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Introduction

The ancient liturgical rite of Spain, often called the Mozarabic rite, is one of several Latin language liturgies that arose in the West in the first four centuries. Only three have survived to this day: the Roman, the Milanese, and the Spanish. Orientalium Ecclesiarum (hereinafter abbreviated as “OE”), the Second Vatican Council’s Decree on the Eastern Catholic Churches, conveyed the Council’s openness to diversity in the liturgy when it stated all the rites celebrated by Catholics in the East or the West enjoy the same dignity and privileges as the Roman rite (OE 3). This led Cardinal Marcelo González Martín (archbishop of Toledo 1972–1995) to renew the ancient Spanish rite’s status and life. He formed a Commission whose work resulted in updating and designating it as an alternate liturgy for all Catholics in Spain in 1988. New liturgical books also appeared in 1991.

I address three questions here: (1) What is liturgy? (2) What is popular religion? (3) What is the relationship between liturgy and popular religion? I see a link between liturgy and popular religion forged in the ritual use of certain symbols. Those used in both realms mediate this link and take on a pivotal role. Such is the case of the Lignum Crucis, a seventeenth-century reliquary holding a relic of the “wood of the true cross” used by the Mozarabic rite parish of Santa Eulalia y San Marcos in Toledo.

My interest in the Mozarabic rite was encouraged by Orlando Espín, who claimed that when the rite was replaced in the eleventh century by the Roman rite, many of the Mozarabic liturgical practices passed into Hispanic popular religion. Spanish missionaries later spread these throughout the Spanish-speaking world. If Espín is correct, then some of the approaches to the cross and to the celebration of Holy Week would have entered into the religious practices of Hispanics in Latin America and the U.S. I find some merit to his claim. Thus, I will look at the approach to the cross and to Christ as seen in the ritual use of the Lignum Crucis and show how it manifests Hispanic piety in general.

To do this, I begin with the use of the Lignum Crucis by describing the Ad tertiam and the Ad nonam pro indulgentiam liturgies at Santa Eulalia as well as the Hermandad Mozárabe’s participation in the Good Friday processions. Then I offer an interpretation of this in light of liturgy and popular religion. I conclude by pointing to some direct links to Hispanic popular piety afterwards.

The Ritual Use of the Lignum Crucis

The cross appears fundamental to the spirituality of Mozarabs. This is most evident on Good Friday when they gather for two liturgies and then take part in processions that wind their way through the city.

The City of Toledo

The city that inspired the painter El Greco in the sixteenth-century has remained relatively unchanged since in parts of the city core, the casco antiguo. Toledo sits atop a rugged promontory hedged in on three sides by a loop of the Rio Tajo. The steep, crooked streets in the casco antiguo tend to be narrow and often impassible by car. The parish Church of Santa Eulalia is hidden in an out of the way barrio of the casco antiguo. This barrio once abutted the medieval judioa (Jewish quarter). It is set on a steep, narrow, cobblestone street. The church was built in 559 during the reign of King Athanagild (554–567). It has suffered reforms, rebuilding, abandonment, and reconstruction over the last 1,441 years. The building was abandoned in 1842 but repaired in the late 1960s.

The description is based on my observations, notes, and videotape taken by my research assistants, Roland Morin and Leon Zalewski, at the Holy Week services of Santa Eulalia on Holy Thursday (April 1, 1999), Good Friday (April 2, 1999), and Holy Saturday (April 3, 1999), as well as the Good Friday processions on April 2, 1999. I use the present tense to help the reader enter into the event although it was a contingent historical event put together by the actors. Nonetheless, I have observed the general outline and the key elements of the event described previously to 1999 and again in 2000 and 2002.

when electricity was installed. The church was reconsecrated for worship in 1973. ¹ The building is a modified Visigothic and Mozarabic style with Mudéjar elements. ² The floor plan is basilical. The most striking image inside is the figure of a woman on a cross. She is Santa Eulalia, a third-century virgin martyr who is the patroness of the parish. Dated to the sixteenth century, the figure hangs in the chapel at the end of the right nave. The image of Santa Eulalia wears a wig of long curls made of chestnut-colored, human hair. A white satin dress covers her body.

