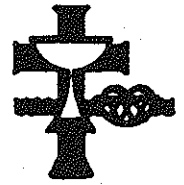


OEN



the **associated parishes**
for liturgy and mission

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AN EDITORIAL

There was a certain amount of irony in the ADLMC meeting in Chapel Hill, N.C. At the opening supper I found myself seated with the old group which met in Daisy's Bar as a refuge from the terrible liturgies of the San Juan Bautista conference in 1981. We laughed about it only to find to our horror that the same sort of "show and tell" liturgies were to be experienced in the Gothic marvel of the chapel at Duke and in the Chapel of the Holy Cross at Chapel Hill. Once again, as at San Juan Bautista, the liturgists were muttering that the musicians should never have been included, and a sense of *déjà-vu* took many of us back to Shreveport and Atlanta where the local musicians performed just everything they could think of endlessly before an outraged congregation.

Evensong at the Duke chapel was "performed" by the choir of Christ Church, Charlotte, and had little room for congregational input. Even the versicles and responses were to a setting by Mr. Hutto,

the director, and were the kind that no congregation could ever sing, but which reduce many church musicians to envious glop. Many in the congregation felt as though they had been mauled. The final blow came when the "mighty Flentrop" proved to be out of tune and Louis Vierne was played on what sounded like the Wurlitzer at the Loew's Poli-Palace in Bridgeport, Connecticut.

The Eucharist at Chapel Hill went on and on with too much everything and little to indicate that anyone had thought about what they were doing. There were no communion stations; there were plastic wafers and skads of celebrants, acolytes, crosses, and choir persons. Toward the end, as the Eucharist reached an hour and a half, I looked at the order of service leaflet and discovered that "The Church's One Foundation" was yet to come, so I made my communion, waited at the back for the Blessing, and then fled. I was feeling sheepish until I found a large group of fellow sufferers



(Editorial - cont.)

had fled earlier through other doors. Some of them begged me to write it all up for *OPEN*, so here we are.

In 1981 I wrote an editorial about all this, stating finally that I was sure the musicians had to be present since in many places they alone have any care for the liturgy because the rector is either poorly trained or completely uninterested. This sort of situation is an "occasion for sin" for musicians, for the temptation to show their stuff and play in-groupy trash is overwhelming.

The ADLMC Board is going to have to look at all this and lay down some rules. We seemed to have bussed to places that were not particularly useful from a liturgical point of view. St. Stephen's Church, Durham, was an example of the "ravages of Rambusch," but I am sure that is *not* why we were bussed there. Therefore, I think one rule should be that all worship be done at the conference center, be it a retreat house or hotel. In my memory, the best liturgies were those prepared for the conference in the Flanders Hotel in Ocean City, N.J., by Howard Galley (1975).

A second rule would be that the Board have control of the conference, not the local people. The need is for these conferences to move liturgical reform forward, not view the local remains of dead practices with reverence. If some insights

into how to overcome the problems of medieval space had been involved, the bussing to Duke might have been worth doing, but, as it often is, the trips were just scenic tours (in the dark) to concerts. In Houston, for instance, the challenge of Anglican worship in a Black Baptist church was highly educational in that it showed, at least, that we don't have to use upper class space to worship properly.

The kind of tension present in Raleigh, Durham, and Chapel Hill will be with ADLMC for a long time, but it is possible to lessen its effects on the group as a whole. The great battle between the liturgists and the musicians will go on, but ADLMC should be the place of meeting where some of the problems can be taken on and reasonable solutions found. In the long run, the friendships formed and the mutual trust which results will be the "spiritual bouquet" of ADLMC. In the meantime, the 1989 conference joins the number of others where opportunities were missed and where very fine people forgot what they were doing and decided to use the conference to make themselves feel good about what they were already used to. Thus, nobody learned much, and lots of folks were angry.

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

beginning on the next page...

A Workshop on the Catechumenate

Editor's note: This workshop was conducted by Dr. Nicholas Papadopoulos at Grace Cathedral, San Francisco, in February, 1988, as part of the conference on the catechumenate sponsored by Associated Parishes and the cathedral. At first, this seems overdone with footnotes, like a Ph.D. thesis gone mad. On further consideration, however, I don't see how else the activity could have been explained without a really broken-up format. Nick is an active layman at the cathedral and has been involved in developing the catechumenate under the direction of Canon Michael Merriman, vice-dean of the cathedral and an AP Council member.

WORKSHOP FOR LITURGICAL CONFERENCE ON THE CATECHUMENATE

Purpose Provide a workshop which models the Catechetical sessions at Grace Cathedral; provide a forum for reflection and comment.

Format Model as closely as possible the experience of Catechumens sent forth from the service to study scripture.

Start The People are gathered in the workshop space.

Leader The Lord be with you.¹

People And also with you.

