

The Liturgical Movement: Right and Wrong Directions—II

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by Duncan Cloud

In my first article I offered some reasons for thinking that the concept of modelling modern liturgies on some pattern formed in the distant past is one which has begun to outlive its usefulness. However, if we turn from Rome and the documents produced by the Consilium there to the actual areas of concern or experiment, we find a potentially far more fruitful situation. Two groups of people seem to be most interested in the changing shape of liturgy: those who love the Roman rite and wish to see it preserved in more or less its present form and those who feel that a new creation is required if we are to have forms of worship apt for the needs of contemporary man. To be sure, the habit of accepting whatever comes from above is ingrained in the Catholic and a large number of the faithful will certainly make the best of whatever is offered liturgically, as they have done in the past, but the two groups I have mentioned are the only ones whose response to liturgical change is not basically passive; each can put up a good case and it is around their needs as worshipping members of the people of God that two types of liturgy will crystallize. Such a polarization is something which we shall have to accept; we must give up the desire to enforce upon all our fellow Catholics a type of worship which at a given moment happens to suit us personally. We must also realize that the two concepts of worship involved are not susceptible of the kind of superficial reconciliation provided by the ICEL translation of the Canon. On the other hand, if each concept of worship embodies valid insights into the nature of worship, then neither should ignore the other, but such a recognition should be organic, not the hasty superimposition of irreconcilable elements on the top of a totally different form.

Let us look first at the situation as it appears to the liturgical conservative. For him, the people of God does not consist only, or perhaps even primarily, in the group gathered together on any one occasion to offer their sacrifice of praise to the Father; it consists rather in the whole Church, in heaven as on earth, from the first Pentecost to the present day, offering jointly with the Son, their head and founder, their prayers to the Father. Of this enormous company a particular congregation forms only a small part and the conservative is particularly conscious at Mass of his fellowship with his predecessors: just as the *Communicantes* links him with the Church triumphant, so the commemoration of the dead links him with the Church suffering. In the eucharistic prayer of the Roman rite all

dimensions of the Church are comprehended.

His attitude to the past marks him off not only from the progressive but also from the theoreticians of the liturgical Consilium. His interest in tradition is not selective in the manner of those who hanker after some liturgical golden age; he cannot see the point of expunging from the record over a thousand years of liturgical practice, as though the period from Charlemagne to Dom Beauduin were one long tale of decadence and misunderstanding. On the contrary, he deplores attempts to subvert concepts regarded as characteristic of medieval and baroque piety. Irene Marinoff in her article, 'The Erosion of the Mystery' (*New Blackfriars*, October 1968), admirably documents one such attempt; others involve the submerging of the personal character of prayer in a sea of vocal and community orientated participation, or involve the virtual elimination of the cult of the saints and popular devotions from the liturgical scene.

One other quality characterizes the liturgical conservative: his loyalty to his own tradition of worship. At its most extreme this takes the form of total immobilism—a return to the silent Latin Mass customary in the not-so-distant past—or slogans like 'the Martyrs died for the Latin Mass'. It also takes a more constructive shape, for instance recognition of the value of Latin as a sign of unity, and concern for specific values embodied in the Roman rite, like the concept of eucharist as offering and sacrifice.

The conservative's attitude to worship seems to me perfectly defensible; it makes sense in terms of his theology of worship. Moreover, it expresses something which transcends denominational theology. Worship tends to be formulated in language which is either archaic (*The Book of Common Prayer*) or downright incomprehensible (Gheez, or the Latin of the Hymn of the Arval Brethren) to the user or hearer. It is also obvious that a lot of people like things this way, as the outcry in certain quarters over the Anglican *Second Series Communion Service* indicates. Worship for many involves incorporation into a tradition and of this tradition a highly stylized or ancient language is a concrete symbol. Now just because the conservative's attitude to worship is an expression of a truth, it deserves respect, perhaps more respect than it sometimes receives. What kinds of liturgical celebration may he reasonably expect?

