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the **associated parishes**
for liturgy and mission

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General Convention and Christian Initiation

by Michael W. Merriman

In 1985 the General Convention gave a mandate to the Standing Liturgical Commission to develop, in consultation with the Education for Ministry and Mission department, guidelines "for a practical catechumenate." The SLC's work was presented to the 1988 Convention in resolutions A098, A099, and A100 which were passed by the Convention. The development of the guidelines and additional rites was done by a committee appointed by the SLC which was chaired by AP Council member Robert Brooks.

The committee's work in the triennium began with a survey of the catechumenal processes being used in various places and an evaluation of successes and problems which were surfacing. The most notable

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program is one going on in the Diocese of Milwaukee where a number of parishes under direct guidelines from Bishop Roger White have been engaging in a form of the catechumenate for several years. There were also catechumenates in several parishes and at least one cathedral.

The primary questions being raised had to do with a clear definition of the catechumenate, what kind of process is needed for catechesis, and the place of already baptized persons in such a process. The resolutions passed by General Convention seek to give direction in those areas.

Resolution #A098: Principles of Implementation.

The definition of the catechumenate needed clarification. Although the directions for its implementation in the *Book of Occasional Services* states that the catechumenate is for persons preparing for baptism, the rites were also being used in many places

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for baptized persons preparing for confirmation, reception, or reaffirmation. The committee immediately agreed that such rites are not appropriate for baptized persons. These additional principles make that clear. (It should be noted that they do not deal with the issue of preparation of older children, which we hope the SLC will deal with in the current triennium.)

The response from people in the Diocese of Milwaukee and other places to this was to acknowledge that such a rule is certainly right but that they had found the structure of the catechumenate effective in preparing baptized persons for the laying on of hands as well. That response led to a further level of work which will be dealt with in the discussion of the resolutions which follow this one.

The other question raised had to do with matters such as curricula and content for the catechumenate. The "Principles of Implementation" set out guidelines for those questions. The context of catechesis is in four areas: scriptures, worship, prayer, and work for social justice.

Primary to this is the study of the history of salvation. This is envisioned as more than a study of the contents of the Bible. The scriptures are seen first as the story of God's saving action in history. Study of the contents of the Bible and aids in reading and understanding are done in that context.

But salvation history is not simply something contained in the scriptures. It is an ongoing story in the lives of believers and of the community of faith. Therefore, the catechumens look at their own lives of worship, prayer, and ministry, both as individuals and as part of the community, as the place where the history of salvation is continuing. The principal curriculum in such a study is the community's shared reading of the scriptures: the Sunday lectionary.

The methodology of the catechumenate is reflection on experience. Thus the catechumens deal with that which they have and are experiencing. They reflect upon the scriptures they and the congregation have heard read and preached. They reflect upon

the worship in which they take part: liturgies of the Word such as the pro-anaphora and the Daily Office. They reflect upon the prayer in which they engage which means that they are being taught methods and types of prayer. They reflect upon the ministry they are doing and particularly that which occurs in their daily lives at work, at home, and in their communities. When they are introduced to organized social and ecclesiastical ministry, it is so they can engage in such activities and then reflect upon it. (In my own congregation this means that they are all engaged in outreach ministry, and have been for some time, before they are baptized.)

This methodology means that they do not engage in study of rites and sacraments in which they cannot take part. Thus their reflection upon baptism, chrismation and the laying on of hands by the bishop, and Holy Communion is not done until after they are baptized. This is the ancient content of post-baptismal catechesis, or mystagogy.

The principles also make it clear that the catechumenate is not to be seen as a time-bound process which begins on a certain date and fills a specific portion of the year. Now catechumens are admitted whenever they are ready. Their period in the catechumenate is determined by their need, not by the calendar. This means that, in congregations which have strong programs of evangelization and a commitment to the catechumenate, there will ultimately be catechumens most of the time. In such congregations the preparation of persons for baptism will increasingly be seen by their members as a central and normal fact of church life.

These principles suggest that the classic baptismal gospel readings for Lent, found in the Year A lectionary, be used every year when there are baptismal candidates for Easter. It gives guidelines for dismissing the catechumens each Sunday after the sermon so that they and their sponsors and catechists may engage in reflection upon the Sunday scriptures. It has been found by many catechumens themselves that remaining with the baptized during the eucharistic rite as non-participants is frustrating and unproductive.

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Resolution #A099: Preparation of Baptized Persons for Reaffirmation of the Baptismal Covenant.

As I mentioned above, the SLC's instruction that the catechumenate is appropriate only for unbaptized persons led to discussion with those who had found that the structure of the catechumenate was highly effective in preparing baptized persons for confirmation/reception/reaffirmation. The Committee on Initiation looked at that structure and sought to find a way to use it while respecting the baptisms of those who are seeking to reaffirm their baptismal covenant.

This set of rites first states the structure: three periods of transition, each concluding with a transitional rite. This is, of course, the same structure as that in the catechumenate. It looks like this:

Stage 1. Inquiry

Rite 1. "The Welcoming of Baptized Christians into a community."

Stage 2. Formation

Rite 2. "The Calling of the Baptized to Continuing Conversion."

Stage 3. Preparation for Reaffirmation

Rite 3. "Maundy Thursday Rite for Baptized Persons in Preparation for the Paschal Holy Days."

