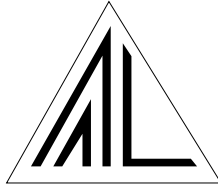




Australian Journal
of **Liturgy**

VOLUME 14 **NUMBER 4** 2015



AUSTRALIAN ACADEMY OF LITURGY

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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: Our Lady and Child, stained glass panel, from the New Norcia Mission and Interpretation Centre. (Photo: Angela McCarthy)

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Editorial



Some of the material in this issue relates to the Conference held in Brisbane last January, *The Word in Worship*. We were hoping to be able to publish a summary of the Aboriginal panel that responded to the sub-theme of 'Preaching the Word'. There were, however, technical difficulties that prevented us from getting the recordings of that session and so the transcriptions were not available in time for review. We hope that we can bring that to fruition in the next issue. Two articles that speak from within that Aboriginal context however, are presented. Michael

Mangan describes the experience of preparing a liturgy on a very grand scale for the *Los Angeles Religious Education Congress*. Of particular interest are the Aboriginal participants and the way in which they contributed aspects of their culture to the liturgical celebration.

The second article stems from the comments of the Aboriginal panel, Dr Christine Black, Dr Anne Pattel-Gray and Thelma Parker, in relationship to the way they experienced hearing the Word preached within the Christian community and in the liturgical context. Two Benedictine monks from New Norcia Monastery in Western Australia were interviewed for this article.

We have two other very interesting works included in this issue. Charles Rue speaks of art and liturgy in a most passionate way. This paper was originally written originally for *Grounding the Sacred through Literature and the Arts Conference 26 July 2015, at the Australian Catholic University Strathfield, NSW*.

Kerry Handasyde explains and illustrates the harvest festivals of previous times. They are both fascinating insights to our history.

We also have two book reviews and a wonderful commendation for our member Sr Susan Daily who is one of this year's recipients for an OAM. Congratulations Susan.

The role of book review editor is now vacant as Stephen Burns has had to withdraw. Thank you Stephen for all the reading, writing and coordinating over the past years. Anyone wishing to take up this role is very welcome to contact me or your Chapter Convenor.

This editorial is being written in the Old City of Jerusalem. I have been over here studying Matthew's gospel for a month in its Jewish context of land and people. The conclusion is upon us and I am feeling a bit like Peter when he witnessed the

Transfiguration – he wanted to build three tents and stay on but the experience came to a conclusion that he had to accept. Tonight as we celebrated Mass with some of the group there was a liturgical confluence: in the Basilica below us we could hear the Chemin Neuf community singing their Eucharist, from the closest minaret there was the Muslim call to prayer and in the streets there was gunfire as the Old City was once again filled with turmoil. We continued to pray for the peace of Jerusalem.

Living here has been wonderful in the way it has expanded my knowledge and understanding (though definitely not complete) of Islam, Judaism and the political struggles that embrace this region. We have had experts from every perspective speak passionately about their faith and their hopes. Two experiences stand out: one of a Muslim woman who was brought up by the Sisters of Sion who run Ecce Homo where we are staying. Her faith in God sustains her in the most difficult circumstances that are imposed on her by those in power. Even though all her education and nurturing was with the Sisters she has a deep and abiding love for God through her Islamic faith. The second experience was in the University of Bethlehem. It is run by the De La Salle Brothers and the current Vice Chancellor, who addressed us, is from New Zealand. The numbers of Christians are dwindling so much that the student population is now eighty per cent Muslim and seventy per cent women. The men in the West Bank are required to work so the women are allowed to study. It is an oasis of peace and hope and the young people we spoke to were inspiring beyond everything that we had witnessed. Even though they are oppressed on both sides they still know that they can build a better world.

Please enjoy and share this issue and for the peace of Jerusalem pray!

Save the Date!

2017 Conference

17-20 January

Hunter Valley Hotel Academy

Kurri Kurri, NSW

“Liturgy Under the Southern Cross”

Aboriginal Australia in Anaheim: International Liturgical Inculturation

Michael Mangan



Michael Mangan is a Brisbane-based composer, teacher and music liturgist who performs and speaks throughout Australasia and North America. In addition to qualifications in music and education, Michael will complete a Master of Theology degree in 2015.

BACKGROUND

The Office of Religious Education for the Archdiocese of Los Angeles hosts the annual *Los Angeles Religious Education Congress (Congress)*, at the Anaheim

Convention Centre in Orange County, California. The event is attended by up to 40,000 people from all walks of Catholic life including many teachers, catechists, clergy, religious, parish musicians and liturgy team members. The majority of the delegates are from North America, particularly California and other parts of the USA, but there is a significant international presence which is growing each year.

Due to the large numbers at *Congress* there is no single space at the conference venue which is large enough for all delegates to gather together. Consequently, five to seven concurrent Eucharistic liturgies are offered at 5.15 p.m. on each afternoon of the three day event. These liturgies are generally themed on musical or cultural lines with delegates' possible choices often including African American, Gospel, Jazz, Celtic, Urban Fusion, Hawaiian or First Nations Masses along with more 'generic' options of General or Young Adult liturgies. The venues for these individual celebrations range from Convention Centre ballrooms, which cater for 800 to 1200 people, up to the 8,000 seat Anaheim Arena. *Congress* liturgies, especially those celebrated in the Arena, are renowned for managing to effectively gather and lead very large liturgical Assemblies to full conscious and active participation. This is achieved through the use of high quality music, movement, processional dance, symbols and environmental visual art, along with engaging proclamation, preaching and presiding.

Over the last decade a number of Australian speakers and musicians have been regularly invited to present workshops and concerts at *Congress* and the past five years has seen some Australian Dioceses and Catholic Education Offices begin to annually sponsor delegates to attend the gathering. Given this growing Australian

presence, and the general American interest in Australia and Australians, a proposal was submitted to the Congress Liturgy Team (CLT) to offer an Australian liturgy at the March, 2015 *Congress*. A crucial part of the proposal, and the aspect that particularly excited the CLT, was the involvement of Australian Indigenous culture in the celebration. The proposal was enthusiastically accepted by the CLT however we immediately began discussions with them about their suggested 'title' of *Australian Aboriginal Liturgy* for the celebration. We pointed out that rather than being an Aboriginal liturgy it would be a Roman Rite which included some inculturated Australian Indigenous elements. The title that was finally agreed on was the *Australian Culture Liturgy*.

Before the proposal was submitted, an approach was made to Brisbane Catholic Education (BCE) regarding the Indigenous elements in the liturgy. The BCE Leadership team was very familiar with *Congress* and had sponsored a significant number of staff to attend the event over the previous five years. They generously agreed to co-sponsor a group of eleven high school indigenous dancers and four staff members to Los Angeles to minister at the liturgy with the remaining costs covered by the dance troupe's school. This particular BCE high school was chosen because of its Indigenous cultural program and its existing dance troupe. It is worth noting that without this outstanding support this project would never have proceeded.

LITURGICAL INCULTURATION

Articles 37-40 of the seminal Vatican II liturgical document *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (SC) provide guidance and encouragement for what has come to be known as 'liturgical inculturation.' 'Even in the liturgy, the Church has no wish to impose rigid uniformity ... rather does she respect and foster the genius and talents of the various races and peoples.'¹ 'Legitimate variations and adaptations' are permitted for various groups and peoples 'provided that the substantial unity of the Roman rite is preserved.'² Noted expert in the field, Anscar Chupungco OSB, defined liturgical inculturation as 'the process of reciprocal assimilation between Christianity and culture and the resulting interior transformation of culture on one hand and the rooting of Christianity in culture on the other.'³ Chupungco did not consider inculturation as an option but rather 'a theological imperative ... the extent of the Church's incarnation in various races and cultures will be the extent of Christ's universality.'⁴

¹ Catholic Church. *Sacrosanctum Concilium* [Hereafter SC], (Vatican, 1963), 37.

² SC, 38.

³ Anscar J. Chupungco, *Liturgical Inculturation: Sacramentals, Religiosity and Catechesis* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 29 – 30.

⁴ Anscar J. Chupungco, *Cultural Adaptation of the Liturgy* (Ramsey: Paulist, 1982), 59.

Similarly, Johnson notes that ‘in the encounter between gospel and culture, the process of liturgical inculturation can help facilitate local accessibility, relevance and meaning-making.’⁵

Speaking specifically of Australian Indigenous inculturation in his speech to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island (ATSI) people in Alice Springs in 1986, John Paul II stated that ‘the Church herself in Australia will not be fully the Church that Jesus wants her to be until you (the ATSI people) have made your contribution to her life and until that contribution has been joyfully received by others.’⁶ The *Australian Culture Liturgy* took this a step further and explored whether Australian Indigenous liturgical inculturation can have value beyond indigenous or Australian communities and be ‘joyfully received’ in an international setting.

Many of the symbols, rituals, Gregorian chant and much of the language of the revised translation of the *Roman Missal*⁷ are completely foreign to the contemporary Western Church. However, the Church holds that the innate power and beauty of the liturgy will speak for itself and become enculturated into a multiplicity of settings throughout the world. Can the reverse also be true? Can the innate power and beauty of an Indigenous culture speak deeply to a multicultural liturgical gathering on the other side of the world?

PREPARATION

The LA CLT tasked a team consisting of Richard Leonard SJ (Presider), Anne Frawley-Mangan (Liturgy Coordinator) and myself as Music Director, with preparing and coordinating the liturgy. Additionally, well-known Australian *Congress* presenters John Burland and Andrew Chinn were invited to join me as ‘lead musicians’ for the celebration. The CLT nominated Bianca, who had previous experience in coordinating *Congress* liturgies, as our LA-based Liaison person.

Formal preparations began in October, 2014 and an ‘Inculturation Team’ was formed to consider Indigenous symbol, ritual, dance and artefacts which could possibly be included in the liturgy. In addition to Anne and myself, the ‘Inculturation Team’ consisted of Erin, (the high school’s Indigenous Participation Officer), Anne V, (a BCE Religious Education Advisor), and Eric, an Indigenous BCE Cultural Education Officer, didgeridoo player and dancer who became our main cultural adviser.

⁵ Clare V. Johnson, ‘The Space Between: XXII Societas Liturgica Sydney 2009,’ *Liturgy News* 39/3 (2009): 5.

⁶ John Paul II, ‘Address of John Paul II to the Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders,’ (1986). Accessed February 5th, 2015. http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/1986/november/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19861129_aborigeni-alice-springs-australia.html

⁷ Catholic Church. *The Roman Missal: English Translation According to the Third Typical Edition*. (London: Catholic Truth Society/Strathfield: St Pauls, 2011).

Liturgical inculturation of rituals and symbols must be approached carefully and sensitively and the Inculturation Team adopted number of guiding principles. Tom Elich counsels that there must firstly be an understanding of ‘the meaning and function’ of specific rituals and symbols within the Aboriginal culture from which they emanate as one ritual may have different meanings in different places and contexts.⁸ Once there is an understanding of the symbol, the second stage is to identify areas of overlap with elements of the Roman rite.⁹ Though a smoking ceremony looks quite like incensation, it does not necessarily mean that is its function within a particular Aboriginal cultural group.

CLT member, John Flaherty, has vast inculturation experience as a Music Director in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles where Eucharist is celebrated in up to forty-five languages each weekend. When collaborating, Flaherty is especially aware of the ‘sub-dominant’ culture, urging those in ‘positions of power’ to strive to remove the perception, or perhaps reality, of power imbalance.¹⁰ He suggests that developing relationships is ‘a way to open human hearts,’ and when interacting, to observe ‘the rule of listening more than you speak.’¹¹ The non-Indigenous members of the Team respected this guideline however it was sometimes necessary to gently direct the discussion as the Indigenous members of the team possessed limited liturgical experience.

The Team was especially committed to integrating Indigenous ritual and symbol *into* the rite, rather than presenting ‘cultural interludes’ within the liturgy. Particular care was taken to ensure that the Indigenous team members were completely comfortable with the liturgical use of each of the inculturated elements. We learned that Eric’s responses of either, ‘I’m not so sure about that,’ or ‘Yeah, that sounds pretty good,’ could be safely translated as a definite ‘No,’ or ‘Yes,’ on questions of cultural appropriateness. On a few occasions, Eric felt the need to consult a local elder for final approval. Fitz-Herbert and Pilcher provided a valuable starting point as they nominated a number of Australian Indigenous elements which had been successfully inculturated into the Roman rite.¹²

⁸ Tom Elich, ‘Aboriginal Culture and Liturgy,’ *Liturgy News* 24/4 (1994): 2.

⁹ *ibid.*

¹⁰ John Flaherty, ‘Multiculturalism, Inculturation, and Transforming Grace,’ *Pastoral Music*, February-March, (2007): 15 – 19.

¹¹ *Ibid.* 18.

¹² John F. Fitz-Herbert and Carmel A. Pilcher, ‘Towards Inculturation: An Australian Indigenous Contribution,’ in *Vatican Council II: Reforming Liturgy*, ed. Carmel Pilcher, David Orr and Elizabeth Harrington (Hindmarsh: ATF Theology, 2013): 78.

INCULTURATED ELEMENTS

SC reminds us that full and active participation of the people 'is the aim to be considered before all else.'¹³ The fact that this liturgy was to be celebrated with a multicultural Assembly in a foreign country influenced choices and decisions regarding which Indigenous elements were included. Each element needed to 'make sense' in this setting without explanation, and to enhance the Assembly's liturgical participation and experience.

A further important factor in preparation was the venue for the celebration. When the initial invitation to coordinate this liturgy arrived we assumed that as 'first-timers' we would be allocated one of the comparatively smaller 800 - 1200 seat venues for the Mass. It was with great surprise that we received the news that the *Australian Culture Liturgy* was to be celebrated in the Anaheim Arena where 5,000 or more people could be expected to attend. Subsequent planning and preparation needed to ensure that ritual, symbol and dance would not be lost in such a massive space and would be able to successfully engage such a potentially large Assembly. After a series of meetings, many discussions, and considerable research a number of Indigenous elements were identified and agreed upon for inculturation into the liturgy.

A decision was made to begin with an 'Acknowledgement of Country,' recognising the First Nations people from the land around Anaheim where the liturgy was to be celebrated. Eric suggested that this be preceded by a 'Welcome Dance' which the troupe already had in their repertoire. This dance, performed to didgeridoo and clapstick accompaniment, used bunched eucalyptus leaves to ritually sweep away evil spirits and welcome good spirits. These Indigenous elements before the Entrance Procession effectively prepared the Assembly for the inculturated liturgy which followed.

Wearing Aboriginal-motif costumes, the fully 'painted up' troupe danced during both the Entrance and Recessional processions. The processions were led by a dot-painted Cross which had been painted by Indigenous artists in Santa Teresa, near Alice Springs. The dances, developed by Eric and the troupe, melded elements of traditional Aboriginal dance with interpretative movement suggested by



Welcome Dance

¹³ SC, 14.

