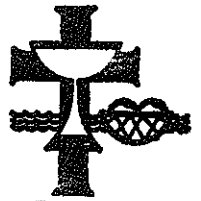


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the **associated parishes**  
for liturgy and mission

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# The Loneliness of the Long-Distance Office Reader

by Barbara Mitchell

The Daily Office, that rich and glorious compilation of the Church's daily prayer, is meant first to be community prayer. It began that way in the early moments of the Christian Church, and before, in the synagogue worship which inspired it, and through the Church's history, in both its monastic and cathedral adaptations, it continued to be corporate prayer. Its dialogue pattern of versicles and responses and its use of plural pronouns logically require the biblical two or three gathered. And more subtly, its intention, as the Church's constant offering to God of itself, for his people, demands and insists upon the recognition of our corporate nature as the Body of Christ. History, structure, intention, and spirituality all call us to believe and attend to Morning and Evening Prayer and Compline as a *corporate* venture in daily worship. And yet so many of us who by personal desire, vocation, or curiosity are called to pray the Daily Office, find ourselves by circumstance forced to pray it alone.

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Praying the Office alone is for many an experience of loneliness, frustration, a discovery of the 'Desert'; it can become dry, distracting, and a chore. And yet for some others it has become fulfilling and even preferable. In this article I wish to reflect upon some of these experiences hoping they may be helpful to those of us who attempt to pray the Office at long distance from the Body gathered.

### *Praying with others an aid*

Many experience the corporate saying or singing of the Office as its own support system. The presence of others tends to encourage our continued attendance; keeping the discipline of doing the Office is not so difficult with others as it may be when prayed alone. Also, we do not have to bear the entire weight of the prayer ourselves; when we personally are too distracted, impatient, hurt, bored, or enraptured by a particular image it invoked, those we pray with will keep it flowing for us. At those inevitable times when the Office becomes a chore, the 'two or three gathered' shows its wisdom by carrying us. The corporate Office has a built-in teaching function.



(Mitchell - cont.)

By nature it is its own direct experience of God's saving grace as that intended for all people: as we pray with the rich, the poor, the small, ailing, healthy, foreign, and eccentric, those we like and those we dislike, we experience that this motley sinful limited bunch is the same group as the redeemed for whose salvation we intercede. With the use of very little imagination, then, our prayers can remain earthy, incarnate, and firmly fixed in our present clay-foot reality. For those of us prone to introspection and brooding, the presence of others can lift us out of using this prayer time for dwelling on our own problems. Similarly, the demands of the corporate prevent us from making this into private devotions. And again more subtly, we can discover in the presence of others that for Christians the 'personal' is that which we discover through the calling forth of self in relationship with others and with God. In this age of individuality we are very prone to trying to follow the world's concept of personhood as something created (rather than evoked and developed), and created in isolation from others, and I believe a corporate round of prayer can help us overcome this mistaken notion.

However, these supports can disappear when we pray alone. So, when and if we must, it becomes apparent we need to become aware of our own personal danger points and use some creativity to develop our own aids.

*Finding the integrity in praying the  
Office alone*

To begin by saying the Office is corporate, not individual, is personal but not private, means that to pray it alone requires an understanding of how we each relate to the corporate Body of Christ and an attempt to maintain that relationship when praying alone. As Christians we believe that the corporate is not merely the *collective* from which we can extract ourselves and retain the same notion of prayer; no, a new being is formed out of the gathering of the people of God. We do not simply remain the sum of our parts, we become the Body of Christ. And as I have said, it is from within that Body that we discover our personhood. So when we pray alone we need to find a way of remaining aware of that place we have in

the Body, and of praying from quite within its reality. It can be done. Some can actively imagine themselves praying with the saints. Some are daily aware, either through keeping contact with religious communities in other places or through world-wide intercessions, that somewhere in the world others are also praying through the day and night, and they can mentally enjoin themselves with them. It may also help to remember that we never pray alone but that it is the Holy Spirit who prays through us. And he/she is readily invoked!

**W**hile these concepts may be helpful to some, others find them entirely too esoteric to be of practical use. Despite the fact that some people will object to any tampering with the Office, several to whom I talked said there came a point in their journey when they had to consciously make a shift in the style of the Office for it to remain viable for them. Prayed as written, it created in them an odd schizophrenia: they felt silly and embarrassed trying to be both people at either end of the versicles and responses. At this point some went through the Prayer Book and collected up prayers from various places; others switched to the Roman breviary which is specifically designed for praying alone. For some the silent rote reading of the same prayers too easily left them personally unengaged. One priest I spoke with said when his moment of desperation hit he asked himself what elements of prayer and study were being asked of him and entirely reshaped that structure to his temperament and spiritual quest. He still uses the lectionary, but as a springboard to meditation on his own life situation and that of his parish, and twice a week he joins with two other parish priests to take turns describing how they have appropriated it. For prayers they refer to Frank Colquoun's books, *Parish Prayers*, *Contemporary Parish Prayers*, and *New Parish Prayers*. (1) As well, during Lent this particular pilgrim marks the forty days on his calendar with the names of forty people he feels called to pray for, and he prays for one a day with his morning prayers, tries to keep that person in his thoughts during the day, and in the evening sits down and writes him or her a letter. This is part of his attempt to maintain a very real relationship with the people of God and with his

(Mitchell - cont.)

spirituality in relationship with them. A good example of using one's creativity and imagination to find and maintain one's place in the corporate reality of the Church, I say!

