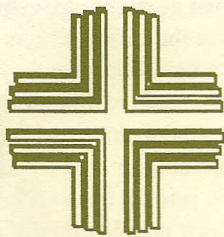


Word on Worship

Newsletter of the Office of Divine Worship, Archdiocese of Newark, Volume 25, No. 4, 2008

A PAUSE FOR SILENT PRAYER

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This past Holy Week I had the opportunity to carve out a few hours of silence. It was Good Friday, a day that is busy in our churches with last minute preparations for Good Friday liturgies and devotions. I made a point of creating some quiet time for a reason which was to watch a movie that I had recently purchased entitled *Into Great Silence*. I thought Good Friday would be an appropriate day to spend some time in quiet reflection and that this movie would be helpful.

The movie had been highly recommended by several friends who had seen it in the theater, but I was also warned that in order for it to have its full effect, it needed to be viewed without interruption. Therefore, removed from phones, doorbells, buzzers and beepers, I set about watching the film. *Into Great Silence* is a fascinating movie. In the year 2000, director Philip Gröning spent six months filming the lives of monks at the Grande Chartreuse, a Carthusian Monastery in the French Alps. In 2007, he released the movie *Into Great Silence*, the result of his efforts.

The Carthusian monks live most of their lives without speaking. They call the long stretches of quiet during their day the "Great Silence." There is no soundtrack to the film other than the sounds of nature, the monks at work and of course, silence. The only time the monks are heard from is while praying and during their weekly hike through the mountains when they are free to talk among themselves. Occasionally during the movie, words from scripture or from the monks' rule appear on the screen.

For one hundred and sixty-two minutes, the viewer is drawn into the power of lives lived in prayer, surrounded by silence, a silence which lets God into their lives; a silence that removes distractions so that the mind can focus on the presence of God in all things and in all moments. The silence is difficult at times, but it is also powerful and has a lasting affect as it did on me, opening me up to a more profound experience of the Easter Triduum liturgies.

Silence is extremely important to our spiritual lives. It is the place where we can find God. The website for the Charterhouse of the Transfiguration, the only Carthusian Monastery in the United States, has this to say about the importance of silence:

We speak of entering into silence, but what is the silence of the contemplative made up of? Is it like a stone falling in a big gaping hole? It is possible that we may confuse true prayerful silence with this kind of event of the material world. In reality silence is *"a tranquil listening of the heart that allows God to enter through all its doors and passages."* (Cf. St 4.2). Silence is a kind of listening: not a feverish waiting for some word that would come and knock on our ear or fill our heart, but a peaceful waiting, in a state of availability for the One who is present and who works in our most intimate selves.¹



For most people in our church pews, silence is nearly an unknown phenomenon. There is an overabundance of sound and distraction in our lives in all times and places. One need not wait to get to the office to check one's email or phone messages – the car or the commute is no longer even a brief refuge of relative silence during a busy day. Times of solitude are filled with the noise of the radio, the cell phone, the mp3 player, the portable electronic game.

Even when we find ourselves faced with a moment of silence, it makes us feel awkward or uncomfortable, unsure of what to do with ourselves. As one spiritual writer notes, "...we are habituated to noise. We are addicted to novelty, to sensation, to ourselves. Fuss and commotion, mental chattering, and outer stimulation occupy our minds from dawn to dusk."² It takes a certain element of spiritual formation to be able to break away from the stimulations of the world in order to not be afraid of silence, but rather to make good use of quiet time.

CAN IT BE DONE?

The role of the Church's liturgy is not only to provide an experience of prayer and worship. Done well, the liturgies of the Church also teach God's people how

to pray: "In the name of the Father and of the Son..." "Our Father who art in heaven..." "Lord, have mercy." "Lord, hear our prayer!"

Even the way we pray at liturgy forms our spiritual lives. Dialogue and response ("The Lord be with you - And also with you." ...reading and responsorial psalm... "The Body of Christ - Amen!") Ritual actions, prayerful words, sacred music and profound responses all serve a role in liturgy which forms the spiritual lives of the assembly. The same can be said of silence in the liturgy. It, too, can teach God's people how to pray. But can it be done? Can moments of silence be effective among an assembly of people so accustomed to noise and stimulation as we find in our everyday world? One thing is certain, silence will only work to form God's people when it is consistent. In other words, there cannot be one Mass at which there are silences and another where there are none. Ritual only works when it is repetitive. No one learns how to play a piano in one lesson; no one learns how to make use of silence for prayer in one liturgy.

People in our world need to be taught silence; led into contemplation. Will there always be a child crying or even a cell

phone ringing during these silences at Mass? Many times, yes. It is unavoidable. There is no absolute silence anywhere, but the kind of silence that the liturgy calls for should bring about a stillness of the heart that can occur in even the noisiest of environments.

It is absolutely essential that some kind of catechesis occur, outside of the Mass, regarding the importance of silent prayer. Just as people have been taught how to say the Lord's Prayer and how to receive communion, they also need to be catechized as to what to do with silent moments in the Mass. A simple insert in the bulletin and consistent use of silence by priests, deacons and readers can easily draw people into the use and importance of silent prayer at Mass and other liturgies.³

Usually the biggest obstacle to silent moments in the liturgy is not the people, but the liturgical leadership. Priests, deacons and those who prepare the liturgy need to let go of the fear that a silent moment at Mass will be awkward or give the appearance of something gone wrong in the liturgy! It can only work when the actions of the priest and ministers indicate that this silence is a moment of prayer given as a gift, not something troubling to

be endured. Properly handled, silence at liturgy can have a profound effect on the worshipping community.

