



AUSTRALIAN ACADEMY OF LITURGY

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# AUSTRALIAN ACADEMY OF LITURGY

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## Editorial

In this issue, the paper presented by Tom Knowles, SSS at a recent gathering of Australian Roman Catholic liturgists is published for the benefit of a wider audience. Although the matter is distinctively Roman Catholic, there are issues raised with which most of us can identify, such as the challenge of engaging the “liturgical day-trippers” who attend occasional rites such as baptisms, weddings and funerals, so that they may enter into “full and active participation” in the liturgical event rather than remain spectators.

There is also a comprehensive review of the Uniting Church in Australia’s new resource, *Uniting in Worship 2*, which has been published in a book, CD-ROM and DVD package to exploit the advantages of new media for liturgical preparation.

In *AJL* 11/1, which should appear in your mailbox soon, we will publish material from the Academy’s 2007 conference on “Liturgy, Creation and Theology”.

As always, I look forward to receiving your contributions for future issues of *AJL*.

Inari Thiel  
Logan City

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## *Close encounters of a liturgical kind<sup>1</sup>*

Tom Knowles sss

The subtitle of Robert Krieg's biography of Romano Guardini names him as 'A Precursor of Vatican II'.<sup>2</sup> Much of Guardini's teaching and writing, not least his best-selling classic *The Spirit of the Liturgy*,<sup>3</sup> laid the groundwork for Vatican II but he felt uneasy with some of its outcomes. Nonetheless his name continues to be invoked in contemporary liturgical writing. If it's not his book, or the eponymous book written by the then Cardinal Ratzinger,<sup>4</sup> it's the letter he wrote in April 1964, less than six months after the promulgation of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, to the Liturgical Congress of Mainz which he was unable to attend because of illness.<sup>5</sup> In it he raised issues that have been taken up explicitly by Mark Searle in his recent posthumous book *Called to Participate*,<sup>6</sup> by David Stosur in an article published last year in *Worship* entitled

<sup>1</sup> Adapted from an address to NSW Biannual Conference of Roman Catholic Diocesan Liturgy Representatives Baulkham Hills, October 2006

<sup>2</sup> Robert A. Krieg. *Romano Guardini. A Precursor of Vatican II*. Notre Dame, Ind: University of Notre Dame Press, 1997.

<sup>3</sup> Romano Guardini. *The Church and the Catholic* and *The Spirit of the Liturgy*. Trans. Ada Lane. New York: Sheed and Ward, 1953.

<sup>4</sup> Joseph Ratzinger. *The Spirit of the Liturgy*. Fort Collins, Co: Ignatius Press, 2000 (reviewed by John Baldwin in *America* May 7, 2001 pp 29-31 and by Rembert Weakland in *The Tablet* 4 November 2000 pp 1488-89).

<sup>5</sup> Romano Guardini. 'A Letter from Romano Guardini'. *Herder Correspondence* (August 1964) 237-39.

<sup>6</sup> Mark Searle. Barbara Searle and Anne Y. Koester, eds. *Called to Participate. Theological, Ritual and Social Perspectives*. Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2006.

'Liturgy and (Post)Modernity: A Narrative Response to Guardini's Challenge',<sup>7</sup> by Nathan Mitchell in his essay on liturgy and the social sciences,<sup>8</sup> and implicitly by others.

Towards the end of his letter Guardini asks a radical question:

Is not the liturgical act, and with it, all that goes under the name of "liturgy" so bound up with the historical background — antique or medieval or baroque — that it would be more honest to give it up altogether? Would it not be better to admit that man in this industrial and scientific age, with its new sociological structure, is no longer capable of a liturgical act?<sup>9</sup>

Give it up altogether? Not capable of a liturgical act? These are startling words. But I wonder whether we aren't asking similar questions: are contemporary Catholics, especially those who only turn up for first communions, confirmation, weddings and funerals, capable of authentic liturgical prayer? Are we tempted, like Guardini, to 'give it up altogether', caught as we are these days between popular incapacity for liturgy and Roman liturgical imperialism?

What I want to do is to revisit the conciliar principle of 'full, active and conscious participation'. It's our mantra, it's our dream, but what does it mean? First I will retrace the evolution of 'active participation' from its origins in the liturgical movement to its canonization at Vatican II and its expression in the post-conciliar

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<sup>7</sup> David A. Stosur. 'Liturgy and (Post)Modernity: A Narrative Response to Guardini's Challenge'. *Worship*, 77, 1 (Jan 2003) 22-41.

<sup>8</sup> Nathan Mitchell. *Liturgy and the Social Sciences*. American Essays in Liturgy. Series Editor, Edward Foley. Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1999.

<sup>9</sup> 239.



rites. Then, provoked by a re-reading of Guardini's 1964 letter, I want to explore some contemporary, perhaps conflicting, views on where we are now and where we might head as far as engaging people in worship is concerned.

Not everyone agrees on the naming, dating and categorizing of the phases of the so-called 'liturgical movement'. A common approach is to speak of two phases, the monastic, beginning with Dom Prosper Gueranger's work and writings at Solemnes from 1832, the second labeled 'pastoral' dating from Dom Lambert Beauduin's address in Malines in 1909. English-born American-based liturgist Mark Searle, who sadly died in 1992 at the age of fifty, sticks with the two phase option but in quite a revisionist way, as we shall see later.