**W**hile I am not in a position to evaluate them, it might be practical to mention studies which have been done to match up personality types with the traditional schools of prayer and spirituality. These studies begin by administering a Myers-Briggs personality inventory, then suggest which of the many avenues of spirituality a particular personality might be most successful in following. That may be useful to look at in order to work with one's personal spirituality instead of against it, to shape an appropriate style of Office for oneself. One such study is available from the Open Door, in Charlottesville, Virginia. (2)

Some people have no difficulty whatever praying the Office alone over long periods of time. They suffer neither dryness nor self-consciousness in doing so, but remain marvelously aware of their place among the saints at prayer. For those of us who are not among them, it seems the very fact of being alone might need to be faced straight on and transformed into something creative. Henri Nouwen, in his book, *Reaching Out*, (3) challenges the experience of loneliness and bids us to turn it into its positive face, solitude. He then urges us to discover in that solitude the seeds of hospitality toward others. I offer that book to you. And it might be helpful to meditate on the numerous accounts of loneliness and of the 'desert experience' found in the Gospels, prophets, and early fathers and mothers to develop more ease with the fact of being alone and responsible for the prayer of God's Church. While few of us are called to be hermits, we can certainly learn from their struggles when we pray a hermit's Office!

#### *Engaging time creatively*

If we are to be successful at maintaining this discipline I believe it is important to assess our time commitment and come to peace with it. Spiritual manuals and directors rightly encourage us to set aside time

each day to pray; a sacred time, into which nothing short of emergencies can intrude. For those who can manage it, this is wonderful. For 'morning people' this time is appropriately some early hour, but there is no point for those who remain unregenerate until mid-afternoon to even attempt it. Cooperating with one's biological clock only makes good sense. My husband and I get up at six during the summer, but as soon as that means rising in darkness come fall, our temperaments become all that the dark symbolizes and we need a different pattern between equinoxes. A lay couple I know put their children to bed at night, then gather around the piano to sing Evensong in plainchant. Not only does that make it fun for them, the lulling strains of Tonus Peregrinus must surely bless their little ones' sleep! Some others who were bothered by middle-of-the-night insomnia suddenly decided this time would be their time for prayer. As one put it, it has the extra benefit of keeping his mind off the dreary things he might otherwise be dwelling upon! Or Compline might be read in bed before turning out the lights.

Yet many argue their schedules are too busy or too changeable for a consistent time for prayer. While some might question their priorities, I would prefer to take Thomas Merton's view of all time as a sacrament and suggest the use of otherwise wasted moments for prayer. The half hour while the cake bakes or the glue sets, the hour spent apart in traffic jams (which is where I memorized the Office, and while doing so developed a new appreciation for red lights!), the time on the crowded bus or waiting for the next client or the dentist, can become times of prayer. If we are called to pray constantly, using such moments this way is only good training.

#### *Other styles of Office*

Since the 'how, and how much' seem to be big questions for long-distance Office readers, here are a few more ideas gleaned from the experienced. Last spring, a minister from a Protestant tradition which does not use the Office gave a lecture to our local ministerial association about the need to encourage private devotion. Borrowing from the decate structure of the Rosary, he suggested we employ our fingers to count

(Mitchell - cont.)

on and design our own 'Rosary', incorporating ten items including several canticles, psalms, a Creed, confession, and some intercessions, all of which would be memorized for easy access. What he came up with was not so much a Rosary as an Office, but it certainly is mobile and adaptable to individual styles. And for those who find reading the words of the printed Office a matter of simply glossing over it, its memorization can encourage alertness and deeper meditation on its images. Bible readings get left out of this system; they could be read at another time, or another idea might help: I have heard of people forming Anglican carpools so the Office gets said on the way to and from work, and then the backseat drivers can read the lessons for everyone. (It goes without saying that except for those who prefer to pray the Office alone, any opportunity to create a corporate situation, even if less than optimum, is to be considered!) And I think we can make creative adaptations with confidence. If we really believe it is God who has called us to our various vocations, and even though it may not be God but fallen creation which puts constraints on our prayer time, we need not feel guilty because we cannot be in the corner of the chapel every day for prayer, God will show us how we can use that lifestyle Gracefully. While he redeems all creation he can certainly redeem our chaotic schedules if we let him.

**A**s I hinted earlier, other adaptations to the system include singing the Office. Using Anglican chant or plainchant (neither of which requires accompaniment) is very useful to some for centering their minds and spirits and for creating a meditative mood. Books on both are readily available from the usual Anglican book dealers, and there are some good modern arrangements that are easy to learn. (4) Psalms may become more meaningful when one prays some needy individual (including oneself) into the situation being described. Likewise, actively imagining yourself in the scene of the day's scriptural passage(s) does help to bring it/them alive and is a classic means of allowing the Word of God to speak to your life. As an Anglican monk once exhorted me, if it does speak, for heaven's sake stop right there and go with it. After all, that is the purpose of the

thing! Prayer has just happened, so there is no need to finish the rest of the Office just to get it done! Finally, some people find referring to the Collects and Lessons in *Lesser Feasts and Fasts* (5) not only keeps them abreast of our liturgical year but also helps enliven their sense of the communion of saints and hence, the rich personality of the Body of Christ.

