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FONTI E STUDI PER LA SCIENZA LITURGICA

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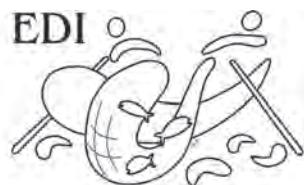
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Wilfred Sumani

## **On fire with praise**

The Canticle of the Three Servants in the Fiery Furnace  
(Dan 3, 56-88) as an Easter Hymn



*Proprietà letteraria riservata.*

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*For Cleopas,  
May the Angel of the Lord refresh you  
with the dew of eternal life.*

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# ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

## 1. Biblical Books

Gen	Genesis	Hab	Habakkuk
Ex	Exodus	Zeph	Zephaniah
Lev	Leviticus	Zech	Zechariah
Num	Numbers	Mal	Malachi
Deut	Deuteronomy	1Macc	1Maccabees
Josh	Joshua	2Macc	2Maccabees
1Sam	1Samuel	Mt	Matthew
2Sam	2Samuel	Mk	Mark
1Kg	First Book of Kings	Lk	Luke
2Kg	Second Book of Kings	Jn	John
1Chron	First Book of Chronicles	Acts	Acts of the Apostles
2Chron	Second Book of Chronicles	Rom	Romans
Neh	Nehemiah	1Cor	First Letter to the Corinthians
Ps	Psalms	2Cor	Second Letter to the Corinthians
Prov	Proverbs	Gal	Galatians
Song	Song of Songs	Eph	Ephesians
Wis	Wisdom	Phil	Philippians
Sir	Sirach	Col	Colossians
Isa	Isaiah	Heb	Hebrews
Jer	Jeremiah	1Pt	First Letter of Peter
Ez	Ezekiel	Ap	Apocalypse
Dan	Daniel		
Hos	Hosea		

## 2. Other Sources and Studies

AAS	<i>Acta Apostolicae Sedis. Commentarium officiale</i> , Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, Roma 1909-.
ALW	<i>Archiv für Liturgiewissenschaft</i> , F. Pustet, Regensburg 1950-.
AS	<i>Assemblées du Seigneur</i> , Cerf, Paris 1962-.
BELS	<i>Bibliotheca Ephemerides Liturgicae Subsidia</i> , CLV–Edizioni Liturgiche, Roma 1937-.

## PREFACE

Poetic texts drawn from the Old Testament, known as “odes” in the Byzantine liturgy and “canticles” in the Latin rites, are among the oldest and most universal texts found in all liturgical families, both Western and Eastern. While these texts enjoyed pride of place principally in the vigil office of the Church’s morning prayer, they also graced with their presence various liturgical celebrations. Among these canticles, the so-called “Canticle of the Three Children” (Dan 3, 56-88), popularly known as “The Canticle of Daniel,” occupied a prominent place in the Church’s prayer. Wilfred Sumaní, having examined a number of possible nomenclatures, decides to call this biblical text “The Canticle of the Three Servants.” This Canticle deserves the title “classic” (in a proper sense of the word) of the Church’s liturgy. We find it, at least by the 4<sup>th</sup> century, in the celebration of the Easter vigil, in the Divine Office, in the vigils of the *Quatuor tempora* (Ember Days), in the Pentecost vigil, and in the Thanksgiving after Mass, among other celebrations. In a sense, the Canticle became the marrow of the spirituality and devotion of the people of God.

The Canticle’s recurrent presence, from the dawn of Christian celebration up to date, triggered the research of Sumaní, who currently teaches at Hekima Jesuit School of Theology in Nairobi (Kenya). Our author, spurred on by scientific and liturgical curiosity, embarked on an inquiry into the identity of this Canticle, its “transversal” presence in the history of the liturgy, articulating the theological import and use of the same in the Liturgy of the Hours and in other celebrative contexts. *On Fire with Praise: The Canticle of the Three Servants in the Fiery Furnace (Dan 3, 56-88) as an Easter Hymn* is an academic work *sui generis* in the sense that it tackles the Canticle on four fronts: methodological, historical, celebrative and theological. These various dimensions inundating the entire study are like four streams flowing into the sea of a well-rounded study of the Canticle. As the reader will easily notice from the very first pages of the book, that is, the *status quaestionis* which constitutes the launching pad for the research, the author’s approach is rigorously scientific. Far from a spiritualist or subjective reading of the text, Sumaní bases his research on solid sources that, in a way, offer a sure spring from which to draw the requisite data for a serious and masterly reading of the biblico-liturgical text under investigation.

