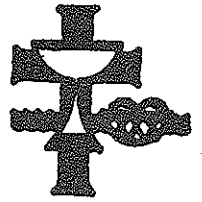


the **associated parishes**  
for liturgy and mission

3606 Mt. Vernon Avenue Alexandria, Virginia 22305 (703) 548-6611



December 1987

# THE LITURGICAL YEAR

by Thomas J. Talley

---

*This paper was presented at the annual conference of the Association of Diocesan Liturgy and Music Commissions meeting at Houston, Texas, in November, 1987.*

*Fr. Talley, a sometime member of the AP Council, is professor of liturgics at General Theological Seminary, New York City.*

---

**I**t is good to be back in Texas, especially to talk about matters I love most. Indeed, that so many of us should be gathered here to think about these things seems a real marvel to me. At the time I resigned my parish in Denton to begin graduate study, there was no Association of Diocesan Liturgy and Music Commissions, and that we are here now is a sign of the vast liturgical development that the Church has seen in this past generation. Not only has the face of the Episcopal Church changed vastly over these past twenty-six years, but that change has been so broadly ecumenical that one can hardly find one of the main line denominations today that is not concerned with questions of lectionary and liturgical year.

One must confess immediately, however, that such a claim for consensus can be overstated. While we are deeply grateful to the Antioch Baptist Church for providing a space for our daily offices, we should not suppose that the Southern Baptist Convention has at present any plans to establish a Standing Liturgical Commission or a uniform lectionary. Still, scholars of a strongly reformed tradition are making their own contributions to studies in liturgical time, even though these often take the negative view that such ordered worship life presents a decay of New Testament spirituality.

As a case in point, Dr. Karel Deddens, a Reformed scholar in Holland, published in



(Talley - cont.)

1975 a rather poor dissertation that assigned the development of the liturgical year to Cyril of Jerusalem in the middle of the fourteenth century.<sup>1</sup> On that basis, he argued that the notion of a liturgical cycle of feasts and seasons is characteristic of Christianity's altered situation following its accommodation to the Roman Empire during the reign of Constantine. As such, the liturgical year represents a deviation from the purity of the spirituality of the early Church, and must be regarded as a symptom of that ritualism from which the Reformation, and especially Calvin, liberated Christianity. The notion of a liturgical year, Deddens concluded, is inconsistent with New Testament spirituality. This is not a surprising conclusion for a Dutch Calvinist to reach. What is challenging is that he does this on the basis of the analysis of the role of Cyril of Jerusalem that he found in *The Shape of the Liturgy* of our beloved Gregory Dix. Dix was not alone in assigning the liturgical year to such a late date; a fourth century origin for the liturgical year has been virtually a commonplace among liturgical scholars, though not least through the influence of Dom Gregory.

Dix had not only assigned a key role to Cyril in the shaping of the liturgical year; he also urged that the Church in the fourth century had put aside her primitive eschatological outlook in favor of a "new historical interest" that set Christ's saving work in the past rather than in the present experience of the worshipping community. More recent studies, however, have argued that this is a curious and insupportable dichotomy.<sup>2</sup> Consciousness of our historical past and especially of the historical rootedness of the salvific work of Christ is not an alternative to eschatological expectation, but is the ground of that expectation. Memory engenders hope. That is a principle deeply ingrained in all Judeo-Christian tradition.

The liturgical year, I want to argue, was not an invention of the fourth century, but is a Christian development from roots that are continuous with the Old Testament. However, the phrase "liturgical year" does deserve a word of explanation. It has not been a common expression in liturgical law, and should not be supposed to have been, in precisely that phrase, a common concern

in the tradition. The liturgical year (as we shall continue to call it) does not refer and has never referred to a systematic articulation of every day or even every week in the year. Rather, it refers to an appreciation of annual (as opposed to weekly) occasions of celebration, such as would call forth one or more annual festivals that would stand apart from the regular weekly observance of Sabbath (for Jews) or Sunday (for Christians). Our present view of the origins of the Christian liturgical year puts that development much earlier than Dix supposed. In what follows, I am dependent on many important scholars, but much is yet hypothesis for which the argument is detailed in my study of *The Origins of the Liturgical Year* published in 1986. With that admission, I shall, in the interests of time, omit the qualifications provided there, and simply report my conclusions.

**W**e have long been accustomed to say that the primitive Church observed no annual festivals, but only the first day of each week as celebration of the Lord's resurrection. Even in the light of more recent studies, that seems to have been true for the Gentile churches, those not of the circumcision that were not expected to observe the prescriptions of the law regarding festivals. This would not apply to Jewish Christians, however. The primitive community at Jerusalem did not stop praying in the temple, nor can we suppose that they ceased to celebrate Passover. Indeed, they would have found the Preparation of the Passover, the day of the sacrifice of the lambs for the festival, charged with a new meaning as the anniversary of the death of the Lord, who, according to the Fourth Gospel, died on the cross at the hour of the offering of the lambs. This primitive fixing of the date of the passion seems to be presumed already in St. Paul's proclamation to the Corinthians (ca. A.D. 55) that "Christ our Passover lamb has been sacrificed for us." There is no reason to doubt that this new content of Passover was present to the Jerusalem community's keeping of that festival already in the year following the resurrection. While they, as other churches, may already have begun to gather on the first day of the week, it would be only to that extent that we could say that the Christian week is

(Talley - cont.)

older than the Christian year. Surely, by the end of the first century the observance of Sunday was universal; the Christian observance of Passover, however, was not. Nonetheless, our annual paschal celebration is not a new Christian invention, but is in direct continuity with the Passover traditions of the Old Testament, albeit now with a new focus on the saving work of Jesus, the Christ, the paschal lamb of a covenant renewed.

