

## **‘Understanding *Anamnesis* Correctly’:**

### **A Structural & Theological Comparison between the Anaphora of St John Chrysostom and the Roman *Canon missae* with a Special Attention to the Anamnesis**

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The Eucharistic prayers, or anaphoras, of the Christian tradition stand at the heart of liturgical worship, expressing the most profound theological convictions of respective communities about Christ event and the believer’s participation in it. Among the most prominent are the anaphora of St. John Chrysostom, central to the Byzantine tradition, and the Roman Canon, the core of the Roman Rite for many centuries.

#### **Titles First: ‘Anaphora’ & ‘Canon’**

Liturgical scholarship generally distinguishes between two basic usages of the term ‘anaphora’.<sup>2</sup> On the one hand, this noun designates the central section of the Eucharistic liturgy within a given Christian tradition. In this sense, the Roman Canon constitutes the anaphora of the Western (Roman) tradition, while the anaphora of St John Chrysostom exemplifies the same in the Antiochene (West Syrian) one.<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, the term ‘anaphora’ is employed more narrowly to denote the Eucharistic prayer in Eastern liturgical sources, whereas the term ‘canon’ is used to describe the corresponding material in Western liturgical practice. In the present study, the terms ‘anaphora’ and ‘canon’ will be employed in the former sense, with ‘anaphora’ having the broader meaning of the Eucharistic prayer in various liturgical tradition, both Eastern and Western.

#### **Historical Context of the Anaphora of St. John Chrysostom & the Roman *Canon missae***

Divine Liturgy of St John Chrysostom is the principal celebration of the great majority of eastern Churches, observing Constantinopolitan tradition. Liturgical scholars classify this anaphora as West

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<sup>2</sup> s.v. "Anaphora." In *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, edited by Cross, F. L., and E. A. Livingstone: Oxford University Press, 2005. Gerard Rouwhorst, "Anaphora". In *Brill Encyclopedia of Early Christianity Online*, (Brill, 2018) doi: [https://doi.org/10.1163/2589-7993\\_EECO\\_SIM\\_00000146](https://doi.org/10.1163/2589-7993_EECO_SIM_00000146). J. Geldhof, *The Roman Canon: An Anaphora for the Future*, in *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses* 100 (2024) 665-699, p. 665 n. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Contemporary scholarship distinguishes between the Western (Roman) and five different Eastern Christian traditions, including East Syrian (or Chaldean), West Syrian (Antiochene), Alexandrian, Armenian and Constantinopolitan (otherwise known as the Byzantine), see R. Roberson, *The Eastern Christian Churches. A Brief Survey* (7th Edition), Rome, 2005. For a shorter overview, see Taras Khomych, “Eastern Catholic Churches and the Question of ‘Uniatism’: Problems of the Past, Challenges of the Present, and Hopes for the Future,” *Louvain Studies* 31 (2006): 214–237, esp. p. 237 for a useful scheme, illustrating the diversity of Christian traditions.

Syrian or Antiochene.<sup>4</sup> It is traditionally ascribed to the authorship of St John Chrysostom, a prominent early Christian author, who was born in Antioch in Roman province of Syria and at the end of the fourth century (398) became bishop of Constantinople.<sup>5</sup> This traditional attribution has been repeatedly challenged by liturgical historical scholarship, which recognises, at the same time, that the vexed question of authorship is virtually impossible to resolve.<sup>6</sup> In the third edition of the collection of Jasper & Cuming summarised the scholarship regarding this issue as follows: “Chrysostom may have done no more than touch up a liturgy already existing at Antioch which acquired his name when he was transferred to Constantinople.”<sup>7</sup> More recent scholarship, however, tends to attribute more weight to Chrysostom’s contribution for its final formation.<sup>8</sup> For the sake of brevity I will refer to this anaphora with its traditional title or simply CHR in this contribution.

The Roman *Canon missae* (hereafter, RC) represents the central and most venerable Eucharistic prayer of the Roman (Western Christian) tradition. For many centuries it was the only anaphora used in the Roman liturgy and remained essentially unchanged through the ages.<sup>9</sup> It is known as Eucharistic Prayer I to Roman Catholics today. Like the CHR, the RC also has very ancient roots with its earliest textual witness possibly appearing in St Ambrose’s *De sacramentis* (late fourth century).<sup>10</sup> Although scholars often describe it as a composite text, formed as a collection of very

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<sup>4</sup> Paul F. Bradshaw and Maxwell E. Johnson, *The Eucharistic Liturgies: Their Evolution and Interpretation* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2012) 327.

<sup>5</sup> R. Kaczynski, *John Chrysostom* in ‘Dictionary of Early Christian Literature’, pp. 330-6.

<sup>6</sup> Alphonse Raes, *L’authenticité de la liturgie byzantine de S. Jean Chrysostome*, in *OCP* 24 (1958) 5–16. G. Khouri-Sarkis, *L’origine syrienne de l’anaphore Byzantine de Saint Jean Chrysostom*, in *Ostkirchliche Studien* 7 (1962) 3–68.

<sup>7</sup> R. C. D. Jasper and G.J Cuming (eds.), *Prayers of the Eucharist: Early and Reformed*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition (The Liturgical Press, Pueblo: Collegeville 1987) p. 130.

