

# **TOWARD A CULTURE OF LEISURE, LITURGY AND LIFE: Prolegomena to Reconstructing the Eucharistic Foundations of Western Technocratic Civilization**

It is in[...] the liturgy that[...] the soul must learn to abandon, at least in prayer, the restlessness of purposeful activity; it must learn to waste time for the sake of God and to be prepared for the sacred game with sayings and thoughts and gestures, without always immediately asking ‘why?’ and ‘wherefore?’ It must learn not to be continually yearning to *do* something, to attack something, to accomplish something useful, but to play the divinely ordained game of the liturgy in liberty and beauty and holy joy before God. In the end eternal life will be its fulfillment. Will the people who do not understand the liturgy be pleased to find that the heavenly consummation is an eternal song of praise? Will they not rather associate themselves with those other industrious people who consider that such an eternity will be both boring and unprofitable? <sup>1</sup>

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## Introduction

Following the implicit theological methodology of the Second Vatican Council’s *Gaudium et Spes*, namely to see, judge, act,<sup>2</sup> this essay will, in the first instance, draw on the work of Jeremy Rifkin's *Time Wars: The Primary Conflict in Human History*, so that the signs of the times may be *seen*, including especially the transformation of time wrought by technological innovation, particularly through the invention and widespread use of computers. I will show that this transformation has had enormous, but often underappreciated, effects on the human person in his relationship to time, leisure, culture and the *cult* or worship which necessarily undergirds culture in its best form. I will show that technological transformation has been responsible in important ways for both altering our sense of, and relationship to, time, and for denying us that very time which is needed in order to engage in the humanly necessary and sustaining activities of community and

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<sup>1</sup> Romano Guardini, “The Playfulness of the Liturgy,” *Communio: International Catholic Review* 21 (Spring 1994): 114.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Gaudium et Spes* no.4

cult, of leisure and liturgy, of wonder and worship.

In the second part, I review Joseph Pieper's unjustly neglected classic work *Leisure: The Basis of Culture*,<sup>3</sup> and judge the cultural analysis offered by Rifkin. Pieper's argument, in sum, is that what will save us from the pernicious effects of our technological busyness and temporal lack will be a recovery of an attitude and practice of leisure which necessarily undergirds culture and leads on to the liturgy without which all our activities turn--as Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger has put it--to "unhappiness in the face of the extent of the still unknown and to despair over our impotence to achieve the essential: being a person, life itself."<sup>4</sup> Human life, it will be argued, can only finally be understood in a liturgical-eschatological context which breaks open the narrow (and often totalizing) confines of human temporality and historicity and saves us from despair by pointing us hopefully toward the transcendent One who is the origin and goal of all our history, the Alpha and Omega in whom and by whom time has been redeemed, death conquered, and the whole creation made new.<sup>5</sup>

This will lead us to the third part of the essay, where I argue that our judgment must lead us to *act*, and that our action will consist in a restoration of liturgical order along the lines of the Roman Rite as it was celebrated before the depredations of modernity made their advances. I will offer an explication and defense of the work of Cambridge theologian Catherine Pickstock, whose

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3 Translated by Alexander Dru (London: Faber and Faber, 1952).

4 Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, "Homily at the Funeral Liturgy of Hans urs Von Balthasar," in ed. David L. Schindler, *Hans urs Von Balthasar: His Life and Work* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1991), 291. It is not insignificant that Ratzinger said this at the funeral of his friend von Balthasar, who was, as Cardinal Henri de Lubac suggested, the most cultured and cultivated man of the century. Indeed, von Balthasar's reading and writing exceeded that of ten normal men. Within that vast corpus of work, however, von Balthasar rightly knew that all theology must be done on its knees, as "praying theology" which would not allow work and worry to overtake prayer, devotion and doxology. Theologians, von Balthasar knew, must not allow themselves to be deluded into thinking that merely because they are writing *about* God they are thus advancing in the spiritual life and growing into communion *with* God. As Stanley Hauerwas, for his part, has suggested, the most important question you can ask a theologian about everything he does is "where do you go to church?" See Stanley Hauerwas, *In Good Company: The Church As Polis* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995), 223, n.25

5 Cf. Revelation 21:1-6; Romans 8:19-25.

just-published book, *After Writing: The Liturgical Consummation of Philosophy*,<sup>6</sup> is a stunningly brilliant philosophical argument against the nihilism of contemporary (particularly deconstructionist) philosophy and the "necrophilia" of Western culture generally. Pickstock provides the corollary to Pieper's judgment, and she shows us that to act in the face of our technological culture we must do so with a view toward restoring to modern man what he has lost sight of, namely that doxology which "as a mode of life constitutes the supreme ethic."<sup>7</sup> Pickstock further argues that the traditional Mass of the Roman Rite<sup>8</sup> remains untainted by the time-bound, efficiency-obsessed technological *Zeitgeist* of modernity, and that this liturgy offers a superior solution to many of modernity's problems.<sup>9</sup>

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6 Oxford: Blackwell, 1998.

7 Pickstock, *After Writing*, 40.

8 A word of terminological explanation is in order. By "traditional Mass" or "traditional liturgy," both Pickstock and I mean what is variously--and often incorrectly--described as the "Tridentine" Mass or the "preconciliar" Mass, that is, the Latin Mass which was widely celebrated in the Catholic West from before the dawn of the modern age until the Second Vatican Council. This Mass, with minor regional differences, was in place well before the Council of Trent, although Pope St. Pius V, after the Council of Trent, codified the Mass in 1570 in order to strengthen the Church against the various charges which the Protestant revolutionaries falsely brought against her. This Mass was not, as various reformers in our own day--echoing the Protestants of the sixteenth century--have suggested, a complete invention during the Middle Ages with no relation to a supposedly simple, primitive "meal" which the early Christians are said--with little or no reliable and respected evidence--to have celebrated. This simple meal thesis has been thoroughly discredited by recent liturgical scholarship, including Pickstock who has rightly noted that the model of the early Church upheld by many mistakes "supposedly pure liturgies [such] as Hippolytus' *Apostolic Tradition* and Justin Martyr's *Apology*" as actual liturgies when, in fact, they "are now almost universally regarded as treatises on liturgy rather than actual liturgical traditions." Pickstock, *After Writing*, 170.

For more on the history of the Mass, see especially Joseph Pope's "Missale Romanum" from the March 1995 *Homiletic and Pastoral Review* and available electronically at <http://www.ewtn.com/library/LITURGY/MISROMAN.TXT>. Pope's article is exceptional for sorting out the terminological inexactitude and confusion surrounding liturgy. See also, Michael Davies, *A Short History of the Roman Rite* (Rockford, IL: TAN Publishers, 1997); and, more generally, Aidan Nichols, *Looking at the Liturgy: A Critical View of its Contemporary Form* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1996).

9 As she puts it in the second half of her essay, the reforms of the Second Vatican Council "have (unwittingly) incorporated the linguistic and epistemological structures of a modern secular order[...] because the Vatican II reforms of the mediaeval Roman Rite failed to take into account the cultural assumptions which lay implicit within the text." Thus the reforms "participated in an entirely more sinister conservatism" which now, far from reforming the Church, is actually helping to destroy her. Pickstock, *After Writing*, 170-171. This critique of modern liturgical transformation has been given eloquent and balanced expression in Aidan Nichols's fine book, *Looking at the Liturgy: A Critical View of its Contemporary Form* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1996). Nichols documents in damning detail the extent to which the "reunions of [liturgical] technicians" leading up to and following the Second Vatican Council were deeply influenced by the "anthropocentric, moralizing, voluntaristic, didactic, subjectivist" elements of the Enlightenment, producing as a result a liturgy that is no more than a "diet of romantic marshmallows indigestibly combined with 'stuff that grabs you by the scruff of the neck and shakes you into submission with its social message.'" Nichols, *Looking at the Liturgy*, 47, 28-29, 108.