Leader Let us pray.
(Collect for Fifth Sunday in Lent, *BCP*, page 219)²

People Amen.

OT Reader Ezekiel 37:1-3,11-14 (Valley of Dry Bones)³

Psalmist Psalm 130 (De Profundis)

Gospel Reader John 11:17-44 (Raising of Lazarus)⁴

Leader Introduces Catechumenate and Workshop in context of readings. Lays out format: split into small groups for scriptural reflection and relation to ones own history; then return to gather for group reflection.⁵

¹This opening is meant to evoke the Sunday morning Eucharist. At Grace Cathedral, Catechumens and Baptismal Candidates are dismissed to scriptural reflection during the Eucharistic Celebration. There are also occasions when Catechumens and Candidates meet with their sponsors and catechists apart from Sunday Eucharist.

²Lent is the traditional time for the preparation of Candidates for Holy Baptism. This tradition is usually observed at Grace Cathedral. The Fifth Sunday in Lent is the last Sunday before Holy Week, and is therefore the last Sunday when the attention is focussed primarily on the Candidates.

³The readings here are taken from Year A, which has readings which are most closely focussed on Baptism. It is highly desirable that Candidates read and reflect on Year A readings during Lent even if they are not preparing in Year A.

⁴Normally, of course, the Epistle is read and reflected on. The Epistle and Sequence are dropped here in the interest of workshop time.

⁵The Candidates and Catechumens are present for the Sermon, which should focus on Baptismal issues, particularly during Lent. The skilled homilist may take opportunity of the preparation of the Candidates to

Leader or Deacon Let us pray.

Come, O Holy Spirit, come; come as the wind and cleanse; come as the fire and burn; convict, convert, and consecrate the minds and hearts of these your servants, to their great good and to your great glory; who with the Father and the Son are one God, now and forever. (from *BOS*, page 125)⁶

People Amen.

Leader or Deacon Depart to your groups.⁷

The People go to spaces for their groups as outlined in Leader's talk. The format for each group interaction is as follows.⁸

Group Leader The Lord be with you.

People And also with you.

Group Leader Let us pray.

Blessed Lord, who caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning: Grant us so to hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which you have given us in our Savior Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

(Collect for Proper 28, *BCP*, page 236)⁹

People Amen.

Leader Introduces self briefly.¹⁰ Asks People to introduce themselves.¹¹

remind the Congregation of their own Baptism and Commitment. Therefore, the Catechumens and Candidates have a real and visible ministry to the Church.

⁶After the Nicene Creed (omitted here for the interest of time), and *before* the Prayers of the People, the Deacon or Celebrant prays over the Candidates and Catechumens prior to their dismissal for reflection. The prayer here is the third and final "scrutiny" (nomenclature of the Roman Catholic *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*). The *Book of Occasional Services* has prayers also for Catechumens.

⁷The practice at Grace Cathedral is to dismiss Catechumens and Candidates before the Prayers of the People and the Peace. A number of other places keep the Catechumens and Candidates in the assembly during the whole service. In both cases, it is appropriate for the Candidates and Catechumens to come forward to receive a blessing at the altar while others are receiving Communion. Dismissal takes place before the Prayers of the People and the Peace to emphasize the Royal Priesthood of the baptized.

⁸Although this gathering has been placed in the context of the Sunday Eucharist, the format is appropriate for other occasions when the Catechumens, Candidates, catechists and sponsors gather. Nevertheless, local and personal circumstances will dictate the precise form of the sessions.

⁹This Collect is particularly appropriate for prefacing scriptural study. A suitable Collect or Prayer should be used to open any catechetical session.

¹⁰A key to the catechetical process is *modeling* responses. Here this technique is used to model introductions. Overall, Catechesis placed in the context of Worship models the worshipping, gathered Christian Community. Note that modeling should be empowering, but not restricting of interaction.

Selected People read the lessons for group.¹²

Leader Provides short commentary relating lessons to Salvation History¹³ and asks questions. For example, When have you felt dead? (Dry Bones, Lazarus) What is the experience of being revived? (Dry Bones, Lazarus) How do you "wait on the Lord"? (Psalm 130) In what way are we called on to "prophesy over the dead"? (Dry Bones)¹⁴

People and Leader discussion.¹⁵

Leader (at appointed time) It is time to close with prayer.¹⁶
(All should rise in a circle).

Leader (lays hands on all in prayer)¹⁷

Group (prays in silence or aloud)¹⁸

Leader composes and says closing prayer.

Deacon or Leader (dismisses group to main group)¹⁹

Panel/People Reflection/discussion time should follow.²⁰

End.

¹¹In any session, it is a good idea to take time at the beginning to find out how people are doing. Occasionally, the prepared material must be jettisoned to deal with issues that arise -- the Holy Spirit at work!

