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50 Years of the Misa ng Bayang Pilipino
(Mass of the Filipino People)

A Status Quaestionis

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Abstract

The year 2025 marks the 50th anniversary of the first publication of the *Misa ng Bayang Pilipino* (MBP), an inculturated Filipino Order of Mass composed under the direction of Anscar Chupungco. This paper explores the status quaestionis of the MBP, re-examining its historical context in the post-Vatican II period and analyzing it through the lens of Chupungco's framework of liturgical inculturation. This study also reviews recent scholarship that has engaged the MBP and presents some pathways for further research.

Keywords

Liturgical Inculturation | Misa ng Bayang Pilipino | Roman Rite |
Cultural Adaptation | Philippines | Post-Vatican II Liturgy

50 Years of the *Misa ng Bayang Pilipino* (Mass of the Filipino People)

A Status Quaestionis

LORENZO PENALOSA – AUDREY SEAH

The *Misa ng Bayang Pilipino* (hereafter *MBP* or *Misa*), first published in 1975 and used presently at annual gatherings such as the *Philippine Conference on the New Evangelization* (PCNE), represents a significant milestone in liturgical inculturation in the Filipino Catholic Church. As one of the first vernacular Masses composed following Vatican II's Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, the *MBP* embodies both the opportunities and challenges of adapting the Roman liturgy to local cultural contexts. However, while several studies have examined the *Misa's* cultural and catechetical value, scholarly literature on the *MBP* remains relatively limited.¹

This essay aims to fill this gap and encourage new scholarship by undertaking a meta-analysis of the *MBP* and related literature through the theoretical framework of liturgical inculturation developed by Anscar Chupungco, OSB (1939–2013), a leading Filipino liturgist and main drafter of the *Misa*. Drawing primarily from his 1992 work, *Liturgical Inculturation:*

¹ This paper was first presented at the joint session of the Liturgy and Culture and Critical Theories seminars at the 2025 North American Academy of Liturgy (NAAL) Annual Meeting in Valparaiso, Indiana. The authors would like to thank members of these seminars, especially the Rev. Vincent Manalo, CSP, for valuable feedback on this article. Authors are listed in alphabetical order; both contributed equally to this work.

*Sacramentals, Religiosity, and Catechesis*² and later essays which represent his mature thinking on the subject, this analysis of the *MBP* examines the methodological principles and processes Chupungco argues should guide authentic liturgical inculturation.³ By evaluating the *Misa* against both Chupungco's criteria and other scholarly perspectives, this study aims to establish a *status quaestionis* regarding the *MBP*'s role in contemporary global Catholic liturgical practice and its implications for ongoing efforts at liturgical inculturation in the Philippines and the global Church.

We proceed in five parts. We begin by providing necessary historical context for understanding the *MBP*'s development in the post-Vatican II period, including the social and ecclesiastical circumstances that shaped its creation. This section also introduces Anscar Chupungco's scholarly formation and career. In Parts Two and Three, we present a detailed analysis of the *MBP* through the lens of Chupungco's theoretical framework by examining his understanding of liturgical inculturation and related concepts such as indigenization, contextualization and methods of dynamic equivalence, creative assimilation and organic progression. In Part Four, we conduct a literature review of recent scholarship that has engaged the *Misa*. In Part Five, we conclude with summative observations for the Filipino and global Church and suggest pathways for further research.

² See Anscar J. CHUPUNGCO, *Liturgical Inculturation. Sacramentals, Religiosity, and Catechesis*, Collegeville 1992.

³ Chupungco's other major works on liturgical inculturation include *id.*, *Cultural Adaptation of the Liturgy*, New York 1982; *id.*, *Liturgies of the Future. The Process and Methods of Inculturation*, New York 1982; *id.*, *Worship. Beyond Inculturation*, Washington, DC 1994; *id.*, *Liturgy and Inculturation*, in: Anscar J. CHUPUNGCO (ed.), *Handbook for Liturgical Studies*, vol. 2: *Fundamental Liturgy*, Collegeville 1998, 337–375; *id.*, *What, then, is Liturgy? Musings and Memoir*, Collegeville 2010; *id.*, *Methods of Liturgical Inculturation* in: Gláucia Vasconcelos WILKEY (ed.), *Worship and Culture*, Grand Rapids 2014, 262–276, and *id.*, *Inculturation of Worship. Forty Years of Progress and Tradition*, in: Gláucia Vasconcelos WILKEY (ed.), *Worship and Culture*, Grand Rapids 2014, 276–286.

1 *Background of the Misa ng Bayang Pilipino*

In the field of liturgical studies, the name Anscar Chupungco has become synonymous with liturgical inculturation. Chupungco was a Benedictine monk of Our Lady of Montserrat Abbey in Manila, Philippines. He served as a professor, *preside* of the Pontifical Liturgical Institute in Rome, and rector of the Pontifical Athenaeum Sant’Anselmo. In 1993, he founded the Paul VI Liturgical Institute in Malaybalay, Philippines, to train liturgists in Asia. He passed away in 2013, at the age of 73, after suffering from a heart attack.⁴

In his decades of scholarship spanning from the 1960s until his death in 2013, he aimed to bring about mutual enrichment between the Catholic faith and local cultures. This work was a response to the Second Vatican Council’s call for a “*Liturgiae generalem instaurationem*” to make rites and prayers more intelligible for people.⁵ Among his works is his involvement in composing the *Misa ng Bayang Pilipino* (Mass of the Filipino People), an adaptation of the Roman rite Order of Mass to Filipino cultural patterns and linguistic sensibilities. In order to understand Chupungco’s work on liturgical inculturation and the composition of the *Misa*, it is necessary to first explore its political, linguistic, and ecclesiastical background. This section is not intended to provide a thorough history but rather to “connect the dots” and trace constellations from developments that may have influenced the composition of the *MBP*.

By the time the Second Vatican Council convened in 1962, the Philippines had just celebrated the 16th anniversary of its independence. While the country had had a long and rich history involving Asian trade exchanges, over 300 years of Spanish colonial rule, 43 years of American control, and four years of Japanese occupation, the Philippines only

⁴ Cf. Joshua McELWEE, Filipino Liturgist, Priest Anscar Chupungco Dies, in: National Catholic Reporter (9 January 2013). [↗](#) On more about Chupungco, see Mark R. FRANCIS, The Future of Liturgical Inculturation and the Contribution of Anscar J. Chupungco, OSB, in: Liturgy 29/3 (2014) 3–10.

⁵ Cf. SACROSANCTUM CONCILIUM OECUMENICUM VATICANUM II, Constitutio de sacra Liturgia *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (4 December 1963), in: AAS 56 (1964) 97–138, here: 105 (art. 21).

gained self-rule on 4 July 1946.⁶ As an archipelago with various cultures and languages, Spanish served as its official language during the colonial period, even though only the elites and clergy spoke it. Likewise, English served as the official language during the American period. The 1935 Constitution, patterned after the 1789 United States Constitution and promulgated with the support of the American government, ordered the selection and adoption of a national language, while keeping English and Spanish as the official languages.⁷ In 1937, President Manuel L. Quezon (1878–1944) approved the adoption of Tagalog – the language of the region surrounding Manila, the capital – as the basis for the national language.

The years 1965 and 1969 would prove to be consequential for both Chupungco and for the political and ecclesiastical landscape of the Philippines. In 1965, Chupungco was ordained to the priesthood and was sent to the Pontifical Athenaeum Sant’Anselmo in Rome to begin graduate studies in liturgy. By the mid-1960s, there had been attempts at introducing the vernacular to the liturgy through the composition of Mass settings, such as the “Pilipino Chant”, produced by Chupungco’s confrere, Benildus Maria Maramba, OSB (1936–2020).⁸ In November 1965, Ferdinand E. Marcos (1917–1989) was elected President of the Philippines. The Second Vatican Council concluded the following month, on 7 December. Four years later, in 1969, Ferdinand Marcos was re-elected President. Meanwhile, in Rome, the *Consilium* for the Implementation of the Constitution on the Liturgy released *Comme le prévoit*, an instruction on the translation of liturgical texts, advocating for intelligibility and the use of common lan-

⁶ In 1964, President Diosdado Macapagal (1910–1997) would change the date of the Philippine Independence Day to 12 July 1898, the date Filipino revolutionaries declared independence from Spain.

⁷ Cf. 1935 Philippine Constitution (8 February 1935), art. 13, sec. 3. in: Official Gazette. [↗](#)

⁸ For a fuller history of the initial efforts to adapt the liturgy in the Philippines, see Dennis C. AMARANTE, Post-Vatican II Liturgical Reforms in the Philippines and their Implementation, Part I (1964–1979), in: *Boletín Eclesiástico de Filipinas* 99 (2023) 105–156. See also Melanie J. MAGPANTAY – Antonio C. HILA, Rufino Cardinal Santos Steers the Archdiocese of Manila to Vatican II (1959–1966), in: *Scientia* 12 (2023) 86–110.

guage in transmitting meaning over the mere replication of form.⁹ That same year, Chupungco earned his doctorate at Sant’Anselmo. He completed and defended his dissertation, titled “The Cosmic Elements of the Christian Passover”, under the direction of a German monk of Maria Lach Abbey, Burkhard Neunheuser, OSB (1903–2003), with whom he shared an interest in the relationship between culture and liturgy.¹⁰

In 1972, Marcos placed the Philippines under martial law, with the justification of quelling a Communist rebellion. The following year, a new Constitution was implemented, becoming the first in the country’s history to recognize “Pilipino” as an official language alongside English.¹¹ In 1974, work on the *Misa ng Bayang Pilipino* began under the direction of Chupungco, who had been named a professor at the Maryhill School of Theology in Manila two years prior. The text of the *MBP* was completed and published in 1975.¹² In his own words, the *Misa* was an attempt “to indigenize the text and ritual of the Roman Mass”¹³. The title of the project itself was striking as it claimed to be the “Mass of the Filipino People” during a time when it was still unclear what it meant to be a “Filipino”, an expression of the desire to unify the country and its various cultures. Linguistically, the *Misa* was written in a tongue – Tagalog, officially known as “Pilipino” and later as “Filipino” – that had been selected as the national language less than 40 years prior. It is the language used in Manila, the

⁹ See CONSILIUM AD EXSEQUENDAM CONSTITUTIONEM DE SACRA LITURGIA, Instructio *Comme le prévoit* (25 January 1969), in: Not. 5 (1969) 3–10.

