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In This Issue …

We begin a two-part commentary on the Three Days of the Paschal Triduum. In this first section our authors step back and take a broad look; in the second part (which will appear in the February-March 1990 issue) we provide a commentary on “Preparing and Celebrating the Paschal Feasts,” a recent circular letter from the Vatican Congregation for Divine Worship.

Our desire in this issue is to stimulate some broad thinking about a “future reform of Holy Week. The Holy Week celebrations were first reformed (in this century) in 1956, which was six years before the Second Vatican Council began and fifteen years before the English version of the final Holy Week reform went into effect (1971). While quite radical for those days, the reformers were affected, no doubt, by the climate of “no change” that pervaded those times before the Council. The general success of this reform added considerably to the growing awareness of a need for the much wider reform of the Sunday liturgy as well. The call of John XXIII for an ecumenical council followed shortly after these reforms.

The rituals that we presently celebrate were slightly revised when the Sacramentary and Lectionary were prepared (1968) and translated (1970). But, in regard to the Three Days, these changes were more along the line of adding options and revising the tone of the liturgy rather than a wholesale re-examination of the rituals themselves.

The obvious question arises whether the preconciliar atmosphere provided an adequate environment for a revision of the central act of our liturgy. What elements do we know now that the reformers of 1956 were unable even to consider in their reform? Or, quite simply, based on what we know now: Did the 1956 reform of the Three Days work?

In preparing this issue, we used a method for inviting reactions from our writers: We developed a position paper, invited comments on some broad topics, and then circulated some of those articles for further comments. As you will discover, this issue has a wonderful integration, and its unity is quite evident.

Gerard Sloyan and Joan Chittister raise a fundamental question: Do you reform the ritual and ceremonies so that they affect the people more, or do your reform the people so that they are better able to participate in the ritual and ceremonies? Is our need to change ritual or people? Most generations have taken the second approach. Generally we have understood that rituals don’t change very often and that people need to be educated in the “ways of God.” We have stressed the importance of conforming to an existing system and called for change in people’s living patterns.

But in our times, we have experienced a tremendous change in ritual patterns, not only in Roman Catholicism, but in other Christian traditions and in Jewish ritual as well. We have experienced a reformation. Why has such a huge revolution occurred in our times, and only for the second time in history? While previous reformers asked, “Can we change the rituals?”, our generation is not afraid to ask the question, “Should we change the rituals?”

This issue can best be used by clergy and musicians to stimulate discussion and comments about Holy Week. As you begin your long-range preparation for the Paschal Triduum, circulate this issue among those preparing. The proposals of Sloyan and Chittister need implementation; the ideas of Funk and Truitt require long-range reflection; the practical suggestions of Struyski and Blondell need to grow in more parishes. And then dream a bit with Don Neumann about what Holy Week could be like.

Nothing is more central to our religious practice than participating in the death-resurrection of Jesus; and nothing is more challenging and relevant to our times.
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Cover: Rev. Richard Lawrence lighting the new fire, St. Vincent de Paul Parish, Baltimore, MD.
Photo courtesy of Denise Walker.

Additional photographs courtesy of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA).
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Below: St. Thomas St. Catherine Liturgical Choir

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Association News

Member News

Convention Issue Coming

Since this issue was prepared before the National Convention began (type was set the week before the Convention opened), the October-November issue of Pastoral Music will be devoted to the Convention in Long Beach and the many developments for the Association during that special time, when so many musicians and clergy are able to be together and celebrate our mutual work together. The December-January issue of the magazine will present a commentary on the new Order of Christian Funerals (due to be released this fall); and the February-March 1990 issue will be the second part of our commentary on the Three Days.

New Books from The Pastoral Press

The Pastoral Press is the publications division of the National Association of Pastoral Musicians. It provides tools for those in worship ministry, including practical guides, resource material, and liturgical scholarship. Three new books dealing with liturgy with children have just been released this summer.

Gather the Children (Cycle A) by Mary Catherine Berglund completes her three-year cycle of suggestions for celebrating the liturgy of the word with children in a separate place. What makes this extensive publication so unique is its liturgical approach. Most other books for children have been developed from an “educational” approach, that is, designed to have children “learn” the liturgy; Gather the Children is designed to have the children “celebrate” the liturgy. The Cycle A volume (more than 200 pages) costs $19.95.

Sing to the Lord an Old (a New) Song (54-page leader’s book, cassette) by Dolores Hruby and Susan Tindall provides a practical way to teach children about hymns. But equally important, it is a comprehensive yet absolutely simple program for music education and integrating the children into the entire parish. Here’s how it works. Ten standard hymns (from the ICEL Resource Collection) are selected, reflecting the church year. The children, either in nonschool religious education programs or in the parish school, use one hymn during a liturgical season. The texts are presented in word games, reflections on the religious meaning of the words, and the like. The music is contained on the cassette (for use by a non-musician teacher).

