

The Ancient Christian Ritual and its Theological Meaning in the 21st Century:

A Study of the Sign of Peace in the *Novus Ordo* in the Roman Rite

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Abstract

The sign of peace has a close connection to the kiss of peace, which was commonly practiced in the early Church. These two expressions also have their origins in the holy kiss, about which the apostle Paul writes in his letters. However, in recent times it has been suggested that the congregation should refrain from the exchange the sign of peace. How could a gesture that is rooted in tradition lose its importance?

This study is an analysis of the historical development of the sign of peace since its inception. This is done through an examination of the major texts of the Roman Rite in chronological order, noting the significant developments. Furthermore, this study points out factors that contributed to the rise and the decline of the sign of peace. It also differentiates the sign of peace in the Roman Rite from that of other traditions.

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Introduction

Nothing we do in the Mass is without meaning. The movements and the responses are meant to accompany the faithful in the act of worshipping the Almighty God. Their meanings are present, however, they can be easily be overlooked or, worse, disregarded. This is caused by many different factors, such as the way the Mass is offered, inattentiveness to the vertical dimension of the Mass, and lack of understanding of the rites. One of the most obvious examples of losing touch with the meaning of a particular rite is with the exchange of the sign of peace. In some places, the sign of peace is exchanged beautifully and reverently; however, in others, the time for the sign of peace is seen as a disruption to the structure of the Mass. Because of its placement in the Communion Rite, it is not only perceived as disruptive, but sometimes it also disturbs the solemn atmosphere or the interior peacefulness of the faithful. Rather than helping the congregation worship more deeply, it seems to draw people away from one of the most important aspects of the Mass, which is worship of the Almighty God. How could such a disruptive gesture be permitted during the Mass?

Thus, to reduce abuses, there have been discussions to move the sign of peace to different locations within the Mass.¹ However, some competent liturgical authorities have suggested retaining the location of the sign of peace because of its uniqueness among the various Christian traditions' signs of peace. The historical developments and the

¹ Benedict XVI, *Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation Sacramentum Caritatis of the Holy Father Benedict XVI to the Bishops, Clergy, Consecrated Persons and the Lay Faithful on the Eucharist as the Source and Summit of the Church's Life and Mission* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2007), Footnote 150; Synodi Episcoporum, "Synodus Episcoporum Bollettino," XI Coetus Generalis Ordinarius (Rome, Italy, October 2, 2005), Proposition 23, accessed May 9, 2017, http://www.vatican.va/news_services/press/sinodo/documents/bollettino_21_xi-ordinaria-2005/xx_plurilingue/b31_xx.html.

theological significance of the exchange of peace in the Liturgy of the Roman Rite reveal that it is different from the Eastern tradition. This task of unfolding the meaning of the sign of peace can be achieved by examining a variety of liturgical texts that refer to the kiss or sign of peace throughout the centuries.

To achieve this examination I will first give a description of the biblical foundations for the “kiss of peace” and the differences between Christian and secular kissing. Next, I will attempt to show the gradual development of the rite as the liturgy took on a more stable form, especially in the West, centered in Rome. Thirdly, I will discuss how the meaning of the kiss of peace shifted and how its importance was illustrated. During the Medieval period, the rite experienced both praise and criticism as it became a common element in the Mass. The criticism was the first sign of its decline. Later, its significance was brought into question as it took on different forms in the 1570, 1962, and 1970 Roman Missals. Even though it has suffered significantly and gone through many changes, the age-old rite has survived through the centuries. It will become apparent that the *sign* of peace is a later development of the *kiss* of peace. Although these two practices are different in manner, they attempt to express the same reality, which has its origins from the earliest apostolic traditions, for which the letters of St. Paul provide a foundation.

Through an analysis of the historical development of the kiss of peace, I will illustrate that there is a significant connection between the holy kiss and the sign of peace. There is continuity in the meaning of the rite, even though it has gone through significant modification. Knowing its significance will help us to be more conscious and attentive to our actions during Mass. Furthermore, knowing the rite’s meaning also

enables us to identify differences between the Roman Rite and other traditions. This differentiation is not intended to deemphasize the sacredness of other traditions; rather it provides a way to better appreciate of the gift of worship that God has given to the Church.

Chapter One: The Background of the Kiss of Peace

Kissing is an age-old gesture of communication. In the contemporary world, it is often considered a gesture of affection between relatives and friends but also between lovers. Unfortunately, the sexual revolution has encouraged many to view kissing solely in the context of romantic relationships. Thus, many find it difficult to envision its usage in a religious context or celebration. Nonetheless, for the early Christian communities in the first century, kissing was considered a proper practice as people greeted one another, and it was often exchanged between worshippers. On many occasions, St. Paul instructed his audience to “greet each other with a holy kiss,” (Rom 16:16, 1 Cor 16:20, 2 Cor 13:12, 1 Thes 5:26), and in First Peter the audience is advised to “greet each other with a kiss of love” (1 Pt 5:14). These passages of Sacred Scripture suggest that kissing was a common liturgical gesture during the apostles’ time. However, what is a “holy kiss”?

The apostles lived in the Greco-Roman culture; thus, in some ways they were influenced by the customs and practices of that culture. Studying the culture will equip us to understand the time in which the apostles lived. So, in order to understand the meaning of the kiss in the Early Church, we look first to the cultural context in which the apostles’ epistles were written. Though the apostles perhaps borrowed the kissing practice from the culture, they employed it with a new meaning appropriate for Christian worship.

Kissing in Greco-Roman Society

In Greco-Roman society, kissing was seen as the proper gesture for greeting one another; however, in order to avoid any abuses there were laws and restrictions governing

when kisses were to be offered.² When a kiss was exchanged in public it was seen either as a formal kiss of greeting to public officials to show reverence and loyalty or as a sign of a close blood relationship.³ The historian L. Phillips claims that “the closer persons were in social rank, respect, and friendship, the closer they were allowed to approach the mingling of *pneumata* (spirit) through a kiss on the mouth.”⁴ Since the kiss was often exchanged mouth-to-mouth, it was understood that when people were greeting each other with a kiss, they were willing to share with one another their spirit or breath. Thus, the mingling of *pneumata* was a sign of union between kissers. Since a kiss had the capacity to communicate or transfer one’s spirit, regulations about public kissing were promulgated so that “the potential for the communication of both spiritual pollution and spiritual power” could be eliminated.⁵

Although kissing was considered to be a proper gesture for greeting one another, showing romantic affection in public was not acceptable.⁶ Romantic kisses were meant to be private acts. Violation of this rule made one subject to rebuke. This is evidenced in the story of chief senator Cato, who prohibited Manilius from entering the Senate because he kissed his wife in public.⁷ Opposite from the romantic kiss is the kiss of respect and reverence, which was permitted in public areas. Most commonly, this type of public

² L. Edward Phillips, *The Ritual Kiss in Early Christian Worship*, Joint Liturgical Studies 36 (Cambridge [England]: Grove Books, 1996), 6.

³ William Klassen, “The Sacred Kiss in the New Testament: An Example of Social Boundary Lines,” *New Testament Studies* 39, no. 1 (January 1993): 128.

⁴ Phillips, *The Ritual Kiss in Early Christian Worship*, 6.

⁵ Ibid., 5-6.

⁶ Klassen, “The Sacred Kiss in the New Testament,” 126–127.

⁷ Ibid., 126.

kissing was often found among family members, friends, or public officials.⁸ In the familial context, this public kissing was extended to those who shared a biological relationship; others such as slaves were never allowed to kiss freemen.⁹

Friends also greeted one another with a kiss. On special occasions, such as before departing, when reuniting after a long period, or after reaching an agreement, it was suitable to greet one another with the fraternal kiss.¹⁰ They greeted each other with kisses in order to show respect for each other. However, kisses between governmental officials were the clearest instance of a kiss being a sign of respect or reverence.¹¹ Commonly, people would kiss the emperor's hand; however, if the emperor knew the other person well, he "declined the kiss of his hand and most likely replaced it with a shared labial kiss."¹² Thus, the location of the kiss indicated the level of intimacy of the relationship.

In short, in Greco-Roman society, kissing functioned as something deeper than just a simple greeting; it commonly revealed an individual's status in society. Since kissing was often correlated with spiritual exchange, "who kissed who, where, in what circumstances ... reflected, reinforced, and challenged the existing social orders."¹³ As a way to safeguard the social order, people were only allowed to exchange the kiss in public with those of the same social status. Those who were considered inferior and who did not share the same spirit as others, such as slaves, were not allowed to engage in this

⁸ Michael Philip Penn, *Kissing Christians: Ritual and Community in the Late Ancient Church*, Divinations (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005), 15.

⁹ Ibid., 33.

¹⁰ Ibid., 13.

¹¹ Ibid., 14–15.

¹² Ibid., 14.

¹³ Ibid., 15.

gesture, unless it was with a member of the same social class.¹⁴ To do otherwise would create disorder within the social system.

The Kiss of Peace in the Bible

In the Old Testament, kissing is not completely unspoken of, although its usage is rare. Kissing in the Old Testament was only practiced in a limited context; it was not as elaborate or common as in Greco-Roman society. There are thirty-two times that the Hebrew word נָשַׁק (*Nasaq*), kissing appears in the Old Testament.¹⁵ Generally, when kisses are exchanged, they are identified as “an expression of passionate love and as a salutation.”¹⁶ There are only a few instances where the kiss was referenced as an expression of romantic love, such as: “Jacob kissed Rachel” (Gen 29:11), as well as other references in Prov 7:13 and Song 1:2.¹⁷

Nasaq was also used in the context of farewell between relatives, such as in the accounts of Isaac, Jacob, and Esau (cf. Gen 27:26-27, 29:13); Laban and Jacob in Genesis 31:27-28; Naomi and her daughters (Ruth 1:9; 1:14); and Elisha and his parents before following Elijah (1Kings 19:20). The kiss of reunion or of reconciliation was also popular among family members, such as in the story of Jacob and Esau (Gen 31:55, 33:4); Joseph and his brothers (Gen 45:15, 48:10, 50:1); Moses and Aaron on the mountain of God (Ex

¹⁴ Ibid., 33.

¹⁵ K. M. Beyse, “נָשַׁק *Nasaq*,” in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, ed. G. Johannes Botterweck, Helmer Ringgren, and Heinz-Josef Fabry, vol. 10 (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006), 73.

¹⁶ Nicolas J. Perella, *The Kiss Sacred and Profane; an Interpretative History of Kiss Symbolism and Related Religio-Erotic Themes* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), 12.

¹⁷ Beyse, “נָשַׁק *Nasaq*,” 73.

4:27); Moses and his father-in-law Jethro (Ex 18:7); and David and his son Absalom (2 Sam 14:33).¹⁸

Fraternal kisses in the Old Testament sometimes exemplified respect and honor. For example, Samuel kissed Saul after he anointed him (1 Sam 10:1), and the author of the Psalms wrote about the “kiss of his feet” to the one who is mighty (Psalm 2:12). The kiss between David and Jonathan (1 Sam 20:41-42) illustrates not only their fraternal closeness but also their respect for one another. Of course, not all fraternal kisses express genuine friendship. There are others which are done with malicious motivation, such as the kiss of Absalom to the supplicants (2 Sam 15:5) and the kiss of Joab to Amasa (2 Sam 20:9, cf. 19:14).¹⁹

In addition to the fraternal or farewell kiss, the Old Testament also describes the giving of a kiss in the context of religious worship. In Hosea, kissing was irreverently carried out by men who offered sacrifices to the pagan gods and then kissed the calves that were being offered (13:2). In 1 Kings 19:18 the Lord spares those who have not bowed down to Baal or offered the kiss to the god. In Job 31:27, Job proves himself righteous because he did not kiss other gods.

In the New Testament, kissing is even less common than in the Old Testament. The Greek word for kiss, φίλημα (*philéma*), is often used to signify a communication between souls through a mouth or nose kiss.²⁰ Kisses are often found in the context of family as a way to express a close relationship. Perhaps, in this context it is not surprising

¹⁸ Nathan Ricardo, “Kiss and Kissing,” in *The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia*, Sponsors ed., vol. 6 (New York: Universal Jewish Encyclopedia, 1939), 405.

¹⁹ Beyse, “נָשָׂא Nasaq,” 75.