Liturgy, it will be noted, especially in its traditional manifestations, is not some esoteric pursuit of theologians with a nostalgic yearning for Palestrina, lace amices, and golden thurifers (however desirable and beautiful those are amidst the sheer ugliness and insufferable banality of much modern art and music). Liturgy, in the final analysis, is most deeply concerned with our present life--with social, economic, political and ethical problems of the earthly city--in order that our life in the *polis* here below may be rightly understood by the light, and ordered toward the goal, of the heavenly city whose work consists in singing without ceasing the praises of the God in whom we all live, move and have our being.<sup>10</sup> Liturgy teaches us what our final end is<sup>11</sup> and provides the hermeneutic through which we can understand both our end and our world. As Michael Baxter has recently written, "liturgy is indispensable for reading the signs of the times rightly."<sup>12</sup> Moreover, as Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger has put it even more forcefully:

Faced with the political and social crises of the present time and the moral challenge they offer to Christians, the problems of liturgy and prayer could easily seem to be of second importance. But the questions of the moral standards and spiritual resources that we need if we are to acquit ourselves in this situation cannot be separated from the question of worship. Only if man, every man, stands before the face of God and is answerable to him, can man be secure in his dignity as a human being. Concern for the proper form of worship, therefore, is not peripheral but central to our concern for man himself.<sup>13</sup>

All of this will be developed in more detail later on. First, though, let us turn to Jeremy Rifkin's work on time to set the scene and provide a key sign of our time.

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10 Cf. Acts 17:28.

11 Cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, ss.1, 1137-1139.

12 Michael J. Baxter, "Reintroducing Virgil Michel: Towards a Counter-Tradition of Catholic Social Ethics in the United States," *Communio* vol. 24, no.3 (Fall 1997): 526.

13 Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, *The Feast of Faith*, trans. Graham Harrison (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1981), 7. For a compelling concrete example of the connection between liturgy and concern with social and economic problems, consider the lives of such women as Mother Teresa and Dorothy Day. Day in particular was adamant that all her concern with the problems of the earthly city--poverty, degradation, denial of human dignity, oppression of workers--could only be understood in the light afforded by, and answered with the assistance of, the liturgy and sacraments of the See Mark and Louise Zwick, "Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker Movement," *Communio* 24 (Fall 1997): 415-467.

## I: Jeremy Rifkin on Time:

Rifkin has argued that as the twentieth century comes to an end, there will be an acceleration of certain tendencies, chief among them the technological preoccupation with time and efficiency. Indeed, Rifkin sketches out an almost apocalyptic story in which he predicts that the closing of this millennium and the beginning of the next will only exacerbate what he calls "time wars," that is, conflicts over the nature of time and our relationship with it. Those conflicts find their fundamental shape in lack and deprivation: we do not have enough time, and the forces which have brought us to this unhappy impasse are working to further deprive of us what we already lack. As he says

the modern world of streamlined transportation, instantaneous communication, and time-saving technologies was supposed to free us from the dictates of the clock and provide us with increased leisure. Instead there seems never to be enough time. What time we do have is chopped up into tiny segments, each filled in with prior commitments and plans. Our tomorrows are spoken for, booked up in advance. We rarely have a moment to spare. Tangential or discretionary time, once a mainstay, an amenity of life, is now a luxury. Despite our alleged efficiency[...] we seem to have less time for ourselves and far less time for each other.[...] Clearly we have had to pay a heavy price for our efficient society. We have quickened the pace of life only to become less patient. We have become more organized but less spontaneous, less joyful. <sup>14</sup>

Rifkin goes on to argue that the fundamental cause of this is the information revolution centred on the rise and increasing pervasiveness of computers in every facet of contemporary society. The rise of computer technology has not been neutral or harmless but has, in fact, created a new "nanosecond culture," a culture whose sense of time is speeded up and which now only knows one direction--forward. This has not been an overnight transformation, and this is not a transformation which is complete. Rather, we are still in the midst of it, but we can already see its effects in our decreased leisure, our increased impatience and joylessness,<sup>15</sup> and our lack of time for one another. More specifically, Rifkin argues that computer technology has revolutionized our relationship with time in at least five crucial ways.

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<sup>14</sup> Jeremy Rifkin, *Time Wars*, 19-20.

<sup>15</sup> Pope Paul VI, in an unjustly neglected Apostolic Exhortation in 1975, rightly noted that "technological society has succeeded in multiplying the opportunities for pleasure, but it has great difficulty in generating joy. For joy comes from another source. It is spiritual." *Gaudete in Domino* (London: Society of St. Paul, 1975), s.1.

In the first instance, Rifkin argues, we are witnessing the move from clocks to computers as time-keeping and time-telling devices, and with that we are moving toward a new measurement of time not in terms of what Rifkin calls "human perceptibility," but, rather, in a manner and at a speed which is beyond human consciousness.<sup>16</sup> Time thus conceived and lived out will contribute very much to what Gabriel Marcel called the "spirit of abstraction," or what Rifkin sees as an "abstraction of time and its complete separation from human experience and the rhythms of nature."<sup>17</sup> The effects of this will, among other things, consist in further alienation of humans from the natural world of which they are a part.

Secondly, this shift is quite simply making us impatient people. Speed is our new watchword.<sup>18</sup> Reviewing the work of psychologists and sociologists like Sherry Turkle, Rifkin shows that computer users, particularly younger users, are much more prone to impatience and anxiety in regular, non-technological human interaction, and more prone to anger and hostility. In this regard, we are witnessing the psycho-emotional effects of using what Marshall McLuhan called a "hot medium," a medium whose very nature "cannot include much empathy or participation at any time."<sup>19</sup> Computers have reduced our capacity for patience and empathy and other virtues necessary for fruitful and harmonious human living. As Rifkin has said, computers and the "experts" who devise and use them "loathe the very idea of idleness."<sup>20</sup> We have, in other words, lost the virtue of patience, and at least one well-known contemporary cultural critic, the theologian

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16 Jeremy Rifkin, *Time Wars*, 23.

17 Jeremy Rifkin, *Time Wars*, 24.

18 Cf. A.A. Mendilow's "The Time-Obsession of the 20th. Century" in ed. C.A. Patrides, *Aspects of Time* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1976), 69-74. As Rifkin says later on, the single greatest characteristic of North American society is that we are "in love with speed. We drive fast, eat fast, make love fast. We are obsessed with breaking records and shortening time spans.[...]We are a culture surrounded by memos and commercials. While other cultures might believe that haste makes waste, we are convinced that speed reflects alertness, power and success. Americans are always in a hurry." Rifkin, *Time Wars*, 71.

19 Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (New York: Signet Books, 1964), 47.

20 Jeremy Rifkin, *Time Wars*, 29.

Stanley Hauerwas, has suggested that our impatience is in no small part responsible for the endless violence which plagues our nuclear world today.<sup>21</sup>

Thirdly, computer technology has hidden from us in no small measure our essential humanity insofar as we use computers for interaction much more than we rely on the traditional face-to-face human encounter. Thus, as Rifkin writes, "with teleconferencing, electronic mail, and office, home, and mobile terminals, there is less need of face-to-face interaction.[...] The computer is able to replace face-to-face interactions."<sup>22</sup> This will only lead, Rifkin tells us, to greater isolation, loneliness and other social problems as we lose the social skills that allow us to co-habitate with others in a relatively harmonious and un-self-absorbed way.<sup>23</sup>

Fourthly, computer technology, given its inherent speed and capacity for almost ceaseless work with no need for rest or recreation, has contributed in considerable measure to enormous levels of stress due to overwork. Study after study suggests that the one thing which plagues us at the end of this century is stress.<sup>24</sup> Rifkin, for example, cites a 1981 study of the "National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health[...]that 'clerical workers who use computers suffer higher levels of stress than any occupational group--including air traffic controllers.'"<sup>25</sup> Computers alter our fundamental expectations of what the human person should be capable of, making us expect that people should be able to work like, and as long and intensely as, a machine.

Fifthly, computer technology has altered our relationship to time in its ahistorical and anti-

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21 Cf. "Taking Time for Peace: The Ethical Significance of the Trivial," *Christian Existence Today: Essays on Church, World and Living In Between* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1995 [1988]), .

22 Rifkin, *Time Wars*, 27-28.

23 As Aristotle reminds us, we need skills to live together in order to develop and practice the virtue of friendship. For more on this, see See Stanley Hauerwas and Charles Pinches, "Companions on the Way: The Necessity of Friendship" and "Friendship and Fragility," *Christians Among the Virtues: Theological Conversations With Ancient and Modern Ethics* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1997).

24 For more on this, see Wayne Weiten, Margaret A. Lloyd and Robin L. Lashley, *Psychology Applied to Modern Life: Adjustment in the 90s*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Pacific Grove, GA: Brooks/Cole Publishing Company, 1991), 64ff.

