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## *Material Abstract*

Jason Darrell Foster

*Sursum Corda*: ritual and meaning of the liturgical command in the first five centuries of the Church

This dissertation explores the ritual and meaning of the *Sursum Corda* in the first five centuries of the Church. The original text and structure was forceful and abrupt - reminding those gathered of their heavenly position in Christ via their baptisms. When the priest shouted the command, those assembled assumed the *orans* position of prayer in the same manner as they did the first time they prayed the 'Our Father' after being baptized. In turn, the *Sursum Corda* brought spiritual and social order to often troubled Eucharistic assemblies. Certain third through fifth century Fathers employed various meanings of the command as they related it to the rites of entrance into the Church. When the initiated had their 'hearts on high' it resulted in the ability to ward off the attacks of the devil (evidenced by earthly concerns, attitudes, actions and perceptions) and, therefore, properly perceive the liturgical service as well as the Eucharistic gifts as the Body and Blood of Christ. In the sixth to eighth centuries, the Great Entrance, coupled with its accompanying hymns the 'Cherubikon' and 'Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence' that contained exhortations to 'lay aside all earthly cares' (previously connected to the *Sursum Corda*), replaced the original meaning of the command as the gathered understood the entrance to be that of the Consecrated Gifts. This liturgical evolution resulted in the *Sursum Corda* transitioning textually and thematically to the exhortation 'Let us lift up our hearts' whereby the assembled ascended to the New Jerusalem. When the heart made this journey it united with God in the Eucharist: the end result being a realized eschatology. Thus, the *Sursum Corda* evolved from a command to remember or realize one's heavenly identity in Christ via baptism to that of a spiritual ascent to the heavenly city of God in the Divine Liturgy.

***Sursum Corda*: ritual and meaning of the liturgical command in the  
first five centuries of the Church**

A dissertation presented

by

Jason Darrell Foster

in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

to

The Department of Theology and Religion

Durham University  
Durham, England

2013

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## Abbreviations

- ANF:* A. Menzies, A.C. Coxe, J. Donaldson, A. Roberts, *The Ante-Nicene Fathers: Translations of the Writings of the Fathers Down to A.D. 325*, ed. reprint (Grand Oaks, Eerdmans, 1975).
- CH:* *Church History*
- JAAR:* *Journal of the Academy of Religion*
- JBL:* *Journal of Biblical Literature*
- JEA:* *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*
- JECS:* *Journal of Early Christian Studies*
- JEH:* *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*
- JRH:* *Journal of Religious History*
- JTS:* *Journal of Theological Studies*
- NPNF:* J. Donaldson, A. Roberts, P. Schaff, *Early Church Fathers, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers 1<sup>st</sup> Series* (Peabody, Hendrickson Publishing, 1994).
- LQF:* *Liturgiegeschichtliche Quellen and Forschungen*
- OCP:* *Orientalia christiana periodica*
- PG:* J.P. Migne, *Patrologia Graeca*
- PL:* J.P. Migne, *Patrologia Latina*
- SC:* *Sources chrétiennes*
- SL:* *Studia Liturgica*
- SP:* *Studia Patristica*
- VC:* *Vigiliae christianae*

## Statement of Copyright

‘The copyright of this thesis rests with the author. No quotation from it should be published without the author’s prior written consent and information derived from it should be acknowledged.

## Acknowledgements

This dissertation is the result of a collective effort. It would not have been completed without the patience and supervision of Rev. Dr. Andrew Louth. His insights, always pregnant with depth and meaning, helped to me to understand the primary sources considered in ways that I never would have alone. The majority of the research took place at St. Valdimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary. While serving on the administrative staff, the Very Rev. Dr. Chad Hatfield made sure my work schedule included library time. Also, the Very Rev. Dr. John Behr was willing on more than one occasion to offer advice pertaining to the structure and direction of my study. As our paths crossed at various functions, he, with a calm voice but sense of urgency on my behalf, always inquired, 'How is you work coming along? When it came to translation issues, the Rev. Dr. Benedict Churchill was a great help with various Latin texts considered; Christopher Sprecher assisted with key German writings; and Dr. Ruth Taylor worked with me on an important secondary French source. Dr. Chris Cosse, a close friend and parishioner, on numerous occasions offered encouragement as well as financial support for this endeavor for which I am forever grateful. Another friend, Mrs. Jaclyn Briery, allowed me the use of one her offices - complete with computer and printer access. Without this gracious accommodation, my work would have been extremely difficult to complete. The mission that I serve, Holy Nativity of the Lord in Shreveport, LA, was more than understanding to the mental, spiritual and time demands of my research. And, finally, I am most indebted to and thankful for the unconditional love and support of my mother, Jeanne, my wife, Ashley, and my six daughters: Addison, Savannah, Camille, Gabrielle, Saxony and Mary Katherine.

*Dedicated to*

*The memory of L.H. Foster*

*And to*

*L. Jeanne Foster and Ashley Foster*

# ***Sursum Corda*: ritual and meaning of the liturgical command in the first five centuries of the Church**

## **Introduction**

During the Divine Liturgy, the Orthodox celebrant, facing the congregation, raises his eyes, arms and hands towards heaven and chants, ‘Let us lift up our hearts.’<sup>1</sup> This exhortation is commonly referred to by liturgists as the *Sursum Corda*. While the direct translation of the original Latin and Greek is abrupt and forceful, in both the East and the West the contemporary exclamation or chanting of the priest is often euphonic. And the corresponding response of the people follows a similar harmonious pattern ‘We lift them up unto the Lord.’ In some Roman Catholic parishes, the faithful have recently begun mirroring the ritual posture of the one presiding by extending their hands and eyes upward at the liturgical exhortation. In light of these observations, it seems that there has been and may presently be some type of liturgical evolution regarding the ritual and meaning of the *Sursum Corda*. This begs the question, ‘How do contemporary churchmen understand the liturgical summons?’ In the last century, D. Dix argued the liturgical phrase is unique to the sacramental Eucharist for the reason that it is ‘to remind the *ecclesia* that the real action of the Eucharist takes place beyond time in the “age to come”, where ‘God has made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the age to come He might shew the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness towards us through Christ Jesus.’ (Eph. 2:6-7).<sup>2</sup> A. Schmemmann, in like manner, comments that the liturgical phrase ‘Let us lift up our hearts’, is an affirmation that

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<sup>1</sup> The original Greek is Ἄνω τὰς καρδίας and the Latin equivalent is *Sursum Corda*. In the Anglican liturgy the Latin is translated ‘Lift up your hearts’ and this translation is commonly used in the Roman Catholic tradition. This phrasing is arguably a product of Thomas Cranmer’s liturgical revisions of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The issue of translation will be discussed further in the next chapter of our study.

<sup>2</sup> D. Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, New Edition (London, Continuum, 2005), p. 127.

the Eucharist is accomplished not on earth but in heaven; and this heaven, a realized eschatology, lies within the heart of Christians.<sup>3</sup> However, he further explains it is also a solemn warning and judgment for those who maintain earthly mindsets during the liturgy.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, it seems the modern understanding of the *Sursum Corda* is primarily concerned with the notion of spiritual ascent, both theologically and spiritually. However, is this conclusion consistent with the primal understanding(s) of the Church?

The dissertation will seek to demonstrate that the *Sursum Corda* was originally connected, ritually and thematically, to the rite(s) of baptism in the first five centuries of the Church; and during the the sixth to eight centuries it evolved into a liturgical notion of spiritual ascent whereby the assembled entered into the heavenly Jerusalem during the celebration of the Eucharist. The foregoing study will prove beneficial for at least four reasons. To begin with, it will contribute to the study of the liturgy in general, especially as it relates to the history and function of the *Sursum Corda* in the Divine Liturgy. It will also provide a new perspective into how the social context of the liturgy related to the command in the first five centuries. Thirdly, it will show the place, importance and uniqueness of the *Sursum Corda* within the catechetical instructions of the Church Fathers considered. And lastly, it will set forth how certain additions to and commentaries on the liturgy after our primary scope of study influenced the place and meaning<sup>5</sup> of the command, which in turn, still affect the way in which the *Sursum Corda* is understood today.

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<sup>3</sup> A. Schmemann, *The Eucharist*, (Crestwood, St. Vladimir's Seminary Press (SVS), 2003), p. 168-169.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, p.169.

<sup>5</sup> The terms 'meaning' and 'function' will often be used interchangeably throughout this work due to the fact that the meaning of a term or phrase is often best understood in the action it brings forth.

## Method of Study

This work is divided into two primary sections. Section 1 consists of three chapters that address ritual/contextual issues. The part of our work will demonstrate how the text, social context and physical posture associated with the *Sursum Corda* relate to each other. In Chapter 1: ‘Ritual Texts – The *Apostolic Tradition* and The *Anaphora of Addai and Mari* will seek to answer preliminary questions about the *Sursum Corda* as found in the respective texts and scholarly commentaries. Specifically we are interested in questions regarding form, origin and structure, translation and context. In Chapter 2: ‘Ritual Setting –The Social Context of the *Sursum Corda*’, we will move beyond textual considerations of the command and explore the social context of the Eucharistic setting in an effort to discover how it relates to the *Sursum Corda*. To date, scholars have not considered the possible relationship between the social context of the Eucharistic gathering and the literal/abrupt translation, ‘Hearts on high!’ Therefore, this part of our study may present new ways of understanding the place of the *Sursum Corda* within the scope of our study. Chapter 3: ‘Ritual Posture – *Sursum Corda* and the *Orans*’ – we will review pre-Christian and Christian references to the ritual posture associated with private and liturgical settings in order to determine what physical stance was assumed during the *Sursum Corda* and how it may be connected liturgically, ritually, theologically and practically to the phrase at this point in the liturgical Celebration. The ‘ritual’ information gleaned from Section 1 will answer certain questions regarding the *Sursum Corda* and provide a foundation for Section 2 or our study.

In Section 2, we will show how the Fathers within our scope of study ascribe various meanings to the *Sursum Corda*. This will be demonstrated in each chapter, as we take into consideration the individual author, the specific period of history, the

genre of writing and how the command relates theologically and liturgically to its context. Specifically, we will systematically work through the relevant portions of the catechisms and sermons of the following Church Fathers in order to see how they employed the *Sursum Corda*: Chapter 4: Cyprian of Carthage; Chapter 5: Cyril of Jerusalem; Chapter 6: Theodore of Mopsuestia; Chapter 7: John Chrysostom and in Chapter 8: Augustine of Hippo. Following, we will include Chapter 9: ‘*Sursum Corda*: Changes in the Sixth to Eighth Centuries’, in order to demonstrate how the Great Entrance and the liturgical setting of the Hagia Sophia influenced the meaning of the command immediately after the scope of our study. Lastly, in our conclusion, we will review the major findings of our research.

### **Review of Contemporary Scholarship on the *Sursum Corda***

Over the last 100 years, the majority of scholars engaging in liturgical theology have only referenced the *Sursum Corda* while addressing another subject; or limited their exploration and analysis of it to only a few passing sentences. The works included in our survey are those that specifically address the liturgical meaning and or function of the command. The *Sursum Corda* is either the main point of study or given intense consideration. Included in this section are writings by F.J. Dölger, E. Ferguson, R. Taft and W.H. Bates and E. Lash.<sup>6</sup> Following is a survey and critique of each respective scholar’s research.

#### **F.J. Dölger – Stand to pray and raise your soul to heaven**

The first extensive study on the *Sursum Corda* that needs to be mentioned is that by F.J. Dölger in *Sol salutis*. He derives his understanding of the liturgical function of the *Sursum Corda* from Cyprian’s use of the term *praefatio* and the

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<sup>6</sup> It needs to be noted that C. Bouman did an extensive study on the textual variants of the introduction to the Eucharistic Prayer, however, his focus was textual not theological. C.A. Bouman, ‘Variants in the Introduction to the Eucharistic Prayer’ *VC*, Vol. 4. No. 2 (April, 1950), pp. 94-115.

ancient ritualized posture of prayer: standing, facing east, with hands and eyes raised to heaven. Due to the fact Taft builds his argument on Dölger's work, we will only cite his conclusion:

The *Sursum corda* belongs to the old prefatory, such as it was constructed already at the beginning of the 3rd century. It is already found in the church order of the Veronese Palimpsest, which we can consider to be a Latin translation of Hippolytus of Rome's Apostolikê Paradosis; further also in Cyprian and in the so-called Canons of Hippolytus. Standing before the Eucharistic blessing, the Word is supposed to urge the believers to lift up their minds and hearts to God. This turning of the mind to God, which follows the *Sursum corda*, also finds an external expression for the senses through the prayer ceremony of standing as well as through the lifting of the eyes and hands to heaven. This can be seen quite clearly in a comment by Cyprian, in which he denounces the self-abnegation, bowing, nodding of the head and prostrating of the pagans before images of the gods. There he says the good word: "God created you upright. Other creatures are bowed forward as a result of their form that is directed earthward, whereas your face is aimed upward to the heavens and to the Lord. Look thither, turn thither your eyes, search out God in the heights...Keep your posture that is aimed upwards, in which you were born, remain as God made you. With the direction of your countenance and the posture of your body, also direct your mind (heavenwards)! It is entirely in this sense that the so-called Testament of our Lord before the great prayer for the congregation also contains among other things the cry: "Lift up the eyes of your hearts!" Here, then, clear reference is being made to the prayer gesture of raising the eyes, but the raising up of the soul is demanded as being essential. Even today, in the Roman liturgy, the priest lifts up both his eyes and his hands at the *Sursum corda*.<sup>7</sup>

We see in Dölger a holistic understanding of the *Sursum Corda* – mind and heart, body and soul. However, his conclusions do not take into consideration the context of the writings in which they are derived. For example, in relation to our study, Cyprian's reference to the *Sursum Corda* is found within his catechetical lecture 'On the Lord's Prayer' (*De Dominica Oratione* 31). One question we need to ask in our work is what other issues does he address in his catechism or in the context of Chapter 31? Moreover, what does the bishop think is accomplished when we have our hearts on high? Does his personal experience tell us anything about the

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<sup>7</sup> Dölger, *Sol Salutis*, pp. 301-302. The author acknowledges Fr. Christopher Spreecher assisted in the translation of Dölger's work and consulted on other German articles.

command? How and why are his hearers able to do it? Beyond these questions, his work does not take into account genre specifics: Cyprian's catechism in the third century, as we shall see, is not the same as a mystagogical work in the fourth. Dölger's work is comprehensive but, in regards to our study, too narrow in scope. However, it does present us with a foundational and comprehensive approach that needs to be followed.

### **E. Ferguson – Stand up to pray**

E. Ferguson, in his article, 'The Liturgical Function of the *Sursum Corda*' contends the original meaning of the command is, more or less, to 'stand up.' His research led him to the conclusion that the normal posture in the worship assembly was standing, with arms extended, and the palms and the eyes uplifted to heaven.<sup>8</sup> Ferguson cites the following biblical and other early sources that describe this practice. For example, *Didache* 12, 'When you stand to pray', and Tertullian, 'To heaven Christians look up, with hands outstretched, because free from sin, with head uncovered, for we are not ashamed.' (*Apol. 30. 4.*); Origen declares, 'There can be no doubt that the position of stretching out one's hands and lifting up the eyes is to be preferred' (*De. Or. 31.2. The Comm. Joh. XXVIII. 4 on John 11:41*).<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, he notes that second century Christians stood for the Eucharistic prayer. He writes, 'Justin Martyr informs us. After the Scripture reading and sermon: "Then we all arise together and send up prayers. And, as we said before, when we cease to pray, bread and wine with water are presented, and the president likewise sends up prayers and thanksgivings as he is able, and the people respond by saying the 'Amen'"'.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> F.J. Dölger, as noted by Ferguson in the end of his work, in *Sol Salutis* (1920), pp. 228-244 proposed the *Sursum corda* was a command to rise and raise the arms to heaven.

<sup>9</sup> Other references include 1 Timothy 2:8; 1 Clement 2 and 29; Acts of Paul and Thecla 34; Clement of Alexandria, *Strom VII. Vii. 40.1*.

(*Apology* I, 67.)<sup>10</sup> Ferguson's assumption is that until the *Sursum Corda*, the gathered, clergy and laity were in a sitting posture. When the baptized were to receive Communion, he believes, 'the faithful appear to have taken the Eucharist standing, at least according to some texts. Dionysius of Alexandria describes "one who had heard the thanksgiving and joined in repeating the "Amen"; who had stood at the table and had stretched forth his hands to receive the holy food'. Tertullian says of taking the Eucharist, "You have stood at God's altar."<sup>11</sup> Moving from the written word to art, Ferguson writes, 'There is a rather precise illustration of Hippolytus' words to be found in a painting from (a bit ironically) the Catacomb of Callistus. It shows a large fish on a tripod table with one person extending his arms so as to place his hands on the fish in the act of blessing, as Hippolytus' bishop lays his hands on the elements at the consecration prayer. Another figure stands beside with arms raised in the *orans* gesture, exactly as we have seen the congregation standing for the Eucharistic prayer.'<sup>12</sup> Ferguson's arguments regarding the relationship between the *orans* posture and the *Sursum Corda* seem convincing. However, he does not present a specific texts or commentary that directly associates the liturgical command with ritual posture of prayer. He assumes 'standing to pray' is synonymous with the *orans*; or praying with eyes up and arms outstretched includes the *Sursum Corda*.

After surveying the aforementioned sources, Ferguson summarizes his research in a similar manner as Dölger:

All of this leads me to suggest the occasion which gave rise to the words, 'Lift up your hearts'. They served as a rubric inviting the believers to lift their hands, or if seated, to rise and lift their hands for the Eucharistic prayer.

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<sup>10</sup> E. Ferguson, 'The Liturgical Function of the *Sursum Corda*', *SP*, 13, TU 116 (Berlin, Akademie Verlag, 1972), pp. 360-361.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid*, p. 361-362.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid*, p. 362. The question of this work of art referring to a *refrigerium* meal instead of a Christian Eucharist will be discussed in Chapter 3 of our study.

As they all in common rise, as Justin says, then the people lift up their hands or, look to heaven, and respond, 'Our hearts are with the Lord.' The congregation was hereby aroused for the high moment of its assembly. The people were invited to arise and thereby lift their hearts to God, this finding expression in the outward elevating of the arms for prayer. The people responded by their gesture and their words in the offering of themselves to God. The sacrifice of prayer and thanksgiving was this accompanied by a symbolic sacrifice as the people presented themselves before God.<sup>13</sup>

Furthermore, Ferguson believes his ritual understanding of the *Sursum Corda* may be confirmed by a rubric in the Ethiopic version of Hippolytus' instructions for the agape that states, 'And he (the bishop) shall not say: Lift up your hearts, because that shall be said at the oblation. '; and the first commentary afforded us on the *Sursum Corda* by Cyprian<sup>14</sup> of Carthage where the bishop informs his hearers they are to stand to pray as possible confirmations of his argument.<sup>15</sup> These two references will be explored in greater detail later in our study.

Ferguson's conclusion hinges on the assumption that the assembly was seated before the *Sursum Corda*. However, his reference to *Apostolic Tradition 25* is challenged by Taft:

Even if the *sursum corda* were not used at the *agape* for this reason, that does not explain its exclusion at other non-eucharistic forms of prayer. Furthermore, though *Ap Trad 27* makes it clear that the faithful reclined at the meal, it seems hardly likely they were reclining while the bishop was standing for prayer, and the text, just cited, explicitly affirms that he was standing. In Tertullian's description of the agape *Apologeticum* 39:16-18, the prayer is said before reclining for the meal, for one must not recline to taste food without previously tasting prayer: "*Non prius discumbitur quam oratio ad Deum praegustetur*" (39:17). It is likely that the same standing posture was assumed for the washing of the hands, lucernarium, hymns, and concluding prayer which followed the past (39:18).<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid, p. 362.

<sup>14</sup> Cyprian's commentary will be addressed in detail later in Chapter 4. Ferguson's reference is to Cyprian's words, 'when we stand to pray.' *De Dom. Or. 31*.

<sup>15</sup> E. Ferguson, 'The Liturgical Function of the *Sursum Corda*', pp. 363-363.

<sup>16</sup> Taft II, pp. 71-72.

However, Taft does agree with Ferguson in that the *orans* position is undoubtedly the original *Sitz im Leben* of the command.<sup>17</sup>

Due to the fact Ferguson concludes his work with the following footnote: ‘After preparing this paper I found in F. Dölger, *Sol Salutis*...a similar perspective.’<sup>18</sup>, we will limit our critique of his work for reasons of redundancy. Ferguson does not seek to establish a historical context that links the *orans* to a sacrificial/sacramental cultic context; thereby giving further credence to his conclusion that ‘standing’ and assuming the *orans* are interchangeable expressions. Also, due to the fact he does not include other sacramental references to the *orans*, e.g. the position assumed after baptism and before the ‘Our Father,’ his work, arguably, does not reveal the theological connectivity of the *Sursum corda* to other rites and rituals. This issue is addressed in depth later in our work.

### **R. Taft – Warning off the unworthy**

R. Taft wrote a three part series on ‘The Dialogue before the Anaphora in the Byzantine Liturgy.’ Section II of this study focuses on the *Sursum corda*.<sup>19</sup> To date, his work is arguably the most comprehensive on the topic. As with the other scholars previously mentioned, it needs to be noted that Taft’s arguments are built upon many of Dölger’s observations.

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<sup>17</sup> This posture of prayer, as noted by Taft (Taft II, p. 73) was common among Christians, Jews and Pagans. See full reference below in footnote 20. R. Tertullian, in *Apology* 24.5, informs us that Christians were referred to as ‘cloud counters’ due to their well-known *orant* position; and in *Apol.* 30:4 he writes, ‘We Christians look there [to heaven] and pray with hands outstretched because they are without guilt, with bare heads because we do not blush...(CCL 1, 141.) Eusebius informs us in VII 9:3 that the ability to look upward was for the faithful because a ‘Convert could not lift his eyes to God.’

<sup>18</sup> E. Ferguson, ‘The Liturgical Function of the *Sursum Corda*’, p. 363.

<sup>19</sup> For the complete series see Robert Taft, SJ, ‘The Dialogue before the Anaphora in the Byzantine Eucharistic Liturgy. I: The Opening Greeting,’ *OSP* [52, (1986), pp. 299-324]; II: ‘The *Sursum Corda*,’ *ibid.* [54, (1988), pp. 47-77]; III: ‘Let us give thanks to the Lord – It is fitting and right.’ *Ibid.* [55, (1989), pp. 63-74].

Taft begins his article on the *Sursum Corda* by suggesting that his textual construction represents the ‘Urform’ of the preanaphoral dialogue that is common to all traditions.<sup>20</sup> It reads as follows:

- III a.) Hearts up!
- b.) We have them to the Lord.
- IV. a.) Let us give thanks to the Lord.
- b.) (It is) fitting and right.<sup>21</sup>

Moreover, he believes, ‘this commonality means not only that we have here the primitive nucleus of the entire dialogue, but also that this nucleus probably has one source.’<sup>22</sup> However, it is not until later in his article that he turns his attention towards the question of origin. For reasons of clarity and continuity, we will explore this section of his research at present.

Taft, in reference to the preanaphoral dialogue, first presents what he refers to as ‘Pre-liturgical evidence.’ He writes, ‘We find the formula adumbrated in such OT texts as Ps. 25:1, ‘To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul,’ and especially in Lamentations 3:41, ‘Let us lift up our hearts and hands to God in heaven.’<sup>23</sup> Furthermore, he notes that the first echoes of the text are found in The Shepherd of Hermas ca. 140:

18:9 – (Vision III, 10:9): ‘double-mindedness makes you foolish, as well as not having your heart to the Lord.’<sup>24</sup>

40:6 (Mandate X, 1:6): ‘...they who...have the heart to the Lord.’

The context, Taft explains, is in relation to understanding spiritual things and, ‘the metaphor is commonplace in early Christian writings.’ The good things of God are

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<sup>20</sup> Taft II,

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, p.

<sup>22</sup> Taft II, p. 49. Dix makes like comments regarding the ‘Urform’ in his work, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, pp. 126-127.

<sup>23</sup> Taft’s translation is taken from the LXX: ἀναλάβωμεν καρδίας ἡμῶν ἐπὶ χειρῶν πρὸς ὑψηλὸν ἐν οὐρανῶ.

<sup>24</sup> Taft II, p. 63. Taft secured these references from R. Joly (ed.), *Hermas, Le pasteur* (Sources Chrétiennes 53bis, Paris 1968), p. 128.

from above in contrast to the evil and terrestrial that is from below. After surveying biblical sources and other considerations<sup>25</sup>, he summarizes, ‘Today most would agree that *sursum corda habemus ad dominum* is a Christian composition without precedent in Jewish worship.<sup>26</sup> But there is less agreement as to its original language, Greek or Latin.’<sup>27</sup> According to Taft:

When all is said and done, therefore, I think that Greek was the original language of the entire dialogue, though I am not entirely comfortable with arguments from what can or cannot be said in a language... Although we cannot specify where and when our liturgical formula arose, it seems to have been in the liturgy itself. The two texts in the Shep 18:9 and 40:6 are strikingly similar to that of Hippolytus that it is difficult not to see an echo of the lit. Dix’s hypothesis that the dialogue may have originated in Rome with earliest appearances in Hermas and especially AT<sup>28</sup>, which did have a large influence on throughout the early Church, then soon after Cyprian, makes this a plausible explanation, however there is no way to prove it.<sup>29</sup>

While it is important to try and derive the language of origin, our focus is on the ritual and meaning of the command. Therefore we are content to accept Taft’s conclusions as they are set forth.

In relation to ‘meaning,’ Taft first addresses the non-liturgical references mentioned previously as ‘simply a metaphor for having one’s life focused on, God and things spiritual, and not on the things of this world.’ He cites Colossians 3:1<sup>30</sup> as a biblical summary of this meaning:

If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above (τὰ ἄνω), where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things that are above (τὰ ἄνω), not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

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<sup>25</sup> See also J. Jungman’s consideration of the origin of the *Sursum Corda* in his work, *The Roman Mass* (Kill Lane, Blackrock, Co Dublin, Four Courts Press, 1953), p. 111, footnote 6.

<sup>26</sup> Taft II, p. 64. See also Dix’s work, *Jew and Greek. A Study in the Primitive Church* (Westminster, Dacre Press, 1953), p.105, where he addresses the question of origin, language and the question of the ‘Urform.’ In short, Dix believes the ‘Urtext’ originated in Rome and was constructed in Latin and from there spread throughout Christendom.

<sup>27</sup> Taft II, p.64.

<sup>28</sup> AT refers to the *Apostolic Tradition*

<sup>29</sup> Taft II, pp. 68-69.

<sup>30</sup> Taft accidentally cites Colossians 3:3 when the actual verse is Colossians 3:1 - εἰ οὖν συνηγέρθητε τῷ Χριστῷ τὰ ἄνω ζητεῖτε οὗ ὁ Χριστός ἐστιν ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ θεοῦ καθήμενος.

According to Taft, the earliest commentaries on the *Sursum Corda* incorporating this same explanation are by Cyprian in his *De Dominica Oratione 31*, and Cyril of Jerusalem in his *Mystagogical Catechesis*. He also references a later work by Caesarius of Arles (†542), *Sermon. 22, 4* in order to demonstrate the continuity of thought between early and later writers.<sup>31</sup> But Taft is not satisfied with this summary.

Under the section heading ‘*Sitz Im Leben*,’ Taft proposes the question, ‘But if our hearts should be high always, then why was this exhortation restricted initially to the Eucharist?’<sup>32</sup> Following, he explores *Apostolic Tradition 25* where the writer instructs his readers that in a certain non-Eucharistic service, the bishop ‘does not say, ‘Up with your hearts,’ because that is said only at the offering.’<sup>33</sup> After exploring the positions of Dölger and Ferguson, he concludes the reason the *Sursum Corda* was omitted was due to catechumens at the *agape*.<sup>34</sup>

Reflecting on his argument, he writes ‘At any rate the *orant* position is undoubtedly the original *Sitz im Leben* of the command.’<sup>35</sup> Taft then explores the various early texts that reference the posture Christians assume while praying – standing, with eyes and hands raised to heaven. Important to our summary of Taft’s understanding of the *Sursum Corda* is a rubric ‘inviting the faithful to not only assume the proper spiritual stance demanded by this most solemn moment of Christian prayer, but also the corresponding prayer posture.’<sup>36</sup> In this statement we see Taft combining theology and ritual. The proper spiritual stance is the mind raised to heaven and this is evidenced by the body being erect, facing east and the hands and eyes directing the gaze of the heart upward toward heaven. In his words, ‘These

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<sup>31</sup> Taft II, p. 69-70.

<sup>32</sup> Taft II, p. 71.

<sup>33</sup> Taft II, p. 71. Also, *Apostolic Tradition 25* will be explored further in the Chapter 1 of our study.

<sup>34</sup> Taft II, p. 72.

<sup>35</sup> Taft II, p. 73. We will dedicate Chapter 3 to the Christian concept of standing to pray and how it relates to the *Sursum Corda*.

<sup>36</sup> Taft II, p. 73.

postures and gestures were no mere ritualism. They were the outward sign of interior dispositions of recollection, purity of mind and heart, and prayer.<sup>37</sup>

Departing from ritual posture, Taft spends considerable time developing what he believes to be the original liturgical function of the *Sursum Corda* found in Cyprian's reference to *praefatio*. Cyprian, in his *De Dominica Oratione* 31, writes the following:

Moreover, when we stand at prayer.....So even the priest, in the preface (*praefatio*) prepares the minds of the people.

Theodoret of Cyr, around 451, in his Ep. 147 to John, Oeconomus of the Church of Antioch, refers to it as a *prooimion*.<sup>38</sup>

Taft notes this is not the liturgical Preface in the later Western understanding of the term, but rather in the earlier, classical sense of the command or prohibition restricting the civil rights of those accused of crime.<sup>39</sup> Due to the extensive nature of Taft's argument and the importance of Cyprian's catechetical lecture on the Lord's Prayer to our study, we will address Taft's conclusion later in our work. Therefore, we will only summarize his position at present: 'to 'look at the offering', not be distracted, lift up our hearts, etc., was an obligation and privilege of only the faithful. *Sursum corda habemus ad dominum* had an apotropaic sense, warning off the unworthy.'<sup>40</sup>

In response to this conclusion, H. Bates argues that Taft does not agree with other conventional explanations of the *Sursum Corda*:

...but his suggestion that it is a warning to the profane and uninitiated to withdraw from the mysteries, after the fashion of the Hellenistic mystery religions, is not convincing. For one thing it is open to the previous objection

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<sup>37</sup> Taft II, p. 75.

<sup>38</sup> Taft cites Dölger for his explanation of the term in *Prooimion-Praefatio*, *Antike und Christentum* 4 (1934), p. 280.

<sup>39</sup> Taft references Dölger, *Sol Salutis*, pp. 288-289, other writings and Origin, *Contra Celsum III* to support his positions. See Taft II, p. 59.

<sup>40</sup> Taft II, p. 49.

that a command needs to be explicit. Granted that unbelievers and the uninstructed may have strayed into the assembly at Corinth (here Bates cites 1 Cor. 14:23), would they have understood the words as ordering them to go? Such commands of exclusion do exist, as in *Didache* 10.6, and, possibly 1 Cor. 16:23. But if this is what *Sursum corda* means, why does it not say so? Equally to the point, *Sursum corda* is not addressed to outsiders but to the initiates. Catechumens would be shown “the doors” at a much earlier stage before the Prayers of the faithful. The nearest parallel to the fine passage from Aristophane’s *Frogs*, quoted by Taft, is the rather prosaic list of prohibited trades and professions in Apostolic Tradition 16. The mystery was already double screened!’<sup>41</sup>

At present, we can conclude that Taft’s scope, in regards to our study, is too limited in regards to historical and genre considerations. It leaves us at the end of third century with the conclusion that the *Sursum corda* was connected ritually to the *orans* position of prayer and was primarily a liturgical warning to the unworthy.<sup>42</sup> While his conclusions may shed light on the negative implications of the *Sursum corda*, they do not help us understand how and if the command had any meaning to the worthy.

### **W. Bates - Rehearsal for the *Parousia***

W. Hugh Bates argues against what he calls ‘traditional arguments’ regarding the *Sursum Corda*. He believes by the time of Cyprian’s commentary on the liturgical command, the original meaning in the *Apostolic Tradition* had been replaced. Beginning with Cyprian, Bates writes, ‘Commentators on the liturgy have traditionally interpreted the *sursum corda* as a call to attention and more strenuous devotion.’<sup>43</sup> After reviewing Cyril’s<sup>44</sup> commentary on the *Sursum Corda*, which he

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<sup>41</sup> H. Bates, ‘*Sursum Corda*: The Word of Command’, *SL*, Vol. 29, No. 1 (1999), p. 59.

<sup>42</sup> Taft does include in his study the idea that the *Sursum Corda* is a leaving of earthly things and considering those that are heavenly. However, he only explores certain references and does not develop the context they are found within or questions of genre. See his comments regarding the notion of elevating hearts and minds to the Lord on p. 70 of Taft, II.

<sup>43</sup> Bates, ‘*Sursum Corda*: The Word of the Command’, p. 57.

<sup>44</sup> Cyril comments on the *Sursum Corda*, ‘For truly ought we in that most awful hour to have our heart on high with God, and not below, thinking of earth and earthly things. The priest then in effect bids all in that hour to abandon all worldly thoughts, or household cares, and to have their heart in heaven with the merciful Lord.’ Translation taken from F.L. Cross as found in *Lectures on the Christian Sacraments, St. Cyril of Jerusalem* (Crestwood, SVS Press, 1977), pp. 72-73.

believes parallels that of Cyprian, he concludes: ‘On reflection, this simply will not do. If *Sursum corda* was intended to be a summons to recollection and conscious devotion, then it is a very roundabout way of achieving its purpose.’<sup>45</sup> He continues by stressing the point that there are other examples found within liturgical text that could achieve this same end, “It might have been done in the words of the chants which cover the great entrance – the “Let all mortal flesh keep silence” of the Liturgy of St. James, or “let us lay aside every worldly care” from the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom. The diaconal bidding from the same liturgy would serve equally well, “Let us stand decently; let us stand in fear; let us attend, so as to make the holy offering in peace.” Anything on these lines would have been sufficiently forceful and explicit to replace *Sursum Corda* altogether – if this is what it really meant.’<sup>46</sup> Cyril of Jerusalem, Bates implies, was probably forced to reinterpret the original meaning of the *Sursum Corda* because, “By his time, *Sursum corda* was already a venerable and universally accepted formula, hallowed and non-negotiable, and forming part of the original interface between president and people in the preface to the great thanksgiving. Whatever it may once have been, *Sursum corda* now needed to be reinterpreted and even reinvented in the light of the liturgical revolution of the fourth and fifth centuries.’<sup>47</sup> Contrary to his observation, we will explore how each of the Fathers in our work employed the *Sursum Corda* differently.

Bates develops an alternative explanation of the command that is eschatological in nature based on biblical exhortations for early believers to be prepared for the return of Christ, the *parousia*.<sup>48</sup> He believes that early Christians

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<sup>45</sup> Bates, ‘*Sursum Corda*: The Word of the Command’, p. 58.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid*, p. 58.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid*, p. 58.

<sup>48</sup> Bates uses the Gregory Dix’s explanation of the eschatological nature of the *Sursum Corda* as a starting point for his argument. See Dix’s work, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, p. 127 and J.A.T. Robinson’s work, *Twelve New Testament Studies*, Studies in Biblical Theology 34 (London , SCM

gathered on Sunday as a ‘rehearsal anticipating the day of the Lord and their own part in it.’<sup>49</sup> Advancing his argument, Bates explains the following regarding early Christian communities:

They met regularly and frequently to rehearse their part in welcoming the Lord on his return. On no account were they to forsake “the assembling of themselves together” (Heb. 10:25). They were the official designation constituted to offer the solemn and formal welcome on the great occasion. Everything must go according to plan. They are to be ready to respond promptly to the call “Hearts on high,” when the Lord is revealed from heaven. Until that day they can only rehearse in anticipation to ensure that, as far as they are able, everything goes without a hitch at that, as far as they are able, everything goes without a hitch at that supreme and final moment.<sup>50</sup>

However, this seems to diminish any eschatological dimensions of the Celebration.

Acknowledging this concern, Bates briefly incorporates an explanation of the relationship between the Eucharist and the already and not yet:

One day, soon perhaps, the rehearsal and the actual performance are going to coincide. We are, of course, speaking in “figures,” which is all that we can do, and “figures” have their limits. Time and eternity intersect at the point of the eucharistic oblation, so that “now” and “then” are no longer entirely appropriate. It is rather a case of “the hour is coming and now is.”<sup>51</sup>

In order to strengthen his argument, he emphasizes the proper interpretation of the original textual form and translation of the Latin and Greek versions of the *Sursum Corda* (*ανο τας καρδιας*), ‘...the basic force of the adverbs *sursum* and *ano*, and the prepositions *ad* and *pros* taking the accusative, indicate motion towards and not place where...the bidding is brusque and abrupt to the point of rudeness! The absence of a verb intensifies the urgency.’ His understanding of the Latin and Greek

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Press, 1962), pp. 154-157 also in *Journal of Theological Studies* 4 (1953) 38-41. Bates’ conclusion is similar to that of G.P. Wetter and T.F. Torrance. G. Wainwright’s notes, Wainwright notes that ‘G.P. Wetter suggested that the *Sursum corda* is in fact a summons to go meet the Lord who is about to make his cultic epiphany. T.F. Torrance seems to see the *Sursum corda* as epitomizing his view that the Eucharist is ‘an eschatological anticipation both of the Advent of the Son of Man and the rapture of the Church.’ Wainwright, following this notion, ‘draws a parallel with the words of Christ of the Lucan apocalypse: “Look up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near”, a redemption to brought by “the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory (Luke 21:27f) As cited in G. Wainwright’s work, *Eucharist and Eschatology* (Akron, OSL Publications, 2002), p. 91.

<sup>49</sup> Bates, ‘*Sursum Corda: The Word of the Command*’, p. 65.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid*, p. 66.

<sup>51</sup> Bates, ‘*Sursum Corda: The Word of the Command*’, p. 66.

is supported by Taft: ‘Alone, sursum corda – *ano tas kardias* is in both languages (Greek and Latin) an abrupt command (an imperative), with the ring of ‘eyes right!’ or ‘hands up!’ as Baumstark has pointed out ‘...Liturgies contain numerous such peremptory commands.’<sup>52</sup> Moreover, the stress for the gathered to be ready for the imminent return of Christ, i.e. the *parousia*, is found in *Apostolic Tradition* 41:10-16. The author describes the importance of rising to pray at midnight (we will look at the focal passages found in *Apostolic Tradition* 41:15-18):

Rising around midnight wash your hands with water, and pray... Therefore it is necessary to pray at this hour. For the elders who handed it on to us taught us thus, because at this hour all creation is still for a moment, so that they may praise the Lord: stars and trees and waters stop for an instant, and all the host of angels [that] ministers to him praises God at this hour together with the souls of the righteous. Therefore those who believe ought to take care to pray at this hour. Also bearing witness to this thing, the Lord says thus, “Behold, a shout was made about midnight of those saying, ‘Behold, the bridegroom comes; rise to meet him.’” And he goes on, saying, “Therefore watch; for you do not know at what hour he comes.” And likewise pray, getting up around cock-crow. For at that hour when the cock crew the sons of Israel denied Christ, whom we have known by faith, looking each day in hope for the appearing of eternal light at the resurrection of the dead. Therefore if you faithful act thus and keep them in your memory and teach them in turn and encourage the catechumens, you shall not undergo temptation, nor will you perish, for you shall have Christ always in your mind.<sup>53</sup>

In light of the ‘Lord’s words’ included in the *Apostolic Tradition*, the Lord may return at any hour. If they, as exhorted by Hippolytus, prayed the ‘hours,’ then they will be found alert when the Lord returns. Therefore, if *Sursum corda* was a command to prepare the hearts of the faithful for the return of Christ, it seems logical to assume it would be included in the preparatory acts of the gathered, outside of the Eucharist, as well as, arguably, in the individual instructions.

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<sup>52</sup> Bates refers to similar translations and arguments put forth by Taft (Taft II, p. 48) and A. Baumstark in Bouman, ‘Variants’, p. 106.

<sup>53</sup> *On the Apostolic Tradition*, translation by Alistair Stewart-Sykes (Crestwood, SVS Press, 2001), pp.165-166.

However, there is no evidence that suggest, at this time, the *Sursum corda* was included in services other than the Eucharist. Moreover, in his commentary on *Daniel*, the oldest extant scriptural commentary, Hippolytus (assuming he is the author) espouses the tradition that the reign of the Antichrist and the end of the world will come six thousand years after creation...He concludes the end will not come until five hundred years after Christ's birth (4.23f.). After this will come a "Sabbath": "the future Kingdom of Saints, when they will reign with Christ after his coming from heaven, as John narrates in the Apocalypse" (4.23).<sup>54</sup> Therefore, if the time is already known then those gathered for the Eucharist are preparing for something that is not imminent...so why practice? Moreover, employing his own logic, 'Hearts up!' seems to be an odd choice of words to use as a summons signaling the Lord's return.

Bates does not pursue the liturgical meaning of the *Sursum corda* outside the *Apostolic Tradition*. However, his argument referring to Cyprian's understanding of the command as already a derivation of the original use set forth by Hippolytus is preliminary. It suggests that there was only one function ascribed to the liturgical action in the early third century. Moreover, Bates conclusion that the *Sursum Corda* was a fixed part of the liturgy by the fourth century should not be necessarily taken to mean the meaning was fixed as well.

### **E. Lash – Hearts on High!**

Lash's work on the *Sursum Corda* is mainly concerned with the proper translation of the phrase. However, his conclusion contains theological implications relevant to our study. He notes, 'The earliest evidence we have for the whole

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<sup>54</sup> W. Brian Shelton, *Martyrdom from Exegesis in Hippolytus: An Early Church Presbyter's Commentary on Daniel* (Eugene, Wipf & Stock, 2008), p. 140.

dialogue is the *Apostolic Tradition* of Hippolytus, of which the Greek can be confidently reconstructed ‘On high the hearts...’<sup>55</sup> He continues by discussing the variations found within early texts including but not limited to the following: the *Apostolic Constitutions* which reads ‘On high the mind,’ and the Barberini codex of the late eight century that includes a verb and he translates, ‘On high let us have the hearts.’<sup>56</sup> Following, Lash compares how various Fathers in their commentaries on the command stress where the heart should be or the idea of ‘lifting’ it up. He sees early writers, like Cyprian of Carthage, Cyril of Jerusalem, John Chrysostom, Theodore of Mopsuestia and Augustine of Hippo stressing the former and later Greek Fathers, Anastasios of Sinai and Germanos, emphasizing the later. His observations regarding the textual change may provide us insight into how and if the meaning of the command shifted immediately after the scope of our study.<sup>57</sup>

He concludes his study by arguing ‘the key word in this invitation by the priest is Ἄνω ‘on high’ or ‘above’, which can mean both ‘up’ and ‘upwards,’ the latter normally with verbs of motion.’<sup>58</sup> After reviewing various ‘important’ biblical passages, he argues that when the word Ἄνω is used it is referring to heaven in the New Testament. Therefore, the *Sursum Corda* is referencing the need for the heart or mind to be in heaven. Lash concludes that he ‘is not happy with a translation of the Liturgy that does not translate the word ἀνω in the opening dialogue of the anaphora.’<sup>59</sup> He continues by explaining ‘a strict literal rendering would be, ‘Let us have our hearts on high here and now. The verb is aorist subjunctive, indicating a particular and immediate action. For reasons of euphony something like:

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<sup>55</sup> E. Lash, ‘*Sursum corda* – The Meaning of a Dialogue’, *Sobornost*, Volume 18, Issue 1: 1996, pp. 19.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid*, p. 20.

<sup>57</sup> This question will be explored in Chapter 9 and future areas of research will be suggested.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid*, p. 25.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid*, p. 26.

Let our hearts be on high

We have them with the Lord

This translation seems to convey the meaning of the command more accurately than the familiar, ‘Let us lift up our hearts.’<sup>60</sup> Lash believes his translation reflects the commentaries by the Fathers considered and, therefore, the living theological tradition of the Church.<sup>61</sup> Thus, for Lash, the *Sursum Corda* is an invitation for the heart to be focused on heavenly things, i.e. Christ during the Eucharist. We will revisit and critique Lash’s conclusions later in our study.

The aforementioned scholars address the theological meaning of the *Sursum Corda* within the limitations of their respective studies. Their primary concern is to discover what the original ritual action and function of the command was in the third century. There seems to be, as referenced in our overview, a consensus among the academics considered that the *Sursum Corda* is connected to the *orans* posture of prayer. However, this seems premature as the majority of evidence set forth speaks to standing to pray and not directly to the ritual position of the *orans*. Regarding function and meaning, their arguments are diverse without any direct reference to the rite of baptism. Therefore, there is a need review their period of consideration and expand it in an effort to better understand the meaning of the *Sursum Corda* in the third to fifth centuries and how it relates to the sacrament of entrance into the Church.

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid, p. 26.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid, p. 26.

## Section 1 – Ritual Considerations of the *Sursum Corda*

### Chapter 1

#### Ritual Texts – *Sursum Corda*: ‘Hearts on High!’ and ‘Minds on High!’

##### Introduction

The primary purpose of Section 1 of our study is to set forth how the ritual texts of the *Sursum Corda* found within the *Apostolic Tradition* and the *Anaphora of Addai and Mari*, the *orans* posture of prayer and the social setting of the Eucharist during our period of consideration all relate to the thematic relationship between the command and the mystery of baptism.<sup>62</sup> In this chapter, the primary objective is to answer some preliminary questions regarding the phrase ‘Hearts on high’, as found in the text of the *Apostolic Tradition* (215 A.D.), and its Syriac equivalent, ‘Minds on high’, in the *Anaphora of Addai and Mari* (third century A.D.).<sup>63</sup> Due to the fact that the first reference to the liturgical use of the *Sursum Corda* is in the *Apostolic Tradition*, it is necessary to discuss the questions of authorship and origin of the document as well as the liturgical form, textual structure and translation of the Latin phrase *Sursum corda*. With these considerations in mind, we will approach the *Anaphora of Addai and Mari* in a similar manner. Specific attention will be focused on the heavenly language found in the Eucharistic Prayer which, contrary to that of the *Apostolic Tradition*, includes the *Sanctus* – the thrice holy hymn of the angelic hosts. Our conclusions regarding the priestly exhortation in these two documents will be foundational to the rest of our study.

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<sup>62</sup> See E. Ferguson’s work, *Baptism in the Early Church: History, Theology, and Liturgy in the First Five Centuries* (Grand Rapids, William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2009) for an overview of the theological development of baptism during our scope of study.

<sup>63</sup> Throughout our study the terms ‘anaphora’ and ‘Eucharistic Prayer’ will be used interchangeably.

## The *Sursum Corda* in the *Apostolic Tradition*

### Authorship and Origin

The anonymous work entitled *On the Apostolic Tradition* (*Apostolic Tradition*) contains the first known accounts of the *Sursum Corda* in the Eucharistic prayer.<sup>64</sup> Since the sixteenth century, the majority of scholars attributed the work to Hippolytus – a third century bishop of Rome. However, churchmen<sup>65</sup>, according to J.A. Cerrato<sup>66</sup>, since the fifth century, have speculated as to who Hippolytus actually was and what constituted his corpus of writings. According to P. Bradshaw, who argues the *Apostolic Tradition* contains material of separate sources ranging from the middle second to the fourth century, notes modern scholarship has linked the *Apostolic Tradition* to Hippolytus for two reasons: First, its close literary structure with two other documents that do bear his name: The *Canons of Hippolytus* and the *Epitome of Apostolic Constitutions* 8, which introduces a subheading, ‘Constitutions of the Holy Apostles concerning Ordinations through Hippolytus.’<sup>67</sup> Second, the opening section of the document speaks of having ‘set down those things that were worthy of note about the gifts that God from the beginning according to his own will

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<sup>64</sup> This chapter seeks to answer contextual questions regarding the *Apostolic Tradition* in order to gain a better understanding of the *Sursum Corda* found within it.

<sup>65</sup> There is a vast amount of scholarship regarding the origins and authorship of the *Apostolic Tradition*. Therefore, reference will be made only to certain works that are relevant to our study.

<sup>66</sup> J.A. Cerrato, *Hippolytus Between East and West* (Oxford, OUP, 2002), pp. 3-5.

<sup>67</sup> P. Bradshaw, as referenced, believes the authorship and dating of the *Apostolic Tradition* are under suspicion. He argues, ‘No existing manuscript bears a title for the work, and it was really the attribution to Hippolytus of two of the derived church orders (the *Epitome of Apostolic Constitutions* 8 and the *Canons of Hippolytus*) that encouraged the identification of this document with that author, as well as the prologue and epilogue of the work apparently using the expression ‘apostolic tradition’ – see his work, *The Search for the Origins of Christian Worship* (Oxford, OUP, 2002), pp. 78-81. Also, see Gregory Dix’s works, *The Treatise on the Apostolic Tradition of St. Hippolytus*, (London, 1937); 2<sup>nd</sup> edn with preface and corrections by Henry Chadwick (London, Ridgefield, CT, 1992), and *The Shape of the Liturgy*, p. 157-162. Dix’s attribution of the *Apostolic Tradition* to Hippolytus is based on the work of E. Schwartz, *Über die pseudo apostolischen Kirchenordnungen*, *Schriften der wissenschaftlichen Gesellschaft im Strassburg*, 6 (Strassburg, K.J. Trubner, 1910), and R. H. Connolly, *The So-Called Egyptian Church Order and Derived Documents*, *Texts and Studies*, 8-4 (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1916) who assigned authorship to Hippolytus following the scholarship of Eduard von der Goltz, ‘Unbekannte Fragmente altchristlicher Gemeindefordnungen nach G. Horners englische Ausgabe des äthiopischen Kirchenrechtsbuchs’, *Sitzungsberichte der Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften* (Berlin, Gedruckt in der Reichsdruckerei, 1906), 141-157.

bestowed on human beings, presenting to himself that image which had gone astray.’<sup>68</sup> Moreover, similar introductory comments are made in the other works that include the name Hippolytus or are considered to be reliant upon the *Apostolic Tradition: Apostolic Constitutions 8.3.1-2, Canons of Hippolytus 1* and *Testamentum Domini 1:14*. In conjunction with the aforementioned, the final chapter of the *Apostolic Tradition* (43) includes the following exhortation, “I give instruction that these things be kept by all the wise. For to all who hear the apostolic tradition.”<sup>69</sup> Thus, there seems to be primary textual evidence to support Hippolytan authorship of this document as well as the first direct reference to the liturgical phrase *Sursum Corda*. However, it should be noted, this conclusion is not without question among scholars.

In the sixteenth century, the famous renaissance antiquarian, Pirro Ligorio (1500-1583) discovered what he was to eventually refer to as the ‘Statue of St. Hippolytus’. On the right hand of the plinth of the curved back of the chair is a list of literary works attributed to him. Included in this list is a reference to the *Apostolic Tradition*. This discovery, for many at this time, including the Vatican who had the statute placed in the Vatican Library where it still resides today, confirmed Hippolytan authorship of the *Apostolic Tradition*. Per contra, recent scholarship suggests there are problems regarding the identification of the statue and, therefore, the inscription linking the writing to Hippolytus.<sup>70</sup> A. Brent, relying on the ‘two authors theory’ and building on the foundation established by E.A. Judge<sup>71</sup> recently

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<sup>68</sup> Bradshaw, *The Search for the origins of Christian Worship*, p. 2. It must be noted that Bradshaw did not support a ‘Hippolytan’ authorship but saw AT as a collection of fourth century fragments.

<sup>69</sup> The Translation is taken from P. Bradshaw, M. Johnson and L. Phillips work *The Apostolic Tradition: A Commentary* (Minneapolis, Augsburg Fortress, 2002), p. 222.

<sup>70</sup> For an in-depth study of the issues regarding the so called statute of Hippolytus and the ensuing questions regarding the corpus of writings attributed to him, see Allen Brent’s work, *Hippolytus and the Roman Church in the Third Century* (New York, E.J. Brill, 1995).

<sup>71</sup> E.A. Judge, ‘The Early Christians as a Scholastic Community I’, in *JRH* 1 (1960), pp. 4-15; ‘The Early Christians as a Scholastic Community II’, in *JRH* 2 (1961), pp. 125-137.

argued the *Apostolic Tradition* represents the work of a community of house Churches, i.e. a school of theology.<sup>72 73</sup> This theory is also supported by A. Stewart-Sykes who writes, in reference to the alleged two authors of the document, ‘The first worked over, and included, much traditional material. The second worked over the material left by the first!’<sup>74</sup> Furthermore, J.A. Cerrato, after exploring textual themes and doctrines that he believes emanate from Asia Minor, concludes that some of the commentary ascribed to Hippolytus is not of Roman origin.<sup>75</sup> These issues are important to our study for the reason that if the *Apostolic Tradition* was authored by Hippolytus it is a witness of a Roman<sup>76</sup> Eucharistic service that is very close to one described earlier by Justin around 150 A.D. Consequently, this may date the *Sursum Corda* even earlier albeit without direct textual evidence. Moreover, it connects us to third century Roman catacomb Eucharistic images. It also connects the Latin texts (*Sursum Corda*) of Rome to that used later by Cyprian of Carthage and Augustine of Hippo.<sup>77 78</sup> Thus, we have a witness to the command within the Roman Empire throughout the scope of our work. If it is not of Roman origin, it still provides the earliest record we have of the opening dialogue of the anaphora, and, therefore, is central to our study.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> A. Brent, *Hippolytus and the Roman Church in the Third Century*, pp. 302.

<sup>73</sup> For an overview of this theory, see Alistair Stewart-Sykes commentary on the “school theory” in *Hippolytus: On the Apostolic Tradition* (Crestwood, SVS, 2001), pp. 11-49

<sup>74</sup> A. Stewart-Sykes, *On the Apostolic Tradition* (Crestwood, SVS, 2001), p. 31. P. Bradshaw challenges his conclusions. See Bradshaw’s article, ‘Who Wrote the Apostolic Tradition? A Response to Alistair Stewart-Sykes’ in the *St. Vladimir’s Theological Quarterly*, Vol. 48, Num. 2-3, 2004, pp. 195 – 206.

<sup>75</sup> J.A. Cerrato, *Hippolytus between East and West. The Commentaries and the Provenance of the Corpus* (Oxford, OUP, 2002). p. 217.

<sup>76</sup> L. Bouyer, *Eucharist, Eucharist: Theology and Spirituality of the Eucharistic Prayer* (Notre Dame, The University of Notre Dame Press, 1966), p. 188-189 suggests that if Hippolytus did write the *Apostolic Tradition* it is doubtful it represented the true Roman tradition.

<sup>77</sup> R.C.D. Jasper and G.J. Cuming, *Prayers of the Eucharist* (Collegeville, The Liturgical Press, 1990), p. 31.

<sup>78</sup> The antiquity of the *Apostolic Tradition* is validated by parallel terms.

<sup>79</sup> The Eucharistic Prayer in the *Apostolic Tradition* contains references to Jesus as the ‘Child’ of God and the ‘angel’ God’s will. These descriptions of Christ are only found in early works dated no later than the mid second- century: *Didache*, *1 Clement*, *Barnabas* and the *Martyrdom of Polycarp*.

In conclusion, the words of J. Jungmann, regarding the contemporary Roman liturgy, may set forth the most convincing argument for the Roman origin of the introductory dialogue that includes the *Sursum Corda* in the *Apostolic Tradition*, ‘In this section of the Roman Mass the heritage of the ancient Church has been preserved with special fidelity also in regard to the simple form of the text, which still retains the dialogue, almost word for word as found in Hippolytus. There are none of those additions or expansions which in other liturgies partly disguise the concise exclamations...Even the *Sursum corda* has elsewhere undergone enlargments.’<sup>80</sup> While the question of who wrote the *Apostolic Tradition* may yet to be resolved among scholars, the primary textual evidence we considered in conjunction with the liturgical preservation of the texts within the Latin Church presents a strong enough argument for us to conclude that Hippolytus penned the *Apostolic Tradition* in the early third century. And his is the first witness to the liturgical use of the phrase *Sursum Corda* in Rome.

### ***Sursum Corda* as Part of the Accepted *Ορθόδοξος* Formula**

In the third century A.D., the bishop had the freedom to create the Eucharistic Prayer extemporaneously if he so desired. However, the prayer offered had to be *Ορθόδοξος* in nature. After discussing issues regarding ordination of presbyters and deacons, Hippolytus gives his instruction:

And the bishop shall give thanks according to what we said before. It is not all necessary for him to repeat the same words that we said before, as if recited by rote giving thanks to God, but according to each one’s own ability he shall pray. If, on the one hand, he prays and recites a prayer briefly, no one hinder him, only let him pray being sound in orthodoxy.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> J. Jungmann, S.J., *The Mass of the Roman Rite: Its Origins and Developments*, Vol. 2, trans. F. Brunner (Kill Lane, Four Courts Press, LTD, 1986), p.113.

<sup>81</sup> Translation taken from the Sahidic version found in P. Bradshaw’s commentary, *The Apostolic Tradition*, p. 68.

According to A. Bouley, ‘Hippolytus<sup>82</sup> provides his text of the *anaphora* not in the interest of liturgical uniformity or fixity, but in order to give an example of a correctly formed and doctrinally orthodox prayer.’<sup>83</sup> From this instruction, we can conclude freedom exists for the bishop to improvise the Eucharistic Prayer, but there are certain elements that are known and necessary for it to be considered acceptable.<sup>84</sup>

The earliest commentary regarding the liberty of the bishop to improvise the Eucharistic Prayer is found in Justin Martyr’s *First Apology* (67.5). Here he describes an ordinary Sunday Eucharist in Rome around 150 A.D.:

67.3-5, 8: And on the day called ‘of the Sun’ an assembly is held in one place of all the living in town or country, and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read for as long as time allows. Then we all stand up together and send up prayers, bread and wine and water are brought, and *the president likewise sends up prayers and thanksgivings according to his ability*, and the people assent with the Amen. And the distribution and participation by everyone in those things over which thanks have been given takes place; and they are sent to those not present through the deacons....And we all make assembly together on Sunday, because it is the first day, on which God, having transformed the darkness and matter, made the world; and Jesus Christ our Savior rose from the dead the same day; for they crucified him the day before Saturday; and the day after Saturday, which is Sunday, appearing to his apostles and disciples, he taught these things which we have also presented for your consideration.<sup>85</sup>

We see the instructional comments made by Hippolytus echo the description of the Eucharistic Prayer described by Justin. The bishop (president) prays to the best of his

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<sup>82</sup> B. Botte, stresses the point that the *anaphora* found within the *Apostolic Tradition* is an individual work of Hippolytus and not the formal Roman Missa, ‘C’est une formule composée à Rome, ce n’est pas la formule de la messe romaine.’ See his work, *Tradition Apostolique*, (Munster, Westfallen, Aschendorffsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1963), p. XV. Bouyer argues a similar conclusion – see his work, *Eucharist* (Notre Dame, The University of Notre Dame Press, 1966), pp. 181-182.

<sup>83</sup> A. Bouley, *From Freedom to Formula: The Evolution of the Eucharistic Prayer from Oral Improvisation to Written Texts* (Washington, DC., Catholic University Press, 1981), p. 126.

<sup>84</sup> C.A. Bouman sees this freedom of improvisation in the West coming to an end in the time of Gregory the Great, when the urban rite was fully established, and in the East it ended around the 8<sup>th</sup> century. See his work, ‘Variants in the Introduction to the Eucharistic Prayer,’ p. 110.

<sup>85</sup> Translation taken from P. Bradshaw’s work, *Eucharistic Origins* (Oxford, OUP, 2004), pp. 62-63.

ability, and, according to *I Apology* 65<sup>86</sup> and *Dialogue with Trypho* 117<sup>87</sup>, the prayer offered contains certain known elements.<sup>88</sup> A. Bouley, in his summary of Justin's writings regarding the Eucharist, concludes,

In sum, then, the eucharistic prayer familiar to Justin was a unified prayer of some length addressed to the Father through the Son and Holy Spirit. It included principally prayers (praises) and thanksgivings for creation, for all God's gifts and for redemption from sin and evil through Christ, being a remembrance of his passion. Perhaps an institution account was included. The information which Justin gives, though quite general, strongly suggests that the Eucharistic prayer was typical or predictable. He is clear on the kind of prayer it is, and he is confident concerning some of its principal content and its purpose. He is able to sum up in a few brief sentences the tenor of the prayer because he knows how it is customarily formulated. All of these elements – kind of prayer, key content, and customary formulation – cannot be totally separated from the framework or structure of the prayer as a whole because all are inextricably joined together. Therefore, the prayer that Justin knows as typical also implies a typical pattern or structure.<sup>89</sup>

Irenaeus in his *Adversus Haereses* (1.7.2) communicates a similar idea, although from silence, when he does not correct the prayer offered by - the Valentinian Gnostic, Marcus<sup>90</sup>; and Tertullian, in contrast to official ceremonies of the Roman religion where a prompter was employed on public occasions to ensure that the proper formulae was correctly repeated, says that Christians pray 'with hands outstretched because they are innocent, with head uncovered, because we are not ashamed, finally without a prompter because we pray from the heart.'" (*Apologeticus*

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<sup>86</sup> 'Then there is brought to the Ruler of the Brethren bread and a cup of water and [a cup] of wine mixed with water, and he taking them sends up praise and glory to the Father of the Universe through the name of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and offers thanksgiving at some length for our being accounted worthy to receive these things from Him. When he has completed the prayers and the thanksgiving, all the people present assent by saying, Amen.' Text and translation taken from L. Bernard, *Ancient Christian Writers – The First and Second Apologies* (New York, Paulist Press, 1997), p. 70.

<sup>87</sup> 117.1 ... 'I myself also say prayers and thanksgivings made by worthy men are the only sacrifices that are perfect and well-pleasing to God. For these alone have been handed down by Christians to do even for a remembrance of their solid and liquid food, in which they remember the suffering which the Son of God suffered for them.' Text and translation taken from Cummings, *Prayers of the Eucharist*, p. 28.

<sup>88</sup> See Bouley's work, *From Freedom to Formula*, pp. 113 -114 where he discusses in detail the elements of Justin's prayer.

<sup>89</sup> A. Bouley, *Freedom to Formula*, pp. 115-116.

<sup>90</sup> A. Bouley, *Freedom to Formula*, p. 132-133.