<sup>8</sup> Robert F. Taft, “The Authenticity of the Chrysostom Anaphora Revisited, Determining Authorship of Liturgical Texts by Computer,” *OCP* 56 (1990) 5–51. Juan Mateos, *A History of the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom: Vol. I, The Liturgy of the Word*, ed. Steven Hawkes-Teeples (Fairfax, VA: Eastern Christian Publications, 2016). P.F. Bradshaw & M.E. Johnson (eds.), *Prayers of the Eucharist: Early and Reformed*, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition (The Liturgical Press: Collegeville, MN 2019) p. 166. Stefano Parenti, *L’anafora di Crisostomo* (Münster: Aschendorff Verlag, 2020).

<sup>9</sup> Geldhof, “Roman Canon,” p. 670.

<sup>10</sup> On the question of dating, see B. Botte, *Le canon de la messe romaine* (Louvain, 1935), 11-25. B. Botte & C. Mohrmann, *L’ordinaire de la messe* (Paris, 1953) 15-25. G. G. Willis, ‘The Roman Canon of the Mass at the End of the Sixth Century’, *The Downside Review*, 98 (1980), 124–137. J. Day, *Interpreting the origins of the Roman canon*, in *Studia Patristica, Including papers presented at the Conference on Early Roman Liturgy to 600 at Blackfriars Hall*, Oxford, UK (2014) pp. 53–67. The relationship between the RC and Ambrose’s *De sacramentis*, however, is a subject of discussion, see E. Mazza, *Sul canone della messa citato del De sacramentis de Ambrogio*, in *Ecclesia orans* 27 (2010) 271-293; K. H. Belcher, *Consecration and Sacrifice in Ambrose and the Roman Canon*, in *Studia Liturgica* 49 (2019) 154-174. More recently Matthew Olver has argued that Ambrose’s work cannot be read simply as a direct source or reflection of the RC but rather it represents a distinctive reworking of shared liturgical traditions, see Matthew S. C. Olver, *Reconfigured Relations: A New Perspective on the Relationship between Ambrose’s De sacramentis and the Roman Canon Missae*, in *J ECS* 32 (2024) 431-465.

diverse liturgical units, the received text of the RC tends to exhibit a remarkable degree of stability, particularly since its appearance in Roman sacramentaries from the end of the sixth century onwards.<sup>11</sup>

There is a plethora of studies devoted either to the CHR or to the RC<sup>12</sup> but very few comparisons of these two important anaphoras.<sup>13</sup> By comparing the CHR anaphora with the RC, I seek to underscore the importance of a close examination of their respective anamnesis units, a dimension that has received even more limited scholarly attention. My purpose is to demonstrate that, while both liturgical traditions affirm the Eucharist as a participation in Christ’s eternal sacrifice, their anamnestic formulations reveal distinct structural and theological emphases.<sup>14</sup> The comparative table of their respective structures presented below will serve as a framework for this analysis.

<b>Roman Canon Missae</b>	<b>Anaphora of St John Chrysostom</b>
Introductory dialogue	Introductory dialogue
<i>Vere dignum</i> / It is truly fitting	It is fitting and right
<i>Sanctus</i> / Holy [congregation]	Holy [congregation]
x	With these powers, Master
<i>Tè igitur</i> / We therefore	x
<i>Memento, Domine</i> / Remember	x

<sup>11</sup> Ralph A. Keifer, *The Unity of the Roman Canon: An Examination of Its Unique Structure*, in *Studia Liturgica* 11 (1976) 39-58. On the diversity of Western liturgical forms prior to Carolingian reforms, see Matthieu Smyth, *L’antique Prière Eucharistique Romaine et Les Autres Témoins de Cette Tradition* in *Revue des Sciences Religieuses* 88/1 (2014) 27–48.

<sup>12</sup> Liturgical historians tend to point out similarities between the RC and ancient Egyptian liturgical sources, such as the anaphora of St Mark and the Der Balyzeh, see Walter D. Ray, “Rome and Alexandria: Two Cities, One Anaphoral Tradition.” *Issues in Eucharistic Praying in East and West Essays in Liturgical and Theological Analysis.*, Liturgical Press, 2010, pp. 99–127.

<sup>13</sup> A prominent liturgical scholar Louis Bouyer was all together dismissive of any possible connection between the RC and the West Syrian liturgical tradition, see Louis Bouyer, *Eucharistie: théologie et spiritualité de la prière eucharistique*. Desclée, 1966, p. 247. More recent scholarship, however, called this to question by pointing out possible links with certain Antiochean liturgical materials (see M. S. C. Olver, *Connections between the Roman Canon Missae and the East Syrian Anaphora of Mar Theodore*, in *Questions Liturgiques*, 101 (2021) 276–304, Geldhof, “Roman Canon,” p. 667) but not with the CHR.

<sup>14</sup> The text of CHR is quoted according to its earliest witness, the 8<sup>th</sup> c ms Barberini Gr. 336, from S. Parenti, E. Velkovska (eds.), *L’Eucologio Barberini gr. 336*. Secunda edizione riveduta con traduzione in lingua italiana (Bibliotheca *Ephemerides Liturgicae*, Subsidia 80, Rome 2000) esp. parr 34-35 (anamnesis). The text of the Roman Canon taken from Anton Hänggi and Irmgard Pahl, eds., *Prex eucharistica: textus e variis liturgiis antiquioribus selecti*, Spicilegium Friburgense 12 (Fribourg: Éditions universitaires, 1968) esp. p. 433 (*Unde et memores*). English translations of these anaphoras are taken from P.F. Bradshaw & M.E. Johnson (eds.), *Prayers of the Eucharist: Early and Reformed*, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition (The Liturgical Press: Collegeville, MN 2019) pp. 168-171, 206-210.