¹⁰ Cf. FRANCIS, *The Future of Liturgical Inculturation*, 44.

¹¹ Cf. 1973 Philippine Constitution (17 January 1973), art. 15, sec. 3 in: *Official Gazette*. [🔗](#)

¹² See Anscar J. CHUPUNGO, *Misa ng Bayang Pilipino. A Study on Liturgical Indigenization*, Quezon City 1975. Hereafter *MBP 1975*.

¹³ *Id.*, Foreword, in: *MBP 1975*. In a 1977 article, Chupungco still uses the term “indigenization” regarding the intention behind the composition of *MBP*. See *Id.*, *A Filipino Attempt at Liturgical Indigenization*, in: *ELit* 91 (1977) 370–376.

capital and its surrounding regions, but is only among several used in the country.¹⁴

While the Philippine bishops had begun to promote the use of vernacular translations of the liturgy in 1964,¹⁵ the *Misa ng Bayang Pilipino* marked a significant milestone in efforts to translate the liturgy both linguistically and culturally. As we shall see, Chupungco considered the *editio typica* of the *Roman Missal* as the starting point and sought to “translate” it using both words and actions according to the cultural patterns of the Filipino people. The Catholic Bishops’ Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) unanimously approved the *MBP* in 1976 and sent the text to the Holy See’s Sacred Congregation for Sacraments and Divine Worship. Nevertheless, as Chupungco laments, the Sacred Congregation never responded.¹⁶

Soon after, new efforts began to surface to produce a more limited translation – one that followed the principles of *Comme le prévoit* but featured fewer cultural adaptations and structural modifications. In 1978, the *Aklat ng Pagmimisa sa Roma* (literally, *Book of Mass-Celebrating in Rome*; hereafter *APR*) was approved by the CBCP. It then received approval from the Sacred Congregation and was promulgated in 1981 – another consequential year ecclesiastically and politically for the Philippines.¹⁷ On 18 January of that year, Ferdinand Marcos lifted martial law, ending almost nine years of formal dictatorship. He did this almost exactly a month before the arrival of Pope John Paul II on 17 February, just in time for the pontiff’s first pastoral visit to the Philippines.

Five years later, the “People Power” Revolution took place, with the backing of the Catholic Church in the Philippines. Consequently, Marcos

¹⁴ According to the CIA World Factbook, only 39.9% of the country’s population of over 118 million people speak Tagalog as their first language. See Philippines, in: The World Factbook. [↗](#)

¹⁵ Cf. AMARANTE, Post-Vatican II Liturgical Reforms, Part I, 114.

¹⁶ Cf. CHUPUNGO, *Liturgies of the Future*, 92. Prior to the *MBP*, India was the only other country that had proposed a full inculturated Mass. While the Indian Mass was rejected, the twelve points of cultural adaptation in the Order of Mass were approved by the Indian Bishop’s conference. For more information, see *ibid.*, 87–89.

¹⁷ See *Aklat ng Pagmimisa sa Roma*, Manila 1981.

and his family fled to Hawaii. The following year, in 1987, a new Constitution was promulgated in the Philippines. Regarding language, it made a distinction between the *national* language (this time “Filipino”, with an “F” rather than with a “P”) and the *official* languages (“Filipino and English”), while recognizing regional languages as “auxiliary official languages” in their respective regions.¹⁸

In 1988, an inculturated Order of Mass for another country – Zaire (now Democratic Republic of Congo) – was approved by the Congregation for Divine Worship and was promulgated the following year.¹⁹ Officially titled the *Missel Romain pour les diocèses du Zaïre*, and more commonly referred to as the “Zaire use”, it features local adaptations to the Roman Order of Mass. Although there had been prior efforts to adapt the Roman liturgy to Zairean culture as early as 1969, work on the Zaire rite began in 1973, and its final approval took 15 years.²⁰ In 1989, when Chupungco published his book, *Liturgies of the Future*, he described the Zaire rite and similar inculturated Orders of Mass as “a major step forward in liturgical tradition, a legitimate progress based on sound tradition”²¹.

¹⁸ Cf. 1987 Philippine Constitution (2 February 1987), art. 14, secs. 6 and 7 in: Official Gazette. [↗](#)

¹⁹ Cf. CONGREGATIO PRO CULTU DIVINO, *Decretum Zairensium Dioecesium* (30 April 1988). Prot. 1520/85, in: Not. 24 (1988) 457. Approval of the *Missel Romain pour les diocèses du Zaïre* was requested by Bishop Monsengwo Pasinya, President of the Conference of Bishops of Zaïre in a letter to the Congregation for Divine Worship dated 24 September 1987. A response expressing approval and confirmation by the Congregation was issued on 30 April 1988, less than a year later. Cf. CONFÉRENCE EPISCOPALE DU ZAÏRE, *Missel Romain pour les diocèses du Zaïre*, Kinshasa 1989.

²⁰ For more on the “Zaire use”, see Elochukwu E. UZUKWU, *Worship as Body Language*, Collegeville 1997, 309; Nathan P. CHASE, *A History and Analysis of the Missel Romain pour les Diocèses du Zaire*, in: *Obsculta* 6/1 (2013) 28–36; Ignace Ndongala MADUKU et al., *Le rite zaïrois de la messe en République démocratique du Congo. Hommage posthume au Révérend Père Laurent Mpongo Mpoto Mamba*, cism, Paris 2023; Rita MBOSHU KONGO, *Papa Francesco e il Messale Romano per le Diocesi dello Zaire. Un rito promettente per altre culture*, Vatican City 2020.

²¹ CHUPUNGCO, *Liturgies of the Future*, 92.

That same year, Chupungco began work on revising the *Misa ng Bayang Pilipino*. This second edition (hereafter *MBP 1989*) was voted on by the bishops of the Philippines, then sent again to the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments (CDWDS) for approval in 1991. Ten years later, this edition of the *MBP* would be published as a part of *The Supplement to the Roman Sacramentary for the Dioceses of the Philippines* approved by the CBCP in 1999, a year after the centennial celebration of Philippine Independence from Spanish colonial rule.²²

In 1992, the same Congregation released the instruction *Varietates Legitimae* on Inculturation and the Roman Liturgy, providing an official interpretation of *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, articles 37–40.²³ It rejected the necessity of the “creation of new families of Rites”, narrowing the scope of inculturation to adaptations within the Roman rite.²⁴ Nine years later, the CDWDS released the instruction *Liturgiam Authenticam* on liturgical translations, reaffirming that liturgical inculturation should be done in the context of the Roman rite and not with the intention of producing new rites.²⁵ Unlike *Comme le prévoit* 32 years prior, it placed greater emphasis

²² See PAUL VI INSTITUTE OF LITURGY, *Supplement to the Roman Sacramentary for the Dioceses of the Philippines*, Pasay City 1999, 132–178. There remains no response from the Congregation. Notably, neither the *Misa* nor the 1999 supplement are mentioned in 1989–2000 issues of *Notitiae*, the official journal of the Congregation for Divine Worship, which reports information on liturgical texts and books approved by the Congregation. However, the *Misa* is recognized as a “project” in a 1989 article which summarizes liturgical inculturation efforts around the world. See François TRAN-VAN-KHA, *L’adaptation liturgique telle qu’elle a été réalisée par les Commissions Nationales Liturgiques jusqu’à maintenant*, in: *Not.* 25 (1989) 864–883, here: 878. Moreover, Dennis C. AMARANTE, *Post-Vatican II Liturgical Reforms in the Philippines and their Implementation, Part II (1980-2012)*, in: *Boletín Eclesiástico de Filipinas* 99 (2023), 355-412, here: 376, notes that while the *MBP* is included in the 1999 *Supplement*, its status is in “limbo.”

²³ See CONGREGATIO DE CULTU DIVINO ET DISCIPLINA SACRAMENTORUM, *Instructio Varietates Legitimae* (25 January 1994), in: *AAS* 87 (1995) 288–314.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, no. 36.

²⁵ See EAD., *Instructio Liturgiam Authenticam* (28 March 2001), in: *AAS* 93 (2001) 685–726.

on the preservation of form and word order than on transmission of meaning through the use of equivalent expressions.

This brief survey highlights the context in which Chupungco's inculturated Filipino Order of Mass was composed. Politically, the first edition was prepared when the Philippines as an independent nation-state was just 30 years old, during a time when the question of what it meant to be Filipino (not merely a member of one of the several peoples in the archipelago) was still fresh. It was composed during the presidency of Ferdinand E. Marcos, who ruled the country for over 20 years, several of which were under formal military control. It was first written five years after the publication of the instruction *Comme le prévoit*, which promoted the primacy of meaning over form in the preparation of liturgical translations. Ecclesiastically, the *MBP* was drafted nine years after the conclusion of the Second Vatican Council, under the direction of Anscar Chupungco, who had earned his doctorate in liturgy five years earlier. A new Tagalog translation of the *Roman Missal* was then promulgated six years after the first publication of the *MBP*, putting into question the purpose and place of Chupungco's inculturated Order of Mass in light of the official translation. According to the preface of *MBP 1975*, the original intention was to produce a Filipino Order of Mass (not rite) for Sundays and occasional use. However, it is evident that this did not come to pass. A revision of the *Misa* was conducted in 1989, which was later included in *The Supplement to the Roman Sacramentary for the Dioceses of the Philippines* in 1999.

The chart below summarizes and contrasts the structure and contents of the second edition of *MBP*²⁶ with the *Ordo Missae*²⁷ of the Roman rite:

²⁶ Based on PAUL VI INSTITUTE OF LITURGY, *Supplement to the Roman Sacramentary*, 132–178. The full ordo of *MBP 1989* in English can also be found in CHUPUNGO, *Worship. Progress and Tradition*, 139–155.

²⁷ Based on the *Institutio generalis Missalis Romani*, in: *Missale Romanum ex decreto Sacrosancti Oecumenici Concilii Vaticani II instauratum auctoritate Pauli PP. VI promulgatum. Editio typica altera*, Vatican City ²1975, 33–42 (nos. 24–57). This was the edition of the *Missale Romanum* in force at the time of the composition of both *MBP 1975* and *MBP 1989*.