As for the relic of the wood of the true cross, the Lignum Crucis, it is found in a reliquary in the shape of a Latin cross. The reliquary sits atop the tabernacle in the Blessed Sacrament chapel. The relic of the true cross was found in a small coffer when repairs were being made to the church in the mid-fifteenth century and the reliquary was made in 1636. ⁶ There is a box at the foot of the cross which contains the relics of Santa Eulalia. A bar separating the box from the base has two levels. At the second, the inscription says the donor was a former rector of the parish who gave the money for the reliquary after having recovered his health. ⁷ Prior to 1987 it was on its anda (a platform used by carriers on which images are placed for processions) and kept in a corner of the sacristy. ⁸ The Hermadad Mozárbete takes it out in procession on Good Friday. Don Enrique Carrillo Morales, the pastor, decided to "return" the Lignum Crucis to its "rightful place," above the tabernacle in 1987. ⁹

His reasoning is partially based on sources that note the placement of the relic on top of a tabernacle or inside of it. ¹⁰ The main reason Carrillo Morales gives for this, however, is liturgical. The Lignum Crucis is placed over the tabernacle "so that, due to the singular veneration that is given to it [the tabernacle] by the Catholic liturgy, it is assimilated to and is united to that which the Church gives to the presence of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament." ¹¹ Thus, he deliberately wants to link the Lignum Crucis to the Blessed Sacrament. As will be shown, the reliquary is treated as if it were a monstrance containing a particle of the sacramental presence of Christ.

¹ See Córdoba, "Las iglesias mozárabes de Toledo." ⁹.
² For Visigothic, Mozarabic, and Mudéjar architecture see Xavier Barral i Altet, The Early Middle Ages: From Late Antiquity to A.D. 1000 (Taschen World Architecture series; Köln and New York: Benedikt Taschen Verlag, 1997) 99–117.
⁴ Hurtado's reason for giving the money for the reliquary, the recovery of his health, makes it a type of ex vot o given in thanksgiving for a favor received. This is a popular religious practice yet very common among Hispanics all over the world.
⁵ Enrique Carrillo Morales, interview by author, Notes, Toledo, May 17, 1999.
⁷ A. Arellano, 12.

THE AD TERTIAM SERVICE

The first liturgical service of Good Friday is the Ad tertiam service, literally "at the third hour." This service has been celebrated anew at Santa Eulalia only since 1996. It is a recovery of a service found in the Liber Ordinum that was altered and combined with the Ad nonam service under Cardinal Cisneros in 1500. Terce or the third hour is usually 9:00 A.M. The liturgy includes a procession of the assembly with the Lignum Crucis and two venerations of it. Don Enrique greets those gathered, inviting them to participate in the service with their attention and prayers. He addresses a prayer to the Father in which he mentions that this fraction of the wood of the cross is the sign of salvation; therefore, it is carried in procession so that as "we cross the sea [of this life]" we pray for the salvation that comes through it. Then he instructs the assembly to leave the church in procession. Don Enrique starts a hymn to the cross, ¡Victoria! Tú reinarás. ¹² The people sing as they go out of the building into the plaza, down the hill, up around the building, and back inside. At the rear a minister swings the thurible filled with incense. Don Enrique follows with the Lignum Crucis. Back inside, the people go to their pews while the ministers return to the front of the altar. Don Enrique continues to hold high the Lignum Crucis. After the hymn, he reads a monition calling on all to adore the wood on which hung Christ the Savior.

Inside the ritual unfolds as the Lignum Crucis is venerated twice. During the second veneration, people come and make various forms of reverence. All do so from a slight distance before nearing the reliquary to kiss it. During the veneration rite, lasting about twenty minutes, don Enrique sings the Versica Regis followed by the hymn, ¡Victoria! Tú reinarás. After everyone venerates the reliquary, don Enrique takes it to the altar. He instructs the people to stand and makes a brief monition inviting all to acclaim the cross in a litany of praise. He begins the litany extolling the holy cross on which Christ hung and whose blood washed our wounds. After the litany, all kneel and don Enrique prays a closing prayer.

The Ad nonam pro indulgentiam service, the second liturgy of the day at Santa Eulalia y San Marcos, is in the afternoon. The title in English is "At the ninth hour for mercy." This service is the longer of the two, lasting about ninety minutes and in a sense is a continuation of the morning service. One feature is the litany for mercy (indulgentiam) ¹³ decreed

¹² This is an idiosyncratic introduction by d. Enrique; the Missale and the Liber Ordinum offer the text of a Latin hymn but due to the lack of notation, he has substituted this hymn of recent vintage. The title in English is "Victory! You will reign." It was composed by F. X. Moreau; another version is available in the hymnal, Flor y Canto (Portland, Oreg.: Oregon Catholic Press, 1989) 194 (the title is simply Tú reinarás).
¹³ Indulgentiam can be translated as indulgence, pardon, tenderness, and mercy; the latter word best conveys the request for mercy in the plea for forgiveness.
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blurred lines of the liturgy and popular religion

by the Fourth Council of Toledo (633). Because penance and reconciliation of penitents were public in the Visigothic church, this service was to be the sacramental reconciliation liturgy. The litany played a major role in the completion of the penance and it incorporated the rest of those attending into a communal penance service.