30.4).<sup>91</sup> Therefore, it seems that at the time the *Apostolic Tradition* was written, the bishop delivered the Eucharistic Prayer to the best of his ability or used a set form. In both cases, regardless, the prayer had to be orthodox in nature (according to a known and acceptable theological/liturgical formula).

Due to fact that Hippolytus exhorts others to follow his own form of Eucharistic Prayer, we can conclude he believed his prayer to fall within the perimeters of ‘right teaching.’ In turn, the opening dialogue, namely the *Sursum Corda*, is also understood to be part of the orthodox and customary formula. This argument is given further credence by the fact that going forward it is found in nearly all Eucharistic liturgies.

### **Questions Regarding the Tripartite Structure of the Introductory Dialogue**

The origin of the tripartite structure of the opening dialogue of the Eucharistic Prayer in the *Apostolic Tradition* is unknown.<sup>92</sup> L. Bouyer sees it as having Semitic origins and being uniquely Christian.<sup>93</sup> Throughout history, when the liturgical texts present themselves, or when reference is made to them in sermons or other didactic writings, it normally appears in this form: the peace<sup>94</sup>, response, *Sursum Corda*, response, thanksgiving, and response. Bouman comments on the influence the introductory dialogue of Hippolytus had outside of Rome:

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<sup>91</sup> R.P.C Hanson believes in this context, ‘Tertullian is speaking of praying for the Emperor, and it seems likely that he is referring to Christian public prayer, i.e. the celebration of the Eucharist, because nobody could imagine that a monitor would be required in private prayer.’ See his work, ‘The Liberty of the Bishop to Improvise Prayer in the Eucharist,’ in *VC*, Vol.15, No. 3. (September, 1961), pp. 173-176.

<sup>92</sup> Brightman, who searched extensively for all biblical allusions in the liturgies, put forth Lamentations 3:41 as possible source. In the LXX, as pointed out by Lash, it runs, ‘Let us lift up our hearts and our hands to the sublime one in heaven’. ‘Let us lift up our hearts’ is a precise translation of the Greek of Lamentations. However, along with other proposed biblical origins like Colossians 3:1-2, the grammatical structure does not allow for a biblical conclusion in regards to origin, however, the concept is clearly derived or consistent with scriptural themes. We will see throughout our work, the theological meaning of the exhortation see is connected to the rite of baptism and heavenly citizenship.

<sup>93</sup> Louis Boyer, *Eucharist* (Notre Dame, The University of Notre Dame Press, 1966), p. 181.

<sup>94</sup> For further study on how ‘the peace’ theologically connects with the *Sursum corda*, see H. Bates discussion in ‘*Sursum corda*’, pp. 54-56.

In the first place we may state that the fact that the division of Hippolytus' dialogue in three parts exactly agrees with the division we find in the oldest texts of these acclamations (since the 4<sup>th</sup> century A.D.). Where and when then these texts have been explained and written down, they appear in their tripartite form... This statement is also important for this reason that it is – together with the fact that the exhortation to the eucharistia (the third member of the dialogue) has been borrowed from the synagogical liturgy – the only basis we have for some conclusion regarding the antiquity and the origin of the dialogue. This basis however is amply sufficient to justify the statement, that a dialogue, divided into a blessing and two exhortations, already at the time if not from the beginning, formed the introduction to the Eucharistic prayer.<sup>95</sup>

He further suggests that this structure has been borrowed from the synagogical liturgy, and provides the only basis we have for some conclusion regarding the antiquity of the dialogue.<sup>96</sup> Others, notably G. Dix<sup>97</sup>, J. Jeremias<sup>98</sup>, and E. Mazza<sup>99</sup> have argued that the Eucharistic Prayer is an adaption of the Jewish grace after meals, the *Birkat ha-mazon*. R.T. Beckwith believes the long grace, which combines praise and petition in the *baraitas* (*Jer. Berakoth* 7.2; and *Bab. Berakoth* 48b) is a possible model for Hippolytus' unified Eucharistic Prayer, if linked with the blessings of creation, revelation and redemption in the *Shema*.<sup>100</sup> Recently, P. Bradshaw and A. Gelston have argued against these conclusions. Bradshaw denies the relationship between the proposed Jewish antecedent and the dialogue of the *anaphora*:

Many scholars have claimed that the prayer bears the marks of the Jewish grace after meals, the *Birkat ha-mazon*. But even if we prescind from the question as to whether this Jewish prayer existed at this early period in the form in which we know it from later sources, the connection between the two amounts to nothing more than that both offer thanksgiving to God and make petitions for something, albeit in very different ways and with very different literary structures. These are simply not close enough similarities to posit a

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<sup>95</sup> Ibid, p. 98.

<sup>96</sup> See Bouman, p. 97 and A. Baumstauck, *Liturgie compare*, Chevetogne 1939, p. 51.

<sup>97</sup> Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, p. 50. Cf. W.O.E. Osterly, *Jewish Background of the Christian Liturgy*, (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1925), pp. 158-192.

<sup>98</sup> J. Jeremias, *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus* (Philadelphia, Fortress Press, 1966), p. 110.

<sup>99</sup> E. Mazza, *The Origins of the Eucharistic Prayer* (Collegeville, The Liturgical Press, 1995), p. 153 ff.

<sup>100</sup> As noted in C. Jones, G. Wainwright, E. Yarnold, and P. Bradshaw (New York, OUP, 1992), pp. 76-78.

direct link between the two, however much those trying to trace the evolution of Eucharistic prayers would like to find one in order to show the continuity from the apostolic age to the fourth century.<sup>101</sup>

Bradshaw is correct in his observation. The Christian Eucharist, in contrast to the form of the Jewish meal prayers, blesses the bread and cup before they are consumed, and the thematic resemblances between the two prayers are very limited.<sup>102</sup> Gelston's comments regarding the date of the Jewish sources support Bradshaw's conclusions, 'The *Mishnah* that contains the earliest practices of Rabbinical Judaism did not reach its definitive form until the end of the second-century A.D.'<sup>103</sup> Therefore, while the Eucharistic Prayer resembles Jewish meal prayers in structure, these forms may have developed alongside the Christian ceremony, not prior to it. Furthermore, as noted by Bradshaw, if we conclude that the *preface* does have Jewish origins this still does not give us any further insight into the meaning of the *Sursum corda*.

While scholars debate the amount of influence, if any, the Jewish meal prayers had on the development of the Christian Eucharistic Prayer, they do seem to agree, again, that the *Sursum Corda* is unique to Christianity and does not have a Jewish or pagan precedent.<sup>104</sup> E. Ferguson comments, 'Josef Jungmann says concerning the middle phrase, "The precise origin of this preliminary *sursum corda*

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<sup>101</sup> Paul Bradshaw, *The Apostolic Tradition*, p. 44.

<sup>102</sup> T. Talley proposes the same conclusion as Bradshaw, but his article, 'From Berakah to Eucharistia: A Reopening of the Question' is a more in-depth study of the subject matter. See his work in *Worship*, Vol. 50, No.2, 1976, pp. 115-137.

<sup>103</sup> For detailed discussion regarding the development of the *Mishnah* and its relation to the Eucharistic Prayer, see Gelston's work, *The Eucharistic Prayer of Addai and Mari* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 2002), p. 2-4.

<sup>104</sup> The Greek Magical Papyri Mimaout contains language that is similar to the EP. The disciple is to invoke the Sun and ask him to fulfill his prayers, saying: '...thou who hearest my every petition, grant that my word may be trusted...I beseech thee, O king, hear my request, for thou hast bidden me lift up my soul to thee... I beseech thee, O Lord, this request of mine, this supplication, this presentation of myself, the lifting up (offering?) of my vocal spirit: may it come to thee, the lord of all, that thou mayest fulfill all that is in my prayer. We thank thee with our whole soul, in hearts lifted up to thee.'<sup>104</sup> See A.D Nock, 'Greek Magical Papyri,' *JEA*, Vol. 15, No. ¾ (Nov., 1929), pp. 230-231.

is not known.”<sup>105</sup> This supports the earlier conclusion of G. Dix, who, in his comparison of the Eucharistic Prayer to the Jewish meal blessings, writes:

The second V and R (?) ‘Lift up your hearts’, ‘We lift them up unto the Lord’ appear to be purely Christian in origin; the V is more idiomatic in Greek than in Latin, the R is more idiomatic in Latin than in Greek, which may be a sign of where they were invented. But they are found in all Greek liturgies as well as the Latin ones, and are indeed first attested in Greek, by Hippolytus. They are quite certainly part of the primeval core of the liturgical eucharist; and their character is another slight indication that the first formation of the ‘four-action shape’ of this took place in bilingual Rome, and spread thence all over Christendom.<sup>106</sup>

Concurring with other scholars, R. Taft explains, ‘Today most would agree that *sursum corda habemus ad dominum* is a Christian composition without precedent in Jewish worship.’<sup>107</sup> If this is the case, then it arguably has a unique meaning to the Christian Eucharistic liturgy. This is further evidenced by *Apostolic Tradition* 4 and 25.

### **The *Sursum Corda* in *Apostolic Tradition* 4 and 25**

The Eucharistic Prayer in the *Apostolic Tradition* 4 is extant in Latin, Coptic, Arabic and Ethiopic and in the adaptations mentioned previously - *The Canons of Hippolytus*, *The Apostolic Constitutions*, and the *Testamentum Domini*. But the original Greek text is not complete.<sup>108</sup> The following opening dialogue that takes place after the ordination of a new bishop is taken from the palimpsest of *Verona*, the Latin<sup>109</sup> translation of the original Greek.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> Josef Jungman, *The Mass of the Roman Rite* (London, 1959), p. 369, as referenced by Ferguson.

<sup>106</sup> D.Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, pp. 126-127.

<sup>107</sup> Taft II, p. 64.

<sup>108</sup> See B. Botte, *La Tradition apostolique de S. Hippolyte. Essai de reconstitution*, 4<sup>th</sup> edn. (LQF 39, Munster, 1972) for an early critical review of the text that was central to the formation of modern scholarship pertaining to the *Apostolic Tradition*.

<sup>109</sup> Bouman considers this to be ‘the true Latin translation of the Greek original, as it was used in Rome during the pontificate of Zephyrinus (ca. 215 A.D.) – see. Bouman, p. 96. Cf. A.F. Walls, ‘The Latin Version of Hippolytus’ *Apostolic Tradition*, *SP*, Vol. 3 (1961), pp. 155-162.

<sup>110</sup> According to Taft, most scholars agree that *Sursum corda habemus ad dominum* is a Christian composition without precedent in Jewish worship. But there is less agreement as to its original language. After surveying recent scholarship regarding the argument, Taft concludes, ‘When all is

Priest: *dominus vobiscum.*

People: *et omnes dicant.*

Priest: *et cum spiritu tuo.*

Priest: *su<r>sum corda*<sup>111</sup>.

People: *habemus ad dominum,*

Priest: *gratias agamus domino.*

People: *dignum et iustum est.*

This responsive dialogue prior to the Eucharistic Prayer offered by the celebrant was liturgically unique in the early Church. It was one of the moments of the cult which was most strongly experienced by the congregation.<sup>112</sup> In order to see its place and how it connects thematically with what follows, and for later comparisons with the *Anaphora of Addai and Mari*, we need to include the complete text of the Eucharistic Prayer in our study. Following the introductory dialogue already set forth, the rubrics continue:

Priest: And then he shall continue thus:

We render thanks to you, O God, through your beloved child Jesus Christ, whom in the last times you sent to us as a savior and redeemer and angel of your will; who is your inseparable Word, through whom you made all things, and in whom you were well pleased. You sent him from heaven into a virgin's womb; and conceived in the womb, he was made flesh and was manifested as you Son, being born of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin. Fulfilling your will and gathering for you a holy people, he stretched out his hands when he should suffer, that he might release from suffering those who have believed in you.

And when he was betrayed to voluntary suffering that he might destroy death, and break the bonds of the devil, and tread down hell, and shine upon the righteous, and fix a term, and manifest the resurrection, he took bread and gave thanks to you, saying, "Take, eat; this is my body, which shall be

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said and done, therefore, I think that Greek was the original language of the entire dialogue, though I am not entirely comfortable with arguments from what can or cannot be said in a language.' For a detailed survey of the argument see Taft II, pp. 64-69.

<sup>111</sup> B. Botte, commenting on the exclusion of the r in *su<r>sum corda*, writes, 'La forme *susum*, bien que non attestée ailleurs, peut être une forme populaire de *sursum*. Refer to his work, *La Tradition apostolique de S. Hippolyte*, p. 13 footnote 1. The Greek translation of the Latin is *ανω τας καρδιας*.

<sup>112</sup> C.A. Bouman, *Variants*, p. 95.

broken for you.” Likewise also the cup, saying, “This is my blood, which is shed for you; when you do this, you make my remembrance.”

Remembering therefore his death and resurrection, we offer to you the bread and the cup, giving thanks because you have held us worthy to stand before you and minister to you.

And we ask that you would send your Holy Spirit upon the offering of your holy Church; that, gathering her into one, you would grant to all who receive the holy things (to receive) for the fullness of the Holy Spirit for the strengthening of faith in truth; that we may praise and glorify you through your child Jesus Christ; through whom be glory and honor to you, to the Father and the Son, with the Holy Spirit, in your holy Church, both now and to ages of ages. Amen.

We see in the above that there is a logical and liturgical continuum between the introductory dialogue and the Eucharistic Prayer in *Apostolic Tradition* 4. The celebrant (a new bishop in this case) and the people are prepared spiritually through responsive admonitions to offer thanks unto the Lord. And the celebrant articulates this collective sense of gratitude through his words of thanksgiving for God sending his child Jesus Christ as Savior and Redeemer. What is unique or rather absent from the Eucharistic Prayer in the *Apostolic Tradition*, as compared to that of the later Latin rite, is notably the *Sanctus*. The implications of ‘angelic silence’ will be discussed later in this chapter. Suffice to say at present, if the gathered are not singing the song of the angels (the thrice holy hymn), then they may have understood their assembly to be earthly in nature without any notion of heavenly ascent.<sup>113</sup> Therefore, the command, *Sursum Corda*, may have specifically ‘earthly’ implications – stop this or that action, pay attention, raise your thoughts, etc., as is befitting those who have received ‘forgiveness of sins through the laver of regeneration in the Holy Spirit’ (*Apostolic Tradition* 21.21).

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<sup>113</sup> This is not to say that the faithful in the Eucharistic service did not understand themselves to truly be in the presence of God. The celebrating bishop and or people as ‘standing before’ God and ministering but this may be at a liturgical distance. See Stewart-Sykes discussion on the term ‘ministrare’(minister) in his work *On The Apostolic Tradition*, p. 66.

The Latin palimpsest folia of the codex *Verona LV* (53) used above as our original source of the *Sursum Corda* has a pericope missing – *Apostolic Tradition* 25. It was reconstructed in modern editions of the *Apostolic Tradition* from a later source document, the Ethiopic version of the Alexandrian *Sinodus*, which discusses the *Sursum Corda* within the context of the *agape*:

When the evening has come, the bishop being there, the deacon shall bring in a lamp, and standing in the midst of the faithful, being about to give thanks, the bishop shall first give the salutation saying: ‘The Lord (be) with you.’ And the people also shall say: ‘With thy spirit.’ ‘Let us give thanks to the Lord.’ And they shall say: ‘Right and just, both greatness and exaltation with glory are due to him.’ And he shall not say: ‘Lift up your hearts’<sup>114</sup>, because that shall be said at the oblation.’<sup>115</sup>

Scholars disagree as to why the *Sursum Corda* is positively excluded in *Apostolic Tradition* 25.<sup>116</sup> Dix argues it was ‘confined strictly to use at the sacramental Eucharist, unlike other parts of the dialogue, and the reason is not far to seek. They are intended to remind the ecclesia that the real action of the eucharist takes place beyond time in ‘the age to come’, where God ‘has made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the age to come He might shew the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.’<sup>117</sup> Taft, arguing against Dix’s conclusion, refers to the use of the *Sursum Corda* in patristic commentaries and, in particular, by the non-Eucharistic references made by Hermas.<sup>118</sup> He concludes the more likely reason for omitting the *Sursum Corda* was the presence of

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<sup>114</sup> The correct translation should literally be ‘Up hearts’, or as A. Stewart-Sykes has suggested, ‘Hearts on high.’ (source).

<sup>115</sup> English translation by R.H. Connolly in his work, *The so-Called Egyptian Church Order and Derived Documents, Text and Studies* vol. VIII no. 4 (Cambridge, Cambridge, 1916), p. 188.

<sup>116</sup> A. Stewart-Sykes believes *Apostolic Tradition* 25 should not be seen as describing a distinction between this meal and the Eucharist, ‘for this phrase does not apply to the meal, but to the thanksgiving for the light. It is at the blessing of the lamp that “hearts on high” is not said. See his work, *The Apostolic Tradition*, p. 135.

<sup>117</sup> Dix, Shape, p. 127. Dix’s interpretation of the liturgical function of the *Sursum Corda* will be revisited later in our study.

<sup>118</sup> Taft does not reference the citation by Hermas here, but in his section entitled ‘Pre-liturgical Evidence’ he direct literary echoes in 18:9 (Vision III, 10:9): ‘double-mindedness makes you foolish, as well as not having your heart to the Lord.’ And in 40:6 (Mandate X, 1:6): ‘...they who...have the heart to the Lord understand and grasp all that is said to them.’ See Taft II, p. 63.

catechumens who could neither eat nor pray with baptized, ‘and were surely not yet considered as having their hearts above, with the Lord, the *Sursum corda* was not for them.’<sup>119</sup> E. Ferguson and F.J. Dölger have similar opinions arguing the *Sursum Corda* was not used at the agape because people were reclining at the table ready for the meal; therefore, they did not rise for the thanksgiving prayer. This is in contrast to the Eucharistic assembly where they did all stand together and the *Sursum Corda* was included in the dialogue.<sup>120</sup> What is consistent among the comments considered is the sacramental connection of the baptized to Christ (in the heavenlies) and their presence and participation in the liturgy.

### **The Correct English Translation of *Sursum Corda***

In order to demonstrate the diversity of English translations among the earliest documents that are textual witnesses to the original *Sursum corda* of the *Apostolic Tradition*, the following chart is taken from the work done by Bradshaw, Johnson and Phillips:<sup>121</sup>

<b>Latin</b>	<b>Sahidic</b>	<b>Arabic</b>	<b>Ethiopic</b>
Up [with your] hearts.	Up [with] heart.	Where are your hearts?	Lift up your heart.
<b>Apostolic Constitutions 8.5 9-10 Domini</b>	<b>Canons of Hippolytus</b>	<b>Testamentum Domini</b>	
Up with [your] mind.	Lift up your heart.	[Lift] up your hearts.	

The variety of these translations of the *Sursum Corda* demonstrates scholarly and grammatical reconstructions of the text in question. Two of the most referenced reconstructions are that of D. Dix and B. Botte. Dix’s reconstruction<sup>122</sup> and

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<sup>119</sup> Taft II, p. 72.

<sup>120</sup> Ferguson, ‘The Liturgical Function of the *Sursum Corda*’, p. 362 and F.J. Dölger, *Sol Salutis*, (1925), pp. 286 ff.

<sup>121</sup> Bradshaw, Johnson and Phillips, *The Apostolic Tradition*, pp. 38-39.

<sup>122</sup> D. Dix, *The Apostolic Tradition* (New York, The Macmillan Company, 1933), p. 7.

translation of *sursum* [*sic*] *corda*, ‘Lift up your hearts’ and P. Cobb’s English translation of Botte’s reconstruction of the text, ‘Let us lift up our hearts’ seems problematic.<sup>123</sup> Dix’s translation reflects later Western usage and Cobb’s version is equivalent to what is normally translated from the Greek *ανω σχομεν τας καρδιας* (the literal translation is ‘let us have our hearts on high’). This is, arguably, an Eastern fourth century translation of the phrase found in the writings and liturgy that bear the name of John Chrysostom.<sup>124</sup> This Greek rendering of *Sursum Corda* is first found in the earliest MS of the Byzantine liturgy, the *Codex Barberini* of the late eighth century. The Latin version used by Botte is taken from the palimpsest of *Verona*, as used in our presentation of the text earlier, is *su<r>sum corda* – again the earliest text we have of the *Apostolic Tradition*.<sup>125</sup> In order to maintain the integrity of the command, *Sursum Corda* should not be translated with the verb. Neither ‘lift up your hearts’ nor ‘let us lift our hearts’ accurately reflects the original Latin phrase nor the true Greek equivalent, ‘*ανω τας καρδιας*.’ This begs the question, then how should it be translated?

As mentioned in our review of current scholarship<sup>126</sup>, E. Lash, in his work prepared for Archbishop Gregorios’s committee for the translations of the Divine Liturgy in English (1994), wrote the Latin *sursum corda* can be confidently reconstructed as ‘On high the hearts’, in Greek. As noted, he believes what is central to the proper translation of the phrase is the word *ανω*. Lash understands the correct translation of *ano* to be ‘on high’ or ‘above’ - which he feels can mean both ‘up’ and

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<sup>123</sup> P. Cobb’s translation of Botte’s work is found in his essay ‘The Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus’ in Jones, *The Study of the Liturgy*, p. 213. The original text and commentary by Botte is found in *La Tradition apostolique. Texte latin, introduction, traduction, et notes. Sources chrétiennes* 11 (Paris, Cerf, 1946), pp. 12-17.

<sup>124</sup> This issue is debated among scholars and will be discussed in Chapter 8 of our study.

<sup>125</sup> Botte, *La Tradition Apostolique*, p. 12.

<sup>126</sup> In this section we will only take into consideration the recent work of E. Lash and H. Bates. The reason for this is these are the only two authors known who have focused considerable attention on how the *Sursum Corda* should be translated.

‘upwards’, the latter normally with verbs of motion.<sup>127</sup> He acknowledges it is not common in the Greek Bible, so to support his argument he writes the following:

In the OT it occurs a number of times in the phrase ‘in heaven above’ and ‘God in heaven above’. In these examples it is usually contrasted with the ‘earth below’ – *kato*. In the NT it occurs in some important passages, especially in the phrase *ta ano* ‘the things above’. In St. John’s Gospel Jesus says, ‘I am from the [things/places] above – *ek ton ano* (8:23) and St. Paul uses the expression twice in Colossians, ‘Seek *ta ano*’ and ‘Think *ta ano*’ (Col. 3:1-2). In Galatians he also contrasts the ‘Jerusalem *ano* with the earthly one (4:26). In two relevant passages it means ‘upwards’. In John 11:41 Jesus raises his eyes *ano*, and in Philippians St. Paul speaks of ‘the upward – *ano*- call of God’ (3:14). In these passages the word effectively means ‘heaven’; indeed NJB, NRSV and REB actually translate it ‘heavenly’ in Philippians... A strict literal rendering would be, ‘Let us have our hearts on high here and now.’ The verb is aorist subjunctive, indicating a particular and immediate action. For reasons of euphony something like:

Let our hearts be on high.

We have them with the Lord.

seems to convey the meaning of the original more accurately than the familiar ‘Let us lift our hearts. We lift them up to the Lord’. It also takes into account the living theological tradition of the Church, as expressed in the commentaries of the Fathers.<sup>128</sup>

The conclusion put forth by Lash represents a common Eastern understanding of the eschatological and heavenly nature of the Divine Liturgy. However, an argument can be made that *Sursum Corda* and *Ἄνω τὰς καρδίας* in the original context of *Apostolic Tradition* may not reflect the movement towards or the location where the sacrifice takes place. It may simply be a direct command. Lash’s example above includes a verb whereas the original Latin and direct Greek translations do not. Moreover, his grammatical insertions inspired by his concern for euphony may compromise the force of the *Sursum Corda* thereby confusing not only the original meaning but the intended ‘particular and immediate’ action. This is not to say Lash’s study does not shed light on our work. His use of the *Sursum Corda* as a means of contrasting the

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<sup>127</sup> Due to the importance of the translation of *Sursum Corda* to the rest of our study, Lash’s work is being revisited.

<sup>128</sup> Lash, pp. 25-26.

things above *ano* (heaven or heavenly) with the things below (earth) will be revisited later in our study when we explore the question of meaning. At present, we can conclude that Lash’s translation ‘Let our hearts be on high,’ although not a direct translation of *Sursum Corda*, is consistent with the biblical connotation of *ano* as it relates to Christ’s position as evidenced by the people’s response: ‘*habemus ad dominum.*’<sup>129</sup>

W. Hugh Bates, in response to Lash’s translation of the *Sursum Corda*, stresses the importance of the liturgical context of the phrase:

The version at least has the merit of correcting the familiar (Anglican) “Lift up your hearts,” with the implications of a misconceived distinction between president and people. On the other hand we may well wish to challenge the cohortative, “Let our hearts...” But it adds nothing to our understanding of the words’ meaning, and sheds no light on the rationale of the exchange. If the force of an expression is not unconnected with its setting in life we need to be able to understand the place of the phrase in the general context of the act of worship of which it is part in order to give its full sense.<sup>130</sup>

Bates uses Lash’s work as a way of preparing the reader for his forthcoming argument regarding the liturgical function of the *Sursum Corda*. In regards to his own understanding of how the phrase should be translated, he comments on the Latin structure of the sentence as follows:

As every schoolboy once knew, the basic force of the adverbs *sursum* and *ανο*, and the prepositions *ad* and *προς* taking the accusative, indicate motion towards and not place where<sup>131</sup> ... The bidding<sup>132</sup> is brusque and abrupt to the point of rudeness! The absence of a verb intensifies the urgency. This makes it almost impossible to offer an acceptable rendering. One simply does not speak to people in church like this any longer. Taft catches the mood accurately with “Hearts up!” Anton Baumstark characterizes the words as “*eine militarisches Kommando!*” Thus, in Greek, this (implicit) imperative soon came to be tamed by the addition of a hortatory subjunctive, Ἄνω τὰς καρδίας.<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>129</sup> Col. 3:1

<sup>130</sup> Bates, ‘*Sursum Corda: Word of the Command*’, p. 53.

<sup>131</sup> Bates does not consider John 1:2 in his comments, ‘1:2 οὗτος ἦν ἐν ἀρχῇ πρὸς τὸν θεόν’

<sup>132</sup> The bidding Bates is referring to is *Sursum corda*.

<sup>133</sup> Bates, ‘*Sursum Corda*’, p. 56.

We see that, unlike Lash, Bates believes it is necessary to maintain the original form, structure and tone of the command *Sursum Corda* in order for us to understand its original liturgical purpose. Thus, between Lash and Bates we are left with a heavenly and earthly translation – ‘Let our hearts be on high’ (have your heart’s above) or ‘Heart’s up!’ (raise your hearts from below, now!). However, both translations may communicate the same idea if they articulated in similar ways and with the same force. Either way, the Latin is not to be understood as a suggestion. It is a command. Therefore, the *Sursum Corda* needs to be understood this way throughout the rest of our study in order for us to see clearly how the remaining ritual considerations and meanings relate to our ritual text.

With the first of our primary texts addressed, we will now turn our attention towards the anaphora of *Addai and Mari*. This Eucharistic Prayer was possibly penned around the same time as the *Apostolic Tradition*. Therefore, we will be able to compare and contrast the *Sursum Corda* in these two primary third century documents and the thematic elements within each anaphora. Following our exploration of *Addai and Mari*, we will set forth our conclusion to this chapter.

### **The Relation of ‘Minds on High’ to the Anaphora of *Addai and Mari***

#### **Origin and Text of the Anaphora**

The second primary ritual text we are considering in this chapter is the *Anaphora of Addai and Mari*.<sup>134</sup> The majority of contemporary scholars have concluded that the anaphora found within the text of the East Syrian anaphora of *Addai and Mari*, and in its ‘twin’ the Maronite anaphora called the *Sharar* or the *Third Anaphora of St. Peter*, is an early composition with sections dating back to the

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<sup>134</sup> We are indebted to Bryan Spink’s work on *Addai and Mari* and the *Sanctus* for this section of our study.

third century. It reflects the liturgical practice of the Judaeo-Christian communities of Syria, i.e. the Church of Edessa. According to Spinks, ‘For many years now the area of East Syria has been regarded as important for liturgical research, both on account of its Semitic background, and its later isolation from the rest of Christendom.’<sup>135</sup> In relation to our study, it provides us with third century evidence outside of the Roman Empire. Therefore, arguably, the *Sursum Corda* found within it may not have been influenced by the *Apostolic Tradition*. Scholars comment that the text may be the earliest extant anaphora that enjoyed actual use in the early Church.<sup>136</sup> The pre-anaphoral texts and Eucharistic Prayer read as follows:

Priest: Peace be with you.

People: And with your spirit.

Priest: The grace of our Lord [Jesus Christ and the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all now and ever world without end.]

Answer: Amen.

Priest: Up with your minds.<sup>137</sup>

Answer: They are with you, O God.

Priest: The offering is offered to God, the Lord of all.

Answer: It is fitting and right.

The Priest says privately: Worthy of glory from every mouth and thanksgiving from every tongue is the adorable and glorious name of Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. He created the world through his grace and its inhabitants in his compassion; he saved men through his mercy, and gave great grace to mortals.

Your majesty, O Lord, a thousand heavenly beings adore; myriad myriads of angels, and ranks of spiritual beings, ministers of fire and spirit, together with

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<sup>135</sup> Bryan Spinks, *Addai and Mari – the Anaphora of the Apostles: A Text for Students* (Cambridge, Grove, 1980), p. 3.

<sup>136</sup> See A. Gelston, *The Eucharistic Prayer of Addai and Mari* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1992)

<sup>137</sup> In ‘The Third Anaphora of St. Peter’ (*Sharar*) the *Sursum corda* is expanded and addresses the heart and mind: It is fitting and right, our duty and our salvation, natural and good. Let our minds ever be lifted up to heaven, and all our hearts in purity.’ The text and translation taken from Jasper and Cuming, *The Prayers*, p. 47. See also Dix, ‘The Shape of the Liturgy’, pp. 78-87 for further commentary.

the holy cherubim and seraphim, glorify your name, crying out and glorifying [unceasingly calling to one another and saying]:

People: Holy, holy, holy [holy, Lord God almighty; heaven and earth are full of his praises].

The Priest say privately: And with these heavenly armies we, also even we, your lowly, weak and miserable servants, Lord, give you thanks because you have brought about us a great grace that cannot be repaid. For you put on our human nature to give us life through your divine nature; you raised us from our lowly state; you restored our Fall; you restored our immortality; you forgave our debts; you justified our sinfulness; you enlightened our intelligence. You, our Lord and our God, conquered our enemies and made the lowliness of our weak nature to triumph through the abundant mercy of your grace.

(aloud) And for all <your helps and graces towards us, let us raise to you praise and honor and thanksgiving and worship, now and ever and world without end>. People: Amen. That all the inhabitants of the earth may know you, that you alone are the true God and Father, and you sent our Lord Jesus Christ, your beloved Son, and he, our Lord and our God, taught us through his life-giving gospel all the purity and holiness of the prophets, apostles, martyrs, confessors, bishops, priests, deacons, and all sons of the holy Catholic Church who have been sealed with the living seal of holy baptism.

And we also, Lord, (thrice) your lowly, weak, and miserable servants, who have gathered and stand before you, [and] have received through the tradition the form which is from you, rejoicing, glorifying, exalting, commemorating, and celebrating this great mystery of the passion, death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

May your Holy Spirit, Lord, come and rest on this offering of your servants, and bless and sanctify it, that it may be to us, Lord, for remission of debts, forgiveness of sins, and the great hope of resurrection from the dead, and new life in the kingdom of heaven, with all who have been pleasing in your sight.

And because of all your wonderful dispensation towards us, with open mouths and uncovered faces we give you thanks and glorify you without ceasing in your Church, which has been redeemed by the precious blood of your Christ, offering up <praise, honor, thanksgiving and adoration to your living and life-giving name, now and at all times forever and ever. People: Amen.<sup>138</sup>

In *Addai and Mari*, we see a variation in the introductory dialogue. In particular we read ‘Minds on high’ instead of ‘Hearts on high’. In relation to these variants, C.A. Bouman postulates, ‘The mere fact that the few short texts of the initial dialogue of the anaphora belong to the original nucleus of the Eucharistic service, or at any rate

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<sup>138</sup> Text and translation taken from Jasper and Cuming, *Prayers of the Eucharist*, p. 42.

since the end of the second century have formed part of it, marks the variants of these text as remarkable problems in the history of the liturgy.<sup>139</sup> Although these variants create textual dilemmas, which Bouman explores thoroughly, our first question is are “heart” and “mind” synonymous in meaning? Setting this question in a participatory context, if one is attending a third century liturgy and hears a command directed to the mind instead of the heart does this carry the same liturgical connotation?

### **A Comparison of the Terms Heart and Mind**

In the Old Testament, the heart is the central organ in Jewish anthropology.<sup>140</sup> לבב is usually employed in a metaphorical sense to designate the innermost part of man, religious and moral conduct, courage and bravery and or feelings and desires. The following emotions are understood as being realized in the heart: gladness (Psalms 4:7), desires (Psalms 20:4, 73:7, Prov. 6:25), is troubled (Psalms 25:17), trusts (Psalms 28:7), is broken (Psalms 34:18), suffers turmoil (Psalms 38:8), fails one (Psalms 40:12), is pained (Psalms 55:4), is proud (Psalms 101:5), hates (Psalms 105:25), is wounded (Psalms 109:22), is distressed (Psalms 143:4), despises (Prov. 5:12), is anxious (Prov. 12:25), is bitter (Prov. 14:10), is merry (Prov. 15:13), is haughty (Prov. 18:12), is proud (Prov. 21:4), envies (Prov. 23:17), delights (Prov. 27:9), anguishes (2 Cor. 2:4). M. Smith comments on the psychological and physiological relation between emotions and the physical location of the heart as follows:

Physiologically, the heart shows marked change with a number of different emotions. This point is especially relevant for biblical prayer, since the heart seems to be the physical location where multiple emotions register physically. Consequently, it is hardly surprising that the heart is the physical

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<sup>139</sup> Bouman, *Variants*, p. 104.

<sup>140</sup> See Hans Walter Wolff, *Anthropology of the Old Testament* (Philadelphia, Fortress Press, 1975), pp. 40-55.

organ to which emotion in general is attributed by Israelites and other peoples of the ancient Middle East.<sup>141</sup>

Thus, ancient Jewish people understood emotions as stemming from the physical location where they were felt. Moreover, they believed both emotions and thoughts are attributed to the heart.<sup>142</sup> We also see this correlation between the heart and mind in the New Testament: “For as he thinks in his heart, so is he.” (Prov. 23:7 NKJV). Jesus asks, “Why do you think evil in your hearts?” (Matt. 9:4 NKJV); “For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts.” (Matt. 15:19 NKJV); “If that evil servant says in his heart, ‘My master is delaying his coming.’” (Matt. 24:48 NKJV); The evil servant says this in his heart because that is what he is thinking; and “...Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart.” (Luke 2:19 NKJV). Arguably, the most convincing biblical example of the heart and mind being synonymous in scripture is seen in the Hebrew *Shemah* and in the condensed version of it in the New Testament teaching of Christ.

In Deut 6:5, the author writes, ‘And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart (לְבָבְךָ) and with all thy soul (נַפְשְׁךָ), and with all thy might (כֹּחְךָ).’ We see here the *Shemah* does not include the mind in the command. However, in Luke’s Gospel (10:27), Christ responds to the question of the rich young ruler by quoting the *Shemah* with the inclusion of the mind, ‘And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart (καρδία), and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind (διάνοια); and thy neighbor as thyself.’ The term used here for mind, *διάνοια*, is derived from the root word νοῦς. Therefore, we can see that heart and mind are often synonymous in the bible. This scriptural conclusion

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<sup>141</sup> Mark Smith, ‘The Heart and Innards in Israelite Emotional Expressions: Notes from Anthropology and Psychology’ In *JBL*, 117/3 (1998) 427-436.

<sup>142</sup> There is no Hebrew term for brain, and, according to Smith, ‘functions often accorded the brain in English are expressed with the heart in Hebrew...e.g. Pss 10:6, 11, 13; 14:1). The heart is also the location of malice (Ps. 5:10). See Smith, ‘The Heart and Innards in Israelite Emotional Expressions: Notes from Anthropology and Psychology’, p. 432 footnote 27.

also applies to the patristic references in our study that use a derivation of *Sursum corda* – ἀνω τὸν νοῦν. In the redacted version of the Liturgy of St. James the two are conflated ἀνω σχώμεν τὸν νοῦν τὰς καρδίας.<sup>143</sup> Bouman’s comments strengthen our argument, ‘Only in biblical and rabbinical language, and consequently in Christian literature, “heart” and “mind” are completely synonymous.’<sup>144</sup> Moreover, Taft, summarizing his thoughts on the issue as it relates to the *Sursum corda* writes:

So the notion of elevating our minds and hearts to the Lord always, but especially in the context of prayer, is a commonplace, and both forms of the exhortation, “hearts” or “mind,” mean the same thing. ...Fathers speak of purity of mind or heart and clearly mean the same thing. Furthermore, there can be little doubt that νοῦς is a substitution for the original καρδίας that could have originated only among hellenophone Christians with their respective intellectual properties.<sup>145</sup>

Thus, the reference to the mind in *Addai and Mari*, ‘Ἀνω τὸν νοῦν,’ is synonymous with the heart, ‘*Sursum corda*,’ in the *Apostolic Tradition*.<sup>146 147</sup>

### **The Relationship between ‘Minds on High’ and the *Sanctus***

The juxtaposition of the anaphora of *Addai and Mari* with the *Apostolic Tradition* arguably reveals the ‘heavenly’ nature of it.<sup>148</sup> Specifically, after

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<sup>143</sup>F.E. Brightman, *Eastern Liturgies*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Piscataway, Gorgias Press, 2004), p. 50.

<sup>144</sup> Bouman, *Variants*, p. 112 footnote 42. See his analysis of this and his review of other scholarly works that address it on pp. 108-113. See also T. Špidlík’s work *La spiritualité de l’Orient chrétien I* (Roma, Pontificum Institutum Orientalium Studiorum, 1978), pp. 105-108 (also referenced in Taft II, p. 70 ) where he concludes heart and mind are the same thing in the context of prayer.

<sup>145</sup> Taft II, p.70. Taft’s comment regarding Hellenistic influence is describe in detail by van Kooten, discussing anthropology in Antiquity, argues Plato set forth a tripartite few of man (mind, soul and body) that was later adopted and adapted by Jewish and Jewish Christian authors namely Philo, Paul and Flavius Josephus. Of special importance to our study is his teaching on the relationship between the soul and mind. van Kooten explains: ‘The further differentiation of soul into soul and mind already takes place, if only incipiently, in Plato. In several passages Plato points out that mind (nous) is a quality of the soul (psyche): mind (nous) is one of the good aspects of the soul, together with other virtues such as courage and self-restraint (*Philebus* 55b). In Plato’s *Phaedrus*, the mind even rises to prominence within the soul, since it is called the “pilot of the soul.”’ See his work *Paul’s Anthropology in Context* (Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 2008), p.270.

<sup>146</sup> Chrysostom later in the fourth-century comments in *Homily II* ‘Hebrews. i.3’, ‘For this name [soul] doth not seem to me to be significative of the substance thereof, but of breathing. For one may see that the same [thing] is called both Soul and Heart and Mind: for, saith he, Create in me a clean heart, O God, and one may often see that it [the soul] is called spirit.’ Taken from *The Homilies of S. John Chyrsotom Archbishop of Constantinople, on...* Vol. 39, (Oxford, James Parker & Co., 1877), p. 23

<sup>147</sup> We will maintain this argument throughout the rest of our work.

mentioning the myriads of heavenly hosts, it culminates at one point in the earthly congregation joining with the angels in the singing of the thrice-holy hymn referred to as the *Sanctus*. Before we explore the possible connection between the ‘song of the angels’ and the *Sursum Corda*, it needs to be noted that the majority of scholars understand the *Sanctus* to be absent from the original text.<sup>149</sup> In 1929, E. Ratcliff argued that *Addai and Mari* reflected a stage of development between the ‘agape’ and the ‘mass.’<sup>150</sup> Because of the transitional nature of the anaphora, Ratcliff was able to identify what he believed to be interpolations in the prayer. Using two of Narsai’s *Homilies* (XVII and XXI) he recreated the original form of the prayer by removing the prayers he believed had no connection with the surrounding material. He concluded the *Sanctus* was not textually connected because it interrupted the flow of thought before the ‘praise to the creator and redeemer’ and after the ‘thanksgiving for salvation.’ Ratcliff argues:

The clauses that introduce this have no connexion with what precedes them. They have no relevance except to the Sanctus; and the whole passage coming in between an address of praise of the Creator and Redeemer and a thanksgiving for salvation and grace is out of place. As in the Roman Rite so in the East-Syrian the Sanctus is an intrusion.<sup>151</sup>

Interestingly, later Ratcliff altered his opinion and concluded that *Addai and Mari* always contained a *Sanctus*, but as the termination of the anaphora.<sup>152</sup> However, as Spinks notes, the view that the *Sanctus* in its present position represented an

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<sup>148</sup> See Bouyer’s comparison of the Eucharistic Prayer in the *Apostolic Tradition* and the anaphora of *Addai and Mari* in his work, *Eucharist*, pp. 146 -186. Also, in regard to the different themes in the Eucharistic Prayers of Hippolytus and Addai and Mari, Dix notes, ‘In *Addai and Mari*, by contrast to Hippolytus, the emphasis is not on the historical process or redemption by the passion and resurrection, but on its eternal results.’ See, Dix, *The Shape*, p. 187.

<sup>149</sup> There are numerous other textual concerns. The one that has drawn the most attention from scholars is the apparent lack of any institution narrative. These and other textual questions are addressed by Spinks and others. It must also be noted that the *Sanctus* is absent from the *Didache* and the *Testamentum Domini*. However, an arguably earlier source, the book Revelation, contains it in what may be an early Christian liturgical context. See M. Shepherd’s work, *The Paschal Liturgy and the Apocalypse* (Cambridge, Lutterworth Press, 2002).

<sup>150</sup> E. Ratcliff, ‘The Original form of the Anaphora of Addai and Mari: suggestion’, *JTS*, 30 (1928-29), p. 29 as cited in Spinks, *Sanctus*, p. 57.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 57.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 57.

intrusion was subsequently endorsed by Gregory Dix, Bernard Botte, W.F. Macomber, J.M. Sanchez Caro, H.A.J. Wegman and Jean Magne.<sup>153</sup> In contrast, Spinks argues against Ratcliff's conclusion by questioning the criteria he used to determine what is and is not an interpolation of the text, i.e. the liturgical law he used to come to his conclusions. In particular, Spinks questions the propositions, 'in order to be authentic the *Sanctus* must always connect with what proceeds it, or why a *sanctus* is "out of place" between praise of the Creator and thanksgiving for salvation.'<sup>154</sup> Furthermore, after comparing and contrasting the *Apostolic Tradition* with the Ethiopic Apostles in order to demonstrate an interpolated *Sanctus*, Spinks argues when the *Sanctus* in the anaphora of *Addai and Mari* is examined in the light of this example it is difficult to find textual and contextual evidence to justify Ratcliff's assertions.<sup>155</sup> He concludes, 'Thus, against Ratcliff and many other scholars, our suggestion is that in *Addai and Mari* we have evidence of the *Sanctus* as part of the anaphora in East Syria in the third century.'<sup>156</sup> This evidence may also help us better understand how early East Syrian Christians understood the mystical implications of the command '*Minds on high*'.

The *Sanctus*, or the *quedussah*, the heavenly chant of the angels that takes place around the throne of God, is recorded in canonical and noncanonical writings as well as in the experiences of those that have 'ascended to heaven.'<sup>157</sup> The first biblical witness of the *Sanctus* is found in the 'Commissioning' of the prophet Isaiah in Isaiah 6:1-3:

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<sup>153</sup> Ibid., p. 57.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid., p.58.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid., pp. 58-59.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid., p. 61.

<sup>157</sup> *Merkavah* mysticism may have contributed to the notion of ascent in the Church tradition. Due to the fact the texts are outside the formal scope of our study we will not include any formal discussion on it. For further study see Spinks, *Sanctus*, pp. 26-45.

In the year that King Uzziah died I saw Yahweh sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and his robe filled the temple. Above him stood the seraphim; each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one called to another and said:

Holy, Holy Holy is Yahweh of Hosts;

The whole earth is full of His glory.

In this vision, it is the seraphim, heavenly and angelic beings, who sing the *trisagion* around the Lord as He sits on His throne. Engnell sees the praise of the angels as being ‘...a cultic formula quoted directly from the ritual of the temple in Jerusalem.’<sup>158</sup> If Isaiah does experience his vision in the liturgical context of the temple, then he may be gazing through that which is seen to that which is unseen. In other words, he may be in the earthly temple participating in the heavenly liturgy. Either way, what we see in these verses is the first account of the heavenly liturgy in the bible. This liturgy includes, in some sense, an aspect of ascent to God in heaven where the angels ceaselessly sing the ‘thrice-holy hymn.’<sup>159</sup> Moreover, certain Jewish communities understood this liturgical movement and felt they participated in it.<sup>160</sup>

A similar vision is also experienced by the author of the book of Revelation in the New Testament. John, exiled on the isle of Patmos, ‘in the spirit on the Lord’s day’ (Rev. 1.10) arguably Sunday, during a service, ‘ascends’ into the heavenly throne room where ‘the four living creatures...day and night never cease to say, ‘Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God almighty, who was and is and is to come!’ (Rev. 4.7-8). Therefore, we have New Testament evidence that suggest the *Sanctus* may

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<sup>158</sup> As found in Spinks, *Sanctus*, p. 17.

<sup>159</sup> The prophet Ezekiel is recorded in the bible as experiencing a similar event. In the MT and LXX Ezekeial 3:12 reads, ‘The spirit took me up, and I heard behind me the voice as of a great earthquake, [saying] Blessed is the glory of Yahweh from his place. See Spinks, p. 21.

<sup>160</sup> Spinks explores the development of the *Sanctus* within Judaism and the synagogue. See Spinks, pp. 39-45.

have been part of the first century Christian liturgy; and in their worship they understood themselves to have ascended around the heavenly throne of God.<sup>161</sup>

There is also evidence within the *Dead Sea Scroll* texts that suggest the Essene community of Qumran ‘stood in the midst of God and his angels.’<sup>162</sup> Thus 1QS 11:7ff:

God has given them to His chosen ones as an everlasting possession, and has caused them to inherit the lot of the Holy Ones. He has joined their assembly to the Sons of Heaven to be a Council of the Community, a foundation of the Building of Holiness, an eternal Plantation throughout all the ages to come.<sup>163</sup>

The ‘chosen ones’ represent the Essene community and the term ‘Holy Ones’ describe the angelic host. Other Qumran texts discuss how the sectarians are united with the angelic hosts liturgically as well:

For the multitude of the Holy Ones [is with thee] in heaven, and the host of the Angels is in thy holy abode, praising thy Name. (1QM 12).<sup>164</sup>

Therefore, if the church on earth is mystically joined to the heavenly realm, the *Sanctus* is a primary expression of this liturgical reality and the *Sursum* may be the priestly exhortation that moves the gathered ‘on high.’

We see this notion of ‘ascent’ as well in *The Passio sanctarum Perpetuae et Felicitatis* that took place in Carthage (200 AD). It is an account of the martyrdom of three catechumens: Saturas, Saturninus and Revocatus and two young women. One was Vibia Perpetua, 22 years of age, ‘well born, liberally educated, honorably married, having father and mother and two brothers, one like herself a catechumen, and an infant son at the breast.’<sup>165</sup> The other was her slave Felicitas who was pregnant at the time of her arrest and gave birth to a girl shortly before her death in

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<sup>161</sup> See Massey Shepherd, *The Paschal Liturgy and the Apocalypse* (Louisville, John Knox Press, 1960), p. 88. The presence of the Sanctus may also be the result of the influence of *Merkavah* mysticism. See Spinks, *Sanctus*, pp. 113-114.

<sup>162</sup> Spinks, *Sanctus*, p. 26.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 26.

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 26.

<sup>165</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 51.

the arena. The early account of the martyrs includes the visions of Vibia Perpetua and Saturas. It is in Saturas' account we find the *Sanctus*.

In Saturas' vision, the martyrs ascend into heaven in three stages. At the final stage, they hear the song of the angels:

And we came near to place, the walls of which were such as if they were built of light; and before the gate of that place stood four angels, who clothed those who entered with white robes. And being clothed, we entered and saw the boundless light, and heard the united voice of some who said without ceasing, Holy! Holy! Holy!' And in the midst of that place we saw as it were a hoary man sitting, having snow-white hair, and with a youthful countenance; and his feet we saw not. And on his right hand and on his left were four-and-twenty elders, and behind them a great many others were standing. We entered with great wonder, and stood before the throne; and the four angels raised us up, and we kissed Him, and He passed His hand over our face. And the rest of the elders said to us, 'Let us stand;' and we stood and made peace. And the elders said to us, and enjoy.' And I said, 'Perpetua, you have what you wish.' And she said to me, 'Thanks be to God, that joyous as I was in the flesh, I am now more joyous here.'

In this vision the martyrs were clothed in baptismal garments of white before entering the chamber of the Lord.<sup>166</sup> This vision of the heavenly hosts resembles what we find in Revelation 4.<sup>167</sup> For our study, what is crucial is the *passio* 'bears witness to the continued belief passed on from certain circles that those who ascend to heaven would hear the ceaseless chanting of the *Sanctus*.<sup>168</sup> Again, it is the song of the angels around the throne of God.<sup>169</sup>

In light of the aforementioned, it is plausible that those who participate in the *Anaphora of Addai and Mari* possibly understood their liturgical assembly as

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<sup>166</sup> See Ambrose, 'On the Mysteries' Chapter 7: 14-15 where he discusses the white robes of baptism and how the church understands it.

<sup>167</sup> Revelation 4: 4 'Around the throne were twenty-four thrones, and on the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white robes... (8) The four living creatures, each have six wings, were full of eyes around and within. And they do not rest day or night saying: "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, Who was and is and is to come."' (NKJV).

<sup>168</sup> Spinks, *Sanctus*, p. 51.

<sup>169</sup> Origen teaches that when the church gathers guardian angels gather as well, 'Thus when there is an assembly of those who are holy there is a twofold church, human and angelic.' Trans. taken from Stewart-Sykes, *Lord's Prayer*, p. 209. Also, as will be discussed in Chapter 3 of our study, Clement of Alexandria's reference to the upward thrust of the body and soul in prayer seems to communicate the notion of ascent. (*2 Strom. Vii. 39, 40.*)

*ascending* to heaven or at least joining in with the angels in the *Sanctus* via the priestly command, ‘Minds on high.’ Thus, when they confirmed their minds were with God they acknowledged the mystical/heavenly nature of the Eucharist. By contrast, the Eucharistic Prayer in the *Apostolic Tradition* does not contain a *Sanctus* or heavenly references. Therefore, we can argue that while the *Sursum Corda* in the *Apostolic Tradition* is the textual equivalent of the ‘Minds on high’, the two expressions arguably communicate different liturgical ideas as do their respective Eucharistic Prayers. This is not to say that the force of the command does not include immediate ‘earthly’ considerations. Instead, *Addai and Mari* may include the notion heavenly ascent.<sup>170</sup> However, in both cases, it is the baptized that can and should have their ‘hearts’ and ‘minds’ on high.

### **Conclusion**

The *Apostolic Tradition*, a third century writing attributed to Hippolytus, contains the first liturgical reference to the *Sursum Corda*. It was composed during a time of some liturgical freedom regarding the composition of the Eucharistic Prayer. However, what was said by the celebrant during the third century Roman Eucharistic assembly had to be doctrinally *orthodox*. The *Sursum Corda*, evidenced by the fact that it is found in almost every existing liturgy, is part of the original ‘urtext’ of the initial dialogue before the Eucharistic Prayer. The structure of the Latin phrase, as well as the Greek translation Ἄνω τὰς καρδίας may communicate either the movement towards or place (above) where the liturgical action is to take place. But what is evident from the grammatical structure of the phrase is the forceful and abrupt nature of the command, it is not a suggestion. If the *Sursum Corda* in the

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<sup>170</sup> This connection between the *Sursum Corda* and heavenly things is important as the other Fathers in our study compare and contrast things earthly and heavenly in their catechisms and sermons.

*Apostolic Tradition*, followed by the response of the people ‘*habemus ad dominum*,’ is understood to be thematically connected to the Eucharistic Prayer that follows, then the command seems to be earthly in nature. Correspondingly, for the baptized, the command may be a ‘calling to attention’ or a summons to ‘stop and prepare yourself for what is about to take place.’ In this context, the phrase *Sursum Corda* is not connected to any notion of spiritual or mystical ascent in the *Apostolic Tradition*. By contrast ‘Minds on high’, in the introductory dialogue of the anaphora of *Addai and Mari* is, arguably, the liturgical vehicle by which the baptized are summoned to enter into the presence of heaven. The mystical ascent of the Eucharistic assembly is realized when the gathered join in the with the angels who sing the *Sanctus*: Holy, Holy, Holy.<sup>171</sup> This is not to say it does not carry ‘earthly’ connotations as we discovered in the *Apostolic Tradition* – the force of the command is the same. Instead, it includes some aspect or realization of spiritual ascent to the throne of God as well. Thus, ‘pay attention as we, those who have been raised with Christ, have ascended to God in heaven!’ may communicate the liturgical idea associated with the command ‘Minds on high.’ The response, ‘They are with you, O God’ confirms the destination and the song of the angels proves it spiritually to be true. With some questions answered and others raised by our exploration of the ritual texts considered, we will now turn our attention towards the ritual context of the *Sursum corda* in order to demonstrate the social and pastoral reasons the assembled believers need to hear the command.

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<sup>171</sup> This connection seems evident later in the Western Church. Aquinas, in his thirteenth century work, *Summa Theologica* – Third Part, ‘Questions’ 83 q. 31, writes, ‘Then, regarding the consecration, performed by supernatural power, the people are first of all excited to devotion in the "Preface," then are exhorted "to lift up their hearts to the Lord," and therefore when the "Preface" is ended the people devoutly praise Christ's Godhead, saying with the angels: "Holy, Holy, Holy"; and His humanity, saying with the children: "Blessed is he that comes."'

## Chapter 2

### Ritual Setting – Social Context of the *Sursum Corda*

#### Introduction

In Chapter 1, we concluded, among other things, that the ritual text, *Sursum corda*, within the *Apostolic Tradition* and the anaphora of *Addai and Mari* may have served an ‘earthly function,’ i.e. an exhortation to move the Christian’s heart from earthly concerns or activities to those above or heavenly. This may indicate that the original liturgical purpose of the *Sursum Corda* had some connection to the immediate social setting of the Eucharist. If it was a command, like others found in the liturgy, e.g. ‘Wisdom’ or ‘Let us attend,’ it may have served practically as a means of calling the baptized to attention before the Eucharistic Prayer. Metropolitan Kallistos Ware believes that a lot of good work has been done on the history of the Byzantine Eucharist and on its commentaries, however:

Far less attention, however, has been devoted to the influence of the liturgy on the daily personal life of the people. What impact did the service have upon a Byzantine Christian who was not a trained theologian or a member of the clergy? How widely were the words of the prayers and the symbolism of the ceremonies understood by the congregation as a whole? Here is a promising field of research.<sup>172</sup>

While our study is not limited to Byzantium, it can be argued that there is a need to employ this type of method in our work. As noted in the Introductory Chapter, contemporary scholarship on the *Sursum Corda* does not take into consideration social milieux of the assembly itself. In order to stay within the scope of our research parameters, we will focus mainly on what the biblical writers and Fathers, per their record, encountered in the liturgical gathering. However, for the sake of context, we will also include general pastoral references that pertain to certain issues that early Christians confronted outside the

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<sup>172</sup> Kallistos Ware, ‘The Meaning of the Divine Liturgy for the Byzantine Worshipper,’ in Morris, *Church and People in Byzantium*, pp. 7-8 as found in Taft, *Through Their Own Eyes* (Berkeley, InterOrthodox Press, 2006), p. 5.

Eucharistic liturgy as well.<sup>173</sup> The purpose of this chapter is to understand the relationship between the ritual setting and the ritual command, ‘*Sursum corda!*’<sup>174</sup>

### **The Spiritual Battleground of the Heart**

Due to the fact that our study focuses on an exhortation directed primarily to the heart, it is important for us to gain a better understanding of why it needs to be challenged or moved, liturgically speaking, from earth to heaven. Specifically, we need to discover what the biblical writers and or Fathers see as preventing the Christian from maintaining a state of spiritual contemplation during the Eucharist. Various texts in the New Testament speak of a struggle that exists within each initiated person to realize the benefits of their baptism and life in Christ.<sup>175</sup> According to the biblical texts, they are said to possess dual citizenship. Christians dwell on earth but their thoughts are to be in heaven.<sup>176</sup> This is understood to create a dialectic tension within the heart between good and evil. Moreover, certain New Testament writers, believed there to be an organized military of spiritual forces allied against the believer.

The writer of Ephesians, probably while looking at a Roman soldier, describes the spiritual army, headed by the devil, that is understood to be allied against the Christian:

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.’ (Eph. 6:10-12). He continues by presenting the spiritual armor necessary to defend oneself during the time of attack: breastplate of righteousness, shodding of the feet with the gospel of peace, shield of faith and the sword of the spirit which is the word of God. (Eph. 6:14-18).<sup>177</sup>

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<sup>173</sup> Taft’s work, *Through Their Own Eyes* is of special importance to this chapter. It will be referenced throughout.

<sup>174</sup> It must be noted that we will seek to understand the common liturgical experience via the writings of New Testament and the Church Fathers. Therefore, the social-historical accounts of lay participation in worship we include in our study are, for the most part, not penned by common Christians.

<sup>175</sup> Examples include: Romans 7:17-19, Col. 2 and Eph. 6.

<sup>176</sup> Philippians 3:20; Col. 3:1-3.

<sup>177</sup> Biblical references will be taken from the *NKJV* version unless noted differently.

Once this armor is applied, the Christian is to pray always and be watchful (Eph. 6:19).<sup>178</sup>

Moreover, 1 Peter 5:8 warns the believer to ‘Be of sober *spirit*, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.’<sup>179</sup> We see from the aforementioned that the biblical author understood there to be external forces that seek to interfere in the life of the Christian.<sup>180</sup> There are also internal struggles that exist within the baptized.

A fourth century writing of pseudo-Marcarius describes this inner ‘spiritual battle’ that exists within the heart:

..and the heart itself is but a small vessel, yet there are dragons, and there lions, and there are venomous beasts, and all the treasures of wickedness; and there are rough uneven ways, there are chasms; there likewise is God, there the angels, there life and the kingdom, there light and the apostles, there the heavenly cities, there the treasures, there all things.<sup>181</sup>

The heart is understood to be a battle ground between the forces of good and evil.<sup>182</sup> When evil triumphs, according to the New Testament, it can result in negative or earthly actions ‘Out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders.’ (Matthew 15:19). And, as we shall encounter later in this chapter, these same ‘earthly’ issues permeated the Church gatherings within the scope of our study. Therefore, due to the connectivity of the heart to the attitudes and actions of people, the idea that the *Sursum Corda* is a command that addresses social concerns within the Eucharistic assembly is plausible.

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<sup>178</sup> 1 Peter 5:8 uses similar language to describe the work of the devil, ‘Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.’ This passage will be revisited again when we engage Cyprian’s work.

<sup>179</sup> The devil will be revisited often throughout our study in Section 2. Therefore, it is important to include these references in our study on ritual setting.

<sup>180</sup> See Louis Coulange and Stephen Haden Guest’s work, *Life of the Devil* (Whitefish, Kessinger Publishing, 2008) for a detailed analysis of the origins and activities of the devil: especially Section IV ‘Activities of the Devil Since the Foundation of the Church, pp. 127-194. For our purposes, the devil is the personification of evil and the adversary of God and man. His power is limited as a creature but understood by the early Church to be active and possibly influential within the life of the Christian, even to the point of possession.

<sup>181</sup> Homily II.43.7 as found in A.J. Mason’s work, *Fifty Spiritual Homilies of St. Marcarius the Egyptian* (New York, The MacMillan Co, 1921), pp. 222.

<sup>182</sup> We also see in Ephesians 6 a description of a demonic hierarchy that is said to engage the Christian in spiritual warfare.

## Social Concerns at the New Testament Eucharist

Arguably, Judas' betrayal of Jesus Christ is the foremost example of, among numerous other things, a social problem at the celebration of the Eucharist.<sup>183</sup> All four Gospels account for what is described as the Last Supper (Mt 26: 17-35, Mk 14:12-21, Lk 22:7-16 and Jn 13:21-30). At this time, Jesus gathers with his disciples to share a meal together. While the accounts differ in the biblical texts, Matthew's Gospel records the following:

Now on the first day of Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Where do you want for us to prepare for You to eat the Passover?"...The disciples did as Jesus directed them; and they prepared the Passover. Now when evening came, Jesus was reclining at the table with the twelve disciples...(after the betrayal by Judas) While they were eating, Jesus took some bread, and after a blessing, He broke it and gave it to disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is My body." And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it all of you; for this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. (Matthew 26:17, 19, 25-28).<sup>184</sup>

Matthew records the words of Jesus before the Supper that incriminate Judas and identify him as the betrayer:

When evening had come, He sat down with the twelve. Now as they were eating, He said, "Assuredly, I say to you, one of you will betray Me." And they were exceedingly sorrowful, and each of them to say to Him, "Lord, is it I?...Then Judas, who was betraying Him, answered and said, "Rabbi, is it I?" He said to him, "You have said it." (Mt 26:20-22, 25)

The Gospel of John informs us the betrayal was set in motion when Judas partook of the bread at the Supper, 'After the morsel, Satan then entered into him. Therefore Jesus said to him, "What you do, do quickly." (John 13:27).<sup>185</sup> We see in this text that Judas is sitting at

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<sup>183</sup> While the term Eucharist is a later title for the Lord's Supper, we will use it for the sake of consistency. For questions regarding the origin and context of the Lord's Supper and the Eucharist see Joachim Jeremias' work *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus* (London, S.C.M. Press, 1966) and Paul Bradshaw's work *Eucharistic Origins* (Oxford, OUP, 2004), respectively.

<sup>184</sup> Dix contends this meal is the source of the liturgical Eucharist but not the model for its performance. He describes the liturgical shape of the Supper as follows: 'The New Testament accounts of that supper as they stand received text present us with what may be called a 'seven-action scheme' of the rite then inaugurated. Our Lord (1) took bread; (2) 'gave thanks' over it; (3) broke it; (4) distributed it, saying certain words. Later He (5) took a cup; (6) 'gave thanks' over that; (7) handed it to his disciples, saying certain words...With absolute unanimity the liturgical tradition produces these seven actions as four: (1) The offertory; bread and wine are 'taken' and placed on the table together. (2) The prayer; the president gives thanks to God over the bread and wine together. (3) The fraction; the bread is broken. (4) The communion; the bread and wine are distributed together.' Citation taken from Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, p. 48.