<i>Communicantes</i> / In fellowship	x
<i>Hanc igitur</i> / Therefore	x
<i>Quam oblationem</i> / Vouchsafe, we beseech you	x
<i>Qui pridie</i> / On the day before He [Institution narrative]	On the night [Institution narrative]
<i>Unde et memores</i> / Therefore also, Lord	<i>Anamnesis</i> / We therefore
x	We hymn you [congregation]
x	<i>Epiclesis</i>
<i>Supra quae</i> / Vouchsafe to look upon them	x
<i>Supplices te</i> / We humbly beseech you	x
<i>Memento etiam</i> / Remember also, Lord	We offer you this reasonable service for (the departed
<i>Nobis quoque</i> / To us ... also	... and the living)
<i>Per ipsum</i> / Through him	x

### **Trinitarian and ‘Somewhat Sacrificial’ CHR versus Christologically Oriented and ‘Aggressively’ Sacrificial’ RC**

The anaphora of CHR is relatively short. In terms of its length, it corresponds roughly to the RC, while being less than half the length of one of its closest liturgical ‘relative’, the anaphora of St Basil the Great.<sup>15</sup> Structurally and thematically, however, there are many divergencies between the CHR and the RC, as can be observed in the comparative table above.

Similarly to many other Syrian anaphoras, CHR introduces the dialogue between the presider and the congregation with the reference to 2 Cor 13:13<sup>16</sup> while the RC starts the dialogue with a short *Dominus vobiscum* by the presider.

The preface then begins with an address to God the Father and exaltation of God’s majesty, employing alpha-privative descriptors ("ineffable, inconceivable, invisible, incomprehensible") in the Presanctus. Creation is mentioned only in passing through the phrase “you created us out of non-existence into existence.” This initial section situates human praise within the context of the angelic hymn, culminating in the Sanctus. The text then transitions to the Supper Narrative, which

<sup>15</sup> H. Engberding, “Die Angleichung der byzantinischen Chrysostomusliturgie an die byzantinische Basiliusliturgie,” *Ostkirchliche Studien* 13 (1964) 105-122.

<sup>16</sup> “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”; *PEER*, 168.

is centered on the Son. Subsequently, the prayer reorients itself to the Father in the Anamnesis and invokes the Holy Spirit to transform the Eucharistic gifts in the Epiclesis, which has no real parallel in the RC.<sup>17</sup> The prayer concludes with commemorations of both the living and the departed, once again addressed to the Father. Taken as a whole, this Eucharistic prayer manifests a distinctly Trinitarian structure.<sup>18</sup> By contrast, the Roman Canon consistently addresses the Father through the Son, with its content being predominantly Christological in orientation.<sup>19</sup> The Holy Spirit is mentioned only once, in the *Per ipsum* doxology, where a Trinitarian formula provides closure to the anaphora. This highlights the relative absence of a developed pneumatology within the RC, in contrast to the fuller Trinitarian balance evident in the other tradition.

In addition to this, RC is permeated with explicit sacrificial language to such an extent that Robert Daly, who devoted much of his scholarly career to the study of the meaning of the sacrifice throughout the centuries, calls it ‘very sacrificial’ and at another point even ‘the most ‘aggressively’ sacrificial of the Eucharistic Prayers here analysed’.<sup>20</sup> Daly justifies his characterisation by identifying twenty-one instances of eight different Latin sacrificial words in the RC, including nouns ‘sacrificio’ (5) and ‘hostia’ (4), the verb ‘offerre’ (5), etc.<sup>21</sup> He then confirms the prominence of sacrificial language by a comparative analysis of some eighteen Eucharistic prayers of various liturgical traditions with the RC scoring on different categories among the top three anaphoras.<sup>22</sup> At the same time, Daly identifies only five explicit sacrificial references in the CHR, placing it in a category of ‘little ... or somewhat sacrificial’ anaphoras.<sup>23</sup> It is worth noting that along with many other West Syrian anaphoras, it contains an explicit offering of the Eucharistic elements only at the

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<sup>17</sup> An influential Byzantine author Nicholas Cabasilas interestingly argues that the Epiclesis has a similar function as the RC prayer for the Angel to bring the oblation to the Heavenly Altar, see *Sources Chrétiennes* 4bis (2021) pp. 217-223. For an English translation, see Nicolaus Cabasilas, *A Commentary on the Divine Liturgy*. Translated by J. M. Hussey & P. A. McNulty with an introduction by R. M. French. London: SPCK, 1977, pp. 76-79.

<sup>18</sup> John Baldovin, “Eucharistic Prayer,” in *The New Westminster Dictionary of Liturgy and Worship* (ed. Paul F. Bradshaw; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002) 195–97.

<sup>19</sup> According to Taft, the strongly Christological focus of the Roman Canon is actually a “sign of [its] great antiquity”, see Robert F. Taft, “‘Eastern Presuppositions’ and Western Liturgical Renewal,” *Antiphon* 5, no. 1 (2000) 15.

<sup>20</sup> R. J. Daly, *Sacrifice Unveiled: The True Meaning of Christian Sacrifice*, London – New York, 2009, p. 140.