One question that is frequently asked regarding silent prayer is, "How long should it last?" One profound answer to that question is, "Until the silence speaks." In other words, when first approached by silence in the Mass, the assembly might begin to wonder if someone missed their cue or if the priest lost his page in the book and does not know what to say next. In the next moment the mind wanders to more profane concerns (like where to go for breakfast after Mass). Finally, there is a realization on the part of the people that the priest said "Let us pray" and given the silence, he must have really meant it!

I recall when I was first ordained making a concentrated effort to respect the silent moments of the Mass. In every collect of the Mass, there is a call to the people by the priest, "Let us pray" followed by the rubric, "Pause for silent prayer." In order to insure this silence was not overlooked, my "silent prayer" often consisted of a self-conscious, timed moment of silence followed by the collect.

Today, I am happy to say that I can pray during that silent period. After fifteen years of this practice, I have a *feeling* for the silent prayer and no longer need be concerned about the timing. With this kind of liturgical formation, the assembly can also learn to feel the silent prayer,

enter it, and hear it speak to them.

WHEN SILENCE?

There are several opportunities for silence in the liturgy, especially at Mass:

- During the act of penitence and the opening prayer (collect)
- After the first reading, second reading and homily
- Before the Eucharistic Prayer and after Communion.

The silence after the readings is critical. As mentioned in the quote above from the Carthusians, this is not to be a silence of anticipation, waiting for the next word to be spoken, but a silence of contemplation on the word of God.

Silence after the first and second reading also paces the liturgy, slowing it down to a reverent pace. The Liturgy of the Word should not give the appearance of ticking off things to do in order to make the liturgy "valid," but should create an atmosphere of prayer, opening hearts and minds to God's word.

At the Cathedral Basilica of the Sacred Heart in Newark, I assist at special liturgies by preparing the readers, who are often guests, for proclaiming the word of God at Mass. I explain to them that after the reading, there will be thirty seconds of silence during which they will lead the assembly in silent reflection. It is important that the reader remain in place for this

silent period to indicate to the assembly that this silent prayer is purposeful and not accidental.

I tell the readers to lead the silence by "radiating holiness." They usually smile at me when I say that, but I explain that radiating holiness requires stillness. No fidgeting, playing with the Lectionary pages, or looking around the cathedral, but rather standing tall and still, hands folded or on the book, reflecting on God's word.

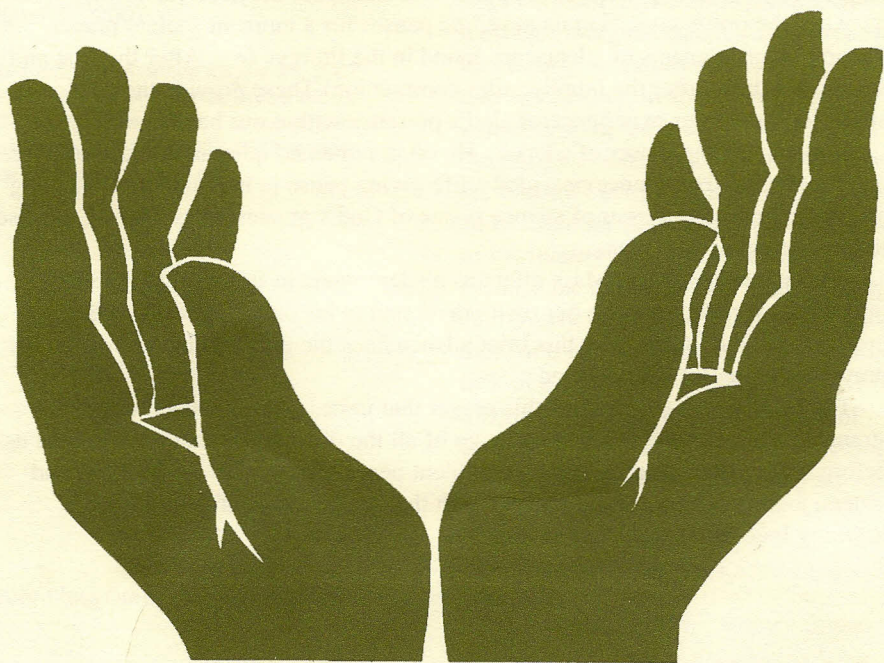
The readers remain still and silent until the organist begins the music for the psalm after the first reading or the Gospel acclamation after the second. Then, the reader leaves the ambo. Having the organist keep track of the timing allows the reader to authentically meditate on the word and not be concerned about keeping track of the length of the silence. The reader's presence and stillness communicates to the assembly that this is a purposeful moment of silence for all to reflect on the reading.

A general rule to keep in mind is that silence and stillness go together while movement and music are equally paired. If there is a silent moment in the liturgy, for example after the first reading, the reader should be motionless, not moving the pages of the lectionary or looking around nervously. However, when it is time for the reader to leave the ambo and the psalmist to enter it, music such as the introduction to the psalm should be used to accompany the motion.

LETTING THE SILENCE SPEAK

Silence in the liturgy has a variety of uses. During the opening prayer when the people are asked, "Let us pray," it is a time for clearing the mind and for raising a prayer up to God. After the introduction to the act of penitence, the deacon or priest should pause before continuing for the assembly to examine its collective conscience.

