

**The Place of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal
in the Liturgical Life of the Church in Nigeria:
Challenges and Prospects**

By

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Abstract

Under the banner of abuses in the liturgy, worship today has been characterised by manipulations of horizontalism, man-centredness and even desacralization and banalization of the liturgy by both the clergy and lay people. This paper advocates for authentic spirit of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal in the liturgical life to be good and beneficial, if well harnessed for pastoral ministry to save souls which is the supreme law (*salus animarum suprema lex*-salvation of soul is the supreme law). Employing expository, and analytic methods, the paper argues that spirit of Charismatic Renewal can go a long way towards renewal of Catholic worship for both the celebrants and participants in the spirit of the Second Vatican Council and the synod on synodality. They must decide as a way of doing the will of God to abide prayerfully, devotedly

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and spiritually to the *modus celebrandi* of the liturgy. The major fuss of aberration is as a result of misguided sense of creativity, innovations and arbitrariness. This is against the backdrop that the liturgy that the people of God come together to celebrate is the most excellent place to experience and encounter the Spirit of God. In the liturgy, adequate efforts should be redirected towards a profound liturgical formation and reorientation of the clergy and faithful; yet, filial obedience and faithfulness to the liturgical norms and guidelines.

Key words: Catholic, Charismatic, Renewal, Liturgy, Spirit, Participation

Introduction

In his seminal article titled: “Charismatism: A Challenge to Catholic Theology,” B.A.C. Obiefuna asserts that: “Liturgists would study the method of worship of the members of charismatic prayer groups to assess the place of crying, tears, clapping, dancing and falling on the ground for Catholic liturgy.”² The writer shares this passion with him as far as liturgical participation according to the modern rite is concerned. After all, the Second Vatican Council has insistently admonished that the faithful should not be just spectators or passive observers or strangers, rather should be actively involved in the celebration of the rites and rituals with full devotion and attention. Thus, the conciliar document states that by way of promoting active participation, the people should be encouraged to take part by means of

² Boniface A. C. Obiefuna, “Charismatism: A Challenge to Catholic Theology,” in *Charismatics and Catechesis*, (Okpuno: Fides Communications, 2018), 229-230.

acclamations, responses, psalmody, antiphons, and songs as well as by actions, gestures, and bodily movements.³

Against such backdrop, the paper argues that Catholic liturgy must continue to integrate charismatic vibrancy to remain relevant in the modern day and the Nigerian society in particular, as opposed to misguided sense of creativity, innovations and arbitrariness. After all, lively liturgy is more appealing and stands to evoke greater commitment to worshippers. The *aggiornamento* (updating) and *approfondimento* (renewal) of the liturgy would remain an ongoing task, guided by liturgical orthodoxy and norms. This paper, therefore, discusses the place of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal in the context of liturgical participation, pointing out the challenges and prospects for the Church in Nigeria. The challenges are real and urgent in *lieu* of the spirit of the Charismatic Renewal to permeate liturgical participation.

The Spirit of the Liturgy

To understand the nomenclature “the spirit of the liturgy,” we can flash back on the meaning of the letter of the law and the spirit of the law. The letter of the law and the spirit of the law are two possible ways to regard rules, norms or laws. When we obey the letter of the law, it means to follow the literal reading of the words of the law, while following the spirit of the law, we follow the intention, why the law was promulgated. Granted that it is normal to follow both the letter and the spirit, the two are commonly referenced when they are in conflict or opposition. Originally, law

³ Second Vatican Council, *Gaudium et Spes*, [Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World], in Austin Flannery (ed.), *Vatican Council II*, (Dublin: Dominican Publications, 1987), 30.

refers legislative statute but it may also refer to any kind of rule. When the letter of the law is followed against the spirit of the law, one is only exploiting technicalities, loopholes and ambiguity in language. It presupposes that both the letter of the law and the spirit of the law should always be followed.

Accordingly, the spirit of the liturgy is to assist in the renewal of understanding of the liturgy. It is being guided to the understanding of the faith and to the right way to give the faith its central form of expression in the liturgy. It begins with a deepened sense of what it means to worship God, a sense that is at the heart of Church's liturgy. Therefore, the spirit of the liturgy is when the means by which earthly time is inserted into the time of Jesus Christ and into its present. It is the turning point in the process of redemption. The public worship is not to be celebrated without the background of "*salus animarum*" (the salvation of souls). Proper worship must integrate actions and intentions arranged before, during and after celebration. Joseph Ratzinger (later Pope Benedict XVI) captures it in his book titled: *The Spirit of the Liturgy*.⁴

The faithful celebrate in order to live virtuous life and not just to be carried away by the rubrics of the worship. Liturgical actions, gestures, postures, movements, texts, rites, etc. are directed towards the glorification of God and sanctification of mankind (*glorificationem Dei et sanctificationem populi*). In the language of the reformed liturgy of the Second Vatican Council, it is to promote active, full, conscious, and socio-communitarian

⁴ This title: *The Spirit of the Liturgy* was also the caption of a book written by Romano Guardini, written before the Second World War to guide the faithful on the renewed understanding of the liturgy.

participation since it is demanded by the very nature of liturgy.⁵ Among the reforms called for were “the participation of the people by means of acclamations, responses, antiphons, and songs, as well as by actions, gestures, bodily attitude, and reverent silence”; rites characterized by a “noble simplicity,” avoiding “useless repetition”; “richer fare...at the table of the Word” in terms of Scripture readings; sermons based on the readings; restoration of the intercessions of the people; and use of the mother tongue.

