

LITURGY: A PASTORAL NEED

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WHEN Father Joseph Jungmann, S.J., rose to speak at the great International Congress of Pastoral Liturgy at Assisi in September 1956 he was greeted by applause so loud and so long that even a cardinalial chairman could scarcely bring it to an end. It was the spontaneous recognition, by two thousand delegates from all over the world, of the special place that Father Jungmann holds not only among liturgical scholars but among all who have worked for the liturgical revival of our time. His subject at Assisi was 'Pastoral Care: The Key to Liturgical History', and it summed up his own achievement, which has been to apply the resources of an exact and unflagging scholarship to liturgical history but always so as to preserve a lively sense of its true purpose. At Assisi he compared the Liturgy to a tree: 'if it has developed in the changing climate of the world's history, if it has known times of storm and times of fruitfulness, nevertheless its growth has come from within and from vital forces which it manifests. The Liturgy is the life of the Church in the sight of God, of the Church which is the community of all those who are incorporated in Christ by baptism and who, Sunday by Sunday, gather to celebrate, under the direction of the priestly ministry, the memorial of the Lord.'

It is this sense of the Liturgy as reflecting the life of the Church, and as determined by her pastoral care, which lies at the heart of Father Jungmann's work. It gives life to the most recondite of his researches, for throughout he is conscious of the dangers of a mere antiquarianism. The work of the liturgist is not a species of archaeology, in which scholars strive to establish original structures or to re-create an ancient monument—beautiful but dead. Of course the liturgical revival of recent years owes an immense amount to the laborious work of scholars, and of necessity they were concerned with establishing authentic texts, with inspecting the process of liturgical evolution. They were often antiquaries by temperament and affected by a nostalgic regret for a happier past. There were also the rubricians, for whom the liturgy was a text to be interpreted, with a casuistry to be

considered. There were, too, the purely scientific scholars, for whom pastoral considerations scarcely arose as they pursued their study of patristic evidence or their scrutiny of medieval texts. From quite another point of view, depth psychologists discovered unsuspected riches in the symbolic implications of Catholic worship. In the meantime, the theologians were scarcely concerned: the ordinary parish priest even less. The study of the liturgy was specialized, even obscure, and was rarely thought to have much immediate connection with the teaching office of the Church.

The great change—and it is a recent one—is to see the liturgy (as Father Jungmann more than any other scholar has taught us to see it) as reflecting in its history the very work of the Church. Essentially unaltered (since its primary function is to re-present the unalterable mystery of our redemption), it yet through the centuries faithfully mirrors the complex and ever-changing culture in which the Church, as an institution in the world, must find her external forms of worship. But in course of time fixed ways and words acquire a sacred character: the language of the liturgy may become a ‘dead’ one, and the social structure that gave initial meaning to some ritual action may long since have disintegrated. For the historian as such, the pastoral considerations which seek to make the liturgy reveal its strength and make it live are not relevant. But for the priest with the care of souls the liturgy is so much more than the sum of its history and of the texts it uses; for him the pastoral purpose is interpretative of all. The difficulty is to preserve what is sacred and at the same time to adapt what is necessary if the liturgy is to make its true impact on the believer. And we have now, in the restored Order for Holy Week, the classic example of a liturgical reform, inspired by an urgent pastoral purpose which nevertheless retains all that a venerable history should safeguard.

Father Jungmann’s great work, *Missarum Solemnia*,¹ first appeared in Vienna in 1948. As he explains in a foreword, it is in a way due to the evils of war, for the Nazi invasion of Austria had removed him from his professorship at the University of Innsbruck, and from 1942 he lived in the country, as chaplain to religious Sisters. Although deprived of the resources of large

¹ English edition, *The Mass of the Roman Rite*, 2 volumes, translated by the Rev. Francis A. Brunner, C.S.S.R. (Benziger Brothers; Burns Oates; £6 15s.)

libraries, he had at last the leisure to write his magisterial study of the Roman Mass, which was to be an exact examination of the sources and of their textual evolution. 'The rows of paragraphs and chapters began to grow, in parallel columns that stretched out yard after yard, and with dozens even hundreds of smaller strips; and to make it easier to establish relationships and basic forms, all shimmering in every colour of the rainbow!' When the war was over, Father Jungmann was able to fill up the gaps and to check his citations, and to give to the world what can only be described as the greatest work of liturgical scholarship of our time.