After the readings and the homily, the silence is a time for meditating on the word of God. After Communion, silence provides an opportunity for quiet prayer to God which is summed up when the priest prays the prayer after communion.



The liturgies of the Church have an extensive amount of “verbage.” Silence during liturgy allows the signs and symbols of the Mass, which may not have a voice *per se*, to speak to all present. A crucifix in procession speaks; an altar table incensed speaks; a sprinkling rite speaks; anointing and the laying on of hands speaks.

The symbols and actions of the liturgy can speak volumes, but only if we let them. It is not necessary to explain everything at the Mass with spoken words. In fact, to do so can undermine the ritual language of the liturgy which speaks most succinctly without the use of any words at all.

It has been argued that modernity, through its proliferation of abstract language “about” reality, has separated us from reality itself. We cannot see or hear the language of things because of our belief that things do not “speak.”

Silence allows symbols to speak. Nobody argues against the power of silent prayer before the Blessed Sacrament, an act of private devotion; how can we deny the assembly a moment of silence here and there throughout the liturgy to reflect, meditate and hear God speaking to them through sign and symbol, word and sacrament? To add even as much as thirty seconds of silence at each suggested time during the Mass would not add more than five or six minutes to the entire liturgy, and yet it would have a profound affect on all participants.

CONCLUSION

I began this article with a description of a movie about Carthusian monks. It rightly should be said that the average parishioner is not a monk, and nor should they be; however, does this mean that silence is only reserved to those in monastic orders? Everyone who exercises is not aspiring to be an Olympic athlete, but they do understand the importance of a healthy body. Likewise one does not need to commit to a life of silence in order to benefit from it, whether during private prayer or even the most festive of liturgies.

The beauty of silent prayer is that it can work anywhere with any assembly. There is no “grading” of silence as one might do with the music or preaching in a Mass.

Silence is simply “pass” or “fail.” It is either provided or it is not, and what each person does with it is up to them: a clearing of the mind; a moment of reflection; a time to enter mystery.

In her poem entitled “Prayer,” Mary Oliver gives insight into the possibilities of silent prayer in the liturgy:

It doesn't have to be
the blue iris, it could be
weeds in a vacant lot, or a few
small stones; just
pay attention, then patch

a few words together and don't try
to make them elaborate, this isn't
a contest but the doorway

into thanks, and a silence in which
another voice may speak.⁴

Particularly striking in this poem is the sense of relief that comes from knowing

that regardless of whether your silent prayer appears as complex and beautiful as an iris or as simple and homely as a weed, it can still accomplish the same purpose. The silences that occur in the liturgy, as in life, can open “the doorway into thanks, and a silence in which another voice may speak” to all present.

Given the proper time and attention, silent prayer can be cultivated from something simple and even awkward to something striking and beautiful; a quiet place where the mystery is entered and the voice of God is heard.

¹ <http://transfiguration.chartreux.org/>

² John Roger Barrie, “The Deepest Silence” in *Parabola* (Spring 2008) 9.

³ See this issue of *Word on Worship* for sample bulletin announcements about silence in the Mass. Also, if suitable to the readings or the liturgy, the role of silence could be referenced in the homily.

⁴ David Sander, “The Last Third of the Night” in *Parabola* (Spring 2008) 15.

⁵ Mary Oliver, “Praying”, in *Thirst* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2006) 37.

BULLETIN INSERT ON SILENCE

“LET US PRAY . . .” POWER IN SILENCE

Why do most of us find silence difficult? Silence would seem to be the easiest thing in the world, no energy is required. Yet there is a fear about the soundless void, the absence of noise or activity around us. Often, almost unthinkingly, we switch on the radio or pick up the phone rather than bear the silence.

Evidence suggests that the greatest strength is often found in silent power. Think about the rays of the sun or the pull of gravity. The closest friends can be happily silent in one another's company. Love eclipses the need for words.

After the priest says, “Let us pray,” he pauses for a moment's silent prayer. Several other moments of silence are found in the liturgy. (e.g. After the first and second readings; after the homily; after communion) These provide the necessary space for the deeper experience of God's presence within our hearts.

Christ knew the power of silence. He often remained quiet in the face of abuse and loneliness. His silence provided a life-giving pause in his ministry of healing and preaching. The power of silence is one of God's greatest gifts, one we can use to great effect as Christians.

The opening prayer at Mass offers us a silent moment in which to recollect ourselves. We stop to make our own prayer and to become conscious of the presence of God. Only after this brief silence does the priest gather or collect our prayers and present them to God.

The Trinity is at the heart of this prayer that unites us with God's love and strength. The silence invites us to let go of all the distractions that preoccupied us before Mass. We gather now in a confident peacefulness with our brothers and sisters, joining our needs and prayers with theirs. We are confident of God's listening love as we say, “Let us pray.”

LITURGY FORTY YEARS AFTER THE COUNCIL

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The first part of this article appeared in
Word on Worship Vol. 25,3

Boston College Canisius Lecture:
April 27, 2007 by Godfried Danneels
August 27, 2007

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WHAT SHOULD WE DO?

It is quite clear that “entering in to the already existing” structure of the liturgy does not mean that we must exclude any kind of flexibility in our liturgical style. Far from being ruled out, creativity is actually called for. If the problem does not lie with creativity then where does it lie?

