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Logocentrism of the Liturgy as Presented by Joseph Ratzinger/Benedict XVI¹

Abstract: Logocentrism should be considered the most characteristic feature of Joseph Ratzinger/Benedict XVI's theological thought. Logocentrism is presented here as the main principle of the theology of the liturgy, both in its cosmic, salvation-history dimension and in the concrete liturgical celebration. The study also points out that logocentrism, being the keystone of Ratzinger's theological thought, is not only the basis for a full understanding of the liturgy, but also for its important place in systematic theology. In the cosmic liturgy, going back to creation, the Logos is the principle of all things and the Liturgist of the universe. The Incarnate Logos, in turn, is the Liturgist of salvation history and eschatology. He also performs the liturgy of the Church, the concrete liturgical celebration, making it a *logikē latreia* (Rom 12:1) and thus a place for the transformation of the human heart and thus the transformation of the world.

Keywords: Joseph Ratzinger, Benedict XVI, Christian worship, Incarnate Logos, *logikē latreia*, Logos of creation, representative sacrifice

The problem of the logocentrism of the liturgy as presented by Joseph Ratzinger/Benedict XVI grows out of the fact that certain opinions circulate not only among more informed Christians, but also among theologians, about the understanding of the liturgy and the practical aspects of its celebration in the publications of the theologian Joseph Ratzinger and then in the teaching of Pope Benedict XVI. It is most often emphasised that this theologian and pope was a critic of certain aspects of the liturgical reform of Vatican II, leading some to even accuse him of failing to properly understand or

¹ Translated from Polish by Maciej Górnicki.

even accept the Council's Constitution on the Liturgy *Sacrosanctum Concilium*. It is also widely known that Ratzinger was concerned with the so-called orientation (direction) of liturgical prayer and participation in the liturgy (*participatio actuosa*), which cannot be equated with external involvement. It is also a generally known and repeated thesis that Ratzinger rejected a purely horizontal understanding of the liturgy, i.e. a liturgy created by the congregation itself as an expression of its expression, a so-called 'self-made' liturgy (German: *selbstgemachte Liturgie*).²

Although all these issues were indeed addressed by the great theologian, they do not define most profoundly what the liturgy is and what its true nature is. Already in response to Father Pierre-Marie Gy OP's accusations against the book *The Spirit of the Liturgy*, Ratzinger himself points out that not everything listed above is the essence of his approach to the liturgy. Ratzinger writes: "I have tried to illuminate the reality of the liturgy in four dimensions: the cosmic dimension of the liturgy, the place of the Christian liturgy in the history of religions and the fundamental problems of human existence that run through it, the relationship between Israel and the Church in the liturgy, the different ways in the Christian liturgy itself, and the relationship between worship and culture."³

It is worth noting already here that since Ratzinger was mainly concerned with the cosmic dimension of the liturgy, the perspective of the history and theology of religion, the relationship of the liturgy to life, the Old and New Testament understanding of the worship of God, and the relationship of worship and culture, the terms "worship [cult]" and "liturgy" are used interchangeably in Ratzinger's terminology. However, when speaking of Christian worship, he uses the term "liturgy" most often.

Despite the declaration of the four dimensions of Ratzinger's theological interests in relation to the liturgy, one must guess that their nexus is something more. This something, or rather

² This can be seen, for example, in the criticism of Ratzinger's book *The Spirit of the Liturgy* undertaken by contemporary liturgists. Cf. Haussling, "Der Geist der Liturgie"; Gy, "Ist 'Der Geist der Liturgie'."

³ Ratzinger, "'Der Geist der Liturgie' oder: Die Treue zum Konzil," 115.

someone, is the Logos on which the entirety of Joseph Ratzinger/Benedict XVI's theology is focused. This truth will be shown here in four stages. First, the thesis that logocentrism is the condition for a proper understanding of the liturgy and its place in the totality of theology will be emphasised (stage one), in order to then move on to the fundamental assumption of Ratzinger's theology that the Logos is the principle of all things and is the liturgy of all creation (stage two) and that the Logos Incarnate is also the liturgy of salvation history and eschatology (stage three). The last part of the article will be devoted to the liturgy of the Church, which is the work of the Logos and is celebrated according to the model of the Logos (stage four).