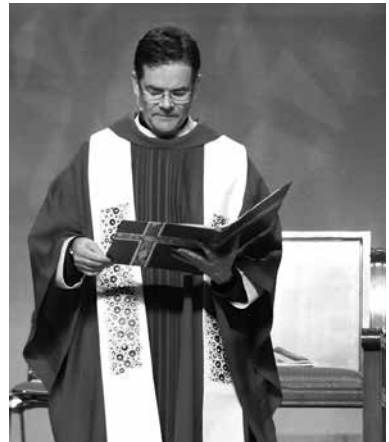
the song lyrics. The songs chosen for the processionals were musically and liturgically appropriate for gathering and sending, incorporated didgeridoo, lent themselves to dance, and were easily sung by the Assembly. *Hearts On Fire* (Michael Mangan, 1999) with the opening lyrics, ‘*We come from Ancient Dreamtime, from the bush or by the sea. We come from a thousand city streets*’ effectively gathered the Assembly. Didgeridoo was substituted for the original bagpipes in Andrew Chinn’s Celtic-influenced *Over the Mountains* (2014) which was used as a rousing recessional.

Consideration was given to using either a Water Ritual or Smoking Ceremony during the Entrance Procession. While both have cleansing and purifying connotations, the Smoking Ceremony was chosen because as the liturgy was being celebrated in Lent, a Water Ritual may have been misinterpreted as pre-empting an Easter season Sprinkling Rite. The Procession of Gifts was also heightened with Indigenous dance and artefacts. Accompanied by didgeridoo and clapsticks, two female indigenous dancers each carried a coolamon, one containing bread and the other a carafe of wine. Following them were females performing a ‘gathering berries’ dance, and males with stylised spears performing a hunting dance. Non-indigenous people then carried sufficient bread and wine for the Assembly of approximately 7,500 people.



Gifts in Coolamons

Didgeridoo was also featured in the Responsorial Psalm, *Create A New Heart* (based on Ps 51, Michael Mangan, 2004) and one of the Communion songs, *One Body In Christ* (Michael Mangan, 2012). The General Intercessions incorporated a sung response at the end of each intercession. The Assembly was led into each response by a ‘call to prayer’ consisting of two boomerangs, used as clapsticks, played by an Indigenous dancer standing at the ambo beside the Intercessor. In addition to the processional cross, Santa Teresa artists were also commissioned to dot-paint stoles for the Presider and Con-celebrant. Aboriginal-motif fabric was used to cover and hang down the



Fr Richard Leonard wearing the dot-painted stole.

sides of the very large altar before the addition of the white altar cloth.

All was ready. The haunting sounds of didgeridoo broke the silence and reverberated through the dimly-lit Anaheim Arena creating a palpable sense of excitement and anticipation. Eleven Australian high school students from Ipswich emerged from the darkness to dance their welcome to a new liturgical experience for 7,500 worshipers gathered from throughout the earth. The result of the research, collaboration and preparation was a vibrant and engaging celebration which drew an Assembly from multiple countries and cultures into 'fully conscious and active' liturgical participation.¹⁴

CHALLENGES

As required, the draft 'script' for the liturgy was submitted to the CLT for approval. Apart from some minor logistical suggestions, everything submitted gained approval and we were aware of a genuine sense of excitement among members of the CLT. The only element which raised concerns was the Smoking Ceremony. While copious incense is used at Congress liturgies, the CLT requested a 'trial run' of the Smoking Ceremony in the Arena before the event so that they could see what was involved. The trial was conducted and approval received.

The Smoking Ceremony also raised some issues in the Australian camp. As Eric would play didgeridoo during the ceremony he had to obtain permission from a local elder, firstly for the ceremony to be performed 'out of country,' and then for two of the male high school dancers to perform it. Sourcing eucalypt leaves also presented difficulties. LA-based Bianca had collected dozens of small eucalypt branches from around Southern California for the Welcome Dance and Smoking Ceremony. While these leaves were used in the dance, Eric was not satisfied with their suitability for the Smoking Ceremony. During a visit to a well-known nearby theme park, he noticed some suitable eucalypt species, and subsequently, a quantity of appropriate leaves miraculously became available on the morning of the liturgy. The final challenge for the Smoking Ceremony was when Eric noticed two American female sacristans lighting the coals in the coolamons for the Ceremony. He quietly asked Bianca, 'Who is lighting the fire?' She was astute enough to immediately recognise that Eric considered this 'men's-business' and quickly asked a nearby Australian male principal to take over the responsibility.

Congress liturgies regularly feature a number of languages, especially Spanish and Vietnamese due to the significant populations of these cultural groups in Southern California. The CLT had suggested the use of Aboriginal language as a further

¹⁴ SC, 14.

cultural integration in the Mass. Clearly, this would have been very powerful, especially in the 'Acknowledgement of Country,' the Intercessions, and in Indigenous song. Unfortunately, as is sadly the case in many urban communities, none of the Indigenous contingent had any traditional language, and so this was not possible.

A significant challenge for Anne, as Liturgy Coordinator, and for the Indigenous dancers, was the lack of access to any rehearsal time in the Arena before the actual liturgy. Incredibly tight set-up and rehearsal scheduling in the Arena before the beginning of *Congress* left no time for the dancers to get a sense of the space, get the timing of their processional dance right or even identify their beginning and ending positions. While they had rehearsed in a large empty undercover area at their school it was quite overwhelming for a group of Australian suburban high school students to minister in a huge space, on the other side of the world, to the largest crowd they had ever danced for, in a liturgy which was to be live-streamed throughout the world. Despite this logistical oversight, and after a very brief walk-through in the Arena the night before the liturgy, the students were outstanding in their professionalism, artistry and dignity in all that they did.

NON-INDIGENOUS ELEMENTS

While the Indigenous inculturation was particularly powerful, many other elements contributed to the vitality of, and participation in, the liturgy. In addition to the three 'lead musicians,' a ten piece band effectively and energetically led the musical participation of the Assembly. The all-Australian repertoire was chosen for its 'singability' and the Assembly enthusiastically sang throughout, despite the fact that very little of the music was previously known to them. The proclamation of scripture and praying of intercessions were engaging and expressive, and the use of Australian voices led the multicultural Assembly to a heightened awareness of the spoken words.

Richard Leonard's inspirational preaching and inclusive presiding style fully engaged all present and led them to unity of mind, heart, voice and purpose as together we prayed the liturgy. A great gift which Richard brought to the celebration was his setting of a time limit. *Congress* liturgies often last up to two hours or more. In our initial meeting, Richard stated that he wanted the Mass to be finished in an hour. When the liturgy was scheduled in the Arena he extended that to 75 minutes to allow for 7,500 communicants. Under Anne's logistical leadership, this time limit was achieved to the appreciative amazement of long-time *Congress* organisers and delegates.

RESPONSE AND FEEDBACK

After the liturgy, unsolicited anecdotal evidence was received from many sources including members of the CLT and of the Assembly. Official Congress Evaluation Summaries were also issued after the event. Evaluation Summaries are compiled from online or hardcopy forms voluntarily submitted by *Congress* delegates who attended the liturgy. Various liturgical aspects were rated on a scale of 1 (poor) to 4 (excellent). A single rating was derived from the raw results for each aspect and then a single total overall rating was generated. The rated aspects which featured significant Indigenous involvement were music, liturgical movement and overall. These ratings provide some basic quantitative insight into people’s response to the Indigenous elements in the liturgy.

Australian Culture Liturgy evaluations, received from approximately 10.5 percent of the estimated Assembly of 7500, were:

	Total					
	Responses	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Rating
Music	789	657	106	22	4	3.79
Liturgical	775	615	116	33	11	3.72
Homily	821	748	63	9	1	3.90
Overall	776	676	91	6	3	3.86
TOTAL	Evaluation	3.82				

These ratings were the highest received across the six concurrent liturgies celebrated that day. While they do not provide any evaluation of how, if, or why the liturgy engaged people, the ratings indicate an overwhelmingly positive response from those who submitted the evaluation form. Naturally, not all evaluations were positive and some ‘poor’ and ‘fair’ evaluations were received. It is interesting to note that of those who rated music and liturgical movement as ‘poor’ or ‘fair,’ 65 percent and 80 percent respectively increased their rating in the overall category to ‘good’ or ‘excellent.’

As no ethics approval was sought, formal interviews or surveys were not conducted. However, informal qualitative data was obtained through unsolicited verbal and written feedback from participants in the liturgy. CLT member John Flaherty commented on the seamless integration of Indigenous culture into the liturgy without any delineation between ‘their bit’ and ‘our bit.’ A powerful sign of this for musician Flaherty was that in the band, didgeridoo player, Eric, ‘was given a place

of honour, beside you [myself as Music Director].¹⁵ Flaherty was also impressed with the inclusion of didgeridoo and Indigenous dance in the non-Indigenous contemporary songs. The American liturgical MC for the liturgy reported that delegates who prepare the American *First Nations Liturgy* had taken particular note of this integration. This melding of traditional and contemporary elements has not been their normal practice and they indicated an eagerness to explore this model in their own liturgies.¹⁶ Another Congress organiser spoke of ‘tears running down my face’ during the Procession of Gifts. She interpreted the spear-carrying males as ‘protectors of these precious gifts’ rather than the intended hunting dance.¹⁷ Any good art is open to interpretation and this provided an example of multiple insights gained from a single event.



Dancers with spears

While a *Welcome to Country* or *Acknowledgement of Land* is common at official Australian celebrations and events it was completely ‘foreign’ to non-Australians who attended the liturgy. While the *Acknowledgement* was conducted before the Entrance Procession and is not part of the liturgy, many delegates spoke enthusiastically and emotionally of how powerful this was for them and suggested that they could, and should, do the same in North American celebrations. Particular phrases which seemed to resonate included an acknowledgement of ‘ancestors and descendants who are strands in the web of life,’ and a request for silence ‘to reflect on the millions of footprints that have travelled this sacred ground.’¹⁸



Welcome and Acknowledgement

A common comment from Australians was that they ‘had never felt more proud to be Australian.’ An Australian Catholic primary school principal suggested that ‘we

¹⁵ John Flaherty, Personal Communication. 15 March, 2015.

¹⁶ Michael Fike, Personal Communication. 13 March, 2015.

¹⁷ Vicki Shepp, Personal Communication, 13 March, 2015.

¹⁸ Anne Frawley-Mangan and Amy Fatiolofa, ‘Acknowledgement of Country, *Australian Culture Liturgy*, Anaheim Arena, March 13, 2015.

should be doing more of this in our liturgies back home.¹⁹ Eric was positively beaming after the Mass declaring, 'I am just so proud that so many people have had the chance to experience my culture.'²⁰ After the conclusion of the liturgy Eric and the Indigenous dancers were mobbed by enthusiastic well-wishers and spent 45 minutes posing for 'selfies' with their appreciative American 'fans.'

Noted UK Catholic educator and popular *Congress* presenter, David Wells, was visibly moved while speaking of the high level of participation, the aesthetic power of the inculturated elements and declared that, 'It just worked so well. It made me wish I was Australian!'²¹ Congress Director, Sr Edith Prendergast wrote, 'One of the hallmarks of Congress is the gathering of many cultures and the exposure to the richness of cultural traditions. We have received so many glowing comments and appreciation about the Australian liturgy. The Aboriginal dance group brought a special gift and presence to the whole Congress.'²²

Naturally not all reaction was positive. The negative responses of which I am aware are typified by Louie Verrecchio's criticism of the '*Novus Ordo*' in general and his scathing review of the 2015 *Congress* liturgies in particular. The *Australian Culture Liturgy* is specifically mentioned in the video blog, *A Masterstroke of Evil Genius*, where Verrecchio is highly critical of many things including the President's contemporary vestments, especially the '1970's era dish-towel' stoles, inculturation generally, and the didgeridoo in particular.²³ Other similar blog comments appear to mostly emanate from those who prefer to worship in the Extraordinary Form of the Tridentine Latin Mass.

CONCLUSION

Back home in Australia, five months after the celebration of the *Australian Culture Liturgy*, has provided some time and distance to reflect and to consider insights about this particular experience of liturgical inculturation.

The preparation process with the Indigenous team members was conducted with cultural sensitivity and an openness to Indigenous perspectives, suggestions and occasional vetoes. While some challenges were found in balancing the limited liturgical experience of the Indigenous team members with our lack of lived experience of Aboriginal culture and ritual. The overwhelmingly positive outcome was a testament to a collaborative approach which resulted in the 'whole being more

¹⁹ Informal Conversation. 13 March 2015

²⁰ Eric Ellis, Personal Communication. 13 March, 2015.

²¹ David Wells, Personal Communication. 13 March, 2015.

²² Sr Edith Prendergast, Personal Communication, 25 March, 2015.

²³ Louie Verrecchio, 'A Masterstroke of Evil Genius,' (March 26, 2015). Accessed on July 25, 2015. <https://harvestingthefruit.com/a-masterstroke-of-evil-genius/>

than the sum of its parts' as indigenous culture was seamlessly melded into the Roman rite.

One of the strengths of the Roman Catholic Church is its universality. A pre-eminent sign of this universality is the celebration of a common liturgy throughout the world. The 'liturgical inculturation' provisions in SC 37 - 40 appear to relate to liturgical adaptations for a particular group for use within that group, e.g. inculturation in liturgies for a primarily Indigenous community. Echoing John Paul II's 1986 call for Australian Indigenous culture to be 'joyfully received by others',²⁴ Clifton suggests that Indigenous inculturation in non-Indigenous and metropolitan parish liturgies 'could revitalise the symbols of the Church for all Catholics and renew the bond between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians.'²⁵ This project suggests that Indigenous liturgical inculturation has the potential to be efficacious far beyond a particular local, or national Church.

The experiences of participants in the *Australian Culture Liturgy* provide an insight into the 'portability' of liturgical ritual and symbol between cultures and continents. Participant feedback indicates that the power and beauty of Indigenous ritual and symbol in the *Australian Culture Liturgy* transcended its original culture. Indigenous artistic aesthetics drew the Assembly with fresh eyes, ears and hearts, more deeply into the liturgical celebration. Rather than through rigid uniformity, the universality of the Church can perhaps also be best expressed through an experience of its 'wide-spread arms,' which embrace and celebrate a diversity of liturgical expression, while still preserving 'the substantial unity of the Roman rite.'²⁶

²⁴ John Paul II, 'Address of John Paul II to the Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders.'

²⁵ Yvette Clifton, 'Joyfully Receiving the Aboriginal Church in Australia,' *Australian Journal of Liturgy* 14/1 (2014): 24.

²⁶ SC, 38.

