



Australian Journal
of **Liturgy**

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AUSTRALIAN ACADEMY OF LITURGY

Australian Journal of **Liturgy**

VOLUME 14 **NUMBER 3** 2015

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AJL is the journal of the Australian Academy of Liturgy and exists to further the study of liturgy at a scholarly level, and to comment on and provide information concerning liturgical matters with special reference to Australia. AJL is published twice a year.

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Photo: The AAL conference was held in Brisbane with the theme: The Word in Worship. Three aboriginal women and Carmel Pilcher lead a morning session which was preceded by prayer on the banks of the Brisbane River. In the photo we have Thelma Parker and Anne Pattel-Gray leading the prayer. (Photo: Julie Moran)

Australian Journal of Liturgy

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The Academy hopes that the work of members will serve to animate the liturgical spirit of the traditions and congregations to which they belong.

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Editorial



This issue of AJL contains material from the recent Conference held in January in Brisbane. The theme of the conference *The Word in Worship* was approached through the lens of the Word as prayer, song, preaching and listening. The introduction to the whole conference was given by Tom Elich and his address leads this issue. Gerard Moore's understanding of praying the Word and Garry Weatherill's address on preaching the Word follow. The keynote session on singing the Word was presented by Michael Mangan

but since it was mostly sung, it is not a publishable paper in the academic sense but was very worthwhile for all participants. The final keynote session was an extended one with three aboriginal women reflecting on hearing the Word. Dr Carmel Pilcher sj facilitated that session and in fact was most instrumental in bringing together Dr Christine Black (Darwin), Dr Anne Pattel-Gray (Brisbane) and Thelma Parker (Mr Isa). The session was recorded and so Carmel will be putting it together as a paper for the next issue in October.

The Brisbane Conference saw quite a shift in personnel in the Academy. Fr Tony Doran is now President as the Victorian Chapter has taken over the National Executive. Rev Christopher Lancaster has assumed the responsibilities of Secretary and Treasurer. I am now the Editor of the AJL with the additional help of Rev Doug Morrison-Cleary as Associate Editor. The idea is to provide a succession plan and support where needed. The Queensland Chapter has a new convenor, Rev Dr Marian Free, as does Victoria with Dr Garry Deverill. I have become the Convenor of the West Australian Chapter for the time being. The Tasmanian Chapter is still without a Convenor but it is hoped they will resume activity soon. Welcome to those who are new and thank you for offering your services. South Australia and New South Wales seem to be without change! Thank you for your constancy.

One of the aspirations of the new editor is to work towards having the academic content of the journal fully available online except for the current year. This will mean that it will be accessible to more people which is valuable for the Academy and also for those involved in liturgical studies at various levels. It could encourage a wider readership and subscription level as well.

Meanwhile, we are in Eastertide. What a joyous time of year! For those in the West we are receiving our first rain and watching the earth renew and rejoice.



Leading the prayer by the Brisbane River: L-R: Thelma Parker (Mt Isa), Dr Anne Pattel-Gray (Brisbane) and Dr Christine Black (Darwin). Photo: Julie Moran.

While Easter texts are so often imaged around spring in the Northern Hemisphere, the earth of Australia can respond similarly with the first rains. Of course, some places in the East have had it too abundantly which becomes destructive of life and place and from this we also seek resurrection.

Christ is risen! Alleluia!

Angela McCarthy

Remember to check our website at www.liturgy.org.au.

The Word in Worship

Introduction to the Conference Theme

Rev Dr Tom Elich



Tom Elich, parish priest of the Catholic parish of Sts Peter and Paul at Bulimba, is director of Liturgy Brisbane where, among other tasks, he edits the journal *Liturgy News*.

An exchange of gifts

My first year at the Seminary at Banyo was 1968. For all the student chaos around the world, it was an ordered life. There were 120 students, our uniform was the soutane and we still had some Masses in Latin. We also had a half-hour period each day in the chapel

for ‘Spiritual Reading.’ There were a number of books we could read – Tanquery, *The Spiritual Life*, of course, or *The Imitation of Christ* or something by Abbot Marmion. But we were not allowed to read the bible. Some of us protested but our ancient spiritual director told us it wasn’t necessary and we could get the wrong idea from it.

Naturally he was not up to date. Several years earlier, the Second Vatican Council had said some powerful things about the Scriptures: It not only produced a document on Divine Revelation but, in speaking of the reform, progress and adaptation of the liturgy, asserted it was essential to promote a warm and living love for Scripture (SC 24). Twenty years earlier, an encyclical of Pius XII in 1943, *Divino Afflante Spiritu*, had liberated Catholic Biblical studies from half a century of suspicion and negativity.

For me, this rediscovery by the Catholic Church of the Scriptures, the Word in Worship, is one of the most outstanding examples of receptive ecumenism. The key question in receptive ecumenism is what can we learn or receive from other Churches and traditions. It took the Catholic Church some decades to get on board with modern biblical scholarship but eventually we were able to receive in a new way one of the key insights of the Reformation, namely the centrality and power the word of God. In typical Catholic fashion, we set about organising this into a revised liturgical book and established a new Lectionary.

These texts were to be read in English and related to people’s lives by means of a homily. The previous one-year cycle of two readings per Sunday was expanded to a three-year cycle of three readings. This responded to the Vatican Council’s request:

The treasures of the bible are to be opened up more lavishly, so that a richer share in God's word may be provided (SC 51). This arrangement has known great success and has been adopted and adapted by many Churches, most notably in the production of the Revised Common Lectionary. There has been therefore a genuine 'exchange of gifts' between the Churches on the importance and place of the word in worship.

Liturgical Reading

Now, fascinating as it would be, I do not intend to study in detail the minutiae of the Roman Lectionary or the Revised Common Lectionary. I would like to take a step back and ask some questions about the word in worship, its role and its function. One of the privileges of introducing a conference topic is that I am entitled to ask questions, questions that I will not and often cannot answer, but which propose ideas to stimulate our reflection and discussion in the coming days.

Establishing a cursus of Scripture readings for the liturgy, whether it is formalised in a Lectionary or not, is a highly contentious activity. How does the Church decide which passages to include in the liturgy and which to omit? What are the criteria for inclusion or omission? Some parts of the bible are used very frequently while others are virtually ignored. (Only four readings are included in the Roman Lectionary (Sundays and Weekdays) from 60 pages of the Books of Chronicles. Or from the Prophet Jeremiah, texts are chosen from 18 out of the 52 chapters, with just 9 readings assigned to a Sunday over the three years.) What status does this 'liturgical bible' have in relation to the biblical canon? Feminist scholars will argue that some of the texts which are included are oppressive to women, and others which show women's leadership and authority are omitted. A similar critique could be made on behalf of Jews and other social groups.

Then there is the question of editing the text. Verses are left out. For example, the Catholic liturgy uses Psalm 137, the beautiful communal lament of a people in exile which begins: *By the waters of Babylon, there we wept*. But we always omit the final verses: *Babylon the destroyer, happy those who seize your babies and smash them against a rock*. In fact we regularly omit references to God destroying our enemies, for example, in psalms 54, 109, 143... Is the liturgy faithful to the biblical perspective if we eliminate vengeance and violence? What does that say about the integrity of the sacred text if we admit that some parts are unsuitable for public reading? Do these choices say more about us and our sensibility than about the bible itself? There is always a danger that we shape the biblical text rather than letting it shape us.

Issues relating to the editing of the text concern not only leaving out verses but also where we start and finish the reading. These are choices that affect the meaning. At the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday, for example, Catholics read just verses 23-26 of



Doug Morrison-Cleary (NSW)
leading the opening liturgy.
Photo: Julie Moran.

1 Corinthians 11: *This is my body... this cup is the new covenant in my blood.* The verse just before refers to those who are hungry and asks: *do you show contempt for the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing?* And just after the Lectionary selection, the biblical text continues: *all who eat and drink without discerning the body eat and drink judgement against themselves...* Does this choice of where to start and end the reading deprive a text about the sacramental body of the Lord of the context of the ecclesial body of the Lord? Does it do justice to Paul's thought?

Then there is a series of issues about the arrangement of the readings. Texts from different parts of the bible are combined in a particular liturgy. On Holy Thursday, for example, the Corinthians text about the Lord's Supper is related to the Exodus text which sets out the rule for

the Passover meal and the Gospel of John which describes the washing of the feet. In between, verses from Psalm 116 are combined with a response from Corinthians. There is a flow over of meaning between these texts as they are heard together in a single liturgy. A reading is taken out of the context of the biblical book and placed into a new context with other readings which are proclaimed in a liturgical setting. The liturgy adds eucharistical and musical elements into the mix. These elements raise interesting questions on how the prayers and music of the liturgy use Scripture and interpret them, and how they create the context in which the word is heard in worship.

Finally, the liturgy assigns biblical passages to feasts and seasons which provides a new context often quite different to their original one. So when we read the story of the creation from the beginning of the book of Genesis at the Easter Vigil, we hear it differently because of the occasion. It is part of a network of meaning which encompasses the Easter fire, the water bath, and the new creation of Jesus' resurrection. The Lectionary also sets the creation story for weekdays in week 5 of Ordinary Time. Here it does something different – it begins a semi-continuous reading of the first books of Genesis over a number of weeks. Or take a feast day – say Mary Magdalene. The Gospel of the day is John's account of the resurrection where Mary is the first witness. But what do we choose for the first reading? The Lectionary offers a passage from the Song of Songs or alternatively a paragraph from 2 Corinthians. Objectively neither of these have any reference whatever to Mary Magdalene, but the liturgy makes a connection. This process occurs when we read Scripture on feasts of the Virgin Mary, or celebrate the sacraments, or mark an anniversary. So for example, biblical exegetes might insist that the reference in Genesis to the enmity between the serpent and the

woman, its offspring and hers, and the serpent's head crushed beneath the heel, has nothing to do with the Virgin Mary (Gen 3:15). But when the Fathers of the Church begin to speak of Mary as the New Eve, iconography shows the serpent beneath Mary's feet, and the text is read on Marian feasts, then it cannot escape layers of Marian meaning.

The Book of the Church

Now I know that raising all these questions can be rather exasperating. We've got to do *something* after all when we celebrate the Liturgy of the Word. I think it is helpful to recognise that many of these processes that we have raised in relation to the use of the Scriptures in the liturgy arise already in the bible itself. The various books frequently show that traditions have been revised or eliminated, created or amalgamated. Just compare the Synoptic Gospels, for example. Further the authors of the original documents had no idea that their writing would be regarded as sacred Scripture or collected with that of others or what their work would sit next to in the final compilation. This is a later process of the formation of the canon.

Within the bible itself, texts are frequently cited and applied to new and different situations. The companion who walked with the disciples on the road to Emmaus began with Moses and all the prophets and interpreted the events of Jesus' death and resurrection in the light of all the scriptures (Lk 24:27). Jesus in the synagogue at Nazareth reads the text of Isaiah *The Spirit of the Lord is upon me... he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor...* and then reinterprets the text in light of his proclamation of the Kingdom of God: *Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing* (Lk 4:17ff). There are hundreds of Psalm quotations in the New Testament, and they are often made to refer to Christ.

Likewise in the bible itself there is a process of selection. John wrote at the end of his Gospel: *There are many other things that Jesus did; if everyone of them were written down, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written... But these are written down to that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life through his name* (Jn 21:25 and 20:31). For John and for us, making a selection of texts is inevitable and always presumes some principles or rationale for the choice. John says his choice was intended to bring his readers to faith and life.

The introduction to the Roman Lectionary spells out some of the criteria it has used to make its choices (LM 58ff). First of all, it states that the order of readings has been compiled for a 'pastoral purpose'. This means that, in function of the cycles of Advent-Christmas and Lent-Easter, people will be led to a deeper appreciation of their faith and the saving work of Christ. In particular it acknowledges that the readings are heard in

the setting of the liturgy and so are intended to open up the principal mysteries of the history of salvation in which we participate as we celebrate the liturgy.

On the one hand the cursus of readings tries to respect the hermeneutical principles of contemporary biblical research; on the other hand, it tries to respect the sequence of liturgical seasons and the primacy of Sunday. Sundays present the more important biblical passages; weekdays offer a complementary series. The Lectionary does not say exactly how it arrived at this assessment of the 'more significant parts' of God's word, but a key is that Christ and the Easter Mystery of his death and resurrection is at the heart of its pastoral purpose. Thus the Gospel reading is primary and the other texts are selected according to a principle of 'harmony'. Here the compilers of the Lectionary attempt to take their cue from the Scripture itself, picking up the dynamic of promise and fulfilment. Outside the Christmas and Easter cycles, the second reading gives an independent semi-continuous reading of Paul's epistles. Those who adapted the Roman Lectionary for the Revised Common Lectionary were especially critical of the choice of Old Testament readings purely in function of the Gospel. They argued that these parts of the Scripture deserved to be read on their own terms. In fairness, I would say that this principle used for ordinary Sundays in the Roman Lectionary was balanced by the weekday Lectionary where the various Old Testament books are read in a semi-continuous way over several weeks. However regular weekday Eucharist is a feature of Catholic parishes and the Revised Common Lectionary only covers Sundays.

On more specific matters, the Lectionary introduction indicates that

- difficult texts are omitted on Sundays for pastoral reasons,
- narrative texts can be longer but more dense texts should be shorter,
- it is better to omit certain verses than omit entirely a reading of high spiritual value,
- the tradition of the church is respected which assigns certain books to particular feasts and seasons,
- long and short versions of a text and alternative readings provide a measure of flexibility.

The bible emerges then as the Book of the Church. I have suggested that the processes of reading the word in worship today are somewhat similar to the processes which formed the canon of Scripture in the first place. These are processes of discernment as the Church tries to hear the will of God and respond to it. The Church, its liturgy and the Scriptures are all born of the Easter event of Jesus' death and resurrection. The gospel narratives and the worship of the Church develop together. In Paul's letters, the community writes itself into the book until the word becomes a model for the community. The Church lives by the word and under the authority of the word.