²⁰ Gustav Stahlin, “Kiss,” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, vol. 9 (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1973), 119.

to see St. Paul encouraging Christians to greet each other with a kiss. Of the seven times where kissing is mentioned in the New Testament, four of the times are in Paul's letters to various communities, and the kiss takes place in the context of common prayer (Rom 16:16, 1 Cor 16:20, 2 Cor 13:12, 1 Thes 5:26).²¹ Fascinatingly, Paul never uses the word φίλημα (*philéma*) without modifying it with the adjective ἅγιος (*hagios*), holy. Paul urges the people to greet each other with a kiss that is holy; he does not, however, instruct his audience on the particulars of offering these holy kisses.

One author describes the holy kiss “as a means whereby believers demonstrated their warm affection for one another.”²² The holy kiss does express the close relationship that Christians share with one another; however, it also “reinforce[s] the bond of love, peace, and respect within the congregation.”²³ Bound together through baptism, Christians are no longer strangers to other Christians; rather, they become members of the Christian family. The kiss signifies “a sign of ecclesial unity and mutual affection.”²⁴ The kiss that is shared among Christians becomes holy because it is offered by those who “have been called by God and made ‘holy.’”²⁵ The holy kiss, as Paul puts it, is the link or expression of love and unity among those who were baptized into the Christian family.²⁶

²¹ Ibid., 139.

²² Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament 6 (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1998), 75–76.

²³ Roy E. Ciampa and Brian S. Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, The Pillar New Testament commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2010), 862–863.

²⁴ Earl Richard and Daniel J. Harrington, *First and Second Thessalonians*, Sacra Pagina Series v. 11 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1995), 287.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Stahlin, “Kiss,” 138–142.

The word φίλημα (*philéma*) also appears in Luke 7:45 and 22:48. In these two instances, kisses were exchanged in the context of hospitality.²⁷ In Jewish culture, kissing guests upon their arrival is a sign of respect and hospitality (c.f. Gen 33:4, Exod. 18:7).²⁸ Surprisingly, a woman unknown to Jesus, who was not the host, kisses his feet repeatedly (Luke 7:45b). “Unlike the sinful woman, Simon [the host] has ‘fallen short of the normative generousities of hospitality in our Jewish tradition.’”²⁹ The Lord was expecting a kiss from Simon as he entered Simon’s house; but, no kiss was given. Jesus genuinely chastised Simon saying, “you did not greet me with a kiss” (Luke 7:45a).

In contrast to the kiss of hospitality is the kiss of betrayal such as Judas’ kiss in Luke 22:48. Since kissing was a common way of greeting each other, Judas maliciously used the kiss to identify Jesus. The kiss of Judas pretends to be a sign of friendship between Jesus and Judas, but in fact, this kiss is the kiss of betrayal.

The apostle Peter also suggests that Christians greet each other with a kiss. Peter differs from Paul in that he does not instruct his audience to offer each other ‘a holy kiss’ but rather φιλήματι ἀγάπης (*philēmati agapēs*), kiss of love, (1 Pt 5:14). Contrary to the social norm of kissing in public only those of the same class (in order to demarcate social status),³⁰ Peter’s suggestion indicates that followers of Christ, who came from various social classes, were a new order within the existing society.³¹ The kiss of love is the

²⁷ Darrell L. Bock, *Luke*, Baker exegetical commentary on the New Testament 3 (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1994), 702.

²⁸ David Lyle Jeffrey, *Luke*, Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2012), 112.

²⁹ Ibid., 114.

³⁰ Joel B. Green, *1 Peter*, The Two Horizons New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2007), 185.

³¹ Ibid.

sharing of mutual love and unity in the context of the Christian family.³² Thus, when Christians exchange the kiss with each other as a sign of fellowship, they become brothers and sisters in Christ, and subsequently they are invited to uphold “the central meaning of mutual love” in the community.³³

Generally, Paul’s and Peter’s letters show that greeting one another with a kiss “was a reworking of an existing practice or convention, for the new purposes of a genuinely new social grouping.”³⁴ Kissing was not new. What was new was the concept of a holy kiss that Paul and Peter introduced to different communities.³⁵ However, many suspect that the apostles were influenced by their teacher, the Lord. One commentator proposes that kissing was probably practiced in a “circle of Jesus’ disciples as an expression of belonging to the *familia Dei*,” thus, it was not something new for both apostles to broaden this practice to other communities.³⁶ The apostles wanted to share this familial sign with their communities where they administered after learning this holy kiss from Christ.

John 20:22 (“And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them ‘Receive the Holy Spirit’”) is the clearest evidence that the holy kiss came directly from

³² Ibid., 185–186.

³³ Reinhard Feldmeier, *The First Letter of Peter: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2008), 256.

³⁴ Andrew Brian McGowan, *Ancient Christian Worship: Early Church Practices in Social, Historical, and Theological Perspective* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2014), 55.

³⁵ Jeffrey A. D. Weima, *Neglected Endings: The Significance of the Pauline Letter Closings*, *Journal for the study of the New Testament. Supplement series* 101 (Sheffield, England: JSOT Press, 1994), 112-113.

³⁶ Green, *1 Peter*, 186. Italics in original texts.

Jesus as some scholars consider.³⁷ Just as Jesus transmits the Holy Spirit to the disciples after the Resurrection, so too the exchange of the holy kiss is an action of sharing the Spirit with one another.³⁸ If the holy kiss has its foundation in the Lord, then the Christian kiss “communicates more than the Christian affection; it would be a communication of that spirit” into believers.³⁹ The spirit in the holy kiss pushes away impure motives, seeks to express unity and love to the others, and is capable of uniting all Christians together as one as “fellow members of the body of Christ.”⁴⁰ Another scholar also notes that not only does the kiss seek deeper unity and peace among the people, but also “its function is intended to stress familial relationship between members of the community.”⁴¹ Coming together as a community and having been chosen to be God’s people, they are children of God. Through faith, they have established for themselves a new family, the family of the faith.

The holy kiss excludes the erotic notion but preserves the union of the two individuals in Christ (and even in the mainstream culture of the time, erotic inclination was secondary in kissing).⁴² For Christians, kissing was a sign of communion of souls through the exchange of individuals’ spirits. It was most appropriate in the gathering of the assembly. “In the kiss, the Spirit was mingled, and the church became in a proleptic

³⁷ Stephen Benko, *Pagan Rome and the Early Christians* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1984), 82.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Phillips, *The Ritual Kiss in Early Christian Worship*, 8. Phillips has an extensive analysis on the spirit and kiss in this book.

⁴⁰ Weima, *Neglected Endings*, 114.

⁴¹ Richard and Harrington, *First and Second Thessalonians*, 291.

⁴² Stahlin, “Kiss,” 119.

way a unity, the living body of the Christ.”⁴³ Those who engaged in the exchange of the kiss found themselves in mystical union with God and other members of the Church. “The stark physical character of a mouth-to-mouth kiss was an actualization and realization of the Christian’s hope to overcome separation and to find union in and with God.”⁴⁴ The kiss in the Bible, then, was not so much about romance but rather about expressing communion among Christians.

Preliminary Conclusions from Scripture

Kissing for the most part was a daily gesture of greeting one another in Greco-Roman society, though it was less popular among the Jews in the time of the Old Testament. In both Greco-Roman society and the Old Testament, familial kisses were the most common and suitable. Because the Christian community constituted a new familial structure, Paul and Peter encourage Christians to greet each other with a holy kiss.⁴⁵ They likely did not invent the holy kiss; rather it is a reiteration of the practice that was probably practiced by Jesus and his disciples as some would hold. Paul and Peter simply extended it to their communities. Christians, whether slave or free, were no longer strangers but shared a special bond in Christ that allowed them to offer the holy kiss to one another without being criticized. This holy kiss differed from the secular kiss.

The holy kiss in the first century evidently set Christians apart from non-Christians in their society. It served as a way to enhance the bond initiated in baptism and

⁴³ Benko, *Pagan Rome and the Early Christians*, 86.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 91.

⁴⁵ Michael P. Foley, “The Whence and Whither of the Kiss of Peace in the Roman Rite,” *Antiphon* 14, no. 1 (2010): 49; Michael P. Foley, “The Mystic Meaning of the ‘Missale Romanum,’” *Antiphon* 13, no. 2 (2009): 104–125.

allowed the spirit to be shared with other Christians. Thus, according to M. Foley, the holy kiss in first century “was a well-established Christian ritual, that is, a practice with distinct religious meaning for those within the church.”⁴⁶ This early practice served as the foundation for the growth and development of the kiss of peace in the Roman Rite.

⁴⁶ Foley, “The Whence and Whither of the Kiss of Peace in the Roman Rite,” 50.

Chapter Two: Kiss of Peace Before the Middle Ages

This chapter will provide an in-depth examination of the kiss of peace from the second to the fifth century. Throughout this analysis, illustrations will show that the development of the kiss of peace proceeded at a steady pace. While the changes were gradual, the meaning of the kiss of peace became significant as the liturgical ritual became more developed. The kiss of peace shared in the liturgy was the extension of the holy kiss, found in the writing of St. Paul.

The Apostolic Fathers from the First to the Third Centuries

Liturgical kissing was viewed as normative for those who participated in the common prayer. The first father of the Patristic era to mention the kiss is St. Justin Martyr (A.D. 110-165).⁴⁷ In *First Apology*, written in 150 AD, Justin specifies that, “having ended the prayers; we salute one another with a kiss. There is then brought to the president of the brethren bread and a cup of wine mixed with water and he, taking them, gives praise and glory to the Father of the universe.”⁴⁸ The language of kissing that Justin used in his remark is very similar to the instructions found in the Pauline letters. Thus, many believe that Justin’s instruction is the extension of the holy kiss found in the Pauline letters, and it is viewed as a seal, a confirmation of what previously has happened.⁴⁹ Of course, Justin did not explicitly equate kissing with a seal.

⁴⁷ After a thorough examination of early Christian writings from the *Didache* to *Justin Martyr*, I found that the Apostolic Fathers mentioned nothing about the kissing ritual, except Shepherd of Hermas (100-160 AD), which mentioned a secular kissing practice.

⁴⁸ Justin Martyr, “The First Apology of Justin,” in *Ante-Nicene Fathers: The Writings of the Fathers down to A.D. 325*, ed. Alexander Roberts et al. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994), Chap. LXV or pg. 185.

⁴⁹ Foley, “The Whence and Whither of the Kiss of Peace in the Roman Rite,” 49–50.

M. Foley suggests that, since Justin's remark about the kiss occurs after his description of baptism and before the Eucharist, it implies that "the kiss functioned liturgically as a seal or consummation of prayer."⁵⁰

Tertullian (155-240 AD), who was the first to use the term "kiss of peace," explicitly reiterated the idea to which Justin alluded:

Another custom has developed, namely, that at the end of the prayer those who are fasting refrain from the *kiss of peace*, which is the *seal of prayer*. Yet at what time is it more appropriate to give the peace to the brethren than when our prayer, more praiseworthy because of our devotion, ascends to heaven. In this way, they participate in our charity, they who have contributed to it by passing on their peace to their brethren. Is any prayer complete when separated from the holy kiss?⁵¹

Tertullian seems to think that there was no better time to offer the kiss of peace than after the prayers were prayed. Even though some practiced fasting and subsequently would omit the kiss of peace, Tertullian advised the contrary because of the significance of the kiss of peace.⁵² As a seal of the prayers, the kiss completed what was brought before Almighty God in prayer, and, in return, people would share peace with one another. They shared not only in the prayers and in intercessions as they presented them to the Lord, but they also shared the same spirit of soul and body through the kiss of peace.

Christians were instructed to exchange the kiss of peace in an appropriate manner in order to avoid scandals. The earlier appearance of the kiss of peace in the Christian liturgy suffered many abuses, as some Christians were confused about the differences between the kiss of peace and a secular kiss. Noting this confusion about the liturgical

⁵⁰ Ibid., 50.

⁵¹ Tertullian, "Tertullian," in *Worship in the Early Church: An Anthology of Historical Sources*, ed. Lawrence J. Johnson (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2009), pg. 133. Emphasis added.