Preaching the Word in an Aboriginal context

Angela McCarthy



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The theme of the Australian Academy of Liturgy Conference in Brisbane, 2015 was “The Word in Worship”. One of the keynote sessions, facilitated by Dr Carmel Pilcher RSJ, was presented by three Aboriginal women: Dr Christine Black (Darwin), Thelma Parker (Mt Isa) and Dr Anne Pattel-Gray (Brisbane).²⁷ During the panel discussion the three women told their stories,

which challenged those members present at the conference in many ways. The stories were rich but contained deep sadness at times because of the effect that the efforts to Christianise their families and communities had on each of their personal circumstances. In many instances difficult relationships developed throughout Australia between the various Aboriginal nations and the Church groups who wished to Christianise them and train them to live in what the colonist mentality considered to be ‘civilised’ ways. Many Australians are aware that the history of the last 200 plus years has seen great injustices perpetrated upon Aboriginal nations around Australia. While in some instances the missionary efforts were very destructive, there were also good people trying to do what they considered to be the work of God among the indigenous people where European settlements had taken place. Part of the drive to do this was their experience in other parts of the world that had been colonised and Christianised within the same social process. Many countries in the world bear both the scars and the advantages given by colonisation. The Benedictine community at New Norcia was established as part of the Christian tradition ‘to carry the comfort of the faith to the four corners of the earth’.²⁸ The results of those efforts since the middle of the 19th century have been mixed, and the reports of their endeavours are not always balanced in the view of community members. Two monks who have spent much of their lives as part of the Benedictine community of New Norcia were asked

²⁷ A transcription of that panel discussion was envisaged but technical difficulties have prevented its completion in time for this issue. It is hoped that it will be possible at a later time.

²⁸ Eugene Perez OSB, *Kalumburu: The Benedictine Mission and the Aborigines 1908-1975* (Wyndham Western Australia: Kalumburu Benedictine Mission, 1977). This was taken from the Preface written by the Hon. Sir Charles Court, Premier of Western Australia at the time of publication.

to provide their understanding of what unfolded in their experience and association with Aboriginal people and the mission of 'preaching the word'.²⁹

Fr Bernard Rooney OSB was Ecclesiastical Superior of Kalumburu from 1971 to 1980, and was Abbot of the New Norcia community from 1974 to 1980. He has spent many years working closely with the Aboriginal people in the New Norcia area forging important links to support the development of those communities. He has in recent years completed his PhD on Aboriginal culture, has published a dictionary of Nyoongar language, a book on the names of towns in Western Australia and their relationship to the Nyoongar language, and last year published a further work about local culture focussing on the life of Ned Mippy of the Nyoongar people who live in the locality of New Norcia.³⁰



Fr Bernard Rooney (left) and Fr Anscar McPhee

Fr Anscar McPhee worked in Kalumburu from 1984 until 2012. He assisted the parish priest and mission superintendent, Fr Chris Saunders (now Bishop of Broome) 'during a difficult time of strained relationships for the church, the people of

²⁹ Two interviews were recorded: Bernard Rooney OSB, 19 April 2015. and Anscar McPhee OSB, 18 April 2015.

³⁰ Bernard Rooney OSB, *The Way of the Boorna-Waangki: A Tale of Cultural Endurance* (New Norcia: Abbey Press, 2014).

Kalumburu and the Department of Aboriginal Affairs as the community struggled to become a responsible, self-determining group.³¹

New Norcia: foundations

The founders of the Monastery of New Norcia were Dom Joseph Serra and Dom Rosendo Salvado, both Benedictines from Spain.³² They were brought to the new colony of Perth by Bishop Brady in 1846. Both had found it difficult in Spain because of the suppression of religious orders in 1835 and so offered their services as missionaries to the Congregation de Propaganda Fide.³³

The new colony of Perth, Fremantle and the surrounding areas, had few Catholics, and of those there was a large proportion of Irish people.³⁴ Propaganda Fide wanted Salvado, a fluent English speaker, to be the bishop of Perth as a successor to Brady, but Salvado had no interest in such an administrative post because his concern was to settle the leadership of the Benedictine community, be separate from Perth, and concentrate solely on his work with the Aboriginal people.³⁵

New Norcia became an independent mission, free from the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Perth, in 1859 governed directly by Bishop Salvado (who became a titular bishop in 1849) and Abbot of New Norcia in 1867. He had engaged in quite a struggle to ensure that New Norcia was a monastery in its own right, not attached to any European monasteries, because the work on the land and with the Aboriginal people would be hampered by a strict monastic lifestyle.³⁶ His struggle for absolute independence came to a conclusion in March 1867 when Pope Pius IX made the New Norcia mission into an apostolic prefecture and Abbey Nullius. Therefore they belonged to no diocese and Salvado was 'Lord Abbot'.³⁷

Also on the voyage to Western Australia from Spain was Dom Martin Griver who eventually was to become bishop of Perth. He had trained as a doctor in the University of Spain while waiting to be ordained following the ban by the Spanish Government in 1835. He had taken initial vows as a Benedictine before leaving Spain but did not become a full part of the monastery, as he was needed in Perth to solve the serious financial and ecclesial problems left by Serra and Brady, which he eventually did.³⁸

³¹ Margaret Zucker, *From Patrons to Partners: A History of the Catholic Church in the Kimberley 1884-1984* (Fremantle: University of Notre Dame Australia Press, 1994), 172.

³² David Hutchison, ed. *A Town Like No Other: The Living Tradition of New Norcia* (New Norcia: New Norcia Benedictine Community, 2007).

³³ Hutchinson, *ibid.*, 34.

³⁴ There were further settlements with Catholics in Albany, Geraldton and on the routes in between.

³⁵ Odhran O'Brien, *Martin Griver: Unearthed* (Strathfield NSW: St Pauls, 2014), 161.

³⁶ The details of this ecclesial struggle are detailed in O'Brien's biography of Bishop Griver and show the complexity of the decision making process and the complications pertaining to the tyranny of distance.

³⁷ O'Brien, *Martin Griver: Unearthed*, 163.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

Griver was dedicated to all of the people, both immigrant and indigenous, and referred to the Aboriginal people as 'Australians'. He and Salvado were of great assistance to each other and corresponded often. In one such letter Griver wrote:

I wish and pray that black and white, Australians and Europeans be brought to the knowledge of the true God, and the true religion, and there be no obstacles in the way, but that every one of one us do his best to obtain that object.³⁹

In the original journey to the north, where Serra and Salvado had been advised that there were groups of aborigines camped, they were assisted in finding water by some aborigines. But in the initial phases they did not attempt to do anything other than to live off the land and learn the language of the Nyoongar people and join them in their nomadic life.⁴⁰ Serra, Salvado and the other pioneering monks faced many hardships, but their aim was to study the language and culture of the people and then eventually 'instruct them little by little in the Faith.'⁴¹ This understanding of their vocation and mission must, of course, be understood within the context of their time.

Salvado did not share the contemporary view of the European colonists that the Aboriginal people would eventually die out.⁴² His interest in the people was much deeper, and his appreciation of their culture is recorded in his letters and diary. He recognised their understanding of ownership of land, and that in his travels through their land he was being given a right of passage.⁴³ Eventually Salvado and his fellow Benedictines established schools and developed the monastery settlement to include houses for Aboriginal families with the Aboriginal people working alongside the monks on the land. This attitude of respect, interest and support continued throughout the development of New Norcia as an Aboriginal mission. In 1892 there were 134 boys being educated in the school but after the Forrest government reduced subsidies to the missions those numbers decreased, and by the time Salvado died (1900) and Abbot Torres took over, the policy began to change, and provision was made for schools for children of European descent as well. However, in 1904 when a Royal Commissioner inquired about the New Norcia Mission, he found it to be 'in flourishing condition, doing excellent work, and worthy of government support.'⁴⁴ Once Torres succeeded Salvado as Abbot, he also began to look outside the immediate area and began a mission at Kalumburu.

³⁹ O'Brien, *ibid.*, 74.

⁴⁰ Hutchison, *A Town Like No Other: The Living Tradition of New Norcia*, 39.

⁴¹ Hutchison *ibid.*, 41.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 59.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 59-61.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 64.

Pago and Kalumburu: mission moves north

Kalumburu is in the most northern part of Western Australia, the most northern permanent settlement. The new mission was begun at the request of a plenary Council of the Bishops of Sydney in 1905.⁴⁵ Abbot Torres charted the northern coastline in a sailing boat, with the assistance of Fr Nicholas de Emo, in order to determine where to put the mission settlement. For its first thirty years it was on a beach in Napier Broome Bay, where there was water and the possibilities of going further inland by way of the Drysdale River.⁴⁶

The initial settlement included the monastery, church and store house as well as wells and garden, but was in constant threat of attack from the local Aboriginal population on whose land they had established themselves. When the attack did come, two of the monks were badly injured but one of the aborigines from Beagle Bay, who had travelled with them to the new settlement, fired a shotgun into the air and ended the violence. Since there was no pay-back from the monks, the Aboriginal people began to trust the monks and would leave their aged members at the mission when necessary: a 'lovely relationship developed.'⁴⁷

The Aboriginal community had been ravaged by disease brought by the pearlers who visited the area and the health of the community, particularly their sexual health, was very poor. The monks had considered that they were dealing with a dying group of people because there were only 700 people within approximately 1000 square miles, and only 15 of them were under 21 years of age.⁴⁸ The first baby (Mary Tudananga, later Pandilo) was born on the mission in 1918 as the health of the community improved with the support and instruction of the monks.⁴⁹ The monks offered protection and shelter to women for as long as possible, but they could not interfere with tribal relationships.⁵⁰

Eventually it became obvious that the original settlement, called Pago, was not going to be sufficient for the needs of the mission. In 1931 inspections of other possible sites began and the new site of Kalumburu was chosen, and by November 1932 the first house for Aboriginal workers was completed.⁵¹ Kalumburu continued to grow and thrive, and in 1935 they had twenty two acres under cultivation: peanuts, beans, millet, rice watermelons and vegetables.⁵² The need of the monks, and the three missionary sisters who joined them in 1931, was to be self-sufficient in their isolation,

⁴⁵ Anscar McPhee OSB, *Pago-Kalumburu: An Historical Sketch* (New Norcia: New Norcia Monastery Publications), 3.

⁴⁶ Perez OSB, *Kalumburu: The Benedictine Mission and the Aborigines 1908-1975*, 3.

⁴⁷ McPhee OSB, *Pago-Kalumburu: An Historical Sketch*, 3.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Perez OSB, *Kalumburu: The Benedictine Mission and the Aborigines 1908-1975*, 85.

⁵¹ Perez ibid

⁵² Perez OSB, *Kalumburu: The Benedictine Mission and the Aborigines 1908-1975*, 92-93.

but also to work with the Aboriginal people who wished to be involved and baptising them eventually when they wished to do so. At no time was there forced involvement of Aboriginal people, and their growth as a community is one of constant change in those who wished to have contact, and with those who remained in the bush in their cultural manner. Movement between the people who lived in the bush and those who lived in the mission was constant; food was only supplied in full rations when they completed sufficient work in the gardens. The monks were aware, and lamented the fact, that for some of the aborigines being Christian meant getting tobacco.⁵³ The introduction of tobacco to the Aboriginal community can be viewed as one of the destructive elements of colonisation.

As Kalumburu flourished Pago diminished, but was still the only port through which all the necessary materials and communications were received. However, a principal concern of the missionaries was the survival of the people. It was recorded in the mission diary in 1939 that over the previous seven years ‘70 deaths have been registered against 16 births of which only 11 are alive today.’⁵⁴ Influenza and other introduced diseases, including leprosy, had ravaged the population. The removal of those suffering leprosy by the police (often in chains to prevent them running away) is a difficult memory.

Destruction and new beginning

World War II brought great changes to the mission, as northern Australia was subject to bombing by the Japanese following the attack on Pearl Harbour. The missionaries did everything that was required by defence personnel, as the Kalumburu mission became strategically important for information for the defence of the north of Australia.⁵⁵ This included runways for air traffic and well-resourced radio communication and meteorological equipment. The missionaries kept, as was their custom, diaries that detail the important events of the time, and so considerable detail is recorded.⁵⁶

On 27 September 1943 the Kalumburu mission was completely destroyed by Japanese bombers (as it had an airfield) and Fr Thomas, the Superintendent of the mission, was killed along with a number of Aboriginal people.⁵⁷ The destroyed mission could not support the numbers it had before, so many aborigines necessarily returned to the bush, and the missionaries had to live in the bush for some time until peace was achieved. The military authorities recognised the value of the mission to the war effort

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 91.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 100.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 103.

⁵⁶ *Kalumburu War Diary* (Perth Western Australia: Artlook Books, 1981). This book is a compilation of the materials available through the diaries.

⁵⁷ *Kalumburu: The Benedictine Mission and the Aborigines 1908-1975*, 109.

and brought great abundance towards the reconstruction of the mission, including supplies of food and building materials.⁵⁸ This material support was of benefit to the mission, but there were deeper concerns.

The monks' and missionary sisters' continual concern was the survival of the Aboriginal people in the district. Violent death and other destructive behaviours among them was constant, and the ravages to their health by introduced diseases as well as the effects of the war caused great concern. Since food was often in short supply, the people had to move between bush life and mission life, even those who were Christian, so there was not the ideal continuity (from the perspective of the missionaries) in faith practice or education.⁵⁹

Change and renewal

Considering the good intentions of the missionary people, and contrasting that with the sadness of so many stories of damage done to Aboriginal nations by those who wished to Christianise them, the drive to preach the word of God to all peoples will always be surrounded by conflicting arguments. Following the war however, the Kalumburu mission began to flourish. It was entirely rebuilt and included a two-storey convent. Fr Seraphim Sanz became the new superintendent and the following two decades saw radical expansion and many settling into the mission life. Fr Sanz acquired Brahman cattle from Queensland, Kimberley stock from Gibb River and Arab horses. A mustering team was developed and in the off season the Aboriginal horsemen were taught carpentry to develop more housing for the mission.⁶⁰ There was a school for the children and a good diet for all through the success of the farm so the health of the mission people improved.

With the changes in the whole Australian Aboriginal scene from the 1960s, radical change was demanded and the attitude was that these changes be introduced rapidly. Fr Sanz was endeavouring to teach the mission people self-governance skills, but the Department for Aboriginal Affairs and the Kimberley Land Council, along with support from others, demanded that the people have independence from all church agencies.⁶¹ Fr Sanz saw this as moving too quickly but he returned to New Norcia in 1981 (where he worked on saving the P'la language with the assistance of Dolores Cheinmora, an enduring achievement for the Kalumburu people)⁶² and Bishop John Jobst of Broome granted independence. The mission now became the focus of change. There was an awareness of the contribution of the missionaries and

⁵⁸ Ibid., 120.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 12.

⁶⁰ McPhee OSB, *Pago-Kalumburu: An Historical Sketch*, 5.

⁶¹ Ibid., 6.

⁶² Ibid.

the danger of a vacuum if change was applied too quickly. The missionaries were credited with the survival of the Aboriginal population in some areas.⁶³ However, major changes happened, and with government resources the Kalumburu community continued to develop and was administered by the Diocese of Broome in its ecclesial matters. One monk remained, however, and became parish priest, Fr Anscar McPhee. He recently discussed in an interview his consideration of this time and the action of the Church during this period.⁶⁴

This paper cannot describe the complexity of the mission activity and its relationship with the Aboriginal people in a full and complete way. That would need a very large book. What the monks perceived was a dying race, and so they offered the Aboriginal people a different way of living if they desired change and saw value in the Christian way of life. Some did so and joined the missionary way of life. Others did not, and remained bush people. The mission particularly offered protection to the women.