The instructions make it clear that the content and methodology for this process is the same as that in the catechumenate, that is, reflection upon experience in the light of salvation history, worship, prayer, and ministry for social justice. It is clear, however, that these persons, as participating members of the baptized community, will be reflecting upon their life as Christians in a number of areas which the catechumens will not encounter until after they are baptized. Therefore, in those congregations where it is desired to have the catechumens and the baptized join in some of their meetings, there will need to be times also when they meet separately. (I have found that this will work quite well in my own congregation.)

One exciting possibility in this process is that it opens up to us the chance to bring all new members in a congregation together for a period of inquiry into the life of the local community. Several times a year a period of inquiry can be announced for all those new to the parish. For several weeks they can look together at the worship, prayer, and ministry of that parish and its diocese. Opportunities for entering into parish life more fully can be introduced as well as opportunities for baptism and for confirmation/reception/reaffirmation.

It will, in many instances, be the case that some in such an "Inquirers' Class" will not choose, or need to choose, some form of reaffirmation and, after being welcomed in the first rite, they can go directly into those areas of parish life for which they are called and suited. (Some may find themselves being called as sponsors to those going on to baptism or reaffirmation, or called to be trained as catechists.)

You will note that this process is directed toward the Paschal Holy Days. It is hoped that the SLC will consider variations in the rites for reaffirmation at other times, but we still believe that the baptism of adults should be at Easter.

Also note that the third rite provides for an opening address on Maundy Thursday which is far less clericalized than the one currently provided by the *Book of Occasional Services*.

Resolution #A100: The Preparation of Parents and Godparents for the Baptism of Infants and Young Children.

Here we have also a structure which parallels the catechumenate. It was suggested to its drafters by John Westerhoff's *Learning through Liturgy*. (Seabury Press). Its stages are:

Stage 1. Pregnancy

Rite 1. "The Blessing of Parents at the beginning of Pregnancy."

Stage 2. During Pregnancy and the time of Birth

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Rite 2. "Thanksgiving for the Birth or Adoption of a Child."

Stage 3. From Birth to Baptism

Rite 3. "Holy Baptism"

Stage 4. Childhood catechesis in the family and the Church.

There are several things to note about this process. Its first rite is from the BOS with suitable modifications when both parents are involved, and the two other rites are from the BCP without change. The process expects the parish to be actively welcoming to those who have children and who are contemplating children. Parents will be encouraged to notify their pastor as soon as pregnancy is determined.

The model of reflection on experience in the light of salvation history, prayer, worship, and ministry for social justice is again given for this process, as is the Sunday lectionary as the basic curriculum. In this case those being prepared are baptized, so their experience includes the sacraments, and the experience includes also pregnancy, birth, and parenting. Those involved from the parish community will need to include trained catechists, godparents, any children in the family, and persons who are parents themselves.

This process will also need adaptation when the child is to be adopted and when the process does not begin during pregnancy.

It is also important to note that the process assumes that children will receive Holy Communion at their baptism and from then on. That this is a natural and essential part of the child's on-going life after baptism is presumed by the guidelines.

All this material is to be found in the new edition of the *Book of Occasional Ser-*

vices just published by the Church Hymnal Corporation (2nd edition, pp.257, cloth, \$11.95. Ed.). The Education for Ministry and Mission unit at the Episcopal Church Center, New York, is in the process of producing materials for implementing these processes.

It should be apparent that a parish which takes this seriously will find a number of things happening: Baptism and its related reaffirmation rites will become the central activity of the congregation, the clergy will have to turn to lay persons as catechists and leaders for these processes, evangelism will be focussed on initiation and ministry rather than mere church membership, and parishes will develop an ever increasing number of persons actively involved in outreach ministry and steeped in the scriptures.

Finally, at General Convention concern was expressed about the term "social justice" used in the catechumenal and parallel rites. Some of this came from an assumption that social justice was being used as a synonym for "social action", and some from a concern that it would be read that way by people who are afraid of social action, especially in its 1960's manifestation.

The term refers specifically to the last three promises in the Baptismal Covenant, as salvation history applies to the credal portion of the covenant, and the first two promises following the Creed to worship and prayer. "Social justice" and our ministry come together in proclaiming Christ, in loving others, and in striving for justice and peace and respecting the dignity of every human being. Catechumens and others, indeed the whole Church, need to have before them Christ who was anointed to preach good news to the poor and their own incorporation into Christ. We are anointed as Christ-bearers to preach and live that good news in our own time. +++

This paper will appear in slightly different form in the publication, by the Church Hymnal Corporation, of the papers from the national liturgical conference held at San Francisco, February 8-11, 1988. Publication is scheduled for Fall, 1989.

The Preposterous Claim of Baptism

Sermon at Grace Cathedral, San Francisco
1 Epiphany: The Baptism of Our Lord, 1989

The Right Reverend William Swing

In the name of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Amen.

When I was in a small mission church in a steel town in West Virginia, a young Serbian Orthodox couple came to me wanting their baby to be baptized. There was not a Serbian Orthodox church around nor a priest, so they wanted to use our building. A Serbian Orthodox priest would come from Northern California for the baptismal rite itself. In working out details I asked of I might be of help. The reply was that a table would be needed in the middle of the church, so I went out and got a table, put it in the church. They said they would like to have a large baptismal candle, so I got one and put it right next to the table. And they said they wanted two large bowls of luke-warm water, so I obliged.