<sup>185</sup> Luke 22:3 records a similar account.

the first 'Eucharist' with the apostles and Christ but his heart is concerned with earthly things, namely money.<sup>186</sup>

Prior to the Supper, according to the biblical texts, Judas met with Jewish leaders to discuss the financial consideration he was to receive for his deception, 'Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot went to the chief priests and said, "What are you willing to give me if I deliver Him to you?" And they counted out to him thirty pieces of silver. So from that time he sought opportunity to betray Him.' It seems as if greed was the initial motive for his betrayal.<sup>187</sup> Thus, at the first Eucharist, the evil one, in some capacity, participated in the gathering as well, negatively speaking.<sup>188</sup> However, according to other biblical accounts of the Supper, these and other pastoral challenges were normal and not always a direct result of the evil one's influence.

### **Failure to Pay Attention in the Eucharistic Assembly**

In Acts 20:7-12 Luke describes Paul's gathering with the believers in Troas on the first day of the week, i.e. Sunday<sup>189</sup>:

<sup>7</sup> Now on the first *day* of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his message until midnight. <sup>8</sup> There were many lamps in the upper room where they were gathered together. <sup>9</sup> And in a window sat a certain young man

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<sup>186</sup> Augustine, in *Letters* 189 refers to avarice and the *Sursum Corda*: As to worldly riches, if you do not possess them, let them not be sought after on earth by doing evil; and if you possess them, let them by good works be laid up in heaven. The manly and Christian spirit ought neither to be elated by the accession, nor crushed by the loss of this world's treasures. Let us rather think of what the Lord says: "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also;"(3) and certainly, when we hear the exhortation to lift up our hearts, it is our duty to give unfeignedly the response which you know that we are accustomed to give.' Translation taken from *NPNF*, Vol. 1, p. 545.

<sup>187</sup> Bart Ehrmann, comparing and contrasting the reasons given for Judas' betrayal, writes, 'In Matthew, on the other hand, the motivation was clearly stated, Judas wanted the money.' See his work, *The Lost Gospel of Judas Iscariot: A New Loot at Betrayer and Betrayed* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 30.

<sup>188</sup> After discussing how angels gather with people of God, Origin explains how wicked angels gather with the impious in *On Prayer* 31.7: 'Should such person become numerous, and gather in the manner of human societies to conduct business of a material nature, they will not be watched over... For instead of the twofold company of holy people and blessed angels that was mentioned above, there may perhaps be a twofold combination of impious people and wicked angels. With regard to such a gathering, both holy angels and devout person might say: "I have not sat down in the council of vanity, and I have not gone in with transgressors. I have hated the congregation of evildoers, and I will not sit with the impious" (Ps. 25.4-5)... thus whole assemblies are abandoned sometimes to fall into testing, and even what they seem to have is taken from them (Lk 8.18).'

<sup>189</sup> For an in depth analysis of the Christian gathering on Sunday, see W. Stott's work, *The Theology of the Christian Sunday in the Early Church* (Oxford, OUP, 1966).

named Eutychus, who was sinking into a deep sleep. He was overcome by sleep; and as Paul continued speaking, he fell down from the third story and was taken up dead.<sup>10</sup> But Paul went down, fell on him, and embracing *him* said, “Do not trouble yourselves, for his life is in him.”<sup>11</sup> Now when he had come up, had broken bread and eaten, and talked a long while, even till daybreak, he departed.<sup>12</sup> And they brought the young man in alive, and they were not a little comforted.

Again, this assembly in the upper room is understood to be a liturgical gathering.<sup>190</sup> It seems, from these texts, that the earliest Eucharistic celebrations in the Book of Acts contained a didactic as well as sacramental element (word and sacrament) and a communal meal (*agape*).<sup>191</sup> Interestingly, John Chrysostom sets forth Eutychus as an example for young believers to follow.<sup>192</sup> Instead of being out late at night engaging in worldly affairs, he is trying to stay awake in order to hear Paul’s words.<sup>193</sup> However, in relation to our study, we see Eutychus as a distraction during the celebration of the Eucharist. The social situation in the Corinthian church seems to be even more problematic.

### **Social Injustice at the Eucharistic Table**

The biblical text informs us Paul established the church in Corinth on his second missionary journey (Acts 18:1-11). From its inception, the gathering seemed to be plagued with various issues such as internal strife and divisions (1:10-3:23), civil lawsuits (4:1-21; 6:1-8), sexual immorality (5:1-13; 6:9 -7:40), eating meat sacrificed to idols (8:1-9:27) and improper liturgical conduct (11:1-6). Of particular importance to our work is Paul’s description of what was taking place at the Eucharistic meal. In 1 Cor. 11:17-22, Paul condemns the Corinthians for their divisions and their self-indulgent actions at the Supper:

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<sup>190</sup> The Greek word used to describe the upper room (ὑπερῶον) in the Acts passage we are considering is not the same as the one used to describe the upper room (ἀνώγειον) in the Gospels of Mark (14:15) and Luke (22:12). Although the textual descriptions of the two places are different, the activity of preaching and breaking bread existed in both. See Bradshaw’s discussion on morning and evening Eucharist in his work, *Eucharistic Origins*, pp. 68-69.

<sup>191</sup> The earliest accounts of what would become known as the Eucharist took place within a community meal referred to as the agape feast. W. Rordorf explains, ‘An agape is undoubtedly a liturgical meal: its very name indicates that it is an act of charity, for it is a sharing and pooling of at least what each person has.’ As found in his work *The Eucharist of Early Christians* (New York, Pueblo, 1990), p. 106,

<sup>192</sup> Chrysostom described other youth in a very different way. He refers to them as – ‘filth rather than youth,’ spend their time in church talking, laughing, joking. (*In Acta hom.* 24.4, (PG 60: 190).

<sup>193</sup> Reference found in the *Orthodox Study Bible* (Nashville, Thomas Nelson Publishing, 2008), p. 1505.

Now in giving these instructions I do not praise you, since you come together not for the better but for the worse. For first of all, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you, and in part I believe it. For there must also be factions among you, that those who are approved may be recognized among you. Therefore when you come together in one place, it is not to eat the Lord's Supper. For in eating, each one takes his own supper ahead of the others; and one is hungry and another is drunk. What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and shame those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you in this? I do not praise you.

The meal Paul describes seems to contain a sacramental and social element. It was during the celebration that everyone, rich or poor, was to be treated as equal. Instead, the wealthy are eating the food and consuming the wine before others, the less fortunate, have an opportunity to partake of the feast. He continues by explaining to the Corinthians how he received the tradition of the Last Supper and passed it on to them. He concludes his exhortation with these words, 'Therefore, my brethren, when you come together to eat, wait for one another. But if anyone is hungry, let him eat at home, lest you come together for judgment. And the rest I will set in order when I come.' (1 Cor. 11:33-34). We will encounter the social notion of providing for the less fortunate during the Eucharist again later in our study, but at present it suffices to conclude the Corinthian church was plagued with social injustice problems that permeated the Eucharistic gathering.

### **False Teachers within the Assembly**

Our last example of 'earthly' conduct during a Eucharistic service in the New Testament is found in the book of Jude. In the Book of Acts and throughout the epistles the threat of heretics disrupting the church is always present.<sup>194</sup> This is the case in Jude's writing as well. In versus 3-19, the author warns his readers to protect themselves from false teachers and describes who they are and what they are doing:

Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints. For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ...Likewise also these men defile the flesh, reject authority, and speak evil of dignitaries...These are spots in your love feasts, while they feast with you without fear, serving only themselves...These are grumblers, complainers, walking

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<sup>194</sup> See Matt. 7:15, Rom. 16:17-18, 2 Cor. 11:13-15 as examples.

according to their own lust; and they mouth great swelling words, flattering people to gain advantage... These are sensual persons, who cause divisions, not having the Spirit.

It is important for us to realize from these passages that the ‘false teachers’ were not only threatening the church but were actually participating in the ‘love feast.’ Therefore, we can, with some sense of certainty, assume that the behaviors and mindsets the apostle warns his readers against manifested themselves in the Eucharistic service. Moreover, we can conclude that the New Testament presents real social and pastoral issues that the leaders of the first century Church had to address when they gathered together for the celebration of the Eucharist. These issues continued and increased as the Church grew and expanded into new territories.

### **Social Problems at the Eucharist in the Third to Fifth Centuries**

From the day of Pentecost (Acts 2) until the Edict of Milan in 313 A.D., the Church experienced various times of persecution, some more intense than others.<sup>195</sup> It can be argued that if someone converted during one of these periods then they were probably serious about their decision to join the church – martyrdom was a reality for many. However, the Church Fathers, both prior to and after the Edicts of Toleration, often write of the moral and spiritual struggles of their congregants.<sup>196</sup> Due to the limitations of our study, we will only present certain examples within the scope of our work. These issues will establish the ‘earthly’

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<sup>195</sup> See G. Clarke’s work on ‘Third Century Christianity in *The Cambridge Ancient History*: Vol. 12, *The Crisis of the Empire*, A.D. 193-337 (Cambridge, CUP, 2005), pp. 616-647.

<sup>196</sup> Problems during the Kiss of Peace will be discussed in our Chapter pertaining to Cyril of Jerusalem. At present we will present one issue addressed by Clement of Alexandria as an example in order to help substantiate our work. Clement of Alexandria (ca. 150-d. before 215, *Pedagogue III*, 11 (81.2-82.1), as found in Taft, *Through Their Own Eyes* (pp. 91-92): ‘If we are called to the kingdom of God, let us act in a way worthy of the kingdom, loving God and our neighbor. But love is shown not by a kiss, but by kindness. However, there are those who make the church assemblies resound with their kissing but do not have love itself within them. And furthermore, this unrestrained use of the kiss gives rise to foul suspicions and calumnies<sup>196</sup>, [the kiss] which ought to be something mystic – the apostle calls the kiss “holy” – dispensing the goodwill of the soul by a chaste and closed mouth, by which, rather, refined manners are expressed. For there is another kiss, impure, full of poison, counterfeiting sanctity. Do you not know that...often kisses inject the poison of licentiousness? It is then very clear to us that a kiss is not love. “For the love meant is the love of God” (1 Jn 4:7). “And this is the love of God,” says John, “that we keep His commandments” (1 Jn 5:3-4), not that we caress each other on the mouth.’ Translation adapted from ANF, 2:291.

struggle of the heart in the Eucharistic assembly that seems to be consistent throughout the period we are researching.

### **Hippolytus - Worldly Occupations in the *Apostolic Tradition***

The genre of the *Apostolic Tradition* does not lend itself to the same information we find in sermons.<sup>197</sup> However, we can deduce from the catechetical information presented within it, that social problems probably faced the gathered. After encouraging those examining ‘Newcomers’ in *Chapter 15* to inquire about their current living arrangements and what to do if someone is found to be possessed by a demon, Hippolytus writes in *Chapter 17* that ‘Enquiry should be made concerning the crafts and occupations of those who are brought to be instructed.’<sup>198</sup> Following, he lists certain occupations of the day that are not acceptable for those desiring to be united to the Church. These include but are not limited to ‘pimps or procurers of prostitutes, sculptors or painters of idols, actors or theater performers, gladiators or people engaged in the gladiatorial business, priest or guardian of idols, civil magistrates that wear purple and those that carry the power of the sword, military service as a soldier, prostitutes, magicians, makers of spells, astrologers, soothsayers and concubines.’<sup>199</sup> The bishop concludes his instruction, ‘If we have omitted any other matter the works will instruct your eyes. For we all have the spirit of God.’<sup>200</sup> In practical terms, his list is not conclusive so he exhorts his readers to examine the lifestyle (actions) of those being considered for initiation. The catechumenate during Hippolytus’ tenure was normally three years in duration.<sup>201</sup> Thus, it seems probable that those with these vices may have removed themselves from them completely during their lengthy period of observation and instruction. This is speculation. However, if this is not the case, then we can assume spiritual

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<sup>197</sup> For our current purposes, we only need to demonstrate that certain occupations were anti-Christian during this time and those that engaged in them may have carried some sinful remnant into the assembly after their baptism.

<sup>198</sup> A. Stewart-Sykes, *On the Apostolic Tradition*, pp. 97-98.

<sup>199</sup> *Ibid*, p. 100.

<sup>200</sup> *Ibid*, p. 100.

<sup>201</sup> *Ibid*, p. 103.

problems persisted at the Eucharist. Cyprian's writings later in the second century leave no doubt as to the prominence of pastoral problems in the North African church.

### **Cyprian – Moral Issues Among the Laity and the Clergy**

Cyprian of Carthage (200 – 258 A.D.) addresses the moral problems facing his members in *De Lapsis* (Chapters 5-6).<sup>202</sup> His sermon was delivered in 251 to North African bishops in Carthage after the Roman Emperor Trajan Decius died in battle – ending a period of intense persecution. After reflecting on the death of the Christian martyrs and how he shared the same grief as those who lost friends and loved ones, Cyprian turns his attention to what he believes to be the providential reasons for the persecution in Chapter 6:

Individuals busied themselves with increasing the size of their estate. They forgot both what believers had either previously done under the apostles and what they always ought to do. They brooded over their wealth as its size increased through their insatiable greed. There was no careful respect paid in the performance of priestly rites, there was a lack of good faith in administrations to the poor, there was no compassion in works of mercy, there was no discipline in the practice of morality.<sup>203</sup>

From Cyprian's comments, we see, as previously with Judas in the New Testament, that greed was one of the primary problems that plagued the North African church. Furthermore, men and women were altering their appearance in ways the bishop felt did not honor God. They were also sexually enticing others and marrying outside of the faith, disrespecting

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<sup>202</sup> Tertullian, whom Cyprian referred to as 'the Master' also experienced pastoral challenges in North Africa prior to Cyprian's episcopal rule. His members attended the gladiator games which were considered, by Tertullian, to be held in the 'devil's house': 'Seated where there is nothing of God, will one be thinking of his Maker? Will there be peace in his soul when there is eager strife there for a charioteer? Wrought up into a frenzied excitement, will he learn to be modest? Nay, in the whole thing he will meet with no greater temptation than that gay attiring of the men and women. The very intermingling of emotions, the very agreements and disagreements with each other in the bestowment of their favours, where you have such close communion, blow up the sparks of passion. And then there is scarce any other object in going to the show, but to see and to be seen. When a tragic actor is declaiming, will one be giving thought to prophetic appeals? Amid the measures of the effeminate player, will he call up to himself a psalm? And when the athletes are hard at struggle, will he be ready to proclaim that there must be no striking again? And with his eye fixed on the bites of bears, and the sponge-nets of the net-fighters, can he be moved by compassion? May God avert from His people any such passionate eagerness after a cruel enjoyment! For how monstrous it is to go from God's church to the devil's—from the sky to the sty, as they say; to raise your hands to God, and then to weary them in the applause of an actor; out of the mouth, from which you uttered Amen over the Holy Thing, to give witness in a gladiator's favour; to cry "forever" to anyone else but God and Christ!' - Taken from 'Of Spectacles' Chapter 25. Translation taken from *ANF*, Vol. 11, p. 32.

<sup>203</sup> *Ibid*, p. 106.

spiritual oversight and creating divisions among the community.<sup>204</sup> One reason for their disrespect for authority may have been the moral deficiency among the clergy. Cyprian continues his chastisement:

Many bishops became administrators of worldly affairs, ceasing their obligation to be to all others an encouragement and an example. They were contemptuous of their divine ministry. Their Chair abandoned, their people deserted, they wandered around the provincial territories of others, and were on the look out for markets in profitable business. While the brothers in the Church went hungry, they wished to hold on to their money in large quantities, to acquire forcibly farms by means of acts of stealth and deceit, to increase their profit by multiplying interest.<sup>205</sup>

From the aforementioned, we can conclude that Cyprian faced many pastoral challenges as a bishop. These were not limited to laity alone. Other leaders were engaging in activities that were not becoming of Christian churchmen. After the Edict of Milan (313 A.D.), these social problems seem to have continued or possibly even increased.

### **Increasing Social Concerns in the Church during the Fourth Century**

The influx of new members into the Church after 313 arguably increased the number of social problems within the Church and, therefore, the Eucharistic assembly.<sup>206</sup> The mass numbers made it more difficult to properly catechize and examine inquirers.<sup>207</sup> Therefore, there was a lack of control and a growing number of pastoral issues within the liturgical settings of the local churches.

John Chrysostom addresses numerous social problems in many of his fourth century sermons. In *De baptismo Christi* 4 he noted that distribution of Communion in Antioch was difficult: ‘We don’t approach for communion with awe, but kicking, striking, filled with anger, shoving our neighbors, full of disorder.’<sup>208</sup> Later in that same sermon, the bishop’s words shed light on who was actually gathered for the Celebration. At this time,

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<sup>204</sup> Ibid, p. 107.

<sup>205</sup> Ibid, p. 107.

<sup>206</sup> We will reference other socio-liturgical issues in later chapters of our work. These particular concerns are specific to the Church figure we are studying and their immediate context as it relates to the *Sursum corda*. Our concern at present is to obtain a general understanding of the various pastoral problems that existed during our scope of study.

<sup>207</sup> The catechumenate during the time of the *Apostolic Tradition* was normally three years (*Apostolic Tradition* 17) and became, in some cases, even longer as the rite of baptism was delayed until near death. Children (like in Augustine of Hippo’s case) often continued as catechumens until a later age.

<sup>208</sup> As found in Taft, *Participation*, p. 118.

many non-communicants attending the liturgy left before Communion. But, according to Chrysostom, others should leave as well ‘Now, just as there should be none of the uninitiated [i.e., baptize] present, neither should there be any of the initiated who are filthy.’<sup>209</sup> Also during his ministry, Chrysostom complains about people leaving after the sermon.<sup>210</sup> Those that did stay shouted and clapped and offered jeers of resentment when roundly berated for their vices and comportment, these were habitually unruly even in church.<sup>211</sup> Furthermore, in his *Homily on the Martyrs*, preached in Antioch before 398, the bishop testifies to the fact that the congregants tended to conclude their all night vigils engaging in unbecoming behavior in the local taverns.<sup>212</sup>

You have turned night into day by means of holy vigils. Don’t change day into night with intemperance and gluttony...and lascivious songs. You honored the martyrs by your presence, by hearing...honor them also by going home... Think how ridiculous it is after such gatherings, after solemn vigils, after the reading of Sacred Scripture, after participating in the Holy Mysteries...that men and women are seen passing the whole day in the taverns.<sup>213</sup>

However, questionable activities were not isolated problems outside of the church assembly.<sup>214</sup>

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<sup>209</sup> Ibid, p. 119.

<sup>210</sup> In *Sermon 73*, Caesarius of Alres, between the late fifth and early sixth centuries, sets forth his pastoral concern for his people in the first paragraph of his homily, ‘I beg and exhort you with paternal devotion, dearly beloved, that as often as Mass is celebrated, either on Sunday or other important holydays, no one should leave church until the divine mystery is celebrated.’ Certain people were attending the service but leaving after the divine lessons were read. The preacher further informs us of the social-liturgical problems facing the congregation, ‘...some of them are so busy with idle and worldly gossip that they neither hear it (the lessons) themselves nor allow others to do so.’ He continues by explaining the Mass is not over until the Lord’s Body and Blood are consecrated, and, unlike Scripture readings that can be done at home or other places, the Eucharist only takes place in the house of God. Following his exhortation, Caesarius explains what he expects from his parishioners, ‘Therefore, anyone who wants to offer the whole Mass with profit to his soul ought to remain in church, prostrate and with compunction of heart, until the Lord’s Prayer is said and the blessing imparted to the people.’ These words set the context for his reference to the *Sursum corda*: ‘When the majority of the people – in fact, what is worse, almost all of them – leave church as soon as the lessons have been recited, to whom will the priest say: “Lift up your hearts?” Moreover, how can they reply that have lifted them up when they go down into the streets both in body and in heart?’ Translations taken from *The Fathers of the Church* Vol. 31, pp. 342-343.

<sup>211</sup> Taft, *Participation*, p. 82.

<sup>212</sup> Basil complains about similar issues that took place during Lent in his *Homily 14* - ‘On Drunkards’.

<sup>213</sup> Taft, *Participation*, pp. 92-93.

<sup>214</sup> Finn, writes, Chrysostom refers to many of these unruly activities as “pomps” of the devil which correspond to Theodore’s “worldly glamor.” The bishop writes: ‘What are the pomps of the devil? Every form of sin, spectacles of indecency [the theater], horse racing, gatherings filled with laughter and abusive language. Portents, oracles, omens, observances of times, tokens, amulets, and

Chrysostom complains of sinful behavior taking place among men and women within the interior of the temple.<sup>215</sup> In *1 Cor Hom.* 36, 5-6, the seemingly frustrated bishop describes certain activities that persisted during the assemblies:

Great is the tumult, great the confusion here in church. Our assemblies differ in nothing from a tavern, so loud is the laughter, so great the disturbance, just as in the baths, in the markets, with everyone shouting and causing an uproar... The church is not a barbershop, a perfumer's, not any other shop in the forum... [In church] we behave more impudently than dogs, and pay as much respect to God as to a whore... The church is not a place of conversation but of teaching. But now it is no different than the forum... nor probably even from the stage, from the way the women who assemble here adorn themselves more wantonly than the unchaste ones there. Hence we see that many profligates are enticed here by them, and if anyone is trying or intending to corrupt a woman, I suppose no place seems better than the church.<sup>216</sup>

These issues seem to be ongoing concerns. In *In Mt hom.* 73/74, 3, Chrysostom speaks poignantly to his parishioners about these matters and expresses the need to construct a wall between the men and women:

Listen first to what you say in the psalm, "Let my prayer rise like incense before you" (Ps 140/141:2). But since it is not incense but stinking smoke that rises from you and your actions, what punishment do you not deserve to undergo? What is the stinking smoke? Many enter [the church] to gape at the beauty of the women, and others curious to see the blooming youth of the boys... What are you doing, man? Do you curiously look for female beauty, and not shudder at insulting in this way the temple of God? Does the church seem to you a whorehouse, less honorable than the forum? In the forum you are ashamed to be seen giving women the once-over, but in God's temple, when God himself is speaking and warning you about these things, you are committing fornication and adultery at the very time you are hearing not to!... Indeed, you ought to have an interior wall to separate you from the women, but since you don't want to, our fathers thought it necessary to wall you off with these boards. For I hear from elders that formerly there were not these barriers, "Since in Christ Jesus there is neither male nor female (Gal 3:28)." In the time of the apostles men and women were equal, for the men were men and the women were women. But now it is completely different: women have taken on the habit of courtesans, and the men are no different than frantic stallions.<sup>217</sup>

Regarding these situations, Taft writes, "No one should be surprised, then, at the peremptory diaconal commands in Greek liturgy: "Get up (*Ορθοι!*)" "Let us stand correctly (*Ετωμεν*

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incantations – these too are pomps of devil." (*Baptismal Instruction* 11.25). Reference and translation taken from Finn, *Baptism in the Early Church*, p. 538.

<sup>215</sup> Taft, on page 94 of *Participation*, notes that Chrysostom complains about the young people as being 'filth rather than youth,' that spend their time in church talking, laughing and joking.' (*In Acta hom.* 24, 4.)

<sup>216</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 94-95.

<sup>217</sup> *Ibid*, p. 96. Later in the same sermon Chrysostom complains about how men and woman communicate with each other, 'For indeed if one could see what is said by men and women at each synaxis, you would see that their talk is filthier than excrement.' (*In Mt. hom.* 88/89) as found in Taft, *Participation*, p. 95.

καλωσῆ)!” “Keep quiet (Πανσασθε)!” Pay attention (Προσχωμεν)!” – to which Chrysostom, doubtless would have added: “Leave the women alone.”<sup>218</sup> While it may be premature, we might add to Taft’s list ‘*Sursum corda!*’ or (ανω τας καρδιας!). Chrysostom concludes after one series of unfortunate events, that it would be better for those involved to stay at home.<sup>219</sup>

Around the same time, in North Africa, Augustine (354-430 AD) complains about like problems. However, these are ones he personally claims to be guilty of as well before his conversion - men move in and out of the assembly chattering and making dates with their lady friends.<sup>220</sup> As with Cyprian earlier in North Africa, in Augustine’s day women were creating problems among the laity and the male clergy were also distracted by their dress, makeup and jewelry.<sup>221</sup> Thus, social problems were not restricted to one area of Christendom and seem to be more common than not in our scope of study.

It seems, in light of our work thus far in this chapter, that many people, men and woman alike, gathered in the Eucharistic assembly with their hearts influenced by ‘earthly’ things. Therefore, a forceful command like *Sursum corda!* could function as a means to address and correct the unwanted behavior. This argument gains further credence from two Fathers: Commodianus in the third century and Anastasius of Sinai in the late seventh or early eight century.

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<sup>218</sup> Ibid, p. 97. The issues between men and women in the following century turned violent. Taft comments, ‘fifth-century Byzantine historian Sozomen, *Church History* VII, 16.8, details the uproar caused in Constantinople when a woman was raped by a deacon in the church.’ As found in Taft, *Participation*, p. 93.

<sup>219</sup> Taft, *Participation*, p. 94 referencing *In Acta hom.* 29,3.

<sup>220</sup> *Confessions* III as found in Taft, *Participation*, p. 96. Harmless, using Augustine’s commentary, describes the tight quarters and diversity of the people that gathered in the North African basilica for his sermons, ‘There were no pews, so people stood: women on one side, men on the other. “The great numbers crowd right up to the walls,” Augustine once said; they “annoy each other by the pressure and almost choke each other by their overflowing numbers.” (*Sermon* 221.1-2). These crowds included people from all levels of provincial society – artisans and fisherman, merchants and magistrates – but the majority seemed to have been townspeople.’ As taken from his work, *Augustine and the Catechumenate*, p. 162.

<sup>221</sup> *In Mt hom.* 73/74, 3

### Commodianus – *Sursum Corda* as a Means to Correct Earthly Behavior

Commodianus<sup>222</sup>, a lesser known mid third century Latin Church poet, possibly from North Africa, provides us insight into the original meaning and function of the *Sursum Corda*.<sup>223</sup> In his work, *Instructions in Favor of Christian Discipline Against the Gods of the Heathens* section LXXVI entitled, ‘Of Those Who Gossip, and of Silence,’ he describes the social setting of the Eucharist and how the priest employs the command, *Sursum Corda*:

When a thing appears to anybody of no consequence, and is not shunned, and it rushes forth, as if easy, whilst thou abusest it. Fables assist it when thou comest to pour out prayers, or to beat thy breast for thy daily sin. The trumpet of the heralds sounds forth, while the reader is reading, that the ears may be open, and thou rather impedest them. Thou art luxurious with thy lips, with which thou oughtest to groan. Shut up thy breast to evils, or loose them in thy breast. But since the possession of money gives barefacedness to the wealthy, thence every one perishes when they are most trusting to themselves. Thus, moreover, the women assemble, as if they would enter the bath. They press closely, and make of God's house as if it were a fair. Certainly the Lord frightened the house of prayer. *The Lord's priest commanded with "sursum corda," when prayer was to be made, that your silence should be made.* Thou answerest fluently, and moreover abstainest not from promises. He entreats the Highest on behalf of a devoted people, lest any one should perish, and thou turnest thyself to fables. Thou mockest at him, or detractest from thy neighbour's reputation. Thou speakest in an undisciplined manner, as if God were absent--as if He who made all things neither hears nor sees.<sup>224</sup>

From this commentary, it is clear that social issues, identical to some we discovered, prevailed at the gathering. The people are assembling but not with devotion. Their minds are concerned with the things of the earth. There is not a sense of repentance. Some are trusting in their wealth and not in the Lord. And certain women are creating problems by their appearance and sensual actions. This is not to say men were not involved in the shenanigans. In order to bring order out of this chaotic assembly, the priest commanded ‘*Sursum corda!*’ The first ritual action associated with the command seems to be silence.<sup>225</sup> Thus indicating before the command there was unwanted commotion and or chatter. Then the liturgical dialogue continues, assumed to be ‘*habemus ad dominum*’ since Commodianus employs

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<sup>222</sup> Charles Hill, *Regnum Caelorum: Patterns of Millennial Thought in Early Christianity* (Cambridge, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2001), p. 32.

<sup>223</sup> Biographical information on Commodianus is limited. See the introduction to his work in *ANF*, Vol. 4, p. 302.

<sup>224</sup> Text taken from Minucius Felix's edition of Commodianus' work, *The Instructions of Commodianus in Favour of Christian Discipline* (Whitefish, Kessinger, 2008), p. 37

<sup>225</sup> Contrary to Lash's argument, it does not seem that the euphony of the command is a consideration. The *Sursum Corda*, according to Commodianus, is a command. This seems to strengthen Bates' conclusion in our Introduction and Chapter 1.

the Latin. The priest engages the ‘prayer that follows’ on behalf of them, but they are not ‘heavenly’ minded. Following, Commodianus increases the social accusations he has against those congregated. He summarizes the spiritual problem as a lack of the awareness of God’s omnipresence or omniscience. In turn, the gathered do not recognize the ‘heavenly’ nature of the sacrament as the Highest is in their midst. From the aforementioned, we can surmise that the *Sursum Corda* at the time of Commodianus was in fact, as we concluded in Chapter 1, an abrupt command, not concerned with euphony. Moreover, it resonated with the gathered that were acting unbecomingly in the Mass. Thus, it was a social corrective that, coarsely put, but to the point, functioned as an earthly command to ‘shut up, stop your unruly behavior and pay attention’ as you are in the Eucharistic assembly before God. Anastasius of Sinai employs the *Sursum Corda* in a similar fashion near the end of the seventh century.

### **Anastasius of Sinai – Ongoing Social/Spiritual Problems and the *Sursum Corda***

The Greek monk-priest and author known as Anastasius of Sinai (630-700) was abbot of the monastery of St. Catherine on Mt. Sinai.<sup>226</sup> There is not much detail about his life, but it seems the pastoral problems he faced are similar to the ones in the scope of our work. In his sermon, *Oratio de Sacra Synaxis*, written sometime around 700, he explains the context and function of the *Sursum Corda*:

Hear what the deacon proclaims to you saying (προσφωνεῖ): ‘Let us stand well, let us stand with fear. Let us be attentive to the holy anaphora.’ Let us bow our heads, let us block out our thoughts, let us stop our tongue, let us fill up our mind, let us ascend to heaven. Let us lift up mind and hearts. Let us raise up to God the eyes of our soul... This the priest affirms to you when he says ‘Ἄνω σχώμεν τας καρδίας.’ And what do we reply to this? ‘Ἐχομεν πρὸς τὸν Κύριον’ What are you saying? What are you doing? Your mine is ‘elevated’ to perishable and passing things, and you say ‘I have it to the Lord?’ Take heed I pray, lest perchance you have your mind (νοῦς) not up to the Lord but down to the devil. (PG 89, 836-837.)<sup>227</sup>

<sup>226</sup> D. Caner, *History and Hagiography from the Late Antique Sinai* (Liverpool, Liverpool Press, 2010), p. 172. See also J. Munitiz’s work ‘Anastasios of Sinai: Speaking and Writing to the People of God’ in *Preacher and His Audience: Studies in Early Christian and Byzantine Homiletics*, eds. M. Cunningham and P. Allen (Leiden, Brill, 1998), pp. 227-245 and R. Pummer, *Early Christian Authors on Samaritans and Samaritanism* (Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 2002), p. 369.

<sup>227</sup> Translation taken from Taft II, p. 58.

The diaconal admonitions inform us that the faithful are standing to pray in the assembly. It seems that the faithful, or faithless, were thinking about other things than the Lord at the Eucharist and possibly engaging in empty chatter. The spiritual cure set forth by the abbot is to reorient your mind and ascend to heaven. Instead of the traditional references to either hearts or minds, he employs the conflation found in the *Liturgy of St. James*<sup>228</sup>; however, this a pastoral reference that is an attempt to move the soul/heart, via the thoughts and ritual posture of the people, to heaven. The text of the *Sursum Corda* is what we find in *Codex Barbarini* commonly translated as ‘let us lift up our hearts.’ The textual force of the command seems to indicate it may be compromised with the addition of *σχωμεν*. However, Anastasius’ commentary regarding the *Sursum corda* is not suggestive. Rather, it is demanding. Either way, what is clear is that he is encountering pastoral problems in the liturgy and he refers to the *Sursum Corda* as part of the remedy. Moreover, we see that the earth ‘down’ is still understood to be the domain of the evil one. Thus, to not truly engage the *Sursum Corda* is to have one’s mind below on the devil. Therefore, he is still a formidable foe in the liturgy of Sinai in Late Antiquity. Anastasius also incorporates the *Sursum corda* in his explanation of the reconciliation at the *pax*, the petition for forgiveness in the Lord’s Prayer, and the *sancta sanctis* warning of the unworthy before the communion (PG, 89, 141). Thus, even in the early eight century, beyond our scope of study, those that gather for the liturgy are standing to pray in the *orans* (the topic of study in our next chapter) and struggling spiritually to lift up their hearts unto the Lord. And the *Sursum Corda*, as was referenced by Commodianus in the third century, is employed by Anastasius to bring spiritual order to the ritual setting of the Eucharist.

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<sup>228</sup> For a summary of the history and textual development of the the *Liturgy of St. James*, see J. Cummings, *Prayers of the Eucharist*, pp. 88-89.

## Conclusion

This chapter presented social and pastoral issues as a lens through which to interpret the *Sursum Corda*. We discovered in our exploration that, for the baptized, the heart is a spiritual battle ground between the forces of good (heaven) and evil (earth). This, in conjunction with other social influences outside of the liturgical gathering, often created pastoral problems at the celebration of the Eucharist from the time of Jesus Christ well into Augustine of Hippo's tenure as bishop in North Africa and beyond. While the *Apostolic Tradition* presented various occupations, and, consequently, types of people that may create issues in the Eucharistic gathering, Cyprian confirmed moral problems did exist among the laity as well as the clergy in the third century. Moreover, after the Edict of Milan in 313, social difficulties seemed to increase. Chrysostom frequently and poignantly addresses these concerns in his sermons. Therefore, it can be argued that if these moral, sexual and social disturbances he refers to persisted in a major city of Christendom (Antioch) or even in the capital of the empire (Constantinople), they were probably prevalent throughout the Eucharistic gatherings across Christendom. Furthering the strength of our argument, Commodianus, in the third century, comments that the *Sursum Corda* was *commanded* by the priest in order to confront improper behavior within the ritual setting. This connection between the Eucharistic assembly and the *Sursum Corda* is further confirmed in the late seventh or early eighth century writing of Anastasius of Sinai. Thus, we can conclude that the Christian assembly, within the scope of our study, struggled with earthly issues; and at least one function of the ritual text, *Sursum Corda*, was to restore *social* order by reminding those gathered of their baptism. To date, scholars have not considered this connection and function of the command.<sup>229</sup> Therefore, our work arguably sheds new light on the place of the *Sursum Corda* in the liturgical gathering. We will now consider how the ritual text and ritual setting is connected to the ritual posture of the command.

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<sup>229</sup> Taft's argument is similar – 'warning off the unworthy.' However, in the texts we considered we can argue it is a strong exhortation to the gathered to correct the issues at hand.

## Chapter 3

### Ritual Posture – *Sursum Corda* and the *Orans*

#### Introduction

Thus far in our study we have concluded that the ritual text, *Sursum Corda*, had an earthly function. It was a command to the initiated that reminded them of their rite of entrance into the Church in order to bring about social order in the assembly prior to the Eucharistic Prayer. From our introductory survey of recent scholarship, we discovered that the academic consensus regarding the ritual function of the *Sursum Corda* is that the gathered were either standing or commanded to stand and assume the *orans* posture of prayer when they heard the exhortation pronounced by the celebrant. Dölger, Taft and Ferguson reference many of the same texts and cover corresponding ritual considerations associated with the command.<sup>230</sup> It is not our objective to repeat their scholarly endeavor. However, it needs to be noted that the writings within our scope of study do not specifically reference the *orans* as the ritual posture associated with the *Sursum Corda*. Instead, what is referenced on numerous occasions is ‘standing to pray.’ Therefore, there is a need for us to broaden the research heretofore regarding this assumption.<sup>231</sup> Specifically, as noted in our introduction, we need to see if the *orans* and ‘standing to pray’ are synonymous. In order to do so, we will explore pre-Christian as well as post-Christian texts that reference the command in cultic settings. If the two terms are ritually equivalent, then they may be liturgically connected to the *Sursum Corda*. Furthermore, if this is the case, then we need to explore what liturgical or theological

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<sup>230</sup> See Dölger, *Sol Salutis*, pp. Taft II, pp. 71-77 and Ferguson’s work, *The Liturgical Function*.

<sup>231</sup> See S. Gilchrist’s dissertation, *The orans posture in early Christianity: a study of the body in worship* (Atlanta, Emory University Press, 1992) for an overview of the subject. This work was discovered near the end of the current study.

implications it has for the Eucharistic assembly.<sup>232</sup> Taft summarizes our intentions in his passing comment on these aspects of the *orans* posture of prayer and how he believes it relates to the *Sursum Corda*. In his words, ‘These postures and gestures were no mere ritualism. They were the outward sign of interior dispositions of recollection, purity of mind and heart, and prayer. To look up and face east was seen as a specifically Christian posture implying true faith, and worthiness.’<sup>233</sup> Pertaining to our central argument, if we can demonstrate the *orans* posture was assumed at the *Sursum Corda* it will further connect the command to rite of baptism due to the fact there is ample evidence, soon to be discussed, that the newly baptized assumed this position of prayer immediately following their baptism the first time they recited the ‘Our Father.’

### **The *Orans* Posture in the Ancient World**

The act of looking upward and stretching forth one’s hands to heaven in prayer existed in different cultures before the advent of Christ.<sup>234</sup> Milburn writes, ‘The figure of the *Orans* was taken directly from its widespread use in classical

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<sup>232</sup> Zeusee’s defines ‘... as “ritual” those conscious and voluntary, repetitious and stylized symbolic bodily actions that are centered on cosmic structures and/or sacred presences.’ And, compared to language, ‘Ritual, on the contrary, tries to reassert the connectedness of things and the continuities in life; it is less an expression of thought than an experiment in living. It is where we lead with the body and the mind follows, discovering the revelation it is given along the way. “Ritual condenses into concrete and unitary form procedures which otherwise would have to be discursive...ritual uses gestures and things to replace analytic expression” Claude Levi-Strauss. Therefore, by studying the ritual actions associated with the *Sursum Corda*, we may be able to discover the theology associated with the command. Moreover, while it is possible to reconstruct the beliefs of a community on the basis of their fragmentary verbal expression in the rite, it is arguably more important to trace the trajectory of the ritual doing and to ask, not what is being said, but what is being done (theme and language modified and taken from M. Searle in *The Study of the Liturgy*, p. 57). In Ricoeur’s phrase, the symbol gives rise to thought. But the ritual symbol is enacted symbol: it is an embodied parable, whose meaning is not so much conceptualized and then expressed in gesture, as something that dawns upon those who carry it out. For that reason, ritual will always be more than doctrine-in-action, as encounter will always be more than description (above references contributed to M. Searle, *The Study of the Liturgy*, pp. 56-57).

<sup>233</sup> Taft II, p. 75.

<sup>234</sup> See A. Louth’s work, *The Origins of the Christian Mystical Tradition: From Plato to Denys* (Oxford, OUP, 2007) for an overview of the influence of pre-Christian thought on the mystical tradition of the Church.

imagery, and it implied for the Christians much the same thing as it had meant for their pagan precursors.<sup>235</sup> He continues by explaining the *Orans* represents *pietas* - ‘the affectionate respect due to state, to ruler, to family or to God.’<sup>236</sup> This is important to our study as early converts to Christianity, Jew and gentile alike, came from diverse religious backgrounds and, therefore, may have already understood the *orans* position to be a common ritual posture. Therefore, they arguably understood their physical posture to be communicating theological ideas. Consequently, there existed a need for church leaders to place the *orans* within a Christian context. Thus, in the following we will consider Greek, Roman and Jewish customs as these three cultures and traditions converged and formed the religious, political and social milieu of the earliest Christians.<sup>237</sup>

### **Ancient Greeks**

The first ancient Greek reference to the *orans* we will discuss is found in the *Iliad* (760 B.C.).<sup>238 239</sup> Of particular interest to us is the reference to ‘lifting up’ hands in prayer during a ritual offering<sup>240</sup> made to propitiate the god, Apollo:

...and they ranged the holy hecatomb all orderly round the altar of god. They washed their hands and took up the barley-meal to sprinkle over the victims, while Chryses lifted up his hands and prayed aloud on their behalf... Thus did he pray, and Apollo hear his prayer. When they had done

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<sup>235</sup> Milburn, *Early Christian Art and Architecture* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1988), p. 32.

<sup>236</sup> *Ibid*, p. 32.

<sup>237</sup> See *The Cambridge History of Early Christian Literature*, F. Young, L. Ayers and A. Louth, eds. (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press), pp. 5 – 116 for a broad survey of the literary and cultural context of the first and second century Christianity; For a general overview of the daily life of early Christians see J. Jeffers’ work *The Greco-Roman World of the New Testament Era* (Downers Grove, InterVarsity Press, 1999); and A. Blasi, P. Turcotte and J. Duhaime’s work *Handbook of Early Christianity: Social Science Approaches* (Walnut Creek, AltaMira Press, 2002) for a detailed study of biblical-social context of the early Christianity.

<sup>238</sup> Whether Homer is an actual historical person and whether he truly penned the *Iliad* is outside the scope our study. For these and other questions surrounding Homer see Barbara Graziosi’s work, *The Invention of Homer* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2002).

<sup>239</sup> See Vidal-Naquet, Pierre, *Le monde d’Homère*, (Paris, Perrin, 2000) for further background information.

<sup>240</sup> In Book 3 there is another reference to the *orans* in the context of the offering up of wool from a lamb’s head, ‘...the son of Arteus lifted up his hands in prayer.’

praying and sprinkling the barley-meal, they drew back the heads of the victims and killed and flayed them.<sup>241</sup>

In this excerpt, we see one of the earliest literary descriptions of the *orans* posture to be in the context of sacrificial worship. Chryses, the one presiding, is standing at an altar and offering the sacrifice of grain to the deity with his hands ‘lifted up’ in prayer on behalf of others.

Later on, during a time of war in *Book 15*, we see collective petitions being offered during a time of distress, ‘Thus then were the Achaeans hemmed in at their ships, calling out to one another and raising their hands with loud cries every man to heaven. Nestor of Gerene, tower of strength to the Achaeans, lifted up his hands to the starry firmament of heaven, and prayed more fervently than any of them.’<sup>242</sup>

These Homeric references are important to our study as they provide insight into how later Greeks prayed. E. Kearns, in her essay ‘The Gods in Homer’s epics’, writes, ‘The heroes of the *Iliad* pray frequently, and in ways as far as we can tell that are strikingly similar to those of the Greeks of later times and “real-life” situations. They pray with some special request in mind, they remind the Gods of their past benefits and promise gifts for the future if their prayer is heard.’<sup>243</sup> Kearns’s comment, if accurate, is, arguably, evidence enough to bring our Greek considerations to the era of the New Testament. However, in order to gain a broader perspective, there are two other Greek writers we must consider: Aristotle and Plutarch.

*On the Heavens*, a third century B.C. pseudo-Aristotelian work reads, ‘And all ages bear witness to this fact, and allot the upper region to God: all of us men

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<sup>241</sup> Homer, *Iliad* bk. 1 ln. 451 as found in *Homer – The Iliad*, translated by Samuel Butler and published online by Orange Street Press Classics – <http://sparks.server.org/books/iliad.pdf>.

<sup>242</sup> *Ibid*, p. 292.

<sup>243</sup> E. Kearns’s, ‘The Gods of Iliad: interaction with humans’ as found in *The Cambridge Companion of Homer*, R. Fowler, ed. (Cambridge, CUP, 2004), p. 64.

stretch out our hands to heavens when we pray.’<sup>244</sup> In essence, the philosopher believed the *orans* posture to be the normal position of prayer assumed by all people when petitions are to be made. Later, in northern Greece, around 110 A.D., Plutarch, in his *Lives*, narrates various scenes whereby people are praying in the *orans* posture. One is of special importance to us. It takes place before the live entombment of a Vestal virgin who is accused of breaking her vow of chastity. In *Lycurgus and Numa*, Plutarch describes the scene as the one accused is punished for her crime:

...then the high-priest, lifting up his hands toward heaven, pronounces certain prayers to himself before the act; then he brings out the prisoner, being still covered, and placing her upon the steps that lead down into the cell..<sup>245</sup>

In this case, like in the *Iliad*, we see the *orans* assumed by a priest. And in this situation, the ritual is accompanied by ‘mysterious’ prayers. In conclusion, the *Iliad*, *On the Cosmos* and *Lycurgus and Numa* demonstrate a ritual continuity within the ancient Greek world. When laity and clergy prayed privately or collectively at the cultic gathering, they assumed the *orans* position.

### **Ancient Romans**

As in our discussion regarding Greek sources, we will now turn our attention to three Roman writings that give us insight into the ritual posture of prayer immediately before and after the advent of Christ. In Rome, around 54 B.C., Lucretius describes the kneeling *orans* posture as being a pagan act of religious sacrifice:

It is not piety to show oneself often with covered head, turning towards a stone approaching every altar, none to fall prostrate upon the ground and to spread open the palms before the shrines of the gods, none to sprinkle altars

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<sup>244</sup> Aristotle, *On the Cosmos*, 6.15. Translation by D.J. Furley in *Aristotle* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 2000), p. 401

<sup>245</sup> Translation by J. Dryden as found in *Plutarch's Lives: Vol. I*, A.H. Clough, ed. (New York, Cosimo, 2008), p. 131

with the blood of beasts in showers and to link vow to vow; but rather to be able to survey all things with a tranquil mind.<sup>246</sup>

Although Lucretius is arguing against this form of worship, here, like in Homer, we see that this ritual act takes place before an altar and includes an offering of blood and vows made by those gathered. Included is the opening of the palms which is symbolic of the *orans* posture in prayer.<sup>247</sup> Lucretius may have been describing what later became known, as mentioned previously in our introduction to this chapter, the ‘Pietas’ – a female image found on Roman coins during the time of Hadrian (117-138 A.D.).

To the Romans, Pietas embodied the religious virtue of piety. F. Gnechi describes the image in the following manner:

The types of Pietas are: a matron occasionally seated but almost always standing and often veiled, with a patera and scepter... She often stands near an altar upon which she sometimes pours from a patera or places incense. Sometimes she raises one hand or both to the sky.<sup>248</sup>

Figures similar to Pietas, if not the Pietas, are found throughout the catacombs of the early Christians. There is no scholarly consensus regarding what these figures represent.<sup>249</sup> Milburn, regarding the relationship between the *orans* and Rome, explains, ‘On coins from the time of Trajan to Maximian Hercules, throughout the second and third centuries A.D., the *Orans* appears quite frequently, accompanied by such motto as *Pietas Publican*; an assertion of, or plea for the “righteousness that

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<sup>246</sup> Lucretius, *De Rerum Natura* Book 5 ln.1199ff as found in S. Harvey’s work, *Scenting Salvation: Ancient Christianity and the Olfactory Imagination* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 2006), p. 23

<sup>247</sup> There are other ancient references to the *orans* posture that are not in the context of sacrificial worship. One example is found in Virgil’s *Aeneid Book 2* line 688 written around 19 BC, ‘But my father Anchises joyously raises his eyes to the skies and uplifts to heaven the hands and voice: “Almighty Jupiter, if by any prayers thou art moved, look upon us...”’ Translation taken from H. Rushton Faircloth as found in *Virgil: Eclogues. Georgics. Aeneid I-VI* (London, William Heinemann, 1916), p. 341

<sup>248</sup> F. Gnechi and G. Elmer, *The Coin-Types of Imperial Rome* (Chicago, Ares Publishers Inc., 1978), p. 56.

<sup>249</sup> A. Ernst, regarding the meaning of the *orans*, writes, ‘The interpretation of this figure is uncertain. She has been construed as the soul of the dead person, a portrait of the deceased, a personification of the pietas and a descendant of prehistoric goddess depictions.’ Taken from her work *Martha from the Margins: The Authority of Martha in Early Christian Tradition* (Leiden, Brill, 2009), p. 60.

exalteth a nation.<sup>250</sup> Righteousness in this context may indicate acknowledgement of or prayer to the Gods.

The second example is from the North African writer Apuleius whose religious novel, *Metamorphoses*, dates to approximately 150 A.D. In this work, *Auplieus* describes the response of the faithful gathered at the Temple of Isis when he is transformed from a big-eared ass back into human form. Aupleius describes their reaction as follows:

The crowd was amazed, and the devout paid homage to this clear manifestation of the power of the mighty deity, to her grandeur which exactly matched my dream revelations, and to the ease of my transformation. With one clear voice, stretching their hands toward heaven, they bore witness to the marvelous beneficence of the goddess.<sup>251</sup>

The reference to the community praying with ‘one clear voice’ implies a liturgical setting in which the offering is thanksgiving. Furthermore, as in our previous examples, the collective posture during this offering is the *orans*.

The last Roman example we will include is that of the Stoic, Seneca (4 B.C. death A.D. 65). Like Lucretius, he is writing against a pagan practice:

It is too stupid to pray for it when you can obtain it by your own efforts. We do not need to lift up our hands toward heaven, or beg the sexton for nearer access to the idol’s ear, as if he could hear us more clearly; god is near you, with you, inside you.<sup>252</sup>

Again, this negative reference to the *orans* posture serves to prove it was common among those that worshiped pagan gods. Moreover, in *Letter 92*, ‘The Happy Life’ he describes the desire of the soul to ascend to god ‘Our spirit is capacious, and its direction is towards god, if vices do not press it down. Just as our bodily posture is erect and looks towards heaven, so our soul, which may reach outward at will, was

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<sup>250</sup> Milburn, *Early Christian Art and Architecture*, p. 32.

<sup>251</sup> Apuleius, *Metamorphoses*, 11.13. Translation taken from R. Pervo, H. Attridge’s work *Acts: a commentary* (Minneapolis, Fortress Press, 3009), p. 494.

<sup>252</sup> Seneca, *Epistle 41 ‘God in Man’* as found in *The Stoic Philosopher Seneca*, trans. by Moses Hadas (New York, W.W. Norton, 1958), p. 188.

fashioned by Nature to desire equality with gods.<sup>253</sup> This text does not refer to the *orans* specifically, but if assumed based on the posture of the body and heavenly gaze described, it presents us with pagan liturgical theology that connects the *orans* posture with the ascent of the soul during the life and ministry of Christ.<sup>254</sup>

We can conclude from the following survey that the *orans* was the typical posture of posture of prayer in both in ancient Greek and Roman societies. Therefore, to early gentile converts to Christianity, praying with eyes lifted up and arms stretched forth, was a common cultic ritual that may have reflected the state of the soul (uplifted in prayer).<sup>255</sup> With some primary pagan sources related to our work considered, we will now turn our attention to the relationship between the *orans* and the Jewish cult.

### **Old Testament Jews and the *Orans***

In the 1Kings, we see the first Old Testament reference to the *orans* position in a liturgical setting:

Then Solomon stood before the altar of the Lord in the presence of all the assembly of Israel, and spread forth his hands toward heaven; and said “O Lord, God of Israel, there is no God like Thee in heaven above or on earth beneath...”<sup>256</sup>

At some point during this great prayer of Solomon he must have knelt before the altar. When he finishes praying, he stands up and blesses the people:

And it came about that when Solomon had finished praying this entire prayer and supplication to the Lord, he arose from before the altar of the Lord, from kneeling on his knees with his hands spread toward heaven. And he stood and blessed the all the assembly of Israel ... (1 Kings 8:54-55).

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<sup>253</sup> Ibid, 246.

<sup>254</sup> This is speculation by the author.

<sup>255</sup> Taft notes, ‘Pagans and Jews prayed in the same way, among Christians the *orant* position is illustrated in the earliest catacomb art and described or explicitly enjoined in numerous text. Indeed it was so common among Christians Tertullian tells us they were ridiculed as “cloud counters.” (Tertullian, *Apol.* 24.5, CLL 1, 134) as found in Taft II, p. 74.

<sup>256</sup> 1 Kings 8:22-23b.

These references connect the *orans* posture with a cultic liturgical context, i.e. at the altar, in the temple, before the Lord. Another relevant observation is that Solomon was standing and later kneeling in the ritual position.

We see a similar posture in Ezra 9 as ‘Ezra’ is kneeling before the Lord with his hands lifted up towards heaven:

And at the evening sacrifice I rose from my fasting, with my garments and my mantle rent, and fell upon my knees and spread out my hands to the Lord my God, saying: O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift my face to thee, my God, for our iniquities have risen higher than our heads, and our guilt has mounted up to the heavens (Ezra 9:5-6).

These texts confirm that standing and kneeling were common postures assumed during prayer. However, Ezra’s context is somewhat different as he is confessing to God privately the collective sins of the people. This posture of confession prohibits him, unlike Solomon, from ‘lifting up his face’ to the Lord.

Nehemiah 8 demonstrates that not only the leaders or priest in an assembly assumed an *orans* posture in prayer, but the faithful did as well:

So Ezra the priest brought the Law before the assembly of men and women and all who could hear with understanding... And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people, for he was standing above all the people; and when he opened it, all the people stood up. And Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God; and all the people answered, ‘Amen, Amen,’ lifting up their hands; and they bowed their heads and worshipped the Lord with their faces to the ground (Nehemiah 8:2-6).

In these texts, there is a liturgical dialogue between Ezra and the people. Included in this interaction is the ritual of standing for the reading of the Law and the raising of hands during worship. However, unlike Ezra who prayed on his knees with his hands raised, those gathered in these texts pray with their hands lifted up and their heads bowed to the ground. In light of this, we see that the *orans* posture is connected with the cultic rites but the position is not limited to one bodily posture or one liturgical

action in the Jewish scriptures.<sup>257</sup> Furthermore, a survey of the Psalter confirms these diverse physical postures related to the *orans*.<sup>258</sup> Thus, we can conclude, Old Testament Jews, like their Greek and Roman counterparts, prayed in the *orans* posture in both private and public/cultic ritual context. However, if they converted to Christianity, the liturgical and theological considerations they attached to the ritual action needed to be corrected via catechism. These observations provide us with a broader understanding of the common place of the *orans* among the clergy and laity in the ritual context of worship. In the following, we will explore certain biblical texts that specifically relate the ritual posture of the *orans* to the social setting of prayer.

### **Lamentations 3: 40-41 and the Social Setting of the New Testament *Orans***

There are Old Testament and New Testament passages that connect the *orans* to the notion of self-examination. The first one considered is Lamentations 3:40 - 41:<sup>259</sup>

Let us search and examine our ways,  
And turn back to the Lord;  
Let us lift up our hearts and hands.<sup>260</sup>  
To God in heaven.

In these passages, before the worshippers engage in the act of prayer, they need to prepare themselves by ‘examining’ their ways. Inherent in this collective reflection is the need for repentance from thoughts, words and deeds that are contrary to the

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<sup>257</sup> This is true of the intertestamental period as well: 2 Maccabees 3:20-21 (100 B.C.): ‘20 Heavenward they raised their hands, each one of them, in prayer; 21 and pity it was to see how common folk about him were sharing the high priest’s agony of suspense.’ Translation by J. Kohlenberger as found in *The Parallel Apocrypha* (Oxford, OUP, 1997 ), p. 119.

<sup>258</sup> Psalm 28, 63, 88, 134, 141 and 143

<sup>259</sup> Another example of self-examination and the *orans* is found in Isaiah 1:15-17 - When you spread forth your hands, I will hide my eyes from you; even though you make many prayers, I will not listen; your hands are full of blood.

<sup>260</sup> LXX: 3:41 ἀναλάβομεν καρδίας ἡμῶν ἐπὶ χειρῶν πρὸς ὑψηλὸν ἐν οὐρανῷ. Taft lists this passage in his consideration of the origin of the *Sursum Corda*. See his discussion in Taft II, p. 63.

law of God. The proper heart or mindset is understood to precede the lifting up of the heart which is accompanied by and reflected in the lifting up of the hands, the *orans* posture.

In New Testament, there are only two<sup>261</sup> specific references to standing and praying. Both of these texts include the notion of ‘searching’ and ‘examining’ as found in Lamentations 3:40-41: The first example is 1 Timothy 2:8:

I desire then that in every place men should pray, lifting up holy hands without anger or quarreling

We see that the writer of 1 Timothy is concerned about spiritual unity and the corresponding social disposition of the assembled (the ritual setting). The author expresses the need for Christians to be at peace with each other before prayer is offered – before holy hands are lifted up. Moreover, following this exhortation to men, the writer addresses women ‘...in like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing, but, which is proper for women professing godliness, with good works.’ In summary, men are to be at peace with each other when they pray and women are to pray clothed in modesty. These texts afford us insight into the social nature of the liturgical gathering of the New Testament Church; and we learn there is a connection between assuming the *orans* and the ritual social context of prayer.<sup>262</sup>

Following a similar theme, in the Gospel of Mark we read Christ’s exhortation to reconcile with others before prayer is offered – Mark 11:25:

And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you trespasses. But

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<sup>261</sup> Another possible reference is to the *orans* is found in John 1:1 - John 17, ‘When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven and said, ‘Father, the hour has come...’

<sup>262</sup> The argument can be made if feuding and improper attire was not an issue or potential problem, then it would not be addressed in a New Testament ‘pastoral’ epistle.

if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses.

Again, forgiveness is a prerequisite to making petition. This act serves to remedy social issues in the context of collective prayer. Moreover, we see clearly from this passage that standing to pray is the posture assumed by the gathered during the Lord's Prayer. Thus, in the Old and New Testaments the ritual posture of the *orans* was assumed during prayer. But, before petition was made to God, the heart, the inner man, and the hands needed to be acceptable before Him. The one praying needed to be pure and at peace with others. The fact that the only two clear New Testament references to the *orans* are found in texts that include exhortations for the gathered to have proper mindsets (heart issues) and behavior (social concerns) at the ecclesiastical assembly, indicate that the ritual posture of prayer is, arguably, connected in function to the *Sursum corda*, as discovered in our last chapter. In the first four centuries following the writings of the New Testament, the evidence linking the *Sursum corda* to the *orans* and the social context of worship is even more apparent.

### **Primary Third Century Considerations of the *Orans***

#### **The *Apostolic Tradition* and the Catacomb of San Callisto**

The *Apostolic Tradition*, as discussed in Chapter 1, is one of our primary ritual texts.<sup>263</sup> It provides us with the first textual account of the liturgical *Sursum corda*, and the possible ritual posture associated with it.<sup>264</sup> *Apostolic Tradition* 4:1-2 describes the activity of the newly ordained bishop before the preface of the Eucharistic Prayer:

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<sup>263</sup> See Chapter 1 of this study.

<sup>264</sup> One of the earliest references to standing to pray is found in Justin Martyr's work *Apology I*, 67: 'Then we all rise together and send up prayers. And, as we said before, when we cease from prayer, bread and wine with water are presented, and the president likewise sends up prayers and thanksgivings as he is able, and the people respond by saying the "Amen".'

When he has been made bishop, let all offer the mouth of peace, greeting him because he has been made worthy. And let the deacons offer to him the oblations, and let him, laying (his) hands on it with all the presbytery, say, giving thanks...<sup>265</sup>

As Bradshaw explains, the act of the deacon bringing up the Eucharistic gifts is also mentioned in *Apostolic* 21 and in the Syrian *Didascalia Apostolorum* where the bishop is instructed to allow one deacon to ‘stand always by the offerings of the Eucharist; and let another stand outside the door and observe those who enter. But afterwards, when you offer the oblation, let them serve together in the church.’<sup>266</sup> The description of the bishop and the presbyters laying their hands on the oblation renders it impossible for them to have their hands raised in the *orans* position during the Eucharistic Prayer.<sup>267</sup> According to Bradshaw, ‘the practice of both bishop and presbyters laying their hands on the Eucharistic offering before the prayer is otherwise unknown in Christian antiquity.’<sup>268</sup> Therefore, the clergy may have assumed the *orans* posture during the *Sursum Corda* and then placed their hands on the offering during the Eucharistic Prayer.

An early piece of catacomb art in the Catacomb of San Callisto provides us a possible visual presentation of what the Celebration may have looked like at this time.<sup>269</sup> It is important for our study due to the fact the ‘first literary evidence for the catacomb is in the *Philosophumena* of St. Hippolytus.’<sup>270</sup> This reference connects

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<sup>265</sup> Translation taken from Bradshaw, *Apostolic Tradition*, p. 38.

<sup>266</sup> *Didasc.* 2.57. ET from Sebastian Brock and Michael Vasey, eds. *The Liturgical Postions of the Didascalia* (GLS 29, Nottingham, Grove, 1982), p. 16 as found in Bradshaw, *Apostolic Tradition*, p. 43.

<sup>267</sup> Throughout our study the terms ‘Eucharistic prayer’ and ‘anaphora’ will be used interchangeably.

<sup>268</sup> Bradshaw, *Apostolic Tradition*, p. 43.

<sup>269</sup> Matilda Webb, *The Churches and Catacombs of Early Christian Rome* (Sussex Academic Press, Portland, 2001), p. 229.

<sup>270</sup> Hippolytus, explaining the history of Callistus, writes, ‘And after Victor’s death, Zephyrinus, having had Callistus as a fellow-worker in the management of his clergy, paid him respect to his own damage; and transferring this person from Antium, appointed him over the cemetery.’ As found in ANF, Book 5, p. 130.

Hippolytus with knowledge of the catacomb and possibly the art within it.<sup>271</sup> There are two figures standing beside a table with what appears to be a loaf of bread and a fish. One, assumed to be the celebrant, is dressed in the tunic of a philosopher and has both of his hands extended toward the ‘elements.’ This figure is looking away from the offering while the other, possibly a female figure, stands beside him in the *orans* posture of prayer.<sup>272</sup> As Mary Heuser noted in her work on ‘Gestures and their Meaning in Early Christian Art,’ the *orans* posture (gesture) always represents prayer.<sup>273</sup> However, it is not limited to the act of prayer alone; it also represents the human soul.<sup>274</sup> Thus, if her observations are correct, we can conclude, with some sense of certainty, the *orans* position of prayer was assumed during the Eucharistic Prayer and the position of the body reflects the desired state of the soul – ‘lifted up’ or ‘on high.’