Preaching the Word in an Aboriginal context: examples from life

Fr Anscar was the last monk to live at Kalumburu and was there for 28 years. When questioned about the means of ‘preaching the word’ he said that ‘preaching’ is not the appropriate word. The traditional form of church worship was important to the missionaries and remained part of their constant activities, but it was not as important to the aborigines. He gave an example.

I learned through my long discussions with the old people that in former times, pre-mission days, the various clans would meet together for Corroboree and since there were frequently long felt grievances between them they would begin the ceremonies with the Dedenghe ritual. This involved taking a large mother-of-pearl shell (the Dedenghe), and holding it up above eye level to gaze at it as a declaration of peace between the clans for the time of the corroboree. With the consent of the old people, I acquired such a mother-of-pearl shell and fixed in the centre of it the figure of Jesus from a crucifix. On Good Friday then at the conclusion of the Stations of the Cross when we laid our Lord to rest amongst our dead, whilst I proceeded to bless all the graves, the community members would hold up the mother-of-pearl shell, look at Jesus then kiss him or peace among families. The people loved this.⁶⁵

Another incident that illustrates the way in which Fr Anscar preached the word involved the sad case of a vulnerable young girl who was born at Kalumburu. In her

⁶³ This acknowledgement was contained in an address by the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs in the opening address of the National Conference held in Adelaide in March, 1975. Perez OSB, *Kalumburu: The Benedictine Mission and the Aborigines 1908-1975*, 148.

⁶⁴ Personal communication: McPhee OSB.

⁶⁵ Personal communication: McPhee OSB.

later teenage years she had a boyfriend who introduced her to drugs and to whom she also became pregnant. The people at Kalumburu were very concerned for her welfare and that of her baby, and convinced her to go to one of the 'dry out' centres. While she was there her boyfriend put his head over the fence and enticed her to leave with him. She did, but then had a cardiac arrest. The medical staff revived her three times but she died. The family were rightfully angry at this distressing event. Fr Anscar was preparing to do her funeral mass, but there was a misunderstanding with the authorities, and no one had communicated with the undertakers to determine what time this would take place, so the funeral was delayed. Fr Anscar noted that this was not unusual in the far north. However, a policeman turned up with the boyfriend who had insisted on attending the funeral, yet the real danger was that the family would kill him. Since the funeral was now delayed until the afternoon, Fr Anscar took the time to visit every member of the girl's family and impress upon them the teaching of Jesus in regard to forgiveness. By taking the word of Jesus to them in this personal way, they heard it, they understood, and the funeral proceeded without incident.

Fr Anscar extended his cross cultural use of Aboriginal customs into the community's liturgical space.

I discovered that there were trees in the bush around Kalumburu that carried the most wonderful burls (growth lumps on the trees). I was told that these trees, known as the Djoan tree, were wrapped in a very nutritious bark. The old people would strip the bark and soak it in water for some time then drain off the water which they would then carry in a mainbun, a conch shell, on a journey, finding energy to keep going from that special water. What better then, to set up in the church a pulpit, beautiful burl and all, where the spiritually nourishing word of God is proclaimed. Based on the same concept we set up a pillar under the tabernacle another under our Lady and finally one under St Benedict. This painting of St Benedict was a tryptic. The great man was depicted in the centre and the story on both sides of the miraculous conversion of Benedict Balben, to whom St Benedict appeared far out in the bush telling him to ask the missionaries for the baptismal water. Thanks to that story many other old people came looking for the baptismal water.⁶⁶

Another member of the New Norcia community who has been closely involved with the Aboriginal people is Fr Bernard Rooney. For some years he was the Abbot and so from 1971 to 1980 he was the Ecclesiastical Superior of Kalumburu.⁶⁷ In 1984 the Catholic Parish of Moora was in the throes of serious issues between the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities.⁶⁸ Fr Bernard was asked by Archbishop William

⁶⁶ Personal communication: McPhee OSB.

⁶⁷ Personal communication: Rooney OSB.

⁶⁸ *The Way of the Boorna-Waangki: A Tale of Cultural Endurance*, 181.

Foley to take the position of parish priest so that his experience could be brought to bear on a very difficult situation. Among the Aborigines at Moora there were many who had spent some of their childhood years in New Norcia for their schooling. Fr Bernard was therefore beginning from a position of trust. Also in the community was Ned Mippy, who features in Fr Bernard's book, *The Way of the Boorna-Waangki: A Tale of Cultural Endurance*.⁶⁹

Ned and Fr Bernard worked closely as a team and so their effectiveness began immediately. As Fr Rooney said to Ned: 'I'd be no good without you Koorda, and you'd be no good without me.'⁷⁰ They worked together to gain the trust of the community and to find out the underlying causes of the difficulties that were erupting in the town of Moora. During an interview Fr Rooney said: 'The religious instruction or any kind of contact with Aboriginal people is always personal. They relate to you. If they don't relate to you then you can forget it.' Fr Bernard had already found this important aspect of communication in his work with the Kalumburu mission and the work with the Aboriginal population of New Norcia.

Parish priests ask about how it was successful in Moora and what is the answer to the problem with that? There isn't any. The answer is you. You have to go around, make contact, know them all, show them that you love them and their children. Know their relationships, know who their uncles and aunties are, you know who their grandparents are, if they are in the town or somewhere else. You just get into their culture because it's a different culture from ours. It might seem the same but it is different. They have their own way of looking at things.⁷¹

Fr Bernard had also learned that the elders who tried to take initiatives to handle problems were often hampered by their own alliances within their extended families, and so could not be seen as neutral. Ned's neutrality came from having Fr Bernard at his side, while Fr Bernard's position as an outsider brought strength to the relationship because of his external relationships with the town's people and the wider community, including the Church.

The Yued community in Moora had various kinds of gatherings, but since Ned had an unconditional and lifelong commitment against alcohol, the gathering of the community that would build problem-solving relationships had to be alcohol-free. Various other government and local social workers knew that any initiative also had to come from the people themselves if it was to be effective.⁷² Fr Bernard felt that a

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 182. Koorda means friend or mate.

⁷¹ Interview with Fr Bernard.

⁷² Rooney OSB, *The Way of the Boorna-Waangki: A Tale of Cultural Endurance*, 185.

social program would be something that would work, and since Ned was insistent that one of the reasons that the white people did not understand the Yued community was because they did not sit down with them, eye to eye.⁷³ They decided on a Mass in the grounds of the church on a Sunday night once a month. Ned and Fr Bernard cleared a section of the grounds that was bounded by some virgin bush, then Ned piled some of the Nyoongar children into the ute and 'went bush' to collect what was needed to make *maya-maya* huts in the traditional manner. A few did not approve of using the traditional ways as they felt shame when faced with their former dwellings and life style, but Ned was not deterred.⁷⁴ The first Mass was held on 14th October 1984 and around a dozen people attended. It was alcohol-free and followed by a barbecue which was assisted by the Sisters of St Joseph.

Fr Bernard insisted that preaching the word in a church building was not going to be effective with the community. That is not a place where the Yued people would feel at all comfortable, hence the eventual popularity of the outdoor gathering near the *maya-maya*. The gatherings proved popular and at times 70 people would attend.

Ned took great delight in gathering youths (with petrol money 'gathered' from Fr Bernard) and heading out into the bush with a rifle to bring back fresh kangaroo or emu meat which would then be cooked in the traditional manner.⁷⁵

Over time the issues at the heart of the community's problems became evident. Racial discrimination and the associated difficulties with the education system that ignored the needs of Aboriginal education, alcohol and associated behaviours, relations with the local police, lack of local government support in decision making, and the biggest problem of all, unemployment. Once the problems had been named, progress was made in forming and re-forming positive relationships to change the whole attitude of both groups within the town of Moora. The full story of these changes and the resultant benefits are in Fr Bernard's book.

Fr Bernard's approach to preaching the word is bound up in his understanding of culture. As he emphasised in the interview: 'Culture is not just things you do, it is a whole mentality. Culture really is difference. We are not the same, we have our own way and we are going to stick to that way.' By valuing the culture on both sides he was able to draw together the needs of the community through a social program centred on the liturgy alongside traditional tucker and therefore find a way through the difficulties.

⁷³ Ibid., 186.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 187.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 188.

Conclusion

In this paper it is not possible to give the complexities of the nature of all the mission activities or the Benedictines' detailed observations of the culture of the Aboriginal people, but the experience of Fr Anscar and Fr Bernard in the missionary activity in New Norcia and Kalumburu offers an example of sincere and valued efforts for the Aboriginal nations with whom they came in contact.

New Norcia still has resident Aboriginal people, two of them employees, living in the Aboriginal housing precinct to the north of the township. All the schools are closed and are now used for accommodation for the many who come to stay in the monastery town: school groups for retreats and music camps, other educational groups, conferences. However, strong ties remain with Aboriginal families through the care and support of the monks. Ben Taylor, an Aboriginal elder whom I have met on a number of occasions and who is often requested to officially welcome people to his land, is from New Norcia. He still has strong links with the Benedictine community as do other members of his family.

With over 100 years of experience among the Aboriginal people of New Norcia and Kalumburu, the Benedictine monks and their associates have, and continue to have, a valued relationship with two Aboriginal nations and have provided means of preservation of language and culture that is of great value to the history of this land and its people.

Harvest Thanksgiving and the Photography of Grace

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Harvest Thanksgiving rests at the junction of liturgy, nature and memory. From the late-nineteenth century it was a major event on Nonconformist church calendars, drawing crowds well beyond regular attendance. By the 1980s it was viewed with nostalgia: a fondly remembered icon of a rural religious past.⁷⁶ Yet it was the Nonconformist churches' uneasy relationship with icons, visual display and imagery of all sorts that made the spectacular displays of fruit and vegetables associated with Harvest Thanksgiving so memorable, so marvellously out of the ordinary. Each autumn, in chapels normally stripped bare, the laity constructed crosses out of cauliflowers and hearts of oranges. Balancing fears of idolatry and kitsch, the people took snapshots of a parsnip moon and stars. Connecting deeply with vocation and place, sugar cane towered over pulpits in Queensland and an entire apple tree was cut from the earth and brought, laden with fruit, to a chapel in Victoria. Displays could take days to construct and then dismantle. Entire weekends of special events were sometimes scheduled. On Sunday morning the people sang "Come Ye Thankful People, Come", "Scatter Seeds of Kindness", and "For the Beauty of the Earth"⁷⁷ Choirs performed. Prayers were offered. Photographs were taken and treasured. These snapshots offer a glimpse into a rich and peculiar world of food and display that is at once consonant and dissonant with



Bayswater Church of Christ, Vic., Red Delicious apple cross, 1964. Photo by Norma Clinton.

⁷⁶ Timothy Gorringer, *Harvest: Food, Farming and the Churches* (London: SPCK, 2006), xi.

⁷⁷ Order of service, Bayswater Church of Christ, 28th March 1965; Taree Corps of Salvation Army, *The Northern Champion*, 27 Feb 1932, 6; Order of service, Bayswater Church of Christ, (n.d) 1967.

Nonconformity's professed and assumed theological stances on the use of imagery. In this time of celebration and thanksgiving, of spectacle and transformation, how were Nonconformist prohibitions on display, materiality and excess so extravagantly overcome? How was the divide between the sacred and profane so colourfully rearranged? This article explores the history of Harvest Thanksgiving in Nonconformist churches in Australia through the medium of photography.⁷⁸ Examining what the people sought to preserve on film, it seeks to understand what Harvest Thanksgiving meant in the faith lives of the people.

There is a little historical scholarship that touches on Harvest Thanksgiving. James Beattie describes the rich appreciation of nature's bounty that was part of the Wesleyan Church's 1892 Harvest Festival in Tapanui in New Zealand's rural south and the widespread adoption of harvest festivals by the Calvinist Presbyterians who had, until the early-twentieth century, resisted such materiality.⁷⁹ Working largely from contemporary news reports, Alison Clarke notes Wesleyan concerns about religious innovation in 1879 and the modesty of nineteenth-century Presbyterian Harvest Thanksgiving days which were appointed to be held in Otago, New Zealand, from the 1860s. She also observes the importance of the theology of Providence in making Harvest a Christian event despite the tenuous correlation between the success of annual crops and the sporadic observance of Thanksgiving.⁸⁰ Evidently the people celebrated the harvest even when Providence left them hungry. Were they especially gracious and thankful people, or keen to appease their God in the hope of a better crop next year, or were they celebrating something more than divine benevolence? In similar vein, Harvest Thanksgiving photographs strongly suggest that the event resonated with the people as more than a response to Providence.

British historians note that the annual practice originated with mid-nineteenth century Anglican clerics who sought to rescue their drunk and unruly parishioners by casting the popular rural celebration of Home Harvest within Providence's Christian theological framework.⁸¹ Having reframed Harvest Home as Harvest Thanksgiving and moved it into the church, many clerics further objected to the lower classes' whole-hearted engagement with Harvest (and Christmas and Easter) and their corresponding lack of attendance at the doctrinally important days of Ascension

⁷⁸ *Permission for reprinting of all sources has been obtained by the author.*

⁷⁹ James Beattie, 'Empire, Environment and Religion: God and the Natural World in Nineteenth-Century New Zealand', *Environment and History* 13 (2007), 426-427.

⁸⁰ Alison Clarke, 'Feasts and Fasts: Holidays, Religion and Ethnicity in Nineteenth-Century Otago' (Unpublished thesis, University of Otago, 2003), 184-211.

⁸¹ Owen Chadwick, *The Victorian Church* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1970), 517; F.L. Cross, eds., *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 3rd edition edited by E. A. Livingstone (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 742;

and Epiphany.⁸² Such scholarship reads the argument as an issue of class. This misses the theological point. Providence was a doctrinal overlay to an earthy celebration of humanity's intimate relationship with God through Creation. Evidently many people chose not to come to church when it was time to celebrate Christ's divinity: the focus of Epiphany and Ascension. But they turned up in droves to celebrate His humanity as a newborn babe and a 'Man of Sorrows.' In the same way, Harvest Thanksgiving was about embodied faith. It belonged to the people rather than the theologians. This experience of embodied faith was remembered by the people through the material reminder that is photography.

If theological historians seem to have given little attention to Harvest Thanksgiving, denominational historians have given even less. The practice was so ordinary, so theologically insignificant and uncontentious, that it rated little or no mention in the various traditions' history books for lay readers. Denominational history has so often been concerned with the distinctive and the identity-defining, it has overlooked the religious events that the people most loved and attended.⁸³ Similarly, Nonconformist historiography in Australia has largely been concerned with ecclesiology and church-state relations, overlooking the peculiar mixture of iconophobia and Harvest display that was uniquely shared by Nonconformist churches.