The problem lies with the boundaries of our intervention. One cannot simply transform and re-arrange the whole thing. Changes have to be made with intelligence. The liturgy contains certain given themes which, while they cannot be changed, do remain open to possible variation. Some of those clearly delineated and unchangeable liturgical paths were determined by Christ himself. In classical terms they are referred to as the “substance” of the sacraments, over which even the Church itself has no power. The liturgy remains Christ’s liturgy.

There are also more historically derived elements of the liturgy which one cannot change. Certain forms of prayer and certain words and ways of speaking which, like the bible texts, remain unchangeable. Perhaps even the liturgical order of scripture reading, lyrical response (psalm) and prayer falls into this category. It is more than just a liturgical vagary, it is a deep theological truth: God speaks first and our response follows.

In order to be able to establish the boundaries between theme and variations a thorough liturgical training is indispensable. Liturgy demands knowledge of tradition and history, in short: documentary knowledge. In order to take one’s place in the liturgical enterprise one has to know one’s craft: Liturgy requires instruction and insight together with a good helping of spirituality and pastoral awareness. Perhaps the reason for the evident liturgical poverty in so many places throughout the world can be found here. There is no lack of engagement or dedication or imagination: there is simply a lack of competence. There is no point in setting up liturgical work groups if they are not trained for their job.

THE DURATION OF THE CELEBRATION

It might come across as strange in the ears of many but our liturgical celebra-

tions are for the most part too short. The liturgy needs time to deliver its riches. It has nothing to do with physical time or “clock” time but with the spiritual time of the soul. Since liturgy does not belong to the world of information but to the domain of the heart, it does not work with ‘clock’ time but with “kairos.” Many of our liturgies do not provide enough time or space to enter in to the event. In this regard Eastern liturgy provides a worthy example, taking its time and inviting those who participate to “leave all worldly cares behind” (hymn of the Cherubim). It is not enough that people have heard the liturgy or that it has been spoken: has it been “proclaimed to them”? Have they been given the opportunity to integrate it? It is not enough for us to have heard the liturgy, we need to have grasped it as well.

A major factor in all of this is silence and the time to interiorize. The liturgy of Vatican II provides time for silence but in practice it is not given much of a chance. Lack of silence turns the liturgy into an unstoppable succession of words which leaves no time for interiorization. Here too is a reason for the liturgy’s “incomprehensibility.”

THE ARTICULATION OF WORD AND GESTURE

A major handicap of the liturgy as it is practiced *de facto* in the West is its verbosity. In essence, liturgy has become matter of “language” and speaking. The word that was once ignored and neglected has made a comeback. How many celebrants consider the homily to be the climax of the liturgy and the barometer of the celebration? How many have the feeling that the celebration is more or less over after the liturgy of the Word? Indeed, there is clearly an imbalance in duration between the liturgy of the Word and the liturgy of the Eucharist.

At the same time too much attention is given to the intellectual approach to the liturgy. There is not enough room for imagination, affect, emotion and properly understood aesthetics. This leads in turn to the consequence that the liturgy begins to function in an extremely intellectual fashion and fails thereby to reach many of those who participate in it because they are either non-intellectual types or

because they do not consider such stuff to be nourishing for their lives.

A liturgy which is almost exclusively oriented to the intellect is also not likely to involve the human body in the celebration to any great extent.

There is a serious imbalance in the articulation of word and gesture. Without introducing rhetorical gesticulations and building in theatricality one can still argue, nevertheless, that the tongue and the ear are frequently the only human organs in use during the liturgy. Liturgy then ends up lapsing from celebration into mere instruction and address.

THE INSTRUMENTALIZATION OF THE LITURGY

One of the consequences of the verbosity we have been discussing is the danger that the liturgy will be instrumentalized and used for ends which lie outside it. Liturgy, however, is a global, symbolic activity which belongs to the order of the "playful." The uniqueness of "play" is the fact that one "plays in order to play," one plays for the sake of playing. The death of play is competition and financial interest.

Liturgy will also die if it is subordinated to ends beyond itself. Liturgy is neither the time nor the place for catechesis. Of course, it has excellent catechetical value but it is not there to replace the various catechetical moments in the life of the Christian woman or man. Such moments require their own time. Nor should liturgy be used as a means for disseminating information, no matter how essential that information might be. It should not be forced to serve as an easy way to notify the participants about this, that and the other unless such things are themselves entirely subordinate to the liturgy itself. One does not attend the liturgy on Mission Sunday in order to learn something about this or that mission territory: one comes to the liturgy to reflect on and integrate one's mission from Christ to "go out to all nations." The establishment of all sorts of thematic Sundays and thematic celebrations has little or no future, except in the death of the liturgy as such. Liturgy ought certainly not to serve as a sort of "warm up" for another activity, even a Church activity. It is not a meeting but a celebration. It can indeed follow from the

liturgy that one departs from it with a greater sense of engagement, faith and love informing and inspiring one's actions.

Liturgy is a free activity: its end is in itself. Although it is the "source and summit" of all ecclesial activities liturgy does not replace them nor does it coincide with them.

THE 'SENSORIAL' PEDAGOGY OF THE LITURGY

The uniqueness of the liturgy is that it gives pride of place to "experience." Experience comes first and while reflection, analysis, explanation and systematization might be necessary they must follow after experience.