In his letter of 1964 Guardini identifies three phases. He wrote:

I would describe the first phase, which started at Solemnes, as restorative and in some ways politically restorative. (It was connected with efforts to overcome Gallicanism and sought closer ties to Rome.) The second originated in Belgian Benedictine monasteries and was of a strongly academic nature. The third, which was centred on the Austrian monastery of Klosterneuberg and various centres of the German Catholic youth movements, had a practical, realistic character: it tried to reach and interest the congregation as it was...<sup>10</sup>

Restorative, academic, practical. However we conceive of the movements that led to the reforms of Vatican II, it's useful to go to the usual starting point: Dom Prosper Gueranger at Solemnes. It's clear that 'active participation' was not on the agenda as far as

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<sup>10</sup> 239.

Gueranger was concerned. In his account of the evolution of the principle, Josef Lamberts writes:

For Gueranger active participation was out of the question: liturgy is a clerical affair, carefully fulfilled by the clergy, while the faithful come to admire in veneration and love the veiled mystery and to nourish their devotion.<sup>11</sup>

Pius X introduced the phrase 'active participation' in *Tra le sollecitudini*, his *motu proprio* of 1903, when he wrote: 'Active participation in the sacred mysteries and in the solemn prayer of the Church is the first and indispensable source of the true Christian spirit.' As he saw it, one of the ways this could be achieved was by taking operatic-style music out of the hands of the choir and enabling the faithful to join together in singing Gregorian chant. Later on, he encouraged more frequent communion as the 'summit of sacramental participation'. Lamberts points out that Pius X's 'active participation' did 'not yet have the meaning of cooperating in the celebration by the laity, of joining the liturgical action performed by the official Church as intensely as possible.'<sup>12</sup>

But it was this phrase of Pius X's with which Lambert Beauduin began his address, 'The True Payer of the Church', usually taken as the start of the 'pastoral' phase of the liturgical movement. Speaking at the fifth National Congress of Catholic Workers in Malines in September 1909, Beauduin declared that 'the first and indispensable

<sup>11</sup> Josef Lamberts. 'Active participation as the gateway towards an ecclesial liturgy.' In *Omnes Circumstantes: Contributions towards a history of the role of the people in the liturgy*. Lampen, Uitgeversmaatschappij J.H. Kok, 1990. 240.

<sup>12</sup> 246.

source of the true Christian spirit is to be found in the active participation of the faithful in the liturgy of the Church'.<sup>13</sup> In his view, this could be achieved by enabling the faithful to understand the liturgical texts and by joining in the common chant. But then, according to Lamberts:

As the pastoral approach of the Liturgical Movement grew, it became more and more evident that a liturgical reform was necessary. Indeed, as instruction of the faithful was undertaken, it was seen that the actual liturgical ceremonial was out of tune with modern society and asked too much historical knowledge of the ordinary faithful to appreciate it and to make this way of worshipping their own.<sup>14</sup>

So the momentum for the reform of the liturgy gathered pace. Let's fast forward to Vatican II and its mandate for liturgical reform. As the Constitution says:

Such [ie full, conscious and active] participation by the Christian people as "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a purchased people" is their right and duty by reason of their baptism. ... In the restoration and promotion of the sacred liturgy this full and active participation by all people is the aim to be considered before all else. (#14)

Before we even begin to ask whether we have achieved this aim or not, it is worth noting Lambert's caution about the phrase 'active participation' as it originated at a time when

one started from the liturgical action of the priest and wanted the faithful to take part in it as actively as possible. Hence the expression still makes a distinction between priest and faithful.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> 244.

<sup>14</sup> 250.

<sup>15</sup> 259

As a result Lambert advocates using the term 'ecclesial liturgy' to convey the meaning that 'liturgy is a celebration of the people of God as a whole'.

By praying, singing, answering, giving assent, acclamations, communicating, by actions and postures, even by a common silence, all contribute to an atmosphere in which the assembly can meet God in actualizing the sacramental presence of Christ in his paschal mystery.<sup>16</sup>

So how successful have we been in achieving 'an ecclesial liturgy'? For Mark Searle the task is definitely unfinished and perhaps the greatest challenges still lie ahead. In his book *Called to Participate: Theological, Ritual and Social Perspectives*<sup>17</sup> edited by his widow Barbara and Anne Koester and published 14 years after his death Searle refers to Guardini's letter of 1964:

At a time when everyone else was apparently riding a wave of enthusiasm over the prospect of changes to come, Guardini sounded a note of caution. To many of his contemporaries it sounded sour and out of tune with the times; forty years later it sounds prophetic.<sup>18</sup>

In his letter Guardini had identified the critical issue of liturgical reform in this way:

A mass of ritual and textual problems will ... present themselves ... But the central problem seems to me to be something else: the problem of the cult act or, to be more precise, the liturgical act.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> 260.

<sup>17</sup> Footnote 5.

<sup>18</sup> 46.

<sup>19</sup> 237.