That Harvest Thanksgiving has not drawn the attention of social and cultural historians is more surprising, as the hugely popular annual event belonged not to the preachers but to the Christian people. It was the people's practice, a yearly acknowledgement of their spiritual vocation as stewards of the earth. At Kingaroy in southern Queensland locally grown sugarcane, peanuts and pumpkin dominated both the working week and the Harvest Thanksgiving. At Tatura Methodist church in fertile north-central Victoria it was all fruit, flowers and the lush foliage that grew so readily in the region. In South Australia's Mount Gambier cereals filled the Salvation Army citadel, both in sheaves and baked into loaves arranged around a bass drum. The link between regional rural



Salvation Army Citadel, Mount Gambier, S.A., 1898. The model house and pasture in the centre of the display make clear the ideal rural life. Photo source: State Library of South Australia, B 19057.

⁸² Jeffrey Cox, *The English Churches in a Secular Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 103; James Obelkevich, *Religion and Rural Society: South Lindsey, 1825-1875* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), 158-161; Simon J.D. Green, *Religion in the Age of Decline: Organisation and Experience in Industrial Yorkshire, 1870-1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 337.

⁸³ *Port Lincoln Times*, 19 Feb 1932, 1; Gorringe, *Harvest*, xi.

work and ritual thanksgiving for the product of that labour was unmistakable.

Ministers were regularly required to preach on the topic of Harvest Thanksgiving and generously found scriptural imprimatur for this new practice within Christian worship. Providence was one popular theme⁸⁴ but other sermons, like that of Baptist minister, Mr McDonald who preached on Psalm 23:5, emphasised the special grace extended to God's people.⁸⁵ Ministers were attentive to the need to guide their flocks away from nature-worship, but the fruity creation of once condemned graven images often escaped theologically-minded condemnation as the pastors looked to shepherd their people. In this gracious light, a cross from cauliflowers was not seen as utterly profane despite Nonconformity being steeped in iconophobic tradition. Evidently it sat comfortably with the faithful, and was accepted by their pastors. More than that, it was an occasion worth photographing.



Cauliflower cross from unknown Church of Christ, c.1930-1960. Private collection.

The rising availability of amateur photography at the turn of the twentieth century coincided with the widespread adoption of Harvest Thanksgiving among Nonconformists. While the sanctity of baptism, Lord's Supper and regular church services were hardly ever disturbed by the camera's lens, recent innovations in worship such as Sunday School anniversaries and Harvest Thanksgiving Festivals were often photographed before or after the service. Setting up the display on Saturday allowed for photography outside the sacred hours of the worship service, although photos from Williamstown, South Australia, appear to have been taken during the service. The laity's sense of ownership and the material richness of these events may have been further enticements to the lens. The coming together of new camera technology and new liturgical event made for a remarkable but unofficial historical record.

Just as Harvest Thanksgiving displays belonged not to the preachers but to the laity, the photographs typically do not belong to the church or its public record but to individuals. The images were rarely published or displayed.⁸⁶ Occasionally they were reprinted in congregational histories as a nostalgic novelty from time long past. But, treasured by individuals, most photographs remained in family albums alongside other snapshots taken at church: weddings, social nights, picnics, and gatherings at

⁸⁴ Taree Corps of Salvation Army, *The Northern Champion*, 27 Feb 1932, 6.

⁸⁵ Hugh McDonald, *Beulah Standard and Mallee and Wimmera Advertiser*, 8 March 1917, 2.

⁸⁶ I am indebted to those who shared their long treasured photo collections with me during the last ten years of collecting such images.

church anniversaries. Such social images featured the congregation as an extension of family that fitted easily in the family album. However, Harvest Thanksgiving photos were highly selective about allowing people within the frame. These images sought to preserve a spiritual memory, an aesthetic and material faith experience that was about more than vegetables. As David Morgan argues, ‘photography captures the elusive reality of things.’⁸⁷

In the heyday of Harvest Thanksgiving religious imagery was otherwise largely absent from most Nonconformist chapels. The Nonconformist aesthetic, with its well-developed ‘suspicion of the visual imagination,’⁸⁸ was characterised by usefulness, virtue, and the presence of words both preached and sung. Methodist, Baptist and Churches of Christ places of worship were often bare but for hymn numbers. Whitewash was arguably more common than the cross. Nonconformity’s persistent iconophobia referenced scriptural warnings against graven images and feared the dissolute ‘distraction of sensuality.’⁸⁹ Importantly for the study of Harvest Thanksgiving displays, there were exceptions. Exploration of these exceptions allows insight into Harvest Thanksgiving’s glorious visual transgression.

The display of words, however artful, was regularly permitted in Nonconformist chapels and in Harvest displays. Biblical texts were often painted at the back of baptisteries and chancels as if on colourful unfurled scrolls.⁹⁰ ‘Worship Him in the beauty of holiness’, it read behind the pulpit in the Tatura Methodist Chapel, Victoria. The same message greeted worshippers each week at the Kingaroy Church of Christ, Queensland. There was no need to add scriptural attribution, as the congregation would have recognised Psalm 29:2. Although a variety of verses were used, Psalm 29:2 was popular in chapels across the country. To the inheritors of the Holiness Movement’s emphasis on sinlessness, the ‘beauty of holiness’ exhorted worshippers to live a sinless life. However, the phrase also signified that ‘beauty’ was there to be seen, and there was physical beauty in the portrayal of the words. It is possible to read the ‘beauty of holiness’ as evidence of a spiritual aesthetic beyond righteous living. The stylised lettering



Tatura Methodist Church, c.1900. Note that the church was still using the term ‘Harvest Home’ at this time. Source: Tatura Irrigation and World War II Camps Museum, Image 100049.

⁸⁷ David Morgan, *The Sacred Gaze: Religious Visual Culture in Theory and Practice* (Berkeley: University of California, 2005), 78.

⁸⁸ John Dillenberger, *The Visual Arts and Christianity in America* (Chico: Scholars Press, 1984), 11.

⁸⁹ Don E. Saliers, “Liturgical Aesthetics: The Travail of Christian Worship,” in *Arts, Theology and the Church: New Intersections*, ed. Kimberly Vrudny and Wilson Yates (Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press, 2005), 182.

⁹⁰ Seasoltz, *A Sense of the Sacred: Theological Foundation of Christian Architecture and Art* (New York: Continuum, 2005), 202.

betrayed Nonconformity's forbidding of icons for, in its presentation as a scroll or banner, the decorative text itself performed the role of icon: window to the divine. Just as bibles were often photographed in the hands of the faithful to show the piety of the holder, so the presence of painted scrolls conveyed that the congregation were pious people in touch with the ancient wisdom of the scriptures. They also affirmed humanity's over-riding visual impulse⁹¹ and pointed toward the authority on which the Word is based: the eyewitness. Despite Protestantism's alleged emphasis on hearing the Word, seeing was believing.

Bible verses were frequently used within Harvest displays, making clear the connection between scripture and vegetables. Significantly, Harvest Thanksgiving photographs were careful always to include the words within the frame. In 1956 at the Congregational Church in Ipswich, Queensland, a fabric banner reading "The Earth is the Lord's" was provided as a backdrop to the display, justifying the visual artistry with a Psalm. At Bayswater Church of Christ, Victoria, in 1968, a banner beside the display read '... show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed' (2 Tim 2:15). Not only was the workman 'approved', but the art too. Through words, art could be authorised. In like manner, images for Sunday School children were welcomed as long as those images remained subordinate to the accompanying text, ensuring accurate decoding.⁹² Similarly, travelling evangelists carried canvas charts composed of image and text in order to better communicate with the unsaved. The Word clarified the meaning of images and rescued them from Nonconformist concerns over mystery and superstition.

From the mid-nineteenth century the Word also accompanied visions of the natural landscape. In this way, nature became another exception to iconophobia, provided that a line was drawn between the teaching of God's grandeur through the medium of nature and the worship of nature itself. This Romantic idea was reflected in the panoramic landscapes of the time. Christ's own teachings were also seen as having been materially located in the visible beauty of the natural world. Aaron Maston, a



Ipswich Congregational Church, 1956.
Source: Whitehead Studios, Picture Ipswich,
Ipswich City Council.

⁹¹ Saliers, "Liturgical Aesthetics," 188.

⁹² Morgan, *Sacred Gaze*, 89; Colleen McDannell, *Material Christianity: Religion and Popular Culture in America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 8-9.

Melbourne-based Churches of Christ evangelist, explained:

Jesus of Nazareth... was one of nature's true noblemen. He practically spent His life in the fields and on the mountain's side, and when He spoke to men of the stirring truths of immortality, He drew from the great storehouse of nature's wonders, and hence is universally acknowledged the world's great teacher, not only for what He taught, but the way He taught it.⁹³

The observation that there was something profound and elemental about Jesus' educative relationship with nature was widely shared at the time.⁹⁴ Nature was interpreted as a witness to God's glory when aided by the sanctifying words of the New Testament. The Reverend Robert Williams took this a step further when he preached at the Lawrence Vale Methodist Church, Tasmania, in 1918: 'The harvest is primarily the gift of God, in that "He gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons" [Acts 14:17], and it is a silent yet forceful witness both to His wisdom and goodness. If we had no revelation, nature would still speak to man of God.'⁹⁵ The natural world had a place in the people's spirituality. It also featured in their chapels. At Sunday School Anniversaries photographs were taken of children holding bouquets. Flower arrangements were a weekly presence in churches and a frequent focus of annual Harvest displays. Their inclusion, despite not being an edible product of the harvest, strongly suggests that Harvest Thanksgiving was not merely about bountiful food but about God's beautiful natural world. In photographs of the Harvest Thanksgiving at Tumby Bay Church of Christ on the southern Eyre Peninsula, South Australia, vases of flowers drew the eye, and, at Williamstown, foliage hung from the chapel's normally unadorned ceiling supports. Biblical foliage was prominent in photographs too, with palm fronds at Beulah Park and Ipswich and cornstalks at Doncaster.



Port Lincoln Baptist Church, 1931.
Source: State Library of South Australia, B71790/313.

⁹³ A.B. Maston, *Australasian Christian Standard*, 1 July 1892, 197.

⁹⁴ For example, William Thomson, 'Preface' to *The Land and the Book*, cited in John Davis, *The Landscape of Belief: Encountering the Holy Land in Nineteenth-Century American Art and Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 47; Morgan, *Sacred Gaze*, 90; H. Paul Santmire and John B Cobb, 'The World of Nature According to the Protestant Tradition', in *The Oxford Handbook of Religion and Ecology*, edited by Roger S. Gottlieb (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 127.

⁹⁵ *The Examiner* (Launceston), 29 April 1918, 8.

Harvest Thanksgiving photographs suggest an appreciation of decorous arrangement. The displays were orderly and any lingering suspicions of spiritual and material disarray or excess could be laid to rest. For all the odd assortments of local produce, the photos reveal evidence of balanced, even symmetrical, arrangement. The emphasis on tasteful display was near universal in newspaper reports. The *Wellington Times* in New South Wales reported that the Baptist chapel had, 'a very fine display of fruit and vegetables very tastefully set out about the rostrum'.⁹⁶ Likewise, the *Port Lincoln Times* described the scene at the Methodist chapel, writing, "The front of the church was tastefully decorated with fruit, vegetables, cereals and flowers."⁹⁷ The same might have been said for Port Lincoln's Baptist Church with its neat row of sheaves standing to attention. The emphasis on tasteful display suggested that gaudiness and lack of restraint, rather than the worship of graven images, might have been the greatest threats.

Photographs taken in rural churches illustrate the extent to which religious aesthetics and vocation were tied together. In fruit-growing areas the same people who prepared Harvest Thanksgiving displays spent their working lives preparing produce to look its best in the market. At Bayswater, Victoria, in the mid-twentieth century apples and pears were packed on the orchards in 'flats', a wooden case used for market, measuring approximately 50



Bayswater Church of Christ, Vic., 1960.
Photo by Norma Clinton. Source: Private collection

x 75cm and holding two layers of fruit. Orchardists almost never photographed the fruit in their packing sheds. But in the chapel at the Bayswater Church of Christ the fruit was transformed. The flats were balanced on temporary frames and further fruit was added to 'finish' the display and conceal joins between the cases. It was then that the fruit was photographed. These professionally produced exhibits testified to Harvest Thanksgiving's integration into the working (and artistic) lives of the worshippers in this rural community. The practice of photography suggests that the fruit in the chapel was altered in the eyes of the congregation.

Given the skill of the fruit packers, it was a small step to extend their Harvest Thanksgiving displays to include pictorial representation. The results were spectacular, startling and irresistible to photographers. In 1960 the local orchardists in Bayswater dispensed with displaying produce on tables and used their skills as fruit

⁹⁶ *Wellington Times* (New South Wales), 18 March 1943, 8.

⁹⁷ *Port Lincoln Times*, 19 Feb 1932, 1.

packers to produce images in apples and pears. A radiating cross was created from Red Delicious, Golden Delicious and Granny Smith apples and brown Bartlett and green Williams pears, all of which were grown on the members' orchards at the time. The rural congregation produced similar designs in the years to follow.

In a series of photographs from Oakleigh Church of Christ in the suburbs of Melbourne an emphasis on fruit and vegetable images is also evident. It developed with the influential involvement of a woodwork and graphic design teacher and craftsmen from the congregation. Vocation again played a role in imagery's acceptability, and its celebration. The men at Oakleigh worked on themed Thanksgiving displays throughout the 1970s and 80s, using frames built for the purpose and lettering made using coloured card, pasted onto a white board which was re-used each year. Breaking with convention, those who assisted putting the display together were confidently photographed beside their creations and in their Sunday suits. In one display the Australian Churches of Christ are represented as a Red Delicious apple cross and the mission in the New Hebrides and Papua New Guinea were depicted as circular targets made of oranges, Granny Smiths and Red Delicious apples. In the early 1980s the congregation's church planting efforts were represented in the form of a tree made of potatoes with five branches representing the five congregations it had helped to establish. In another photo a heart of oranges proclaims 'God's Good Gifts'. However, it is the 1985 photo that most surprises. Under a sign reading 'Thou Crownest the Years with Goodness' (Psalm 65:11) are the words, '150 Years Growing Together'. It refers to the state of Victoria's 150th anniversary and the central design depicts the logo used by the state in publicising civic events. Mixing imagery derived from civic celebrations with Harvest Thanksgiving was a long way from the stark separation of church and state insisted upon by the denomination's pioneers.



Oakleigh Church of Christ, Vic. Victoria's 150th Logo; Australia in fruit. Photos by John Masterton. Source: Private collection

The charitable destination of the fruit and vegetables also helped sanctify their brief transformation from produce to chapel art and, just as congregations kept records of monetary donations, photographs witnessed to the people's material generosity.

The charitable destination of the fruit and vegetables also helped sanctify their brief transformation from produce to chapel art and, just as congregations kept records of monetary donations, photographs witnessed to the people's material generosity.

Care was taken to fit all the produce in the frame as a record of gracious giving. Donations were very often publicly advertised as humility required that it be known that the great excesses were intended for charity. The *Gippsland Times* article is typical when it reports that the ‘elaborate display of garden and home produce’ at the Baptist Church in Sale was ‘to be donated to the Gippsland Hospital and Baptist Kindergarten in Carlton.’⁹⁸ In many churches if the produce was unlikely to keep for the journey, as was often the case with stone fruit, it was auctioned among the members of the congregation. Individuals bid generously for the cause and the cash was donated in place of the food.⁹⁹ Church social service departments and missions have long used food in ministry. Usefulness could sanctify food’s place in an otherwise bare chapel.