⁵² Since Judas betrayed the Lord with a kiss, thus, on days of fasting, i.e. Good Friday, omitting it would set as a reminder to Judas' act.

kiss, Athenagoras (133-190 AD) raises awareness about the religious meaning of the kiss of peace in *A Plea for the Christians*, which was written between 177 and 180 AD:

We regard each other as brothers and sisters, and to the more advanced in life we give the honour due to fathers and mothers. On behalf of those, then, to whom we apply the names of brothers and sisters, and other designations of relationship, we exercise the greatest care that their bodies should remain undefiled and uncorrupted; for the Logos again says to us, “if anyone kisses a second time because it has given him pleasure, [he sins];” adding, “Therefore the kiss, or rather the salutation, should be given with the greatest care, since, if there be mixed with it the least defilement of thought, it excludes us from eternal life.”⁵³

There were those who failed to differentiate the religious kiss from the secular kiss and would disregard the regulations by kissing the neighbor a second time. Athenagoras, of course, discourages a second kiss to the same neighbor because it would no longer be a kiss of peace but one of lust. The kiss of peace is certainly not a carnal or a lustful kiss; it is rather a holy and pure kiss, which “must be carefully guarded” for liturgical usage.⁵⁴

Similarly, Athenagoras’ contemporary Clement of Alexandria (150-215 AD) raises serious cautions in *The Instructor* (182-202 AD):

But there are those that do nothing but make the churches resound with a kiss, not having love itself within. For this very thing, the shameless use of a kiss, which ought to be mystic, occasions foul suspicions and evil reports. The apostle calls the kiss holy. When the kingdom is worthily tested, we dispense the affection of the soul by a chaste and closed mouth, by which chiefly gentle manners are expressed. But there is another unholy kiss, full of poison, counterfeiting sanctity. Do you not know that spiders, merely by touching the mouth, afflict men with pain? And often

⁵³ Athenagoras, “A Plea for the Christians,” in *Ante-Nicene Fathers: The Writings of the Fathers down to A.D. 325*, ed. Alexander Roberts et al. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994), 146.

⁵⁴ Valeriy A. Alikin, *The Earliest History of the Christian Gathering: Origin, Development and Content of the Christian Gathering in the First to Third Centuries*, Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae v. 102 (Boston, MA: Brill, 2010), 258; Benko, *Pagan Rome and the Early Christians*, 84.

kisses inject the poison of licentiousness. It is then manifest to us, that a kiss is not love. For the love meant is the love of God.⁵⁵

Clement clearly describes that the kiss of peace was a mouth-to-mouth kiss, but he distinguishes it from a kiss of lust. There were some, instead of exchanging a holy kiss with each other, their kiss was “full of poison, counterfeiting sanctity” because it was not done with a chaste and closed mouth, or it was done out of plain lust.⁵⁶ These unholy kisses should not be exchanged among Christians in the liturgy. On the other hand, when a kiss was exchanged with a chaste motive, it bonded the two together and made their kiss a mystical action.

To safeguard the religious meaning of the kiss of peace, a concrete regulation was issued. *Apostolic Tradition* (ca. 235 AD), the most prominent document of the liturgical celebration of the Early Church, details this regulation by asserting that “[t]he faithful should greet each other, the men with each other and the women with each other.”⁵⁷ This is the first example of the separation of the sexes during Christian worship, effectively avoiding the possibility of exchanging a lustful kiss.⁵⁸ This separation between men and women not only allowed the kiss of peace to remain pure and chaste but also eliminated the possibility of scandal.

The *Apostolic Tradition*, in dealing with the catechumens, also specifies that the kiss of peace be only for baptized Christians:

⁵⁵ Clement of Alexandria, “The Instructor,” in *Ante-Nicene Fathers: The Writings of the Fathers down to A.D. 325*, ed. Alexander Roberts et al. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994), 291.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 91.

⁵⁷ Hippolytus of Rome, “Apostolic Tradition,” in *Worship in the Early Church: An Anthology of Historical Sources*, ed. Lawrence J. Johnson (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2009), 661 or pg. 205; Paul Fike Stutzman, *Recovering the Love Feast: Broadening Our Eucharistic Celebrations* (Eugene, Or: Wipf & Stock, 2011), 95–96.

⁵⁸ Stutzman, *Recovering the Love Feast*, 96.

When the teacher has completed the catechesis, the catechumens pray by themselves, apart from the faithful...after they have finished praying, the catechumens do not extend the kiss of peace because their kiss is not yet holy. The faithful are to greet one another, the men greeting the men and the women greeting the women, but the men are not to greet the women.⁵⁹

While Christians were able to offer the kiss of peace to each other within certain limits, the catechumens were prohibited from offering the kiss of peace, either to Christians or to fellow catechumens. Since the catechumens were not allowed to share the kiss of peace with anyone, it seems that the kiss of peace denotes a meaning that is not merely reconciliatory. If it were only about reconciliation, it would seem suitable for the catechumens to share the kissing practice at least among themselves. Yet because they were not yet baptized and their kisses were not yet sanctified, they could not share in the kiss of peace.⁶⁰ Thus, the restrictions on the catechumens reveals the essence of the kiss of peace, namely the seal of the revealed mystery in which only baptized Christians can share.

In celebrations of the major orders, a kiss of peace was exchanged with the newly ordained Christians, but it appears to be different from the kiss of peace in the Eucharistic liturgy. Regarding the ordination of a bishop, the *Apostolic Tradition* instructs, “[w]hen he has been made bishop let everyone offer him the kiss of peace, greeting him because he has been made worthy.”⁶¹ The kiss of peace signified the respect due to the bishop who was worthy of such displays of respect. Those who offered the kiss of peace to the new bishop would offer it to him before he continued with the Offertory and the dialogue with the people. Furthermore, Book VIII of the *Apostolic Constitutions* notes that after a

⁵⁹ Hippolytus of Rome, “Apostolic Tradition,” 205.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid., 200.

new bishop was ordained, he was enthroned in a different place, and then, to show respect, a kiss was offered only by those in the sanctuary (as opposed to among all the baptized after the prayer of the faithful).⁶²

Similarly, regarding the sacrament of confirmation, after the bishop anointed the neophytes with holy oil on their foreheads, “the bishop gives the kiss and says, ‘May the Lord be with you.’”⁶³ Likewise, St. John Chrysostom (347-407 AD) instructed those who were at the rite of initiation to offer the kiss to the newly baptized as a way of welcoming the new members. Chrysostom suggested in his *Baptismal Catecheses* (286-397 AD) that “as soon as they emerge from the holy waters, all embrace them, greet them, give them the kiss, congratulate them, and share in their joy.”⁶⁴ In these sacramental celebrations, the kiss became a sign of respect or welcoming into the community. This kiss of peace could be carried out in a similar manner to the kiss of peace after the prayer of the faithful; however, it is different in meaning.⁶⁵

The Kiss of Peace from the Fourth to the Fifth Centuries

Even though Justin, Tertullian, and the *Apostolic Tradition* mentioned the kiss of peace in the early Church, it was not clear whether the kiss of peace had any connection

⁶² Alexander Roberts et al., eds., “Constitutions of the Holy Apostles,” in *Ante-Nicene Fathers: The Writings of the Fathers down to A.D. 325*, vol. 7 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994), 483.

⁶³ Hippolytus of Rome, “Apostolic Tradition,” 207.

⁶⁴ John Chrysostom, “Baptismal Catecheses,” in *Worship in the Early Church: An Anthology of Historical Sources*, ed. Lawrence J. Johnson, vol. 2 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2009), 1560.

⁶⁵ Edward Yarnold, *The Awe-Inspiring Rites: The Origins of the R.C.I.A.*, 2nd ed. (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1993), 39; Phillips, *The Ritual Kiss in Early Christian Worship*, 32–33. Phillips has an extensive discussion of the kiss, which Chrysostom mentioned. He distinguishes two different type of kiss in Chrysostom’s usage: the post-baptismal kiss, congratulatory kiss, and the pre-eucharistic kiss, reconciliation. Those who participate in the post-baptismal kiss do not participate in the Eucharist, because it might not have been a Eucharistic celebration at the baptism ceremony.

with the liturgy of the faithful. By the fourth century, however, many claim that the kiss of peace is offered in reference to the Eucharist.⁶⁶ Christian writers began to notice its significance, as well as its location in the Eucharistic celebration.

The instruction in Matthew 5:23 (“therefore, if you bring your gift to the altar, and there recall that your brother has anything against you”) became a key foundation in understanding the kiss of peace for many Christian writers. To show the connection between the kiss of peace and the liturgy of the Eucharist in particular, several Fathers viewed it as a reconciliatory moment before the Offertory, corresponding to the Lord’s instruction in Matthew 5:23, and therefore, the kiss of peace was considered a moment of preparation before entering into the liturgy of the Eucharist. For instance, Cyril of Jerusalem (315-386 AD) not only described the location of the kiss and how it was to be done, but he also explicated its significance in the Eucharistic Rite. In his *Mystagogical Catechesis* (348 AD), Cyril describes the kissing practice, which came after the priest washed his hands:

Then the Deacon cries aloud, Receive ye one another and let us kiss one another.... [T]his 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 have banished all remembrance of wrongs.⁶⁷

⁶⁶ Alikin, *The Earliest History of the Christian Gathering*, 259; Benko, *Pagan Rome and the Early Christians*, 85; Penn, *Kissing Christians*, 23. Origen mentions that “this is the truer, closer, holier kiss, which is said to be granted by the Bridegroom- Word of God to the Bride- that is to say, to the pure and perfect soul; it is of this happening that the kiss, which we give one to another in church at the holy mysteries, is a figure” Song of Songs 1.

⁶⁷ Cyril and F. L. Cross, *St. Cyril of Jerusalem’s Lectures on the Christian Sacraments: The Procatechesis and the Five Mystagogical Catecheses*, Texts for students no. 51 (London: S.P.C.K, 1966), Book V. 3 or 72.

The kiss of peace was not only a sign of unity, but it was also a sign of reconciliation and forgiveness toward those who have offended another. For Cyril, “the kiss therefore is reconciliation and for this reason holy.”⁶⁸

Likewise, Theodore of Mopsuestia (350-428 AD), in *Baptismal Homily IV*, remarks, “this is why before we approach the sacrament of the liturgy we are required to observe the custom of giving the Kiss of Peace. Only then [after one has sought the peace and reconciliation with others] may he come forward to take part in the offering.”⁶⁹ Since early Christians were all baptized in the same baptism and same faith, and since all shared in the same Eucharist, they could not proceed to the mystery while holding something against one of the brethren. As a sign of reconciliation, the kiss of peace healed relationships and disposed Christians to be suitable to join in the liturgy of the Eucharist. Therefore, the kiss of peace was considered a preparatory element.

In *Catechesis 3*, St. John Chrysostom (349-407 AD) also indicated the reconciliatory aspect of the kiss of peace when it was exchanged in the Eucharist. To remain faithful to the command in Matthew 5:23, Christians were first to seek peace with their brethren, for which the kiss of peace was provided; then all could approach the sacrifice worthily.⁷⁰ Moreover, Chrysostom reasoned that, since each soul was a temple of the Holy Spirit, the kiss was seen analogously as a sacred action because, “by giving one another a kiss with the mouth, we are kissing the entrance to the temple.”⁷¹ Thus, the

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Theodore of Mopsuestia, “Baptismal Homily IV,” in *The Awe-Inspiring Rites: The Origins of the R.C.I.A.*, ed. Edward Yarnold, 2nd ed. (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1993), 222. Brackets in Yarnold’s translation.

⁷⁰ Chrysostom, “Baptismal Catecheses,” 208.

⁷¹ Ibid., 208.

kiss needs to be holy and chaste in order to eliminate spiritual contamination upon entering into temple of the other person.

Contrary to these three writers, the *Apostolic Constitutions* (375 to 380 AD) did not relate the kiss to Matthew 5:23; rather, it presents a different rationale for why the kiss was exchanged before the Offertory. In section II of Book II, the *Apostolic Constitutions* describes the community after they listened to the work of God:

After this, let them rise with their consent...As to the deacons, after the prayer is over, let some of them attend upon the oblation of the Eucharist ...let the deacon who is at the high priest's hand say to the people, let no one have any quarrel against another...Then let the men give the men, and the women give the women, the Lord's kiss. But let no one do it with deceit, as Judas betrayed the Lord with a kiss. After this let the deacon pray for the whole Church.⁷²

In the Sunday gathering, the kiss of peace preceded the universal prayer. The exchange of the kiss was intended to remove any quarrel against another. The *Apostolic Constitutions* clearly distinguished the kiss of peace from Judas' kiss. The kiss of peace is not deceitful; it is clear in its motives, and it has the capacity to reconcile neighbors before proceeding to the reception of the Eucharist.

Ambrose and Jerome also supply a noteworthy interpretation on the kiss of peace. Jerome (347-420 AD) indicated in *Epistle 82* that there was no communion without the kiss of peace.⁷³ Despite the fact that he did not specify clearly whether he referred to the kiss as the kiss of peace or some other kiss, he, nonetheless, connected the kiss to the reception of the Eucharist.⁷⁴ Similarly, Ambrose (337-397 AD) did not specify the

⁷² Roberts et al., "Constitutions of the Holy Apostles," 422.