1. Logocentrism as a Condition for a Proper Understanding of the Liturgy and Its Place in Theology

The first task of this study should be to prove that Joseph Ratzinger/Benedict XVI's approach to the liturgy, especially its connection to the personal Logos, restores it to its deepest understanding and its proper place in theology. More than a century has passed since the publication of the programmatic first issue of the journal *Jahrbuch für Liturgiewissenschaft* in 1921, in which Romano Guardini stated that the study of the liturgy belonged to systematic theology and that only one of its research directions was the pastoral aspect.⁴ This way of thinking prevailed in the liturgical movement and in those theological approaches that prepared for and accompanied the Second Vatican Council. A breakthrough in this approach was the so-called "critical science of the liturgy" by Heinrich Rennings (1926–1994), which took the words *liturgia semper reformanda* as its paradigm and focused on making changes to the celebration of the liturgy in order to adapt it to the current mentality of the participants.⁵ It was this approach that Ratzinger extended to all "liturgists" in some of his statements, when he says, for example, that some priests

⁴ Cf. Guardini, "Über die systematische Methode."

⁵ Cf. Rennings, "Über Ziele und Aufgaben". More on this, see Migut, "Liturgiczna perspektywa teologii."

and liturgists alike believe that in the celebration of the Eucharist, only the words of institution and the substance of the sacrament are unchangeable, while the rest can be disposed of at will.⁶ Ratzinger recalls that the Liturgical Movement aimed to overcome the reductionism of abstract sacramentology and to point to an understanding of the liturgy, including the sacraments, as the time and place of the action of the Logos at this stage of the history of play, which is the Church.⁷ The lack of an adequate understanding of the liturgy led to a mature liturgy referring to salvation history and the Tradition of the Church being replaced by a created liturgy. From a living process of growth and becoming, it was often switched to creation, following the pattern of technical production, i.e. creation, shallow products, produced on the fly.⁸

2. Logos as the Principle of All Things and the Liturgist of Creation

The world is a work of creation and is derived from the Logos. The term “Logos” means both “sense” and “word.” It can be said that the “Logos,” is the “sense-bearing force.” The concept of “logos” was one of the great “pra-ideas” in the Hellenistic and Hebrew worlds, whereby, significantly, “logos” means both the idea – pattern – and speech. God, therefore, is not only an idea, but also speech, an action. The words from John’s prologue “In the beginning was the Word” indicate that the creation of the world was preceded by a spiritual sense, an idea of the world. The world is the materialisation of the idea and the “pra-thought” which God carried within himself and which, in the world, became the field of history, occurring between God and his creation.⁹

The Logos is the pre-eternal word, the meaning of all things (“pra-thought”), eternally existing in the Son of God. Ratzinger emphasises the primacy of the Logos, which opposes a materialist and idealist

⁶ Cf. Ratzinger, “Preface,” 11.

⁷ Cf. Ratzinger, “Preface,” 11; Ratzinger, “Organiczny rozwój liturgii,” 652.

⁸ Cf. Ratzinger, “Ku pamięci Klausa Gambera,” 597.

⁹ Ratzinger, *Bóg i świat*, 104.

understanding of the world. This primacy means that the Logos is the primordial source and encompassing power of all being, and that thought and meaning are not merely incidental, by-products of being, but that all being is the product of thought, and even in its inner structure it is thought.¹⁰ As the theologian emphasises, Christian belief in God is in complete agreement with neither materialism nor idealism. In opposing materialism, the Logos in creation makes the totality of being something thought, and matter points beyond itself to thought as that which precedes it and is more primordial. The Logos in creation also opposes idealism, which regards individual entities as moments of an all-embracing consciousness. The Logos of creation makes being something conceived, but not in such a way that it remains mere thought and that its selfhood on closer examination turns out to be a mere appearance. All things as conceived come from the Logos as creative consciousness, creative freedom, but the Logos as sustaining all things, creative consciousness, has given the object of its thought the freedom of its own independent existence. Thanks to the Christian conception of the Logos, all idealism, proclaiming that everything real is the content of a single consciousness, is defeated.¹¹ In reality, everything is sustained by a creative freedom, which gives again the freedom of its own existence to what it has thought. The created world is, on the one hand, an entity conceived by a single consciousness, the Logos, and, on the other hand, is a real independent entity. In this, too, lies the essence of the concept of creation, the most primordial liturgy in which all being originates. The standard by which creation is to be understood is therefore not some craftsman, but the Logos, the creative Spirit, the creative Thought. The idea of freedom derives from the essence and action of the Logos and is something characteristic of the Christian belief in God. The world derives from the Logos and therefore contains reason, it being not only mathematical reason, which can be called neutral or factual reason, but also “moral reason.”¹² At the basis of the existence of the world is reason (Logos) and creative freedom, creating

¹⁰ Cf. Ratzinger, *Einführung in das Christentum*, 111.

¹¹ Cf. Ratzinger, *Einführung in das Christentum*, 133.

