.

Conversely, women are prohibited from touching the mask or even understanding the spiritual meaning behind the task. Women are able to observe the ceremony and many do so, but they are careful to keep their distance. Both genders work to maintain the secrecy surrounding the ceremony, as it is forbidden to share the process outside of the mask making societies.

Masquerade traditions have a varied range of purposes that span from performing elements of epic drama derived from community cosmology and lore, ushering in new months and seasons, honouring totems and ancestral spirits, enactments of parables or myths, with entertainment and community building serving as a consistent commonality. There are two types of Masquerades in Igboland, the Visible and Invisible.

Visible Masquerade

The visible masquerade is meant for the public and are more for entertainment. The masks used offer a visual appeal for their shapes and forms. In these visual masquerades, performers of harassment, music, dance, and parodies are acted out. These dramatic performances often depict stories of daily life with a moralistic bent that highlights the social norms that the *Mmanwu* so closely

enforces. The local instrument used in these depictions are integral to the spiritual intention of the stories and the actual masks themselves include a great deal of artistic drama.

Invisible Masquerade

The invisible masquerades functions at night. Sound is their primary tool. The masquerader screams loud enough that it can be heard throughout the valley. The masks used are usually fierce looking and their interpretation is only fully understood by the society members. These invisible masquerades call upon a silent village to strike fear in the hearts of those not initiated into the society.

Means of Social Control

The *Mmanwa*, like the *egwu* in Igala tradition are considered as agents of the spirit beings in meting their anger when the living infringes certain norms of the society. So, in the past, the masquerades bore judicial, social regulatory, and even policing powers, however, though these functions have decreased in modern times.

The Bush Cow Masquerade

These are cap masks worn on top of the head with the face and body covered with grass. Bush cow masks are found in the grassland area where bush cows are found in large numbers, especially around, Mamma, Eloyi, Chamba, Mumuye and the Mambilla groups. The masks are used during festivals with the deities for the rich agricultural yields of the year. Their horned form refers to their connection with magic forces and accomplishment in all forms of life.

For the Chamba people, each clan is supposed to have at least one bush cow mask. The masks are painted in different colours to determine the gender of the mask. Some clans, however, will have both the male and female bush cow mask. Composed in the masks are the features of animals and human attributes. The horns of the bush cow mask refer to the "female bush cow ancestor." The mouth is often referred to that of a crocodile. These masks are supposed to represent the power of the bush. The masks are stored in the bush and when they perform for special occasions, they come from the bush and not from the homes. During the performance, the dance is likened to the style of dance of a buffalo.

In summary, it could be said that the masquerade plays a significant role in the social and religious life of the people. The masquerade is also an art or an image and so, it is pertinent that we now turn our attention to the Christian notion of art and the role it plays in her daily life of the Church. It will help us to see if the presence or use of the masks can be an essential element to be featured in the Eucharistic celebration.

The Theology of Images and Craft in Christian Art

The Biblical Background

The Bible begins with the majestic pronouncement, In the beginning, God

created the heaven and earth... (Gen 1;1). Stunning in simplicity, yet profound in implication, we are first introduced to God as the creator, the original artist. He is the creative imagination and personality behind all things; creativity is an essential part of his divine nature. God intended creation to be both functional and beautiful (Gen 2:9). Into this world he placed the man and woman created in his image. They had the ability to think, feel and create. The cultural mandate affirms that God intended for human beings to develop and steward his world. We were commissioned to be culture formers (Gen 1:28; 2:15). The specific call of God for Bezalel to make 'artistic designs' (Exod 31:1-6) opens up the possibility of artistic expression as a spiritual calling.

The biblical notion of the image of God implies on the one hand a negation, and, on the other hand, an affirmation. This tension is intrinsic to the true understanding of the image. In spite of the sharp criticism of the image, the Old Testament uses the same category of the 'image' to sum up the divine revelation in creation. Man, as an apex or the center of creation is the image of God in the cosmic temple. The true image of God is thus distinguished from other images in the dynamic nature of its understanding. The true image of God should necessarily reveal the art of God. The biblical notion of the image of God is, therefore, associated with great events of divine revelation in history. It is experienced by man in the manifestations of the divine plan of creation and salvation.

In the New Testament, all the characteristics of the true image of God are seen in the person of Jesus Christ who is, therefore, the perfect image of God, the Son revealing the glory of the Father. In the image of Christ, humanity has received the vocation to perfection. Christian fulfilment consists in the imitation of the image revealed in Christ.