Finally, the day came. It was freezing cold and required a snow lane to be shoveled to the church door. The Serbian Orthodox priest arrived with magnificent robes and a baptismal kit. The baby arrived under layers and layers of warm blankets. And when the baptism began, the blankets were taken away and, to my surprise, the baby was naked. The priest opened his baptismal kit, took out a pair of fine, small scissors, and approached the little boy. I thought to myself, "Well, this is going to be a first for me." Then the priest went over and snipped off a little bit of hair from the baby's head. And he combined it with a small portion of wax from the candle — the baptismal candle — and together it became a seal and a symbol. This tiny combination, whereby the human offering was engulfed by and grafted into the larger baptismal symbol of the candle in the body, this tiny combination of hair

and candle wax was to be kept by that family for a lifetime. And then when that little baby would grow up and finally get old and finally would die and would be put in a coffin, then some member of the family was to take that little combination of hair and candle wax from the baptismal candle and put it into the coffin as if to mark the reality of it all and to say, this child died to the world a long time ago, and this child began to live eternally with Christ a long time ago.

Baptism makes such a preposterous claim. It claims that the world does not know how to tell time and that the world does not know how to conduct regular personnel evaluations. I absolutely adore the preposterous nature of baptism into Jesus Christ. It sees the world through a most laughable mirror. Everything is upside down and inside out. Lofty celebrities are brought down and obscure, powerless folks are granted status and tenure. And no one is on time except the Boss. Baptism is a journey that starts for a naked baby in a mission church in the winter darkness of a steel town and ends with a new creature clothed in a spiritual body among the saints in life. Baptism breaks the law along the way, including the law of common sense. Baptism is outrageous and dangerous. That is why priests have to have license to carry around baptismal possibilities of life and death.

Look at the story that was read today in the Gospel. The Christ is coming. The Christ would rise up from the midst of the people. No one knew who was going to be the Christ, the Chosen One, but it says that the people were in expectation and they wondered in their hearts; they mused, "Could John the

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Baptist be the Christ?" He was a likely candidate. John was strong, John was public. He was well known to the Governor, to the Tetrach. John was zealous for God and he was fearless. John could lead people and John was out by the river baptizing. Folks flocked to him. Taking people who had sold out in a Godless life, he would convict them and he would turn them around in a God-directed destiny. A likely candidate.

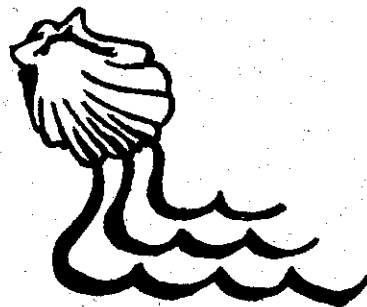
In the midst of this hoopla and speculation about John, a quiet, inconspicuous man stepped into the water of total immersion. And then the heavens opened and the Spirit of God descended like a dove upon him and a voice was heard saying, "You are my beloved son. In you I am well pleased."

This unlikely Jesus was the Christ, and he had a baptismal blessing which was uniquely his to have and to share. Both things have got to go together if there is anything in this story for us. The baptism was not only his to have, but it was his to share. That word, "beloved," was for him and the word "beloved" was for him to share. "You are my beloved in whom I am well pleased." These are not words written in a book. This is the Eternal Voice echoing through galaxies and light years to arrive here at the right time with the right person, making a mockery out of our time schedule and our value system, but coming from the foundation of the earth, to land upon Jesus of Nazareth in the Jordan River at that time being baptized.

The whole baptismal enterprise becomes something else. Making a claim of final worth in the middle of all this business we call life. Something came to the final one; in baptism we have the final rite. Sometimes in the Church we say, "Well, the burial office is the final rite or ritual." No, no, no! Baptism is the final rite. God speaks to Jesus in baptism as if life and death and death and life are turned around. Jesus hears God say, "You are mine. You are beloved and I am well pleased with you." And then Jesus turns that around in his baptism and he offers it to the world. He takes all of us in all of our sordidness, in all of our compromise, and lifts us right out of his water of baptism, and he says to us, "You are beloved." Nothing can take that away. "You are beloved."

This world grinds away with all of its imprisoning cycles — the cycle of poverty, the cycle of substance abuse — all those voices that sentence us in our heads to limited existence because we are only so smart, only so attractive, only so healthy, and our days only last so long. But baptism claims that the world does not know how to tell time or conduct a personnel evaluation. The Christ shares his final words, his final word with you, "beloved;" shares it back there in that water; shares it right here in this bread and this wine. And when the world hears the word "beloved," the world convolutes and turns inside out in the face of God's claim.

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Are Deacons the Enemy?

Sermon at the Ordination of Deacons
Cathedral of St. John, Diocese of Rhode Island
February 4, 1989

The Reverend Canon James Lassen-Willems

Is the permanent diaconate a plot by bishops to take over diocesan conventions throughout this country? Is this ordination today a harbinger of episcopal tyranny? I am here today to tell you that the truth is worse than a mere plot by bishops to take over the Church. Much worse. The permanent diaconate is a plot by God to make the Episcopal Church relevant and responsive to the needs of poor and oppressed people in the 20th century, to make ours a Church for all the people, not just those with Anglo-Saxon surnames and a stable income.