At the same time that the children are learning about the hymn, the parish uses this same hymn in its liturgy, so that when the children come to the eucharist, the ideas that they have been learning in school are reinforced in the liturgical setting. The parish is alerted to the hymn text and the fact that the children are using this text as their reflection on the season. The entire parish, in Sunday liturgy and education programs, is thus united, and the experiences of the various groups are used to reinforce one another. It is absolutely simple... but effective beyond words. Sing to the Lord an Old (a New) Song: $7.50 book only, $12.50 book and cassette.

Jack Miffleton’s latest book, Sunday’s Child, is a practical workbook that shows how to adapt the liturgy for Masses with children and adults and for gatherings of children only. The full text of the Directory for Masses with Children is included, as well as examples of ways to choose music and texts. Miffleton illustrates a basic way to teach children the rhythm and flow of liturgy, how to build on family traditions, and how to involve the children in the celebration. Sunday’s Child: 64 pages, $7.50.

More on Membership Fees

For only the second time in its thirteen-year history, the National Association of Pastoral Musicians has raised its membership rates. The obvious increases in costs of paper, printing, postage, and the like, along with necessary salary and benefit increases in response to inflation, have made the membership rate increases necessary in order to maintain a balanced budget.

In addition to increasing the rates, however, we have taken this opportunity to define more clearly the categories of membership and the ways that fees are divided between dues and magazine subscriptions. We have also introduced a new concept: “levels” of membership.

There are two membership categories: parish membership and individual membership. The distinction between them is that a parish membership can have multiple members, while individual memberships are restricted to one person. The difference in benefits is that a parish membership extends the member benefits (including discounts on our programs) to everyone in the parish under the one membership number, whether they are listed on the parish membership or not; while the benefits of individual membership cannot be extended beyond the one member.

NPM’s membership goal remains the same: to register every parish in the United States as a regular parish member, that is, to have at least one clergy staff person and one musician from every parish as a member of NPM. Because music ministry so involves the clergy, NPM continues to insist that even if the clergy cannot sing or if they lack expertise in music, their support is essential for effective music ministry in the parish.

The fees for parish and individual membership are divided into two parts. Since members receive a subscription to Pastoral Music magazine, part of the fee is the subscription cost and the rest, of course, is membership dues. The subscription cost for members ($18 per year) is discounted from the non-member subscription price ($24 per year). For parish memberships of three or more people, there is an additional
discount on the magazine rate for every member after the first two ($16 per year for those additional members in the parish group).

Since all members must pay membership dues, the dues portion of the annual fee begins at $30 for parish membership and $20 for individual membership. The membership fee chart on this page gives you the various totals for subscription and dues for members.

Subscriptions to Pastoral Music will be available to individuals and libraries, but subscribers are not members of the Association.

In addition to encouraging parish membership, we also encourage participation in the divisions of the Association. Several special division are planned, but at the moment the Director of Music Ministries Division (DMMMD) is available for full-time, paid, parish music ministers. The fee is an additional $10 per year.

The truly new idea that we have introduced with this membership fee increase is "levels of membership" (as shown on the chart). NPM has been convinced from pastoral experience that not all parishes are the same, and one of the most significant differences among parishes is the size of their annual income. Often that figure drastically influences what can or cannot be done. While NPM doesn’t want to "impose" a membership fee based on income, we do feel it is fair...to the larger parishes and the smaller parishes...that memberships be offered so that the larger parishes can support the work in a more proportional way. Therefore we have set levels. We suggest that parishes with an annual income over $350,000 raise the membership part of their annual dues from $30 to $40; and those over $500,000 annual income are encouraged to raise that portion of their annual dues from $30 to $50. Some people laughed when we began discussing this idea. One person said that "it would never work." NPM believes that people who work in the church understand the truth of this plan and will voluntarily adjust their own dues payments accordingly. The membership fee chart has these amounts worked out for you.

Your Membership Number

NPM uses computers, and computers seem to like numbers better than names. Your membership number appears on the upper left corner of the mailing label on this magazine. It consists of five numbers, a letter, and a single number. Jot it down so that the next time you are looking for your membership number, you'll have it.

National Staff Transitions

Tom Wilson has taken a position with the Board of Pharmaceutical Specialties, headquartered in the District of Columbia, so after four years as the meeting planner for NPM, he has moved on to another field. We wish him well in his new career. Thank you, Tom, for the fine service you have rendered to the members of this Association.

Nathan Mitchell has been hired as Membership Director. With an illustrious career as a teacher, lecturer, and author, Nathan brings an invaluable knowledge of the liturgical field.

Charlotte Ivy, the accounts receivable clerk and the "telephone voice" of The Pastoral Press, has taken a position as assistant bookkeeper. We hope you get to speak to her replacement when you call in your orders!