### *Maintaining the discipline*

It also makes sense to be alert to our weaknesses in keeping up our practice and to utilize the means of strengthening it. I am aware in my faulty attempts to form new habits that I tend to do well for the first two weeks, but in the third week the novelty wanes and that week I will be prone to packing it in. So now I try to design some extratreats and boosts that week to get me over my slump. Some people maintain if you can keep up a practice for ninety days you truly have a new habit, but it is getting there that may be the problem! Those who have prayed the Office alone for a long time reflect that it can become like a 'positive addiction' without which their day is incomplete, and it might be useful to strive toward this as an attitude or goal.

Some women are conscious that their spiritual cycle is tied to their biological cycle, and in order for them to keep at the Office they deliberately vary their prayer patterns to their monthly ups and downs rather than fight them by rigidly conforming to the Church's cycle. However that works for the reader, it is reasonable to expect discipline to be easier when one is cooperating with one's rhythms and moods, and if theological justification is necessary for doing that, well, it is certainly incarnational! Obviously, discernment is required here as to how far one can go without obliterating the intent of the liturgical week and seasons, but if approached as flexible things, the adaptation of the Church's weekly and seasonal cycles can provide real strength.

As well, so can variation of rite. A priest I know who loves the modern rite found while dealing with the breakup of his marriage that he gravitated back to the penitential comfort of the old rite.

(Mitchell - cont.)

Similarly, others who were confronted with trauma or uncertainty over which they had little control reached back into the marrow of their spiritual leg-bones where the comfort of their earliest experience rattled around in the form of 'thee's' and 'thou's'. It only takes being alert to the options and not being afraid to use them.

From these experiences it would seem that it is those who have found an integrity in praying a corporate form of wor-

ship in their own solitude, and who have managed to adapt it to their own lifestyle and temperament, using the time available to them creatively and harmonizing the many options offered by the Church with their own life rhythms, who have had the most success and pleasure(!) in keeping the discipline of praying the Office at long distance from the Body gathered. I hope something of their various solutions will be of inspiration in your attempts. I can only add my own encouragement. God be with you! + + +

#### FOOTNOTES

(1) Colquoun, Frank. *Parish Prayers, Contemporary Parish Prayers, New Parish Prayers*. Hodder & Stoughton. London. 1967, 1975, 1982, respectively.

(2) The Open Door, Inc. P.O. Box 855, Charlottesville, Va. 22902

(3) Nouwen, Henri. *Reaching Out*. Doubleday and Co. Ltd. Garden City, N.Y. 1975.

(4) Church Hymnal Series. *The Book of Canticles*. The Church Hymnal Corp., New York. 1979. (Contains both plainchant and Anglican chant versions of the canticles, invitatory antiphons, and psalms for Morning and Evening Prayer.)

(4 cont.) *Gelineau Psalter*. Gregorian Institute of America, 225 W. 63rd St., Chicago, Ill. 61136.

*The Nashotah House Psalter*. Privately published by Nashotah House Episcopal Seminary. Limited copies of this plainchant arrangement of the 1979 American Prayer Book psalter are available through the Sacristan, Nashotah House, Nashotah, Wisconsin 53058.

(5) The Proper for *Lesser Feasts and Fasts*, third edition. Church Hymnal Corp. New York, N.Y. 1980.

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## CORRECTIONS

Your transcriber/*OPEN*-putter-together allowed two egregious errors to creep into the letter from the Rev. Gregory Howe in *OPEN* for July 1983. On page 6, left hand column, line 34 from the top, the word 'not' appears where it should not. The sentence should read, 'For example, the initiation rites begin with the presumption of a pro-anaphoral form, but do include a convenient, relatively clear, non-eucharistic ending.' The second error appears on the same page, right hand column, fourth line up from the bottom. The word 'he' was intended to be 'we'. The sentence should read, 'I only wish we took his predicate more seriously...' My regrets and apologies!

Art Jenkins

In his review of Aidan Kavanagh's *Elements of Style* and O. C. Edwards's *Elements of Homiletics*, editor Henry Breul cited another *Elements of Style* as having been written by Rudolph Flesch. The authors of that book were actually William Strunk, Jr., and E. B. White.

# Leo Malania

1911-1983

Leo Malania was only recently elected to the Council of Associated Parishes, but for many years he had been a strong supporter of all that AP has stood for. Those of us on the Council mourn him as we regret that we will not share his wisdom and deep faith. Leo's patience and evenhandedness during the struggle to bring the new Prayer Book to completion was a wonder to those of us who were privileged to know him. He was bombarded with hate mail and pointed to as 'the enemy' by those who opposed the new Book. There were times when he was quite exhausted by the burdens of his task, but he never wavered. To those of us with pro-

lems of a personal sort he could be a healing person even though his personal burdens were great. He was a man who gave himself completely to whatever he was doing and did it well. We will all be living with Leo's memory as we use the new Prayer Book; it is a living memorial to him and to his skill in guiding it through the vicissitudes of the complicated life of the Church. Truly, Leo was a man sent by God at a time when he was needed.

TE DEUM LAUDAMUS

*(The Rev.) Henry H. Breul*

# Lawrence Hadley Rouillard

1930-1983

I met Larry Rouillard in the fall of 1966. I was an entering freshman at Claremont Men's College, Claremont, California, where Larry was Episcopal chaplain. It was his work as chaplain, especially his weekly Eucharists, followed by lunch in his home, that helped keep me in the Episcopal Church.