That tradition, however, underwent further reshaping in the second century. The majority of the Jerusalem community was dispersed following Hadrian's destruction of the city and his building of a new Roman city on the rubble of Jerusalem in the early 130's. To assure that there would be no resumption of troubles with the Jews, all the circumcised were forbidden to enter the new city, Aelia Capitolina, and that rule excluded Jewish Christians as well. These were dispersed, continuing a diaspora that may have begun already during the troubles leading to the destruction of the temple in A.D. 70. A major center for this Christian resettlement was Asia Minor, and it is there especially that we find our richest evidence for a continuing Christian observance of Passover and the following Pentecost in the second century. These Christians, however, had been separated from the synagogues since the final decade of the first century, and so were out in an awkward position regarding the celebration of the annual Passover. The date of the festival was set by scripture in the night from the 14th to the 15th of Nisan, the first spring month; but the Jewish lunar calendar, being some eleven days shorter than a solar year, had a month added from time to time as needed, in order to keep pace with the seasons. The decision as to when to add an extra month was made by the rabbis in Babylonia, and the Christians of Asia could not continue to depend on their authority. Indeed, the Christians of Asia Minor were not even on the rabbis' mailing list. Therefore, the Asian Christians simply adopted the local solar calendar and observed the paschal fast on the fourteenth day of the first month of spring, sufficiently close parallel to the Jewish date, and not the only variant method of determining the critical fourteenth day of the first month. The months in this Asian form of the Julian calendar began nine days

earlier than the months at Rome, and when the Roman calendar was adopted with the founding of Constantinople in 330, this Asian fixed date for the Preparation of the Passover, the fourteenth day of a month called Artēmesios, was expressed as the sixth day of April. Failure to recognize this date, April sixth, as the Roman calendar's equivalent to the fourteenth day of the first spring month in the calendar used in Asia Minor in the second century has been a major stumbling block to understanding the early development of our festivals. We shall return to this paschal date, still observed as Passover in the fifth century, according to a historian of that time.<sup>3</sup>

**W**ith the departure of the bishops of the circumcision from Jerusalem, a Gentile episcopate was established, and the first Gentile bishop, from around 135, was Marcus. Evidently, this brought into close conjunction (and perhaps conflict) the Gentile custom of observing only the first day of the week and the Jewish Christian observance of the annual Passover. The resulting compromise called for keeping Passover, but with the termination of the paschal fast only on the day of the Resurrection, Sunday. This custom was adopted quickly at Alexandria, and spread rapidly through the Gentile churches, although it seems to have been adopted at Rome only around A.D. 165, the first year of the episcopate of Soter. A small Asian community in Rome continued to observe the fixed Passover date, unadjusted to the day of the week. They came to be called "Fourteenthers," or Quartodecimans, and were a continuing thorn in the side of the Roman bishops attempting to hold in unity that many-faceted cosmopolitan community. The Roman Asians' continuing ties to their bishop in Ephesus, and his support of their paschal date, led eventually to the struggle in the late second century, which ended in the excommunication of the province by Victor, bishop of Rome. That outrageous act had little effect, in fact, and the determination of the date of Easter was, after Arianism, the second major item on the agenda of the Council of Nicea in 325. Only then did there appear a general agreement that Easter should be on Sunday, although that was surely the predominant practice throughout the third century.

The original Asian observance entailed a



(Talley - cont.)

fast commemorating the passion and death of the Lord on the day of Preparation of the Passover, and a vigil through the night, concluded with eucharist at cock-crow. When that was adjusted to the structure of the week, the vigil was through the night from Saturday to Sunday, and the concluding eucharist at cockcrow on Sunday. The one-day fast now fell on Saturday, although that made this one Saturday in the year an exception to the general Jewish and Eastern Church tradition forbidding fasting on the Sabbath. That one day was now adjacent to the weekly fast on Friday, established already in the first century. We learn from Irenaeus in the second century that some fasted for one day, but others connected the Friday and Saturday and fasted for two days. By the middle of the third century, it is clear that in some places the first four days of the week had been added as less rigorous fast days, giving us the Holy Week we now know. The earliest source for this extension of the paschal fast to six days, *Didascalia Apostolorum*, reveals a curious chronology evidently derived from the calendar of the Essenes at Qumran, a calendar so wedded to the seven day week that its year consisted of exactly 52 weeks and, therefore, only 364 days. This put every month date on the same day of the week in every year, and Passover was always celebrated in the night from Tuesday to Wednesday. *Didascalia Apostolorum* says that we fast on Monday because then Judas made his treasonous compact with the priests; we fast on Tuesday because then the Lord ate the Passover with his disciples; on Wednesday he was arrested; on Thursday he was brought before Pilate. On all these four days the fast may be broken at the ninth hour (mid-afternoon). The Friday and Saturday are fasted entirely, however, in commemoration of the death of Christ and his lying in the tomb. For reasons that are less than clear, commentators have often denied that we see any trace of Good Friday before the fourth century, and Dix, we have seen, assigned the invention of Holy Week to Cyril, bishop of Jerusalem in the latter half of the century. In fact, our observance of Holy Week is in full view a century before Cyril, including a solemn fast on the Friday in commemoration of the Lord's death.

In both the Asian fixed date Pascha and in its adjustment to the structure of the

week, the character of the celebration was the same: a commemoration of the entire mystery of our redemption by Christ on the occasion of his passion. That included the passion, death, resurrection, and glorification of the Lord, and in many cases the outpouring of the Spirit upon the Church. Indeed, the incarnation itself was included among the themes celebrated. This led eventually to the assignment of the annunciation to the date associated with the passion, April 6. St. Ephrem of Edessa, in one of his paschal hymns, wrote:

*In Nisan the Lord of Thunder weakened his heart through sympathy and entered into the womb of Mary that he might dwell there; in Nisan again he has shown himself strong, and after loosing the womb of hell is risen.*<sup>4</sup>

At this point, however, we must admit a further complication. April sixth, as we said earlier, is the Roman calendar date equivalent to the fourteenth of the first spring month, Artemesios, in the pre-Constantine calendar of Asia Minor. At Rome itself by the early third century historical interest, prompted by commemoration of the martyrs on the days of their deaths, led to an attempt to establish the exact Julian calendar date for the crucifixion. This would not be a translation of the 14th of Nisan into the first month of a solar calendar as was the Asian date, but rather the determination of the 14th day of Nisan in the year of our Lord's passion. In other words, the Roman question had to do not with how we should convert the Passover date from a lunar to a solar calendar, but with the precise Julian date on which our Lord died. The year was determined, rightly or wrongly, to be A.D. 29, and in that year the 14th of Nisan, the 14th day of the spring moon, was computed to have fallen on March 25. That, therefore, was taken in the West to be the date of the crucifixion. In time, this, too, was taken to be the date of both the death and the conception of the Lord, but this seems to be a replication of the earlier assignment of those events to April sixth in the East. Nonetheless, we have texts from Augustine and others that explicitly identify the dates of the conception and passion of the Lord and base the nativity date of December 25 on the conception/passion date of March 25, the nativity being just nine months after

the conception at the Annunciation.