This is a plot that has been unfolding for twenty centuries. By the grace of God, it is a plot that is finally coming to fruition in our time, in this very place, at this very time, with the ordination of these five people as deacons in our Church. Yes, it is a plot that has simultaneously ripened for the last ten years in many places in our country and throughout the world. It is a plot to which I hope we, the People of God, will gladly be able to say, "Amen" to during this ordination ceremony today.

I think I have probably been asked to preach at this ordination because, for the last three years, I have been involved in spiritual formation for the students in the Deacons School. For me this has been a time of praying and teaching, discovering the meaning of this old-new ministry which is re-emerging in our midst. The invitation by the students of the Deacons School to be their spiritual resource has challenged and matured my theology. I want to begin this sermon by thanking you five ordinands, and the rest of the deacon students who are here, for asking me to serve you as a spiritual resource. You people do not know

what your prayers and love have done for this one short, dwarfish priest in both hard times and good times. Thank you.

I really have two things I want to say today. One thing is about the meaning of the diaconate for our Church. The other is about what you five need to do to be ready for this new ministry.

Let's begin by looking at one of today's lessons, in particular, Luke 22:24-27.

A dispute arose among them, which of them was to be regarded as the greatest. And he said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and those in authority over them are called benefactors. But not so with you; rather let the greatest among you become the youngest, and the leader as one who serves. For which is greater, one who sits at table, or one who serves? Is it not one who sits at table? But I am among you as one who serves."

The key to understanding the meaning of the permanent diaconate is in the mystery of this table servant that Jesus refers to in our Luke reading. Let's examine what the mystery of this table servant is, and what the inner preparation is that this servant needs, to have the Mind of Christ in his or her ministry.

First, we need to ask, who is this table servant? What is the standard that is used to measure the table servant? The Table Servant is, of course, as our Luke reading says, Jesus Christ himself. In fact, you may remember that the table server, the

deacon, for the Last Supper, was Jesus Christ. He was deacon as well as priest at that supper. He was deacon very, very often in his ministry. It is Jesus Christ, himself, who is the model for you five ordinands today.

This is a very stunning recognition for the identity of the table server that gets lost immediately when we look at how deacons are seen in the Church today. I have heard many priests joke that the deacon is really a waiter or waitress with a collar on — a kind of ordained step-and-fetch-it. That is what the Church would like to think sometimes, and that is the way some of us have tried to treat deacons. We do this probably because, in our own age, we are uncomfortable with service and servanthood of any kind. It has no status, it is the kind of thing some ethnic groups are supposed to do, or women. But, in thinking of service this way, we forget what the *Table*, itself, meant for Jesus Christ and for the early Church, what a *table servant* was and, more generally, what *servant* and servanthood meant in the Gospel.

So, what does the Table mean? It is the place where the People of God are fed, clothed, brought together, and cared for. The Table is our symbol for community, for the Kingdom of God, for the Wedding Feast in that Kingdom. The diaconate begins as a ministry in Acts, because the table in the early Church is not serving its function as the place for God's justice. The Table was not a place where all of the people were being cared for, all of the people being fed, all of the people being gathered together. People were being left out in the Acts account.

During our liturgy, the Table is the very interface of Heaven and Earth. It is, symbolically, the place where the Kingdom of God and God's creation meet in a loving, almost erotic, embrace. Look at that Table, that is where Heaven and Earth meet. Truly, we bring to it the gifts of us the people, and the cries and brokenness of us, the people, all of us. And there we give these gifts to God, trusting in His grace and mercy. And, by God's grace, these gifts are made the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, the healing heavenly Food of the Kingdom. It is really this Food that becomes for us the actual presence of God and also the

reminder of our ultimate destination with God, the heavenly bridal feast which never ends. This is what the Table means.

So, let us take another look at who are the Table servants. In Acts, deacons are ordained to make sure that the needs of all the people are met at the Table. It should be no surprise that one of these deacons, Stephen, turns out not to be a waiter at all, but a preacher. He is a preacher who is murdered because his message was to invite all of the people to the banquet, to the feast, to make sure that all of the people got an invitation to come to the meal. The deacon's purpose then and now is to take the message of the Church to the margins, to all of the people, and to bring those people back into the Church.

So, yes, the deacon makes sure that everyone gets to the Table. This heavenly table, this radical table, meant the same thing at the time of Christ, and for the new Church after Christ, as it means for us now. If we forget that this is what this table over there means, that it is the symbol of God's invitation to all of the broken, all of the hurt, all of the lonely, all of the victims, then the deacons who serve at that table will be trivialized, they will be reduced to waiters at the Episcopal Church restaurant.

That is not what the deacon's presence means. They are the guardians, the assurance that our table is fair, that everyone is included, that everyone is heard. They are God's and Christ's sergeants at arms, the advocates, the voices for those who have no voices. It is especially important today, in a world with so much hunger, so much oppression, so much brokenness, so much death and fear, that we have deacons at the tables in our Church. It is critically important. Otherwise the Church may very easily forget the meaning of the Table and the necessity for every person's inclusion at our eucharistic table.

If we understand the table servant, *then what about servanthood in general?* What does Jesus mean when he says, "I am among you as one who serves."? Jesus Christ is the servant. Jesus is the one who gave himself completely and totally for us, that we all might have opportunity to be included

in God's invitation for wholeness, that we might finally understand what it is to be divine and to be human, and that we might really understand our correct relationship to one another.