This is what I think Martin Luther and the other reformers meant by the principle of *sola scriptura*. But the Scriptures are not static or univocal in their meaning. It is a living tradition. The Second Vatican Council said of divine revelation: *Sacred tradition and sacred Scripture make up the one sacred deposit of the word of God entrusted to the Church*. The living teaching authority of the Church authentically interprets the word of God; however it *does not stand above the word of God but is rather its servant* (DV 10). One of the most moving gestures in the ordination of a bishop in the Catholic Church is that, during the prayer of ordination, the open Book of the Gospels is held above his head. He and all authority in the Church is subject to the word of God.

The Word in Worship is an Event

So far we have been considering the word in worship primarily as a written text. Once words are put on a page, they are liberated from their author and the situation of their original utterance, and take on a life of their own. They can be carried to distant places. They can be opened and brought to life again centuries later. It is a beautiful image: living words and ideas, pressed to death between the pages of a book – like the Victorian pressed flowers, dried but delicately preserved in all their detail. And then, the book is opened, the human eye falls upon the printed word, and the ideas come to life again in the mind, and can find their place again on the human tongue and in the human ear. This is what happens in the event, the action of the liturgy. The potential of the written is actualised in the spoken. In the spoken word, a real human being is present and is speaking from the heart, from faith. In hearing the spoken word, there is an encounter of faith between real Spirit-filled human beings.

The believing, remembering, ministering and worshipping of the first Christian community is reactivated in our proclamation. Reading and hearing the word in the midst of the gathered Church

- expresses and forms our faith (it has a teaching role);
- it remembers the events of Jesus' death and resurrection and immerses us in the love of God made visible (like the Eucharist itself, it is anamnesis);
- it ministers to us in our joy and sorrow, our hope and grief (it has a pastoral function);
- it evokes within us the sacrifice of praise, helping us voice our glory of God (it is doxological).

Notice that the worshipping assembly is not outside the action, as they would be in a concert. It is not like listening to an opera aria or the recitation of a ballad. That is the easiest way of understanding what is happening – to imagine the church as a performance space with the reader and psalmist as performers – but this is inadequate. There is no audience at worship, or as the liturgy document of the Second Vatican

Council put it, *full, conscious and active participation is the aim to be considered before all else* (SC 14). This means that everyone is present as the actor or doer of the liturgy, because they are baptised into the Body of Christ, and the liturgy is celebrated by Christ. The liturgy of the word draws us into union with Christ as he proclaims the kingdom of God and assures us of God's love. Word and Sacrament are alike in this respect. *The Church has always revered sacred Scripture even as it has revered the body of the Lord, because, above all in the liturgy, it never ceases to receive the bread of life from the table both of God's word and of Christ's body...* (DV 21)

The word in worship is an encounter with Christ as saviour. It enables us to establish ourselves in a faith relationship to Christ which corresponds to faith of the apostolic Church. However the situation of the Church around the Mediterranean in the first century is rather distant and foreign. There will be some translation required for Christian communities celebrating the word in the 9th or 16th or 21st centuries. There will be some mediation required for Christian communities celebrating the word today in Europe or Oceania, Asia or Africa, communities of illiterate farm workers or students at Cambridge University.

As an oral performance or action, each celebration of the liturgy is unique. It is not like playing a recorded symphony over and over. It is the word of the Lord addressed to us in the here and now. So our reception of the word is shaped by the bushfires or floods which surround us, by the unfolding terrorist event: we hear something actual and new. These are the reasons why the homily is an integral part of the liturgy of the word.

Layers of Meaning.

The biblical text therefore works in different ways in different contexts. How do we negotiate the many layers of meaning when we participate in the event of the word?

When the ancient biblical text is read, the first effort is to understand its literal meaning. A common definition of this enterprise is to discover *the sense which the human author directly intended and which the written words convey*. This is an exploration of the world behind the text: drawing on a knowledge of the biblical languages and the history of the time; an understanding of the literary form and the history of its redaction. I summarise drastically: the study of biblical exegesis and hermeneutics is a complex field.

The second phase in grasping the layers of meaning in the biblical text is the search for 'more-than-literal senses'. This begins to address the world in front of the text. It is true of any great literature: we read Shakespeare today and see new things in it every time. For the biblical texts, it is especially acute because we believe it to be the word of God addressed to us. *Christ is present in his word, since it is he himself who speaks when the*

holy Scriptures are read in the Church (SC 7). However, the search for the ‘more-than-literal’ needs to be kept in control; a dialogue is required between the literal sense and the more-than-literal sense. Most commonly, this second phase has encompassed the search for typology and the elaboration of allegory. Cassian gives an example: literally Jerusalem is a Jewish city; allegorically, it is the Christian Church; morally it stands for the human soul; eschatologically, it refers to the kingdom of God. Luther and Calvin rejected much of the allegorical but still held to a typological interpretation of the Old Testament in emphasising its Christological character.

More recently, we have seen a range of approaches to biblical hermeneutics which may be collectively grouped under the title ‘literary criticism’. Here it becomes very clear that the biblical text is not seen as a window onto the historical world of biblical times, but is rather a mirror reflecting a world into which the reader is invited. This is a dialogue, a transaction between the author, the text with a life of its own, and the reader. The reader, from within a concrete situation, engages with the text to construct meaning, making multiple interpretations possible. Those with a sociological bent do recognise a collective dimension where the reader is seen to be part of a ‘reading public’. But unfortunately, from what I can see, most of these reader-response approaches envisage a lone reader sitting in a study. The word in worship, on the other hand, entails a corporate, communal indeed ecclesial reading and, as we have said, the participation of the whole liturgical assembly in receiving the word and its meaning. Reading the Scriptures in the liturgy opens up God’s word to us, gathered as the Body of Christ!

A Liturgical Hermeneutic

I would therefore like to argue for and propose to you tonight the possibility of elaborating a liturgical hermeneutic of the biblical text. (The phrase “liturgical hermeneutics” is sometimes used to refer to the scientific interpretation of liturgical texts and actions. I am using it here to speak of the way the liturgical action might shape our interpretation of the biblical text.)

The Church’s worship was the cradle in which many part of the bible were formed, and it was the context for the establishment of the biblical canon. *Among the requisites for acceptance in to the biblical canon, a writing had to display not only apostolic origin but it also had to be read at liturgical celebrations* (De Zan, p. 39). The Church’s worship has provided one of the principal settings for the use of Scripture and the proclamation of the word down through the centuries. As Byron Anderson has written: *Scripture is not the home of the liturgy, but liturgy is the home of Scripture*. It is in the liturgical proclamation that the bible is actualised as Scripture, the word of God. This above all is where it lives in the life of the Church. Hence the announcement at

the end of the reading *The word of the Lord*. Hence the veneration of the gospel with incense and solemn procession.

The bible shapes the liturgy (its patterns, words and gestures), and the liturgy shapes bible – not just in the beginning but as a constant dynamic, as the place for its actualisation as the life-giving word of God. It is because the liturgy shapes the bible that the possibility of a liturgical hermeneutic arises.

If a biblical phrase has been incorporated into a liturgical prayer or antiphon, perhaps since the sixth century, it not only shapes our praying but it provides an overlay of meaning for the biblical text. Because of the blessing of water for baptism, whenever we hear the Exodus story of the crossing of the Red Sea, Christian baptism is lurking in the background.

If a biblical text is used as a liturgical prayer – a psalm, for example, or the Magnificat or the Benedictus, – then this regular ecclesial usage adds a dimension to the meaning of the biblical text. If we always pray *Lord I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof* as a preparation for holy communion, how can we not hear a eucharistic reference in the story of the centurion?

If biblical passages such as the man born blind, or the Samaritan woman at the well, or the raising of Lazarus have been used for centuries in the Lenten liturgy before Easter, their meaning is enriched with the overtones of Lent and penance, Easter and Christian initiation.

When certain texts are applied to the celebration of feasts of the Virgin Mary, or martyrs, or other saints, it colours the text and a layer of meaning is transferred to the biblical passage. There are new connections in our minds and hearts.

If chapters of the bible are regularly divided in certain ways to provide pericopes for the Church's liturgy, does not this provide an additional way of structuring the biblical text beyond the chapters established in the 13th century and the numbered verses devised in the 16th?

If certain biblical passages are regularly combined together in a single liturgical celebration and are heard and received together, do these connections not take on an importance beside the significance of what might come before or after them in the bible itself.

If the Scripture texts are proclaimed aloud in the liturgy, do not the oral, rhetorical features of the text become more important in understanding meaning? I am thinking here of features such as repetition, the use of key words, vivid visual images, and so on. I am conscious that many oral elements relating to the sound or pattern of the

language will be lost in translation, but then perhaps even the translations selected for liturgical use themselves contribute to a liturgical hermeneutic.

Now I suspect it will be difficult to establish such a liturgical approach to Scripture interpretation. Biblical scholars generally dismiss the liturgical use of biblical texts as ‘accommodation’. This is seen to be extraneous to the meaning and interpretation of the bible: it is *eisegesis* not *exegesis*. It is true that the process of accommodation by an individual preacher or theologian can easily be tendentious. For example, at the funeral of John Bloggs, a text about John the Baptist is applied to the deceased: *There was a man sent from God whose name was John* (Jn 1:6) or *I tell you, among those born of woman, no one is greater than John* (Lk 7:28).

But I would argue that the liturgy is the primary context for hearing and interpreting Scripture. It is here that it is honoured and received as divine revelation. It is here that there is an ecclesial context for understanding the word. It will require a collaboration between scholars of the bible and of the liturgy so that we can build bridges. Like any more-than-literal meaning, a liturgical layer in our interpretation must always be connected to the text and its literal meaning.

When we are talking about the liturgy shaping the interpretation and meaning of the bible, we are talking about the liturgy as an ecclesial act, an act of the body of Christ, the work of the Church which itself is under the authority of the bible. The Holy Spirit is active in the Church gathered for liturgy and guides the proclamation of the word and its reception. No less than the breaking of the bread or the washing with water, proclaiming the word in worship is the action of Christ who catches us up in his great saving work of reconciliation. *It is the spirit that gives life... the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life* (Jn 6:63).

Further Reading

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E Byron Anderson, “Practicing Scripture, Unsealing the Book”, *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 46/2 Fall 2011.

Praying the Word in the Liturgy

Gerard Moore



Assoc Prof Gerard Moore is the lecturer in worship and practical theology at UTC, currently Head of School, School of Theology, Charles Sturt University, Australia, and a member of the university's Public and Contextual Theology Research Centre.

This paper emerged from the invitation to speak on 'praying the word' at the Australian Academy of Liturgy conference in January 2015. Given the multiplicity of contexts for liturgical prayer, I will concentrate on the Liturgy of the Word in the Sunday Eucharist, specifically the Roman avatar

of this rite. At first glance the topic appeared straightforward, but it has proved to be a bit more complex than I first anticipated. My interest was sharpened following a recent conference on preaching, where the presentations were well received but two things stood out. One was the presenter's insistence that preaching was the highlight/highpoint of the liturgy. I would have thought rather that this belonged to Communion (after all union in the triune God is the end goal of the Christian life). The second was that there was no mention of the ritual context of preaching. Rather the act of preaching was spoken of as an event in its own right, unencumbered by its ritual setting, perhaps even transcending it. For me, the inflation of the role of the preaching and the obscuring of the ritual context serve to remind that there is an abiding tension in discerning the experiential locus of the rites of the Word and the way that different parts are to be emphasised.

The larger worship context

Praying the word within the Sunday service is set within a ritual context, but even before that it is placed within a larger devotional and liturgical framework. It is related to habits of reading the scriptures and praying the psalms, the celebration of various forms of the liturgy of the hours, attending to the scriptural references in prayers, participation in prayer groups, the proclamation of the word at occasional worship services such as baptisms, weddings and funerals, falling under the spell of religious art, and the multiplicity of biblical references in classical and popular culture. The Eucharistic celebration is itself replete with scriptural texts, biblically inspired prayers and postures, and biblical warrant. Scriptural images control our perception of time

and our calendar. The basic building block of the civil calendar, the seven day 'week', emerges out of concerns around the Sabbath, and is underpinned by the Genesis 1 creation narrative. The great holiday seasons of Christmas and Easter are biblically inspired expressions of Christian faith. In summary, there is a strong disposition to the Word already present in the assembly gathered.

The liturgy of the word within the Eucharist: The classic paradigm

The proclamation of the word is carried through in a particular ritual framework comprising readings, homily, creed and intercessions. There are of course variations on this arrangement, however it will serve adequately as a template for the discussion that follows with particular references to the current liturgy of the Roman rite. For our purposes two aspects warrant attention. Beneath the entire rite is a dynamic of proclamation and response. At one level, the readings and homily are proclamation, and the creed and petitions are response. The sacredness and ecclesial richness of this cannot be underestimated. The proclamation attempts to do justice to the power of the word: "Indeed, the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing until it divides soul from spirit, joints from marrow; it is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart" (Heb 4:12). Here is a manifestation of the revelation of the triune God, a hearing of the words of Christ, and a persuasion of the grace of the Spirit. The response in the symbol of the creed reflects the commitments of baptism, while the petitions are an action of the priestly people of God. This is a profound ritual event of revelation, baptism and priesthood.

The dynamic of proclamation and response is expressed through genre: attention to genre is an essential aspect of the transformative nature of the liturgy of the word. The Lectionary readings require proclamation that is sensitive to the particular genre of each text. The chosen psalms, narratives, letters, hymns and poems reveal the living God in their literary form as well as in their content. Further, proclamation involves attention to the nature of those who are hearing the word. The instructions to ministers of the word in the General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM)¹ detail that texts are to be spoken in a loud clear voice, with the tone of voice in correspondence with the genre of the text itself, the form of celebration, the idiom of the language and the culture of the people (GIRM 38). Such attention to the hearers is essential if they are to meditate on what they have heard (GIRM 45), if the singing is to engage them in prayer and open them to joy and love (GIRM 39), and if the Holy Spirit is to prompt their hearts and lead them to respond in prayer (GIRM 56). The homily is a further act of proclamation, understood as a living commentary on the word which seeks to foster a fuller understanding of the word and facilitate its effectiveness (GIRM29).