What does he mean by ‘the liturgical act’? This isn’t a familiar phrase for us and Guardini doesn’t explain it fully. But we can begin to get a sense of his meaning when he goes on to say:

As I see it, typical nineteenth-century man was no longer able to perform this act; in fact he was unaware of its existence. Religious conduct was to him an individual inward matter which in the ‘liturgy’ took on the character of an official, public ceremonial. But the sense of the liturgical action was thereby lost. The faithful did not perform a proper liturgical act at all, it was simply a private, inward act, surrounded by ceremonial and not infrequently accompanied by a feeling that the ceremonial was really a disturbing factor.<sup>20</sup>

By contrast the Council (according to Guardini) made it clear that ‘the religious act underlying the liturgy was something singular and important’. While the liturgical act is performed by individuals, they form ‘a *corpus*: the congregation, or rather the Church present therein’. It is a union of ‘spiritual inwardness’ and ‘external action’ so that ‘the external action was in itself a “prayer”, a religious act’. Let’s note here that Guardini is talking about two ‘marriages’ here: the communion between individuals that makes them the church at worship, and the union between outward action and inner meaning.

He gives the example of what was still called then the ‘offertory procession’:

It makes all the difference whether the faithful look on this procession as a mere means to an end which could have been achieved equally well by someone coming round with the collection-plate, or whether they know that the act of bringing their gifts is a ‘prayer’ in itself, a readiness toward God.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> 237.

<sup>21</sup> 238



Let's go now to the most quoted sentence in Guardini's letter:

The question is whether the wonderful opportunities now open to the liturgy will achieve their full realization; whether we shall be satisfied with just removing anomalies, taking new situations into account, giving better instruction on the meaning of ceremonies and liturgical vessels or whether we shall relearn a forgotten way of doing things and recapture lost attitudes.<sup>22</sup>

The words which seem to capture liturgical writers' attention are the last ones: 'relearn a forgotten way of doing things and recapture lost attitudes'. What is this 'forgotten way of doing things'? Let me insert here Mark Searle's answer to the question:

By "lost attitudes" and "a forgotten way of doing things" he seems to suggest a way of approaching liturgy and engaging in its sights and sounds, its words and gestures, that had been eclipsed by the rise of individualism and the split between inner and outer dimensions of the self ... To put the matter in positive terms, these "lost attitudes" seem to consist in seeing the liturgy as constituted essentially by "participation"  
...<sup>23</sup>  
...

Just what Searle means by 'participation' we'll come back to. Guardini writes about two modes of participation — 'doing' and by 'looking' — each of which can and must be attentive to the 'inner sense in the outward sign'. This is not a private awareness. He writes:

Of particular importance for the liturgical act is the active and full participation of the congregation as a body. The act is done by every individual, not as an isolated individual, but as a member of a body in which the Church is present. It is this body which is the "we" of the prayers. Its structure is different from that of any other collection of

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<sup>22</sup> 237-38.

<sup>23</sup> 47.

people meeting for a common purpose. It is that of a *corpus*, an objective whole.<sup>24</sup>

David Stosur is another writer who explicitly invokes and re-interprets Guardini's letter.<sup>25</sup> He sees it through the lens of 'both modern and postmodern liturgical concerns'. By 'modern concerns' he means 'the challenges that must be overcome if the reforms of the liturgy outlined by the Second Vatican Council were to have the desired deep effects on the People of God'. If anything, concern about individualism has only intensified in the four decades since Guardini wrote. It's a defining characteristic of our times. And it's easy to name, as does Stosur, other cultural factors militating against true participation: 'consumerism, pragmatism, and a mentality that worships technology and entertainment'. So much for Stosur's 'modern liturgical concerns'. From here he moves on to what he calls the postmodern question. Here is his rephrasing of the very first passage I quoted from Guardini's letter:

*Is not the liturgical act and, with it, all that goes under the name of "liturgy" so bound up with the historical background — antique or medieval or baroque, pre-modern or modern — that it would be more honest to give it up altogether? Would it not be better to admit that the individual in this advanced technological and scientific age, with its rapidly emerging global, capitalist, socio-economic structure, is no longer capable of the liturgical act presupposed by the Roman Rite? And instead of talking of renewal ought we not consider how best to celebrate the "sacred mysteries" (this time in quotation marks, presuming as the terms does a "grand narrative") so that the postmodern individual can grasp their meaning through her or his own approach to truth?*<sup>26</sup>

<sup>24</sup> 238.

<sup>25</sup> Footnote 6.

<sup>26</sup> 30-31.

Stosur himself says that most liturgical writers would respond to this question by saying that *'the liturgy itself [is] "the answer"'*. In other words, actual participation in liturgy

provides an essentially formative Christian experience. The liturgy...helps the individual and the community to deepen their baptismal commitment of conversion to Christ, thereby overcoming the detrimental effects of society's influence on them.<sup>27</sup>

'This line of thinking', he writes, 'is legitimate, proper and essential' but it

does not offer a complete solution. Following Guardini, it does not suffice simply to label certain cultural trends as opposed to the values and attitudes presumed by the Roman Rite and then to propose that devout participation in the liturgy will eventually stem the cultural tide... We are all, in fact, so influenced already by cultural and sociological forces that we unconsciously distance ourselves from many of the liturgy's most profound participative demands and possible transformative effects.<sup>28</sup>

That last sentence is worth re-reading and mulling over. The problem is in fact more acute 'if, in fact, those who genuinely give themselves over to the liturgy in the way Guardini hopes for constitute the minority in attendance at a typical Sunday Eucharist...' Why? Because

if a few in the congregation are seeking genuinely to participate in the liturgy and many others are not, then the signifying power of the rite is betrayed: instead of the sign helping to *effect* the saving reality offered by the living God, the sign working *in opposition* to the reality becomes a tacit operating principle.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> 32.

<sup>28</sup> 32-33.

<sup>29</sup> 34.

