

Preface

I never thought I would write a book about liturgical reform and Orthodoxy. Numerous life events contributed to the genesis of this book. I spent countless hours of my youth in the company of my grandfather, a priest of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church. I served as an altar boy, sang in the parish choir, and began to conduct choir when I turned 18. These activities included the familiar tasks of preparing and evaluating music, learning the appointed ritual movements of the liturgy, and debating the “right” way to liturgize. When I was in college, a friend from the local chapter of the Orthodox Christian Fellowship at the University of Minnesota introduced me to the writings of Alexander Schmemmann. Schmemmann answered my questions about the ultimate purpose of the liturgy. I found his explanation of the liturgy as the Church’s ascent into the kingdom of God more persuasive than anything I had ever read. I continued my inquiry into Orthodox theology by reading Schmemmann; his explanations were not only informative, but also inspiring and edifying. In my first quarter at “The U,” I requested information on theological education from every Orthodox seminary in North America.

The next step occurred much later in my career, when I began to teach liturgy to undergraduates at The Catholic University of

America (CUA). The question of liturgical renewal captured my full attention with my attempt to understand the so-called liturgy wars in the Catholic Church, especially since students did not withhold their opinions about more noteworthy dimensions of the wars. The only way I could attempt to address the controversial liturgical issues in the classroom was to seriously read the pertinent documents of Vatican II, especially *Sacrosanctum Concilium* and *Lumen Gentium*. In reading these documents and the history of the liturgical movement, I began to recognize common theological patterns shared between the Orthodox and Catholic churches. The fiftieth anniversary of the proclamation of *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, and its commemoration at a special symposium in September 2013 at CUA, afforded me the opportunity to begin the process of working out my reflections on the question of liturgical reform. I was particularly struck by Schmemmann's dismissal of the possibility of a significant liturgical reform for the Orthodox Church. His conservative approach to reform seemed dissonant with his liturgical theology, which shared much in common with *Sacrosanctum Concilium*. At the time, I was putting the finishing touches on my book on Chrismation (The Liturgical Press, 2014), and the memory of the similarity between Schmemmann's and Yves Congar's notion of the priesthood of the laity only enhanced my awareness of the dissonance between a conservative approach to liturgical reform and the common enterprise of *ressourcement* in sacramental theology.

After the symposium at CUA, I wrote a formal proposal for the book project and was rewarded with a contract by the generosity of Michael Gibson and Fortress Press. The pages awaiting your attention are the result of this work. In these pages, I explore the phenomenon of liturgical reform in the Orthodox Church in dialogue with the impact of Vatican II on Christendom. My study attempts to show that *Sacrosanctum Concilium* is the product of the

liturgical movement, and that contemporaneous Orthodox models of liturgical reform are grounded by the same theological rationale supporting the Roman Catholic reform. After analyzing *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, I examine and assess four Orthodox models of liturgical reform: Schmemmann's Eucharistic revival, liturgical renewal in the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, liturgical rebirth in the Church of Greece, and the creation of a new liturgical order at New Skete Monastery. I conclude with extensive reflections on what we can learn from these recent reform models and how we might update the agenda for liturgical reform to achieve the ecumenical liturgical objectives.