25 Rifkin, *Time Wars*, 30.

reflective emphasis. We are now living in an era which was characterized by Christopher Lasch twenty years ago as being founded on "the waning of the sense of historical time."<sup>26</sup> Computers are not bound by the demands of historicity and temporality in the way we are, and they have neither need nor capacity to reflect on where we have come from, where we are presently, and where we are going. Computers, in other words, despite claims to having a "memory" have no real *reflective* memory in the way that humans do--that is, no capacity to reflect about the origin and goal of human history. As Rifkin has said:

Nowhere is this more apparent than when it comes to learning how to reflect, one of the essential time skills taught in the clock culture. Reflection is too slow and confining, too static and dull; it fits the old time world, where memory was important. In the computer world, reflection is as close as the flick of a keystroke. Pondering for long periods of time appears to be uneconomical and unnecessary to a child who has come to think of the past as a code that can be instantaneously called up whenever past information is necessary to fulfill a momentary need.<sup>27</sup>

By making such extensive use of computers, we are coming to replace reflection on history with mere information about the present or the future, information which is itself replacing knowledge, which has in turn discarded wisdom.<sup>28</sup>

In sum, then, there have been five major transformations in our relationship to time: first, time is being measured by computer technology in ever more imperceptible and thus abstract units which bear no correspondence to, and have no discernible relationship with, the natural rhythms of human life in the world; second, computers, with their speed, have begun to work on human consciousness in such a way that we have become much less patient; third, we are in danger of becoming even more dehumanized and antisocial as we come to rely more and more on technology and less and less on face-to-face interactions; fourth, we are very stressful (because overworked)

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<sup>26</sup> Christopher Lasch, *The Culture of Narcissism* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1979), 3.

<sup>27</sup> Rifkin, *Time Wars*, 34-35.

<sup>28</sup> To ask T.S. Eliot's well-known questions from more than fifty years ago, "Where is the Life we have lost in living?/Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge?/Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?/The cycles of Heaven in twenty centuries/Bring us farther from God and nearer to the Dust." T.S. Eliot, "Choruses from 'The Rock,'" *Collected Poems 1909-1962* (London: Faber and Faber, 1963), 161.

people; and fifth, we are in real danger of losing the capacity to think, to reflect and remember, to ponder the great questions of any age--who am I? where have I come from? and where am I going?<sup>29</sup>

Rifkin's argument, on balance, simplifies matters somewhat. The cultural transformation which he correctly describes has not come about solely because of computer technology<sup>30</sup> but through a variety of complex and interconnected factors whose analysis and description lies beyond the scope of this paper. That being said, it is nonetheless overwhelmingly true, in a way which requires no further demonstration for our purpose here, that we *are* manifestly much busier than ever before. Now if these cultural changes are the result of more than simply the widespread use of computerized technology, it follows that the solution to the problem must be more comprehensive than a simple--indeed, simplistic--refusal or avoidance of computerized technology. What must begin to take place is not a narrow focus on, or rejection of, computers in particular and technology in general but, rather, a renewed effort to situate their use in a context of wider *cultural transformation*.<sup>31</sup>

I would argue, then, that the wider transformation should seek to situate computers and all technology in the context of a culture based on the practice of leisure and then--as an inescapable correlate--on the practice of liturgy rightly ordered to the praise of God. This is the thesis which has been given coherent form in the work of the eminent Catholic historian Christopher Dawson in "Modern Civilization in Europe and America: The Enlightenment and Technology." He writes there

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29 As Rifkin observes later on, "we do not spend a great deal of time on ritualizing the past. We prefer novelty to tradition and are in love with anything that is young, new, or unexplored. If we are not very reflective, it is also the case that we do not extend our temporal horizon very far into the future. We are primarily interested in the immediate future." Rifkin, *Time Wars*, 77.

30 Cf. his treatment of clocks and calendars. Rifkin, *Time Wars*, 83-113.

31 One relatively circumscribed place to begin in restoring rest and leisure to the West might be the gradual reclaiming of Sunday as a widely observed Sabbath. Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, with his characteristic perspicacity, has written a helpful essay on this point. See "The Resurrection as the Foundation of Christian Liturgy: On the Meaning of Sunday for Christian Prayer and Christian Life," in *A New Song for the Lord: Faith in Christ and Liturgy Today* (New York: Crossroad, 1996)

that "the only way out of the impasse in which modern civilization finds itself is to return to the old spiritual foundations and restore the old alliance between religion and culture." <sup>32</sup> In so doing, "the technological order which today threatens spiritual freedom and even human existence by the unlimited powers which it puts at the service of the human passion and will loses all its terrors as soon as it is subordinated to a higher principle" <sup>33</sup> In other words, what we now need is a *spiritual conversion* to higher principles which will transform our culture. These principles, I am arguing, are leisure and liturgy.

Now this conclusion is at once at odds with many of the cherished notions of liberal modernity not only because leisure is at odds with our age, but also because we live in a time which the sociologist Mary Douglas has documented as being filled with contempt for ritual and liturgy (and especially the ecclesial authority behind them).<sup>34</sup> In her important and revealing book *Natural Symbols: Explorations in Cosmology*,<sup>35</sup> Douglas demonstrates that the depredations of the liberalism of modernity, especially manifest in the modern nation-state, have culminated in our day with the "denunciation not only of irrelevant rituals, but of ritualism as such; exaltation of the inner experience and denigration of its standardized expressions; preference for intuitive and instant forms of knowledge; rejection of mediating institutions, rejection of any tendency to allow habit to

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32 Christopher Dawson, "Modern Civilization in Europe and America: The Enlightenment and Technology," *Communio: International Catholic Review* 22 (Winter 1995): 721-738. This is a reprint of chapters 14 and 15 of *The Crisis of Western Education* (Steubenville: Franciscan University Press, 1989 [1961]). Dawson, "Modern Civilization in Europe and America," 735.

33 Dawson, "Modern Civilization in Europe and America," 736. Cf. David L. Schindler's reflection that "in a word, the problems of our age can be met only via a renewed encounter with the scandalously singular realities of the magisterial-creedal Christian faith. This is what it means for Balthasar, finally, that to say that the crisis of our time is theological in nature. This, finally, is his rendering of Heidegger's pronouncement that 'only a god can save us'" (*Communio* XXIV, no.3 [Fall 1997]: 579). For an even stronger and fuller argument along the same lines, see the work of the Catholic historian Hilaire Belloc, *The Crisis of Civilization* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1937). In a related but somewhat different vein, see Neil Postman's recent essay, "Science and the Story That We Need," *First Things* no.69 (January 1997): 29-32.

34 We know from the work of Alasdair MacIntyre that contempt for authority, and the inability to conceive of any distinction between power and authority, manipulative and non-manipulative social relations, is *the* defining hallmark of modernity. See MacIntyre, *After Virtue* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984), 23.

35 New York: Pantheon Books, 1982 (1970).

provide the basis of a new symbolic system." The end result of this, Douglas argues, is neither liberation nor greater transformation through simple, non-habitual actions but, rather, destruction: "we arise from the purging of old rituals, simpler and poorer, as was intended, ritually beggared, but with other losses. There is a loss of articulation in the depth of past time."<sup>36</sup> The final result of this is that we forget at our peril that "ritual forms, like speech forms, [are] [...]transmitters of culture."<sup>37</sup> Western culture has historically rested--and necessarily and ultimately *must* rest--on the dyad of leisure-liturgy which finds its highest expression in the sacrifice of the blessed Eucharist, the "source and summit" of our entire life, as the Second Vatican Council rightly called it.<sup>38</sup> Put differently, human culture as such has an integral connection with "cult" or worship of the one true God manifested in the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ.<sup>39</sup> We simply cannot exist rightly or peacefully without this living link.<sup>40</sup> Religion, in other words, is not a private affair while business goes on in the public square.<sup>41</sup> There is a living link between religion and culture, and the latter

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36 Douglas, *Natural Symbols*, 19.

37 Douglas, *Natural Symbols*, 21.

38 *Lumen Gentium* s.11.

39 For more on this, see the work of the eminent Oratorian theologian and liturgical scholar Louis Bouyer, including his *Life and Liturgy* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1956) and his *Rite and Man: Natural Sacredness and Christian Liturgy*, trans. M. Joseph Costelloe (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1967).

40 As Pope Pius XI put it in instituting the new liturgical feast of Christ the King in 1925, "In the first Encyclical Letter which We addressed at the beginning of Our Pontificate.[...]We remember saying that the[...] manifold evils in the world were due to the fact that the majority of men had thrust Jesus Christ and His holy law out of their lives[...]; and we said further that, as long as individuals and States refused to submit to the rule of our Saviour, there would be no really hopeful prospect of a lasting peace among nations." *Quas Primas* s.1.