**Entrance of Ministers**

The ministers file in from the sacristy in silence. Don Enrique carries the *Lignum Crucis* as in the morning, with a humeral veil covering his hands and the base of the reliquary. He places the *Lignum Crucis* in the middle of the altar between tapers. The *Lignum Crucis* remains on the altar all through the liturgy though direct references to it never occur.

The Good Friday evening processions are the third event. In Christian circles processions came into use once persecution waned in the fourth century. As John Baldwin notes, "the relaxation of persecution meant that Christians were free to take to the streets, and after the first decade of the fourth century such public manifestations were permanently legitimized." Consequently processions became a regular feature in Christian religious expression. In Jerusalem particularly, processions at Holy Week became a way to recall and re-enact the events of Christ's Passion. These practices captured the imagination of Christians elsewhere and had great impact on their own religious practices.

Ronald Grimes defines procession as a "linearly ordered, solemn movement of a group through chartered space to a known destination." Its main purpose is "to give witness, bear an esteemed object, perform a rite, fulfill a vow, gain merit, or visit a shrine." Grimes, Reading, Writing, and Ritualizing, 63–64; and idem, Beginnings in Ritual Studies, rev. ed. (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1995; 1st pub. 1982 by University Press of America) 27.

**Mozarabs and Their Paso**

Once all the people in the city have left Santa Eulalia after the *Ad nonam pro indulgentiam* liturgy, a few members of the *Hermandad Mozárabe* take the Lignum Crucis to the Mozarabic parish Church of Santas Justa y Rufina. There they will be prepared for the Good Friday Processions that go through the casco antiguo. Santas Justa y Rufina is the home-base for three other non-Mozarab groups too.

**Gathering of the Hermandad**

The Mozarabs who will process have been arriving at Santas Justa y Rufina since 7:30 P.M. In addition to those who live in Toledo, others from Madrid and other parts of Spain have come to take part. The processants include men and women, boys and girls. The males come dressed in the distinctive royal blue mantle of the Hermandad; a large cross emblem adorns its left arm. They wear their *venera* (Mozarab emblem) notes that processions are oriented toward a destination rather than a "center."

Processions became a means to proclaim faith publicly and to take the liturgy hidden in churches into the street. In this way, the city became liturgical space. Baldwin gives certain traits of them that reflect current Spanish practice in general and the processions in Toledo in particular: "Processions of all sorts are, of course, public in nature, but popular liturgical processions differ in that they are much larger in scale and succeed in bringing together people of diverse backgrounds and status. Thus, as a kind of democratic form in a very undemocratic world, they succeeded in bringing liturgy onto the streets."

There is clear evidence of processions in Spain in the sixteenth century; they tended to be penitential in character. This is a trait that continues to mark Holy Week in Toledo today. More dramatic elements were added to Holy Week in the ninth century.

**Notes**


around their neck on a blue and gold ribbon. The females arrive dressed in black. Their emblem, attached to a blue and gold ribbon in the form of a bow (lazo), is pinned over their heart. Don Enrique arrives dressed in the habit of the Mozarab chaplains of black cassock, white surplice, black cope and ruffled collar. The Mozarab cross emblem on a blue and gold band hangs around his neck. Only processants may be in the church at this time. The archdiocese assigns a chaplain to each group. In this way, the popular religious practice of Holy Week processions is legitimized and integrated into the ecclesial life of Toledo.

The first group to leave is the one that accompanies the Descendimiento paso. Then follows the group accompanying the paso of the Virgen de las Angustias. Some dressed in seventeenth century armor are next. Then come the members of the Knights of the Holy Sepulcher who accompany the Santo Sepulcro image. A young man in armor drags a black pennant attached to a spear behind him before the dead Christ. Then comes the Hermandad Mozárabe with the Lignum Crucis.22 They are followed by more armored processants. The group accompanying the paso of Nuestra Señora de la Soledad follows. In this order, a living tableau is set up in which Jesus is taken down from the cross, placed on the lap of his weeping mother, escorted by soldiers, followed by Christ laid out in a coffin, leaving an empty cross (the Lignum Crucis reliquary), and the mother weeping. Thus, the gospel narratives describing the last moments of Jesus’ passion are set-up to be reenacted for all to see.