It is the candid view of the Mother Church that in the quest to promote the spirit of the liturgy, Christian worship must be celebrated with a great sense of simplicity, decorum and in view of fine details, vigour, candour, and aesthetics. The Fathers of the Second Vatican Council in *Sacrosanctum Concilium* put it right when they said: “Pastors of souls must, therefore, realize that, when the liturgy is celebrated, something more is realized than the laws governing valid and lawful celebration. It is their duty also to ensure that the faithful take part fully aware of what they are doing, actively engaged in the rite and enriched by it.”⁶ In the liturgy, the exterior and the interior must be linked together. This is to ensure individual participation and authentic ritual action. All liturgical celebrations, with options, alternatives, and choices, are sacramental. They are signs and symbols that give impression to the conferring of a divine life by Christ, and the offering to the Father, through Christ of the homage and worship of his people. Simply put, worshippers must understand the liturgical symbols, gestures, postures, acclamations, etc. to translate them to life.

⁵ Second Vatican Council, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, (The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy) [Henceforth SC] in Austin Flannery, (ed.), *Vatican Council II*. Dublin: Dominican Publications, 1987) 14.

⁶ SC 11.

Admittedly, the spirit is to the praise and glory of God as well as to the building up of the Church.

The Place of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal

It is certainly correct to agree with Hilary C. Achunike that Catholic Charismatic Renewal has their liturgy which is not completely different from that of the classical Pentecostals.⁷ Generally, Pentecostalism is believed to have started in Los Angeles, USA under the leadership of Charles Parham in 1900. He was an American evangelist and faith healer. It stresses on the necessity of Jesus Christ as personal Lord and Saviour. It has as its focal point usage of spiritual gifts in form of speaking in tongues and divine healing. They teach that speaking in tongues is the biblical evidence of spirit baptism. It comprises of over 700 denominations and a large number of independent churches. There is no central authority governing Pentecostalism. Nonetheless, many of the denominations are affiliated with the Pentecostal World Fellowship.

Since the 1960s, Pentecostalism has strongly gained acceptance from other Christian traditions. Pentecostal beliefs, concerning Spirit baptism and spiritual gifts, have been embraced by non-Pentecostal Christians in Protestant and Catholic Churches through the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement. The Pentecostals, together with the Charismatics, have over five hundred million (500,000,000) adherents worldwide. The charismatics and young priests today have championed the

⁷ Hilary C. Achunike, "Pentecostalism and Catholic Liturgy" in Luke E. Ijezie, *Theology and Liturgy in the Life of the Church, Proceedings of the Annual Conference of the Catholic Theological Association of Nigeria*, (Anthony Village: Clear Impact Services, 2012) 223.

introduction of Pentecostal elements in Catholic liturgy. Nonetheless, Catholic charismatics, like Pentecostals, lay much emphasis on freedom from formality.⁸ Hence, Obiefuna affirms that, “Charismatism appears to me to be awakening of the church to real African feelings of religion and spirituality-enthusiastic worship of an undying God. It encourages clapping of hands, dancing and other worshipful gestures.”⁹

In the context of this study, the place of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal refers to the mood or attitude of the liturgy that promotes communal spontaneity, sharing, expressive, congregational singing, and a lively worship, accelerated by the spiritual revival and influence of Pentecostalism. They tend to focus on the gifts of Holy Spirit, especially on the gift of spiritual healing, which is a vital part of the Church’s ministry. A vital charismatic renewal meeting and worship are symbolical in lively congregational activity or participation. The charismatic renewal members have, through their celebrations, enlivened worship in their prayer meetings. Relatedly, the reformed liturgy of the Second Vatican Council rightly stated that the liturgy is the source and summit of the Church’s activity.¹⁰ It further noted worship as a communion in holiness, a renewal of covenant, and a mediation of grace as well as glorification of God.¹¹ These statements clearly pertain to the sacraments in a special way. In recent times, the Church in Nigeria recognises the need to be authentically alive with the people she has come to evangelize through curbing non-liturgical practices and aberrations that obscure the very essence of liturgy.

⁸ Achunike 223.

⁹ Obiefuna 230.

¹⁰ SC 10.

¹¹ SC 10.

Ideally, sacramental economy is where the Christian's participation in the life of the Spirit and in the economy of grace is generated and that attitude to the whole of reality are given fundamental expression. The Christian participates in all the activities of the Church, to grow spiritually. Indeed, the obligation of Christ's faithful to participate in liturgy is absolute. Accordingly, Christian worshippers should dispose themselves to the spirit of Charismatic Renewal. It will help to facilitate the Christian spirituality of every member of Christ's faithful to give befitting worship to God "in spirit and truth" (John 4:24).