41 This abominable idea is of course precisely what the liberalism of modernity has had us believe for centuries. The Church and Christians generally have been chastened into privatizing embodied ecclesial-communal practices, turning them into innocuous and anemic (and individual) "beliefs" in order to render them harmless to the project of that "dangerous and unmanageable institution," (MacIntyre), the modern nation state which demands one's primary, and usually exclusive, loyalty. The state succeeded in taming the Church and privatizing faith by telling Christians that the state was necessary in order to keep Christians from killing one another. That, however, has been exposed as the liberal lie it is by William Cavanaugh's recent and very important article, "A Fire Strong Enough to Consume the House: The Wars of Religion and the Rise of the State," *Modern Theology* 11/4 (October 1995), 377-420. Cavanaugh has convincingly dispensed with the old canard favoured by liberals like John Rawls and Jeffrey Stout that the modern nation state was the corrective to the bad behaviour of murderous Christians. In Cavanaugh's words, "the 'Wars of Religion' were not the events which necessitated the birth of the modern State; they were in fact themselves the birthpangs of the state....[T]o call these conflicts 'Wars of Religion' is an anachronism, for what was

cannot hope to flourish--indeed, is ultimately inconceivable--without the presence of the former. As George Wiegel has recently argued, "the 'real world' is the human universe that has been redeemed and transformed by the atoning death of the Son of God. The Church is not 'here' and the 'real world' there; the story of the Church is the world's story, rightly understood.[...] Reality is cruciform, and [...]the story of the world is, in the final analysis, the story of the Paschal Mystery."

<sup>42</sup> That paschal mystery is reenacted and celebrated in the liturgy of the Church, the rightful celebration of which both presupposes, and also gives rise to, a culture of leisure. Josef Pieper's work has made precisely this connection, and we turn to it next.

## II: Josef Pieper on Leisure:

In the opening decades of this century, when the German Thomist Josef Pieper wrote *Leisure: The Basis of Culture*, a book which convincingly demonstrated the living link between culture and cult, he could scarcely have predicted how his work would prove by century's end to be a prophetic and prescient, particularly in its diagnosis of what he called "a new and changing conception of the nature of man, a new and changing conception of the very meaning of human existence."<sup>43</sup> This change has rendered man into what Pieper called "the worker," who is engaged in "the daily struggle for a bare physical existence."<sup>44</sup> Such workers are characterized by three principal traits: "an extreme tension of the powers of action, a readiness to suffer *in vacuo* unrelated to anything, and complete absorption into the social organism, itself rationally planned to

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at issue in these wars was the very creation of religion as a set of privately held beliefs without direct political relevance." Cavanaugh, 418. I am very indebted to Stanley Hauerwas for drawing my attention in a recent letter to Cavanaugh's work.

<sup>42</sup> George Wiegel, "John Paul II and the Priority of Culture," *First Things*, no. 79 (February 1998): 24-25.

<sup>43</sup> Josef Pieper, *Leisure: The Basis of Culture*, trans. Alexander Dru (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1952), 29. Pieper was not alone in this thesis. It has also been shared by, e.g., Hannah Arendt, who notes the "factual transformation of the whole of society into a laboring society." Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1952), 4.

<sup>44</sup> Pieper, *Leisure: The Basis of Culture*, 92.

utilitarian ends." In our world of workers there has everywhere arisen, "a feeling of strain, of being overwrought and over-done." <sup>45</sup> As a result of this profound cultural change, "leisure, from this point of view, appears as something wholly fortuitous and strange, without rhyme or reason, and, morally speaking, unseemly: another word for laziness, idleness and sloth." <sup>46</sup>

Pieper's work goes on to argue that leisure is not merely the absence of activity nor the presence of sufficient time to engage in the many banal activities or "breathless amusements," <sup>47</sup> which our consumeristic and materialistic culture indulges in to entertain itself under a misguided notion of "leisure as escape," as Christopher Lasch diagnosed it.<sup>48</sup> Leisure is not simply the absence of work, and it does not exist solely to enable us to work; it is "not to be a restorative, a pick-me-up."<sup>49</sup> Leisure, rather, when properly understood and lived out, consists in the first instance in a "mental and spiritual attitude,"<sup>50</sup> a "condition of the soul"<sup>51</sup> which is able to engage in non-activity, in contemplation and reception of the mysteriousness and gratuitousness at the heart of the cosmos. Leisure in this regard is that condition of the person who is open to what Hans Urs von Balthasar called the "metaphysics of wonder." <sup>52</sup>

Leisure, in revealing itself as a spiritual attitude and condition of openness, wonder and celebration, enables us to step beyond the *vita activa* and touch transcendence. In so doing, we

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45 Pieper, *Leisure: The Basis of Culture*, 92.

46 Pieper, *Leisure: The Basis of Culture*, 48.

47 Pieper, *Leisure: The Basis of Culture*, 92.

48 Lasch, *The Culture of Narcissism*, 122-124.

49 Pieper, *Leisure: The Basis of Culture*, 56.

50 Pieper, *Leisure: The Basis of Culture*, 51.

51 Pieper, *Leisure: The Basis of Culture*, 52.

52 See Hans Urs von Balthasar, *The Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics*, V: *The Realm of Metaphysics in the Modern Age* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1991).

come to the "gate to freedom"<sup>53</sup> which leads us into the heart and "soul of leisure," that is, "celebration."<sup>54</sup> This celebration consists not in an anthropological celebration of merely human goodness, achievement or skill, but necessarily must consist in celebration of the *divine*. As Pieper puts it, "if 'celebration' is the core of leisure, then leisure can only be made possible and indeed justifiable upon the same basis as the celebration of a feast: and that formation is *divine worship*."<sup>55</sup> There is, then, no feast which does not have a divine object and source. This is simply a *sine qua non* of all feasts as such: "that is not a demand or a requirement; it does not mean that that is how things *ought* to be. It claims to be a simple statement of fact: however dim the recollection of the association may have become in men's minds, a feast 'without Gods,' and unrelated to worship, is quite simply unknown."<sup>56</sup> It is only by being grounded in, and oriented towards, divine worship that leisure avoids spinning off into sloth or "laziness"<sup>57</sup> and work avoids becoming "a cult" or "religion."<sup>58</sup> Leisure, in sum, is an attitude of openness, wonder and celebration of the divine, a condition of the soul which engages the totality of human life, embracing "everything which, without being *merely* useful, is an essential part of a full human existence."<sup>59</sup>

Pieper goes on to deal with the role of wonder in relation to philosophy, theory and theology. For our purposes, however, enough has been said to both see the heart of Pieper's important, and unjustly neglected, argument, and also to see the direction in which we must move: toward a cultural-cultic celebration and transformation by grace through the liturgy and sacraments of God's Church. Celebration and transformation are not mere options for us precisely because they

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53 Pieper, *Leisure: The Basis of Culture*, 57.

54 Pieper, *Leisure: The Basis of Culture*, 71.

55 Pieper, *Leisure: The Basis of Culture*, 71.

56 Pieper, *Leisure: The Basis of Culture*, 72.

57 Pieper, *Leisure: The Basis of Culture*, 75.

58 Pieper, *Leisure: The Basis of Culture*, 76.

59 Pieper, *Leisure: The Basis of Culture*, 76.

are worship and gifts of God, who both gives the command<sup>60</sup> and expects obedience to it by His creatures. As Pieper puts it, "worship is either something 'given,' divine worship is fore-ordained--or it does not exist at all. There can be no question of founding a religion or instituting a religious *cultus*. And for the Christian there is, of course, no doubt in the matter: *post Christum* there is only *one*, true and final form of celebrating divine worship, the sacramental sacrifice of the Christian Church." <sup>61</sup>

Pieper's argument, in sum, is that leisure and liturgy dialectically interact with one another as leisure gives rise to liturgy, which in turn both undergirds and also gives rise to further leisure in a hermeneutic circle of on-going cultural transformation. It is not a simple movement of leisure to liturgy--or liturgy to leisure--but an on- going, dialectical process of transformation in which culture and cult interact. Understood thus, we realize that the answer to the problems which Rifkin has sketched out is in two parts, neither of them separable from the other. If we wish to overcome our chronic lack of time and our perpetual busyness, leisure and liturgy must *both begin at the same time* to be restored to our culture. We cannot recover a leisure-based culture without the liturgy which undergirds and sustains that culture; but neither can we restore sense to the Church's liturgical order without looking at the broader culture in which that liturgy is celebrated.