When I arrived in Cambridge in the fall of 1970 to enter ETS, I found that Larry had been called as Protestant chaplain at the University of New Hampshire. About the time I left New England and returned to Oregon, Larry entered a long period of seeking to move from college work back to the parish ministry. We kept in touch and he put me onto Associated Parishes, later sponsoring me for membership on the Council, of which he had been a member for many years.

In the fall of 1979 I was pleased to nominate Larry for rector of St. Stephen's, Portland, Oregon. I was delighted when he got the call early in 1980. At St. Stephen's (an old downtown parish and former cathedral),

Larry was able to push in two of his great areas of interest. He revitalized their liturgy and became personally involved in, and led the congregation to become active in, a number of local social issues. Among these were: working for the establishment of a police review board, opening a soup kitchen, and helping to found Night Watch, a ministry on Skid Row.

The spirit of Larry Rouillard is not caught by the long list of his many accomplishments, publications, interests, and organizations listed in the Episcopal Clerical Directory. The two issues that constantly, consistently, and persistently came up in the seventeen years I knew Larry were his deep caring equally for good liturgy and for social action. He led, challenged, and prodded me from the time I met him until the last time we spoke. I have lost a friend and a model for my ministry. The Episcopal Church has lost a good leader.

*(The Rev.) Neff Powell*

# An Oxford Movement Celebration

by Ormonde Plater

A continuing concern of Associated Parishes is to rediscover the meaning of 'catholic' in liturgy and mission. Thus we have taken a lively interest in the 150th anniversary this year of the founding of the Oxford Movement (often dated from Keble's 'National Apostasy' sermon July 14, 1833 at St. Mary's, Oxford), and especially in the many celebrations concentrating on a new approach to catholicism. Four members of the AP Council — Fr. Peter C. Moore, Fr. William H. Petersen, Bishop Richard F. Grein of Kansas, and I — took an active part in one of these celebrations last summer.

The occasion was the Feast of St. Mary the Virgin (August 15) and the place St. Paul's, Seattle, where Fr. Moore is rector. He is also president of AP, and when he decided to put on a celebration, he sent out invitations to parishes and clergy in the two northwestern corner dioceses of Olympia (Seattle and the coast) and Spokane (inland) and the adjacent Canadian dioceses of British Columbia and New Westminster. When all had gathered, the undercroft of the church was packed to standing-room-only with a crowd that included lay persons, priests, deacons, and two bishops, one of them the Archbishop of British Columbia.

We were to hear three speakers over the course of the day and then celebrate mass that night. The first speaker was Fr. Dominic Wilson, O.H.C., co-prior of the order's house at Berkeley, on the revival of monastic and religious life since the mid-nineteenth century. One of Fr. Dominic's observations: the older women's orders in this country, despite large endowments, are composed mainly of aged women and few novices, whereas new orders such as the Order of the Holy Cross (men) and its sister Order of St.

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Helena (women) are growing rapidly on little financial base. Another observation: because of large numbers of monks in medieval England, the piety of Anglicanism remains essentially Benedictine, centered on a love of the monastic daily office; even our Franciscan friars have an unusual appreciation of the office. Fr. Dominic, a native of Birmingham, Alabama, helps support the order by making miniature objects, and during the following talks he completed a tiny needle-point of male and female nudes (with fig leaves, as Bishop Grein's wife, Joan, pointed out gleefully).

During the lunchtime break, I went with Fr. Dominic and a former Roman priest to visit the nearby Space Needle, a relic of the 1963 World's Fair. Unable to ride to the top because of a late-summer crowd of tourists, we nevertheless strolled through the park and made a sensational monastic visit to a fast-food restaurant.

After lunch the ecclesial crowd reassembled to hear Fr. Petersen, formerly professor of church history at Nashotah House and now dean of Bexley Hall (bringing a catholic touch to a seminary suspected of protestantism). He was scheduled to speak on the ecumenical implications of the Oxford Movement. Mostly, however, he took his audience on a scholarly pilgrimage through nineteenth-century England, with frequent pauses at the shrines of Keble, Pusey, and Newman, and he made the point that the departure of Newman for Rome robbed the movement of its intellectual underpinnings and left it mainly pastoral in emphasis. Fr. Petersen's talk was heady but fascinating.

After everyone had become thoroughly exhausted and in little mood for further erudition, I was brought on as the last speaker — or *entr'acte* before the divine liturgy — with the assigned topic of catholic ministry today. Naturally, I spoke about deacons. I told a few tall tales, the most popular about Oakerhater, the Cheyenne warchief who became a deacon in Oklahoma; surveyed the

(Plater - cont.)

confused history of the diaconate in the Episcopal Church (source of much of our present muddle); then quit for questions. There followed one of the strangest outbursts I have ever witnessed. The Bishop of Olympia had declared a 36-month moratorium on ordinations to the diaconate, an action taken for 'further study' (the usual reason in such cases) which has done little to lower tempers. So people were popping up and yelling at each other. We finally had to adjourn after a young priest tried to get us all to take a vow never again to use the word 'lay' to refer to the unordained.