A ‘Eucharistic fresco’ from the Catacombs of San Callisto.<sup>275</sup>

<sup>271</sup> Hippolytus and Callisto opposed each other for various theological reasons. Hippolytus addresses Callisto (also known as Calixtus) as a heretic and a danger to the Church in Rome. For a more detailed treatment of the interaction and conflict between Hippolytus and Calixtus see John J. IGN. von Dollinger’s work, *Hippolytus and Callistus* (Edinburgh, T&T Clark, 1876).

<sup>272</sup> Milburn believes the *orans* figure to female - ‘probably the woman ‘Thanksgiving’, or in St. Paul’s language, ‘Blessing’, who acclaims the action of Christ, purveyor of divine wisdom, as he hallows the food which satisfied the apostles on the Sea of Tiberias.’ As found in *Early Christian Art and Architecture*, (Berkeley, Univ. of California Press, 1989 ), pp. 34-45.

<sup>273</sup> Mary L. Heuser, ‘Gestures and Their Meaning in Early Christian Art,’ (PhD Dissertation, Harvard University, 1954).

<sup>274</sup> Robert Milburn, *Early Christian Art and Architecture*, p. 32. We will explore this aspect of the ritual posture later in this chapter.

<sup>275</sup> Image taken from

[http://ookaboo.com/o/pictures/noindex/picture.original/12401017/A\\_Eucharistic\\_fresco\\_Catacombs\\_of\\_San\\_Ca](http://ookaboo.com/o/pictures/noindex/picture.original/12401017/A_Eucharistic_fresco_Catacombs_of_San_Ca)

However, the question of whether this image, and that of a banquet scene adjacent to it with seven young men reclining at the *sigma* sharing a meal of a fish and seven baskets of bread<sup>276</sup>, found on the walls of a Christian family tomb within the catacombs of San Callistus' are images of a Eucharist or not is debated.<sup>277</sup> Some scholars believe the meal scenes represent a type Christian agape feast or *refrigerium*.<sup>278</sup> These funerary meals, referred to by the technical term *refrigerare* in non-Christian texts, were held by members of the deceased family or a funerary society that commemorated the deceased, refreshing themselves and the soul of the deceased with a meal.<sup>279</sup> Quite often, these meals took place near the tomb of the departed on the day and anniversary of their burial. It is not difficult to see that these practices may have been adopted by Christians. According to Tertullian, *refrigerium* was common among Christians in the late second and early third centuries. He writes, 'We make oblations for the deceased on the anniversary of their death...If you look in Scripture for a formal law governing these and similar practices, you will find none. It is tradition that justifies them, custom that confirms them, and faith that observes them. (*De corona militis* 3.2-3).<sup>280</sup> While Christians may have adopted these early pagan practices, according to Tertullian, they may have incorporated Eucharistic themes (oblations) and, therefore, rituals within them.

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<sup>276</sup> According to R. Jensen, 'Apart from table custom, the seven diners most commonly seen in the earlier banquet images might possibly represent the seven deacons appointed to serve tables in Acts 6:2-3. Later on the deacons were appointed to distribute the eucharistic elements to the congregation and carry away a portion to those who were absent for a meal.' See her work, *Understanding Early Christian Art* (New York, Routledge, 2013), p. 58. A. McGowan also discusses this topic in his work *Ascetic Eucharist: Food and Drink in Early Christian Ritual Meals* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1999), pp. 130-137. It needs to also be noted that there is picture of the sacrifice of Isaac showing Isaac, Abraham, the ram and the bundle of firewood which seem to set forth the notion of sacrifice and, therefore, may give further credence to our argument that these images are communicating Eucharistic ideas.

<sup>277</sup> See T. Klauser's work 'Das altchristliche Totenmahl nach dem heutigen stande der Forschung', in *Gesammelte Arbeiten zur Liturgiegeschichte, Kirchengeschichte und Christlichen Archäologie*, ed. E. Dassman, *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum* Ergänzungsband 3 (1974), pp. 114-120 and J. Parker's work *The Archeology of Rome, Part XII The Catacombs* (Oxford, James Parker and Co., 1877), pp. 198-199.

<sup>278</sup> The term *refrigerium* means 'to refresh, cool' or 'to be in refreshment.' See *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity*, Second edition. ed. E. Ferguson (New York, Routledge, 2013), pp. 975-976.

<sup>279</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 976.

<sup>280</sup> Translation taken from J. Le Goff's work, *The Birth of Purgatory* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1986), p. 47.

In the artwork that contains the figure assuming the *orans*, the fish and loaf of bread on the tripod arguably presents us with early Christian Eucharistic imagery.<sup>281</sup> The Greek letters IXΘΥΣ, which spell the word ‘fish’, was interpreted by early Christians as an acrostic making up the initial letters of the phrase ‘Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior.’<sup>282</sup> In a similar manner, the loaf of bread represented Christ as well. This relationship was first set forth by Christ as recorded in John 6: 48-5:

I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which comes down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world.

Jesus continues his discourse by connecting the partaking of His flesh with the future resurrection, ‘Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise Him up on the last day.’ This theological explanation of the Eucharist may explain why the bodies of the dead awaiting burial were sometimes present during the celebration of the Supper and were given Communion.<sup>283</sup> In 393, the Council of Hippo forbade these practices in North Africa. However, the aforementioned serves to connect the fish and bread on the tripod with the Eucharist and the departed. Therefore, the argument that this specific image with the figure in the *orans* represents an image of a ‘Christian’ *refrigerium* with soteriological and eschatological implications via the Eucharist for the one deceased is plausible. Moreover, if this image of one, who, according to Milburn, is giving ‘thanks’ is

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<sup>281</sup> For a comprehensive overview of the fish symbol as it relates to pagan and Christian context see F. Dölger work, *IXΘΥΣ: Das Fischsymbol in frühchristlicher Zeit, i. Religionsgeschichtliche und epigraphische Untersuchungen* (Rome, Spithover, 1910), and *IXΘΥΣ: Das Fischsymbol in frühchristlicher Zeit, ii-v, Der heilige Fisch in den antiken Religionen und im Christentum*, 4 vols. (Munster, Aschendorff, 1922-43). For a discussion of the relationship between fish and bread as representative of the Eucharist, see H. Hiers and C. Kennedy’s work, ‘The Bread and Fish Eucharist in the Gospels and Early Christian Art,’ in *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 3, no. 1 (1976), pp. 21-48. The ‘fish’ may also have been connected to Jewish messianic expectations – see R. Jenson’s work, *Understanding Early Christian Art*, p. 57.

<sup>282</sup> R. Milburn, *Early Christian Art and Architecture* (Oakland, University of California Press, 1988), p. 30. See also G. de Rossi’s discussion of on the symbolic relationship between the fish image and Christ in the scriptures, the writings of the Fathers and the catacomb art found within San Callistus in his work *Roma Sotterranea, Or, Some Account of the Roman Catacombs, Especially of the Cemetery of San Callisto*, G. de Rossi, J. Northcote, W. Brownlow (London, Longmans, Green, Reader, and Dyer, 1869), pp. 214 -218.

<sup>283</sup> See M. McLaughlin’s discussion on the dead receiving the Eucharist in her work *Consorting with Saints: Prayer for the Dead in Early Medieval France* (Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1994), pp. 31-32.

connected thematically to the banquet scene discussed previously that connects Christ's meal with His apostles by the Sea of Tiberius in John 21, it may demonstrate how early Christians likened these miraculous events with the Eucharist, which, 'as the medicine of immortality', sustains the believer and guarantees eternal life.<sup>284</sup> Thus, we can argue there is evidence to suggest that the *orans* figure is participating, i.e. possibly physically responding to the *Sursum Corda*, and preparing to 'give thanks' during the celebration of the Supper which is connected thematically to the post-resurrectional meal, the futuristic messianic feast realized in some sense by eating and drinking with the resurrected Lord in the present and the actual funerary banquets.<sup>285</sup>

In conclusion, this artwork may very well be the earliest image of a presbyter and deacon or deaconess celebrating the Eucharist in early third century Rome that connects the *orans* posture of prayer to the *Sursum Corda*. Unfortunately, the drawing does not include images of the laity during the Celebration. Thus, we cannot conclude they also assumed the *orans* posture when they heard the liturgical command. While this is not evident in the *Apostolic Tradition*, the relationship between the *orans* posture (standing to pray) and the *Sursum corda* seems less ambiguous in Cyprian of Carthage's *De Dominica Oration* 31.

### **Cyprian – Standing to Pray and the *Sursum Corda***

Cyprian's commentary on the Lord's Prayer (250 A.D.) is explored in depth later in our work.<sup>286</sup> Therefore, at present, we will limit our focus to his reference to the ritual posture of prayer. Cyprian instructs his hearers:

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<sup>284</sup> R. Milburn, *Early Christian Art and Architecture*, pp. 34-35. Also, Augustine, commenting on this Johannine pericope writes: 'Now the Lord made a feast for his seven disciples, that is to say, from the fish which they saw laid on the fire of coals, to which he added some of the fish which they had caught, as well as the bread which they are said to have seen. Just as the fish was consumed in the flames, so Christ suffered: He himself is the bread which came down from Heaven; and to Him is joined the Church in order that it may have in everlasting blessedness.' (*Tractate 123 on St. John's Gospel*). Ibid., p. 34.

<sup>285</sup> Ibid., 59.

<sup>286</sup> Chapter 5 is dedicated to Cyprian's use of the *Sursum Corda*.

Now when we stand to pray<sup>287</sup>, dearest brothers, we should be watchful and apply ourselves to our prayers with our whole heart. Every fleshly and worldly thought should depart, nor should any mind dwell on anything other than the prayer that it is offering. Therefore, before the prayer, the priest prepares the minds of the brothers by first uttering a preface he says: “*Sursum corda!*”<sup>288</sup>

We see in this pericope that Cyprian understands there to be a certain ritual posture that accompanies the Lord’s Prayer. This is consistent with the biblical teaching of Christ set forth previously in Mark 11:25. But, according to the bishop, standing to pray is also the ritual posture associated with the Eucharistic Prayer and the *Sursum corda*. In summary, our two primary third century texts seem to indicate that the ritual act of assuming the *orans* posture of prayer was connected to the priest’s cry, *Sursum corda*. Next, we will engage various patristic themes and texts in order to try and broaden our understanding of the social and theological implications associated with standing to pray.

### **Patristic Commentary on the *Orans* and the Cross – Theological Considerations**

The story of Moses and the journey of the people from Egyptian bondage to life in the ‘Promise Land’ is often cited by the Fathers due to the Christological typology they see within it.<sup>289</sup> In regards to our topic, the posture Moses assumes

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<sup>287</sup> A. Stewart-Sykes comments, ‘Although the audience would be standing in any event before the Eucharist, the standing might be standing to attention.’ As found in his work *On the Lord’s Prayer*, p. 87.

<sup>288</sup> Translation taken from A. Stewart –Sykes, *On the Lord’s Prayer*, pp. 87-88. Cyprian’s commentary is the topic of our study in Chapter 4.

<sup>289</sup> References not considered in the body of this text include *The Epistle of Barnabas* Chapter 12:2. Also, John Chrysostom penned the following regarding the symbolic message of this Exodus passage: ‘See how the type was ‘given by Moses,’ but the ‘Truth came by Jesus Christ’ (Exodus 17:12). Again, when the Amalekites warred in Mount Sinai, the hands of Moses were supported, being stayed up by Aaron and Hur standing on either side of him (Exodus 17:12); but when Christ came, He of Himself stretched forth His Hands upon the Cross. Hast thou observed how the type ‘was given,’ but ‘the Truth came’?’<sup>289</sup> Again, we see the cross as representative of victory or overcoming evil. Also, Gregory of Nazianzus (circa AD 329–90), in similar fashion, explained, ‘Moses is to conquer him by stretching out his hands upon the mount, in order that the cross, thus typified and prefigured, may prevail. Gregory of Nazianzus, “In Defense of His Flight to Pontus,” *Oration* 2:88, in Schaff and Wace, eds., *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers—Second Series*, 7:222. There are other passages that relate the actions of Moses stretching out his hands to victorious work of Christ on the Cross: Justin Martyr’s *Dialogue with Trypho* goes is more detailed, and the *Christian Sibyllines Book* 8 line 250,

during the battle is of primary importance.<sup>290</sup> During the conflict, Moses stretches forth his hand(s) at various times. The ritual stance is directly related to the miraculous acts of God attested to in scripture.<sup>291</sup> In Exodus 17:11-13, the writer of the book records the battle between the Israelites and Amalek. It was necessary for Moses to keep his hands raised during the battle for God's people to be victorious:

<sup>11</sup> And so it was, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed; and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed. <sup>12</sup> But Moses' hands *became* heavy; so they took a stone and put *it* under him, and he sat on it. And Aaron and Hur supported his hands, one on one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. <sup>13</sup> So Joshua defeated Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword.

These passages of scripture describe the prophet's posture but do not speak of prayer. However, given the nature of war, petition seems implicit. But what is explicit is the connection between his hands being raised and the realization of victory over the opposing forces. Thus, in the biblical story, the *orans* posture assumed by Moses is directly related to the power of God and the defeat of the enemy. According to patristic sources, this act of Moses foreshadowed a greater victory realized by Christ on the cross.<sup>292</sup>

Cyprian interprets Moses' actions in Exodus 17 as representative of the struggle between the Devil and Jesus: 'In Exodus, when Moses, for the overthrow of

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Irenaeus of Lyons *Proof of Apostolic Preaching* 46, and Tertullian *Against Marcion* 3:18 and *An Answer to the Jews* 10

<sup>290</sup> For the purpose of continuity of themes, instead of following a chronological path through catechism, we will stay within a biblical context and explore Moses' relation to Christ via the *orans*.

<sup>291</sup> Examples of this are found in Exodus 9:22-33.

<sup>292</sup> Ambrose: *Concerning Virgins* 1.2.7 and *On the Sacraments* 4.18 also reference the *orans* as the cross. In describing the martyrdom of St. Agnes, comments: 'She was fearless under the cruel hands of the executioners, she was unmoved by the heavy weight of the creaking chains, offering her whole body to the sword of the raging soldier, as yet ignorant of death, but ready for it. Or if she were unwillingly hurried to the altars, she was ready to stretch forth her hands to Christ at the sacrificial fires, and at the sacrilegious altars themselves, to make the sign of the Lord the Conqueror, or again to place her neck and both her hands in the iron bands, but no band could enclose such slender limbs.' *Virgins* 1.2.7 - ANF pg. 364. And in *On the Sacraments* 4:18 he writes - 'I would that men, that is those who can observe the precept, should pray in every place, lifting up pure hands. What is meant by lifting up pure hands? Oughtest thou in thy prayer show forth the cross of the Lord to all and sundry? That indeed is a proof of thy piety, not of modesty.'

Amalek, who bore the type of the devil, raised up his open hands in the sign . . . of the cross, and could not conquer his adversary unless when he had steadfastly persevered in the sign with hands continually lifted up.’<sup>293</sup> In similar fashion, Archelaus (flourished circa 278 A.D.), bishop of Carchar in Mesopotamia, drew a typological parallel between Moses and Christ. He wrote: “Moses . . . stretched forth his hands and fought against Amalek; and . . . the Lord Jesus, when we were assailed and were perishing by the violence of that erring spirit who works now in the just, stretched forth His hands upon the cross, and gave us salvation.”<sup>294</sup> Later, Augustine of Hippo (354-430 A.D.) interprets the Christological typology as representing the inward struggle of some people against the sin of pride:

There are, however, some who think themselves capable of being cleansed by their own righteousness, so as to contemplate God, and to dwell in God; whom their very pride itself stains above all others. For there is no sin to which the divine law is more opposed, and over which that proudest of spirits, who is a mediator to things below, but a barrier against things above, receives a greater right of mastery: unless either his secret snares be avoided by going another way, or if he rage openly by means of a sinful people (which Amalek, being interpreted, means), and forbid by fighting the passage to the land of promise, he be overcome by the cross of the Lord, which is prefigured by the holding out of the hands of Moses.<sup>295</sup>

Elsewhere, Augustine speaks clearly regarding the posture of Moses, ‘Amalek’s resistance [was] subdued by the sign of the Cross.’<sup>296</sup> Therefore, standing at prayer with arms outstretched, in the Christian context, and according to the aforementioned sources, is to remind believers that Christ has conquered the devil by way of the cross and, therefore, his adversarial influence and their ‘earthly’ actions can be overcome as well. This individual perspective is emphasized in fifth century Northern Italy.

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<sup>293</sup> Cyprian, ‘The Treatises of Cyprian,’ treatise 11:8, in ANF, 5:501.

<sup>294</sup> Archelaus, “Disputation with Manes,” in ANF, 6:220.

<sup>295</sup> Augustine, ‘On the Trinity,’ NPNF Book 4, First Series, 3:79–80

<sup>296</sup> Augustine, ‘On the Psalms,’ Psalm 44:8, NPNF Book 8, First Series, 8:142.

Maximus of Turin's *Sermon* 38.3 (400 A.D.), in similar fashion as Augustine, approaches the victory of Moses and Christ from a pastoral perspective.<sup>297</sup>

Even a person's bearing, when he raises his hands, describes a cross; therefore we are ordered to pray with uplifted hands so that by the very stance our body we might confess the Lord's suffering. Then our prayer is heard more quickly, when Christ, whom the mind speaks, is also imitated by the body. Holy Moses is an example of this as well: when he was waging war against Amalek he overcame him neither by arms nor by sword but by his hands uplifted to God. For thus you see it written: 'When Moses lifted up his hands Israel conquered, but when he lowered his hands Amalek regained his strength.'<sup>298</sup>

Maximus argues that when a Christian imitates the suffering of Christ on the cross it assist their mind in prayer.<sup>299</sup> Specifically, assuming the ritual shape may result in the mind being raised to a greater awareness of Christ's redeeming work on their behalf. And in *Sermon* 45.3, again he references Amalek but this time he refers to the *orans* as a means of armor against demons:

Let us rejoice dearest brethren, and let us lift up holy hands to heaven in the form of a cross. When the demons see us thus armed they will be cast down. When Moses' hands were lifted up Amalek was conquered; when they came down a little he grew strong. The sail yards of ships and the ends of the sail yards move about in the form of a cross. The very birds, too, when they are borne to the heights and fly through the air, imitate the cross with their wings outstretched. Trophies themselves are crosses, and so are adorned victories of triumphs. These we ought to have not only on our foreheads but also on our souls so that thus armed we may trample upon the asp and the basilisk, in Christ Jesus, to whom be glory forever.<sup>300</sup>

For Maximus, Moses' victory over Amalek foreshadowed Christ's victory on the cross over the evil one.<sup>301</sup> Furthermore, the image of the triumph of Jesus set forth by

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<sup>297</sup> Origin comments on the right state of mind that needed to accompany (*On Prayer* 31.2):

<sup>298</sup> St. Maximus of Turin, *Sermons, Ancient Christian Writers*, Issue 50, trans. B. Ramsey (Mahwah, Paulist Press, 1989), p. 93.

<sup>299</sup> The *Odes of Solomon* 27 – 120 A.D. also relates the orans to the cross in prayer: 'I extended my hands and hallowed Lord; For the expansion of my hands is his sign. And my extension is the upright cross. Hallelujah.'

<sup>300</sup> Translation by B. Ramsey as found in *Ancient Christian Fathers: The Sermons of St. Maximus of Turin*, Issue 50 (Mahwah, Paulist Press, 1989), p. 250.

<sup>301</sup> Caesarius of Arles in *Sermon* 103 compares and contrasts the physical and theological meanings associated with the ritual posture assumed by Moses and Christ, 'Moses indeed lifts up his hands, but

God at all times in nature and everyday life situations. Also, when the Christian signs himself with the cross, Maximus teaches that the soul is impacted as well – it is prepared for battle. Therefore, when the gathered pray in the *orans* posture, thereby assuming the position of the cross, the devil and demons are understood to recognize it and are ‘cast down.’<sup>302</sup> Their influences are removed.

The Fathers included in this section of our study see in the *orans* the cross of Christ. In their context, when a Christian assumes the ritual posture, and thereby imitates the crucifixion, there are external (devil) and internal (social) ramifications. The evil one is subdued and, simultaneously, it functions as a means of self-reflection and reconciliation among those that are praying to God in heaven. To not realize these struggles is, arguably in the patristic context presented, to pray without the heart and mind focused on the things above. In conclusion, to assume the ritual posture of the *orans* is to identify with the cross, engage the devil, examine one’s own life, extend the peace and to act properly at the time of prayer.

### **The Ritual Path to Standing in the *Orans* Position**

For converts, the transition into the Christian Church usually included an intense time of catechism prior to Baptism.<sup>303</sup> Cyril of Alexandria (c. 150-211 A.D.) in his *Homily* 11, exhorts those preparing for the rite to continue in pursuing the example of Christ, ‘Having taken, therefore, Christ as our pattern, let us draw near to

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does not extend them. For whom then was it reserved to extend his hands, except our Lord Jesus Christ? When he was stretched out on the cross as if to embrace the whole world, He spread out the arms of His goodness. Therefore, Moses lifted up his hands. But although he did not extend them, still by raising them, he showed the mystery of the cross. Understand, brethren, that then already opposing nations were overcome by the mystery of the cross. If, with the Lord’s help, we lift up our hands, dearly beloved, we too conquer the devil.’ As found in *The Fathers of the Church*, Vol. 2, p. 108.

<sup>302</sup> Tertullian also refers to the cruciform posture of the hands in prayer ‘But we not only lift them, but even extend them, imitating the Lord’s passion, as we also confess Christ in prayer.’ (*De Oracione* 14). Translation taken from T. Emminghaus’ work, *The Eucharist: Essence, Form, Celebration* (Collegeville, The Order of St. Benedict, 1997), p. 133.

<sup>303</sup> We will explore in depth the issue of catechism in Section II of our study. For now, our objective is to see how the *orans* relates to baptism.

the grace of holy baptism, that so we may gain boldness to pray constantly, and lift up holy hands to God the Father, the he may open the heavens also for us, and send down upon us too, the Holy Spirit, to receive us as sons.’<sup>304</sup> However, only those who had faced West<sup>305</sup>, renounced the devil<sup>306</sup>, and participated in the rite of entrance were children of God who could face East<sup>307</sup> and pray to Him as Father.<sup>308</sup>

The *Constitutions of the Holy Apostles* 7.44 informs us catechumens had to leave before petition was made by the faithful:<sup>309</sup>

After this, let all rise up with one consent, and looking towards the East, after the catechumens and penitents are gone out, pray to God eastward, who ascended up to the heavens to the East; remembering also the ancient situation of paradise in the East, from whence the first man, when ye yielded to the persuasion of the serpent, and disobeyed the command of God was expelled.<sup>310</sup>

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<sup>304</sup> Translation taken from Thomas Finn, *Early Christian Baptism and the Catechumenate: Italy, North Africa, and Egypt*, in *Message of the Father of the Church*, Vol. 6 (Collegeville, The Liturgical Press, 1992), p. 228.

<sup>305</sup> Facing West also included turning from a former state of mind to a new one. Lactantius – *Divine Institutes* 2.10. 300 AD explains, ‘The East is assigned to God, because God is the fountain of light, and the enlightener of all things, and because God makes us rise to eternal life. But the West is ascribed to that disturbed and depraved mind, because it conceals the light, because it always brings on darkness, and because it makes people die and perish in their sins. For as light belongs to the East, and the whole course of life depends upon the light, so darkness belongs to the West: but death and resurrection are contained in darkness.’ (ANF, 07), p. 57. See also Cyprian work, *On the Lord’s Prayer* 36.

<sup>306</sup> Renunciations of the devil and his works were customary during our scope of study and will be explored further in later chapters. One example of facing West and renouncing the Devil before baptism is found in Cyril of Jerusalem’s *Myst. Cat* I ‘On the Rites before Baptism, ‘I renounce the Satan, Satan. I wish to say, wherefore ye stand to the West; for it is necessary. Since the West is the region of sensible darkness, and he being the darkness...ye therefore, looking with a symbolical meaning towards the West, renounce the gloomy potentate.’ As found in F.L. Cross, *Lectures*, p.54-55.

<sup>307</sup> Cyril’s *Catechetical Lecture* XIX.9, provides a concise summary, ‘When therefore thou renoucest Satan, utterly breaking all thy covenant with him, that ancient league of hell, there is opened to thee the paradise of God, which He planted towards the East, whence for his transgression our first father was banished; and as a symbol of this was thy turning from West to East, the place of light.’

Translation taken from *NPNF*, Book VII, p. 146.

<sup>308</sup> Facing East is also discussed by Clement of Alexandria in *Stromata* 7.7. Origen *On Prayer* 32 develops theologically the idea of the East being the source of true light. Stewart-Sykes notes, that ‘In his *Homilies on Leviticus* 9.10, he references the ‘East’ as an expression of the direction in which salvation comes, an allegorical reference to Christ. (Stewart -Sykes, p. 212).

<sup>309</sup> Basil informs us in his work *On the Spirit* 27.66 even the baptized were not always aware of the theological significance of facing East to pray: ‘Thus we all look East at our prayers, but few of us know that we are seeking our old country, Paradise, which God planted in Eden in the East. We pray standing on the first day of the week, but we do not all know the reason. On the day of the resurrection we remind ourselves of the grace given to us by standing at prayer, not only because we rose with Christ and are bound to “seek those things above,” but because the day seems to us to be in some sense an image of the age we expect.’ Translation taken from *ANF*, Second Series, Vol. 8, p. 42.

<sup>310</sup> Translation in *ANF*, Vol. 7, p. 442.

There are a few things to be noted here. The first being the referenced prayer takes place after the catechumens are dismissed, and, therefore, during the sacramental section of the liturgy. Second, it seems, unless the ‘rising up’ is only in reference to the voices of the faithful, that there is a transition in posture from sitting to standing; and, thirdly, the prayer is directed ‘up’ to God who is in the heavens. Earlier in the same document there is a theological connection between being raised with Christ in baptism and the *orans* posture of prayer (*Constitutions of the Holy Apostles 2:7*):

The faithful pray the Lord’s Prayer standing, because in Baptism, they have been raised with Christ: After this let them stand up and pray that prayer which the Lord taught us. But, of necessity, the one who is risen again ought to stand up and pray, because the one who is raised up stands upright. Let them who have been dead with Christ, and are raised with Christ, stand up. And let them pray toward the East.<sup>311</sup>

This relationship between the *orans* and the sacramental rite of entrance is further witnessed in the writing of Ambrose of Milan in *De Sacramentis V*, 4:19 – baptism gives Christians the right to look up. Although there is evidence that catechumens prayed kneeling<sup>312</sup>, the normal posture at the Eucharist is standing, not kneeling or lying prostrate.<sup>313</sup> And the ability to stand in the *orans* posture of prayer before God contains symbolic as well as theological significance to the early Church Fathers.

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<sup>311</sup> Ibid, p. 441.

<sup>312</sup> Harmless, describing the actions of the newly baptized in Augustine’s North Africa, writes, ‘They would enter with head bowed and low and possibly would kneel or prostrate themselves; these gestures symbolized that “pride was destroyed, [and] humility, brought in.”’ See his work, *Augustine and the Catechumenate* (Collegeville, The Liturgical Press, 1995), p. 262

<sup>313</sup> Standing for prayer during the ‘Great 50 Days’ was required by the Nicene Counsel in 325 AD: ‘Forasmuch as there are certain persons who kneel on the Lord’s Day and the days of Pentecost, therefore, to the intent that all things may be uniformly observed everywhere (in every parish), it seems good to the holy Synod that prayer be made to God standing (*Canons of Nicaea 20*).’ Translation taken from *NPNF*, Vol. 14, p. 43. This is the only canon that addresses the structure of worship. Basil expresses the importance of standing on Sunday the 8<sup>th</sup> Day in his work *On the Spirit 27.66*: ‘Of necessity, then, the church teaches her own foster children to offer their prayers on that day (Sunday) standing, to the end that through the continual reminder of the endless life we not neglect to make provision for our removal thither.’ Translation taken from *NPNF*, Vol. 8, p. 42.

## Standing up, Again

Standing to pray is also, according to Cyril of Jerusalem in *Catechism Lecture 19.9* ‘a way of remembering the resurrection.’ The word resurrection (ἀνάστασις) literally means ‘a standing up, again.’<sup>314</sup> Therefore, there are liturgical and theological connections between standing and the resurrection. Another Eastern Father, Basil of Caesarea (329-379 A.D.), comments on the theological relationship between standing to pray and Pentecost:

Moreover all Pentecost is a reminder of the resurrection expected in the age to come. For that one first day, if seven times multiplied by seven, completes the seven weeks of the holy Pentecost; for, beginning at the first, Pentecost ends with the same, making fifty revolutions through the like intervening days. And so it is a likeness of eternity, beginning as it does and ending, as in a circling course, at the same point. On this day the rules of the church have educated us to prefer the upright attitude of prayer, for by their plain reminder they, as it were, make our mind to dwell no longer in the present but in the future. Moreover, every time we fall upon our knees and rise from off of them we show by the very deed that by our sin we fell down to earth, and by the loving kindness of our Creator were called back to heaven.<sup>315</sup>

According to Basil, we see that the ritual act of kneeling and rising on Pentecost is a form or realized eschatology. Standing, the upright attitude of prayer, is connected to the mind dwelling in the future. Moreover, rising from the kneeling position to that of standing is symbolic of the spiritual transition of the believer from earth to heaven. In the same work, the bishop instructs his hearers on the relationship between standing to pray and resurrection of Christ: ‘On the day of the resurrection we remind ourselves of the grace given to us by standing at prayer.’ Thus, we see standing and assuming the *orans* connects the illumined to their baptism and

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<sup>314</sup>Catherine Bell, referencing Bourdieu’s theory on body and ritualization comments, ‘And yet, suggests Bourdieu, nothing less than a whole cosmology is instilled with the words ‘Stand up straight!’ *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* (Oxford, OUP, 1992), p. 99. Citation taken from work, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, translated by Richard Nice (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1977), p. 94.

<sup>315</sup>Basil, *On the Spirit* 27:66. Translation taken from *NPNF*, Second Series, Vol. 8, p. 42.

resurrection in Christ. Basil also communicates the ritual significance of face East to pray.<sup>316</sup>

### **Facing East – A Heavenly Identity**

The Christian *orans* also includes facing east and looking upwards in a heavenly direction. This posture is assumed not only for the reason that Christ ascended in that direction but also as a means of remembering the baptized former captivity under the devil.<sup>317</sup> Chrysostom, in his *Baptismal Instructions 10.14-15*, describes this transition to and through the sacramental rite of entrance as a deliverance from former enslavement to a new ‘captivity drives one forth from foreign soil and leads him to his homeland, the heavenly Jerusalem.’<sup>318</sup> He continues by explaining ‘that captivity separates you from kinsmen and fellow citizens; this one leads you to the citizens above, for St. Paul says: “You are citizens with the saints.”’ Therefore, it can be argued from this text that Christians, under Chrysostom’s pastoral leadership, needed to approach prayer with the mindset they were already citizens of heaven. Similar comments are found, once again, in Chrysostom’s Cappadocian contemporary, Basil of Caesarea.

Basil, also commenting that ‘baptismal waters allows one to escape the tyranny of the devil,’<sup>319</sup> provides an encomium on the sacrament that list the spiritual benefits realized in the rite:

Baptism is a ransom to captives, a forgiveness of debts, the death of sin, regeneration of the soul, a shining garment, an unassailable seal, a chariot to heaven, the agent of the kingdom, the gift of adoption.<sup>320</sup>

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<sup>316</sup> Basil, *On the Holy Spirit*: 27:66.

<sup>317</sup> Chrysostom, *Bap. Inst.* 6,19.

<sup>318</sup> Translation taken from *Ancient Christian Writers: Baptismal Instructions* (Mahwah, N.J., Paulist Press, 1963), p. 154.

<sup>319</sup> *Exhortation to Baptism 2*. Translation taken from E. Ferguson, *Baptism*, p. 587.

<sup>320</sup> *Exhortation to Baptism 5*. Translation taken from E. Ferguson, *Baptism*, p. 587.

Thus, Eastern Christians, in the fourth century, among other things, by standing and facing East to pray, were reminded of their baptism whereby they received numerous spiritual benefits, including access to the heavenly.<sup>321</sup>

### **Assuming the *Orans* Posture and Lifting Up the Soul**

Being a ‘citizen’ of heaven implies access to the city. As discovered in Chapter 1, there may be a connection between the *Sursum Corda* and the *sanctus* in *The Anaphora of Addai and Mari*. Moreover, according to other sources we explored, those who ascend to heaven hear the angelic song and, liturgically speaking, participate in it in some form or fashion by singing the ‘Thrice Holy Hymn.’ The *orans* may be the physical vehicle that communicates the soul has reached or realized its destination at the command, *Sursum corda!*

Clement of Alexandria in the late second or early third century, comments on the ascent of the soul to God in prayer.<sup>322</sup> After discussing the topic of prayer and the moral and spiritual requirements needed to properly engage the spiritual discipline, he describes the ritual posture that accompanies the ritual act:

Though we open not our lips we cry in our inmost being from the heart. This cry God ever hears. We raise our heads, we extend our hands up toward heaven, and we stand on tiptoe at the final acclamation in our prayer, as we direct the thrust of our minds toward the Intelligible Substance. By attempting through words to raise our bodies above the earth and by raising up our souls to which a longing for heavenly things has given wings, we

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<sup>321</sup> Germanus, in his eighth century commentary on the Divine Liturgy, describes the reasons Christians face East to pray in the Hagia Sophia: ‘Praying toward the East is handed down by the holy apostles, as is everything else. The is because the comprehensible sun of righteousness, Christ our God, appeared on earth in those regions of the East where the perceptible sun rises, as the prophet says: “Orient is his name” (Zech 6:12); and “Bow before the Lord, all the earth, who ascended to the heaven of heavens in the East” (cf Ps 67:34); and “Let us prostrate ourselves in the place where His feet stood” (cf Ps 67:34); and again, “The feet of the Lord shall stand upon the Mount of Olives in the East” (Zech 14:4). The prophets also speak thus because of our fervent hope of receiving again the paradise of Eden, as well as the dawn of the brightness of the second coming of Christ our God, from the East.’ Translation by P. Meyendorff in *St Germanus of Constantinople: On the Divine Liturgy* (Crestwood, SVS Press, 1984), p. 63.

<sup>322</sup> Clement of Rome, in his *Letter to the Corinthians* 29, connects the soul to the hands: ‘Let us then approach him in holiness of soul, raising pure and undefiled hands to him, loving our gracious and merciful Father...’ Translation taken from *AF*, Vol. 1, p. 57.

force them to advance toward the Sanctuary, for we scorn the bonds that still link us to the flesh.’ (VII *Str.* 7.40).<sup>323</sup>

In this text, Clement presents what he may understand to be the struggle of the Christian existence – to physically dwell on earth with the heart and mind in heaven. However, what is clear in this pericope is the entire body is postured in an upward position in order to assist and or reflect the spiritual ascent of the soul. While Clement does not reference the *Sanctus*, later in *Book VII*, he remarks the true gnostic is ‘one with the divine choir.’<sup>324</sup> As we learned in Chapter 1, the song of the divine choir is the ‘thrice holy hymn.’<sup>325</sup>

John Chrysostom’s comments in his *Homilies on Philippians* 3.24 provide further insight into how his congregation in the fourth century remained in the *orans* after the *epiclesis*, ‘...for when the whole people stands with uplifted hands, a priestly assembly, and that awful sacrifice lies displayed, how shall we not prevail with God by our entreaties for them? And this we do for those who departed in faith...’<sup>326</sup> The bishop is speaking to his people about the efficacy of prayers offered for the departed during the Eucharist.<sup>327</sup> However, before this takes place, the earthly gathering is united with the heavenly angels via the *Sanctus*.<sup>328</sup> This participation in

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<sup>323</sup> Translation found in J. Patrick, *Clement of Alexandria* (London, William Blackwood and Sons, 1914), p. 296.

<sup>324</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 296.

<sup>325</sup> Translation taken *NPNP*, Vol.13, p. 197.

<sup>326</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 197

<sup>327</sup> Bush writes, ‘Prayers for the dead seem to have been advocated by Chrysostom at the Holy Communion, and also at the anniversaries of the deaths of dear relatives and friends...Tertullian speaks of it as common practice ...and they occur in all the ancient liturgies, e.g. that of St. James, St. Mark, St. Basil, and St. Chrysostom.’ As found in his work, *The Life and Times of Chrysostom* (Piccadilly, The Religious Tract Society, 1885), pp. 308-309. E. Rebillard, in his work *The Care of the Dead in Late Antiquity*, trans. by E. Rawlings and J. Routier-Pucci (Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 2009) on page 171 argues that when Chrysostom ‘...refers to commemoration of the dead during the liturgy of the Eucharist, he is always talking about what Christians can do for relatives who dies in a state of sin or without having been baptized.’

<sup>328</sup> Chrysostom, in reference to the diaconal bidding, ‘Let us stand up straight’ may be writing against the *orans*: ‘(41)... “Let us stand up straight,” was not instituted as part of the liturgy by chance or without reason. It was done so that we might straighten up our thoughts which were dragging the along the ground. It was also done so that we might first cast aside the weakness which comes to us from the affairs of daily life and then be able to make our souls stand straight before God. (42) It is

heavenly worship to ‘the one to whom that surrounding circle of angels cease not to say, “Holy, Holy, Holy.”’ is accomplished when the gathered or candidates for angelhood ‘...succeed in deserving it, begin even here on earth to learn by heart that strain hereafter to be raised unto God, and the function of future glory.’<sup>329</sup> Thus, we can argue certain Fathers within the scope of our work see the *orans* posture of prayer assumed at the *Sursum Corda*, among other things, to be a physical reflection of the spiritual ascent of the soul to heaven realized in the singing of the Sanctus.

### Conclusion

In this chapter, we demonstrated that throughout the pre-Christian era and within the Christian era considered that the ritual of ‘standing to pray’ is directly connected to the *orans* and, therefore, baptism. In the Ancient Greek, Roman and Jewish civilizations, it was considered to be the standard bodily posture for cultic and private prayer. In the New Testament, the direct references to it are limited to two occasions, 1 Timothy 2:8 and Mark 11:25. However, both are in the context of pastoral exhortations regarding unity and forgiveness – ritual setting considerations.

These passages reflect the same meaning as Lamentations 3:40-41, a text some

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true that when the deacon bids us to stand straight this command is given not to the body but to the soul. Let us listen to Paul who has used this expression in the say. When he was writing to men who had fallen down and given up in the face of troubles which were attacking them, he said: “Straighten up your drooping hands and your weak knees,” (Heb. 12:12) What should your response be, then? Should we say he is talking about the hands and knees of the body? By no means! He is not speaking to runners and boxers and wrestlers. By these words he was exhorting people to rouse up the strength of reasoning powers within them because these had been weakened by temptations.’ (*Homily IV*, ‘On the Incomprehensibility of God). Translation by P. Harkins as found in *The Fathers of the Church* Vol. 72, *St. John Chrysostom: On the Incomprehensible Nature of God* (Washington, D.C., The Catholic University Press, 1984), pp. 80-81.

<sup>329</sup> Translation taken from *ANF*, Vol. 3, p. 682. Chrysostom also refers to heavenly nature of the liturgy in his work..... ‘Think by whose side you are standing, think of those with whom you call upon God. It is with the Cherubim. Think of those with whom you are joining to form this choir, and this well be enough to sober you. Although you wear a body around you, although you are entangled in flesh, reflect on the fact that you have been deemed worthy to join with the spiritual powers above to praise in the song the common Master of all.’ But the bishop warns his people, ‘But if anyone has allowed himself to lose his zeal and goodwill, let him not share in those sacred and mystic hymns. Let no keep his thoughts on the affairs of daily life at the sacred time. Let him rid his mind of all earthly things, let him transfer himself entirely to heaven and let him stand next to the very throne of glory and raise his all holy hymn to the God of glory and majesty. (*Homily IV*, ‘On the Incomprehensibility of God). Translation by P. Harkins as found in, *The Fathers of the Church*, Vol. 72, p 82.

scholars believe may be the origin of the *Sursum Corda*.<sup>330</sup> Moreover, as we discovered, they may reveal one of the early functions of the liturgical command – assume the proper positions for prayer, pay attention and stop unwanted behavior. Also, we examined a piece of third century Roman catacomb art that possibly depicts a deacon or deaconess assuming the *orans* during the *Sursum Corda* and the Eucharistic Prayer. While this is still speculation, we learned Cyprian’s reference to ‘standing at prayer’ during the *Sursum Corda* is definitive. Also, we discovered in this chapter, many Fathers taught that when the baptized assume the shape of the cross at the time of prayer it represents Christ’s victory over the devil on the cross. Thus, if this posture was assumed by those in the scope of our study at the command, *Sursum Corda*, it functioned as a means by which the initiated remembered the theological implications of their baptism. In the rite(s) of entrance, the influence of the devil and other evil was overcome. Therefore, earthly mindsets or activities, as discovered in Chapter 2, were to be cast aside before the Eucharistic Prayer. In contrast to the earthly considerations, standing to pray, also according to the Fathers presented, represents the resurrection and the ability for the mind to dwell in the already/not yet future – the heavenly. Finally, as heavenly citizens, the baptized sought to spiritually ascend through prayer, as represented by the eyes, hands and heart elevated to God, and sing the *Sanctus*. Origen’s second century commentary seems to capture the essence of what it means to stand and pray in relation to our study. In his work *On Prayer* 31.2 he writes:

Accordingly it seems to me that anyone who intends to embark on prayer should lay a foundation for himself by preparing a while so that he will be the more attentive and alert throughout his prayer. He will have put aside every testing and troubling thought and will recall, as far as possible, the greatness of the one whom he is approaching, and the disrespect that lies in

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<sup>330</sup> E. Lash, regarding the origin of the *Sursum Corda* writes, ‘There is no obvious scriptural source, and Brightman, who searched diligently for all the biblical allusions in the liturgies, can only suggest Lamentations 3:41’ See E. Lash, *Sursum corda – the meaning of a dialogue*, p. 19.

approaching and yawning and inattentively and, as it were, contemptuously. He will put aside all alien thoughts, so coming to prayer, extending his soul, as it were, before extending his hands, his mind intent on God before his eyes and, before standing, raising his intellect from the earth and setting it before the Lord of all. All remembrance of wrongs against anyone who is supposed to have done him injustice should be put away, as much as he would that God have no remembrance against himself should he have done injustice, or sinned against any of his neighbors, or be conscious of having acted contrary to right reason.<sup>331</sup>

He continues, in the same context, by explaining why the *orans* is the best posture in prayer:

Nor can there be any doubt that, of the numerous dispositions of the body, standing with hands extended and eyes upraised is much to be preferred, in that one thereby wears on the body the image of the characteristics which are becoming to the soul in prayer.<sup>332</sup>

With Origen's words as our closing thoughts we will conclude our study on ritual posture and the *Sursum Corda*.

### Summary of Section 1

In Section 1 of our study we discovered that the early Fathers within our scope of study employed the *Sursum Corda* as an abrupt command to those who were united to Christ in the rite of baptism. Its primary earthly function was to restore order to the Eucharistic gathering that was either understood as being under the influence of the devil or distracted by worldly concerns – issues contrary to spiritual realities of baptism. When the priest boldly pronounced the *Sursum Corda*, the assembly was to quickly respond by assuming the *orans* posture. In turn, by facing east and imitating the victorious death of Christ, they were, arguably, to remember their initiation whereby they first prayed the 'Our Father' with the assembly. For the congregants, it was in baptism that the powers of the evil one were overcome and they were raised spiritually with the resurrected Christ in heaven.

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<sup>331</sup> Translation by A. Stewart-Sykes in *Tertullian, Cyprian & Origen: On the Lord's Prayer* (Crestwood, SVS Press, 2004), p. 206.

<sup>332</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 207.

Thus, a proper response to the *Sursum Corda* included heart, mind, body and soul lifted up to God in prayer. With this chapter and Part 1 of our work complete, we will now turn our attention towards the meaning ascribed to the command, *Sursum Corda*, by Cyprian, Cyril, Theodore, Chrysostom and Augustine in their catechetical teachings.

## **Section 2: Meaning of the Liturgical Command**

In Section 1 of our study, we demonstrated the ritual connection of baptism to the *Sursum Corda*. As we transition into Section 2 of our study, ‘Meaning of the Liturgical Command’, we will see how the Fathers considered further develop this relationship in their catechisms and sermons. It needs to be noted that the pastoral contexts in Chapter is composed of those either preparing for entrance into the Church or have already participated in the rites associated with baptism. Therefore, when the Fathers are ‘speaking’ to the gathered their Christian identity, whether expected or realized, is, arguably, in mind.

### **Chapter 4**

#### **Cyprian: *Sursum Corda*, the Devil and the Poor**

##### **Introduction**

This chapter is divided into two parts. Part 1 will explore the context and times of Cyprian’s commentary *On the Lord’s Prayer* and demonstrate how the bishop connected the *Sursum Corda* to the rites on entrance. Included in our study are issues pertaining to his conversion and problems he faced as Bishop of Carthage in the mid third century. This intentional broadening of the academic approaches heretofore to the *Sursum Corda* is extensive; however, this methodical approach will afford us the opportunity to see how various liturgical and theological ideas within his writing connect with the command. Following, in Part 2, we will explore the social context of the Eucharistic gathering in Cyprian’s North African church. Particularly, we will focus on the bishops understanding of the poor and their place in the assembly. In his Sermon: *On Almsgiving and the Poor*, he speaks to the need to provide alms at the celebration of the Eucharist and makes reference to this act being connected with the ‘mind on high.’ Thus, we will pursue this reference to see

if it sheds new light on another aspect of the *Sursum Corda* in third century North Africa.

### **The Lord's Prayer in Third Century North Africa**

Cyprian's commentary on the *Sursum Corda* is found within his catechetical teaching on the Lord's Prayer. According to Stewart- Sykes, this treatise, like that of Tertullian, who Cyprian referred to as the 'master,'<sup>333</sup> was delivered to catechumens after their final rite of exorcism and renunciation and before their entrance into the waters of Baptism.<sup>334</sup> When the new converts emerged from the sacrament, they, for the first time, recited the 'Our Father' with the gathered community. Therefore, there is a close connection between Cyprian's instruction and the rites of entrance. Moreover, throughout the bishop's lectures there are numerous references to the struggles the North African Church was facing during his tenure. Thus, it is necessary for us to explore Cyprian's own experiences in order to better understand the meaning he ascribes to the *Sursum Corda*.

### **Baptism and turning from Earthly Things**

Cyprian's (200 A.D.) own words in *ad Donatum*, written not long after his baptism<sup>335</sup>, serve as the best testimony to his spiritual journey and the impact the rite of entrance had on his own existence; and, arguably what he expected it should have on others<sup>336</sup>:

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<sup>333</sup> Jerome, *De Viris Illustriis*, Chapter 5.

<sup>334</sup> A. Stewart-Sykes, *Tertullian, Cyprian & Origin: On the Lord's Prayer* (Crestwood, SVS Press, 2004), p. 22 -26

<sup>335</sup> Finn summarizes what Cyprian feels are the benefits of the rite (Letter 74[73]): renewed and sanctified (74.5.1), sins cast off and formed spiritually into a new person (74.5.2), put on Christ (74.5.3), regeneration and second birth (74.5.4; 6.2), the dying of the old self so that the new may be born (74.6.1), cleansing of sins (74.5.4); 6.2); salvation (74.11.3; cf 63 [62].8.4 –“saving waters of baptism”), and identification with the church (74.7.2; 11.3 and passim).<sup>7</sup> See Finn's work, *Baptism in the Early Church.*, pp. 357-358.

<sup>336</sup> We include sections of biographical information of the Fathers we are studying in order to see how the rites of the Church impacted them personally. In turn, this may provide insight into how they

Once I lay in darkness and in the depths of night and was tossed to and fro in the waves of the turbulent world, uncertain of the correct way to go, ignorant of my true life and a stranger to the light of truth. At that time and on account of the life I then led, it seemed difficult to believe what divine mercy promised for my salvation, namely, that someone could be born again and to a new life by being immersed in the healing water of baptism. It was difficult to believe that though I would remain the same in bodily form, my heart and mind would be transformed.

How was it possible, I thought, that a change could be great enough to strip away in a single moment the innate hardness of our nature? How could the habits acquired over the course of many years disappear, since these are so deeply rooted within us? If someone is used to fine feast and lavish banquets, how can they learn restraint? If someone is used to dressing conspicuously in gold and purple, how can they cast them aside for ordinary simple clothes? Someone who loves the trappings of public office cannot become an anonymous private person. Anyone who is attended by great crowds of supporters and is honored by a dense entourage of obsequious attendants would consider solitude a punishment. While temptation still holds us fast, we are seduced by wine, inflated with pride, inflamed by anger, troubled by greed, goaded by cruelty, enticed by ambition and cast headlong by lust.

These were my frequent thoughts. For I was held fast by the many sins of my life from which it seemed impossible for me to extricate myself. Thus I yielded to my sins which clung fast to me. Since I despaired of improvement I took an indulgent view of my faults and regarded them as if they were slaves born in my house.

But after the life-giving water of baptism came to my rescue and took away the stain of my former years and poured into my cleansed and purified heart the light which comes from above, and after I had drunk in the Heavenly Spirit and was made a new man by a second birth, then amazingly what I had previously doubted became clear to me. What had been hidden was revealed. What had been dark became light. What previously had seemed impossible now seemed possible. What was in me of the guilty flesh now confessed it was earthly. What was made alive in me by the Holy Spirit was now quickened by God.<sup>337</sup>

Cyprian's experience in and through baptism resulted in a radical departure from his former life and a transition in his ideology.<sup>338</sup> In his own words, he approached the sacrament with a sense of doubt in regards to its efficacy. Prior to baptism, the future

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expected the same sacraments to influence others. We will also include other information that may provide us further insight into each Church Father's commentary on the *Sursum Corda*.

<sup>337</sup> Cyprian to Donatus, English translation in Oliver Davies (ed.), *Born to New Life. Cyprian of Carthage*, (Brooklyn, NY, New City Press, 1992), pp. 21-22 as found in Bryan Spinks work, *Early and Medieval Rituals and Theologies of Baptism* (Aldershot, Hampshire, Ashgate, 2006), p. xiii.

<sup>338</sup> Cyprian also speaks about renouncing the world in *Treatise II*, 22, 'On the Dress of Virgins' as found in *ANF*, Book 5, p. 436.

bishop enjoyed a lavish lifestyle among the social elite. Inherent within this community were the trappings of certain sins. However, his heart and mind were ‘transformed’ by the rite as the light from above revealed the earthliness of his former desires and behavior. Thus, we may conclude that due to his own spiritual experience, Cyprian understood baptism to be a life changing event for those who received it within the context of the Church.

### **The Ongoing Struggle with the Devil**

Unlike Tertullian (c. 160-225 A.D.), an earlier Church Father from Carthage, whose work entitled *On Baptism* treated the sacrament in a very detailed and systematic way, Cyprian did not write a formal treatise on the subject. What we learn about his theology and practice of baptism is pieced together from his own experience and correspondence – particularly *Letters 69-75*.<sup>339</sup> Throughout his writings the bishop speaks of spiritual benefits realized in the rite – including the defeat of the evil one.<sup>340</sup> Ferguson, commenting on Cyprian’s view of the ramifications that baptism has on the devil, writes, ‘Cyprian appeals to Israel’s escape from Pharaoh at the Red Sea (“that sea was a sacrament of baptism [*sacramentum baptismi*] – on the basis of 1 Corinthians 10:1-2,6 – to illustrate that the power of the devil stops at the “saving water.” When human beings “come to the water of salvation and to the sanctification of baptism...there the devil is beaten down.” The wicked spirits can no longer remain in the body of a person “baptized

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<sup>339</sup> We will explore Cyprian’s view of the devil and his influence later in this chapter when we discuss the context and meaning of the *Sursum Corda* as found in *On the Lord’s Prayer* 31.

<sup>340</sup> See H. Kelly’s work, *The Devil at Baptism: Ritual, Theology, and Drama* (London, Cornell University Press, 1985) for an overview of the devil and the rite of initiation beginning in the third century.

and sanctified, in whom the Holy Spirit is beginning to dwell.”<sup>341</sup> However, the bishop contends that the evil one is still active, ‘Our physical members share with the remainder of humanity in this weak condition, as long as we bear in the present age this flesh that we share with them. Therefore, if the Christian recognizes and accepts under what contract, under what law will he become a believer, let him grasp how much more he must endure in the present age in proportion to the struggle in which he must engage the devil.’<sup>342</sup> The bishop understood that even the baptized, those who have beaten down the devil, may still be influenced by him. Furthermore, he writes: ‘In baptism the devil is driven out by faith of the believer, and he comes back again if that faith should falter.’<sup>343</sup> Arguably, the external and internal issues Cyprian faced during his episcopacy in North Africa contributed to his conclusions regarding the relationship between the devil and the baptized.

### **Church Struggles and Moral Laxity in the North African Church**

Not long after his reception into the Church, Cyprian was ordained a presbyter and within two years (249) he was elected Bishop of Carthage. Later that same year the Roman Emperor Decius (249-251) instituted the first concerted imperial effort to stamp out Christianity.<sup>344</sup> This led to many pastoral issues for the new bishop and others.<sup>345</sup> The edict issued by Decius in late 249 or early 250 sought

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<sup>341</sup> Ferguson, *Baptism*, p. 359. Summarizing Cyprian’s teaching on baptism and the devil as found in *Letter* 69. As noted by Ferguson, Cyprian also writes about the exodus as prefiguring Christian experience in *To Fortunatus* 7.

<sup>342</sup> *De Mortalitate* 8.127-9.132 – translation taken from Allen Brent’s work, *Cyprian and Roman Carthage* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 108. Cyprian makes a similar statement in *Letter* 60.3.2 in his remarks against heretics where he explains the devil does not seek those outside the life of the church, ‘Instead he hastens on to harass those in whom he perceives that Christ is still standing.’ Translation taken from Ancient Church Writers, *The Letters of Cyprian* Vol. 8 (Mahweh, Paulist Press, 1986), p. 94.

<sup>343</sup> *Letters* 69 (75).16.1, taken from Ferguson, *Baptism*, p. 359.

<sup>344</sup> Thomas Finn, *Early Christian Baptism and the Catechumenate: Italy, North Africa, and Egypt* (Message of the Fathers of the Church Series 6), (Collegeville, The Liturgical Press, 1992), p. 129.

<sup>345</sup> For an in-depth study on how the Decian persecution impacted the church in Carthage, see Allen Brent’s work, *Cyprian and Roman Carthage*, pp. 193-249.

to enforce religious conformity on the people throughout the empire.<sup>346</sup> Many, amidst the persecution, retreated from the faith. For some, like Rogatianus the presbyter and other confessors who were exiled for the faith, it was a time of moral laxity. Cyprian addresses their conduct in *Letter 6*:

For what a disgrace is suffered by your name, when one spends his days in intoxication and debauchery, another returns to that country whence he was banished, to perish when arrested, not now as being a Christian, but as being a criminal!... What, then is that – How execrable should it appear to you – which I have learnt with extreme anguish and grief of mind, to wit, that there are not wanting those who defile the temple of God, and the members sanctified after confession and made glorious (bathed in the light), with a disgraceful and infamous concubinage, associating their beds promiscuously with women's!<sup>347</sup>

In order to deter this mindset and unacceptable behavior, the bishop reminds them of the grace they received in baptism and their duty to continue in the faith, ‘We had renounced the world when we were baptized; but we have now indeed renounced the world when tried and approved by God, we leave all that we have, and have followed the Lord, and stand and live in His faith and fear.’<sup>348</sup> However, this behavior within the Church was brought about by exile. Before the persecutions, Christian leaders were entangled in worldly affairs seeking power and prestige in the large cities, men and women dishonored the image of God, oaths were taken and broken lightly, believers married non-believers, clergy participated in immoral relationships with unmarried women, disunity and hatred ran rampant, and gossip and frivolity plagued the liturgical gatherings.<sup>349</sup> Beyond these issues Cyprian had to address the issue of the *lapsi* – those that left the Church during the time of

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<sup>346</sup> This was not the first period of persecution the North African church faced. Court records indicate that twelve Christians were executed of Scillium (an unknown location) were executed on July 17, 180 for being Christian; and in 203, Vibia Perpetua and Felicity were martyred for like cause along with a male slave, two young men, and a catechumen as recorded in *The Martyrdom of Saints Perpetua and Felicity*.

<sup>347</sup> *Letter 6.4-5*, as found in *ANF*, Vol 5, pp. 284-285.

<sup>348</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 285.

<sup>349</sup> As found in *By this Sign*, Ted Byfield, ed., (Canada, Friesens, 2004), p. 14.

persecution and wanted to return. And he was confronted with disagreements over infant baptism and the validity of baptisms that took place outside of the Church by schismatics and heretics. We can conclude that Cyprian, as a bishop, dealt with more than just administrative concerns in the North African Church. And his commentary on the Lord's Prayer, is a reflection of his episcopacy in that it sets forth what he desired to see among his people: unity of mind (*Chapter 8*), a common brotherhood among those who have renounced the evil one as their father (*Chapter 9*) and love harmony within the Church (*Chapter 24*).

### **Cyprian's Catechism *On the Lord's Prayer***

Scholars disagree as to whether Cyprian's catechumens received instruction on the Lord's Prayer before or after their baptism.<sup>350</sup> In either case, what is important to our study is his reference to the *Sursum Corda* in *Chapter 31*. For the sake of continuity and context, we will include the bishop's teaching on certain relevant topics in chapters prior to 31. In turn, this information, in conjunction with our previous work, will help us better understand the meaning and function Cyprian ascribes to liturgical command.

### **Preparing the Heart to Stand before God in Prayer**

Before beginning his formal exposition, Cyprian instructs his catechumens about how they need to approach God in prayer:

4: However, let the words and the pleas of those who pray be made with discipline, restrained by quiet and reserve. Let us call to mind that we are standing before the face of God. Both the posture of our body and the modulation of our voice should be pleasing to the divine eyes. For whereas

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<sup>350</sup> Stewart-Sykes reviews some of the scholarly opinions on both sides of the issue (*On the Lord's Prayer*, pp. 22-26). Whether or not Cyprian presented his instruction on the Lord's Prayer before or after baptism does impact the outcome of our study. Due to the scope of our study, we are not able to present a detailed explanation of the catechumenate at this time in North Africa. For further information, see Finn, *Early Christian Baptism and the Catechumenate* and, first and foremost, review Tertullian's works *On Repentance 6* and *On Baptism*.

the shameless groan and cry out, by contrast it is fitting that the reverent man should pray reserved prayers... And when, we come together with our brothers, we gather to celebrate the divine sacrifices with the priest of God, we should be mindful of reverence and order, nor forever tossing ill-judged phrases into the air, nor seeking to commend our requests by bombarding God with a tumultuous verbosity, because God is a hearer not the voice but of the heart, nor is he who sees our thoughts prompted by our cries. Thus the Lord shows us when he says: "Why do you consider evil in your hearts?" (Luke 5.22) And in another place: "Let all the churches know that I am an examiner of the kidney and the heart" (Rev.2.23)...6. Moreover the person who prays, dearest brothers, should not be unaware of the manner in which the tax collector praying in the temple together with the Pharisee. He did not brazenly raise his eyes to heaven nor did he insolently raise his hands but, beating and bewailing the sins to be found concealed within, he implored the assistance of the divine mercy.<sup>351</sup>

In this preparatory instruction, we see the faithful assembled with a priest 'standing' before the face of God. As we discovered in Chapter 3 of our study, this *orans* is pregnant with theological meaning. Socially and spiritually, at this time, the bishop explains there is a need to control one's emotions and be reserved. God is said to be concerned with the purity of heart in prayer, not simply what is articulated. Now having explored the manner in which one is to pray, Cyprian begins his exposition of the prayer.<sup>352</sup>

### **Contrasting Earthly and Heavenly Themes**

According to Stewart-Sykes, Cyprian's translation of the Lord's Prayer is as follows: 'Our Father, you who are in the heavens, let your name be held holy, let your Kingdom come, let your will be done in heaven and on earth. Give us this day our daily bread, and pardon our debts just as we pardon our debtors; and do not allow us to be led into temptation, but set us free from the evil one.'<sup>353</sup> Using the prayer as an outline for his catechism, he performs an exposition verse by verse with

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<sup>351</sup> Translation taken from A. Stewart-Sykes, *On the Lord's Prayer*, p. 67.

<sup>352</sup> In Chapter 11 the catechumens are instructed 'Let us act as temples of God, so that it may appear that God dwells in us. Let our conduct not fall away from the spirit; rather, we, who have begun to be spiritual and heavenly, should think and perform spiritual and heavenly things.' Translation taken from A. Stewart-Sykes, *On the Lord's Prayer*, p. 72.

<sup>353</sup> *Ibid*, p. 69.

commentary. In his work, Cyprian makes numerous references to the issues we have discussed thus far.

In Chapter 9, Cyprian informs his hearers that they can refer to God as Father due to the fact that ‘Anybody who is renewed, reborn, and restored to his God by grace, first of all says, ‘Father’ because he is now a son.’<sup>354</sup> The bishop is reminding the gathered of the theological implications of baptism as he does in Chapter 10 where he comments again on their ability to call God ‘Our Father’. In Chapter 11, he informs them as children, they need to act as temples of God, so that may it may appear that God dwells in them. Cyprian continues, ‘Let our conduct not fall away from the spirit; rather, we who have begun to be spiritual and heavenly, should think and perform spiritual and heavenly things.’<sup>355</sup> This is accomplished by those who have been made holy in baptism persisting in the way they started (Chapter 12). He brings to mind Paul’s words, ‘Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor the effeminate, nor sodomizers, nor thieves, nor cheats, nor drunkards, nor wizards, nor the rapacious, shall attain the Kingdom of God.’ The gathered were all of these, but Cyprian explains to them they (the baptized) were washed, made just and hallowed in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of God.<sup>356</sup> Again, we see here Cyprian exhorting the catechumens to the moral responsibility that accompanies the life of the believer. A similar reference to sinful vices is made in Chapter 16 and he concludes the chapter with this admonition, ‘Because it is the will of God that earthly things should yield to heavenly, that the spiritual and godly should prevail.’<sup>357</sup> In Chapter 19, the catechumens are reminded that those who participate in the daily bread of the Eucharist are also those who ‘have renounced the

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<sup>354</sup> Stewart-Sykes, *On the Lord’s Prayer*, pp. 70-71.