About 10:00 p.m. the Lignum Crucis emerges from the church. The paso is carried by four Mozarab young men. It is led by two boys vested as altar servers, one of whom swings a thurible. The paso is more flimsy than the earlier ones and so any movement is easily seen in the canopy. One is struck by its simplicity and starkness. The spotlight on the front of the paso is focused on the reliquary making it shine underneath the canopy.

While the Hermandad emerges, civic and military officials approach the church from the lower part of Santa Justa street. They are the last to line up. These include members of the city council, the provincial government, military officers, and officers of the Guardia Civil. They are led by the mayor who wears the Mozarab cross emblem on a gold chain as a symbol of the city government’s role of civil protector of the Hermandad Mozárabe.23

The officials of the archdiocese wait at Hombre de Palo Street for the paso of Our Lady of Sorrows. Once the group with their chaplain passes by, they insert themselves in the procession before the civic and military officials. The center of the church group is taken by Archbishop Francisco Álvarez Martínez. He too wears the Mozarab cross emblem on a gold chain, a sign of his role as the current ecclesiastical superior of the Hispano-Mozarabic rite and titular head of the Hermandad Mozárabe.

Along the route I overhear observers saying “those are the Mozarabs!” Some bless themselves as the Lignum Crucis passes by. Others ask who this group is. Yet others note the simplicity of the Lignum Crucis paso and are not very taken by it. For Mozarabs though, to go in procession on Good Friday is to engage in “an act of recollection. It means to accompany the Lignum Crucis. It is to do penance.”24 Don Mario Arellano García asserts that taking the Lignum Crucis in procession is very important: “It is the most important element in the procession of Good Friday since it is the authentic relic of the cross. The rest are just statues.”25

24 Jurado Lozano family interview by author, Notes, June 2, 1999; combination and trans. of statements made by different members of the family: “Es un acto de reconocimiento. Significa acompañar al Lignum Crucis. Es completar la penitencia.”
25 Mario Arellano García, interview by author, Notes, May 20, 1999; trans. of “Es el elemento más importante de la procesión de Viernes Santo puesto que es la reliquia auténtica de la cruz. Lo demás es solamente imágenes.”
26 Cf. Constituciones (1984), arts. 1 and 5; Constituciones (1999), art. 13. Álvarez Martínez was designated a cardinal by Pope John Paul II in 2001.
Informal Dispersal and Disassembly

Once the processants return to the church they sing the *Salve* and disperse to go their separate ways. The *Lignum Crucis* is left on its *anda* in the secured church. Next morning a small group will quietly return it to Santa Eulalia where it will be affixed to the top of the tabernacle, left there until the next Holy Week. Afterwards, only passing reference will be made to the wood of the cross in the orations and readings of the Holy Saturday Vigil and on the Feast of the Finding of the True Cross on May 3.

Interpretation

The fact that the *Lignum Crucis* reliquary stands out as a principal symbol in the liturgies and in the evening processions of Good Friday raises three basic but important questions. What is liturgy? What is popular religion? And, what is the relationship between liturgy and popular religion? By answering these one can come to see how the *Lignum Crucis* is a pivotal symbol.

What is Liturgy?

A major result of Vatican II was the reform of the Roman liturgy. *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (SC) recognizes it as central to the life of the Church as its “fount and summit” (SC 10) and delineates the program for reform. It also describes liturgy by presenting its traits. In particular, the Church teaches liturgy is a participation in the paschal mystery of Christ as well as a human activity “whereby the faithful may express in their lives and manifest to others the mystery of Christ and the real nature of the true Church” (SC 2). Motivated by *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, liturgical theologians have been considering how the liturgy is both the fount and summit of the Church’s life. In their study several have shown how the liturgy is not only a *locus theologicus* but also *theologia prima*.

This is not a new idea but it has emerged even more since Vatican II.

The liturgy is what I call “enacted theology.” It is theology in action that calls forth *theologia secunda* or reflection on the experience of God taking place through word, song, ritual, and so forth. Because

liturgy is more than texts and involves God’s action as well as that of the worshipers, Alexander Schmemann notes that the task of liturgical theology is to examine what is done in worship. In this way the theologian is able to identify the real nature of worship and thus attain correct comprehension of a liturgical event.

I propose five characteristics of liturgy, four of which are found in the documents of Vatican II, especially *Sacrosanctum Concilium*; liturgy is Christocentric, anamnetic, epicletic, and ecclesial. The fifth, liturgy as *ecclesial ritual praxis*, is articulated by Margaret Mary Kelleher. I apply these to the Good Friday events in Toledo and the ritual use of the *Lignum Crucis*.