<sup>21</sup> Daly, *Sacrifice Unveiled*, p. 125.

<sup>22</sup> Daly, *Sacrifice Unveiled*, p. 139. Cf. Ralph A. Keifer, *The Unity of the Roman Canon; An Examination of Its Unique Structure*, in *Studia Liturgica* 11 (1976) 39-58, p. 46.

<sup>23</sup> Daly, *Sacrifice Unveiled*, pp. 136-140. Cf. Kenneth Stevenson, *Eucharist and Offering* (New York: Pueblo Pub. Co., 1986) 64. John R. K. Fenwick, *The Missing Oblation: The Contents of the Early Antiochene Anaphora*, *Alcuin/GROW Liturgical Study* 11 (Bramcote: Grove Books, 1989) 12. Robert F. Taft, “Understanding the Byzantine Anaphoral Oblation,” in *Rule of Prayer, Rule of Faith: Essays in Honor of Aidan Kavanagh, O.S.B.*, eds. Nathan Mitchell and John F. Baldovin (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1996) 32–55.

conclusion of the anamnesis. In view of this John Fenwick, another historian of liturgy, advanced a thesis that CHR along with the anaphora of the Twelve Apostles and the Eucharistic prayer found in Apostolic Constitutions 7 “are all independent derivatives of a single prayer” or proto-anaphora that had no “oblation or offering of the eucharistic elements to God” and hence, the “missing oblation”.<sup>24</sup>

Matthew Olver has recently challenged this view.<sup>25</sup> He argues that despite the lack of separate oblation formulas at the beginning of the anaphora the CHR, as well as other West Syrian anaphoras, contain oblation verbs, which imply the act of offering the bread and wine. These verbs are integral to the Eucharistic celebration, indicating that the liturgy embodies the concept of material sacrifice. Olver argues that the sacrificial nature is inherent in the liturgical language and actions. He pays special attention to the use of the verb προσφέρω in the anamnesis and in the subsequent petitions, pointing out that they most clearly express the idea of oblation but he does not develop this idea. Taking this into consideration, I would like to focus specifically on anamnesis, which manifests important similarities but also differences between the RC and the CHR.

### **Definition and Role of Anamnesis**

The contemporary liturgical scholarship uses the word anamnesis, a transliteration of the Greek ἀνάμνησις (*anamnēsis*), as a technical term referring either to the commemoration of the Salvation History events or to the specific liturgical section of the eucharistic prayer, immediately following the Institution Narrative.<sup>26</sup> We will first be focusing on the Anamnesis in the latter sense but will extend its meaning to include the former as we progress. In his classical study of the subject matter, Dom Botte points out that Eucharistic anamnesis usually includes the following three elements:<sup>27</sup>

- 1) a transition which recalls the Supper Narrative;
- 2) an enumeration of the 'mysteries' of Christ's salvific work; and
- 3) a prayer of offering.

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<sup>24</sup> Fenwick, *Missing Oblation*, p. 5.

<sup>25</sup> M. S. C. Olver. *The “Missing” Oblation and the Problem of Sacrifice in Early Antiochene Anaphoras: A Reconsideration of John Fenwick and Stefano Parenti*, in *Harvard Theological Review* 117 (2024) 475-505. Cf. R. F. Taft, *Reconstituting the Oblation of the Chrysostom Anaphora: An Exercise in Comparative Liturgy*, in *OCP* 59 (1993) 387-402

<sup>26</sup> R. F. Taft, ‘*This Saving Command*’ of the Chrysostom Anamnesis and the ‘*Missing Command to Repeat*’, in *Studi Sull’Oriente Cristiano* 6 (2002) 129–149, pp. 130-131.

<sup>27</sup> B. Botte, *Problèmes de l’Anamnèse*. in *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 5 (1954) 16–24.

He further distinguished between two types of Anamneses: those using the term ἀνάμνησις or its translation with reference to Lk 22:19 and 1 Cor 11:24-25 in a participial or nominal form, such as μεμνημένοι, *memores*. Anamneses of the other type employ the verb καταγγέλλετε from 1 Cor 11:26.<sup>28</sup> CHR along with the RC belong to the first type. For the purposes of this contribution we set the texts of the respective anamnestic sections of CHR and RC in parallel columns:<sup>29</sup>

<p><i>Unde et memores</i></p> <p>(1) Therefore also, Lord, we your servants, but also your holy people,</p> <p>(2) having in remembrance the blessed passion of your Son Christ our Lord, likewise his resurrection from the dead, and also his glorious ascension into heaven,</p> <p>(3) do offer to your excellent majesty from your gifts and bounty a pure victim, a holy victim, an unblemished victim, the holy bread of eternal life and the cup of everlasting salvation.</p>	<p><i>Anamnesis</i> <i>The priest says privately:</i> We therefore,</p> <p>remembering this saving commandment and all the things that were done for us the cross, the tomb, the resurrection on the third day, the ascension into heaven, the session at the right hand, the second and glorious coming again,</p> <p>(<i>aloud</i>) offering you your own in all and for all</p> <p><i>People:</i> We hymn you &lt;we bless you, we give you thanks, Lord, and we pray to you, our God&gt;.</p>
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<sup>28</sup> Botte, *Problèmes de l'Anamnèse*, p. 16.