<sup>355</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

<sup>356</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 73

<sup>357</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 77.

world and its wealth and its pomp.<sup>358</sup> Here Cyprian calls to mind the command to renounce the devil and the things of the world during the exorcisms before baptism.<sup>359</sup> Living a devoted life will keep them safe from the evil one that only has the power that God gives him. And this power is directly related to the proportion of their sins (Chapter 25). The catechumens are taught that the Lord's Prayer concludes with the phrase, 'But set us free from the evil one.' Cyprian explains, 'This includes all the weapons the enemy can bring against us in this world, from which we are sure to find security and safety if God set us free.' (Chapter 26).<sup>360</sup> The bishop concludes his commentary with a series of 'post' lectures. The first one (Chapter 28) exhorts the hearers they are to love God and each other, and, as Jesus went up to the mountain and spent the night in prayer how much more should sinners spend the night in prayer (Chapter 29). Thus, throughout Cyprian's commentary on the Lord's Prayer, he alludes to the moral transformation that should take place via the sacrament of baptism. In essence, those of heaven should act in a heavenly manner. Furthermore, the devil and the world are subdued by the grace of God in the life of the believer. What is necessary is for the newly illumined to realize is that spiritually and intellectually they are no longer citizens of the earth. Instead, they are now, through baptism, citizens of heaven; and as heavenly children, they call God, Father.

### ***Chapter 30 – Seek to Maintain Unity and Peace***

In Chapter 30, Cyprian teaches his catechumens about Christ's prayers for them and the importance of unity. Referring to Peter's sifting by Satan (Luke 22:31), he assures them that Christ was praying for Peter during the time of his failure and

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<sup>358</sup> Ibid., p. 79.

<sup>359</sup> H. Kelly's work, *The Devil at Baptism: Ritual, Theology, and Drama* (Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1985) explores the rites of initiation and the place of the Devil and demons. He argues in third century the struggle with evil was turned into an elaborate ritual (p. 10). For a survey of the various renunciations see E. Ferguson, *Baptism in the Early Church*, p. 23 footnotes 6-8.

<sup>360</sup> Ibid., p. 85.

following restoration. As an example, he cites John 17:20, ‘I do not pray for these alone but for those who shall believe in me through their word, that they should all be one; just as you, Father are in me and I in you, so should they be in us.’<sup>361</sup>

Commenting on the passage, the bishop admonishes his hearers to maintain this same type of unity, ‘You may see what was the desire of him who pleaded, that just as the Father and the Son are one, so we likewise should remain in the selfsame unity.’<sup>362</sup> Further exhorting them, he continues ‘And thus it may also be understood how great a sin it is to tear apart unity and peace, because the Lord prays for this very thing, desiring that his people should have life, knowing that discord does not enter the Kingdom of God.’<sup>363</sup> Thus, Cyprian’s final words before he introduces the *Sursum Corda* are an exhortation for the gathered to remember Satan’s activity, Christ’s prayers for them and their need to desire unity and peace among each other.

### ***Chapter 31- The Meaning and Function of the Sursum Corda***

We intentionally made our way through Cyprian’s life experience in baptism and his catechism on the Lord’s Prayer in order to establish a framework, or context, by which we can discover the meaning he ascribes to the liturgical command, *Sursum Corda*. In *Chapter 31*, these various influences and realities coalesce in Cyprian’s commentary. His catechetical explanation of the command is foundational to those that follow. Due to the significance of the text, we will cite it in its entirety:

Now when we stand to pray, dearest brothers, we should be watchful<sup>364</sup> and apply ourselves to our prayers with our whole heart. Every fleshly and worldly thought should depart, nor should any mind dwell on anything other than the prayer that it is offering. Therefore, before the prayer, the priest prepares the minds of the brothers by first uttering a preface as he says: ‘Hearts on high!’ And as the people reply: “We have them with the Lord,” so

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<sup>361</sup> A. Stewart-Sykes, *On the Lord’s Prayer*, p. 87.

<sup>362</sup> *Ibid*, p. 87.

<sup>363</sup> *Ibid*, p. 87.

<sup>364</sup> Again, here Cyprian seems to be referring back to 1 Peter where the apostle instructs his readers to be watchful because the Devil prowls around like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour.

they are warned they<sup>365</sup> should think of nothing other than the Lord. The heart is closed against the enemy and lies open to God alone, so that the foe of God may not enter at the time of prayer. For he creeps around constantly and insinuates himself with subtlety, deceitfully calling away our prayers from God, so that we have one thing in our heart and another on our lips. It is not the sound of the voice but the mind and the heart which should pray to God with sincere intent. What lethargy it is to be led astray and captured by unbecoming and profane thoughts when you are praying to the Lord, as though there were some matter to which you should give more attention than what you are saying to God! How can you expect God to hear you when you yourself cannot hear? Do you want God to have you in mind when you are making prayer when you are not even mindful of yourself? This is to be entirely off-guard before the enemy, this, when you pray to God, is to cause offense to the majesty of God through your neglectful prayer, this is to be watchful with your eyes yet drowsy in your heart when a Christian should be watchful in his heart while sleeping with his eyes. As it is written in the Song of Songs in the character of the church: ‘I am asleep and my heart is awake (Song 5.2). The apostle counsels us with solicitude and anxiety when he says: “Continue in prayer and be watchful at it” (Col. 4.2) That is, he is teaching those who are watchful in their prayer and showing them what can be gained by those who ask of God.<sup>366</sup>

In the aforementioned, Cyprian makes numerous references to the challenges he arguably overcame in and through the rite of baptism (things of the earth) and other issues that are important to our study . Therefore, we will address each one of them in a systematic manner.

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<sup>365</sup> The text in the ANF Book 5, p. 455 reads, ‘so *se* (referring to the priest) may be reminded...’ However, the text seems to indicate, as Stewart-Sykes correctly translates, that the reference should be made to the laity, not the priest.

<sup>366</sup> The translation is taken from A. Stewart-Sykes, *On the Lord’s Prayer*, pp. 87-87. The Latin text is included for reference purposes: *XXXI. Quando autem stamus ad orationem, fratres dilectissimi, vigilare et incumbere ad preces toto corde debemus. Cogitatio omnis carnalis et saecularis abscedat, nee quiequam tunc animus quam id solum cogitet quod precatur. Ideo et sacerdos, ante orationem praefatione praemissa, parat fratrum mentes dicendo: Sursum corda; ut, dum respondent plebs, Habemus ad Dominum, admoneatur nihil aliud se quam Dominum cogitare debere. Claudatur contra adversarium pectus, et soli Deo pateat, nee ad se hostem Dei tempore orationis adire patiatur. Obrepat enim frequentior et penetrat, et subtiliter fallens preces nostras a Deo avocet, ut aliud habeamus in corde, aliud in voce, quando intentione sincera Dominum debeat, non vocis sonus, se animus et sensus, orare. Quae autem segnitia est alienari et rapi ineptis cogitationibus et profanas cum Dominum deprecari, quasi sit aliud quod magis debeas cogitare quam quod cum Deo loqueris? Quomodo te audiri a deo postulas, cum te ipse non audias? Vis esse Deum memorem tui cum rogas, quando te ipse memor tui non sis? Hoc est ab hoste in totum non cavere: hoc est, quando oras Deum, majestatem Dei negligentia orationis offendere: hoc est vigilare oculis et corde dormire, cum debeat Christiannus et cum dormit oculis corde vigilare, sicut scriptum est ex persona Ecclesiae loquentis in Cantico Conticorum: Ego dormio, et cor meum vigilat. Quapropter sollicite et caute Apostolus admonet dicens: Instate orationem, vigilantes in ea, docens et ostendens eos impetrate quod postulant de Deo posse, quos Deus videat in oratione vigilare. Latin texts found in (PL004, p. 539-540) . The author acknowledges the assistance of Rev. Dr. Benedict Churchill with the Latin texts and translations throughout this study.*

## 1.) Standing to Pray

As we learned in Chapter 3 of this study, the ritual posture of ‘standing to pray’ includes facing east, extending the arms and eyes upward toward heaven (the *orans* position) and, thereby, assuming the position of the cross: the shape that reflects victory over the devil and his influence. In Chapter 31, Cyprian’s reference to ritual standing refers to the proper position assumed by the catechumens when they first recite the Lord’s Prayer after baptism. However, this posture is not limited to the Lord’s Prayer. It includes prayer in general and, arguably, it is the ritual posture associated with and or connected to the command, *Sursum Corda*.<sup>367</sup> We can argue from his comments that standing to pray in the liturgical assembly and calling God ‘Father’ may act as a constant reminder that those baptized into Christ were transferred from the domain of the evil one<sup>368</sup>, that below, to the Kingdom of God, that above.<sup>369</sup> Thus, we can conclude, along with the aforementioned, that Cyprian’s reference to ‘standing to pray’ at the *Sursum Corda* functions as a call for the one praying to remember the theological benefits of their initiation.

## 2.) Be Watchful

Cyprian is aware of the external and internal struggles that the catechumens face when they gather to pray. Both factors lead Cyprian to admonish his hearers ‘...we should be watchful and apply ourselves to our prayers with our whole

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<sup>367</sup> This does beg the question, ‘How does the assembly collectively assume this position without getting in each other’s way?’ The actual physical posture of the *orans* position is not that of the cross, although it seems to have been interpreted theologically in this way. Instead, it is the arms are positioned in a more vertical manner. Therefore, if one person is standing beside another then a slight shift in one direction or another would accommodate the gathered.

<sup>368</sup> Ferguson, in regards to the practice of renunciation in Cyprian’s church, ‘Among the preliminaries to baptism there was a prayer or exorcism over the water. “If it is to be possible for water to clean away by its baptismal washing the sins of a person who is being baptized, then it is essential that the water should first be cleansed and sanctified by a bishop.” (Letters 70 (69).1.3) There was a prebaptismal renunciation of the devil and the world. Cyprian makes frequent allusion to such but without making a formal renunciation explicit or giving an exact verbal formula when he says, “We renounced the world when we were baptized.” (Letters 13 (6).5.3.’ As found in Finn, *Baptism in the Early Church*, p. 352.

<sup>369</sup> We will address the ‘devil’ later in this chapter.

heart. Every fleshly and worldly thought should depart, nor should any mind dwell on anything other than the prayer that it is offering.<sup>370</sup> The bishop does not want his people to be double-minded. Instead, single-mindedness in prayer is a protective measure against the foe of God, the devil. Jungman believes that Cyprian's comments on the *Sursum Corda* express 'the mood in which the Christian soul should properly begin every prayer: every fleshly and worldly thought should be suppressed and the mind bent solely upon the Lord.'<sup>371</sup> Furthering this thought, Cyprian warns the catechumens that there are spiritual, social and personal issues before them they need to take into consideration before they petition the Lord. These issues can deter or detract them from praying, so it is necessary they be watchful with their heart. This spiritual wandering can be related to sinful thoughts or troubling issues, problems he knew very well from among his own flock.<sup>372</sup> Furthermore, this reveals the earthly struggle Christians in his community may encounter when they strive to be attentive with the heart in prayer.

In order to remedy this potential spiritual crisis, Cyprian prepares his hearers '*Ideo et sacerdos, ante orationem praefatione praemissa, parat fratrum mentes dicendo: Sursum corda; ut, dum respondent plebs, Habemus ad Dominum,*

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<sup>370</sup> As cited previously in full texts of the Lord's Prayer as translated by Stewart-Sykes.

<sup>371</sup> Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite* (Dublin, Four Courts Press, 1953), p. 110.

<sup>372</sup> In *Epistle VI* "To Rogatianus the Presbyter, and the Other Confessors," Cyprian addresses issues among those that called themselves 'Christians': '4: But I hear that some of you infect your number, and destroy the praise of a distinguished name by their corrupt conversation; whom yourselves, even as being lovers and guardians of your own praise, should rebuke and check and correct. For what a disgrace is suffered by your name, when one spends his days in intoxication and debauchery, another returns to his country whence he was banished, to perish when arrested, not now as being a Christian, but as being a criminal!...5.)What, then, is that – how execrable should it appear to you – which I have learnt with extreme anguish and grief of mind, to wit, that there are not wanting those who defile the temples of God, and the members, sanctified after confession and made glorious, (illustrata – referring to baptism) with a disgraceful and infamous concubinage, associating their beds promiscuously with women's!' *ANF*, Vol.5, pp. 284-285.

*admoneatur nihil aliud se quam Dominum cogitare debere.*<sup>373</sup> The Latin reference to the *Sursum corda* is identical to that found in the *Apostolic Tradition*:

*Sursum corda  
Habemus ad Dominum*

If the liturgical order is the same as the *Apostolic Tradition* (after the kiss of peace, the blessing of the priest and response of the people) then we can infer that the meaning of the liturgical command may be similar. Due the fact Hippolytus does not comment on the liturgical function of the *Sursum Corda*, we are left to speculate. However, as we discovered in Chapter 1, what is known is the force of the text. It is a *command* to relinquish any earthly concerns and, in Cyprian's case, be aware of the enemy that is ever present, even during times of prayer. Before we further explore the place of the evil one in the liturgy, we need to address Cyprian's use of the technical term *praefatio* and how it relates to the *Sursum corda*.

### 3.) *Praefare*

Before the prayer, Cyprian prepares (*parat*) the minds (*mentes*) of the gathered by way of *praefatio*.<sup>374</sup> To date, this technical term (*praefatio*) has received notable attention from scholars. Taft, constructing his work on the conclusions made by Dölger<sup>375</sup>, argues Cyprian's use of the term *praefatio* '...is not the liturgical Preface in the later western understanding of the term, but rather in the earlier, classical sense of the command or prohibition restricting the civil rights of those accused of a crime.'<sup>376</sup> However, Mohrman's argues against this conclusion:<sup>377</sup>

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<sup>373</sup> PL004, p. 539.

<sup>374</sup> The reference to the prayer of the priest and the *Sursum Corda*, which the *Apostolic Tradition* confines to the celebration of the Eucharist, seems to be an intrusion or out of place as Cyprian is lecturing on the Lord's Prayer. However, Stewart-Sykes notes that the Latin term used for priest here *sacerdos* without qualification is only employed by Cyprian of the bishop. Therefore, Cyprian is referring to the Eucharistic prayer. See A. Stewart-Sykes, *On the Lord's Prayer*, p. 88.

<sup>375</sup> See F.J. Dölger, *Sol Salutis*, pp. 288-289.

<sup>376</sup> Taft III, p. 50.

Since St. Cyprian we find, in the beginning fairly rarely, the noun “*praefatio*” in the language of Christians to designate a prayer. It is to the noun “*praefatio*” and not the verb “*praefari*” which was attributed the role of becoming a technical term of the Christians liturgy. This statement, it seems to me, is not without importance. Opposite the pagan religious language where the verb has adapted more than the noun a purely technical meaning, the language of the Christians demonstrates from the beginning, a preference for the noun.

In Cyprian we meet, for the first time, the word “*praefatio*” relating to the Eucharistic liturgy. There is no doubt the Bishop of Carthage means here, by “*praefatio*,” the admonition in the dialogue which announces the prayer of consecration. One asks to know what the relation is of this usage with “*praefari*”, “*praefatio*” in the common language (secular non-religious). One is tempted to think immediately of the meaning of the “preliminary (prefatory) prayer.” But if one compares the meaning of “*praefatio*”, prefatory prayer of the secular language, to the meaning we are examining, one notes certain differences. *Praefatio* – and certainly *praefari* – in the language of the pagan cult can designate a preliminary sacrifice, a prayer preceding a sacrifice or a speech, and very rarely a preliminary warning which must exclude those who are impure from the ritual act. No-where does “*praefatio*” designate – as in Cyprian – an admonition to prayer.<sup>378</sup>

After suggesting the term in Cyprian’s text may be a creation of the bishop who was a trained rhetorician, she concludes: ‘At any rate one must notice two things: contact with the terminology of pagan religion is doubtful and it is only after many centuries that we find in our texts a use of “*praefatio*” which attaches itself to the St. Cyprian usage. By comparison, Jungman notes, ‘the use of “*praefatio*” in the Gallican liturgy seems to continue to use St. Cyprian’s, even though it is not identical.’<sup>379</sup> Therefore, Taft’s (Dölger’s) argument that the bishop’s use of the term *praefatio* is derived from ancient pagan practice and is a warning for the unworthy to *withdraw* is plausible but it does not seem probable. Instead, *praefatio* may serve as a warning to those gathered to be ‘on guard’ spiritually as they prepare to offer the Eucharistic prayer to God.

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<sup>377</sup> Taft does acknowledge Mohrman’s work but only in passing – Taft II, p. 50 footnote 7. However, her argument is important to our study and therefore needs to be explored in greater detail.

<sup>378</sup> Christian Mohrman, ‘Sur L’Histoire De Praefari – Praefatio,’ VC, Vol. VII, p. 11. Mohrman discusses Cyprian’s use of the term on pages 10 -11. Author acknowledges the assistance of Dr. Ruth Taylor for assistance in French translations.

<sup>379</sup> Ibid., p. 11

Moreover, Taft also argues that the *praefatio* also had a religious sense, ‘Proclaimed at the beginning of a religious rite, it was a liturgical warning listing those crimes that excluded one from participation in the *actio* of the offering or mystery cult.’ To further his position he again refers to references made by Dölger to pagan authors<sup>380</sup> and he cites Celsus’s accusations as addressed by Origin in *Contra Celsum* III, p. 59:

That I bring no heavier charge than what the truth compels me, anyone may see from the following remarks. Those who invite to participation in other mysteries, make proclamation as follows: “Everyone who has clean hands, and a prudent tongue;” others again thus: “He who is pure from all pollution, and whose soul is conscious of no evil, and who has lived well and justly.” And these things they proclaim, those who promise purification of sins. But let us hear what kind of persons these [Christians] invite. Everyone, they say, who is a sinner...and, to speak generally, whoever is unfortunate, him will the kingdom of God receive.<sup>381</sup>

Throughout Cyprian’s commentary on the Lord’s Prayer he is exhorting those who either participate or will participate in the Eucharist. But Taft believes at this point in the service the concern shifts to the unworthy? In response to Taft’s conclusion, as presented previously in our Introduction, H. Bates argues,

Taft is certainly uneasy about the conventional explanation of *Sursum corda*, but his suggestion that it is a warning to the profane and uninitiated to withdraw from the mysteries, after the fashion of the Hellenistic mystery religions, is not convincing. For one thing it is open to the previous objection that a command needs to be explicit. Granted that unbelievers and the uninstructed may have strayed into the assembly at Corinth (here Bates cites 1 Cor. 14:23), would they have understood the words as ordering them to go? Such commands of exclusion do exist, as in *Didache* 10.6, and, possibly 1 Cor. 16:23. But if this is what *Sursum corda* means, why does it not say so? Equally to the point, *Sursum corda* is not addressed to outsiders but to the initiates. Catechumens would be shown “the doors” at a much earlier stage before the Prayers of the faithful. The nearest parallel to the fine passage from Aristophane’s *Frogs*, quoted by Taft, is the rather prosaic list of prohibited trades and professions in *Apostolic Tradition* 16. The mystery was already double screened!<sup>382</sup>

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<sup>380</sup> Taft cites Dölger’s reference to Lucian of Samosata (ca. 125-180), *On Sacrifices*, 12-13 and Livy (59 BC-17 AD), *Ab Urbe condita* XLV, 5: 3-4 on pp. 288-289 of *Sol Salutis*.

<sup>381</sup> Taft, III, p. 52. Translation taken from *ANF*, 4, pp. 487-88.

<sup>382</sup> H. Bates, ‘Sursum Corda: The Word of Command’, *SL*, Vol. 29, 1999, p. 59.

Bates' conclusion is straightforward and persuasive. It fits within the context of the catechism and the prior exhortations to those about to be baptized. What seems to be more problematic about Taft's position are his references to Chrysostom's work, *In Eph hom. 3, 4*<sup>383</sup> and Theodore of Mopsuestia's, *Hom. 16, 21*<sup>384</sup> as proof texts for his argument regarding the praefatio:

Chrysostom's Antiochian sermon to the penitents *In Eph hom. 3, 4*, where they are excluded from not only from receiving communion, but were not even allowed to be present during the anaphora and communion:

Even the eyes are unworthy of these wonders, unworthy also to the ears....After these things, it is permitted to approach and see, but while he [the Lord in the Eucharistic species] is present, leave! You are no more allowed here than a catechumen! (PG, 62, 69).

Theodore of Mopsuestia, *Hom. 16, 21* in the litany after the anaphora, says the deacon proclaims:

Let us pray for him who presented this holy oblation...and let us also pray that we may be found worthy to look at it, to approach it, to partake of it. (Tonneau-Devresses 563)<sup>385</sup>

Taft's reference to Chrysostom and Theodore is an appeal to a different context.

They are both writing in the fourth century after the Edict of Milan and the influence of the imperial court on the Divine Liturgy. That is to say they both testify to dramatic changes in the ritual and, arguably, the liturgical theology of the Church; or at least it is expanded. The transition in the Eucharistic celebration from 'thanksgiving' to a reenactment/participation in the Passion of Christ filled with fear and awe, and the influx of people into the Church, some seeking true spiritual enlightenment while others political asylum, created new difficulties for the pastors

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<sup>383</sup> 'Even the eyes are unworthy of these wonders, unworthy also the ears...After these things, it is permitted to approach and see, but while he [the Lord in the eucharistic species] is present, leave! You are no more allowed to be here than the catechumen!' Taft, III, p. 49.

<sup>384</sup> 'Let us pray for him who presented this holy oblation...and let us also pray that we may be found worthy to look at it, to approach it, to partake of it' Taft III, p. 50.

<sup>385</sup> Next, Taft relates how to pay attention to the offering and control who could look upon it, was a pagan discipline too: "*Quique adsint sacris, respicere illa vetat...Respicit, et pure sacra peracta putat*" says Ovid, *Fastorum VI*, 164, 444. Taft II, p. 50.

of that day. Suffice it to say at present (this topic will be explored in more detail in the next chapter), many of those who participated in the rites of entrance (baptism and chrismation) and the Eucharist may have experienced disappointment and doubt. When they entered into the bath of regeneration, holy water was just water. In the Eucharist, the Body and Blood of Christ still looked like bread and wine. What they saw with their eyes, touched with their hands and tasted with their mouths were natural, not supernatural. In order to correct the sensual perception and open the spiritual eyes of the newly converted, churchmen in the fourth century employed new catechetical techniques to train the senses in how to perceive the Eucharistic actions and gifts before them. Again, these things take place after Cyprian's time and, therefore, the comparison is challengeable.<sup>386</sup>

Taft concludes his section on the *praefatio*, 'Thus Christians saw no contradiction between their outreach to sinners and the lengthy *praefationes* in such later sources as *Test Dom* 1, 23 or *Ap Const* 8, 12:2. They welcomed all who were sincere, but the warnings were no mere formality. Christians had to be on guard against the presence at services of the curious, or the hypocrites and heretics, right into the 5<sup>th</sup> century.' Again, Taft's observation fails to capture the main thrust of Cyprian's instruction. It was a solemn warning directed to each hearer, personally. Those being instructed on how to pray needed to be on guard against themselves and their adversary, the devil: not necessarily others they may consider unworthy in attendance.<sup>387</sup>

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<sup>386</sup> The issues discussed in this chapter will be discussed in detail in the following four chapters of this study.

<sup>387</sup> Taft's conclusion seems to be more in line with Cyprian's thoughts, 'One major difference, however, between the pagan *praefatio* and Christian preanaphoral dialogue should be stressed: the main thrust of the pagan *praefatio* was negative, apotropaic, whereas the core of the Christian liturgical unit is the *Sursum corda*, a positive exhortation to leave behind the affairs of earth and raise our minds and hearts to God.' However, After reviewing the various references within paganism and Christianity, he concludes, '*Praefatio*, then, was the name given to a liturgical text solemnly proclaimed – not every liturgical text, but those that have special prominence.' Found in E. Mazza,

#### 4.) Closing the Heart to the Enemy

According to Taft, ‘...to have one’s heart up to the Lord is simply a metaphor for having one’s life focused on God and things spiritual, and not on the things of the world.’<sup>388</sup> He is correct in his general observation; however, his comments need to be expanded in order to include Cyprian’s pressing concern regarding his catechumens. We previously learned in this chapter that the evil one, the devil, is ‘driven out’ in baptism, but it is the responsibility of the believer to keep him at bay. In *Treatise X* ‘On Jealousy and Envy,’ the bishop reveals what he sees as the strategy of the evil one and how believers are to always ‘watch’ and be careful of the adversary,

Therefore, beloved brethren, be on guard...the Apostle Peter, in his epistle, forewarns and teaches, saying, ‘Be sober, and watch; for you adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, goeth about seeking any one to devour.’ He goeth about everyone one of us; and even as an enemy besieging those who are shut up (in a city), he examines the walls, and tries whether there is any part of the walls (our members), less firm and less trustworthy, by entrance though which he may penetrate to the inside. He presents to the eyes seductive form and easy pleasures, that he may destroy by chastity by the sight. He tempts the ears with harmonious music, that the hearing of sweet sounds he may relax and enervate Christian vigour. He provokes the tongue by reproaches; he instigates the hand by exacerbating wrongs to the recklessness of murder; to take captive the soul by money, he heaps together mischievous hoards; he promises earthly honours, that he may deprive heavenly ones; he makes a show of false things that he may steal away the true; and when he cannot hiddenly deceive, he threatens plainly and openly, holding forth the fear of turbulent persecution to vanquish God’s servants – always restless, and always hostile, crafty in peace, and fierce in persecution. Wherefore, beloved brethren, against all the devil’s deceiving snares or open threats, the mind out to stand arrayed and armed, ever ready to repel as the foe is ever ready to attack.<sup>389</sup>

Cyprian understands the devil as having the ability to appeal to all five senses in an effort to disrupt and deter spiritual growth. In turn, the *Sursum Corda* is a deterrent to the evil one. In Cyprian’s words taken from Chapter 31, after uttering the preface,

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*The Eucharistic Prayers of the Roman Rite* (New York, Pueblo, 1986), p. 41. His discussion on the preface is found on pages 36-48 of the same work

<sup>388</sup> Taft II, p. 69.

<sup>389</sup> *ANF*, Cyprian *Treatise X* ‘On Jealousy and Envy’, Vol. 5, p. 491.

‘he (the priest) says, “*Sursum corda!*” And as the people reply: “We have them to the Lord,” so they are warned that they should think of nothing but the Lord.’ For at this time, Cyprian explains, ‘The heart is closed against the enemy and lies open to God alone, so that the foe of God might not enter at a time of prayer.’<sup>390</sup> Therefore, the command promotes awareness of the evil one at the liturgical setting and provides a liturgical safeguard for the heart and, consequently, the church gathered. Moreover, for the bishop, the relationship between outward gesture – standing and assuming the *orans* posture of prayer – to the inward disposition are mutually implicating; there is no hint that it is the inward that matters, while the external can be dispensed with. Thus, the Celebration is not simply an individual or existential experience. It is a collective gathering of God’s people to receive the Eucharistic gifts; and, during Cyprian’s tenure as bishop, to offer alms for the poor.

## **Part II: Eucharistic Context – Minds on High and Almsgiving**

Chapter 32 in Cyprian’s catechism ‘On the Lord’s Prayer’ reveals another aspect of the Eucharistic gathering – the need for almsgiving to accompany prayer.

The bishop explains:

Those who pray should not come to God with unfruitful or barren prayers. A request is futile when a sterile prayer is made to God... And so the divine Scripture instructs us when it says: “A prayer with fasting and almsgiving is good” (Tobit 12.8). For he who, in the day of Judgment, shall return a reward for the works and almsgiving is a kindly listener with good deeds.<sup>391</sup>

For the bishop, prayer and almsgiving are spiritual disciplines that accompany the Eucharistic gathering. This is evident in his work *de Opere et Eleemosynis* where he exhorts the gathered, ‘Let us give to Christ earthly vestments, as we are about to receive heavenly clothing; let us give worldly food and drink, as we are about to

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<sup>390</sup> Cyprian, *On the Lord’s Prayer* 31, translation taken from Stewart-Syke’s, p. 88.

<sup>391</sup> Cyprian, *On the Lord’s Prayer*, translation taken from Stewart-Sykes, p. 89.

come to the heavenly banquet with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob.<sup>392</sup> However, before we attempt to see the connection between Cyprian's instruction and the *Sursum Corda*, we need to gain a better understanding of the Eucharistic setting in second century Carthage

### Caring for the Poor

The less fortunate that gather for the Eucharistic meal seem to be of special importance to Cyprian - as well as the wealthier members' mindset towards them.<sup>393</sup>

Pontius, in *Vita* 3, describes Cyprian's life as a cleric as one characterized by charity:

His house was open to every comer. No widow returned from him with an empty lap; no blind man was unguided by him as a companion; none faltering in step was unsupported by him for a staff; non stripped of help by the hand of the mighty was not protected by him as a defender. Such things ought they to do, he was accustomed to say, who desire to please God. And thus running through the examples of all good men, by always imitating those who were better than others he made himself also worthy of imitation.<sup>394</sup>

Cyprian preached by example. For him, the imitation of Christ's ministry reflected the reality of Christ's presence, and, therefore salvation.<sup>395</sup> Moreover, returning again to his work *On the Lord's Prayer*, we see that he encouraged his catechumens to participate in almsgiving when they pray. The bishop, after citing Tobit 12:8 'A prayer with fasting and almsgiving is good,' instructs his hearers, 'For he who, in the

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<sup>392</sup> Cyprian, *de Opere et Eleemosynis* 24 - translation by author with review by Rev. Dr. Benedict Churchill. (PL004, p. 619)

<sup>393</sup> See Geoffrey Dunn's works 'Cyprian's Care for the Poor: The Evidence of *de Opere et Eleemosynis*,' in *SP* – papers presented to the Fourteenth International Conference on Patristic Studies, Oxford 2003, and 'The White Crown of Works: Cyprian's Early Pastoral Ministry of Almsgiving in Carthage' as found in *Church History* 73:4, December 2004, pp. 715-740; L. Wm. Countryman, *The Rich Christian in the Church of the Early Empire: Contradictions and Accommodations*, *Texts and Studies in Religion* 7 (New York, Edwin Mellen, 1980), p. 185.

<sup>394</sup> Translation taken from Dunn, 'The White Crowns of Work', p. 720. Also see Richard Saller, *Personal Patronage under the Early Empire* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1982) and See J Keating's work, *The agape and the Eucharist in the early Church: studies in the history of the Christian love-feasts* (London, Methuen & Co, 1901) for further study in regards to Cyprian and the poor.

<sup>395</sup> St. Anthony the Great (*First Letter of St. Anthony*, taken from Leonid Ouspensky's *Theology of the Icon* SVS Press p. 207, p. 207): The (Holy) Spirit, uniting with the intellect teaches it to keep the entire body, from head to toe, in order – the eyes, so that they can see purely, the ears so that they hear in peace...., the tongue, so that it can speak only good, the hands, so that they are put into movement only to be lifted up in prayer or to perform works of charity...

day of judgment, shall return a reward for the works and almsgiving is a kindly listener today to the prayer of one who comes to him in prayer associated with good deeds.’<sup>396</sup> Following this theme, he refers to Cornelius as an example, ‘Thus for instance, Cornelius the centurion deserved to be heard when he prayed. For he was a frequent giver of alms to the people and prayed constantly to God. Thus around the ninth hour, when he was at prayer, an angel was standing by, bearing witness to his good deeds and saying: “Cornelius, your prayers and almsgiving have ascended as a memorial before God” (Acts 10:2-4).’<sup>397</sup>

Now that we better understand Cyprian’s sacramental connection to the poor, we will turn our attention to his work, *de Opere et Eleemosynis*. This sermon does not reference the exact text of the liturgical *Sursum Corda*, however, what is clearly set before is the proper mindset needed during the Eucharist:

24. And for that reason, dearest brothers, for whom there is fear [reverence] inclined toward God, and, with the world despised and trampled upon, whose intellect (mind) is raised to heavenly and divine things; in full faith, with a devoted mind, with uninterrupted working, let us offer our service to God who is to-be-propitiated. Let us give to Christ earthly vestments, as we are about to receive heavenly clothing; let us give worldly food and drink, as we are about to come to the heavenly banquet with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob. Lest we harvest little, let us sow a great deal. Let us have regard for our safety and eternal salvation, while there is time, as the Apostle Paul says when he warns us: Therefore, while we have time, let us work what is good to all, but especially to the domestics of faith. Let us not grow weary in doing good; for in its season we shall reap (Galatians 6:10, 9).<sup>398</sup>

Again, the Latin text does not include the same liturgical language as that found in *de Dominica Oratione 31* – specifically *Sursum Corda*. But what is similar is the

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<sup>396</sup> Translation taken from A. Stewart-Sykes, *On the Lord’s Prayer*, p. 89.

<sup>397</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 89.

<sup>398</sup> 24. *Et idcirco, fratres charissimi, quibus metus in Deum pronus est, et spreto calcatoque jam mundo, ad superna et divina animus erectus est, fide plena, mente devota, operatione continua promerendo Domino obsequium prae-beamus. Demus Christo vestimenta terrena, indumenta coelestia recepturi: demus cibum et potum saecularem, cum Abraham et Isaac et Jacob ad convivium coeleste venturi. Ne parum metamus, plurimum seminemus. Securitati ac saluti aeternae, dum tempus est, consulamus, Paulo apostolo admonente et dicente : Ergo, dum tempus habemus, operemur quod bonum est ad omnes, maxime autem ad domesticos fidei. Bonum autem facientes non deficiamus; tempore enim suo metemus (Gal 6:10). (PL004), p. 619.*

textual reference to the liturgical function of the *Sursum Corda* - (*Et idcirco, fratres charissimi, quibus metus in Deum pronus est, et spreto calcatoque jam mundo, ad superna et divina animus erectus est, fide plena, mente devote.*) Those things that are a distraction are to be removed from the gathered and their intellect is to be raised to heavenly and divine things. This description of the spiritual state of the participants echoes Cyprian's exhortation to his catechumens in *de Dominica Oratione* 31. These references that relate the mind and heart do not indicate that at Cyprian's time in North Africa, *Sursum Corda* and *Sursum mentes* were both used in the preface to the Eucharistic Prayer.<sup>399</sup> However, what does seem to be conclusive is having one one's mind and heart elevated to things above, i.e. to Christ Himself, is evidenced by, among other things already discussed, almsgiving at the Eucharist.<sup>400</sup> Therefore, this emphasis on charity may reinforce the earthly nature of the *Sursum Corda*

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<sup>399</sup> Augustine, in *Sermon 71* 'Sermons 51-60 on Selected Lessons of the New Testament, refers to minds instead of hearts, '5.) Lift up your minds to the hope and comprehension of better things. Give not yourselves up to worldly desires.'

<sup>400</sup> This conclusion is consistent with the writings of future Western Fathers that are within the scope of our study. In *Sermon 22*, Caesarius uses the *Sursum Corda* as a means to explain the place of charity in the life of the believer. He explains: '(3) These two roots are planted in two fields by two farmers, dearly beloved. Christ plants the one in the hearts of the good; the Devil plants the other in the hearts of the bad. No evil springs from the root of charity, and no good from that of avarice. The Gospel speaks the truth when these two roots are mentioned and described as follows: "Ever good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit."... Thus, the two farmers are wont to plant those two roots, as we mentioned above. Christ plants one in the hearts of the faithful; the Devil plants the other in the hearts of the proud. Thus, one is planted in heaven; the other, in hell. The preacher knowing the question may arise of how one can still be in the world and have 'the root planted in heaven,' introduces a pastoral function of the *Sursum corda*, 'The hearts of the faithful are heaven, for they are daily lifted up there when the priest says: 'Lift up your hearts.' Then they all reply: "We lift them up to the Lord"; in the words of the Apostle: "but our citizenship is in heaven." Following, Caesarius explains the practical implications of heavenly citizenship, 'Therefore, if the citizenship of the faithful is in heaven, when true charity is in them the root of charity is planted in heaven. On the contrary, the root of avarice which is in the hearts of the proud is planted in hell, because these men love earthly possessions, incline toward them, love them, and place all their hope on the earth.' Translation taken from Sister M. Mueller, *The Fathers of the Church*, Vol. 31, pp. 113-14. Again, in *Sermon 32* - 'An admonition to those who frequently give alms, but still commit robbery and adultery every day', Caesarius begins his sermon by warning his hearers to 'be on guard lest the cruel Enemy of the human race overtake you, as he commonly deceives the careless and negligent with his wicked cunning.' It seems as if certain individuals, 'murderers, robbers and adulterers' developed the mindset that if they gave alms God would redeem them. However, the preacher explains that God is pleased when the soul is offered with money. Later in his homily, he explains the place of the poor in the economy of God, 'Thus, when we give money to the poor, let us offer our soul to God, as have mentioned before, so that where our treasure is there our heart may also be. Why does God ask for money? Surely, because He knows that we love it very much and continually think about it, for where

## Conclusion

Cyprian of Carthage presents us with the first catechetical commentary on the *Sursum Corda* found within his treatise ‘On the Lord’s Prayer.’ In his church, the baptized stood and, arguably, assumed the *orans* posture of prayer at the command, *Sursum Corda!* This ritual acted as a reminder to those gathered of Christ’s victory over the devil that is always ‘prowling about’ at the hour of prayer seeking a distracted heart. Moreover, in the rites initiation, as did Cyprian, they too participated in the defeat of the spiritual enemy, personally. However, for the bishop, the threat of his presence at the hour of prayer was a reality. He knew this from his own experience as a bishop in times of spiritual and moral laxity among the initiated. Therefore, the ritual *praefatio* functioned as a means of a solemn invitation to be spiritually attentive to the activities of the evil one before the Eucharistic prayer was offered. For the bishop, the *Sursum Corda* has a positive connotation as well. It is an exhortation to have the heart and mind on high where Christ is ‘located’ in heaven. Thus, the meaning of the command, *Sursum Corda*, for Cyprian may be summarized as follows: assume the *orans* as you first did when you exited the

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our money is there is our heart.’ Caesarius continues by echoing the teaching of Augustine, ‘God, moreover, exhorts us to store up treasures in heaven by alms for the poor, so that our hearts may follow whither we have sent ahead our treasure. Then, when the priest says: “Lift up your hearts,” we may with a clear conscience reply that we have lifted them up to the Lord.’ Translation taken from Sister M. Mueller, *The Fathers of the Church*, Vol. 31, p. 156. In like manner, Caesarius, in *Sermon* 34 ‘A sermon on love or parents, and on giving tithes’ describes the need for individuals to provide moderate means for their immediate family, then relatives and lastly servants. Then, the preacher explains, ‘Whatever God has given you beyond this, except food and clothing, you should not store up in earthly treasure “where thieves break in and steal,” but in heaven, so that “where your treasure is, there thy heart also may be.’ Then when the priest says: ‘Lift up your hearts, ‘we may reply with confidence and in truth: “We have lifted them up to the Lord.”’ He concludes by teaching those gathered that ‘God has sent everything over and above that for distribution among the poor.’ Translation taken from Sister M. Mueller, *The Fathers of the Church*, Vol. 31, p. 164. Again, in *Sermon* 39, Caesarius instructs his readers that if they do not forgive each other but give alms, ‘we offer earthly substance to God but subject our soul to the Adversary.’ The preacher, knowing that men love earthly wealth, teaches the gathered that God desires their wealth because ‘He desires the offering we love. Thus, in accord with His teaching may our heart follow where our treasure has gone ahead. Then when the priest says, ‘Lift up your hearts, ‘we can with a clear conscience say that we have lifted them up to the Lord.’ Translations taken from Sister M. Mueller, *The Fathers of the Church*, Vol. 31, p. 196.

baptismal waters and prepare to pray the Lord's Prayer with the faithful, be aware of the devil and his earthly influences and place your devotion and thoughts on the risen Lord who is above in heaven, *now!* Moreover, in the midst of troubling and diverse liturgical practices, the assembly functioned as a means of necessary support for the poor – a cause Cyprian is keenly interested in during his episcopacy. In his *Sermon*: 'On Alms and the Poor,' he teaches there is a connection to having one's heart on high with God in the Eucharist banquet and providing for the less fortunate that have gathered for the Celebration. By providing physical necessities of clothing and food to the needy (earthly concerns), Christians participate in the heavenly benefits of Christ in the Eucharist – 'their treasure is in heaven.' Therefore, the command *Sursum Corda* may have functioned in third century North Africa also as a means of promoting almsgiving and care for the poor at the Eucharist liturgy. With our third century observations complete, we will turn our attention towards the East, after the Edict of Milan, and explore the meaning of *Ἄνω τὰς καρδίας* in the mystagogical catechesis of Cyril of Jerusalem.

## Chapter 5

### Cyril of Jerusalem – *Sursum Corda* and Earthly Affairs

#### Introduction

Cyril of Jerusalem's (313-386 A.D.) reference to the *Sursum Corda* is found within a new genre of catechism, the *Mystagogical Catechesis*.<sup>401</sup> A possible purpose for this type of writing, both to the Alexandrian and Antiochene Fathers<sup>402</sup>, was to explain to the catechumens the oral or written explanation of the mystery hidden in the Scriptures and celebrated in the Liturgy: a theology of the sacraments.<sup>403</sup> Mazza hypothesizes the rise of mystagogy at this point in history may be attributed to *Canon 46* of the Council of Laodicea.<sup>404</sup> He contends, 'The council in fact ordered that the baptized were to study the faith thoroughly and "give it back" (the *redditio* or recital of the creed) on Holy Thursday. Just as *Canon 48* of this council gave rise to the postbaptismal anointing, so *Canon 46* may have given rise to the idea of mystagogical instruction or catechesis.'<sup>405</sup> Mazza's theory, that by his own account is speculative, assumes a canon of a local council may have affected the whole practice of the fourth century Church. Moreover his conclusion that this is 'why so

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<sup>401</sup> According to Wainwright, 'All scholars accept the fact that Cyril wrote the Procat. and the Cat., but strong doubt has been expressed about the Myst. Cat.' The majority of the MSS attribute authorship to John, Cyril's successor. For an in depth study of manuscripts and textual concerns relating to the writings by or attributed to Cyril see Alexis James Duvall's work, *Cyril of Jerusalem, Mystagogue: The Authorship of the Mystagogic Catecheses* (Washington, Catholic University Press, 2001).

<sup>402</sup> The patristic church had two hermeneutical approaches to Scripture. Clement and Origen in Alexandria placed a greater priority on the spiritual understanding of the text, the (non-literal or allegorical). Third and fourth century Fathers in Antioch, an example being Theodore of Mopsuestia, advocated the importance of considering the literal meaning of scripture. These methods coalesced in the mystagogical writings as the historical accounts of the Passion of Christ and his resurrection, experienced in the liturgical assembly, were manifested by way of allegory ascribed to the ritual symbols and gesture in the Eucharistic celebration.

<sup>403</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 1-2. Mazza further argues that argues that Chrysostom uses the term *mystagogy* to describe Christian initiation in general and Theodore uses it in reference to the liturgical celebration.

<sup>404</sup> *Canon 46* reads 'They who are baptized must learn the faith [Creed] by heart, and recite it to the bishop, or to the presbyters, on the fifth day of the week.'

<sup>405</sup> Mazza, *Mystagogy: A Theology of a Liturgy in the Patristic Age*, p. X. Against Mazza, it can be argued that Canons rarely introduced new practices, they just prescribe what has been traditional.

many examples of mystagogical catechesis, very similar among themselves, came into being in such a short period of time' is problematic due to the fact there are not many of these types of catechisms.<sup>406</sup> The vast amount of information that we have from the fourth century, and it becomes evident that what we see in this period is the preservation of Christian literature, so much easier now, is after the end of persecution. Thus, the emergence of this type of catechism may not be something new. Instead, the Church's new place of prominence at this time ushered in a new era Christianity. The 'liturgical flowering', planted in the previous centuries, of this period resulted in new freedoms and challenges for the once persecuted religion. Liturgical worship moved from mainly domestic<sup>407</sup> settings to basilicas and reflected the civil magistracy: vestments, processions, lights, incense, etc.<sup>408</sup> In regards to our study, we need to seek to understand how Cyril employed the *Sursum Corda* in this new liturgical context and how it relates to certain aspects of baptism. To do so, in this Chapter we will systematically work our way through his *Mystical Catechesis* in order to develop the liturgical and theological setting in which the command is found in Chapter 5. Of special importance to our work is his positioning of the *Sursum Corda* immediately following the Kiss of Peace and the exhortation to, 'lay aside all earthly care' at this point in the Eucharistic celebration.

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<sup>406</sup> Ibid., p. XI.

<sup>407</sup> This is not to say that Christians did not build buildings or gather freely before the Edict of Milan. Eusebius describes life for the Christians in the third century during a period after persecution under the Roman emperor Decius: 'But how can anyone describe those vast assemblies, and the multitudes that crowded together in every city, and the famous gatherings in the houses of prayer; on whose account, not being satisfied with the ancient buildings, they erected from the foundation large churches in all the cities. (Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* 8.1.5) as found in J. Baldwin, 'The Empire Baptized' as found in *The Oxford History of Christian Worship*, eds. G Wainwright and K. Tucker (Oxford, OUP, 2006), pp. 77.

<sup>408</sup> For background studies as they relate to our study see P. Bradshaw, *Eucharistic Origins*, pp. 139-157.

## Catechesis in Fourth Century Jerusalem

As the catechetical process transitioned during the fourth century, the Holy Lands, especially Jerusalem, where the passion of Christ unfolded, became a favored place for pilgrimages.<sup>409</sup> One nun, Egeria, who made a spiritual journey to Jerusalem in the late fourth century, recorded what she experienced in the city.<sup>410</sup> Her detailed account provides insight into the liturgical life of the Church in Jerusalem and the catechumenate during the time of Cyril. After describing the daily liturgical cycles and events that take place during Lent, Egeria records the story of the catechumens as they make their journey into the Church.<sup>411</sup> She describes the instruction of those preparing to be baptized in a section of her correspondence entitled, ‘The Inscribing of the Competents.’ This period covered eight weeks and included the teaching of adults and children. Important to our study is Egeria’s inclusion of the bishop’s questions pertaining to the moral character of the candidate. She writes:

Then the bishop asks the neighbours of every one who has entered concerning each individual, saying: "Does this person lead a good life, is he obedient to his parents, is he not given to wine, nor deceitful?" making also inquiry about the several vices which are more serious in man. And if he has proved him in the presence of witnesses to be blameless in all these matters concerning which he has made inquiry, he writes down his name with his own hand. But if he is accused in any matter, he orders him to go out, saying: "Let him amend, and when he has amended then let him come to the font." And as he makes inquiry concerning the men, so also does he concerning the women. But if any be a stranger, he comes not so easily to Baptism, unless he has testimonials from those who know him.<sup>412</sup>

Thus, we see, during this time of mass conversion, that the bishop was concerned with the character of the person preparing for entrance into the Church. Beyond the

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<sup>409</sup> M.L. McClure and C. L. Feltoe, ed. and trans., *The Pilgrimage of Etheria* (London, Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1919), pp. 90-93.

<sup>410</sup> For a critical review of Egeria’s account, see H. Silvan’s essay, ‘Holy Land Pilgrimages and Western Audiences: Some Reflections on Egeria and Her Circle in *The Classical Quarterly*, New Series, Vol. 38, No. 2 (1988), pp. 528-535.

<sup>411</sup> Cyril’s catechetical outline follows that of the Didache or ‘The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles’ – the earliest known example of Christian catechism. However, the description of the Eucharist is more ritualistic, ceremonial and mystical.

<sup>412</sup> McClure, *The Pilgrimage of Etheria*, p. 90.

obvious spiritual considerations, there was also the need to protect that gathered from those seeking entrance into the community for less desirable reasons or alternative motives. Following the period of interrogation, the *competents*, men, women and children, together engage in a 40 day period of catechizing that begins with an exorcism by the clergy.

After the fifth week, they are taught the Creed, which includes teaching from the Scripture, and other theological tenants pertaining to the death and resurrection of Christ. And, according to the Egeria's account, this takes place until the end of the seventh week. The nun records the words of the bishop to those preparing for the sacrament of entrance:

But the teachings of the deeper mystery, that is, of Baptism itself, you cannot hear, being as yet catechumens. But, lest you should think that anything is done without good reason, these, when you have been baptised in the Name of God, you shall hear in the Anastasis, during the eight Paschal days, after the dismissal from the church has been made. You, being as yet catechumens, cannot be told the more secret mysteries of God."

We see in the words of the bishop that the mystical teachings are not done until after the rite has been administered. Moreover, it seems as if baptism is the primary mystery by which all others can be understood. The 'secrets' are explained to the newly baptized in what Egeria refers to as the 'Mystic Catechizings.' Cyril, using the holy site where the resurrection took place as his stage, reveals the theological significance of the sacrament. The nun explains the teaching that takes place in the Anastasis:

But when the days of Easter have come, during those eight days, that is, from Easter to the Octave, when the dismissal from the church has been made, they go with hymns to the Anastasis. Prayer is said, the faithful are blessed, and the bishop stands, leaning against the inner rails which are in the cave of the Anastasis, and explains all things that are done in Baptism. In that hour no catechumen approaches the Anastasis, but only the neophytes and the faithful, who wish to hear concerning the mysteries, enter there, and the doors are shut lest any catechumen should draw near. And while the bishop discusses and sets forth each point, the voices of those who applaud are so

loud that they can be heard outside the church. And truly the mysteries are so unfolded that there is no one unmoved at the things that he hears to be so explained.<sup>413</sup>

Egeria's extended account affords us a 'lay' view of what is taking place. Her reference to the outburst of the crowds reveals the oratory skills of Cyril. His instruction takes on a more intense dynamic as the gathered contemplate visually and spiritually where the biblical account of Holy Week unfolded. The connection between the physical locations where Christ's Passion unfolded to the bishop's teaching on the Eucharist may represent how the liturgy moved from a celebration of thanksgiving to a reenactment of the death, burial and resurrection of Christ among the Antiochian Fathers. However, Egeria seems to be more intrigued by the vigor and excitement of the catechumens than the actual theological content of the lectures given by the presiding bishop of her day. Moreover, these times of mystical catechism are attended by the newly converted and the faithful. Therefore, if Cyril's audience is a mixture of the old and new, his comments may be directed at both – meaning, we need to understand his exhortations are not limited in scope to just the newly baptized. He is speaking to those who will experience the liturgy and those who already have done so. Thus, his teachings have pastoral and liturgical implications for the general Eucharistic assembly. In the following, we will move from Egeria's lay observation to the theological content of the mystical lectures as presented by Cyril.

### **Catechetical Overview**

Cyril's of Jerusalem's baptismal sermons can be divided into three categories or stages: First, *Procatechesis* (the sermon preached to those newly enrolled for

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<sup>413</sup> Translation taken from M.L. McClure and C. L. Feltoe, ed. and trans. (London, Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, The Macmillan Co., 1919), pp. 90-93.

baptism); Second, the *Eighteen Catechesis* which instructed the baptismal candidates in the fundamentals of the Christian faith. These lectures were delivered, as noted previously, in the Church of the Resurrection (Anastasis) – the great Basilica constructed on the site of the Holy Sepulcher by Constantine in 335. The Third stage of catechism, the *Mystagogic Catechesis*, is a series of five lectures that took place after the rite of baptism on Easter day. Cyril describes the location and the content in *Lecture 18. 33*:

And after Easter's Holy Day of salvation, ye shall come on each successive day, beginning from the second day of the week, after the assembly into the Holy Place of the Resurrection<sup>414</sup>, and there, if God permit, ye shall hear other Lectures; in which ye shall again be taught the reasons of every thing which has been done, and shall receive the proofs thereof from the Old and New Testaments, - first, of the things done just before Baptism, - next, how ye were cleansed from your sins by the Lord, by the washing of the water of the word, - and how like Priests have become partakers of the Name of Christ, - and how the Seal of the fellowship of the Holy Ghost was given to you, - and concerning the mysteries at the Altar of the New Testament, which have taken their beginning from this place, both what the Divine Scriptures have delivered to us, and what is the power of these mysteries, and how ye must approach them, and when and how to receive them; - and at the end of all, how for the time to come ye must behave yourselves worthily of this grace both in words and deeds, that you may all be enabled to enjoy the life everlasting. And these things shall be spoken, if it be God's pleasure.<sup>415</sup>

For Cyril, the ritual and power found within the rites of baptism, chrismation and the Eucharist are confirmed in the texts of the Divine Scriptures. But the bishop is not only concerned with educating new Christians on doctrinal topics. He is also concerned with how they will approach and perceive the Eucharistic gifts as well as how they will act during their time of preparation for the Eucharist. From the beginning of their catechism until their final preparation for Communion, the bishop reiterates the theme of worthiness to his audience. This raises the question: 'Where there ongoing pastoral problems within the assembly regarding the perception of the

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<sup>414</sup> The place referred to is the small chapel, Anastasis, which contained the Holy Sepulcher.

<sup>415</sup> Translation taken from *ANF* Book 7, p. 142.

Eucharist and the behavior of the people that he is trying to address within the context of his catechism as a means of prevention?’ The *Mystagogic Catechesis* explained the sacramental reality of the mysteries and simultaneously addressed the issue of sensory problems that the new converts may struggle with after their ritual experience. The teaching lessons describe in detail the practical and theological implications of the rites the new Christians just underwent.<sup>416</sup> The first of these is *Lecture 1 (On the Rites Before Baptism)*.<sup>417</sup> It is to this Lecture we will now turn our attention in order to establish a contextual and sacramental foundation for our exploration of the *Sursum Corda*.

### **Renunciation of the Devil after Baptism**

On the first day after their entrance into the Church, Cyril begins his lecture. As is his custom in the catechesis, he references a scripture passage at the beginning of his lesson that functions as an outline or thesis for the teaching session that day. The first instruction on baptism is under the biblical texts of 1 Peter 5. 18-14, ‘Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the devil walks about like roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour, etc.’ The newly baptized, only a short time earlier, had renounced the devil (Satan). Now, Cyril desires to instruct them in the meaning of the ritual act. The bishop informs the newly illumined that he wanted to dialogue with them about the mysteries previously,

but knowing well that seeing is far more persuasive than hearing, I waited till

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<sup>416</sup> The five sermons that make up the *Mystagogic Catechesis* include: *Lecture 19* or 1 is entitled ‘To the Newly Baptized,’ *Lecture 20* or 2 is entitled ‘Of Baptism,’ *Lecture 21* or 3 entitled ‘On Chrism,’ *Lecture 22* or 4, ‘On the Body and Blood of Christ,’ and *Lecture 23* or 5, ‘On the Sacred Liturgy and Communion.’

<sup>417</sup> T. Finn writes: ‘As the reader will quickly learn, the theology of the early Christians was the result of symbols deeply lived. The primacy of experience is further underscored by the fact that instruction on the baptismal rites was delayed until after baptism, given usually during the Easter season. Conditioned by ancient mystery cult practice, the Church felt that the intimate meaning of the ritual drama should be spread before and understood by the initiated. See his work, Thomas Finn, *Early Christian Baptism and the Catechumenate* (vol. 6) Gen. Ed. Thomas Halton (Collegeville, The Liturgical Press, 1992), p. 5.

this season; that finding you more open to the influence of my words from this your experience, that I might take and lead you to the brighter and more fragrant meadow of this present paradise; especially as you have been made fit to receive the more sacred Mysteries, having been counted worthy of divine and life-giving Baptism.<sup>418</sup>

We can determine from Cyril's comments that he believed the rite of initiation to be visibly and spiritually enlightening. Moreover, it can be argued, and we will revisit Cyril's use of dramatic language later in the next section of this chapter, that he is hoping that the elaborate ritual within the context of the Holy City may assist in opening the minds of the newly baptized to grasp the spiritual reality of what took place. In his words, 'let us now teach you exactly about these things, that ye may know the deep meaning to you-ward of what was done on that evening of your baptism.'<sup>419</sup> Following, the bishop discusses what took place during the renunciations of Satan and all his works. These things transpired as the catechumens were standing and facing 'West,' the region of the 'dark and gloomy potentate.'<sup>420</sup> Previously in *Lecture 1*, at the rite of renunciation, there was a transition from the devil to Christ, a breaking of the covenant with him and hell and a turning from West to East. However, it was the responsibility of the newly baptized to remain guarded and sober as the devil continued to seek to ensnare them and, in turn, defile their baptismal garments.<sup>421</sup>

### **Baptism and the Triumph over the Devil**

The following day, after his discussion on the renunciation of Satan, Cyril begins *Lecture II* - 'On the Rites of Baptism.' The passage of scripture he selects to

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<sup>418</sup> Text and translation of Cyril's work, *Lectures on the Christian Sacraments*, is taken from F.L. Cross. See *Lectures on the Christian Sacraments* (Crestwood, SVS Press, 1977), p. 53.

<sup>419</sup> *Myst. Cat.* I.1

<sup>420</sup> The renunciations include Satan himself, 'And All They Works', 'And All His Pomp', and 'And All Thy Service'. Cyril lists some the activities of the evil one: 'madness of shows, and horse races, and hunting' are considered vanity and 'pomp of the Devil.'

<sup>421</sup> *Lecture I*: 9-10. Cyprian's comments are similar to Cyprian's. See Chapter 4 of our study for a comparison.

describe the contents of his thoughts is Romans 6. 3-14, 'Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death...for you are not under the law but grace.' Jeanes notes Cyril's reference to this passage represents a theological shift in the meaning of baptism, 'In recent decades liturgists have been exploring how baptismal rites before the fourth century talked about regeneration, after the pattern of John 3:5, more than about dying with and rising with Christ in the words of Paul in Romans 6:3ff. The shift in emphasis from the one understanding of baptism to the other was probably general throughout East and West.....'<sup>422</sup> If this is the case, then it may have impacted Cyril's liturgical theology as well. Before we explore this question, we need to continue our study on the bishop's rite of entrance. Cyril's description of the baptismal ritual is as follows:

2. As soon, therefore, as ye entered in, ye put off your garment; and this was an image of putting of the old man with his deeds. Having stripped yourselves, ye were naked; in this also imitating Christ, who hung naked on the Cross, and by His nakedness spoiled principalities and powers, and openly triumphed over them on the tree. For since the powers of the enemy made their lair in your members, ye may no longer wear that old vestment; I do not at all mean this visible one, but that old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts. May no soul which has once put him off, again put him on, but say with the Spouse of Christ in the Song of Songs, I have put off my coat, how shall I put it on? O wondrous thing! ye were naked in the sight of all, and were not ashamed; for truly ye bore the likeness of the first-formed Adam, who was naked in the garden, and was not ashamed.<sup>423</sup>

We see in Cyril's comments that the catechumen imitates Christ in that he is stripped naked. Then, entering into the waters, he enters into death whereby the forces of evil are defeated. Furthermore, the body that once was the lair for the enemy and contaminated by deceitful lust is transformed 'into a new coat.' Finn believes Cyril's understanding of the sacrament whereby 'the recipient of baptism, through the enactment of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection in the baptismal rite and

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<sup>422</sup> Gordon Jeanes, 'Baptism Portrayed as Martyrdom in the Early Church,' SL 23 (1993), pp. 158-176.

<sup>423</sup> Cyril, Lecture 2.2 – p. 59-60.

symbol, participates in the redemption that these events have accomplished' was first introduced by Origin.<sup>424</sup> But the bishop's theology of baptism seems to be unique.

In his description of the rite, Cyril moves from Rom. 6:3-14, 'dying with Christ' to Col. 2:15 'spoiling principalities and powers...' Jeanes argues the reason for this is the bishop opposes what he refers to as the classical view of baptism at this time – 'the rite only confers remission of sin and adoption.'<sup>425</sup> Instead, Cyril exhorts his hearers '6. Let no one then oppose that Baptism is merely the grace of remission of sins, or further, that of adoption; as John's baptism bestowed only the remission of sins. Nay we know full well, that as it purges our sins, and conveys to us the gift of the Holy Ghost, so also it is the counterpart of Christ's sufferings.'<sup>426</sup> While Christ truly suffered, the baptized participate 'only in the likeness of death and sufferings, whereas of salvation, not the likeness but the reality.'<sup>427</sup> We see in the bishop's comments that the theology of baptism is expanded. It now encompasses regeneration as well as symbolic participation in the passion of Christ. In dying and rising with Christ, the evil one and his forces are defeated and the baptized is empowered by the Holy Spirit to live the Christian life. However, the spiritual battle within the heart of the newly illumined continues.

### **Holy Chrism – Standing Against the Devil**

Cyril's *Mystagogical Catechesis* III discusses anointing with Holy Chrism. The newly baptized is anointed on their forehead, ears, nostrils and breast so that they 'put on the whole armor of the Holy Ghost' in order to stand against the power

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<sup>424</sup> Finn references Origin's comments 'those who have been taken up into Christ by baptism have been taken up into his death and buried with him, and will rise with him' (ch. 3, Homilies on Exodus 5:2).' See Finn, *Earl Christian Baptism and the Catechumenate*, p. 9.

<sup>425</sup> Jeanes, *Baptism*, p. 167.

<sup>426</sup> Cyril, Lecture 2.6 – p. 62.

<sup>427</sup> Cyril, Lecture 2.7 – pp. 62-63. It must be noted that Cyril does speak of the newly baptized as 'rising with Christ' in baptism. However, this is not the emphasis.

of the enemy, and vanquish it.<sup>428</sup> Again, we see the warnings and exhortations to battle the external forces of evil. However, Cyril stresses the need for the one receiving Holy Unction to realize the spiritual reality of it:

3. But beware of supposing this to be plain ointment. For as the Bread of the Eucharist, after the invocation of the Holy Ghost, is mere bread no longer, but the Body of Christ, so also this Holy Ointment is no more simple ointment, nor (so to say) common, after the invocation, but the gift of Christ; and by the presence of His Godhead, it causes in us the Holy Ghost.<sup>429</sup>

The bishop is aware that to see common oil as a symbol of the Divine activity and presence is counter intuitive to the senses. Therefore, he appeals to the *epiclesis* in the Eucharistic Prayer as an example of the power of the Holy Spirit to transform the mere elements into mysteries. He concludes, ‘Having been anointed, therefore, with this holy ointment, keep it unspotted and unblemished in you, pressing forward by good works, and becoming well-pleasing to the Captain of your salvation, Christ Jesus, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.’<sup>430</sup> With the new Christians enlightened by the teaching of the Bishop and warned about the constant threat of the evil one, Cyril turns his attention to the Eucharist. However, he is aware that the converts will need to realize in their hearts the efficacy of their baptism in order to truly see and comprehend the Eucharistic celebration as he wants them to experience it.

### **The Eucharist - Seeing is Believing is Seeing**

*Lectures 4 (On the Body and Blood of Christ) and 5 (On the Sacred Liturgy and Communion)* are of special importance to our study. The fourth and fifth lectures deal specifically with the Eucharist. These lectures present us with the first evidence of fourth century Eucharistic piety and devotion. Also, they reveal several characteristics that are significantly different from what was written in preceding

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<sup>428</sup> Cyril, *Lecture III.4*, pp. 65-66.