That night the celebration reached its climactic end with Solemn Pontifical Mass sung by Bishop Cochrane of Olympia. It was great fun to begin with the Marian hymn Daily, Daily (from the Chicago hymnal *Cantate Domino*) and stop for prayers at the shrine of Our Lady. Bishop Grein as preacher properly exhorted us to a sense of the ministry of all the faithful. We ended with further Marian devotions, as the clergy and

acolytes gathered around the font and paschal candle, free-standing in the narthex, to say the Angelus together, uniting the womb of Mary with the womb of the baptismal font. Normally I despise keyhole prayers, but this, a regular feature of the parish, was strangely touching.

St. Paul's is a large modern church with choir and pipe organ suspended from the ceiling at the back, a free-standing altar, stations of the cross, and shrines lining the aisles — a proper place to celebrate catholicism on the Feast of Our Lady. The devotional life is not solely clerical but includes the laity, who appear to be the main bearers of local custom, including a lively but tasteful tradition of devotion to the Virgin. I reflected that the Church everywhere could benefit from devotion to Mary, which is well within the mainstream of Anglican tradition, and from celebration of our catholic heritage in its contemporary setting. In most places, we avoid both.

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## In Praise of Chaos

At the most recent meeting of the Council of Associated Parishes (May, 1983), it was very clear that another crisis had arrived and no one seemed to know how to approach a solution. The first occasion like this seems to have been the problem of the Eucharist as the central act of worship on the Lord's Day. That was dealt with, and by now it is a readily accepted idea throughout the Church, but far from being implemented in many places. The second 'hang-up' came when we discovered that it was all very well to restore the Eucharist to its central position, but it seemed that the people coming to the Eucharist did not know what it meant to be baptized. I remember a session in the Super Gothic chapel at the DeKoven Foundation in Racine, Wisconsin, when Alan O'Neil opened to us the findings that he had made as to just what the people of God knew about what it meant to be baptized. He had just taken over at a new parish and was thoroughly

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shaken after having asked a few simple questions. Thus, the pressure for public baptism and the baptismal office in the new Prayer Book. Then, the push for a catechumenate and serious questioning of infant baptism. All these crises were turning points within the twenty year span of my membership on the Council. Each time a supposed solution to a problem has led us to a new level of perception, as 'De Lawd' said in *Green Pastures*, 'The trouble with makin' a miracle is that you have to rear back and create another miracle to take care of the fust one.'

Thus, ecclesiology reared its head at the Nashotah House meeting...what do we mean when we say 'the Church'? What is it that people are baptized into? What the function of the Church is in the world and what Holy Orders are now both appear to be up for grabs. Added to all this is the problem



(Review - cont.)

of chaos in practice within Anglicanism itself, let alone other denominations. Some places ordain women, some don't; some are honest about gay clergy, some are not. Some dioceses deal with deacons, others will not, while the wildest confusion seems to reign in the minds of those advocating 'total ministry' at the same time calling for the professionalization of the clergy. In the larger Church some will ordain women only in terms of a community, others create 'vagrant clergy' stamped with apostolicity forever at their ordination and therefore infinitely moveable. The concept of 'the Church' ranges from the individual Christian all the way to a super mystery which hovers over all branches of Christendom. In some places the congregation calls and ordains, in others an outside authority sends a fully accredited ministerial 'master key' to make the local Christian community function. We may be getting agreements about Eucharist and Baptism on a general Christian level, but when it comes to ecclesiology and Holy Orders, chaos is with us.

Actually, if one reads Edward Schillebeeckx's book *Ministry: Leadership in the Community of Jesus Christ* (Crossroad, New York, 165 pages, \$12.95), the solutions begin to appear as our present chaos begins to look quite apostolic. Schillebeeckx points out that the norm in the early Church was to see the local gathering as the spirit-filled community with a 'right to have a minister.' This right was exercised in a variety of ways in different communities. The Council of Chalcedon (451) refused to recognize ministries which were not embodied in a local community, thus obviously reacting to 'vagrant ministers' who were beginning to appear. The problem of how the ordination was performed was not much concern at the time, but rather the assent of the community under the guidance of the Holy Spirit was the all-important factor.

*According to the canon of Chalcedon, even a correct liturgy of the laying on of hands is null and void without calling by a local church and to a local church. It is this particular context which determines the ecclesial character of the ministry; the*

*ecclesial dimension is the decisive element of ordinatio or appointment.*

Schillebeeckx, pages 39-40

This is a far cry from our present situation. The Episcopal Church with its medieval heritage has opted for the diocese as the 'local church' and works with the 'master key' system in a variety of ways. Rome seems to have opted for the whole world as the local church with the papacy placing its 'clerical master keys' into position. Only among the fundamentalist sects does any sort of indigenous ministry rise up in the local church, and then it is usually a strong-minded person with a Bible and an urge to preach.

Our problem lies not so much in that we don't conform to an apostolic pattern but that we don't have *the* pattern for our times. Whether we like it or not as Anglicans, our bishops are more and more appendages to the life of the local community. They appear as strangers and leave the same way, all the while taxing the financial vitality of the local church for their support and the support of what is quite often a totally irrelevant staff as far as the local church is concerned. The attempt to give confirmation to the local minister is one example of the discomfort felt with the present system. Indeed, in some places episcopal confirmation has begun to disappear with the administration of chrism during the baptismal liturgy. We are living in a time when small group life is becoming the primary source of human contact. The proliferation of self-help groups is symptomatic of the lostness felt by people when they try to deal with large institutions. It is difficult ecclesologically to differentiate between the functions of the bishop and the presbyter so that, ironically, the local parish seems to have everything necessary to Christian community save the 'right to leaders.' This is a real switch, and if what Schillebeeckx says is true, it is something that needs a very serious look. The present chaos may be fruitful, for biblically there is a great deal of evidence that God creates out of chaos. So, in a way, our present situation is ripe for new order.