¹² Ratzinger, *Bóg i świat*, 127.

successive entities as free. At the basis of creation is freedom, which thinks, and by thinking, creates freedoms, and so makes freedom the structural form of all being.¹³ In this way, reason and freedom are the foundation of the liturgy of creation, the cosmic liturgy.

In Ratzinger's understanding the Logos is not an anonymous and indefinite consciousness, but is freedom, creative love and a person. To acknowledge the primacy of the Logos is to opt for a personal, creative thought and thus to opt for the primacy of the individual over the universal. At the core of the liturgy of the Logos is the conviction that the person, including the human person, cannot be reduced to "something," since it has reference to the infinite and to the eternal Logos, the Person of the Son of God. The Logocentricity of creation means, the choice of freedom against the primacy of the laws of cosmic-natural necessity.¹⁴ It means that the Logos as creative thought, which is the basis of all being, is truly self-conscious thought and that this thought knows not only itself but also the totality of what is conceived by it. The Logos not only knows but also loves, and He is creative because He is love, and because whatever is thought by Him, it is incorporated into the freedom of His own being, objectified and liberated as an independent being. All this means that the Logos knows that which is thought by Him, in its independent existence, He loves it and, by loving, sustains.

According to Ratzinger, the biblical description of creation within seven days indicates that creation is fulfilled in the worship of God. The rhythm of the sevens and its cosmic significance serves the message that creation moves towards the Sabbath, which is the sign of the covenant between God and man. The Sabbath, moreover, is a summary of the Torah, the Law of Israel, which must lead to the conclusion that the worship of God has in itself a moral form. For in the Torah is contained the entire moral order of God, the order of the Logos. Creation by being a representation of the Logos proceeds towards the worship of the Creator and exists for the worship of the Creator.¹⁵

¹³ Cf. Ratzinger, *Einführung in das Christentum*, 116–117.

¹⁴ Cf. Ratzinger, *Einführung in das Christentum*, 116–117.

¹⁵ Cf. Ratzinger, "Sens biblijnych opisów," 38–39.

Man is the only creature capable of worshipping God on behalf of all creatures, because on the one hand he belongs to the earth, to matter, but on the other hand he bears within himself the image of God, the Divine Logos is reflected in him. God's resemblance means being related to Him, it means being able to relate to God, it is man's openness to God. In the likeness of the Logos, the human person is most human when he/she transcends himself/herself, when he/she becomes capable of saying "You" to God. Unlike the animal, the human being is a being who is able to think about God, who is able to pray. "Therefore, likeness to God also means that man is a being of word and of love; a being moving towards the other, destined to give himself to the other, and only in the proper giving of himself can he truly recover himself."¹⁶

In order to understand the original meaning of the worship of the Creator, it is necessary, according to Ratzinger, to recall two truths that are closely connected. The first is that God created the world in order to enter into a history of love with man. He created the world so that there would be love. The only worship desired by the Creator is the response of love, the word expressed by life. In this way, love and the truth of life are the only worship willed by God. The second truth about the worship of the Creator is its reference to the Logos. Ratzinger says here that the ancient Jewish scriptures place the Torah, which is the embodiment of covenant love, the story of God's love for humanity, at the beginning of all things. It was it – the Torah that was with God and through it that all things came to be. It was it that was the light and life of man. In the New Testament interpretation, the concept of Torah will be referred to the Logos through whom all things were made (cf. John 1:3), or: "All things were created through Him and for Him" (Col 1:16; cf. Col 1:15–23). God created the world in order to become human and to be able to pour out His love, to lay it also on us and to invite us to respond so that we love one another.¹⁷ It is in the Incarnate Logos that the love of the Creator will be most fully demonstrated on behalf of all creation. It is evident here that true worship of God has three

¹⁶ Cf. Ratzinger, "Sens biblijnych opisów," 43.

¹⁷ Cf. Ratzinger, "Sens biblijnych opisów," 39.

most essential elements. The first element is reason, that is, building on the truth of being a creature and on the truth of acts corresponding to that condition. The second element is love as the response given by man to the Creator on behalf of himself and all creation. Love also implies responsibility for other people and care for all creation. The third element, interpenetrating the previous two, is the bond with the Logos and the emulation of His truth and love in one's life.