The question which I wish to raise at this point is what *form* of the liturgical sacrifice and sacrament best enables that attitude and process of cultural transformation and transcendence to happen. It is a question which has been answered in the last fifteen years especially with an

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60 Cf. Exodus 20:8-11. As the *Catechism* puts it, "Just as God 'rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had done,' [Gen 2:2], human life has a rhythm of work and rest. The institution of the Lord's Day helps everyone enjoy adequate rest and leisure to cultivate their familial, cultural, social and religious lives [cf. *Gaudium et Spes* 67 s.3]" (s. 2184). The *Catechism* goes on in the next article to note that "on Sundays and other holy days of obligation, the faithful are to refrain from engaging in work or activities that hinder the worship owed to God, the joy proper to the Lord's Day, the performance of the works of mercy, and the appropriate relaxation of mind and body [cf. canon 1247]" (s.2185).

61 Pieper, *Leisure: The Basis of Culture*, 79-80. Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, echoing Pieper's work, puts the matter thus: "those who celebrate a feast need some external motive empowering them to do so. They cannot do it of themselves. There needs to be a reason for the feast, an objective reason prior to the individual's will." Ratzinger, *Feast of Faith*, 63.

increasingly strong consensus against what is commonly called the *Novus Ordo* Mass which Pope Paul VI commissioned and promulgated in 1969 following the Second Vatican Council. None have voiced this critique with as much authority or as much accuracy as Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger himself. In what surely ranks as the most damning liturgical critique to date, and from the most highly placed authority in the Church after the Holy Father himself, Ratzinger has said that the damage to, and decline in, the Church since the Second Vatican Council was due in no small part to the destruction and banning of the Traditional Mass: this act was the source of "extremely serious damage for us." "I was dismayed by the banning of the old Missal[...]seeing that a similar thing had never happened in the entire history of the liturgy." Ratzinger goes on to note that

the promulgation of the banning of the Missal that had been developed in the course of centuries, starting from the time of the sacramentaries of the ancient Church, has brought with it a break in the history of the liturgy whose consequences could be tragic.[...] But the fact that [the liturgy] was presented as a new structure, set up against what had been formed in the course of history and was now prohibited, and that the liturgy was made to appear in some ways no longer as a living process but as a product of specialized knowledge and juridical competence, has brought with it some extremely serious damage for us.<sup>62</sup>

This is a critique which Cardinal Ratzinger has given authoritative utterance to, but it has been growing for some time now in a variety of places.<sup>63</sup> It has recently been given its most

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62 These comments were widely reported in a plethora of Catholic periodicals, but the most complete record is Paul Likoudis's "Cardinal Ratzinger on the Collapse of the Catholic Liturgy," available at <http://www.synasoft.com/~rfreeman/ratzing.htm>. Ratzinger has earlier had very critical comments on the liturgy. See also Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger with Vittorio Messori, *The Ratzinger Report: An Exclusive Interview on the State of the Church Today*, trans. Salvator Attanasio and Graham Harrison (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1985). For a fuller treatment of Cardinal Ratzinger's critique of liturgy and its ecclesiological implications, see Denis Sureau's "La liturgie sans Eglise: La Crise de la Liturgie selon le cardinal Ratzinger," *Sedes Sapientiae* 56 (summer 1996): 1-17. I am indebted to Fr. John Mole, O.M.I., for drawing my attention to this article on Ratzinger. Michael Davies also provides a helpfully brief critique. See his *Liturgical Shipwreck: 25 Years of the New Mass* (Rockford, IL: TAN Publishers, 1995).

63 The literature of critique is vast and growing exponentially. Inter alia, see Aidan Nichols, *Looking at the Liturgy*; James Hitchcock's *The Recovery of the Sacred* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1974); Thomas Day, *Why Catholics Can't Sing: The Culture of Catholicism and the Triumph of Bad Taste*; and for a stinging, well-documented and well-written critique from a Canadian perspective, see the work of Anne Roche Muggeridge, *The Gates of Hell: The Struggle for the Catholic Church* (Toronto: McClelland and Stuart, 1975) and *The Desolate City: Revolution in the Catholic Church* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1990). Others in the field who are writing in this vein include the Ottawa Oblate John W. Mole whose work has been published in a variety of places; and the Oxford Oratorian Jerome Bertram, whose article "The Sarastro Virus," *Sedes Sapientiae* (August 1997: 4-8) is a brilliant critique of the extent to which the ideology of the Enlightenment has infiltrated the *Novus Ordo* Mass.

intellectually rigorous expression in the recent and brilliant work of the Cambridge theologian Catherine Pickstock. Summarizing and critiquing the most important liturgical scholarship of our day, Pickstock gives us the clearest understanding to date of why the contemporary liturgy has been so problematic and how it is the traditional Mass of the Roman Rite which will once again help restore a culture of leisure which Pieper rightly saw as so necessary in our technological civilization. Put briefly, Pickstock notes that it is this Mass especially which offers a “redemptive critique of secular time, and its concomitant epistemological assumptions.”<sup>64</sup> The contemporary Mass, which is to say the *Novus Ordo*, is not only incapable of this critique but it has, in fact, disturbingly participated to a large degree in “the modern colonization of time by a lateral and abstract space[...]predicated on a violence which promotes the divisions of outside and inside, subject and object, active and passive” and, to be sure, public and private as well as culture and cult.<sup>65</sup> I turn now to the unfolding of Pickstock's thesis in some detail both to build on and answer the question about appropriate liturgical form with which we left Pieper and also to respond in some detail to the diagnosis which Rifkin gave us in the first part.

### III: Catherine Pickstock's Radical Orthodoxy:

Catherine Pickstock's *After Writing: On the Liturgical Consummation of Philosophy* is an extraordinary synthesis and analysis consisting of two major parts (with an important transitional chapter critiquing Duns Scotus as the real architect of many of the errors of modernity, particularly his voluntarism, false epistemology, and divorce of ontology from theology).<sup>66</sup> The first part, "The

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<sup>64</sup> Pickstock, *After Writing*, 221.

<sup>65</sup> Pickstock, *After Writing*, 220.

<sup>66</sup> As she puts it, "the Scotist legacy is palpable: the independent variable of time operates upon a reality univocally governed by a numerical and linear, rather than differentiated and cyclical, order.... Where traditionally the order of linearity and temporal homogeneity were restricted by the liturgical order, subduing the rise of the State with its economy of liturgical return, there now reigns the 'production at every moment of the new,' '(a)n order with no Sunday.'" Pickstock, *After Writing*, 139.

Polity of Death," consists largely in a critique of Derrida and the nihilistic drift of contemporary philosophy which she reads through the hermeneutic of Plato's *Phaedrus*, showing how Platonic thought ends not--as Derrida has argued--in what Pickstock calls the "necrophilia" of deconstruction but, rather, in doxology. The end result of her rereading of the Platonic tradition and her critique of modernity is to show that "liturgical language is the only language that really makes sense,"<sup>67</sup> and that if modernity is to be transformed, it will be through an at least partial return to, and recovery of, those ecclesial practices of liturgy which sustained the Church until the high Middle Ages before the twin--and very related--disasters of the Protestant revolt and the rise of the modern nation-state.

I think that her work provides solutions to each of the five core problems (seen in the first part) which technology, particularly computerized technology, has raised against our relationship with time. Her solution, in each and every instance, may be summarized quite simply as a return to the practice of the traditional Mass of the Church (a practice which will in itself involve an attempted recovery of the practice of leisure). Stated baldly like this, it seems simplistic; but given the elaborate, detailed and highly thought out argument which she mounts well in advance of putting forth this liturgical thesis, it is not simplistic but sophisticated in a quite astonishing way.

*a) Imperceptibility and the Abstracting of Time:*

As we saw with Rifkin, technology generally, and computers particularly, have assisted in speeding up time and abstracting it from human perception and consciousness in such a way that time has almost entirely lost any relation to the rhythms of nature, both human and extra-human.

Pickstock, for her part, echos Rifkin on this point: the project of abstraction<sup>68</sup> and "spatialization is

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<sup>67</sup> Pickstock, *After Writing*, xv.

<sup>68</sup> Pickstock provides a fascinating example of abstraction in the ascendancy of the noun and the rise of a preoccupation with "linguistic efficiency" in 20th century English, supplanting adjectives and adverbs especially. She notes that the ascendancy of the noun in "media news reports, political speeches, and bureaucratic discourses"

equally a suppression of eternity, since time can only be affirmed through the liturgical gesture which receives time from eternity as a gift and offers it back to eternity as a sacrifice." <sup>69</sup> The response, in other words, to a technological abstracting of time and a rendering of it at increasingly imperceptible speed lies not in further technological invention or human effort. Rather, Pickstock suggests, what we need is to receive time from God as a gift--and this ability to receive time is itself God's gift; we can do nothing. Our problematic relationship with time will be transformed as we receive it as gift and offer it back as gift to the One from whom it came in the sure and certain knowledge that time has already been redeemed, and the threat which the passage of time raises for all of us, the threat of our imminent death, has been defeated by Christ's sacrifice on the cross. In other words, the solution to its abstraction must come from beyond us, from the transcendent God of eternity who, while standing outside of all time and history, has nonetheless definitively entered history and time in Christ for the redemption of both.

