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the **associated parishes**
for liturgy and mission

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THE ROLE OF THE BISHOP IN THE LITURGY:

Practical Aspects of Episcopal Liturgies

by Louis Weil

This address was given at the annual meeting of the Conference of Diocesan Liturgical and Music Commissions held at Techy, Illinois in November, 1982. The Rev. Louis Weil is Professor of Liturgics and Church Music at Nashotah House.

During a clergy conference which I gave recently, I had a conversation with the bishop of the diocese concerning liturgical aspects of his parish visitations. He told me an anecdote which can, I think, serve as an appropriate point of departure for this talk. At the coffee hour following the Eucharist a parishioner asked him — quite seriously — if to be elected bishop, one had to have the hymnal memorized. She had noticed that throughout the service he had not picked up a hymnal. The bishop responded, "Actually I have only a few hymns memorized. The same six hymns are used everywhere I go."

My being a member of a seminary faculty leads me to be present at a great many Ordinations, and I have often wondered if bishops do not begin to gag when the organist plays an introduction to "St. Patrick's Breastplate." My point is *not*, of course, merely that we have not explored the rich diversity of even the *Hymnal 1940* [which we shall soon be putting aside for its successor], but of our inclination to resort to static and quite often narrow models for our liturgical norms. Even fine hymns, such as "St. Patrick's Breastplate", easily become a kind of liturgical cliché when there is no deeper penetration into



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the nature of the liturgical event as a sign of and nourishment for the Church's identity. The liturgical experience of God's People comes to be marked by a heavy-handed inevitability, and the marvelous vitality which comes from an unexpected juxtaposition of liturgical and musical elements is lost. The underlying problem, I believe, is a failure to realize the enormous responsibility which is involved in making specific liturgical, musical, and pastoral judgments. It is far easier, and often with the best of intentions, simply to repeat a familiar model, even down to the same small repertory of hymns, rather than to do the far more difficult task of working through the development of a liturgy from its core meaning: the Proclamation of the Word and the Celebration of the Eucharist in the perspective of the particular event for which the people have assembled.

To start from this inner core of meaning has significance for any liturgical celebration, and not least the weekly principal Sunday Eucharist of our parishes, when we gather to celebrate "the Day of the Lord." But I believe this approach also has social importance for the major liturgies in which the bishop is involved: the celebration of the Easter Vigil in the cathedral church; diocesan events, such as Ordinations, the Consecration of Churches, or the Celebration of a New Ministry; and also, of course, the bishop's parish visitation, where he presides at the rites of Christian Initiation and at the Eucharist. These all tend to be "great occasion" liturgies, celebrations which reach beyond the customary resources to use additional means to emphasize the importance of the event. The problem is that often the special event is characterized only by added liturgical weight, by *quantity*, as though it were we who make the event important by making the liturgy longer. Rather, I suggest, our task is to allow the event to speak: it is its meaning which proclaims its importance.

My purpose in this address is simply to raise several questions concerned with episcopal liturgies. I am concerned about practical matters in liturgical celebrations, and I make no apology for that.

Practical matters are not an end in themselves, but they are always indicative of the intentions and understanding which are operative in the minds of those who have had the responsibility of liturgical planning. In this perspective, practical decisions about a specific liturgical celebration are always grounded in a liturgical theology; conscious or unconscious, a rite is always expressive of a theology. This idea may seem strange. After all, isn't that a lot to say about "just another service"? But if we see in the liturgy the primary sign of the Church's identity, a people gathered to remember and sent forth to serve — if that identity is at the heart of the liturgical action, then there are ultimately no insignificant decisions about a particular rite. All the decisions, the choices which are both conscious and unconscious, share in a whole event and are expressive of a theology of Church, sacrament, and ministry. When poorly planned liturgy impairs the experience of corporate worship, God's people are the victims, not merely in terms of having had an unfruitful hour in church, but more fundamentally because of the formative impact of the liturgy in the shaping of Christian self-awareness.

I am talking about the importance of the experiential aspect of the liturgy, as a corporate event in which Christian faith and identity are nourished. One of the major pastoral benefits of liturgical renewal has been the *humanization* of the liturgy. There is a growing awareness that liturgical rites are not merely a clerical drill performed before lay observers, but that the rites are prayer, corporate prayer. This awareness leads to a new set of practical liturgical priorities which scarcely operated in the liturgical mentality of twenty years ago. Preoccupation with rubrics is gradually giving way to a concern for pastoral and communal priorities.