¹ The General Instruction is found at the front of the Roman Missal, with modifications for each national edition. The Australian text is available online at <https://www.google.com.au/#q=general+instruction+of+the+roman+missal+australia>

The response of the gathered community also involves genre. In the Roman rite the intention is that the readings are 'heard'. This is somewhat distinct from the Protestant ritual genius where the readings are both read and heard simultaneously. The Roman rite is based around the hearing of the readings and the spirit filled response of the gathered community. The Protestant retrieval of the scriptures brings with it a deep appreciation of individual devotion and a close personal reading, sanctioned within a communal environment.

The rite calls for attentive communal listening to the readings, a 'chewing' of the word, and heartfelt singing of the psalm and its response. The ritual requires an acclamation at the close of each reading followed by a rich silence. Particular emphasis is given to the Gospel readings, with a procession, acclamation of praise, ordained minister as reader, change in posture, dialogue and specific acclamations. The same applies to the preaching of the homily, a role reserved to the presiding celebrant or an ordained minister. Fitting proclamation is met with attentive listening, as speaker and hearers together appreciate the challenge of the proclaimed word.

From this ritual engagement with the word emerge the creedal reaffirmation of baptism and the petitions of the priestly people of God. Through the creed the community, as a single united body, professes the mysteries of faith, mysteries that are revealed in the scriptures. Taking up their baptismal priesthood, the community further responds to the proclamation of the word through petitions for the salvation of all (GIRM 69). The leadership of the rite of intercession is based in baptism not priestly ordination.

The media of the liturgy of the word

Where a church is well formed and moulded according to the Roman church's hierarchical template there is no role for the priest or bishop in the rites of the Lectionary except that shared with all the baptized: to sit in community and hear the word in common². In terms of ritual leadership, the Lectionary is the book of the laity and the deacon, with the function of proclaiming the readings described as ministerial rather than presidential (GIRM 59). It falls to the deacon to proclaim the Gospel. The presiding priest or bishop may only proclaim the Gospel when no deacon or other priest is present (GIRM 59). The non- Gospel readings, the accounts from the Old Testament and the Epistles, are the province of the lay ministers, either instituted Lectors or a commissioned lay person³. The psalm may be sung by a cantor, a choir or the assembly, or when not sung led by a lay minister or proclaimed in whole

² Protestant readers will need have some patience here. There is deep confusion in the Roman church about the role of the priest in the proclamation of the Gospel and the implications that follow from current practice in that church.

³ The current Code of Canon Law (§230) restricts institution to the ministry of Lector to men. Consequently many dioceses do not institute Lectors but rather commission women and men for the role.

by the same (GIRM 99-104). Only where there is no one else suitable to read should the priest celebrant proclaim the readings (GIRM 59). As a sign of the importance of the role the liturgical ministers of the word, deacons and readers alike have a place in the procession of ministers at the opening of the liturgy (GIRM 44). Further, in the proclamation of the readings the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (SC) teaches that it is Christ who is present and speaking: “[Christ] is present in His word since it is He Himself who speaks when the holy scriptures are read in Church” (SC 7). The authentic ritual voice of Christ is the diaconal voice and the lay voice.

The same can be seen when the liturgy of the word is examined as a whole: readings, homily, creed and intercessions. The homily has a presidential aspect in that it ordinarily is given by the priest celebrant. However it is not a presidential but a ministerial role in that it can be led by another ordained minister present at the celebration, whether bishop, concelebrant or deacon (GIRM 66). The Profession of Faith is an action of the whole gathered people, sung or said by the priest and the people together. There are various options as to who leads it: priest, cantor, choir, assembly (GIRM 68). With the General Intercessions there is a limited role assigned to the priest celebrant. The intentions/petitions of the priestly people are led by the deacon, cantor, lector or a member of the lay faithful, with the celebrant introducing the ritual, inviting the faithful to pray and concluding the rite with a prayer (GIRM 71). In summary, the ministerial roles are based in baptism, though the reading of the Gospel (deacon) and the preaching (bishop, presbyter, deacon) are given authority through ordination.

How is the sacramentality of the liturgy of the word best mediated? In an age of hypermedia this is an issue of ongoing concern. New media are constantly emerging, and traditional mediations are losing appeal or relevance. As a consequence any response must remain open. It is also evident that there have been multiple media in use across the tradition. While not technically a part of the liturgy of the word, the medieval proclamation of the Exultet at the Easter Vigil is a case in point, with a single cantor, the light of the paschal candle, the unfurling of the richly luminescent Exultet scroll and the community huddled around the light to catch a glimpse of the illuminations and decorations. The exquisitely decorated examples of the book of the Gospels carried in procession offered a visual feast, while the passing of the same book throughout the assembly for veneration by kissing gave the liturgy a tactile presence. The use of incense, organ flourishes, the development of Sequences, all enhanced the ritual, particularly when the readings were not proclaimed in the vernacular.

Yet the metaphor of ‘word’ puts some constraints upon the media that can be employed,

particularly in the Roman context⁴. At heart a metaphor of word implies human voice, whether speaking or singing, physical presence, physical placement, and hearers. The sacramental 'risk' is that the voice of the minister present in the assembly, be it male, female or child's, is a vehicle for the revelation of God. The minister's voice must come from a place in the midst of the assembly that is appropriate for the proclamation and reception of the living word. The dynamic is as simple as possible in human oral communication: one person speaks or sings the word of God in the presence of the hearers. Within this dynamic there are minimal impediments to interpretation, though distortions are possible especially around power and gender. Given that this is the most common of human interactions most hearers have developed skills in minimalizing obstructions, distractions and distortions to understanding and interpreting what has been read.

Yet this is not always the case, particularly in the present life of the church as it deals with systemic and chronic abuse from within its episcopal and presbyteral ranks. Risk to the liturgy of the word is especially present in the way the ritual event is open to being overshadowed by loss of ecclesial credibility, abusive uses of authority, unacceptable and derisive uses of language, hypocrisy and ecclesial avoidance. The context has shifted too for the hearers of the word in liturgy. Communities are becoming more aware of and alert to abusive patterns, bullying, societal violence, grooming and seduction. They expect a pastoral response that is open, transparent, empathic and which actively works for justice and reconciliation. It is within this context that the word is to be proclaimed, heard, enacted and the community transformed. The risk that the triune God takes is firstly that the divine word of love is spoken by a church which has poor credibility, and secondly that the power and integrity of this word is able to be 'heard' by the believers despite the distorted environment.

In all this, the Christian faith places great trust in the power of language itself. It is no accident that 'word' is the primary metaphor for the revelation of the threefold God⁵. The Christian community is a faith community of language. What, then, is the role of other media in the liturgy of the word? Every additional piece of technology or sensory stimulation adds a further interpretative lens upon the dynamic of hearing the word. An added musical accompaniment, art work, slide show, interpretative movement all are created and brought to the rite as a further interpretation of the word proclaimed. The primacy of the hearer in community working to hear and comprehend the reading by an authorized minister from an established liturgical space is overlaid with other interpretative possibilities. These may be authorized or unauthorized, welcomed or imposed. When authorized and welcomed there is still the need to ask whether the reading itself is being further broken open for the hearers, or whether the hearers are

⁴ Again the Protestant liturgical genius also understands 'word' as words on a page, the text of the bible as a book. This allows for a dynamic of reading from the bible while the text is read out loud in the service.

⁵ It is worth reflecting that other religions have different primary metaphors, such as the primacy of dance in Hinduism.

being herded down a particular path or theme or emphasis. This limits the reach of the Spirit in the rite. Each additional interpretative lens infringes upon the open-ended nature of the proclamation, and reduces the richness and nourishment of the fare on offer at the table of the Lord.

In sum, there is a divine risk in every proclamation of the word. It is a risk taken by God that the word is offered through a ritual structure, embodied in human language, proclaimed by fallible ministers, encumbered with a variety of media, and spoken into a fraught ecclesial context. While all this may seem to make the graced proclamation of the word almost impossible, it underscores the deep sacramentality of the rite and the abiding, if not brooding, presence of the divine.

Beyond and behind the classic paradigm

Yet there may be more to the picture. It is worth returning to the above discussed tension around preaching. The two questions of where the emphasis is placed when we approach the praying of the word, and what is the experiential locus open the way for us to realize that there may be limitations that this paradigm itself is putting upon the hearing of the word.

It has to be acknowledged that there are cultural aspects to this which are lost to western ritual practice. Posture is understood differently in Asian cultural climes. In many Pacific cultures, for example, to sing is to dance: processions and psalms without dance are themselves an imposition and a blurring of the interpretative lens. With this comes the need for further exploration of the effects of presenting the word of God as a 'script', a written artefact, to cultures and communities that are narrative and oral at heart. These cultural mismatches are for us an opportunity to re-read the 'cultural' inscription of our praying of the word in worship. This paper will make a start by examining the suppositions behind the current Western/Roman paradigm. These are well hidden from our guise, but seen more clearly from the outside!

One is the reduction of the 'Word' to a written text, with two consequences for our prayer. Firstly it valorizes the book of the bible over the word proclaimed through multiple media. Secondly, it serves to reduce our sensitivity to the Word who is behind the words, to the living (rather than grammatical) nature of revelation. This is particularly relevant to oral cultures, where narrative and storytelling are key methods of transmitting cultural meaning and truth. It goes without saying that this is the dynamic behind the compilation of the stories, sayings, histories and legislative texts that comprise the Hebrew Bible. In this it is important to note the central role of liturgy and worship in honing, transmitting and verifying oral traditions⁶.

⁶ For further exploration see Marie-Louis Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament: A Sacramental Reinterpretation of Christian Existence*, A Pueblo Book (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1995) 190-227.

A second supposition is that the Liturgy of the Word is an embodiment of the 'noble simplicity' characteristic of the 'genius' of the Roman liturgy. What needs to be questioned here is the paradigm of 'noble simplicity' itself, one which on examination is more cultural than liturgical. The approach was introduced to liturgical circles through the writings of Edmund Bishop¹ who further acknowledged that these characteristics were not derived from Christianity or Christian faith, but were part of what was understood to be the cultural fabric of Roman culture: "We must not separate in idea the Roman of pre-Christian days and the Roman under the Christian dispensation; at bottom in his instincts, in his powers, in his limitations, he is the same"².

Bishop's assessment of Roman qualities reflected judgements from antiquity, such as those of the Greek outsider, Dionysius of Halicarnassus (60BCE-7CE), who spent much of his life in Rome admiring the ways of the city's leaders and inhabitants. Dionysius' distinction between native Roman religious sentiment and imported cults is paralleled in Bishop's distinctions between what was original Roman liturgical practice and later changes imported into the city's worship. The native of Halicarnassus saw Roman practice as reverent, sober and decorous:

No festival is observed by the Romans...any instances of divine possession, Corybantic frenzies, religious begging rituals, Bacchic rites and secret mysteries, all-night vigils of men and women together in temples or any other trickery of this kind, but there is a reverence in all their words and actions in respect of the gods, which is not seen among either Greeks or barbarians and the thing that I have marvelled at most of all is that, although the city has attracted tens of thousands of peoples who are compelled to worship their native gods according to the customs of their homelands, it has never publicly adopted any of these foreign practices...The (Roman) city is extremely cautious with respect to religious customs which are not native to Rome and regards as inauspicious all pomp and ceremony which lacks decorous behavior.³

Interestingly, Bishop was in agreement with Cardinal Newman that the Roman genius does not lie in originality or the creative imagination⁴.

There are two further considerations that need to be taken into account as Bishop's view of things Roman is taken up in the twentieth century. One is that, though he was writing from England, he was following on from a period of ultramontaniam in

¹ Edmund Bishop, "The Genius of the Roman Rite", in *Liturgica Historica: Papers on the Liturgy and Religious Life of the Western Church* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1918) 1-19.

² Bishop, "The Genius of the Roman Rite", 12.

³ Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* 2.19.2-5. Text from Matthew Dillon and Lynda Garland, *Ancient Rome: From the Early Republic to the Assassination of Julius Caesar* (London and New York: Routledge, 2005) 162. My thanks to Dr Cristina Gomez for bringing this to my attention.

⁴ "... as Newman has it, in a blunt way, 'Rome, except in the case of some great Popes, has never shown any great gift of origination'", Bishop, "The Genius of the Roman Rite", 12-13.

France, influenced by Guéranger, which led to the abandonment by many dioceses of local liturgies in favour of the Roman rite. The Gallican liturgies were seen as too embellished and florid, and suffered by comparison with the more severe lines of the Roman rite, as indebted as it was to earlier Gallican influences.

The second is more indirect, comes from the world of art rather than worship, and again comes from an outsider⁵. Renowned 18th century art historian Johann Winckelmann (1717-1768), on moving from his native Germany, established his career in Rome where he ushered in what would be known as Neoclassicism. His premise was that great art came from emulating the aesthetic and moral qualities of the ancient Greeks, admiring the 'noble simplicity' and 'calm grandeur' of their sculpture. This was in contrast to later classic art, especially Roman, that he saw to be a degeneration from the 'pure' tradition. More to the point, it was also a reaction to the cultural expressions of his own age, the Baroque⁶. Both Dionysius of Halicarnassus and Winckelmann had a strong preference for the qualities of simplicity and sobriety, and were reacting against 'excesses'. Ironically the Greek saw this reflected in the Romans, and the German, whilst in Rome, saw it in the Greeks. What both witness to is the development of a western 'classicist' mindset, a mindset that has played a part in the renewal of the liturgy. This can be seen in Bishop where he characterizes Gallican and Mozarabic (Spanish) texts as overwrought, allows for them to contain moments of surpassing beauty, but finally moves to a preference for things Roman which are seen to be appropriate for all (civilized) ages:

These books [Gallican and Mozarabic] are of the deepest interest; they contain also prayers of great beauty; but when regarded as living rites, as giving the prayers actually said and sung in public, they not only proclaim themselves as the productions of a late, and sometimes of a barbarous age, but they evince a tone of mind, and are the product of a spirit alien to that which we have now become accustomed to regard as most befitting the Divine worship, tutored as we have so long been in the sobriety of Roman forms⁷.