For two centuries it has been popular to say that Christmas is a Christian adoption and adaptation of the Roman pagan festival, *Dies natalis solis invicti*, the birthday of the invincible sun. That was not a festival of great antiquity at Rome. It was established on December 25, the traditional (but inaccurate) winter solstice date, by the Emperor Aurelian in the Year of our Lord 274. Those who seek to base Christmas on that festival seldom give full weight to its late institution. In fact, in support of this theory of a pagan origin for our nativity feast, many writers point to the mosaic ceiling in the mausoleum of the Julii in the Vatican cemetery, a mosaic showing Christ as the Sun, driving his chariot across the heavens. In fact, archeologists assign that mosaic to a time some decades before there was a pagan festival on December 25, although Christ was already associated with the sun on the basis of Malachi 4:2. Nor, it now seems, should we appeal to Constantine's syncretism for the adoption of such a pagan festival. It seems highly likely that Christmas was being observed in North Africa before the accession of Constantine. On the other hand, from at least 324 forward, Constantine had little contact with the city of Rome, being preoccupied with his new Christian capital of Constantinople, and there is no sign of a feast of Christ's nativity on December 25 at Constantinople during Constantine's lifetime.

At Rome, Leo's Christmas sermons in the fifth century reveal his awareness of the coincidence of the nativity feast with the sun festival of the old religion, and he warns against confusing the two; but we cannot escape the texts from the fourth and following centuries that reveal the thinking of Christians of that time on the question of the origin of the date of Christmas. It was on December 25 because that was nine months from the historical date of his passion, and he was conceived on the day on which he died, March 25. The earliest known evidence of a claim that the western Christmas was based on a pagan festival appears in the final decade of the twelfth century. Having to this point collected no fewer than eight testimonies from the fourth to the seventh centuries

that reveal in East and West the computation of the nativity date from that assigned to the death and conception, I must say that it is time for those who want to argue for a pagan origin to present some firm evidence. Failing that, we are left with contemporary voices who say that it was this assignment of the annunciation to the date of the passion that yielded the nativity date nine months later, first in the East on January sixth, and later in the West on December 25.

While there is every reason to believe that such a computation to January sixth was first made in Asia Minor, by whose calendar the April paschal date was established, nonetheless, by the end of the second century that date was known to Clement of Alexandria. He observes in his *Stromateis* that Christ was born 194 years and one month and some days before the death of the Emperor Commodus on December 31, 192. Several writers in the past have computed that birth date by the Julian calendar and have concluded that Clement of Alexandria thought that Jesus was born on November 18. However, Roland Bainton, in the course of his doctoral research at Yale, showed that at that point Clement was dependent on a source from the Egyptian countryside that still followed the old Egyptian calendar, which did not have a leap-year. Those who figured the birth of Jesus as on November 18, therefore, had counted forty-nine days too many (the number of leap-years in that period of 194 years). It becomes clear that the date to which Clement referred was, in fact, January sixth. The immediately following section of Clement's *Stromateis* is the comparatively well known passage in which Clement observes that the Basilidians "also" celebrate the baptism of Jesus on that date, and Bainton establishes a similar practice for the Marcionites.

Given the observance of the same date by groups separated from one another, it now seems that we must suppose the Epiphany to have been established at some point rather early in the second century, first, I suspect, in Asia Minor, and spreading from there to Syria, Palestine and Egypt. It was once thought that the Epiphany must have been based on some pagan festival, perhaps first in Egypt. The testimonies that have



*(Talley - cont.)*

been appealed to for such a festival on January sixth, however, fail to stand up to close examination, and it can be fairly said now that we have no evidence of a significant pagan festival on January sixth; nor is it possible to imagine any such syncretism in second century Christianity. Failing that, we must again take it that the date was established by counting nine months from the date associated with the primitive paschal celebration of the entire mystery of Christ, the passion, resurrection and glorification, but also the incarnation.

Egyptian sources of the fourth century refer to the Epiphany as the celebration of the Baptism of Jesus, and say that this feast is the beginning of the year. What does that mean? What begins on the Epiphany? We have suggested that the date was computed as that of Christ's nativity, the beginning of his earthly life. Clement seems to have known that, but he also knows of the celebration of his baptism on that date, the beginning of Jesus' public ministry and the occasion of that anointing with the Spirit by virtue of which he is revealed as Messiah.

Years ago, Allan McArthur suggested that in second century Ephesus the Epiphany marked the beginning of the course reading of the Gospel of John, a reading brought to its conclusion with the reading of that gospel's passion narrative at Pascha.<sup>5</sup> In my own study of the origins of the Christian year I have suggested that the same was or became true of the Gospel of Matthew at Jerusalem and of the Gospel of Mark at Alexandria. The complex themeology of the Epiphany, reflected in Hymns 132 and 135, derives from the variety in the beginnings of the gospels, one or another of which, I believe, was read on the Epiphany. Matthew begins with the nativity story including the visit of the Magi, Mark with the baptism of Jesus in Jordan, John with both of those, perhaps, but in close connection with the wedding at Cana.

The supposition of such a course reading of Mark at Alexandria is especially compelling, and allows us to appreciate more fully our own lenten hymns, and also offers an explanation of the curiosity that on Palm Sunday we read the accounts of the

entry into Jerusalem and then the passion according to one or another of the synoptic gospels, although none of them suggests any chronological connection between those two events. It shows us, however, an extremely complex development in which the forty day fast originated not as preparation for Easter, but following immediately after the Epiphany, while still at a time of preparation for baptism at the conclusion of those forty days.

A generation ago, liturgical historians loved to deride the association of Lent with the fast of Jesus as a late symbolic reinterpretation of a fast season that had its beginning in the preparation of candidates for baptism at Easter. More recently, we have become a bit more cautious in urging the universality of paschal baptism in the first centuries of our era. In Egypt, especially, baptism was not at first conferred at Easter, nor is it today. In current Coptic practice, baptisms are forbidden between Palm Sunday and Pentecost, and that seems to reflect a very primitive tradition in Egypt. There, Epiphany began the reading of the Gospel of Mark with the celebration of the baptism of Jesus in Jordan. On the next day, following the chronology laid down in the gospel, Jesus began his fast in the wilderness, and so the Church began its observance of the forty day fast. This was in imitation of the fast of Jesus, but it also provided opportunity for the final shaping of candidates for baptism. In the sixth and final week of that fast baptism was conferred, on a day that Coptic tradition associated with the conferral of baptism by Jesus. The source of that curious tradition regarding Jesus baptizing on the day on which the Alexandrian Church baptized was a puzzle that long defied solution, but for the past decade I have been obsessed with the idea that we now have the source of that tradition in the so-called Secret Gospel of Mark, included in a letter of Clement of Alexandria discovered by Prof. Morton Smith and first published in 1973, a gospel passage read, Clement says, only to those being initiated into the great mysteries. This added passage in Alexandria's version of Mark closely parallels John's story of the raising of Lazarus, but includes an account of Jesus' subsequent initiation of the youth he had raised from the dead.