Sin became the greatest obstacle in the worship of the Creator, consisting in that man regarded dependence on supreme love as slavery and thus negated the truth of his condition of being a creature. Man does not thereby become free, but destroys truth and love, and blurs in himself the image of the Logos. He cannot make himself a god and thus becomes "a caricature, a pseudo god, a slave to his faculties which degrade him." Sin is by its very nature an opposition to truth, and this means that the man who denies the boundary between good and evil, the inner measure of creation, denies the truth. He lives in untruth, in unreality, and thus finds himself under the dominion of death.¹⁸

Sin as a negation of the ability to worship the Creator is linked to freedom and it is this freedom of creation that changes the positive *exitus* of the creature's vocation into existence, making it a fall, a desire to be independent, making *reditus*, or unity with the Creator and worship, impossible. Love has been understood as dependence and has been rejected. "In its place appear autonomy and autarchy: to come only from oneself and be within oneself, to become God by one's own efforts. The arch leading from *exitus* to *reditus* is thus broken."¹⁹

3. The Incarnate Logos as the Liturgist of the History of Salvation and Eschatology

The history of salvation is a continuation of the history of creation, it is the formation of a "new creation." Its beginning is God's loving response to sin, which, as stated above in Ratzinger's words,

¹⁸ Cf. Ratzinger, "Grzech i odkupienie," 63.

¹⁹ Ratzinger, "Duch liturgii," 41.

breaks the arch leading from *exitus* to *reditus*. This means that, on the one hand, man does not want to return and, on the other hand, rising by his own efforts to communion with God turns out to be impossible. A particular stage of salvation history begins with the calling of Abraham, the father of faith. Jean Corbon calls this stage of salvation history from Abraham to Mary the pre-liturgy of the Logos, which is patiently prepared by the Holy Spirit. He calls this pre-liturgy the hidden *prothesis* of the Logos, that is, what would correspond to the preparation of bread and wine before the celebration of the Eucharistic liturgy in the Eastern Churches.²⁰

The essence of sacrifice as a fundamental act of worship consists, according to Ratzinger, in a return to love, and thus sacrifice is divinisation, a process of becoming similar to God, of becoming love again, and thus a path to freedom. After original sin, in worship there must be a moment of healing of wounded love, of expiation, of purification and of coming out of isolation, and therefore sacrifice carries healing and a loving transformation of distorted freedom into painful reconciliation. In the state of sin, everything was directed towards being only oneself and to be able to do everything without anyone else. The essence of worship includes a dependence on the other, on God, who should free me from the bondage that I myself can no longer shed. Hence a Saviour is necessary for salvation.²¹

In the Old Testament, there is a full awareness that worship makes it possible to maintain a proper relationship between God and man, for only then can the desired order prevail in all reality. During the Babylonian captivity, when temple worship was lacking, Israel gained a new experience of only being able to suffer for the love of their God. The prophets, through divine inspiration, understood that this suffering of believing Israel was a genuine sacrifice, a new and great worship in which they stood before the living God, interceding for the people and for the whole world. Israel itself is a servant of the Lord and in their suffering, they accept God and intercede to Him for the world, but they are nevertheless stained and guilty

²⁰ Cf. Corbon, "Liturgia – źródło wody życia," 34 ("The Wellspring of Worship," 34).

²¹ Cf. Ratzinger, "Duch liturgii," 41.

and thus incapable of offering this spiritual sacrifice to God. Israel is incapable of performing the role of the Servant of the Lord. This is why Isaiah's Songs about the Servant of Yahweh are still ambiguous. These songs speak of and interpret the fate of a suffering people, they help the people to take their pain in obedience to a judging and loving God, but at the same time they show a longing for the One who is the pure witness of God in this world and who remains as yet unnamed, but who will bring all things to fulfilment.²²

Another important stage in the history of Old Testament worship, as Ratzinger shows, is the representative sacrifice, which bears the marks of a perfect sacrifice because it appeals to the "heart" of the person offering it, but in temple worship it became distorted and adulterated. The first event that creates representative worship is when Abraham receives a lamb to offer to God instead of his son. Representative sacrifice here finds its justification in the command of God himself, who gives the lamb and Abraham in turn offers it to God. The second event is the establishment of the Passover liturgy in Exodus 12. Here the lamb clearly appears as a ransom, as a result of which Israel is spared the death of its firstborn. However, this ransom is at the same time a sign pointing to the future, to the Incarnate Logos.

In *The Spirit of the Liturgy*, Ratzinger notes that the Church Fathers regarded the parable of the lost sheep as an illustration of man's inability to worship fully after original sin. For them, the sheep entangled in the thorn bush and no longer finding its way back is a picture of man as such, who does not get out of his thorny bushes and can no longer find his way to God himself either. "The shepherd who goes for it and brings it home is, for the fathers, the Logos himself, the Eternal Word, the eternal meaning of all things existing in the Son of God, who himself sets out on the way to us and takes the sheep on his shoulders, that is, assumes human nature and, as God-Man, brings created man back home."²³ In this sense he makes possible the *reditus* expressed in worship.