Post-Vatican II Roman Ordo Missae	MBP's Order of Mass
Ritus initiales	Introductory Rites
Introitus	Entrance Procession
Signum Crucis	Veneration and Sign of the Cross
	Opening Doxology
Salutatio	Greeting
Actus paenitentialis	Penitential Act
	Sign of Peace
[Gloria in excelsis]	[Gloria]
Collecta	Opening Prayer
Liturgia verbi	Liturgy of the Word
	Veneration of Gospel Book/Lectio-
	nary
	Blessing (<i>mano po</i>) of Lector and
	Handing on of the Lectionary
Lectio	Reading
Psalmus	Psalm
[Lectio]	[Reading]
Evangelium	Gospel
Homilia	Homily
[Professio fidei]	
Oratio universalis	General Intercessions
Liturgia eucharistica	Liturgy of the Eucharist
Praeparatio donorum	Preparation of the Altar and Gifts
Oratio super oblata	Prayer over the Gifts
	Lighting of altar candles
Praefatio	Preface (Invariable)
Prex eucharistica	Eucharistic Prayer A or B
Ritus communionis	Communion Rite
Oratio dominica	The Lord's Prayer
Ritus pacis	
Fractio panis	Breaking of the Bread
Communio	Communion
Oratio post communionem	Prayer after Communion
Ritus conclusionis	Concluding Rite
Salutatio	Parting Words (as dismissal)
Benedictio	Blessing
	Doxology to Venerate the Cross
Dismissio	

2 *Chupungco's Understanding of Liturgical Inculturation and Related Terms*

Having examined the political, linguistic, and ecclesiastical contexts in which the *Misa ng Bayang Pilipino* was composed, we now shift our focus to Chupungco's thought in relation to the development of the *MBP*. Central to this discussion is the interplay between Chupungco's evolving ideas on liturgical adaptation, liturgical inculturation, and related terms – both from theological and practical perspectives – and his use of the term “cultural pattern” as opposed to “culture”. Examining each of these terms systematically reveals how Chupungco conceived of the interaction between Filipino and Roman elements within the liturgy, thereby offering a framework for evaluating the *MBP* as a work of liturgical inculturation.

2.1 *Indigenization*

In his 1992 work, *Liturgical Inculturation*, Chupungco explains that indigenization was often used as a synonym for “liturgical adaptation” to a particular culture. As an example, he cited a 1965 musical setting of the Mass Ordinary titled “The Pilipino Chant”, composed by his confrere, Benildus Maria Maramba, OSB, which incorporated the indigenous rhythms and melodies of the Ifugao, Kalinga, and Maranaw tribes and was translated into several languages.²⁸ Chupungco himself used that term as late as 1977, in an article he published on *Ephemerides Liturgicae*.²⁹ Over time, however, Chupungco became critical of the term. While acknowledging that “indigenization” described local attempts to adapt the liturgy to perceived native cultural elements, he argued that the term was both etymologically and conceptually problematic, as it presupposed a static understanding of culture.³⁰ Moreover, he cautioned that the term was misleading because the liturgy, consisting of divinely instituted “essential elements” transmitted through apostolic preaching, could be “grafted onto cultures outside its origin” but could never become truly indigenous in the literal sense.³¹

²⁸ Cf. CHUPUNGO, *Liturgical Inculturation*, 15.

²⁹ Cf. ID., *A Filipino Attempt at Liturgical Indigenization*.

³⁰ ID., *Liturgical Inculturation*, 16.

³¹ Cf. *ibid.*

Thus, it is noteworthy that Chupungco's thought around the terms "indigenous" and "indigenization" developed over time. In the foreword of the 1975 booklet of the *MBP*, Chupungco described the *Misa* as "the result of efforts undertaken [...] to indigenize the text and ritual of the Roman Mass"³². It appears that Chupungco's rejection of static and reductive notions of culture becomes more explicit later through his criticism of the term and the preference for more accurate terms. This change also highlights the fact that the *MBP* is a text that emerged when the theology and process of liturgical inculturation was still being developed and articulated across the Church and academy. Following Chupungco's latest thought on the matter, the Filipino elements of the *MBP* should not be properly understood as "indigenized". Instead, they are better seen as carefully constructed and strategically defined features designed to serve specific evangelical and catechetical purposes, which will emerge more clearly as we consider other key terms.

2.2 *Incarnation*

While "incarnation of the liturgy" has sometimes been used synonymously with "liturgical adaptation", Chupungco carefully distinguishes between the theological motivation for liturgical adaptation and the process of expressing incarnational theology in the liturgy. Although the mystery of the Incarnation may inspire the development of local liturgical expressions, he argues that this mystery, by its very nature, cannot be replicated and therefore cannot serve as a direct paradigm for inculturation. Instead, the Incarnation of Christ provides what Chupungco calls a "pattern of encounter between the Church and culture" that can be modeled, while remaining theologically distinct from the Incarnation itself.³³ In doing so, Chupungco is careful to denote the Incarnation as a foundational theology for understanding the evangelical purpose of liturgical adaptation. This distinction is an important one that underscores the *analogia entis*:

³² ID., Foreword, in: *MBP 1975*. Moreover, the subtitle of this booklet is "A Study on Liturgical Indigenization". Chupungco also explains his understanding of indigenization in an essay written shortly after the *MBP* was conceived. See ID., A Filipino Attempt at Liturgical Indigenization, 370–376.

³³ Cf. ID., Liturgical Inculturation, 18.

the Incarnation is what God has done for us and can only be done by God; the actions of expressing an incarnational theology, one of which includes liturgical adaptation as found in the *MBP*, is what humans do.

2.3 Contextualization

The World Council of Churches introduced the term “contextualization” in 1972 to describe how local churches adapt their worship when “the struggle for political, economic, and cultural freedom” deeply affects the work of God’s people.³⁴ Chupungco explains that contextualization embodies Christianity’s prophetic role and shares fundamental concerns with Latin American liberation theology, expressing these theological principles through worship.³⁵ During the Philippines’ martial law period in the 1970s, Chupungco witnessed how the local church developed creative liturgies that incorporated activist elements. Students and members of base Christian communities led these liturgies to confront social injustice and material poverty. They employed slogans, gestures, placards, and red banners from protest movements, wielding forceful language that drew from both biblical and political sources. These liturgical innovations aimed to stir emotions, call communities to action, and challenge oppressors, passive bystanders, and power holders.³⁶ For Chupungco, contextualization is one of many elements that can be present in liturgical inculturation. This is contrary to scholars who argue that contextualization is a more comprehensive term than inculturation.³⁷

Emerging from the historical period of martial law and economic hardship in the Philippines, the *MBP* appears to incorporate elements of liturgical contextualization.³⁸ For instance, both anaphoras of the *Misa*

³⁴ Ibid., 19 f.

³⁵ Cf. *ibid.*, 21.

³⁶ Cf. *ibid.*, 20.

³⁷ See David J. HASSELGRAVE – Edward ROMMEN, *Contextualization. Meanings, Methods, and Models*, Grand Rapids 1989.

³⁸ CHUPUNGO, *Inculturation of Worship*, 284 affirmed this when included the following as one of five criteria shaping the *Misa*: “[W]ithout forgetting the needs of the universal church, the texts should include such contemporary concerns of the church in the Philippines as social justice, peace and development [...]”.

emphasize Jesus' closeness to people in physical and spiritual distress in their respective anamnetic sections immediately before the Institution Narrative:

Eucharistic Prayer A

Jesus Christ shared the fellowship
and the suffering of every one.
He went about every town
to proclaim his teaching.
He did not hesitate
to enter the home of sinners
and sit at their table.⁴⁰

Eucharistic Prayer B

In obedience with your will,
he [Christ] revealed your mercy to all
and shared the suffering of the poor
and oppressed.³⁹

Similarly, the people's acclamation responding to this section of the anaphora emphasizes Jesus' proximity and love, as expressed by his healing:

We praise and exalt
your Son who came
to open the eyes of the blind,
to make the lame walk,
and to show compassion for all.⁴¹

³⁹ CHUPUNGO, Worship. *Beyond Inculturation*, 151. The Tagalog text reads: "Bilang pagsunod sa iyong kalooban isiniwalat niya sa lahat ang banal na aral at nakiramay siya sa mga api at dukha". Unless noted otherwise, all the original Tagalog texts are from PAUL VI INSTITUTE OF LITURGY, Supplement to the Roman Sacramentary, 132–178. Eucharistic Prayer B is shorter and simpler than Eucharistic Prayer A and was likely intended for ferial celebrations.

⁴⁰ ID., Worship. *Beyond Inculturation*, 146. The Tagalog text reads: "Si Hesu-kristo ay nakisama at nakiramay sa tao. Nilibot niya ang bawa't bayan nang aral niya'y maipahayag. Hindi siya nag-atubiling makituloy sa bahay at sumalo sa hapag ng taong makasalanang". Eucharistic Prayer A is the longer of the two anaphoras of the *MBP*. Presumably, it was intended for Sundays and feast days.

⁴¹ Ibid., 146. 151. The Tagalog text reads: "Dinadakila ng lahat ang napanarito mong Anak na siyang nagmulat sa bulag, sa pilay ay nagpalakad, at nakiramay sa lahat". Both Eucharistic Prayers feature this acclamation.

The image of opening the eyes – signifying social awareness – is especially clear in one of the petitions after the epiclesis, which emphasizes solidarity with the poor:

Eucharistic Prayer A

[*Third petition:*]

Awaken us [*lit.* open our eyes] to our responsibility for one another, especially those who suffer, the oppressed and the poor so that we may live our lives with diligence and conviction in accord with your holy will [...].⁴³

Eucharistic Prayer B

[*Second petition:*]

Teach us to have compassion for the poor and the suffering and to faithfully serve the people so that all may share a life of well-being and prosperity.⁴²

The explicit naming of “those who suffer”, “the poor”, and “the oppressed” reflect the influence of contemporary liberation theology; none of these terms are found in the Eucharistic Prayers of the *editio typica* of the *Roman Missal*.⁴⁴ Stating more than what God has done for God’s people, the gathered assembly seeks God’s help to take action against sin that perpetuates suffering.