This salvific in-breaking of Christ restores to us the gift of time and strips away the abstraction which denies our relation to natural cycles and the world, in the process making us feel impotent to act meaningfully in our seemingly technologically determined world:

liturgical time is tilted away from any delimited or inscribed attainment, and, in its prefatory casting, implicitly offers a critique of the violence of an immanentist construal of time which claims to obtain an 'arrival,' and perforce closes off the *potential* of human action. For although the time of liturgy is forever 'before,' this does not humiliate the possibility of human action, but rather exposes the dishonesty of any claim that ethical action consists in discrete accomplishments, or that action stands on its own, outside an anticipation of its ultimate eschatological consummation. The liturgy reminds us that all our

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(and, I might add, social science journals) comes out of the Enlightenment desire for control, objectivity and power, and that the noun "carries no markings of time or personal agency and so appears both permanent, unchanging and given," thus perpetuating the Enlightenment's false universalism and denial of social particularity: "for nominalization conceals human and temporal reality under the guise of objecthood, removing the personal *from itself*." The most disturbing and problematic result of all this is that contemporary English--and many other modern languages--has lost completely the concept and use of what she calls the "middle voice," which is discussed in more detail below as that voice necessary for the active reception of a passively bestowed gift. Pickstock, *After Writing*, 93, 91, 95.

actions, even those of the past, do not exceed the status of that which is going-to-happen, although this *establishes* rather than erases the possibility of action.<sup>70</sup>

In contrast with the traditional Mass, Pickstock says that contemporary liturgies are incapable of accomplishing this because they have incorporated and "ironically perpetuated certain features of the truly secularizing modern epoch. For example, they imposed such anachronistic structural concepts as 'argument,' 'linear order,' 'segmentation,' 'discrete stages,' and the notion of 'new information' outside 'linguistic redundancy' or repetition."<sup>71</sup> These concepts, Pickstock argues, are seen in the *Novus Ordo* Mass, which, rather than confronting, challenging and converting cultural and technological ideas of time has, instead, largely *capitulated* to them.<sup>72</sup>

b) *Impatience:*

As Rifkin showed, computers in particular have made us much more impatient people. As time and our perception of it have both been sped up, we have become a "nanosecond culture" in love with speed and generally unwilling to wait. Moreover, as Stanley Hauerwas and others have shown, this impatience has a not inconsiderable connection with the violence which has plagued our

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<sup>70</sup> Catherine Pickstock, *After Writing*, 221. Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger echoes this when he writes that "the only way to master time, in fact, is the way of forgiveness and thankfulness whereby we receive time as a gift and, in a spirit of gratitude, transform it." Ratzinger, *Feast of Faith*, 129.

<sup>71</sup> Pickstock, *After Writing*, 175.

<sup>72</sup> It is fashionable in certain circles to uphold the Council of Trent as the height of theological development and to denigrate everything coming out of and happening since the Second Vatican Council as a loss and destruction of some imagined Tridentine glory. While Trent was indeed a formidable and important moment in the life of the Church, it can hardly be said--especially of one takes seriously, as I do, the role of the development of traditions as outlined above all in Newman's masterwork, *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* and also in MacIntyre's work, especially his 1988 Gifford Lecture *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry: Encyclopaedia, Genealogy and Tradition* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1990)--that it has been all downhill from there. Much that was good *was* done after Trent and precisely at the Second Vatican Council. The problem lies not in the council but in much of its unfortunate implementation, above all in the *Consilium* which concocted the *Novus Ordo Missae*. Those who deny or overlook this typically cast aspersions on the postconciliar *Novus Ordo* Mass, often to the point of calling its sacramental validity into question. That is not my intention, and those are not my views. The new Mass *is*--if celebrated with proper form and intention--a valid sacrifice and sacrament. My critique--and that of Ratzinger and numerous others cited--is with the liturgical *form* of the sacrifice in the West.

blood-drenched century of tears. We have lost the ability to practice the virtue of patience and to sit in silence and not knowing, capable of hospitality and graciousness toward the stranger and enemy alike. As a result, we have no capacity for being a peaceful people. Once again Pickstock suggests that it is the traditional Mass of the Roman Rite which will teach us this necessary virtue of patience, and, in so doing, bestow upon us through the *epiclesis* of the Spirit the gift of that peace "which the world cannot give" <sup>73</sup> but which the world--and never before as in this century--so desperately needs.

Pickstock's argument is situated within a discussion about the culture of the high Middle Ages before the Protestant revolution and the rise of the modern nation state. Drawing on the work of John Bossy and Henri Cardinal de Lubac in particular, she shows that peace (*contra* what Kant and those who were influenced by him would later suggest), is never something taught rationally but is, rather, received liturgically as a gift through the Body of Christ understood both as the Eucharist and as the Church which is constituted by that same Eucharist.<sup>74</sup> Peace, in other words, is never a human accomplishment, is never simply the absence of overt conflict or war, and is "perpetual" only insofar as it is perpetually and eternally given by the Prince of Peace, Jesus Christ, the same "yesterday, today and forever."<sup>75</sup> In order to receive this gift, we must learn the practice of patient waiting which in itself begins to transform our relationship to time and our perpetual busyness. This is seen most clearly immediately after the canon of the Mass and the consecration of the elements when the celebrant moves into the exchange of peace:

in the[...]prayer, '*Pax Domini sit semper vobiscum/Et cum spiritu tuo*,' the gift of the Body and Blood of Christ are identified as turning time *into* peace, or as transposing time into the gift of peace seen in the redemptive exchange between past, present and future.[...] In this dialogic turn, peace is both something we have received and are bestowing upon one

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<sup>73</sup> John 14:17.

<sup>74</sup> As the *Catechism* puts it, "the Eucharist makes the Church. Those who receive the Eucharist are united more closely to Christ. Through it Christ unites them to all the faithful in one body--the Church. Communion renews, strengthens, and deepens this incorporation into the Church, already achieved by Baptism" (s.1396).

<sup>75</sup> Hebrews 13:8.

another.[...] The nature of God's gift to us is peace amongst us: this is the (always arriving through time) gift of (spatial) community.<sup>76</sup>

Peace, then, is the gift of God to His people who have learned to practice patience, graciousness and open hospitality toward the stranger and the enemy. In being open to the stranger and to God we receive time as a gift and not as something anxiously, hurriedly grasped from the hand of our enemies. We thus receive patience and, through patience, peace.

*c) Hidden Humanness, Individualism and Isolation:*

As Rifkin showed, the rise of the computer as a core part of the communications revolution has had the effect of producing one of the great ironies of history: never before have we had more opportunity for communicating with one another, and yet never before has our culture been as riddled with individualism, isolation and loneliness.<sup>77</sup> We have myriad ways to communicate with one another, and yet we are isolated from one another.

Pickstock suggests once more that the individualism, loneliness and fragmented nature of modernity will only finally be transformed by a return to the *communal* celebration of the Mass of the Roman Rite which both reveals to us our truly social-ecclesial nature and restores the rightful communion among human beings and between humans and God via the Church, in the process transcending the narrow confines of earthly existence.

Pickstock would thus have us think again about the value of ecclesial practices not on the terms of the modern nation state<sup>78</sup> but on the model of the Church in the high Middle Ages where

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<sup>76</sup> Pickstock translates the Latin thus: "The peace of the Lord be always with you/And with thy spirit." Pickstock, *After Writing*, 237.

<sup>77</sup> Hannah Arendt has also noted that modern industrial society is characterized by "the mass phenomenon of loneliness, where it has assumed its most extreme and most antihuman form" and goes on to suggest that the totalizing grasp of the modern capitalist nation state is to blame: "the reason for this extremity is that mass society not only destroys the public realm but the private as well." Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 59.