²² Cf. Ratzinger, "Eucharystia – centrum Kościoła," 293.

²³ Ratzinger, "Duch liturgii," 41.

The Logos is the eternal word (“pra-thought”), the meaning of all creation, eternally existing in the Son of God. He is at the same time that Logos who becomes the God-Man at the moment he assumes human nature. Thus the philosophical Greek idea of the Logos reaches its fullness in this very Incarnate Logos, in the Word of God made Flesh. From this moment on, the Logos is no longer merely a sense, a pattern, or a thought existing outside of creation, but He Himself has entered the created world and embodied Himself (Logos *incarnatus*). Now the Word is no longer merely a substitute for someone else, corporeal, but united to the whole reality of man. Thus the Logos of creation, the Logos in man and the true Incarnate Logos, the eternal Logos – the Son of God – come together.²⁴

According to Ratzinger, the philosophical and historical-religious aspect of the biblical vision of God shows that, on the one hand, we are dealing with a strictly metaphysical image of God, in which God is, in an absolute sense, the original source of all existence. On the other hand, however, this original source of creation, the creative principle of all things, i.e. the Logos as the original cause, is at the same time someone who loves with all the passion proper to true love. In this way, the attempt to worship God, to commune with God, which is expressed by human *eros* is ennobled to the highest degree and at the same time undergoes such a purification that it becomes fused with *agapē*.²⁵ This is accomplished in the mystery of the incarnation and in the paschal mystery of the Logos. As Ratzinger states, the prologue of John’s Gospel bridges the story of creation, the “primordial” foundation of all things and the Palestinian event. They show that the Logos, the creative sense from which the world came into being, is present in a human being named Jesus. This power that created the world enters the world itself and enters into a direct relationship with man. Here we have a great paradox: God is so great that he can become tiny. This leads to the great paradox that the Logos becomes so small that He reveals Himself in a human person. In this way, God is placed in a concrete historical context, which is a path towards Him. A road on which God is expected. And on which we can hear

²⁴ Gózdź, “Chrytologia Logosu,” 237.

²⁵ Benedict XVI, *Deus caritas est*, no. 10.

His message. This makes it possible to encounter God and to worship Him at every moment of history.²⁶

Now, the question must be asked what the essence of the liturgy of the life of the Incarnate Logos is. It is at the same time a question about how the Incarnate Logos accomplishes the *reditus* of man to God. Referring to the image of the shepherd who comes to free the sheep trapped in the bushes, Ratzinger states that it must first be noted that in the shepherd, in the Incarnate Logos, there is a human will and a divine will. This duality was not removed, but, as Ratzinger emphasises, on the personal plane and on the plane of freedom, there was a union of the human will and the Divine will. The result of this was not one natural will, but one personal will of the Incarnate Logos. The unity of the Divine and human wills in the Incarnate Logos is more perfect and profound than a mere natural unity, and it is the counterpart of the unity of the Triune God. The Incarnate Logos expresses this in the words: “I came down from heaven not to do my own will, but the will of Him who sent me” (John 6:38). When the Divine Logos speaks these words, he refers them to the human will of Jesus the man, which he calls his will, the will of the Logos. In Jesus Christ there are not two selves, but only one. “The Logos speaks of the human mind and will of Jesus, using the word ‘I’; this I has become His own, has been received into union with His divine self, because the human will has perfectly united itself with the will of the Logos and with it has completely adhered to the will of the Father.”²⁷

The human will does not become absorbed by the Divine will through such a personal union. It comes to the fore most clearly during Jesus’ prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane and is the expression of Jesus’ special relationship to God. This prayer gives an insight into the inner life of the incarnate Word, and it reads: “Abba, Father, for You all things are possible; take this cup from Me! But not what I will, but what you will [be done]!” (Mark 14:36). The human will of Jesus unites with the will of the Son, and thus the identity of the Son is realised, “which consists in the full surrender of the I to the Thou, in the giving up and handing over of this I to the other; this is

²⁶ Ratzinger, *Bóg i świat*, 190.

²⁷ Ratzinger, *Chrystus i Jego Kościół*, 45.

the specific mode of existence of the One who is pure reference and pure act.”²⁸

The prayer in Gethsemane is the consequence of the whole mission of the Incarnate Logos, which consists in the perfect fulfilment of the Father’s will, in accepting it as His own, and thus in the renewal of worship. Jesus, in his conversation with the Samaritan woman, states that the worship desired by God is worship “in Spirit and in truth” (John 4:23), and it consists in seeking and fulfilling the will of the Father, which He expresses in the words: “My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to do His work” (John 4:34). The whole life of the Incarnate Logos is the realisation of this new worship, and it reaches its anticipatory peak at the Last Supper, in the prayer in Gethsemane, which is the realisation of Jesus’ words “no one takes it [life] from me, but I give it from myself” (John 10:18) and most fully in his death on the cross.