Dialectics of Liturgical Participation

Liturgical participation is one of the major concerns of the reforms of the Second Vatican Council which calls for active, conscious, full and socio-communitarian participation.¹² Some scholars like Christopher Ejizu refers to it as 'the watershed' of the Ecumenical Council.¹³ The Council Fathers advocated that it is the right and duty of every baptized Christian since they are a chosen people, a royal priesthood called by God to offer him sacrifice. Their liturgical participation is to be all-involving, demanding all the faculties God has given at their disposal. In the Roman liturgies, the watchword is very much orchestrated in order to encourage uniform gestures, postures and rapt attention, listening, responding, singing, and the use of vernacular, provision of liturgical ministries (for lectors, acolytes, ushers, etc.) to be gender free and indeed, an open cheque given for the evolution of

¹² SC 14.

¹³ See Christopher Ejizu's "Foreword" in Emmanuel C. Anagwo, *Active Participation in the Eucharistic Celebration*, (Port Harcourt: University of Port Harcourt, 2013) xii.

the cultural values and genius of the people, following the laid down guidelines and procedures for liturgical inculturation.¹⁴

The mantra of this paper is that the same liturgical participation can be promoted and replicated in the spirit of Catholic Charismatic Renewal; hence, the living, vibrant, intense, and elaborate celebrations of worship and prayer meetings, etc. constitute their format. However, an honest assessment cannot but affirm that a lot of bottlenecks are still under the way to realize fully the potentialities of liturgical participation, advocated by the reformed liturgy. In the words of Cardinal Sarah: "Today the need to understand [the sacraments] is increasing, because of deformations and bad decisions deliberately taken by many priests who confuse the faithful."¹⁵ In some places there came about a loss of the sense of the sacred and mystery of faith, swept along a course of permissiveness and anarchy. Liturgical celebrations are turned into shows with extraneous and spurious activities: "Some priests behave like television hosts."¹⁶ To a large extent, abuse in the liturgy, like a virus, has eaten deep into the fibres of ecclesial celebrations in Nigeria. Little wonder the challenge of mission, justice, love, sharing etc. ensuing hereto are not yet concretely reflected in the socio-communitarian living of Nigerians.

¹⁴ SC 37-40.

¹⁵ Quoted by Alberto Carosa, "Vatican liturgist: "We are administrators, and not the masters, of the sacraments" in http://www.catholicworldreport.com/Blog/4739/vatican_liturgist_we_are_administrators_and_not_the_masters_of_the_sacraments.aspx accessed on 16 September, 2024.

¹⁶ Quoted by Alberto Carosa, "Vatican liturgist:..."

Purpose of Liturgical Participation

When the assembly participates in the liturgy, it is not just for the sake of gathering, that is, just for mere liturgical participation. It is not simply to recognise one's denomination or sect or for jamboree. The purpose of liturgical participation is for the glorification of God and the equipping of Christians with the power to carry out the mission in the world. The two cannot be separated.¹⁷ God is glorified because He is the author and creator of everything in the world. God created man to know Him, love Him, serve Him and to be with Him in the world to come. Liturgical worship is one of the ways to show God that humanity is not ungrateful. The four ends of Mass (thanksgiving, adoration, contrition, and petitions) express this noble quest.¹⁸

For Joseph Ratzinger, the liturgical celebration leads to the transforming power of God, who wants, through what happens in the liturgy, to transform us and the world.¹⁹ Adding his voice further on the purpose of liturgical participation, Patrick C. Chibuko succinctly states that it leads to total transformation of the body, soul and spirit, shown in the sanctification of the people of God, edification of the Church, glorification of God and human person which is made of body, soul and spirit expressed in *martyria* (martyrdom), that is, life of witnessing.²⁰ This challenge

¹⁷ Craig Douglas Erickson, "Liturgical Participation and the Renewal of the Church" in *Worship* Vol. 59, No.3, (Minnesota: Saint Paul, 1985) 232.

¹⁸ Emmanuel C. Anagwo, *Active Participation in the Eucharistic Celebration*, (Port Harcourt: University of Port Harcourt, 2013) 37.

¹⁹ Joseph Ratzinger, *The Spirit of the Liturgy* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2000), 175.

²⁰ Patrick C. Chibuko, "Active Participation in the Liturgy: Towards the Revival of Christian Culture" in *Bigard Theological Studies* Vol 26, 2, (2006) 56.

leads ultimately to the transformation of the larger society like in the political scene. That the worshipper is transformed for better, leading to one's holiness of life and can contribute to the growth of the Mystical Body of Christ which ultimately is a way towards adoration. To actualise this noble objective, one may, at times, demonstrate one's faith through Baptism of Blood which is martyrdom.