Together in MENC

As we reported last year (Pastoral Music June-July 1988 [125]) 7, NPM is an auxiliary organization in MENC (The Music Educators National Conference). Auxiliary organizations support MENC's goals and sometimes share in its national and state conventions and programs, although such organizations do not have to demand that their members also be members of MENC (unlike "affiliated" and "associated" organizations, which do have such membership requirements). Since many of our members are also music educators, we wanted to voice our support of MENC’s purposes by this formal cooperation.

And as reported in MENC Soundpost (53, Spring 1988), NPM is in interesting company. That newsletter contains a brief summary of all the affiliated, associated, and auxiliary organizations allied to MENC. Along with NPM, the auxiliaries are: the American Choral

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$18 per year of each member's fee pays for a subscription to Pastoral Music Magazine for the term of membership.

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How Do You Spell "Church"?

In its May Newsletter, the Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy suggested a rereading of articles 1-13 of the Constitution on the Liturgy. Those articles develop the "ecclesiological and christological framework for a proper understanding of the nature of liturgy." Since our understanding of liturgy and its role is so entwined with our understanding of Christ's mission and the role of the church, the article suggests, it is very important that we examine what we mean by "church" and compare it to the scripturally-based ecclesiology found in the Constitution.

An inadequate appreciation of the implications of this scripturally-based ecclesiology often leads to misunderstandings on many levels of the Church's life, most visibly when the Church gathers for liturgy. Too often liturgical tensions find their root cause, not in aberrant liturgical practices, but in a defective understanding of the nature of the Church. Parish liturgy committees and diocesan liturgical commissions can benefit from analyzing the effects that differing ecclesiologies have upon the continuing reform and promotion of the liturgy. Just as some have balked at a view of the Church as a pilgrim people embracing the mission of Christ, others have welcomed the concept yet pushed aside much of the Church's rich tradition by espousing an ecclesiology which emphasizes the parish community to the exclusion of the local and the universal Church. Neglecting the Church's comprehensive self-understanding will inevitably thwart the development of quality liturgical celebrations. In liturgy, especially the eucharist, the Church experiences its preeminent self-manifestation. On any level... how a particular community views itself is revealed through the liturgy.
co-workers" with the bishop and the way local structures can support the bishop’s role, especially a liturgical commission and a diocesan worship office or resource person. The two final sections describe the work of national (FDLC and the BCL) and international (ICEL and the Congregation for Divine Worship/ Discipline of the Sacraments) organizations.

The Directory for Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest comes from the Congregation for Divine Worship. It begins with a description of the Christian Sunday that lays emphasis on the full celebration of the eucharist as the "only true actualization of the Lord's paschal mystery and as the most complete manifestation of the Church.

Other celebrations of the liturgy of the word and eucharistic communion must be seen as "substitutional," but never as "the optimal solution to new difficulties nor as a surrender to mere convenience." As we mentioned before (Pastoral Music, December-January 1989 [13:2] 10) this document presents music as integral to celebrations in the absence of a priest.

Both of these documents are available from the USCC Office of Publishing and Promotion Services, 3211 Fourth Street, NE, Washington, DC 20017.

A third publication reminds us of the advances made in the incorporation of people with disabilities into our liturgical assemblies. Celebrate and Challenge was published by the National Catholic Office for Persons with Disabilities (NCPD) to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the Pastoral Statement of the U.S. Catholic Bishops on Handicapped People. It says, in part:

NCPD’s hope of "opening doors" to persons with disabilities has become a reality in many parishes: more churches are totally accessible; some provide sign language interpretation of their liturgies; persons with visual impairment or orthopedic disabilities are lectors or members of the choir; persons who are mentally retarded or who are deaf are Eucharistic Ministers or ushers. Integration is expressed in all its depth and beauty in the Eucharistic assembly where all become one body.

NPM congratulates those parishes that offer the witness of assemblies of such "depth and beauty" and thanks NCPD for continuing to challenge the rest of us to ministry with persons with disabilities not because of the disabilities but because [Christ] died for all.

The document is available from the National Catholic Office for Persons with Disabilities, PO Box 29113, Washington, DC 20017.

A fourth publication comes from SMS Publications. Progressions is a twice-yearly church music product and services guide directed to church music directors. It offers informative articles written, in most cases, by experts in various fields (e.g., worship resources, musical instruments and technology, sound, and lighting). Some of the articles are pitched toward the evangelical tradition, but many of them contain good, solid information. In addition there are music reviews, product and service comparison charts, and product information. For more information about Progressions write: SMS Publications, Inc., 1418 Lake Street, Evanston, IL 60201. (312) 328-3386.

Publication Number Five is Joy, a new bimonthly newsletter/journal published by The Jubilee Center that explores transformative religious experiences. Its publishers hope that it will serve as a networking vehicle to "help people access more resources for integrating spirit, body and psyche into forms of [holistic] worship that will meet the hunger for challenge and transformation."