The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy took up the approach espoused by Bishop, though with the emphasis on brevity, clarity and ability to engage⁸. Stress too was placed on comprehensibility, though this is more indicative that the rites and symbols are to be entry points to the mystery of the revealed God rather than mere obfuscations and even obstacles to engagement with that same mystery:

⁵ Both Dionysius and Winckelmann have a strong preference for the simplicity and sobriety, however ironically the Greek saw this reflected in the Romans, and the German, whilst in Rome, saw it in the Greeks. What both witness to is the development of a western 'classicist' mindset.

⁶ See Robert Hughes, *Rome* (Phoenix) 411. This is part of an extended discussion on neo classicism, a movement which appears to have direct bearings on the later writings of Edmund Bishop.

⁷ Bishop, "The Genius of the Roman Rite", 5.

⁸ See Antoine Dumas, "Les oraisons du nouveau Missel romain," *Questions liturgiques* 52 (1971) 263-270.

The Rites should be distinguished by a noble simplicity. They should be short, clear, and free from useless repetitions. They should be within the people's powers of comprehension, and normally should not require much explanation (SC 34).

This is an important principle of reform in reaction to the pre Vatican II liturgical practices and devotional expressions. However both the Latin liturgy and the vernacular ritual come from within the same western expression. Further, as with Winckelmann, they look to the past as the guide to the future, and show a remarkable dissatisfaction with the 'present'. This is allied to two other points important to Winckelmann in describing the history of art. One is that change in art is understood as 'development' or 'decay', with the presumption of some particular historical form as the ideal. The second is that development is 'organic'. These terms will be surprisingly familiar to anyone who has been of late locked into the Roman liturgy wars.

Beyond the current paradigm: Praying the Word

This paper is brought to a close with a challenge to the current underpinnings of the way we pray the word, particularly in the Eucharist. It is not that the paradigm is ineffective, nor that it is in a state of terminal misalignment with culture. Rather, we are being offered an opportunity to look into the theoretical foundations of the way we pray the word, and overcome their hidden limitations and distortions. In the long run, our rites of the word may remain very similar or even unchanged. More important, however, are shifts in our understanding of these rites. In order to pray the word, then, perhaps it is time to move beyond certain limits. Here are four:

1. The word of God is not a book or a thing scripted. It is neither 'script'-ure nor 'biblio': it is, however, held within a written text. In consequence we have ministers who may either 'read', 'narrate', 'tell', 'sing', 'dance' the living Word, and hearers who may 'read', 'listen', 'remember', 'enact', 'respond', 'chew', 'receive' it. We have to be alive and alert to the implications of the Word of God who is revealed within the words of the Scriptures.
2. Far beyond and behind questions of translation (of the bible and other liturgical texts) is the cultural expression of word: our worship has favoured a particular expression of language as text, however there are multiple expressions such as word embodied in song, dance, memory, narrative, picture.
3. The proclamation and praying of the word is not about the past but about the future. The intention of the ritual is transformation and conversion, not reaffirmation of the past or of the tradition.

4. In Roman circles, the clericalization of the Liturgy of the Word, with particular emphasis placed on the Gospel proclamation, the Book of the Gospels and the rites around the Gospels has had a role in inhibiting the baptismal responsibility for participating in the rite.

At core is the need for cultural communities of faith to interpret the primal dynamic underpinning the liturgy of the word, to reflect on the appropriate lenses that need to be applied so the living word can be received/heard, and to be critically alert to dynamics of abuse, power, misogyny, misappropriation of the text, and the tethering of the word.



Fr Anthony Doran leading the final liturgy of the conference. Photo: Julie Moran.

Response to Gerard Moore: Praying the Word

Paul Walton



Rev Dr Paul Walton served as the Convenor of the Assembly Working Group on Worship for the Uniting Church for 15 years and was involved in the development and publication of the *Uniting in Worship 2*. He has been a member of the Australian Consultation on Liturgy, is a member of the Australian Academy of Liturgy and of the international body, *Societas Liturgica*.

First of all, Gerard, let me thank you on behalf of everyone here for a very thought-provoking paper, and say that it is both a privilege and a pleasure to respond.

Gerard, recently we were at a colloquium on the teaching of liturgy and worship in Uniting Church colleges, where you told me that your DNA is not that of the Uniting Church. Your paper clearly illustrates that, but it also shows that we're somewhere in the same family tree. There is a definite relationship in our DNA. Some genes may be switched on or off; perhaps others have mutated; but we are related.

The situation of a church like the Uniting Church in Australia is that it is ever either learning from or in reaction to the Roman Catholic Church. We don't realise it most of the time, but it's true. Sometimes we learn from and react to the right things; sometimes, we choose the wrong things. After all, it is said (by us!) that the councils of the church do err.

Let me mention some of those things, which arise from your paper.

Firstly, your visiting speaker at United Theological College who insisted that "preaching was the highlight/highpoint of the liturgy". We get that a lot. The elevation of the Word over all else is perhaps almost inevitable in churches arising from the Reformation, largely because of that ambivalent relationship to the Roman Church that we 'enjoy'.

After all, it is not so long ago that most congregations in the churches that formed the Uniting Church had a Sunday service which ended with the sermon, derived

from Wesley's simplification of Cranmer's Morning Prayer service. The sermon was the climax, and everything before it—the hymns, prayers, readings or more likely a singular reading or even just a verse for the day—were 'the preliminaries'.

And on those Sundays—perhaps monthly, perhaps quarterly—in which the Lord's Supper was celebrated—it was just added to the end, as a kind of anticlimax. Some people left before the Lord's Supper, perhaps because they felt themselves unworthy.

There are a few places in the Uniting Church where this may still be true, but mercifully they are few. And many are withering on the vine.

So when *Uniting in Worship* was published in 1988, it emphasised the ecumenical shape of worship. We gathered together, heard and responded to the Word, celebrated the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper and were sent forth.

Of course, many Uniting Church congregations celebrate the Eucharist only monthly. It was hoped that the shape offered by *Uniting in Worship* would make them aware of a kind of 'hole' in the service on non-eucharistic Sundays, but that has not been the case. The Eucharist is still experienced as an addition to the statistical norm, even though the liturgical norm is a full service of Word and Sacrament.

Which brings me to my second point. I was intrigued that your paper mentions the word 'Lectionary' so few times in discussing the Service of the Word.

In a church which is open to receiving the riches of the Church catholic—which for us includes but is not limited to the Roman Catholic Church—the gift of the Roman Lectionary (1969) was gladly, though not uncritically, received. It gave rise to the Common Lectionary (1983) and then to the Revised Common Lectionary (1992).

In a church that can encourage but not mandate the use of a lectionary, the Revised Common Lectionary has been a wonderful ecumenical and liturgical recovery. I think it is fair to say that most Uniting Church congregations across Australia do use and value the Revised Common Lectionary, but most would not use all the readings every Sunday. Yet some congregations do not follow it at all; others may use it sporadically, or in seasons like Christmas and Easter. (Or only on those days.) Others are experimenting with the Narrative Lectionary, which I know little about but which seems to be thin scriptural gruel for a congregation to swallow week after week.

Thirdly, I was amazed—gobsmacked!—by your ability to use the word 'hierarchical' positively. We just cannot do that. 'Hierarchy' is a swear word in the Uniting Church, and we kid ourselves that we don't have one. You said,

Where a church is well formed and moulded according to the Roman church's

hierarchical template there is no role for the priest or bishop in the rites of the Lectionary except that shared with all the baptized: to sit in community and hear the word in common.

I love that! (Yet I do wonder how much it is a statement of the ideal rather than the actual.) It's not all that long ago that the presbyter ('minister of the Word' in our parlance) would often be the one designated to read the scriptures in church, which might only be one reading or even just the verse for the day, which the minister would have chosen and on which he would preach.

Today, generally the people read, and usually from the RCL. And we have a long tradition of lay people who preach regularly, whether they are commissioned lay preachers or pastors, or are just people who find themselves in a place where there is no one else to do it.

You say, "It falls to the deacon to proclaim the Gospel". Many Uniting Church deacons bristle at the thought of the role of proclaiming the Gospel Reading as theirs. They often see it as a 'hierarchical' imposition (there's that word again!) and as a 'domestication' of the diaconate. What a misunderstanding of the verbal dynamite that the Gospels really are!

The problem for us as a church in denial about hierarchy is that it becomes our shadow. We cannot claim its gifts: we cannot really say that the role of the presbyter is to sit in community with the baptised during the reading of the Scriptures in the church's worship without risking a long discussion about what's so special about ordination anyway.

Point four: Speaking of the enfleshed nature of the Service of the Word, you say:

The risk that the triune God takes is firstly that the divine word of love is spoken by a church which has poor credibility, and secondly that the power and integrity of this word is able to be 'heard' by the believers despite the distorted environment.

We all hear the word in a "distorted environment". All churches share in this "poor credibility" today, whether through the moral failure of their clergy, an unyielding conservatism on moral issues or a theological progressivism that knows no boundaries. Further, it doesn't matter to non-churchgoing folk which church does what; we're all tarred by the same brush.

I am reminded that Pope Francis offered a 15-point criticism of the Roman curia

in his Christmas address to them.¹ I took his critique of the curia as something all clergy and congregations could apply to themselves. We may then take some responsibility to remove some of the distortions with which the Word must compete in our own contexts.

I want to add something here to the discussion, a point of difference between the Uniting Church and the Roman Catholic Church, and that is the place of women in the Service of the Word.

In the Roman Church, the current Code of Canon Law (§230) restricts institution to the ministry of Lector to men. Consequently many dioceses do not institute Lectors but rather commission women and men for the role. I can't help but wonder how many women bristle at the need to 'get around' this restriction of the ministry of Lector.

Further, in the Uniting Church not only does it not matter if women read the Scriptures in church, but some of the best preachers—in fact, the two best preachers—I have had the privilege to listen to are ordained presbyters who are women. I cannot but believe that this is one of the distortions that the hearers of the Word in the Catholic Church experience.

Fifthly and finally, you spoke of the “supposition”

that the Liturgy of the Word is an embodiment of the ‘noble simplicity’ characteristic of the ‘genius’ of the Roman liturgy.

When Edmund Bishop writes of the “genius of the Roman rite”,² he also he characterises Gallican and Mozarabic texts as “overwrought”.

Uniting in Worship 2 was published on 2005. Gerard, I recall that when we were introducing *Uniting in Worship 2* to our ecumenical colleagues in the Australian Consultation on Liturgy, it was you who observed that the different styles of our Services of the Lord's Day paralleled this difference between Roman and Gallican styles. SLD-1 (Service of the Lord's Day—1) has its own ‘noble simplicity’, from Rome out of Cranmer and Wesley with a dash of Knox.



Carmel Pilcher assisting with prayer by the Brisbane River. Photo: Julie Moran.

¹ <http://www.religionnews.com/2014/12/22/doctor-pope-francis-list-ails-church>

² Edmund Bishop, “The Genius of the Roman Rite”, in *Liturgica Historica: Papers on the Liturgy and Religious Life of the Western Church* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1918) 1-19.

The other two Services of the Lord's Day use a far wider range of imagery in relation to both the divine and the human. (Bishop may have called these services 'overwrought'; I rather like to think that he would if he could have seen them.)

I have to say that it was with a sense of relief that we heard this insight from you. It seemed to validate our efforts and gave us a kind of branch on the liturgical family tree from which we could swing.

Do you see how the Uniting Church in Australia is ever either learning from or in reaction to the Roman Catholic Church?

Now, if you look at the kind of liturgical resources that are coming out thick and fast—often for use with the Revised Common Lectionary—one often sees more of a wider range of imagery and less of an ascetic simplicity. Whether that is a good or a bad thing depends on where you stand.

Gerard, as I began this response, I reminded you that you told me only a few weeks ago that your DNA is other than that of the Uniting Church. You're not about to swim the Parramatta River!

I have also spoken from a particular viewpoint, that of a presbyter in the Uniting Church. My personal DNA is post-Protestant, ecumenical and small-c catholic. But not Roman. Now I must confess to the possibility of maybe being something of a quasi-semi-Gallican.

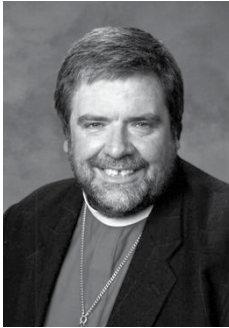
Thank you once more, Gerard. I am very glad you are teaching at the United Theological College these days. I value your scholarship and your insights. But most of all, I value your friendship.



Praying the Word
in the final liturgy.
Photo: Julie Moran.

Preaching the Word: Australian Academy of Liturgy 2015

Garry Weatherill; Anglican Bishop of Ballarat



Preaching the Word: A preacher reflects on practice

Introduction:

I am a preacher. I am also an Anglican bishop and so I am an administrator, a disciplinarian, a pastor to the pastors. I am often the special guest, with a special message for the parish centenary, the society wedding, the priest's retirement, or the State funeral. I've been a preacher for nearly 30 years and so I must have preached at least 1500 Sunday sermons, at least that many weekday homilies and probably a similar number of special event sermons. And I'm still more than a decade away from retirement. The numbers are staggering. What am I doing when I preach the Word? Where do those sermons come from? Are there any real consequences from my preaching?