One thing is very clear. When liturgical participation bears or does not bear the corresponding challenge, it can easily be viewed from two perspectives, namely, ritual synergism and ritualism. Ritual synergism in relation to active participation comes into play when the individual participates knowingly, actively, and fruitfully in the liturgy of the Church.²¹ Simply expressed, there is a harmonious co-operative working of the agents such that each is mutually enriched. Through the Holy Spirit as the source of this ritual synergism, the worshipper lives this out optimally. Conversely, when the worship is without fruit, it becomes mere ritualism. The deplorable effect was seen in the rubricism that led to legalistic tendency. For instance, when the priest has finished the consecration, the fingers are so-carried sanctimoniously. Even at the risk of pastoral charity like the exchange of kiss of peace, the minister uses only the last three fingers that have not touched the sacred specie for the exchange. One wonders the place of purificator in cleaning the hand if touched with the sacred specie. In fact, there is no corresponding level of participation from the external manifestation to the internal level. As such, there is no effect of the fruitful participation. The purpose of the liturgical participation is

²¹ Erickson 232.

defeated. The worship can be anything but liturgical participation that is purposeful.

Forms of Liturgical Participation

According to Craig Douglas Erickson, Christian participation in liturgy rendered to God in worship has three principal forms, namely, knowledgeable, active, and fruitful participation.²² First, knowledgeable participation is initiated by baptismal commitment which enjoins the worshipper to have personal faith in God by the power of the Holy Spirit. Like the members of the Charismatic Renewal, the power of the Holy Spirit makes the experience of the Christian to be directed to the purpose of liturgical participation. Aptly expressed, to participate knowingly requires this inward illumination, given in baptismal grace. A balanced illumination of the heart must be complemented by the mind. Without this process, all the ritual experienced, no matter how simple will have little or no meaning at all.

Second is active participation, which is contrasted with passive participation, presupposes the full and conscious level of participation. The external gestures and postures are directed to a harmonious worship confirming the reciprocal relationship between the internal and external. Acclamations, responses, psalmody, symbols, antiphons, colours, hymns, songs, gestures, actions, and silent reverence are means through which active participation is promoted and advanced.

Third as fruitful participation entails intensive preparation. Liturgical participation is not a fire-brigade approach, haphazard affair, or an enterprise dotted with makeshift or rescue operation.

²² Erickson 231.

All those involved, beginning with the celebrants, preachers, servers, lectors, and cantors must be trained to their responsibility and should play their part well. Fruitful participation generates mission. From the celebration, the worshipper gets the mandate; hence, the celebrated expression 'From Mass to Mission'.

Furthermore, we can also distinguish between internal and external participation. Internal participation refers to the inner disposition of the faithful which is raised towards co-operation with the divine grace. This inner participation is expressed through outward manifestation like postures and gestures, acclamations, responses, and songs. For Patrick Chibuko, "The faithful should try to raise their mind to God through interior disposition as they listen to the singing of ministers or choir."²³ While the external participation expresses those patterns of liturgical actions, gestures, postures, movements, etc. carried out during liturgical worship with the view to uplift the hearts and minds of the faithful to God, using our bodily movement in worship.

Patterns of Liturgical Participation

A close examination of Catholic worship will reveal distinct patterns of liturgical participation.²⁴ People erroneously lump them under bipolar categories. In actual praxis, one may see in any given worshipping community one or more patterns taking the lead while others are less highly observed. They, however, make the celebration to be varied and rich in scope when properly

²³ Chibuko, "Active Participation in the Liturgy" 48.

²⁴ For a detailed study, see Emmanuel C. Anagwo, "Active Liturgical Participation and Collaborative Ministry in Nigeria" in Benedict E. Ukutegbe, Emmanuel C. Anagwo & Victor J. Usman (eds.), *Active Participation and the Church in Nigeria, Proceedings of the Annual Conference of the Catholic Liturgists' Association of Nigeria (CALAN) 2017*, (Warri: Vinnyl Communications, 2017) 45-71.

utilized. As patterns of liturgical participation, the congregation is led towards ritual synergism. And seven patterns could be discerned, namely, spontaneous involvement, passive engagement, corporate-verbal, interiorized-verbal, lay leadership, multi-sensate and independent engagement.²⁵ Let us objectively review them.

First is spontaneous involvement. This entails allowing the worshippers to be free without inhibitions while responding to the celebration. Since the Holy Spirit blows wherever it likes, if celebration is restrictive, the operation of the Holy Spirit, which comes with many gifts (1 Cor 12:28-31) may be hindered. Examples of this spontaneous involvement in liturgical celebration include spontaneous “Amen”, “alleluia”, “Praise the Lord”, other acclamations of praise, handclapping, hand-raising, improvisational singing, *glossolalia*, recitation of the Prayer of the Faithful, and others. Care, however, should be taken lest giving too much free hand to this pattern can also block other patterns of participation that can be complementary to the holistic movement of Holy Spirit in worship.

