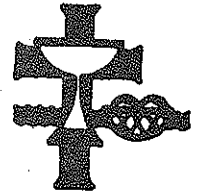


a communication of
associated parishes
3806 Mt. Vernon Avenue Alexandria, Virginia 22305



December, 1979

The Albuquerque Conference

by Henry H. Breul

The Eleventh Annual Conference of Diocesan Liturgical and Music Commissions Chairpersons was held in Albuquerque, NM, Nov 6-9, 1979. The theme this time was "The Meaning of Space and its Uses in Liturgy." As a consequence of the theme, the conference spent much of its time on busses. All in all, seven separate worship spaces were explored, and three of them were actually used for liturgy.

The conference of over 100 participants began with evensong at the Cathedral of St. John with Professor Samuel Garrett of the Church Divinity School of the Pacific starting things off with a sermon on space. This was followed by a walk to perhaps the most fascinating space in Albuquerque: a new shopping/office complex with a fine restaurant, the Tamarind, where we were served Veal Wellington as we sat in the midst of good Southwestern art.

That evening the Rev. Robert Brooks of Baytown, TX, did a slide presentation of the baptism of an adult catechumen at the Easter Vigil (see page 9). This caused excitement that lasted throughout the conference, and it was reinforced by the final liturgy, which was also the baptism of an adult. It was interesting to note that, though the focus of the conference was space, Christian Initiation, particularly infant baptism versus adult catechumenate and adult baptism, occupied much of the conversation.

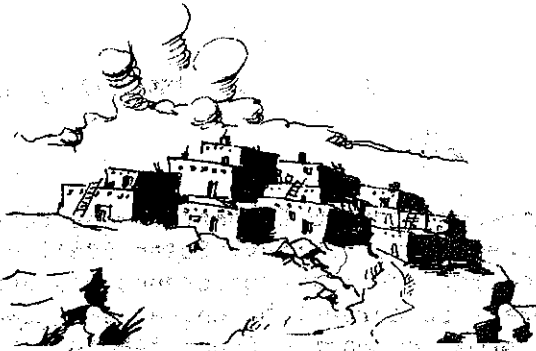
On Wednesday the Eucharist was celebrated in Spanish by the Rev. Susan Buell of El Paso, and then the conference was bussed to Faith Lutheran Church, a new Lutheran congregation on the edge of the city near the Sandia mountains. The building is plain and very practical with a wall that moved mechanically to allow for large congregations. The altar and choir occupied the same wall, and glass panels ran the full length of another wall giving a view of the mountains. It was clear from the decor and the "earth colors" chosen that an attempt was being made to involve unchurched people by giving them a sort of "living room" ambience. The parking lot was located so that people in their cars could participate by tuning in their radios and watching through the plate glass next to the pulpit and altar. This was explained by the pastor to be a place for people who wanted to explore church membership but not get physically involved for a while, plus a place where people with injuries or ailments, or families that were mourning could worship without undue discomfort. Naturally, the idea was greeted with a broad spectrum of response. The church had an outside atrium which turned many people on as being a fine space for pre- and post-liturgical meeting.

From this suburban setting, the conference was bussed to two highly disparate pueblos. The first, Laguna, was described as an "Anglicized" pueblo. It sat on the land like a town with a post office, general



(Breul - cont.)

store, and gas station. The church was remarkable, having been restored recently and dominating the pueblo like a great white mesa. The space for worship was unique in that it was highly decorated and ornate. The shape of the church - long and narrow - was dictated by the length of the wood available for joists, but unlike many American "liturgical bowling alleys", it was somehow very warm space that gave one the feeling of being near the altar. It was sort of a vague rebuilding of a Spanish church filtered through the experience of native Mexican priests in an outlandish environment.



The next pueblo was Acoma, as different from Laguna as night from day. Acoma sits on a 300-foot mesa high above the valley floor and was originally reached only by a carved footpath or donkey trail. All the building material and soil on the mesa had to be brought up on human or animal backs. Now there is a precipitous road leading up to the pueblo, but it still has an aura of solitude. The people of Acoma are wary of visitors and there were a great many restrictions about where one could go. The church was a very much larger version of that at Laguna, but fallen into some disrepair. It is used only on feast days, and the pueblo itself is only fully occupied seasonally, a sort of Indian Nantucket. Unfortunately, the rains came and the clouds obscured the view, and we had to retreat before seeing the sunset as had been planned. One of the interesting points about this pueblo was that the houses had been arranged so that the space on the top was confined and the views of the valley and distant hills obscured so that there was a sense of security. The burial ground in front of the church, on the other hand, looked over the magnificent view of the valley and the mountains so that, as one stood at the church

door with one's back to the altar, the whole panoply of the glories of the Southwest lay before one.

Thursday started off with AP Council member Vienna Anderson's talk on "Space and Hangings", which many in the conference felt was the best thing done there. After this, it was busses again to St. Michael's Parish for Morning Prayer and a description by the rector, AP Council member Peter Moore, of how he turned rather disastrous liturgical space into something useful. One problem remained in that, standing or sitting, the altar was quite invisible. Tedd Welsch, a choreographer from All Saints', Pasadena, described some of the dances he had done and led the group in the use of their hands and bodies in pouring water for the final liturgy of baptism that evening. Lunch was served at St. Thomas of Canterbury Chapel at the University of New Mexico. This was a fun time since the chapel was undergoing new construction and parts of the building were under water from the constant rain the area was experiencing. The group wandered about in the puddles trying to envisage what the new addition would look like when it was finished.