⁷³ Phillips, *The Ritual Kiss in Early Christian Worship*, 28.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

location of the kiss of peace; however, in *De Sacramenti* he also seemed to connect the kiss of peace with the reception of the Eucharist.⁷⁵

Based on the writings of these Fathers, the kiss of peace was seen as a common practice in the Eucharistic celebration in these early centuries. The connection between the kiss of peace and the command in Matthew 5:23 serves as the foundation for the kiss of peace being located at the time of the Offertory rather than at a different time. Thus, the kiss of peace is seen as a moment of preparation for the faithful before entering into the liturgy of the Eucharist.

The New Location for the Kiss of Peace in the Eucharist

The new location of the kiss of peace denotes not only a different emphasis but also a different meaning. While other churches kept the kiss at the time of the Offertory, in Rome, Pope Innocent I (378-417 AD) taught that the custom was to be carried out at a different time. It is unclear exactly when the Roman church began the kiss of peace at a later time in the liturgy, but in 416 Innocent I responded to a letter from Decentius, Bishop of Gubbio (a town north of Rome), who was confused by the Roman location of the kiss of peace. Innocent gave Decentius specific directives to carry out this custom:

You mention that some demand that the kiss of peace take place, or be offered among the priests themselves, before the mysteries themselves have taken place. In fact, the peace should take place after all those things about which I must not speak. The peace shows that the people have been brought together concerning what has taken place in all of the mysteries celebrated in Church.⁷⁶

⁷⁵ Ambrose and J. H. Srawley, *St. Ambrose On the Sacraments: And On the Mysteries*, trans. T. Thompson, Rev. ed. (London, New York: Macmillan, 1919), V, 2.

⁷⁶ Innocent, Martin Connell, and Decentius, *Church and Worship in Fifth-Century Rome: The Letter of Innocent I to Decentius of Gubbio: Text with Introduction, translation and Notes*, Joint Liturgical Studies 52 (Cambridge [England]: Grove Books, 2002), 23.

Based on the text of the letter, the kiss before the Offertory was a common and well-known practice. Innocent wanted to convince the neighboring church to conform to the Roman pattern. What Innocent envisioned about the kiss in the Roman liturgy was that, by offering the kiss at the end of the Eucharist prayer, the “people offer their consent and acknowledge it as the closing sign of peace.”⁷⁷ Perhaps there are some nuances similar to what St. Justin and Tertullian mentioned about the kiss as the ‘seal of prayer.’⁷⁸ It is unclear whether Innocent innovated this pattern or he reiterated this existing pattern by suggesting this, but he insisted that other churches should follow the Roman pattern.⁷⁹

Of course, Innocent was not the only one who spoke about the location of the kiss after the Eucharist prayer. In North Africa, during the time of St. Augustine, the location of the kiss of peace was also recorded as being at the end of the Eucharistic prayer. A little before Innocent’s letter to Decentius, St. Augustine (354-430 AD) attested to the importance of the kiss of peace in the liturgy in Africa. In his *Sermon 227* (ca. 414-415) Augustine tied the kiss of peace to the Lord’s Prayer and instructed the faithful at Mass that “after the consecration is accomplished, we say the Lord’s Prayer ... immediately afterwards occurs the ‘Peace be with you’ and the holy kiss that Christians share with one another.”⁸⁰ It is significant that the kiss of peace is placed directly after the conclusion of the Lord’s Prayer. Noticing this significance of the kiss of peace and the prayer in Augustine’s sermon, G. Dix points out that the kiss is seen to be a fulfillment of the

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Phillips, *The Ritual Kiss in Early Christian Worship*, 28.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 27.

⁸⁰ Augustine of Hippo, “Sermons,” in *Worship in the Early Church: An Anthology of Historical Sources*, ed. Lawrence J. Johnson, vol. 3 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2009), Sermon 227.

phrase “forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us,” and because of this, “the kiss acquired a special fittingness as a preliminary to communion.”⁸¹ The kiss that is exchanged with one another was not only for reconciliation, but it also served as a bridge connecting the brethren together as they joined in the Eucharist.⁸² The unity of body and soul with each brother and sister would prepare them and make them worthy to receive the Eucharist.

Apparently, the location of the kiss of peace that Augustine describes is similar to the location, which Innocent suggests to the neighboring churches. Could it be the case that Innocent was influenced by the practice of St. Augustine? Though they share the same location, what makes Augustine’s and Innocent’s kisses of peace differ from each other is the location of the Lord’s Prayer. Innocent’s description did not refer to the Lord’s Prayer, whereas Augustine saw a close connection between the two. If Innocent’s innovation were influenced by Augustine’s, it would perhaps have been difficult for Innocent to disregard the significance of the Lord’s Prayer. Moreover, for the Roman liturgy, the Lord’s Prayer appeared prior to that of the time of Innocent; however, it did not have the present arrangement until the time of Pope Gregory the Great (540-604 AD).⁸³ Additionally, the fact that Innocent placed the kiss of peace immediately at the end of the Eucharistic prayer (before the Lord’s Prayer) suggests that Innocent’s pattern was not influenced by Augustine’s.

⁸¹ Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1982), 108.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Josef A. Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite: Its Origins and Development (Missarum Sollemnia)*, vol. 2 (Dublin: Four Courts, 1986), 278. Jungmann points out that “Since Gregory’s time this prayer, the Our Father, is said right after the canon, and therefore *super oblationem*, that is, over the sacrificial gift still lying upon the altar, whereas formerly the prayer was not said till immediately before the Communion, after the consecrated breads had been removed from the altar and broken.”

Based on this evidence, Innocent seemed to place less emphasis on the notion of reconciliation but rather reconnected the kiss of peace with the notion of a seal, like Justin and Tertullian. The location of the kiss immediately at the end of the Eucharistic prayer suggests that it sealed what just happened to the bread and wine.⁸⁴ Thus, Innocent did not view the kiss of peace as a preparatory element for the reception of the Eucharist as did Augustine. Not until the time of Gregory the Great as we shall see later that the kiss of peace became a prominent preparatory element for receiving Communion.

<u>Innocent (378-417)</u>	<u>Gregory (540-604)</u>
Canon	Canon
Kiss of peace	Our Father
Our Father	Kiss of peace
Communion	Communion
(Outline according to Jungmann. See footnote #81)	

Why did the Roman liturgy locate the kiss of peace immediately after the Eucharistic prayer? Perhaps in the fourth century, there was a decline in the number of people receiving the Eucharist.⁸⁵ Many people would leave the assembly immediately after the consecration, causing a considerable disturbance.⁸⁶ The kiss of peace, then, would have helped restore peace and order into the assembly after the people not receiving Communion left. The shift from the pre-anaphora to the post-anaphora location

⁸⁴ Phillips, *The Ritual Kiss in Early Christian Worship*, 28.

⁸⁵ Dominic Serra, "The Greeting of Peace in the Revised Sacramentary : A New Pastoral Option," in *Liturgy for the New Millennium: A Commentary on the Revised Sacramentary: Essays in Honor of Anscar J. Chupungco*, ed. Mark R. Francis et al. (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2000), 99–100.

⁸⁶ Dominic Serra, "The Kiss of Peace: A Suggestion from the Ritual Structure of the Missa," *Ecclesia Orans* 14, no. 1 (1997): 91–92.

of the kiss of peace would have happened around 400 AD when a large number of people began abstaining from receiving the Eucharist.⁸⁷

Additionally, J. Jungmann noted that the placement of the kiss of peace immediately after the Eucharistic prayer, described by Innocent, was viewed as “a seal and guarantee” of the mysteries.⁸⁸ On the other hand, in the arrangement described by Gregory, in which the Our Father comes immediately after the canon, the kiss of peace is viewed as an element of the Our Father and is seen as a prayer of preparation for Communion, and the kiss of peace (offered after the embolism) seems to be a fitting demonstration of what is expressed in the Our Father.⁸⁹ The kiss prepared the faithful to receive the Lord in the Eucharist. Therefore, ultimately, “the kiss appears as an illustration of the *sicut et nos dimittimus*.”⁹⁰

Other commentators, however, claim that the Roman Church probably relocated the kiss of peace because of the popular practice of the *fermentum* (the *fermentum* practice was later replaced by the *sancta*, the dropping of the reserved Sacred Host from the previous Mass into the consecrated chalice).⁹¹ The proponents of this claim also hold

⁸⁷ Ibid., 92; For a fuller discussion of those who participated in the celebration but did not receive the Eucharist, see Robert F. Taft, “The Inclination Prayer before Communion in the Byzantine Liturgy of St. John,” *Ecclesia Orans* 3 (1986): 41-45.

⁸⁸ Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite*, 2:322.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 2:322–323.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 2:323.

⁹¹ Paul F Bradshaw, “The Genius of the Roman Rite Revisited,” in *Ever Directed Towards the Lord: The Love of God in the Liturgy of the Eucharist Past, Present, and Hoped for*, ed. Society of St. Catherine of Siena and Lang (New York: T & T Clark, 2007), 60–61; John F. Baldovin, “The Fermentum at Rome in the Fifth Century: A Reconsideration,” *Worship* 79, no. 1 (2005): 47–48. Also see, Michael Foley, “The Whence and Whither of the Kiss of Peace in the Roman Rite,” 63-64. Both Bradshaw and Baldovin hold that the *fermentum* was responsible for the Roman location for the kiss of peace.. According to Baldovin, the “popularity and frequency of the communion services at the neighborhood churches would have been responsible for the unique Roman practice of exchanging the peace immediately prior to receiving communion” (Baldovin, 47).

that priests were not allowed to offer the entire sacrifice in their titular churches. They assert that since priests were not allowed to offer Masses by themselves in their titular churches during this time, they instead held the Word Service.⁹² Thus, right after the universal prayers, the priests would take the *fermentum*, which was brought to the celebrant by acolytes from the papal Mass, and drop it into the chalice. After that the people were instructed to offer the kiss of peace with one another and then proceeded to receive communion. This group of scholars argue that since the kiss of peace was practicing at this location for a long period of time, it gradually became the preferred location when, later, priests were allowed to celebrate Masses by themselves in their titular churches.⁹³ It seems interesting for some to make this claim because, although the *fermentum* practice was mentioned by Pope Miltiades (311-14 AD) and later by Pope Sirius (384-99 AD), it was never seen in a direct connection to the practice of the kiss of peace.⁹⁴ Furthermore, how would one explain the mixing of the Consecrated Host with unconsecrated species? Thus, their explanation does not seem valid.

⁹² Baldovin, "The Fermentum at Rome in the Fifth Century: A Reconsideration," 47. Both Bradshaw and Baldovin hold that the *fermentum* was responsible for the Roman location for the kiss of peace. According to Baldovin, the "popularity and frequency of the communion services at the neighborhood churches would have been responsible for the unique Roman practice of exchanging the peace immediately prior to receiving communion" (Baldovin, 47).

⁹³ Ibid.; Anscar J. Chupungco, *Handbook for Liturgical Studies*, ed. Pontificio Ateneo S. Anselmo, vol. 2 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1997), 119.

⁹⁴ For an illuminating discussion about *fermentum* and *sancta* practice, see: Josef A. Jungmann, "Fermentum: A Symbol of Church Unity and Its Observance in the Middle Ages," in *Pastoral Liturgy* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1962), 287–95; Baldovin, "The Fermentum at Rome in the Fifth Century: A Reconsideration"; Nathan Mitchell, *Cult and Controversy: The Worship of the Eucharist Outside Mass*, Studies in the Reformed Rites of the Catholic Church v. 4 (New York: Pueblo, 1982), 35-36, 57, 60-62; Kevin W. Irwin, *Models of the Eucharist* (New York: Paulist Press, 2005), 207–209; David Grumett, *Material Eucharist* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 240–44.

Preliminary Conclusions

As we saw, there are some significant developments in the kiss of peace. From the time of the apostles to the second and third centuries, the kiss of peace was mainly viewed among the baptized as a sign of welcoming or respect. Many Fathers also saw a connection between Matthew 5:23 and the exchange of the kiss of peace as an element for preparation before entering into the liturgy of the Eucharist. Because of this connection, many saw the kiss of peace as a sign of reconciliation. Later, however, the kiss of peace was evolved from being a sign of reconciliation before the Offertory to a sign of preparation for communion after the consecration. This shift of meaning is evident in a shift in location: by the end of the fifth century the Churches of Rome and North Africa had placed the kiss of peace after the consecration. The rearrangement of Gregory the Great brought out a new meaning of the kiss of peace, i.e., preparation for Communion.