Jesus was not a power person. He was powerful, power was in him, but power was not his game, not his name. His name was love, was servanthood, was giving, was healing, was touching, was speaking, was advocacy, was rebel, was justice, was more things than I can name. But his power and his person and his strength were shown, not by titles, not by institutional power struggles, but by devoting his life to his ministry among victims, the needy, the sinners, the broken, the God seekers, the questioners, the ill, the plague ridden. Servant is not lackey. Servant is not waitress or waiter. Servant is the Spirit-filled proclaimer of the Gospel who is totally and unmistakably on the side of those who are in need of the Gospel. Servant, in our Gospel today, is the tested one, the tried one, the trained and educated one, the praying and prepared advocate of the victims. That is what servant is. In our Church, the diaconal servant is called to serve all of those people who are asked or forced to serve the powerful in the secular world. These people who serve are, of course, the same ones who too often are the oppressed; the ones in the welfare line, the hourly wage earners and the like. Deacons are called to serve them as Christ served us, with love and by restoring their dignity.

That is why you ordinands have been trained the way you have been trained, have been tested the way you were. You have not always been treated fairly and as justly as you might have been. Because your Church is not a fair and perfect place. If it were, there would be no need for you. We are struggling as we learn to deal with your emerging ministry. You are new creatures. We do not fully understand you. We need your help to begin to learn to listen to your voices and to the voices of the people you represent. You are being ordained as a sign of our trust, of the Church's trust, that the Holy Spirit has truly selected you to help us discover the whole meaning of ministry in our Church, a ministry which includes everyone, lay and ordained. You need to take your own occasional experiences as victims and allow them to place

you in compassionate solidarity with all of those victims whom you will serve. Because even the Church, God's Church, sometimes makes some of its children victims.

I have one more thing I would like to say. I want to take the other major Lucan theme of inner preparation, of prayer, and relate it to this diaconal ministry of which I have just spoken. Now, I want to speak to you personally, as your spiritual director, the one you have chosen as your spiritual resource person. This whole thing will not work for you unless you are deeply connected to the one you are called to emulate, Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ is both an inner and an outer ministry. We have already said something about what you are to do in the world, what you are to do for the Church. This will not work unless you learn to care for yourselves spiritually. Unless you learn to look for the Kingdom within you, in your very center, converting your soul there, as you attempt to convert the world outside you, to convert the world and yourself from the laws of sin and death, to the laws of God's love in Christ.

This inner ministry has three aspects to it:

First, the Discipline of Jesus. You must read the Gospels carefully. Jesus is your model. Jesus is the one who does the things you must learn to do. He is with women, he is with people with leprosy, today he is with persons with AIDS, he is with the poor, the unclean, the low class, or no class. He touches the dead. He heals and feels all of the victims.

You are called also to be present for anyone and everyone in this world. To never say no to anyone's needs because they are different than you, a different color, a different sexuality, a different religion, a different gender. You are asked to be like Jesus, to be present for anyone within the limits of the resources which God gives you. You can only learn this Discipline of Jesus by immersing yourself in the Gospels in particular. Learn to speak about and think about and dream about every act that is in Jesus' life. It must be that simple



for you. To begin with Jesus himself and then to look at all those women and men in the history of the Church whose commitment has been to Jesus first.

Second, Prayer. This will only work if you learn to pray. Look at all of the aspects of prayer in the Church. Today we pray for you and the bishop lays hands on you. You will now be prayed for every day someplace in the world. Then, you must pray for others, especially those who are forgotten and abandoned, but you must also pray very distinctively and particularly for yourself. Learn to talk to God about what is happening in your life, every day. Learn to be with God as friend and comrade in your daily life.

But, as important as these forms of prayer, you must also learn to be totally immersed in prayer, to be centered in it at the very core of your being. If you do not learn this inner prayer, you will simply burn out. You will learn this inner prayer when you begin to explore some form of meditation or contemplative prayer. We have already spoken about this at Deacons' School. But I say it again now. The Discipline of Jesus will cease to mean anything to you unless you learn to live with God inside, in some form of quiet strengthening prayer that will sustain you no matter what.

Third, the Community of Deacons. You will also not make it if you try to do it alone. The diaconate began as a group activity. It should remain that now. You are going to strange places and you will do strange things. You need one another. You need other deacons. That is why the bishop and arch-deacon will be supervising you in affinity groups, that is, in groups according to your diaconal vocation. You will have one another to share with and to rely upon. Your ministry is developed, encouraged, and evaluated in the presence of other deacons. You will be distinctive because you will not be asked to do ministry separated and apart from other deacons. Your ministry is really conceived in our Church as a team ministry, not as a Lone Ranger crusade.

You should know that it is a very real truth that the necessity of God's Kingdom will disappear, sometimes very slowly, if you attempt to organize the margins of society by yourself. Very slowly you will

be seduced by society, by the secular world, if you are by yourself. You will become ashamed of the Church, of Jesus' name, of calling yourself a believer. You will use only secular language and believe in secular images and secular solutions. And, I can tell you brothers and sisters, as a former communist, which is probably the most secular symbol system in the world today for social change, the secular world is bankrupt. It has no solutions without God. We need God and we need Jesus Christ. Socialism, communism, or capitalism, without God, will breed no real solutions. People are converting today to religious belief more rapidly in socialist and communist countries than anywhere else in the world, except for the Third World, where secular answers haven't had much to offer either. So don't be ashamed of being Christian. And work together in teams so that you may strengthen one another in God's message.