Second is passive-engagement. Emphasis is placed on the outward participation of the congregation which is minimal. But the internal disposition can still be very high. The use of visual and audio means is very important to this model of participation. Examples include attentive listening to the proclamation of God’s word, good rendition of hymns by the choir as well as an articulate prayer by the leader of the worshipping community. The problem with this model of participation is making the worship of the community to be dependent on the priest. Such clerical

²⁵ Erickson 238.

usurpations are hardly consistent with the doctrine of the priesthood of all the faithful.

Third is corporate-verbal. This pattern of participation expresses the fact that liturgy ought to have forms leading to verbal expression. Common usage of corporate-verbal includes unison prayers, confessions, litanies and dialogues. Measured prose is used to shape the prayer of the Church. Usually, the Holy Spirit is attributed to have an active role in the formulation and articulation of the prayers and responses of the Church in the celebration. The basic problem with this pattern is making the Prayer of the Faithful to be stereotyped and bookish in usage and application.

The fourth pattern is interiorized-verbal. This model of participation is distinguished from the corporate-verbal model in the sense that experience of participatory prayer is to be achieved without a prayer booklet or mimeographed bulletin. Because the responses are short and familiar, they enable the assembly to use them without recourse to print medium. Examples are liturgical hymns, songs, choruses, responses, scripture songs, and others. Repetition is a constant trait of this model of participation. Pointing its short-coming as trivialization of sacred worship, Erickson states that "The interiorized-verbal pattern runs the risk of vulgarization. Memorization necessitates simplicity, which is only a step away from insipidness, particularly where music is involved."²⁶

Another pattern which is the fifth is lay leadership. Emphasis in this type of participation is the active involvement of lay persons in leadership role in worship. The understanding is that the worship of the faithful should be opened to all who are

²⁶ Erickson 240.

priests by virtue of Baptism. Areas for this lay leadership include as lay leaders, worship leaders, preachers. The risk to be generated by this model of participation, which is controversial, is to lead to anti-clericalism which in the long run will sow the seed of confusion of liturgical roles. And this is not to the interest of any assembly which recognises participation according to status, office, and duty.

The sixth pattern is multi-sensate. As a model of liturgical participation, it presupposes the fact that human imagination may be excited by a variety of stimuli. The point of stress is non-verbal dimensions of participation observed in liturgy like the postures and gestures, signs and symbols, etc. Through the use of the sensate (taste, sight, touch, smell); kinetic (body movement) and emotion, liturgical participation is enhanced. Examples of multi-sensate include kneeling, standing, signing of the cross, imposition of hands, genuflection, to mention but a few. Multi-sensate can degenerate into ritualism since the assembly may be engaged in a practice without knowing its signification. Ongoing catechesis can help to stem the tide of extremism in this regard.

The seventh and final pattern is the independent engagement. In this pattern of participation, Holy Spirit as the agent of transformation engages an individual towards worthy celebration especially where the liturgy is not celebrated in the vernacular. Two examples could be cited such as a child who is preoccupied with catechetical aid because the homily is not in a vernacular or a worshipper whose attention is drawn away from liturgy into meditation through the symbols placed in the Church. According to Joseph Jungmann, the independent engagement was the most dominant pattern of participation during the Middle Ages as the congregation busied themselves in this way while the priests

solely offered the sacrifice to God.²⁷ The limitation of this pattern has been pointed out by the sixteenth century Protestant Reformation that without intelligibility, true and proper engagement is very difficult to be arrived at in liturgy.²⁸ A good liturgical worship must aim at proclaiming the Gospel for the assembly to comprehend and be edified by the celebration (1 Cor 16:25-26) and consequently appreciate the challenges posed by fruitful participation.

Charismatic Form of Worship

Catholic Charismatics have their liturgy which is not completely different from that of the Classical Pentecostals. The Charismatics and young priest, have championed the introduction of Pentecostal elements in Catholic liturgy. Let us briefly discuss some modes of worship characteristic of them here:

Spontaneity and Dynamic Worship

An outstanding form is that charismatic fellowship has reawakened the call for a lively way of spontaneous worship. This pattern of worship presupposes that songs and gestures are beyond stereotyped, pre-written, planned, and practised liturgy. They would argue that instead of the normal, dull, and rigid pattern of worship that has characterized the Catholic liturgy, they introduced spontaneity in their mode of worship, which is unstructured, uninhibited and can last for hours on end with joyful shouting, swaying and singing, clapping of hands, waving of hands, dancing and moving round the church. For them, during Prayer of the Faithful (also called Universal Prayer, General

²⁷ Joseph A. Jungmann, *The Early Liturgy*, (Notre Dame, 1959) 169ff.

²⁸ Erickson 241.

Intercession or Bidding Prayers), they are not meant to be rigid and stereotyped but should respond to the yearnings and aspirations of the worshipping community.²⁹ In fact, they have generally promoted a lively worship for the members, fostering unity, encouraging active participation in the liturgy as well as binding the community together and becoming a powerful tool for inclusivity, welcoming diverse voices, perspectives and worldviews.