Isn't this the issue with which we are trying to grapple at this meeting? That particular liturgical celebrations are at least compromised, if not actually rendered impotent, by the mix of active participants and passive onlookers.

Stosur offers a theoretical way ahead using a narrative approach drawn from Paul Ricoeur's writings. It is the performance of liturgy that is the key

wherein the scriptures are proclaimed, the prayers are prayed and the actions undertaken, which hands down to us the living stories of our tradition for our appropriation and deepened transformation.<sup>30</sup>

But he ends his essay on a note of caution: it is only if 'we have the courage honestly to narrate and implicate ourselves in the Story' that we will 'discover our living and true identity'. The question remains as to how we in practice enable our liturgical day-trippers to implicate themselves in the Story.

Let's go back to Mark Searle's thought-provoking reinterpretation of the phases of the liturgical movement. He suggests it is more accurate to speak of two liturgical movements.

The first as countercultural in inspiration, aimed at weaning nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Catholics from their culturally accommodated devotions and their individualistic piety and bringing them back to the liturgy ... driven by the strong belief that liturgy could re-form Catholics as a People of God to be reckoned with socially and politically ... The second movement grew out of the first but worked in the opposite direction and with the conviction that the liturgy had to be accommodated to the people ... [It] recognized that for liturgy to have an

<sup>30</sup> 41.

impact on the people, it would have to be brought closer to them, for example, through the use of the vernacular.<sup>31</sup>

Put simply, for Searle the first liturgical movement was about being counter-cultural — about establishing an alternative world-view in the minds and hearts of worshippers — while the second was about accommodation of the liturgy to the needs of the people.

The three figures Searle identifies with the first movement are Prosper Gueranger, Pius X and Virgil Michel. Gueranger was reacting to the ‘political, social and religious upheavals of the previous half-century’. It was ‘in the fixed liturgy of the Roman church that he saw a pattern of life and action strong enough to be able to withstand the transient fashions of thought and culture’.<sup>32</sup>

Pius X was dealing not only with the loss of the papal states, with the consequent ‘political and social eclipse of the Church’s temporal power’ but also the ‘rise of scientific thought and of historical-critical methods [that] seemed to undermine the very bases of Christian faith and to entail the end of religious beliefs and practices’.<sup>33</sup> His promotion of sacramental communion and of congregational plainchant was based on his view of the liturgy as ‘the means for making Catholics into Christians and for turning individuals ... into a force to stem the secularist tide of history’.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> 1.

<sup>32</sup> 2-3.

<sup>33</sup> 5.

<sup>34</sup> 6.



Virgil Michel may have had different political views but he shared the others' conviction about 'the formative potential of the liturgy'. The great danger, for Michel, was 'neither socialism nor fascism but unbridled individualism ... the cult of free-enterprise ... [the pursuit of peoples'] own individual self-interest without regard to society's traditional claims on the individual's sense of responsibility'.<sup>35</sup> Searle claims that for Michel the goal of the liturgical movement was 'to adapt the people to the liturgy so that, thus transformed themselves, Catholics would then be in a position to contribute more effectively to the transformation of society'.<sup>36</sup> All three — Gueranger, Pius X, and Michel — saw the liturgy as the primary means of establishing a proper Christian (Catholic) consciousness in people as the basis for right social order.

The focus of the second liturgical movement, culminating in the Council, was 'the renewal of church life' through the reform of the liturgy. It was 'more concerned with liturgical renovation than with the construction of a new social order'.<sup>37</sup> This second movement 'focused on liturgical change and ecclesial renewal, bringing the liturgy to the people so that they might participate fully and help bring the Church into the modern world'. As a result, 'the clarity that marked the first liturgical movement was not evident: that the liturgy of the Church shapes the faithful and the faithful contribute to the

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<sup>35</sup> 6-7.

<sup>36</sup> 8.

<sup>37</sup> 8-9.

shaping of the world'.<sup>38</sup> And as we all know, the bookends of the Council testify to this loss of connection between worship and world. The Council's first document — on the liturgy — has nothing to say about the world, and its last — on the church in the modern world — has nothing to say about liturgy.

The dilemma then is this: 'Should we accommodate the liturgy to ourselves, encouraging a subjective approach to liturgy or engage in understanding the liturgy, regarding it in a more objective way' — a way that is 'more countercultural and yet more conscious of the world'?<sup>39</sup> There is no doubt which path Searle wants us to take — away from liturgy 'as something to be adapted to our needs and tastes' and towards 'a liturgy that in its objectivity and givenness transcends the individuals who participate in it, lifting them up to engage in something far beyond their ability to create or even imagine'.<sup>40</sup> Language like this may be ringing alarm bells for you. Doesn't it sound just like that of the restorationists, those who would 'reform the reform'? Maybe. For the moment let's stay 'alert but not alarmed'.

Searle proceeds to talk about three levels of participation, using the classic scholastic analysis of sacrament in terms of *sacramentum tantum*, *res et sacramentum* and *res tantum*, ie the sign itself as signifier, what is signified, and the ultimate outcome. Or, as Searle

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<sup>38</sup> 12.

<sup>39</sup> 13.