Chapter Three: The Essential Meaning of the Kiss of Peace for the Roman Rite

By the time of St. Gregory the Great (540-604AD), the Lord's Prayer became a prominent element in the liturgy. The relocation of the Our Father right after the consecration allowed the kiss of peace to be seen as a preparatory element just before the reception of the Eucharist and a demonstration of the words "as we also have forgiven." The kiss of peace, placed after the Our Father, no longer was a foreign gesture but was now appropriately integrated into the Eucharist. The rearrangement of the Our Father and the kiss of peace brings about a unique meaning of the kiss of peace in the Roman Rite, despite its varied modifications.

The Kiss of Peace in the Liturgy from the Fifth to the Late Seventh Century

By the time of St. Gregory the Great there was a strong connection between the kiss of peace and the reception of the Eucharist. Gregory recalled the story of a group of monks who, having been threatened by shipwreck, gave each other the kiss of peace and received the Eucharist, which they carried with them.⁹⁵ Also, there is a story of St. Mary of Egypt (344-421) who would offer the kiss of peace to the monk who brought her Communion.⁹⁶ These stories show a strong connection between the Eucharist and the kiss of peace; the latter was seen as a preparatory element for the reception of the Eucharist.

Gregory's relocation of the Our Father affected the location of the fraction rite, and this also affected the way in which communicants prepared to receive Communion. The location of the kiss of peace became a testament to what was prayed in the *Pater*

⁹⁵ Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite*, 2:323.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

Noster. People should be at peace with the Lord and their neighbors before Communion. How could this be done? While the grace of the Sacrament of Penance removes sins and heals penitents' relationship with God, the kiss of peace, on the other hand, reconciled them with their neighbors. Some uphold that the placement of the kiss of peace immediately before Communion was viewed as "a part of a sanctifying process related to personal piety."⁹⁷ This sanctification prepared the communicant to be ready to receive the Lord into their hearts. Abbot Carol, O.S.B., sums up the rite by stating that "the kiss of peace after the words of the *Pater* on the forgiveness of offences and before partaking of the Body and Blood of Our Lord was an act of deep meaning."⁹⁸ The kiss of peace helped the communicant to seek reconciliation and forgiveness; thus, this ritual became a practical and useful approach to achieve what it intended. This was the reason why the liturgist, J. Jungmann, saw the kiss of peace as "a natural preparation for the Communion."⁹⁹ For some, the kiss of peace was viewed as a pre-condition or "at least a fitting preparation" for receiving the Eucharist.¹⁰⁰

In light of a strong connection between the kiss of peace and Communion, around the year 1080, some even began to hold the kiss of peace as "a sort of substitute for Communion."¹⁰¹ Even though they did not receive the Eucharist physically, the kiss of

⁹⁷ Kiril Petkov, *The Kiss of Peace: Ritual, Self, and Society in the High and Late Medieval West, Cultures, Beliefs, and Traditions* v. 17 (Leiden ; Boston: Brill, 2003), 15.

⁹⁸ Fernand Cabrol, *The Mass of the Western Rites* (St. Louis, MO: B. Herder, 1934), 85.

⁹⁹ Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite*, 2:323.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 2:324.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 2:325.

peace was seen as a form of Communion.¹⁰² Christians received the peace of Christ, which came from the presence of the Eucharist from the altar.

Seventh Century Papal Mass

The evidence of the kiss of peace found in the papal Mass in the seventh century suggests that the kiss of peace was exchanged in different ways. The most noticeable document that speaks of the practice of the kiss of peace is the *Ordo I (Ordo Romanus Primus)* from the seventh and eight centuries with its rubrics for the Papal Easter Mass. It notes that the kiss of peace is located after the *Pater Noster* and the Embolism. While the *Sancta* was being dropped into the chalice, the archdeacon turned and offered the kiss of peace to the first bishop and “*deinde et ceteri per ordinem et populus*” (then the others according to rank and the people).¹⁰³ Nonetheless, the later manuscripts of this *Ordo* mention something different, namely, “*deinde ceteris per ordinem et populis*.” This indicates that the archdeacon, after offering the kiss of peace to the bishop, offers it to the others according to rank and then to the people. This small change of the terms *ceteri* and *populus* are the subjects of the sentence who give the action. The *ceteris* and *populis* are indirect objects who received the action. Noticing the differences between these manuscripts, Jungmann sums up the development:

The first Roman *ordo* says explicitly: When the *pax Domini* has been spoken, the archdeacon gives the kiss of peace to the first bishop, *deinde*

¹⁰² Miri Rubin, *Corpus Christi: The Eucharist in Late Medieval Culture* (Cambridge [England]: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 74–76.

¹⁰³ Michel Andrieu, *Les Ordines Romani du Haut Moyen Age*, Spicilegium Sacrum Lovaniense (Louvain: Spicilegium Sacrum Lovaniense Administration, 1960), Ordo I, n. 18; Gordon P. Jeanes, *The Origins of the Roman Rite* (Bramcote, Nottingham: Grove Books, 1991), 38. Jeanes translates this text as “The archdeacon gives the peace to the senior bishop, then *others give the peace in order, and likewise the people*.” Emphasis added. Cf. Richard B Hilgartner, “The Sign of Peace,” *Liturgical Ministry* 20, no. 3 (2011): 138.

et ceteri per ordinem et populus. At the given signal, therefore, those in the nave of the church greeted each other with the kiss. But many of the later manuscripts of this *ordo* have introduced an inconspicuous but very important change: *deinde ceteris per ordinem et populis*. Thus the kiss of peace is made to proceed from the altar and, like a message or even like a gift which comes from the Sacrament, is handed on “to the others and to the people.” The new rule is clearly expressed in a plan for Mass, which is placed at the beginning of the tenth-century Romano-German Pontifical.¹⁰⁴

It seems to be the case that at one time, *Ordo I*’s rubrics instructed that everyone (priest and people alike) shared the peace with one another simultaneously after the archdeacon’s instruction. However, the later manuscripts seem to suggest that the kiss of peace was to be exchanged in a consecutive order like a chain. After the instruction of the archdeacon, the kiss of peace was exchanged like “a message or even like a gift which comes from the altar.”¹⁰⁵ This indicates that there was a development in order to emphasize the origin of the peace, the essence of the peace, rather than who shared the kiss of peace.

This latter practice of the kiss of peace, the chain-like peace offering, alluded to a new emphasis for this aged ritual.¹⁰⁶ As a chain, this new development “led to an emphasis on the kiss of peace being a blessing from Christ mediated by the celebrant, rather than a simple action among the worshippers to express their mutual reconciliation.”¹⁰⁷ At Mass, the priest stands in the person of Christ and, when he is about to offer the kiss of peace, always kisses the chalice or the altar, which signifies the presence of Christ. Thus, when the kiss was to be circulated, it was not merely a simple

¹⁰⁴ Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite*, 2:326. Emphasis in original texts.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Bard Thompson, *Liturgies of the Western Church*, (Cleveland: World, 1961), 39.

¹⁰⁷ Philip Sheldrake, “The Sign of Peace,” *The Way* 22 (January 1982): 44–45.

sign of charity and unity, nor a condition for the reception of the Eucharist, nor of the priest's peace; rather, it conveyed a deeper reality: Christ's peace in the presence of the Eucharist, which brought unity among the people.¹⁰⁸ To highlight this significance, "the kiss of peace developed into elaborated rituals."¹⁰⁹

Right before the time of the exchange of the kiss of peace, the priest, who represents Christ at Mass, would be the first to receive the peace from Christ with a sign of veneration. His reception of Christ's peace was done by kissing a sacred object. *Ordo I* points out that "the chalice and paten were kissed."¹¹⁰ Subsequently, this practice endured and was well developed by the twelfth century, as liturgical manuals show.¹¹¹ After the priest had received Christ's peace by kissing the sacred object, he passed it on to the archdeacon, deacon, and others. After the lesser minister received the peace, he would pass on the peace according to the hierarchical order. This chain-like approach stressed the source of the peace, which they were exchanging. Since Christ is the source of the peace, "no one can give the peace who has not received it from someone else, including the priest, who has not received it from Christ Himself."¹¹² The true peace could only be obtained in the presence of Christ, and since it was only in Christ that all people were

¹⁰⁸ B. I. Mullahy, "Kiss, Liturgical," in *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 8 (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1960), 207.

¹⁰⁹ Sheldrake, "The Sign of Peace," 45.

¹¹⁰ G. J. C. Snoek, *Medieval Piety from Relics to the Eucharist: A Process of Mutual Interaction*, Studies in the History of Christian Thought v. 63 (Leiden; New York: E.J. Brill, 1995), 240–1; Andrieu, *Les Ordines Romani du Haut Moyen Age*, II, 97, n. 94.

¹¹¹ Foley, "The Whence and Whither of the Kiss of Peace in the Roman Rite," 63; O. B. Jr Hardison, *Christian Rite and Christian Drama in the Middle Ages: Essays in the Origin and Early History of Modern Drama* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1965), 74. The manual of the twelfth century suggests, "the celebrant first kissing the altar, the host, the chalice, the book or the crucifix; then he would pass it to the lesser minister."

¹¹² Foley, "The Whence and Whither of the Kiss of Peace in the Roman Rite," 71.

connected with one another, the kiss of peace, “therefore, was not a horizontal action of the faithful, but it became a vertical action that was perceived perhaps as another fruit or gift of the presence of Christ.”¹¹³ This form of passing the peace became the normative form not only for the Papal Masses but also for non-papal Masses.¹¹⁴

Reasons for Decline

Even though the meaning of the kiss of peace was noteworthy, few people were aware of its significance, and for a variety of possible reasons, the ritual became less emphasized.¹¹⁵ The decline in reception of the Eucharist threatened the practice of the kiss of peace as early as the mid sixth century.¹¹⁶ Many who experienced a sense of unworthiness purposely abstained from receiving the Eucharist, while still participating in the Mass.¹¹⁷ Although more and more people abstained, Caesarius of Arles (468/470-542 AD) encouraged the people to stay at least until the end of the Lord’s Prayer so that they would receive Christ’s peace. “Therefore, again and again I beg and beseech you, that every Sunday, and especially on the major feasts, that no one leave church until the divine mysteries are completed.”¹¹⁸ Despite his encouragement, many left the assembly right after the consecration, thus minimizing the number of people who participated in the kiss of peace.

¹¹³ Hilgartner, “The Sign of Peace,” 138.

¹¹⁴ Sheldrake, “The Sign of Peace,” 45.

¹¹⁵ Colin Buchanan, *The Kiss of Peace*, Grove worship 80 (Bramcote, Nottingham: Grove Books, 1982), 12.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite*, 2:359-367. esp., 361.

¹¹⁸ Caesarius of Arles, *Saint Caesarius of Arles*, trans. Mary Magdeleine Mueller, Sermons vol. 1 (1-80) (Washington, D.C: Catholic University of America Press, 1956), 73–74.

In some places in Europe, there was also an understanding that the kiss of peace was only to be exchanged between those who would receive Communion.¹¹⁹ Theodore of Canterbury (602-690 AD) gave a clear directive regarding the reception of the Eucharist, positing that “*qui non communicant, nec accedant ad pacem neque ad osculum in ecclesia*” (those who are not communicating, should not come up for the peace nor for the kiss in Church).¹²⁰ The exchange of the kiss of peace was seen as the transferring of Christ’s peace, so, if one was not properly disposed to receive the Eucharist, one would not be disposed to receive Christ’s peace. This connection was perhaps a fitting reason for saying that the kiss of peace was a preparatory element for the reception of the Eucharist. This perhaps further reduced the number of people who participated in the kiss of peace.

As fewer people received the Eucharist during this time, it has been suggested that this probably was the period when the kiss of peace began being circulated only among those in the sanctuary.¹²¹ During the Middle Ages, many doubted that “married people, especially married women, and artisans, could have their minds on ‘higher matters’ often enough for devout reception.”¹²² Thus, evidence appears to suggest that only the clergy were among those considered worthy to receive the Eucharist—and, thus, worthy of receiving the kiss of peace.

¹¹⁹ Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite*, 2:325. Cf. Foley, “The Whence and Whither of the Kiss of Peace in the Roman Rite,” 58; Robert Cobié, *The Church at Prayer: An Introduction to the Liturgy*, ed. Aimé Georges Martimort, New ed., vol. 2 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1985), 165.

¹²⁰ Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite*, 2:323.

¹²¹ Thomas E Wilson, “A Pax on Both Your Houses: A Reflection on the Peace,” *Sewanee Theological Review* 39, no. 2 (1996): 177–8.