The event indicating the initiation of the new worship is, in Ratzinger’s view, the purification of the temple (John 2:13–22; Matt 21:12–17; Mark 11:15–19; Luke 19:45–46), which is most clearly expressed in John’s description, where the words are spoken: “Destroy this temple, and I will raise it up again in three days” (John 2:19). In a veiled way, Jesus announces the end of the temple, and thus also the end of the Law and the end of the previous form of covenant. The cleansing of the temple also becomes a prophecy of the death and foreshadowing of Christ’s Resurrection, and at the same time the beginning of the realisation of a new worship,²⁹ where the glorified Logos is Priest, Temple and sacrificial Lamb. Union with Him and following Him in love becomes the basis of a new worship that is universal and embraces all people. Only such worship makes it possible for the world to return to God.

Thanks to the incarnation of the Logos, but above all thanks to the salvific mysteries accomplished by Him with the emphasis on His sacrifice of the cross, the *reditus*, meaning return to God, is possible. In this way, human sacrifices, including the representative sacrifices of the Old Testament, take the form of the cross

²⁸ Ratzinger, *Chrystus i Jego Kościół*, 46.

²⁹ Cf. Ratzinger, “Zbudowani z żywych kamieni,” 421–422.

of Christ, a concrete and boundless love that gives itself away in the cross. It is not self-destruction but a free gift and an act of new creation, restoring creatures to their proper identity. All worship is participation in the paschal mystery of Christ, in his “passage” from the Divine to the human, from death to life, to the unity of God and man. Ratzinger states that Christian worship is the realisation and fulfilment of the words spoken by Jesus in the Jerusalem temple on the day of his solemn entry into Jerusalem: “When I am exalted, I will draw everyone to myself” (John 12:32).³⁰

The new worship performed by the Incarnate Logos is thus announced in the form of representative sacrifices in the Old Testament, implemented by Him from the mystery of the incarnation to the paschal mystery, but through the worship of the Incarnate Logos, He becomes the Liturgist of the liturgy of heaven and thus the only Liturgist of the whole universe. From the representative sacrifice of the lamb offered by Abraham, the world awaited the actual Lamb who comes from God and is therefore not something substitutive for us, but a real representation that brings us to God himself. God’s desired worship is fulfilled in the Lamb given to us by God – Christ. The Book of Revelation shows this sacrificed Lamb still living as the centre of the heavenly liturgy, thanks to Christ’s sacrifice now present in the whole world and removing as unnecessary all substitutes for the liturgy (Rev 5).³¹ By realizing the sign of the Paschal lamb, the Glorified Logos accomplishes the sanctification of the first fruits, which encompasses all of us.³²

Thus, the Incarnate Logos became the Liturgist of salvation history and of eschatology as its fulfilment. Eschatology, however, is the fulfilment of the cosmic liturgy and the liturgy celebrated by the Logos in salvation history, as “worship in Spirit and in truth” (John 4:23). It is also the most important reference of the liturgy celebrated in the “time of the Church.” Thanks to the mystery of the incarnation and Passover of the Logos, accomplished in time, the cosmic and historical circles are now distinguished from one

³⁰ Cf. Ratzinger, “Duch liturgii,” 42.

³¹ Ratzinger, “Duch liturgii,” 44.

³² Cf. Ratzinger, “Duch liturgii,” 45.

another. The historical dimension has its own inalienable significance, having its basis in the gift of freedom, which is at the centre of both Divine and created being, but is not for this reason separated from the cosmic circle. In spite of the differences separating them, the two circles constitute a single circle of being. “The historical liturgy of Christianity is and will remain – without separation and without confusion – a cosmic liturgy, and this alone ensures its full greatness. The inimitable novelty of Christianity is a fact; nevertheless, it does not evade the search for the history of religion, but incorporates into its reality all the existing elements of world history and thus remains related to them.”³³