<sup>40</sup> 14.

puts it, the ritual behaviour itself, the new ecclesial reality it brings about, and union with God.<sup>41</sup>

The first level of participation is participation in ritual behaviour. Searle highlights four characteristics of ritual behaviour. Firstly it is collective. Liturgy, he says, is 'the action of the assembled people as a whole' though 'not everyone is required to do everything at the same time'.<sup>42</sup> Secondly it is formal, i.e. is 'always more or less predictable', being governed by established rules. '[Ritual] is a kind of dance, in which the partners trust each other to do what they are supposed to do'.<sup>43</sup> Thirdly ritual is performance. It is 'something that is *done*' and it is 'a performance that makes a difference ... [especially] by creating, modifying, or sustaining *relationships*' (e.g. marriage rites).<sup>44</sup> Fourthly it is formative. It 'is the rehearsal or appropriate enactment of relationships: our relationship to God, to one another, to those who have gone before us, to those who will come after us, and to the world as a whole'.<sup>45</sup>

The second level of participation is participation in the liturgy as the work of Christ; it is 'our being drawn into a living participation in Christ's own sacrifice of obedience'. Human worship acceptable to God has to be 'an offering of one's whole self, with and in Christ, to God ... our identification with Christ in his radical obedience to

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<sup>41</sup> 17-18.

<sup>42</sup> 20.

<sup>43</sup> 21.

<sup>44</sup> 22-23.

<sup>45</sup> 24-25.

God'.<sup>46</sup> For the baptized this means 'a new set of relationships to Christ, to the Church and to the world'.<sup>47</sup> These relationships are founded on faith, i.e. our personal participation in the faith of the Church which in turn is a participation in the faith of Jesus Christ.

The third level of participation is participation in the life of God.

Ultimately, then, full, conscious, active participation in the liturgy of the Church means nothing less than full, conscious, active participation in the life of grace, lived and manifested individually and collectively, as union with God and communion with all humanity.<sup>48</sup>

It is 'a participation in the communitarian life of God' who is at once the one beyond all naming, the Christ, and the Spirit, and a participation in history, in God's work of transforming humanity.<sup>49</sup>

It is at this point that Searle turns to Guardini's letter with its reference to 'a forgotten way of doing things'. Essentially what Searle is recommending is participation by way of contemplative attention to the forms of symbolic communication that the liturgy employs:

signs of every kind, languages of space and time, roles, gestures, postures and processions, speech and song, prose and poetry, the sight and touch of sacred objects, the smells of balsam and incense, the colors of vestments and paraments, lights and flowers, icons and statues.<sup>50</sup>

'Even,' he says, 'to attend to some of them at any given liturgy would promote the fullest, most conscious, and most active participation possible in the liturgical event.' In this he echoes what Kathleen

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<sup>46</sup> 28.

<sup>47</sup> 30.

<sup>48</sup> 38.

<sup>49</sup> 37-44.

<sup>50</sup> 48.

Hughes has to say in the chapter entitled 'Paying Attention' in her 1999 book, *Saying Amen: A Mystagogy of Sacrament.*, what Mary Collins wrote on 'Contemplative Participation' in her short book of 1990, *Contemplative Participation: Sacrosanctum Concilium Twenty-Five Years Later*<sup>51</sup>, and what Patrick Collins argued in 1983 in his thoughtful book, *More Than Meets the Eye*.<sup>52</sup> Searle offers an explanation of Guardini's somewhat obscure term, the 'liturgical act':

The "liturgical act" is essentially a sacramental mindset, a way of looking and seeing more than meets the eye. It has everything to do with faith, "the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen" (Heb 11:1), brought to bear on any part of the liturgy or the liturgy as a whole. It is ultimately an encounter with, in, and through liturgy for the sake of the world.<sup>53</sup>

If this all sounds just too inward, Searle hastens to address the outward dimension of liturgy. Like Virgil Michel he wants to forge 'the connection between the liturgy itself and the forms of social life'.<sup>54</sup> This has

both a negative and a positive side. Positively, the liturgy rehearses and embodies the spirit of solidarity, of self-sacrifice for the common good, and proper use of the material goods of creation. On the negative side, liturgy and social justice are related because they both suffer from the common enemies — radical individualism (freedom without commitment) and totalitarian socialism (commitment without freedom).<sup>55</sup>

To achieve this we have to own the Council's understanding of the Church as 'an efficacious sign or sacrament of intimacy with God and

<sup>51</sup> Mary Collins. *Contemplative Participation. Sacrosanctum Concilium Twenty-Five Year Later.* Collegeville, Liturgical Press, 1990.

<sup>52</sup> Patrick W. Collins. *More Than Meets the Eye.* NY: Paulist Press, 1983.

<sup>53</sup> 66.

<sup>54</sup> 68

<sup>55</sup> 69.



of the unity among the peoples of the world'.<sup>56</sup> The Church therefore 'has to operate...not only in the private realm of people's private lives, but in the public realm where the common weal is at stake'. For this reason he warns us of the ambiguity of the word 'community'. It is a word that is 'heavy with nostalgia for older, simpler, more settled times'.<sup>57</sup> He goes on:

attempts to develop a community spirit in and through the liturgy...invariably serve simply to obscure the real basis of our identification with each other — which is not ethnic, nor socio-economic, or affective, or a matter of institutional pride or loyalty, but our common life in Christ.<sup>58</sup>

He wants us to take seriously

the realities of modern life ... [that] (1) many of the people we are closest to, our "community" if you like, are scattered across the country and maybe even the globe; (2) we may or may not find a "home away from home" and a new collection of "significant others" in our local parish ...; and (3) most of the people with whom we gather on Sundays will be people we do not know and whose faces we may not even recognize.<sup>59</sup>

He urges us to abandon the false ideal of intimate fellowship and be content with being what Parker Palmer called 'a company of strangers'. As a 'company of strangers', we 'will often have little in common beyond our common humanity and the Spirit poured into our hearts in baptism'.<sup>60</sup> He poses a question for us:

Instead of regarding the people at the core [of the parish] as normative and their mutual involvement as a model for everyone else (which is neo-clericalism), what would happen if we accepted that it is the people on the

<sup>56</sup> 71. Cf *Lumen Gentium* #1.