After lunch the busses went to St. Paul's Lutheran Church. This church is the oldest Lutheran congregation in New Mexico, but has moved from downtown to the near suburbs on a large plot of land. The design of the building is dramatic inside and out. The roof is a great swooping curve that makes the interior space extremely intense. The basic floor and altar shapes are triangles which further intensify the atmosphere. The dominating architectural feature is an enormous, soaring choir and organ loft opposite the altar area. In all, very exciting space, but one which overwhelms people. This was the space where the baptismal liturgy, presided over by the Bishop of the Rio Grande, was to be performed, so a rehearsal was held and spaces assigned for people to stand so that the dancers could operate.

After dinner at the Cathedral, the "Liturgy in Four Spaces" began with the Order of Worship for the Evening at the tables, then came the Service of the Word in St. Paul's Lutheran parish hall where the chairs were lined up choir style. There followed a

(Breul - cont.)

Litany in procession down a long winding corridor to the atrium/vestibule baptistry of the church. This space was circular and very intense. In the midst was a large ceramic baptismal font, and, as the catechumen was baptised, all the participants lifted their hands in a pouring motion together. The newly-baptised was clothed in white and the Peace was passed. Singing a hymn, the congregation moved into the church and stood in two rows around the triangular altar area as the liturgy proceeded with dance and gestures by the congregation. While the emphasis of the conference was on space, and indeed four separate spaces were used (six if you count the bus ride and the corridor), I didn't find it all very helpful. As often happens at conferences like this, the leadership gets carried away. The sudden addition of "signing" the Sanctus and Benediction led to the necessity of everyone having his/her program perforated and hung on a string around the neck to leave hands free. All in all, "progressive supper" liturgies have little to recommend them, and, even though this conference *was* involved in "space", the final liturgy came off as quite self-consciously "fixy".

The last day, Friday, was begun with a response by the AP Council's resident architect, Tom Babbitt, who had some strong reactions to St. Paul's Church from an architectural/liturgical standpoint (see his article elsewhere in this issue). Then, after reports from the Standing Liturgical Commission and the Standing Commission on Church Music, the conference proceeded to the business session.

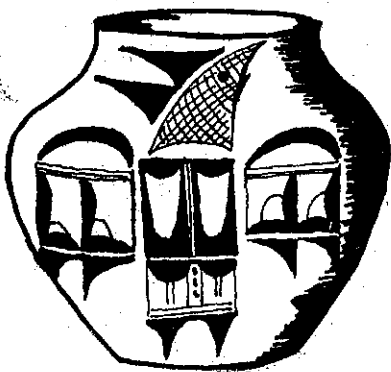
Earlier in the conference there had been a vote to incorporate the conference as The Conference of Diocesan Liturgical and Music Commissions so as to be able to gather funds to support the work of liturgical renewal in general and the Standing Liturgical Commission in particular. Leo

Malania had pointed out that "815" had en-
viscerated the actions of General Convention in forming a national liturgical office to the point that there would be only one secretary with no one to dictate letters to her, and that the whole function of the office had been put under Bishop Wright, the PB's assistant for "ministry" who, while being a fine person, had no particular interest in liturgy. If this weren't bad enough, the Standing Liturgical Commission has not been given the funds to continue its work of revision. It appeared to the conference that the forces of reaction were doing all they could to shove liturgical renewal under the ecclesiastical rug.

Another point of concern was raised about the communications emerging from the Society for the Preservation of the Book of Common Prayer. The Rev. Logan Jackson's letter and report to his constituency making hash out of what was done at General Convention were bad enough, but the news that the Presiding Bishop invited the Rev. Messrs. Jackson and Ralston to the meeting of the committee on guidelines for the use of 1928 as consultants was greeted by gasps of unbelief. As a result of all this, the resolution reproduced on page 4 was adopted.

Most of the participants had come to Albuquerque with the idea that the Prayer Book battles were over and that this conference could be a relaxed look at space, but it is clear that the battle is still on and that the principle of a Church always in the midst of reform is in jeopardy as our P.B. tries to lead the sheep into the non-existent past.

All in all, the conference was a great success ... we certainly experienced a great number of spaces. Everything was beautifully organized by Peter Moore and his colleagues, and the Southwest, albeit wet, was a gorgeous piece of turf to experience and move about in. +++



R E S O L U T I O N

passed by the

CONFERENCE OF DIOCESAN LITURGICAL AND MUSIC COMMISSIONS

at Albuquerque, N.M. on November 9, 1979

WHEREAS, the 66th General Convention of the Episcopal Church spoke in a single clear voice of the place of the 1928 Book of Common Prayer in the life of this Church and the place of the 1928 Prayer Book in our heritage; and

WHEREAS, the Pastoral Letter of the House of Bishops called upon the Church to make an orderly transition from the 1928 Book where it is still in use to the 1979 Book of Common Prayer, while recognizing the need for "a balancing gentleness with persons"; and

WHEREAS, the Resolution and Guidelines passed by General Convention make provisions for this transitional process to take place under the authority of the Diocesan Bishop and Chief Pastor and Liturgical Officer; and

WHEREAS, mailings from the Society for the Preservation of the Book of Common Prayer are distorting the clear voice of this Church in General Convention and creating damaging confusion;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that this Conference of Diocesan Liturgical and Music Commissions calls upon the Presiding Bishop to use the authority of his office to carry out the will of General Convention; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Conference pledges its support to the Diocesan Bishops in their implementation of the Resolution and Guidelines of that Convention.