His method is necessarily an historical one. A description of the form of the Mass through the centuries is followed by a detailed analysis of its ceremonies. The work closes with an index of formidable size, with a meticulous analysis of sources which is the best commentary on the scope of Father Jungmann's researches. What is endearing about these volumes is the warmth, and even humour, that marks them throughout. Father Jungmann never loses sight of his purpose, which is fundamentally a pastoral one: a greater knowledge of the history of the Mass should lead to a greater love of it. And no reforms can be of profit unless they constantly relate to that organic process of growth, which the liturgical texts so profoundly reflect. That is why Father Jungmann does not content himself with an examination of texts. He is concerned, equally, with the Mass as an action, as the work of a community, and his references to the development of the Mass in practice, as it were (whether it be Hippolytus's description of an *agape* or the account of the modern revival of the dialogue Mass), give a concrete and living quality to his book, and certainly add much interest to the notes.

It is plainly impossible to indicate in any detail the range of Father Jungmann's work, but one may instance his treatment of the offertory procession as an example of his method. He is not content with an exhaustive history of the practice and the details of its ritual; he sees its meaning (however weakened) in the modern 'collection' and Mass stipend. For him the offering by the faithful of the holy gifts is not just a matter of history. True, the practice has withered away and there are demands for its revival: but the testimony of history is invaluable not only for an understanding of the present text and ceremonies of the Mass, but, too, for that

process of adaptation and revision which a living liturgy demands.

The American translation of *Missarum Solemnia* is excellently done, and the notes and indexes are reproduced in all their amplitude. This is an indispensable book for any Catholic library; and if dollars transformed into sterling seem to add up to a very high price, it can safely be said that no library grant could ever be so well spent as in securing Father Jungmann's great work. Those who feel nervous of so formidable a work of scholarship can in *Public Worship*² become acquainted with Father Jungmann's basic ideas, here applied to the whole liturgical field—the sacramental rites, the Divine Office, the Church's Year, as well as the Mass and its history. Originally written as a volume in a series of 'Catholic Thought', *Christian Worship* provides, in 250 pages, an admirable outline of the main currents of liturgical development, with, in necessarily abbreviated terms, the same constant reference of the liturgy to its central place in the Church's life which marks all Father Jungmann's books. A series of lectures on the Canon of the Mass, *The Eucharistic Prayer*,³ provides once more an illuminating study of the history of the liturgy of the Mass as the interpreter of its place in the Church's life.

In Father Jungmann one can discern a rare combination of qualifications—that is to say, of original research and its pastoral application—in liturgical scholarship. The two streams which, as it were, meet in him can be seen separately in the work of Anton Baumstark and Pius Parsch. Baumstark was a layman, a sort of German Edmund Bishop, who died in 1948. His academic work, carried on for over fifty years in various German universities, was of formidable range. In 1932 he delivered a course of lectures on the history of the Liturgy to the Monks at Amay (now at Chevotogne). They were published in *Irénikon*, and then in book form, revised by Dom Bernard Botte, the distinguished patristic and liturgical scholar of the abbey of Mont César. The English edition of this book,⁴ translated by Canon F. L. Cross, Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity at Oxford, is a welcome addition to liturgical work in English, since for the first time it makes available the masterly researches of a scholar who has profoundly affected Continental liturgical studies. (It is worth noting that the

² *Public Worship*. Translated by Clifford Howell, s.j. (Challoner Publications; 21s.)

³ Translated by Robert L. Bakley. (Challoner Publications; 4s. 6d.)

⁴ *Comparative Liturgy*. Revised by Bernard Botte, o.s.b. English edition by F. L. Cross, D.D. (Mowbray; 35s.)

most interesting recent liturgical work has been done by French scholars, but it leans heavily on the earlier researches of such men as Baumstark and, from a quite different point of view, Dom Casel.)