<sup>29</sup> Unde et memores sumus, Domine, nos tui servi sed et plebs tua sancta

Christi Filii tui Domini Dei nostril tam beatae passionis nec non et ab inferis resurrectionis sed et in caelos gloriosae ascensionis

offerimus praeclarae maiestati tuae de tuis donis ac datis hostiam puram, hostiam sanctam, hostiam immaculam, panem sanctum vitae aeternae et calicem salutis perpetuae. 1) Ὁ ἱερεὺς μυστικῶς·

2) Μεμνημένοι τοίνυν

τῆς σωτηρίου ταύτης ἐντολῆς καὶ πάντων τῶν ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν γεγενημένων· τοῦ σταυροῦ, τοῦ τάφου, τῆς τριημέρου ἀναστάσεως, τῆς εἰς οὐρανὸς ἀναβάσεως, τῆς ἐκ δεξιῶν καθέδρας, τῆς δευτέρας καὶ ἐνδόξου πάλιν παρουσίας

3) Ἐκφώ<νω>· Τὰ σὰ ἐκ τῶν σῶν σοὶ προσφέροντες κατὰ πάντα καὶ διὰ πάντα.

4) Ὁ λαός· Σὲ ὑμνοῦμεν.

As can be observed above, both texts have all the three elements. Moreover, both are addressed to God the Father, which is not the case with all anaphoral Anamneses, some of which are addressed to the Son.<sup>30</sup>

It is worth noting that the first and the third elements, mentioned above, are more elaborate in the RC, while the list of the salvific events (the second element) is more extensive in CHR Anamensis. We will briefly discuss these elements now.

The first part of both Anamneses is introduced by a coordinating conjunction ‘therefore’ ‘indicating that what is to follow – that is the offering – is a consequence of at least the institution narrative’ and possibly all the salvific actions of God.<sup>31</sup> However, while CHR uses simple liturgical ‘we’, the RC distinguishes between ‘we’ – ‘your servants’ and ‘your holy people’, to differentiate between the presider(s) and the congregation. The significance of this distinction is spelled out in the third element.

The third element in the CHR is very concise: it recognises the gifts as God’s own offered for all humanity and all creation, emphasising the cosmic dimension of the service. The RC likewise acknowledges that the offering is ‘from your [=God’s] gifts and bounty’, highlighting God’s majesty and elaborating sacrificial connotation by the use of specific adjectives.<sup>32</sup> It is also worth noting that only presider(s) pronounces the prayer of the RC while the CHR shows a different dynamics: the whole congregation responds to the words and actions of the presider(s) by singing ‘we hymn you <we praise you, we glorify you>.’ This response indicates two important points. First, it emphasises again the dialogical character of the anamnesis (as well as of the entire anaphora). It is worth noting that certain parts of the prayer are pronounced privately (μυστικῶς) by

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<sup>30</sup> As pointed out by Taft, only four prayers of the CHR are addressed to Christ: the prayer of the third antiphon, the prayer before Gospel reading, the Cherubic hymn prayer (*Nemo dignus*) and the elevation prayer (Taft, *Great Entrance*, p. 121 n. 7).

<sup>31</sup> Olver, *Offering for Change*, p. 218.

<sup>32</sup> M. S. C. Olver, *Reconfigured Relations: A New Perspective on the Relationship between Ambrose’s De sacramentis and the Roman Canon Missae*, in *JECS* 32 (2024) 437

the presider, as rubrics point out.<sup>33</sup> These parts would not be heard by the rest of the congregation.<sup>34</sup> At the same time, the CHR in general and its Anamnesis in particular, has a structure of a dialogue between the presider and the congregation. As pointed out by Taft, the only finite verbs, which make the grammatical sense of the Anamnesis, come in the people's response ('we hymn you...').<sup>35</sup> This response reinforces the dialogical and communal character of this prayer. The RC, on the other hand, makes a clear distinction between the presider and the congregation, as mentioned above, a distinction which is articulated even more strongly in the *Te igitur* and *Memento Domine* sections, suggesting that the congregation is not itself the direct offeror of the gifts, but rather the community on whose behalf the gifts are presented.<sup>36</sup> This appears to stand in contrast with the CHR, where the whole action is attributed to the entire assembly.<sup>37</sup>

The second part of the CHR anamnesis is more extensive than that of the RC. The latter enumeration of the salvific events focuses upon the more immediate events following the Last Supper, namely, the Passion, Crucifixion, and Resurrection.<sup>38</sup> Chrysostom anamnesis, on the other hand, includes a more extensive enumeration of the acts of dispensation:

- The Cross (Crucifixion as the ultimate sacrifice)
- The Grave (Burial as the completion of His sacrificial death)
- The Resurrection (Victory over death)

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<sup>33</sup> This practice is dated to the seventh century. It is worth noting that before the changes introduced by the Second Vatican Council, there was a centuries-long tradition of the silent recitation of the RC in the West too, see Geldhof, p. 685.