I am not a preacher who is flattered when people ask for a copy of my sermon. It seems to me that if a sermon has done its job well, it need not be re-read or analysed line by line – a sermon is an event, complete in itself. It may be that the preacher has been very profound or challenging or heretical, but the hearer should know what the sermon was about as soon as it is finished. That said, I love reading other people's sermons. Church fetes, and deceased priests' libraries are a great source for books of sermons, and it was at a church bookstall that I found my copy of Leslie Weatherhead's 1940 sermons under the title, *This is the Victory*. I noticed the name and felt a little frisson of association Weatherhead/Weatherill Not so different. I wondered if we might be related. I come from a line of Primitive Methodist preachers, and Weatherhead was one of the most prominent Methodist ministers in WW2 and post War Britain. He was the minister at the City Temple in London, the pre-eminent Congregational church in the UK.

This is the Victory is a series of sermons preached in late 1940 at the City Temple, based on 1 John 5:4 "his is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith". Late 1940 London was in the grip and terror of the Blitz. Each sermon in the series built on

the idea that no matter what might happen in the world around us, God would never abandon his faithful people. Even if destruction came to your house, or the German threat came across the Channel, there remained a spiritual victory that could never be assailed by the gathering forces of the enemy. Even reading the sermons today, you can feel the power of the hope in Weatherhead's words, and you can sense the reality of a context that was particularly gloomy.

What was he preaching? A text? The Gospel? A word of hope? Comfort? Yes all of these, but also he was reaffirming the presence of Christ in the midst of the endless nights of bombing. He was proclaiming that the Living Word was present, interacting with God's people, even in the flames and explosions. Like the Blessed Virgin Mary, Weatherhead was bringing the eternal Word into a specific time and place: incarnating the presence of Christ. How did he preach? Just as he always had preached and just as he would go on doing until his death in the early 1970's. He prepared carefully, he listened to the world around him and waited for the small quiet promptings of discernment, he chewed over the Scriptures every day so that they formed his heart as well as his mind. He watched and noted the reactions of those to whom he preached. No doubt he received criticism, sometimes well and sometimes with resentment. At almost exactly the same time as *This is the Victory* went into a second edition in 1942, the City Temple took a direct hit and was totally destroyed. After the War it was rebuilt and still stands as a powerful testimony to the faith of a powerful minister and preacher.

And what were the consequences of Weatherhead's series of sermons? I suppose there were newspaper reports, but I haven't read them. I like to imagine people walking home through the darkened streets of London, discussing Mr Weatherhead's theme. Even more, I like to imagine ordinary working class Londoners sheltering in the Underground, hearing the bombs above destroying their city, encouraging each other by remembering what the minister at the City Temple has said about the presence of the Lord Jesus, even in darkness for those who have faith. The real victory - our faith.

At one level this is a very romantic picture of a world vastly different from our own, where a preacher's ability to make real the total identification of the Word made flesh with 1940's Londoners, was so powerful, that echoes still resonate today in 21st Century Australia. But as an illustration of WHAT the preacher is doing, HOW the preacher goes about the task, and the CONSEQUENCES of that preaching, there is a hard nosed reality to Weatherhead's preaching that is still inspiring for those of us who seek to preach the Word today.

So in this time together I want to explore WHAT it means for us to Preach the Word. I want to look at HOW we preach the Word in contemporary Australia, and I want to touch on some of the CONSEQUENCES of preaching the Word in our own context.

Part I

WHAT are we doing when we preach the Word? Incarnational work. The invocatory prayer before a sermon often gives us some preliminary clues as to what the preacher thinks he or she is doing in preaching. Most of us are familiar with the usual, “In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.” Sometimes this is thundered with a deep and sonorous voice that might almost be the Almighty himself speaking. Usually there is an accompanying expansive sign of the cross made. Sometimes a timid curate with a thin reedy voice will use this invocation while appearing to scratch his chest with a very diminutive sign of the Cross. If most preachers really thought about what they are saying, they would recoil with embarrassment- unless they sport almighty sized egos. Our Anglican Archbishop here in Brisbane uses a variation that seems a little more humble, while still being aspirational - “May these words be spoken and heard, in the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.” At Evensong, Anglicans have traditionally used variations of a psalm invocation, “May the words of my lips and the meditations of our hearts be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, our strength and our deliverer.” This is starting to sound a better note, a mix of gratitude and anticipation, without too many grandiose and often misguided claims being made by the preacher or for the preacher. My current favourite, “May my spoken word, lead us through the written Word, to encounter the Living Word, even Jesus Christ our Saviour and our Lord,” captures the nuances in our use of the word, The Word, and suggests something of the complexity of trying to make sense of this very dynamic process—bringing together, Scripture, the personality of the preacher, and particular contexts. A bidding prayer attributed to J A T Robinson gives some insight into the very orthodox prayer of someone who was judged harshly by his contemporaries for a lack of orthodoxy, “Come Holy Spirit, Giver of Life and love: grant us for our hallowing, thoughts that pass into prayer, prayer that passes into love and love that passes into life with you forever.” This prayer also takes the dynamics of preaching very seriously and it expects there to be change, as real encounter with God is initiated by the Holy Spirit, as it were, sweeping the path for the Word to be made real in the face to face encounter between preacher, congregation and the Holy Spirit.

Whatever the invocatory prayer might imply, most preachers want to preach well, not so that they have the approval of their congregations, their spouses or their colleagues, but because they want to honour God. They want, as Phillip Brooks is claimed to have said in his 1877 Yale lecture series, to do what preachers have always done, to speak “truth through personality”. In our own day, Walter Brueggeman says something similar, but with additional nuance, when he talks about preaching as “traditioning” ie helping to shape the tradition, and transmit the tradition and expand and explore the apostolic tradition. Preaching the Word can be encouragement, teaching, and exhortation, prophetic, edifying. But without some attempt at applying Scripture in a way that makes



The Music Table Photo: Julie Moran.

the living Christ incarnate in a contemporary and peculiar, unique context, preaching will always be whistling into the wind. As a community and as Church, we have just celebrated the great feasts of Incarnation and Epiphany. What we are trying to do every time we enter the pulpit, is to recapture the essence of these feasts, God is with Us and God is For us All. “Sir, we would see Jesus.”

Usually the movement in a sermon is from Scripture to application. From written Word to Living Word. Such a starting point is a strong corrective to the individual preacher’s personal moral or political values as the starting point for preaching. However, it is always possible that the Living Word addresses the Church from beyond the Scriptural tradition.

It is not necessarily rampant liberalism or flagrant syncretism to understand say, Gandhi’s satyagraha (peaceful non-violent protest) as a genuine epiphany of the Living Word from beyond the Hebrew/Christian scriptural tradition. Such an experience of the Word made flesh in a context that makes us uncomfortable, may well find a place in orthodox preaching of the Word.

The Puritans believed that the preacher should engage in exegesis, exposition and application of Scripture (preferably for at least 40 minutes on each task). Such sermons must have been hard work for preacher and congregation alike. But it is not a bad guide for beginning the HOW of preaching, once the primary WHAT of preaching is clear. And the WHAT is really always about engaging people with the person who is the Word Incarnate, Jesus Christ.

Before I move to discuss the HOW of preaching the Word, I want to ask you to engage in some dredging of your memories. Can you remember one or two or three sermons that have changed you or your understanding of the God who comes near to us in Christ? There are three for me. Pastor Siegfried Hebart Snr, a diminutive Lutheran scholar preaching on John 4 with the constant question “where can I find that Living Water.” His sermon brought the generosity and loving kindness of Jesus towards the woman at the well (and me) into a sharp focus I had never experienced before. Baptist pastor Gerald Ball with a magnificent invitation to transformation in Christ, with a sermon on the text, “You are Simon, you shall be Peter.” And a sermon of my own at the consecration of a friend as a bishop when I finished with the triple exhortation “Stay close to Jesus, stay close to Jesus, stay close to Jesus” and in the silence as I left the pulpit

a 5 year old nephew of the new bishop said loudly “you have to stay close to Jesus” and I felt convicted by my own preaching. However much we might seek to understand WHAT happens when we preach, there remains the unexpected, the “surprised by joy”, the “Someday I’ll find you” moment that is about God’s action alone.

Part II

HOW we preach the Word.

David Garrick was the foremost Shakespearean actor of the Eighteenth Century. He is reported to have had this painful encounter with a leading Churchman and renowned preacher. “How is it,” asked the preacher, “that people respond so deeply to your fiction and ignore my proclamation of the truth?” “Perhaps,” replied Garrick, “because I act to make fiction seem like truth, and you act to make truth seem like fiction.” Every preacher knows the painful reality that HOW the Word is preached matters a great deal. Canadian Marshall McLuhan put it more brutally, in the sales-speak of the 20th century: the medium is the message. This is why preaching is such hard work. The preacher is exposed not only before the people of the congregation, but also before the whole company of the Redeemed. Not many preachers are lazy, although it is said that the introduction of a three year cycle for the Sunday Lectionary sent a lot of BCP Anglican clergy to an early retirement, rather than facing the task of revising a well-kept set of annual sermon notes! Most preachers, even those pushed for time in the business of parish life, want to bring a well-prepared sermon to Sunday Eucharist. Once we were ordained, all my clerical friends and I stopped socialising on Saturday nights because of The Sermon. Most of those who preach regularly have a decent theological grasp of the Scriptures and of Tradition and of the place of Reason in our post Enlightenment thinking. Most take exegesis seriously and consult commentaries before they search for sermon notes on the net. The problem is that too many preachers, like Garrick’s friend, have not developed their art, and so have become used to the regular humiliation of bad preaching. Like a rectal examination, preaching for many preachers has become a necessary and loathed regular part of life, to be endured and forgotten as quickly as possible. Sadly, many congregations treat the sermon the same way.

In the early 1960’s, Bishop Reindorp’s little book *Putting it Over* attempted to encourage parish clergy to practice their art, and take time with the techniques of preaching. More recently Episcopalian Thomas Troeger, and his more radical counterpart Bill Countryman, have both been to the Antipodes and tried to free up the clergy to use imagination and innovation in preaching. But more significant than any list of techniques are what literary critics might call the Feel and Tone of the preacher- his or her attitude to the text and to the congregation. Without authentic engagement by the preacher with both text and congregation, no amount of technique will make dry

bones live. So the first serious essential element in preaching the Word is authenticity. The preacher must have truly wrestled with the Biblical narrative, to have struggled with sin and redemption, and must have an authentic tone when addressing the congregation. The preacher doesn't need perfect belief, or totally orthodox theology, only a real love for the Living Word and a desire to share something of the preacher's own joys and sufferings on the way of discipleship. Most congregation members have an unerring nose for inauthentic preaching, and the damage that can be caused by a lack of authentic consonance between word and action in the person of the preacher can be terminal. The dramatic fall from grace of the professional clergy of the Roman Catholic and Anglican churches in this country following the revelations of child abuse will probably take several decades to repair.

The preacher needs to know about the world into which he or she speaks the Word of grace. There is an easy and understandable temptation to make preaching from the Bible a closed system of self-reference, as if the only events that really mattered are those recorded in Scripture. The typological contortions sometimes forced on the Hebrew Scriptures are a good case in point. Just as a good Biblical preacher must know something of the cultural context of post Exilic Judaism, or first century Roman citizenship rights, he or she will also be familiar with the cultural context of their own time and place. The Word preached is never spoken into a vacuum, but always into a richly complex cultural reality. The Living Word is always enfleshed in time and place. The sermon should not be a film review, say, for the latest Hobbit movie, but the careful preacher may well find deep resonances of the Christian pilgrimage in the populist cinema offerings at Christmas time, which can assist the task of bringing the Living Word to bear on our daily struggles.

Third, the preacher's task will bear most fruit if the preacher knows and even comes to love the people to whom he or she speaks. While peripatetic performers, like Bishops or Passionists may bring new and exciting perspectives to the preaching task, there is nothing like sustained quality relationships between preacher and congregation to grow faith, to deepen prayer, to open hearts to the saving love of Christ. The link between the pastoral ministry and preaching cannot be emphasised too strongly. This is not to devalue the power of occasional preaching, but simply recognises the reality that we will be most vulnerable when we feel that we know and are known. This precious link is under significant threat as clergy numbers dwindle and as individual clergy are asked to take up more and more responsibility. Austin Farrer was an Oxford don in the middle of the last century. His books of sermons and reflections are still popular with conservative Anglo-Catholics, but they are dry and dusty to read. Farrer was loved and admired, not just for his considerable intellect, but because he loved the students he prepared for Confirmation, and they knew him not just as a teacher and priest, but as a faithful husband who shared the difficulties of raising a disabled daughter. Authenticity of life,

a real love for the Living Word, a strong connection with the world in which he found himself, and the pastoral reality of “knowing and being known” by those to whom he ministered, formed the basis of his reputation as priest, scholar and powerful preacher. Preaching then becomes a mutual experience where preacher, congregation, Scripture and Spirit are engaged in mutual revelation. Preaching the Word is in this sense as much an act of the congregation as an act of the Preacher.

I want to mention one more essential in the process, the HOW of Preaching the Word. Preaching is both a charism and an art. It needs time to develop. Preachers need to have time to think, to wait on the movement of the Spirit, to let ideas and images surface quietly away from the demands of the sermon preparation slot for the week. Prayerful, determined waiting on God, sitting in uncertainty, false starts and many redrafts are the stuff of good preaching. The private prayer of the preacher as he mounts the pulpit should not be the first prayer connected with this sermon! We would never dream of presiding at Eucharist without the necessary preparation of the elements, and the appropriate rite. However constrained, we do our best to ensure, the appropriate prayers and actions are offered, so that the faithful may feed on Christ. Preaching the Word should elicit the same preparation and sacramental reverence and awe in those who minister from the spoken Word, through the written Word, to the Living Word.

Part III

Some Consequences of what I have said about Preaching the Word.