<sup>57</sup> 72.

<sup>58</sup> 73.

<sup>59</sup> 74.

<sup>60</sup> 75.

fringe who are normative, that it is the stranger, not the friend, who is the typical “companion”?

Now this sounds a little more promising as far as our dilemma is concerned. It frees us up to accept the fact that there is and will continue to be a huge variation in the degree of participation within our worshipping congregations. I’m not sure, however, how this acknowledgement sits with Searle’s idealistic account of contemplative participation.

Leaving that aside, one of the possibilities that the image of ‘a company of strangers’ opens up for us is that of becoming a ‘community of memory’. The parish as a ‘community of memory’ would keep alive not only the biblical narratives but also the stories of the local church so as to, in Robert Bellah’s words, ‘connect our aspirations for ourselves with the aspirations of a larger whole’. A ‘community of memory’ would continually enlarge our horizons and enable us to participate in what Karl Rahner famously called ‘the liturgy of the world’. In this perspective, ‘the liturgy of Christ’s death and resurrection is ... the culmination of the whole dramatic unfolding of living and dying, of warring and loving, of joy and sin and suffering and growth that makes up human history’.<sup>61</sup> The psalms, the General Intercessions and the Eucharistic Prayer all connect us to this liturgy of the world. They are our prayers ‘as a priestly people, a community of memory, a people who will not forget

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<sup>61</sup> 79.

or escape into fantasy', a people in 'solidarity with the rest of humanity' both in and beyond the liturgy.<sup>62</sup>

The question is, is Mark Searle's vision of liturgy as a community of strangers participating in ritual behaviour, in the work of Christ, and in the life of God by means of contemplative attention to the rite itself an 'escape into fantasy'? Aren't we here to share the problems we have with the most ambiguous celebrations of the parish — the rites that are attended by many who are unchurched and liturgically illiterate — the first Communion Masses, the confirmation ceremonies, the infant baptisms, the weddings and funerals, the Easter and Christmas observances? These are the celebrations where perhaps the majority of those attending may be uncritical and unconscious creatures of the prevailing culture and even more vulnerable than regular worshippers to the pervasive blandishments of its materialism, hedonism, individualism and pragmatism. These are congregations for whom 'contemplative attention' is quite foreign. What are we to do?

Searle it would seem, along with others, would have us hold the liturgy in high regard and take very seriously what the Constitution says in #7: 'Rightly, then, the liturgy is considered as an exercise of the priestly office of Jesus Christ'. It describes the liturgy as a 'great work wherein God is perfectly glorified and the recipients made holy'. In this view liturgy is much more God's work on us than our

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<sup>62</sup> 85.

work and what we have to do is surrender ourselves to it and let God's work be done. Above all we must allow ourselves to be taken beyond the confines of our own individual worlds into the larger world that is the body of Christ. To the extent, then, that we let ourselves become the body of Christ, we shall be a force for the transformation of human society and the world we inhabit.

Let me finish with an alternative — dissenting — view. Nathan Mitchell in his monograph *Liturgy and the Social Sciences* in the American Essays in Liturgy series refers to Guardini's letter and comments: 'Guardini's impassioned plea for relearning "a forgotten way of doing things" quickly became a kind of talismanic text, especially among people working in the field of pastoral liturgy'.<sup>63</sup> Further on he describes Searle and others as belonging to 'the "high church" camp of Catholic liturgists. What characterizes this body of scholars is their view that ritual serves to maintain social cohesion, reinforce corporate identity, instil shared values, and convey received meanings.

What Mitchell wants to do is to recognize and affirm what ritual scholar Ronald Grimes calls 'emerging ritual'. Citing the rituals of AA meetings and of family life in America, Mitchell describes 'emerging ritual' as inventive, creative, variable, embodied, self-interpreting, even playful and irreverent. Towards the end of the essay, he concludes that 'the power of ritual is thus far more local,

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<sup>63</sup> Nathan Mitchell. *Liturgy and the Social Sciences*. American Essays in Liturgy. Series Editor, Edward Foley. Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1999. 9.

strategic, messy, imprecise, ordinary, flexible, ambiguous, and indeterminate than the high church liturgist might wish us to believe'.<sup>64</sup> Can you hear Gueranger groaning in his grave? Mitchell writes:

Ritual *does* embody religious dispositions, faith and truth, but it does so in a manner that is far more homely, local and imprecise than some anthropologists (and some liturgists) might assume. Religious ritual is a kind of *bricolage*, an act cobbled together from whatever is immediately at hand and available for use ... The stuff of ritual *is* the stuff of the common-sense world. On this point the Christian liturgy has stubbornly insisted for almost two millennia. It is the stuff of spittle, salt, water, bread, wine, light, fragrance, touch, taste, smell.<sup>65</sup>


On this basis it would seem that Mitchell would be far more at home with our motley lot of unchurched liturgically-illiterate Catholics turning up for the odd special celebration than would Searle. He would also seem to connect more immediately with a new generation that is characterized by a wealth of choices, a wish to keep options open, and a determination to make their own meanings out of the smorgasbord of possibilities.