The Development of the Theological Understanding of the Image in Christian Art

The first point of call in discussing the development is to set on course the truth and validity of the relationship between the image of God and the images of God. The question quickly comes to fore. Can the material images really represent the true image of God? Are they capable of revealing God and rendering the invisible spiritual realities visible? To answer the questions just raised we need to distinguish between the true image which are icons from the false images which are idols. A proper understanding of the place of images in Christian worship and the role of art in Christian life has evolved through a serious controversy over the use of images. Properly understood, images have a mediatory role. They have to belong to the material and to the spiritual realms of reality, so that they may serve man in his passage from the visible to the invisible reality.

Teachings of the Church Fathers on Arts.

There are many archeological discoveries which provide sufficient evidences to the fact that already from the beginning of the third century the tradition of

Christian art had been established in the church. According to Margherita (1963), there were excavations made under the Vatican Basilica periodically between 1939-1958 that brought to the light Christian vaults and mosaics that are so far known. Some of the images found were, the Good Shepherd, the Mystical Fisherman and Jonas swallowed by the whale. Also found were a symbol of Christ's descent into hell and resurrection three days later (p. 36). The earliest findings of Christian art belong to the first half of the third century. History has it that in the western church centers, religious art had originated and developed in the context of funerary rites in burial places. While in the eastern region Christian art had appeared in different setting, namely, in the context of baptismal rites for the purpose of highlighting the baptismal significance of Christian life. An example of such archeological discovery was the digging of the remains of a small town at Dura Europos on the Euphrates. The church tradition on the whole traces the origin of the first icons to the lifetime of Jesus himself and to a period after him.

Scaff and Wace (1979) mentioned Eusebius of Caesaria (265-340) who maintained that there were in existence the images of the Apostles and Christ preserved till his time, even though the practice was disapproved of. He asserted that "...we have learned also that the likeness of his apostles Paul and Peter, and of Christ himself, are preserved in the paintings, the ancients being accustomed, as it is likely, according to the habit of the Gentiles, to pay this kind of honour indiscriminately to those regarded by them as deliverers" (p. 304). This was recorded by Eusebius in order to show that these images are vestigial remnants of a pagan past, that the iconophiles used to support their position.

Controversial Attitudes towards Images in Arts

Under the influence of both the Hebrew-biblical and Greek-philosophical traditions, the early theologians develop a double attitude in the understanding of the concept of images. From the biblical point of view, the theologians emphasized the prohibition of images in Ex 20:4. But at the same time they were aware of the revealed image of God in man (Gen 1:27) and the God-Man, Jesus Christ who is "the image of the invisible God" (Col 1:15). In sum, while despising the emptiness of all images in accordance with the biblical tradition, yet they upheld the anthropological and theological meaning of the concept of the image.

As for the theologians who were influenced by Platonic spiritualism, they were opposed to artistic images which were considered to be mere shadows of the truth. In their teaching, material images were not considered to be conducive to the contemplation of spiritual ideas. According to their belief system, true religion is the elevation of the mind to God in which the illusions of the senses are to be rejected.

The fundamental principle underlying image-worship is empathised by Elavathingal (1990), that, "material objects can be the seat of divine power and that this power can be secured through physical contact with a sacred object" (p.

57). The iconoclasts and iconophiles accept this principle in their sacramental theology. For example, the bread which we receive is an image of His (Christ's) body, taking the form of this flesh and having become a type of His body. It was asked whether the principle of Eucharistic presence could be extended to a general principle of the sacramental mediation of the divine through material objects and be applied to the understanding of images as means of grace. According to them the notion of the true image was so restricted that it could not be used meaningfully for any material image other than the Eucharist. Only the sacramental image in the Eucharist was acceptable to them as the image and symbol of Christ.

The Theological Understanding of Images as Icons

The practice of the Veneration of images was deeply rooted in the popular and monastic piety before a definite formulation of the theology of images. This practice was passionately defended by the monks during the iconoclastic crisis. But it was John Damascus (679-749), Theodore of Studios and Patriarch Nicephorus of Constantinople (758-828) who gave a theological clarification given by the early Fathers, a doctrinal definition of the images as icons, distinguishing them from idols, was made possible.

It was necessary to clarify the very concept of images, in order to establish the true meaning of the image, because the iconoclastic identification of images as idols was based on a particular definition of image. The iconophiles proceeded from their own definition of image in order to show how an image could be an icon instead of an idol. For, according to John of Damascus, an image is a mirror, and a figurative type, appropriate to the dullness of our body. This definition reflects 1Cor 13:12: "For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, then I shall understand fully,..." Yet, in another definition, John of Damascus saw image as a triumph, a manifestation and a monument in commemoration of a victory. A Christian image is, therefore, the victory of Christ and his followers over the demons. Again he defined it as a likeness, an illustration, and a representation of something, showing forth in itself that which is imaged (Elavathingal 1990, p.60).