These pastoral and communal priorities, however, often have little impact upon the planning of liturgies on great occasions, such as the episcopal visitation or a diocesan event. We seem all too easily to revert, perhaps unconsciously, to the professional model in which liturgy is more akin to performance than corporate action. A heavy formalism often characterizes such celebrations, and yet it is just as impor-

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tant for these occasions to be imbued with a strong pastoral and communal sense as it is for the Sunday Eucharist.

A false concept of solemnity

Several years ago Robert Ledogar said that variety in the Roman Rite covered the spectrum "from solemn to very solemn." Unfortunately, the problem has an ecumenical range. A decade ago, while I was attending the ordination of a bishop, I overheard a Lutheran pastor seated behind me say, "Do Episcopalians always take so long to make a bishop?" I turned to him and said, "Only when we don't know what we are doing!" I found the pastor's comment an authentic human response; it expressed what he was experiencing that day — extreme fatigue, and that is a sound basis for criticism. It was not merely the problem of solemnity being equated with length, but rather the "non-organic" length. In other words, many elements in the ordination that day seemed unrelated in any essential way to the core meaning of the celebration; it was meaningless length. My own experience suggests that this is one of the chief problems in our mindset toward episcopal liturgies: the idea that solemnity is created through the use of quantities of liturgical and musical materials.

By contrast, there is a type of liturgical expansion which takes place naturally in the celebration of a great event. It is what I call an organic expansion from that central core which I spoke of earlier: Word and Sacrament celebrated in the perspective of — that is, shaped by — the particular event for which the People of God have gathered. It is this inner meaning which fleshes itself out in external, liturgical forms. Organic expansion involves, on the part of the planners, a realistic awareness of the physical factors: the architectural disposition, space, lines for movement both for the various ministers and also for the increased number of people who are usually present. Organic expansion also involves the sensitive integration of other resources, music and the arts, and additional liturgical texts which may be appropriate. When a liturgy is allowed to develop in this way, from its central core, it is unlikely that any resulting

extra length will prove negative because of the integral relation of its various parts.

What I have often experienced at major episcopal liturgies seems to turn that order inside out. Perhaps unintentionally, the planners for such celebrations seem to assume that they will inevitably involve a long series of elements, more or less strung together. The result is often a liturgy lacking focus. I have seen people arrive for the celebration of such a major event only to see them leave exhausted and spiritless at the end. The experience of unintegrated quantities of liturgical material, no matter how beautiful or significant each element may be as an individual item, seems to produce a kind of liturgical heaviness rather than a humanly renewing experience of being the Church.

Liturgical structure

Several years ago I received a telephone call from a priest who was a seminary classmate and was then rector of a large parish. An episcopal visitation was coming up in several weeks, and he asked my advice on integrating the several events which would take place at the principal Sunday Eucharist. I asked what all would take place, and he answered:

- the Baptism of an infant;
- the Confirmation of three adults;
- the Reception of two adults;
- the Ordination of two Candidates for the diaconate;
- and the Eucharist.

I asked him if he wanted to fit in the marriage of one of the deacons, whose marriage was coming up only one week later!

Obviously, it is not an ideal to combine so many elements in one rite. But this challenge gave me an opportunity to test out some ideas about integration of parts. I said to the priest, "You must begin by deciding the sacramental priori-

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ty in the rite, and that would determine the basic structural shape." To my delight he said, "The Baptism is the primary element, culminating in the Eucharist." I then responded that the rite of Baptism should then supply the basic structure of the rite, and that the Confirmations, Receptions, and the diaconal Ordinations should be celebrated as auxiliary to that primary act.

This is a good example of the point I made earlier about the theological importance of liturgical decisions. I once attended a comparably complex liturgy in which the Ordination supplied the basic structure, and the Initiation rites were fitted in around it. This may seem to be picking at a nit, but the theological question is not a minor one. If Baptism is the foundational sacrament as our theology teaches, then that cannot simply be affirmed in theory; the liturgical celebration must manifest that primacy.

As to the liturgy for which I helped in the planning, we not only took the baptismal rite as the basic structure, but I also suggested that the sermon should underscore what the rite articulated, and should link all vocation, both lay and ordained, to the common sign of vocation in Baptism. Fortunately, the ordinands supported this approach. Although I still believe that particular occasion combined too many elements, the care we gave in planning was fruitful when the day arrived, and what was experienced was a single, integrated event under the liturgical presidency of the bishop.