<sup>429</sup> Cyril, *Lecture III.3*, p.65.

<sup>430</sup> Cyril, *Lecture III. 7*, p. 65.

centuries.<sup>431</sup> Wybrew comments on this transition, ‘From Cyril’s description of the rite in the mid-fourth-century Jerusalem it emerges that the Eucharist was quite definitely regarded as a sacrifice. But it was less a sacrifice of thanksgiving than one of propitiation.’<sup>432</sup> This shift in emphasis is reflected in the new ritual interpretation of the Celebration and in the way sacramental realism is defined. Mazza summarizes this new hermeneutic as follows:

(a) A typological interpretation of the Eucharist is the principal basis on which the entire theology of the rite is built, with the help especially of the biblical figures that are applied to the Christian celebration; the method for using these figures is based on platonic dialectic. (b) Alongside this first method of interpretation, which I wish to call traditional, there is another, a new one, wholly devoted to expounding sacramental realism; it ends up with a naïve and physicist realism: Jesus is incarnated once again, but this time in the bread and wine; in practice, the bread and wine are new, physical manifestations of the incarnation of Christ. That is what I mean when I speak of a naïve and physicist realism.<sup>433</sup>

The result of this new approach set forth in the mystagogical homilies is a new set of pastoral challenges. Namely, the celebration of the Eucharist, while on earth, needs to be seen as heavenly; and bread and wine need to be viewed as Body and Blood. In turn, the mind has to move beyond the physical senses to the supernatural realities they represent – believing results in seeing.

G. Frank argues that many catechumens entered into the mysteries only to be disappointed by the lack of the supernatural, i.e., water in baptism was simply water, the bread and wine of the Eucharist appeared to only be bread and wine, etc.<sup>434</sup> This ‘sensory confusion’ led Cyril and others (John Chrysostom, Theodore of Mopsuestia and Ambrose) to tutor new Christians in ways to ‘re-perceive’ the Eucharistic rite.<sup>435</sup>

Frank, comparing Ambrose to his Eastern contemporaries, writes:

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<sup>431</sup> Hugh Wybrew, *The Orthodox Liturgy* (Crestwood, SVS Press, 1990), p. 33.

<sup>432</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 34.

<sup>433</sup> Mazza, *Eucharist*, p. 147.

<sup>434</sup> Georgia Frank, “Taste and See” – ‘The Eucharist and the eyes of faith in the fourth century.’ *CH*, Vol. 7, No. 4. (Dec. 2001), p. 622.

<sup>435</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 620-621.

Like Ambrose, they confronted head-on whatever nagging facts the “eyes of the body” reported and called on neophytes to use another faculty of sight, that of the soul. What Ambrose called the “eyes of the heart” corresponded to what these Greek-speaking teachers called “eyes of faith” or “spiritual eyes.”<sup>436</sup>

Frank continues by explaining that ‘new experiences demanded new eyes.’<sup>437</sup> This type of sight was acquired by catechetical instruction whereby the evidence of the physical senses were reframed in mental images and visual processes. As the liturgy was enacted before them, they were taught to ‘look’ at what was taking place with awe. Moreover, Cyril himself sees the need for the eyes to be opened to the spiritual realities present in the Eucharist (V.21-22). This is accomplished by physical contact with the Body and Blood of Christ, ‘So then after having carefully hallowed thy eyes by the touch of the Holy Body, partake of it..hallow thyself by partaking also of the Blood of Christ. And while the moisture is still upon they lips, touch it with thine hands, and hallow thine eyes and brow and the other organs of sense.’<sup>438</sup> In these texts the bishop is instructing his converts to take the consecrated bread, the Body and Blood of Christ, and touch their eyes with it. The bishop seems to think, or hope, the power of the ritual imagery and action coupled with the verbal description of the rite will assist the baptized in comprehending the sacramental presence before them. This multi-sensory approach is to help persuade the mind away from any doubt or confusion brought about by the taste of the bread and wine. Thus, Cyril exhorts his listeners, ‘Trust not the judgment to the bodily palate; no, but to faith unfaltering; for they who taste are bidden to taste, not bread and wine, but the antitypical Body and Blood of Christ.’ (5.20).<sup>439</sup> In light of this, Cyril’s lecture *On the Mysteries* 4 seems to be a preemptive measure against any type of negative reaction the newly

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<sup>436</sup> Ibid, p. 621.

<sup>437</sup> Ibid, p. 621.

<sup>438</sup> *NPNF*, Book 7, p. 156.

<sup>439</sup> *NF*, Book 7, p. 156.

illuminated may encounter. If those gathered do not perceive the Eucharist as set forth by the bishop then this may result in unwanted attitudes and actions within the assembly.

Discussing the Body and Blood of Christ, in 5.1 the bishop stresses the need to take scripture as proof enough for the change of bread and wine into the sacrament:

Since He Himself (speaking of Christ) declared and said of the Bread, This is my Body, who shall dare to doubt any longer? And since He has Himself affirmed and said, This is my Blood, who shall ever hesitate, saying, that it is not His blood?<sup>440</sup>

Again, Cyril seems concerned about how the converts will reconcile what they see with what they hear and taste. In order to develop this new mystical paradigm by which to view and comprehend the Eucharist, Cyril teaches, again, the newly baptized that the same power of the Holy Ghost that transforms the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ transforms their senses (4.6):

But beware of supposing this to be plain ointment. For as the Bread of the Eucharist, after the invocation of the Holy Ghost, is mere bread longer, but the Body of Christ, so also this holy ointment is no more simple ointment, nor (so to say) common, after invocation, but it is Christ's gift of grace, and, by the advent of the Holy Ghost, is made fit to impart His Divine Nature. Which ointment is symbolically applied to the forehead and the other senses<sup>441</sup>; and while they body is anointed with the visible ointment, thy soul is sanctified by the Holy and life-giving Spirit.<sup>442</sup>

According to the bishop, the power of the Holy Spirit is what persuades the physical senses to comprehend the Eucharistic reality. In Cyril's list of body parts that are anointed, the eyes are not included. He believed that it took faith for one to see and taste the Body and Blood of Christ, 'for even though sense suggests this to thee, yet

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<sup>440</sup> *NF*, Book 7, p. 150.

<sup>441</sup> In 21.4 Cyril describes the anointing as taking place on the forehead in order that the shame of Adam may be removed, next the ears in order to hear the Divine Mysteries, then the nostrils so as to be a sweet fragrance to God of Christ, afterwards the breast so as to stand with the breastplate of righteousness against the Devil.

<sup>442</sup> *NF*, Book 7, p. 150.

let faith establish thee. Judge not the matter from the taste, but from faith be fully assured without misgiving, that the Body and Blood of Christ have been vouchsafed to thee.<sup>443</sup> Cyril concludes his lecture on the ‘On the Body and Blood of Christ’ by, again, confirming and assuring his newly baptized that what they are experiencing is a sacramental reality (4.9), ‘Having learnt these things, and been fully assured that the seeming bread is not bread, though sensible to the taste, but the Body of Christ; and that the seeming wine is not wine, though the taste will have it so, but the Blood of Christ...’<sup>444</sup> Now that the bishop has instructed the newly baptized on the presence of the Body and Blood of Christ in the Eucharist, he turns his attention to the final lecture that will ‘set the crown on the spiritual building for your (the newly baptized) edification.’<sup>445</sup>

### **Cyril and the Meaning of the Command *Ἄνω τὰς καρδίας***

*Lecture 5* contains Cyril’s description and meaning of the *Sursum Corda*. As noted previously, Cyril begins each lecture with a scriptural reference that serves as his thesis for that day. The one selected for his last discourse ‘On the Sacred Liturgy and Communion’ is 1 Peter 2:1(a) which reads, ‘Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy and all evil speaking...’ A further reading of the entire passage helps us to see that the author of the epistle, like Cyril, was writing to new converts, ‘as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby, if indeed you have tasted the Lord’s goodness.’ The bishop’s choice of this passage for the context of his discussion and explanation of the liturgical setting is thematically consistent with what we discovered thus far in our study. Therefore, we can conclude that *Lecture V* is delivered by Cyril with the objective of creating not

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<sup>443</sup> *NPNF*, Book 7, p. 150.

<sup>444</sup> *NPNF*, Book 7, p. 152.

<sup>445</sup> *NPNF*, Book 7, p. 153.

only the proper mindset in the liturgy but also the proper behavior. With the immediate context considered, we will now turn our attention to Cyril's twofold meaning of the *Sursum Corda*.

### ***Sursum Corda* and the Kiss of Peace?**

In 5.2 and 3 Cyril describes what takes place immediately before the *Sursum Corda*. After the priest washes his hands as a representation of his innocence before the Lord, the deacon admonishes the people to greet each other with a holy kiss.<sup>446</sup>

This kiss, according to Cyril, is not like one exchanged by common friends.<sup>447</sup>

Petkov, in his discussion on the development of the ritual themes associated with the kiss, writes:

In Cyprian of Carthage and even more so in Cyril of Jerusalem, the kiss's implications of peace and reconciliation gained added momentum and strengthened its sacramentality. Cyril added another touch for future exegetes by stating that the kiss was a 'commingling of souls.' The kiss, he postulated, "is a sign of a true union of hearts, banishing every grudge...[the kiss is] a reconciliation and therefore holy." From such beginnings the kiss expanded to cover man-to-man reconciliation in preparation for participation in the sacramental mysteries of worship.<sup>448</sup>

In this act of love is also the underlying notion of forgiveness, the proper disposition of the heart. In Cyril's words, 'banish all remembrance of wrongs....The kiss therefore is reconciliation, and for this reason holy: as the blessed Paul somewhere

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<sup>446</sup> The bible records the liturgical kiss in Rom. 16:16, 1 Cor. 16:20, 2 Cor. 13:12 and 1 Th. 5:26. In the early Church, Justin refers to it in *Apology* 65.2 and Tertullian in *De Oratione* 18. For further study, see also J. Baldwin's work, *Liturgy in Ancient Jerusalem*, Alcuin/GROW Liturgical Study 9 (Nottingham, Grove Books, 1989).

<sup>447</sup> Cyril explains the ritual function of the kiss, 'It is not such: this kiss blends souls one with another, and solicits for them entire forgiveness. Therefore this kiss is the sign that our souls are mingled together, and we have all banished all remembrance of wrongs. For this is cause Christ said, If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee; Leave there thy gift upon the altar, and go thy way; First be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift (Matthew 5.23). The kiss therefore is reconciliation, and for this reason holy...' Translation taken from F. Cross, *Lectures*, p. 72.

<sup>448</sup> Kiril Petkov, *The Kiss of Peace: Ritual, Self, and Society in the High and Late Medieval West* (Leiden, Brill, 2003), p. 14.

cried saying, *Greet ye one another with a holy kiss*<sup>449</sup>; and Peter, *with a kiss of charity* (1 Peter 3:15)..<sup>450</sup> But this kiss, like any other, can create earthly problems.

This was the case for Clement of Alexandria more than a century earlier:

If we are called to the kingdom of God, let us act in a way worthy of the kingdom, loving God and our neighbor. But love is shown not by a kiss, but by kindness. However, there are those who make the church assemblies resound with their kissing but do not have love itself within them. And furthermore, this unrestrained use of the kiss gives rise to foul suspicions and calumnies, [the kiss] which ought to be something mystic – the apostle calls the kiss “holy” – dispensing the goodwill of the soul by a chaste and closed mouth, by which, rather, refined manners are expressed. For there is another kiss, impure, full of poison, counterfeiting sanctity. Do you not know that...often kisses inject the poison of licentiousness? It is then very clear to us that a kiss is not love. “For the love meant is the love of God” (1 Jn 4:7). “And this is the love of God,” says John, “that we keep His commandments” (1 Jn 5:3-4), not that we caress each other on the mouth.<sup>451</sup>

Clement identifies multiple concerns in regards to the kiss of peace. The first is the ritual was full of hypocrisy, not love. Next, it seems from his writing that some of the congregants may have been opening their mouths during the exchange when they should have remained closed. Consequently, this was leading to hearsay and speculation and even licentiousness. The result of this behavior is a separation of the sexes at the kiss. This pastoral remedy is first witnessed in the *Apostolic Constitutions* - a Syrian document that is dated to the late fourth century that may have originated during the controversy with the Arian, Eunomius (360-380).<sup>452</sup> Thus, it is possibly a text that is contemporary with Cyril’s *Lectures*.

In *Apostolic Constitutions* (375 to 380 A.D.) *Book VIII* 2.6-7 during the Kiss of Peace, the deacons act as those who maintain order and dignity in the service:

And let the bishop salute the church, and say, The Peace of God be with all of you all. And let the people answer, and with thy spirit; and the let the deacon say to all, Salute ye one another with the holy kiss. And let the clergy

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<sup>449</sup> 1 Corinthians 16:20.

<sup>450</sup> *NPNF*, Vol. 8, p. 153.

<sup>451</sup> Clement of Alexandria (ca. 150-d. before 215, *Pedagogue* III, 11 (81.2-82.1), as found in Taft, *Through Their Own Eyes*, pp. 91-92.

<sup>452</sup> Jasper and Cummings, *Prayers*, p. 100.

salute the men, the women the women. And let the children stand at the reading-desk; and let another deacon stand by them, that they may not be disorderly. And let the other deacons walk about and watch the men and the women, that no tumult may be made, and that no one nod, or whisper, or slumber; and the let the deacons stand at the doors of the men, and the sub-deacons at those of the women, that no one go out, nor a door be opened, although it be for one of the faithful, at the time of the oblation. But let one of the sub-deacons bring water to wash hands of the priests, which is a symbol of the purity of the souls that are devoted to God.<sup>453</sup>

In the aforementioned, at least five members of the clergy were needed to ensure crowd control during the ritual act. Afterwards, one of the deacons dismisses the catechumens, hearers, unbelievers and the heterodox. Then he turns his attention to the members and exhorts the mothers to receive their children, all to be a peace with one another and for no one to come in hypocrisy.<sup>454</sup> Reminding those gathered of the sacred nature of what is about to take place, he exhorts them to ‘stand upright with fear and trembling.’<sup>455</sup> What follows is the introductory dialogue of the Eucharistic prayer.<sup>456</sup>

Cyril’s placement of the *Sursum Corda* in his *Lecture* directly follows or possibly interrupts the kiss of peace.<sup>457</sup> Bouman assumes the bishop did not include the salutation, ‘because he was used to the shorter formula with which the neophytes were already familiar, so that it needed no further explanation.’<sup>458</sup> Taft, however, points out that this is an argument from silence.<sup>459</sup> Cyril’s language describing the order of events seems to be chronological either beginning with Εἶτα or ‘Μετὰ ταῦτα

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<sup>453</sup> ANF, Book 7, p. 486.

<sup>454</sup> Ibid, p. 486.

<sup>455</sup> Ibid, p. 486.

<sup>456</sup> In *Apostolic Constitutions* Book VIII, the Kiss of Peace is followed by the deacons admonition to stand with fear and trembling. The gifts are brought to the altar and the threefold grace and blessing is given by the one presiding – the *Sursum Corda* follows.

<sup>457</sup> *The Greek Liturgy of St. James* (the liturgy of Jerusalem) places the kiss of peace right after the reciting of the Creed. See Brightman, p. 43. W.E. Scudamore confirms this placement, ‘There was no salutation in the Liturgy of Jerusalem in St.Cyril’s time, for he makes the Exhortation, “Lift up your hearts” come immediately after the kiss of peace. It is not in the Canon of the Gelasian Sacramentary; but the later Gregorian has “The Lord be with you” which is probably borrowed from Milan.’ Found in his work, *Notitia Eucharistica* (London, Rivingtons, 1876), p. 522.

<sup>458</sup> Bouman, *Variants*, p. 99.

<sup>459</sup> Taft I, p. 308.

or τουτο. Arguably this signifies a systematic order.<sup>460</sup> Thus, beginning with the exhortation of the clergy:

3. Εἶτα βοᾷ ὁ διάκονος· “ἀλλήλους ἀπολάβετε καὶ ἀλλήλους ἀσπαζώμεθα.”

4. ‘Μετὰ τοῦτο βοᾷ ὁ ἱερεὺς· “Ἄνω τὰς καρδίας”.’

5. Εἶτα ὁ ἱερεὺς λέγει· “εὐχαριστήσωμεν τῷ κυρίῳ.”<sup>461</sup>

Therefore, the ritual kiss Cyril describes, like in the *Apostolic Constitutions*, is, arguably, subject to thoughts and actions he believed unbecoming in the Eucharistic gathering. The priest shouts (βοᾷ),<sup>462</sup> ‘Ἄνω τὰς καρδίας,’ which is identical in structure and meaning to the Latin command, *Sursum Corda*. As set forth in Chapter 1 of our work, it is forceful and not to be taken as a suggestion. Therefore, it is an immediate command intended to bring social and spiritual order to the congregation.

<sup>463</sup> This argument gains further credence when we take into consideration how the bishop, throughout his catechism, consistently addresses pastoral issues he does not want to encounter in the liturgy. Furthermore, it conveys the sacred nature of the liturgy at this fearful hour.<sup>464</sup> If the hearts and minds of the gathered are ‘on high’

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<sup>460</sup> Dix discusses Cyril’s systematic approach and use of language in *Shape*, pp. 196-197. Here he concludes Cyril is discussing the liturgical events as they take place. Also, K. Burreson, in his essay ‘The Anaphora of the Mystagogical Catecheses of Cyril of Jerusalem’ found in *Essays on Early Eastern Eucharistic Prayers*, pp. 113 – 134, references J. Fenwick’s work *The Anaphoras of St. Basil and St. James*, OCA 240 (Rome, Pontificium Institutum Orientale, 1992), p. 38 where he notes ‘that Cyril is not totally consistent in his uses of these terms, yet he concedes that Cyril’s terminology seems to indicate that he is commenting upon all the sections of the anaphora and not omitting any.’ Burreson also acknowledges that Dix was the first person to expound upon Cyril’s approach in *Shape*.

<sup>461</sup> Greek texts taken from F. Cross, *Lectures*, pp. 30-32. For a description of the various manuscripts his edition is derived from see the same work pp. xxxiv-xxxv.

<sup>462</sup> Bates comments, ‘Cyril of Jerusalem’s use of βοᾷ and δυνάμει would suggest that even by this time *Sursum corda* already had the character of a solemn and mysterious utterance. Βοᾷ like κράζω also is used very often to introduce patristic citations of scripture.’ As found in Bates, ‘*Sursum Corda: The Word of Command*’, p. 55. Lash connects δυνάμει with the enigmatic diaconal proclamation before the final repetition of the Trisagion in the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom. (Lash, *Sursum Corda*, n. 12) The impression is given that there is something very significant or special about the words that are being uttered.

<sup>463</sup> Taft compares Cyprian’s use with Cyril’s and concludes, ‘The lavabo is as sign of purity and freedom from (5, 2); the kiss of peace shows we have forgotten wrongs and been reconciled before making our offering in the spirit of Mt 5:23 (5,3).’ Taft II, p. 69. To this conclusion, we may add that the *Sursum Corda* also acts as a liturgical ‘call to order.’

<sup>464</sup> Ambrose, a contemporary of Cyril, in his *Letter to his Sister* 41 alludes to what may be common problems during the kiss of peace: ‘The Priest says the prayer of salutation: O Sovereign and

reflecting on the spiritual benefits of their baptism, then they are prepared to experience and receive the Eucharist, i.e. see and receive it as Cyril describes it. However, to remove oneself from the earth necessitates one laying aside the cares of this world.

### **Ἄνω τὰς καρδίας - Let us lay aside all earthly cares**

Following the Kiss of Peace, Cyril discusses the introductory dialogue of the Eucharistic prayer:

After this the Priest cries aloud, “Ἄνω τὰς καρδίας.” For truly ought we in that most awful<sup>465</sup> hour to have our heart on high with God, and not below, thinking of earth and earthly things.<sup>466</sup> In effect therefore the Priest bids all in that hour to dismiss all cares of this life, or household anxieties, and to have their heart in heaven with the merciful God.

The bishop refers to this liturgical time as that ‘most awful’ hour. This descriptive language has its genesis in the fourth century. The theological transition in the liturgy from a sacrifice of praise in the third century to a sacrificial victim in the fourth resulted in new terminology to describe and communicate what was taking place; and the proper disposition it should manifest. This is not to say that Cyril did not understand the rite to be truly ‘awe-full.’ But what he is trying to ensure is that others see the offering in like manner, i.e. they realize the spiritual reality of it even when the senses contradict what they see, hear and taste. For the bishop, Christ the

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Almighty Lord, look down from heaven on Thy Church, on all Thy people, and on all Thy flock. Save us all, Thy unworthy servants, the sheep of Thy fold. Give us Thy peace, Thy help, and Thy love, and send to us the gift of Thy Holy Spirit, that with a pure heart and a good conscience we may salute one another with an holy kiss, without hypocrisy, and with no hostile purpose, but guileless and pure in one spirit, in the bond of peace and love, one body and one spirit, in one faith, even as we have been called in one hope of our calling, that we may all meet in the divine and boundless love, in Christ Jesus our Lord, with whom Thou art blessed.’ (*ANF*, Vol. 7, p. 545).

<sup>465</sup> Regarding Cyril’s use of the word fear, Jasper and Cumming comment, ‘Another new concept is that of “fear,” which appears at the same places at the same time period. Only found in St. Mark (liturgy) in one very late addition, it occurs several times in St. James (liturgy), and permeates the sermons of John Chrysostom. It may have been evoked by the public nature of the services after the peace of the Church, but it has remained a constant and prominent feature of the Eastern liturgy.’ – *Prayers*, p. 83.

<sup>466</sup> Jasper and Cumming note that ‘Another new concept (in Cyril’s commentary on the liturgy) is that of “fear,” which appears at the same places at the same time period.’ See *Prayers*, p. 83.

King is present in the midst of the congregation in the Eucharistic elements. The gathered, his servants, when they approach [to receive], are instructed ‘do not come forth with your hands flatly stretched out, but make your left hand a throne of the right one to receive the King.’<sup>467</sup> This new emphasis on Christ as King may be a protective measure against the Arian heresy that asserted the Son of God was a subordinate creation to God the Father; or it may reflect the emerging influence on the court ceremonial that accompanied the reception of the king.<sup>468</sup> Moreover, if a faithful servant is to encounter the King and partake of his Body and Blood for spiritual and eternal benefits, then any earthly care at that time should be seen as less troublesome. In regards to our study, Cyril’s language and commentary is seminal for those that follow within the Antiochian sphere of influence - including Theodore of Mopsuestia and John Chrysostom.

In regards to the heart, Cyril stresses the importance on where it is to be, not on the act of lifting.<sup>469</sup> In other words, the baptized are not to try to lift their heart; instead, it is *to be* in heaven focused on Christ. To have the heart on high is not to think about earth and the earthly. This is now possible for the new and older converts because they entered into the earth with Christ in baptism and rose with him on the third day. The bishop describes this transformation in Lecture 2:3:

After these things, ye were led to the holy pool of Divine Baptism, as Christ was carried from the Cross to the Sepulchre which is before your eyes...ye made your saving confession...and descended three times in the water, and ascended again; here also covertly pointing by figure at the three-days burial of Christ. For as our Savior passed three days and three nights in the heart of the earth, so you also in your first ascent out of the water, represented the first day of Christ in the earth, and by your second descent, the night; for as he who is in the night, sees no more, but he who is in the day, remains in the

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<sup>467</sup> *Myst. Cat* 5:21.

<sup>468</sup> A. Mingana, ‘The Liturgical Mysticism of Theodore of Mopsuestia’, *JTS* (1943), pp. 431-439.

<sup>469</sup> This is in contrast to the later addition to the command - *σχωμεν* – as found in the Liturgy of St. James ‘*ανο σχωμεν τον νουν και τας καρδιας*’ and those of St. Basil and St. John ‘*ανο σχωμεν τας καρδιας*.’ See F.E. Brightman, *Eastern Liturgies* (Piscataway, Gorgias Press, 2004), pp. 50 and 321, respectively.

light, so in descending, ye saw nothing as in the night, but in ascending again, ye were as in the day. And at that moment, ye died and were born again; and the Water of salvation was once your grave and your mother...your birth went hand and hand with your death.<sup>470</sup>

The practical-spiritual result of the new birth is a new mindset. The concerns of those attending, during the kiss or at other times, are to be removed from the heart and mind. These are things of the earth. The *Sursum Corda* brings Cyril's theme of *Lecture 5* (1 Pet. 2.1) to a spiritual praxis, 'Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies and evil speakings...' <sup>471</sup> This is to 'abandon all worldly thoughts' and, we might add, social-liturgical problems as well.

Beyond the normal family and work struggles that are common at all times and to every people, J. Behr's comments regarding the living conditions in the early centuries of the Church may help us better understand what the bishop means when he references 'household cares' in relation to the *Sursum Corda*:

In the early centuries, the Christian communities were primarily located in the urban centres of the Empire. But far from being the ordered civilized places as their ruins suggest, the Greco-Roman cities were overcrowded nightmares. As Stark describes it, people would have 'lived in filth beyond our imagining... The smell of sweat, urine, faeces and decay permeated everything.'<sup>472</sup> They were rife with infectious diseases, such that most people would have suffered from chronic health conditions, and those that survived had a life expectancy of less than thirty years. Cities were subject to frequent fires, collapsing buildings and other disasters. To maintain their populations, the cities needed to be repopulated by newcomers more or less continually, leading to high rates of crime and frequent riots.<sup>473</sup>

The list of possible household concerns Behr provides is daunting. However, in the midst of these concerns, 'the Christian Church could provide a new basis for attachments and an extended sense of family.'<sup>474</sup> But this family is different in that it

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<sup>470</sup> Cyprian, *Lecture II.3*, pp. 60-61.

<sup>471</sup> *Ibid*, p. 71.

<sup>472</sup> See R. Stark, *The Rise of Christianity: A sociologists Reconsiders History* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1996), pp. 153-154.

<sup>473</sup> F. Young, L. Ayres and A. Louth (eds.) *Early Christian History*, 'Social and historical setting' by John Behr (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 62.

<sup>474</sup> *Ibid*, p. 62.

is mystically united to Christ in baptism by the Body and Blood of Christ in the Eucharist.<sup>475</sup> Thus, within the baptized community and before the Eucharistic Prayer, the troubles of the world are not to deter the Christian's heart from dwelling in heaven with Christ.

After hearing the summons of the liturgical command, *Ἄνω τὰς καρδίας*, during the Kiss of Peace or at its conclusion, the people respond to the shout of the priest:

Then ye answer, "We lift them up unto the Lord:" assenting to it, by your avowal. But let no one come here, who could say with his mouth, "We lift up our hearts unto the Lord," but in his thoughts have his mind concerned with the cares of this life. At all times, rather, God should be in our memory but if this is impossible by reason of human infirmity, in that hour above all this should be our earnest endeavour.<sup>476</sup>

Cyril warns those gathered not to assemble in a hypocritical manner. It is better for them to stay home than to spiritually contaminate the assembly. The bishop knows this type of attention and devotion, especially for the newly converted, is difficult. However, he desires them to be attentive in order to perceive and receive the mysteries before them. He instructs:

Then the Priest says, "Let us give thanks unto the Lord." For verily we are bound to give thanks, that He called us, unworthy as we were, to so great grace; that He reconciled us when we were His foes; that He vouch-safed to us the Spirit of adoption. Then ye say, "It is meet and right:" for in giving thanks we do a meet thing and a right; but He did not right, but more than right, in doing us good, and counting us meet for such great benefits.

In his concluding comments, Cyril reminds the gathered, once again, of the grace they received in baptism when they received the 'Spirit of adoption.' In turn, they need to be thankful for it. The people acknowledge this by their agreement, 'It is

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<sup>475</sup> Cyril, *Lecture 4.3*, p. 68.

<sup>476</sup> Translations taken from *NPNF*, Vol. 7, p. 154.

meet and right.<sup>477</sup> With their hearts in the right place, the faithful are prepared to participate in the worship of heaven.

### *Sursum Corda and the Sanctus*

It can also be argued that the Cyril employs the *Sursum Corda* as preparatory command before singing of the *Sanctus*. Now, with their hearts on high with God in heaven, the gathered prepare to join in the *Sanctus* with the hosts of the world above whereby they are sanctified by the spiritual Hymns. According to Spinks, the *Sanctus* apparently served as a way of ensuring the sanctity of the congregation before the anaphora.<sup>478</sup> Admitting his position may be putting too much weight on this Cyril's homiletic material, he explains, 'but it may imply that the singing of the *Sanctus* was necessary for the actual supplicatory part of the anaphora; the congregation made a 'spiritual ascent' and, having sanctified themselves, standing before God like the seraphim, they then asked for a true communion and the descent of the Spirit, and favors for the living and the dead.'<sup>479</sup> This suggest that Cyril understands the true mark of one's heart being on high with God is participation in the *Sanctus* and, therefore, the worship of heaven as experienced in the liturgy of the faithful. Thus, the *Sursum Corda* was the command that confirmed the spiritual ascent of the congregation and is liturgically and spiritually connected to the Thrice

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<sup>477</sup> In Cyril we once again encounter the *Sanctus* Lecture V.6. Mazz a comments, - 'Since the interpretive method connected with dramatization had the angelic liturgy as its object, the latter too has no place in Cyril, with the one exception of the commentary on the *sanctus*. Ever here, however, he says simply that the seraphim gave us this doxology and that when we recite it, we enter into communion with the heavenly hosts and are thereby sanctified. It can be said, therefore, that the theology of the angelic liturgy and its sanctifying role is fully present in Cyril's catechesis, even though he does not follow the typological method that interprets the earthly liturgy as *typos* of the angelic liturgy.' Taken from *Mystagogy*, p.154. However, the fact that, like in *Addai and Mari*, the angelic hymn becomes the chant of the church as well. Thus, there is arguably, as in *Addai and Mari*, some notion of spiritual ascent in Cyril's Eucharistic liturgy.

<sup>478</sup> K. Bureson, *Essays on Early Eastern Eucharistic Prayers*, p. 126. See also Dix's comments regarding Cyril's positioning of the *Sanctus* in *Shape*, p. 197. To date, there is no scholarly consensus regarding exactly what Cyril meant this statement.

<sup>479</sup> Spinks, *The Sanctus in the Eucharistic Prayer*, p. 64.

Holy Hymn. In summary, according to Cyril, the *Sursum Corda* is the command that interrupts the Kiss of Peace and calls the gathered to proper attitudes and actions; challenges the gathered servants of the King to remove any earthly concerns; and confirms the spiritual ascent of the Eucharistic community resulting in the singing of the *Sanctus*.

### **Conclusion**

Cyril of Jerusalem does more than introduce us to a new era of the Church. He also is, arguably, the first to engage his catechumens in a new form of catechism – *mystagogy*. For Cyril, the success of his method is dependent upon two things: 1.) his ability to make the new converts visualize what Christ actually experienced in the newly discovered and restored holy places in the city of Jerusalem (where Christ, walked, died and was buried and resurrected); and 2.) The training of the senses to perceive in the earthly ritual signs and symbols the heavenly reality of the Eucharist. By doing so, the gathered would not only see the sacrament as the bishop wanted them to see it but they would also act as he wanted them to act. In the midst of this expanding view of the Eucharist is a new way, for us in our study, to understand the meaning of the *Sursum Corda* – at least in the way Cyril ascribes meaning to it. In his outline of the liturgy, he places the command directly after the Kiss of Peace. We learned that this ritual act was problematic in other times and in other places. It seemed to manifest social problems among the people or possibly distract them from the focus of the liturgical gathering. The mystical shout by the priest, ‘Ἄνω τὰς καρδίᾱς’ interrupted any unwanted mindsets or behavior. The command challenged the faithful to redirect their devotion to the risen Lord. Now, with the heart dwelling on heavenly things, things realized in their baptisms, the cares of this world, whether financial, marital, sickness, disease, crime, etc., are to be laid aside as the faithful

servants prepare to receive Christ the King in the Eucharist. Moreover, for Cyril, the *Sursum Corda* was a means of preparation for the sanctifying work of the heavenly hymn, the *Sanctus*. When the assembly heard the command and responded sincerely, they prepared to join with the choirs of angels and experience the consecrating work of the Holy Spirit whereby the gifts of bread and wine were transformed into the Body and Blood of Christ. Therefore, the *Sursum Corda* was an acknowledgement of the heavenly nature of the Eucharistic liturgy and the *Sanctus* confirmed the ascent and readiness of the congregation. In conclusion, Cyril's commentary presents us with new pastoral functions of the command *Sursum Corda* and confirms that, at least in the liturgy of Jerusalem, it carried the notion of spiritual ascent as evidenced by its thematic connection to the *Sanctus*.

## Chapter 6

### Theodore of Mopsuestia – *Sursum Corda* and seeing the Heavenly Liturgy

#### Introduction

The *Catechetical Homilies* of Theodore of Mopsuestia were probably delivered after 383 A.D. and before 392 A.D. from either Antioch, Tarsus or Mopsuestia.<sup>480</sup> Theodore was a disciple of Diodorus of Tarsus and is recognized as principal representative of the Antiochene School which insisted on the literal and historical exposition of the biblical text. However, many of Theodore's writings were presumably destroyed due to the fact he was personally anathematized at the Fifth Council in 553 (Constantinople II). The remaining texts we do have arguably set Theodore apart as the foremost exegete of Antioch.<sup>481</sup> His catechism is complex and, according to Mazza, demands a reasonably high spiritual level to comprehend that supposes a competence superior to what simple catechumens possess. Theodore's works were originally written in Greek and then translated into Syriac.<sup>482</sup> The only edition that contains the Syriac text with an English translation is by Alphonse Mingana. In reference to Mingana's work, Bradshaw notes, 'It is not without fault.'<sup>483</sup> However, Mingana's English translation will be referenced throughout this chapter.<sup>484</sup> In being consistent with our method, we will

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<sup>480</sup> Scholarly consensus seems to favor Antiochene origins (see R. Taft, *The Great Entrance: A History of the Transfer of Gifts and Other Pre-Anaphoral Rites* (Rome, Pontificio Instituto Orientale, 2004), p. 35), however, E. Mazza believes Tarsus or Mopsuestia to be more probable. See his work *Mystagogy* (New York, Pueblo Publishing, 1989), p. 45.

<sup>481</sup> In the Syriac tradition Theodore is regularly referred to as 'the interpreter'. According to Quasten (III.402), the Church of the East (then referred to as 'the Nestorian Church' venerates him as 'the great exponent of the Scriptures.'

<sup>482</sup> Jasper and Cumming, *Prayers of the Eucharist*, p. 135. Also see R. Tonneau and R. Devreesse, *Les Homelies Catechetiques de Theodore of Mopsueste*, *Studi e testi*, (145), (Rome, Vatican, 1949) as being the best edition of the text and it translated into French

<sup>483</sup> Bradshaw, *Search for Origins*, p. 108.

<sup>484</sup> For reasons of clarity, Mazza's comments on Theodore's theological language are included: 'In the *Catechesis* of Theodore, the word "mystery" always indicated the ritual celebration of the Church, whether the sacrament is understood as the celebration or as the intent of the celebration. "Type" is

systematically work our way through relevant portions of Theodore’s mystagogical catechism. Due to the length and complexity of his work, we will only address certain topics that relate to our research. When we arrive at the introductory dialogue before the Eucharistic prayer, we will rely on the outline of the texts found in Jasper and Cuming’s work, *Prayers of the Eucharist*. This will enable us to structure this chapter in a manner that is consistent with our work thus far. Prior to this exposition, we will seek to understand three primary issues: the eschatological nature of the Church; how baptism relates the newly converted to it; and how they participate in the ‘Angelic Liturgy.’ By doing so, we will develop the argument that Theodore’s employs the *Sursum Corda* as a baptismal lens by which the gathered see and comprehend the Eucharistic liturgy.

### **Interpreting Theodore’s Catechism**

Theodore introduces a new way of interpreting the liturgy and, with it, new challenges.<sup>485</sup> What is consistent throughout the bishop’s work is his eschatological

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understood both in itself and in conjunction with “sign” and “mystery.” “Type” is especially used to designate the sacramentality of the rite celebrated, but its semantic area often coincides with “mystery.” “Sign” is always used to indicate the external, visible, and tangible aspect of the rites.’ See his work, *The Origins of the Eucharistic Prayer*, p. 290, footnote 21.

<sup>485</sup> For background information on Theodore and the School of Antioch see: A. Louth’s work ‘John Chrysostom and the Antiochene School to Theodoret of Cyrillus’ in *Early Christian Literature*, pp. 347-348. The Antiochene School promoted a literal hermeneutic, but when we study the liturgical commentary that contains the *Sursum Corda*, we will see that Theodore employs typology that is almost exclusively allegorical. Mazza spends a great deal of time exploring Theodore’s use of language, style and method. See *Mystagogy*, (pp. 45-104). Mazza writes, ‘It is not easy to date with any accuracy the catechetical homilies of Theodore of Mopsuestia...they were probably delivered after 383 and before 392. The current view is that they were delivered at Antioch, but it is more likely that they were delivered at Tarsus or Mopsuestia, since the liturgy on which they comment is not the one which Theodore’s contemporary, John Chrysostom, shows being celebrated at Antioch.’ Mazza, *Mystagogy*, p. 45. For a more detailed analysis of the word *rozo* (*raza*) see Baby Varghese’s work, *West Syrian Liturgical Theology* (Aldershot, Ashgate, 2004), pp. 35-42. He concludes his in depth analysis ‘...A *rozo* is the manifestation of the Kingdom of God...This experience of the Kingdom, an anticipation of the eschatological fulfillment, is already accessible in the Body of Christ. It is in the liturgical acts that this experience is made accessible to us. Its accessibility is not limited to a few of the liturgical celebrations, namely, the sacraments. It is available in every liturgical act in a manner proper to it, for every celebration is rooted in the unique mystery of Christ...The act of assembling – the primary act of the Liturgy – is the *rozo* of the unity of all the Kingdom of God. It is a manifestation of the foretaste. Thus the word *rozo* provides a key to understanding the relationship between the Church, Kingdom and the liturgy.’ (p. 42). Mazza summarizes the various terms we are

understanding of salvation (the future hope of immortal life with God).<sup>486</sup> This

notion of salvation is dependent upon the resurrection of Christ who,

established a kingdom in heaven, and established it there as a city in which He has His kingdom, which the blessed Paul calls ‘Jerusalem which is above, free, and mother of us all,’ since it is in it that we are expecting to dwell and abide. That city is full of innumerable companies of angels and men who are all immortal and immutable. Indeed the blessed Paul said: ‘You are come to Mount Zion, and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, and to the Church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven.’ He calls the firstborn those who are immortal and immutable, like those who are worthy of the adoption of sons of whom our Lord said that ‘they are the children of God because they are the children of the resurrection’; and they are enrolled in heaven as its inhabitants.<sup>487</sup>

At the *parousia*, Christ will gather the faithful and bring them into the eternal

kingdom where the sufferings of this world will be no more:

These things will be seen so in reality in the world to come, when, according to the words of the Apostle, ‘we are caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, so that we may be ever with Him.’ He will take us up and ascend into heaven where His Kingdom is seen and where all of us shall be with Him, free and exempt from all troubles, in happiness and pleasure, and enjoying to the full the benefits of that kingdom.<sup>488</sup>

However, Theodore’s hope is not limited to the future. The Church provides the context whereby the faithful can participate in the heavenly blessings in the here and now: ‘Those who draw near to Him in this world He wished them to be, through religion and faith, as in the symbol of the heavenly things, and He so constituted the Church as to be a symbol of the heavenly things; and He wished that those who

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considering in another work: ‘In the *Catechesis* of Theodore, the word “mystery” always indicated the ritual celebration of the Church, whether the sacrament is understood as the celebration or as the intent of the celebration. “Type” is understood both in itself and in conjunction with “sign” and “mystery.” “Type” is especially used to designate the sacramentality of the rite celebrated, but its semantic area often coincides with “mystery.” “Sign” is always used to indicate the external, visible, and tangible aspect of the rites.’ See his work, *The Origins of the Eucharistic Prayer*, p. 290.

<sup>486</sup> Mazza confirms this conclusion, ‘Theodore’s idea of salvation is strongly eschatological in character, and this is the ultimate reason why human beings can join the invisible powers in praising God.’ As found in *Mystagogy*, p. 78.

<sup>487</sup> A. Mingana, *Commentary of Theodore of Mopsuestia on the Lord’s Prayer and on the Sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist*, Woodbridge Studies 6 (Piscataway, Giorgas Press, 2009), pp. 23-24.

<sup>488</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 24.

believe in Him should live in it.<sup>489</sup> According to Theodore, by participating in the mystery of the Church one is connected to the risen Christ and the future blessings of heaven. This union with Christ is realized in the sacraments of baptism and Eucharist that, according to F. McLeod, ‘not only ‘image’ a future immortal existence in heaven but also have a spiritual effect in the present life, for they unite and nourish a person’s union with the body of Christ.’<sup>490</sup> Therefore, if one is truly connected to Christ’s body in a corporate manner then ‘one is assured of sharing in a potential way in the immortal bodily existence that Christ’s humanity now possesses.’<sup>491</sup> Now that we have established the future and immediate soteriological relationship between Christ and the Church via the sacraments, we will turn our attention towards the rite of baptism in an effort to see how this mystery transforms and prepares the communicant to perceive the Eucharistic Celebration.

### **Baptism – Becoming a Citizen of Heaven**

For Theodore, those who participate in the rite of entrance (baptism), and, therefore, experience the new birth, are citizens of heaven.<sup>492</sup> But, as was common during his time, one had to be a candidate first:

He, therefore, who is desirous of drawing near to baptism, comes to the Church of God through which he expects to reach that life of the heavenly abode. He ought to think that he is coming to be the citizen of a new and great city, and he should, therefore, show great care in everything that is required of him before his enrolment in it.<sup>493</sup>

The period of enrolment was intense. It included a time of instruction on the Lord’s Prayer, the Creed, and the Sacraments. Moreover, along with the help of a sponsor,

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<sup>489</sup> Ibid., p. 24.

<sup>490</sup> F. McLeod, *The Role of Christ’s Humanity in Salvation: Insights From Theodore of Mopsuestia* (Washington, D.C., The Catholic University Press, 2005), p. x.

<sup>491</sup> Ibid, p. x. McLeod summarizes the soteriological implications of Theodore’s sacramental theology in his essay, ‘The Theological Ramifications of Theodore of Mopsuestia’s Understanding of Baptism and the Eucharist,’ *J ECS* 10

<sup>492</sup> Mazza notes that Theodore references two things baptism effects: (deliverance from evil, and (b) participation in the messianic blessings. See *Mystagogy*, p. 52.

<sup>493</sup> Mingana, p. 24.

the candidate had to go through the ritual of renunciation (kneeling), similar to those found in our previous chapters, whereby judgment is placed upon the devil and human beings are delivered from the power of the demon.<sup>494</sup> Following these exorcisms, the hopeful confessed the Creed and bound themselves to God. Now, the catechumen was ready to enter the water.

Theodore's theology of baptism is best summarized by his own words '...to be reborn and to die with Christ and rise with Him from there, and so that after having received another birth, instead of your first one, you may be able to participate in heaven.'<sup>495</sup> He continues by informing the neophytes of their current limitations, 'As long as you are mortal by nature you are not able to enter the abode of heaven, but after you have cast away such a nature in baptism and have risen also with Christ through baptism, and received the symbol of the new birth which we are expecting, you will be seen as a citizen of heaven and an heir of the Kingdom of Heaven.'<sup>496</sup> Here we see the connection of the rite of baptism with the historical life of Jesus. For Theodore, when the individual enters into the baptism of Jesus in the Jordan, they die and rise with them. By rising with Him, they are granted participation in the new age, the age to come. However, according to McLeod, Theodore believes 'those who receive baptism have not attained in their earthly life its full promise but are assured that it will also certainly become theirs as long as

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<sup>494</sup> Ibid, pp. 34-38.

<sup>495</sup> Ibid., p. 44.

<sup>496</sup> Ibid., p. 44. Also, Finn, contrasting Cyril's theology of baptism with Theodore's, writes, 'Culture, however, conditioned perception. Theodore of Mopsuestia (Vol. 5, Ch. 1), for instance, has a different perspective. Imbued with Neoplatonism, he sees the sacraments as the link between what he calls the "two ages." The first age is the visible and ever-changing world of time, space, and human life and choice; the second, the invisible and immutable future – Paradise regained. The ages are linked invisibly by the risen Christ and visibly by the sacrament, which makes the present and the second age through sign and symbol enacted in the first. As Theodore sees it, the sacraments make present the second age, or future, because they participate in its reality, the core of which is the resurrection. Already achieved by Christ, resurrection, even though inchoative, is Paradise regained for the Christian' as found in *Early Christian Baptism*, pp. 9-10.

they remain faithfully united to Christ's body.<sup>497</sup> Thus, through baptism there is the potential of realizing, in some sense, life in the eschaton; but this existence is dependent upon one's ongoing participation in the life of Christ within the Church. According to Theodore, this level of devotedness is directly related to the Christian's ability to see, perceive and receive the sacraments which is directly related to having one's heart on high during the Eucharist.

### **Eyes, Faith and Imagination – Preparing for the Eucharist**

After baptism, the newly converted need to prepare for participation in the heavenly liturgy and communion. In order to do so, they need first to prepare their minds to comprehend 'what it is and accurately grasp its greatness.'<sup>498</sup> In *Chapter 5*, Theodore writes:

As often, therefore, as the service of this awe-inspiring sacrifice is performed, which is clearly the likeness of heavenly things and of which, after it has been perfected, we become worthy to partake through food and drink, as a true participation in our future benefits—we must picture in our mind that we are dimly in heaven, and, through faith, draw in our imagination the image of heavenly things, while thinking that Christ who is in heaven and who died for us, rose and ascended into heaven and is now being immolated. In contemplating with our eyes, through faith, the facts that are now being re-enacted: that He is again dying, rising and ascending into heaven, we shall be led to the vision of the things that had taken place beforehand on our behalf.<sup>499</sup>

For Theodore, faith is the key to understanding the Eucharistic liturgy. It is by faith the newly baptized are able to see the events of the Passion of Christ dramatically displayed before them in the Eucharistic liturgy. By doing so, they may be able to catch a glimpse of heaven, so to speak. Theodore, knowing that faith needs to be united to instruction, explains to his hearers his understanding of sacramental representation:

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<sup>497</sup> F. McLeod, *The Roles of Christ's Humanity in Salvation*, pp. 49-50.

<sup>498</sup> Mazza, *Mystagogy*, p. 51.

<sup>499</sup> Mingana, p. 83.

Every sacrament consists in the representation of unseen and unspeakable things through signs and emblems. Such things require explanation and interpretation, for the sake of the person who draws nigh unto the sacrament, so that he might know its power. If it only consisted of the (visible) elements themselves, words would have been useless, as sight itself would have been able to show us one by one all the happenings that take place, but since a sacrament contains the signs of things that take place or have already taken place, words are needed to explain the power of signs and mysteries.<sup>500</sup>

For the bishop, the one drawing near to the Eucharist has to see in the signs and emblems something other than what they represent, naturally. Therefore, the ritual gestures that accompany the Celebration are of primary importance to bishop as they enable the unseen to be seen. Frank comments, ‘For Theodore, the bodies in worship were the key to interpreting the eucharistic process. More than Cyril or Chrysostom, who commented on the bread, the wine, or the communicant’s own hands extended, Theodore offered a more telescopic view, paying closer attention to the celebrants and the visual impression they created throughout the liturgy.’<sup>501</sup> However, the clergy are not the only participants in the rite. The people, the silent congregants, have an active role in the divine drama as well. Therefore, the entire church is involved in the ritual activity and plays an important part in communicating the sacramental reality of what is taking place and is understood through the eyes of faith.

### **The Prothesis and the Passion of Christ**

Theodore delivers two homilies on the Divine Liturgy. As noted by Mazza, the Eucharist is clearly divided into three main parts: 1) the prothesis, 2) the anaphora, and 3) the rites of communion.<sup>502</sup> Each part of the service is understood through an allegorical lens: in the prothesis, there is an image of the passion that can only be understood by spiritually preparing the mind to comprehend it:

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<sup>500</sup> Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>501</sup> Frank, ‘Taste and See’, p. 638.

<sup>502</sup> Mazza, *Mystagogy*, p. 61.

Because the things performed for us by Christ our Lord are awe-inspiring, and because we expect their complete fulfillment in the next world, we receive them now only by faith, and we proceed gradually in this world in a way that we are in nothing absent from our faith in them. This being the case, we are necessarily confirmed in the faith of the things revealed to us through this ministry of the Sacrament, as we are led through it to the future reality, because it contains an image of the ineffable Economy of Christ our Lord, in which we receive the vision and the shadow of the happenings that took place. This is the reason why through the priest we picture Christ our Lord in our mind, as through him we see the One who saved us and delivered us by the sacrifice of Himself; and through the deacons who serve the things that take place, we picture in our mind the invisible hosts who served with that ineffable service. It is the deacons who bring out this oblation—or the symbols of this oblation—which they arrange and place on the awe-inspiring altar, (an oblation) which in its vision, as represented in the imagination, is an awe-inspiring event to the onlookers.<sup>503</sup>

Like Cyril, Theodore uses dramatic language to capture the attention of his listeners.

The liturgical actions, symbols and gestures represent heavenly things and can only

be comprehended and participated in the here and now by faith. He seems to be

aware of the fact that some may only see the visible or earthly in the liturgy - a

human priest, deacons, not angels, simply bringing bread and wine to the altar.

Therefore, he wants the newly baptized to engage their mind and their imagination in

the passion of Christ. Only then will they see the Lord before them in the ritual

taking place. In Mazza's words, 'Theodore's method is descriptive. Starting with

what is visible, he urges the faithful to imagine in their hearts the scene of the

passion as it occurred historically.'<sup>504</sup> If they are able to do this, then they will

experience the passion of Christ in the ritual actions.

Theodore describes this portion of the heavenly liturgy in the following commentary:

We must also think of Christ being at one time led and brought to His Passion<sup>505</sup>, and at another time stretched on the altar to be sacrificed for us.

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<sup>503</sup> Mingana, p. 85.

<sup>504</sup> Mazza, *Mystagogy*, p. 61.

<sup>505</sup> Taft believes this becomes a problem because it 'will eventually lead, in the Byzantine tradition at least, to the interpretation of the liturgy as culminating in a resurrection from a passion or sacrifice accomplished before the liturgy has even begun.' See Taft, *The Great Entrance* – p. 37. Dix also

And when the offering which is about to be placed (on the altar) is brought out in the sacred vessels of the paten and the chalice, we must think that Christ our Lord is being led and brought to His Passion, not, however, by the Jews—as it is incongruous and impermissible that an iniquitous image be found in the symbols of our deliverance and our salvation—but by the invisible hosts of ministry, who are sent to us and who were also present when the Passion of our Salvation was being accomplished, and were doing their service. Indeed, they performed their service to all the Economy of Christ our Lord without any exception, and were present with their service at the time of the Passion, endeavoring to perform it according to the will of God. When our Lord was in deep thought and fear at the approach of His Passion, the blessed Luke said that "an angel appeared to Him strengthening and encouraging Him," and like those persons who are wont to stir up the courage of the athletes with their voices, he anointed Him to bear tribulations, and by encouraging words persuaded Him to endure pains with patience, and showed Him that His Passion was small in comparison with the benefit that will accrue from it, as He would be invested with great glory after His Passion and His death, from which He would be the cause of numerous benefits not only to men but to all the creation.<sup>506</sup>

Now that he has described the invisible reality before them, he turns his attention to the visible:

We must think, therefore, that the deacons who now carry the Eucharistic bread and bring it out for the sacrifice represent the image of the invisible hosts of ministry, with this difference, that, through their ministry and in these remembrances, they do not send Christ our Lord to His salvation-giving Passion. When they bring out (the Eucharistic bread) they place it on the holy altar, for the complete representation of the Passion, so that we may think of Him on the altar, as if He were placed in the sepulchre, after having received His Passion. This is the reason why those deacons who spread linens on the altar represent the figure of the linen clothes of the burial (of our Lord). Sometime after these have been spread, they stand up on both sides, and agitate all the air above the holy body with fans, thus keeping it from any defiling object. They make manifest by this ritual the greatness of the body which is lying there, as it is the habit, when the dead body of the high personages of this world is carried on a bier, that some men should fan the air above it. It is, therefore, with justice that the same thing is done here with the body which lies on the altar, and which is holy, awe-inspiring and remote from all corruption; a body which will very shortly rise to an immortal nature...<sup>507</sup>

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comments, 'What is disconcerting is to find that this is connected with the offertory, not with the consecration. All this 'fear' and 'adoration' on which Theodore lays so much emphasis, and the fanning and other marks of the reverence are addressed to what we should call the 'unconsecrated' elements, 'before the liturgy begins.' See Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, p. 283. These issues will be revisited in our final chapter that addresses the liturgical changes of the fifth through eighth centuries and how they impacted the meaning and function of the *Sursum Corda*.

<sup>506</sup> Mingana, p. 85.

<sup>507</sup> Mingana, p. 86.

Mazza, commenting on Theodore's sacramental theology of the prothesis, writes, 'The realism of the liturgy depends for Theodore on the fact that the sacrament is an image of the angelic liturgy. The liturgy celebrated by human beings is true insofar as it participates in the heavenly liturgy.'<sup>508</sup> However, this 'realism' is purely symbolic as Theodore is describing the unconsecrated elements. Thus, what makes the earthly celebration a heavenly one is that it is an *imitation* of the angelic liturgy. This begs the question, 'What is the angelic liturgy?' Theodore describes it in the following:

These things take place while every one is silent, because when the service has not yet begun, every one must look at the bringing out and spreading of such a great and wonderful object with a quiet and reverential fear and a silent and noiseless prayer. When our Lord also had died the Apostles moved away and were in the house in great silence and immense fear; so great indeed was the silence that overtook every one that even the invisible hosts kept quiet while looking for the expected resurrection, until time came and Christ our Lord rose, and a great joy and an ineffable happiness spread over those invisible hosts. And the women who came to honour the body received from the angels the new message of the resurrection that had taken place, and when the disciples also learnt through them what had occurred they run together with great zeal to the sepulchre. We are drawn now by similar happenings to the remembrance of the Passion of our Lord, and when we see the oblation on the communion-table—something which denotes that it is being placed in a kind of a sepulchre after its death— great silence falls on those present. Because that which takes place is awe-inspiring, they must look at it with a quiet and reverential fear, since it is necessary that Christ our Lord should rise in the awe-inspiring service which is performed with the sacerdotal ceremonies, and announce our participation in ineffable benefits to every one. We remember, therefore, the death of our Lord in the oblation because it makes manifest the resurrection and the ineffable benefits.<sup>509</sup>

The angels are the ones given the responsibility to reveal the resurrection to the woman at the tomb. It is this action that is expressly described as the 'angelic liturgy.'<sup>510</sup> The laity gathered, like the apostles and the angels before the news of the resurrection, participate in their silence and await the resurrection. Thus, Theodore's

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<sup>508</sup> Mazza, *Mystagogy*, p. 63.

<sup>509</sup> Mingana, pp. 87-88.

<sup>510</sup> Mingana, p. 88.

commentary is eschatological, in the strict sense, as those gathered anticipate something that belongs to the second coming.

To summarize, in the prothesis we see the passion of Christ ‘re-enacted,’ before the gathered by the deacons who represent the angelic powers that were present during the passion, burial of Christ and resurrection of Christ. However, as Mazza notes, ‘...the prothesis as type of the passion is not to be interpreted as a dramatization comparable to a sacred play; rather, by reason of the typology at work, it is to be regarded as belonging to the sphere of sacramentality proper: the prothesis is the moment of the sacramental death of Jesus.’ The message of the resurrection presented by the angels to the myrthbearing woman is, according to Theodore, the ‘angelic liturgy.’<sup>511</sup> Now, with the gifts (Christ the willing victim) lying on the altar, the priest offers his prayer and extends the peace. In response, those gathered pass the peace amongst themselves as a means of reconciliation.<sup>512</sup> Following, the names of the living and the departed are read. Then the deacon cries ‘Look at the sacrifice!’ before the introductory dialogue to the anaphora begins.

### ***Catechesis 6 – The Meaning of the Sursum Corda***

*Chapter 6* of Theodore’s catechism is the primary focus of this chapter. Thus far, as in the prior chapters of Part 2 of our study, we have explored the connection between the rite of baptism and the Eucharist in Theodore’s catechism. In baptism

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<sup>511</sup> Mazza, *Mystagogy*, p. 64.

<sup>512</sup> The notion of peace is important to the Church Fathers we have considered in our study. Both Cyprian and Cyril connected in some form or fashion to the *Sursum corda*. Theodore does not. However, peace at the assembly is of primary importance to him. He explains that the possibility of peace to the sacraments of baptism and the Eucharist: ‘Owing to the fact that we received one new birth of baptism, through which we are joined as if into one natural body, and owing to the fact that all of us partake of one food in which we receive the same flesh and blood and become more strongly united in the single body of baptism, as the blessed Paul said: “For we are all partakers of one bread” (1 Cor. 10:17) – it is right that the rite of giving peace should be performed before we draw nigh unto the Sacrament and unto the service, as it is in it we make our profession of mutual concord and love to one another... That which takes place is not only a profession of love but a reminder that we must remove and cast away from us every enmity, if it appears to us that we have fought against a child of our faith... It is incumbent, therefore, on the one who has sinned to placate with all his might the one against whom he has sinned, and to be reconciled to him.’ As found in Mingana, pp. 92-93.

one is given to ability to participate in heaven and this mystically takes place in the Eucharist. Now, we will focus on each stage of the introductory dialogue in order to see how Theodore's use of the *Sursum Corda* relates to his overall catechism.

We began this exposition with a diaconal exhortation that we have not encountered thus far in our study:

**Deacon: Behold (look) at the offering**

Theodore may see this command as something common to the Antiochene culture of the day. Referring the words of the deacon, the bishop writes:

In this he exhorts every one to look at the sacrifice, as if a public service was about to be performed, and a public sacrifice was about to be immolated, and a public sacrifice was about to be offered for all, not only for those who are present but also for those who are absent, as long as they were in communion with us in faith and were counted in the Church of God and had finished their life in it.<sup>513</sup>

Taft argues this exhortation by the deacon, like others found in Armenian and Coptic traditions, 'is just one more those diaconal calls to attention found in other traditions and with precedents in pagan usage...that had an apotropaic sense, warning off the unworthy.'<sup>514</sup> However, to use the command 'Look' with the intent for some of the gathered to 'look away' is confusing. Frank believes the use of ritual and the invocation of mental images in Theodore's work 'is the conviction that the worshipper approached and encountered divine presence in space, and not in some disembodied illusionism.'<sup>515</sup> While the command, 'βλεπετε!' may have originated from pagan sources, Theodore seems to be appealing, once again, for the new Christians to employ the eyes of faith so that what is being accomplished in the ritual act will be spiritually comprehended in the heart. The command 'to look' may be synonymous with 'see'. It is a recalling of all that Theodore has set forth in his

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<sup>513</sup> Mingana, 95.

<sup>514</sup> Taft I, p. 55.

<sup>515</sup> Frank, 'Taste and See', p. 642.

explanation of the divine service that, at this point in the liturgy, needs to be grasped as the senses battle to comprehend the appearance of the common elements as representing the sacrificial body and blood of Christ.

Following the command by the deacon, the Bishop pronounces a Trinitarian blessing upon the assembled:<sup>516</sup>

**Bishop: The Trinitarian Blessing.**

Theodore's benediction is an amplified version of 2 Cor. 13:13 found later on in the Byzantine liturgy: 'The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God the Father and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.'<sup>517</sup> According to Bouman, Theodore is the first to use the longer more elaborate benediction and his testimony makes it clear, that towards the end of the fourth century the use was all but fixed.<sup>518</sup> Taft, on the contrary, argues 'it gives precious testimony to a tradition still in flux.'<sup>519</sup> Due to the fact Cyril presented us with varying text as well, Taft's comments seem accurate and, therefore, if the liturgy is not 'fixed' it seems the interpretation is not either. In either case, Theodore informs his hearers that when the bishop, facing them, gives the blessing it is a reminder of the grace and mercy of God displayed in the person and work of Jesus Christ:

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<sup>516</sup> In regards to Theodore's benediction, Bouman notes, 'Form the varying short formula (The Lord be with you) must be distinguished an elaborate benediction, drawn from 2 Cor. 13, 13, which we find for the first time in a catechetical homily of Theodore of Mopsuestia and afterwards in all liturgical text from Antioch, the Syriac churches, Armenia and Byzantium.' See his work 'Variants,' pp. 99-100. Theodore's own comments confirm this was not the only form of the benediction – '...Some priests only say: 'The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you', and include in, and restrict with these, words all the sentence of the Apostle.' *Serm. XVI (VI)*, trans. by A. Mingana, opp. 98-99 as found in Bouman, 'Variants', p. 101, fnt 16.

<sup>517</sup> Text is taken from F. Brightman, *Eastern Liturgies: Being the Texts Original or Translated of the Principal Liturgies of the Church*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Picataway, Georgia Press, 2004), p. 321.

<sup>518</sup> In regards to Theodore's benediction, Bouman notes, 'Form the varying short formula (The Lord be with you) must be distinguished an elaborate benediction, drawn from 2 Cor. 13, 13, which we find for the first time in a catechetical homily of Theodore of Mopsuestia and afterwards in all liturgical text from Antioch, the Syriac churches, Armenia and Byzantium.' See his work 'Variants,' pp. 99-100. Theodore's own comments confirm this was not the only form of the benediction – '...Some priests only say: 'The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you', and include in, and restrict with these, words all the sentence of the Apostle.' *Serm. XVI (VI)*, trans. by A. Mingana, O.C. pp. 98-99 as found in Bouman, 'Variants', p. 101, footnote 16.

<sup>519</sup> Taft I, p. 309.

...as it is by His grace and mercy that He made manifest to us a love for the sake of which the Only Begotten Son of God, God the Word, was pleased to assume a man for us, whom He raised from the dead, took up to heaven, united to Himself, and placed at the right hand of God. And He promised to us participation in all these, and gave us also the Holy Spirit, whose firstfruits we are receiving now as an earnest. We shall receive all (the fruits) when we shall have communion with Him in reality and when our vile body shall be fashioned like to His glorious body. This is the reason why the blessed Paul prayed in his Epistles for the faithful so that they may be seen worthy of the love of God, which He by His grace made manifest to all our race, and made us all worthy of the grace of the Holy Spirit by whose gift He promised to us communion with Him.<sup>520</sup>

Theodore is transitioning the minds of the newly baptized from the death or offering of Christ to His resurrected place in heaven. It is this resurrected, victorious Christ who they would soon picture in their mind who ‘through each portion of the bread, draws nigh unto the person who receives him, while greeting him and speaking to him of his resurrection.’<sup>521</sup> The Communion they are about to receive, according to the bishop, is an eschatological participation in the promised Kingdom to come now mystically present, to some extent, in the Eucharist. He concludes, ‘It is with justice, therefore, that the priest who is about to perform such a great service, from which we are led to the hope of these (benefits), should first bless the people with the above words.’<sup>522</sup> The people respond, ‘And with your spirit.’