¹²² Virginia Reinburg, “Liturgy and the Laity in Late Medieval and Reformation France,” *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 23, no. 3 1992, 539–540.

Some see it as problematic that the kiss of peace was exchanged only among the clergy, claiming that it was a clear sign of division between the clergy and the people.¹²³ The kiss of peace was viewed as a privilege for the clergy alone. Thus, after the celebrant passed the kiss to the deacon, the kiss was circulated among those in the sanctuary, and “soon it stopped reaching the people at all.”¹²⁴ However, this observation seems inaccurate. The clergy did not keep the kiss of peace for themselves; rather, since only those who received Communion received the kiss of peace, and since few laypeople at that time were receiving Communion, consequently few laypeople received the kiss of peace. This is why Pope Innocent III (1160-1216) asserted in his treatise on the Mass, *De sacro altari mysterio*, that the “kiss of peace was shared by all the faithful in the Churches.”¹²⁵ The encouragement of Pope Innocent III served as a reminder for the faithful to participate. It was fitting that Christ’s peace prepared communicants before they actually received the Lord in the Eucharist.

Pax or Osculatorium

In the thirteenth century, everyone in the congregation again was able to exchange the kiss of peace; it was not, however, exchanged in the original manner. The mouth-to-mouth kiss, common in past centuries, was now seen as problematic. It was replaced by the kissing of a Pax-Board or *osculatorium* so that the laity could share in the exchanging

¹²³ Petkov, *The Kiss of Peace*, 15. I think Petkov is incorrect to suggest that this kiss of peace is served as a separation between the laity and the clergy.

¹²⁴ Thomas E Wilson, “A Pax on Both Your Houses: A Reflection on the Peace,” *Sewanee Theological Review* 39, no. 2 (1996), 178.

¹²⁵ Walter Lowrie, “Kiss of Peace: A Declaration of Koinonia,” *Theology Today* 12, no. 2 (July 1955), 236.

of the peace.¹²⁶ The Pax-Board or *osculatorium*, sometimes called a pax or pax-brede or pax-tablet, originally appeared in England in 1248.¹²⁷ A Pax-Board was a decorated plaque, made of wood or metal, upon which was engraved or painted the figure of Our Lord, a saint, or some liturgical symbols.¹²⁸ It was used as a way to pass on the kiss of peace not only to those who were clerics in the sanctuary but also to the congregation in the nave.

Perhaps the replacement of the kiss of peace with the Pax-Board was fitting. In response to Pope Innocent III's suggestion that everyone should receive the peace, the Pax-Board was thought to be the most suitable way to reengage the people into the exchange of the kiss of peace. Furthermore, since, during earlier centuries, the Church Fathers worried about possible scandal as some men and women went back for a second kiss, a restriction was placed on the inter-gender exchange of the kiss of peace. By the twelfth century, exchanging the kiss of peace even among persons of the same sex was considered an immoral act.¹²⁹ There was no clear explanation why the Roman Rite replaced the kiss of peace with the Pax-Board; however, some speculate that that mouth-to-mouth kiss was seen as a hygiene or contagion concern.¹³⁰ In contrast, some think that the kiss of peace was replaced by the Pax-Board because it shifted the focus to a holy

¹²⁶ Nikolaus Gühr, *The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass: Dogmatically, Liturgically and Ascetically Explained*, 6th ed. (St. Louis: B. Herder, 1924), 723–724.

¹²⁷ Archdale Arthur King, *Liturgy of the Roman Church* (London: Longmans, Green, 1957), 362.

¹²⁸ Thomas J. Heffernan and E. Ann Matter, eds., *The Liturgy of the Medieval Church* (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute, 2001), 420; Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite*, 2:329.

¹²⁹ J. Russell Major, *From Renaissance Monarchy to Absolute Monarchy: French Kings, Nobles, & Estates*, Johns Hopkins Paperbacks ed. (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 65.

¹³⁰ Foley, "The Whence and Whither of the Kiss of Peace in the Roman Rite," 70; Major, *From Renaissance Monarchy to Absolute Monarchy*, 65.

object, thus avoiding the possibility of improper kissing.¹³¹ While the mouth-to-mouth kiss expresses unity and charity among Christians, the source of the peace, which is Christ, could easily be forgotten. Kissing via an object minimizes the possibility of scandal and intensifies the focus on Christ, the source of the peace.

The practice of the Pax-Board engaged everyone at Mass; nevertheless, it posed a question of precedence. Before passing it to others in the nave, the celebrant would kiss it after kissing the chalice and the altar.¹³² Afterwards, the deacon would bring it to different people according to hierarchical order.¹³³ This was the common practice even until 1502. John Burckard, the papal master of ceremonies for multiple popes in the fifteenth century, recorded in the *Ordo Missae* of 1502 that, after the celebrant offered the kiss of peace through the *instrumentum pacis* (instrument of peace), the minister then offered it to others with “*dignioribus primo: deinde aliis: ultimo mulieribus singulis competenti.*”¹³⁴ This instruction indicated that the Pax-Board was to be offered: First the people of greater dignity, then others, lastly each suitable woman.

When the Pax-Board was carried out in this manner, problems developed. Some claim that the usage of the Pax-Board became an occasion to display rank privilege.¹³⁵ There were instances in England where people quarreled during the Eucharist about who was supposed to venerate the Pax-Board first. E. Duffy, points out that “the procession

¹³¹ Stutzman, *Recovering the Love Feast*, 127.

¹³² Rubin, *Corpus Christi*, 74; Buchanan, *The Kiss of Peace*, 13; Reinburg, “Liturgy and the Laity in Late Medieval and Reformation France,” 539.

¹³³ Foley, “The Whence and Whither of the Kiss of Peace in the Roman Rite,” 70.

¹³⁴ Johannes Burckard, “Ordo Missae Ioanis Burckardi,” in *Tracts on the Mass*, ed. J. Wickham Legg, Henry Bradshaw Society ... [Publications] vol. XXVII (London: Harrison and sons, 1904), 162.

¹³⁵ Eleanor Kreider, “Let the Faithful Greet Each Other: The Kiss of Peace,” *The Conrad Grebel Review* 5, no. 1 (1987): 44; Foley, “The Whence and Whither of the Kiss of Peace in the Roman Rite,” 70.

and the *pax* [Pax-Board] were by no means the only moments of the Mass in which such matters of precedence might generate friction, endangering the very unity they sought to affirm.”¹³⁶

This tension can also be seen during the Tridentine era. Even though the Pax-Board is found in the 1570 Missal, codified by St. Pius V (1504-1572), its usage was limited; it was mainly considered as a way to exchange peace in low Masses.¹³⁷ The Pax-Board did not stand alone by itself; rather it was interwoven with the communion rites.¹³⁸ Therefore, “the greeting, *pax tecum*, was exchanged at solemn Masses, during which the *pax* might have been given.”¹³⁹ This gradual decline is further evidenced in *Caeremoniale Episcoporum* II, (1752). In solemn high Masses, the rubrics indicated that after the prayer *Domine Iesu Christe* “*geneflectit, et statim surgit, osculatur altare simul cum celebrante, a quo dicente ei ‘Pax tecum,’ accipiet pacem, cui ipse respondet ‘Et cum spiritu tuo’*” (he genuflects and immediately rises, then he kisses the altar with the celebrant who says to him [archdeacon] *Pax Tecum*, he will receive the peace, to which he will respond *Et cum spiritu tuo*).¹⁴⁰ The rubrics indicate the exchange of the kiss of

¹³⁶ Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, c.1400-c.1580* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992), 127. For more stories, see 126-129.

¹³⁷ Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite*, 2:329. According to Jungmann, “the kiss of peace with the *instrumentum pacis* is also provided in the Missal of Pius V of 1570 and in the *Caeremoniale episcoporum* of 1600. In this way it can, at high Mass, be communicated also to the laity. Outside of high Mass, both at the *missa cantata* and the low Mass, this is the only manner of giving the kiss of peace that is considered, both for the clergy of all ranks and for the laity.”

¹³⁸ Hilgartner, “The Sign of Peace,” 138.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Catholic Church, *Caeremoniale Episcoporum: Editio Princeps: 1600*, ed. Achille M. Triacca et al., Ed. anast., Monumenta Liturgica Concilii Tridentini 4 (Città del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2000), II, Viii, 75; Benedikt XIV., *Rituale Romanum Caeremoniale Episcoporum Ac Pontificale Romanum: Sanctissimi Domini Nostri Benedicti Papae XIV. Jussu Edita Et Aucta / [2]*, *Caeremoniale Episcoporum*, *Caeremoniale Episcoporum* (Romae: Salomon, 1752), VIII, 75, <https://opac.ku.de/s/uei/de/2/10/BV020846588>.

peace would be exchanged after the celebrant received the peace of Christ by kissing the altar.¹⁴¹ The vertical emphasis was still emphasized up until the mid-eighteenth century as the celebrant kissed the altar before offering the liturgical greeting. Therefore, according to Jungmann, the practice of kissing of the Pax-Board became less common, and it was carried out infrequently before reaching the twentieth century.¹⁴²

Preliminary Conclusions

The kiss of peace went through many modifications during the Middle Ages. From the mouth-to-mouth kiss, it was replaced by the Pax-Board. As we shall see, it evolved into the embrace or accolade. These manners in which the kiss of peace was exchanged varied; however, its meaning was never lost. Furthermore, the later modifications did not capture all the expressive aspect of the mouth-to-mouth kiss of peace; nonetheless, they were at least a reminder of what had gone before it.

Significantly, through these changes, the meaning of the kiss of peace in the Roman Rite became more obvious, since it was more closely connected with the Communion rite rather than with the Offertory. These changes attempt to illustrate the essence of the kiss of peace in the Roman Rite. It was no longer merely a sign of peace among Christians; it was now a sign of the peace of Christ, of His true presence on the altar, which the whole congregation equally shared. As the peace is shared vertically, like a chain, it orients Christians to the source of the peace and takes the focus off the horizontal dimension of sharing the peace. As a sign of Christ's peace, the kiss of peace "binds them all together in intimate union with Christ" and anticipates a deeper union

¹⁴¹ Hilgartner, "The Sign of Peace," 138.

¹⁴² Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite*, 2:329–330.

with Christ at Communion.¹⁴³ Of course, the vertical emphasis is not the only meaning of the kiss of peace in the Roman Rite, it is, nonetheless, a more prominent meaning at the time of exchanging the kiss of peace.

¹⁴³ Gehr, *The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass*, 724. Notice here, Gehr refers the *pax* as the mouth-to-mouth kiss. He calls the *pax* (*pax brede*) is the *Osculatorium*.

Chapter Four: The Return of the Kiss of Peace

Even though the Pax-Board existed and made its way to the 20th century, it “‘suffered injury’ through its development through each progressive addition or modification, especially when compared to its earliest forms.”¹⁴⁴ The revision of the Order of the Mass at the Second Vatican Council brought further changes to the kiss of peace. These changes did not restore the rite to its original form, but neither did it disrupt its significant meaning.

The Crisis of the Kiss of Peace

While the Pax-Board was found in all the Masses in the thirteenth century, it became less popular in the 1570 Missal. In the 20th Missal, its usage was only mentioned in Masses with the presence of dignitaries in a low Mass.¹⁴⁵ Otherwise, a more stylized form of embracing or accolade became a substitution for the Pax-Board. Nevertheless, this modified form of the kiss of peace was not commonly used either. It was found only at the solemn high Mass, and it was mainly reserved for those clergy in the sanctuary or high dignitary members, who sat at a distinguished area.¹⁴⁶ The congregation was not normally engaged in this form of exchanging the kiss of peace.

Since this modified form was chiefly exchanged among the people in the sanctuary, many scholars speculate and claim that the kiss of peace completely

¹⁴⁴ Hilgartner, “The Sign of Peace,” 139.

¹⁴⁵ Adrian Fortescue, J. B. O’Connell, and Alcuin Reid, *The Ceremonies of the Roman Rite Described*, 15th ed. (London ; New York: Burns & Oates, 2009), 92.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 132–133.

disappeared from the sixteenth century until the twentieth century.¹⁴⁷ Such conclusions seem inaccurate because, even though the exchange of peace was limited to the solemn high Mass, it never disappeared from the liturgy. For instance, since the thirteenth century, it is accurate to say that in the Roman Rite, the kiss of peace (mouth-to-mouth) was no longer perceived as a fitting form of exchanging the peace in the liturgy. The kiss of peace took on different forms. Certainly, there are recollections of the practice of the Pax-Board in the 1570 Missal and the modified form of the kiss of peace, namely the embrace or accolade, as found in the 1962 Missal. Presuming that the kiss of peace disappeared from the sixteenth to the twentieth century would preclude the possibility of the Pax-Board and the embrace as a replacement for the kiss of peace. Therefore, one would conclude that either the kiss of peace existed throughout history with different forms, or the kiss of peace ceased to exist since the thirteenth century because neither the *pax* nor the embrace replaced the kiss of peace.