The question of clarity of structure in the liturgy is related to the concept of form in the arts. It is an expression of that wonderful mystery of the interrelationship of parts in a work of art which is indicative of a sensitive and skilled craftsman. Those who plan the liturgy for a given community, or for a major event in a diocese, or who set the normative guidelines for the clergy, need to develop a comparable sensitivity. Good liturgy is seldom an accident. Choices are made, often very subtle ones, which either permit the rite to communicate from its central core of meaning, or else tend to obscure or stifle that basic sense.

In this perspective, our experience of the liturgy is directly related to our sense of what it means to be the Church.

When this primary concern is not consciously linked to the various stages of planning, the wrong things tend to be emphasized, so that secondary gestures multiply and distract, and added verbal elements confuse or clutter the primary communication.

The liturgy as an expression of a theology also raises another issue which has special significance for episcopal liturgies. In both the Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic traditions, an ordained person is inhibited from vesting for the liturgy with the signs of another order: a priest may not vest as a deacon. Liturgical ministries are seen as integrally linked to the Church's pastoral ministry, not merely roles for which one puts on one costume one time, and another costume another time.

This practice among Orthodox and Roman Catholics is not liturgical fussiness. It is based on a theological understanding of ordained ministry. Yet in the Episcopal Church we do not take this matter seriously, and continue to have priests play at the role of deacon. We all have a catalogue of examples:

- 1) at the General Convention, a deacon holding the Gospel Book while a priest proclaims the Gospel.
- 2) a liturgy I attended at which the bishop presided; a priest took the role of deacon; a deacon was the server; the bishop read the Epistle; the priest read the Gospel.
- 3) or two liturgies involving the bishop of a diocese on the same day: at one he was presiding as bishop; at the second, he was vested as a priest-concelebrant while a rector presided.

Are we serious about the three-fold Order of ministry?— or is it merely a liturgi-

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cal charade to permit fancy vesture to distinguish roles which have no connection with real pastoral experience?

The Orders are an expression in the liturgy of the reality of distinct forms of service in the Christian community, and they must *signify* with integrity, or else we are playing a liturgical game.

The purpose of processions

Processions are not merely utilitarian. Although they are the means by which we get a number of people into the sanctuary area, that purpose does not exhaust their significance. Processions remind us of the power of human movement to set a certain atmosphere for the liturgical action which is to follow. They communicate a kind of crescendo, a building up of anticipation which the accompanying music should support and confirm. The importance of processions on great occasions is self-evident: the entrance procession offers a splendid opportunity not only to achieve its utilitarian purpose with style (the numbers involved are almost always larger than normal on such occasions), but also to create an atmosphere of celebration, to set the mood, and to draw the assembly into a common act of praise.

Yet good processions do not happen by accident nor must they always follow the same pattern. It seems to be difficult for some people to conceive that a procession might be other than a single movement down the single central aisle. The result is, especially on occasions at which a very large number of people are involved, that the procession becomes too long, unwieldy, and disproportionate in relation to the liturgy as a whole. There are other solutions.

A few years ago Archbishop Michael Ramsey visited Puerto Rico, and I was asked to plan the liturgy and music for a large-scale ecumenical occasion involving him and the archbishop of San Juan. We were faced with several questions which will be considered here, but most dramatically by the decision to have an enormous entrance procession with clergy and choirs from all over the island. I realized immediately

that the procession would far overbalance in length the liturgy of the word, which was the focus of the celebration. A single procession down the center aisle seemed out of the question.

After studying the building, I realized that the procession might be divided into three groupings. Two groups of clergy and singers entered from two entrances on either side of the congregation *at the same time* that the procession of the two archbishops started down the center aisle. Aware that the congregation would not want to be following a hymn text at that point, I had the triple procession supported by joyful organ music. It worked — and not just in the utilitarian sense. The time of the procession was cut short, but its impact was tremendous. The whole church was filled with a tangible atmosphere of excitement when, after everyone was in place, we joined together in an enthusiastic hymn of praise.

What we are discussing in this type of planning is not emotional gimmickry or manipulation. It is simply a taking into account of the internal dynamic of a large assembly of people involved in a certain common activity. The alternative is the all too common lack of sensitive planning in which the utilitarian aspect of the process (simply getting people to their places) becomes an end in itself and therefore worthy of an enormous share of the liturgical time. The congregation then becomes victim rather than co-celebrant.