Each issue of Joy is projected to contain first-hand accounts of experiential worship, descriptions of practices, rituals, and other ingredients such as music, voice, and movement, and the ways they fit into worship; also book, music, and event reviews; and listings of retreats and other relevant resources. For a free sample copy write: The Jubilee Center, PO Box 663, Waltham, MA 02254. (617) 893-7317.

Melodious Accord + Chorus America = Poems and Songs

Thanks to a grant from Chorus America, Melodious Accord will be able to hold its three-day event called "Poems and Songs" next spring.

It has long been a dream of Melodious Accord to bring together poets, composers, singers, accompanists, musicologists, and other interested persons to explore how words and music relate, how individual voices serve as variations on a theme, the way the solo voice acts as a solo instrument, and the varieties of American song. With the recent grant (one of nineteen under Chorus America’s American Choral Works Performance Program) Melodious Accord has been able to schedule this event for March 9-11, 1990, in New York City. The centerpiece of the event will be a concert that features Alice Parker’s Miliad Ma-trigals, with texts drawn from the sonnets of Edna St. Vincent Millay.

For more information, contact: Melodious Accord, Inc., 801 West End Avenue, Apt. 9D, New York, NY 10025.

Competition

The Southwest Liturgical Conference has announced a Hispanic Composition Competition. Last year’s competition was to produce texts for liturgical celebration. This year the competition is to produce winning musical settings for those texts. All three texts may be set, but each setting is considered a separate entry. Deadline for entries is November 1, 1989, and the winners will be notified by December 1. The first place entry receives $500 and a free trip to the 1990 Study Week in Fort Worth to accept the award. For a complete set of rules and copies of the winning texts, write: Mary McLarry, Chairperson, SWLC Hispanic Music Competition, 800 W. Loop 820 S., Ft. Worth, TX 76108. (Si necesita las reglas en español, escribame y se las enviaré rápidamente.)

Help from a French Colleague

A book with a cover showing a priest in “fiddleback” vestments seated before an almost invisible altar (with a military figure in dress uniform among the ministers in the background) would not appear, at first glance, to be a lot of aid in helping to show Americans How to Understand the Liturgy. But the fact is that this is an excellent book, whose author is not afraid to draw from the past as well as the present in helping his readers understand the liturgy. Jean Lebon is the directing editor of Église Qui Chante, and the English translation of his book is a welcome addition to the literature.

As J. D. Crichton says in his preface: "The great value of Fr. Jean Lebon’s book is that it lays out the underlying truths clearly and applies them to the celebration of the eucharistic liturgy. His attention to the assembly, symbolism, and the liturgy of the word is particularly helpful. The book is available from The Crossroad Publishing Company, 370 Lexington Avenue, New York, NY 10017 ($11.95)."
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The Three Days (Part 1)
The Paschal Triduum: An Enduring Drama

BY GERARD SLOYAN

The Chrism Mass has been celebrated in the cathedral church on Holy Thursday morning. Few attend it besides the clergy, who are there for a twofold, practical reason: to recommit themselves to priestly service in accord with a suggestion of Pope Paul VI, reiterated by his successor, and to obtain the oils blessed at the Chrism Mass for parish use.

These oils of the catechumens and of the sick and the holy chrism of ordination, confirmation, and consecration will play an important part in parish life in the year to come. These sacramentals should not be brought privately to the sanctuary or sacristy without some appropriate reception by the community, for they are the ones who will be strengthened in health or prepared for death through an anointing this year; their infant children, family members, and friends will find a door of entry to the believing community by the application of these fragrant oils.

The liturgy of the Triduum does not specify a mode of receiving the oils publicly. They should at least be brought forward in the entrance procession at the Evening Mass of the Lord’s Supper and placed reverently on the altar as both they and the altar are incensed with accompanying prayers. The oils are three. Prayers they achieve their intended sacramental effect in the year ahead.

Will olive oil, some of it scented with fragrant balm, have retained its symbolic power as we move into the next century? Most worshipers in this country have never seen an olive tree. They may use its fruit in salads or salad dressings or buy it as a cooking oil, but as a sign of health in body, it remains exotic to them. As an ordinary application to tired muscles in an attempt to stay limber, olive oil has almost no occurrence in our midst; if it is employed in the billion-dollar fitness industry, we do not know it. Yet the application of a thousand lotions and skin softeners, commercially prepared and of uncertain composition, is a matter of daily experience. The ones we use are based on petroleum, or linseed, or cotton oil; the peoples of the globe’s warmer climes use oil from the olive. As for aromatic balm or spices, our culture could not be more deeply involved in perfumes, sachets, and fragrances.