Are we faced with a hard choice between Searle's liturgical high-mindedness and Mitchell's ritual rudeness? Must we choose between a liturgy that resists and rejects the allurements of culture or one that revels in its earthy ambiguities? I don't believe so. It's a dynamic dialectic rather than an intractable dichotomy. 'The Word became flesh' after all. But what Mitchell and Searle do is give us some contrasting bearings for the way ahead. There's no single correct

<sup>64</sup> 89.

<sup>65</sup> 91.

answer to the question as to how we should celebrate key sacramental rites in such a way as to engage the once-upon-a-timers. There are all sorts of strategies we might imagine and employ to good effect. But there'll be no quick solution to the problem. Or is it not so much a problem as a possibility?



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## Book Review

*Uniting in Worship 2* (Sydney: Uniting Church Press, 2005)

*Uniting in Worship* (UiW) was a major achievement when it was published in 1988. It represented the fruition of eleven years of work of the Commission on Liturgy appointed at the inaugural Assembly of the Uniting Church in Australia.

During the early 1980s orders of service had been drawn up to bring together the three worship traditions of the Congregational, Methodist and Presbyterian churches. UiW was published in two editions: a People's Book and a Leader's Book. The latter contained a number of services not in the People's Book and also the full text of each service. The People's Book contained some outline services, with only the texts required by the people. Both books were needed to conduct worship.

With the publication of *Uniting in Worship 2* (UiW2) in 2005, the necessity of two books is superseded. Over the period between the two publications, members of the National Working Group on Worship have taken into account developments in biblical scholarship and theology, developments in liturgical thinking (especially in the ecumenical context), growth in understanding of their own developing tradition, and have been involved in the on-going discussions about liturgical language.

Extensive developments in technology have also taken place since 1998. This has enabled the Working Group to publish one book-based resource as well as other resources on CD ROM and a DVD, together with resources from UiW continuing to be available on a website. This will enable ongoing developments to be made available to the church as they occur. Clearly, for the Uniting Church, the current worship resources are always in process. This is made clear in the Preface where some areas of further development are envisaged (ordination and commissioning rites, baptism and associated rites, as well resources in languages other than English).

Whilst all the services within UiW2 are approved by the Assembly Standing Committee for use, this is not a 'Prayer Book' in that these and only these services are authorised. It is a book of worship resources, providing for local adaptation and offering a plenitude of choices. These include the sorts of language used in the rites. Three types of language are described: 'high register' language (often dense in meaning), 'medium register' language (longer sentences, wider range of imagery and of human experience), and 'low register' language (more colloquial and conversational). UiW2 uses the first two registers but not the third. It also includes an expanded use of metaphors for the addressing and naming of God.

As well as the liturgical texts and directions for use (rubrics) there is, on the right hand side of the page, a series of 'blubrics' — theological or historical background and references printed in blue. Whilst these

are often scriptural citations, sometimes they go much further to explain the use or Christian meaning of a symbol or ritual action. This reviewer does not always find this helpful. Often the 'blubric' *limits* the Christian meaning. Some examples of this are: "Confirmation has two meanings: the Church confirms God's promises declared in baptism, and we affirm our willingness to live by that faith" (p80). In the First Service for the Lord's Day, at the *Agnus Dei* (p 181) the 'blubric' reads "Here we pray for the benefits of Jesus' sacrifice on the cross, calling on him as Lamb of God (see John 1:29, Hebrews 10, Revelation 5:6-14)". Whilst this may be one way to interpret the Christian meaning of the *Agnus Dei*, it is far from being the only one. It entirely ignores its liturgical meaning/use as a Fraction Anthem. The text is meant to be joined with an action, which will in turn colour its meaning, which may be quite different from the explanation offered in the 'blubric'. Other instances border on the patronising. In the Great Prayer of Thanksgiving in the Second Service for the Lord's Day, the following 'blubric' appears after the *Sanctus* and *Benedictus* "In these paragraphs the history of salvation is told" (p 213). This is, or should be, self-evident.

The book contains seven major liturgical sections. First comes Baptism and related services, with the first subsection containing new material, for the catechumenate: rites of welcome, calling, and for Lent. These resources are one of the highlights of this revision. They follow the traditional pattern (as reflected in RCIA and others) but with a freshness and openness. The rite of baptism itself follows a

fairly traditional pattern. There are also various rites of baptismal reaffirmation in this section.

The second major section is the Service for the Lord's Day. Like most sections there are extensive pastoral and liturgical Notes provided before coming to the actual text of the rite. These Notes are very helpful indeed, providing not only some liturgical teaching, but also some very practical suggestions. One of the distinct advantages of providing a book of liturgical resources rather than an authorised Prayer Book is that these Notes do not have to undergo thorough scrutiny and can therefore be very useful in bringing the texts to a living enactment. There is an important emphasis on liturgical shape and structure — a strong and important emphasis throughout the entire book. They are commended both to ministers and congregations. This writer also thinks they would be useful for members of other churches to help bring their own traditions to life.

This section contains two Services for the Lord's Day, both capable of being used as a Service of the Word or as a complete Eucharist. The First Service is basically material from UiW. The Second Service is more widely revised. New to this section is also a large amount of resource material for the various sections, the Lord's Prayer in languages other than English, and notes on using music in worship.