It is not a question of reducing music to a merely functional role to suggest that the musical sequences, whatever may be chosen, should be carefully predetermined to correspond to the procession as closely as possible. Given the possibility of unexpected complications, this requires the planning of certain flexible alternatives, and it also requires the careful integration of liturgical and musical preparations. If the music lasts for any great length of time beyond the procession itself, it serves only to confound the significance of the liturgical action. Any entrance rite which takes twenty minutes in a liturgy in which the reading of the word of God takes five demonstrates a desperate misjudgment of priorities. →

The liturgy of the word

One of the chief victims at large-scale liturgical celebrations is the liturgy of the word. What seems to happen is that so much energy is expended in simply getting started that the readings come as an anticlimax, an opportunity for inattentive rest after a lengthy wind-up. The planners of liturgies on great occasions must take into account not only the effect of a badly balanced procession upon the reading of scripture which follows, but also the internal rhythm of the liturgy of the word itself. The proclamation of God's word is of fundamental importance in every liturgy. The choices which must be made concerning it, therefore, have an often overlooked significance.

This is not the place to discuss such basic matters as audibility, visibility, and the quality of reading. Common sense should remind us that essential to the effective hearing of the word is effective proclamation. The persons chosen to read must be informed of and formed for this important ministry. If we may assume that (a risky assumption), we may concern ourselves with other aspects of the overall context which are frequently neglected.

The liturgy of the word is precisely that: the word-action of the liturgical celebration. The focus is the word proclaimed. If it is swallowed up by a musical framework of excessive length, it is all too easy for its point to become obscured or lost. It is, of course, quite appropriate that various forms of musical response be used between the readings, but these should complement the readings, not suffocate them. Long hymns, often with slight relation to the appointed scripture, only serve to distract from the primary focus.

Another problem in this regard is the participation of the congregation. It is very easy for a congregation to become passive during the liturgy of the word. On a great occasion, the desire for a heightened spirit of festivity can lead

to a takeover of the music by a trained choir. This confirms the passivity of the congregation. The solution is not the elimination of special music, but rather its careful integration both with the liturgical action and with the musical participation of the assembly.

The singing of a gradual responsory and of the alleluia offer almost limitless opportunities of varied musical styles and combinations which we have scarcely begun to explore. The use of cantors or instruments or more complicated music for a trained choir can all be used in combination with the sung participation of the congregation. And the liturgical power of such means can hardly be exaggerated. The effect is one of the total integration of the various members of the assembly, yet with a complementarity of roles which permits different levels of musical competence to function effectively together.

At the ecumenical service with Archbishop Ramsey mentioned earlier, the use of musical responsories became the solution to a major problem. It was a somewhat unique situation. As we anticipated, the large congregation represented every Christian tradition in Puerto Rico. There was no common musical heritage to draw upon. We had to move onto new terrain. How could we keep this very mixed assembly from a merely passive role? Their musical participation was vital for a living celebration, but there was nothing other than a limited repertory of hymns which would be generally familiar, and many of these were of poor musical quality and unsuited to the nature of the occasion.

We decided to use a variety of responsories at different points in the liturgy. In each case, the phrase was sung first by a cantor or the choir and then repeated by the assembly: a responsory for the introductory psalm; responsories to the canticles between the readings; a hymn with a refrain; and, finally, a *Te Deum* in which the first line was used as a refrain at appropriate places in the text. These uses were quite distinct in style, and yet all within the responsory pattern. The result was what we had hoped: twelve hundred people sang as

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though they had sung together for years.

Other musical matters

It is a basic principle for the planning of any liturgy, especially for a large-scale celebration, that no music should violate the internal logic of a liturgical action. This is a difficult question to discuss apart from a specific situation. I do not mean that the authorized liturgical text is of greater importance than aesthetic matters. The point is rather that liturgy is *action*. The text is not an end in itself. It is set in the framework of action, and action implies movement. Without careful preliminary attention, the internal sense of a liturgical action can be violated. The role of music is to complement and support the action, even to give it a whole further dimension, but not to be a brake which pulls the action to a halt.

One example may suffice. At the ordination of a bishop, the choir of his former parish was asked to sing an anthem. There are, of course, many points at which such an anthem might be placed so as to con-

tribute richly to the celebration. Instead, the planners put the anthem (which was ten full minutes in length) at the time the new bishop was vested. The vesting took one minute. The result was that the congregation of 1,000 found themselves standing helplessly at what suddenly turned into a choir concert. It was an excellent example of non-organic, meaningless length. The action died on the spot!