1. Preaching really matters.

The Anglican reformers arranged churches to reflect the four constituent elements of Christian life. At or near the door, the baptismary proclaimed Christian initiation. At the other end of the Church, lectern, holy table and pulpit formed a threefold approach to worship. Scripture proclaimed (in English), The Lord’s Supper celebrated (Holy Communion in both kinds), and the Word preached, indivisible from each other in authentic encounter with Christ in Sacrament and as Living Word. This balance has been lost, not just in my tradition, but across many liturgical Churches.

2. Preaching the Word is an exercise in mutuality.

Both the preacher and the congregation are invited through good preaching to new levels of dialogue, not just, “Lovely sermon thank you, Vicar”. Preachers are called to challenge their hearers to new understandings and new levels of insight and commitment. Congregation members should actively hold their preachers accountable for their preaching, and must be more than passive recipients of the preacher’s latest reading. Support groups, sermon critique groups, Bible study groups with a time for sermon feedback, collegial mutual accountability are simple ways to facilitate better, more authentic engagement with the Living Word. Recently

I preached some sermons at Ballarat Grammar about the relationship between Science and Religion. A couple of weeks later, a boy from the school recognised me having dinner at a local hotel. As he cleared away the plates he commented that my last sermon should have talked about Thomas Kuhn's *Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. It was, he said, a great book, and gave deeper insight into some of the things I had mentioned in my sermon. I was excited, not just because he recognised me, but because he had listened to and critiqued my sermon, and was happy to discuss it with me. How often we preachers long for such real response to our work. The College for Preachers is an important part of the UK Church of England, and played a significant role in the Episcopal Church in USA until funding cuts closed the College in 2009. While there are many summer schools, vacation programs, etc in preaching offered in Australia, most are from a fairly literalist, evangelical background, and emphasise particular exegetical approaches and therefore particular pre-conceived conclusions. If we believe preaching really matters, we might need to take some initiatives in formalising accountability opportunities.

3. Preaching the Word requires confidence.

This is not personal confidence, but a deep confidence in Christ and in the Gospel message. In our post-modern world, a kind of theological tooth decay has been at work for several decades and consequently, many preachers have lost the confidence to preach the life transforming message of Christ's saving work in his Passion and Resurrection. Do we really believe in and experience Christ as both Saviour of the world, and as my personal Lord and God?

4. Preaching the Word requires authority.

Celia Hahn's seminal little book for church leaders, *Relinquishing Control, Growing in Authority* points to the consensual authority acknowledged between baptised Christians who exercise different gifts on behalf of the whole Body of the Church. The last thing the world or the Church needs is a new set of leaders who exercise control in a way that proves the depth of original sin. We do need to foster preachers who speak with a recognised authority based not on position or power, but on faithfulness in giving flesh to the Living Word. (eg the Cure d'Ars).

5. Preaching the Word is Missional.

Ours is a mission-oriented Church, partly because things are not what they used to be, and partly because mission is part of the esse of the Church. In our Anglican tradition in the 90's we had the Communion wide Decade of Evangelism, and we endlessly redraft the Five Marks Of Mission for our Church. Rowan Williams, the former Archbishop of Canterbury, talked about Mission as "Finding out where God is at work, and joining in." Surely such a definition invites the preacher to engage even more seriously with her/his surrounding culture in order to identify and proclaim the Living Word, already present. Good preaching is always Missional, because it is an encounter with the Living Word in the everyday, In the here and the now.

....

I want to end where I began.

This description comes from a Lutheran Year Book for Pastors, published in 1940 in the USA, (coincidentally the same year as Weatherhead's *This is the Victory*). In spite of some archaisms, it is surprisingly powerful, because it captures both the frustration and the privilege of Preaching the Word:

I am a Preacher

I am a preacher. Some of my cultured friends smile superciliously when the subject of my profession comes up. Some people in my church prefer to pay little or no attention to me. They say I know nothing about life. Some of my young people who have spent a few hours in a college classroom laugh when I talk about the modern world. I am not supposed to know very much. I am not as young as I once was. Some of the deacons have been hinting that they would prefer a younger man who has no theme and parts in his sermons and tells stories. Some of the ladies would like me more if I could balance a tea cup gracefully. Some of the businessmen in my church claim that I know nothing about finances – I who have reared a family on a thousand dollars a year. Out in the world I am considered just a little queer and old fashioned.

I am a preacher. I am one of the greatest line in the history of men. My fathers in God were Isaiah and Jeremiah, Peter and Paul, Luther and Walther. My line reaches back beyond the Cross to the days before the flood came over the earth. Only because of the Church I serve and the Word I preach does God permit the world to roll on its way. I have watched men step quietly through the last gate because I had been permitted to show them the way. There are men and women, and children too, before the throne of Heaven today who are my children. They are there because God let me bring them there. The saints of the Church are my joy and the sinners are my burden. I am an ambassador of the King of kings. My lips are among the few left in the world that speak truth. I, almost alone among men, deal day after day with eternal things. I am the last echo of a far voice that forever calls men Home. I am the hand of the Bridegroom, the shadow of the Cross, the trumpet of the King. Neither obscurity nor unpopularity can rob me of my glory. It is not my own, but the reflected glory of Him Whose free and happy slave I am. I am a driven man. I must preach faith in a world that disbelieves, hope in a time that has no hope, and joy in an hour that knows only sorrow. I am at home in a tenement house or in a mansion because my home is neither. I and my people alone stand between the world and destruction. The flames on my altar will not die and the lights in my sanctuary will not be quenched by flood and storm. I am a preacher – and, more than ever, glad of it.



FROM THE PRESIDENT

Anthony Doran

Christ is risen, alleluia! Risen indeed, alleluia!

As I pause to write my first report as President, we continue to rejoice in the resurrection. Our many and varied communities have celebrated the death and resurrection of Jesus according to our diverse traditions and cultures. For me, the days of the Easter Triduum make sense of what I do as Christian, as a minister, and as a liturgist. It is always an immense privilege to help others encounter the Risen Christ in our worship, especially at Easter.

Sitting at my desk at home in Melbourne, as I look out the window of my office, the leaves are beginning to fall from the trees, daylight saving is over and days are drawing in, there is a chill as dusk settles. It's a far cry from the warm weather which greeted those of us who gathered in Brisbane for the National Conference in January. As always, those of who were able to make the journey to Brisbane

At the General Meeting of the Conference, the Executive was formally moved from the Western Australia Chapter to the Victorian Chapter. The WA Chapter took on the executive role somewhat unexpectedly at the Melbourne Conference in 2011. Under the presidency of Dr Angela McCarthy, the National Executive worked tirelessly over the last four years to streamline much of the administration of the Academy. I take this opportunity to thank the WA Chapter for their leadership of our Academy over the last four years: we are certainly in their debt.

Our national conference is always a wonderful opportunity to connect (and re-connect) with friends and colleagues from around the country. As well as being a great social opportunity, the conference provides an opportunity to reflect on and be challenged by various facets of the Conference theme through the keynote addresses and public lecture. There is also the opportunity to learn from each other through the short papers offered by members. Some of these papers are

published in this edition of *AJL* so that all Academy members can savour and enjoy the riches we shared in Brisbane.

An important and exciting development at the Brisbane Conference was the presence of two colleagues from New Zealand, Teresa Wackrow and Phillip Hadley. They are certainly interested in further developing their links with the Academy and are exploring how this might take shape. We'll keep you informed of progress.

At the General Meeting, Robert Gribben was elected as a Life Member of the Academy. Robert has held a number of positions in the Academy over the years, most recently as Editor of this journal. During his time as Editor, Robert did much to develop the Journal, ensuring each issue was a quality production. The Journal has been redesigned, bringing it to a level of excellence. We thank Robert for his efforts. Dr D'Arcy Wood has written in honour of Robert in this issue.

A sub-committee of the National Council was tasked with the job of finding a replacement. At the General Meeting, the sub-committee recommended to the Academy that Dr Angela McCarthy be appointed as the new Editor of *AJL*, with Doug Morrison-Cleary as Associate Editor. We wish them every success.

Working together with me on the National Executive are Chris Lancaster as Secretary-Treasurer and Garry Deverell as the new Victorian Convener. We are slowly getting our heads around the administrative tasks connected with moving the executive from one side of the country to the other: changing signatures and passwords, dealing with different MYOB versions, bouncing emails and the like! We're getting there slowly – thanks for your patience and encouragement.

Anthony Doran

Anthony.Doran@cam.org.au

FROM THE CHAPTERS

New South Wales – Doug Morrison-Cleary

The NSW chapter had its first meeting of the year on 11 March where we welcomed a newcomer, made some plans for the coming year, and shared our thoughts and experiences of the recent AAL Conference. We will be meeting next on 13 May with a focus on the arts and Christian symbols, then on 8 July, 9 September and 11 November.

We meet at the Mount St Benedict Convent, Pennant Hills Rd, Pennant Hills (car access off Hull Road) at 4:30pm. After our meeting we adjourn to a nearby pizzeria for dinner. We are also hoping to schedule two or three meetings in Newcastle this year. We have a large number of members in the Newcastle, Central Coast and Hunter regions. Please contact Doug, our convenor, on presbyter@hildormen.org if you have any questions.

Queensland – Marian Free

During the year following the 2013 Conference in Hobart, we continued our usual pattern of meeting in alternate months from February to October, with an end-of-year dinner in early December. Most of our meetings were at St Francis Theological College, where the Ministry Education Commission of the Anglican Diocese of Brisbane graciously made a room available to us. Twice we ventured further afield, once to Stella Maris RC Parish in Maroochydore, and once to St Bartholomew's Anglican Parish in Toowoomba.

Discussions during those meetings centred on selected articles from AJL, and any work being done by AAL-Q members.

During 2014, we met monthly, and much of our attention was focused on practical preparations for the current conference and on discussion of various aspects of the theme, "The Word in Worship".

Meetings have been attended by 6-10 members; we begin with a brief liturgy of prayer (and sometimes song) prepared by a volunteer, and our discussions are usually accompanied by refreshments, including wine and cheese (though Joe's hospitality at Stella Maris during Lent imaginatively kept the "fast" with seafood and salad instead of cheese).

One of the challenges we face is the size of our state, which makes it difficult to find meeting places where members from outside the S-E corner can participate. Perhaps

2015 will be the year in which we find some better ways of optimising participation from Cairns to Warwick.

Finally, AAL-Q now has a dedicated e-mail address, aal.qld@gmail.com

South Australia – Ilsa Neicinieks

Given the national AAL conference in January, the Adelaide Chapter had its first meeting for 2015 on March 5th. Sadly we had to bid farewell to Leanne Earl whose husband has had a posting to Geelong.

Having lost Leanne, we are now looking forward to welcoming Alison Whish! Alison who has been a long-time member of the AAL, moved from Tasmania to Victor Harbor S.A. in 2014.

After our customary “What’s on the Boil?” segment, where we share what liturgical projects we are currently involved in, the March meeting began with shared reflections on the January conference for the benefit of those who were unable to attend. This was followed by a spirited discussion of Tony Way’s article, “*Hippies and Holy Joes?*” printed in the last edition of the Australian Journal of Liturgy.

Members then shared what they consider to be strengths and weaknesses in regard to liturgical music in their own traditions.

There was agreement that much work still needs to be done to encourage our respective congregations to sing hymns and songs that are both liturgically and theologically appropriate and there was general lament regarding the current paucity of competent musicians in our parishes.

On a more positive note, Jenny O’Brien gave an update of where things are at in regard to a new Roman Catholic liturgical music resource called *Catholic Worship Book II*, which she and several other liturgical musicians have spent some years compiling, and which is due for release in the latter part of 2015.

Victoria – Anthony Doran prior to Garry Deverill becoming Convenor.

As we have done for the last few years, in 2015 members of the Victorian Chapter will continue to meet on the second Wednesday of alternate months (March, May, July, September and November) at St Francis Pastoral Centre in Melbourne’s CBD. We’re grateful for the hospitality of the Blessed Sacrament community in providing this most central location, and any Academy members visiting from interstate are more than welcome to join us.

The transfer of the National Executive to the Victorian Chapter necessitated the election of a new Convener which was held at the March meeting and Garry Deverell was elected. Garry has previously been Chapter Convener and joins Chris Lancaster and Tony Doran on the National Executive. This meeting also saw the presentation of life membership to our venerable Chapter member Robert Gribben. Robert's contributions to the Academy are celebrated by D'Arcy Wood elsewhere in this issue.

In May, the Chapter will hear from Nathan Nettleton who will give an 'introduction' to Baptist worship, outlining its origins and current practice. Robert Gribben will 'respond' – given some of the current reading he is doing regarding the reclaiming of the catholic heritage in protestant worship. Plans are shaping up for Chapter meetings later in the year to examine the role of music in the cause of Christian unity, and also to look at recent developments in the singing of psalms in worship.

The Victorian Chapter leadership will continue its work with the University of Divinity on developing the Leatherland Prize to enhance, promote, and further develop liturgical studies. It is hoped that this venture might be the beginning of a fruitful partnership between the Chapter and the University.

For three of the last four years, I shared the convenership of this Chapter with D'Arcy Wood. D'Arcy's ever-present good humour, wise leadership and practical support were more precious than silver or gold. I thank him for his contribution to the Victorian Chapter. As outgoing Chapter Convener, this is my last Chapter Report for *AJL*. It has been an honour and a privilege to have served this Chapter as Convener.

Western Australia – Angela McCarthy

The WA Chapter meet approximately 5 times per year with a final meeting normally held at the Benedictine Monastery in New Norcia, two hours drive north of Perth.