¹²It is good to have the Catechumens and Candidates reread the lessons for Scriptural Study. In case of Prayer Book studies, the studied sections should be read aloud. This practice makes the material more accessible and immediate -- also, in the case of Sunday Liturgy, a lot has happened since the first reading of the Scriptures.

¹³Generally, it is a good idea for the leader to prompt discussion by a *short* commentary relating the lessons or subject to Salvation History, ministry, and so forth. The temptation to sermonize should be resisted! Again, modeling is a key technique here.

¹⁴Questions asked should delve into fundamental life issues. Baptism is death and resurrection. Preparation should honor the primal nature of conversion.

¹⁵Discussion is the focus of most catechetical sessions. Often, the catechist is the one who learns! The Spirit moves in strange and mysterious ways.

¹⁶Prayer again is key: it should bracket sessions.

¹⁷Laying of hands is an ancient tradition for Prayer in this circumstance. Local circumstances will dictate use of this practice; however, it is a wonderful practice that should be seriously considered.

¹⁸Opportunity, which may not be taken at first, should be given to the group to pray aloud.

¹⁹It is the Deacon's prerogative to dismiss the people from the session.

²⁰Reflection and discussion is an important part of the Catechetical process. Whole sessions may be devoted to reflection on previous week(s), or devoted to general "how are you doing with this process" reflection.

Body Language in the Institution Narrative

Editor's note: The first part of this article appeared in the September 1989 issue of OPEN.

The Elevation after the Words of Institution

Around 1205, the bishop of Paris convened a synod to address several pastoral issues: regulation of fees, clarification of sacramental practices and responsibilities of the clergy. Paris was a great theological center of the time, and the site of ongoing debates about the Real Presence. The bishop insisted that certain eucharistic teachings and practices be addressed definitively. The confusion around the consecration and viewing of the host was part of the agenda.

One synodal decree was intended to regulate the elevation of the host in relation to the institution narrative. It is the first record of a rubric for an elevation *after* the words of institution:

In the canon of the Mass, when they begin the words "On the day before..." presbyters are ordered not to elevate the host immediately so that it may be seen by all the people; rather, they are to hold it just in front of their chest until they have said the words "This is my body." At that point, they elevate the host so that all may see it.¹

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By calling for a new single elevation the decree attempted to settle two controversies. Is it proper to elevate the host for viewing before the words of institution? Their answer was no. The decree supported the interpretation that the bread and the wine are consecrated independently and therefore displaying the host right *after* the words of institution related to the bread would be theologically proper. Second, the decree attempted to dispel the confusion caused by elevating the host before and during the words of institution, practices that had evolved since the ninth century. Those elevations grew out of an imitation of the narrative and developed into a showing of the host. To regulate the popular desire to see the host and to avoid misguided devotion toward a host not consecrated, the decree insisted the host be lifted up for view only *after* the words of institution. It answered some thorny theological and practical questions of the day by declaring when the Lord actually becomes present in the elements and how that presence is to be expressed and revered.²

Accumulations and Accretions

Viewing and venerating the host at this new elevation after the words of institution became the principal way people participated in the eucharist. Within 50 years this elevation had spread throughout Europe, and practices quickly developed to express the adoration expected at this moment. Many of these practices survived until recent years and were common in our parishes.

* The elevation was lengthened and/or the

priest turned left and right to show the host. Even by 1256, regulations opposed this custom, but this extended elevation and the turning from side to side persisted in the papal Mass where it is the custom today.

- * Dark cloths were used as backdrops to the altar or dark curtains were pulled behind it at the Sanctus so the white host would be clearly visible.
- * Candles were brought in by the deacon or server for the consecration to enhance the viewing. This pragmatic step quickly grew into a devotional gesture toward the eucharist — the "consecration candles" became candles or torches brought in at the Sanctus and retained until communion was finished.
- * An incensation of the host at the elevation developed, already attested by a source from 1256. Soon after that, there were instructions to the thurifer to use less incense, lest the view be obscured. Some sources indicate that, as with the candles, the use of incense soon was expanded from the Sanctus through communion.
- * Choir bells were rung to signal the showing of the host (first recorded at Cologne in 1201). As with the candles and incense, the ringing of the bells crept forward to the signing with the cross ("he blessed it"), then to the imposition of hands at the epiclesis, then to the Sanctus. By 1300 the large church bells were also rung at the elevation, to alert those in the town or the fields to turn toward the church and adore the host. Not until the 16th century do records of small handbells used by servers appear.

Generally priests were discouraged from adding prayers at the time of the elevation, but the faithful were urged to pray intently during this new showing of the consecrated host. Already in 1215 writers urged the people to make fervent petitions during the elevation. Others encouraged striking the breast or signing oneself with the cross; reciting the *Te Deum*; or greeting the Lord in the elevated host with "Hail savior of the world, word of the Father, true victim," or any number of such acclamations. Many

of these acclamations had been used by priests at communion time and later became acclamations of the faithful at the elevation. Some hymns that we associate in our day with benediction were originally prayers, and then hymns, used at the elevation: *Adoro te devote, Anima Christi, Ave verum corpus*.³ By the 16th century, these hymns and acclamations at the elevation began to disappear, as the custom became one of strict silence. Still, the congregational responses persisted in some areas, including one in Ireland: "All praise to thee, Lord Jesus, white and red [colors of the host and wine]".