For the strength the Spirit imparts, for the influence that the breath of God exerts over the bent world, no symbols will soon replace these ancient ones. The wonders of industrial chemistry do not improve on them. But people need to know of them and their use, not by having a hasty thumb in cotton wadding take them by surprise at an unexpected sacramental moment, but by an invitation to reflect on them in the assembly as signs of the Spirit’s action.

Setting the Tone

The entrance song for the Mass of the Lord’s Supper, taken from Galatians 6, should not be substituted for by anything eucharistic, for it sets the tone for the Triduum, not just for this evening’s celebration: “We should glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, for he is our salvation, our life and our resurrection; through him we are saved and made free.”

The cross is a gallows tree. Cyanide pills and the electric chair send many into eternity, the firing squad and the hangman’s rope many more. Some who are executed are guilty of heinous crimes; but with others in today’s world of racist and ethnic violence, it is “Truth forever on the scaffold, Wrong forever on the throne.” Jeweled crosses, or even crosses as simple jewelry, try to tell something of the glory of Calvary, but

Rev. Gerard Sloyan, a presbyter of the Diocese of Trenton, NJ, is professor of religion at Temple University, Philadelphia, PA. He has been a liturgical minister during the sacred Triduum in one role or another, child and adult, over a sixty-year period.
necent victims by knives and guns must be brought home to us. If there is to be life in the world, there must be an end to such death.

The rite of foot washing—the “maundy” of “Maundy Thursday” (from “Mandatum novum do vobis,” “A new commandment I give you”—can be questioned as to symbolic fitness in a world that goes largely shod and is accustomed to quite different signs of hospitality and service. What would convey Jesus’ action better? Taking people’s coats at the door and pressing a drink

One cannot love one’s country’s wars or abide its violence and pray the prayers of these days in good conscience.

on them in the next breath is utterly banal. How do we serve each other?

One common way is by preparing and serving a meal; that is our chief means of expressing friendship. In Jesus’ case the issue was one of teacher and disciples, superior to the service of inferiors, but made equal by the deed. The pastor changing the teenager’s tire, the corporation president providing coffee and sandwiches for the custodial staff, the dean doing the photocopying for the graduate assistant—meaningful symbols in the order of service are not easy. Appropriate gestures do what consults the ease of the guests, in any case, rather than imposing a rubrical, iron form on them.

This is not an evening to remind anyone that the host is in charge at the party. People see through stagy gestures in a minute (the prelate in the soup kitchen while the cameras click). Doing a thing the way people most want it done is the essence of service, capitulating to their needs and desires. That is Jesus’ way as servant and friend. He saved us by accepting the maximum inconvenience. What will symbolize this best, not as between pastor and people, but among people who are on an absolute par in their call to service? Much thought must be given to creating the symbols from decade to decade. Men in the public and humbling service of women should be a serviceable sign for a long time to come.

A Ritual Meal, a Sacred Drama

About food and drink at the holy meal: The bread and wine Jesus used to bless God, then share, are not staples everywhere on the globe, but they are almost universally available. What are not to be found everywhere are graciousness, courtesy, and thoughtfulness in meal behavior: the grace of God expressed in human grace. As in St. Paul’s day, a few gorge themselves, and many eat comfortably, while others go hungry. The eucharistic meal is a great leveler: an equal share is given to all in the hope that all will share the goods of the earth, which are given to all.
Congregations ready themselves to serve the Thursday Supper of the Lord. Not all rise to the challenge equally well, preparing and serving it in such a way as to convey the depth of sharing it stands for. At worst, the bread is poor, the cup nonexistent, and the distribution hurried. At best, the body-bread is of excellent quality, the blood-wine a rich red and ample, and the service slow and solicitous. A “Body of Christ” pressed on palm or tongue with the speed of a card dealer is no fit way to convey that this food will achieve the upraising of this Christian’s body on the last day.

Some suppose that until the meal is conducted in meal circumstances, it cannot signal nourishment to the recipients. The last we heard of that was around the year 55 C.E. in Corinth. It has been a ritual meal since then, as it was well before, which was the subject of St. Paul’s reminder. Rites that are celebrated according to the laws of ritual are more forceful symbolically than anything else in the realm of the ordinary.

At the Holy Thursday eucharist, therefore, let this ritual meal be served and received with more solemnity than at any other time. Multiple ministers of bread and cup must be in many places around the place of assembly. They must take the pains with each one who comes forward that a good host would in seating guests at ease at table. “But that would take forever!” No, just a little longer, although the memory might last forever—the very point of sacraments as impressive symbols. More than that, in a frenzied culture that eats meals at the desk, on the run, or with family members dropping in and out to attend to the necessity of eating in the shortest possible time, there is the opportunity to show what a meal might be in a human community. In times of physical and cultural starvation, the meal becomes a lost art. The distinct possibility exists that this is what Jesus meant to show, before all else, in coming to us as our food.