### ***Minds on High!***

As a review, the gathered, those that have been baptized in the name of the Father, and the Son, and Holy and received the benefits ‘which are: second birth, renewal, immortality, incorruptibility, impassability, immutability, deliverance from death and servitude and all evils, happiness of freedom, and participation in the

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<sup>520</sup> *Hom cat.* 6; Mingana, p. 98.

<sup>521</sup> *Hom cat.* 6; Mingana, p. 107.

<sup>522</sup> *Hom cat.* 6; Mingana, p. 98.

effable good things which are expected<sup>523</sup> are standing as silent participants in the liturgy. In the prothesis, with the eyes of faith they saw Christ in the bread and wine go to His passion. Now, the deacons, as angels, stand near his tomb. The peace is given and received. And prayers are made on behalf of the living and the departed. Following, a deacon cries out, ‘Look at the offering!’ The priest blesses the gathered in the name of the Trinity as a reminder that these things taking place are an act of mercy and grace towards them. Now the Bishop employs the *Sursum Corda*:

Bishop: After the benediction the priest prepares the people by saying: ‘Lift up your minds,’ in order to show that although we are supposed to perform this awe-inspiring and ineffable service on earth, we, nevertheless, ought to look upwards to heaven and to extend the sight of our soul to God, as we are performing the remembrance of the sacrifice and death of Christ our Lord, who for us suffered and rose, is united to Divine nature, is sitting at the right hand of God, and is in heaven, to which we must extend the sight of our soul and transfer our thoughts by means of the present remembrances. And the people answer People: To you, O Lord – and in this they confess with their voices that are anxious to do so.

After the priest has prepared and set in the right direction the souls and the minds of the congregation, he says: ‘Let us give thanks unto the Lord.’ This means that for all these things which were accomplished for us, and which are about to perform in this service, we owe, before anything else, gratitude to God, who is the cause of all these benefits. To the above words, the people respond: It is fitting and right.<sup>524</sup>

Now that we have established the liturgical context of the of the *Sursum Corda*, we will systematically address its meaning.

### **Textual Considerations**

According to Bouman, Theodore’s use of the word (Greek equivalent) *νοῦν* instead of *καρδία* represents the oldest source for the Antiochene use.<sup>525</sup> It is also found within the Antiochene sphere of influence in other documents of the same

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<sup>523</sup> *Hom. Cat.* 6; Mingana, p. 62.

<sup>524</sup> *Hom. Cat.* 6, Mingana, 97-98.

<sup>525</sup> Bouman, ‘Variants’, p. 105.

period, *Apostolic Constitutions* Book VIII, 12.5 and later in Narsai, *Homily* 21.<sup>526</sup> However, to suggest that Theodore employed the term ‘mind’ instead of ‘heart’ is, arguably, assimilating him to the Syriac tradition, of which he was very likely unaware; so it is possible that he used *kardia*, while the Syriac translator used the term with which he was familiar from his experience of the liturgy. We first encountered the phrase ‘Minds on High’ in *The Anaphora of Addai and Mari* in Chapter 1 of our study where we concluded that ‘Minds on high’ was the liturgical equivalent of *Sursum Corda* or Ἄνω τὰς καρδίας.<sup>527</sup> Therefore, for Theodore, whether he originally referred to the heart or the mind in the *Sursum Corda*, the structure of the phrase is the same – it is a command.

### **‘Minds on High’ as Preparation**

Theodore comments that the *Sursum Corda*<sup>528</sup> is a preparatory command. This language is similar to that used by Cyprian.<sup>529</sup> However, in Cyprian’s commentary, the *Sursum Corda* prepares (warns) the people to think of nothing but the Lord during the Eucharistic prayer. The alternative, which the bishop explains, is to have the mind on earthly things; thereby, allowing the foe of God to enter into the heart during the anaphora. For Cyril, the *Sursum Corda* is a command that interrupts the ‘earthly’ activities and mindsets that may develop during the Kiss of Peace. Furthermore, the Bishop of Jerusalem employed the command as a means to exhort the gathered to and lay aside earthly cares and household anxieties that were common for the average Christian that gathered for the Eucharist. He may also have

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<sup>526</sup> Taft II, p. 58.

<sup>527</sup> Jasper and Cummings note the similarities between *Addai and Mari* and Theodore. See *Prayers of the Eucharist*, pp. 39-41

<sup>528</sup> Bouman, notes ‘that up to the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> century and during the 5<sup>th</sup> century this reading was known in the centre of the Antiochene patriarchate.’ See his discussion of the textual variants of hearts and minds in ‘Variants’, pp. 105-108.

<sup>529</sup> Cyril description of the *Sursum Corda* does not refer to it as means of preparation. However, the ultimate objective is to have the heart in heaven with God.

understood the liturgical function of the *Sursum Corda* to be the means by which the gathered prepared to sing the Sanctus and be sanctified. In Theodore's commentary, there is not a reference to the devil or an admonition to focus during the Eucharistic prayer. Instead, having 'minds on high' is a means by which the gathered can understand the heavenly nature of the earthly liturgy. In other words, the *Sursum Corda* prepares the newly baptized to see through the oblation and remember in the ritual signs, symbols and gestures the Passion of Christ, His resurrection, and His sitting at the right hand of God.

Theodore uses similar language on various occasions. When speaking of the celebrant's acclamation, 'holy things for those who are holy,' Theodore notes this is said to direct 'the mind of all to look at the greatness of the oblation. He says in this way you ought to observe the greatness of the offering which is laid (on the altar).'<sup>530</sup> Again, he explains the words of the priest, 'prepare us all to see through the oblations the gift of Christ our Lord.'<sup>531</sup> Also, when receiving Communion by hand, the Priest says: "The body of Christ." He teaches you by this word not to look at that which is visible but to picture in your mind the nature of this oblation..<sup>532</sup> Lastly, Theodore includes in his catechism the need to adhere to the command in the Lord's Prayer to forgive others. If not, 'neither will your Father who in heaven forgive your trespasses –we will all the more not receive the grace and the benefits prepared for us by God while still in this world, if we do strive with our power to have mercy upon our neighbours. We become, therefore, worthy of this awe-inspiring Sacrament if we think of things of which we spoke above (Theodore is referring to forgiveness); and if we acquire in the measure of our power, a mind higher than earthly things; and if we contemplate heavenly things, and think

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<sup>530</sup> Mingana, pp. 108-109.

<sup>531</sup> Mingana, p. 103.

<sup>532</sup> Mingana, p. 113.

continually that it is in their hope that we have received the Sacrament.’<sup>533</sup> Thus for Theodore, the mind is prepared by way of the command *Minds on high* in order that what has ritually been done and will be done can be comprehended sacramentally.

### ***Orans* – Extending the Sight of the Soul**

As we learned in Chapter 3 of our study, the extension of the soul to God is, according to certain Fathers, physically reflected in the *orans* posture of prayer.<sup>534</sup> Thus, if, for Theodore, this ritual connection between inward disposition and outward form exists, then the assumed posture<sup>535</sup> during the *Sursum Corda* may further reinforce the drama of the Passion that has taken place in the liturgical setting.<sup>536</sup> The bishop references extending the eye of the soul when he discusses the prayer of the priest pertaining to the grace of the Holy Spirit coming upon the people as well as the gifts presented in the sacrifice. He writes:

And the priest says the grace of the Holy Spirit may come also on all those present, in order that as they have been perfected into one body in the likeness of the second birth, so also they may be knit here as if into one body by the communion of the flesh of our Lord, and in order also that they may embrace and follow one purpose with once accord, peace and diligence in good works. In this way, all of us pray to God with a pure mind not to receive communion of the Holy Spirit for punishment, as if we were divided in our

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<sup>533</sup> Mingana, pp. 115-116.

<sup>534</sup> Theodore, being formally trained rhetoric, understood act of extending the ‘eye of the soul’ as an ancient Greek philosophical expression used by but not limited to Socrates who, according to A. Nightingale, believed ‘most humans direct their gaze ‘downwards’ towards feasting and other physical pleasures, but we can also direct our gaze ‘upwards’ towards truth and reality.’ Taken from her work, *Spectacles of Truth in Classical Greek Philosophy: Theoria in Cultural Context* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 80.

<sup>535</sup> J. Leonard and N. Mitchell, in their work *Postures of the Assembly During the Eucharistic Prayer* (Chicago, Liturgy Training Publications, 1994), argue that the *orans* was assumed in various places during the Eucharistic Prayer until the ninth century. If they are correct, then our conjecture is plausible.

<sup>536</sup> J. Laidlaw explains the relationship between doctrine, ritual and memory, ‘While the doctrinal mode is characterized by frequent repetition of religious doctrine in verbal form, which feeds into semantic memory, the imagistic mode is organized around infrequent dramatic and shocking events – such as traumatic initiation ceremonies – that give rise to flashbulb memories of baffling experiences that those involved may come to understand, insofar as they do, only after prolonged reflection over the course of their lives. Frequent repetition in the doctrinal mode of routinized rehearsals of details of religious doctrine, in regular liturgical ceremonies with sermons, well-known hymns, readings, and familiar and habitual body movements, contribute to well-informed schemas of semantic memory.’ See his work, edited with H. Whitehouse, *Ritual and Memory: Toward a Comparative Anthropology of Religion* (Walnut Creek, AltaMira Press, 2004), p. 4.

thoughts and bent on disunions, bickerings, jealousy and envy, and despising good works, but to be considered worthy to receive (that communion) because the eye of the soul looks towards God with concord, peace, diligence in good works, and purity of mind.<sup>537</sup>

We see in these words extending the eye of the soul first necessitates the proper ritual social context. Again, this is a common theme that is usually connected to the description of the *Sursum Corda*. Only when the worshipper is at peace with others and engaging the Christian life, externally and internally as set forth by Theodore, can the pure mind be on high. Finally, we see that when the soul of those initiated and baptized in the name of the Father and the Son and Holy Spirit reaches its destination the response is the singing of the Sanctus. Theodore, describing the worship offered to the Trinity in the book of Isaiah, comments:

He makes also mention of the Seraphim, as they are found in the Divine Book singing praise which all of us who are present sing loudly in the Divine Song which we recite, along with the invisible hosts, in order to serve God... Indeed the Economy of our Lord granted us to become immortal and incorruptible, and to serve God with the invisible hosts “when we are caught up in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord (1 Thess. 4:17) Nor are the words of our Lord false, who says that the Children of God “are like the angels of God, because they are the children of the resurrection.”<sup>538</sup>

For Theodore the singing of the Sanctus is made possible by the grace of God which affords the Christian the ability to participate in the heavenly worship of the Trinity. Theodore explains, ‘And we make use of the words of the invisible hosts, in order to make manifest the greatness of the grace which has been so unexpectedly outpoured upon us.’ The mind is to maintain this sense of awe throughout the entire service as heads are bowed before and after the singing of the Thrice Holy Hymn.<sup>539</sup> Thus, the command ‘Minds on high’ is a call to the baptized to ultimately participate in the worship of heaven.

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<sup>537</sup> Mingana, pp. 104-105.

<sup>538</sup> Mingana, p. 102.

<sup>539</sup> Ibid, p. 102.

## Conclusion

Theodore's mystagogy is complicated and presents a new way of interpreting the Eucharistic ritual. For him, the liturgy is rooted in the historical and eschatological reality of the resurrection of Christ. Through the rite of baptism, the new believer, as with Cyprian and Cyril, is removed from the influence of the devil and united to the Lord. Now, as a Christian, one has the ability to perceive things that are spiritual. Moreover, the illumined receives the benefit of participating in the heavenly liturgy and encountering the risen Christ in Communion. Theodore is aware that if the allegorical explanations of the ritual signs, symbols and gestures are not realized by the gathered, then they will only see the material or earthly liturgy – deacons and priest offering and serving bread and wine. Therefore, for him, the *Sursum Corda* is a command to extend one's thoughts and understanding through the rite itself. 'Minds on high' is the means by which the baptized believer is to grasp the body of Christ that was made immortal through the resurrection and is now an eschatological reality.<sup>540</sup> Christ is crucified, Christ is buried, and Christ will rise again when the Holy Spirit, through the *epiclesis*, encounters the bread and wine and transforms them into the Body and Blood of Christ. Moreover, Heaven, for Theodore, liturgically speaking, is not a location, but a realization through an act of faith. But the initiated must transfer their earthly thoughts and extend the eyes of their soul to see in the ritual before them this already but not fully realized state of existence via participation in the life of the resurrected Christ. Thus, Theodore also employs the *Sursum Corda* as a means to stir up faith in the minds of the gathered as they remember the spiritual benefits of their baptism, and, as possibly reflected by the *orans* posture, move their soul to anticipate and participate in the heavenly

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<sup>540</sup> Mazza, *Mystagogy*, p. 76. THor

liturgy. But one cannot accomplish this if he or she is encumbered by social and spiritual issues. Only the pure mind can see the things of God when summoned to be on high. With this proper spiritual attitude, the faithful can express their gratitude to the Trinity by joining in with the hosts of angels in the singing of the Sanctus.

## Chapter 7

### John Chrysostom: *Sursum Corda* as the Key to Moral Conduct and Heavenly Perception

#### Introduction

Our testimony from the School of Antioch continues with John Chrysostom (347-407 A.D.). His mystical catechetical homilies that survive are only on baptism and do not include any reference to the *Sursum Corda*. However, within the corpus of writings we do possess from the bishop there are catechetical homilies that are relevant and beneficial to our study. In regards to the liturgical texts referenced by Chrysostom in these homilies, his only commentary on the introductory dialogue is in *In 2 Cor Hom.* (18, 3). But he does not mention the *Sursum Corda* or discuss its function. However, the absence of the command in his overview of the pre-anaphoral dialogue may reveal certain things about it. Moving away from silence, Chrysostom's direct commentary on the *Sursum Corda* is found in two homilies: (*Heb. Homily 22, 3* and *Homily 9: 'On Repentance'*). It is in our exploration of these two sermons we will see how Chrysostom relates the *Sursum Corda* to liturgical rites of baptism and the Eucharist.<sup>541</sup>

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<sup>541</sup> For an overview of Chrysostom's life see H. Moore's translation of, *The dialogue of Palladius concerning the life of Chrysostom* (London, The Macmillan Company, New York), p. 38. For further information on Palladius' life see Demetrios S. Katos' work, *Palladius of Helenopolis: The Origenist Advocate* (Oxford, OUP, 2011). For the purpose of reference, As a result of his leadership, 'the Church put forth daily more abundant blossoms; the tone of the whole city was changed to piety, men delighting their souls with soberness and psalmody.' Palladius describe these changes as upsetting the evil one, 'the devil, who hates all that is good, could not tolerate the escape of those who he held in his dominion, now taken from his grasp by the word of the Lord through the teaching of John; so much so, that the horse-racing and theatre-going fraternity left the courts of the devil and hastened to the fold of the Savior, in their love for the pipe of the shepherd who loves his sheep.' (p. 38).

## Catechism and Morality

Chrysostom, like Theodore, composed a series of catechetical lectures that were probably given in Antioch either in 388 or possibly 390.<sup>542</sup> Two of these are instructions on baptism that he delivered just prior to the administration of the rite. Unlike Cyril in Jerusalem, who advocated experience before explanation, Chrysostom saw the lectures as benefitting the candidates. He cited his reasons as '(1) "that you might be carried on by the wings of hope and enjoy the pleasure before you before you enjoyed the actual benefit"; and (2) that "you might... see the objects of bodily sight more clearly with the eyes of the spirit" since the rite's real dynamic is the invisible work of God.'<sup>543</sup> The bishop's comments reveal that he is concerned about how the catechumens will view the impending sacraments. However, contrary to Cyril and Theodore, who used the liturgical rite as an outline for their catechetical topics in order to preempt these questions and concerns (including references to bodily gestures, sacramental signs and the spoken word), Chrysostom's catechism focused less on liturgical actions and symbolism and more on moral behavior.<sup>544</sup> For the bishop, the neophytes, who he admonished to maintain their baptismal purity, were engaged in combat with the devil and demons who sought to influence their behavior in the Divine Liturgy.<sup>545</sup> However, the sacraments

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<sup>542</sup> Mazza discusses the history and difficulty of identifying and organizing Chrysostom's corpus of mystagogical writings in his work, *Mystagogy*, pp. 107-109. However, this assumes the bishop did write a text of mystagogical writings which is challengeable.

<sup>543</sup> Saint John Chrysostom, *Baptismal Instructions*, Trans. and Annotated by P. Harkins (London, Green & Company, 1963), pp. 53-55

<sup>544</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 72-73. Harmless believes Chrysostom's catechism was a form of mystagogy. However, this assumption may not be correct. See Harmless, *Augustine and the Catechumenate*, p. 73

<sup>545</sup> Chrysostom, *Sermon 1.5*. E. Ferguson comments, 'Chrysostom more often employs the image of an athletic contest to describe this combat. The parallels are worked out according to the school for training, stripping and anointing, the specators, and the crown; a point of contrast is that the judge of our contest (Christ) does not stand aloof but is on our side (3.8-11; cf. 12.33-37). The athletic imagery then shades into the military imagery of armor and weapons (3.11). The thirty days of instruction before baptism are likened to the exercises in the wrestling school; after baptism our combat with the demon is like a boxing or wrestling match (9.29).' As found in Ferguson, *Baptism in the Early Church*, p. 549. Satan, as was common, was also renounced by the candidate. Chrysostom writes, 'Then the priest has you say, 'I renounce the Satan, thy pomps, thy service, and thy works.' These

they received in the Church, he argued, gave them new powers to live moral lives – the fruit he aimed to help them cultivate.<sup>546</sup> Therefore, in our exploration of the bishop’s reference to the *Sursum Corda*, it is his admonition of appropriate moral conduct we need to keep in mind.

### **The Structure of the Introductory Dialogue**

The liturgy that bears of the name of Chrysostom may well have preserved the form used in Antioch during his episcopate (370-398). It provides us with the following complete outline of the introductory prayer:<sup>547</sup>

The priest says: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God the Father and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

People: And with your spirit.

Priest: (Ἄνω σχῶμεν τὰς καρδίας)

People: (Ἐχομεν πρὸς τὸν Κύριον)

Priest: Let us give thanks unto the Lord.

People: It is fitting and right...

People: Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord of Sabaoth; heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosana in the highest.

The priest, privately: With these powers, Master, lover of man, we also cry aloud and say: holy...holy...holy.<sup>548</sup>

In regards to the *Sursum Corda*, we encounter for the first time the inclusion of

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words are few but their power is great. The angels who are standing by and the invisible powers rejoice at your conversion, receive the words from your tongues, and carry them up to the common master of all things. There they are inscribed in the books of heaven.’ Translation taken from Mazza, *Mystagogy*, p. 169., as found in G. Jeanes, ‘Baptism Portrayed as Martyrdom in the Early Church,’ *Studia Liturgica* 23 (1993), p. 158. Finn, *Baptism in the Early Church*, p. 533. For further background study on Chrysostom see the following: R. Burnish, ‘Baptismal Preparation under John Chrysostom,’ in S. Porter and A. Cross, eds., *Baptism in the New Testament and Early Church: Historical and Contemporary Studies in Honor of R.E.O. White* (Sheffield, Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), pp. 379-401; B. Varghese, *Les onctions baptismales dans la tradition syrienne*, *Corpus scriptorium christianorum orientarium* 512 (Louvain, Peeters, 1989), pp. 81-89; and T. Finn, *The Liturgy of Baptism in the Baptismal Instructions of St. John Chrysostom*, *Studies in Christian Antiquity* 15 (Washington, Catholic University of America Press, 1967).

<sup>546</sup> Bradshaw and Johnson comment that Chrysostom’s sermons addressing moral issues may have been inclined to exaggeration. See their work, *The Eucharistic Liturgies*, p. 62.

<sup>547</sup> Taft argues the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom was introduced into Constantinople from Antioch, probably by Chrysostom in 398. See R. Taft, ‘St. John Chrysostom and the Byzantine Anaphora that Bears His Name’ as found in *Essays on Early Eastern Eucharistic Prayers*, ed., P. Bradshaw (Collegeville, The Liturgical Press, 1977),

<sup>548</sup> Translation taken from P. Bradshaw and M. Johnson’s work, *The Eucharistic Liturgies: Their Evolution and Interpretation* (Collegeville, Liturgical Press, 2012), p. 99.

σχῶμεν in the command.<sup>549</sup> However, this ‘form’ is found in the later eight century *Codex Barberini* 336 and, therefore, may not be attributed to the fourth century or early fifth century episcopal tenure of Chrysostom.<sup>550</sup> The bishop does set forth an outline of the introductory dialogue in his sermon *In 2 Cor Hom.* (18, 3). The following is taken from his sermon preached in Antioch:

But sometimes there is no difference between the priest and those under him, as for instance when they partake of the awesome mysteries.<sup>551</sup> For we are all alike counted worthy of the same things, not as in the Old Testament when the priest ate one part of the offering and the people another, and the people were not allowed to partake of what the priest received. But it is not that way now: for one Body is set before us all, and one Chalice. And in the prayers also, you see the people contributing much. For on behalf of the energumens, on behalf of those in penance, the prayers are offered in common by priest and them [the people], and all say the one prayer, the prayer full of mercy.<sup>552</sup> Again, when we exclude from the holy precincts those unable to partake of the Holy Table, another prayer is made, and we all alike fall to ground and all alike rise up. Again, when it is necessary to share and give the peace we all exchange the kiss [of peace]. Again, in the most awesome mysteries the priest prays for the people and the people pray for the priest; for “And with your spirit” is nothing but that. Everything in the eucharist is shared, for the priest does not give thanks alone, but also the people [give thanks] with him. For after he has first received their acclamation consenting that “It is fitting and right” to do this, only then does he commence the eucharist [i.e. anaphora]. Why are you surprised that the

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<sup>549</sup> For a detailed analysis see R. Taft’s work, *A History of the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom*, Vol. 6 (Roma, Pontificio Istituto Orientale, 2010)

<sup>550</sup> A survey of Brightman’s work, *Eastern Liturgies*, confirms the *textus receptus* of the *Sursum Corda* in the Byzantine tradition in manuscripts of Chrysostom and Basil is Ἄνω σχῶμεν τὰς καρδίας. Taft comments further that it is unvaried in all sources that mention it from Germanus, in his work *Ecclesiastical History and Mystical Contemplation* (composed between 715 -730) and *Barberini 336*, a mid-eight century uncial codex preserved in the Vatican Library, on with the sole exception of the roll *Esphigemnou* 34 of 1306 AD, which adds καρδίας ἡμῶν, a reading also found in some manuscripts of Peter. (See, Taft II, p. 54). Thus, the Byzantine tradition witnesses to the entrance of σχῶμεν into text of the command at least by the eight-century. The question of the inclusion of σχῶμεν into the command will be visited in the last chapter of our study.

<sup>551</sup> Theodore describes the act of Communion in a similar way. See Mingana, p. 110.

<sup>552</sup> R. Taft, in his work, *Through Their Eyes*, p. 103, comments on the priest’s prayers – ‘The custom of reciting the prayers in the hearing of the people would not survive the sixth century, however. In 565, the last year of his reign, emperor Justinian I (527-565), in *Novella 137*, orders ‘...all bishops and presbyters to say the prayers used in the divine oblation and holy baptism not inaudibly, but in a voice that can be heard by the faithful people, so that the souls of those who listen may be moved to greater compunction and raise up glorification to the Lord God...Hence it is fitting that the prayers in the holy oblation and the other prayers offered by the most holy bishops and presbyters in an audible tone to Our Lord Jesus Christ Our God, with the Father and the Holy Spirit...’(CIC III, 695-99).’

people speak together with the priest, why they send up in common those sacred hymns even with the very Cherubim and the heavenly Powers?<sup>553</sup>

The bishop's commentary on the introductory dialogue focuses on the amount of lay participation in the Divine Liturgy and the notion of thanksgiving. His reference to the introductory dialogue does not include any commentary on the *Sursum Corda* or the corresponding response of the people. His structuring of the dialogue proceeds from the Kiss of Peace, the prayer of blessing (the peace), and the response: 'And with your spirit.' Chrysostom completely ignores the priest's exhortation, Ἄνω τὰς καρδίας or Ἄνω σχῶμεν τὰς καρδίας and the response of the people, assumed to be, 'we have them with the Lord.'<sup>554</sup> He continues by referencing the laity's reply to the celebrant's words, 'Let us give thanks unto the Lord' as 'It is fitting and right.' Following, he mentions the priest and people, in common with heavenly hosts, participate in, arguably, the *Sanctus*. Due to the fact that the *Sursum Corda* is excluded by Chrysostom in this context, it raises questions regarding the meaning and function of the liturgical command. This exclusion may be due to the fact that the command to have one's heart lifted up is, for the bishop, a matter of personal piety and devotion. While it is a command to the gathered, it is realized individually by each participant in the liturgical celebration. Thus, he does not reference it. While this may be conjecture or an argument from silence, the following sermons that address the meaning Chrysostom ascribes to the *Sursum Corda* may strengthen our position.

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<sup>553</sup> PG 61:527, trans. adapted from NPNF series 1, vol. 12:356-66 as found in R. Taft's work, *Through Their Own Eyes: Liturgy as the Byzantines Saw It*, (Berkeley, InterOrthodox Press, 2006), pp. 29-30.

<sup>554</sup> Cf. n. 10.

## The Meaning of the Command

### *Sursum Corda - Heb. Homily 22. 3 and Homily 9*

Chrysostom's sermon *Hebrews Homily 22* section 7, reads 'Seek (saith He) and ye shall find.'<sup>555</sup> The preacher informs his listeners that when it comes to pursuing God, be careful 'For many are the hindrances, many the things that bring on darkness, many those things that impeded our perception...if we bury ourselves in the depth of evil desires, in the darkness of passions and of the affairs of this life, with difficulty do we look up, with difficulty to we raise our heads, with difficulty do we see clearly...Let us therefore shake off the earth from ourselves, let us break through the mist which lies upon us. It is a thick, and a close one, and does not allow us to see clearly.'<sup>556</sup> These exhortations to a proper Christian moral disposition and mindset reflect the fact that Chrysostom is more concerned with the heart of the worshipper than he is trying to explain the theological and liturgical significance of the liturgical drama.<sup>557</sup> For if one is captured by the things of the earth, those things the believer was delivered from in baptism, then his or her gaze is fixed on those things that are contrary to the heavenly gathering, i.e. influences of the devil, earthly passions and affairs. In turn, the one preparing to participate in the Eucharistic service will be distracted.<sup>558</sup> The bishop knows to move beyond the carnal and mundane is difficult. Anticipating the thoughts of the gathered, Chrysostom

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<sup>555</sup> *Homily 22.7 The Homilies of St. John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople ...* Vol. 39. , p. 260.

<sup>556</sup> *Ibid*, p. 260

<sup>557</sup> Harmless, *Augustine and the Catechumenate*, p. 72.

<sup>558</sup> Chrysostom often relates the Christian life to 'military enlistment' that takes place at baptism. The Lord, 'leads his troop into spiritual battle' (*Baptismal Instructions* 12.30-32). Finn writes, 'the spiritual battle is a combat with the devil and the demons, who are behind pagan religion and immorality (*Ibid.* 1.5)...Chrysostom relates the combat with the devil at baptism to the exodus of Israel from Egypt. "Now you shall see greater and more brilliant [miracles] than those seen when the Jews went forth from Egypt. You did not see Pharaoh and his armies drowned, but you did see the drowning of the devil and his armies. The Jews passed through the sea; you have passed through the sea of death. They were delivered from the Egyptians; you are set free from the demon. They put aside their servitude to barbarians; you have set aside the far more hazardous servitude to sin. (*Ibid.* 3.24).' As found in *Baptism in the Early Church*, p. 549.

explains,

And how, you say, is this cloud broken through? If we draw to ourselves the beams of the sun of righteousness. The lifting up of my hands (it is said) is an evening sacrifice. With our hands let us also lift up our mind<sup>559</sup>: ye who have been initiated in the mysteries know what I mean, perhaps you too recognize the expression, and comprehend what I am hinting at. Let us raise our thoughts on high.

The preacher's words, as we discovered in Chapter 2 of our work, describes the physical posture (the *orans*) assumed in evening prayer to be that also of the *Sursum Corda*. Therefore, in the bishop's commentary there is a connection between the physical posture and, in this case, the mind. Here we see that Chrysostom may be familiar with the variation of the command employed by his contemporary, Theodore of Mopsuestia.<sup>560</sup> If this was not a reference to the *Sursum Corda*, then there would not be a need to hint to the initiated. Moreover, the function of the command, the meaning, is seen as a pastoral exhortation to remove the mind of the hearers, and therefore their hearts, beyond sinful inclinations 'on high' to the Lord; thereby manifesting the moral character of the baptized – for baptism is a cross on which the believer has been crucified to world. (*Homily 9.6*).<sup>561</sup>

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<sup>559</sup> However, Taft believes the text of the *Sursum corda* is problematic. He writes, in reference to the language in the homily, 'This could only be "Let us lift up our mind," the traditional Antiochene variant of the present "Let us lift up our hearts.'" See, Taft II, p. 57.

<sup>560</sup> See Taft's discussion on the Chyrostom's use of *vovv* instead of *καρδια* in Taft II, p. 61 and in Bouman, *Variants*, p. 107.

<sup>561</sup> We may gain further insight into Chrysostom's understanding of the *Sursum Corda* later in his sermon (*Homily 22.8*) where he writes, 'The swiftest birds fly unhurt over mountains, and woods, and seas, and rocks, in a brief moment of time. Such also is our mind; when it has put on its wings, when it has separated itself from the things of this life, nothing can lay hold of it, it is higher than all things, even than the fiery darts of the devil.' The preacher continues by describing the need to be fully armed and fortified with 'the shield of faith, let us keep guard with all carefulness, so as to be impregnable.' Following, he informs his hearers of the actual sins that function as weapons of the devil, 'Now the dart of the devil is evil concupiscence. Anger is in a special way a fire, flame; it catches, destroys, consumes; let us quench it, by long-suffering, by forbearance...For nothing is equal to long-suffering. A man of such character is never insulted...For they are raised above the darts.' Again, if this commentary is about the *Sursum Corda*, it means to engage the devil in spiritual warfare with the hope of rising above his earthly influence. Translation taken from J. Parker, *The Homilies of St. John Chrysostom* (Oxford, Jamer Parker and co. and Rivingtons, 1877), p. 262.

### *Sursum Corda: Homily 9: ‘On Repentance’*

Chrysostom’s second reference to the *Sursum Corda* is found in *Homily 9: ‘On Repentance.’* The preacher is exhorting his audience to engage in good works so as to take care of their souls. It seems that many of his parishioners were saying that those who live in the world and in the midst of many concerns cannot be saved. Following, Chrysostom addresses the pastoral issue that is at hand. Certain people were showing more respect to the emperor than Christ and His Church: ‘It is because you do not attend continually the prayers and the divine gatherings. Do you not see that those who want to receive dignities from the earthly emperor are always found next to him, that they cause others to entreat so they will not lose what they request? These things are said about those who forsake the divine assemblies, and about those who occupy themselves with secular matters and vain talk during the time of the Dreadful and Mystical Table.’<sup>562</sup> We see from his comments, that people were forsaking the Eucharistic gathering addressing secular matters during the Divine Liturgy.<sup>563</sup> Chrysostom’s response to these distractions is to direct his hearers attention to the *Sursum Corda*. He questions them, ‘What are you doing, O man? When the priest says: “Let us lift up our mind and our hearts,”<sup>564</sup> why do you not

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<sup>562</sup> Ibid. p. 127.

<sup>563</sup> In *Homily 24*, Chrysostom compares and contrast the notion of believers as being citizens of heaven (Heb. 11: 13-16) and St. Paul’s words, ‘For the world has been crucified with me and I to the world’ with the mindset of his listeners, ‘But we, being at home and quite alive and busy ourselves about all things here as citizens. And the very thing which righteous men were to the world, strangers and dead, that we are to heaven. And the very thing which they were to Heaven, alive and as its citizens [whose home and interests were there], that we are to the world. Wherefore we are dead... Wherefore we have provoked God to wrath, because when the enjoyments of Heaven have been set before us, not even so are we willing to separate ourselves from things on earth, but, just like worms, we turn about from the earth to the earth, and again from this to that, and in short we are not willing to lift up ourselves even for a little while, not to withdraw ourselves from human affairs; but just as if we were thoroughly immersed in our torpor and sleel and drunkenness, are stupefied with imaginations.’ (Parker, *Chrysostom*, p. 384).

<sup>564</sup> As Taft points out, the *Protheria 21* (AD 1085-1095), comments on the dialogue: ‘Soon the bishop exhorts all to have the hearts up, and the whole mind (ανο τας καρδιασ εχειν, και ολον τον νουν).<sup>564</sup> After considering the possibility that Constantinople once knew the Antiochene form ‘Let us lift up the mind,’ or the conflated Jerusalem redaction, ‘Let us lift up mind and hearts (ανο σχωμεν τον νουν και τας καρδιας),’ he continues in his commentary, ‘We can immediately exclude any suggestion that

affirm and say: ‘We lift them up unto the Lord’? You are not afraid? You are not ashamed of being found a liar at this terrible moment? Bless me, what a wonder!’<sup>565</sup>

He continues his exhortation by describing the liturgical actions and theological significance of what is taking place before them:

The Mystical Table is prepared, the Lamb of God is sacrificing Himself for you, the priest is struggling on your behalf, spiritual fire is gushing forth from the Table, the Cherubim are standing by and the Seraphim are flying, the six winged creatures are covering their faces, all the bodiless powers together with the priest are interceding on your behalf, the spiritual fire is descending, the blood from the Immaculate Side is emptying into the vessel for your purification, and you are not afraid, you do not blush, and you are found a liar at that terrible moment?<sup>566</sup>

We see in this description of the service that the gathered in question, by not having their hearts and minds to the Lord, are not engaging in the heavenly liturgy. More to the point, they do not realize the spiritual significance of what is taking place before them. By offering their response to the command, ‘We lift them up unto the Lord’ they are lying about their participation in the liturgy as their mind is consumed with vain matters. Chrysostom explains that there are 168 hours in a week and God set aside one hour for Himself, ‘and you spend it in worldly and ridiculous affairs and in company.’<sup>567</sup> The preacher’s comments reflect a common pastoral challenge among the fourth century writers included in our study. Each one struggles with the ability to explain, communicate and convince the gathered that the bread and wine offered in the Eucharist becomes the Body and Blood of Christ. Chrysostom, after comparing the way people approach the emperor as being more orderly and respectful than Christ Himself in the Eucharist, writes, ‘Do not see it as bread,

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Chrysostom could be referring to the latter, for in his time this conflated redaction did not exist.’<sup>564</sup> Therefore, he concludes the text is not authentically Chrysostom. However, W.E. Scudmore argues that Chrysostom witnesses to the reading in St. James rather than that of the Liturgy that bears his own name in *Homily IX. de Poenitentia*, tom. ii, p. 412. See also Bouman’s discussion on this issue in *Variants*, pp. 113-114

<sup>565</sup> Ibid., p.126.

<sup>566</sup> Ibid, p.127.

<sup>567</sup> Ibid, p.127.

neither think that it is wine, for the body does not eliminate them in a toilet like other food...For this reason when you approach, do not think that you partake of the Divine Body from a man; rather, believe that you partake of the Divine Body from the Seraphim with the fiery spoon that Isaiah saw; and when we partake of the Saving Blood, let us believe that our lips touch the very Divine and Immaculate Side.<sup>568</sup> The preacher's words, like that of Cyril and Theodore, seem to indicate that the physical qualities of bread and wine (the appearance of the Gifts) that remain after the consecration contribute to the disorderly conduct at the Eucharist. Instead of seeing Christ before them in the Celebration and showing due respect when they receive Him in their hands, they display greater honor when they touch the garments of the earthly emperor. Chrysostom suggests that the command, *Sursum Corda*, if grasped spiritually, sets aright the spiritual disposition of the hearer. With the heart and mind lifted up to the Lord, the worshipper can 'see' and participate properly in the Eucharist. Chrysostom encourages his listeners, 'Therefore, for this reason my brethren, let us not be absent from the churches, and inside them let us no longer occupy our time in conversations. Let us stand with fear and trembling, with our eyes lowered and the soul elevated, with silent sighs and loud shouts of the heart.'<sup>569</sup> Thus, our exploration reveals that when Chrysostom references the *Sursum Corda* it is for the specific reason of addressing the proper spiritual attitude each person gathered should possess before the anaphora.

### **Conclusion**

Contrary to Cyprian, Cyril and Theodore, we were not able to approach Chrysostom's reference to the *Sursum corda* in a systematic liturgical manner.

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<sup>568</sup> Ibid, p.127.

<sup>569</sup> Ibid, p. 127.

However, we discovered the key to understanding the meaning Chrysostom ascribes to the command is found in Chapter 2 of our work that addresses the ritual social context of the bishop's church. It seems he confronted more pastoral issues, or at least recorded more them, than the other Fathers included in our study. Morality was a major issue of concern for Chrysostom and he addresses it more than once with clergy and laity. The bishop, like the other Fathers in our study, attributes this type of problem to the ongoing battle the baptized encountered with the devil and demons. The power to overcome them was found in the sacramental and liturgical life of the Church. In *Heb. Homily 22,3*, the bishop informs his hearers that the only way they can break through spiritual darkness and oppression brought on by the evil one is to 'shake off the earth' and by assuming the *orans* posture of prayer and, with the lifting up of the hands, lift the mind and thoughts up also. In turn, with the mind on high, the Christian will spiritually soar above the fiery darts (passions and desires), the earthly influences of the devil. In *Homily 9: 'On Repentance,'* Chrysostom makes his second direct reference to the *Sursum Corda*. This time, instead of a positive exhortation, he uses the command as a means to chastise those that are gathered. Due to the fact that they are approaching the Eucharistic gifts in an unworthy manner, disrespectfully, means their hearts and minds are not lifted up to the Lord. If this was the case, then they would have spiritual eyes to see the heavenly reality of the Body and Blood of Christ before them. Instead, they are found as 'liars' at this moment because, according to his commentary, they only see bread and wine. Therefore, as in Cyril and Theodore, Chrysostom understands the function of the *Sursum Corda* to be the primary liturgical means by which the heavenly liturgy, and the reality of the consecrated Eucharistic gifts, can be properly perceived. With our study on the Eastern fourth century Fathers complete, we will now return to North

Africa and explore how Augustine of Hippo employs the *Sursum Corda* in his mystagogical catechesis and sermons

## Chapter 8

### Augustine of Hippo: *Sursum Corda* and God's Grace

#### Introduction

The writings of Augustine of Hippo (354 – 430 A.D.), unquestionably more than any other, influenced and shaped Western Christianity. His extensive corpus of sermons, treatises and letters contain more references to the phrase *Sursum Cor(da)* than any other Christian figure.<sup>570</sup> However, for our purposes, we will focus primarily on how the bishop describes the liturgical function of the command in *Sermon 227*. It will serve as the outline for our study.<sup>571</sup> Like Cyprian, Cyril and Theodore, this mystagogical instruction by the bishop sets forth a comprehensive and connective theological context from initiation in the Church to participation in the Eucharist.<sup>572</sup> We owe a lot of what we know about Augustine and his catechumenate to a concerned deacon from Carthage, Deogratias. He instructed the catechumens 'in the rudiments of the faith' due to his learning and oratory skills.<sup>573</sup> However, at some point, Deogratias was concerned over his self-perceived lack of

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<sup>570</sup> Finn notes, 'By his own account Augustine left behind ninety-three treatises in 270 volumes. The list, however, does not include thirteen works written between 426 and 430, nor his seventy-six extant letters, nor close to 1,000 sermons.' See *Early Church Baptism*, p, 148. His references to the *Sursum cor* include: *Sermons*: 19, 5: 25, 2; 69, 5: 86, 1; 165:4 176, 6; 227; 261, 1; 311, 15 (PL 38, 135, 168, 439, 524, 904, 953, 1100, 1202, 1420); 345, 4 (PL 39, 1520) as noted in Taft II, p. 56.

<sup>571</sup> For a discussion on the allegorical language and its relation to the catechumenate see H. Boersma's work, *Heavenly Participation: The Weaving of a Sacramental Tapestry* (Grand Rapids, Wm. B. Erdman's, 2011), pp. 109-112, 139).

<sup>572</sup> Mazza comments, 'The second half of the fourth century saw the rise of the great mystagogical homilies... The principal authors are Cyril of Jerusalem, John Chrysostom, Theodore of Mopsuestia, and Ambrose of Milan, but we ought to add the name of Augustine, even though he did not preach sets of mystagogical catecheses in the true and proper sense of the word.' Taken from his work, *The Celebration of the Eucharist: The Origin of the Rite and the Development of Its Interpretation* (Collegeville, The Liturgical Press, 1999), p.147.

<sup>573</sup> This paragraph of our study is dependent upon Augustine's letter, *De Catechizandis Rudibus* and the work by W. Harmless, *Augustine and the Catechumenate* (Collegeville, The Liturgical Press, 1995), p. 69.

ability.<sup>574</sup> He requested assistance from Augustine regarding his public speaking skills. The bishop responded to the deacon's request by sending him a small pastoral treatise entitled, *On Catechizing Inquirers (De Catechizandis Rudibus)* – a systematic proclamation of the Gospel.<sup>575</sup> According to the instructions found within it, Deogratias was to ask the baptismal candidates, upon completion, if they 'believe these things and desire to observe them.' If they answered positively, they were to be 'signed with due ceremony' and 'handled according to the custom of the Church.'<sup>576</sup> Harmless writes, 'This ceremony – the entrance into the catechumenate – included several rites: perhaps, a laying-on of hands; certainly, a signing of the cross on the forehead and taste of salt.'<sup>577</sup> Augustine interpreted these initial rites as a shadow and foretaste of the sacraments of initiation whereby they were to be conceived in the womb of mother Church.<sup>578</sup> But now, the new catechumens (*competentes*), could call themselves Christians as they belonged to the 'the great household.'<sup>579</sup> If they continued their spiritual progression, eventually they would be baptized and receive the Body and Blood of Christ in the Eucharist - the spiritual food that nourishes the family. It is within this context, we find Augustine's description of the liturgical meaning of the *Sursum Corda* as it relates the divine grace of election realized in baptism and the heavenly position of the believer in Christ.

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<sup>574</sup> *De Catechizandis Rudibus* 1.1 (trans. Joseph P. Christopher, ACW 2:13) as found in Harmless, *Augustine*, p. 70. Harmless also includes a listing of sources that address the dating of Deogratias's request to Augustine.

<sup>575</sup> Harmless, *Augustine*, p. 71.

<sup>576</sup> *De Catechizandis Rudibus* 26.50 translation by Christopher, p. 82 as found in Harmless, *Augustine*, p. 112.

<sup>577</sup> Augustine considered the salt 'a sacrament' which, in some sense, 'preserved' and 'seasoned' the candidate.' As found in Harmless, *Augustine*, p. 112.

<sup>578</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 113 referencing *Sermo* 260 C. 1

<sup>579</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 113 referencing *Sermo* 301 A. 8.

## The Spiritual Journey to Baptism

### *Sermon 227*

Like the Church figures that precede him in our study, Augustine catechized those who were preparing for baptism during the Lenten season. The bishop was personally familiar with the process. As an infant his mother enrolled him in the catechumenate, but as was custom at this time, he was not baptized due to the fear that sins committed after baptism carried greater guilt.<sup>580</sup> ‘I was already signed with the sign of the cross and seasoned with salt from the time I came forth from my mother’s womb.’<sup>581</sup> His own account of his baptism in Milan is limited to a few words, ‘We were baptized, and disquiet about our past life vanished from us.’<sup>582</sup> Of special importance to our study is what took place during the exorcisms and Augustine’s baptismal theology. In order to gain a better understanding of these things, we will explore some of the bishop’s other writings on these subjects and then return to *Sermon 227*.

### **Exorcisms – Being Removed from the Power of Satan**

A series of exorcisms took place throughout the Lenten catechumenate whereby the *competentes* were progressively being freed from the dominion of the devil and being transferred to God’s in preparation for their adoption as sons on the day of baptism.<sup>583</sup> Finn describes this time as follows:

‘Competency’ was especially a time for probing and testing. As a result, exorcism was a frequent part of the competents’ experience. As Augustine puts it, the purpose was to grind the competents as grain into flour for the bread that he calls *corpus mysticum Christi* which he thinks of as both the church and the eucharist (*Sermon 229*). In the rite the ministers imposed their

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<sup>580</sup> See Mark Searle’s essay, ‘Infant Baptism Reconsidered,’ in M.E. Johnson, ed., *Living Water, Sealing Spirit: Readings on Christian Initiation* (Collegeville, Liturgical Press, 1995), p. 367.

<sup>581</sup> *Confessions* 1.11.17 trans. by Henry Chadwick as found in his work *Saint Augustine Confessions*, World’s Classics (Oxford, OUP, 1991), p. 13.

<sup>582</sup> *Ibid.*, *Confessions*, 9.6.14 (p. 163).

<sup>583</sup> Ferguson, *Baptism*, p. 794.

hands on the *competents*, invoked the power of Christ and the Trinity, and voiced angry biblical rebukes of the devil, per-emptorally commanding his instant expulsion.<sup>584</sup>

During the end of the catechumenate an intense scrutiny took place. Ferguson explains, 'It involved a physical exam to determine if there were signs on the body that would indicate that one was still under the power of Satan. Curses were pronounced on the devil, and there was a breathing on (or hissing at) the candidate to expel the Devil.'<sup>585</sup> The exorcism was made in the name of Christ.<sup>586</sup> Augustine references this stage of the catechumenate (beginning on the 8<sup>th</sup> day, Saturday, eve of Palm Sunday and the Lamp-lighting (*lucernarium*), and the responsibility of the *competentes* to examine their own hearts:

What we are doing for you by invoking the name of your redeemer, you must complete by thoroughly scrutinizing and crushing your hearts. We block the wiles of the ancient and obstinate enemy with prayers to God and with stern rebukes; you must stand up to him with your earnest prayers and contrition of heart, in order to be snatched from the power of darkness and transferred into the kingdom of his glory... We heap curses on him, appropriate to his vile wickedness; it is for you, rather, to join the glorious battle with him by turning away from him and devoutly renouncing him...

And you indeed, while you were being scrutinized, and the persuader of flight and desertion was being properly rebuked by the terrifying omnipotence of the Trinity, were not actually clothed in sackcloth, but yet your feet were symbolically standing on it...

From these we have just now found you to be free; we congratulate you, and exhort you to preserve in your hearts the health that is apparent in your bodies.<sup>587</sup>

We see in this description of the exorcisms that the heart is the battle ground

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<sup>584</sup> Thomas Finn, 'It Happened One Saturday Night: Ritual and Conversion in Augustine's North Africa Author(s): JAAR, Vol. 58, No. 4 (Winter, 1990), pp. 592.

<sup>585</sup> Finn comments, 'The striking finale was "exsufflation": grasping the *competents*, the exorcist hissed in their faces. Were exsufflation done to a statue of the emperor, according to Augustine, the offence would have been the capital crime of denigrating majesty. As for the *competents* themselves, they may have been dressed in coarse leather outer garments (*tunicae pel-liciae*) and stood barefoot, with necks bent. Although we will return to the subject shortly, one can sense that exorcism could be a terrifying experience. Caveat *competens!*' see 'It Happened,' p. 592.

<sup>586</sup> Ferguson, *Baptism*, p. 794.

<sup>587</sup> *Sermon* 216.6.10.11 as found in Ferguson, *Baptism*, p. 794.

between good and evil.<sup>588</sup> Moreover, according to Augustine, the spiritual disposition of the heart is evidenced by the lack of bodily markings that accompany the indwelling of evil. Following, the catechumens received instruction on the Creed which was to be confessed after the Baptismal rite and the Lord's Prayer. Moreover, it was recited daily, 'as if a daily baptism', because of its petition for the forgiveness of sins.<sup>589</sup> Beyond the individual renunciations, the entire vigil celebrated the cosmic victory of Christ over sin, death and over the demonic powers.<sup>590</sup> Now, with their instruction complete, the catechumens prepared for the rite of baptism.

### **Baptism and Union with Christ**

In similar fashion to Theodore but contrary to Cyril, Augustine instructed the *competentes* on the theology of baptism before they participated in the sacrament. As they stepped down into the baptistery, the *competentes* were baptized in the name of the Trinity: their sins were forgiven,<sup>591</sup> their fleshly nature removed (baptism replaces circumcision and looks forward to human resurrection),<sup>592</sup> they were born

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<sup>588</sup> Caesarius of Arles, in *Sermon* 136, discusses how all created beasts seek food for themselves. According to the preacher, this is not limited to just physical animals. Spiritual beasts, the devil and his angels, seek food from God as well. Their appetite is for 'careless and tepid men, the bloodthirsty, proud, sensual and avaricious. They, indeed, are the food of spiritual beasts, for by their wicked deeds they compensate the devil for the loss of his soul.' He further describes the prey of the evil one as follows: 'but men who are earthly-minded, sensual, and proud, who love the earth and place all their hopes in it. They labor entirely for carnal advantages, nay rather for such pleasures, and think little or nothing of the salvation of their souls. Men like these the devil seeks... therefore let each one look to his own conscience (assigned to him at the beginning cross with predest of Aug). If he sees he has greater care for his own body than for his soul, let him fear that he will become food for the serpent.' Contrasting earth and heaven, or the carnal with the spiritual, Caesarius refers, once again, to notion of heavenly citizenship and relates it to the *Sursum Corda*: 'As far as possible let him strive to fulfill what the Apostle says, "But our citizenship is in heaven." Moreover, when the priest says: "Lift up your hearts," let him reply with perfect security that he has turned to the Lord.'" As with Augustine, to not have one's heart lifted up is to be open the advance of the adversary, 'If you do not want to be the food of a serpent, do not be earth. In other words, do not place all your hopes and efforts in the earth. Indeed, if the devil sees you occupied too much with worldly pleasure, he seeks you from God as food for himself.' Translation taken from *The Fathers of the Church*, Vol.47, p. 268.

<sup>589</sup> *Sermon* 213.9 in Ferguson, *Baptism*, p. 795.

<sup>590</sup> Harmless, *Augustine*, p. 266.

<sup>591</sup> *Sermon* 229.E.2

<sup>592</sup> *Sermon* 213.9; 223.2

again, cleansed and justified by the grace of God,<sup>593</sup> and transferred from darkness to light (enlightened).<sup>594</sup> Moreover, Augustine employs imagery taken from Romans 6:1-11 to describe how baptism relates to the cross of Christ:

[Paul makes] us understand baptism in Christ as nothing but an image of Christ's death, and that Christ's death on the cross is nothing but an image of the remission of sin. Just as real as was death, so real is the remission of our sins; and just as real as was his resurrection, so real is our justification.<sup>595</sup>

This sacramental grace is not a static one-time experience, theologically speaking, but rather a day-to-day reality in the Christian's life. Ferguson writes, 'Augustine continues Paul's point in Romans 6 that those dead in sin are not to practice it. The crucifixion, burial, resurrection, and ascension of Christ as models for the Christian life – crucifying the flesh, buried in baptism, resurrection to a new life, seeking the things above where Christ is (*Enchiridion* 14.53).'<sup>596</sup> In Augustine's own words, 'You believed, you were baptized, your old life died, slain on the cross, buried in baptism. The old, which you lived so badly, has been buried; let the new life arise.'<sup>597</sup> In essence, if the *infantes* wanted to be successful in their Christian experience, they needed to be continually moving their hearts from the things of earth, former things, to the resurrected Christ in heaven, future things. Furthermore, according to Finn, for Augustine baptism is the sacrament of the resurrection.<sup>598</sup> Therefore, the initiated are to always have their baptism before them as a reminder of their participation in the life of the exalted Christ. However, the struggle against the devil and the flesh remained a reality. Thus, before their participation in the rite, the candidates were anointed with chrism and by this 'Christ has made us wrestlers

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<sup>593</sup> *Against the Letters of Petilian* 3.50.62.

<sup>594</sup> *Sermon* 225.4

<sup>595</sup> Ferguson, *Baptism*, p. 803.

<sup>596</sup> *Ibid*, p. 804.

<sup>597</sup> *Ibid*, p. 804.

<sup>598</sup> Finn, *Early Christian Baptism*, p. 157.

against the devil.<sup>599</sup> After baptism, the neophytes were signed with oil on their forehead signifying they ‘like Christ the King, would have strength, “like kings, [to] rule over the flesh and overcome the world.”’<sup>600</sup> Now that the baptismal rite was complete, the newly baptized prepared to receive the Eucharist.

### Post-Baptismal Instruction

After their baptism on Easter Day, Augustine delivered a series of sermons directed specifically to the newly illumined, the *infantes*.<sup>601</sup> In the annex of the main basilica, the neophytes were led back to the main basilica where they were greeted by the faithful. Harmless, referencing *Sermon 260.C,7* describes their first communion experience, ‘During their first Eucharist, the neophytes simply listened and watched, apparently in baffled silence, for they received no prior catechesis concerning it.’<sup>602</sup> For the next week, they witnessed the Eucharist at close range: standing in the *cancelli*, a sanctuary area which was sectioned off by a railing and within which the bishop, presbyters and deacons normally stood.’<sup>603</sup> In *Sermon 227*, Augustine describes in detail what the new converts are seeing and experiencing in the liturgy.

As with Cyril and Theodore, Augustine needed to instruct the *infantes* in the proper way to perceive and receive what was before them on the altar. After

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<sup>599</sup> *Tractatus in evangelium Ioannis 33.3* (trans. John Gibb and James Innes, NPNF 7.197) as found in Harmless, *Augustine*, p. 272.

<sup>600</sup> *De civitate Dei 17.4.9* as found in Harmless, *Augustine*, p. 273.

<sup>601</sup> In *Sermon 228* Augustine explains his terminology for the newly baptized, ‘Those persons, who not long ago were called *competentes*, are now called *infantes*. They were said to be *competentes* because they were beating against their mother’s womb, seeking to be born; they are now called *infantes* because they, who were first born to the world, are now born to Christ.’ Translation by Sister Mary Sarah Muldowney, R.S.M in *St Augustine: Sermons on the Liturgical Seasons* (Washington, D.C., The Catholic University Press, 1959), p. 199.

<sup>602</sup> Exhausted from the rituals and demands of the vigil season, Augustine concludes *Sermon 228*, ‘Concerning the Sacrament of the holy altar, which they have seen today, however, they have heard nothing. Today a sermon on this subject is their due, but it ought to be brief both because of our fatigue and their edification.’

<sup>603</sup> William Harmless, *Augustine and the Catechumentate* (Collegeville, The Liturgical Press, 1995), p. 312.

encouraging them to participate in daily communion, he describes the Eucharistic gifts: ‘That bread which you see on the altar, consecrated by the word of God<sup>604</sup>, is the Body of Christ. Through those accidents the Lord wished to entrust to us His Body and the Blood which He poured out for the remission of sins.’<sup>605</sup> Afterwards, Augustine interjects his principle of worthiness, ‘If you have received worthily, you are what you have received, for the Apostle says, ‘The bread is one; we though many, are one body.’ This imagery taken from 1 Cor. 10:17 represents unity within the church – something the bishop wrote should be ‘cherished.’<sup>606</sup> In light of our previous work where we learned about the internal and external struggles of the gathered during the assembly, Augustine speaks of unity from his own experience with the Donatists.<sup>607</sup> He continues by relating the process of making bread to the process of the catechumenate:<sup>608</sup>

Unless wheat is ground, after all, and moistened with water, it can’t possibly get into this shape which is called bread. In the same way you too were being ground and pounded, as it were, by the humiliation of fasting and the sacrament of exorcism. Then came baptism, and you were, in a manner of speaking, moistened with water in order to be shaped into bread. But it’s not yet bread without fire to bake it. So what does fire represent? That’s the

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<sup>604</sup> Cyril understood the consecration to take place via the Holy Spirit. Augustine refers to ‘word’ or words of institution, ‘This is my Body; This is my Blood.’ See C. W. Dugmore (1951). ‘Sacrament and Sacrifice in the Early Fathers.’ *JEH*, 2, pp 24-37 for an overview.

<sup>605</sup> Translation by Sister Mary Sarah Muldowney, R.S.M in *St Augustine: Sermons on the Liturgical Seasons* (New York, Fathers of the Church, 1959), p. 196.

<sup>606</sup> This imagery is also found in *Didache* 9:4: ‘As this broken bread was once scattered on the mountains, and after it had been brought together became one, so may thy Church be gathered together from the ends of the earth unto thy kingdom; for thine is the glory, and the power, through Jesus Christ, forever.’

<sup>607</sup> James of Edessa (479-486) also uses the *Sursum Corda* as a means to emphasize unity. ‘And after this the priest says to the people, Lift Up Your Hearts: the people answer him Our hearts are with Lord. And moreover he cries aloud to them Let us give thanks unto the Lord: and they answer him What thou hast said is Meet and Right. And when these things that have been mentioned - to wit that he has given them the peace and has signed them with the cross – and that they have answered him appropriately – and by these two last things – to wit that he has given them direction and that they have given their consent and pronounced his intent to be right – they with him and he with them have been made one body of Christ and one mind: then the priest turns to God and, from the words whereunto they have consented and from the intent of the 40 people themselves, makes a beginning of the words to God the Father to whom is offered the sacrifice of the body and blood of the only begotten for the propitiation of the people.’ As found in Brightman, *Eastern Liturgies*, p. 491-492.

<sup>608</sup> Sister Muldowney, *St. Augustine*, p. 196.

chrism, the anointing.<sup>609</sup>

In preparation for these things, the newly baptized are encouraged when they come to church to ‘put aside empty talk; and to concentrate your attention on the Scriptures. We are your books.’<sup>610</sup> When the Spirit descends, wrote Augustine, ‘...He enkindles charity by which we ardently desire God and spurn the world, by which our chaff is consumed and our heart purified as gold.’<sup>611</sup> We see thus far in Augustine’s sermon, exhortations to be worthy, unified, to put aside empty talk and to spurn the world. He concludes his analogy by summarizing the rites that have taken place, and again, referencing unity, Therefore, the fire, that is, the Holy Spirit, comes after the water; then you become bread, that is, the body of Christ. Hence, in a certain manner, unity is signified.<sup>612</sup> Now that the sacraments have been explained in order and the *infantes* are warned about what mindset not to have in the service, Augustine turns his attention to the introductory dialogue in the Eucharistic prayer.<sup>613</sup>

### ***Sursum cor: The Meaning of the Liturgical Command***

Augustine’s explanation and description of the *Sursum Corda* is a major focus of our study. Therefore, we will present the Latin text and then, for clarification, reconstruct the introductory dialogue found within it:

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<sup>609</sup> As found in Ferguson, Baptism, p. 793. Translation from Edmund Hill, Sermons III/6, *The Works of St. Augustine: A Translation for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (New Rochelle, New City Press, 1993), p. 254.

We are indebted to his work in this section of our study.

<sup>610</sup> Ibid, p. 196.

<sup>611</sup> Ibid, p.196.

<sup>612</sup> Ibid, p. 197.

<sup>613</sup> In *Sermon 229*, Augustine again stresses these same characteristics, ‘Behold what you have received ! Therefore, just as you see that the bread which was made is one mass, so may you also be one Body by loving one another, by having one faith, one hope, and an undivided charity. When heretics receive this Sacrament, they receive testimony against themselves, because they seek division, while this bread indicates unity. Thus, too, the wine existed in many clusters of grapes; and now it is one. It is one in the beautiful golden cup after the crushing of the grapes in the wine-press. And now you, in the name of Christ, have come to the chalice of the Lord, after your fasts, your labors, your humiliations, and your contrition. There you are on the table, and there you are in the chalice, for you are one with us. We receive [His Body] together, and we drink [His Blood] together because we live together.’ Translation taken from Sister Muldowney, *St. Augustine*, p.202.

*Tenetis sacramenta ordine suo. Primo post orationem, admonemini sursum habere cor. Hoc decet membra Christi. Si enim membra Christi facti estis, caput vestrum ubi est? Membra habent caput. Si caput non praecessisset, membra non sequerentur. Quo iuit caput vestrum? Quid reddidistis in Symbolo? Tertia die resurrexit a mortuis, ascendit in caelum, sedet ad dexteram Patris. Ergo in coelo est caput nostrum. Ideo cum dicitur, Sursum cor; respondetis, Habemus ad Dominum, tribuatis viribus vestris, meritis vestris, laboribus vestris, quia Dei donum est sursum habere cor; ideo sequitur episcopus, vel presbyter qui offert, et dicit, cum responderit populus, Habemus ad Dominum sursum cor: Gratias agamus, quia nisi donaret, in terra cor habermus. Et vos attestamini, Dignum et justum est, ut ei gratias agamus qui nos fecit sursum ad nostrum caput habere cor.*<sup>614</sup>

The first phrase we need to consider in our reconstruction is ‘*Primo post orationem*’ or ‘First, after the prayer.’ Augustine’s sermon does not include the specific language of ‘the prayer,’ but Harmless, in his construction, presents it as the familiar:

The Lord be with you,  
And with thy spirit.<sup>615</sup>

Next, we see the first reference to the *Sursum Corda* as (*sursum habere cor*) – have your heart lifted up.<sup>616</sup> However, Augustine is not directly quoting what is said in the Eucharistic liturgy.<sup>617</sup> He does this later in the paragraph (*Ideo cum dicitur, Sursum cor; respondentis*) with the corresponding response (*Habemus ad Dominum*).<sup>618</sup>

### ***Sursum cor*: Textual Considerations**

In this first reference ‘*sursum habere cor*’ it seems Augustine is exhorting the *infantes* to do something: 1.) to *lift* their hearts on high when they hear the

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<sup>614</sup> Text taken from MPL038, pp. 1100-1101.

<sup>615</sup> Harmless, *Augustine and the Catechuminate*, p. 312.

<sup>616</sup> See Augustine - *Sermons on the Gospel of John - Tract XVIII* – Chapt. V - 19 where he discusses the heart.