The postures of the clergy and congregation were affected differently by the introduction of the elevation. In the Christian tradition, the posture for liturgical prayer had been the same for both clergy and assembly; standing with arms lifted at the sides and palms facing upwards. This *orans* (that is, "praying") position persisted even into the 16th century in some European regions.⁴ Gradually, this *orans* position for the faithful changed, though not at the same time in all regions. At first people bowed their heads during the presidential prayers; later, they bowed their upper bodies through the entire canon (the same profound bow as the clergy in seventh-century Rome). Eventually, they knelt during the presidential prayers and this kneeling became their posture during the canon (as a ninth-century source from Tours indicates). Kneeling, which had been a posture of penitence for certain days and seasons, was transformed into a posture of adoration.

These postures were not uniform of course; they varied from place to place. Jungmann notes: "At the least, it was expected that those who, according to the custom of the time were squatted on the floor, would, as a mark of respect, at least stand up... On the other hand, a complete *prostratio* often became customary, especially in monasteries."⁵ Often the traditional posture of the region was defended and the innovations of that century were met with opposition. People were sometimes reluctant to kneel in adoration because the posture had been associated from time immemorial with prayers of petition and penance.

Compromises developed which are with us

still. The ancient practice of standing was retained through the preface and the Sanctus, then all but the clergy knelt for the rest of the canon. As honoring the host became more important, the kneeling was extended through communion (parallel to the expanded use of candles, incense and bells).

The priest continued the traditional posture of standing for the entire eucharistic prayer. Other signs of veneration were added; for example, bowing toward the host just before the elevation or reciting the institution narrative while bowing.⁶ Genuflection was not associated with the institution narrative until the 15th century and is first mentioned in Roman books in 1498. This gesture of respect, originally *person-oriented*, now became associated to the *object* of the host. It was a profession of faith and doctrine.

*Thus at this very late date there was transferred to the Blessed Sacrament a token of honor which — like the use of lights and incense, and throne and baldachin — originated in princely ceremonial and from thence had long ago been taken over into the liturgy as an honor to persons.*⁷

"My Lord and My God"

Over time the desire to see the host waned. The *viewing* of the host gave way to *adoring* and *honoring* the host and the elevation became a moment for awe and reverence. The customs surrounding it changed — from looking at the host and using hymns and acclamations to *avoiding* a look at the host and insisting on absolute silence. By the late 14th century, theologians were criticizing the practices that had been inserted into the canon and the distortions that emphasis on the elevation had caused. By the 16th century, synods called for "the greatest silence" at this time, and the practices common to our century took shape; no hymns or verbalized prayers, the server ringing a bell to call attention to the consecration and elevation, people bowing their heads at the elevation, silence in the church, the assembly kneeling in silent adoration.

In 1907, Pius X tried to revive the practice of looking at the host for the elevation by granting an indulgence to those who would look at the host and then pray, "My Lord and My God."

The 1570 missal standardized, for the first time, the elevations of both the host and chalice. Prior to this missal, the rubrics did not direct the priest to elevate the chalice after the words of institution. But with the 1570 missal the elevation of the host and its rubrics were duplicated:

- * The actions of Jesus were to be imitated, some of them literally enacted at the appropriate words: "He took the bread/Taking the cup," "with his eyes lifted up," "giving thanks to you," "he blessed it."
- * Genuflection was made prior to and after each of the two elevations.
- * The host and the chalice were shown to the people ("*ostendit populo*").

The 1970 missal, while retaining the elevation and accompanying adoration of the eucharist, greatly simplified the rubrics:

- * The words of institution are no longer acted out.
- * There are only two genuflections by the priest (after the elevations of the bread and the cup).
- * The host and the chalice are each shown to the people.
- * The cross is traced over the gifts only once during the entire eucharistic prayer (at the epiclesis), replacing the 25 times the 1570 missal called for.
- * The doxology at the end of the prayer, formerly interrupted and obstructed by multiple crosses, is restored to its original prominence. The rubrics indicate that this elevation with the doxology is the climactic gesture of the entire prayer: "The priest takes the chalice and the paten with the host, and lifts them up" as the doxology is proclaimed. This elevation is not a gesture of showing the bread and cup to the people but a gesture

(Fitzgerald - cont.)

of offering praise and thanks — a gesture by the people giving thanks, rather than a gesture to them.