(Talley - cont.)

The Secret Gospel occurs in chapter 10 of Mark, following verse 34 of the canonical text, and our Coptic sources tell us that the fast season was brought to a celebratory conclusion on the Sunday following the baptism with the Feast of Palms, the celebration of Christ's entry into Jerusalem at the beginning of the following chapter 11 of Mark. It was this Feast of Palms, Coptic writers tell us, that was the conclusion of the fast of forty days, not the Pascha of the Resurrection that was kept in its own time in the month of Nisan. Between Mark's account of the Entry into Jerusalem and the passion narrative there are a few chapters devoted to the teachings of Jesus, but without any narrative story line.<sup>6</sup> These, we may believe, were read as needed during the neutral zone (we would call it the "green season") between Palm Sunday and the paschal fast of six days or less during which the passion narrative was read. Thus, it appears, the liturgical year from Epiphany to Easter was shaped by the course reading of the Gospel of Mark in the Church of Alexandria from as early as the second century.

Late but uncontradicted sources observe that the Nicene settlement of the date of Easter included the decision to put the major fast before Pascha, as was already customary where baptism was performed at Easter, and to set its length at forty days, retaining Egypt's custom of imitating the fast of Jesus. The eastern churches understood that to mean setting the fast of forty days prior to the paschal fast of six days, yielding a six week Lent followed by Holy Week. At Constantinople, the ancient Egyptian course reading of Mark during the imitative fast was adopted. On the fifth Sunday of Lent all the Byzantine rite churches still read Mark 10:32-45, the old Coptic chapter 31 into which the story of the miracle at Bethany was inserted. By the time of our earliest evidence for Constantinople, a sermon of John Chrysostom, the canonical text of Mark has evidently rejected the Secret Gospel that had been read at the conferral of baptism, and the Saturday of Lazarus after the fifth Sunday drops Mark abruptly in favor of John, to read the story of the raising of Lazarus on a day that still bears the marks of a major baptismal liturgy, even though but a week before the Paschal Vigil. That Saturday of Lazarus is followed by Palm Sunday,

its account of the Entry into Jerusalem also read from John, the only gospel in which the Entry is chronologically related to the passion. During the paschal fast itself, Holy Week, the Byzantine gospels are drawn from Matthew, readings obviously taken over from Jerusalem. After Nicea, therefore, it would seem that Constantinople adopted the old Alexandrian course reading of Mark for Lent, but broke its relation to Epiphany and set it prior to Holy Week. The ending of that course with the rejected Secret Gospel was impossible, and John's account of the Bethany miracle is substituted, as is John's account of the Entry into Jerusalem on the following day. Thus it came to pass that Palm Sunday, having originated six weeks after Epiphany, is kept after Nicea on the Sunday at the head of the paschal fast of six days.

Pilgrims from Constantinople to Jerusalem insisted on visiting the places they heard of in the gospels on the days on which they heard of them, and we find the pilgrim Egeria in 383 recounting how it is already established that there is a liturgical visit to the tomb of Lazarus at Bethany on the day before Palm Sunday and a procession with palms down the Mount of Olives on the Sunday at the head of the paschal fast. The procession with palms seems to be native to Jerusalem, although the reason for doing it on this day, as with the visit to the tomb of Lazarus on the previous day, was an influence from Constantinople. This impressive procession rite was carried from Jerusalem to Spain and elsewhere in Europe by returning pilgrims, and eventually it was adopted at Rome as well, although by that time Rome had dedicated that Sunday to the reading of the Passion of Matthew. So the double theme of that Sunday is found still in the 1979 Prayer Book. That we read the synoptic gospels for both the entry and the passion, gospels that establish no chronological connection between the two events, heightens the importance of the processional hymnody that supplies that dimension of the Johannine chronology in such lines as, "to thee before thy passion they sang their hymns of praise," and "ride on, ride on in majesty; in lowly pomp ride on to die."

If the gospels take us no further than the resurrection, we still have evidence from the second century of the observance

(Talley - cont.)

of the Great Fifty Days of rejoicing with the prohibition of fasting and kneeling in prayer. The reiteration of this discipline of unbroken rejoicing at Nicea, however, was already in the face of significant decay of the Pentecost. At Jerusalem to the end of the fourth century the final day of that joyous period marked both the Ascension of Jesus and the gift of the Spirit, but elsewhere the Ascension had begun to be observed on the fortieth day and that festival was itself preceded by the fast that in the fifth century would be supplied with litanical processions on the three days before the Ascension, the Rogation Days that achieved such popularity in medieval Europe. Overcoming this decay of the integrity of the Paschal Pentecost has, as we know, been one major emphasis of recent reform of the liturgical year, and this insistence on the unity of the glorification of Christ with the Spirit's indwelling of the Church has perhaps had no finer statement than that of Leo the Great in the fifth century. It was in one of his sermons on the Ascension that he said, "All that was visible of the Redeemer has passed over into the mysteries."

In these holy mysteries Christ lives, consecrating all the ages that remain until that final parousia for which we watch in hope. It is to enliven that hope that we recall the story of our redemption, for

only memory can open the future to hope, and the form taken by that recalling of the gospel of our redemption is the liturgical year.