As the suburbs engulfed farming areas and people turned their once productive yards over to lawn and azaleas the availability of locally grown produce declined. From the 1960s more and more churches attempted to maintain Harvest Thanksgiving displays with the aid of breakfast cereals and other products from the new supermarkets. But such products were difficult to use artistically. More often than not they languished at the bottom or the edge of the designs while the cauliflowers and carrots maintained centre stage. Then there was the sense that products such as Vegemite, Skippy Corn Flakes and John Bull Oats lacked authenticity. Despite their long shelf-life and potential usefulness for charities, they did not resonate with the people in the way of natural produce. They did not carry the sense of blessings from God’s abundant earth. With their branding and logos and non-scriptural text, such products clearly belonged to corporations, and not to God. Realising the symbolic poverty of supermarket products and the aesthetic and spiritual value of natural produce, some churches approached retail fruiterers to donate vegetables for display. The liturgical tradition of Harvest Thanksgiving was too valuable to give up for want of home-grown food, and the generous Oakleigh fruiterer and his daughter were honoured with inclusion in a Harvest Thanksgiving photograph. Photographs reinforced the priority of nature and of personal connection to the produce, framing images to focus on the vegetables, their donors and arrangers.

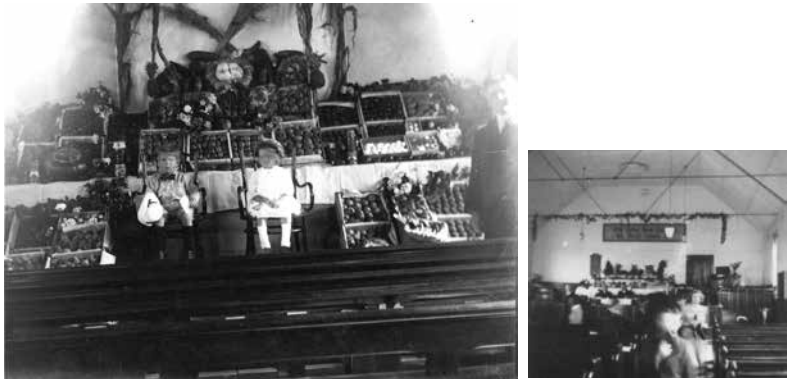
Vocation had once sanctified Harvest Thanksgiving’s celebration within the church, but urbanisation meant that by the 1970s and 80s, in many Australian Nonconformist churches, horticultural vocation and Harvest Thanksgiving were no longer bound together. While Harvest Thanksgivings continued on a smaller scale in an age of abundance people yearned for the time when Harvest’s intimate connection with vocation could be seen in the regional produce of Harvest displays. The ritual and its association with vocation was so hard to let go, and thankfulness so much a part of the prayer life of the people, that attempts were made to preserve Harvest

⁹⁸ *Gippsland Times*, 27 Feb 1939, 3.

⁹⁹ Interview with John Masterton, 17 June 2007.

Thanksgiving in other forms. Some churches began giving thanks for other vocations. By 1974, even before the rural town of Berwick was absorbed into Melbourne’s suburbs, the Church of Christ there had re-named their service ‘Thanksgiving for the Harvest and our Daily Work’. They offered prayers for policemen, students, retirees and factory workers as well as farmers and their produce. It made theological sense in the circumstances. But the practice did not last. Thanksgiving for vocation did not seem to resonate in the same way as Harvest Thanksgiving. Was this because Providence no longer seemed necessary in the age of supermarkets or because nature was out of the picture? The photos, if any were taken, cannot be found.

By the time Skippy Corn Flakes and ‘Daily Work’ became widespread inclusions, Harvest Thanksgiving was in decline. Indeed, these later adaptations were attempts to preserve the ritual memory of a time of meaningful sacred connection and whole-hearted celebration. Harvest Thanksgiving photographs intuitively recognised the ungraspable nature of the past. They witnessed to the fact that the flowers would wilt and the fruit decay. They implicitly acknowledged that the abundant life transformed within the chapel would pass away. In ghostly images suggestive of the fleeting nature of temporality, they captured ‘the elusive reality of things.’¹⁰⁰



(left) : Doncaster Church of Christ, Vic., 1914, with children seated in the elders’ chairs on the platform. Source: Doncaster Church of Christ. (right): Williamstown Church of Christ, S.A., 1948, with children leaving the chapel. Source: Private collection.

Harvest Thanksgiving photographs provide a glimpse into the spiritual lives of Nonconformists in the late-nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Their careful framing allows the viewer to focus in on the practice’s significance. Generosity was a feature, as evidence of both God’s Providence and the people’s charity, and photographers ensured that this was captured in time. Redeeming words ensured that the displays were not mistaken for idolatry, for these were the products of people well-versed in

¹⁰⁰ Morgan, *Sacred Gaze*, 78.

scripture. However, there can be no doubt that the displays were artistic and even representational, confirming that Nonconformity's iconoclasm responded to an equal or greater human urge to create images. Sheaves of wheat and sugarcane conveyed a sense that the people's spiritual and working lives were intertwined: a fact graciously affirmed each autumn in the spectacular transformation of white-washed chapels. The photographs witnessed to a delight in nature and a connectedness to it that went beyond the providentially useful. Appreciation of nature's beauty and embodied faith are evident everywhere. Ultimately the photographs represent an attempt to capture the elusive temporality of life in all its abundance and passing beauty. In such images we glimpse the fleeting transformation of sacred space and object, saved as snapshots. In this way they are photographs of grace.

Vatican II Catholic Liturgical Reform: Work of Literature, Art and Example of Structural Evolution - Charles Rue



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The liturgical reform of the Second Vatican Council (Vatican II) – its rituals, Scripture readings and prayers of a revised Catholic Liturgical Year – constitute a work of literature and art. It can be studied as an object in its own right but this article looks at it more as a structured celebration which takes participants beyond themselves.

This paper will make three points: firstly, the power of liturgical worship to work pastorally is a test of it as literature and art; second, liturgy continually evolved and can be further changed; and third, the Vatican II liturgical reform is an example of an organised collaborative work of literature and art. A further point: the Vatican II reform offers a model for ongoing reform, for example, inserting a *Season of Creation* into Catholic liturgical year as a 21st century reform that helps believers towards ‘ecological conversion’.

Pastoral Significance

First Point: The pastoral significance of the Vatican II liturgical reform needs to be emphasised, that is, the impact of the reform on people in the pews, its capacity to take worshippers beyond themselves to experience new horizons.¹⁰¹

Literature and art must communicate. It is ‘we’ and not just ‘I’. As part of the cultural wars about art, in a misinterpretation of postmodernism much literature and art seem to ignore engagement. Countering this interpretation, many postmodern plays are called performance art since they focus on engagement. Postmodernism might best

¹⁰¹ Ernst H Conradie, ‘Liturgical Reorientation through an Emerging Horizon’, *Re-discovering the Spiritual in God’s Creation* (Conference, Serafino, McLaren Valley, March 2015).

be seen as transcending the alternatives of objectivism and relativism, offering a more chastened perspective and approach to truth.¹⁰² Reality is not totally relativist and merely constructed by human interpretations.¹⁰³ Literature and art in particular is not just a thing created by the artist for their personal achievement or destined to become an object.

Liturgy is more event than thing, remembering story more than the objects which surround it, celebrating challenging memories. While cathedrals, statues and music can enhance celebration, good pastoral liturgy opens worshippers to a Big God, helping them enter more deeply into the historical cultural flow and mystery of life, embracing reality without fear as Pope Francis preached last Easter.¹⁰⁴ Johannes Metz wrote of the paschal mystery expressed in Christ as a dangerous memory - subversive of the ways in which humans might prefer to think of God and to order their ways of living. Worshippers enter into rhythms past and future, historical and eschatological - a prayer experience for them of the spiritual dimension of the human journey. Liturgy which works pastorally in helping open believers to new horizons sets a litmus test for its value as literature and art.

At a recent conference at ACU Sydney titled *Grounding the Sacred through Literature and the Arts* several lead presenters spoke on the power of sacred texts to transform. Rachael Kohn said that engaging sacred texts opens a spiritual pathway. She told of three people from different traditions in Argentina – the Pope, a Rabbi and an Imam – being led by engaging their religious texts to grow in their faiths, dialogue and friendship. Sister Kathleen Deignan told of how Merton's vision grew as he engaged with a series of structured religious disciplines, primarily Catholicism and Buddhism. Imam Afros Ali spoke of how using the many names of Allah opens new appreciations of reality.

Pastors often experience the fact that taking-part in Sunday worship is the common way ordinary Catholics are led to consciously know God and experience God's presence in their lives. As deeper meanings of the Scriptures are broken open for the Sunday community along with the bread, their faith is both confirmed and challenged to grow. Believers might attend retreats and read books, but experiencing the yearlong rhythm of Sunday liturgical worship is the mainstay of Christian growth in life – a habit of God and humanity meeting. In 1962 Pope John XXIII said, *it is no accident that the first schema to be considered was the one dealing with the sacred liturgy.*

¹⁰² D. Stiver, *The Philosophy of Religious Language; Sign, Symbol and Story*, (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1996), 186.

¹⁰³ A. McHoul and W. Grace, *A Foucault Primer: Discourse, Power and the Subject*, (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1993), 2.

¹⁰⁴ 'To enter into the mystery' means the ability to wonder, to contemplate; the ability to listen to the silence and to hear the tiny whisper amid great silence by which God speaks to us (cf. 1 Kings 19:12). To enter into the mystery demands that we not be afraid of reality.'

Evolution of Liturgical Rituals

Second point: A little history - the Church's Liturgical Year rituals and successive seasons of prayer evolved gradually. The Liturgical Year draws loosely on the rhythms of nature. Nature's four seasons provide time frames, each with emotional dimensions linked to winter, spring, summer and autumn. Onto these frames was grafted the commemoration of historical religious events, initially Hebrew Scriptural accounts of their history of salvation¹⁰⁵ and then Christian remembrances of the life-death-resurrection of Jesus and sending of His Spirit as an abiding presence. There is continuity in the flow from nature's seasons through to salvation expressed in Scripture culminating in Jesus the Christ.

Over two millennia the Christian liturgical year cycles of prayer grew as diverse communities created rituals to localise their commemorations. Varied selections of Scripture readings were used in the worship cycles to stimulate mind and feelings, nourishing and challenging at both the intellectual and emotional levels. To capture a spectrum of emotions, prayers of thanksgiving, lament, petition and the like, often chanted, were added to embellish and give colour to their remembering and local commemorations of God's ongoing action. Culturally diverse Christian Rites emerged.

The end result was that systematically over a year different Christian communities created cycles of remembrance, thanking God and being challenged. Worshippers had structure to both know about and experience the unfolding acts of God in the human spiritual journey.

Vatican II re-creating Liturgical Practice

The liturgical year of the Roman tradition was recast after Vatican II (1962-65) to better serve the modern pastoral needs of faith communities. It built on the past but purposely created anew.

But the Council's reform of the liturgy did not come out of nowhere. From the 19th century scholars had researched sources. Reform in the 20th century was foreshadowed by papal writings and conferences. Pius X encouraged believers to better participate in the Eucharist and Pius XII authorised new Easter rites. The living Body of Christ needed reform with a pastoral focus which moved the liturgy away from legal issues. The 'Pian' Commission operated 1948-1960 and the International Congress on Pastoral Liturgy was held at Assisi in 1956. Vatican II's liturgical reform

¹⁰⁵ Israel began this transition from nature to history with its great festivals - spring festival sacrificing a new born lamb (Passover); unleavened barley bread (Mazoth Ex 12:34,39); wheat harvest (Shabuoht); wine and fruit harvest (Tabernacles Lev. 23:39-43). Canaanite festivals were given new meanings in Israel. Weekly and yearly cycles were created - Sabbath as a seventh day of rest (Ex 20:11) and rest for the land in the 7th year (Lev 25:4).

was primed to go. In 1975 Annibale Bugnini documented the multitude of people and planned efforts involved in Roman liturgical reform from 1948-1975.¹⁰⁶ His account is comprehensive.

Father Bugnini was a member of the Vincentian Congregation of the Missions. At Vatican II the missionary churches helped emphasise the pastoral tone of the liturgical reform. Mission bishops constantly asked practical questions to judge which rituals spoke to their people or did not. Poetically expressed, it was only right that the one river of the Gospel take on the hue of soils from many lands. The value of localisation, now called 'inculturation' in theological language, was born.

Collaborative Work

Third point: Reforming the Roman Liturgy in the 1960s was a collaborative effort. As noted, it built on research into liturgical reform over a century. Bugnini was chief organiser around the mandate of Vatican II and might be regarded as the primary author but he involved hundreds of experts and pastors. It was a team effort.

The initial work of major liturgical reform was assigned to a *Preparatory Committee* as soon as the Vatican II Council was announced in 1960. Under Bugnini the Committee of 65 members, plus 30 advisors and a secretariat, approached liturgical reform with military like organisation. The basic work was divided into small subcommittees taking up 13 general areas from mystery, through calendar to art. Members were experts drawn from pastoral activists, academics, varying nationalities and spiritual traditions. For speed of work, its members were largely European based even if internationally composed. The initial findings were circulated for further discussion. After just fourteen months the Committee handed over its proposed liturgical schema to Vatican II's secretariat February 1962.

The Schema was discussed by the bishops of Vatican II. Their initial vote was 2215 in favour and only 46 against. After minor changes, the *Constitution on the Liturgy* was promulgated November 1963. Vision, organisation and competence had combined well.

Organised Work of Concilium

Implementation of the reform of the Roman liturgy proposed by the *Constitution* fell to a group called *Concilium* (Council for the Implementation of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy). It operated from 1964-69. Not unlike the way multiple subcommittees carried through the pre-Vatican II preparation, 12 groups with 39 sub-groups were formed under Bugnini. *Concilium* worked *under the flag of mutual*

¹⁰⁶ Annibale Bugnini, *The Reform of the Liturgy 1948-1975*, ed. M J O'Connell (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1990).

trust, fraternal harmony, good will and the shared ideal of reaching our unwavering and well-defined goals wrote Bugnini.¹⁰⁷

The group firstly outlined a General Plan. Major areas included the liturgical calendar, the Breviary, the Missal, the sacraments, pontifical rituals, music, non-Roman Rites, feasts of the saints and law. Groups were further divided for particular aspects such as Scripture and Prayer composition. Experiments were conducted in various abbeys in Europe and United States but unauthorised experimentation raised concerns as it was seen to threaten order and gave ammunition to detractors of the reform. General meetings reported on progress and maintained unity of purpose.