P.S. *The Presiding Bishop's response:*

Peter Moore received a letter from Canon Anderson, Assistant to the P.B.: "While the Presiding Bishop does not feel it is appropriate for him to make official response to pronouncements from informal organizations (sic) of Episcopalians, he is in the process of forming an advisory committee on Prayer Book."

The tipoff is that he has co-opted the Rev. Messrs. Jackson and Ralston of the SPBCP as advisors to his committee.

And so it goes--

HHB

An Architect's View

by Thomas C. Babbitt, A.I.A.

We experienced a wonderful variety of spaces for liturgy at the conference in Albuquerque. The culmination was in the excitement of the Acoma Pueblo with its small-scale street spaces extending right on out into space, beyond the cliff edge, 300 feet above the ground below, which contrasted so strongly with the tall, solid enclosure of the church, leading to the heavily decorated altar and reredos. The power of those relationships of scale, under the scale-less dome of sky unbroken from horizon to horizon in all directions, left no doubt that this was indeed a sacred place.

Of course, we can't have all our liturgical spaces in such dramatic settings, nor can we build our cities at such medieval scale; we are simply too many. Neither can we build in the un-self-conscious way that we experienced at Acoma. We must build to suit our numbers and we must, with thought and love, build to suit our liturgy.

Two of the other liturgical spaces we experienced at the conference were designed with the liturgy as their focus, but with very different results. Faith Lutheran Church was a plain space, the shape of whose interior space was unremarkable. What was remarkable was the powerful importance of the altar and the cross behind it and the great view of the mountains through the huge glass wall.

While some found the view distracting, it added a beautiful new dimension to the experience for me. The entrance through the open patio was particularly welcoming and human-scaled, and the main space was an easy place to listen, think, and pray. The

Tom Babbitt is an architect practicing in Torrington, CT, and is a member of the AP Council.

space never got in our way. Its bland quality, with cream-colored walls and carpeted floor, seemed to allow a concentration on the service. It might be tempting to add bright liturgical art for special occasions, however, but not permanent.

The other Lutheran church, St. Paul's, was also designed with the liturgy very much in mind. The almost triangular shape, centered around the altar, the entrance through the smaller space under the choir loft, which explodes into the great space as you come in, the strong sculptural shapes of the altar, paschal candleholder, pulpit, and cross which hangs over the altar, all are very beautiful and very powerfully done; obviously the work of an artist of energy and ability.

It was, therefore, surprising to this architect to feel that I would rather worship in the bland and less interesting space of Faith Lutheran. It was the power of those forms that seemed to get in the way of the liturgy. The dancers (who contributed so much to the service) first showed me how difficult it was to move around the altar and the triangular platform on which it stood. The points of the triangles thrust out so strongly that the dancers simply couldn't go around them; they had to dance to a halt, then consciously change direction to go along to the next side.

Even though the altar was absolutely central, its shape seemed to push people away, to make it difficult to gather around. In addition, the various sculptured forms of the chancel furniture, as beautiful as they were, constantly called attention to themselves. The paschal candleholder was as important as the pulpit, and the credence tables equally so. The entire building, in the end, did this. It served itself rather than the liturgy.



(Babbitt - cont.)

Service is the key word here, the concept of a servant church building. Perhaps it has to do with the passing of triumphalism in the church, or with the label of this time as the "post-Christian" era, but mostly, I think, it has to do with liturgy. The action of the liturgy must be central to the architecture, in concept and detail. The actions of gathering together, of singing, of speaking and hearing, of bringing the word into the center of the gathered group, and of giving and receiving the bread and the wine -- these must be served by the building. How many of our buildings get in the way of some (or most) of these things? We so often must rearrange our

movements, and suffer in other ways, to accommodate our buildings. But thinking again about our experience at Faith Lutheran Church, it was indeed a servant building, an empty vessel waiting to be filled with song and prayer and praise and action of the liturgy.

There is a hard lesson to be learned from these two buildings, for architects and for building committees, but perhaps it is the same lesson that our Lord teaches us about giving up ourselves. Church buildings which serve our worship might help us in the creation of a servant church.

+++



From Space to Space through Fire

by Henry H. Breul

The conference in Albuquerque on liturgical space made me reflect on the space we now use at St. Thomas' in Washington, D.C., after our disastrous fire in 1970. The old Gothic church was completely gutted, but we moved into the parish hall in order to have time to reflect on the future. We are still in the parish hall and it has turned out to be better liturgical space than anything we saw during the conference.