Perhaps we should begin with the rather obvious point that any liturgy should move the faithful to be one in holiness (*Constitution on the Liturgy*, art. 10). It follows that no-one should be compelled to participate in a service which thoroughly annoys him, for, except in a minimal, *opere operato*, sense, he will not be advanced by it either in holiness or in unity with his fellow worshippers. Material limitations will naturally restrict the varieties of service available, but where a considerable number of Catholics share the same strong feelings about the liturgy and where what is demanded is not actually invalid, it is surely desirable that their wishes should be met even at

the cost of having a liturgy which does not conform entirely to contemporary ideals. I know a number of elderly Catholics who are stubbornly unreconciled to the sheer noise of the post-Conciliar Mass. Accustomed to interior participation they find the din of the average Parish Mass an intolerable burden. Since interior participation is presumably better than alienation, it is hard to see why such people should not be provided, at least in cities where there are plenty of churches, with the possibility of attending on Sundays the kind of Mass from which they derive consolation and spiritual fortification. On the same grounds the Latin Mass Society has a good case and the rule obtaining in my own and other dioceses could well be made general; the rule is that wherever three or more Masses are celebrated on Sundays, one must be in Latin. I grant it is a pity that such regulations should be necessary; for they encourage a spirit of legalism in which the less enthusiastic among the clergy arrange the Latin Mass for an inconvenient hour. However, an inconvenient Latin Mass is better than none at all.

There remains the large number of liturgical conservatives who gladly accept the rediscovered insights of liturgical theology, yet wish to see them manifested within the framework of the traditional liturgy. They are convinced of the benefits brought by an English liturgy and an audible Canon; however, it is the traditional Roman liturgy that they wish to see Englished, not something else belonging to some other tradition. Here the translators of the ICEL Canon and Father Roguet, *mutatis mutandis*, in his entertaining contribution to an excellent little book,¹ have, I suspect, missed the point. Father Roguet distinguishes between translations which belong to the genre of 'd calque', word-for-word renderings, and those which he categorizes as 'les belles infid les', free translations which at their best aim at a profounder kind of fidelity to the texts they translate: he argues that the official French translation of the Canon belongs to this second category and very properly so. The ICEL translators make the same kind of distinction for their own version. But is not such a distinction misconceived, at least in terms of those who will want to use their versions? It may well be that 'dans ses mains saintes et v n rables' is not the kind of expression one uses in living French, but then the Roman Canon is not a modern French eucharistic prayer, and liturgical conservatives who like it would hardly expect it to sound like one. A conservative requires of a version that it should be intelligible and that it should convey the specifically Roman character of the original. Both versions are certainly lucid, but both fail (the English one to a greater extent than the French) in the second respect; for example, 'toi vers qui montent nos louanges'—and still more 'in this spirit of thanksgiving'—which correspond with nothing in the *Te igitur*, are more appropriate to a Hippolytan *anaphora* than the Roman Canon.

¹Assembl es du Seigneur: deuxi me s rie: No. 1, La Pri re Eucharistique.

I feel that the conservative deserves a more wholehearted tolerance than Father Roguet, for all his humanity and understanding, or his Anglo-Saxon analogues are prepared to offer. If I am right in suggesting that conservative liturgists are not merely misguided and obsolete beings, but have preserved certain genuine insights into the nature of worship, then they deserve from the progressive more than a tactically motivated form of toleration. Justice demands the acknowledgement that they are preserving an essential element of worship, namely commitment to a specific tradition, and in Christian terms, to the concept of continuity in the people of God. It may be an unmodish way of looking at the Christian community to consider it as the communion of all, living and dead, who share in Christ's priesthood and, above all, the communion of those who, when on earth, visibly attest their membership within our own Roman tradition, but it is surely a legitimate way; but if it is legitimate, then the conservatives should be allowed to go their way in peace. As it is, conservatives suffer from a sense of being antediluvian castaways, left behind after the subsidence of the Conciliar flood; their attitude is defensive and suspicious, to some extent justifiably so, and this is an unsatisfactory frame of mind to be in, if they are not to turn in on themselves instead of giving to their fellow members of the Christian body, and indeed to the world, a positive and outgoing concept of worship.

The conservative in his turn should make one concession to the progressive. The conservative view of liturgy has obvious dangers; if we adopt the position that liturgy is primarily a linking of ourselves with all our predecessors in a joint offering of praise to the Father in and with Christ, then it is fatally easy to ignore the present situation of the Church altogether. We have only to remember what happened when the conservative position was dominant. The Eucharistic mystery probably attained its greatest degree of isolation and insulation from present realities in those churches where the congregations sat or knelt or stood as passive audiences of indifferently performed polyphonic masses; at least the musical language of the Haydn or Gounod masses which they replaced was a recognizable language, expressing emotions and responses in terms that could be encountered even in the popular songs and ballads of the day. But most of those who endured the remote complexities of Palestrina or Byrd could not identify themselves with the music and its message even to the limited extent possible with rococo or nineteenth-century masses. In wanting to be sure that this situation shall never arise again, the progressive is taking a justifiable stand.