"Celebrate first, then understand" might seem a strange proposition to some and perhaps even come across as obscuritanistic and anti-intellectual. Does it imply a call for irrationality or an abandonment of the massive catechetical effort the Church makes in order to prepare people to receive the sacraments? Think, for example, of the creed and confirmation.

The Church Fathers adhered to the principle that mystagogical catechesis (in which the deepest core of the sacred mysteries was laid bare) should only come after the sacraments of initiation. Prior to baptism they limited themselves to moral instruction and teaching on the Christian "way of life." Immediately after baptism—during Easter week—they spoke about the deep meaning of baptism, chrism and Eucharist. Their pedagogical approach remained "sensorial": participate first and experience things at an existential level in the heart of the community and only then explain. Their entire method of instruction was structured around a framework of questions and answers such as: "Did you notice that...?" "Well what this means is..."

Perhaps we do not have to adhere to the letter of such a pedagogical approach—the "*disciplina arcana*" also had a hand in things—but it certainly provides a hint in the right direction. One can only understand the liturgy if one enters into it with faith and love. In this sense no catechetical method will succeed if it is unable to depend on good, community celebrations of the liturgy. In the same way catechesis

as such will be of little use if it is not accompanied by a liturgical praxis during the period of catechesis.

Where the liturgy is concerned, the following rule applies: first experience, first "live" the liturgy, then reflect and explain it. The eyes of the heart must be open before the eyes of the mind because one can only truly understand the liturgy with the intelligence of the heart.

This has consequences for liturgical work groups: those who desire to work with the liturgy and, as we already noted, "vary the given theme," will first have to listen attentively to that theme and participate in the celebration of the liturgy as it is. If they do not, then their entire liturgical endeavor will turn out to be nothing more than "self-expression" and not the shaping of a pre-given entity which has its roots in the liturgical tradition of both the Old and New Testaments and in the living tradition of the Church. What would we think of a composer who refused to listen to his predecessors or a painter who refused to visit a museum? Every musician listens to music and every poet reads poetry. This is simple human wisdom but it applies in full to the liturgy which is primarily God's work with his people.

The worthy liturgist listens first, meditates, prays and interiorizes. Only then can he or she "modulate."

RITUAL AND BOREDOM

The very terms "rite" and "ritual" summon up the idea of boredom and monotony. "It's always the same..." we hear day in day out. Ritual is synonymous with rigidity and sclerosis.

Is that really so, however? It is true that an exaggerated attachment to particular forms does exist, but that is ritualism, unsound ritual. We have to admit that every good thing has its pathology.

Ritual, however, is something other than ritualism. Ritual is priceless and irreplaceable. It has its place in every human activity. Every human being has a morning and evening ritual just as every society has its regular festivities which are celebrated in the same way each year.

Ritual is an unavoidably anthropological datum. Every significant human reality is

surrounded and protected by ritual: birth, marriage, love, death. Every transition is adorned and embellished with ritual. Every time we encounter something that transcends the human person we "humanize" it with ritual.

The unique characteristic of every ritual is its repetitiveness and stereotypical nature. In order for us to interiorize profound matters, we need identical stereotypes, the reassuring ceremonial wordings we call ritual. This kind of repetition, however, does not necessarily imply monotony or the stifling of any kind of personal element. Every marriage rite, for example, is stereotypical: everyone marries in the same manner and with the same words and gestures. Yet in so doing those involved are not left depersonalized, a mere number in the line. Every marriage remains unique even though it took place in just the same way as any other. As a matter of fact it is essential for every couple that they are able to take their place in line with every other marriage in and through the fixed marriage rite. In this way the fragility of their personal engagement is socialized and, in their eyes, protected and guaranteed. The same is true for the language of love. It remains endlessly unvarying yet it is experienced as fresh and new each time it is spoken.

Repetitive ritual provides, in addition, the opportunity for in-depth reflection and interiorization. Serious matters (such as the liturgy) cannot be grasped all at once: they need time and time means repetition. Only pure information such as an order or a computer language does not require repetition since it can be understood immediately. More profound matters only let their real significance emerge over time.

Ritual, finally, provides a protection against direct, un-mediated religious experience. Only the great religious geniuses (such as Moses before the burning bush) are able for such experiences; the rest of us need the protective mediation of ritual and the "decelerating," "delaying" role of repetition.

Indeed, there will always be a certain monotony and perhaps boredom associated with ritual. Perhaps we simply have to be aware of it and reconcile ourselves with it, as long as we continue to bear in mind how necessary this "tiresome"

aspect of ritual can be.

A few further reflections might also be useful. If we constantly emphasize the "tiresome" aspect of ritual we reveal just how individualistic our experience of the liturgy has become. Ritual, however, is necessary in order to bring a community together and allow it to celebrate. If we turn the liturgy into the most individual expression of the most individual emotion then we wipe out any possibility of communal celebration. If, however, we enter into the Eucharistic celebration with it fixed "*ratio agenda*" it is because we want to make it possible for many to celebrate in the same rhythm. There can be no community without ritual.

We need to bear in mind, furthermore, that we attend the liturgy at God's invitation. The liturgy is not a feast we laid out for ourselves, according to our own personal preferences. It is God's feast. We attend by invitation and not simply to satisfy our own particular needs.

A great deal depends, to be sure, on the person of the presider. He is someone who must lead a community event on God's behalf. He is the living vehicle of something that goes beyond him. He is, therefore, neither robot nor actor; he is a servant.