Conclusion

It is difficult to appreciate fully the context that first prompted the elevation of the host. The theological and sacramental issues of the time, the liturgical experience of both clergy and laity, the lack of historical information and sources available then — the situation was in many ways unique in the history of the church. The great eucharistic debates among theologians and schools raged from the ninth century on. The private Mass was for many priests the primary experience of eucharist, overshadowing or replacing the great tradition of communal celebration. Presenting gifts for the eucharist and sharing in the blessed gifts by receiving communion were virtually unknown for the majority of the church. Frequent reception of communion was not practiced. In the understanding and experience of most Catholics the eucharist became more and more reified and distant.

It is likewise difficult to underestimate the impact this 13th-century innovation had on the celebration of the liturgy and sacramental theology. One author after another echoes the conclusion of Edouard Dumoutet that its introduction remains the most important eucharistic development of the Middle Ages. The celebration of the eucharist came to revolve around the privileged moment of revelation and adoration.

*It acquired a new center, a new focal point...Esteem for this opportunity to look upon the host went to such lengths that it was placed side by side with holy communion, and the question was asked, would a person commit a mortal sin by looking at the sacred host?*⁸

What was the most lasting result of this innovation? The ancient prayer of thanks-giving, of *eucharistia*, became distorted. Its primacy and its integrity were diminished. The authentic heritage had been "following the tradition of the early centuries, to recognize one long consecratory prayer which began with the preface and ended with the solemn Amen."⁹

Any sense of one long consecratory prayer was gone with the extreme preoccupation with the words of consecration.

Earlier in this century writers pointed out that the eucharistic action was obstructed by the elevation and its gestures:

*The medieval ceremony of the elevation has tended to become a new center of gravity for the Mass...A rite unknown till the 12th century cannot be of first importance in any liturgy.*¹⁰

This ceremony has no place in the structure of the Sacrifice...It plays no part in the sacred action.

*There is a tendency sometimes to make it an act of oblation [rather than an act of showing it to the people] and to see in it the "culminating point of the Mass." The sacrificial oblation... is in no way expressed at this moment.*¹¹

The liturgical reforms of the past 25 years have greatly changed our understanding of the eucharistic prayer and its gestures. The context that first led to the elevation no longer exists. Our experience of eucharist is far different. The liturgy is now in the vernacular and the goal is full, conscious and active participation by everybody. Frequent communion is again the norm. The altar is a table, not a tomb or reliquary. Communal celebration has become the typical experience for both clergy and laity. The eucharistic gifts are placed on the altar in clear view of everyone, no longer hidden by the priest or sanctuary screen. Eucharist has again become what *we* do, and it is much more than adoring the host.

The postures and gestures of the eucharistic prayer are changing as they have so often in the past. Our experience of the eucharist is different from the 13th-century experience (or even the experience of the first part of the 20th century); our understanding of the eucharist will be different as well. Our liturgical expression of that experience and that understanding are going to be different.

The meal motif of the eucharist — the taking and eating of bread and wine — became, over time, a ritual drama, a mystical reenactment. The symbolic action of a blessed and shared meal was transformed

(Fitzgerald - cont.)

into a dramatic allegory. Words that once invited one to *eat* and *drink* were accompanied by actions that prompted one to *look*. The whole meaning of the eucharist shifted.

Now we are recovering the ancient meaning of eucharist, returning to the language and experience of a meal shared. Because of that shift, accumulated meanings of a ritual drama are undercut. The *meal* motif is highlighted; the *looking* and *adoring* motif seems, suddenly, out of place.

The actions, gestures, words and postures of the liturgy help us to express reverence for the presence of the Lord. They express our participation in the eucharist; they express, in the end, how the church understands itself.

Changes continue in our body language at the eucharist. This is a sign of vigor and vitality. The body of Christ in new and very old patterns is lifting up its thanksgiving to the Lord. +++

NOTES

1. Nathan Mitchell, *Cult and Controversy: The Worship of the Eucharist outside Mass* (New York: Pueblo Publishing Company, 1982), 156. See also Joseph Jungmann, *Mass of the Roman Rite*, trans. by Francis Brunner, vol. II (New York: Benziger Brothers, 1955), 207, footnote 30.
2. Earlier in this century, Herbert Thurston maintained the decree addressed only the first issue, whether consecration of bread and of wine are effected separately. See Thurston, "The Elevation," *The Tablet CX* (1907): I, "The Lifting of the Host," 603-05; II, "Showing the Host," 643-45; III, "Seeing the Host," 684-86. Edouard Dumoutet insisted the decree really came about because of the second issue, the pastoral need to clarify the elevation before and during the words of institution and the desire to see the host. See Dumoutet, "Les Origines de l'Elevation," *Revue Apologetique* 43 (1926), 36-41.
3. See Jungmann, *Mass of the Roman Rite II*, 214-16; also, footnotes 91 through 97. See Mitchell, *Cult and Controversy*, 136.
4. Jungmann, *Mass of the Roman Rite*, trans. by Francis A. Brunner, vol. I (New York: Benziger Brothers, 1951), 239, footnote 29.
5. Jungmann, *Mass of the Roman Rite II*, 210, footnote 56.
6. Jungmann, *Mass of the Roman Rite II*, 206, footnote 28.
7. Jungmann, *Mass of the Roman Rite II*, 123.
8. Jungmann, *Mass of the Roman Rite II*, 120.
9. Thurston, "The Lifting of the Host," *The Tablet CX* (1907), 603. See also Jungmann, *Mass of the Roman Rite II*, 216.
10. Adrian Fortescue, *The Mass: A Study of the Roman Liturgy* (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1937), 345.
11. Bede Lebbe, *The Mass: A Historical Commentary* (Westminster, Maryland: Newman Press, 1949), 80-81.