⁴² Ibid., 152 f. The Tagalog text reads: “Turuan mo kaming makiramay sa isa’t isa, lalo na sa aming mga kapus-palad at nagdurusa, at maglingkod nang tapat sa sambayanan sa ikauunlad ng aming pamumuhay”.

⁴³ Ibid., 149. The Tagalog text reads: “Imulat mo kami sa aming pananagutan sa isa’t isa, lalo na sa mga sawimpalad, api at dukha, upang kamin glahat ay mamuhay nang may pagsusumikap at sariling paninindigan, ayon sa iyong banal na kalooban [...]”.

⁴⁴ The anamnesis in Eucharistic Prayer IV where “the poor” is named comes closest to this: “And you so loved the world, Father most holy, that in the fullness of time you sent your Only Begotten Son to be our Savior. Made incarnate by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary, he shared our human nature in all things but sin. *To the poor* he proclaimed the good news of salvation, to prisoners, freedom, and to the sorrowful of heart, joy”. Eucharistic Prayer IV, in: *The Roman Missal Renewed by Decree of the Most Holy Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican, Promulgated by Authority of Pope Paul VI and Revised at the Direction of Pope John Paul II*, Collegeville ³2011, 656–662, here: 657 (no. 117). Emphasis added.

2.4 *Revision*

When the Second Vatican Council called for the revisions of liturgical books, it envisioned a process of correction, amendment, improvement, and updating of existing texts. Chupungco emphasizes two crucial aspects of this directive: First, that revision works with existing books, and second, that revision follows the “classical” model, which he equates with Roman characteristics defined by a sense of *sobrietas romana*.⁴⁵ He added that the framers of *Sacrosanctum Concilium* intended for revisions to the Tridentine rite to produce new *editiones typicae*, which local churches could then adapt to their cultures, similar to how Franco-Germanic churches adapted Roman liturgical books in the eighth century. The principle of *sobrietas romana* is also reflected in *Sacrosanctum Concilium*’s call for noble simplicity, brevity, clarity, freedom from unnecessary repetition, comprehensibility, and minimal need for explanation.⁴⁶ Notably, while the Constitution’s framers did not mandate that local adaptations strictly maintain *sobrietas romana*, this stipulation provides a general sense of the Roman rite’s essential characteristics that should remain visible even in local adaptations. This approach seems to express an understanding that while liturgical uniformity does not always guarantee unity, certain uniform elements can effectively express unity among churches of the Roman rite.

Chupungco was an ardent supporter of *sobrietas romana*. For instance, while the Roman Mass features word repetitions such as “*mea culpa, mea culpa, mea maxima culpa*” and “*Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus*”, the *Misa* generally avoids the consecutive repetition of the same word. A clear example of this tendency appears in the Filipino translation of the *Sanctus* first featured in the *APR* and inserted in the 1989 edition of *MBP*. This version spaces out the word “holy” (*banal* in Tagalog):

⁴⁵ CHUPUNGO, *Liturgies of the Future*, 3 explains: “The liturgical reform of Vatican II used as a model the classical or pure Roman liturgy. By pure it is meant the shape of the liturgy that existed in Rome before it adopted the Franco-Germanic elements toward the eighth century”.

⁴⁶ Cf. SC 34 (AAS 56, 109).

Holy are you, Almighty Father,
 holy is your name,
 holy is your kingdom;
 heaven and earth resound
 with praise for your glory.⁴⁷

Furthermore, other choices around which “Roman” elements to retain prove particularly interesting. One example involves a change to the structure of the anaphora, especially regarding the placement of the epiclesis: in *MBP 1975*, the two anaphoras followed the West-Syrian structure, beginning with a lengthy anamnesis that concludes with the Institution Narrative, moving to the epiclesis (both over the gifts and the assembly), and ending with intercessions and a doxology. In contrast, *MBP 1989* introduced changes that brought the anaphoras in line with the post-Vatican II Roman form. Notably, the *MBP*’s revised Eucharistic Prayers feature a “split epiclesis” occurring before and after the Institution Narrative, being aligned more closely with the anaphoras in the *Roman Missal*.⁴⁸ Indeed, the post-Vatican II Roman Canon (Eucharistic Prayer I) has a “split epiclesis” in the form of the *Quam oblationem* and the *Supplices te rogamus*. In his book, *Liturgies of the Future*, published in 1989, a year after the approval of the Zaire rite, Chupungco observes that the anaphora of this inculturated liturgy “follows faithfully the Roman model”, including having two epicleses (consecratory and communion), and yet “the composition is Zairean”⁴⁹. One speculates that he may have discerned that the Vatican considers the “split epiclesis” a necessary characteristic for retaining the “substantial unity of the Roman rite”⁵⁰. Consequently, he may have

⁴⁷ CHUPUNGO, *Worship. Beyond Inculturation*, 145. One exception to this tendency is the repetition of the word *tanda* (remember) in the statement introducing the Institution Narrative, highlighting the memorial character of this section of the anamnesis: “For how clearly we recall [*Sapagkat tandang-tanda pa namin*] that on the night he was betrayed [...]”. *Ibid.*, 147.

⁴⁸ Cf. Paul F. BRADSHAW – Maxwell E. JOHNSON, *The Eucharistic Liturgies. Their Evolution and Interpretation* (ACC 87), Collegeville 2012, 314.

⁴⁹ CHUPUNGO, *Liturgies of the Future*, 91.

⁵⁰ Interestingly, CHUPUNGO, *What, Then, is Liturgy?*, 2 f. notes in his memoir that the “substantial unity of the Roman Rite” is not defined – even the drafters of the Constitution did not know what it meant.

changed the original single epiclesis in the *MBP* into a split epiclesis with the hopes that the Filipino Order of Mass would receive official approval from the CDW.⁵¹

2.5 *Adaptation and Accommodation*

The distinction between adaptation and accommodation in the context of the liturgical reforms of *Sacrosanctum Concilium* is vital to understanding Chupungco's thought on liturgical inculturation. Article 1 of the Constitution establishes the Council's goal as "to adapt more suitably to the needs of our times those institutions that are subject to change", a mission aligned with the principle of *aggiornamento*.⁵² Throughout *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, the terms adaptation (*aptatio*) and accommodation (*accommodatio*) are often used interchangeably, except in reference to sacraments and sacramentals, where *accommodatio* is used more consistently to suggest what Chupungco interprets as a form of compromise.⁵³ However, following the publication of post-conciliar typical editions of liturgical books, these terms acquired more distinct meanings, particularly regarding decision-making authority for liturgical variations. Adaptations (*aptationes*) fall under the authority of bishops' conferences with the approval of the Holy See, while accommodations (*accommodationes*) pertain to individual ministers, allowing them to modify particular celebrations for pastoral reasons, especially those outlined in the *praenotanda* of liturgical books.⁵⁴ The key distinction lies in permanence: *aptationes* establish lasting ritual

⁵¹ This hypothesis is supported by the development of Eucharistic Prayer IV, which was modeled on the Antiochene or West-Syrian form but was changed to conform to the Roman form. Cf. Annibale BUGNINI, *The Reform of the Liturgy 1948–1975* [trans. by Matthew J. O'CONNELL], Collegeville 1990, 458. For background and a critique of the insistence on a pre-consecratory epiclesis as a necessary component of the "Roman genius", see Alexander A. ZERFASS, *Licht aus dem Osten? Die Diskussion um die Basilien-Anaphora im Römischen Messbuch*, in: Andreas VONACH et al. (eds.), *Kult – Magie – Ritual. Festschrift für Reinhard MESSNER zum 65. Geburtstag*, Innsbruck 2025, 577–592.

⁵² Cf. CHUPUNGO, *Liturgical Inculturation*, 24.

⁵³ Cf. *ibid.*, 23.

⁵⁴ Cf. *id.*, *Cultural Adaptation of the Liturgy*, 49.

changes within a local church's liturgical practice, while *accommodations* serve temporary, immediate needs of specific groups. These distinctions are relevant to the *MBP* insofar as they relate to Chupungco's understanding of where jurisdiction for liturgical inculturation properly lies.

2.6 *Inculturation*

Chupungco's discussion of inculturation is primarily theological but rather brief.⁵⁵ He explains that inculturation initially served as a synonym for adaptation in the 1970s but gradually took on deeper theological significance, becoming a theological neologism. This shift occurred especially after Pope John Paul II used the term in *Catechesi Tradendae* to emphasize the incarnational dimension of the relationship between catechesis and culture. In the process of inculturation, catechesis – an essential form of proclaiming the Gospel – takes on cultural expression, embedding the message of faith within the lived realities of a community.⁵⁶ Chupungco notes that Gerald Arbuckle echoes Pope John Paul II's perspective, arguing that the cultural adaptation of the liturgy, when undertaken for evangelical purposes and in ways that recognize the theological gifts of the local church, should rightly be described as "inculturation"⁵⁷.

Chupungco's understanding of inculturation aligns with Aylward Shorter's definition: "the creative and dynamic relationship between the Christian message and a culture or cultures"⁵⁸. This explanation assumes a reciprocal interaction and mutual assimilation between faith and cul-

⁵⁵ This section relies on ID., *Liturgical Inculturation*, 28 f.

⁵⁶ Cf. IOANNES PAULUS II, Adhortatio apostolica *Catechesi tradendae* (16 October 1979), no. 53, in: AAS 71 (1979) 1227–1340, here: 1320 (no. 53). Inculturation is mentioned again in the English translation of ID., Littera encyclica *Slavorum Apostoli* (2 June 1985), no. 21. [↗](#) However, the original Latin text in the *Acta Apostolica Sedis* uses the term "animi culturae inductionis". See ID., Littera encyclica *Slavorum Apostoli* (2 June 1985), in: AAS 77 (1985) 779–813, here: 802 (no. 21). Pope John Paul II later expounds on inculturation in ID., Littera encyclica *Redemptionis Missio* (7 December 1990), in: AAS 83 (1991) 249–340.

⁵⁷ Cf. CHUPUNGO, *Liturgical Inculturation*, 24.