THE COSMIC GROUNDING OF THE LITURGY

One important fact about the liturgy is its relatedness to the cosmos. Many of its symbols are borrowed from cosmic realities such as fire, light, water, food, bodily gestures. Times and seasons, the position of sun and moon, night and day, summer and winter are also related to the liturgy. In the liturgical event all the major human archetypes have their place.

What is important, however, is that the cosmic realities in question are given their chance to appear in their full reality as created things. The liturgy must work with "real" things. Although everything is to a certain degree transformed by culture it should never be overshadowed by cultural accretions. Fire needs to be real fire, light real light, linen real linen, wood real wood. Time must also be respected, such as the hour for the Easter vigil celebration. Thus liturgy often becomes the true repository of the authenticity of the

objects around us. To serve God we use only the best things as He created them. Expediency and comfort need to make way here for authenticity.

We should be aware, however, that all our Jewish and Christian symbols are no longer purely cosmic or natural. They have all been determined and conditioned by the history of God with his people. Although all our Jewish-Christian feasts have an agrarian origin they have all been conditioned by the events of salvation which are historically situated and no longer natural; they are fact-historical. The Passover feast is no longer purely agricultural, it is also the celebration of the exodus from Egypt. Shebuoth is no longer a celebration of the first harvest but of the giving of the law on Mount Sinai. With Christian feasts which are entirely determined by the historicity of the Christian mysteries it is even clearer. There are no more purely cosmic, natural feasts. The Christian festal calendar is no longer a purely natural calendar, it consists rather of a series of memorial days which celebrate historical events between God and his people.

THE LITURGY AND THE SENSES

Liturgy is closely related to the body and the senses. As a matter of fact there is only one fundamental symbolism: that of the human body as an expression of the human soul and thus the primary location of all symbols. All other symbolic gestures can be situated in the extension of the human body.

The eye is the most active of the senses. In the liturgy nowadays, however, it tends to be somewhat undervalued. There is a lot to hear but little to see. At one time the situation was reversed. At a time when the verbal dimension was not understood the visual dimension was pushed to the fore. Certain secondary liturgical gestures, such as the elevation of the bread and wine at the consecration are a consequence of this fact. Even Eucharistic worship outside of mass has its roots here. We can certainly re-evaluate the visual side of our liturgy but that does not always mean that we have to supply additional visual effects. It is always best to let the great symbols function. How can it be understood as a water bath if it turns out to be little more than a sprinkling with water? How can we

speak of "hearing the message" if everyone is sitting with their heads bent reading the texts in their missalettes at the moment when they should be listening? The three great focal points of the celebration: the presidential chair, the ambo and the altar, also have a strong visual significance.

Of great importance is that the different text genres should be respected: a reading is not a prayer, hymn is not a psalm, a song is not a *monitio* nor is a homily a set of announcements. Each of these genres requires its own—auditive—treatment. Furthermore, it is clear that neither rhetoric nor theatricality nor pathos have a part in the liturgy. Reading is not acting: it is allowing oneself to be the humble instrument of a word that comes from beyond. The exaggerated impact of the personal individuality of the man or woman who reads can kill the liturgy and eliminate its harmonics.

Even the place from which the Scriptures are read has some significance. It is better not to read from the middle of the community because the word comes to us from elsewhere. It is proclaimed; it does not simply arise out of the community. It is also best to read from the *Book of the Gospels* and from an ambo surrounded by symbols suggestive of respect (light, incense, altar servers).

The sense of touch finds its most profound expression in the laying on of hands and in anointing. These are among the most physical gestures of the liturgy and they can have an enormous impact on the human person. The significance of praying in the presence of a sick person takes on quite a different character if one places one's hands on that person or anoints them.

The sense of smell, to conclude, is almost completely unused in the liturgy. It is not to our advantage that the use of incense has been pushed aside into the domain of superfluity and hindrance. The Eastern Church is much better off than we are in this regard. One rather absurd case is the scentlessness of the chrism which we use to suggest the "good odor of Christ" to our newly confirmed. Here too the Eastern Church is ahead of us (perhaps too generously!) in their use of tens of different scents and spices in the manufacture of their chrism.

"INCULTURATION"

The problem of "inculturation" is a recent phenomenon. It was treated in a remarkable document produced by the Sacred Congregation for the Sacraments and Divine Worship in 1994.

We cannot discuss every aspect of the problem at this juncture. The principle, however, is clear: if the liturgy is an "incarnational" fact then it is an inherent requirement that it be inculturated in the various cultures of humanity. Such is evident. Liturgy must be inculturated, or rather: liturgy will inculturate itself if it is lived with faith and love of Christ by people of all cultures.

There are also limits, however. The liturgy is not only a structuring of human religiosity, it gives form to the Christian mysteries. These mysteries took place in history, in a particular place and time and using particular rites and symbols. The last supper is not just a common, human religious meal, it is the meal the Lord ate with his disciples the night before he suffered. This implies that all Eucharistic celebrations need to be recognizable as such which includes even formal connections and references. No cultural religious meal is equivalent to the Christ meal. In this sense the Eucharist can never be completely "inculturated."

The liturgy is not only an incarnational datum, it also belongs to the order of salvation. As such it has a salvific impact on the cultures of humankind. Not every religious practice or popular "liturgy" can be used as a "vehicle" for Christian liturgy. There are levels of incompatibility and there are prayers and practices which are not appropriate for use in the Christian liturgy. 'Discernment' here will not always be so simple.