A CELEBRATION

On the Feast of the Epiphany, January 6, 1990, the Order of the Holy Cross will celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the life profession of

* FATHER BONNELL SPENCER, OHC

Bonnie has been a long-time member of the Council of Associated Parishes for Liturgy and Mission and has also served as our President. Our prayers of thanksgiving for his ministry to us and to the world are with him that day.

Liturgical Change With or Without Prayer Book Revision

by A. Pierce Middleton

When liturgical change is mentioned, the hearer is likely to assume that the speaker intends to discuss Prayer Book revision. But that is not necessarily the case. And, indeed, I intend to show that liturgical change takes place more or less continuously even without the appearance of new and revised editions of the Book of Common Prayer. The reason for this is that liturgy consists of more than the words used in worship. It includes also the setting and the actions — i.e., the non-verbal aspects — of worship. Liturgy consists of both *ritual* and *ceremonial*, words and setting, and of words only. In the last three centuries Anglican ritual — the words of worship — has changed very little, as can be seen if our Rite I services are compared with the various editions of the Prayer Book from 1549 to our present one. And yet the ceremonial — i.e., the architectural, the artistic, and musical settings of worship — of Anglican worship has changed dramatically and, indeed, kaleidoscopically. If you attended church in 1586, 1686, and 1986, you would be struck by the liturgical differences, rather than by the similarity, even though the words used were virtually the same or, at least, changed very little.

Why is it that over the centuries we change our way of worshiping, even when we revise our Prayer Book infrequently? There are many reasons.

One reason is that the tempo of life has been accelerated, especially as a result of the industrial revolution. In the rural society of colonial days and in the early 19th century, time was perceived different-

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ly than by modern city-dwellers. No one in the 18th century seemed to mind riding many miles over muddy roads or rowing across creeks in order to attend church on Sundays. Colonial churches were full to overflowing, and the people, once there, were in no hurry to return home. Churchgoing was the principal — if not the only — break in their weekly routine on the farm. It was a social event: they saw their neighbors and exchanged news, and they raised no objection to services that lasted several hours. The Sunday service then consisted of Morning Prayer, the Litany, and the Holy Eucharist, with two lessons at Morning Prayer, plus a selection from the Psalter, and the epistle and gospel at the Eucharist — five lessons in all — together with a much longer sermon than most of us could stomach today. Even when there was no Holy Communion, our colonial forebears would have been offended if all they got was Morning Prayer. That, after all, was a daily office and not worthy of being *the* Sunday service. The bare minimum on the Lord's Day was Morning Prayer, the Litany, Ante-Communion and sermon.

Times change, and as the old Latin proverb has it, "we change with them." The tempo of life began to accelerate in the 19th century, and by the 1850's the House of Bishops for the first time authorized the celebration of the Eucharist on Sunday without the necessity of using Morning Prayer and the Litany immediately before it — all in the interests of accommodating busy people whose lives were becoming more time-conscious than was the case in their grandparents' day. This radical change in Episcopal liturgical practice was accomplished without changing a word in the Book of Common Prayer.

The long-range results of this well-meaning action by our bishops was quite

unforeseen. By late Victorian days the average parish church celebrated an early Eucharist, shorn of its canticles, its psalmody, and its Old Testament lesson which for centuries had been provided by Morning Prayer which preceded the Eucharist and served as part of the Ministry of the Word. The average parish church also had a solemn high Morning Prayer at 11:00 a.m. on Sundays, complete with sung canticles, psalms, and hymns, and with a sermon (for which the rubrics made no provision at Morning Prayer). Morning Prayer seemed strangely lacking, and so the Victorian parsons quite unrubrically borrowed portions of the Eucharist and added them to "the otherwise bald and unconvincing" Morning Prayer — notably the "offertory" — converting the age-old daily office into a hodgepodge — a kind of "dry mass" — without authorization either by the Book of Common Prayer or the bishops and General Convention.