<sup>78</sup> Cf. Cavanaugh, "A Fire Strong Enough to Consume the House."

the dichotomies of public-private, sacred-secular, Church-state did not exist, for everyday economic and social life by its very nature was "definitively ritual or liturgical in character. There simply was no duality of the liturgical and the mundane, just as the dichotomy of public and private was foreign to the mediaeval mind.[...] [A]ll forms of social interaction were themselves embedded in a structure of worship, ritual and charity."<sup>79</sup>

Such ritually imbued communities were founded on gift, most especially the "gift of being:" "it was at the Mass that the social realm received itself as the union of the social limbs of the Body of Christ, a theme of reconciliation which was symbolized in the great procession at Mass of the craft guilds and fraternities."<sup>80</sup> It is thus this offering of gift which reconciles people to one another and to God, overcoming all estrangement through the community of the Church. As she puts it:

the performance of community in the offering of gift characterizes liturgical space as both relational and temporal. In addition, its space contrasts with that of the pagan *polis*, in which only a full citizen could offer a liturgy: only a citizen could be a citizen. In Christian liturgical space, there are no prior determining criteria for both the subject and the community, outside the offering of gift which *all* may offer. This priority of gift, which[...]is a category which integrates spontaneous initiative with a constitutive exchange, results in an *equivalence* of individual and community. It follows that while we exceed the world through our liturgical transgression of lateral limits, the world--as a now non-totalized community--continues to exceed *us*. We remain with the other in praise.<sup>81</sup>

Moreover, we not only remain with the other in praise but we are brought into that wider *communio* which transcends space and time where we make our offering with all those who have gone before us marked with the sign of faith and who sleep the sleep of peace. Liturgy thus has an inherent eschatological orientation to it:

it is in this eschatological chronotope that the worshipper is reminded of his communality. The service of praise is not rendered in an autonomous manner, but through Christ, our Lord, in both proximal and angelic congregation. We offer praise in the first person plural, "*nos tibi semper et ubique gratias agere,*" and in unison with the praise of the heavenly choirs, who also sing through Christ ("*Per quem maiestatem tuam laudant Angeli*"), in the

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79 Pickstock, *After Writing*, 146.

80 Pickstock, *After Writing*, 147.

81 Pickstock, *After Writing*, 234.

city of the living God, where thousands upon thousands of angels are gathered, concelebrating in one society of exultation. This is a polity whose lateral and historical limits are opened so as to enter the transcendent city of Jerusalem: "*Cæli cælorum Virtutes ac beata Seraphim socia exultatione concelebrant. Cum quibus et nostras voces ut admitti iubeas, deprecamur, supplici confessione dicentes.*"<sup>82</sup>

d) *Speed and Stress:*

Rifkin's review of the relevant literature has confirmed (as Pieper predicted), that vast sectors of the contemporary workforce are marked by unprecedented levels of anxiety and stress. People are overwhelmed with the demands placed on them and the work expected of them. They are expected, in fact, to work like the very machines we ostensibly control and direct but which are now instead coming to master and control us, transforming human consciousness as well as the expectations we have of human productivity.

Once more Pickstock advances the thesis that in the final analysis the only thing which will save us from this will be a recovery of, and return to, the traditional liturgy which offers a critique of the predominant cultural notions of human worth in terms of fast and efficient productivity and the consequent stress which such demands engender in the human psyche. In contrast with these modernist notions, the traditional Mass offers a theological anthropology based on *gift*.

Pickstock writes that a gift is characterized above all by participating in the sacrificial self-gift of Christ: "all gifts are made possible by, and are a repetition of, the incarnation," and this is seen most clearly in the Mass: "Insofar as the person of Christ is the engendering of all gifts--which are not extra to Him, but participate in His being--it can be seen that the character of gift is determined by His own nature: '*Per quem hæc omnia, Domine, semper bona creas, sanctificas, vivificas, benedixis et præestas nobis.*'"<sup>83</sup> Pickstock contrasts this with what she calls the pagan

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<sup>82</sup> The three Latin phrases translate respectively as "that we should at all times and in all places give thanks unto Thee;" "through whom angels praise your majesty;" and "the heavens and the heavenly hosts and the blessed seraphim, joining together in exultant celebration. We pray you, bid our voices also to be admitted with theirs, beseeching you, confessing, and saying." Pickstock, *After Writing*, 235-236.

<sup>83</sup> The Latin is translated as: "by whom, O Lord, Thou dost create, hallow, quicken, bless and bestow upon us these things." Pickstock, *After Writing*, 240.

and immanentist notions of modernity, which alternately deny or refuse gift, in its place opting for a Darwinian anthropology based on productivity and efficiency. Contrary to such a necrophiliac anthropology, Pickstock says that a genuine understanding of gift, most especially the gift of being, will allow us to come once more to understand that human beings have a worth far and above what they can produce or do. Indeed, Pickstock argues, a proper theological anthropology rightly understands that human beings have intrinsic and inherent worth by virtue of being created in the image of God, and thus our very nature is itself a gift whose worth is incalculable.

Liturgically this is seen most clearly in the "Roman Rite [where] the worshipper receives his restored humanity by receiving God's gift in the person of Christ, and receives his being only by offering it back, in the subjective act of praise. Thus, for this ontology of gift, being is that which is always already relational."<sup>84</sup> These gifts of being and relationality do not by their very nature end by or with themselves and cannot be grasped or hoarded; like the manna in the desert, this would guarantee their destruction.<sup>85</sup> Stopping a gift, Pickstock says, is the very definition of violence.<sup>86</sup> The nature of gift, rather, inheres in constant giving and re-giving. All linear and rationalist trajectories of progress and production are not so much refused as transformed, coming to reflect giftedness as the defining characteristic of the economy of salvation:

The liturgical gift of being--like any gift--cannot, according to the dynamics of mundane acquisition, be simply appropriated. At the point when the gift is received, it must be handed on [...]. In the same way, we receive peace only by passing it on to others. This economy of 'dispossession' is ultimately figured in the 'Mass' itself, which sends us out (*'Ite, Missa est'*) that we might be received as gifts into the world.<sup>87</sup>

We thus come to see that our inherent giftedness comes from beyond time, from a

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<sup>84</sup> Pickstock, *After Writing*, 248.

<sup>85</sup> Cf. Exodus 16:13-20

<sup>86</sup> Cf. Pickstock, *After Writing*, 250.

<sup>87</sup> Pickstock, *After Writing*, 250.

transcendent Father in whom there is no time and who gives when He gives.<sup>88</sup> We cannot force this gift, and we cannot speed up its giving. The only way we can receive it is in patience, wonder and open receptivity to the Spirit, who will transform us in an encounter with eternity.

*e)The Ahistorical, Antireflective Tendency:*

One of the most disturbing trends which increased computer usage has inflicted upon us is an increasing unwillingness and consequent inability both to think, ponder and reflect, and also to remember our history. This is most disconcerting because those who fail to remember the past are of course condemned to repeat it. Given these difficulties with reflection and remembrance, what are we to do?

It will by now come as no surprise that Pickstock upholds once more the example of the traditional Mass of the Roman Rite, a liturgy with a history of more than a 1500 years behind it. Pickstock demonstrates generally the salvific role of repetition and reflection in the liturgy, noting that liturgy is not a merely slavish repetition of everything that was done the day before but, rather, a repetition which is at once ever new and ever the same, temporal and timeless, earthly and eternal. In order to both counter and transform modernity's ahistoricizing and anti-reflective spirit, Pickstock gives us an extended eschatological reflection<sup>89</sup> on the Mass as journey, concentrating especially on the fore-Mass and the opening of the Mass itself (what in modern parlance would be called the "entrance rite"), both of which demonstrate the nature and role of remembrance and reflection and radically transform our cultural preoccupation with linear rationality, the ideology of progress, the denial of our finitude and historicity, and the necrophiliac refusal to practice the

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<sup>88</sup> Cf. James 1:17; II Peter 3:8.

<sup>89</sup> Pickstock takes the eschatological nature of the liturgy to be a *sine qua non*: "the liturgical event can only be genuine if it retains always an eschatological reserve, or continuing acknowledgment of the impossible and need for repeated divine arrival" *After Writing*, 214-215.

sacrament of the present moment.<sup>90</sup>

Pickstock begins by noting that the very opening words of the Mass (technically the fore-Mass), *In nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti*, immediately dislocate us and decentre the temporally located self, denying our efforts at ahistorical abstraction free from the contingency of temporal existence. Do we begin our journey toward the Trinity whose name is invoked at the outset, or are we already in the presence of the Triune God who precedes us and in whom we are originally located independent of any travel or travail on our part? This dislocating, as Pickstock says, "invokes two contradictory journeys: a sending out of God and a going into God. In instantiates both a commission bearing divine authority, and an unmoving invocation of divine protection and subsumption within the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit."<sup>91</sup> From the very beginning, then, we are denied the possibility of denying reflection and history. We are disoriented and called to account: where are we? how did we get here? and where are we going?