Perhaps the problem stems from the old mentality in which music was not really seen as integral to the liturgical action but rather as a kind of whipped cream, an external decoration which might just as easily be omitted. We are learning again now that the musical and other aesthetic dynamics of the liturgy are not external options. In the experience of the participants, these aspects often assume a far deeper significance than the words of the rite. In that perspective, these aspects must not be ignored or taken for granted. They require sensitive and knowledgeable attention on the part of all involved in liturgical planning — not as something added on at the end, but as an integral dimension of the celebration from the first moment of its conception. +++



AN EDITORIAL

by Henry H. Breul

The other day at the diocesan convention, my Senior Warden was set upon by an ardent member of the "Society for the Preservation of VOUCHSAFE." With disgust in her voice she said, "Do you realize that your parish is one of the six in this diocese that uses Rite II exclusively?" When this conversation was reported to me, my reaction was "What? Only six?" On the other hand, a distinguished liturgiologist said to me that the first Prayer of Consecration in Rite I should have been consigned to the Historical Documents section of the Prayer Book. Between these two positions there are varying gradations of pleasure and pain with the new Prayer Book, and it may well be time to take a dispassionate look at it as it has been experienced since trial use was authorized in 1976.

AP found in the late fifties that it had made a serious mistake in tying itself too closely to the 1928 book. As that book became less and less functional and scholarship began dogging our liturgical consciences, Council meetings became progressively more rancorous. We found that we had become Prayer Book fundamentalists with the grandiose idea that if we could only get everybody obeying the text and rubrics of the 1928 book, we would usher in the Kingdom. It would seem to me that we should never allow ourselves to get into that stance again, however attractive we find the new book.

Consensus are arising as to the faults of the new book. For many, the actual inclusion of Rite I at all was a serious mistake done under the seemingly powerful gun of the Prayer Book Society. Even when it had become clear that the Society had little clout in the Convention, the Standing Liturgical Commission flinched on several things that have left us with liturgies that are of doubtful quality. The initiatory rite with its confusion about Confirmation and the Rite II Burial

Office spring to mind. The House of Bishops flinched on Confirmation, and it would appear that the Burial Office committee was a weak one. It is reported that the Great Thanksgiving "B" has conquered the South, while "C" seems to have lost its earlier appeal quite rapidly throughout the Church. Those of us who summer on Nantucket were jolted early on by "...our island home..", which is the name of the former "poor farm" and now the terminal nursing home on that island.

In another way the integrity of the new book was vitiated by the refusal of the House of Bishops to face up to the diaconate and instead taking the easy way out by licensing lay chalicers. Many of us are uncomfortable with the use of a sort of Old Testament typology in the selection of lessons to fit the Gospel in the Sunday propers. I, for one, find myself looking for the Book of Occasional Services constantly when it comes time for the blessings and dismissals at the end of the Eucharist.

There are, of course, magnificent new things in the new book; Massey Shepherd's litany of penitence is a masterpiece and should replace all the old "little lists" for preparation for confession. Eucharistic Prayer "D" would be my choice for the standard consecration prayer if there is to be one; it is strong and exciting, but it needs to be read with careful emphasis and pauses.

It would seem to me, therefore, that part of AP's thrust should be a monitoring of the new book. We can honestly look at some of its shortcomings while still being terribly enthusiastic about it as a whole. This would save us from our former problem of being bound by a book in such a manner that we fear to criticize it in any way. In the same way, we should

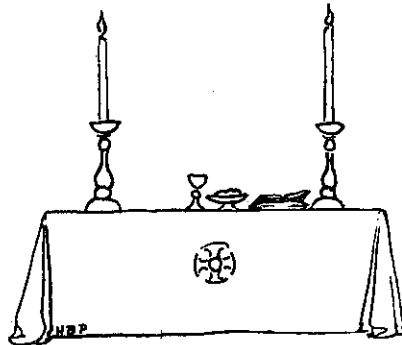
(Editorial - cont.)

be ready to criticize the misuse of the clear intention of the new Prayer Book when it occurs. The celebrations at New Orleans and at the Anglican-Lutheran occasion at the Washington Cathedral were examples of "sacramental magic" where the elements were pre-consecrated at a smaller celebration earlier on instead of being an integral part of the celebration with the full congregation gathered. Reserva-

tion for the sick is one thing; those celebrations represent extremely poor sacramental theology by wracking up the whole idea of the offerings of the people.