The communion service of Good Friday is framed starkly, and such is its intention. If the meal of Thursday, with its instructive Scripture and homily, conveys the parting of friends who will yet be reunited—all joy and song at an event commemorated here in its institution—then Friday looks to the happening that the meal anticipated in Jesus’ day and recalls in our own, and it looks to the event of his coming in glory, which we anticipate. Holy Thursday is gregarious: Jesus and his “little flock [πατάκην].” Good Friday has an air of desolation: the eucharistic Christ visibly absent from his people although available in uninterupted incarnation, even from the tomb. Such is the clear message of being able to commune with him as he is brought in sacrament from a hidden place of reserve.

The late twentieth century is a time when people are surfeited with drama. Once many peoples went a lifetime without seeing a play, except the liturgies in their churches, or the Mahabhara epic in their villages, or the processions that ushered in the new year. Now, worldwide, they have more drama than they can handle. Out of Egypt and India, Hong Kong and the U.S. there spews a surfeit of celluloid drama, much of it violent and pandering to the basest passions. The violence can also be seen on evening television shows; the pandering, on daytime “soaps.”

The drama available in all the media is of such poor quality that people were richer without this pollution of

Doing a thing the way people most want it done is the essence of service, Jesus’ way as servant and friend.

The Lamb. The Vatican Museum.
their minds and sense. It has had two opposite effects on them, however. One is the dulling of their sensibilities, making them incapable of recognizing good drama when they see it. The other, paradoxically, is alerting them to the bad presentation of what might have been a good play. The Good Friday service is potentially a very good play in four acts. One of the four is “talky” and needs to be handled with consummate skill—the bidding prayers for people of various kinds and conditions. But the other acts require an equally high art.

Since any baptized person whose life is in order may speak publicly, the responsibility should be spread around—literally around the congregation. The strong voices, well projected, of people who converse in interesting tones should arise from unexpected places in the assembly. The designation of groups of persons about to be prayed for should be committed to memory. If all the prayers are assigned to one presbyter, that may be an unfair demand on him, since an oratio has the merit of being language in tension. Diffuse wording, the refuge of ill-prepared participants in any play, can destroy the impact. Lengthy drama need not be tedious drama. Badly played, the bidding prayers can be tedious.

The veneration of the cross is a powerful rite, the more so when it is done at a leisurely pace, however crowded the assembly. The bodily posture that brings the lips of believers close to the image of the corpus of Jesus can do more for them than many words. If the “Reproaches” are sung in some haunting melody, the refrain—“My people, what have I done to you? How have I offended you? Answer me!”—may remain. The congregation’s best poets need to be put to work, however, at verses that speak of the ways these worshipers make sport of Christ by treating him cruelly in others. The repetition of medieval lyrics that place the blame on tormentors long dead may confuse modern congregations, keeping from them the truth of where the guilt for Christ’s passion and death lies. Social evil is never banal, but the language describing it can easily be. This must not be let happen to the words that describe the sin that requires redemption by the cross.

The Passion according to John needs explanation before it is read or sung. It is a powerful piece, but if it is heard with the ears of modern history, its effect will be quite the opposite of that intended. Careful homiletic treatment should then precede it, even if none follows it. The homilist needs to have done hard study of the major themes of this Gospel, which peak in chapters eighteen and nineteen. The Johannine irony intended by Caiphas’s proposal that one man die for the people (18:14), the suggestion that ritual purity be avoided while this monstrous injustice is being carried out (v. 28), and the meaning of “truth” and the double meaning of “king of Judea/the Jews”—all must be explored to help people know what to listen for, lest they think they are hearing mere history.

Liturgies of Deliverance

On the Great Night of Easter the new fire rising to the night sky from an outdoor brazier will never lose its impact. The grains of incense being affixed to the Christ Candle may need the briefest explanation, as many people crane to see. The sea of candles lit from the one candle and the Easter proclamation (Praeconium Paschale) need no explanation, but the biblical readings may, cut down to as skeletal a number as four, as they now often are. The homily at the eucharistic rite should be the time for that, for all who were gathered in the narthex or the forecourt and could hear would have listened closely to every word. Why do we recite a truncated history of Israel, indeed of the world since its creation, on this night of all nights? The culmination of this story in the Easter kerygma must make that clear.

The nonverbal symbols of the Triduum Paschale in the West have a marvelous power to endure—if the carefully constructed verbal symbols do not fail them. Christian people at their first seder as the guests of Jews often express the wish that their Christian liturgy of deliverance were like that. It is not like that. Since before the raucous meal that St. Paul reported on at Corinth, things have been different in the two families as they celebrate what is divine deliverance to them. Jews are understandably wary of attending Christian services; so often they have been put off by an overt or a hidden proselytism. If, however, any should come to a Christian assembly on any of these three days, they should be able to say, “Amazing! You have provided a quite different reading of the history of our people. But as you moved about and sang and prayed, I felt at certain moments that I was among my people, not among its ancient adversary.”