The first thread with which our author weaves the plot of the research is the study of the Canticle in its biblical context. It is to be noted that Sumaní

is not a biblical scholar (for he has not pursued any academic degree in such field); nonetheless, it would be too reductionist to say that he is a liturgist who approaches the Bible with curiosity; rather, it is more adequate to characterise the author as a lover of Sacred Scripture who found a way of marrying his study of liturgy at the Pontifical Institute of Liturgy in Rome with avid research at the Pontifical Biblical Institute, among other institutions of higher learning, thereby equipping himself with the skills to approach the text in a more complete manner. Sumaní's research attests to the necessity of acquiring adequate biblical foundations in order to undertake a study of a scriptural text in its liturgical context. It also betokens the author's desire, perhaps discrete, to deepen his knowledge of the Bible so as to be in a position to undertake an interdisciplinary work even in the sphere of liturgical science.

Speaking of interdisciplinarity, the book takes patristics as the second thread of the study. The author opens up the biblical text to the interpretation of the Fathers in order to explore the Christian reception of the Canticle, especially in the early centuries. The Fathers, as the author shows, offer a christological and pneumatological interpretation of the Canticle. Sumaní appropriates the patristic insights in order to show how, in the liturgy, the Canticle is read within the gridlines of type and antitype, the latter being Christ, for the salvation of the three servants who emerged out of the fiery furnace of death with bodies unharmed, anticipates the resurrection of Christ, just as the dew that refreshed the fiery furnace prefigures the gift of the Holy Spirit.

The research continues with the third thread, namely, the liturgical use of the Canticle. The author combs through liturgical sources in order to identify and examine the various liturgical celebrations that have played host to the Canticle across the centuries. Special attention is given to the solemnities of the liturgical year which more explicitly celebrate the resurrection of Christ and the gift of the Holy Spirit: the Easter vigil and the vigil of Pentecost. The journey culminates in the study of the role of the Canticle in the Liturgy of the Hours where one appreciates even more the connection between the Old and the New Testament, the former being oriented to the Gospel, which is the word of the risen Lord. Further, the presence of the Canticle in the Liturgy of the Hours not only accords the biblical text a new richness and new light, but also illustrates the fact that the Word of God "finds a home" in the liturgy. In other words, it is in the liturgy that the Canticle attains its celebrative and ritual character. The words of Pope Benedict XVI in Apostolic Exhortation *Verbum Domini* n. 52, are instructive in this regard: «To understand the word of God, then, we need to appreciate and experience the essential meaning and value of the liturgical action. A faith-filled understanding of sacred Scripture must always refer back to the

liturgy, in which the word of God is celebrated as a timely and living word».

Another objective of the present research, in addition to highlighting the importance of the Old Testament text in the Christian celebration, is to show how the Canticle serves as a vehicle for expressing the faith, praise, the needs and the anxieties of human persons and societies today. As Pope Benedict XVI affirms, «In considering the Church as ‘the home of the word,’ attention must first be given to the sacred liturgy, for the liturgy is the privileged setting in which God speaks to us in the midst of our lives; he speaks today to his people, who hear and respond».

Beyond the content of the present work, in which the author offers a scientific and clear analysis of the Canticle, the main contribution of this book is, in my view, that of articulating a method for studying scriptural texts that migrate from their biblical context to a liturgical celebration. The methodological approach adopted and applied in this research permits Sumani to draw from the ancient treasure of Tradition, the newness of a fresh and comprehensive theologicoo-liturgical reading of the Canticle, which is a product of an ensemble of various hermeneutical approaches, in an enterprise whose fundamental rule is interdisciplinarity with the scope of making a serious contribution to theological science.