This has been the bane of the existence of liturgical scholars and historians for nearly a hundred years, but anthropologists and sociologists tell us that it is not easy to change the accustomed ways of millions of people in a short space of time. Attempts of liturgiologists to correct the Victorian blunder and to restore to the Eucharist its canticles, psalms, and Old Testament lesson were beaten back in the 1920's when the 1928 Prayer Book was adopted. Since then a vast amount of published scholarship has leavened the lump sufficiently to secure the restoration of the full Eucharist in the 1979 Prayer Book. The Caroline Divines and the godly churchmen of the 18th century must have risen up and called us blessed when the General Conventions of 1976 and 1979 adopted the present Prayer Book by a huge majority. The bishops were virtually unanimous, and close to 90% of the deputies voted for it.

Other reasons why liturgy changes are, of course, our changing perceptions and fashions of worship. For example, the simple four-part Eucharist of early Christian days was celebrated joyfully and corporately by priest, deacons, and people with little in the way of architectural setting, or vestments, or music. After the Emperor Constantine made Christianity the established religion of the Roman empire, the circumstances in which we wor-

shipped changed. Great churches were built, the clergy became officials of the state, and in the course of time many men took Holy Orders, and the services were elaborated to such a degree that by the Middle Ages the people in the nave were largely excluded from active participation in the eucharistic action and were reduced to the role of passive observers. The professional clergy and trained choristers monopolized the rite, which remained in Latin, now no longer understood by the people. And the music, instead of being simple plainsong, was gradually elaborated so that the people could no longer join in the singing.

By the 16th century, it was obvious that the Church was in urgent need of reform, not only liturgically but in other ways as well. Some of the medieval corruptions of doctrine and liturgy were corrected by Archbishop Thomas Cranmer. His monumental 1549 Prayer Book preserved the chief features of English medieval worship but made four important changes: (1) he shortened and simplified the complicated liturgical books that were then in use, reducing them to one; (2) he translated the services into the language of the English people; (3) he provided congregational responses in order to recover the corporate nature of worship; and (4) he got John Merbecke, organist of St. George's Chapel, Windsor, to provide a simple musical setting on the principle of a single note to a syllable, thus enabling the people to participate in the musical portions of the service for the first time in centuries. These changes were not mere innovations, but rather a recovery of old practices that had fallen out of use. Cranmer attempted to get behind medieval ways of worship and to revive the practices of early Christian centuries.

The Book of Common Prayer was a product of its own age. It could not have come about in earlier centuries because hand-lettered manuscripts were much too costly to be made in quantity, but Johann Gutenberg had successfully introduced printing by means of moveable type in the 15th century and that great invention made it possible to print prayerbooks in large numbers. The lowered unit cost resulted in their coming into the hands of all who could read. If Marshall McLuhan was right, then

all Western civilization entered upon a new era with the invention of printing. He called it the Gutenberg Galaxy, or the rise of "the tyranny of the printed word." Perhaps that has something to do with the fact that the "rite" (or words of worship) became rigidly fixed, once they were printed, and almost sacrosanct, and the purity of the rite came to be held in higher esteem than the ceremonial setting of worship. In any event, 18th and 19th century Anglicans were uncommonly satisfied with their so-called "incomparable liturgy" and seldom entertained a shadow of a doubt that it was the best form of worship in all Christendom.

But the euphoric love of the received form of Anglican worship was overtaken in the middle of the 19th century by an unexpected storm that was destined to transform, not the rite (which remained unchanged), but the ceremonial that accompanied it: the manual acts, the architectural setting, the arrangement of church interiors, the music, the vestments, the design of communion silver and of all the other accessories of Anglican worship. It began modestly enough at Oxford in 1833 with a sermon entitled "National Apostasy" by a mild-mannered priest and professor of poetry, John Keble. In it he deplored, not the Book of Common Prayer, but the current state of the Church of England and the decline of the nation from Catholic faith and practice. He was speaking of the Catholic aspect of Anglicanism that had survived the turmoil of the Reformation and had been enunciated by Archbishop William Laud and the 18th century Caroline Divines, and not of the ethos of the continental Church of Rome. This sermon was a thunderclap. It inaugurated the so-called Oxford Movement which produced its famous, influential, 90 tracts, thereby earning its adherents the name "Tractarians." They stressed the historical continuity of the English Church with Christianity in the Apostolic and Patristic periods before the bishops of Rome developed their claim to supremacy. They were concerned with doctrine rather than with liturgy: they had no quarrel with the 1662 Prayer Book. It was their colleagues, the Ecclesiologists and their successors, the Ritualists, who deemed the high Middle Ages the best of times, and who with little thought of changing a word in the Prayer

Book, revived medieval architecture and ceremonial including eucharistic vestments, candles, altar crosses, and incense as fitting expressions of the doctrinal position of the Tractarians. The rapid spread of their enthusiasm for medieval precedents was facilitated by the concurrent Romantic Movement in literature, especially the popular novels of Sir Walter Scott which prepared the way by romanticizing things medieval in the minds of English-speaking people. In a relatively short period of time our perception of the Middle Ages was radically changed from a period of barbarism and superstition to one of transcendent faith, truth, and beauty. Gothic revival architecture, Gothic chalices and patens, and Gothic chasubles became the height of fashion.