Henry H. Breul  
Editor, OPEN

# A Preparation for Change

by Father Richard Driscoll, S.D.S.

**S**t. Matthew ends his gospel with the command, 'Go ye and teach all nations baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.' There are no directions on how to baptize, but about twenty years later in the Didache, a writing from the year 90-100, we read:

*Baptize in living water, and if you do not have living water, then in still and if you cannot baptize in cold, then in warm water. And if you do not have either then pour water three times on the head in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost (#7)*

This Syrian church order soon spread for in Rome in the year 215 we read:

*When they come to the water, let the water be pure and flowing.  
(Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus #21)*

Why all this concern for the quality of the water, that it be living, flowing water? Isn't water water? Yes, but one must remember that all early writers in the Church were more liturgists than canon lawyers. They were more concerned with the mystery and quality of the experience of baptism than a question of what is the minimal amount of water that can be used and still be valid. Baptism for them was not a ritual of legal purification but a transformation of life so radical that it could only be described in terms of death and rebirth. This was best symbolized when those to be

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baptized were 'plunged into' and 'brought up out of' the water: death and resurrection.

Over the centuries two things happened to make the quality of the water less important. The first was the legalism and efficiency attitude that affected both the eucharist and baptism. The nouns became more important than the verbs: 'plunged into water' was reduced to mere water and 'breaking and sharing' became mere bread. The containers for the water and the bread became ever more elaborate but the sign of the action was lost in process. Early altars were simple wooden tables and so it was the more enduring stone baptistry adjacent to the church that gave archeologists the first sign that a church was being unearthed.

**A** second trend that made the 'quality' of the water less important was that infants rather than adults became the norm for baptism. Since mystery cannot be fully experienced by the infant, they thought, why insist on the fullness of the sign? Besides, it seemed less trouble and was more convenient. So gradually pouring of water over the head replaced the experience of being 'plunged into' water — the symbol of death — and being 'brought up out of water' — the symbol of the resurrection. It is interesting that the first pictorial presentation of the new kind of baptism was in the year 1330. Before that every picture showed John the Baptist or succeeding figures with hands on the head of the person they were about to immerse into the water. Even in England we know that the practice of infant immersion was practiced as late as 1536. In the East where mystery and symbol are held in higher esteem than efficiency and convenience, the immersion of infants is still practiced today.

The history of baptismal fonts is seen in the Basilica of St. John Lateran in Rome. The original font is below floor level: twenty-five feet in diameter and three feet in depth. Lined and paved with

(Driscoll - cont.)

marble, it was used for adult immersion. Falling into disuse, it was filled in and a font large enough for infant immersion was erected over it. This in turn was no longer used and a smaller font was placed above it for the pouring of the water.

Another trend that influenced the shape of baptistries over the centuries was the question of how material things such as bread, wine, water, and oil can become instruments of grace and salvation. The early fathers and theologians dealt with all of them on the same level; what happened to the bread at Mass happened to water at Baptism: namely, a second incarnation. Even though over most of the years emphasis was put on the Eucharist it was never forgotten that the consecration of baptismal water was of supreme importance. It was a far different blessing than the one given, for instance, to the palms on Palm Sunday. Traces of this equal importance may be seen in the resemblance of the aumbry where the oils are kept to the tabernacle where the Eucharist is reserved. During the Middle Ages with the rise of superstition and belief in magic, the baptismal water had to be guarded and kept safe from 'witches and black masses.' Covers were made for the fonts and kept locked for safety's sake, not to provide space for ornamentation as some believed.

From history, let us turn to the present. With the event of the second Vatican Council and the renewal of the catechuminate, the norm for baptism is again adult baptism. What does the norm mean? For the Eucharist the council told us that the norm is the people of the Lord gathered around the bishop on the Lord's day to celebrate the Lord's Supper. Admittedly, it is not 'normal' for most Catholics to gather with a bishop for Sunday Eucharist, but it is the norm, or ideal. The norm now for baptism is the Christian initiation of adults. In 1972 we have the implications of this norm spelled out in practice. One of these is that immersion is explicitly called the preferred form.

*Either the rite of immersion, which is more suitable as a symbol of participation in the death and resurrection of Christ, or the rite of infusion may be lawfully used in the sacrament of baptism. (RCIA Intro #21)*

It goes on to spell this out in regard to baptism.