PIETRO ANGELO MURONI



# GENERAL INTRODUCTION

## Preamble

In his penetrating study of Christian rites, Gordon W. Lathrop contends that the essence of the *ordo* of Christian worship is what is called “liturgical dualism”—the juxtaposition of the old and the new, word and gesture. This, in his view, is the “deep structure” not only of the Christian liturgy but of the Bible as well. Old words are used to say something new; Old Testament texts are juxtaposed with gestures drawn from the New Testament. Therefore, sustains Lathrop, to understand the dynamics of the liturgy it is important to pay attention to the “patterns” of worship, because in liturgy meaning occurs through the structure of the celebration<sup>1</sup>. Lathrop also affirms that in Christian worship meaning occurs through the content of the *ordo* as well. Not all texts or gestures play the same role in liturgical celebrations. As he writes in the book, some texts «carry the heart of the faith better than others»<sup>2</sup>. This affirmation can be illustrated by the Old Testament readings assigned to the Easter vigil. For instance, while the celebrating community is allowed to choose a minimum of four Old Testament readings, it is not allowed to omit Exodus 14 and its canticle<sup>3</sup>. This means that Exodus 14 and the Canticle of Moses are particularly pertinent to the Easter vigil. They, in a way, embody the spirit of the Passover celebration.

In the history of Christian liturgy, one of the texts that “carry the heart” of the Christian faith, to borrow Lathrop’s expression, is the *Canticum trium puerorum*<sup>4</sup>, popularly known as the Canticle of Daniel. For reasons to be explained later in the book, the present study prefers to use the term “Canticle of the Three Servants”. This poetic composition has been used in the Easter vigil, in the Divine Office, in the vigils of the *Quatuor Tempora*, in the Pentecost vigil and in the Thanksgiving after Mass, among other liturgical *loci*. The Christian community has prayed with this biblical text for so many centuries that the Danielic hymn came to penetrate the marrow of popular devotion and influenced personal spirituality. For instance,

<sup>1</sup> Cf. G.W. LATHROP, *Holy Things: A Liturgical Theology*, Fortress Press, Minneapolis 1993, 33-83.

<sup>2</sup> LATHROP, *Holy Things*, 223.

<sup>3</sup> *Numquam autem omittatur lectio cap.14 Exodi cum suo cantico*. MR 2008, 356.

<sup>4</sup> For reasons to be explained later in this introduction, “Canticle”, “Hymn” and “Song” will be used interchangeably to refer to the *Canticum trium puerorum*.

PART I

*BIBLICAL EXEGESIS  
AND CHRISTIAN INTERPRETATION  
OF THE CANTICLE  
OF THE THREE SERVANTS*

## Chapter 1

# Textual and Theological Analysis of the Canticle of the Three Servants

### Introduction

Sacramental signs are chosen on the basis of their inner or ontological qualities. The liturgical use of the Canticle is premised on its sacramental character, that is, its capacity to signify an aspect of the mystery celebrated. Though there are many biblical texts of a hymnic character in Scripture, not all came to acquire the liturgical importance of the Canticle of the Three Servants. In fact, Alexander A. Di Lella describes the Canticle as «a gem of Jewish poetry and piety»<sup>1</sup>. It is a text possessed of a deep theological content and literary elegance. This chapter investigates the structure and content of the Canticle, in order to understand some of the factors behind the magnetism it has exercised on Christian liturgy over the centuries.

Guided by this liturgical *Weltanschauung*, the present chapter, after discussing the history and structure of the Canticle, will focus on two main points: First, how the text describes God, with a particular emphasis on the divine titles, qualities and actions; second, how the Hymn presents humanity and, by extension, the world at large. Together, these two aspects constitute the theandrical dialogue at the heart of the history of salvation celebrated in the liturgy.

This chapter will adopt the following operations: first, the establishment of the semantic content of key concepts (*Stichwörter*) in the Canticle, with the help of lexicons and dictionaries, aware that writers and translators often choose their words in order to communicate a specific message.

<sup>1</sup> A.A. DI LELLA, «A Textual and Literary Analysis of the Song of the Three Jews in Greek Daniel 3:52-90», in *Studies in the Greek Bible: Essays in Honour of Francis T. Gignac*, S.J., ed. J. Corley-V. Skemp (CBQ Monograph Series 44), Catholic Biblical Association of America, Washington 2008, 49.