The Charge

I don't believe in long charges. Betty Lou, Lois, Gail, Bob Adams, and Bob Field; I charge you with three things today:

1. Be present to and for God in Jesus Christ. Be present in the world and in your Church. Be brave and insistent in this presence. It will not be easy. Learn what I have called the Discipline of Christ. Learn to think with the Mind of Christ.

2. Be present to God and Christ in your core by learning to pray. Learn to pray constantly. Learn to be centered in prayer. Learn to let God be so intimate in yourself that God is like a lover, constantly present, constantly a resource.

3. Be with one another as deacons. Go to the places of suffering, the places of need together, so that you are not overwhelmed by the brokenness of this world. Learn to see one another as sisters and brothers. You are the antibodies which our Church needs to bring it into the full consciousness of its mission. We need you to do it together as a team.

Thank you and may God continue to bless your ministries. In Jesus' name.

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Central Symbols, Water

by Gerard S. Sloyan

A faculty colleague of mine who is a Polish Jew and Hasidic rabbi came back from Israel two summers ago and gave me this bottle. The label says "Carmel," then "Advat", the winery, and beneath it "dry rosé wine." It does not look like rosé. That is because it is murky water, replete with algae at the bottom, from the River Jordan. Zalman Schachter said, as he offered it to me, "I cannot think of anyone who might appreciate having this as much as you." He was right, of course. I treasure it more than a flask from the Pierian Spring where the Muses were born, or Lourdes water, or even a draught from a holy well on the Irish countryside. For here, in this water, our salvation was begun.

Well, not quite. This water was not primordial in our story like the four rivers of Paradise, the Tigris and Euphrates which everyone knows and the Pishon and the Gibon which no one can locate. We could go back farther still to the "face of the deep," over which the Spirit of God moved to tame the turbulence, to quell the chaos. "The seething sea ceaseth and thus the surging sea sufficeth me." Israel knew the Mediterranean in all its ferocity, and was never at ease with it. This may have been in part because the Philistines, then the

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Phoenicians forbade them access to it. Jonah is the bible's only sailor and he is a kind of schlemiel, a figure of fun. To Israel, the sea was *tehom*, the bottomless abyss. They could praise it as a mysterious work of God where the sea-monsters played, but few of them went down to the sea in ships. Some did business on the great waters where the Lord "lifted the waves of the sea. They cried to the Lord in their trouble...and God made the storm be still" (Ps 107:23-29). Let the firmament keep on separating the waters above from the waters below was the biblical outlook. Let the Breath or Wind of God keep the face of the waters calm, but "O, Western Sea, stay 'way from my door."

Some of you remember the immense impact Rachel Carson's *The Sea Around Us* had when it appeared almost forty years ago. This quiet government researcher made a mighty roar with her calm and measured treatise. Its main point was that without the sea we would have no existence. No less than the fish, she made clear, do we have water as our element. Oceans sustain us as much as the sun, although in different and less perceptible ways. You may have heard what all the paved surfaces in the cities of Florida have done to the climate there, making it hot and muggy, whereas, say the oldest residents, it used to be warm but fresh. All the grass is gone, covered by blacktop and cement. But the grass used to speak to the sky, and the sky used to speak to the grass. That conversation is over. The balance is destroyed. And the sea is around the Floridians in the way it was not meant to be. There are ever so many more ways —

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this is the thrust of the Carson book — in which the sea *is* meant to be around us. Should the oceans, rivers, and streams dry up or grow polluted, she maintains, there would be an end to our race.

God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that gathered together [God] called Seas. And God saw that it was good (Gen 1: 10). That is the first creation poem. And from the second, a narrative: "When no plant of the field was yet in the earth and there was no man to till the ground; but a stream welled up from the earth and watered all the surface of the ground — then the Lord formed *Adam* out of *adamah* ...," a human being from the dust. Well, you know the rest of the story. Without watered earth there would be no fields to till, no human life. Once the moisture came from beneath, the conditions of our life were set...

There must have been a deluge of immense proportions in the ancient Middle East, for it has left its memory in the writings of many peoples. Here is the way the Assyrian tablets of Gilgamesh, king of Uruk, tell it:

For six days and six nights the winds blew, torrent and tempest and flood overwhelmed the world, tempest and flood raged together like warring hosts. When the seventh day dawned the storm from the south subsided, the sea grew calm, the flood was stilled; I looked at the face of the world and there was silence, all humanity was turned to clay. The surface of the sea stretched flat as a rooftop; I opened a hatch and the light fell on my face. Then I bowed low, I sat down and wept, the tears streamed down my face for on every side there was a waste of water. (The Epic of Gilgamesh, trans. N. K. Sanders, Penguin, 1960, p.109).

Utnapishtim, the Noah of the epic, sent out a dove and a swallow which returned because they found no resting place, then a raven which ate as the waters receded and did not come back. The hero god, Enlil, was blamed by the goddess, Ishtar, for having brought the flood by his lack of reflection, but he in turn was angry at the gods for the magnitude of their destruction. The high god, Ea, says to Enlil that

it were better if a lion or a wolf had been the agent of wasting humanity, a famine or pestilence. But he makes no promise about the future.