4. The Liturgy of the Church as the Work of the Logos and Modelled on the Logos

In order to show the logocentrism of the Church’s liturgy as seen by Ratzinger/Benedict XVI, it is necessary to return to the question of man in his relationship to God. To return to the truth that he belongs from the earth from which he was created, but having in himself the likeness of God, bearing in himself the image of the Logos, he is the priest of creation. The true dignity, however, is discovered by man in Jesus Christ, the only Priest of the universe. In the New Testament Christ is called the second Adam, and it is only in Him that the deepest meaning of being human is revealed. The Logos Incarnate is the ultimate man, and creation is, as it were, only a preliminary project directed towards Him. In Him the truth is revealed that man is a being who can become a brother to the Incarnate Logos. He is a creature who can unite himself completely with Christ and in Him with God himself. Ratzinger sees in this reference of the creature to Christ, the first to the second Adam, the truth that man is a being on the way, a being of transition. Man is not yet fully himself in creation, but must only finally become himself in Jesus Christ, in his mystery, including especially the mystery of his Passover. Man must become with Christ the dead grain of wheat in order to be truly

³³ Ratzinger, “Duch liturgii,” 42.

resurrected, to be truly raised, to be truly himself (cf. John 12:24).³⁴ The process of dying means love, because what God wants from man is precisely the love that transforms man and in which man is able to accept God and give himself to Him.³⁵ It is worth noting that the identification of the purpose of worship and life takes place here. Therefore, man needs the power and help of the Incarnate Logos, and this is what the liturgy of the Church mainly serves. The paradigm of the dying of the seed encompasses the whole of man's life and is worship in imitation of the Logos, but it is the celebration of the liturgy, especially the Eucharist, which is the place where the Logos unites this worship with His own, strengthening man in the service of God. In this way, a process of becoming "sons in the Son," children of God in the divine Logos, is accomplished.³⁶

While answering the question about the purpose of the Church's liturgy, it is worth referring once again to biblical anthropology and observing that original sin renders man incapable of being a priest of creation, so it is in the Incarnate Logos, in his human nature, that the process of responding with love to love begins. In the Incarnate Logos, the blessing descending from God is transformed into a blessing originating in man. Thus, through man, in accordance with the Creator's original intention, creation can worship Him. The Logos is thus the main subject of the Church's liturgy, for through it the "new creation of the world" is at work, in that the making present of the salvific event accomplished in Him (the new creation) leads to the transformation of the world into what the Creator originally created it to be. The transformation of the world, the process of the renewal of creation, takes place through the transformation of man as a participant in the liturgy. Transformed in the liturgy, man in union (communion) with the Logos transforms the world by the power of the Logos and in imitation of the Logos.

Looking at the Church's liturgy in this way is made possible by Odo Casel's mystery theory of the sacraments. Ratzinger sees him as the greatest discoverer of a true theology of the liturgy and

³⁴ Cf. Ratzinger, "Stworzenie człowieka," 50.

³⁵ Cf. Ratzinger, "Eucharystia – centrum Kościoła," 292.

³⁶ Cf. Bonagura, "Logos to Son."

sacraments in the 20th century. Casel develops the concept of liturgy by departing from the theory of effects (*effectus*), according to which Christ in his life gained many merits, the effect of salvation, which is now distributed to individual people in specific amounts through the sacraments. The person receiving a sacrament does not enter into a direct relationship with Christ, but from the existing supernatural goods he receives the *effectus*, a definite fraction of them. Casel teaches that in the worship of the Church, in the celebration of the sacraments, the participants enter into a relationship with Christ and His saving act becomes present anew. In the mystery of worship, the work of redemption and salvation itself is present, not just the fruits of grace detached from them. Thus, the bestowal of grace that takes place in the sacraments, and more broadly in the liturgy of the Church, is a real bond with the person of Christ and through Him with His saving acts. Thanks to the real presence of the Incarnate Logos together with His saving work in the liturgy, the significance of the liturgical celebration increases. It is no longer merely the bestowal of effects, but the presence of Christ's saving deed in His Church; it is the continuation of Christ's life and thus the real centre of Christianity. On this basis, Casel defines the liturgy as the mystery of Christ's worship in the Church. This approach prompts us to look at the liturgy, including the sacraments, as the living presence of Christ among his people. In order to avoid the reification of the sacraments, this truth must be continually emphasised and, when speaking of the sacraments, their celebration should always be taken into account.³⁷

Since the Church's liturgy is a work of the Logos and builds worship after the model of the Logos, we should consider Paul's notion of *logikē latreia* (Rom 12:1), i.e., Logos-oriented divine service, as the most correct formula to express the essence of Christian liturgy. Beyond any doubt, this formulation is the one Ratzinger considers most adequate for capturing the nature of the Church's liturgy. In this concept, Ratzinger states, the spiritual dynamism of the Old Testament as well as the processes of inner purification of the history of religion, human search and divine response fuse with each other.

³⁷ Cf. Ratzinger, "Kościół i liturgia"; Pałęcki, "Nauka o obecności."