As Dom Botte points out in his foreword, Baumstark combined encyclopaedic knowledge (he was especially well equipped to deal with oriental texts) with an astonishing power of synthesis. He retained the approach of the comparative philologist, and it was his comparative approach to liturgical history—describing the evolution of various liturgical forms and reconstructing the primitive system from which they derived—that gave a new and scientific direction to an area of study that had had hitherto been unorganized and even casual in its methods. The danger, of course, as Dom Botte insists, is that a theory can become too rigidly adhered to: ‘to take a logical construction as though it were a historic reality’. And Baumstark’s approach is certainly Germanic in its thoroughness. He emphasizes that a comparative study of liturgies must ‘use methods similar to those employed in comparative linguistics and comparative biology’. It is certainly true that an exact and empirical study of sources must be the prerequisite of any formulation of ‘laws’ of liturgical evolution, and Baumstark’s brilliant generalizations—such as the antithesis of uniformity *versus* variety in the liturgical life and the antithesis of austerity *versus* richness—are only arrived at after the most careful examination of all the available evidence (and for Baumstark that means, for instance, the Council of Seleucia-Ctesiphon in 410 legislating for the Persian Church, as well as the Synod of Cloveshoe speaking for the Anglo-Saxons in 747).

This comparative method, at least when handled by a scholar of Baumstark’s imposing erudition, throws light on many obscurities and reveals the liturgy as a living element in a complex culture in which the development of language, social custom and even plain human oddities of behaviour can have their part. Thus one of Baumstark’s ‘laws’, that of ‘Organic Development’, deals with the tendency to abbreviation (and the more primitive elements are always the first to be affected). This explains, for instance, the presence of the *Oratio super populum* in the ferial Masses for Lent. They are in fact a survival of an earlier practice, which has disappeared from the rest of the year’s Masses. So, too, the Tracts which are still entire psalms (as on the first Sunday of

Lent) represent the original pattern: as does the omission of the trinitarian doxology from Passion Sunday onwards (though all sorts of 'pious' explanations have been devised for what is in fact simply the primitive practice, since, as Baumstark shows, at the most solemn times of the liturgical year—and the liturgy of Good Friday provides a splendid example—we are closest to the earliest shape of the liturgy).

Baumstark's researches—and his capacity for synthesizing the results—give to his book the dimensions of a fundamental source in itself. That is why an English edition—especially when presented with the meticulous care which Canon Cross has applied to what must have been a most teasing task—is so valuable. Much of Baumstark's material is unfamiliar or even unobtainable—he had a great capacity for writing articles of importance in obscure journals in unlikely languages—and with the publication of *Comparative Liturgy* English liturgical studies will be greatly enriched.

Pius Parsch represents a wholly pastoral approach to the liturgy, and his *Liturgy of the Mass*,⁵ while it makes use of the most recent and respectable liturgical scholarship, is designed to further the great work which he inaugurated at Klosterneuburg. Dom Parsch was an Augustinian Canon who anticipated much of the contemporary liturgical revival, both with his review, *Bible and Liturgy*, and with his pastoral work. He was a pioneer in establishing a truly communal Mass (assisted, it must be admitted, by the tradition in German-speaking countries of a considerable use of the vernacular). In such matters as the popularizing of a leaflet missal and in encouraging liturgical preaching he was well in advance of the post-war liturgical movement (especially as exemplified in the French *Centre de Pastorale Liturgique*) which has so triumphantly vindicated his methods. The present work, originally a series of articles, has been several times revised, and is now a splendid guide to the history of the Mass, making full use of the best German liturgical scholarship, but always so as to reveal the Mass in its true dimensions as the prayer of the Church in which the faithful are to find the very foundations of their spiritual life. It is full of brilliant analogies and helpful summaries

5 *The Liturgy of the Mass*. By Pius Parsch. The Third Edition translated and adapted by Rev. H. E. Winstone, M.A. Introduction by Rev. Clifford Howell, S.J. (London, B. Herder; 25s.)

(as for instance the ingenious little chapter which finds in the architecture of an ancient cathedral a pattern of the structure of the Mass). One cannot recommend it too warmly to those who want to understand the Mass, not merely as a venerable text but as the very lifeblood of Catholic worship.

It is an encouraging sign that these fundamental German works on the liturgy should now be available in English. It is true that the liturgical revival in this country must ultimately find its own writers, who will take into account those factors of native culture and tradition which necessarily modify the expression of a people's worship. But the radical need is a return to the sources—to Sacred Scripture and the patristic understanding of the Word of God as mediated through the liturgical rites.⁶ And Pius Parsch (whose recent death was, humanly speaking, so great a loss to liturgical writing) has, more than any one else, shown us how this can be done.

⁶ And, in this connection, one must welcome *The Sunday Sermons of the Great Fathers*, translated and edited by M. F. Toal. 1. Advent to Quinquagesima (16s. 6d.) 2. Lent to Ascension (17s. 6d.) (Longmans).