To accommodate these new ideas about the proper setting of worship, almost every Anglican church from the Orkneys to Land's End and from Alaska to New Zealand was retrofitted, as far as possible, after the fashion of medieval cathedrals with a deep chancel either raised above or demarcated from the nave by a chancel screen, with the organist and a vested choir relocated in the chancel, and the font placed at or near the west door. To the priest, who in colonial days stood alone at the altar, were added a variety of other ministers: deacons, subdeacons, acolytes, crucifers, taperers, thurifers, and banner-bearers. This reconstituted medieval arrangement had much to recommend it, but it had one fatal flaw: by bringing the organist and choir into the chancel, the people were removed — sometimes far removed — from the altar where the eucharistic action took place. With the coming of the early Sunday Eucharist with no choir and no music, the priest and people were separated by a vast no-man's-land of empty choir stalls to the detriment of the visual manifestation of the corporate nature of the Eucharist.

Just as the 19th century spawned an idea and a movement that wrought havoc with the received tradition of Anglican worship and resulted in widespread change, even though the Prayer Book was only slightly revised in 1892 and 1928, so the 20th century has witnessed and reacted to an equally potent idea and movement with far-reaching ramifications for worship.

(Middleton - cont.)

Known as the Liturgical Movement, its basic object is much the same as Archbishop Cranmer's in 1549. It is to get behind the Middle Ages and to recover some of the virtues of the early Christian worship. These may be summarized in this way: (1) to clarify the language of the liturgy so that scripturally-based concepts and insights may be unequivocally enunciated in the rite; (2) to recover even more than Cranmer did in 1549 the active participation of the people in worship by providing more congregational responses, allowing lay persons to read lessons (other than the eucharistic Gospel), and the prayers of the people, as well as to authorize lay eucharistic ministers wherever there is a shortage of priests and deacons; (3) reduce the distance between priest and people by moving altars nearer the nave by eliminating chancels and by returning organs and choirs to rear galleries where they usually were before the Oxford Movement; and (4) by restoring the Eucharist as the principal Sunday service and revising it so that Morning Prayer, Holy Baptism, and other pastoral services may be used as the Ministry of the Word followed by the Offertory and the celebration of the Eucharist. This enables us to get behind the medievalism of Victorian Ritualists whose commendable zeal had the unforeseen result of dropping canticles, the Old Testament lesson, and the selection from the Psalms out of the Sunday Eucharist to the loss of Anglican worshipers who, in order not to forego these liturgical treasures, developed the habit of attending Choral Evensong on Sundays in addition to the morning Mass.

The 1979 Prayer Book takes all this into account and makes it possible to retain these excellent features by allowing them to be incorporated into the Sunday Eucharist, thus restoring the practice dear to the

hearts of our colonial ancestors and making the present Prayer Book by far the richest and, in many respects, the quintessential Anglican Prayer Book of all times.

Why must we change our way of worship from time to time? For much the same reason that we have to retranslate the Bible when old forms of English become clouded by the changing vernacular. Experience has taught us that belief tends to follow worship; we come more and more to believe what is expressed in our worship, both the words and the significance afforded them by the architectural and aesthetic setting of worship. We have now emerged from the Gutenberg Galaxy; we have escaped from the tyranny of the printed word. We live in a day when symbols have once again become effective means of non-verbal communication, as was the case in earlier centuries before the appearance of the printing press. To be effective as an expression of our belief, and as a continual deepener of it, the liturgy — both in rite and ceremonial — must be clear and meaningful. Otherwise our belief would decay and we would not be able to hold our young people or to draw adult converts to the Church.

Each age has its own insights, its own presuppositions, and its own limitations. It is, therefore, imperative that the Church periodically rethink its message and revise its mode of worship so as to maintain an authentic expression of the Christian faith in words and ceremonial that speak not to our Tudor or Colonial or Victorian forebears, but to the people who darken the doors and occupy the pews of our churches today. This is our Christian vocation, and it is the cutting edge of the Gospel. Under God, it is also the Church's hope for the future. +++



Dec. 1973

You've Come
a Long
Way

Associated Parishes

A PROPER CHARGE.

B—P OF L—D—N. "You must not bring your playthings into Church, my little men."

•• Several weak-minded clergymen in the Diocese of London, seeking to introduce Romish decorations, such as crosses and candles, and ornamented altars, into their Churches, were very properly reproved by Dr. Tait, Bishop of London.—November 27, 1858.

(see page 13)

from "PUNCH"