Strong Sharing Community and Liturgical Life

Charismatic spirit encourages a strong commitment to the liturgical life of the Church, inspires active participation, nurturing a sense of community and shared worship. Here, members are so conscious of what goes on in their church and would want to be a part as a unified worshipping community. Elsewhere, the writer argues that the spirit of Charismatic Renewal is not just gathering the faithful for liturgical worship into faceless community but also to foster strong commitment to liturgical life and personal solidarity with the events and activities of the local Christian community. They believe in communal life and reaching out to their needy members and groups within their neighbourhood. Level of expectancy regarding sharing in Catholic liturgy has been raised and challenged by this charismatic spirit. It can also be a challenge towards a great sense of involvement which can have wonderful impact in Catholic communities. For instance, Catholics will begin to have need to create some small parish

²⁹ For a detailed study, see Emmanuel C. Anagwo, "A Rediscovery of the Value of the Prayer of the Faithful in the Light of the Synod on Synodality" in Okechukwu Cajetan Ani (ed.), *Journal of Pastoral and Spiritual Theology*, Vol. 2, 2022, 152-168.

groups with special reference to small/basic Christian communities, all to reawaken the need for small groups to have a sense of belonging in community, ecclesial consciousness and a unique means expressing emotions, thoughts and communal expressions.

Congregational Singing and Dancing

Congregational singing and dancing always retain a privileged place in divine worship. They have always served the liturgy as its handmaid. They hold immense value in worship, spiritual growth and community. Believers can express worship, praise and thanksgiving to God. Like the Second Vatican Council, the spirit of Charismatic Renewal is a challenge on the role of congregational singing as veritable means of the mystery of faith to be explored in the liturgical worship. The Conciliar Document states that the musical tradition of the Universal Church is a treasure of inestimable value, greater even than that of any other art. The main reason for this pre-eminence is that, as a sacred song united to the words, it forms an integral part of the solemn liturgy. It describes the function of congregational singing in worship in three ways as expressing prayer more delightfully, fostering unity of minds and enriching sacred rites with great solemnity.³⁰ Music born of the experience of that faith awakens the presence of God in our midst. Nonetheless, sometimes Plain Chant, psalmody, Gregorian chants, motets and hymns of the Catholic liturgy are not appealing to the modern man/woman who wants the effects of music to take him/her into frenzy. Charismatics know that using one's bodily movement, blended with sweet sound of praise, is an

³⁰ *Musicam Sacram* (Instruction on Music in the Liturgy), in Austin Flannery (ed.), in *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*, Vol. 1, (Dublin: Dominican, 1987) 64.

aid to profound human awareness and self-expression and a point of contact between humanity and God.

Challenges Emanating from the Spirit of Charismatic Renewal

The challenge of charismatic spirit in the Nigerian society are enormous. Some Christians, especially youth, today troop to places where they express themselves freely during worship. They are fascinated by the vibrancy that appeal to their age-bracket. They want to go to places where no one restricts them on what to do during worship. But they forget that “all that glitters is not gold.” Regrettably, some Catholic priests follow the trend in order to feel relevant in today’s Nigerian Church. Disposing completely the Catholic identity and cultural heritage is not our thesis here, but to integrate both. In considering the situation at hand, let us highlight some challenges therein:

Endangering the Theological and Liturgical Integrity of Catholic Worship

The vibrant Charismatic movements in Nigeria have had a profound challenge on the religious consciousness of Christians, including Catholic worshippers. These movements prioritize spontaneity, emotional expressions, prophetic utterances, healing and praise and worship sessions characterized by contemporary music and dance. Their new manner of prayer is based on charismatic experience, especially praying in tongues and a desire to see manifestations of the Holy Spirit’s presence. For them, such charismatic experience is closely associated with the sanctity of a given person. This has led many Nigerian Catholic worshippers, especially the youths, to perceive the structured nature of Catholic

liturgy as rigid, monotonous and less spiritually engaging. Some priests now imitate charismatic spirit style by incorporating praise bands, altar calls, and motivational sermons into the Holy Mass, just to draw massive crowd, endangering the theological and liturgical heritage of Catholic identity. Ideally, the Eucharistic liturgy, which should be the centre of Catholic worship is presently at a risk of being jettisoned by experiential and sensational horizontal elements. The challenge for the Church in Nigeria is the tension created between fidelity to liturgical norms and pastoral adaptation.

Alteration of the Eucharistic Texts

An outstanding challenge facing the liturgical life for the Church in Nigeria is the alteration of the Eucharistic texts among the celebrants and participants. Flowing from the influence of Charismatic renewal, liturgical celebrations are shaped more by personal preference and local tradition than by fidelity to liturgical norms. A typical example is when the Eucharistic prayers are altered, in non-liturgical words or songs. It is an abuse to alter the texts of the Sacred Liturgy as it does not project the spirit of authentic meaning of the liturgy.³¹ To prove the point “As the Spirit leads, we go”, there have been instances where some priests altered the words of consecration, rendering the sacrament invalid.³² The Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments emphasizes that “the words of

³¹ Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, *Redemptionis Sacramentum* (RS), (Okpuno: Fides Communications, 2004) 59.