*The baptistry is the area where the baptismal font FLOWS or has been placed. It should be reserved for the sacrament of baptism and should be a worthy place for Christians to be reborn in the Holy Spirit and in water. It may be situated in a chapel either inside or outside the church or in some part of the church easily seen by the faithful; it should be large enough to accommodate a good number of people. After the Easter season the Easter candle should be given a place of honor in the baptistry, so that when it is lighted for the celebration of baptism, the candles of the newly baptized may easily be lighted from it. (RCIA Intro #25)*

In the Rite of Baptism itself it states:

*Touching the candidate the celebrant immerses him or his head three times, raising him out of the water each time.*

The United States Conference of Bishops has spelled this out in even more detail:

*To speak of symbols and of sacramental signification is to indicate that immersion is the fuller and more appropriate symbolic action in baptism. New baptismal fonts, therefore, should be constructed to allow for the immersion of infants, at least, and to allow for the pouring of water over the entire body of a child or adult. When fonts are not so constructed, the use of a portable one is recommended.*

*The place of the font, whether it is in an area near the main entrance of the liturgical space or one in the midst of the congregation, should facilitate full congregational participation, regularly in the Easter Vigil. If the baptismal space is a gathering place or an entry way it can have moving, living water and include provision for warming*

(Driscoll - cont.)

*the water for immersion. (Art and Environment in Catholic Worship. #76 and 77)*

This brings us to the present situation in a local church. A person walking into a church should be able to see an icon that expresses that church's beliefs in stone and wood. Does the baptistry adequately express theological belief? Is it in conformity with the best liturgical norm? Does it reflect a commitment to evangelism? Does it allow for the fullness of the sign for both infant and adult? What might a modern baptistry look like?

One of the earliest and most consistent concepts that baptistries tried to capture in stone was that of a tomb or mausoleum, with the font in the shape of a sarcophagus or coffin to provide the symbolic dimension of baptism as a death and burial with Christ. This is not a morbid concept, since it is precisely the victory over death that is being celebrated. With this symbolism in mind there are often three steps down into the tomb and three steps up to represent the time Jesus spent in the tomb. Paul, in the use of the word tomb, links it to the womb. Theodore of Mospuestia, in the year 400, saw the water as a womb into which the candidate descended to receive second birth from the Holy Spirit. A low ceiling and relative darkness were also used to express the idea of a passage or tunnel from darkness to light. Our use of a scallop shell to pour water goes back to the womb symbolism.

Another concept that baptistries of the past tried to recover was that of baptism as a new creation. In the story of the original creation, we have the Spirit calling forth life from the waters and

the river flowing from the Garden of Eden to the four corners of the earth. Thus the font was seen as a fountainhead from which flowed new life - new creation. The candidate either stood or knelt in the pool and was immersed or water was poured on his head. Listen to this description again from Theodore of Mospuestia in the year 400:

*You follow the signal the bishop gives you by word and gesture, and bow down under the water. You incline your head to show your consent and to acknowledge the truth of the bishop's words. If you were free to speak at this moment, you would say Amen....but since you cannot speak, you receive the sacrament of renewal in silence and awe. (Bap. Homilies 3.18)*

How can we accomplish this today? This is largely a job for architects and artists. Our objection that if the baptistry is large enough for adults it will be inconvenient for infants seems a small question indeed, and anyway it is one that can easily be answered by an imaginative architect. He may even incorporate the present font into a new design. He may also open up the space so that the baptismal font may serve as the holy water font and make clear that our blessing ourselves with the holy water as we enter the church should remind us continuously of our own baptism. He may discover new space that will create such a baptistry with living and flowing water that we shall rediscover the richness and fullness of this ancient and venerable rite. The vision, the hope that renewal is ever possible, that death eventuates in resurrection is ever part of the gospel.

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We are pleased and honored to note that, in his new book, John R.H. Moorman, IX Bishop of Ripon, makes a nice bow to Associated Parishes. The book, a selection of The Episcopal Book Club, is *The Anglican Spiritual Tradition*, published by Templegate Publishers, Springfield, Illinois.

# Annual Liturgical Conference Dedicated to Leo Malania

reported by Henry Breul

The fourteenth annual conference of the Association of Diocesan Liturgical and Music Commissions met in Washington D.C., November 7-10. The conference was entitled The Way of Resurrection: The Baptismal and Burial Offices. The conference began with Evening Prayer and Eucharist at the Washington Cathedral with Bishop Walker as celebrant and Herbert O'Driscoll as preacher. There followed a banquet at St. Alban's parish hall on the cathedral grounds.

The headquarters of the conference was the National 4-H Center in suburban Chevy Chase where most of the participants stayed and where the first morning's session was held, beginning with Morning Prayer at the Methodist church across the way. William Stringfellow delivered a paper on Baptism which was pithy and provocative, calling Baptism a 'radical rite which incorporates people into a new society.'

After lunch, the conferees were bussed to Grace Church, Georgetown, a renewed Victorian parish built for the people who once ran barges on the Chesapeake and Ohio canal. Seven different workshops were held which were repeated in most part twice the next day so that every participant could select three different subjects.

The day ended with a baptismal Eucharist celebrated by William Spofford, the assistant bishop of Washington, with Vienna Anderson preaching. The lack of a candidate for baptism was sad, but the committee had tried hard to get one right up to the last moment.

The next day Bill Wendt did a superb presentation on dying and contemporary practices which was attended by the Washington Episcopal Clergy Association along with

the 175 regular members of the conference. The group then moved to St. Francis, Potomac, Md., a posh suburban parish, for workshops and a burial Eucharist at which there were ashes and a grieving family.

The dinner that evening at St. Francis was the time of presentation to Fae Malania of a scroll in thanksgiving for Leo's life and work. 'His memorial is the Book of Common Prayer 1979.'