Inculturation does not take place so much on the liturgist's desk as in the praxis of liturgy itself. It is not an act of bureaucratic sophistication but rather a faithful loyal discernment which takes place in the celebration itself. Only after long and deep immersion in the real liturgy accompanied by a great desire for Christ and his mysteries, for Church tradition and for the historicizing of the "natural" liturgy through the coming of Christ will we see the slow but steady emergence of inculturated litur-

gy. This is how the Jewish liturgy transformed into the Greek and the Greek liturgy into the Roman and the Roman liturgy was supplemented and augmented by the German and Anglo-Saxon liturgy and so forth. Such work of inculturation has always been the fruit of the thoughts and deeds of a few significant Church figures and of the patient sensitivity and faith-filled discernment of the many peoples of the world.

It remains an open question whether we should consider inclusive language to be a question of inculturation. The discussion is still in full swing and would demand a separate and more thorough treatment than is possible here. In fact the question remains whether we are being faced with a radical cultural change or not and whether or not this has religious implications. It appears to me to be more of an anthropological problem which is not only significant for biblical and liturgical texts but for the use of language as such and for the whole dimension of conviviality between men and women.

LITURGY AND LIFE

There has been a great deal of discussion in recent years concerning the exotic character of the liturgy and its distance from the every day life of Christians. It is true indeed that a liturgy which has no impact on or consequences for the way Christians live their lives is off the mark. If, according to Pope Leo the Great, the Christian mysteries have crossed over into the liturgy then it is equally true that liturgy must cross over into the moral and spiritual life of Christians. "*Imitamini quod tractatis...*" — "Do in practice what you do in the liturgy" resounds the ancient text from the liturgy of ordination.

Some have endeavored to draw the conclusion from this axiom that the liturgy is not important when compared with our day to day lives or that it is a sort of preparation or "warm-up" for life itself, an option for those who need it but redundant for those who don't. Others have suggested that liturgy and life coincide and that true service to God takes place outside the church in one's daily life.

Liturgy does not coincide with life, rather it has a dialectic relationship with life. Sunday is not Monday nor vice versa.

Aside from the liturgy's profound and significant content as an indispensable source of grace and power for life, we must also bear in mind that the Sunday ritual interrupts monotony and differentiates and articulates human time. The liturgy is not life and life is not liturgy. Both are irreducible and both are necessary. They do not coincide.

It is sometimes said that the liturgy gives shape to life, that it symbolizes life. This is not entirely incorrect. What we do throughout the week in a varied and diluted way we also do in the liturgy but in a more concentrated and purified fashion: we live for God and for others. Liturgy, however, is not only a symbolization of human life. Liturgy symbolizes and makes present: firstly the mysteries of salvation, the words and deeds of Christ, but also our deeds in so far as they are reflected, purified and redeemed in Christ. His mysteries—made present to us in the liturgy—are our archetypes. This Christological determination of our lives in the liturgy is of the essence.

On the other hand, it is a fact that the liturgy finds its field of application in daily life. It flows over it and nourishes it but never coincides with it nor complies with it. Life and liturgy are in a dialectic relationship. The life of the Christian is built on two things: *cultus* and *caritas*.

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Subscription Information

One year subscription to *Word on Worship*, 4 issues, \$10.00. Bulk rate, five or more issues to the same address, \$8.50 per year per subscription. Foreign subscription, \$13.50 per year. To begin your subscription call 973-497-4345. **Website:** www.rcan.org/worship

Principles Of Translating the *Missale Romanum*

Part 1A

Editor's Note: The USCCB's Committee on Divine Worship Newsletter has been including a series on the rationale for the translation of the forthcoming third edition of the Roman Missal. Part 1 of the first segment from this series is included here. Others will appear in future issues of Word on Worship.

As the translation process for the third edition of the Roman Missal continues, we would like to take the opportunity to provide our readers with a somewhat detailed insight into the principles that are being used for the translation process.

The sources for these principles are the Instruction *Liturgiam authenticam*, and the *Ratio Translationis* for the English Language, issued by the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments in 2001 and 2007, respectively. One of the guiding principles of the translation is to be found in number 20 of *Liturgiam authenticam*:

The Latin liturgical texts of the Roman Rite, while drawing on centuries of ecclesial experience in transmitting the faith of the Church received from the Fathers, are themselves the fruit of the liturgical renewal, just recently brought forth. In order that such a rich patrimony may be preserved and passed on through the centuries, it is to be kept in mind from the beginning that the translation of the liturgical texts of the Roman Liturgy is not so much a work of creative innovation as it is of rendering the original texts faithfully and accurately into the vernacular language. While it is permissible to arrange the wording, the syntax and the style in such a way as to prepare a flowing vernacular text suitable to the rhythm of popular prayers, the original text, insofar as possible, must be translated integrally and in the most exact manner, without omissions or additions in terms of their content, and without paraphrases or glosses. Any adaptation to the characteristics or the nature of the various vernacular languages is to be sober and discreet.