The liturgical year as we encounter it in the Book of Common Prayer today represents the weaving together of many local traditions, but that complex development is only the result of ecumenical convergence upon a primitive simple insistence on the historicity of our salvation, an insistence that prompted the writing of the gospels and their proclamation in the liturgical assemblies for which they were written. All the seasonal phenomena of our worship — Advent wreathes, the Christmas creche, Epiphany water, ashes, palms, the paschal candle — all have grown not out of the imitation of pagan surroundings, but out of the imaginative and affective response of the People of God in generation after generation to the proclamation of that one story of one life and one death that had become the story of their lives as it is the story of ours. That life and saving death and resurrection is celebrated at every eucharist, but the telling of its story, the proclamation of its history, is the origin and the present purpose of the liturgical year, a pattern of proclamation that is not only consistent with New Testament spirituality, but native to it. +++

#### NOTES

1. Karel Deddens, *Annus Liturgicus? Een onderzoek naar de betekenis van Cyrillus van Jerusalem voor de ontwikkeling van het 'kerkelijk jaar'* (Goes 1975)

2. See especially Robert Taft, S.J., "Historicism Revisited," *Beyond East and West: Problems in Liturgical Understanding*. NPN Studies in Church Music and Liturgy (Washington, D.C. 1984)

3. Sozomen, *Ecclesiastical History* VII.18.

4. *Hymnus XXI De resurrectione Christi*,

verse 10 [Th. J. Lamy, *Ephraemi Syri et sermones*, 2 (Mechliniae 1986) 774]

5. A. A. McArthur, *The Evolution of the Christian Year* (London 1953) 69.

6. In his response to the addresses at the ADLMC conference in Houston, Geoffrey Cuming took issue with this point, observing that Jesus periodically returns to Bethany in these chapters, thus marking them as more of a narrative than I have suggested. I respectfully remain unconvinced.



# EDITORIAL

**F**or a long time there has been talk of the need for a national liturgy and music office, and the Standing Liturgical Commission and the Commission on Church Music have been working on a job description for the liturgical and musical officer.

It would seem that there are two sides to this business. It would be nice to have liturgical concerns addressed at the national level, and it would be helpful for persons on the local level who are searching for answers to have a clearinghouse for information. The problem comes when we consider the unstated impact of a person on the national staff who not only controls the flow of information but who will also eventually determine the agenda of the Church in liturgical and musical matters. It is not hard to imagine that, if one person is put in the position of doing nothing but think liturgy 40 hours a week, that person will have an enormous effect on the doing of liturgy itself. The Roman Catholic experience has been one of the diocesan liturgical office becoming the bishop's "board of control," keeping the lid on things and generally slowing down liturgical reform at the behest of the hierarchy. I hate to think of what we would have gotten as a liturgical person under our former Presiding Bishop and how that person would have been used had not that person been

Leo Malania. The whole thing reminds me of Samuel's warning to Israel before he anointed Saul to be king.

Our own experience in AP of having a full-time executive was one in which the thrust of our efforts was clearly skewed in the direction that Otis Charles found to be his concern at the time. It was simply too easy for the Council to let him do his own thing. To his credit, he tried to get the Council to exercise more control over his activities, but mostly found himself left to his own devices.

All this is not to say that we should not have a national office but that we should learn from the Roman experience and that of AP and realize that when we get the person the battle is not over. It will be our job to be sure that that person really represents a broad spectrum of liturgical and musical thought and interests and does not become the captive of ADLMC, AP, the Anglican Society, or any other single group, and, perhaps even more important, does not become the only person having the Presiding Bishop's liturgical ear. The SLC will want to be sure that the office is responsive to the Commission and not the other way round.

*(The Rev.) Henry H. Breul*  
*Editor, OPEN*

St. James the Less, Ashland, Va.

## An Associated Parish

by Samuel E. West

*This article was written almost a year ago, but problems of space precluded its publication until now. We are glad to be able to offer it as an illustration of a parish that is striving to function according to AP's principles of liturgy and mission.*

*The Rev. Samuel E. West, a co-founder of Associated Parishes, is retired and living in Richmond, Virginia.*

**D**uring a recent visit to the AP office, I checked with Coordinator Art Jenkins on the names of AP members in the Richmond, Virginia, area where Mary and I recently had moved in retirement. I was particularly interested to note that the parish in Ashland, about 20 miles north of Richmond, has a full parish membership, not just one for the rector or a lay member.

Soon after, on IV Advent, we were present for the Eucharist there. We were most delighted with all we experienced. Arriving shortly before the entrance rite, we were greeted by Rector Jeffrey Fishwick, vested in a Sarum blue chasuble. The nave was quickly filling with adults and children in a wide span of ages. The celebration in the bright colonial building was one with excellent participation, devout prayer, enthusiastic responses, and good singing by choir and congregation. The homily, related to the Proper of the day, kept our attention. While there was an air of joyful anticipation, there was also a current of serious commitment and reverence, befitting Advent. Practically all baptized adults and children received Holy Communion.

The Dismissal was followed by a beehive of excited activity in the parish hall. At

the close of the homily, the rector, in an audible whisper, had allowed that "since technically we can say that Advent closes with today's dismissal, I will depart from my usual stance and encourage the singing of Christmas carols." Someone began playing the parish hall piano and was soon joined by someone with a portable instrument as all began to sing during the varied, busy activity. Parish children excitedly worked on the Jesse Tree; adults scurried in and out of the church and plant, returning with wreaths and other items, some of which were decorations for "greening" the church. Other items in boxes seemed clearly intended for some charitable purpose. The usual post-eucharist educational hour was recessed for this day.

It was also clear that visitors, ourselves included, were warmly welcomed with friendly engagement in conversation. When we expressed our appreciation for the warm hospitality and the excellence of Prayer Book worship, one fellow senior communicant invited us to move to Ashland and become resident communicants of the parish!

That St. James the Less is a family community in fact was clearly evident.

## ASHLAND

Ashland is a community of but some 5,000 residents, growing, and the home of Randolph-Macon College. At first sight, as one drives down the main streets, it appears as an unremarkable town, but there are attractive neighborhoods. The community is supported by mercantile commerce, small industry, and rural culture. Given the size and complexion of Ashland, as well as its long history, it was a treat to find such a strong parish gathered on the Lord's Day.

### THE RECTOR AND FAMILY

The rector, the Rev. Jeffrey Fishwick, a 1976 graduate of Yale-Berkeley, came to the parish in 1982. He was born in 1946 in Madison, Wisconsin, the "birthplace" of and in the same year as Associated Parishes! While his father was an Episcopalian, his mother was for many years a Roman Catholic who later became an Episcopalian. After that, Jeffrey visited Grace Church in Madison, the "mother church" of AP, a number of times.

Jeffrey married Carol Lichtenberger, the daughter of the late and highly respected Presiding Bishop, Arthur Lichtenberger. Carol, who is trained in several skills, is working in Ashland as a reading tutor for children. The Fishwicks have two children: James, 6; and Anne, 4.

Having moved early in life from Madison, Fishwick became accustomed elsewhere to the Sunday Morning Prayer habit, but was not satisfied with it. Through study, and with the help of several sacramentally sympathetic clergy, he worked his way into the liturgical renewal movement and in the process came across the publications of AP. He found them not only helpful himself, but also useful as study and workshop material for laity.