In such an understanding of the liturgy, the Logos of creation, the Logos in man and the true, incarnate, eternal Logos – the Son – come together. Any other definition of the essence of the Christian liturgy Ratzinger regards as a shallowing of its nature. This is most evident in the theological understanding of the Eucharist, which cannot be narrowed down to a mere gathering, feast or meeting, since the very word “Eucharist,” points to the worship of God, and therefore to the universal form of worship accomplished in the incarnation, cross and resurrection of Christ. Only the short formula *logikē latreia* expresses the whole truth of the worship of the Logos and in imitation of the Logos and can therefore also be used as an adequate term for the Christian liturgy.³⁸

Ratzinger considers the Eucharist to be the most important type of Christian worship in its sacramental dimension, for it is the anticipatory agape of the Logos, the continuation of the logic of the incarnation and the cross, and the mysticism of the Eucharist is the mysticism of God’s humbling himself towards us and “operates at a radically different level and lifts us to far greater heights than anything that any human mystical elevation could ever accomplish.”³⁹ In this context, it is worth noting that in the descriptions of the institution of the Eucharist at the Last Supper there are two unfathomable words that remain at the centre of the Church, at the centre of the celebration of the Eucharist and of the Christian life, for they are the special presence of the living God, the Logos, Jesus Christ among his people and therefore shake the world, and they read: “this is my body, this is my blood.” Ratzinger stresses emphatically the true meaning of these words: “The incarnate Logos does not give ‘something’ but himself as the definitive, authentic sacrifice in which all the representative sacrifices of the Old Testament find fulfilment. This also means that God wants from man [...] a love which transforms man and in which man is able to accept God and give himself to him.”⁴⁰ Elsewhere, he points out just as forcefully that the transubstantiation of bread and wine into His Body and Blood brings into the inside of the cre-

³⁸ Cf. Ratzinger, “Duch liturgii,” 53; Belcher, “The Feast of Penance,” 254–255.

³⁹ Benedict XVI, *Deus caritas est*, no. 13.

⁴⁰ Cf. Ratzinger, “Eucharystia – centrum Kościoła,” 291–292.

ation the foundation of a radical transformation, a kind of “nuclear fission.” This transformation penetrates the innermost and deepest level of being, carrying out a process of transformation of reality to the point where God becomes all in all (cf. 1 Cor 15:28).⁴¹

The analyses carried out in this article point to logocentrism as the main foundation and keystone of the liturgy in its relation to Ratzinger/Benedict XVI’s theology as a whole. It is clear from the analysis of Ratzinger’s writings that the liturgy cannot be separated from theology, and that its celebration cannot be regarded as the property of the priest or the community. Ratzinger’s, later Pope Benedict XVI’s, grasp of the liturgy can certainly be called one in which the Logos not only pervades the liturgy, but also constitutes it, celebrates it and brings it to eschatological fulfilment. Understood in this way, the liturgy, as has also been shown, is not limited to mere celebration, but has a history-salvific and cosmic dimension. Such a profound and holistic approach safeguards the liturgy from its reduction to mere ceremonies with their variability and its marginalization in theology, reducing it exclusively to a pastoral dimension. The logocentricity of the liturgy inscribes it within the totality of theology, all its sub-disciplines, and even reaches back to its philosophical foundations, as does the concept of the “Logos” itself.

Logocentryzm liturgii w ujęciu Josepha Ratzingera/Benedykta XVI

Abstrakt: Logocentryzm należy uznać za najbardziej charakterystyczny rys myśli teologicznej Josepha Ratzingera/Benedykta XVI. Logocentryzm został tutaj ukazany jako główna zasada teologii liturgii, tak w wymiarze kosmicznym, historiozbowczym, jak i konkretnej celebracji liturgicznej. W opracowaniu wskazano też, że logocentryzm, będąc zwornikiem teologicznej myśli Ratzingera jest nie tylko podstawą pełnego rozumienia liturgii, ale też jej ważnego miejsca w teologii systematycznej. W liturgii kosmicznej, sięgającej stworzenia, Logos jest zasadą wszystkich rzeczy i Liturgiem wszechświata. Z kolei Logos Wcielony jest Liturgiem historii zbawienia i eschatologii. On też sprawuje liturgię Kościoła, konkretną celebrację liturgiczną, czyniąc z niej *logikē latreia* (Rz 12,1), a tym samym miejsce przemiany serca człowieka, a przez to przemiany świata.

Słowa kluczowe: Joseph Ratzinger, Benedykt XVI, kult chrześcijański, *logikē latreia*, Logos stworzenia, Ofiara zastępcza, Wcielony Logos

⁴¹ Benedict XVI, *Sacramentum caritatis*, no. 11.

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