For the purposes of this article it is

not necessary to go into the various alternatives and plans put forward from the congregation and the surrounding neighborhood. The rebuilding of the church was not possible, and anyhow the idea of building something just for worship seemed an extravagance that the inner city parishes were finding they could ill afford. The neighborhood was undergoing rapid change, and no one was ready to predict how it would come out. So it was decided to hun-



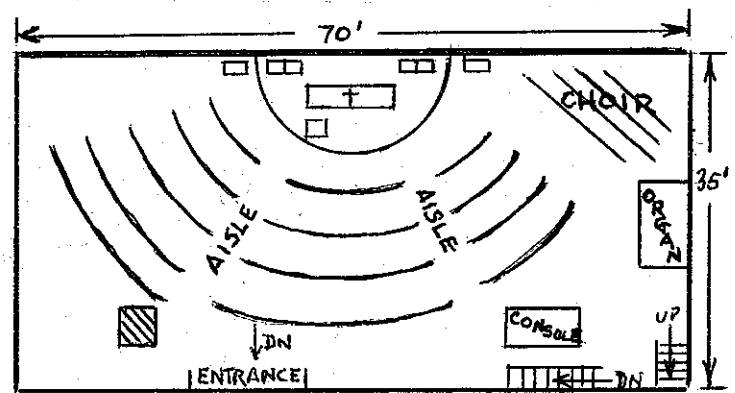
(Breul - cont.)

ker down in the "Great Hall" which was only slightly damaged by the fire.

A stage at one end was closed off and made into a sacristy, and the hall was cleared of partitions which once broke up the other end. The result was a large rectangular room which we decorated in warm colors and a red and brown carpet. There was some push to repeat the "liturgical bowling alley" set-up of the old church with the altar at one end, the divided choir, and all the medieval problems. However, saner heads prevailed and the altar was placed on a platform on one wall of the rectangle opposite the entrance. The choir was placed to one side and folding chairs set up in an arc around the altar. Everything was moveable so that adjustments could be made as we lived in the space and so that the local community could use the room for meetings and the choir for concerts. (Even the altar was placed on casters.)

Naturally, there were many people who couldn't make the transition, but a good number stayed on and accepted the fact that communions could be made standing and that kneeling for anything would be most difficult. Many people were surprised at how well the space worked. The curve of the seats in the rectangular hall gave a kind of exciting tension to the space, and the fact that no one was more than four rows from the action made worship much more intimate. Suddenly the Peace was passed with a note of joy. In the old church with the darkness and inhibiting pews, the Peace just never got going at all. Congregational singing picked up for the choir was no longer remote and the individual voice was sounding in warm space, whereas in the old church everyone seemed to be singing a solo. As time passed, a cross was attached to the wall behind the altar and the substitute electronic organ was replaced with a fine pipe organ.

Last year--after eight years of use--a refit seemed to be in order. Tom Babbitt, AP Council member and AP's architectural whiz, consulted with a redecoration committee. A new and larger platform was built (portable) and the ugly factory-type windows on either side of the altar were closed over. Rather than keep the folding chairs, wooden "cathedral" chairs were ordered from England, and the space now looks like this:



There is no choir procession. The choir simply takes its place; the sacred ministers come in, reverence the altar and bow to the congregation; and the Service of the Word starts with the announcements. When there is a baptism, chairs are cleared in the middle section facing the altar, so the action takes place in the midst of the congregation.

There are problems, however. The "Great Hall" is on the second floor and there are no elevators. Local laws prevent the use of a chair lift in a public building, so we are stuck with that problem. There is a weekday celebration in the "Guild Room" on the first floor for those who can't make the stairs. At one point, some of the older ladies who still call themselves the "Women's Auxiliary" bought kneelers, but only one or two people ever use them. That was the last gesture of those who wanted to turn the clock back to the past.

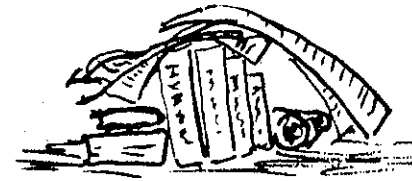
The site of the church is now a lovely "people's park", with trees planted in the outlines of the old building and with a focal point in the remains of the old altar and reredos of the church. At the Princeton Liturgical Week a few years ago, it was suggested that the congregation should enter the church through a garden, thus reminding them of the happenings in Eden, as a preparation for the celebration of the mystery. I'm not sure how valid this idea is, but we have it.

One thing is certain: the Eucharist can be experienced in a most exciting way in space such as ours. There is no architectural overwhelming, and everyone is close to everything that happens. There is a real sense of community at worship rather than a loosely-connected group of people separated by pews with long vistas to a remote altar.

+++

BOOKS

reviewed by
PAUL Z. HOORNSTRA



Praise the Lord, Prof. David E. Babin, booklet, 93 pages, \$1.00. Forward Movement Publications, 412 Sycamore, Cincinnati, OH 45202.

During the past 20 years, Dr. Babin has invested a great proportion of his energy in things liturgical. His interest in the preaching ministry has been felt by hundreds of his students (Seabury-Western) across many years now.

He has conducted regional conferences as well as think-tanks in his commitment to assist Episcopalians in particular, and all Christians in general, in deepening their devotional and worship experiences. As a member of The Associated Parishes (Council and officer) he has helped in the publication of numerous pamphlets aimed at the person who sits regularly in the pew.