Christocentric

*Sacrosanctum Concilium* portrays liturgy as the exercise of the priestly office of Christ (SC 7). He is present in many ways: in the person of the minister, in the Scriptures that are read, in the sacraments, in the eucharistic species, and in those gathered in his name (SC 7). Thus, liturgy is christocentric. The two Good Friday liturgies are clearly christocentric. First, the assembly is convoked in Christ’s name through two official liturgies. Second, Christ’s passion and death is the main focus of the prayers and Scriptures for both services. Third, they are presided over by the Church’s minister, don Enrique; other liturgical ministries in the form of readers and acolytes also appear in service to the worshipping assembly. Fourth, most of the prayers are addressed to the Father in Christ’s name; some are addressed directly to Christ as the mediator between God and humankind because of his death on the cross. Fifth, the liturgies invite the assembly to recognize its need for Christ’s reconciliation through veneration of his cross in the *Ad tertia* liturgy and in the *Ad nonam* penitential service.

The penitential aspect of surrender to Christ is extended into the Good Friday processions. These too are christocentric: the events of the final day of Jesus’ life are presented in sculpted tableaux carried by the faithful. The processions are sanctioned by church authorities and accompanied by its ministers. The participants engage in prayer and penances, self-imposed or given by their confessors. The processions act as an invitation to onlookers to appropriate faith in the salvific

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33 Schmemann, 11.

sacrifice of Christ on the cross, which the participants are proclaiming publicly by their actions. The plain, sparse *Lignum Crucis* carried at the end also serves to focus on Christ as the source and summit of Christian worship. As doña María Jesús Jurado Durán states, taking the *Lignum Crucis* in procession is more important than the images “because it is a sliver of the cross of Jesus; its like taking Christ in procession, that’s why its under the *palo*. It is the only one under *palo* like the Blessed Sacrament. The rest are only images and they do not have much spiritual value despite their beauty.”

**Anamnetic**

*Sacrosanctum Concilium* also declares that in Christ the perfect achievement of our reconciliation was attained and “the fullness of divine worship was given to us” (SC 5). This has been realized by his incarnation and the offering of his life, death, and resurrection for our salvation. This sacrifice is his ongoing paschal mystery which not only offers worship to God but also actualizes his redemption of the world. Liturgy then is centered on Christ’s paschal mystery and is built on it. In other words, liturgy is anamnetic. It memorializes and actualizes the paschal mystery.

Although the passion and death of Christ is the central focus of the Good Friday liturgies and the processions, it is only part of the total paschal mystery celebrated that day. Don Enrique has introduced the offering of flowers before the veneration of the cross during the *Ad tertiam* service in the morning. In this way he makes a link to the Christmas liturgy. The flowers chosen, roses, lilies, and violets, are specifically mentioned in the *Illatio* for that Mass. They represent the ongoing redemption of the Lord after his glorification found in martyrs (roses), virgins (lilies), and the pure (violets). These are signs of Christ’s kingdom in the world. In this way the totality of the paschal mystery found in the Incarnation, Life, Passion, Death, Resurrection, Glory, and continuous presence of Christ in the Church is celebrated. As such, not only do the Good Friday liturgies memorialize Christ’s redemption, they actualize it in the primary sign of the Church gathered in his name.

The Good Friday evening processions extend the anamnetic quality of the liturgies into the streets. By taking the *Lignum Crucis* in procession, the honor accorded to the relic of Christ’s cross serves to bring to mind Christ’s redemption and to raise awareness of his presence in the midst of those gathered. Don Enrique declares: “We are following the example of the Jerusalem Church, doing what is described by Egeria.” For this reason, in my judgment, the processions are at the least quasi-liturgical. They are christocentric and anamnetic.

**Epicletic**

Another trait of liturgy is the presence of the Holy Spirit. The first gift Christ gives to his followers is the Spirit. Through the Spirit those gathered in liturgy are changed into the Mystical Body of Christ and are empowered to offer perfect worship to God in union with Christ. Thus, liturgy is epicletic for it conveys the Spirit to those gathered, i.e., the Spirit is poured out on those open to it.

The Holy Spirit’s role has been integral to the economy of salvation for the Spanish Church since earliest times and this is reflected in its liturgy. The concept of the *filioque* was first introduced at the Third Council of Toledo (589) as part of the Symbol of Faith. Furthermore, the orations of the Mozarabic rite regularly end with a doxology in praise of the Trinity. For example the *Ad tertiam* liturgy ends with the doxology: “Who with God the Father and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, forever and ever. Amen.” The text of two of the three doxologies for the three presidential prayers in the midst of the Litany for Mercy says: “By your mercy, our God, who lives with God the Father and reigns with the Holy Spirit forever and ever. Amen.” These convey the sense that the Holy Spirit is present as they worship. The doxologies convey a sense of being convoked by the Spirit. I submit that it is the same Spirit that impels them to proclaim their faith publicly by going onto the streets in procession.