⁵⁸ Aylward SHORTER, *Toward a Theology of Inculturation*, Maryknoll/NY 1988, 11.

ture, distinguishing inculturation from mere external adaptation. Chupungco emphasizes that, because liturgy is both expressive and formative, an inculturated liturgy signifies and enables a profound interior transformation. Through inculturation, Christianity integrates and elevates authentic cultural values, rooting itself meaningfully within a culture while also forming individuals more deeply in the Christian faith.

It is noteworthy that while Chupungco mentions the use of the term “inculturation” by the delegates at the 32nd General Congregation of the Society of Jesus, he did not point out how the definition of inculturation by Pedro Arrupe, which has an eschatological dimension (referring to “a new creation”) makes it distinct from an incarnationally-focused definition of inculturation.⁵⁹ However, Chupungco also writes that “the process of interaction and mutual assimilation brings progress to both; it does not cause mutual extinction”⁶⁰. While eschatology is not explicitly found in Chupungco’s words, it is possible that “progress”, if considered theologically, inevitably takes up an eschatological dimension, be it realized or imminent.⁶¹

⁵⁹ Cf. CHUPUNGO, *Liturgical Inculturation*, 28. For Pedro Arrupe, the aim of inculturation is not simply to allow Christianity to find expression through cultural elements. Rather, cultural expressions are only a means by which inculturation’s ultimate goal is attained – for the Christian message to become a “principle that animates, directs and unifies the culture, transforming it and remaking it so as to bring about a ‘new creation’”. PEDRO ARRUPÉ, *On Inculturation, to the Whole Society* (1978), in: *Portal to Jesuit Studies*. [↗](#) See also the discussion in SHORTER, *Inculturation*, 10.

⁶⁰ CHUPUNGO, *Liturgical Inculturation*, 29.

⁶¹ Theologians such as Joseph Ratzinger, Michael Amaladoss and Orlando Espín have likewise noted the need for mutual reciprocity but favor different terms – interculturalization and inter-transculturalization, respectively. They claim that these terms more accurately describe what happens in cultural encounters with the Gospel which is *a priori* embedded in a culture. Ratzinger’s 1993 address to the Doctrinal Commissions in Asia exemplifies this view: “[...] we should no longer speak of inculturation but of the meeting of cultures or ‘inter-culturality’, to coin a new phrase. For inculturation presumes that a faith stripped of culture is transplanted into a religiously indifferent culture whereby two subjects, formally unknown to each other, meet and fuse. But such a notion is first of all artificial and unrealistic, for with the exception of modern technological civilization, there is no such thing

2.7 Cultural Pattern

“Cultural pattern” is a term that is crucial to the process of liturgical inculturation as Chupungco intends. Chupungco does not define “culture”, but distinguishes the term “cultural pattern” from it, defining instead “cultural pattern” as the “typical mode of thinking, speaking, and expressing oneself through rites, symbols, and art forms” that permeates all aspects of a society. Cultural patterns influence a people’s values, ideology, traditions, socioeconomic structures, family dynamics, and political systems.⁶² He characterizes it as a “prescribed system” through which societies reflect on, verbalize, and ritualize their values, traditions, and life experiences. Cultural patterns refer to *shared* cross-cultural traits that transcend local particularities, allowing for the identification of generic groupings, such as European, African, Latin American, Asian, or South Pacific cultural patterns.⁶³ These patterns provide a flexible framework to identify *shared* characteristics among socially constructed groups, such as those of a new nation-state, while acknowledging internal diversity.

It appears that Chupungco’s use of “cultural pattern” reflects similarities to function-structural definitions of “culture” found in early 20th century cultural anthropology, while his implicit understanding of “culture” may align with an older, hierarchical (albeit also structural) view in which

as faith devoid of culture or culture devoid of faith. It is above all difficult to envision how two organisms, foreign to each other, should all of a sudden become a viable whole in a transplantation which stunts both of them. Only if all cultures are potentially universal and open to each other can inter-culturality lead to flourishing new forms”. For more, see Joseph RATZINGER, *Christ, Faith, and the Challenge of Cultures*, Address at the Meeting with the Doctrinal Commissions in Asia, Hong Kong (3 March 1993). [↗](#) Michael AMALADOSS, *Beyond Inculturation. Can the Many Be One?*, Delhi 1998; and Orlando ESPÍN, *Intercultural Thought*, in: James B. NICKOLOFF – Orlando O. ESPÍN (eds.), *An Introductory Dictionary of Theology and Religious Studies*, Collegeville 2007, 639–645. To the authors’ knowledge, Chupungco does not embrace “interculturality” or “inter-transculturation” as a replacement for “inculturation”, preferring inculturation throughout his works with the understanding that mutual enrichment of “Roman” and local cultures also happens within the process of inculturation.

⁶² Cf. CHUPUNGO, *Liturgical Inculturation*, 35.

⁶³ Cf. *ibid.*, 36.

having culture connotes being “civilized”⁶⁴. What is apparent is his attempt to use “cultural patterns” as a way to balance similarities and differences among diverse and mixed ethnic and linguistic groups, as well as uniformity and unity in the universal Church. By avoiding the trappings of a closed functional-structural model of culture limited *a priori* by ethnicity, nationality, racial or linguistic labels, Chupungco’s use of the term “cultural patterns” allows liturgists and the local community to draw their own boundaries around their histories and traditions from which they adopt or appropriate practices.

2.8 *Liturgical Inculturation*

Having explored other related terms, we now turn to the central concept of liturgical inculturation, which Chupungco develops and clarifies over time.

In his 1992 work, Chupungco describes liturgical inculturation as “the process of inserting the texts and rites of the liturgy into the framework of a local culture”⁶⁵. Chupungco asserts that this process is not merely optional but essential for genuine Christian conversion. He writes:

In short, the liturgy is *inserted* into the culture, history, and tradition of the people among whom the Church dwells. It begins to think, speak, and ritualize according to the local cultural pattern. If we settle for anything less than this, the liturgy of the local Church will remain at the periphery of our people’s cultural experience. We cannot overstate the singular place of cultural pattern in the process of inculturation. It is where *interaction and mutual assimilation* between liturgy and culture normally take place.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ A useful summary of the evolution of “culture” and the development of its “classical” definition can be found in Kathryn TANNER, *Theories of Culture. A New Agenda for Theology*, Minneapolis 1997. See also definitions of culture, particularly that of Franz Boas’ contribution in the 20th century where “culture” is described in a plural form and more relativistic ways in John R. BALDWIN et al. (eds.), *Redefining Culture. Perspectives across the Disciplines* (LEA’s Communication Series), Mahwah/NJ 2006, 7.

⁶⁵ CHUPUNGO, *Liturgical Inculturation*, 30.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.* Emphases added. Moreover, Chupungco notes, “The objective of liturgical inculturation is to graft liturgical texts and rites onto the cultural pattern of the local Church”. It is noteworthy that his use of the arboreal term,

Chupungco develops and clarifies this definition further, favoring the term “integrate” over “insert” in his 1998 essay in the *Handbook for Liturgical Studies*:

One may define liturgical inculturation as the process whereby pertinent elements of a local culture are *integrated* into texts, rites, symbols, and institutions employed by a local church for its worship. Integration means that the cultural components influence the liturgical pattern of composing formularies, proclaiming them, performing ritual actions, and symbolizing the liturgical message in art forms. In some cases integration can also mean that local rites, symbols, festivals, after due critique and Christian reinterpretation, become part of the liturgical worship of the local church.⁶⁷

Significantly, since “[i]nculturation means reciprocal enrichment”⁶⁸, changes to the liturgical texts and rubrics should be expected. The goal of liturgical inculturation is significant:

The immediate aim of inculturation is to create a form of worship that is culturally suited to the local people – so that they can claim it as their own. Its ultimate aim, on the other hand, is active, intelligent, and devout participation that springs from the people’s own conviction of faith. Inculturation, properly understood and rightly executed, should lead the assembly to a more profound appreciation of Christ’s mystery that is made present in the celebration by the dynamic mediation of cultural signs and symbols. Inculturation, in other words, should aim to deepen the spiritual life of the assembly through a fuller experience of Christ, who reveals himself in the people’s language, rites, arts, and symbols. If inculturation does not do this, it remains a futile exercise.⁶⁹

“to graft”, which he also employed in his discussion of indigenization, appears to parallel Anton Baumstark’s (1872–1948) metaphor of a tree for understanding how the liturgy as an “organism” develops. While beyond the scope of this paper, a comparative study between Chupungco and Baumstark’s theory of liturgical development including his understanding of the natural and *supernatural* aspects of the liturgy could reveal deeper insights into Chupungco’s thought. Cf. *ibid.* and Anton BAUMSTARK, *On the Historical Development of the Liturgy* [trans. by Fritz WEST], Collegeville 2011, 49.

⁶⁷ CHUPUNGO, *Liturgy and Inculturation*, 339. Emphasis added. This definition is echoed in *id.*, *Methods of Liturgical Inculturation*, 263.

⁶⁸ *Id.*, *Liturgy and Inculturation*, 340.

⁶⁹ *Id.*, *Methods of Liturgical Inculturation*, 263.

In his 1992 work, Chupungco highlights the Franco-Germanic liturgies of the Middle Ages as an exemplary case of liturgical inculturation in action. During this period, the “formal, austere, and reserved” Roman liturgy was enriched with the “charm, drama, and color” of Franco-Germanic culture.⁷⁰ For Chupungco, as mentioned above, what is distinctly “Roman” in the Roman cultural pattern is characterized by qualities such as “sobriety, directness, brevity, simplicity, and practical sense”, the *sobrietas romana*.⁷¹ While liturgical inculturation seeks to preserve and adapt this Roman legacy, he also acknowledges the potential for missteps, presumably if developments are not managed or monitored. For instance, he critiques how the Kiss of Peace in the rite of Confirmation, originally a symbol of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, became conflated in the sixth century with a fatherly pat on the cheek and eventually evolved into the “slap” used in the knightly vesting rituals of the 13th century. This transformation shifted the theological meaning of the Kiss of Peace from a spiritual emphasis to a militaristic one, whereby the sacramental symbol began to reflect the idea of becoming a soldier of Christ.⁷² Chupungco calls this shift a “misfortune”, but appears to still consider this an example of inculturation insofar as it reflects the culture and theology of a particular historical context, albeit flawed in practice. It is evident that Chupungco is concerned with how the ritual caused a departure from the rite’s original meaning associated with the Holy Spirit. If the rite changed but the original meaning remained, it would be considered a successful form of inculturation.⁷³

To avoid such missteps, Chupungco sets out two starting points for liturgical inculturation in the Roman rite: the *editiones typicae* of liturgical books and the cultural pattern of the local people. He writes: “The process

⁷⁰ Cf. *id.*, *Liturgical Inculturation*, 31.