This present booklet came out after the 1976 General Convention, and we can hope Forward Movement will spend the money to have it revised in the light of 1979's Denver General Convention. This present

edition is very valuable; a few pages of added material (from GC79) would make it almost the last word. And certainly, in any case a very clear word!

This is far more than a "how-to" guide. It is a guide, and a good one; but it also carries a full load of theology, sound Catholic teaching. Teenagers can handle it well, so can adults. And pastors will be assisted in their task (duty) of leading worship and teaching the people in the use of the new Prayer Book.

I have read it myself more than once. I have discussed the contents with Dr. Babin on several occasions. And now I've ordered a quantity of these booklets for my own confirmation classes this Fall. Even now, as I re-read some of its sections, I am refreshed by the way Fr. Babin makes the new Prayer Book exciting. Yes, the booklet is available. I have just hung up the phone, having talked with Forward Movement Publications to make sure. You'll not regret using this for your own reading and/or teaching purposes.

+++

JIMMY CARTER OFFERED
TO SWAP JOBS WITH OUR
PRESIDING BISHOP LAST MARCH -
AND THE BISHOP IS STILL
MULLING IT OVER!



Imaging the Story of Jesus

Through Baptism

by Robert J. Brooks

Although the Albuquerque conference had its main emphasis on "space", a slide presentation on the catechumenate by the Rev. Robert J. Brooks of Baytown, Texas, brought forth a great deal of response. Fr. Brooks really hit a responsive chord. The following article, copyright 1979, Christian Century Foundation, is reprinted by permission from the July, 1979, issue of Christian Ministry. Ed.

"Holy Baptism is full initiation by water and the Holy Spirit into Christ's Body the Church. The bond which God establishes in Baptism is indissoluble." Thus begins the description of the new rite for holy baptism in the Proposed Book of Common Prayer of the Episcopal Church. Through the use of this new rite, the radical implications for the renewal of the church's corporate life are only beginning to be discovered. It has the potential for dramatically transforming the Episcopal Church, when celebrated in its fullness.

That is an extraordinary statement to make about a rite which, as commonly practiced, had been reduced to the social nicety of "christening" in our tradition. Yet, the experience of All Saints' Church, Baytown, Texas, and other parishes of the Episcopal Church which have attempted fully to implement the new rites in their integrity has shown that actually they must be seen as the culmination of an educational process, which itself discloses and integrates a human process that has been encountered by all. Baptism models this process and is, therefore, normative in imaging forth to the community the inexhaustible depth of meaning of its membership in Christ.

Whether one is reaffirming, as an adult, the baptismal covenant made when baptized as an infant, or is being received into the communion of the Episcopal Church, or

is reaffirming his/her baptism after having lapsed from the faith (rites are provided for each in the confirmation liturgy in the pastoral offices) -- these are all seen as derivative from the one event of being incorporated into membership in the crucified and risen One through baptism.

Baptism, then, is membership in the church, Christ's body. In our tradition it can be administered at any age: after preparation of an adult candidate, or of sponsors of infants or younger children. The new rites, however, affirm that adult baptism is normative. This does not mean that it will be more frequently celebrated than infant baptism in the Episcopal Church. It means that the baptism of an adult and the educational process which precedes it unambiguously articulate to the people the implications of their membership in the Christian community. In fact, it enables the baptized to draw meaning and new life from an ordinary human process, which the church has come to call "conversion".

Threefold Process

Insights from psychology have helped theologians and liturgists to relate a universal and continual internal process to Christian initiation rites (baptism). The process is threefold and all humans have experienced it.

(Brooks - cont.)

The first stage is called separation. In this stage, a person feels that his/her world has "fallen apart". Often one is not sure what caused this; it seems to come from "outside" one's previous world. Relationships or priorities no longer have the claim they once did. One is no longer sure what to value. There is a sense of not being "at home" any more, of alienation, loneliness, anxiety about the future. Symbolic language is used by the person to describe this stage. Expressions such as being "down", "feeling blue", "in the desert" would articulate and mirror the internal situation. Events which can force separation from our previous way of giving meaning to reality (i.e., "our world") would include marriage, moving, birth, sickness, unemployment, death.

The second stage is the liminal, or "in-between" stage. It can last for a few hours or for years. Following the disorientation and disillusion with the previous world which appeared in the stage of separation, this stage is marked by feelings of frustration, restlessness, insecurity, void, weakness, languishing, a desire for something unknown. Symbolic language would speak of the sense of being "outside one's own world". This stage comes to a conclusion when a person begins to get insight or a disclosure that points to a new situation. The desire for something unknown is transformed into a sense of hope that insight will be given.

There need be no specific option appearing as yet that somehow one will be delivered from the languishing of the "in-between" stage. The lostness has not yet changed, but the approach to it has, as one basically accepts the question that has been raised for his/her life. Loneliness is transformed into the enjoyment of solitude, restless-

ness into the journey. The original situation is not exchanged for another; it is transformed by accepting the process. The disclosure produces a sense of having been acted upon and then of dependence on a larger reality which has given the insight.