As for Theodore of Studios, he defined image as a likeness of that of which it is the image, in itself showing by imitation the character of the archetype... the true in the likeness, the archetype in the image (p. 61). Yet, in another definition, he called the image a kind of seal and representation, bearing within itself the authentic form of that from which it also get its name. Nicephorus gave most comprehensive definition, as outlined by Elavathingal (1990), by itemizing the component elements of image as follows:

A likeness of an archetype, having impressed upon it the form of what it represents by similarity, differing from it only by the difference of essence in accordance with the material (of which they are made); or an imitation and similitude of the archetype, differing (from it) in essence and substance; or a product of some technical skill, shaped in

accordance with the imitation of the archetype, but differing from it in essence and substance (p. 66).

All these definitions of the image implied, on the one hand, gives a close relation and, on the other hand, a precise distinction between the image and that which was imaged. Theodore of studios would say, "by nature, Christ is one thing, and the image of Christ is another, and yet there is an identity because they are called the same" (p. 67). But by identity they meant not, as the iconoclasts theory had maintained, an identity of essence between the image and the prototype. On the other hand, it consisted in the particular relationship that the image had to its prototype in which the image is a likeness that characterizes the prototype in such a way that it also maintains some distinction from it.

Distinction between Likeness and Identity

The distinction between likeness and identity was essential to the understanding of the true significance of the image. In the making of an image the artist might imitate the true nature of the archetype and produce a likeness, but the image thus produced would not be identical in essence with the original. From this dynamic understanding of the image which implied a relation and a distinction between the image and the original it followed that the worship paid to an image was not directed to the essence of the image, but rather to the imprint of the prototype that had been stamped onto the image as a real.

The clarification of the notion of the image was a good beginning for the development of the theology of icons. Proceeding from this understanding, the iconophile theologians classified and graded the notion of the image. They could defend the relevance and meaning of icons in Christian worship on the basis of this classification. John Damascus identified different senses in which the term image could be used in the Christian language about God. Icons were considered to belong to the last category of this classification. They were:

The Son of God as the image of the father, the Father's eternal will to create images and paradigms for the visible world; the visible things that acted as physical types of the invisible prototypes; man as a creature in the image of God and therefore called into being by God as an imitation; the Old Testament types which foreshadowed what was to come in the New; image erected as memorials, whether in books or in pictures, in words or in objects, in commemoration of glorious deeds in the past, pointing backward as the Old Testament shadows has pointed forward (Elavathingal, 1990, p.70).

Distinction Between Icons and Idols

The refutation of the charge of idolatry was based on the distinction made between an icon and an idol. Idolaters were those who could not distinguish between an idol and an icon. The former was the representation of persons or things that were devoid of reality or substance, while the later represented real persons. Idols worship was service done to the devil, but the Christian worship

of icons was glorifying the true God. Theodore of Studios said that the very representation of Christ in an icon is the way of dispelling idolatry. Worship of icons offered a via media between the false spiritualism of the iconoclasts and the false materialism of the idolaters. The statements in the Scripture directed against idols were not applicable in the case of icons.

The defenders of the images had to explain their position also with reference to the Old Testament prohibition of graven images (Ex 20:4).

By reading the biblical evidence differently and, in effect, reinterpreting the law of the Old Testament in the light of the incarnation taught in the New Testament, the iconophiles rejected the argumentation of the iconoclasts from scripture and laid claim to the authority of scripture for themselves (Elavathingal, 190, p. 73).

The Masquerade at the Eucharistic Celebration The masquerade as the work of art, cannot be used at the Eucharistic celebration. The class of art that are used at Mass are vestments, vessels and linens. Neither can the masquerade be used as an icon, because it does not represent the statue of an icon. Very often these forms of religious expression according to Ratzinger (2000) are more or less popular piety. Popular piety has a special importance as a bridge between the faith and each culture of its very nature, it is directly indebted to its culture. It enlarges the world of faith and gives it its vitality in the various circumstances of life (p 199).

The only function of the masquerade that is known, both culturally and socially are dancing and entertainment. This function too, has no place within the Eucharistic celebration. This type of dancing is not a form of expression for the Christian liturgy. In about the 3rd century there was an attempt in certain Gnostic-Docetic circles to introduce dancing into the liturgy. It was realised, however, that the cultic dances of the different religions have different purposes incantation, imitative magic, mystical ecstasy and none of which is compatible with the essential purpose of the Liturgy of the reasonable sacrifice. It is totally absurd to try to make the liturgy attractive by introducing dancing which is frequently ends with applause. Power (1984) reiterates that, wherever applause breaks out in the liturgy because of some human achievements, it is a sure sign that the essence of liturgy has totally disappeared and been replaced by a kind of religious entertainment (p. 51).