How then can a conservative liturgy accommodate some reference to the present needs of the community without such a reference appearing alien and superimposed? Any suggestions must needs be tentative, but perhaps it would be helpful to look at those points in the Roman rite Mass where there is already a present reference, if

only in embryo. I note four: the prayers, especially the collect of the day; the scripture readings and the homily; the Bidding Prayers; the commemoration of the living in the Canon. The present reference of the scripture readings would be reinforced if there were a quite unequivocal directive requiring them to be in the vernacular even in a Latin Mass. As regards the collects, any possessor of a Missal knows what a rich collection of traditional prayers exists to deal with almost any conceivable emergency or need. These votive prayers have tended to lapse out of use with increasing and very proper concentration on the liturgical year, but is there any reason why within the context of the Roman rite they should not be called upon in face of some urgent local or wider need? The commemoration of the living would be more actual if it and the commemoration of the dead were not now the only parts of the Canon which the celebrant normally utters to himself. The Bidding Prayers fall into a different category; I personally hope that they are only a transitional feature of the Roman rite. I trust that something similar but less formal and stereotyped will always be found in a progressive liturgy, but it is alien in every sense to the Roman rite. It is a gratuitous duplication of the commemoration of the living and thus its introduction contravenes the spirit of article 50 of the Constitution on the Liturgy. From the historical point of view it is a duplicate of the *Kyrie*. Stylistically, in its present shape, the uneasy mixture of semi-spontaneity and formalism is out of keeping with the liturgical form onto which it has been superimposed. Consequently, awareness of present needs ought to emerge from other, more characteristic, features of the Roman rite Mass.

The problem which confronts the composer of progressive liturgies is almost the opposite of the conservative's. If we take an eucharistic liturgy as our example, we can perhaps pose the problem thus. On the progressive view, the Church is primarily a community or a series of communities, living in the here and now, which ought to be fully engaged fully in the world's problems; all liturgy should reflect awareness that those who worship are men and women of 1969, not medieval or late Roman peasants and artisans, and secondly liturgy should look outward from the Christian community to the larger community which it should be serving, a world of people disfigured by napalm, disease and malnutrition. Clearly, an eucharistic liturgy which expresses this view of worship will require far more radical changes than the resuscitation of the *oratio fidelium* or the provision of alternative *anaphorai*, mainly derived from Greek and oriental liturgies. Only the unchanging centre of the mystery will remain inviolate: the Word of God manifesting himself through the sacred books and then in the form of bread and wine; our sharing in his priesthood and in the re-presentation of the sacrificial meal of the Last Supper. In concrete terms this will entail (a) some New Testament reading; (b) an eucharistic prayer involving at least the

Words of Institution and an offering of the bread and wine by priest and community in union with Christ's own sacrificial self-offering; (c) communion. Negatively, anything else which cuts off the worshipper from the world he should be sanctifying must be excised from the liturgy: formal prayer styles evocative of late Roman or Carolingian court ceremonial, vestments, dead symbolism, even, for small groups and communities, the use of churches for services. Positively, the forms and symbols used should manifest a concern for the world or at least an involvement in it.

Now the danger involved in this programme is that of allowing no place whatsoever for the conservative's insight into the place of tradition in worship; just as the conservative's eucharist is always liable to degenerate into something like the revival of an oratorio or drama, more venerable than meaningful, so some of the progressive experiments reported with a straight face by Father Hovda¹ appear to have no visible connexion with Christianity, much less Catholicism. It may be fun to fill a room with liturgical kites and banners, mobiles and posters improvised from the materials of advertising and news media, flags and balloons to provide a context of dying and re-creation of God's world (though the symbolism requires as much catechesis as the more traditional signs) or to gather in groups of six in order to take turns in passing one another, eyes closed, from hand to hand, a form of 'experiential service' which is said to inculcate in the group the learning of trust, the receiving of support and the experience of love—but it is hardly more than a liturgical game.

How can a modern liturgy creatively incorporate some reference to the older insights? Such an incorporation must take place, if liturgical experimentation is to move from the underground Church into the open, because such experiments will never receive official recognition without such an incorporation. But it is important that progressive liturgies should receive some degree of institutionalization, here and in America, as they have in Holland, if the liturgy is to fulfil its role of manifesting Christ to the world. It may seem impossible; certainly it is not surprising that many left-wing Catholics despair of any changes in the liturgy which are both radical and 'official' and are therefore driven to treating the liturgy as peripheral, as being a kind of spiritual service-station, while the main political action of Christians is carried on elsewhere. But such an attitude, though understandable, is ultimately impoverishing; it entails accepting a contradiction between the prescriptive language of the Liturgical Constitution and actual practice, which undercuts the credibility of our worship. For example, the liturgy is said to move the faithful to be 'one in holiness' and the eucharist to draw them into the compelling love of Christ and set them on fire (art. 10). It is