You know the biblical version of this tale so well that it would be needless to repeat it. God vows to destroy the earth because it is filled with violence: "I will bring a flood of waters on the earth, to destroy all flesh...everything that is on the earth shall die" (Gen 6:17). But an ark built to surmount the flood, the effective sign of a fresh start. The deluge was the destructive power of God in the waters, but the tiny craft in the immense sea was the bearer of new life. You know what Peter made of that ancient tale years later: "At that time a few persons, eight in all, were saved — survived — through water. You are now saved by a baptism which corresponds to this exactly" (1 Pet 3:20-21). The God who destroys is the God who rescues: "Behold, I establish my covenant with you and your descendants after you...and...never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth...When the rainbow is on the clouds I will look upon it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth (Gen 9:9, 11, 16).

But a deluge was scarcely the prevailing biblical image of water...When Hagar fled the wrath of her mistress Sari, wrathful over the slave-woman's pregnancy, a messenger of the Lord overtook her at the spring on the way to Shur (Gen 16:7). Because the Lord had spoken to her there and she loved to tell the tale, that place was called the "well of the living sight" (v. 14). Abraham's servants found Rebekah as wife to Isaac at a well, because it was she who volunteered, "Drink and I will water your camels" (Gen 24:24, 20, 44, 46). "Then Isaac brought her into his tent, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife, and he loved her" (v. 67). Jacob met Rachel who "was beautiful and lovely" (29:17). This time it was he who rolled the stone from the well's mouth and watered the flocks of his mother's brother Laban. The wily kinsman ran a game on the lad from the country, as Jim Rockford might say, seven years with the wrong woman, poor Leah of the strabismus. We are spared nothing of the perils of polygamy. "Get thee child with mandrake root" (30:14-16) and

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two sons and a daughter came to Leah of that; but then, to Rachel, Joseph. Some of you have seen that well in the land of Jacob's ancestors to which he returned (pulling out on Laban by night like the Baltimore Colts). It is in a Greek Orthodox church in Nablus now. Ancient Sychar has been gobbled up by modern Nablus-Shechem. A Greek priest and two Israeli soldiers, Tommy-guns at the ready, sat there amicably all day long when I last saw it in '84. "Sir, you do not have a bucket and this well is deep. Surely you do not pretend to be greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us this well and drank from it with his sons and flocks" (John 4:12). "Whoever drinks of the water I shall give will never again be thirsty; no, the water I shall give will be an inner spring always welling up to eternal life." "Leaping" might translate John's verb here better — in the Vulgate, *saliens in viam*. You pitch a coin down Jacon's well and hear a muted splash, and it is a thrill to me there, but it does no leaping. It kept sheep and cattle alive in Jacob's day, but Jesus struck a better bargain with the woman right there with his "living water". It is a life within that will last us into the final age...

There was no water at Rephidim. The people fell to quarreling. "Give us water to drink," they said to Moses... "Why did you make us leave Egypt? Was it to have us die here of thirst with our children and our livestock?" (Exod 17:1-3). "Moses cried out to the Lord, 'What shall I do with this people? A little more and they will stone me'" (v.4). I need not tell you how that phrase ends up in John's gospel twice, "When some...reached for rocks to stone him again, Jesus protested to them, 'Many good deeds have I shown you from the Father. For which of these do you stone me?'" (10:31; see 8:59). "Go and strike with your staff on the rock in Horeb," the Lord said to Moses (Exod 17:5). "Strike the rock and the water will flow from it for the people to drink" (v.6). Out of that unlikely place came sweet water, but the memory of the peoples' grumbling was stronger; Massa and Meribah — the "testing" and "kvetching", if you don't mind the Yiddish. You know what Paul made of that story. The tractate *Sukkah* in the Tosefta (iii, 11) said, "the rock [of Horeb] went up with them to the hills, and down to the valleys," and you find the same in other

places in the Talmudic literature. Wrote Paul, who probably knew that legend from boyhood, "For they drank from the spiritual Rock which followed them, and the Rock was Christ" (1 Cor 10:4). It was a commonplace in the early church, the Fathers more than the Christian testaments, to find Christ in all those biblical theophanies. Paul does not do it often, but he does it here. The thirst of all who believe in the risen Lord is slaked by him. He is ever present to them as a gift of God in the midst of the desert of life...

One could go on all morning, I suppose, telling of water in all its forms in the Bible as a symbol of God's refreshment of humanity, God's rescue — for that is what salvation means — God's life. The graciousness of this mysterious One whose designs no mortal comprehends in the sea around us. The power of the storm in Job and the nature Psalms, the water jars of Cana, the baptism of Jesus in water and Spirit and fire, the entry of thousands in Acts by the door of baptism, the voice of one like a Son of Man sounding like the roar of rushing waters (Rev 1:15). Water is power, water effects change, water is life. There is another side to the coin of the tree planted near running water whose leaves never fade (Ps 1:3). It is the chaff driven on the people who are springs without water (2 Pet 2:17). The barren branches fit for the blaze (Mat 7:19). "Let the lowly brother take pride in his eminence and the rich one be proud of his lowliness, for he will disappear like the flower of the field. When the sun comes up with its scorching heat it parches the meadow, the field flowers droop, and the meadow's loveliness is gone. Just so will the rich man wither away among his many projects" (Jas 1:10-11). The figures of desiccate dreariness in scripture make a shorter list than those of moisture and life, but the list is just as important. T. S. Eliot's dry brain in a dry season is the Christian's enemy. After a birth in water, the tragedy is, aridity can set in for a lifetime. A sanctuary where Jesus' friends assemble well heated, well appointed, the worshipers themselves well clothed. A *very* muted protest within, if indeed words are ever spoken, about the systems that make this comfort possible and the discomfort that surrounds us. Those Cambridge ladies with well-washed souls knitting garments for — is it? — Poles. The poor do