³² RS 55.

consecration must not be changed.”³³ One must read the text and maintain the language of the text. However, alternative or substitution is always indicated where it is possible.

Introduction of Private Devotions into Liturgy

Relatedly, some clergy take excessive liberties of vibrancy of Charismatic Renewal to introduce private devotions into liturgy (for instance, recitation of the rosary prayers during the Eucharistic liturgy or performing exorcism and healing prayers during the liturgy of the word. These practices stem from insufficient theological formation or better still, a tendency to lean towards charismatic showmanship. Abuses in the liturgy not only confuse the faithful but also weakens the sense of sacred tradition and universality of the Catholic liturgy. They have made members of the Church to be confused, upset, perplexed and scandalised.³⁴

Resistance to Change

Another challenge is that some people are allergic to change. Anything that makes them to shift from their usual position is resisted with the last pint of their blood. Such people are afraid of change, innovation and invention of any sort. ‘As it was in the beginning, so shall it be now’ is the mantra of their life. For Patrick C. Chibuko, “The dynamics of change carry a certain degree of thrill and mixed feelings trailing behind the change.”³⁵

³³ RS 55.

³⁴ Emmanuel C. Anagwo, *Liturgical Renewal Towards Controlling Abuses in the Liturgy and Popular Devotions in Nigeria*, (Benin City: Plush Prints & Paperworks, 2025) 4.

³⁵ Patrick C. Chibuko, “And with your spirit” in the New Translation of the Order of Mass: A Christo-Cultural response” in *Koinonia*, Volume 5, Number 3 (2012: 69)

Teresa Okure pungently describes this attitude of fear of change as “conservatism, laziness, pragmatism and lack of time and interest which conditions us to be satisfied with the *status quo*.”³⁶ As a result of their *modus operandi* (mode of operation) and *modus vivendi* (mode of living), they do not appreciate new ways of doing things. They think that the old dogmatic way is always right and better. For them, the idea of charismatic vibrancy and rituals is sacrilegious and unacceptable. Manifesting this culpable ignorance and myopic tendency “they still feel that there is nothing good about charismatic spirit and vibrancy.” It is quite unfortunate!

The Use of Acoustic

There is also the challenge on the use of acoustic. Acoustic means anything related to sound or sense of hearing. Here, we are concerned more with the good use of microphone, public address, and sound system for effective worship and in the delivery of the word of God. A system that is strong as well as effective needs to be put in place.³⁷ The era of managing the sarcastic analogy of Catholic microphone (with the usual hitting of the microphone) unlike the Pentecostal microphone (audibly clear and distinct) is a necessity to promote liturgical participation. Hence, one of the challenges in promoting liturgical participation is when the Church’s sound system is not properly set up to project her voice. The spirit of Charismatic Renewal has opened the dire necessity of good acoustics to reach out to many people in a liturgical space.

³⁶ Teresa Okure, “Inculturation in Nigeria: A Survey and Evaluation” in *Inculturation and the Mission of the Church in Nigeria* (Port Harcourt: CIWA, 1992) 69-91.

³⁷ Emmanuel C. Anagwo, *Celebration of the Word of God: A Liturgical Enquiry*, (Berlin: Peter Lang International Publisher, 2020) 70.

It is to the advantage of the worshipping community to employ the services of a technician which is a good sound engineer who will aid in the choice and location of sound systems within the Church. Consequently, it is very necessary that this should be considered at the point of constructing the Church. Periodic maintenance of the public address system is highly recommended for an optimal service to evolve. Stabilizers should be provided to ensure adequate light supply and avoidance of damage to the public address system. The spirit of Charismatic Renewal has shown that neglect on this aspect of Church Building has colossal consequence to the dissemination and celebration of the Word of God. Admittedly, they usually go for the state-of-the-art sound system that will make the word of God to be heard in a very clear sound. Charismatics know that poor sound system would kill liturgical actions, rituals, etc. Their basic principle is that it should be loud and clear. “Only the best is good for God in worship” is their watchword in order to mitigate against the challenge on the use of acoustic.

Prospects Towards Balancing Charismatic Vibrancy for Fruitful Participation

Given the current situation of some celebrations, patterns and forms of liturgical participation are disadvantaged to evolve socio-communitarian living. The reasons are not far-fetched. It suffices to mention that the mode of liturgical celebrations seems not to be appealing to their religiosity, sensitivity, perception, and comprehension to encourage an effective Christian witnessing in the Nigerian society today. Perhaps, their non-participatory status, in most cases, resulted in denying them the riches of the Eucharistic transformation. But all hope is not lost. We must look

to the future with optimism, under the banner of the spirit of Charismatic Renewal.