⁷¹ Cf. *ibid.*, 36.

⁷² Cf. *ibid.*, 33 f.

⁷³ In this example of a misstep, there appears to be a conflation between understanding inculturation as a conscious and active activity done to further deepen people’s faith (as Chupungco appears to intend) and inculturation as an inevitable encounter of faith and culture, which can shift the meaning and practice of rituals in less intentional ways that cause a ritual action to distance itself from its original meaning. In contrast to the “slap”, he affirms the efforts in the Franco-Germanic context as intentional.

of liturgical inculturation seeks to make them meet and interact, so that from their union a new *terminus ad quem*, a liturgy for the local Church, may be brought into existence.”⁷⁴ This work must align with the principles outlined in SC 23, which calls for a balance between “sound tradition” and openness to “legitimate progress”. Achieving this balance requires careful eucharistical exegesis and rigorous historical, theological, and pastoral investigation to ensure that both the liturgy and culture are brought into fruitful dialogue without compromising the essential integrity of either.⁷⁵ He appears confident that missteps can be minimized if the *editio typica* is the starting point, proposing that “Inculturation based on the typical editions is the best school and discipline for creativity in the liturgy”⁷⁶.

3 *Methods of Liturgical Inculturation in the MBP*

Having examined the theology and theory behind liturgical inculturation, we now turn to an analysis of its practice as applied in the *MBP*. For Chupungco, liturgical inculturation involves three methods: dynamic equivalence, creative assimilation, and organic progression.⁷⁷ The most appropriate method to be employed should be prescribed by pastoral needs.

3.1 *Dynamic Equivalence*

Dynamic equivalence (as opposed to formal correspondence or literal translation) consists of replacing an element of the Roman liturgy, both rites and texts, with something in the local culture with equal meaning or value so that the people’s histories, values, and traditions may be evoked

⁷⁴ CHUPUNGO, *Liturgical Inculturation*, 32.

⁷⁵ Cf. *ibid.*, 33.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 46. It may be worth noting that by beginning with the *editio typica*, Chupungco limits himself to a structural approach to the liturgy which overlooks areas of liturgical participation with an impact on gender and praxis. While an analysis of these critiques lie beyond the scope of this essay, readers interested in these critiques may consult Agnes M. BRAZAL, *Inculturation. An Interpretive Model for Feminist Revisions of Liturgical Praxis?*, in: *QL* (1996) 124–134.

⁷⁷ Cf. CHUPUNGO, *Liturgical Inculturation*, 37.

in the liturgy.⁷⁸ In essence, dynamic equivalence “reexpresses the liturgical *ordo* in the living language, rites and symbols of a local community”⁷⁹. This principle manifests itself in several ways throughout the *MBP*. The most straightforward applications appear in culturally equivalent translations of terms, phrases, rituals, and symbols, as well as in the strategic use of Filipino idioms that capture the spiritual meaning of Latin expressions.

Dynamic equivalence was the method used in crafting the anamnesis and epiclesis of the 1975 *MBP* anaphoras.⁸⁰ For instance, the *Misa* employs the expression “tandang-tanda pa namin” (literally, “we remember-remember”) – a common Tagalog idiom of nostalgia – to express the intensity of the anamnesis or sense of remembrance in the Institution Narrative. The principle also extends to the addition of alternative forms, possibly exemplified in Chupungco’s treatment of the *Sanctus* mentioned earlier. Most notably, dynamic equivalence appears in ritual arrangements, such as the placement of the presider’s Communion. In the *MBP*, the presider receives Communion last, following Filipino cultural patterns of hospitality where the host only begins to eat after serving guests. This arrangement reinforces the theological understanding of the priest as president of the assembly while simultaneously expressing the role of host through a culturally resonant gesture.⁸¹ These examples demonstrate how dynamic equivalence operates not merely as linguistic translation but as a comprehensive approach to cultural adaptation that preserves theological meaning through culturally appropriate forms.

⁷⁸ Cf. *Ibid.*, 37 f. See also *Id.*, *Methods of Liturgical Inculturation*, 266–269.

⁷⁹ Cf. *Id.*, *Methods of Liturgical Inculturation*, 278.

⁸⁰ Cf. *Id.*, *Liturgical Inculturation*, 39 f.

⁸¹ Cf. *ibid.*, 41. However, it is worth asking if the role of presider necessarily coincides with the role of host. The church building, other than being the *domus Dei* (house of God) is the *domus ecclesiae* (house of the church community). While the priest presides in the name of the assembly, it is not “his” house, and the congregation are not mere “guests”.

3.2 *Creative Assimilation*

Creative assimilation begins with what the culture has to offer.⁸² It is based on SC 77 and is done when translations (via dynamic equivalence alone) is not enough for the fully renewed liturgy such that new texts have to be written.⁸³ However, Chupungco insists that there must still be a direct relationship to the *editio typica*, since creative assimilation is the apprentice of dynamic equivalence.⁸⁴ Examples of this method of inculturation appear in the *MBP*. For instance, the *Misa* features several acclamations recited or sung by the assembly. These acclamations follow the pattern and melody of the Lenten *Pasyon* readings introduced during the Spanish colonial era that remain popular today.⁸⁵ There are no texts corresponding to these in the *Roman Missal*; hence, these acclamations are new compositions “creatively assimilating” an element from popular piety.

Moreover, the *MBP* introduces new gestures not found in the Roman *Ordo Missae*. For example, the presider blesses the assembly with a large crucifix at the beginning and the conclusion of the celebration. This dramatic gesture replaces the simple Sign of the Cross and the final blessing (with the hand) in the Roman Mass. Furthermore, the common Filipino gesture of the *mano po*, (literally, “hand, please”), in which one asks for an elder’s blessing by requesting the elder’s hand and touching its back to one’s forehead, was introduced in certain parts of the *Misa*. For instance,

⁸² Chupungco illustrates some historical examples of creative assimilation which draw from Roman household rites in *Id.*, *Methods of Liturgical Inculturation*, 264–266.

⁸³ Cf. *Id.*, *Liturgical Inculturation*, 46.

⁸⁴ Cf. *ibid.*

⁸⁵ Cf. *Id.*, *Worship: Beyond Inculturation*, 138. He explains that the traditional *Pasyon* consists of poetry with five lines, each with eight syllables. This devotional prayer is done during Lent as a way to prepare for Holy Week. While this is a creative way of “assimilating” the pattern and melody of a devotion familiar to many Filipinos, it is fair to ask whether it is appropriate to make one Lenten practice a fixture of the Eucharistic celebration throughout the liturgical year.

at the start of the Liturgy of the Word, the readers “make the *mano po*” to the priest, who gives them his blessing as well as the lectionary.⁸⁶

3.3 *Organic Progression*

Chupungco defines organic progression as the task of supplementing and completing the “shape of the liturgy” as established by *Sacrosanctum Concilium* and the Holy See after Vatican II:

It is progressive because it operates through two dynamics that develop the shape of the liturgy: (1) supplementation, whereby new elements are inserted into the liturgy; and (2) continuance, because it is a sequel to the work begun by the council and the Holy See. The method is organic because it results in a new shape that is coherent with the basic intention of the liturgical documents and, more broadly, with the nature and tradition of Christian worship.⁸⁷

This process involves revisiting the typical editions of liturgical books in light of post-conciliar experiences within local churches, with the aim of addressing what these books lack or correcting what they express only partially or imperfectly.⁸⁸

What makes organic progression significant is its role in addressing gaps left by *Sacrosanctum Concilium* while simultaneously adapting the Roman liturgy to reflect the evolving needs of local churches – this is distinct from adaptations (facilitated by episcopal conferences) and accommodations (as facilitated by the presider). Chupungco provides several examples of organic progression, including the creation of new local liturgical feasts, the transfer of movable feasts from weekdays to Sundays, the use of the vernacular in all liturgical celebrations, the introduc-

⁸⁶ Cf. *ibid.*, 141. While doing the *mano po* to priests is common in the Philippines, this gesture could be interpreted as unnecessarily clerical. Indeed, in many parishes, elderly parishioners serve as lectors, which means that the rubrics of the *MBP* would obligate even them to ask for the priest’s hand regardless of the priest’s age.

⁸⁷ *Id.*, *Methods of Liturgical Inculturation*, 273. See also *id.*, *Liturgical Inculturation*, 47 f.

⁸⁸ Cf. *id.*, *Methods of Liturgical Inculturation*, 273. See also *id.*, *Liturgical Inculturation*, 47–50.

tion of new Eucharistic Prayers, the allowance to repeat the Anointing of the Sick for the same illness, and the possibility of constructing particular Orders of Mass. In line with other methods of liturgical inculturation, organic progression aims to bridge Roman liturgical tradition and local pastoral needs by providing new rubrics and guidelines in the *editio typica* for the universal Church.

This method raises an interesting question: Could organic progression represent the reciprocity between the local church and the Roman liturgy that Chupungco envisions as a fruit of inculturation?⁸⁹ By providing a mechanism for local adaptations (directed by bishops' conferences) to shape the Roman liturgy in ways that preserve its essence while addressing specific cultural and pastoral needs, organic progression seems to embody a kind of mutual enrichment between local and universal liturgical expressions that Chupungco advocated. It is perhaps a means by which the church "takes up whatever it finds positive in all cultures", but with new directive principles, not specific prescriptions.⁹⁰ The *MBP*, as a whole, serves as an example of organic progression – an *ordo* intended to make up for what is lacking in the *editio typica* from the context of the Philippines.⁹¹

In sum, the *MBP* is both a liturgical adaptation of the Roman rite and a cultural adaptation aimed at evangelization, thereby qualifying as an inculturated liturgy. As Chupungco explains, adaptation represents the general program for updating the liturgy, while inculturation is one method of achieving it.⁹² Importantly, Chupungco bases his liturgical adaptations not on "Filipino culture" in a vague sense, but rather on observable "cultural patterns" of the Filipino people, which serve as the foundation for shaping the *MBP*'s engagement with the *editio typica* of the Roman rite.