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not just happen. They are a creation of the rich. That is probably why you never hear a word in scripture that praises the prosperous. Neither Moses nor the prophets nor Jesus seems to know of an honest way to get rich. Oh, but that was a day of kings and conquerors, you may say, tenant farmers and tax-gatherers, a two-class society of the ruling class and landless proletariat. All quite different. Agribusiness, sweet little deals that are unindictable, a chief officer of justice who is busier as a defendant than a prosecutor, rents going out of sight and housing starts growing fewer and fewer, and new jobs multiplying — at less than \$14,000 a year, half of them at \$7,000 a year. The litany of inequity could go on. The human pain, the misery is intense.

It was never easy to be a Christian. It gets harder in our day to be a churchgoer, and that is something different. We pray a little less inauthentically that we did a few decades back. Thank God for that: There is a little more beauty and sublimity of

word and deed in our assemblies. The scriptures are heard at greater length; human words regrettably do not grow briefer. We need God's word as the parched soil needs rain. But, oh, the word going down like snow and rain and going back to the Lord empty, the distance between the waters above and the earth beneath, the green wood and the dry. Jesus weeps for Jerusalem, the women weep for Jesus. Verbal religion flourishes; Bibles are multiplied; people read them; they even quote them. And people near to us go underpaid for a lifetime. They live totally chancy existences, while we gather large sums of money in Jesus' name — a totally laudable enterprise (2 Cor 8 and 9) — and spend it on our congregation, our parish, our self-identity as... (name your Christian church). The sacramental principle, starting with the becoming human of God's word, is a language of truthful, not lying, signs. We who have convictions about liturgy are getting the words and symbols straight. It is time, now, for the tune.

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A Progress Report on THE HYMNAL 1982 COMPANION

by Raymond F. Glover, General Editor

What is the real source of the tune "Venite Adoremus" (110)? *The Hymnal 1982* and 1940 arrangements are the work of the late Dr. Leo Sowerby, but where did Canon Douglas find the tune? This is the sort of question that still confronts the General Editor of *The Companion* as work on the book enters its final year of preparation.

Using the 1940 Companion as a guide and benefiting from the example and structure of the recent *Hymnal Companion to the Lutheran Book of Worship* (1981) and *The Historical Companion to Hymns A and M* (1962), *The Hymnal 1982 Companion* promises to be a very comprehensive and scholarly publication.

The members of the editorial committee working with Mr. Raymond F. Glover, General Editor, are: Dr. Carol Doran, Associate Professor of Church Music and Director of Community Worship, Colgate Rochester Divinity School/Bexley Hall/Crozier Theological Seminary and St. Bernard's Institute, Rochester, NY; the Reverend Dr. Robin Leaver, Associate Professor of Church Music, Westminster Choir College, Princeton, NJ, and current President of the International Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Hymnologie; and the Reverend Dr. Carl Daw, Vicar of St. Mark's Chapel, Storrs, CT, a member of the text committee for *The Hymnal 1982*, currently a member of the SCCM and liaison to the committee from that body. Completing the group and serving as Research Assistant

(Glover - cont.)

is Mr. Carl Manns, co-author with Nicholas Temperley, of *The Hymn Tune Index; The Anglo-American Hymn Tune to 1820*, and *Fuguing Tunes in the Eighteenth Century* (1983).

The Hymnal 1982 Companion is conceived as a two-volume publication. Volume One consists of essays and Volume Two of text and tune entries and biographies of authors, translators, composers and arrangers. The first volume is divided into three sections; the first deals with topics that relate to the history, development and use of hymns and hymnals in the Episcopal Church and covers such issues as "What is Congregational Song?", "The Accompaniment and Leadership of Congregational Singing", "The History of the Hymnal of the Episcopal Church" and "The Creation of the Hymnal 1982".

The second group, new to the Companion to the Hymnal, focusses on Service Music. Included here are essays that deal with the "Recovery of Plainchant in the English Tradition" along with others on services of the Book of Common Prayer and the resources of the Hymnal that relate to them.

The third group of essays covers the history of Christian hymnody. Included will be essays on "German Church Song", American and English congregational song from the Reformation to the present day, popular religious song and the culturally diverse sources of many of our hymns. A

detailed bibliography and glossary will close the volume.

The structure of Volume Two resembles that of *The Hymnal 1940 Companion*. Each text and tune will have a separate entry. In addition, some entries will provide an analysis of the structure of text and tune and, on occasion, practical performance notes. Original texts will be given in entries on foreign language texts and where texts have been altered or where stanzas have been omitted. Examples illustrating a tune's development will be used where relevant. The inclusion of graphics and practical indexes will add a further distinctive quality to the publication.

The authors represent diverse traditions and countries; among them are such authorities on hymnody and liturgy as Nicholas Temperley, Alan Luff, John Wilson, Carl Schaik, Paul Westermeyer, Tom Ward, Howard Galley, Leonel Mitchell, Marion Hatchett, Charles Price, Louis Weil, and Geoffrey Wainwright.

Although a date has not been determined for the publication of the Companion, the editor and his committee hope to be able to present a completed manuscript to the publisher, the Church Hymnal Corporation, on 30 December 1989. This promises a great reward for those who await its appearance.

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