The disclosure event, however long it takes, thrusts the person into the third stage of aggregation or assimilation. A new world begins to take shape for the individual, involving not just a new understanding, but a new life style in which the person energetically yearns for a new life. Changes in values, priorities, and relationships will emerge. Using symbolic language, the person speaks of being "up", being "back", of having experienced "light", "rebirth", "marriage", "victory", "joy".

Full Implications

Having in mind a general outline of this three-stage process that all people experience is absolutely essential. Everyone is in one stage or another at a given moment. Without an understanding of this internal process, it would be difficult to comprehend the new rites in the Episcopal Church. They are intended to tell the story (of Jesus dead and rising) and act out through ritual gesture (water baptism) the full implications of the human process. They enable the process by modeling its stages and showing that once can survive the disintegration of his/her world -- a survival that conversion brings. When an adult is baptized, all of this is most clearly manifested; other adults can identify with what the candidate is going through.

A diagram will help to illustrate the relationships.

Internal Experience	Christian Story	Christian Ritual
separation	death of Jesus	water baptism (being immersed)
liminal ("in-between")	burial of Jesus	water baptism (being under water)
aggregation	resurrection of Jesus	water baptism (rising; being received by community)

(Brooks - cont.)

The story of Jesus dead and rising is revealed as our own story, our journey from separation (deathlike in its pain and alienation) through liminality (grave-like in that what was before has died, but we are stuck in not yet being alive) to aggregation (like coming to life or being born again). Since we discover who we are as individuals by what we say and do, these rites enable us to say and do things which tell us that our faithfulness to the process has made us one with Jesus, members of his body. Through these rites, the candidates and the baptized are educated over and over again on both an intellectual and a subconscious level about their membership in Christ. Because this process happens over and over to people, it is incumbent to celebrate the rites in the midst of the people so as to remind them of and deepen the knowledge and experience that give them new life.

In the light of the above, we can understand why Tertullian said in the second century that "Christians are made, not born." While all people go through the internal process, each person must appropriate internally, through Christian story and symbolic action (baptism), the full implications of this for him/herself. Those implications are nothing less than that we are told "who we are and who we will be", as John the Deacon wrote in the year 500.

At All Saints', the establishment of this initiatory process has had dramatic impact on the life of the entire congregation. The interaction between candidate and congregation has enabled greater vulnerability and intimacy on the part of all. The process usually covers nine months to a year and is reserved to adult candidates for baptism. These would normally be defined as individuals who have reached the psychological growth stage of universal rationalization and who have taken responsibility for their own lives; i.e., they have passed through the stage of adolescent rejection and are affirming themselves. Thus, adult candidates for the most part would not be younger than the early- to mid-20s.

The length of time for preparation depends on the candidate. It could be shorter or longer than a year. The purpose is pastoral. In a society where it is increasingly unlikely (if it ever was possible) for a

person to have a comprehensive and systematic appropriation of the Christian gospel outside of a deep immersion in a church, it seems the height of insensitivity to rush a candidate to the font without taking the time with a person to fully equip him/her for Christian witness in today's world. Aidan Kavanagh has said that baptism is "entrance into an abnormal community". Using the perspective of the values dominant in our society, in contrast to those imaged forth in the life of Jesus, the Christian community is indeed abnormal. The least the church can do is to affirm that an adult candidate is worth its time to prepare him/her for a countercultural life style.

It is interesting to note that the norm in the fourth century was a three-year period of candidacy for adults desiring baptism, the same length of time and an almost identical process required today by the canons of the Episcopal Church for those desiring ordination to the priesthood. The baptized deserve the same consideration as ordinands in our time.

The Process Begins

The initiatory process has four stages. Each concludes with the celebration of a rite, which is the culmination of what has gone before. Initiation is rooted in the human internal process previously described.

The first stage is evangelization or pre-catechumenate. This stage is initiated when an adult expresses a desire to be baptized and to learn more about the Christian faith. I meet with the inquirer several times, perhaps over a period of months. During these meetings I try to help the inquirer clarify his/her motives for requesting baptism, which usually will be vague and unformed. This clarification assists the inquirer in being more focused as to the multitude of feelings that have brought him/her to this point. I also begin to introduce the person to a methodology which will enable him/her to see that, throughout one's life, God has been calling the individual to himself. In recounting his/her journey to this community, the person perceives how inexorably one has been moved in this direction.

(Brooks - cont.)

Stage one culminates in admission to the catechumenate. This rite takes place at the principal Sunday worship service and models for the inquirer and the community what has preceded it. The inquirer hears him/herself asking for "life in Christ", an explicit statement of what was implied when the person first requested baptism. Sponsors stand with the candidate. These should if possible be the persons who brought the inquirer to the community in the first place. Their appointment is agreed on by the inquirer and me. They are thoroughly instructed in their ministry, which will continue through the actual baptism, months in the future. They show to the community that part of the ministry of all is to sponsor one another. For the catechumen (learner) they are the community's representatives, and they also represent the catechumen to the community.

During the rite the catechumen is signed by the celebrant and the sponsors with the cross on his/her forehead, proclaiming to him/her and the community that this person has taken up the cross as the symbol of his/her life. The signing celebrates what the person has become to that point and what he/she will grow into. The rite celebrates the person's entrance into the community, giving the sense of a new and special relationship between them. Hearing oneself prayed for by name in the Prayers of the People manifests the nurture and concern of the baptized for their new catechumen.