⁸⁹ Referring to the declaration made by the Extraordinary Synod of Bishops in 1985 on the topic of inculturation, CHUPUNGCO, Liturgical Inculturation, 29 writes, "The synod's definition contains the essential elements of inculturation, namely the process of reciprocal assimilation between Christianity and culture and the resulting interior transformation of culture on the one hand and the rooting of Christianity in culture on the other".

⁹⁰ Cf. *ibid.*

⁹¹ Cf. *id.*, Methods of Liturgical Inculturation, 274.

⁹² Cf. *id.*, Liturgical Inculturation, 25.

The *Misa* is therefore an inculturated liturgy that is a result of engagement between the “Filipino cultural pattern” and the Roman *editio typica* following the method and principles of dynamic equivalence and creative assimilation. In Chupungco’s own words, the *MBP* “is in fact the Roman Mass in Filipino form” and serves as an enhancement of the Roman rite in the Philippines.⁹³

4 *Contemporary Scholarship on the Misa ng Bayang Pilipino*

Having closely examined the *MBP* in light of Chupungco’s framework for liturgical inculturation and its associated terms, we proceed to offer some concluding observations in light of recent scholarship. While several works feature Chupungco’s writings on liturgical inculturation,⁹⁴ few di-

⁹³ Cf. ID., A Filipino Attempt at Liturgical Indigenization, 376.

⁹⁴ Some of these include Aidan KAVANAGH, Liturgical Inculturation. Looking to the Future, in: *StLit* 20 (1990) 95–106; Ildebrando SCICOLONE (ed.), *L’adattamento culturale della liturgia. Metodi e modelli. Atti del IV Congresso Internazionale di Liturgia*, Roma, Pontificio Istituto Liturgico, 6–10 Maggio 1991 (*ALit* 19 / *StAns* 113), Rome 1993; Mark R. FRANCIS, Liturgical Inculturation. The State of the Question, in: *LiMi* 6 (1997) 97–107; Patrick C. ЧИВУКО, Liturgical Inculturation. Proposed Pattern, in: *AfER* 40 (1998) 216–243; Anthony J. GITTINS, Beyond Liturgical Inculturation: Transforming the Deep Structures of Faith, in: *IThQ* 69 (2004) 47–72; Frank C. SENN, Liturgical Inculturation. The Translation of the Gospel, in: *LuthFor* 39 (2005) 65–72; Thomas PLASTOW, Differing Views of Liturgical Inculturation. Conflicting Agenda for the Church, in: *GrTr* 23 (2006): 32–48; Paul M. COLLINS, Context, Culture and Worship. The Quest for “Indian-Ness”, Delhi 2006; Clare V. JOHNSON, Bridging the Cartesian Chasm. A Radical Empiricist Perspective on Liturgical Inculturation, in: *StLit* 40 (2010) 208–223; Gerard ROUWHORST, Liturgische Inkulturation seit dem Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzil, in: Christoph BÖTTIGHEIMER – René DAUSNER, *Vaticanum 21. Die bleibenden Aufgaben des Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzils im 21. Jahrhundert. Dokumentationsband zum Münchner Kongress “Das Konzil ,eröffnen”*, Freiburg i. Br. et al. 2016, 477–488; Oliver-Marie SARR, Inculturazione o interculturalità? Lettura di *Varietates Legitimae* 4, in: Francesco BONOMO et al. (eds.), *Liturgia e cultura. Atti dell’XI Congresso Internazionale di Liturgia*, Roma, Pontificio Ateneo sant’Anselmo – Pontificio Istituto Liturgico 9–

rectly engage with the *Misa*. This section will evaluate three of these works: the 2001 D.Min. thesis of Jesus Malit, a 2021 article by Edward Foley, and a 2021 book on the *MBP* by Maria Cecilia Payawal. This wider perspective allows us to reflect on the *MBP*'s successes and limitations as a model of inculturation and implications of Chupungco's thought for the global Church.

4.1 *Jesus Malit, SSS*

Jesus M. Malit's 2001 Doctor of Ministry thesis from the Catholic Theological Union in Chicago, titled *From Berakah to Misa ng Bayang Pilipino: Exploring the Depths of a Filipino Eucharistic Spirituality Through the Pilipino Rite*, examines the *MBP* in light of the Jewish concept of *berakah* blessings. Chapter four of this project provides an exegesis of the 1975 text, with particular attention to its evangelical and catechetical value for those who are part of the Life in the Eucharist (LIFE) movement in the Philippines.

We offer two critiques to his overall excellent work: First, Malit describes the *MBP* as "a radical adaptation of the Roman Mass to the religious culture of the Filipino Christians"⁹⁵. Malit's description of the *MBP* as a "radical adaptation" may contradict Chupungco's own understanding of what the *MBP* is about. Chupungco did not use this term (taken from SC 40) with regards to the *MBP* but saw his inculturated liturgy in terms of the principle of "dynamic equivalence"⁹⁶. In other words, Chupungco points to SC 39 instead, intending the *MBP* to be a more effective "translation" of

11 maggio 2018 (EO. Studi e ricerche 2), Naples 2019; Eduardo C. FERNÁNDEZ, La aparición de la teología contextual en la Iglesia, in: La cosecha. Teología hispana contemporánea en Estados Unidos (1972–2019), Santiago de Chile 2020, 203–264; Audrey L. SEAH, Signs of Hope. Narratives, Eschatology, and Liturgical Inculturation in Deaf Catholic Worship [unpubl. dissertation, University of Notre Dame, South Bend/IN], 2021; Saya OJIRI, Toward Japanese Ways of Christian Worship. Rice, Ritual, Relationship, New York 2025.

⁹⁵ Jesus M. MALIT, *From Berakah to Misa ng Bayang Pilipino*. Exploring the Depths of a Filipino Eucharistic Spirituality Through the *Pilipino Rite* [unpubl. thesis, Catholic Theological Union, Chicago], 2001, 99.

⁹⁶ Cf. CHUPUNGO, *Worship. Beyond Inculturation*, 129 f.

the Roman Mass. It is unclear if Malit intended the word “radical” to refer to the “root” (*radix*) as symbolic of indigenized practice, or “radical” as extreme difference.

Second, Malit’s claim that the *MBP* “is not meant to supplant our ordinary Tagalog/Pilipino translation of the Roman Rite [Mass]” requires qualifications. It is unclear if Chupungco and his collaborators originally intended the *MBP* to be secondary to an “ordinary” Tagalog translation. The foreword to the 1975 *MBP* states that the “*Misa* is intended for Sundays and special occasions”.⁹⁷ It is worth asking if the subsequent insertion of the *MBP* in *The Supplement to the Roman Sacramentary for the Dioceses of the Philippines* was the result of the CDWDS’s reluctance to approve the *MBP* as the normative Mass in the Philippines or if the *MBP* was intended to be supplemental (and for occasional use) from the beginning.⁹⁸

4.2 Edward Foley, OFM Cap

Edward Foley, who directed Malit’s D.Min thesis, makes a noteworthy contribution to the discussion surrounding the *MBP* by highlighting its decolonizing and decolonializing properties.⁹⁹ Foley argues that, while not ex-

⁹⁷ CHUPUNGO, Foreword in: *MBP 1975*.

⁹⁸ It is more probable that Chupungco intended for the *Misa ng Bayang Pilipino* to be the normative Order of Mass in the Philippines for parish celebrations on Sundays, the Lord’s Day, and on feast days. In 1982, he disappointingly wrote, “Since to date it has not received the blessing of Rome, [the *MBP*] is gradually disappearing from the parish scene where it made its debut in 1976.” ID., *Liturgies of the Future*, 92. Moreover, in one of his last major publications before his death, *What, Then, is Liturgy?*, Chupungco seemed to have accepted that the *MBP* would not be the normative Mass in the Philippines. Instead, he challenged “the Holy See to declare inculturated forms of the liturgy as ‘other extraordinary’ forms of the Roman Mass along with the Tridentine rite” after the promulgation of *Summorum Pontificum* in 2007. Cf. ID., *What, Then, is Liturgy?*, 19 f.

⁹⁹ See Edward FOLEY, *Liturgical Inculturation. Decolonization or Decolonialization? Examining Misa ng Bayang Pilipino*, in: *AJT* 35 (2021): 83–99. Foley is in step with James Laxa who calls for greater attention to indigenous Filipino stories and spiritualities, reflecting a growing sensitivity to decoloniality and a desire for decolonized worship. It is unclear, however, if Laxa

PLICITLY designed as a decolonializing exercise, the process of liturgical inculturation seen in the *MBP* has allowed Filipinos to reclaim their language and ritual agency, and, in this way, can be considered an act of decolonialization. He further notes that, alongside the use of liturgical language, the *MBP* incorporates ritual actions that embody Filipino values and sensibilities, particularly a strong sense of social justice that is attuned to the Filipino socio-political context. Indeed, while Chupungco himself did not name “decolonializing” or “decolonizing” as a goal or feature of the *MBP*, he expressed similar ideas in his 1977 work.

Foley’s analysis provides a basis for examining a previously overlooked decolonializing role of the *Misa*. As mentioned above, the concept of the Philippines as a nation-state is a relatively recent social construct. Chupungco’s thoughtful use of the term “cultural pattern” is significant in this regard, as it avoids reducing Filipino identity to a homogenous group. Instead, it acknowledges the shared traits that can emerge across diverse populations while also recognizing the need to bracket some differences. Moreover, “cultural pattern” as a concept has allowed recognition of Filipino agency in appropriating elements introduced by Spanish colonizers. Seen alongside the analysis performed in part two, Foley’s essay therefore broadens the potential impact of the *MBP*, pointing out the *Misa*’s dual significance: The *MBP* is a symbol of a modern political alliance within a newly constructed nation-state in a post-colonial age *and* a symbol of a spiritual alliance with the global Roman rite.