Subsequent tasks included revision of theological underpinnings and selections from Scripture, translations and style, music and the arts, pastoral principles and adaptation. *Concilium* kept Episcopal conferences in touch with developments and asked them to present their particular questions in a process of mutual learning. Translation of liturgical books was of special importance as it often involved groups of nations using the same language but culturally diverse. To be the true voice of the church, it was decided that translations had to respect the content of the message, accurate but agreeable to the hearer.

The role of national liturgical commissions, publishers of liturgical journals and information periodicals such as *Notitiae* played a part in the conversation. At this time, some Protestant church were also reorganising their forms of worship. The presence of observers from other ecclesial communities was a public way of showing mutual respect and learning. However, it also led some Catholic critics to wrongly say that the liturgical reforms were too Protestant.

Bugnini identified six pastoral principles essential to the reform. Liturgy has to:

- Be prayer* experienced by believers to immerse themselves in God's mystery.
- Act as the summit and font of church community life.*
- Embody full, conscious and active participation.*
- Manifest the church as a sign of communion* and basis of all its action.
- Show substantial unity but not rigid uniformity.*
- Follow sound tradition but allowing for legitimate progress.*

Pastoral relevance demanded that the liturgy be loosed from the encrustations of time so that rites could speak in the spirit and language of modern times. It had to regain its power to communicate, to better become the literature and art of the people and not a dead object or play-thing for an elite. The liturgical reform exemplified the tone of Vatican II which called for a new mobilisation of the entire church as a work of the

¹⁰⁷ Bugnini, 185.

Spirit, an ongoing process sensitive to every culture. Pope John XXIII said, *The liturgy must not become a relic in a museum but remain the living prayer of the church*. This call grows more relevant in an ecological age.

Liturgical Calendar and Three Year Cycle

The first major task of the *Concilium* teams was to reform the liturgical calendar. It stands as the basis on which the celebrations of the Mass and the Liturgy of the Hours are organised. These two are important because they act both as focal points for Christian worship and as models for the rhythm of other forms of communal prayer. When some leaders of the Eucharistic and para-liturgies tried to become locally relevant they worked with a limited understanding of what the two models teach about liturgical history and the dynamics of liturgical structure. Good will and pastoral concern are not enough by themselves to make liturgy work for the faith growth of the people. Sadly, church leadership often left 'creative' people without guidance, maybe showing itself incapable as it remained silent or resorted to issuing insensitive rulings.

The liturgical year works with a type of counterpoint - every Sunday acts as the primary day of the Lord while the whole mystery of Christ is recalled during the course of the liturgical year.¹⁰⁸ *Concilium* worked within the traditional liturgical seasons - Advent, Christmas (winter), Lent, Easter (spring), post Pentecost Ordinary Time (summer) - but refined them to emphasise aspects of the one economy of salvation and Christ mystery.

Concilium introduced a new three year liturgical cycle. This contrasted markedly with the old one year cycle with only a one year round of Scriptural readings. *Concilium* followed through on the Council's mandate to nourish communities with a wider range of Scripture (CL nos. 35.1 and 51). Its basic principle was to present a fuller story of the mystery of Christ and the history of salvation - the nucleus of apostolic proclamation.

One significant decision of *Concilium* was to move the feast of Christ the King to the end of the liturgical year - Christ yesterday, today and forever. In that place it marked the end to the liturgical year but also helped highlight the eschatological aspect of Salvation History - the ongoing and cosmic nature of the human journey to the end of time. This decision was largely theological but structurally better linked the new three year liturgical cycle.

Special days had to be integrated into the flow of the liturgical year and made more understandable at a pastoral level. One example was the prayer and fasting carried

¹⁰⁸ **The Sacramentary** 1969, 'General Norms for the Liturgical Year and the Calendar', 1 and 17.

out on Rogation and Ember days.¹⁰⁹ The Australian bishops all but abolished these ancient ways celebrated originally to mark the natural seasons. Feast days were rationalised - some had significance for the whole church while local celebration was more appropriate for others. The place of Marian feast days raised questions because of Mary's special importance within the life of the whole Church and the practices of local churches. Two criteria were identified to test the place of a Marian feast - does it enhance a close relationship with Christ? Does it help advance the mission of church life? *Concilium* faced practical decisions with pastoral relevance in mind.

Three Year Lectionary

Integral to the reform was the creation of a new Lectionary of Scriptural Readings to fill out the three year cycle.¹¹⁰ The many lectionaries used over centuries in different Rites and Reformed churches were consulted. From 1960 onwards some churches experimented with a three year Sunday cycle of Scripture to more systematically nourish worshippers. In 1965 *Concilium* tasked 35 biblical scholars to select from Hebrew and New Testaments according to a set framework. It was argued by some that the new three reading cycle on Sundays be made optional to better work ecumenically with other churches. In fact, many reformed churches concurred with the change to a three year cycle. Leadership decided to make the three year cycle the standard church practice, not optional.

The new Liturgical Calendar and Lectionary was promulgated Pentecost 1969. On this date, the *Congregation of Sacred Liturgy (Divine Worship)* was established to oversee further reform.

Criticisms

The Vatican II liturgical reforms were not perfect. It is sad to recall that in the selection of Scripture for the Lectionary the voice of both women and the earth was often overlooked and even suppressed.¹¹¹ Seeing the Scripture through the eyes of modern movements was a challenge. However, learning from the feminist hermeneutic of suspicion, scriptural scholars attached to the *Earth Bible Project* are among many who strive to recall the hidden voice of the earth in the Bible.¹¹² One great example is to hear the voice of earth in the great debate between God as Creator and Job (chs 38-42).¹¹³

¹⁰⁹ Tom Elich, 'Ember Days' *Liturgy News* (Brisbane Australia) December 37/4.

¹¹⁰ Bugnini, 406.

¹¹¹ <http://futurechurch.org/women-in-church-leadership/women-and-word/women-in-bible-and-lectionary>

¹¹² <http://www.flinders.edu.au/ehl/theology/ctsc/projects/earthbible/>

¹¹³ It tells of human ignorance and arrogance in failing to see God's work in the natural world - God is not happy. Christians are called to recognise in liturgical prayer the voice of Earth as Prophet learning from scientists - observing the natural systems and cosmic cycles; saying earth embraces and nurtures us.

The reform was not without controversy. The newly created Congregation came under pressure from those who saw Vatican II as a mistake and it was infiltrated by those who wanted a return to the past. Some became locked into the Roman liturgy wars.¹¹⁴ *Una voce* promoted the continued use of Latin; some called the 1969 Missal of Paul VI heretical. A dictum recalls that *Documents, no matter how solemn, are ineffective against bad faith*. A 1974 Note about liturgical translation from the Congregation lessened the decision making role of episcopal conferences. Bugnini had pushed to counter this trend but found himself 'promoted' to a foreign diplomatic post as Archbishop. Pastoral relevance was often bypassed forgetting that '... rites and symbols are to be the entry point to the mystery of the revealed God rather than mere obfuscations and even obstacles'.¹¹⁵

However, attempts at backsliding were paltry compared to the great work Bugnini and his many teams had achieved. The reform of the Roman liturgy had sometimes been forged in pain but was a win for the faithful. Bugnini's account of the Vatican II liturgical reforms reads like a novel – proposals, experiments, preliminary schema, condemnations, opposition, negotiations, debates in journals and the media, factional fights, scapegoating, local interests, successes and failures. The liturgical reforms during 1960s in particular were complex, involved a vast number of players and never travelled smoothly, yet they emerged as a great work of creativity. Many subsequent criticisms of the Vatican II liturgical reform might better be placed at the foot of poor implementation as timid local bishops failed to build on its structures and encourage diocesan leaders to implement its spirit.

Creating A Season of Creation as a 21st Century Reform

A further point - a 21st century reform of the Vatican II liturgy is in the wind. It aims to insert a September *Season of Creation* within the liturgical year. The world is facing an environmental crisis and Catholics in all nations are caught up in this crisis. Celebrating a *Season of Creation* within the liturgical cycle is one way to help believers find God in this crisis – modern pastoral relevance. Proponents say it would open believers to first appreciate the modern insights of the ecological sciences and second, better find the voice of earth in the Scriptures. Promoters argue that celebrating a *Season of Creation* helps believers give knowing and active witness to a new awareness of the thirteen billion years unfolding Reign of God; witness to the mystery of God present in creating the entire cosmos and its evolution; challenging them to embrace all creation in their spiritual journey.¹¹⁶ Adelaide based Lutheran Scripture scholar Norman Habel has led many initial efforts.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁴ Bugnini, 257-301.

¹¹⁵ Gerard Moore, *AJL* 14.3.2015, 109.

¹¹⁶ Norman Habel *Discerning Wisdom in God's Creation*, (Northcote, VIC: Morning Star Publishing, 2015), 59-72.

¹¹⁷ <http://seasonofcreation.com/>

A major step forward was the 2015 encyclical letter of Pope Francis *Laudato Si* which pulls together and develops Catholic teaching on the environment. Humanity is part of an evolutionary emergence of God's love where God humbly embraces the unfolding cosmic, suffers with it, leading to a transformation of humanity as Denis Edwards writes.¹¹⁸ The Pope's vision is spiritual and goes deeper than ethical demands to present a comprehensive vision of the human journey which he terms *integral ecology*.

Introducing a *Season of Creation* would create a structured liturgical way to help all Catholics implement the call of Pope Francis in his environmental encyclical *Laudato Si*. It might be a new work of literature and inspiration for art in the making. The Vatican II liturgical reform is a story of the possible and gives hope for further reform.

Conclusion

I suggest that the revised Vatican II Liturgical Year together with its Lectionary of Scriptural Readings is a work of literature and structure for performance art through worship. Pastoral relevance to people's lives was its touch stone. Even though it was a collaborative work, it has a unity which helps worshippers have an experience of God present in the human spiritual journey and helps further define humanity.

¹¹⁸ Denis Edwards, 'Experience of Word and Spirit in the Natural World', *Re-discovering the Spiritual in God's Creation* (Conference, Serafino, McLaren Valley, March 2015). Edwards draws on Karl Rahner's *Theological Investigations* which were often informed by pastoral concerns.



FROM THE PRESIDENT

As I pause to write this report, the first tiny hints of Spring are beginning to appear: its seems just that less bit cold, tiny buds are appearing on the plants outside my window, the days are slowly drawing out. In the Southern Hemisphere, we live with the reversal of the seasonal and liturgical order of our Northern brothers and sisters. Easter for us is not a Spring festival, but a celebration of the triumph of Light over darkness as the light in our skies fades. And of course, we do not celebrate Christmas in “the bleak midwinter” but rather as the sun in our skies reaches its height in praise and worship of the new-born Sun of Justice.

Work has begun on transferring management and maintenance of the AAL website to Catholic Communications in Melbourne. Catholic Communications are already engaged by the Academy to look after the layout, printing and distribution of the *AJL*. Since the inception of our website, Paul Mason has managed and maintained our website and we thank him for the effort and countless hours he has put into creating and sustaining the online presence of the Academy. Hopefully, we can continue to build on the solid foundations laid by Paul, as our webpage moves into this new phase of its existence.

A week ago, I returned from Quebec and the 25th Congress of *Societas Liturgica*. The Congress theme *Liturgical Formation: traditional task and new challenge* was examined along a number of different research axes in both plenary addresses and short papers. We were well represented by a dozen or so Australians who ventured to Canada. Tom Elich and Carmel Pilcher each presented short papers on the various research axes of the Congress. This Congress also marked the end of Carmel’s term on the *Societas* Council. Many international friendships were renewed and new connections were made. While, in world terms, we may be small, in liturgical terms, I believe, we do punch above our weight.

The National Council has meets every second month via Skype. A major focus of our meetings recently has been the next Conference, scheduled for January 2017.

The NSW Chapter – who will host us for this Conference – is well advanced with planning. As soon as we have more concrete details, an update will be sent out via email.

In terms of the National Executive, we have caught up with the administrative backlog involved in the move of Executive. My thanks to our tireless Secretary/Treasurer Chris Lancaster who has worked with dedication to get us ‘up to speed.’ Thanks to all those who have paid their membership fees. Please also remember to update your contact details if these change through the course of the year - especially your email address as this is our primary way of communicating with you. As always, thanks for your patience and encouragement.

Anthony Doran

Anthony.Doran@cam.org.au

Save the Date!

2017 Conference

17-20 January

Hunter Valley Hotel Academy

Kurri Kurri, NSW

“Liturgy Under the Southern Cross”

FROM THE CHAPTERS

New South Wales – Doug Morrison-Cleary

At our May meeting of the NSW Chapter, we were presented with a visual feast by Susan Daily. While her presentation revolved around a couple of projects for presenting Christian symbols and their meanings, we also saw demonstrations of her painting techniques and discussed the role of the arts in liturgy. As mentioned elsewhere in the Journal, Susan was honoured with the Order of Australia in the most recent Honours List. Our congratulations to her for this wonderful acknowledgement of her work in liturgy and the arts, especially amongst Aboriginal communities.

At our July meeting, Carmel Pilcher presented some further reflections on liturgical inculturation in the Aboriginal context. This was partly in preparation for her short paper presented at the Societas Liturgica Congress in August.

We meet next on 9 September to reflect on the Societas Liturgica Congress and to discuss further our preparations for the 2017 AAL Conference. On 11 November, we will return to our discussion book, 'Reforming Liturgy'.

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 a couple of meetings in Newcastle this year. Please contact Doug, our convenor, on presbyter@hildormen.org if you have any questions.

Queensland – Marian Free

There has been little action on this side of the country as we are back to meeting every second month. The main news is that for our August meeting some of our members made the drive to Maroochydore for our annual "outside of Brisbane" meeting. We have struggled to find a meeting time during the day as it is difficult to find a time that suits a majority.

We welcome all visitors.

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

South Australia – Ilsa Neicinieks

At our June meeting, Bill Griffiths and Alison Whish - both long-serving members of the AAL - were welcomed to our South Australian Chapter.

Sadly at that same meeting we bade farewell to Matthias Prenzler who has moved to Indooroopilly, Queensland. Since then, Linards Jansons, a former Lutheran pastor and faculty member of the Australian Lutheran College, has also left our Chapter. We have greatly appreciated their contribution and our best wishes go with them.

Following our usual “What’s on the boil?” segment, the main business of the meeting was to discuss a chapter from Catherine Vincie’s latest book entitled *Worship and the New Cosmology*. The chapter chosen was ‘Integrating the New Cosmology into our Prayer Traditions.’

As a result of our discussion members all agreed that our various traditions need to be more intentional in regard to incorporating cosmological and ecological themes into our liturgical prayer, including prayers of lament.

At our next meeting in September we look forward to three of our members sharing their reflections on the *Societas Liturgica* conference recently held in Quebec, Canada. At our final meeting for 2015 we will discuss one of the papers presented at that conference.

Victoria - Garry Deverill

The Victorian chapter has met three times this year, with attendances averaging a pleasing 12-15 people. A range of speakers have helped us reflect on aspects of the liturgical universe, including Nathan Nettleton on the history and theology of Baptist worship and Tom Knowles on liturgical dimensions of the Pope’s recent encyclical on the environment. In March Garry Deverill took over the Convenorship of the chapter from Antony Doran. This will be Garry’s second turn as chapter convenor, the first being at the time of the last Melbourne conference. The chapter was pleased to congratulate Robert Gribben on his life membership, conferred at the Brisbane National Conference in January.