2. 1 Corinthians 11:17-34.
3. Editor’s Note. The Mahabharata is a great Indian epic poem that was composed and collected over the course of eight hundred years (400 B.C.E. to 400 C.E.). It now numbers over 100,000 double lines of verse, and its most famous inclusion is the Bhagavad Gita ("Song of God").

The New Year was the greatest annual religious feast in ancient Mesopotamia, and perhaps all of the Near East. It was usually observed at the spring equinox as a celebration of creation and the creator-god, renewing the victory of the creator over chaos. The ceremonies often involved processions through the fields and the enthronement of the king as the earthly vice-regent of the god. Israel may have had similar feasts in the spring (Unleavened Bread/Passover) and the fall (Rosh Hashanah/Atonement/Tabernacles), although the Hebrew Bible is quite silent about such themes on these occasions.

4. See GIRM #70 and esp. 71: “If there are several persons present who are empowered to exercise the same ministry, there is no objection to their being assigned different parts to perform. For example, ... if there are several readings, it is better to distribute them among a number of readers. The same applies for the other ministries.”
Whose Drama Is It, Anyway?

BY JOAN D. CHITTISTER, O.S.B.

Gerard Sloyan calls the paschal Triduum “an enduring drama,” and suddenly it becomes clear that the title has unearthed a significant liturgical problem. Drama, you see, engages an audience and interacts with an audience and changes an audience. Drama, in fact, is the one literary form that is done specifically for a live audience in order to evoke a response in them, specifically, and is then dependent on the audience itself to complete its value and evaluate its effects. Drama, in other words, is not private, and it is not passive. Good drama is alive and living and enlivening. It is immediate, immersing, and compelling.

My fear is that the drama has too long belonged to keepers of the historicized Jesus and the local hierarchy.

In that awareness, it seems, may lie the real question that Sloyan’s analysis requires us to face. The question is not simply what kinds of things can be done to invigorate the liturgy for Easter; the question is: What can we do to authenticate our liturgy? The question, in other words, is why we are doing what we are doing. What does our celebrating this particular feast this way do to the people, the Gospel, and the church itself? Just exactly whose drama is it? My fear is that the drama has too long belonged to keepers of the historicized Jesus and the local hierarchy.

Sloyan’s presentation of suggestions for a newly renewed liturgy for the Easter Triduum is powerful; it is also, in my opinion, correct. If anything, it is mild.

Symbols speak another language from the linear, rational one we have all learned to depend on for life’s tidier things, like contracts of ownership, directions to town, or explanations of systems. Symbols speak to the deepest, most feeling parts of us. Symbols tie the past and the present together. The cross on top of the church does not simply evoke in me an image of the church as it is in my life now. The cross on top of my church also arouses memories and feelings of what the church has been in my life long past and what it could be, as well.

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Symbols touch the nonrational and tap the meanings behind the words. When the words a group uses about itself and the feelings that its symbols evoke are congruent—when what I see the Red Cross doing matches what the Red Cross says it is about—then the symbol of that association has confirming importance. When the two are out of sync, however, the tension grows within me, no matter the words.

The fact is that symbols are powerful stuff under any conditions. Church symbols, in particular, send at least three messages that affect society. First, they tell us at the nonconscious level what the church is. Then they
tell us, too, who we are in that church, regardless of what the documents declare us to be. Finally, they tell us who we and the church are together in this world. Gerard Sloyan is pleading for a church of the people that has meaning now. Too often, however, our services simply offer symbols of a clericalized church whose meaning is found only in the dim, dark past, and whose drama includes only the chosen few.

Dangerous, Damaging Symbols
The Easter Triduum is an especially important moment in the tying of the church’s ties with daily life. In the Triduum life and death, crucifixion and resurrection, institution and community vie and struggle and come to terms. Yet what we see played out in the Easter rituals far too often, perhaps, is an image of a church largely removed from present times, owned by one class of people and done to another. The messages of the

Easter Triduum may indeed signal the very life or death of the church itself.

The symbols of the Triduum, in fact, may be far more damaging for what they leave out than for what they include. Rituals that highlight the holy oils of Holy Thursday as treasures given to the priesthood, rather than as balm given for the daily lives of the congregation, do a sad disservice to the meaning of Holy Thursday. Where are the sick themselves, whose public prayers in the liturgy’s course will give witness to their having been strengthened by the grace of the sacrament of healing? Where are the newly ordained, who will proclaim publicly their devotion to the people of God, or the young confirmandi, who will proclaim their own intentions to live the Christian life in public ways? Why should people attend a ceremony that has nothing whatsoever to do with them, if they don’t recognize the oils used, or have had nothing to do with their preparation, or have heard no testimony about the effects or efficacy or memory of power those oils hold for their own lives? The fact is that, say what we will about the place of the oils in the Christian community, if the community never realizes that place, or worse, if they see symbolically that the oils are not their province at all, then all the liturgical documents in the world will never compensate for that lack of identity.