I have said enough, I hope, to start some dialogue going — within AP at least — about all this. As the TV stations say, "Responsible replies are welcomed."

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AN OPEN LETTER ON CEREMONIAL

by Carlos H. Mercado, Jr.

The October 1982 issue of *OPEN* contained comments by AP President Peter Moore and a reprint from *ISSUES* regarding the sorry state of public worship at the New Orleans General Convention. Perhaps the liturgical perversions at the Triennium are justified as a testimony to the unfinished areas of liturgical renewal in the Episco-

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pal Church. What went on in New Orleans reflects what goes on throughout the Church every Sunday morning and at countless diocesan and national functions. It is so ironic that our Church now has a series of liturgical documents (The Book of Common Prayer, the Prayer Book Office, the Book of Occasional Services, Lesser Feasts and Fasts, *et alia*) representing the finest in contemporary liturgical understanding and based upon excellence in liturgical scholarship and Christian tradition, yet few in the Church really know how to use these documents.

It seems the problem is ceremonial. →

(Mercado - cont.)

How we translate the words of a liturgy into actual worship services says a lot about what is going on in our minds. That's what is so frightening! Back in 1549, it was easy for Lord Cranmer to assume that his ex-Roman Catholic clergy knew how to celebrate the Mass and conduct other "rites and ceremonies of the Church." We can readily sympathize with his antipathy toward the overwhelming medieval ceremonial manuals, which reduced corporate worship to a series of gestures and "tics." We can rejoice in his decision to give latitude to his clergy in their conduct of services by almost totally eliminating ceremonial rubrics. Four hundred and thirty-three years later, however, it is high time to rethink the hoary old notion that a minister is free to do his own thing so long as the Prayer Book is used. Now, I am not suggesting that the Church issue rigid directions under pain of excommunicztion and death by burning. I am merely stating that basic concepts need to be taught to *all* clergy, who in turn must properly inform their people. I pick on the clergy for one basic reason: The Prayer Book, on page 13, states that a bishop or priest normally presides at worship. Also, it is the clergy who attend seminary to receive education in "churchly matters" and who, one might presume, would be concerned with how and why worship is done. The laity look to their clergy for insight into theology, church history, and all liturgical traditions. Perhaps this is wrong, but not all Episcopalians live near a seminary, a library, or a book store having facilities for liturgical research; and fewer still would know how to take advantage of such facilities. Let's face it, good people, the leadership for liturgical renewal is not coming from the clergy. Groups like Associated Parishes, comprised of clergy *and* laity, will have to spearhead any movement to raise the liturgical consciousness of the Episcopal Church.

Dr. Hatchett sums it up in his recent *Manual of Ceremonial* when he says that good ceremonial must somehow make the liturgical texts more understandable to the congregation. This is where we fail the most. Our clergy learn ceremonial concepts on a catch-as-catch-can basis:

- 1) the parish in which they grew up,
- 2) their seminary chapel,
- 3) something they

saw on TV, 4) some cathedral they once visited in England, 5) what went on in their previous parish assignments. Now, what are the chances that these men and women have been consistently exposed to good ceremonial? Looking around, I'd say pretty slim! If some of the clergy reading my comments are mad at me by now...good! I've been victimized too long by too many inept clerics who seem to have no interest in making worship speak to the people.

Somehow a parish priest recognizes the need to take a course at a nearby seminary or via Theological Education by Extension dealing with pastoral counseling or some aspect of theology; or they might readily spend a week at the College of Preachers in Washington, D.C.; but just suggest a day or two rethinking worship in today's Church, and you are looked upon as crazy and totally out of order. Somehow, clergy think that a one semester survey in the history of worship, taken ten or twenty years ago, has taught them everything they'll ever need to know on the subject. Or maybe they just don't care.

I have been given the impression that most parish clergy are so happy that they got through the Prayer Book revision without being lynched by angry parishioners, if they never even think about liturgy again, that will be fine. Fortunately, most laity see their priest most of the time in his/her role as celebrant, rather than in the role of crisis counselor. The clergy, however, must spend an inordinate amount of their time with relatively few parishioners. Perhaps this makes the regularly scheduled services seem so routine that they just don't merit much time, thought, and effort — another Sunday, another Mass! Reverend clergy, it is through worship that most of us encounter the holy and experience the Body of Christ. It's the center of our Christian lives, and if it doesn't work, something essential is missing from our lives.