<sup>617</sup> Bouman expresses concern over Augustine’s common use of *Sursum cor* instead of *Sursum corda* in his writings. However, he refers to a conversation he had with Dr. Christine Mohrmann that explained that “the singular *sursum cor* in the sermons of St. Augustine is just another instance of the general use he makes of the singular, when he affects his hearers more directly by speaking to each of them separately, or when he regards them individually; whereas he uses the plural when he quotes the exact liturgical formulas.” Contrary to Mohrmann’s conclusions, we see in *Sermon 227* that Augustine makes a direct reference to exact liturgical formula and it is the singular *sursum cor* instead of the plural *corda*. See Bouman, “Introduction to the Eucharist,” p. 103 footnote 23.

<sup>618</sup> Heart up! We have them with the Lord.

exclamation *Sursum cor*. In other words, they need to have their hearts on high when they hear the celebrant articulate the formal liturgical command. The first reference is describing their spiritual participation in the liturgy while the second is referencing what is actually said by the bishop or priest officiating. Thus, Augustine's textual liturgical reference is consistent with that of Hippolytus and Cyprian except that he uses the singular (*cor*) instead of (*corda*) presumably either to emphasize the individual spiritual requirement of each of the neophytes or to simply correct the vulgar Latin of *corda* to the correct Latin of *cor*.

### **Spiritual Ascent as a result of Baptismal Grace**

Whereas Cyril and Theodore incorporate dramatic language to assist the Spirit in conferring the meaning of the Eucharistic rituals and symbols (bread and wine as Body and Blood), Augustine relies more on the grace found within baptism. Through the ceremony of baptism, the *infantes* are now considered Spirit-filled members of Christ. According to the Creed (*Symbolum*) they recited, 'On the third day He (Christ) rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven; He sits on the right hand of the Father.'<sup>619</sup> Jungman notes, 'Augustine takes occasion, time after time, to speak of the *Sursum Corda*. For him the words are the expression of a Christian attitude, much the same as St. Paul's admonition to those who have risen with Christ: *quae sursum sunt quaerite*; our Head is in heaven, and therefore our hearts must also be with him.'<sup>620</sup> Augustine contends having the heart on high with Christ is not something that individuals can achieve on their own strength, merit or labors.<sup>621</sup> In his work, '*On Predestination of the Saints and the Gift of Perseverance*'

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<sup>619</sup> '*Quo ivit caput vestrum? Quid reddistis in Symbolo? Tertia die resurrexit a mortuis, a ascendit in coelom, sedet ad dexateram Patris.*'

<sup>620</sup> Joseph Jungman, *The Mass of the Roman Rite* (Dublin, Four Courts Press, 1953), p. 110.

<sup>621</sup> '*...tribuatis viribus vestris, meritis vestris, laboribus vestris.*'

Book II Chapt. 33, he explains that to lift up one's heart to the Lord is a direct result of God's grace:

Therefore, as is said in the sacraments of believers, that we should lift up our hearts to the Lord is God's gift; for which gift they to whom this is said are admonished by the priest after this word to give thanks to our Lord God Himself; and they answer that it is "meet and right so to do." For, since our heart is not in our own power, but is lifted up by the divine help, so that it ascends and takes cognizance of those things which are above, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God, and, not those things that are upon the earth, to whom are thanks to be given for so great a gift as this unless to our Lord God who doeth this,--who in so great kindness has chosen us by delivering us from the abyss of this world, and has predestinated us before the foundation of the world?<sup>622</sup>

Augustine references the entire introductory dialogue and refers to the *Sursum Corda* as God's gift. Thus, in virtue of one's baptism their heart is on high. In the command, the priest exhorts his congregation to recognize this. Spiritually, this understanding of God's grace, as realized in the *Sursum Corda*, should result in humility.<sup>623</sup> In turn, Augustine instructs his hearers, 'Let us give thanks unto the Lord...' for if it was not for His initiatory grace according to His plan of election and predestination, then their hearts could not ascend to and comprehend the things of Christ; instead, they would be fixed on earth and earthly things. It is for this reason

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<sup>622</sup> Trans. taken from *NPNF*, Volume 5, p. 538.

<sup>623</sup> Augustine communicates this same idea in his Sermon: *On the Good of Widowhood* – 'But there is no one blessed with the gifts of God, who is ungrateful to the Giver. Forasmuch as, also, whereas in the course of the sacred Mysteries we are bidden to "lift up our hearts," it is by His help that we are able, by Whose bidding we are admonished; and therefore it follows, that, of this so great good of the heart lifted up, we give not the glory to ourselves as of our own strength, but render thanks unto our Lord God. For of this we are straightway admonished, that "this is meet," "this is right." You remember whence these words are taken, you recognize by what sanction, and by how great holiness they are commended within. Therefore hold and have what you have received, and return thanks to the Giver. For, although it be yours to receive and have, yet you have that, which you have received; forasmuch as to one waxing proud, and impiously glorying of that which he had, as though he had it of himself, the Truth saith by the Apostle, "But what hast thou, which thou hast not received? But, if thou hast received, why boastest thou, as if thou hadst not received?" Translations taken from *NPNF* Vol. 3, p. 449. Augustine's protégé, Caesarius of Arles, comments echo that of his teacher in his *Sermon 210 – On the Lord's Ascension*, 'If, therefore, we celebrate the Lord's ascension in a manner that is right, holy, faithful, devout and pious, we must ascend with Him and lift up our hearts. Now as we ascend, let us not be lifted up in pride or presume upon the merits as if they were our own. For we ought indeed to lift up our hearts, but to God alone. A heart lifted up but not to the Lord is called pride; a heart lifted up of the Lord is called a refuge.' Translation taken from Caesarius, *Sermon 210, The Fathers of the Church*, Vol.3. Translated by Sister Mary Magdalene Mueller, OSF (Washington, Catholic University Press, 1973), p. 94.

i.e., the grace of God bestowed upon them, the new members bear witness by saying, ‘It is right and just for us to give thanks to Him who made us to raise our heart up to our Head.’<sup>624</sup> This overview enables us to complete our construction of the introductory dialogue:

Let us give thanks unto the Lord.  
It is right and just.

With our reconstruction complete, we will now explore Augustine’s comments regarding the *Sursum Corda*.

We learned previously, the illumined, by way of the rite of baptism, are citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem.<sup>625</sup> As heavenly citizens, Christians should behave accordingly.<sup>626</sup> Augustine informs his congregants that one way this is realized is by their conversation:<sup>627</sup>

Wherefore take heaven for all saints. For the earth also is spoken of all who are in the earth, "Let all the earth worship Thee." If we may properly say with regard to those who dwell on the earth, "Let all the earth worship Thee," we may with the same propriety say also as to those who dwell in heaven, "Let all the heaven bear Thee." For even the Saints who dwell on earth, though in their body they tread the earth, in heart dwell in heaven. For it is not in vain that they are reminded to "lift up their hearts," and when they are so reminded, they answer, "that they lift them up:" nor in vain is it said, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth." In so far therefore as they have their conversation there, they do bear God, and they are heaven; because they are the seat of God; and

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<sup>624</sup> *Dignum et iustum est dicentis, ut ei gratias agamus qui nos fecit sursum ad nostrum caput habere cor.*

<sup>625</sup> *De Catechizandis Rudibus* 20.36; 21.37 ‘No all this was a figure signifying that the church of God with all the saints who are citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem...’ As found in Harmless, AC, p. 145.

<sup>626</sup> Caesarius, in *Sermon* 176 where he references the work of Augustine on the vision of blessed Peter, the Apostle and Cornelius, the Centurion, writes, ‘As we mentioned above, blessed Peter typified the Catholic Church. The fact that he went up to the roof signifies that the Church was to ascend on high spiritually, away from earthly desires, and to lift up the heart in accord with what the Apostle said: “But our citizenship is in heaven.” Translation is taken from *The Fathers of the Church*, Vol. 47, p. 441.

<sup>627</sup> In *On the Gospel According to St. John*, Tract 1 – Chapter 1:7, Augustine comments on the earthly struggle of believers and the command notion of lifting up the heart to the Lord, ‘What do I mean by saying, “what he lifts up, whither?” Let him see to it what sort of a heart he lifts up, because it is to the Lord he lifts it up, lest, encumbered by a load of fleshly pleasure, it fall ere ever to be raised. But does each one see that he bears a burden of flesh? Let him strive by continence to purify that which he may lift up to God. For “Blessed are the pure in heart, because they shall see God.”’ As found in *NPNF*, Volume 7, p. 9.

when they declare the words of God, "The heavens declare the glory of God." (*Sermon 3*).<sup>628</sup>

For Augustine, the way one communicates displays the spiritual disposition and position of the heart. Thus, the *Sursum Corda* is a summons to the baptized to reflect upon the nature of their conversation. Moreover, in order to establish a mindset on things 'which are above', the bishop implored his congregants to rid themselves of any sense of disunity.<sup>629</sup> He writes in his sermon *On Psalm 77*:

9. 'Because there the Lord commanded blessing.' Where did he command it? Among the brethren who dwell together. There He enjoined blessing, there they who dwell with one heart bless God. For thou blesses not God in division of heart... Art thou straitened on earth? Depart, have thy habitation in heaven. How shall I, a man clothed in flesh, enslaved to flesh, thou wilt say, have my habitation in heaven. First go in heart, whither thou wouldest follow in the body. Do not hear, 'Lift up your hearts,' with a deaf ear. Keep thy heart lifted up, and one will straighten thee in heaven.<sup>630</sup>

Thus, we can see that Augustine, like the other Fathers in our study, connects the *Sursum Corda* to the social context of the Eucharist. The command functioned as a means of individual and collective self-reflection whereby the gathered are exhorted to act according to their new nature in Christ via baptism and strive for corporate

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<sup>628</sup> *NPNF*, Volume 6, p. 270.

<sup>629</sup> Caesarius of Arles comments on the *Sursum Corda* in a similar manner. Describing certain animal sacrifices offered by Abraham in the Old Testament, writes, "'The birds,' says Scripture, 'he did not cut in two...' because in the Catholic Church carnal men are divided, but spiritual men are not at all. And, as Scripture says, they are separated one against the other... However, the birds, that is, spiritual souls, are not divided... because they have 'one heart and one soul in the Lord.'" <sup>629</sup> Continuing, he sets the context for his pastoral use of the *Sursum Corda*: 'And since carnal men, who can be divided, are pressed down by the heavy fetters of vice, spiritual men are raised on high by the wings of various virtues and as if by two precepts of love of God and charity toward the neighbor, they are lifted up to heaven. With the Apostle they can say: "But our citizenship is in heaven." As often as the priest says: "Lift up your hearts," they can say with assurance and devotion they have lifted them up to the Lord.'<sup>629</sup> The preacher remind those gathered, that there are 'very few and rare are the people in the Church who can say this with confidence.' Translation taken from *The Fathers of the Church*, Vol. 47, p. 8.

<sup>630</sup> Later in the same sermon, Augustine writes, 'Because not to no purpose hast thou heard "Lift up your heart;" because not on earth, where thou wouldest have rotted, thou has remained... This do ye therefore, brethren, with your souls; lift up your hearts, sharpen the edge of your mind, learn truly to love God, learn to despise the present world, learn voluntarily to sacrifice the offerings of praise..' Translation found in CCL, p.

unity.<sup>631</sup>

Augustine, again, similar to the other fourth century figures in our study, is keenly aware that the *infantes* may struggle to see the bread and wine after the consecration as the Body and Blood of Christ. In order to help them develop the spiritual eyes necessary to properly understand and partake of the sacrament, he instructs them, ‘Let the Sacrament not appear of trifling value to you because you look upon it. What you see passes; but the invisible, that which is not seen, does not pass; it remains. Behold it is received; it is eaten; it is consumed. . . . Therefore, what is signified will last eternally, even though it seems to pass.’<sup>632</sup> He continues by exhorting them to ponder these things so they might have unity in their heart, ‘so that you may always lift up your heart (*sursum cor*). Let your hope be, not on earth, but in heaven; let your faith be firm and acceptable to God. Because you now believe what you do not see, you are going to see there where you will rejoice.’<sup>633</sup> Augustine uses the liturgical command as a pastoral exhortation in his concluding comments in *Sermon 227* as an exhortation to faith. It seems that he believes things pertaining to the Eucharist are heavenly and cannot be understood by earthly reason. If one is able to realize this, then the heart will not be divided by or between sensual perception and sacramental reality. In turn, the baptized will be able to keep their heart lifted up to heaven, where their Head and hope are located and respond accordingly in the Eucharistic gathering.

### Conclusion

Our exegesis of *Sermon 227* sheds light on Augustine’s understanding and use of the *Sursum Corda*. First, we learned that he, possibly, uses *sursum cor* for

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<sup>631</sup> Augustine, in *City of God* Book 4 Chapter 13 , writes regarding the proud, ‘For it is good to have the heart lifted up, yet not to one’s self, for this is proud, but to the Lord, for this is obedient, and can be the act of the humble.’ Translation taken from *NPNF*, Volume 7, p. 209.

<sup>632</sup> Mueller, *The Fathers of the Church*, p. 198.

<sup>633</sup> Mueller, *The Fathers of the Church*, p. 198.

pastoral reasons and as a direct liturgical reference. Second, to have one's heart to the Lord is a gift of God's initiatory grace according to election and predestination and realized in baptism; therefore, while the heart is lifted up to God simultaneously it needs to be humbly low. In turn, to hear the command may be a means by which the congregation recalls the spiritual benefits they received via the sacrament of entrance into the Church. Third, Christ, our Head, has ascended into heaven and, therefore, the newly baptized need to see themselves positionally in the same place when they hear the command as they are united to His death and resurrection. Thus, there is a notion of ascent in the preface. Fourth, Augustine connects the *Sursum Corda* to the social context of the gathering. If Christians can assemble in unity, then their hearts are truly on high. Lastly, if the *infantes* are able to maintain a heavenly mindset, they will be able to see beyond the earthly elements in the Eucharist. In the bread and wine set before them they will comprehend the true reality of the Body and Blood of Christ. Therefore, coupled with our premise that standing to pray is to assume the *orans* posture at the cry, '*Sursum cor(da)*,'<sup>634</sup> we see in Augustine the command is directly related to his theological arguments regarding salvation: God's grace in baptism is the reason the action can take place (soteriological); and Christ is the Head of the Church and the body needs to ascend accordingly (ecclesiological). Moreover, to perceive the Eucharistic Reality is a result of the heart and mind removed from the world and directed toward the heavenly Gifts that lie before the gathered (pastoral theology).

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<sup>634</sup> Augustine confirms two points of our thesis regarding the ritual posture associated with the *Sursum Corda* (standing and looking up) in *Sermon 60 – 2*. What is that "woman who was in an infirmity eighteen years"? In six days God finished His works. Three times six are eighteen. What the "three years" then in "the tree" signified, that do the "eighteen years" in this woman. She was bent down, she could not look up; because in vain did she hear, "Up with your hearts." But the Lord made her straight. Translation taken from *NPNF*, Volume 6, p. 444. It seems, in light of our study regarding the *orans*, that standing to pray with one's eyes uplifted is incomplete without the arms assuming a similar vertical posture. However, in Augustine's case, this is an argument from silence.

## Chapter 9

### *Sursum Corda* - Changes in the Sixth to Eighth Centuries

#### Introduction

In the East, the period between the sixth and eighth centuries witnessed a shift in the emphasis of the *Sursum Corda*. The early mystagogical lectures of the fourth and early fifth centuries we explored connected the command to the rites of initiation. This seems to be a natural link as these lectures were catechetical in nature. Moreover, during this period of Church history, there were large numbers of adult converts entering the Church and, therefore, many needed to receive some formal instruction on the sacraments and the liturgical life of the Church. However, from the fifth to eighth century, sacramental theology moves from focusing on baptism as the primal sacrament to the Eucharist. Thus, we need to explore how the *Sursum Corda* was ‘reconnected’ within the context of the Divine Liturgy. Of particular importance to our study is the development of the sixth century Great Entrance within the imperial liturgy of the Cathedral Hagia Sophia and the corresponding processional chants known as the Cherubic Hymn (Cherubikon) and the ‘Let all mortal flesh keep silence.’ Also, Germanus, influenced by the writings of Pseudo-Dionysius the Aeropagite (late fifth to early sixth century A.D.) and Maximus the Confessor (580 – 662 A.D.), in his *Commentary on the Divine Liturgy*, sets forth a new genre by which these liturgical innovations are explained within the Eucharistic context. The relationship between these expansions, additions, constructions and commentary to and on the *Sursum Corda* will demonstrate how the liturgical meaning of the command transitioned immediately following our scope of study.

## **The Great Entrance, ‘Cherubikon’ and the ‘Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence’**

In our scope of study, the transfer of bread and wine in the third century was rather uneventful. In *Apostolic Tradition* 4, following the ordination of a new bishop and the kiss of peace, the deacons are instructed to do the following:

Let the deacon presents the oblations to him (the newly consecrated) and, laying hands on it with the whole presbytery, let him say thanks:

The Lord be with you

And they shall say:

And with your spirit  
*Sursum Corda!*<sup>635</sup>

In this description, the oblation, the gifts or bread and wine, are presented to the one presiding without any ritual symbolism or theological meaning.<sup>636</sup> This seems to be the normal practical and/or liturgical action associated with the procession of the gifts in the East and West until, according to Taft, the early fifth century.<sup>637</sup> In his work, *The Great Entrance*, Taft writes, ‘The earliest witness to anything resembling today’s ritualized transfer of gifts is found in *the Mystagogic Catechesis* of Theodore of Mopsuestia, a series of homilies which most scholars believe to have been delivered at Antioch, where Theodore had served as presbyter for a decade before becoming bishop of Mopsuestia.’<sup>638</sup> We explored Theodore’s commentary in our

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<sup>635</sup> Translation taken from A Stewart-Sykes, *On the Apostolic Tradition*, p. 64.

<sup>636</sup> For a thorough study the various Eucharistic offerings in the early Church, see Andrew McGowan’s work *Ascetic Eucharists: Food and Drink in Early Christian Ritual Meals* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1999).

<sup>637</sup> For comparison, The *First Apology* of Justin Martyr records the presentation of the gifts after the kiss of peace in a straightforward and practical way: ‘Then there is brought to the Ruler of the Brethren bread and a cup of water and [a cup] of wine mixed with water, and he taking them sends up praise and glory to the Father of the Universe through the name of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and offers thanksgiving at some length for being accounted worthy to receive these things from Him.’ As in the AT, there is no symbolism or recollection of the passion of Christ linked to the procession of the gifts. Translation taken from *St. Justin Martyr: The First and Second Apologies*, translation by Leslie W. Barnard (New York, Paulist Press, 1997), p. 70.

<sup>638</sup> Robert Taft, *The Great Entrance*, p. 35. Dix also engages the historicity and liturgical implications of the Great Entrance in his work, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, pp. 284-286.

work. But our focus was not specifically on the transfer of gifts. As a review, in the following, Theodore describes the liturgical action in question:

It is the deacons who bring out this oblation...which they arrange and place on the awe-inspiring altar, a vision...awe-inspiring even to the onlookers. By means of the symbols we must see Christ who is now being led out and going forth to his passion, and who, in another moment, is laid out for us on the altar...And when the offering that is about to be presented is brought out in the sacred vessels, the patens and chalices, you must think that Christ our Lord is coming out, led to his passion...by the invisible hosts of ministers...who were also present when the passion of salvation was being accomplished...And when they bring it out, they place it on the holy altar to represent fully the passion. Thus we may think of him placed on the altar as if henceforth a sort of sepulcher, and as already undergone the passion. <sup>639</sup>

As we learned in Chapter 6, for Theodore<sup>640</sup>, the liturgy is an *anamnesis* of the resurrection of Christ and the procession of the gifts represents His burial procession.<sup>641</sup> Dix describes the central importance of the new ritual: 'It is now the procession which attracts attention, which impresses and evokes religious emotion; the actual offering has become the merely the terminus of this.'<sup>642</sup> He continues, 'It is therefore the procession which Theodore has to account for, and since it can hardly be interpreted as in itself the central act of the Eucharist (though it has already by the fifth century become the moment of the greatest ritual splendor in the whole rite and remains still among the Byzantines) it must be regarded as the consequence of something.'<sup>643</sup> The 'consequence of something' Dix refers to is the prothesis. This preparation of the Eucharistic elements is an enacting of the Passion apart from the assembly of the church, 'before the liturgy begins.'<sup>644</sup> During the Celebration, the gifts are transferred to the altar. In turn, it is not difficult to see why this ritual action

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<sup>639</sup> Translation taken from Taft, *The Great Entrance*, p. 35-36.

<sup>640</sup> Taft comments, 'Where this concept arose, we have no idea.' *Ibid.*, p. 37.

<sup>641</sup> Taft, *The Great Entrance*, p.37 and Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, pp. 288-289.

<sup>642</sup> Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, p. 290.

<sup>643</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 290. It must be noted that Taft also references Dix regarding this issue as well, see *The Great Entrance*, p. 37.

<sup>644</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 290.

may create confusion among the gathered regarding the consecrated nature of the bread and wine. New hymns make the situation worse.

In the sixth century, during the ‘Great Entrance’, there is a summons for the gathered to move from earth to heaven as set forth in two hymns: the Cherubikon<sup>645</sup> and the ‘Let All Mortal Fliesh Keep Silence.’<sup>646</sup> The emperor Justin II (565-578), according to the historian Cedrenus, introduced the ‘Cherubikon’ into the liturgy of his church.<sup>647</sup> The following reference details the transfer of relics confirms the use of the hymn:

Under him [Justin] it was decreed that *Cenae tuae mysticae* be chanted on Holy Thursday. Also the image “not made with hands” came from Camulians, a village in Cappadocia, and the venerated wood from the city of Apamea in Syria Secunda. And it was decreed also that the Cherubic Hymn be sung.<sup>648</sup>

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<sup>645</sup> In regards to origin and influence of the Cherubikon, after surveying the relevant manuscript evidence, Taft concludes ‘What we find in the later sources, then, is the gradual but inexorable encroachment of a Constantinopolitan liturgical piece, the Cherubikon, on its Jerusalem sister piece, the *Sanctificatorum*.’ Taft, *The Great Entrance*, p. 74.

<sup>646</sup> According to Taft, neither of the contemporary homilies of Chrysostom or the *Apostolic Constitutions* (Book VIII) ascribed the same theological significance to the transfer of gifts as does Theodore. However, in the early 6<sup>th</sup> century, a similar interpretation is found in the Liturgical Homilies of Narsai. It is interesting to note that Narsai also explains to his readers that before the transfer of gifts is made they need to ‘put aside...anger and hatred.’ This is exhortation is similar in meaning to the forthcoming Cherubic Hymn. Also, around this same time, Pseudo Denys mentions the transfer of gifts without assigning any special importance or meaning. See Taft, *The Great Entrance*, p. 38-39.

<sup>647</sup> Wybrew, *The Orthodox Liturgy*, p. 83. Germanos describes the Great Entrance in the Hagia Sophia: ‘By means of the procession of the deacons and the representation of the fans, which are in the likeness of the seraphim, the Cherubic Hymn signifies the entrance of all the saints and righteous ahead of the Cherubic powers and the angelic hosts, who run invisibly in advance of the great King, Christ, who is proceeding to the mystical sacrifice, born aloft by material hands. Together with them comes the Holy Spirit in the unbloody and reasonable sacrifice. The Spirit is seen spiritually in the fire, incense, smoke, and fragrant air: for the fire points to His divinity, and the fragrant smoke to His coming invisibly and filling us with good fragrance through the mystical, living, and unbloody service and sacrifice of burnt-offering. In addition, the spiritual powers and the choirs of angels, who have seen His dispensation fulfilled through the cross and death of Christ, the victory over death which has place, the descent into hell and the resurrection on the third day, with us exclaim the alleluia... It is also in imitation of the burial of Christ, when Joseph took down the body from the cross, wrapped it in clean linen, anointed it with spices and ointment, carried it with Nicodemus, and placed it in a new tomb hewn out of a rock. The altar is an image of the holy tomb, and the divine table is the sepulcher in which, of course, the undefiled all-holy body was placed. Translation taken from P. Meyendorff, *St. Germanus of Constantinople: On the Divine Liturgy* (Crestwood, SVS Press, 1984), p. 87.

<sup>648</sup> J Mateos, *Le Typicon de la Grand Elgise. Ms. Sainte-Croix No. 40. Introduction, texte critique, tradition et notes*, 2 vols (=OCA 165-166), Rome, 1962-1963, p. 76 as found in Taft, *The Great Entrance*, p. 69.

Regarding the entrance hymn, Taft writes, ‘Since the ‘Cherubikon’ never appears in Constantinople as anything but a chant to accompany the transfer of gifts, we shall presume it was introduced at the Great Entrance where we find it in the earliest euchologies and where it still is today.’<sup>649</sup> According to Taft, the literal translation of the *textus receptus* of the ornate and mystical ‘Cherubikon’ is as follows:

We who mystically represent the Cherubim and sing the thrice-holy hymn to the life-giving Trinity, let us lay aside all worldly care [Lk 21:34] to receive the King of All escorted unseen by the angelic corps. Alleluia...<sup>650</sup>

What we encounter in the ‘Cherubikon’ is an outline of what is forthcoming in the Eucharistic celebration. In this entrance hymn, those assembled ‘mystically represent’ the angels and are preparing to sing the Sanctus; prior to this they are to ‘lay aside all worldly cares’, a direct reference to the function of the impending *Sursum Corda*; and all this is done in order to receive the ‘King of All’ in the Eucharist.<sup>651</sup> We encounter similar language in the text of the Byzantine Great Entrance troparia the ‘Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence’:

Let all mortal flesh be silent and stand in fear and trembling, and harbor no earthly thoughts for the King of Kings and Lord of Lords comes forth to be slain and given as food to and the faithful. The choirs of archangels go before him, with all the principalities and powers, the many-eyed Cherubim and the six-winged Seraphim, faces covered, and proclaiming the hymn: Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!<sup>652</sup>

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<sup>649</sup> Taft, *The Great Entrance*, p. 69. The hymn, ‘Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence’ may have been taken from the Liturgy of St. James.

<sup>650</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 54.

<sup>651</sup> Taft comments on this explanation of the Cherubikon as follows: The phrase “to receive the King of All” is usually taken to mean “to welcome Christ entering now in the procession under the symbols of bread and wine”. But *υποδέχομαι* means receive in communion, as can be seen not only from Byzantine liturgical terminology but also in the Protheoria (1055- 63), the earliest Byzantine commentary to interpret the phrase.<sup>37</sup> So the chant does not refer only to the procession, but is an introduction to the whole eucharistic action from anaphora to communion. It instructs the faithful that they who are about to sing the thrice-holy hymn of the Cherubim (the Sanctus of the anaphora) must lay aside all worldly care (*Sursum corda*) to prepare to receive Christ (in communion). See his work, ‘How the Liturgies Grow: The Evolution of the Byzantine “Divine Liturgy” in *OCP*, XLIII, Roma, 1977, p. 8.

P. 8  
<sup>652</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 55.

These songs echo the earliest commentaries on the meaning and or function of the *Sursum corda*. It seems plausible that, due to the fact many people began to treat the gifts being transferred as already consecrated, the admonition to ‘lay aside all earthly care’ was understood in relation to Christ perceived entrance at that time.<sup>653</sup>

Eutychius, Patriarch of Constantinople 552-5, 577-82, strongly disapproves of this popular reverence to the unconsecrated gifts and therefore furthers our argument:

They act stupidly, who have taught the people to sing a certain psalmic chant when the minister are about to bring up to the altar the bread of oblation and the recently-mixed chalice. In this hymn, which they consider suitable to the action being performed, the people say that they bear in the King of glory, and refer in this way to things being brought up, even though they have not yet been consecrated by the high-priestly invocation – unless perhaps what is sung means something else to them. For as Athanasius the Great says in his sermon on the baptized: ‘You will see the Levites (i.e. the deacons) bearing in bread and a chalice of wine and putting them on the table. And as long as the supplications and the prayer have not been completed, it is nothing but plain bread.’<sup>654</sup>

In light of this ignorance, it seems as if the Great Entrance, via the accompanying hymns, replaced a primary liturgical function of the command as early as the sixth century, at least in Constantinople. This begs the question, ‘What happened to the *Sursum Corda*?’

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<sup>653</sup> This argument is supported by the fact that during the Great Entrance people began to treat the gifts being transferred as already consecrated. If Christ the King was entering at this time then the need to ‘lay aside all earthly care’ was fitting for the liturgical moment. Moreover, later, in the fourteenth century, Nicholas Cabasilas, in his commentary on the Divine Liturgy, explains the state of gifts being transferred, ‘If any who prostrate themselves thus before the priest who is carrying the offerings adores them as if they were the Body and Blood of Christ, and prays to them as such, he is led into error; he is confusing this ceremony with that of ‘the entry of the presanctified’, not recognizing the differences between them.’ Translation taken from Nicholas Cabasilas, *A Commentary on the Divine Liturgy*, trans. by J. Hussey and P. McNulty (Crestwood, St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1998), pp. 65-66. Cabasilas’ explanation indicates that what he was writing against was probably taking place and needed to be corrected. Dix argues this expression of devotion still takes place during the Great Entrance. He writes, ‘The profound reverence and actual worship rendered to the unconsecrated elements during this procession have been a source of embarrassment to Eastern theologians, and as standing puzzle to liturgists who have put forward various explanations...Theodore’s explanation supplies the genuine origin.’ See, *Shape*, pp. 285-286.

<sup>654</sup> Taft, *The Great Entrance*, p. 84.

## Germanus' Commentary on the Liturgy and the Hagia Sophia

Germanus' *Commentary on the Divine Liturgy* represents a new genre of liturgical commentary and, therefore, may present us with a new meaning of the phrase, *Sursum Corda*.<sup>655</sup> It is the first work we have after the golden age of Justinian and at the beginning of the period of struggle and victory over Iconoclasm (726-775, 815-843). In Taft's words, 'The patriarch of Germanus (715-730) stands at the gate of this watershed, and his work is our earliest witness to the new synthesis in popular liturgical piety.'<sup>656</sup> Throughout the text one can see the influence of Maximus the Confessor's (580-662) mystagogy on the interpretation of the Divine Liturgy.<sup>657</sup> The influence of Germanus' commentary 'reigned with undisputed primacy over the field of Byzantine liturgical explanation.'<sup>658</sup> It was not until the lay theologian, Nicolas Cabasilas, wrote his famous *Commentary on the Divine Liturgy* in the fourteenth century that it was challenged. According to Meyendorff, this work 'has its origins in the fourth century, with the famous mystagogical catechesis of such leading figures as Cyril of Jerusalem, Ambrose of Milan and John Chrysostom.'<sup>659</sup> However, it seeks to incorporate Antiochene hermeneutical perspectives as well. Like these ecclesiastical leaders, Germanus penned his commentary on the liturgy as a means of explanation to the faithful. Also, like those before him, he had the pastoral challenge of exhorting people not only to attend the liturgy but also to engage it. Thus, he describes in detail the liturgical actions and

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<sup>655</sup> R. Taft, 'The Liturgy of the Great Church: An Initial Synthesis of Structure and Interpretation on the Eve of Iconoclasm,' *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, Vol. 34/35 (1980/1981), p. 45.

<sup>656</sup> Taft, 'The Liturgy of the Great Church', p. 46.

<sup>657</sup> See A. Louth, *Maximus the Confessor* (New York, Routledge, 1996) for an overview of Maximus and H. von Balthasar's work, *Cosmic Liturgy: The Universe According to Maximus the Confessor* (San Francisco, Ignatius Press, 2003) for liturgical considerations.

<sup>658</sup> Taft, 'The Liturgy of the Church', p. 74 as found in Meyendorff, *St. Germanus*, p. 52.

<sup>659</sup> Meyendorff, *St. Germanus*, p. 25.

their corresponding interpretations in order to provoke a myriad of responses including fear and awe as well as comfort.

Germanus' use of the phrase βλεπετε ανω σχωμεν τας καρδιας is found in his concluding comments on the Great Entrance:

Thus Christ is crucified, life is buried, the tomb is secured, the stone is sealed. In the company of the angelic powers, the priest approaches, standing no longer as on earth, but attending the heavenly altar, before the altar of the throne of God, and he contemplates the great, ineffable, and unsearchable mystery of God. He gives thanks, proclaims the resurrection, and confirms the faith in the Holy Trinity. The angel wearing white approaches the stone of the tomb and rolls it away with his hand, pointing with his garment and exclaiming with an awed voice through the deacon, who proclaims the resurrection on the third day, raising the veil and saying: "Let us stand aright" – behold, the first day! – "Let us stand in fear" – behold the second day! – "Let us offer in peace" – behold, the third day! The people proclaim thanks for the resurrection of Christ: "A mercy of peace, a sacrifice of praise." The priest teaches the people about the threefold knowledge of God which he learned through grace: "The grace of the holy and consubstantial Trinity be with all of you." The people together confess and pray, saying: "And with your spirit." Then the priest, leading everyone into the heavenly Jerusalem, to His Holy mountain, exclaims: "Behold, let us lift up our hearts!"<sup>660</sup> Then all declare: "We lift them up unto the Lord!" The priest says: "Let us give thanks unto the Lord." [The people affirm: "It is meet and right" to send up hymns of thanksgiving to the Holy Trinity, to have the eye of the soul seeking the habitation of the heavenly Jerusalem.] 91

In this description, the Patriarch includes σχωμεν in the *Sursum Corda*. We first encountered the inclusion of this phraseology in the writings of John Chrysostom. However, as noted, scholars debate the authenticity and dating of the reference. But this is not the case in Germanus' liturgical commentary. Therefore, what was once a command may now be an invitation or exhortation 'Let us lift up our hearts' – no exclamation point needed. If this is the case, then, contrary to certain Fathers in our scope of study, and as set forth previously, there may no longer be a connection

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<sup>660</sup> Taft sees the inclusion of behold (look) before the *Sursum Corda* as 'just one more of those diaconal calls to attention found in other traditions with the precedents in pagan usage.' He further explains how the unworthy were exhorted not to look, but the worthy were exhorted to look. See Taft II, p. 55.

between the *Sursum Corda* and earthly concerns.<sup>661</sup> Instead, Germanus employs the *exhortation or invitation* as a means of spiritual ascent not to but into the ‘heavenly Jerusalem, to His Holy Mountain.’ This is where the ‘eye of the soul’ was to have its habitation at this point in the Divine Liturgy. Therefore, there is arguably a connection between the physical/aesthetical setting and the way in which the gathered understood the exhortation, ‘Let us lift up our hearts.’

### **Hagia Sophia – Heaven on Earth**

Germanus’ commentary reflects the worship of the Divine Liturgy in the Hagia Sophia. It was the cathedral church in the capital city of the eastern Roman Empire dedicated to Christ, the ‘Holy Wisdom’ of God. It was built under Justinian and dedicated in 537 and was like nothing else in Christendom.<sup>662</sup> The historian Procopius of Caesarea, in his work *De Aedificiis*, written around 560, describes the buildings of the Emperor Justinian's Empire. Included in this work is his description of the Hagia Sophia:

The emperor, thinking not of cost of any kind, pressed on the work, and collected together workmen from every land... [The Church] is distinguished by indescribable beauty, excelling both in its size, and in the harmony of its

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<sup>661</sup> The next major influential Eastern commentary on the liturgy is by Casbasilas in the fourteenth century. After describing the spiritual benefits of the Trinitarian blessing, he describes the contrast between heaven and earth in relation to the *Sursum Corda*: ‘Having dignified us with such a prayer and thus raised our souls up from the earth, the priest raises our thoughts also, saying: “Let us lift up our hearts “ – let us be heavenly-minded, not earthly minded.’ The faithful give their consent, and say that their hearts are where our treasure is – there where Christ is, who sits on the right hand of the Father. “We have lifted them up to the Lord.”’ Thus, for Cabasilas, the *Sursum Corda* did carry earthly implications. This possible shift in meaning may be attributed to his awareness of the undue devotion towards the gifts of bread and wine during the Great Entrance. Translation taken from J.M. Hussey and P.A. McNulty in *Nicholas Cabasilas: A Commentary on the Divine Liturgy* (Crestwood, St Vladimir’s Press, 1998), p. 69.

<sup>662</sup> Prior to the edifice built by Justinian, two other churches occupied the same space. The first church was known as the Μεγάλη Ἐκκλησία (*Megálē Ekklesiā*, "Great Church") was inaugurated on 15 February 360. Following the exile of John Chrysostom, Patriarch of Constantinople, the structure was destroyed by fire during the riots of 404. The second Hagia Sophia, rebuilt and dedicated by Theodosius II, was inaugurated on 10 October 415, met with a similar fate during the Nika Revolt. It burned to the ground on 13–14 January 532. After a series of earthquakes, the arch and dome collapsed in 558. A new dome was constructed and the Hagia Sophia restored in 563. The question of what would a participant see when they assumed the *orans* may shed some light on the meaning of the command after our scope of study.

measures, having no part excessive and none deficient; being more magnificent than ordinary buildings, and much more elegant than those which are not of so just a proportion.<sup>663</sup> The church is singularly full of light and sunshine; you would declare that the place is not lighted by the sun from without, but that the rays are produced within itself, such an abundance of light is poured into this church....<sup>664</sup>

Procopius' commentary moves from space and light to the response of those that visited it 'No one ever became weary of this spectacle, but those who are in the church delight in what they see, and, when they leave, magnify it in their talk.'<sup>665</sup> He further mentions that the gold, silver and gems presented by Emperor Justinian cannot be described. The sanctuary, according to Procopius, where only the priests were allowed to enter, contained forth thousand pounds' weight of silver.<sup>666</sup> The majesty, complexity and beauty of the building and the liturgy within it led observers of each generation to conclude the structure represented, among other things, heaven on earth.<sup>667</sup> One of the most famous of these reports is that of St. Vladimir's emissaries in 987. They described their experience as follows, 'We knew not whether we were in heaven or on the earth. For on the earth there is no such beauty, and we are at a loss how to describe it. We only know that God dwells there among men...'<sup>668</sup> Thus, the Hagia Sophia and the worship within it created a new paradigm by which the laity observed, participated in and understood the liturgy. The exhortation (βοα) βλεπετε ανω σχωμεν τας καρδιας<sup>669</sup> was aesthetically

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<sup>663</sup> Taft observes that during the reign of Justin 'that the space itself, not its decoration, created this impression. Only later, less magnificent structures of a poorer age was this symbolism made explicit'

<sup>664</sup> According to Taft, 'Those who describe the church are dumbfounded by the same two qualities: the vastness of the nave, and the brilliance of its lighting.' See, 'The Liturgy of the Great Church', p. 48.

<sup>665</sup> Ibid., p. 48.

<sup>666</sup> Translated by W. Lethaby and H. Swainson, from Procopius, *De Aedificiis*, in *The Church of St. Sophia Constantinople*, (New York, Macmillan and Co, 1894), pp. 24-28.

<sup>667</sup> Taft observes that during the reign of Justin 'that the space itself, not its decoration, created this impression. Only later, less magnificent structures of a poorer age was this symbolism made explicit in mosaic and fresco, in accord with a more literal spirit of the post-iconoclastic age.' Taft, 'The Liturgy of the Great Church', p. 48.

<sup>668</sup> S.H. Cross and O.P. Sherbowitz-Wetzor, *The Russian Primary Chronicle, Laurentian Text* (Cambridge, MS, 1953), pp. 110-111 as cited by Meyendorff, *St Germanus*, p. 16.

<sup>669</sup> Meyendorff, *St Germanus*, p. 90.

different than what the gathered experienced in the house churches and lesser structures of the third to fifth centuries. To lift up one's heart in this massive edifice, along with imperial and ecclesiastical considerations of the day, was, arguably, to be in what many would consider, the New Jerusalem.

For Germanus, the structure of the building also contained theological connotations as established a century earlier by Maximus the Confessor. One reason Maximus penned his *Mystagogy* (ca. 630) was to exhort certain monastics to a greater form of Eucharistic piety.<sup>670</sup> The Patriarch was also influenced by Pseudo-Dionysius' *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*. Denys understood the Divine Liturgy to represent the mystical ascension of the soul to contemplation of God, our union with Him, and our deification: the end and purpose of the hierarchy.<sup>671</sup> This theological consideration is adapted by Germanus in his work. In his commentary on the Divine Liturgy, Maximus sets forth the 'general' and the 'particular' levels of each part of the Celebration. According to Meyendorff, 'The general meaning refers to the mystery of salvation to the whole cosmos: this method is typological.'<sup>672</sup> For Maximus, the church building is an image of the whole universe that reflects this understanding:

The holy church of God...is a figure and image of the world, which is composed of visible and invisible things...It is divided into a place reserved for the clergy and assistants, which we call the sanctuary, and a place accessible to all the faithful, which we call the nave. Nevertheless, the church is essentially one, not divided because of the variety of its parts...The wise thus glimpse the universe brought into existence by God's creation, divided between the spiritual world, containing incorporeal intelligent substances, and the corporeal world, the object of sense...as if they were all built by hands, but suggested by the ones we build: its sanctuary is the world above, allotted to the powers above, its nave the world below, assigned to those whose lot it is to live in the senses (ch 2).  
...the holy church of God is an image of the sensible world by itself; the sanctuary reminds one of the sky, the dignity of the nave reflects the earth.

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<sup>670</sup> Ibid, p. 36.

<sup>671</sup> A. Louth, *Denys the Areopagite* (New York, Continuum, 1989), pp. 56-57.

<sup>672</sup> Ibid, p. 36.

Likewise the world can be thought of as a church: the sky seems like a sanctuary, and the cultivation of the land can make it resemble a temple (ch 3).<sup>673</sup>

Maximus also ascribes a ‘particular’ meaning to the church structure. It presents the temple as symbolic to the human being: the soul being the sanctuary, the body the nave, and the mind, the sacred altar within the sanctuary.<sup>674</sup> Commenting on Maximus’ thoughts, A. Louth explains, ‘Conversley the human being is a mystical church, the body ‘radiant by virtue through the ascetic force of the soul’, the soul a sanctuary in which the *logoi* of the senses are conveyed to God by reason, and the mind an altar on which ‘he summons the silence abounding in song in the innermost recesses, rich in speech and tone’ (Myst. 4:672 A- C).’<sup>675</sup> However, these divisions are not in opposition to one another or negative, for, according to Louth, ‘one term always stands higher than the other: the visible world points to the invisible world and in a way adumbrates it, similarly the nave and the sanctuary, or body and soul...these divisions are not separations, but representations of a tension, a tension which draws onwards and upwards – towards a final consummation.’<sup>676</sup> What is essential to our study is this salvific and eschatological movement that Maximus sees as taking place in the liturgy from nave to sanctuary, from earth to heaven, towards our final rest in God.<sup>677</sup> This movement into the dwelling and saving presence of God, i.e. the New Jerusalem, the Holy Mountain, is connected theologically to the *Sursum Corda*. It is the eyes of soul (heart) that seeks to mystically ascend and unite with God via the Eucharist. At the end of Chapter 41, Germanus’ commentary on the liturgy concludes with the earthly Church now in heaven ready to participate in the mystical Supper:

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<sup>673</sup> Excerpt and translation taken from Meyendorff, *Germanus*, p. 36.

<sup>674</sup> A. Louth, *Maximus the Confessor*, p. 73.

<sup>675</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 73.

<sup>676</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 73.

<sup>677</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 74.

...the souls of Christians are called together to assemble with the prophets, apostles, and hierarchs in order to recline with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob at the mystical banquet of the Kingdom of God.

Thereby having come into the unity of faith...we are no longer on earth but standing by the royal throne of God in heaven, where Christ is...<sup>678</sup>

At this time, the adopted and co-heirs with Christ, can say, 'Our Father who art in heaven.' Germanus explains the 'saying, "in heaven" points out your Father's native country and home; if want to have God as a father, look to heaven and not to earth.'<sup>679</sup> Therefore, to assemble in the Hagia Sophia presents a liturgical and theological shift in the meaning of the *Sursum Corda* in the two centuries following our scope of study.

### Conclusion

The immediate period following our scope of study witnessed a theological shift in the meaning and function of the *Sursum Corda*. This was brought about by the language in the Great Entrance hymns, namely the 'Cherubikon' and the 'Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence', that were associated with the highly elaborate and ritualized Great Entrance that entered the sixth century Divine Liturgy. These songs had the original intent of preparing the gathered for the *Sursum Corda* where they were to 'lay aside all earthly cares.' To clarify, the singing of the hymns spoke of what was to take place later in the liturgy at the time of the command. Moreover, the transfer of the unconsecrated gifts from the table of preparation to the altar became mistakenly understood as being already consecrated, i.e., the Body and Blood of Christ. Therefore, as the King made his way through the assembly, the baptized believed the entrance hymns referred to that moment, not later at the *Sursum Corda*. In the eight century, according to Germanus' commentary, the

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<sup>678</sup> Myendorf, *Germanus*, p. 101.

<sup>679</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 101.

command ἀνω τας καρδιας transitioned to an invitation or exhortation of ascent with the new language of the *Sursum Corda* ‘ἀνω σχωμεν τας καρδιας.’ As those gathered raised their eyes upward, the majesty and beauty of the building arguably impacted their understanding of the command. To lift up the heart within the time and space of the Divine Liturgy was to be in heaven, spiritually and locally. Furthermore, the church building represented the cosmos and the individual. Theologically, the movement from the earth to heaven represented the desire of the soul to unite with God in the Eucharist - it is no longer a remembering of one’s baptism. The *Sursum Corda* functioned as the primary liturgical means by which this eschatological event took place. Now, in the New Jerusalem, the gathered could participate in prayer to their Father in heaven. Therefore, in eighth century Constantinople, the evolution of the theological connection of the *Sursum Corda* from the sacrament of baptism to the sacrament of the Eucharist was complete.

## Conclusion

In our study we have presented new arguments regarding the ritual and meaning of the *Sursum Corda* in the first five centuries of the Church. To date, academicians have not considered the relationship between the social contexts, the grammatical force of the phrase, the social context of the Eucharistic assembly, the *orans* posture of prayer and the rite(s) of baptism. Our work revealed that when the celebrant shouted the liturgical command, the initiated assumed the *orans* posture of prayer. This ritual action served as a reminder of the spiritual benefits they received in baptism where they were delivered from the things of the earth to the things of heaven and called God, Father. Correspondingly, they were to think and act in ways becoming of Christians in the assembly. Furthermore, we demonstrated how each Father within our scope of study connected various baptismal themes with the *Sursum Corda* in their catechisms or sermons. Lastly, building on the scholarship of others, we argued that during the sixth to eighth centuries, the inclusion of the Great Entrance, with its new hymns of entrance, in liturgy of the Great Cathedral, Hagia Sophia, altered popular piety and, therefore, the meaning of the *Sursum Corda*. This liturgical evolution reflected a transition in the sacramental emphasis of the Church from the mystery of baptism to that of the Eucharist – from remembering what took place spiritually in baptism to the soul ascending to God in the New Jerusalem. This conclusion represents how the majority of contemporary scholars understand the function of the *Sursum Corda* today. In the following, we will review our method and contributions to the field of liturgical studies.

Our study was divided into two primary Sections. The first one dealt with ‘Ritual Considerations.’ In this part of our work we concluded the primary ritual texts *Sursum corda* and Ἄνω τὸν νοῦν, as found in the *Apostolic Tradition* and the

anaphora of *Addai and Mari*, are grammatically the same. They represent part of the original ‘urtext’ of the introductory dialogue. The language is forceful and abrupt and, therefore, is articulated by the priest in the form of a command. This confirmation of previous scholarship was important to our study as it raised the question of ‘Why the need for a command directed at the heart?’ Due to the fact Hippolytus does not provide any commentary on the *Sursum Corda*, we had to explore how it was connected to the rest of the dialogue and the Eucharistic Prayer. The response of the people to the *Sursum Corda* is the affirmation that the heart is focused on the Lord or God. Therefore, Hippolytus may have understood the *Sursum Corda* to be connected thematically to baptism. In the *Apostolic Tradition*, the language in the Eucharistic Prayer is ‘earthly’; meaning, there is no reference to heavenly things or the singing of the *Sanctus*. On the contrary, the anaphora of *Addai and Mari* includes the participation of the gathered in the Thrice Holy Hymn of the angels. Therefore, while both texts of the *Sursum Corda* can be understood as commands, their liturgical functions are different. However, when juxtaposed they present the dual nature (earthly and heavenly) of the *Sursum Corda* and baptism that coalesced in the fourth century.

The second topic we discussed under the heading of ‘Ritual Considerations’ was the social-liturgical setting of the *Sursum Corda*. As previously noted by R. Taft, we discovered that from the time of Christ until that of Augustine, the liturgical gatherings of the Church were often plagued with social problems. These problems, according to the biblical texts and the writings of the Fathers, were often attributed to the heart: greed, fatigue, social injustice, heretical teaching, improper behavior between men and women and overall disrespect for the Divine nature of the assembly. In turn, this provided the answer to the question we considered regarding

the need for a command directed at the heart. We concluded the *Sursum Corda* was a liturgical/social call to attention that reminded those gathered of their baptisms. In this context, the command functioned as a means to address improper attitudes and dispositions existed within the assembly. This function of the *Sursum Corda* is clearly set forth and confirmed by the third century Latin poet, Commodianus, and by the late seventh or early eighth century Father, Anastasius of Sinai. Both of these writers presented commentary that we argued linked this function to the command. Consequently, it confirmed our theory regarding what we referred to as the ‘earthly’ function of the *Sursum Corda* – remember you baptism and stop what you are doing!

The last consideration in Section 1 of our study explored how the ritual posture of prayer, the *orans*, was connected to the *Sursum Corda*. Our review of contemporary scholarship in the introductory section of our work revealed most academics believe the *orans* posture of prayer to be the physical response associated with the *Sursum Corda* in the third century. However, the texts proposed as evidence are not conclusive – they speak of ‘standing to pray’ but not specifically the *orans* posture. Therefore, building upon their endeavors and assumptions, we broadened the approach to the ritual posture of prayer by including references in certain ancient Greek, Roman and Jewish texts. In these writings, we learned that ‘standing to pray’ was synonymous with the *orans*. It was the common posture of prayer in personal and cultic settings. The New Testament affirmed this conclusion and revealed that the ritual posture was connected to social and spiritual considerations similar to what we discovered in our study regarding ritual setting. Moreover, a third-century piece of Roman catacomb art picturing what certain scholars believe to be a Eucharistic Celebration presented what may be a deacon(ess) standing with hands raised next to a celebrating priest. This rendering possibly confirmed the ritual connection between

the *orans* and the *Sursum Corda*. However, Cyprian of Carthage in his commentary on the Lord's Prayer, positively linked standing to pray (*orans*) with the ritual posture of the *Sursum Corda*. The Fathers we reviewed also broadened our theological understanding of the ritual posture of prayer, and, therefore that of the liturgical command. They explained, among other things, that the *orans* posture represented the victorious cross of Christ. However, this physical form of prayer in the Eucharistic assembly was reserved for those who had renounced the devil and been baptized. Moreover, when Christians faced east to pray and assumed the ritual position of prayer they recalled the resurrection of the Lord. Lastly, we discovered that hands and eyes lifted up to prayer reflected the heavenly ascent of the soul. These spiritual benefits were first realized when one entered the Church through the rite of baptism. Therefore, we made a connection that to date has not been realized by other researchers. The *Sursum Corda*, in conjunction with the *orans* posture of prayer, functioned as a means by which the faithful recalled the spiritual benefits they received in the sacrament of baptism. Thus, those gathered who had been delivered from the influence of the devil via the rites of entrance, needed to act in way that represented their new identity in Christ.

In Part 2 of our study, we shifted our focus from ritual to meaning. Our method of study included a systematic exploration of the catechetical lectures and sermons of Cyprian, Cyril, Theodore and Augustine. Chrysostom's reference to the *Sursum Corda* did not lend itself to this type of analysis. The purpose of our unprecedented approach to the command was to discover how it was related to the overall theological instruction found within the respective teachings of the Fathers on the rite(s) of entrance into the Church. This method proved to be fruitful as it

produced new insights into how the *Sursum Corda* was employed during the third to fifth centuries.

The first Father we considered was Cyprian of Carthage. His commentary on the *Sursum Corda* is the only known one within the third century. As set forth by other scholars and mentioned previously, the bishop's work connects the *orans* posture of prayer to the command. Theologically, for Cyprian, the ritual of standing to pray is related to the rite of baptism. It was in the rites of entrance associated with the sacrament that the new converts experienced deliverance from the devil and first extended their arms and hands in prayer to God as Father. However, the evil one still 'prowled about' at the assembly seeking a distracted heart. The command, '*Sursum Corda!*' functioned, according to Cyprian, as a *praefatio*, or warning against this spiritual adversary. This conclusion contradicts current scholarly opinion that argues the bishop employed the term *praefatio* as a warning off of the unworthy. Moreover, the command encouraged the faithful to have their hearts on high with Christ. Thus, for Cyprian the *Sursum Corda* represents the spiritual struggle of third century North African Christians between things of earth and those of heaven. Furthermore, we discovered that the bishop, in his sermon 'On Alms and the Poor', relates having one's mind on high at the time of the 'heavenly banquet' is demonstrated in care for the poor within the assembly. This relationship, not mentioned previously in other scholarly endeavors, between the *Sursum Corda* and almsgiving became more apparent in later in the fifth and early sixth centuries as evidenced by Caesarius of Arles.

Cyril of Jerusalem was the next Father in our research. He introduced us to the first mystagogical catechism in Section 2. The bishop's instruction regarding the rites of entrance is similar to Cyprian's. In short, during this period of catechizing he

included many references to how the rituals associated with entrance deliver one from the power and influence of the devil; however, again, the threat of the evil one's influence is always present. Moreover, we learned that during his tenure as bishop, after the Edict of Milan, many people were seeking entrance into the Church; but mass conversion may equate to mass problems within the Eucharistic assembly. Of primary concern are those who cannot see the bread and wine of the Eucharist as the Body and Blood of Christ. If those gathered do not comprehend the sacramental reality before them, then social issues may arise in the liturgy. The scriptural passage Cyril chose as his outline for *Lecture V* of his *mystagogical catechism* that contains the *Sursum Corda* was 1 Peter 2:1 (a), 'Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy and envy and all evil speaking...' We concluded the bishop's selection of this biblical text further confirms that for him the command was directly related to the social/spiritual context of the liturgical gathering. With this in mind, we argued Cyril employed the *Sursum Corda* either during or directly after the Kiss of Peace. The bishop's systematic approach to his explanation of the liturgy, as set forth in use of the words 'next' or 'after this', arguably, confirmed its seemingly unusual placement. At this time, it was not uncommon for this ritual to create problems between the sexes or be done in a hypocritical way. Thus, we demonstrated the command functioned as a means of crowd control, both physically and spiritually. Moreover, Cyril is the first Father to connect the *Sursum Corda* to the notion of 'laying aside all earthly cares.' As we discovered, the common lifestyle of the day was difficult. When one entered into the holy assembly as a servant of the King, these considerations were to diminish as the heart was on high with Christ and preparing to receive His Body and Blood. This realization of ascent brought about by the *Sursum Corda*, reaches a climax in the singing of the *Sanctus* whereby the

congregation was sanctified and ready to receive the Eucharist. Along with the aforementioned, our research demonstrates how the *Sursum Corda* is connected thematically to baptism and the *Sanctus* in Cyril's *mystagogical* catechism.

Our third and fourth chapters explored the catechism of Theodore of Mopsuestia and the sermons of John Chrysostom, respectively. Theodore introduced us to a new way of interpreting the Eucharistic liturgy in his commentary on the Eucharist. Through baptism, the believer is delivered from the domain of the devil and united to Christ. Now, the Christian has the ability to perceive spiritual things. In particular, the Christian can see what Theodore refers to as the heavenly liturgy where one encounters the risen Christ. According to the bishop, it is necessary for the gathered to comprehend the ritual drama of the passion and resurrection of Christ as set forth in the ritual signs, symbols and gestures of those celebrating the service. The *Sursum Corda* is the means by which this is accomplished spiritually by faith. When the baptized 'Mind is on High', the liturgical participant can see Jesus going to His passion by way of the deacons carrying bread and wine, His body on the altar and participate in the resurrected life of Christ via the sacrament. But these things cannot be realized if the mind is not pure or influenced by things of the earth. If the proper spiritual disposition is secured, then the end result is one singing the *Sanctus* with the angels as a means of thanksgiving to the Holy Trinity. It needs to be noted that Theodore does not relate any specific ritual posture to the *Sursum Corda*. It is assumed that the faithful are standing at this time. Our work suggested that his reference to 'extending the eye of the soul' may physically manifest itself, according to our previous research on this relationship, in the *orans* posture of prayer. Due to the fact there has not been any extensive research on the meaning Theodore ascribes to the *Sursum Corda*, our work is seminal.

John Chrysostom, a contemporary and friend of Theodore, focuses a great deal on the issue of morality as it relates to the *Sursum Corda*. In Section 1 Chapter 2 addressing of our study that addressed ‘Ritual Context’, we learned that Chrysostom, more than any other Father considered, references negative social and pastoral issues within the ecclesiastical assemblies. In a consistent manner as witnessed throughout our study on meaning, the bishop attributes these problems to the post-baptismal influence of devil and demons. According to Chrysostom in *Heb. Homily 22,3*, the *Sursum Corda* coupled with the *orans* posture of prayer enables the worshipper to ‘soar above’ the influence of the evil one. The bishop, in similar fashion as Cyril and Theodore, believes that if one is not able to have their hearts and minds on high during the Eucharistic Celebration then all they will encounter in the Eucharist is bread and wine, not the Body and Blood of Christ. In turn, the inability of the some of the gathered to *see* the sacrament resulted in unacceptable actions in the liturgy. Thus, our study on Chrysostom revealed how his understanding of the *Sursum Corda* is connected how the initiated interact within the ritual setting and their perception of the Eucharist.

The last Father in our study of meaning and the *Sursum Corda* was Augustine of Hippo. He references the *Sursum Corda* more than any other Patristic figure. However, in regards to the North African bishop, our focus was on his *Sermon 227*. In it, Augustine describes how the *Sursum Corda* is a means of God’s initiatory grace according to election and predestination and realized in baptism. According to the bishop, this salvific act of God should result in a sense of humility. Moreover, to hear the command of the priest is to recall one’s experience in baptism where the candidate was transferred from the domain of the devil and united to the death and resurrection of Christ. For Augustine, one indication that the *Sursum*

*Corda* was actually realized among the gathered was unity. If the liturgical context did not reflect this pastoral consideration, then the heart was not truly on high.

Moreover, this mindset, as is consistent with our fourth century Fathers, according to Augustine, was necessary in order for the new Christians to comprehend the Body and Blood of Christ in the Eucharist.

Our study on ‘meaning’ demonstrated that there are common themes among the Fathers in regards to the *Sursum Corda*. The first is having the heart of on high is related to remembering one’s baptism. It was in the rites of entrance the heart was moved from the things of the earth to Christ in heaven. Secondly, the *Sursum Corda* is a spiritual call to attention in order that the gathered may realize the presence and possible influence of the devil. If this is not comprehended by the faithful, then it may result in improper attitudes and actions in the liturgy. Thirdly, the *Sursum Corda* was the liturgical command that, if realized, provided spiritual sight to the worshipper. When the heart or mind was above, then the worshipper can see the bread and wine of the Eucharist as the Body and Blood of Christ. Lastly, the command is connected thematically with the *Sanctus*. The realization of ones heart on high was a form of ascent that resulted in the participant joining with the angels in singing the heavenly chant, ‘Holy, Holy, Holy.’

The last chapter of our work considered how the meaning of the *Sursum Corda* evolved in the sixth to eight centuries. In Chapter 2 of our study, we noted that Anastasius of Sinai in the late seventh or early eighth century still employed the *Sursum Corda* as a means to correct pastoral problems within the social context of the liturgy. However, within his commentary he also connects the command to the need for the gathered to ‘ascend to heaven.’ This exhortation reflected a form of

liturgical and theological evolution in the Divine Liturgy of the Hagia Sophia in the capital of Constantinople.

During the reign of Justin II (565 – 574), the transfer of the unconsecrated gifts to the altar table became known as the Great Entrance. The highly ritualized and celebratory movement added by the Emperor took place during the weekly singing of the ‘Cherubikon.’ This hymn spoke of events that were to take place in the liturgy – the singing of the Sanctus (let us who mystically represent the cherubim and sing the thrice holy hymn) the *Sursum Corda* (lay aside all earthly cares) and the Eucharist (that we may receive the King of all). However, the unprecedented ceremony and grandeur attached to the transfer of gifts, coupled with the singing of the mystical ‘Cherubikon’, resulted in a new popular piety and devotion as the unconsecrated gifts were mistakenly understood to be the Body and Blood of Christ. Thus, we concluded that the notion to ‘lay aside all earthly care,’ that we encounter in some sense in Cyprian but without question in Cyril, shifts at this time in history from the *Sursum Corda* to the Great Entrance. If the gathered could mistake the nature of the gifts being transferred at this time then it seems plausible that they may also have misunderstood the exhortation found within the ‘Cherubikon’ and the ‘Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence’ on Holy Saturday. Moreover, this liturgical problem persisted at least until the time of Cabasilas in the fourteenth century, if not until present.

Germanus’s *Commentary on the Divine Liturgy*, written in the early eighth century, reveals how these developments altered the emphasis of the command from earthly concerns, originally associated with baptism, to that of heavenly ascent in the Eucharist. His work was influenced by the earlier liturgical commentaries of Pseudo-Dionysius and Maximus the Confessor. Maximus, relying on the theological

developments of Denys regarding the human soul's ascent to God in the liturgy, presents the physical structure of the church as an image of the entire universe. In his description, he sees the sanctuary, where the priests gather, as the sky, and the nave, where the laity assembles, as the earth. In the immense setting of the Great Cathedral, complete with its elaborate ceremony and beauty, the clergy, representatives of the state and the laity gathered in what was referred to as 'heaven on earth.' It is within this theological and liturgical context that Germanus describes the *Sursum Corda* as the means by which the priest leads everyone up to the New Jerusalem. Furthermore, he comments it is meet and right to have the eye of the soul seeking the habitation of the heavenly Jerusalem. Germanus' commentary does not make reference to any of the former 'earthly' concerns that we encountered within our primary scope of study. Moreover, for Maximus (again, relying on Denys) and, therefore, for Germanus, what the soul is truly seeking is contemplation and union with God via the Eucharist. Therefore, the *Sursum Corda*, at this point in time and place within the Eastern Church, reflects a theological shift away from the primacy of the rite of baptism to that of the Eucharist. And this is arguably, per our introduction, where the East and West find themselves today. In light of our study, it may prove beneficial if we revisit the theological and ritual connection that once existed between the *Sursum Corda* and the rite of baptism – a transition that seems to be already taking place organically within some Eucharistic assemblies.

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