One of the most challenging aspects of this principle has been to keep the balance between creating a flowing vernacular text that is compatible with the rhythm of popular prayer while, at the same time, translating the text in an integral and most exact manner. The question of translating the text in an integral and exact manner demands a great deal more than just simply translating word for word. Sometimes, those not engaged in translation are of the impression that one simply has to take a dictionary and perhaps a thesaurus and thus produce an "exact" translation. Understanding of vocabulary and syntax are simply the entranceway into the process of translation. Translators, when they first approach a text, must explore the biblical and patristic sources of the texts they are dealing with. They do this through careful study of various scholarly studies. Sometimes, understanding the use of a word or phrase by the Church fathers can unlock important aspects of the meaning of a particular prayer. The particular context that surrounds the use of a word by a particular Church father is very important. Oftentimes the fathers of the Church are trying to address particular epistemological, anthropological and soteriological issues of their day. One also has to have an understanding of the particular heretical or separatist movements that could have influenced the use of particular language.

Continued next issue

Baptismal Formula Questions

RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS REGARDING BAPTISMAL FORMULAS

CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS PROPOSED

On the validity of baptism conferred with the formulas: "I baptize you in the name of the Creator, and of the Redeemer, and of the Sanctifier" and "I baptize you in the name of the Creator, and of the Liberator, and of the Sustainer."

QUESTIONS

First question: Whether the baptism conferred with the formulas "I baptize you in the name of the Creator, and of the Redeemer, and of the Sanctifier" and "I baptize you in the name of the Creator, and of the Liberator, and of the Sustainer" is valid?

Second question: Whether the persons baptized with those formulas have to be baptized in *forma absoluta*?

RESPONSES

To the first question: Negative. To the second question: Affirmative.

The Supreme Pontiff Benedict XVI, at the audience granted to the undersigned Cardinal Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, approved these responses, adopted in the Ordinary Session of the Congregation, and ordered their publication.

Rome, from the Offices of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, February 1, 2008.

William Cardinal Levada

BAPTISMAL FORMULA

The response to the questions concerning baptismal formulas given by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith clearly indicates that no substitutions may be made to the words of the baptismal formula. In fact, to do so invalidates the sacrament, and the person must be baptized

according to the proper formula.

This would be true of anyone (infant, child or adult) being baptized in the Catholic Church.

VALID BAPTISMAL FORMULA

The baptismal formula approved for use in the English language is found in the 1970 *Rite of Baptism for Children* (see 60), and in the 1988 *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* (see 226):

N., I BAPTIZE YOU IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, (*He immerses the candidate the first time.*)
...AND OF THE SON, (*He immerses the candidate the second time.*) ...AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. (*He immerses the candidate the third time.*)

The **same** priest (or deacon) who speaks the formula also immerses the person or pours the water over the person being baptized.

Minister of Baptism

In a January 9, 2007 letter addressed to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Archbishop Myers inquired as to the validity of baptisms when one minister recites the baptismal formula and another pours the water or immerses the person being baptized. The Congregation responded in an April 25, 2008 letter:

A thorough study has been conducted into this important matter and I am now in a position to inform you that such a baptism is invalid because the integrity of baptism consists in the form of words and the use of the matter. Therefore, neither the minister who only pronounces the words, baptizes, nor the minister who only performs the immersion or the effusion of water. If one pronounces the words and the other performs the action, the formula does not express the truth, for a minister cannot truly say:

"I baptize you..." when, in fact, he doesn't execute the action.

+ Angelo Amato, SDB
Titular Archbishop of Sila
Secretary, Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith

Consequently, any baptism at which one minister recited the baptismal formula and another minister poured or immersed the person being baptized is invalid.

Archbishop Myers has directed that anyone who is aware of a baptism or baptisms having been administered in this manner should notify the Office of the Vicar General (Archdiocese of Newark) so that arrangements can be made for those in question to be validly baptized.

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Archdiocese of Newark

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Do Not Explain Too Much

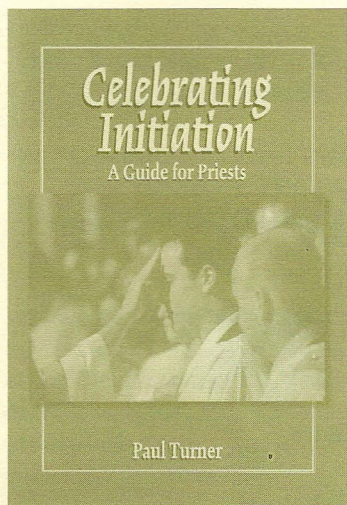
If a poet must explain the poem before it is recited, there is something wrong with the poem. If a liturgy must be explained before it is done, there is something wrong with the liturgy. In such cases it is probable that there is something wrong with the poet and the liturgist as well. This is not to say that preparation is never needed. It is only to say that lengthy explanations are always abnormal and should never occur as an immediate prelude to an act itself.

The assembly needs sustained preparation and formation of various sorts – evangelical, homiletical, catechetical and ascetical. It is when these are lacking that last-minute recourse is had on the part of slothful ministers to verbose explanations of what is about to happen. The risk this runs is that of turning the liturgy into a “learning experience,” as it is called. In a culture such as ours the educational temptation is difficult to resist. But liturgy which is stylish and effective in incrementing *logos* leads not to the brink of clarity but to the edge of chaos. It deals not with the abolition of ambiguity but with the dark and hidden things of God. When it comes to liturgy, precision can be bought at too high a price, and some things cannot be said.

Aidan Kavanagh

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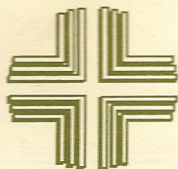
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