### THE PARISH VENTURE

In accepting the call as rector in Ashland, he asked for and received from the vestry time to formulate certain guidelines, policies, and goals, plus responsible standards for baptisms, marriages, burials, and Sunday worship.

Aware of the pastoral need to be sensitive to and to be able to know and respond to the history and customs of the parish he was inheriting, he quickly formed a worship committee and began training them. He also developed a continuing plan for education and dialogue that would lead to achieving the goal of having the Holy Eucharist, the chief expression of the Lordship of Christ, as the principal offering on the Lord's Day. This would have to include understanding and application of the eucharistic thrust into mission.

The worship committee found AP's brochures and other materials to be the most useful among the various other forms of study material available. "People can study and learn, but also find their way to ask further questions." It was the worship committee which became convinced that the parish should budget a membership in AP for the parish, not for just the rector.

While the primary goal of Eucharist as the principal service every Sunday is not quite achieved, clear progress is being made. Sunday morning begins with a Rite I Eucharist at 8 o'clock. On two Sundays a month Morning Prayer is still scheduled for 10 o'clock. When a fifth Sunday occurs in any month, it is always the Eucharist, as is true of major feasts such as Easter, Christmas, All Saints, the patronal festival, and the like. "I am now getting more and more actual pressure from a growing number of eucharistically and sacramentally oriented laity to take the next moves for every-Sunday Eucharist (usually Rite II) at 10 o'clock. Out of need, at least once a year I conduct an instructed Eucharist with the assistance of worship committee members, especially to help newcomers and to refresh others," commented Jeffrey Fishwick.

### PARISH EDUCATION

The schedule for the Sunday educational program does not interfere with worship. Classes for all ages begin at 11:15 a.m., and people stay. The adult class, conducted under the supervision of the rector, is so popular that at times church school officers have some difficulty enlisting teacher replacements for younger classes because adults like to remain as part of

(West - cont.)

the adult program. The curriculum for most classes is the Colorado series based on the three-year lectionary cycle of Proper and is closely graded for each level. The parish is also involved in the Education for Ministry program from the School of Theology, University of the South. Fishwick comments, "While I believe in 'training' people well for churchy jobs such as acolyting, lay reading, and administration of the chalice, we stress a continuing and deepening education beyond the 'how-to's'."

### SPIRITUAL LIFE

Committed to the deepening of his own spiritual life and the directing of it for others, Rector Fishwick is involved in the "Shalem Institute of Spiritual Life" and travels once a week to Washington, D.C. for his own continuing education with it. (This writer also has the testimony of a young transitional deacon anticipating ordination to the priesthood soon that Jeffrey Fishwick is his able spiritual director.)

When asked about the Daily Offices and the life of prayer, Fishwick responded, "If I don't offer the Daily Office for whatever excuse on a given day, I feel as if I had got up on the wrong side of the bed." With him, we hope that he will soon be able to enlist the "two or three" or more to offer the Daily Office at the church, and encourage people like retired and alert senior citizens to do so with friends at home, keeping an ongoing roster for personal intercessions and thanksgiving.

Baptisms and marriages with the Church's blessing must involve life as communicants and study for baptismal parents, godparents, and the parties to an intended marriage blessing.

Recently the dean of students of Randolph-Macon College was prepared for and received Holy Baptism and admittance to Holy Communion. A fourth-year Vietnamese student, a Buddhist, has become interested in Christianity and, after a healthy period as a catechumen, will receive Holy Baptism.

Most children are admitted to Holy Communion early after baptism, in conjunction with the education of parents and with their

consent. In many cases, reluctant parents have been led by their baptized children to be admitted to full participation in the Eucharist.

The parish has a cadre of articulate lay readers and poised licensed eucharistic ministers. The new Hymnal is in active use.

### MISSION

Father Fishwick was asked to furnish us with a sampling of the multifaceted outreach program. First, upon his arrival as rector, the parish was pledging but a miniscule amount to the normal mission budget through the diocese. The parish then adopted a step-goal to raise the amount annually by 1% until 10% or more of its total budget is reached. The parish is now at 8%. But this is only a hint of growth in the sense that liturgy and mission must become one in their meaning, as rector and commissions in Ashland fully understand.

On the Sunday my wife and I visited in Advent, we noticed boxes for needy people as part of the Dismissal activity. This, it turns out, is but one facet of a mission outreach series adopted for each year but uniquely carried out in Lent and Advent. Part of the overall giving is the use of an endowment fund of between \$25,000 and \$30,000. A maximum of 10% of the interest from this fund is allowed to be spent on the fabric of the plant or for "our own purposes." The rest is designated for mission purposes elsewhere. The 1986 Advent Christmas mission report is quoted below as a sampling.

#### *Report of the Outreach Commission*

*The Outreach Commission gives thanks for the outpouring of gifts, food, toiletries, money and energy from our parish this Advent-Christmas season. The Christmas offering for the shelter program of the Downtown Cooperative Ministries was \$943.51. An additional \$800 from the Chenery Fund was added for this effort to expand shelter and available beds for the homeless in Richmond.*

*Nancy Bugge made 13 bright Christmas stockings and filled them with toys, books, soap, toothpaste and brushes, fruit and candy, distributed through ACTS to families*

(West - cont.)

in the Ashland area. Lula Hopkins took toilet articles parishioners brought to church during Advent to the Peter-Paul Development Center on Church Hill where such items are always needed. Gifts to the Christ Child on Christmas Eve filled seven ample boxes to overflowing and were distributed to needy Ashland and Hanover County families through ACTS.

Curt and Gladys Gleason with funds raised through their Rescue Mission provided groceries for 40 large food boxes including turkey with trimmings. Ten boxes were added to similar gifts from the Social Ministries Committee of St. Ann Roman Catholic Church and distributed through ACTS.

Other boxes were distributed through churches in Caroline and at Aquia Episcopal Church in Northern Virginia. Debbie Carter, Bridgett Keith and Jay Pace joined the Gleasons for packing duty which seemed to transform Brydon Hall into a Ukrops Grocery stockroom. Tom Wingfield of ACTS said that our parish involvement and St. Ann's made this the most bountiful Christmas ever for the many needy families.