## 1.1. Brief History of the Biblical Text of the Canticle

The Canticle of the Three Servants is found in the third chapter of the Book of Daniel, according to the Greek, Syriac and Latin versions of the Old Testament. The Masoretic Text of the Book of Daniel does not include the Hymn, nor does it feature the Prayer of Azariah and the prose additions relating to these two poetic compositions. It is widely believed that the Canticle, like the other additions to Daniel, was inserted into the Book of Daniel at the moment of the latter's translation into Greek, no later than the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C., since that was the time the Semitic texts of Daniel, Esther, and Jeremiah were translated into Greek<sup>2</sup>. Scholarly opinion is divided on the original language of the additions to Daniel 3, some arguing for a Semitic *Vorlage* no longer extant or, at least, not yet discovered<sup>3</sup>, and others rooting for Greek as the language in which the additions were composed<sup>4</sup>. An arbitration of these two views is beyond the purview of the present study.

There are two main Greek versions of the Canticle of the Three Servants: the Septuagint and the Theodotion<sup>5</sup>. The Septuagint, adopted by Christians

<sup>2</sup> Cf. MOORE, *Daniel, Esther and Jeremiah*, 13.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. E. ULRICH, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Origins of the Bible*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids 1999, 97; J. ZSENGELLÉR, «Additions or Edition? Deconstructing the Concept of Additions», in *Deuterocanonical Additions of the Old Testament: Selected Studies*, ed. G.G. Xeravits-J. Zsengellér (Deuterocanonical and Cognate Literate Studies 5), De Gruyter, Berlin 2010, 8; J.J. COLLINS, «Current Issues in the Study of Daniel», in *The Book of Daniel: Composition and Reception*, vol. 1, ed. J.J. Collins-P.W. Flint (Supplements to Vetus Testamentum 83.1), Brill, Leiden-Boston-Köln 2001, 3-4; M. KNIBB, «The Book of Daniel in its Context», in *The Book of Daniel: Composition and Reception*, vol. 1, ed. J.J. Collins-P.W. Flint (Supplements to Vetus Testamentum 83.1), Brill, Leiden-Boston-Köln 2001, 24-25; E. TOV, «Reflections on the Many Forms of Hebrew Scripture in Light of the LXX and 4QReworked Pentateuch», in *From Qumran to Aleppo : Discussion with Emanuel Tov about the Textual History of Jewish Scriptures in Honor of His 65th Birthday*, ed. A. Lange-M. Weigold-J. Zsengellér, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen 2009, 20-21.25.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. J. JOOSTEN, «The Prayer of Azariah (DanLXX 3): Sources and Origin», in *Septuagint and Reception: Essays Prepared for the Association for the Study of the Septuagint in South Africa*, ed. J. COOK (Supplements to the Vetus Testamentum 127), Brill, Leiden-Boston 2009, 11-15. Though BOGAERT does not explicitly assert that these additions were originally composed in Greek, he sees in them literary pieces born in the Maccabean environment and holds that the texts circulated in Greek; cf. P.M. BOGAERT, «Daniel 3 LXX et son supplément grec», in *The Book of Daniel in the Light of New Findings*, ed. A.S. van der Woude, University Press, Leuven 1993, 34.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. *Septuaginta. Vetus Testamentum graece iuxta LXX interpretes*, vol. 2: *Libri poetici et propheticci; Septuaginta. Vetus Testamentum graecum auctoritate Societatis Litterarum Gottingensis editum*, vol. 16/2: *Susanna, Daniel, Bel et Drago*, ed. J. Ziegler, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen 1954; BOGAERT, «Daniel 3 LXX et son supplément grec», 15-16; M. DELCOR, *Le livre de Daniel*, Librairie Lecoffre, Paris 1971, 20-24; O. EISSEFELDT, *Introduzione all'Antico Testamento*, vol 4: *Il canone e il testo*, tr. V. Gatti (Biblioteca Te-

PART II

*THE CANTICLE  
OF THE THREE SERVANTS  
IN THE LITURGY*

## Chapter 4

# The Canticle of the Three Servants in the Easter and Pentecost Vigils

### Introduction

In the history of the Roman rite, the use of the Canticle of the Three Servants has been attested in different liturgical contexts. Since liturgical traditions develop organically, it is difficult to state with exactitude when the Hymn became part of Christian liturgy. However, it is clear that by the 4<sup>th</sup> century the Canticle had become part of the Easter vigil and other liturgical contexts. In the early centuries, the physiognomy of the Pentecost vigil resembled so closely that of the Easter vigil that some scholars have called the Pentecost vigil the “little sister” of the Easter vigil. This chapter interrogates liturgical sources in order to understand the role of the Canticle of the Three Servants in these two vigils.