<sup>34</sup> This is probably the reason why some ancient commentators either provided limited exposition or did not offer their comments on the anaphora at all, e.g. Maximus the Confessor in his *Mystagogia*. For illuminating discussions of Maximus' omission of the Anaphora in his commentary, see T. Cattoi, Liturgy as Cosmic Transformation, in Oxford Handbook of Maximus the Confessor, 2015, 414-435, p. 432. Paul M. Blowers, *Maximus the Confessor: Jesus Christ and the Transfiguration of the World*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016, pp. 190-193. The latter refers to 'Maximus' evocative silence of the Anaphora' as an apophatic, 'theologically intentional silence,' a way of 'honouring in silence the mystery of the faith'. Following the interpretation of Hans-Joachim Shulz, Blowers then points out that the anaphora for Maximus represents the point at which 'the Church finds itself liturgically leaving the dimension of expectation and forthwith entering sacramentally, the dimension of final fulfilment', emphasising the eschatological character of the service.

<sup>35</sup> R. F. Taft, *Understanding the Byzantine Anaphoral Oblation*, in: N. Mitchell, J. Baldovin (eds.), *Rule of Prayer, Rule of Faith. Essays in Honor of Aidan Kavanagh, O.S.B.* (A Pueblo Book, Collegeville 1996) 32-55.

<sup>36</sup> Bradshaw & Johnson, *Prayers of the Eucharist*, p. 202.

<sup>37</sup> The third element in its extended form also points out to the sacrificial feature of the service by alluding to a prayer of an early martyr – a parallel or quotation of the Prayer of Polycarp before his execution from the *Martyrdom of Polycarp*, an early Christian writing which represents Polycarp's execution as a sacrificial event with many eucharistic references. Further on this, see T. Khomych, *Liturgy as a Meeting Place for the Expression of Religious Experience. Martyrdom as a Model of Christian Life*, in L. Boeve et al (eds), *Encountering Transcendence: Contributions to a Theology of Christian Religious Experience*, Peeters, 2005, pp. 477–487.

<sup>38</sup> M. S. C. Olver, *Offering for Change: The Logic of Consecration That Unites Early Christian Anaphoras*, in *Worship* 96 (2022) 204–221.

- The Ascension (Christ's glorification and intercession)
- The Sitting at the Right Hand (Christ's authority)
- The Second Coming (Eschatological fulfilment of the sacrifice)

The final element on this list is especially striking as it does not refer to any of the past events, which we normally associate with memory and remembrance. Instead, it focuses on the future second coming. How can a future event be remembered? An answer to this question is related to the meaning of the term in its liturgical context, a meaning that was clarified during one of the Eucharistic controversies.

### **Remembrance Debated**

This theme of liturgical remembrance was thoroughly examined during the Synods of Constantinople in 1156 and 1157, which addressed fundamental questions about the nature of the Eucharist and its relationship to Christ's sacrifice on the Cross.<sup>39</sup> These Synods addressed a controversy initiated by prominent professors of the Patriarchal school Nikephoros Basiliades and Michael the Rhetor over sacrificial liturgical formulas, including the reference to Christ as simultaneously 'the one who offers and is offered and who receives (ὁ προσφέρων καὶ προσφερόμενος καὶ προσδεχόμενος)' in the prayer of the Cherubikon, as contradictory.<sup>40</sup> In response the Patriarch Constantine IV Chliarenos convened a Synod in Constantinople in 1156, which condemned the stance of these two professors. However, Soterichos Panteugenos, a deacon of Hagia Sophia and patriarch-elect of Antioch, challenged the outcome of this initial trial in his Dialogue.<sup>41</sup> Using Scripture, particularly Romans 6:10 and Hebrews 7:27, as well as drawing on certain Platonic ideas, Soterichos asserted that Christ's sacrifice was offered 'once for all' and could not be repeated. In view of this he argued that the Eucharist is only a memorial (ἀνάμνησις) of the sacrifice on the Cross, presented in a symbolic or imaginary fashion. This view, however, was met with opposition and assembly of yet another synod in the Imperial Palace in Blachernae presided

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<sup>39</sup> K. Ware, 'Not an Image or a Figure': *Cabasilas on the Eucharistic Sacrifice*, in Job Getcha, and Michel Stavrou (eds.), *Le feu sur la terre: mélanges offerts au père Boris Bobrinskoy pour son 80e anniversaire*. Paris: Institut de théologie orthodoxe, 2005, 141-153, p. 143.

<sup>40</sup> On the dispute, see R. F. Taft, *The Great Entrance: A History of the Transfer of Gifts and Other Preanaphoral Rites of the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom*, Rome, 1975, pp. 135-139. Athanasios D. Angelou, *Refutation of Proclus' Elements of Theology*. Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 1984, pp. xxi-xxii. Alexander P. Kazhdan and Ann Wharton Epstein, *Change in Byzantine Culture in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries*, Berkeley, 1985, p. 160. Ware, 'Not an Image or a Figure', pp. 143-147.

<sup>41</sup> P. Magdalino, *The Empire of Manuel I Komnenos, 1143-1180*, Cambridge, 2002, p. 280. Kazhdan and Epstein, *Change*, p. 160.

now by the Emperor Manuel I Comnenus himself in 1157. This second meeting eventually settled this controversy, issuing four official statements, dealing with various aspects of this controversy and clarifying the Church's stance on this matter.<sup>42</sup> As far as the subject of our investigation is concerned, the third Synodal statement is of importance. It runs as follows:

Some who hear the words of the Savior concerning the celebration of the divine mysteries handed down by Him, 'do this in memory of me', but not understanding the 'memory' correctly, they dare to say that it is an imaginary and figurative renewal of the sacrifice of our Saviour's own body and blood offered on the precious cross for the redemption and atonement of all human race, the sacrifice offered daily by those who perform the divine mysteries, as our Saviour and Lord of all has handed down. For this reason they introduce another [sacrifice] besides the one performed from the beginning by the Saviour, and to that which is referred to in an imaginary and figurative way, as they empty the mystery of the awful and divine liturgy through which we receive the pledge of the life to come. They say these things although our divine father John the all-wise and golden-tongued proclaims the sacrifice to be unalterable and one and the same in many explicit explanations of the words of great Paul. Let them be anathema.<sup>43</sup>

This synodal statement rejects a view reducing the Eucharist to a mere 'figure' or 'image' of Christ's sacrifice in terms of a mental recollection of the Cross as a claim that empties the mystery of the Eucharist. Instead, the Synod affirmed the identity of the Eucharistic sacrifice with the unique sacrifice of Christ through the concept of *ἀνάμνησις*. This statement, however, does not explain how the sacrifice of the Eucharist is identical with the Sacrifice of the Cross.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Paul Magdalino, *The Empire of Manuel I Komnenos, 1143-1180*, Cambridge, 2002, p. 280.

<sup>43</sup> The English translation, a phrase of which is used in the main title of this contribution, is mine. For the text of the anathemas and their French translation, see Jean Gouillard, *Le synodikon de l'orthodoxie: édition et commentaire*. Paris: de Boccard, 1967, pp. 72-75:

Τοῖς ἀκούουσι μὲν τοῦ Σωτῆρος περὶ τῆς παρ' αὐτοῦ παραδοθείσης τῆς τῶν θείων μυστηρίων ἱερουργίας λέγοντος· τοῦτο ποιεῖτε εἰς τὴν ἐμὴν ἀνάμνησιν, μὴ ἐκλαμβανομένοις δὲ ὀρθῶς τὴν ἀνάμνησιν, ἀλλὰ τολμῶσι λέγειν ὅτι· καινίζει φανταστικῶς καὶ εἰκονικῶς τὴν ἐπὶ τοῦ τιμίου σταυροῦ παρὰ τοῦ Σωτῆρος ἡμῶν προσαχθεῖσαν θυσίαν τοῦ ἰδίου σώματός τε καὶ αἵματος εἰς κοινὸν τῆς ἀνθρωπίνης φύσεως λύτρον τε καὶ ἐξίλασμα ἢ καθ' ἑκάστην προσαγομένη θυσία παρὰ τῶν τὰ θεῖα ἱερουργούντων μυστήρια, καθὼς ὁ Σωτὴρ ἡμῶν καὶ δεσπότης τῶν ὄλων παρέδωκε, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο ἄλλην εἶναι ταύτην παρὰ τὴν ἐξ ἀρχῆς τῷ Σωτῆρι τετελεσμένην εἰσάγουσι, καὶ πρὸς ἐκείνην φανταστατικῶς καὶ εἰκονικῶς ἀναφερομένην, ὡς κενούσι τὸ τῆς φρικτῆς καὶ θείας ἱερουργίας μυστήριον δι' οὗ τὸν τῆς μελλούσης ζωῆς ἀρραβῶνα λαμβάνομεν, καὶ ταῦτα τοῦ θεοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν Ἰωάννου τοῦ πανσόφου καὶ χρυσορρήμονος διατρανοῦντος τῆς θυσίας τὸ ἀπαράλλακτον καὶ μίαν καὶ τὴν αὐτὴν εἶναι φάσκοντος ἐν πολλαῖς τῶν τοῦ μεγάλου Παύλου ῥητῶν ἐξηγήσεσιν, ἀνάθεμα.

<sup>44</sup> Ware, 'Not an Image or a Figure', p. 145.

This complex question is further elucidated in the ‘Refutation of the Writings of Soterichos’ by Nicholas of Methone, a leading theologian, whose views underlined this synodal formulation.<sup>45</sup> Drawing on the homilies of John Chrysostom on Hebrews, Nikolas explained that Christ’s unique self-offering on the Cross is perpetuated through His heavenly intercession. An excerpt from his *Refutation* will help us understand his approach. Reflecting on the relationship between the Eucharist and the Cross, Nicholas writes as follows:

everything there stands eternally and without ceasing, for there is not there the past which has gone and is no longer, nor the future which is not yet, nor the present which, in flowing by, holds its being but is no more than it is not; but the eternal age, having gathered everything together at once, possesses all things. Therefore also the things now taking place in time among us will then stand before us eternally and face-to-face, and from this we shall bear either eternal life or eternal punishment, according to the worth of our deeds. What, then, hinders that the saving (event) once accomplished here for our sake, and there eternally manifested, as Paul says, before the face of God, should also be said to be eternally performed, inasmuch as it also graciously grants to us eternal redemption? Although the divine sacrifice on our behalf is said to have been offered once for all but it may also be reasonably understood and said to be offered continually to God upon the heavenly altar, and thus to grant us also the eternal redemption. A manifestation of this eternal offering is the mystery of the sacred service performed here by us each day, according to the divine tradition of the Saviour.<sup>46</sup>

As we can observe in the quotation above, Nicholas identified three interconnected dimensions of Christ’s sacrifice

1. The Cross, where Christ offered Himself in history.
2. The Divine Liturgy, an earthly manifestation of this sacrifice.