During December we completed our commitment to the winterization program of the Hanover Interagency Council. Teams of parishioners weatherized four homes in the town and county, putting plastic on windows, wrapping water pipes and putting weatherstripping around doors. At another home, nearly rebuilt by a winterization team from St. Peter United Methodist Church, we coordinated and built a pit privy for a very needy family that had no bathroom facilities. Norman Bugge took on the task of construction. Ron Hopkins, with Bobby Snipes of R.R. Snipes Construction Co., donated time, labor and machinery to dig the pit. We would also like to help the family clean up the litter and refuse-ridden yard and will seek parishioners to join us. Thanks to Norm, Hop, John Wade, Steve Pace, Dick, Sandi and Fred Shirey, Chris Pace, Mike Hall and Alex Cude for their help with these instance of outreach.

Your Outreach Commission constantly is made aware of needs, especially in the Hanover community, and welcomes the time and talents of any parishioner in helping.

## THE PLANT/APPOINTMENTS

The parish plant is neat on the outside, and the church building itself is a late 1950's colonial style, designed by architect Milton Gregg. Appointments are basically simple and attractive. There is healthy liturgical space around the altar as the choir stalls are sufficiently separated from it to avoid any sense of crowding. Behind the altar are two handsome wood panels, one beautifully carved with the full text of the Lord's Prayer and the other with the Ten Commandments, looking a bit Hebraic, something of a synagogue. The rector, with the worship commission, was responsible for moving the well-designed altar to a free-standing position, and it is used accordingly. The brass altar cross is placed on a credence to one side of the altar. As is done in a number of area parishes, full frontals are used instead of the short "bikini" type so-called superfrontals.

Fishwick pointed out two unique items of interest that aided matters. The parish quite readily accepted the Sarum blue array for use because it is used in the historic Bruton Parish, Williamsburg, Va. Thus it is "correct!" Also, since the rector uses whole pita bread increasingly (furnished by different families each time), it is more readily accepted because of conditions in past history. There was a time when the parish was so poor it could not afford to purchase commercially prepared pre-fractional wafers, and so women of the parish each week made loaf altar bread for the Holy Communion.

## VIGIL PROGRAMS

St. James the Less Parish keeps two kinds of vigil activity: an on-going vigil "presence" at the time of the death of a parish member; and the Great Vigil of Easter. Obviously, they are related.

Using the Prayer Book provision for vigils in The Ministration at the Time of Death (p. 465) when a fellow-communicant dies, a round-the-clock vigil team of parishioners is scheduled to keep watch with and for the bereaved. This includes the vigil at the church, where the remains of the deceased are brought, not at a funeral home. The



(West - cont.)

vigil includes the pastoral presence and care for the families of those who died, helping to minister to their grief at the time of death, at the funeral, and for the continuing period of the grief process.

The celebration of the paschal mystery in the Great Vigil of Easter did not have an easy start. People did not respond well when it was scheduled for the night of Easter Eve. "We had to compete with the sentimentality attached to the area sunrise Easter services, and this included some Episcopalians," said Jeffery Fishwick. Other denominations were attempting to make the sunrise services a "union" event of all the churches, but without any sacramental celebration. But after Fishwick had taken a cue from AP's Marion Hatchett and made reference to it, laity came to the rescue. They moved the Great Vigil to Easter "very early in the morning while it was still dark on the first day of the week!" "Our church building has real working shutters on the windows. Therefore, beginning before dawn, while the doors are shut and the windows shuttered, the Great Vigil begins with a fine response of attending people. Then to keep the timing and sense of contrast between darkness and light, in case the morning sun beats us to it, as the paschal fire is lighted and the Light of Christ is proclaimed, appointed laity open the shutters and doors simultaneously so that a natural flood of light comes in at the appropriate moment." This prompts ALLELUIA's indeed, and, after Communion and Dismissal, breakfast is served.

### THE PARISH AND AP

The parish lists some 225 communicants now. This represents a quite startling growth after earlier years. Since the advent of Rector Fishwick and the enabling of a strong baptismal ministry from the rest

of the Laos of the parish, average attendance has more than doubled — one healthy sign of growth in all dimensions.

As an AP Council member myself, I asked Fishwick for his comments about AP, how we might be of more service. He had two basic responses:

1. "Please get more of those teaching brochures into our hands soon! They are sorely needed and desired by us." (Ed. note: since this article was written, two brochures — *The Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage and Holy Baptism: A Liturgical and Pastoral Commentary* — have been sent to members.)

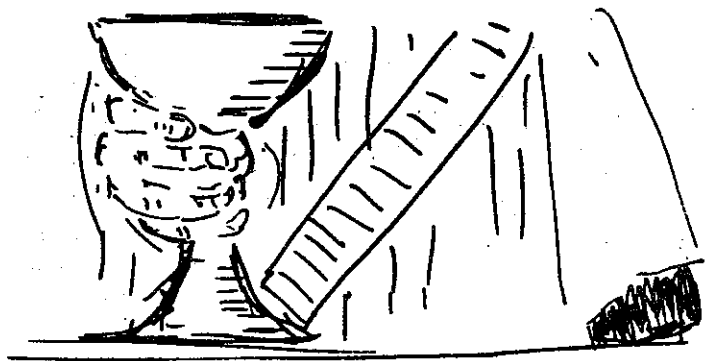
2. About *OPEN* — I enjoy it, but I find that laity find it too esoteric in their busy lives for the most part, so they don't take to it too easily. I would like to have them have it as an additional periodical tool for study. I wish it would come out more often. Include good scholarly material, of course, but not exclusively. Add material that may be readily accepted even at practical levels for laity."

He then added, "After all, AP is chiefly about parishes, not just clergy. As parishes of the Family of God that include the educated and the not-so-educated, there must be a continuous flow of communication from parishes, for parishes, to parishes, which are the heartbeat of the Church and in the front lines of mission for the Faith and Gospel."

It was urged by this interviewer that Jeffrey and his people should and could make contributions of report and inquiry for *OPEN* and not feel intimidated as if all *OPEN* material must be prepared as long, scholarly and intellectual research papers!

+++





The deacon in the liturgy

## Table Waiter

by Ormonde Plater

**M**y bishop recently remarked that "deacons are the epitome of lay ministry," which is a fine aphorism, a warning against clerical pomp. In the grandeur of ordination, however, we often lose sight of simple functions. One of the typical acts of a deacon is to wait on table. This function helps to keep our feet on the ground. Just as the beast in all of us corrects the angel in all of us, the plain old tablewaiter brings the evangelist down to earth. To put the matter in terms of liturgy, the deacon who proclaims the gospel must also serve the dishes.