Since the January 2015 conference is centred on the Word of God, the WA Chapter have been working through the themes selected for the conference. At our May meeting, Elizabeth Smith presented "Praying the Word". Elizabeth writes constantly for wide ranging liturgical needs within her Anglican community and shared some of them. We began in prayer with texts that she had written entitled "Community of the Beatitudes – Prayer for Busy People". She reflected with us of the construction of the prayers and the particular needs around praying the Word. Elizabeth also explained about the transition from one Anglican prayer book to another and the reasons for the transition and pointed out some of the differences between them and the fact that Cranmer used many passages of Scripture in his prayer book.

Our August meeting was lead by Angela Gorman who is a professional liturgical musician. She developed the theme of “Singing the Word”. We began with sung prayer using psalms and petitions with sung responses. Angela then lead us through a process of reflection on Scriptural passages that were either psalms or references to singing praise to God, e.g. Exodus 15:1, Hebrews 2:12 and Ephesians 5:19.

In September John McCarthy lead us in examining “Preaching the Word” with particular reliance on his prison ministry experiences and what particular emphasis is required.

The November meeting concentrated on “Seeing the Word” and Angela McCarthy presented a short summary of her recent thesis on Scripture, theology and art.

Our first meeting for 2015 centred on a review of the Brisbane Conference and then our April meeting focussed on Anzac Day.

Visitors and new members are welcome. Contact angela.mccarthy@nd.edu.au

OBITUARY

Graham Robert Hughes

William W. Emilsen



Graham Robert Hughes 1937–2015

Graham Hughes' was one of Australia's foremost liturgical scholars. His remarkable teaching career spanned the first twenty-five years of the Uniting Church in Australia. After postgraduate studies at Cambridge in New Testament and parish ministry in New Zealand, he was appointed Lecturer in New Testament at United Theological College in 1977.

Five or six years later, his career took an unexpected turn when the College asked him to switch from teaching New Testament to establish a new department of Liturgical Studies. This he did with distinction, laying a solid platform for what we have come to appreciate as his passion for 'doxological excellence'. Despite some opposition he persuaded a whole generation of students that the longed-for renewal of the church must have at its core meaningful worship of the God who has spoken and still speaks to us through Jesus Christ.

In addition to his doctorate which was published as *Hebrews and Hermeneutics* (CUP, 1979), Graham wrote several works on liturgy, including the little classic, *The Place of Prayer* (UTC, 1999). His *magnum opus* was *Worship as Meaning: a Liturgical Theology for Late Modernity*, published in 2003 by Cambridge University Press shortly after he retired. This book was a distillation of his careful teaching, wide reading, experience as a Minister of the Word, and a lifetime of thoughtful theological reflection.

Graham was an active member of the Australian Academy of Liturgy and the international *Societas Liturgica*. When able to attend their Congresses his contribution was warmly received.

After retirement he turned to the subject of the nature of sacraments. Because of his growing concern over the diffused nature of sacramentality in mainline Protestantism, he sought to establish a Reformed Sacramentality. He left five substantial unpublished essays which will be edited by his colleagues and published under the title, *The Sacramental Life*.

He is survived by his four children from his first marriage to Mary—Catherine, Linton, Sarah and Simon—and his wife Donika with whom he spent twelve culturally rich years dividing their time between Nierstein in Germany and Katoomba in the Blue Mountains.

LIFE MEMBER

Professor Robert W Gribben by D'Arcy Wood

Robert W. Gribben

According to Wikipedia, Gribben Head is a promontory on the south coast of Cornwall.

Although born in far-off Mooroopna in north-eastern Victoria, Robert Gribben values his Cornish background and recently served a term as president of the Cornish Association of Victoria. From the time of John Wesley, Cornwall has been a stronghold of Methodism, and the Methodist heritage has been central to Robert's life and ministry.

He began his tertiary education at the University of Melbourne in Arts and Law, soon adding Theology in Melbourne and at Cambridge, graduating BA and MA from the latter in 1968 and 1972. It was also in the 1970s that he wrote a thesis "Evangelism and a Theology of the Cross" and was awarded MA by the Melbourne College of Divinity (now the University of Divinity). During his student years Robert's interest in ecumenism was developing via his membership of the Student Christian Movement. He was president of the Melbourne University Branch and national study secretary for three years.

Robert is known in the Australian Academy of Liturgy (AAL) primarily as a liturgist, of course, but his career has been many-sided as pastor, teacher, writer and ecumenist. I shall touch on each of these, while not pretending to give a full account.

After ordination by the Methodist Conference of Victoria and Tasmania in 1970, Robert had pastoral ministries in Portland and Kew, 1970-76, followed by chaplaincy at Ormond College in the University of Melbourne. It was during his time at Ormond that he became the first holder of the W.A. Sanderson Fellowship in Liturgical Studies. After working in the United Kingdom for four years, he returned to parish ministry, first at North Balwyn (Melbourne) 1984-89, and later at the beautiful bluestone Wesley Church in Lonsdale Street in central Melbourne. Robert became known for his easy communication with his congregations, while not "talking down" to his hearers, being at heart a reader and scholar.

Before taking up his ministry in Portland, while still in Cambridge, Robert married Susan Anderson, a lawyer. Susan has supported Robert in his full and varied ministry and has continued her own work in law and mediation. They have two children and two grand-children.

Robert is a gifted teacher. Members of AAL know this from his many lectures and addresses at conferences and chapter meetings over the years. While in England in the 1980s he was Ecumenical Lecturer and Tutor in Liturgy at Lincoln Theological College, after which he lectured at the Bossey Ecumenical Institute in Switzerland for a semester. It was during his rather short ministry at Wesley Church that he was urged to accept the appointment as Professor of Worship and Mission at the Uniting Theological College in Melbourne (now Pilgrim Theological College). For 11 years there he worked with Anglican and Jesuit colleagues in the United Faculty of Theology, serving a term as president of that body. Students benefitted from his extensive knowledge of theology, liturgy, missiology and ecumenism as well as his skills in communication.

Robert is a dedicated and very busy ecumenist. His term as full-time general secretary of the Victorian Council of Churches (1989-95) is only one phase in many decades of involvement with ecumenical bodies including the World Council of Churches. For more than 10 years he chaired the Standing Committee on Ecumenics and Dialogue for the World Methodist Council and was also a member of that Council's steering committee. The Uniting Church in Australia, formed in 1977, has maintained strong links with world-wide Methodist and Reformed bodies, and in line with that commitment Robert was a member of the Anglican-Methodist International Commission in the 1990s. He then co-chaired the reconstituted Anglican-Methodist International Commission for Unity in Mission (AMICUM) from 2008. His retirement from full-time teaching in that year released him for further travel, not that his overseas commitments had been minor, by any measure, up to that time. Robert is enthusiastic about the 2015 report of AMICUM entitled *Into All the World: Being and Becoming Apostolic Churches*.

Mention must also be made of the Global Christian Forum which includes Roman Catholic, Anglican, Orthodox, Protestant, Pentecostal and Independent churches from many countries. While separate from the World Council of Churches, it has extended and developed the work of that body, crossing barriers which hitherto had hindered ecumenism. Robert has been a member of the GFC steering committee since 2007.

Robert has extensive knowledge of Orthodoxy. He has visited Orthodox churches in many parts of the world and is widely respected for his understanding of the theology, liturgy and spirituality of the Orthodox. He co-founded and then chaired the Melbourne Institute for Orthodox Christian Studies from 2003.

On the national scene Robert has been a long-term member of the ecumenical commission of the Uniting Church, now re-labelled the Christian Unity Working Group, and on behalf of that body has been an influential member of the Anglican-Uniting Church national dialogue for more than a decade. This has been a challenging and at times difficult assignment.

Although he has an association with various universities such as Cambridge and Charles Sturt, Robert's particular love of the University of Melbourne and its colleges is evident to all who know him. Having been chaplain at Ormond College and dean of the chapel at various times, he was appointed a Fellow of that College and is now Emeritus Fellow. Despite the long-term rivalry between Ormond and Queen's, Robert has managed, with his usual aplomb, to be a Fellow of Queen's (his own college in his student days) from 2008 to the present. His interest in Methodist scholarship is illustrated by his chairmanship of the Sugden Heritage Collections Committee at Queen's, which supervises one of the most important archives in the Methodist world.

As a writer, Robert has produced a huge number of articles, published sermons and chapters. The subjects are varied, Wesley studies, Methodism, ecumenism, ecclesiology, education and of course liturgy. When the Uniting Church was formed Robert became a member of its Commission on Liturgy, travelling frequently from Melbourne to Adelaide for meetings. His influence on the large publication *Uniting in Worship* (1988) was profound and his writing, anonymous of course, is to be found on many of its pages. Similarly with the supplementary volume *Uniting in Worship 2* (2005) of which he was liturgical co-editor.

In the course of his liturgical research and drafting, he prepared *A Guide to Uniting in Worship* (Uniting Church Press, 1990), a manual for liturgical leaders and presiders. This manual is about more than practical issues, however, being grounded in theological and liturgical principles. Drawing on his work for his church's liturgy, Robert produced *Uniting in Thanksgiving: the Great Prayers of Thanksgiving of the Uniting Church in Australia* (Uniting Academic Press, 2008), launched with great commendation by the AAL's Tom Elich. While serving his own church long and faithfully, Robert has written for an ecumenical audience in such publications as *Communion in Australian Churches* (Victorian Council of Churches, 1979 and 1985).

These labours for his church, as pastor, preacher, presider, teacher, scholar and administrator have been prodigious, yet, as an observer of his ministry and as a friend, I often feel he is appreciated more in other churches than his own and in other countries than his own. An example of this is the conferring on him of Doctor of Divinity, *honoris causa*, by Shenandoah University in Virginia, USA, in 1997. This was in recognition of his ecumenical and liturgical work for the World Methodist Council and its member-churches throughout the world. In Australia he was the first secretary

of the Australian Consultation on Liturgy and later its co-chair. Members of AAL will recall his presidency of the Academy on two occasions and his outstanding editorship of its journal *The Australian Journal of Liturgy*, a responsibility that he laid down only this year. Some members, especially younger ones, will not know of his membership of the AAL's predecessor the Ecumenical Liturgical Centre (ELC) (Melbourne) of which he was honorary director 1977-80. He facilitated the merger of that body with AAL when AAL was founded in Adelaide. Fortunately Robert has written an account of the ELC in the AJL, Vol.13, No.3, 2013.

It is unsurprising that, when the international *Societas Liturgica* decided to hold its Congress in Sydney, Robert was active on the planning committee. The Congress was a great success in 2009. Robert had been a member of *Societas* from 1980 and was on its Council 1995-99. One of the skills he has developed from many years of travel is to combine several international commitments on a single trip! An example of this cramming of commitments is his membership of the international English Language Liturgical Consultation (ELLC) 1989-2001, of which body he was co-chair for four years. As well as preparing common texts for English-speaking churches, texts now widely used in liturgical books, the ELLC administers the Revised Common Lectionary.

As though his heavy involvements in the Church, locally, nationally and internationally, were not enough, Robert has a concern for community issues. To the surprise of some of his friends, he became a member of the Victorian Casino and Gaming Authority in 1995 and was for a time deputy chair of its research committee. The fact that he was, at the same time, chair of the board of the Christian Television Association is an indicator of the breadth of his interests and his great capacity for work.

Those who have enjoyed Robert's friendship know him as an entertaining conversationalist and a delightful dinner companion. I remember that my father once described a friend of his as "an Elizabethan Christian" and the description fits Robert rather well. His sense of humour enlivens any gathering that he attends.

Few if any have made such a great contribution to the ecumenical liturgical scene in Australia and it is fitting that the AAL has conferred on him Life Membership of the Academy.

BOOK REVIEWS

McGowan, Andrew B. *Ancient Christian Worship: Early Church Practices in Social, Historical, and Theological Perspective*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: BakerAcademic, 2014.

Andrew B McGowan is an eminent liturgical historian and this is thoroughly evidenced in his new book, *Ancient Christian Worship: Early Church Practices in Social, Historical, and Theological Perspective*. The study of liturgy requires sources that emanate from original material of the early Christian period but expert assessment and interpretation of such information is necessary and this is where McGowan's book is an important new resource.

In his teaching Fr Russell Hardiman,¹ himself a liturgical historian, would always point towards historical origins as a necessary way of informing any argument or confusion about various aspects of liturgy. Since the Second Vatican Council studies of liturgy fully informed from early sources have helped guide the renewal of liturgical practice and books such as McGowan's are essential in the debates that have surrounded such radical change. Our contemporary debates are not a new experience. McGowan begins his book by stating clearly that the understanding we have does not only come from records of the 'praise ritual and prayer but also from witnesses to debate, development, and instruction.'² Even the interpretation of the word 'worship' requires care. When we read in our English version the word 'worship' we interpret it through our own lens of liturgical practice or other forms of prayer and music. In ancient times worship also meant 'obedience or service, not gatherings, nor beliefs, nor song, nor ritual' and so to really understand the texts we use, we have to be aware of such divergence in meaning.³ The actions of the early Christian communities that we call worship included many actions that would be outside our contemporary usage of the word. Nevertheless, McGowan limits the scope to the foundations of liturgical practice but emphasises that it is a limitation.⁴ He quotes Justin Martyr (ca. 100 – ca. 165) who presents 'the distinctive sacramental actions of the Christians within a bigger picture, with the ritual and the worldview as two sides of the same coin.'⁵

While worship is about words and what we do with our bodies in particular settings, what has been left to us from the earliest period is mostly texts and so the basis of

¹ Rev Dr Russell Hardiman is a life time member of the Australian Academy of Liturgy, now retired, and taught liturgical studies for many years at the University of Notre Dame Australia.

² Andrew B. McGowan, *Ancient Christian Worship: Early Church Practices in Social, Historical, and Theological Perspective* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: BakerAcademic, 2014), 1.

³ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 8.

this book depends on the ‘rich set of surviving text’ that is available now.⁶ However, while there is also material evidence from archaeology, it is limited in the first three centuries. Most of what we have in terms of images are funerary and at times this has been interpreted as being because of the need for Christians to worship in the catacombs because of persistent persecution. This seems to be a serious exaggeration that romanticises this early period whereas it is more clearly evident that it was ‘fewer than ten years out of the nearly three hundred during which Christians were executed as the result of [Roman] imperial initiatives.’⁷

In the chapters following McGowan’s description of the origins of Christian Worship, he deals with different aspects of worship under the headings of Meal, Word, Music, Initiation, Prayer and Time. Each of these is explored using ancient material (canonical and other) and contemporary commentaries.

Meal: Banquet and Eucharist⁸ explores the original activity of the Christians which was to eat together. Their regular form of gathering was a meal tradition called the ‘breaking of the bread’ and was the ‘central act around or within which others – reading and preaching, prayer and prophecy-were arranged.’ New Testament texts refer to Jesus’ Last Supper and Christians are familiar with the story. To consider it the last one, there must have been others beforehand indicating that this was a common activity for Jesus and his friends. From this practice eventually emanates the Christian understanding of Eucharist. The four-fold pattern of taking, giving thanks, breaking and eating is evidenced in many places in the New Testament but there are subtle differences between the ideas of blessing and thanksgiving. The blessing comes from the Jewish tradition and is the term used in Mark and Matthew’s account whereas the term thanksgiving is used Paul and Luke’s accounts.⁹ Exploration of texts and meaning using the experience of the early communities greatly enriches our contemporary understanding because we can gain considerable clarity through the origins of ideas on which we continually focus. Jesus’ Jewishness is the important context in which to begin an understanding of the Last Supper. Pitre suggests that Jesus did not finish the Jewish ritual Passover meal on the night before he died because the conclusion could only be the spilling of his own blood.¹⁰ McGowan develops the context of the Eucharist in such detail that one can only do it justice by reading his full text where he establishes that ‘Most Christian writings from the second century on suggest that the power and character of the Eucharistic food were upheld with startling realism.’¹¹

As McGowan explores the distinctive understanding of Word in Christianity he

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Candida Moss, *The Myth of Persecution* (New York: HarperOne, 2013), 129.

⁸ McGowan, *Ancient Christian Worship: Early Church Practices in Social, Historical, and Theological Perspective*: 19-64.

⁹ Ibid., 29.

¹⁰ Brant Pitre, *Jesus and the Jewish Roots of the Eucharist* (New York: Doubleday, 2011), 170.

¹¹ McGowan, *Ancient Christian Worship: Early Church Practices in Social, Historical, and Theological Perspective*: 47.

considers it in the light of reading and preaching. Christians are singular in their understanding of Word as it is seen as ‘intrinsic to God’s being and that the verbal instrument of creation is also the subject of the incarnation.’¹² This chapter does not ‘construct a history of ancient hermeneutics or explore the content of the earliest Christian kerygma’¹³ but looks at how words were consumed just as the bread and wine were consumed, as real food. Again, Jewish tradition and practice inform what developed in the early Christian communities. The Temple was the place of worship but other gathering places like the synagogue were for the reading of the Law and for conversation and study. Early communities therefore seem to be, from Paul’s and Jesus’ synagogal Scripture events, ‘more like a communal Bible study with some authoritative input than “liturgy”’.¹⁴

A colleague described with surprise his Baptist students understanding of worship as only the choice of music – their understanding of worship centres only on the songs they sing, with no liturgical elements. McGowan notes the same and that this contemporary attitude would have surprised the early Christians. While we do not have musical scores to give us the sounds they used, we know they sang (Matt 26:30). What we do have is ‘largely of practices, roles, and attitudes toward music’.¹⁵ Once again we see that the earliest music must be understood ‘within the matrix of Jewish practice’.¹⁶

Chapter 5 unfolds the early practices involved in Baptism, Anointing and Foot Washing. ‘Baptism as an initiatory action was almost universal in earliest Christianity; while there was diversity of specific practices and of theology, the fact of baptism was generally assumed.’¹⁷ As it developed it used the natural symbol of water but for new purposes and to establish new meanings. McGowan explores the revelations of the Dead Sea Scrolls and the place of John the Baptist in the development of such ritual washing and the message conveyed through this practice about God’s action in the world. Jesus’ own baptism is shown to be very important for the early Christians in both their belief and practice and the elements of divine adoption and giving of the spirit become part of the early Christian ritual along with forgiveness and repentance.¹⁸ This is an extensive chapter that shows not only the development of the practice in the Christian communities, but also the quest for meaning within such development.

Prayer: Hours, Ways, and Texts explores the diversity and origins of how the early

¹² *Ibid.*, 65.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 66.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 71.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 111.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 114.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 135.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 140.

communities came together in prayer. Again, the Jewishness of the earliest disciples is expressed in what they do and where they do it and it was profoundly communal as well as highly personal, a matter of mind and body.¹⁹ McGowan maps the development over the first four centuries and the spread of Christian communities who then contributed to this communal focus on prayer and praise in the morning and evening. The diversity experienced among the early Christian communities is the surprising aspect to those who have not sought this information before. Again, what we presume and understand from our own experience is vastly different from the diversity of prayer in this early period.

In Chapter 7 McGowan deals with Time: Feasts and Fasts. In our contemporary context, we defeat the sense of time by having things available to us at all times. With the digital age we are available to the world (or at least those who have our mobile phone number) at any time of the day or night. With electricity we can turn night into day, with global transport we can have any fruit or vegetable at any time of the year. What we lose with this availability is the sacred sense of time. McGowan explores this sense of time beginning with the importance of the first day of the week, the Lord's Day.²⁰ The celebration of Easter and its importance throughout Christian history is linked to the celebration of the Passover but it becomes clear that what we have today is very different. The developments since the early period have increased in complexity in regard to the celebration of the suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The detail and careful development of the complexities of the early Christian communities in McGowan's book, what they did and why, offers a rich platform for examination of liturgy and the sacraments and the very life of the Church. What is deeply impressive, and so often in contrast to contemporary communities, is the understanding that their whole lives are about service and that is the reality of their worship. I would certainly commend this book to those studying liturgy but also to anyone interested in liturgical development. It is a very readable tome but extremely worthwhile in its detail and scholarly value.

Angela McCarthy
Western Australia

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 184.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 218.

Gerard Moore. *Earth Unites with Heaven: An Introduction to the Liturgical Year*. Northcote, Victoria: Morning Star Publishing, 2014.

The founder *Pastoral Liturgy* and life member of the Academy of Liturgy, Fr Russell Hardiman, spent many years at the University of Notre Dame teaching liturgy and sacramental theology. One of his favourite responses to contentious issues was to look at history for which he had an encyclopaedic memory and huge library. What seemed like 'tradition' to some could turn out to be a very recent action, or a recent view of liturgical matters. Gerard Moore, who also is a very good liturgical historian, has given us an excellent resource in his new book, *Earth Unites with Heaven: An Introduction to the Liturgical Year*. For the seasons of Advent, Christmas, Lent, the Easter Triduum and the Fifty Days of Easter, he gives us a potted history. This is always useful in times of change so that we are aware of what is important and what comes from deep in our Tradition.

Liturgical seasons form our way of celebrating the richness of the mystery of Christ by heightening our awareness of particular aspects.²¹ Our Sunday worship and Easter celebrations are the apex of the seasons but the whole cycle leads us into the mystery of God's action in the world. In the first instance, Moore settles the great dilemma about whether we 're-enact' events, particularly those around Easter, or do we 'remember' them? From the procession with palms on Passion Sunday to the drama of the Triduum, there is a desire to 're-enact' the events. We have much in our history of pious devotions to encourage this desire because in our past when the laity was not included in the action of the Mass, other devotions were critical to understanding and responding to the love of God. Now, in the post Vatican II period, we have liturgy in the vernacular and the encouragement of the Church for full, conscious and active participation.²²

Moore says clearly that Jesus' intention for us was to do it "in remembrance of me" (Luke 22:19 and 1 Cor 11:25).²³ It is the active remembering that is so important. What we remember in this way, before God, brings the remembered action into our current reality, what we call 'anamnesis', from the Greek word to 'remember'.²⁴ This form of remembering makes present through our prayer the action of Christ. This is what liturgy is all about. In the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (Sacrosanctum Concilium) it is explained:

Within the cycle of a year, moreover, she unfolds the whole mystery of Christ,

²¹ Gerard Moore, *Earth Unites with Heaven: An Introduction to the Liturgical Year* (Northcote, Victoria: Morning Star Publishing, 2014), 11.

²² Second Vatican Council, "Sacrosanctum Concilium: Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy," in *The Documents of Vatican II*, ed. Walter M. Abbott (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1963), 7.

²³ Moore, *Earth Unites with Heaven: An Introduction to the Liturgical Year*: 12.

²⁴ Anscar J Chupungco, *What, Then, Is Liturgy?* (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2010), 68.

from the incarnation and birth until the ascension, the day of Pentecost, and the expectation of blessed hope and of the coming of the Lord.

Recalling thus the mysteries of redemption, the Church opens to the faithful the riches of her Lord's powers and merits, so that these are in some way made present for all time, and the faithful are enabled to lay hold upon them and become filled with saving grace.²⁵

While in Jerusalem last year, I was deeply moved by the various places we visited that had real historical connections to the places where Jesus preached, lived and suffered to death and rose again. However, what was much more moving was when we celebrated liturgy in these places, it was then that it was really present to us and at times it moved us to tears.

Moore gives us a rich understanding of the difference between the seasons and the core of it all, the feast of Sunday. Christians had established this is the principal day of celebration by the third century with the life and faith of the church "made manifest in our Sunday worship."²⁶ Following the detail provided by Moore gives a useful background to any liturgical planning that takes place in parishes or schools.

The Christian week can include fasting, the Liturgy of the Hours, daily Mass or devotions. All are treated simply and clearly in Chapter Four. Again, the use of historical details assists in developing an understanding that is valuable for parish and school life.²⁷

In Chapters Five to Nine, Moore presents the history and theology of the seasons of Advent, Christmas, Lent, the Easter Triduum, and the Fifty Days of Easter. For Advent he develops the dual focus of the mystery of the Incarnation and the eschatological expectation of Christ's return. As he points out, the second aspect is often neglected and the winter imagery of Advent is hard to transfer to a hot and sunny climate in the southern hemisphere.

The chapter on Christmas again speaks of origins and also gives an anchor in the paschal mystery which "leads the baptised to ponder the fragility of human existence and the mystery of salvation. The prayers and readings for the Masses of Christmas focus on the coming of the light"²⁸. Once again the imagery here makes it difficult in the southern hemisphere where we need less light and careful adaptation. What is fascinating are the variations over time of how dates and details have been selected. Moore also emphasises that Christmas is part of a season and does not end until the

²⁵ Council, "Sacrosanctum Concilium: Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy," 102.

²⁶ Moore, *Earth Unites with Heaven: An Introduction to the Liturgical Year*: 15, 16.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 25-31.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 38.

Feast of the Baptism of the Lord. This has ramifications for the choice of music and any church decoration for the season.

Chapter Eight on the Easter Triduum is well worth using as a foundation for the preparation of parish liturgies. Moore gives clarity to the various aspects of the Triduum and how the differences in the various actions bring so closely to our mind and hearts in the liturgy the cost of Jesus' action for us and then the power of God's action in raising Jesus and establishing our salvation. The unified action of the whole three days gives us the fullness of the story of our salvation.

Easter of course does not end on Easter Sunday, but continues for fifty days until Pentecost. An interesting detail that Moore reveals is that throughout the entire season "the people stood in prayer and the penitential actions of kneeling and fasting were prohibited."²⁹ Going to Masses in various parts of the world it is interesting to note the differences in the gestures of the assembly - when people stand and kneel. In many places they stand as resurrected people throughout the whole of the Eucharistic prayer, in other places they stand for the memorial acclamation and then remain standing. It makes sense because in Australia the major acclamations of the Mass in the Eucharistic prayer have to be sung while kneeling. This is not an ideal way to sing and to acclaim the greatness of God's act for us.

Moore concludes this excellent little book with a discussion on the Liturgical Calendar. Communities all over the world have their own cultural needs to be incorporated into the calendar. For example, in Australia we celebrate Anzac Day on 25 April and the solemnity of St Mary of the Cross, our first saint, on 8 August. Bishops are able to decide on variations but the principal seasons of the year are in the General Calendar and the directives for deciding what to do with local variations are in the General Norms for the Liturgical Year and the Calendar (1969).³⁰

This small volume is immensely valuable for insights while preparing or reviewing various liturgies throughout the year. It leads to other possible areas of exploration that could very well enrich the way in which we all celebrate liturgy in our communities.

Angela McCarthy
Western Australia

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 63.

³⁰ Congregation for Divine Worship, "General Norms for the Liturgical Year and the Calendar," (1969), <http://www.liturgyoffice.org.uk/Calendar/Info/GNLY.pdf>.

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT ...

australian pastoral musicians network
NATIONAL CONFERENCE



YESTERDAY, TODAY,
TOMORROW:
Songs
FOR
THE *Journey*



1-3 OCTOBER 2015
BRISBANE

CONFERENCE KEYNOTE PRESENTERS CONFIRMED



Marty Haugen

International presenter, performer, recording artist, author & composer of over 450 pieces including *Mass of Creation*, *Gather Us In*, *Shepherd Me O God* & *All Are Welcome*



Dr Maeve Heaney VDMF

Born in Dublin, Maeve lectures in theology at ACU, is an internationally known composer and musician and author of the recently released *Music as Theology: What music says about the Word*



Dr Richard Leonard SJ

A Jesuit priest, Richard Leonard is the director of the Australian Catholic Office for Film & Broadcasting. He lectures worldwide on faith and culture, has been a Visiting Professor at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome and has served on juries at numerous international film festivals.

SPECIAL EVENTS:

- Conference Mass
- Conference Dinner
- Showcase Concert

SAVE THE DATES:

1-3 OCTOBER 2015

St James College,
Spring Hill (Brisbane)

Info & Registration
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