¹'The Underground Experiment in Liturgy', *International Documentation on the Conciliar Church*, No. 68-29, c.p. pp. 10-11.

one thing to admit that at the level of descriptive language this sometimes happens only minimally, quite another to assert that we should not do our best to bring it about. Again, the liturgy is in fact the only situation where the Christian community comes together as a community; in theological language, 'the liturgy constitutes the Church as Church, and it expresses what the Church essentially is' (Verheul, *Introduction to the Liturgy*, p. 94). We ought therefore to try to bridge the gap between ideal and fact, accepting that some discrepancy is inevitable because of human limitations.

The element of tradition is of course preserved by retaining the permanent elements of the mystery which have been of its essence since its institution. But the liturgical progressive can go further without doing violence to his purpose. There are themes of great historical importance which existing liturgies neglect, but which are very relevant to a progressive view of liturgy. Some of them are investigated by J.-P. Jossua in an important, if jargon-strewn, book (*Le Salut: Incarnation ou Mystère Pascal*).¹ Many of the Fathers stress the dependence of the Paschal mystery on the primary fact of the Incarnation, or perhaps better the inter-dependence of the two facts, as the means of our salvation. Now the implications of a greater stress on the saving role of the Incarnation plus the implications of the concept of recapitulation are obvious for an outward-looking progressive liturgy: if it was necessary for Christ to be man as well as god for the Paschal mystery to be realized and if, in some sense, he recapitulated the whole human race, then Christ's concern for men as himself fully man is part of his saving work, just as his sufferings included those of the mutilated Vietnamese or the starving Biafran. Here then is a case where a theme can be both traditional and fresh; it is not difficult to think of an *anaphora* which begins by thanking and praising the Father for sending his son to be a man concerned for men; he shared their sufferings and ours; may we also be the ministers of their glorification in him and with him. The implications of this traditional theme in terms of the concrete situation of the local Church could then be spelt out in detail.

Secondly, if experimental liturgies are to emerge above ground, there must be a certain sobriety and humility about the experiments. Balloons and liturgical kites are worse than silly; they are irrelevant. To a certain extent, the good news of Christ can be conveyed 'straight'; just as Father Edwards found that it was actually more satisfactory when catechizing the Tiv in Nigeria not to point up the analogies between Christian and Tiv ritual,² so it may be questioned whether the detritus of the consumer society really illuminates the gospel message and does not rather clutter it with distracting and marginal images.

I am very conscious that in my survey of creative and relatively

¹Les éditions du Cerf, Paris, 1968.

²See his article, 'Priest and Anthropologist', *New Blackfriars* November 1968.

sterile areas of liturgical activity limitations of space have led me to say nothing of ecumenical liturgy. *The Daily Office*, recently published by S.P.C.K., which is the work of a joint liturgical group formed of members from all the major non-Roman British Churches, shows both the possibilities and the limitations of work carried out at an official level. It is promising because the Office is less theologically contentious than the Eucharist and the Group have produced a scheme which should be quite acceptable to Catholics; it even includes optional readings from deuterocanonical books of the Old Testament. The most obvious limitation of ecumenical public forms of worship is that agreement necessitates an extremely conservative approach to liturgical language. It is noteworthy that this Office which is the most ambitious piece of joint work to be produced so far by our non-Roman brethren is couched in the 'Thou/Thee' form, except for the Intercessions and Thanksgivings. The determination of the authors to recognize such limitations and work within them has produced a more satisfactory document than *Modern Liturgical Texts* lately issued by the Church of England Liturgical Commission. These texts of the Lord's Prayer, Creeds, *Te Deum* and Gospel Canticles are thoughtful and scholarly and will doubtless form the basis for versions shared between the Churches. The *Te Deum* perhaps shows the translators at their best; the Lord's Prayer on the other hand is an unconvincing mixture of the archaic and the modern. The first aspiration is rendered: 'Your name be hallowed', but there seems little point in giving up the sacral second person and yet retaining the archaic 'hallowed' and the semi-archaic form of the subjunctive. It would have shown greater consistency to keep 'thy' with the *New English Bible* or to write something like the 'may your name be held holy' of the *Jerusalem Bible*.

I realize that limitations of space have made me somewhat oversimplify the issues and adopt a rather didactic tone. Yet we ought by now to be able to take stock of the liturgical situation and distinguish valuable developments and responses from the merely ephemeral or mistaken. My own attempts to do this may not carry conviction, but at least the effort is worth making.