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 centred on the Word of God, the WA Chapter worked through the themes selected for the conference. Elizabeth Smith presented “Praying the Word” to help prepare us for the Brisbane conference. Elizabeth writes constantly for wide ranging liturgical needs within her Anglican community and shared some of them. Elizabeth has now moved to Kalgoorlie so cannot attend meetings and her input is sorely missed.

This year we have had reflections on the conference and on the 100th anniversary of the landing at Gallipoli. In our last meeting there was a reflection on 'Laudato Si' from Pope Benedict and its implications for liturgy. This is an area that will need to be explored in much greater depth in order to get the fullness of its value to all Christians. Our October meeting will be held in New Norcia at the Benedictine Monastery.

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

Save the Date!

2017 Conference

17-20 January

Hunter Valley Hotel Academy

Kurri Kurri, NSW

“Liturgy Under the Southern Cross”

Loreto Sr. Susan Daily Awarded the Order of Australia

Loreto Sister Susan Daily was awarded the Order of Australia last month in recognition for her commitment to the arts, building independence among Aboriginal communities and developing a genuine Australian religious art form.



Taken from the Press Release of the Loreto Sisters, 1st July 2015.

The official announcement was made on June 8. Beaming with excitement Susan explains the award came as a complete shock and she struggled to keep it a secret from her friends and family for two weeks before the official announcement. For over 26 years Susan has dedicated much of her life to volunteering her time as an art mentor and empowering Aboriginal women to gain independence through the sacredness of art.

The Honourable Philip Ruddock MP wrote in a recent letter to Susan, ‘You have enriched the lives of so many, particularly within indigenous communities through your role as an educator... you have also provided countless life-changing opportunities for those who have shown artistic skill.’

Susan’s work takes her to many parts of Australia. In the past year she has offered guidance at both the Merrepen Arts and Santa Teresa Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory and currently teaches in Melbourne at an innovative art supply house.

‘I have found it very moving that in these Aboriginal communities people share some of their most sacred thoughts and desires. Some I understand, but others make me realise they are crying out for help.’

Susan understands the importance of sustainability and hopes her lessons in art technique will foster independence among the women working in the local aboriginal art centres.

‘It is important for the independence of the artists to encourage them to run their own art centres by offering suggestions to make their new ideas happen.’

Susan talks warmly about one initiative at the Santa Teresa Community where she helped to transform an idea into a commercially viable reality. ‘I encouraged the women to realise their dream of painting on crosses and selling them. We designed four different models which were then made into ceramic blanks to be painted on.’ The commitment of the Aboriginal artists and Susan’s guidance has certainly paid off with over 15 thousands of these beautifully painted crosses continuing to be sold to tourists, schools and parishes throughout Australia.



Susan pauses before explaining that her desire to give back to society stemmed from her childhood. Born into a nurturing family she always had a love for creativity and innately knew her commitment to God would be translated through art. While attending Loreto Mandeville in Melbourne she was encouraged to develop her skills further. ‘I began to draw Gospel stories and when I prayed gradually I built up my own ‘alphabet’ of symbols.’

Laughing cheekily Susan said ‘growing up I thought the pictures in story books were more important than the words. I therefore used to ‘read’ the pictures and could tell a different story every time!’



‘Drawing has helped me to make some meaning of my highs and lows of life... I use it in my prayer and know when I do not I am much the poorer for it.’

After graduating from Loreto Mandeville in 1962 Susan attended art school for a year before deciding to become a Loreto Sister. She was not the first religious artist in her family – Her great aunt, a sister of Mercy, Sr. Bernadine Carr is well known for her coats of arms paintings for the Bishops of Australia.

Susan has been a Loreto Sister for over 51 years and in that time has seen an emergence of technology that she now enjoys utilising in her designs, creating resources that can be used across the church.

The majority of Susan's art is now designed using her iPad which she has the option of transferring onto silk banners – another art technique which she is well known for amongst the wider community.

She is now working towards making churches more beautiful through the work of her silk banners.

Susan is the seventh Loreto Sister to have received an award.

BOOK REVIEWS

Alan Rathe, *Evangelicals, Worship and Participation: Taking a Twenty-first Century Reading*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2014.

This is the latest in the Ashgate series on Liturgy, Worship and Society, and it stands in the series alongside Teresa Berger's book on liturgy and gender as one of the most readable and valuable. Alan Rathe's study looks at what is being taught in twenty evangelically-inclined theological colleges in the United States, organises them so as to surface emphases in the streams, and gently draws conclusions from his findings. Surveying the books on seminary reading lists he identifies five strands, each with a different emphasis: "all of life," "gathered devotion," "sacramental recovery," "evangelistic worship," and "organically missional." These headings give some very basic clues as to where weight lies in each stream, but Rathe's book considers each in probing detail. Notably—perhaps surprisingly—among the evangelical colleges, the sacramental recovery strand is the largest. It includes texts which are likely to be known also in Australia, within and beyond evangelical circles: James White's *Brief History of Christian Worship*, Simon Chan's *Liturgical Theology*, and Geoffrey Wainwright's *Doxology*, for example. Books in this stream also take the first and second-most read texts in the evangelical seminaries Rathe looks at: Robert Webber's *Worship Old and New*, and Webber's *Worship is a Verb*. Curiously—and brilliantly—Rathe intensifies his survey of each strand by probing how different "levels" of participation flourish or flounder, and as John Witvliet points out in his Foreword to the book, the key lens Rathe employs is somewhat surprising given the focus on evangelicalism: it is the medieval sacramental categories (refracted through the work of fairly recently deceased Roman scholar Mark Searle): *sacramentum tantum* ("the sacrament itself"), *res et sacramentum* ("the thing and the sacrament"), and *res tantum* ("the thing itself"), with the latter linked also to contemporary Trinitarian theology suggesting as it were the deepest level of participation in worship, a sharing in the very life of God.

Rathe's explorations are as strange and superb as these brief notes on his juxtapositions and tools might suggest. What he finds is so textured and complex to resist any simple reportage, except to say that it is a respectful, inviting window—or kaleidoscope—on a major family of contemporary Christian faith, in a much-neglected tradition (at least in many liturgical circles), in a particular cultural context. What it all amounts to for non-evangelical readers in other settings is almost anyone's guess. Some will, I suspect, find it frustratingly unwieldy, with its cross-crossing categories, transpositions, and multiple mappings; others may well find it little but irrelevant, from both a cultural and ecclesial elsewhere. I found it enthralling.

One of the many attractive things I loved about the book was the debunking of the descriptor “evangelical” with which it begins. Surveying “classic” descriptors like David Bebbington’s quadrilateral (biblicism, crucicentrism, conversionism, activism), Timothy Larsen’s five-fold definition and Bruce Shelley’s identification of traditions within the evangelical tradition, Rathe notes along the way that an evangelical might be anyone who for whatever reason appreciates Billy Graham! At any rate, his discussion shows how futile—certainly imprecise—much conversation about evangelicalism is, particularly when used to pigeonhole or worse, slight, others. (I would like to see Rathe’s opening chapter read by Anglicans of different kinds in Australia as an impetus to start a more fruitful conversation than those that sometimes go on across party lines.) Also excellent is Rathe’s discussion of how Pentecostalism maps onto his evangelical survey. The focus on Pentecostalism is found in one of the book’s appendices and emerged, apparently, as Rathe’s research started to show the gap of attention to Pentecostal literature in the theology schools he looks at. The appendix is a very good example of the additional care Rathe seeks to extend from something that is already so wide-ranging.

Throughout, I found this book fascinating. For teachers of liturgy there are things to learn from it whatever the tradition from or in which they teach, whatever books shape the curriculum. The questions and model of engagement Rathe suggests “translate.” In liturgical studies circles, this book should chasten any quick dismissal of worship in the evangelical tradition, enable understanding of its rich diversity and its internal and broader-church dialogues, and help to give a major worldwide expression of Christianity more of the attention it deserves from liturgical scholars.

Stephen Burns

Trinity College Theological School, University of Divinity, Melbourne

Odhran O’Brien, *Martin Griver: Unearthed*. Strathfield NSW: St Pauls, 2014.

Ecclesial biography is not my usual genre for reading pleasure but this book certainly was very pleasurable to read.

O’Brien was awarded the Historical Commission Research Scholarship from the Catholic Archdiocese of Perth which provided him with the funds to write this book. Further scholarship funding from the Western Australian History Foundation and personal and professional support from others enabled him to travel within Australia and over to Spain to delve into original sources. The study of Church history is indeed important and for this biography original sources of information have been sufficient to build a valuable historical view of the period in which Martin Griver worked in the new settlement of Perth as well as a view of the man himself. O’Brien carefully outlines the sources that he used in his first chapter with special emphasis on the value

of the archives in the New Norcia Monastery, two hours' drive north of Perth.

The period in which Martin Griver worked in the new colony of Western Australia was formational from several perspectives. The preceding two bishops, Brady and Serra, had ecclesiastical battles that left the small Catholic community scarred and financially depleted. Griver actually arrived on 29 December 1849 into the port town of Fremantle with Serra who was newly made a bishop and a Spanish knight and who brought with him new recruits from Spain for the fledgling colony.¹¹⁹ Bishop Salvado, the one who principally established the community at New Norcia, was also with them and their Benedictine recruits from Spain. Bishop Serra was to be the new auxiliary bishop for Bishop Brady and even though they were greeted fervently by the small Catholic community both Brady and Serra had different ideas about how the missionaries were to be dispersed. Bishop Serra intended to send them to New Norcia where the Benedictine monks had begun a community as a mission to the aboriginal population but Bishop Brady had very different ideas. What ensued was what has been described as "The Great Schism of Perth."¹²⁰ O'Brien's account is detailed and well supported and shows how the cultural differences between the Spanish and the English speakers became a serious cultural problem for the small community struggling to establish themselves in Western Australia.

A further struggle was the extreme delays in communicating with Rome, particularly Propaganda Fide, who were charged with administering missionary activities by the Curia. In our contemporary communication systems we are capable of speaking to people on the other side of the world with no difficulty at all. In the latter 19th Century it could take four months for a letter to reach Rome and if they asked for more details the letter exchange with a possible decision could take up to twelve months.¹²¹ It is hard for us to comprehend the difference that would make to responsible decision making activities. Both Serra and Brady took advantage of it and eventually Bishop Polding had to go to Perth from Sydney to untangle the debacle. Brady was sent back to Europe and Serra left in charge but the difficulty between the Spanish vision and the needs of Perth, Fremantle and the wider country areas was left to Griver, as the administrator, to sort out and restore to some kind of harmonious social balance. O'Brien's account of this unfolding history is detailed and full of interesting details that have a legacy in Western Australia to this day.

One of the unique qualities of Griver was a result of the Spanish Government's attempt to reduce the clergy and their power. Griver was not allowed to take Holy Orders as the Spanish Government limited ordinations to try and restrict the

¹¹⁹ Odhran O'Brien, *Martin Griver: Unearthed* (Strathfield NSW: St Pauls, 2014), 77.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 61.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 60.

numbers of clergy and therefore their wealth and power.¹²² When this happened to Griver he went to University and qualified as a doctor. This was a gift to the Western Australian community and particularly to the community at New Norcia and to outlying Catholic communities with few resources. He also had experience in viticulture and horticulture from his upbringing in a farming family in Granollers.¹²³ He was determined that the colony would be self-sufficient in altar wine!

While battles ensued between the Spanish and English speaking fraternities, Griver established himself as a very good administrator, humble, honest and diligent. He put in place very good structures and processes that enabled the young diocese to start to function in a more orderly manner. Western Australia did not begin as a penal colony and the lack of labour made it very difficult for the colony to flourish. However, once convicts had been brought to WA the majority of them were Irish Catholics and so the needs for pastoral care were greatly increased for Griver's administration but few resources were available.¹²⁴ O'Brien makes it clear throughout the biography that the poor, the convicts, the marginalised and others struggling to survive were Griver's main concern. His own apostolate to those in the notorious Fremantle prison was profound.

This biography presents Griver as a holy man. Even though he made initial vows as a Benedictine before leaving Spain, he did not finalise them as the needs of the colony and then his elevation to Bishop of the Perth diocese took his entire vocational resources. He was responsible for the building of St Mary's cathedral which he saw as the necessary spiritual and cultural focus for the Catholic community of Western Australia.

His body was exhumed from under the old cathedral and reinterred in the new crypt following the beautiful renovations completed in 2009.

Problems that we have today with cultural differences between clergy and parish communities,¹²⁵ as well as badly behaved priests and the resultant damage, were a reality for Griver as well. He was greatly challenged by the needs of the convicts, especially those to be executed.¹²⁶ Even more so, the preparation of the aboriginal prisoners who were facing execution. In these instances Griver worked well with Salvado who was building the New Norcia community. He asked him to send an indigenous person who was capable of communicating with the aboriginal prisoners and to bring them comfort.

¹²² Ibid., 37.

¹²³ Ibid., 75.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 77.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 156.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 149.

Griver was an ascetic person who was very frugal and he insisted that those around him live similarly. It was only after his death that it was discovered that he wore crosses with nails strapped to his body, one on his back and one on his chest.¹²⁷ This was not uncommon among the mystics of Spain and Europe who influenced his development but was still a surprise to those who had worked closely with him before his death, particularly his assistant, Fr Gibney.

Interesting details within this biography that are fascinating include the episode where Fr Gibney, while travelling to the Eastern colonies his train stopped at Glenrowan and he witnessed the shootout between Ned Kelly and the police. Having heard that Kelly was injured and Catholic, Gibney left the train and administered the last rites and Kelly survived to fight another day.¹²⁸ A further incident of great interest was the rogue Irish priest that came to the colony, Fr Patrick McCabe. He developed a strong friendship with the Fenian prisoner, John Boyle O'Reilly and ensured that mail got in and out of Fremantle prison with the eventual result of O'Reilly and others escaping on the *Catalapa*, a whaler sent out from the USA. Hard to imagine what it took in terms of patience, endurance and meticulous planning, as well as a lot of luck, for such events to happen.¹²⁹

This is a meticulously drawn biography giving profound insight into the life and times of Bishop Griver. This history could well be the thorough and scholarly work that precedes consideration for canonization.¹³⁰ Bishop Griver's legacy endures to the present day through the careful decisions that he made to establish a Catholic community that was carefully aligned with the culture of the wider community and with the churches and schools necessary to build into the future.

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¹²⁷ Ibid., xxx.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 217.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 203.

¹³⁰ Ibid., xxxv.

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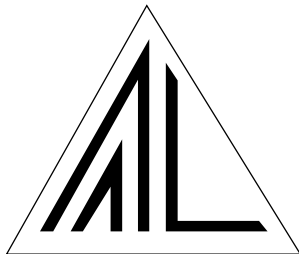
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