**Ecclesial**

A fourth trait of liturgy is its ecclesial aspect. Those who take part in liturgy are changed by Christ into his Body. *Lumen Gentium* (LG) teaches that the transformation into the Body of Christ makes his followers the

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55 Maria Jesús Jurado Durán, interview by author, Notes, June 2, 1999; trans. of “es un trozo de la cruz de Jesús. Es como si llevaríamos a Cristo de procesión, por eso va bajo palo. Es el único que va bajo palo como el Santísimo. Las demás son solamente imágenes y no tienen mucho valor espiritual aunque son preciosas.”

56 *The Illatio* is roughly equivalent to the Roman *Preface* in the Eucharistic Prayer. It is one of seven variable prayers that forms the structure of the Hispano-Mozarabic eucharistic celebration.
Church and this occurs in every legitimate gathering of the faithful (see LG 26). Liturgy makes the Church; at the same time it is an action of the Church. Therefore, liturgy is ecclesial.

One way to approach the ecclesial nature of the ritual use of the Lignum Crucis is from the legal aspect. The Hispano-Mozarabic rite is an official liturgical system sanctioned by the Roman Catholic Church whose ecclesiastical superior is the archbishop of Toledo.42 In this way the rite becomes a particular expression of the ecclesial nature of the Body of Christ. Cardinal González Martín officially allowed the use of the Lignum Crucis in the two Good Friday liturgies by the publication of new liturgical books. He also approved its use in the processions. When the community gathers in worship in its different forms with the archbishop, or his designated agents, the pastors and chaplains of the Mozarabic rite, they make visible to the world the Body of Christ encompassed in a particular gathering of the faithful. Because the archbishop also takes part in the processions a question arises: does this make them liturgical given the traits above?

ECCLESIAL RITUAL PRAXIS

To further explore the liturgical nature of the ritual use of the Lignum Crucis, is it necessary to see how the Church is being constituted by the Good Friday events. Actions are symbolic: they evoke feelings, reveal values and embody what is meaningful. As a result, symbols have a role in the incarnation of meaning. Human culture is partially comprised of values; symbols help apprehend them. Ritual is action that makes meanings and values real. Liturgy is the action of the Church at prayer. This means liturgy is ritual that actualizes the Church and its share in Christ's redemption. That is; liturgy is ecclesial ritual praxis, action that incarnates meaning and constitutes the Church.

Kelleher takes the notion of symbol and incarnate meaning and applies it to liturgy as an act of meaning.41 At the heart of this notion is human subjectivity: the assembly, made up of individual subjects, becomes a collective subject: "a community, a group of persons who have achieved a certain degree of common meaning."44 Clearly, since symbols carry a community's meanings, they will vary from community to community.

The Good Friday events disclose that Mozarabs sense being a particular community accompanied by the presence of Christ as it inter-

42 For the role of the Holy See and bishops in the designation of any form of worship as liturgy, see SC 22; Instruction Inter Oecumenici, September 26, 1964.
41 Kelleher, 482.
44 Kelleher, 23 n: 23 citing Lonergan's notion of community, Method, 79.

acts with the larger church and culture that surrounds it. Because the Mozarab community gathers on Good Friday at two liturgies and for the processions in Christ's name, it chooses to respond to the Spirit that convokes it to give witness to Christ's centrality in their lives as a community. The community also brings its faith to bear on worship by actively participating in the liturgies and the processions.

The Lignum Crucis serves to help focus this worship and to bind the members together as the Body of Christ. As several of my informants reiterated, the Lignum Crucis makes them aware of the presence of Christ among them, as if it were the Blessed Sacrament. Don José Miranda further explains that the "[reliquary] is a symbol of our Catholic faith; there is nothing better since it is a little piece of the Lignum Crucis; nothing else can represent the sacrifice of our Redeemer."46 In terms of the procession with the Lignum Crucis, don Miguel Pantoja declares they take it out because "it is a sign of faith which we manifest in the streets."46

What is Popular Religion?

There has been much research on popular religion both as a Christian and non-Christian phenomenon. Many terms try to describe the religious practices of common people or those who are not the elites of a religion. Some include little tradition, folk-religion, common religion, popular piety, and variations thereof.47 All are attempts at describing a very complex reality: the experience of, or faith in a transcendent reality and its incorporation into everyday life, especially by common people. These names reflect the dominant notion of religion as comprised of two opposite poles: the religion of elites and the religion of the people as opposed to the elites.