#### 4.1. Canticle in the Roman Easter Vigil?

Augustine affirms that the Easter vigil is the mother of all vigils<sup>1</sup>, while Paul Bradshaw states that the Easter vigil is the «oldest attested vigil in the history of Christianity»<sup>2</sup>. The importance of the Easter vigil as a foundation for other vigils obtains on both thematic and structural planes. Since the Hymn of the Three Servants is attested in the Easter vigils of some Eastern<sup>3</sup> and Western<sup>4</sup> churches, it is also imagined that the Canticle may have ex-

<sup>1</sup> *Quanto ergo alacrius in hae vigilia, velut matre omnium sanctorum vigiliarum, vigilare debemus, in qua totus vigilat mundus?* AUGUSTINUS, *Sermo CCXIX*, ed. J.P. Migne (PL 38), Migne, Paris 1865, 1088. [To the present writer’s knowledge, a more recent critical edition of this sermon is not yet available].

<sup>2</sup> P.F. BRADSHAW, «Easter Vigil», in *The New SCM Dictionary of Liturgy and Worship*, ed. P.F. Bradshaw, SCM Press, London 2005, 162.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *Le Codex arménien Jérusalem 121. Introduction, textes, traductions et notes*, ed. A. Renoux (PO 36), Brepols, Turnhout 1971, 296–307.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *Le lectionnaire de Luxeuil*, ed. P. Salmon (Collectanea Biblica Latina 7), Libre-

isted in the Roman Easter vigil<sup>5</sup>. Given that the mainstream Roman liturgical books do not mention the Canticle within the context of the Easter vigil, Heinrich Schneider surmises that the Song may have “disappeared” from the Roman Easter tradition at a certain point<sup>6</sup>.

To ascertain the feasibility of the claims of these scholars, it is germane to review the liturgical witnesses of the Roman Easter liturgy. Since the conjectures on the Canticle’s possible use in the Roman Easter are partly based on its use in other liturgical traditions, this section will take recourse to comparative liturgy in order to determine the viability of such affirmations. But more importantly, the study of the use of the Canticle in the Easter vigil of various traditions seeks to establish connections between the use of the Hymn in the Easter vigil and in other liturgical contexts.

#### 4.1.1. *Gregorian Tradition*

The Gregorian Sacramentary is said to represent the Roman papal liturgy and was probably written in the early 7<sup>th</sup> century, during the pontificate of Honorius I (625-638). The sacramentary later evolved into three distinct types in the second half of the seventh century, one of which is the *Hadrianum*, the liturgical book which Pope Hadrian sent to Charlemagne between 784 and 791<sup>7</sup>. The *Hadrianum* is believed to be a product of a reform whose intent was to bring the Easter vigil back to its more primitive form. Unfortunately, no pre-Hadrian document is extant, with the exception of fragments whose authenticity is doubtful. Herman Schmidt, therefore, decides to place the *Hadrianum* between the *Gelasianum Vetus* and the Gregorian sacramentaries of the 8<sup>th</sup> century, the latter being elaborations on the basis of the ancient Gelasian and the pre-Hadrian Gregorian sacramentaries<sup>8</sup>.

Given that the purpose of the aforementioned reform was to restore the Easter vigil to its older form, which state is probably represented by the

ria Vaticana, Città del Vaticano 1944, 105-114; *Liber Comicus sive lectionarius missae quo Toletana Ecclesia ante annos mille et ducentos utebatur*, ed. G. Morin (Anecdota Maredsolana 1), Monasterium S. Benedicti, Maredsous 1893, 171-201.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. M. RIGHETTI, *Manuale di storia liturgica*, vol. 2: *L’Anno liturgico*, Ancora, Milano 1969, 266-267; A. ROSE, «Les “benedictions” dans les vigiles et à l’office du matin», in *Les bénédictions et les sacramentaux dans la liturgie. Conférences Saint-Serge XXXIV<sup>e</sup> semaine d’études liturgiques*, ed. A.M. Triacca-A. Pistoia (BÉLS 44), CLV-Editioni Liturgiche, Roma 1988, 245-246.