Liturgy can only attract people when it looks, not at itself, but at God, when it allows Him to enter and act. Then something truly unique happens, beyond competition, and people have a sense that more has taken place than a recreational activity. That is why, none of the Christian rites includes dancing. Actually, it could be drawn from the passage of the constitution on the sacred liturgy, *Sacramentum Concilium*, there we are given the norms for adaptation of the liturgy to the character and the traditions of the various peoples:

Whatever in their way of life is not indissolubly bound up with superstition and error, she looks upon with benevolence and if possible, keeps it intact, and sometimes even admits it into the liturgy provided it accords with the genuine and authentic liturgical spirit (SC.37).

Bases for Inculturation

The Christian or liturgical worship relies heavily on the arts, since it is the works of arts, like, vessels, linens, buildings, colours, vestments and etc. that are used for worship. They are all works of human hands. These works of art enhance the spiritual experience of the community. To inculturate any works of art, the socio-cultural values of the people must be examined. In other words, the mode of understanding the religious arts, learning about Jesus and the Gospel stories shall be established as the authentic base for inculturation with grandeur and dignity in traditional and modern design.

The use of these works of art and our case the masquerade, must be a sign or symbol that its requisites must be in accord with the spirit of liturgy and the dynamics of Christian worship. Fundamentally, the artistic works of African arts originated from the social, cultural and religious backgrounds. Their origins are usually based on the context of life-experience of the community which the African people conceive about reality. This means that the faith-expression of the believing community depends largely on the social, cultural and religious worldview of the worshipping community.

According to the perennial teaching of the Church, these are meant to serve the same purpose for which the Church celebrates her liturgy, viz, for the integral or the total transformation of the Church and her members. The necessary implication is that the integral transformation of the church and her members are expressed in the sanctification, edification and glorification of God. It culminates in bearing witness (*martes*) through loving sacrificial service (*diakonia*)- our liturgical celebration not only demands re-enactment (*anamnesis*) but also imitation (*mimesis*) that are expressed in *martyria* and *diakonia* (p. 65).

Steps to be followed

Symbolic Significance

The ultimate purpose for these symbolisms revolved around what the church celebrates in the liturgy, namely for the integral or total transformation of the church and her members and the glorification of God. For any art or culture to be adopted, its scope and competence must work towards taking into consideration all the necessary features that constitute the integrity of the church teachings. In order to facilitate active participation in worship, it should communicate clearly some divine realities which uplift the mind, body and soul to God.

Ecclesial Approval

Liturgy is not a one-man business where the owner does whatever one wants. Instead, it is a public worship and belongs to all, and its trends are universal. Therefore, it demands that, any new introduction of any sort, be it culture or art into the liturgy, must have an ecclesial approval from the church's competent authority.

Catechesis on the Mode of art/Culture

Education has been a strong weapon that makes religious dialogue possible in the Church setting. By catechesis we mean enlightenment that will make Christians understand their faith by conscientizing them on the meaning of such cultures to be imbibed and the values behind them. Thus, catechesis on the mode of understanding arts in African culture represents the space between ignorance of what is true and the knowledge of all that is good, right or commendable with reference to the use of arts in African culture.

Conclusion

Liturgy and art are closely knitted together and it is difficult to divorce one from the other. Thus, the reformed liturgy of the Second Vatican Council rightly states that, "the fine arts are rightly classed among the noblest activities of man's genius; this is especially true of religious art and of its highest manifestation, sacred art. Of their nature arts are directed toward expressing in some way the infinite beauty of God in works made by human hands. Their dedication to the increase of God's praise and of his glory is more complete, the more exclusively they are devoted to turning men's minds toward God" (SC,43) Therefore, the connection between liturgy and art are inseparable, one cannot do without the other. Both speak the same language of symbolic representation. Liturgy as a public worship must make use of the services rendered by artistic works in all ramifications for this representation. For instance, the Eucharist, the Body and Blood of Christ, represents a hidden reality which art is all about. The Church building is an art work, both inside and outside with its intrinsic representation. Wherever the faithful meet, the true participation of the liturgical process carried out in spirit and truth (John 4:24) is made real; hence, art and liturgy are seen as inseparable. Worship is at the core of the personality, and thus it rouses in humanity that value which they hold absolutely dear. In order to liberate the gospel as well as liturgy from a certain cultural and historical importance, the concept of contextualization is said to come to play. That is, making use of the living cultures to reflect on the liturgical message and its relevance to contemporary life situation; that is, the import of liturgical inculturation, enthroning the dynamic and mutual dialogue between the Christian faith and culture.

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