Since we are a small parish, I invite all the baptized to sign the new catechumen on the forehead with the cross during the exchange of the peace. During communion, the baptized receive the bread and wine, sign of their lives, but the catechumen (in accordance with ancient custom) receives salt, to preserve his/her journey to deeper faith and to stir up a thirst for the waters of baptism.

Stage two is the catechumenate, for which all of the baptized are invited to act as catechists. Usually 15 or 20 volunteer to do so. The sponsors and our deacon are required to be in the catechumenate, since they are ministers of the baptismal service.

Aidan Kavanagh has called the catechumenate "conversion therapy". The experiences

during this educational stage are intended to force the catechumen to enter the psychological stages of separation and liminality, so that the baptismal rite becomes the entrance, more or less, to aggregation. The catechumenate provides for the learner the story and rites for internalizing what is happening to him/her. The conscious decision of the catechumen to risk the conversion process also sparks conversion in the catechists over the period of months that this stage takes -- as long as is required for a deep perception that the catechumen's story is really that of Jesus dead and rising.

The fact that the candidate's admission to the catechumenate comes during worship is significant in this process. Following the custom of the early church, we do not tell the inquirer what will happen in the rite. Since the experience is fresh and authentic, all of his/her reactions and facial expressions mirror to the congregation something of his/her journey. This is an exposure to the theological methodology which will equip him/her for baptism, one of "experience first, then reflect", for that is the way life is really lived. Those who can internalize this insight will have a sense of potency in living the Christian life. The catechumenate's first meeting deals with what the catechumen experienced and thought the church was saying to and about him/her in the admission rite.

The catechumenate is structured in four dimensions, all of which interact, to enable the conversion therapy. I give presentations on the basic Christian beliefs from the Nicene and Apostles Creeds as well as from the Catechism (it is used as a guideline to content, rather than directly). These presentations are related to the seasons of the church year as well. This dimension also deals with introduction to the history of salvation as contained in the Old and New Testaments. A second dimension is encouragement and instruction in the life of prayer. A third is regular association with the baptized in their worship. Finally, the catechumen is assigned to work in an area of social justice which is agreeable to him/her, the deacon, and me.

All four dimensions involve the sharing of insights by the catechumen and the catechists. The dimension dealing with Christian

(Brooks - cont.)

beliefs and ethics often involves value-clarification exercises and role-playing for the entire group in order to assist in internalizing intellectual data. Prayers of exorcism are used from time to time to give the catechumen a sense of movement on the journey to purify motives and discard unchristian values.

As Baptism Nears

The catechumenal stage culminates in the rite of enrollment for candidacy for baptism. In accordance with the custom of the early church, all adult candidates are baptized on Easter Sunday. This is most appropriate, for those baptized on Easter embody Jesus' resurrection victory in the life of the present faith community. Therefore, catechumens are enrolled as candidates on the first Sunday in Lent. This makes the Lenten period, as it was in the early church, a prebaptismal retreat for the candidates in which they are joined by the entire community as a renewal of their baptism.

The enrollment rite proclaims that the catechumens are called by God to be baptized. During the rite, each enters his/her name, along with those of the sponsors, in a special register. Again the catechumens are given a sense of movement on their journey from separation to aggregation, from death to life, effected by the testimony of the sponsors to the entire community about each catechumen's faithful service to his/her ministry of being prepared for baptism. The entire congregation reaffirms its responsibility and nurture by approving the candidates for enrollment and by offering prayers for them. Again, the candidates are led through the rite without previous specific knowledge of what will take place.

During the candidacy stage (the 40 days of Lent), the catechumenate meets twice a week (previously it met twice a month). The Sunday afternoon meeting deals with the Sunday Gospel reading, which is always baptismal in character in this season. The candidate is encouraged, by faith-sharing on the part of the catechists and by dialogue, to see that particular part of the gospel as his/her own story. In each Sunday service during Lent, the candidate kneels in

silence before the congregation, sponsors on either side with a hand on each shoulder. This period of silent prayer by all is concluded with a prayer by the celebrant asking for the continued purification and illumination of the candidate. Each Sunday afternoon this experience is also discussed.

The other weekly meeting involves additional role-playing and small-group work on basic Christian themes, relating them to human experience. The interrelationship of these meetings to Sunday worship builds a heightened sense of anticipation for everyone as we approach Holy Week.

Easter eve the candidate and catechists gather for a prebaptismal retreat, beginning at sundown. The nine Old Testament readings that are to be read at the Great Vigil on Easter are considered existentially. They are a minicourse of a sort, in salvation history, manifesting how God acts faithfully to create us anew and liberate us for transformed life.

Easter Day

All Saints' has only one service on Easter day, the Great Vigil of Easter. It is celebrated at dawn so that the candidates may enter more fully into the awareness that each is the Risen One for us. The service invokes for the candidates the internal journey they have made since requesting baptism months earlier. After the vigil, the readings are heard and the candidates are presented by their sponsors to the celebrant, re-enacting their being brought to the community. Then each candidate hears again his/her own voice saying that he/she desires to be baptized. As a result of the process that has led up to this moment, this statement should be far more rich in meaning than when first uttered.