<sup>6</sup> *Aus der römischen Ostervigil ist der Hymnus verschwunden.* H. SCHNEIDER, *Das Buch Daniel, das Buch der Klagelieder, das Buch Baruch*, Herder, Freiburg 1954, 25.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. E. PALAZZO, *A History of Liturgical Books From the Beginning to the Thirteenth Century*, tr. M. Beaumont, Liturgical Press, Collegeville 1998, 50-51.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. H. Schmidt, *Hebdomada sancta*, vol. 2: *Fontes historici, commentaries historicus*, Herder, Rome 1957, 370.

## PART III

# *TEXTUAL, CELEBRATIVE AND THEOLOGICAL SYNTHESIS ON THE LITURGICAL USE OF THE CANTICLE OF THE THREE SERVANTS*

## Chapter 7

# Liturgical “Routinisation” of the Canticle: Textual and Hermeneutical observations

### Introduction

In liturgy, as in other human activities, that which is popular or valued eventually becomes widely used — it “catches on”. In the entertainment industry, for instance, certain songs become so popular that they are played on the radio several times a day, as long as their chime remains appealing to the audience. It is perhaps a general rule in the development of the liturgy that when a text or a gesture is incorporated into the liturgy, it is designed to be part of a specific celebration. However, when the text or gesture becomes popular, for theological or cultural reasons, it gradually extends its tentacles to other celebrative *loci* until it becomes a liturgical commonplace. Some examples of this pattern can be cited.

The history of the frequency of the Eucharistic celebration is one of the cases in point. While in the early centuries the Eucharistic celebration was a Sunday event, it was later extended to the commemoration of martyrs and saints. By the fourth century Saturday had become assimilated to Sunday and acquired a Eucharistic celebration everywhere, with the exception of Rome and Alexandria. The emergence of the weekly stations on Wednesday and Friday also made these days Eucharistic occasions<sup>1</sup>. Eventually, the Eucharist became a daily event.

Similarly, the Creed was originally reserved for baptismal liturgies but was later “routinised” and came to be recited or sung every Sunday and on solemnities, especially in areas where the Arian heresy was rife. It is reported that Timotheus, patriarch of Constantinople, was the first to order that the Symbol be recited at every Mass<sup>2</sup>. The same applies to the hymn *Gloria*

<sup>1</sup> Cf. R. TAFT, «The Frequency of the Celebration of the Eucharist throughout History», in *Between Memory and Hope: Readings on the Liturgical Year*, ed. M.E. Johnson, Liturgical Press, Collegeville 2000, 77-96.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. J. JUNGMANN, *The Mass: An Historical, Theological and Pastoral Survey*, tr. J. Fernandes, The Liturgical Press, Collegeville 1976, 181-183; JUNGMANN, *The Mass of the Roman Rite*, 297.

*in excelsis*. In the Latin Church this hymn was not initially intended for the Mass. Its function was similar to the *Te Deum*, namely, a hymn of thanksgiving or festival song. When it was introduced into the Mass (at least by the 6<sup>th</sup> century), it was reserved for festive occasions. Pope Symmachus (†514) is reported to have permitted the *Gloria* to be used on Sundays and on the feasts of martyrs, but only at the Masses presided over by a bishop. Later, priests were allowed to intone the hymn, but only on Easter. However, by the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> century, the *Gloria* was said in all Masses of a festive character, blurring the ancient distinction between pontifical and presbyteral Mass<sup>3</sup>. The list can go on.

To adapt Max Weber's description of the "routinisation of charisma"<sup>4</sup>, it can be observed that when a text enters into a ritual programme it brings in something fresh, some form of "spirit", a charisma. However, when the text is repeated, especially in multiple contexts, it loses its former charisma and hardens into a ritual artefact deprived of its capacity to arrest the attention of the liturgical subject. Just as a notice on a door eventually becomes part of the door and is hardly noticed, liturgical texts can gradually lose their power to speak because they have become part of routine.