Of course, in some way, these observations about the kiss of peace rite are worth noting because, after the council of Trent to Vatican II, there were signs that suggested that the kiss of peace turned out to be unpopular in many parishes. Many saw the kiss of peace as “trifling vestiges of ancient Oriental and Jewish sanctuary etiquette,” which slowly disappeared among the people.¹⁴⁸ There are stories such as an old lady asking a young priest about the kiss of peace and “why he had not used it,” which illustrates the

¹⁴⁷ Buchanan, *The Kiss of Peace*, 16; also Kreider, “Let the Faithful Greet Each Other,” 350. Kreider asserts “By the late 16th century the kiss of peace had largely disappeared from the worship of the Christian churches...it survived as an occasional practice among some monastic communities,” 44.

¹⁴⁸ Paul A Tanner, “Why Omit the Liturgical Kiss?,” *Orate Fratres* 7, no. 3 (January 21, 1933), 130.

decline of the age-old practice among the priests and the people.¹⁴⁹ However, some still recognizes the significance of the kiss of peace and questions the motive of those who refused to exercise the kiss of peace. The liturgical kiss communicates the fundamental truth about Christians, so, then, why omit the liturgical kiss? After all, through Baptism, we become family members in the faith, which enables us to share in the kiss of peace. The unity with others through the kiss symbolizes and signifies the union we share with the Almighty Father. Through that liturgical kiss, we express our union with God with others, “a union not, of course, physical or hypostatic it is true, but a union nevertheless altogether unique and approximating the physical order.”¹⁵⁰ Thus, the kiss of peace exemplifies this very truth about Christians.

Although the practice of the modified kiss of peace, namely the embrace or accolade, was unpopular, the significance of the rite was never missing because of the presence of the *Embolism* (prayer for peace before the greeting *Pax tecum*). According to Jungmann, “the prayer, therefore, gains its full meaning only when supported by the performance of the rite.”¹⁵¹ It is the formal prayer addressing Christ for peace in the Church; thus, when the peace rite was omitted during the *missa cantata* or the low Mass, this prayer “offers a substitute for it.”¹⁵² Even though, in some Masses there was no physical exchange of peace, peace was still being exchanged because of this prayer.

¹⁴⁹ Graham Woolfenden, “‘Let Us Offer Each Other the Sign of Peace’--An Enquiry,” *Worship* 67, no. 3 (May 1993): 246; John Bossy, *Christianity in the West 1400-1700*, 1 edition. (Oxford Oxfordshire ; New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 69–70.

¹⁵⁰ Tanner, “Why Omit the Liturgical Kiss?,” 131.

¹⁵¹ Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite*, 2:331.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*

The Kiss of Peace in the Roman Missal 1970 and Its Drawbacks

Sacrosanctum Concilium (1963), the first document of the Second Vatican Council, reaffirms the enormous value of the celebration of the Eucharist and the sacrifice Christ made, which is perpetuated continuously throughout the centuries. The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is “a sacrament of love, a sign of unity, a bond of charity, and a paschal banquet in which Christ is eaten, the mind is filled with grace, and a pledge of future glory is given to us.”¹⁵³ In addition urging “fully conscious, and active participation in liturgical celebrations,” the Council also sought to reform the liturgy to the extent that “both text and rites should be drawn up so that they express more clearly the holy things which they signify; the Christian...should be enabled to understand with ease.”¹⁵⁴

In spite of the many sessions spent on the liturgy, the kiss of peace was not one of the topics for discussion. Foley points out that “*Sacrosanctum Concilium* does not mention the kiss of peace let alone call for its restoration.”¹⁵⁵ Instead of the kiss of peace, or the Pax-Board, or an embrace, the action of the kiss was replaced by *a sign* of peace. This sign is now accessible to everyone in the church, clergy and faithful.

Many suggest that the return of the congregational sign of peace can be attributed to the Church of South India.¹⁵⁶ Prior to the Second Vatican Council, precisely in 1950, the Indian Christians of St. Thomas practiced a different form of sharing the peace, which

¹⁵³ Catholic Church, “*Sacrosanctum Concilium* - On the Sacred Liturgy,” par.47, accessed February 8, 2017, <http://www.ewtn.com/library/councils/v2litur.htm>.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, Par14, par. 21.

¹⁵⁵ Foley, “The Whence and Whither of the Kiss of Peace in the Roman Rite,” 75.

¹⁵⁶ Woolfenden, “‘Let Us Offer Each Other the Sign of Peace’--An Enquiry,” 247; Buchanan, *The Kiss of Peace*, 16; Kreider, “Let the Faithful Greet Each Other,” 45.

extended to everyone in the congregation. *The Order for the Lord's Supper* reads, "the giver places his right hand against the right palm of the receiver, and each closes his left hand over the other's right hand" while saying "the peace of God" or "the peace of God be with you."¹⁵⁷ Whether the practice of the Church of South India influenced the *Novus Ordo* 1970 (*NO* 1970) or not, the Roman Church called for the sign of peace to be extended to everyone. Therefore, the 1970 *NO* mandates that the "*Offerte vobis Pacem*" (Let us offer each other the sign of peace) take place after the prayer for peace, said by the priest, and the priest's liturgical greeting, but before the *Haec commixtio* (May this mingling).¹⁵⁸

The General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM) was issued in order to accompany and to give deeper instructions on the *NO*. The first edition of the General Instruction on the Roman Missal (GIRM, 1969) notes that a sign of peace was to be exchanged in order to "express [Christian] love for one another and beg for peace and unity in the Church."¹⁵⁹ However, it does not recommend a specific way of exchanging the sign of peace. Rather it reserved this instruction to the conferences of Bishops. These conferences could mandate the manner that the sign of peace is to be exchanged, "according to local custom."¹⁶⁰ The later editions consistently provide instruction similar to the first edition, except for the fourth edition. Interestingly, the fourth edition of the GIRM (1975), noting the possibility of abuse, clearly indicates that the sign of peace is to

¹⁵⁷ T. S. Garrett, *Worship in the Church of South India*, Ecumenical Studies in Worship no. 2 (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1958), 29.

¹⁵⁸ International Committee on English in the Liturgy, ed., *The General Instruction and the New Order of mass* (Hales Corners, WI: Priests of the Sacred Heart, 1969), 112.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 56.b.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, no. 112.

be offered “only to those who are nearest.”¹⁶¹ At later points in the instruction, it provides more details about the sign of peace, such as “in accord with the decisions of the Conference of Bishops, all offer one another a sign that expresses peace, communion, and charity.”¹⁶²

Meanwhile, in 1977, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops of the United States (NCCB) issued a short document on the sign of peace as a way to “present a rationale for a ritual gesture, which...is now an important part of the revised Eucharistic Liturgy of the Church.”¹⁶³ The document provides a brief historical development of the kiss of peace, while providing some directives for the exchange of peace. The NCCB suggested that the sign of peace should be both “genuine and reverent. It is not a mere greeting. It is a form of worship and of prayer – a personal and sincere pledge and sign of reconciliation, unity, and peace.”¹⁶⁴ Additionally, the conference pastorally considered the handshake as the common norm in a large celebration. The use of both hands, however, would distinguish the rite from a secular handshake. Regardless of the type of sign of peace implemented, pastors should make sure that the rite does not “become a mere formality or deteriorate into a frivolous display.”¹⁶⁵

The actual exchanging of a gesture of peace is a manifestation of the prayer for peace, communicated by the priest. In some instances, the exchange may be omitted from

¹⁶¹ Catholic Church and International Committee on English in the Liturgy, eds., *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, Liturgy Documentary 2 (Washington, D.C: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2003), 82.

¹⁶² Ibid., no 154, cf. no. 181 and no. 239.

¹⁶³ Bishops Committee on the Liturgy, *The Sign of Peace*, ed. Catholic Church (Washington, D.C: United States Catholic Conference, 1977), 1–2.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid, 4.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid, 5.

the Mass; however, the inclusion of the sign of peace should be somewhat normative. J. Emminghaus notes that there are three different parts to the exchange of peace: 1) the priest's prayer for peace, 2) the priest's liturgical greeting of the congregation in peace, and 3) the exchange of peace itself.¹⁶⁶ The celebrant does not need to personally share the sign of peace with everyone, since "the priest has already prayed for peace among all present and has addressed them with his all-inclusive greeting: 'The peace of the Lord be with you always.'"¹⁶⁷ This communicates that there is an underlining awareness that the peace comes from Christ through the priest's words. Therefore, his prayer for peace already entails his exchanging a gesture of peace with others.

Even so, it was not long after the introduction of the handshake that the possibility of disrespect and distraction became, at least in some communities, a reality.¹⁶⁸ In some places, the sign of peace could be considered a disruptive element of the liturgy. Some theologians claim that there are benefits to move the sign of peace to a different place since the present location of the sign of peace caused more damage than benefit to the structure of the Mass.¹⁶⁹ In 1995, there was an attempt to move the sign of peace to before the Offertory, which the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) approved; however, it never received the *recognitio* from the Congregation of

¹⁶⁶ Johannes H. Emminghaus, *The Eucharist: Essence, Form, Celebration*, ed. Theodor Maas-Ewerd (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1997), 194.

¹⁶⁷ Catholic Church. National Conference of Catholic Bishops... Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy, "The Kiss of Peace," *AFTER* 20, no. 4 (August 1978), 256.

¹⁶⁸ Thomas J. Reese, "In the Catholic Church, a Kiss Is Never Just a Kiss," *America* 172, no. 13 (April 15, 1995): 12; Benedict XVI, *Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation Sacramentum Caritatis of the Holy Father Benedict XVI to the Bishops, Clergy, Consecrated Persons and the Lay Faithful on the Eucharist as the Source and Summit of the Church's Life and Mission*, Footnote 150; Synodi Episcoporum, "Synodus Episcoporum Boolettino," Proposition 23.

¹⁶⁹ Reese, "In the Catholic Church, a Kiss Is Never Just a Kiss."

the Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments (CDW).¹⁷⁰ Nonetheless, the CDW had its own reasons to retain the location of the sign of peace. Such an attempt appears to suggest that there were problems related to the rite at the present location.

There are some different factors that help explain why sometimes the sign of peace could be harmful to the Mass. Some speculate that the term “sign of peace” was not expressive enough and did not capture the true meaning of the age-old rite. As a sign, it seems to captivate the peace as a symbol rather than the true peace.¹⁷¹ Instead of sharing the true peace of Christ with one another, it could become superficial. Others attributed handshakes as the cause of laxity in the rite of peace. The handshake does not seem to adequately capture the clarity and seriousness of the kiss of peace; whereas “kissing is universally recognized as a sign of some form of love.”¹⁷² Some even strongly refer to the handshake as “a meaningless *liturgical* gesture,”¹⁷³ as there is no difference between the liturgical handshake and the secular handshake. Everyone was once again able to participate in the exchange of the peace because of the presence of the sign of peace; however, in no way can the newer manner be compared to the traditional kiss of peace.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷⁰ Hilgartner, “*The Sign of Peace*,” 140.

¹⁷¹ Foley, “The Whence and Whither of the Kiss of Peace in the Roman Rite,” 82.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, 86. Emphasis in original.

¹⁷³ Romano Tommasi, “The Construction of the New Mass : Some Funny Things Happened Near Roman Forum: Part II,” *The Latin mass* 11, no. 2, The Latin Mass (Summer 2002), 34. http://www.latinMassmagazine.com/articles/articles_downloads.html.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

Reaffirming the Theology of the Sign of Peace

There are many titles for the exchange of peace, and yet its meaning has never been lost. While there are critical reflections on the gesture of the sign of peace and the effort to restore the ancient rite, in *Redemptionis Sacramentum* (2004), the Congregation for the Divine Worship (CDW) points out that:

According to the tradition of the Roman Rite, this practice does not have the connotation either of reconciliation or of a remission of sins, but instead signifies peace, communion, and charity before the reception of the Most Holy Eucharist.¹⁷⁵

The document not only clearly points out what the sign is envisioned to achieve, but it also reaffirms the traditional meaning the Church held regarding this age-old rite. Its meaning is distinguished from the penitential rite; it does not have “the conciliatory function” which contemporary liturgical theology tends to attribute to it.¹⁷⁶ The sign of peace is not a penitential sign nor a sign of reconciliation; rather, the sign of peace in the Roman Rite is a token of peace and unity that only Christ can supply. Therefore, the document clearly differentiates the elements and connotations of the sign of peace in the Roman Rite from other traditions by noting its placement after the consecration in the Mass.