Since the candidates have separated from their old world and moved into a new one of changed values and priorities, the renunciations enable them to internalize that change. They make the renunciations of evil at a dark place in the church, facing a placard on which are listed both social evils (war, racism, sexism, etc.) and personal evils from each one's own



(Brooks - cont.)

life. At the conclusion of the renunciations, he/she tears up the placard as a sign that those values no longer have power in his/her life.

Then the affirmations of adherence to Christ are made facing the rising sun to remind the person that he/she has moved into a new world filled with light. The entire congregation affirms its support of the candidate in this new life, as the culmination and renewal of the community's concern and nurture which began at admission to the catechumenate. It also affirms the necessity of a support community in order to live this life. Throughout the process, the faith is imaged forth by the baptized to the candidate, and vice versa. Hence, the congregation renews its baptismal covenant (the Apostles Creed) at the same time that the candidate makes that covenant for the first time. The candidates and the congregation have shown to each other that it is possible to risk the Christian life style. Once again the community offers its prayers for the candidates.

The water in the tomblike font is now blessed by the celebrant in a prayer of thanksgiving, recalling all the ways in history that God has created and saved through water. Because God is faithful, God will save again, through this water. The candidate is then assisted into the font by the sponsors and is immersed in the name of the Trinity. Immersion is the norm in the new rites, as it most unambiguously manifests the human process of separation/liminality/aggregation imaged forth in Jesus dead, buried, and rising. The person's bursting forth from the waters deeply invokes within all the baptized the radical dimensions of their life in Jesus dead and rising. After being led out of the font by the sponsors, the candidate is anointed with oil, used to make the sign of the cross on the forehead.

The anointing follows a prayer for the sevenfold gifts of the Spirit. Having moved into their new world, the candidates are energized -- "Spirit-filled" -- for the new life style. They feel renewed, feel good about themselves. This anointing-consignation gives an image of what Cyril of Jerusalem said in the fourth century to the newly baptized "You are all Christs" (anointed ones). The neophytes (newly-

baptized) are then clothed in a white garment, indicating being covered with a new existence. The baptized welcome them into the "Household of God", an affirmation of having moved into the assimilation stage. This is ritualized by sharing the peace with all and receiving communion, the banquet of the Promised Land (new world).

Model of Education

Since the high level of anticipation of such an event can lead to a psychological "crash" after it is over, there is a fourth stage of initiation. It corresponds to the aggregation stage of the internal human process, letting the person assimilate what has happened in the baptism, and allowing the church to continue its nurture of those new to the faith. The catechists and the neophyte continue to meet each Sunday during the great fifty days of Easter to discuss what has happened during and since baptism. The baptismal theme of the Gospel reading of the day is taken up, and teaching of the sacraments is done at this stage, now that the neophyte has experienced them. The practice of praying for him/her name in the worship service continues. At the end of this period, the neophytes are presented to the bishop at a worship service to be welcomed and have their baptisms related to the larger church.

The initiatory process described here is the model for education for adult membership. Whether the class be for the parents of infants to be baptized, for adults (late teens and above) who were baptized as infants and want to renew their baptismal covenant through confirmation, for baptized persons who wish to enter communion with the Episcopal Church, or for those who have lapsed and wish to renew their baptism -- all of these are going through the internal human process the church calls conversion. Therefore, our classes for all of these people are modeled on the fourfold dimensions of the catechumenate. They manifest to the community that conversion is an on-going process.

Further, Cursillo and marriage-encounter weekends take the form of intensive mini-catechumenal experiences. In each is an attempt to force the conversion process by



(Brooks - cont.)

taking people away from familiar surrounds (separation) and immersing them in the four-fold shape. A concluding worship service is to aggregate what has gone before. Assimilation is enabled to continue through small-group meetings after the weekend.

The insights shared here into the human

journey and the ways these relate to our new baptismal rites, as they have been implemented at All Saints', are proving useful in education for adult membership. I feel that the transformation in our faith community has been remarkable, and that this process could revolutionize the church universal. +++



News from:

The Liturgical Conference

The Liturgical Conference has prepared a new edition of its highly acclaimed lenten program, *FROM ASHES TO EASTER*. The updated version, with foreword by Gerald S. Sloyan, follows the plan of the Sunday readings for all three cycles of each of the major lectionaries now in use in the Christian churches in North America. The material is also keyed to the celebration of the stages of the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA). Rita Claire Dorner, O.P., edited, revised, and expanded the 1974 version, in consultation with the Center for Pastoral Liturgy at The Catholic University of America, to implement recommendations

from many of the congregations that have been using the program for up to six years. *FROM ASHES TO EASTER* is offered as an 8½" by 11" bound volume, at \$9.95 net, but the total-parish-involvement format has been retained.

Regional and local workshops are being scheduled across the country to introduce the new edition of *FROM ASHES TO EASTER*. Information about the workshops, the program, or The Liturgical Conference itself can be obtained by calling 202/529-7400, or by writing to the Conference at 810 Rhode Island Ave. NE, Washington, DC 20018.