On account of its popularity, the Canticle of the Three Servants likewise came to be routinised and was used in liturgical celebrations other than the Easter vigil. Though the Song of Moses (Exodus 15) was the Easter canticle par excellence, it could not rival the Canticle of the Three Servants in terms of popularity. The Danielic hymn was possessed of a charisma few biblical odes could match. In the Roman rite, the Hymn expanded to the Quatuor Tempora (four times a year) and every Sunday at Lauds (fifty-two times a year), not to mention solemnities, feasts and commemorations of some martyrs and saints. This chapter explores examples and some of the effects

<sup>3</sup> Cf. JUNGMANN, *The Mass of the Roman Rite*, 238.

<sup>4</sup> Max Weber argues that rationalization is the basic tendency of social or historical movements and institutions. A charismatic figure gives birth to a new idea or moment, but, with time, the idea solidifies into a movement with bureaucratic structures that, in a way, kill the original spirit or its charisma. When applied to Christianity, it has sometimes been argued that, while Christ was a charismatic person who imbued religion with a new spirit characterized by authenticity, spontaneity and less attention to the law, Christianity eventually became institutionalized and lost the original charisma of its founder. Werner Stark, however, argues that, inasmuch as it is true that Christianity has in the course of time developed structures, such as Canon Law and other administrative apparatus, Christianity has never lacked charismatic figures who have brought about a new lease of life. Stark cites figures such as St. Paul, St. Benedict, St. Francis of Assisi and St. Charles Borromeo. Perhaps it would be reasonable to admit that in any institution rationalization tends to predominate until a new charismatic figure arises and breathes new life into it. Cf. M. WEBER, *From Max to Weber: Essays in Sociology*, tr. H. Gerth-C. Wright Mills, Oxford University Press, New York 1946, 262-264; W. STARK, «The Routinisation of Charisma: A Consideration of Catholicism», *Sociological Analysis* 26 (1965) 203-211.

## GENERAL CONCLUSION

«We shall not cease from exploration, and the end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started and know the place for the first time», wrote T.S. Eliot in his 1942 poem «Little Gidding»<sup>1</sup>. After this long peregrination though the different celebrative places inhabited by the Canticle of the Three Hebrews, one begins to grasp the *Geist* of this Hymn and to understand why it has had such a glorious history in the liturgy.

The present study began with the biblical investigation of the meaning of the Old Testament ode, and then proceeded to the Christian interpretation of the same. It emerged from the biblical inquiry that the Canticle is an Addition. It was inserted into Daniel 3 by a redactor, just as the other canticles in both Testaments were inserted into the narrative context as a way to celebrate the salvation narrated in the story. The identity of the Canticle as an Addition may explain why the Hebrew Bible does not include the Hymn. On account of its omission from the Massoretic Text, many contemporary biblical scholars on the Book of Daniel do not comment on it, in spite of the claims by some scholars that the Canticle was probably written in Aramaic and later translated into Greek, though the claimed Aramaic *Vorlage* remains elusive. Considering that the notion of Addition applies even to the oldest hymns inserted into biblical narratives, it would be less than justifiable to relegate the Canticle of the Three Servants to the status of apocrypha. On a positive note, interest in this Canticle has been reawakened in recent biblical scholarship.

The study of the patristic and early Christian interpretation of the Canticle brought out the specifically Christian reception of the Old Testament text, which was read in the light of the Christ event. The contributions of authors from both East and West were paraded. The early Christian interpretation of the Canticle within its biblical narrative context (Daniel 3) brought out Christian themes discerned therein which probably account for the incorporation of the Canticle into Christian liturgy. A contemporary scholar, for instance, may easily dismiss as unfounded and fantastic the patristic interpretation of the fiery furnace as a tomb, because typology is no longer a prominent exegetical approach in modern scholarship.

<sup>1</sup> T.S. ELIOT, «Little Gidding», in *The Complete Poems and Plays, 1909-1950*, Harcourt, New York 1952, 144.

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