Typical of today's Episcopal Church, our diocese (Rochester, NY) recently accepted the report of an ad hoc futures commission. Nowhere in the report was the matter of worship. It is impossible to get more than three or four priests to an Information Day or workshop on any aspect of liturgy or music. Although the 1979 Prayer

(Mercado - cont.)

Book is in use in 100% of our parishes, the old Morning Prayer parishes have not even begun to deal with the Eucharist as the principal service of the Lord's Day. Instead, they continue to do that dreadful high church, Victorian "Morning Prayer and Sermon" — so far from the beauty of the morning office and not even a good Protestant preaching service. When Holy Communion is celebrated, the worshipper must endure the damndest array of foolish pomposity. Our annual Convention Eucharist, which should be a model of what is attainable at any parish on a Sunday morning, turns into a weird circus that makes me envy the Quaker meetinghouse. The Diocesan Commission for Liturgy and Music is never, ever consulted by the arrangements committee — we must search out said committee, and no one listens to us anyway. Most Convention delegates are critical of the service and we miss a wonderful spiritual opportunity. Our bishop (Robert Spears) is personally a good liturgist and a strong supporter of the new Prayer Book. While I appreciate his sense of democracy, I wish he'd be a bit of a medieval prelate and kick a few tails where liturgy is concerned!

A few things that really drive me to the point of sinful thoughts include:

1) The ridiculous notion that the choir, clergy, and acolytes must process from the rear of the nave, down the center aisle to the chancel. Since most of our buildings place the sacristy off the chapel, the procession must go outside and around the building or squeeze down a narrow aisle. Why not follow the most direct path from sacristy to chancel?

2) The lack of silence during worship. Liturgical Muzak. Don't sit still and meditate...do something! Why are we uneasy with silence and calm?

3) The Peace turned into the coffee hour or a liturgical group grope. Can we find a balance between the "frozen chosen" and a street riot?

4) Thunderous, overblown offertories that emphasize money collections, choir concerts, incensing the entire neighbor-

hood, and everything but the preparation of the bread and wine. The Great Thanksgiving is reduced to an afterthought.

5) Episcopalian eucharistic prayers butchered into a Tridentine Canon of the Mass that is insulting to the faith of both Anglicans and Roman Catholics. Those Prayer Book thanksgivings are so beautiful...if only some celebrants wouldn't get in the way of the texts.

6) Services that won't end...recessionals, candle extinguishing, endless sacristy prayers, seven-fold amens...oh, shut up and go home!

7) Cardinal arch-lay readers in copes and birettas who prance about the chancel playing "high mass." Do they know that Pius XII died 23 years ago, and he was no great fan of Anglicanism? Why do so many Episcopalians imitate the Roman Church that thought of us as heretics and reject the present Roman Church that is working towards unity with us?

Enough of my problems. They indicate that not too much understanding of the meaning of worship is around these days. What we need is an agenda. As a starting point, I suggest:

1) Every movement needs a leader, and AP should lead. It's the best qualified.

2) Bishops belonging to AP must go to work on their brothers, while our priests and deacons should stir things up at the diocesan level.

3) AP should give the national Church no peace until an office of liturgy and church music is in full operation at 815 Second Ave., NYC.

4) *OPEN* needs to be an open forum for discussion of every practical aspect of worship.

5) AP members who have any influence at our seminaries should lean on the Dean and faculty to put in place better liturgical training of our future clerics.

6) Lay persons must not sit still for lousy liturgy. Get to work on your rector.



(Mercado - cont.)

(Increase your pledge and demand your money's worth!)

7) All bishops, priests, and deacons, especially those educated before 1970, need continuing education in liturgy and church music. AP should develop the training resources and methods for their use.

In the years ahead, let us resolve to get the 1979 Book of Common Prayer and its sister liturgical documents out from under their medieval Roman and Victorian Protestant shrouds. Who knows, maybe our worship will bring people closer to God and to one another. Fancy that!

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Liturgy in Small Congregations

by Charles W. Thompson

This article appeared in The Kansas Churchman, newspaper of the Diocese of Kansas, in September, 1982, and is reprinted with permission. The author is Director of Music at Nashotah House.

"The liturgy is a shared activity of people gathered together. No other thing brings out this communal dimension so well as singing. Many voices...can be fused together, so that when we blend and follow the same rhythm, only one voice is heard — that of the community."

(J. Gelineau, S.J.)