The next part of the opening of the Mass, the recitation of the opening verse of Psalm 43, leads us more closely towards the place we have already arrived at, the "problematic altar:"<sup>92</sup> *Introibo ad altare Dei./Ad Deum qui lætificat iuventutem meam*, a versicle which is repeated three times in very short order. This constitutes a form of structural re-beginning. We have both arrived and must be perpetually setting out on our journey; we journey in order that there may be a journey; we celebrate liturgy in order that there might be a liturgy. Liturgy is "always about to begin, not in a 'hollowed out' sense, but as a necessarily deferred anticipation of the heavenly worship towards which we strive. Our liturgy in time can only be the liturgy we render in order to be able to render

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<sup>90</sup> Jean-Pierre De Cassaude, S.J., *Self-Abandonment to Divine Providence*, trans. Algar Thorold, ed. John Joyce (London: Burns & Oates, 1959). Jonathan Robinson of the Oratory comments on de Cassaude's work and related matters in his splendid new book, *On the Lord's Appearing: An Essay on Prayer and Tradition* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1997).

<sup>91</sup> Pickstock, *After Writing*, 181.

<sup>92</sup> Pickstock, *After Writing*, 183.

liturgy." <sup>93</sup>

This problematic journey continues its perpetual re-beginning throughout the Mass, thereby slowly teaching us that human life, properly understood, does not progress forward in a unilinear direction of unmitigated and uninterrupted progress but, rather, is constantly beginning over and over again as we see in the next part of the fore-Mass, the *Confiteor*. The *Confiteor* itself contains the famous three-fold repetition of *mea culpa, mea culpa, mea maxima culpa*, which is actually said six times, the first three by the priest in his confession, the next three by the people in theirs. This impresses upon us the soteriological realization that moral progress--as with any and all progress in life--is rarely a simple matter of straightforward movement; given the fallen nature of humanity, we are perpetually in need of beginning over and over again. We fall and get up, falling again and getting up again and again.

This unsegmented journey of re-beginning continues throughout the Mass, encouraging in us a reflective spirit on where we are, where we have come from, and the gift which has brought us to that place and is leading us on to our heavenly home. Moreover, it gives us a deep sense of our history through repetition<sup>94</sup> such that we cannot not remember it. Pickstock thus counters the ahistorical and anti-reflective tendencies of modernity, showing that while identity is not foreclosed, neither is it wide open. Both our identity and our history are ultimately linked with the history of the entire cosmos, which is being recapitulated in Christ.

In sum, then, Pickstock's extraordinarily insightful and brilliant work--the depth of whose

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93 Pickstock, *After Writing*, 183.

94 Pickstock does not mention this directly, but I would add that the Mass impresses upon us a deep, indeed bimillennial, sense of history through the summarized story of salvation told in the Creed, and especially in the third section of the Canon (and again after the consecration), the invocation of the saints, where we are reminded of the history of the lives of, and of our connection with, those who have gone before: *Communicantes, et memoriam venerantes in primis gloriosæ semper Virginis Mariæ, Genitricis Dei et Domini nostri Jesu Christi: sed et beatorum Apostolorum ac Martyrum tuorum, Petri et Pauli, Andreae, Jacobi, Ioannis, Thomæ, Iacobi, Philippi, Bartholomæi, Matthæi, Simonis, et Thaddæi: Lini, Cleti, Clementis, Xysti, Cornelii, Cypriani, Laurentii, Chrosogoni, Joannis et Pauli, Cosmæ et Damianis*. Cited in Sylvester P. Juergens, *The New Marian Missal* (New York: Regina Press, 1962), 668-669.

richness we have not been able to plumb here entirely--has shown us that in the final analysis the ills of our world, technological and other, will only be corrected by a return to a sacrificial-sacramental participation in the death and resurrection of Christ as that is mediated and given to us most felicitously through the traditional Mass of the Roman Rite. Her work has shown us that, in both broad cultural terms and in more specific terms of the relationship to time which technology has rendered so problematic, the answer to our problems is, and remains as it has from before time and forever, Christ's salvific offering of the *total gift of Himself* on the Cross and in the Eucharist. A final few words of summary and conclusion are now in order.

### Conclusion:

We have seen through Jeremy Rifkin's work that technology, particularly in its computerized forms, has assisted greatly in a profound transformation of our sense of, and relationship to, time. The unmistakable conclusion was that we have become people whose defining characteristic is anxious busy-work which has reduced the mystery of the human person and his capacity for wonder to a slavish capacity for work and little else. What was proposed as an answer was the beginning of a cultural conversion, which was illuminated by Josef Pieper's work and shown to be the move toward a recovery of greater leisure and that liturgy which follows on, and necessarily undergirds, leisure if our culture is not to sink further into what Pope John Paul II has recently called a "culture of death," a key hallmark of which is its idolization of "efficiency."<sup>95</sup> Pieper's argument about leisure was thus seen to require liturgy as both leisure and liturgy dialectically interact with one another, transforming the wider culture at large. Thus we turned to

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<sup>95</sup> As the Holy Father has written, "In fact, while the climate of widespread moral uncertainty can in some way be explained by the multiplicity and gravity of today's social problems, and these can sometimes mitigate the subjective responsibility of individuals, it is no less true that we are confronted by an even larger reality, which can be described as a veritable *structure of sin*. This reality is characterized by the emergence of a culture which denies solidarity and in many cases takes the form of a veritable 'culture of death.' This culture is actively fostered by powerful cultural, economic and political currents which encourage an idea of society excessively concerned with *efficiency*." Pope John Paul II, *Evangelium Vitae* (Vatican City: Vatican Polyglot Press, 1995), s.12 (emphasis added).

the work of Catherine Pickstock, who has convincingly shown that the highest expression of culture-building and -transforming liturgy remains the traditional Mass of the Roman Rite which will assist us to recover both leisure and liturgy as widespread cultural attitudes and practices of wonder, gratitude and openness to the gratuitousness of the creation and its Creator. Thus our final answer to Rifkin is twofold. We must begin by both recovering a broader culture of leisure and *at the same time* return to the embodied ecclesial *practice* of the celebration of the traditional Mass of the Roman Rite which, for more than a millennium, allowed a culture of leisure to flourish in the West.

Though it is scandalous to suggest to modern ears,<sup>96</sup> the celebration of Holy Mass must once again come to have a central place in our culture, undergirding and indeed transforming all of life--social, economic, political and spiritual--so that leisure, liturgy and ultimately life may once more flourish and the new age of barbarism and darkness in which we find ourselves may be defeated not by violence but through the patient, peaceful practices of virtuous, worshipping people-in-community.<sup>97</sup> If the story of technological transformation of time with which we began set the scene for us, then it is appropriate that we end with another story, the story of the resurrection as it comes to us again and again in the Eucharist. For it is in this never-ending return to, and retelling

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96 As Stanley Hauerwas and Michael Baxter put it at the end of their essay on *Quas Primas*, Pope Pius XI's 1925 encyclical instituting the new feast of Christ the King, "we realize that such a call to worship will appear to many people, especially academics, as quaint at best. And we are well aware that [this]...will be judged by many to be less than 'serious' because it does not tackle the complex legal issues attending church-state relations....To these criticisms we have two responses. First, we write not as apologists for the liberal project...nor as theorists groping for a way to make peace with the nation-state, but as theologians of a church constituted by a politics that acknowledges Christ as King. And second, what Pius XI said of the Church's teaching could also be said of papers delivered by theologians at academic conferences: '[s]uch pronouncements usually reach only a few and the more learned among the faithful; feasts reach them all.' Finally, we are aware that some will infer from what we have written that we favor some kind of restoration of 'the confessional state.' We favor no such restoration. However, we do favor restoring a theoretical commitment to grounding politics in the christological claim that Christ is King." Stanley Hauerwas, *In Good Company: The Church As Polis* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995), 215. With Hauerwas and Baxter, I make no apologies for this conclusion.

97 Cf. Alasdair MacIntyre: "What matters at this stage is the construction of local forms of community within which civility and the intellectual and moral life can be sustained through the new dark ages which are already upon us. And if the tradition of the virtues was able to survive the horrors of the last dark ages, we are not entirely without grounds for hope." *After Virtue*, 263.

of, the salvific-sacramental story of Christ's resurrection that the redemption of time lies. The story of the resurrection is "the story which sets out the transcendental condition for every story. Yet, since the resurrection ensures that there is no final death to end the story, Jesus' story is at once the story which makes stories possible, and the impossible story which never ends. Even if the world would come to an end, his story would still continue."<sup>98</sup> In a nuclear age, when technology has transformed time, destroyed leisure and denied any need for liturgy, in the process giving us the potential to effect the end of the human story--and all of life on this planet--does that not sound like good news indeed?

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98 Pickstock, *After Writing*, 266.