For the moment, forget about having a deacon at the altar as a sign of the diversity of ministry. Think of a table, the waiter hovering in the background. The waiter doesn't stand against the edge of the table during the meal — the diners would be offended at the intrusion — but remains discreetly at a distance, towel over arm or shoulder, ready to step forward if service is needed, if dishes are to be served or removed, if wine is to be

*Ormonde Plater, a member of the AP Council, is a deacon serving St. Anna's Church, New Orleans, La. This article, one of a series on "The Deacon in the Liturgy," first appeared in Diakoneo, a publication of the North American Association for the Diaconate, 14 Beacon St., Room 707, Boston, MA*

poured. In most restaurants of the better sort, the waiter does not carry on a running conversation with the patrons, does not draw attention to himself, does not distract the diners. Principles of good table service are the motivating force behind classic servants such as Jeeves and Hunter. (I seem to recall P.G. Wodehouse describing Jeeves as melting into the background like an elegant frog.

Principles of good table service help to make practical sense of the mystical liturgy of the sacrament. After the offertory, or table setting, the presider comes to the altar, and the deacon steps well back on the right (or wine) side. If there are two deacons, which is a good idea in parishes with more than one deacon, they step well back on either side. Liturgies with more than two deacons at the table tend to look over-served.

During the anaphora — or eucharistic prayer — the deacon stays away from the altar until service is needed. This can occur when a page needs to be turned. The usual place for the book is on the left. The presider, with hands in the prayer gesture, needs someone else to turn pages. The deacon thus steps around to that side and turns the page, then steps back. If there are two deacons, the left one does this.



(Plater - cont.)

At the end of the anaphora, the concluding doxology (which is often sung), the deacon steps forward on the right and lifts the chalice high while the presider lifts the bread, a gesture of offering the elements to God. This makes practical sense when the bread that is offered is a substantial loaf. (It is not desirable to lift additional flagons at the same time.)

As chief servant of the wine, or sommelier, the deacon performs a normal function of a meal. There is also an ancient understanding of this function that the cup of wine is the "mystery of faith" which the deacon must hold with a clear conscience (see 1 Timothy 3:9, which influenced liturgies from the Roman canon to our Prayer A.

In some pestiferous locations, it is also necessary for the deacon to keep insects out of the chalice, usually by covering it while it is not in use. In some oriental rites the deacon waves a cloth or fan.

In summary, if one of the main roles of deacons is to set others free for their own proper ministries, including to set leaders free to devote themselves to prayer (as Acts 6:4 says), then the ministry of the deacon during the anaphora should leave the presider entirely unencumbered by duties such as turning pages, hoisting dishes, and swatting flies.

The presider, as host, does have one traditional serving role, to break the bread into pieces sufficient for communion. The rubric in Book of Occasional Services deserves to be quoted in entirety:

*It should be noted that the rubrics of the Prayer Book require that the initial breaking of the Bread take place in silence. A distinct period of silence then follows (the celebrant having replaced the Bread on the paten.) The singing of the Confractorium is then begun, during which the celebrant and other priests break the Bread for distribution. In the absence of a sufficient number of priests, deacons may assist in the Bread-breaking. The*

*pouring of consecrated wine into any additional chalices should also take place during this anthem, and before the Invitation "The Gifts of God..." and the celebrant's communion.*

[page 15]

The first breaking of bread into two halves does not symbolize the death of Christ, the presider does not need to show the bread to the people at this point, and the fraction is not an occasion for throwing arms out in a representation of the cross. Instead, the breaking is an occasion for meditation, complete silence for at least 30 seconds. When the silence ends, the breaking resumes in earnest, and the deacon brings one or more extra chalices to the altar, fills them from the flagon(s), and arranges them along the right side of the altar with sufficient towels or purificators.

When all this is accomplished, the sacrament ready for communion, the meal ready, presider lifts bread and deacon chalice to invite the people to receive. Then the presider receives the sacrament in both kinds. Just what does the rubrical word "receive" mean? Some are now interpreting the rubric to mean that communion involves more than one person. If so, the deacon should give communion to the presider, and the presider to the deacon. Lay eucharistic ministers receive next.

As the chief enabler of lay ministries, the deacon should never exclude LEM's from the eucharist. Even the smallest parish can regularly use at least one LEM in every eucharist. The deacon takes one side of the rail, or of the station, the LEM the other. If you use two LEM's, the deacon can replenish chalices from the flagon, a practice which symbolizes the enabling of ministries. The rubrics also permit the deacon to serve the bread, although that is the normal role of bishops and priests.

When communion ends, the presider takes a seat while the deacon and LEM's clean up at a side table or in the sacristy.

+++





# BOOKS



*Prayer Book Rubrics Expanded.* Byron G. Stuhlman. Church Hymnal Corporation, New York, N.Y. \$14.95

The Rev. Byron Stuhlman, long-time chair of the Connecticut liturgy and music commission and editor of the ADLMC newsletter, has been commissioned by the Church Hymnal Corporation to write a "customary" for the BCP 1979. While one may wonder whether this is meant to be the official manual for worship like that of the Lutherans, it is wonderfully done. Byron has been very "Anglican" in his approach; moderate in all things and wise in his advice. He told me that he sent the draft to two seminary professors, both of Anglo-Catholic persuasion; one thought he had oversimplified the manual acts, while the other was disappointed that he had left so much in. This is a good indication of the usefulness of the book. No brand of churchmanship needs to be offended, and the catholic Faith is very much in evidence. I find myself following his advice constantly and have already cut back some of my "fussi-

nesses" and found a deeper understanding of why I do or do not do certain things. Certainly this is a landmark book and one that everyone will find a treasure trove of practical liturgics.

The larger question is the problem of an "official" book. The fact that Frank Hemline of the Church Hymnal Corporation is up on liturgical affairs and has made a masterful choice in Byron should not blind us to the problem of another editor and a misbegotten choice of writer. While it is nice to know that officialdom cares about liturgy, a dangerous precedent may have been set which could kick back in the future.

Having said that, I have nothing but praise for both Byron and Frank for what they have done. We may devoutly hope that this will put an end to those little partisan booklets from this and that party in the Church claiming to have "the word."

(The Rev.) Henry H. Breul  
Editor, OPEN



## The CATECHUMENATE Conference

Have you made your plans to attend the conference on the Catechumenate? As previously announced in OPEN and by letter, this conference, jointly sponsored by Associated Parishes and Grace Cathedral, San Francisco, will be held at the cathedral February 8-11, 1988.

All information can be obtained by writing to: Margie Stehle, Trinity Church, 330 Ravenswood Ave., Menlo Park, CA 94025.