A greater appreciation of the spirit of Charismatic Renewal for liturgical participation should be studied and applied, by being faithful to the liturgical laws. All worshippers are duty bound to have an adequate knowledge of the nature and purpose of liturgical participation. Full import of the meaning, goal, patterns, forms, spirituality, and theology of the liturgical participation should be enunciated to the faithful. Not only becoming conversant with the liturgical laws out of 'rubrical exactitude' but in love and acknowledgement for valid and lawful celebration, the faithful should also be made to be fully involved, being aware of what they are doing, actively engaged in the rite, and being enriched by it.³⁸

The Igbo of Nigeria would say: "*Gbara gbara fee oke, O buru ara*" (When something goes beyond the limit, it becomes problematic). St. Augustine says: "*Virtu in medio stat*" (Virtue stands in the middle). The Church never shielded away from this all-important heritage of the role of Holy Spirit which Charismatic Renewal are claiming to possess. Accordingly, both the clergy and the lay faithful should embrace the positive evolution and influence of Charismatic Renewal and discard their excesses. The Charismatic firebrand and Catholic orthodoxy do not conflict with one another, but can complement, to satisfy the yawning need for a lively, dynamic, and accommodating liturgy, above all, to ensure that the Catholic worship must also always address the challenges that touch people in their lives. In the words of Austin Echema, we boldly state:

³⁸ SC 11.

The time has come when we must take into account all that is positive in the Pentecostal Movement if we hope to make progress in the areas of liturgical renewal, inter-faith dialogue, the inculturation of Christianity, the ministry of healing, especially towards psychotics and addicts, and new approaches to church union and ecumenism. The age of antagonism, indifference and neglect or even arrogance is over.³⁹

As we integrate the spirit of Charismatic Renewal, the Catholic faithful must guide against over-bearing and negative influence that may pervert the Gospel of Christ and jeopardize the Christian faith.⁴⁰ Of course, it is inevitable that certain Christians feel more at home with the dogmatic security of the keys of Peter (Matt 16:10-19), exemplified in the Catholic liturgy, others with the charismatic firebrand liturgy of Paul (1 Cor 14:18), typified in the Pentecostal Churches, and still others with the pedagogical eloquence and learning of Apollos (Acts 18:24) amplified in the Charismatic Renewal of the Church. All must be blended in the worship of God; after all, unity is not uniformity. When they are blended, active, conscious, and plenary participation of the faithful advocated by the Second Vatican Council would be a reality than the fleeting dream it seems to be today.

Conclusion

From the study, the paper proposes the integration of the spirit of Catholic Charismatic Renewal in the context of liturgical

³⁹ Austin Echema, "Pentecostalism and Baptism in the Holy Spirit: A Critique" in *The Nigerian Journal of Theology*, 19 (2005) 81.

⁴⁰ For a detailed study, see Emmanuel C. Anagwo, "Impact of Pentecostalism on the Catholic Liturgy: The Nigerian Experience" in Timothy Barga (ed.), *The Catholic Church in the Face of Pentecostalism (Jos Studies)*, Vol. 22, June 2014, 20.

participation. It attempted to re-echo our understanding of liturgical participation, after the spirit of the Second Vatican Council and synod on synodality. After all, in his oft-quoted book, *The Spirit of the Liturgy*, Ratzinger rightly emphasizes that “the art of celebrating the liturgy properly” (*ars celebrandi*) is the key to foster active participation (*participatio actuosa*) of the People of God in divine worship.⁴¹ Indeed, the art of proper celebration of the post-conciliar Mass is guided by the appropriate spirit of the Council Fathers. Accordingly, the paper has also called for a time of renewal, introspection, and rejuvenation, *via* the principles of lively, vibrant, and liturgical participation. The spirit of Charismatic Renewal is good and will be beneficial, if well harnessed for pastoral ministry to save souls which is the supreme law (*salus animarum suprema lex*-salvation of soul is the supreme law). Anybody who desires communal commitment, sharing, spontaneity, and spirit-filled liturgical worship should see the spirit of Charismatic Renewal as a priority, for both celebrants and participants. The spirit of Charismatic Renewal is neither evil nor the Catholic liturgy the symbol of perfection that has no room for improvement.

In conclusion, the Church in Nigeria, like the universal Church, has enjoyed over the years, the *modus operandi* (mode of operation) and *modus vivendi* (mode of living) anchored on the dictum: “*liturgia semper reformanda est*” (liturgy is always undergoing reformation). The current proposal on the spirit of Charismatic Renewal should be seen as occasion for a continued renewal of the liturgy plagued with myriads of abuses and aberrations in this direction. Liturgy, in the life of Church, is a

⁴¹ Ratzinger, *The Spirit of the Liturgy* 171.

reality that is *semper reformanda*. Anyone who tells you otherwise is refusing to come to terms with the truth and reality of fruitful and integral liturgical participation, with its concomitant purpose, forms, and patterns. The mantra of the paper is that Catholic liturgy can integrate charismatic vibrancy to remain relevant in the modern day and the Nigerian society in particular. The Church is already exploring the charismatic firebrand but more efforts can still be expended, especially with the liturgy for young people. Accordingly, adequate efforts should be redirected towards a profound liturgical formation and reorientation of the people of God; yet, filial obedience and faithfulness to the liturgical norms and guidelines.