The importance of this statement does not apply only to the large parish with the elaborate music program; it is important to any group of Christians, no matter what size, gathering to worship and experience the mysteries of Christ. Unfortunately, in the past twenty years, due to changes in the liturgy and musical styles, music has fallen short in many small congregations. This is unfortunate for two reasons: first, the joy in charismatic experience which a sung liturgy creates, and, second, the loss of insight into the Anglican tradition of liturgy.

How can a small congregation recover such a tradition? Through the development of a musical ministry wherein both priest and musician(s) have goals and

perspectives for the parish. Through prayer, study, and teaching the community can enter into an experience in growth through worship.

The integrity of the liturgy should not be lessened by too many hymns, organ music, or anthems. The discreet selection of such should be kept to a minimum. The important factors — the prayers, intercessions, canticles, ordinary of the mass (Kyrie, Gloria in Excelsis, Sanctus, Agnus Dei), etc., should have precedence. These texts are the foundation of the liturgy.

Then the use of Psalmody comes into play. (Psalmody is the singing or reciting of psalms, and it is the vehicle of both choir and congregation.) After Psalmody come the select hymns, songs, and anthems which should be worked in.

By far the most important aspect for success in a parish is teaching the congregation, not just the music, but the "why" and "how" behind the musical and liturgical traditions. The integrity of music in the liturgy can be a viable means in any congregation. The "little church" syndrome can be replaced with the attitude of community at worship. Through patience, teaching, and prayer a liturgy can transform people into the worshipping Body of Christ.

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BOOKS

reviewed by HENRY H. BREUL

American Churches. Roger G. Kennedy. Stewart, Tabori & Chang, New York. Distributed by Workman Publishing Co., Inc. One W. 39th St., New York, NY 10018. 296 pages. \$50.00.

Roger Kennedy, curator of the Smithsonian's Museum of American History, has put together a remarkable book. At first it seems to be another "bedside table" or "coffee table" offering, but it turns out to be much more. Not only does it give a history of church building in the U.S. along with the regional influences which came to bear, but it is remarkably catholic in its content. The pictures, which are magnificent, range all the way from Acoma pueblo to the latest churches in Columbus, Indiana and Collegeville, Minnesota. Each reader will undoubtedly find that there is some favorite example of a particular style missing, but then this is ever so. I personally miss the inclusion of Ithiel Towne's minimally Gothic Trinity-on-the-Green in New Haven. I'm surprised that Mr. Kennedy, as a Yale graduate, would have passed that by, since that church was the spark that started the "Gothic holocaust" in American church architecture.

Surprisingly for a picture book of this sort, the text is worth reading, for, though Kennedy seems to find "mystery" in some pretty awful places, he does bring the unenlightened reader out of the idea that there is really only one style of church architecture. Since we have but recently begun to emerge from the "Gothic ghetto" of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, this sort of information is invaluable to those who find God only beneath ogive arches. The author points out quite gently that there seems to be something anachronistic in setting the great liberal preacher, Harry Emerson Fosdick, in the midst of overblown Gothic splendor in the Riverside Church. It makes one wonder what William Sloan Coffin feels about the space in which he is immersed.

Those who read William L. Pierson's book,

American Buildings and Their Architects: Technology and the Picturesque, reviewed in OPEN, July, 1980, will want this book as a companion piece. Those members of the AP Council who spent one Spring week at St. John's, Collegeville, a few years ago will find the pictures of that place fascinating, though Mr. Kennedy does not deal with the light and sound problems inherent in the design of the chapel. One of the monks there who was an architect said that some of the community were praying for a hail storm to come and destroy the west window, while others tried each year at the Great Chapter to move back into their old quarters where they could sing their offices at a normal pace instead of waiting for the endless reverberations to die down.

In other words, the text tends toward the "happy" side of things, but it is informative, and even without the text the pictures themselves are worth the price. +++

The Altar Guild Book. Barbara Gent and Betty Sturges. Morehouse-Barlow, 1982. 89 pages. Paper. \$4.95.

At last there is an Altar Guild manual which deals with the new Prayer Book. The authors soft pedal the old diagrams of vested chalices and point to the role of the deacon and the symbolism of the bare altar before the Great Thanksgiving. They also make provision for the use of real bread and the alternative possible to the use of "plastic" at the Eucharist. Indeed, it is a most sensible book and one which consciously speaks to Altar Guild members who are finding the transitions in the liturgy difficult. One quote will give the feel of the whole book:

"The challenge to the Church today, to every parish of the Church, is to explore new ways of carrying out the familiar actions, new ways that speak for this time and each place." +++