4.3. *Maria Cecilia Payawal, PDDM*

Maria Cecilia M. Payawal’s 2021 Doctor of Liturgy dissertation from San Beda University, Manila, now also available as a book in the Philippines, is the most comprehensive and up-to-date study of the 1989 *Misa ng Bayang*

is critiquing the *MBP* or a different Order of Mass. See James LAXA, An Exercise in Contextualization. *Misa ng Sambayanang Pilipino. Towards a Reappropriation of Ancient Filipino Spirituality*. Paper presented at the 10th De La Salle University Arts Congress, Manila, Philippines, 16 February 2017.

Filipino.¹⁰⁰ The goal of her work is to articulate a renewed understanding of the theology and spirituality of the *MBP* in service of evangelization so that it may lead the people to full and active participation in the liturgy. Her book is a significant contribution to the literature on the *Misa* in that it offers an unprecedented history of the development of this Order of Mass, which includes oral interviews with those involved in the process and a systematic and comparative assessment of the differences between the 1975 and 1989 *MBP*. She concludes with critiques of the *Misa*, noting that several idioms and phrases that are used in it are now difficult for people to understand. She also recommends the elaboration or elimination of some rituals, offering an abbreviated version of the *MBP*, and research into more Filipino cultural patterns that could be further incorporated into the *Misa*.¹⁰¹ Notably, in the appendix of her work, she also includes survey results on the *MBP* given after the celebration of an inculturated Mass with a Filipino community at a church in Barcelona, Spain. This appears to be the first attempt at a study of the reception of the *Misa* by a community in the Filipino diaspora.¹⁰² In light of Foley's observations, Payawal's work can be seen as an example of the ongoing decolonializing task that the *MBP* enables.

5 *Future Directions*

This essay has aimed to systematize the historical, socio-political, theological, and methodological aspects of the *MBP* to highlight previously overlooked aspects of the *Misa* and identify areas for further research and scholarship. In Part One, we historically contextualized the *MBP*. By tracing its developments, we place the *Misa* in a broader socio-political context of decolonization and modern nation-state building. This underscores the decolonializing and contextualizing aspects of the *MBP* which

¹⁰⁰ Maria Cecilia M. PAYAWAL, *The Misa ng Bayang Pilipino (Mass of the Filipino People) as a Filipino Attempt at Liturgical Inculturation and as a Response to the Challenge of the New Evangelization in the Philippines*, Manila 2021. In this work, she refers to the second edition of the *Misa* as *MBP 1991*, according to the year it was submitted to the CDWDS.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 353–359.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 431–436.

are easily missed but referenced in more recent analyses. In Parts Two and Three, we explored the systematic application of Chupungco's method of liturgical inculturation on the *Misa*. Chupungco's understanding and taxonomy of related terms are illuminating for contemporary discussions around terminology and the practice of liturgical inculturation. In Part Four, we undertook a review of recent works on the *Misa*, with the decolonial turn being a particularly important contribution. Consequently, the literature suggests a number of pathways for new scholarship on the *MBP* with local, decolonial and global implications.

Firstly, at a local level, the *Misa* has been celebrated in the Philippines for 50 years. While it is not used regularly in parishes, it has been celebrated annually at the PCNE gatherings since 2013, signifying how the Philippine Church hierarchy continues to view the *MBP* as an instrument of evangelization.¹⁰³ However, there has not yet been a qualitative study or ethnographic research on the reception of the *Misa* by Filipino Catholics. Such a study would aid the Church in understanding if the intentions and goals of the *MBP* are being met by diverse Filipino populations, especially those from indigenous groups. It would also determine if there is demand for translations and further adaptations into major regional languages, such as Cebuano, Ilocano¹⁰⁴, and Kapampangan. Moreover, it would be valuable to explore the experiences of the *MBP* by Filipinos in the diaspora, as Payawal has done.

Secondly, the decolonial turn affords another way to rethink the place of inculturated liturgies and the tension between unity and uniformity. As noted in Part One, the *Misa*'s status and use in the Philippines have changed over the years. While perhaps originally intended for regular parish use, it has now taken on symbolic significance and is celebrated once a year at the PCNE or at solemn national gatherings. However, being included in the 1999 *Supplement to the Roman Sacramentary for the Dioce-*

¹⁰³ Filipino theologians have also continued to support its adoption, see Michael Demetrius H. Asis, *The Shape of the Filipino Church to Come. A Vision of Renewal in Filipino Sacramental Worship*, Manila 2020, 138.

¹⁰⁴ Principles for an inculturation Ilocano Eucharist have been proposed by Joefrey M. ALMAZAN, *Naindayawan-A-Rambak-Ti-Gimong. An Inculturation of the Eucharist in Ilocano*, in: *Religion and Social Communication* 22 (2024) 7–33.

ses of the Philippines clarifies its contemporary role – following the method of organic progression, it “supplements” the *Roman Missal* by giving the Roman rite what it had lacked for a local church without replacing it. The frequency of its use is therefore left to pastoral judgement and determined by local bishops, once again returning ritual agency to the local church. In the case of the Philippines, the bishops have appeared to have chosen the occasional use of the *MBP* as a perfectly valid option without diminishing its value. Perhaps the role of the *Misa* as a supplemental Order of Mass may inspire and encourage other liturgical inculturation efforts globally, particularly in locales where the faithful have historically been less inclined to explore cultural adaptations of the liturgy for fear that it may replace the *Roman Missal*.

Finally, the global implications of the *Misa* must also be affirmed. The decolonializing characteristic of the *MBP* is directly linked to its contribution to the global church’s theology and liturgical practice, as decoloniality is relevant not only to those who have been colonized but to former colonizers as well. To this end, we note that there are at least three ways in which the *Misa ng Bayang Pilipino* features Filipino traits that illuminate parts of the Gospel in a manner that the *editio typica* does not: First, the insertion of the *mano po* gesture invites the global church to embrace a sense of respect for elders, a value that is easily overlooked in an increasingly global capitalist society where the greying generation is cast away. Second, both Eucharistic Prayers of the *MBP* draw attention to Christ’s closeness to the poor and the sick, and the petitions after the epiclesis over the people highlight the values of solidarity and social awareness. These explicit references to social sin and suffering invites the global Church to act as God acts. Third, the Communion Rite of the *Misa* expresses an alternative form of a theology of hospitality, specifying that the presiding priest consumes the Body and Blood of Christ last, after the congregation has received Communion.¹⁰⁵ While a departure from traditional practice in both East and West, where Communion is always received by

¹⁰⁵ A rubric in *MBP 1975*, 16, states, “After the communion of the people the priest receives communion”. The same rubric appears in *MBP 1989* but slightly altered: “After the communion of the people the priest distributes communion to the other ministers. He takes communion last”. CHUPUNGO, *Worship. Beyond Inculturation*, 154.

the main celebrant first, the theology expressed in the *MBP* calls attention to a Christology of servanthood, a welcome antidote to modern clericalism.

How these contributions can be articulated and incorporated into the Roman rite in ways that may be adopted by other local churches is yet to be determined. There appears to be an opportunity here for the Holy See to act as a bridge-builder across local churches by providing new rubrics and guidelines adopted from local churches in the *editio typica* as a form of organic progression of the Roman rite.¹⁰⁶ From a global perspective, a comparative study of contributions from other similarly inculturated rites, especially the *Missel Romain pour les Diocèses du Zaïre* in the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Mass of the Land of the Holy Spirit in Broome, Australia, and most recent liturgical adaptations for Indigenous communities the Diocese of San Cristóbal de las Casas in Mexico would likewise be valuable.¹⁰⁷

There are many lessons that can be drawn from the *Misa ng Bayang Pilipino*'s development and reception for communities around the world seeking to integrate their cultural identities into Catholic worship. By looking back to the *Misa*'s conception and its first 50 years, we offer this essay as a humble beginning and look forward to the possibilities in liturgical inculturation that the *MBP* will help future generations envision ahead.

¹⁰⁶ For example, could the reception of Communion by the priest after the Communion of the faithful from the *MBP* be an option in the *Roman Missal* for churches with significant Filipino populations and an option for the global church? Introducing new options could be a path towards what Chupungco imagines as the future of the global church – a multicultural liturgy where different local customs representing the diverse peoples of the global church are visible in the liturgical celebration as the penultimate goal of liturgical inculturation. Cf. ID., What, Then, is Liturgy?, 21.

¹⁰⁷ There may also be implications for the development of an Amazonian rite. See Judith GRUBER et al.(eds.), *Laboratorium Weltkirche. Die Amazonien-Synode und ihre Potenziale* (QD 322), Freiburg i. Br. et al. 2022; CONFERENCIA ECLESIAL DE LA AMAZONÍA, *General framework of the Amazonian Rite. A Church with an amazonian face. Working document* (8 May 2025), in: CEAMA. [↗](#)

Abbreviations

AAS	Acta Apostolicae Sedis
AfER	African Ecclesiastical Review
AJT	Asia Journal of Theology
ALit	Analecta Liturgica
APR	Aklat ng Pagmimisa sa Roma
CBCP	Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines
CDW	Congregation for Divine Worship
CDWDS	Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments
CEAMA	Conferencia Eclesial de la Amazonía
CSP	Societas Sacerdotum Missionariorum a Sancto Paulo Apostolo / Paulist Fathers
Elit	Ephemerides Liturgicae
EO	Ecclesia orans
GrTr	Grace and Truth
IThQ	Irish Theological Quarterly
LiMi	Liturgical Ministry
LuthFor	Lutheran Forum
MBP or Misa	Misa ng Bayang Pilipino
MBP 1975	First edition of the Misa ng Bayang Pilipino
MBP 1989	Second edition of the Misa ng Bayang Pilipino
Not.	Notitiae
OFMCap	Ordo Fratrum Minorum Capuccinorum / Order of Friars Minor Capuchin
OSB	Ordo Sancti Benedicti / Order of St. Benedict
PCNE	Philippine Conference on the New Evangelization
PDDM	Pie Discepole del Divin Maestro / Sister Disciples of the Divine Master
QD	Quaestiones disputatae


QL	Questions liturgiques
SC	Sacrosanctum Concilium
SSS	Congregatio Sanctissimi Sacramenti / Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament
StAns	Studia Anselmiana
StLit	Studia Liturgica

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