Peter Williams argues that popular religion comes from and belongs to the people rather than to "the 'elite' specialists specifically trained in religious functions."48 This is a common point of view. But he seems to be unaware that many religious elites also practice some form of popular religion. In my experience, religious professionals also apply religious tenets to everyday life in some form, be it as informal

46 José Miranda, interview by author, Notes, March 23, 2000; trans. of "Es el simbolo de nuestra fe católica, no hay nada mejor por ser un trozo del Lignum Crucis; nada más puede representar el sacrificio de nuestro redentor."
47 Miguel Pantoja, interview by author, Notes, March 21, 2000; trans. of "Es una muestra de fe que se manifiesta en la calle."
personal devotions or religious acts not necessarily recognized as worship but seen as necessary for a full integration of religion into life and vice versa. In other words, popular religion also occurs under the aegis of official religion. In my judgment, popular religion gets many of its themes and notions from official religion and the latter gets many of its notions and insights into God’s action in the world through the lived experience of people applying their faith.

Ann Taves indicates that, in the Catholic context, the hierarchy in the nineteenth century across the board made a concerted effort to promote and guide some popular practices while permitting others to develop on their own.49 Through the late 1960s, novenas, rosaries, forty Hours, processions, and other forms of popular religion were still practiced by clergy and laity on a regular basis. Some were built into the liturgical calendar, while others were more spontaneous and informal. In some of the Catholic world these practices are still encouraged by Church officials, particularly in Spain and Latin America. Indeed, after Vatican II, the Catholic Church of Latin America actively sought to understand and promote popular religion as a form of evangelization.

Hispanic scholars of popular religion tend to see popular and official religion in a symbiotic relationship, though they too are greatly influenced by the dominant view. Virgilio Elizondo notes that since the onset, Christianity was able to present a unique way of universalizing peoples without destroying their identities so they would not have to disappear either through assimilation or marginalization.50 One way it was able to do this was through the interweaving of the Christian message with local religious traditions.51


52 Ibid., 37.

Another Hispanic scholar who has examined popular and official religion is Espín.53 He notes “every major religion, to the degree that it has a well-defined normative core of beliefs and liturgy, has aided in the development of a popular version of itself.”54 Arturo Pérez examines Hispanic popular religion as a source for the inculturation of Catholic liturgy.55 He notes the forms of popular religion among Hispanics vary but they reveal a basic trait: a complex of underlying belief rooted in God expressed in a profound sense of the sacred and transcendent, openness to God’s word, prayerfulness, an ability to endure, and detachment.56

Taves, Elizondo, Espín and Pérez point to the perspective that popular religion is not necessarily in opposition to official, doctrinal, or formal religion but can be intimately linked to it. It is from this viewpoint that I see the Lignum Crucis as a pivotal symbol. It connects official and popular religion by serving as a point of reference for the liturgies of Good Friday as well as the devotional character of the evening processions. The link is further strengthened by the official sanction and participation of the hierarchy in the processions as well as by the participation of those who carry the Lignum Crucis in procession in the liturgies of Good Friday.

What is the Relationship Between Liturgy and Popular Religion?

The relationship between liturgy and popular religion is best seen in the concept of sacramentals. They include blessings, exorcisms, and blessed objects for use in liturgical events and popular devotion.57 The Catechism of the Catholic Church, in terms of popular religious practices states “the religious sense of the Christian people has always found expression in various forms of piety surrounding the Church’s sacramental life, such as the veneration of relics, visits to sanctuaries, pilgrimages, processions, the stations of the cross, religious dances, the rosary, medals, etc.”58 It adds “these expressions of piety extend the liturgical life of the Church, but do not replace it.”59


54 Ibid., 310.


56 Ibid., 7. He cites Puebla (1979) nos. 444 and 913.

57 Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2nd ed. rev. in accord with the official Latin text promulgated by Pope John Paul II (Washington, D.C.: USCC; Vatican City: Librería Editrice Vaticana, 1994, 1997) 1674; 178 advises the reader to compare the Council of Nicea II (DS 601; 603) and the Council of Trent (DS 1822) in this regard.

58 Ibid., 1675.
Taking the Lignum Crucis in procession extends the penitential aspect of the Ad terram and Ad nonum liturgies into the realm of popular religion. This occurs on Good Friday evening. In my opinion, the link must be made in order for people to find their lives celebrated in the liturgy and the liturgy celebrated in their lives. Popular religion is one way this is done; these Mozarab customs are indicators of that.