This reaffirmation of the paschal meaning of the sign of peace in *Redemptionis Sacramentum* is not the only occasion in which the Church speaks to the significance of the age-old rite. In 2007, for example, in the post-synodal apostolic exhortation, Pope

¹⁷⁵ Congregation of Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacrament, “Instruction *Redemptionis Sacramentum*,” 71, accessed February 17, 2017. http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccdds/documents/rc_con_ccdds_doc_20040423_redemptionis-sacramentum_en.html.

¹⁷⁶ Foley, “The Whence and Whither of the Kiss of Peace in the Roman Rite,” 78.

Benedict XVI commented on its significance. The pope asserted that “by its nature the Eucharist is the sacrament of peace ‘which is exemplified in the expression in the sign of peace.’”¹⁷⁷ The Church constantly and consciously prays for the gift of peace and for Church unity and for all humanity, so that all can be oriented toward “the one who ‘is our peace’ (Eph 2:14) and who can bring peace to individuals and people when all human effort fails.”¹⁷⁸ While the pope, along with the Synod Fathers, spoke about the source of peace that we hope to signify in the sign of peace, he also expressed his concern about the exaggerated emotions that often accompany the sign of peace. Rather than signifying its true meaning, the sign of peace “can be exaggerated and cause a certain distraction in the assembly just before the reception of Communion,” to which extent the gesture should be retrained.¹⁷⁹ To further safeguard the sacredness of the Eucharistic celebration and the significance of the rite, the pope advised that the gesture should be exchanged with sobriety. Additionally, the pope requested that competent offices further study the rite with the possibility of “moving the sign of peace to another place,” since the present location can become problematic.¹⁸⁰

In response to Pope Benedict XVI’s request in 2007 and after acquiring opinions from all the Conferences of Bishops in the world, in 2014 the CDW issued *Circular Letter on the Ritual Expression of the Gift of Peace at Mass* to reiterate the rite’s significance. The letter first points out that the peace that is shared in the Mass is the

¹⁷⁷ Benedict XVI, *Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation Sacramentum Caritatis of the Holy Father Benedict XVI to the Bishops, Clergy, Consecrated Persons and the Lay Faithful on the Eucharist as the Source and Summit of the Church’s Life and Mission*, No. 49.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., Footnote 150. *cf. Pro.* 23.

peace of Christ, which He brought about through his death and resurrection.¹⁸¹ With this understanding, the sign of peace carries with it the paschal connotation, which the Roman Rite has always ascribed to it. The Congregation likewise reaffirmed the present location of the sign of peace found in the Order of the Mass in the Roman Rite.¹⁸² The reasons for retaining this present location are twofold. Firstly, moving the sign of peace to a different location would introduce changes to “the structural order of the Mass.”¹⁸³ Secondly, the peace in the Roman Rite has always denoted the paschal connotation, which is found “in the Eucharistic contemplation of the Paschal mystery as the ‘Paschal kisses of the Risen Christ present on the altar.’”¹⁸⁴ The present location is not only deemed suitable but is also differentiated from the conciliatory notion of other traditions. While retaining the present location, the CDW also provides some considerations for conferences of bishops in order to “deepen the spiritual significance of the rite of peace in the celebration of the Holy Mass.”¹⁸⁵ Nevertheless, the CDW did not suggest a gesture to accompany the exchange of peace; rather, it preserved the right of the conferences of bishops to decide.

In July 2014, the US Conference of Bishops provided explanatory notes to implement the CDW’s decision to retain the present place of the sign of peace.¹⁸⁶ The

¹⁸¹ *Congregatio de Cultu Divino et Disciplina Sacramentorum*, “Circular Letter: The Ritual Expression of the Gift of Peace at mass,” *Sacred Music* 141, no. 3 (September 2014): no. 1.

¹⁸² Interestingly, in 2008 when the US Conference of Bishops participated in the survey for the removing of the sign of peace to a different location, the US bishops positively agreed to move the sign of peace to before the offertory.

¹⁸³ *Congregatio de Cultu Divino et Disciplina Sacramentorum*, “Circular Letter,” no. 5.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, no. 2.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, no. 8.

¹⁸⁶ Secretariat of the US Bishops’ Committee on Divine Worship, “*Understanding the Holy See’s Circular Letter on the Ritual Expression of the Gift of Peace at mass*” (The US Bishops’ Committee on Divine Worship, August 2014), accessed February 11, 2017, <https://adoremus.org/2014/09/15/Ritual-Expression-of-the-Gift-of-Peace-at-Mass/>.

document from the US Bishops provided only the brief history of the sign of peace with its biblical foundations and its development throughout the centuries. It also provides some theological approaches to the rite. The document from the US Bishops reiterates the rationale of the CDW's document while explicitly affirming the paschal notion in the sign of peace in the Roman Rite. The reiteration about the paschal notion in the sign of peace reveals that the peace in the Roman Rite has a strong connection to the paschal mystery.

Universally and locally, the significance of the sign of peace in the Roman Rite refers to the paschal mystery. "The Roman kiss is a Paschal kiss, a kiss that flows from the Passion, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ rather than from His Sermon on the Mount."¹⁸⁷ The kiss of peace in the Roman Rite does not nullify the Lord's command on the Sermon of the Mount, which is found in Matthew 5:23-24 (before offering your gifts at the altar, you should first be reconciled with your brother or sister). Rather, the Roman kiss of peace places its focus and emphasis on the Paschal Mystery, as echoed in John 20:21-22 (Jesus breathes on the peace to his disciples).¹⁸⁸ The exchange of the sign of peace is a token of the peace that is given to the Church through the presence of Christ on the Altar.

The peace given to the people is the everlasting peace that Christ promised his Church. Although the sign of peace has undergone many modifications, which, at times, did not express the reality, the rite was envisioned to communicate Christ's peace. When

¹⁸⁷ Michael P Foley, "A Crisis of Meaning in the Sign of Peace," *The Latin Mass* 16, no. Advent/Christmas (2007): 37.

¹⁸⁸ Foley, "The Whence and Whither of the Kiss of Peace in the Roman Rite," 69.

the rite is done properly, it not only signifies Christ's peace, but it also "has the potential to effect the unity it signifies" as people receive the Lord into their souls.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁹ Hilgartner, "The Sign of Peace," 141.

Conclusion

The study of the kiss of peace in the Roman Rite reveals that throughout the centuries, the kiss of peace went through many different phases. It started from the instruction of the apostle Paul who, in his letters, would encourage his audience to exchange the holy kiss with one another. Of course, this holy kiss was different from the secular kiss. While the secular kiss was only to be offered to those who shared similar ranks, the holy kiss or the Christian kiss, on the other hand, was a means to engage all who have been baptized into the Christian family. Hence, there is no separation among the Jew or Greek, slave or free person, or male or female as long as one is baptized in Christ.¹⁹⁰ Some took advantage of and rendered impure the mouth-to-mouth kiss; therefore, its began to be regulated.

The term “kiss of peace,” first mentioned in the writings of Tertullian, understood as a seal, was continuously used throughout history. When liturgical kiss first appeared in the liturgy in the fifth century in Rome, it was intended to be exchanged in the Church by all as it expressed the communal unity in the assembly and secured a separation between genders. Moreover, due to various reasons such as precedence, personal hygiene, or contamination, the kiss gradually became a clerical occurrence that was only shared among a few people in the sanctuary. Unquestionably, by this time, its significance was underemphasized. As the kiss of peace declined, it was replaced in the thirteenth century by the Pax-Board or *osculatorium*. This, then, marked the end of the mouth-to-mouth kiss of peace. The appearance of the embrace or accolade became more popular in the liturgy and took place of the kiss of peace. This modified form of the kiss of peace existed up

¹⁹⁰ Cf. Gal 3:28 and Col 3:11.

until the 1962 Missal. At the Second Vatican Council, the New Order of the Mass (1970) provided specific instructions for the kiss of peace. The kiss of peace, once again, was replaced by a general sign of peace, which the episcopal conferences specified in their own manner. The current sign of peace, like previous forms, is another modification of the kiss of peace.

When the kiss of peace was first mentioned in Rome in the fifth century, Pope Innocent referred to the kiss of peace as the seal, which is the term that St. Justin Martyr and Tertullian used to describe the kiss. St. Justin's instruction to offer the kiss reflects the admonition from the instruction of St. Paul. Thus, this reveals that the sign of peace is another representation of the holy kiss found in St. Paul's letter. Though the sign of peace is not as expressive as the holy kiss or the kiss of peace, the meaning of the kiss of peace is safeguarded. The location of the kiss of peace (after the consecration), however, remained constant from the fifth to the twenty-first century. This continuity suggests that the kiss of peace in the Roman Rite never lost its true meaning. How? The explanation of the kiss of peace from Pope Innocent I linked the meaning of the Roman kiss with the understanding found in St. Justin's and Tertullian's articulation. Then, during the time of Pope Gregory the Great, he perpetuated its meaning by arranging the location of the Our Father and the kiss of peace. His arrangement helped not only to demonstrate but also to unfold the essential meaning of the kiss of peace in the Roman Rite. When the kiss of peace was exchanged after the consecration, it referred to the peace of Christ's Real Presence. The people are confirmed in this reality by a seal, the kiss of peace.

This kiss is to be understood as the paschal kiss, whereas the conciliatory kiss was exchanged before the Offertory. It is the peace of Christ that we are called to share with

one another. A paschal kiss denotes aspects that differ from the conciliatory peace, which was demonstrated by the decision of the CDW in retaining the location of the sign of peace. As we saw, Foley maintains that there are four different aspects in the paschal kiss of the Roman Rite: peace, the Risen Christ, the Holy Spirit, and reminder of Judas' betrayal kiss.¹⁹¹ This peace that is exchanged among Christians finds its root in the presence of Christ on the altar and is shared vertically from the celebrant to the people. These aspects, however, are not always expressed because of the limitations of the manner in which the peace was shared or because of a lack of intention to appreciate the age-old rite. The peace that comes from Christ always unites humanity, and, at the time of reception of Communion, it signifies a deeper reality. The kiss of peace in the Roman Rite is different from that of other traditions not only because it is placed at a different location of the Mass but also because it symbolizes a different understanding.

Of course, the meaning of the kiss of peace in the Roman Rite alludes to the paschal notion, in which Christ is the source of the peace. Even though its meaning emphasizes the vertical aspect of the kiss of peace in the Roman Rite, it does not in any way limit or exclude other meanings of the kiss of peace such as reconciliation or unity. However, it is worthwhile to note that in the Roman Rite, as the CDW points out, the primary significance of the kiss of peace is the exchange of the paschal peace of the Risen Christ.¹⁹²

This study has presented the development of the kiss of peace as well as its theological meanings. Nevertheless, this study has not exhausted every aspect of this age-

¹⁹¹ Foley, "A Crisis of Meaning in the Sign of Peace," 37.

¹⁹² Congregatio de Cultu Divino et Disciplina Sacramentorum, "Circular Letter," 2.

old rite. There are other unsolved questions, which open the possibility for further study and examination in this area. For instance, it is conceivable that the Church would not return to the mouth-to-mouth kiss of peace as, perhaps, it is considered an inappropriate gesture to use at Mass. Yet the manner of the sign of peace in the *Novus Ordo* does not always appear to express its true meaning. So, how could the sign of peace be more expressive while still safeguarding the solemnity of the Mass? What are other appropriate gestures that represent the significance of the kiss of peace of the Roman Rite and simultaneously maintain the organic nature of the celebration of Mass? The kiss of peace in the fourth century was considered a substitution for the Communion; how could the sign of peace (handshake) in the twenty-first century exemplify this aspect? Furthermore, peace is only found in Christ. Prior to Vatican II, before the exchange of peace, the celebrant always received the peace by venerating the altar. What could we do to demonstrate that the sign of peace is a participation in Christ's peace? In other words, what sign could we use to express the vertical emphasis rather than the horizontal when the peace is exchanged? Exploring these possible questions will help us to renew our appreciation for the richness of the liturgy, and answering these questions could enhance the act of worshipping the Almighty God in the liturgy.

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