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<sup>45</sup> Athanasios D. Angelou, "II Nicholas' Works". In *Refutation of Proclus' Elements of Theology*. Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 1984, pp. xxxvi-xxxvii. Ware, p. 145. Further on Nicholas of Methone, see Jozef Matula, Nicholas of Methone. In: Lagerlund, H. (ed.) *Encyclopedia of Medieval Philosophy*, Springer, 2020, pp. 1331-1334.

<sup>46</sup> ὁ αἰὼν ἀθρόα συλλαβῶν ἔχει ἅπαντα· διὸ καὶ τὰ νῦν ἐν χρόνῳ γινόμενα παρ' ἡμῶν, τότε διαιωνίως ἡμῖν ἔσονται παριστάμενα κατὰ πρόσωπον, καὶ αἰωνίαν ἐντεῦθεν οἴσομεν ἢ τὴν ζωὴν ἢ τὴν κόλασιν κατ' ἀξίαν τῶν πεπραγμένων· τί κωλύει καὶ τὸ ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν ἐνταῦθα τετελεσμένον ἐφάπαξ σωτήριον, ἐκεῖ δὲ διαιωνίως ἐμφανιζόμενον, ἧ φησι Παῦλος, τῷ προσώπῳ τοῦ Θεοῦ, λέγειν καὶ διαιωνίως τελούμενον, καθὸ καὶ λύτρωσιν αἰωνίαν ἡμῖν χαρίζεσθαι; Εἰ καὶ προσῆχθαι τοίνυν ἐφάπαξ πρὸς αἴσθησιν λέγεται τὸ ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν θεῖον σφάγιον, ἀλλὰ καὶ διαιωνίως νοοῖτ' ἂν εἰκότως καὶ λέγοιτο προσάγεσθαι τῷ Θεῷ ἐπὶ τὸ ἄνω θυσιαστήριον, καὶ οὕτως ἡμῖν καὶ τὴν αἰωνίαν βραβεύειν λύτρωσιν, δεῖγμα τῆς αἰωνίου ταύτης προσαγωγῆς τὸ παρ' ἡμῶν ἐνταῦθα καθ' ἐκάστην τελούμενον τῆς ἱερούργιας μυστήριον, κατὰ τὴν θεῖαν τοῦ Σωτῆρος παράδοσιν (Nicholas of Methone, *Ἀντίρρησις πρὸς τὰ γραφέντα παρὰ Σωτηρίχου τοῦ προβληθέντος Πατριάρχου Ἀντιοχείας περὶ τοῦ 'Σὺ εἶ ὁ προσφέρων καὶ προσφερόμενος καὶ προσδεχόμενος'*, in Demetrakopoulos, A (ed.), *Ἐκκλησιαστικὴ βιβλιοθήκη. Bibliotheca ecclesiastica continens Graecorum theologorum opera*, vol. 1, Leipzig, 1866, pp. 321-359, here 354-355).

3. The Heavenly Altar, where Christ's eternal intercession continues.

He emphasized that the Divine Liturgy is both a participation in and a manifestation of the Heavenly Liturgy. It is through this liturgical act that the timeless reality of Christ's sacrifice is brought into the present. In this way, the Eucharist becomes an experience of Heaven on Earth, uniting the faithful with Christ's eternal offering. Kallistos Ware helpfully summarises the outcome of the debates and the underlying understanding of the anamnesis as follows: "The Eucharist, then, is a sacrifice, because it is one with the heavenly intercession of Christ, which in its turn is the continuation of the sacrifice of the Cross."<sup>47</sup>

In this way the anamnesis signifies the Church's participation in Christ's eternal sacrifice at the heavenly altar. Thanks to this Eucharistic remembrance the faithful are enabled to join in Christ's self-giving, which is continuously present before God.

### **Conclusions**

To conclude, we note some structural and theological differences between the CHR and the RC. While sharing a common affirmation of the Eucharist as participation in Christ's eternal sacrifice, both anaphoras exhibit distinct theological and structural emphases. The CHR follows a Trinitarian structure, emphasising divine majesty, eschatological fulfilment and communal participation in worship, while the RC places a stronger Christological emphasis using explicit sacrificial language and priestly intercession.

The anamnesis in CHR plays a crucial role in shaping the liturgy's theological orientation. Its extensive enumeration of salvific events, culminating in the Second Coming, underscores the eschatological dimension of the Eucharist. In contrast, the RC focuses more immediately on Christ's Passion, Crucifixion and Resurrection. The dialogical nature of CHR, with the congregation actively responding to the presider, reinforces its communal aspect.

Ultimately, the CHR offers a rich theological vision of the Eucharist, highlighting not only its sacrificial character but also its cosmic and eschatological dimensions. Its structure and theology, clarified particularly through the Eucharistic controversies of 1156–1157 and the writings of Nicholas of Methone, which still merit further scholarly attention, demonstrate a profound engagement with the mystery of Christ's self-offering. In this way, it manifests the unity between the historical event of the Cross, Christ's ongoing intercession in Heaven, and the celebration of the Divine Liturgy. This perspective corresponds to the wider Eastern Christian understanding of the

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<sup>47</sup> Ware, 'Not an Image or a Figure', p. 146.

Eucharist as an encounter with the Divine mystery, in which Heaven and Earth are joined in worship and communion. Taken together, both anaphoras, the CHR and the RC, bear witness to the diversity and venerable depth of Christian theological traditions, reflecting the richness of the Church's liturgical and doctrinal heritage.