THE LIGNUM CRUCIS AS A PIVOTAL SYMBOL

Clearly the Lignum Crucis is a pivotal symbol. One of the reasons is its shape in the form of a cross: the cross is venerated by Christians as the sign of their faith. At the same time the Lignum Crucis is an object of popular devotion. The reliquary becomes an implement of popular religion when it is taken out in the “non-liturgical” activity of Good Friday processions. Nonetheless, because it is taken out as if it were the Blessed Sacrament, the Lignum Crucis extends the liturgy into the popular religious realm. This blurs the line between liturgy and popular religion. Indeed, it reveals the nexus between the two.

PARALLELS WITH HISPANIC PIETY

Because Mozarabs and their rite reflect the liturgy and spirituality of the earliest Hispanics, I suggest they and their liturgy are an apt source for examining the roots of much contemporary Hispanic spirituality, especially as expressed in popular religion. For example, the Mozarab view of Christ as the God-Man who is exalted above all others because of his sacrifice on the cross parallels the approach toward Christ found in Hispanic devotional practices throughout the world. The images of Jesus favored by Hispanics tend to be the Jesus at his infancy, the Santo Niño (Holy Child) or at the end of his life, the Nazareno (the Nazarene). These represent the vulnerable, dependent Jesus who not only reflects human weakness and vulnerability but also requires human solidarity in suffering. This reveals to Hispanics that Jesus accompanies them in their lives and inspires them to accompany him in his suffering and death, his resurrection and exaltation.

For Hispanics the cross and resurrection are intimately interrelated. Roberto Goizueta notes that in the Via Crucis processions of Good Friday, Hispanics engage in a praxis that, as an act of “accompanyment,” constitutes and empowers them as persons and as a community of faith. The Good Friday events thus provide a way for Hispanics in general to stress the passion as an active, communal undertaking over against suffering passively endured by a solitary individual: “Suffering shared is suffering already in retreat.” The source of hope is not the Resurrection of a solitary individual but “the ultimate indestructibility of the community that accompanies Jesus on the Via Crucis and is reconciled with him in the Resurrection.”

It appears that the stress on Christ’s exaltation entered the Old Spanish liturgy because of the need to emphasize this in light of the Arian perspective at the time of the rite’s greatest unfolding. In my judgment, this liturgical emphasis eventually influenced the spirituality of the faithful to the extent that by the time the Roman rite became predominant among the Spanish, the exaltation of Christ had led to an overemphasis on his divinity. As a result, the need for mediators who could approach the throne of mercy developed among Hispanics in general. In my opinion, that is why today Hispanics tend to approach Mary and the saints for help in asking Christ for his grace rather than approaching Christ directly.

There are other parallels. The Mozarab sense that one must embrace the cross even to being an alter Christus as a martyr has its parallel in the Good Friday processions found among Hispanics all over the world where individuals perform penitential acts of self-sacrifice. Mandalas and promesas, penitential vows and promises made to God, Mary, and the saints by individuals, are another way. The carrying of the cross in everyday life is expressed by such concepts as hay que sacrificarse por sus hijos (one must sacrifice oneself for one’s children) or no hay mal que por bien no venga (there is no evil that does not come for some good). These are common ways of speaking among Hispanics as they face problems and try to make sense of them in light of their faith in Christ and his sacrifice on the cross.


66 For his development of this concept see Roberto S. Goizueta, Caminemos con Jesús: Toward a Hispanic/Latino Theology of Accompaniment (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1995).

The Mozarab sense that the celebration of the liturgy is not to be confined to the church building parallels the general Hispanic desire to manifest one's faith publicly. This is seen, for example, in the number of Hispanics at Ash Wednesday services seeking ashes on their foreheads. It also is seen in the Hispanic attitude toward processions and other devotional acts; they are seen as equally important as official liturgical celebrations, if not more so and thus attract much participation.

Mozarabs bring elements of everyday life into the liturgy and take liturgical elements into everyday life as seen in the flower offering at the Ad tertiam liturgy and in the Good Friday procession of the Lignum Crucis. These find a parallel in Hispanic practices of celebrating important life events in church. Such is the case with the Presentation of the Three Year Old, the Quince Años rite for the fifteen year old, and the use of the arras and lazo (coins and yoke) at Hispanic weddings. In fact, all three have clear parallels in liturgical rites found in ancient Hispano-Mozarabic texts. Church elements are also found in everyday life as seen in altars in homes and at grave sites, the use of holy water at home for various purposes, and the imparting of blessings by parents on their children. Much of Hispanic popular religion and celebration of the liturgy throughout the world has much in common with the Good Friday celebrations of the Hispano-Mozarabic rite, as I have shown.

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