The final day began with Morning Prayer and Eucharist celebrated by Vienna, with the present correspondent preaching, at the Methodist church, then a business meeting and the election of new officers. Cliff Gaines is the new president, succeeding Winnie Crapson.

The conference was highly satisfactory. There were some minor 'glitches' (we never saw real bread...someone forgot), and some of the study groups were more successful than others. The fascinating fact that there were sixty persons attending who were there for the first time was made even more interesting when the largest sign-up for groups was for the Easter Vigil. It would appear that that message is still in need of explication.

Next year Connecticut, then Minneapolis, then Omaha.

Ten members of the AP Council attending the conference were able to have a 'rump' Council meeting at Carmack's restaurant. We approved a price rise for brochures (see page 15) and also straightened out assignments for various Council members, particularly the business of writing for OPEN.

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# Letters to the Editor

## HELP WANTED

I have been asked to 'take' the Three Hours on Good Friday next. I'm very conscious that we have a tendency towards reconstruction of the Lord's Passion rather than making the event a liturgical celebration of the Passion in terms of celebration, proclamation and symbol. I know the traditional Anglican way is the joining of Morning Prayer, the ante Communion, the Litany and Evening Prayer together.

However, I am writing to request from your membership suggestions as to how the Three Hours may be further improved.

David G. Hawkins  
St. George's (Anglican) Church  
2950 Laurel St.  
Vancouver, B.C. V5Z 3T3

## INTERIM SHARING

I was enthusiastic about Joe Morris Doss' article in the September *OPEN*, about the Lutheran-Episcopal Interim Sharing. His suggestion that we remain open about our sacramental theology and liturgical practice is important in this time of mutual discovery of one another's traditions.

None of the theological or liturgical differences that Doss mentions concern me as much as one which he does not mention but which is a real concern to me. In the joint celebrations our congregation has had with our local Lutheran congregation, I have discovered the Lutheran practice of adding unconsecrated bread or wine when there is not enough of that which has been blessed to go around. Similarly, bread or wine which has been offered in Eucharist which is not consumed by the participating congregation is returned to the bread box or wine jug to be used, hopefully, for Eucharist at another time.

While I appreciate that it is the eucharistic action of offering, blessing, and receiving rather than in the magic power of the priest which makes a Eucharist valid, and while it is not my own understanding of catholic orders which makes a Lutheran's orders valid or not, I really do have a problem with the idea that bread not set apart in consecration can be our Lord's body, and that wine consecrated as our Lord's blood should be poured back into the bottle of beaujolais.

I do intend to continue the warm and growing interim sharing with our Lutheran friends here, but only after raising this concern with them, as I can't 'just do it' when 'it' is not being done: unconsecrated bread is *not* the body of Christ any more than blessed bread isn't. While we share the idea of real presence, Lutherans seem to suggest that the presence leaves after the party. I do have to sit down with our local Lutheran clergy and hash this one out, because, short of that, this seems to be an area where Lutheran doctrinal clarity is a little hazy.

(The Rev.) Christopher T. Connell  
Church of St. Raphael the Archangel  
Brick Town, N.J.

## COMMUNICATING CHILDREN

I'd like to call attention to a Resolution earlier passed by the House of Bishops in meeting, October, 1971. This came not too long after the Church accepted the practice of admitting young baptized children to Holy Communion.

The Resolution calls for bishops and other clergy to honor the communicant standing of such a baptized child when the child moves to another parish and diocese, even if the practice is not part of the new parish or diocesan policy.

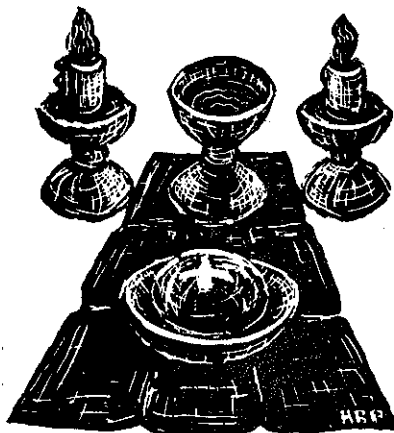
(Letters - cont.)

Personally, I have recently come across evidence of such baptized children being summarily excommunicated after such a move even though the child had not committed any heinous sin! So to penalize children who have been regular recipients of the Blessed Sacrament after baptism seems to constitute a very denial of the Real Presence of our Lord and his bidding for children to come unto him and 'forbid them not.'

By the same token, children, usually through their parents or guardians, should

exercise the courtesy of informing their new parish priest before suddenly appearing for receiving at the time of the administration of Holy Communion in a parish where communicating baptized children is not common practice. Even more helpful, or in addition, the child's former parish priest might write the new rector or vicar giving that priest advance notice.

*(The Rev.) Samuel E. West (Ret.)  
St. Richard Mission  
Jekyll Island, Georgia*



## Brochure Prices Increased

We regret to announce that it will be necessary to increase the prices of our brochures. Increased printing costs have made this inevitable. As of January 1, 1984, the following prices will prevail:

1-19 copies	\$1.75 each
20-49 copies	\$1.50 each
50+ copies	\$1.25 each

Library/bookstore rate \$1.10 each  
(sent postpaid)

As always, if a check accompanies an order, we will pay the postage. If we bill you, we will include a charge for shipping and handling.

If any orders postmarked after January 1, 1984, are received on the old form (showing the old prices), we will confirm the order at the new prices before shipment.