There is a vast amount of resource material. I counted (I think) twenty-two Great Prayers of Thanksgiving (including a number on the

CD ROM). With so many options there is something for everyone here. The question needs to be asked, "Is this too many?" The material is a little uneven and some Prayers seem to have "written by a committee" stamped all over them, as seen in the flow of the Prayer and a mixture of linguistic styles and images within the same Prayer. Some are quite didactic. Others are more in the broad ecumenical tradition.

Particular attention should be drawn to the Great Prayer on p313, called "a joint Anglican-Uniting text", earlier versions being found in Anglican and Uniting sources, originating with the late Congregationalist liturgist Harold Leatherland. This Prayer is the exact same text as the fourth Great Thanksgiving in the Second Order of Holy Communion in the Anglican *A Prayer Book for Australia*. Certainly this Prayer has been developed with consultation between representatives of both Churches. One translation of *lex orandi lex credendi* is "we believe what we pray". If this dictum is true — and this writer believes that it is — then the use of the same Eucharistic Prayer in the two Churches raises questions about Eucharistic belief and practice between the Churches. Does this Prayer mean that the Churches believe the same about the Eucharist? If so, what is to prevent intercommunion? Of course there are other questions of ministry, order and authority to be considered. In my view, these are secondary to *lex orandi lex credendi*. If nothing else, some interesting questions are raised where two traditions can use identical Eucharistic Prayers.

“Using Music in Worship” (pp345ff) is a very useful introduction to this important topic. Not only does this essay seek to promote the use of music within the liturgy, at various places within the rites themselves music is provided within the text. Whilst there is a danger that this will be the only music ever used at these points, the Uniting Church is to be congratulated in taking most seriously the matter of music enlivening the text. This is a step that other liturgical churches might emulate, rather than simply relegating music to rubrics and some Notes. The book also has a number of lists of suggested hymns, particularly in the pastoral services.

Within pastoral resources there are Marriage and related services, Funerals and related services and a section of Pastoral services including the blessing of a home, healing, reconciliation and a new service for healing for those whose marriage is ending or has ended. In the Marriage section there is a new Service of blessing of an engaged couple. This is a welcome inclusion and reflects the need for seeing Marriage as a process rather than a thirty-minute wedding event. In Funerals, there are new services for use when a death occurs around the time of birth, and a service for All Saints’ Day with the remembrance of departed loved ones included.

The Lectionary section is an important expansion of material in UiW. First, the UCA has adopted the ecumenical *Revised Common Lectionary* for Sundays. This means that in Australia, Anglicans and Uniting Church congregations are invited to read the same lections on



any given Sunday. The use of this lectionary is very widespread amongst English speaking churches around the world. The exception is within the Roman Catholic communion, though this is where the 'three-year' system originated.

The liturgical Calendar has a much-expanded list of other commemorations, varying from ancient commemorations like John Chrysostom (Jan 27) to more recent ones like Mother Teresa of Calcutta (September 5<sup>th</sup>) and Alan Walker (January 29<sup>th</sup>). February 3<sup>rd</sup> is listed as "The First Christian Service in Australia". This is historically doubtful: Anglicans changed the name of this day from "First Christian Service in Australia" to "First Anglican Service at Sydney Cove". There is fairly strong evidence that there were Christian services of at least Anglican and Roman Catholic traditions in Western Australia at least one hundred years earlier! More important than these last matters is the inclusion of rites for Ash Wednesday, Passion/Palm Sunday, Holy Week, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday rites and an order for the Easter Vigil. These are drawn from the classical rites as seen in other Churches. To encourage their use a DVD is supplied with the celebration of an Easter Vigil in a UCA parish. This is a very helpful way of introducing such material to congregations never having seen such celebrations before. This is another of the gems of this publication.

The CD ROM is also an excellent resource, containing all the material in the book, together with current ordination and commissioning

services, and an enormous amount of extra resource materials. Some music is also included, together with occasional services such as Anzac Day, and some useful teaching articles (for example, on the use of oil in worship).

In the Acknowledgements section the very first acknowledgement is to the Australian Consultation on Liturgy (ACOL), the official liturgical discussion group for all the major churches in Australia. It is a place where much liturgical sharing of ideas and resources takes place. UiW2 has been on ACOL's agenda for some years now, and the influence of other traditions is clearly seen in many places in the book. ACOL belongs to the *English Language Liturgical Consultation* (ELLC), a group made up of representatives of all the major English-speaking Churches around the globe, and ELLC translations of many of the common texts are used in the book. Liturgy has been an ecumenical venture for some decades now, and UiW2 demonstrates how such ecumenical sharing can be enormously beneficial.

UiW2 is a fine liturgical resource — a book with accompanying electronic resources. It provides the fruits of ecumenical sharing of liturgical resources. If there is a broad criticism, it is that the resources contain too much material. Ministers and congregations may be well be overwhelmed with such a plethora of choices. The wealth of material will provide resources well beyond what most congregations will need or use. Trained leaders, clergy or lay, will

provide the most effective use of the various materials. It is to be hoped that the Uniting Church will take seriously the liturgical formation of its leaders so that, as Paul Walton writes in the Introduction, "this work will bear much fruit in the enrichment of the worship life of the Uniting Church in the coming years, to the eternal glory of the triune God of love". And, please God, may these resources enrich other Churches as well.

— *Rev'd Dr Ronald Dowling*

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