The farewell dinner commemorated on Holy Thursday, as Sloyan implies, was certainly meant to enable Jesus and the Twelve to deal with the pain that

When some people are forgotten, ignored, and rejected in the liturgy itself, what will the words or the gestures really mean?

commonly comes with any passover experiences in life. It was obviously meant to be a preparation for the new costs of discipleship and the unknown challenges of the journey. It was certainly intended to confront the Twelve with the demands of service and to call each of them to examine the depths of their own betrayals. As the center point of the feast, then, it must be meant to do the same for us.

But who would know it? To repeat the washing of the feet without presenting parallel models of sharing and serving as well, in ways that are meaningful to our own time and people, serves simply to make the apparent esoteric. If, on the other hand, ministers of the eucharist left the assembly in splendor to carry the eucharist to the homes of the sick or disabled, then “Do this in memory of me” might take on new meaning for the entire assembly. If we could gather together physically around the table, around the Christ in the bread and wine, around the Christ in each other, as we do at the baptismal font, then perhaps each of us could be
touched by the pains and costs and call to service of that moment in a personal way. If we heard public declarations from the priests and the people of the congregation that they themselves would give specified hours of public service that year, or if Holy Thursday were the day on which we collected food for one hundred families in the city, the foot washing would take on a new reality in a society of the working poor and the obscenely rich.

As it is, the eucharist becomes an increasingly uneasy and triumphalistic celebration of the male priesthood, rather than the acknowledgement of the presence of the food of life, and the foot washing presents the center of the Gospel as unattainable, quaint, bygone, and out of touch. The symbols become symbols of the past rather than goads to new life in the present. What we get in the ceremony, then, without the insertion of contemporary signs of sharing, service, and nurture, is simply a display of priestly presence and solemn pomp, meant probably to enhance the mystery and transcendence of the event, but actually serving only to privatize it. When it is necessary, for instance, for the bishops of a country to determine in solemn session whether or not the feet of women are worthy items for washing in the Holy Thursday ritual, it is difficult to take either the ritual or the church’s call to humility and public service seriously. Perhaps if we want our words and our symbols to mesh in this age, it may be that the feet of women and blacks and refugees should be the only ones washed on Holy Thursday—if we really want to proclaim our commitment to being a voice for the voiceless, lifting up the lowly, and doing as Christ has done.

Three Dominant Issues

The point is that the church is ministering in a world where three issues dominate the human agenda, calling for Gospel truth and Christian commitment: the desire for universal human participation, the growth in consciousness of the immorality of oppression, and the reality of globalism touching every facet of life, political, economic, and social. Glasnost, perestroika, and democratization are not governmental strategies; they are ideas whose time has come. Feminism and the anti-apartheid movement are not communist-dominated plots; they are the cry of the lepers for Jesus’ attention. Ecology is not a fad; it is a return to the mandate of the creation story to “take possession of the earth and till it and care for it.” In this world, the church’s words and symbols must coincide. There is no room for double messages here; there have been double messages for long enough.

When some people are forgotten, some ignored, and others rejected in the liturgy itself, what will the words really mean to a generation that looks to the church to mirror the best of its world, but sees in it only the mirror of a world that is past, oppressive, parochial, and clerical? In liturgies where women are omitted from service at the table “when there are an adequate number of priest present,” who can seriously believe the talk that Jesus died for all, redeemed all, and rose for all? When the poor are left at the door of suburban churches that have no program to serve, bond with, uplift, and nourish those poor, who will find anything but empty play in the foot washing rite or the veneration of the cross on Good Friday? When the simple of the world are used as political pawns, economic chips, and military targets, and never a word is said in their behalf in homilies or petitions in our churches, who will believe that the Scriptures announcing the salvation of Israel have anything whatsoever to do with the world of our own time? When the documents say that no ordained minister is needed to lead the Good Friday services, but ordained ministers always do, who will believe that the table belongs to the people? When the bravely-lit Christ candle of the Easter Vigil brings no light to those who need hope and liberation in our day, when personal spirituality supersedes, undercuts, and overlooks the social dimension of the foot washing, the eucharist, the crucifixion, the resurrection, and the empty tomb’s mandate to us to carry on, then the liturgy does not enliven or engage. Then the symbols and the Gospel are at odds.

So what is this church really saying liturgically about the nature of the church, our place in it, and our role in the world? Indeed the symbols may be far too clear. When we look at rituals centered on the historical Christ but devoid of the present paschal mystery, we see a church that is more a cultural artifact than the living body of Christ. When we see a church whose presentation of itself is more a picture of maleness and clericalism than it is of the community of the baptized, we look at a church that is separatist and elite, rather than one that is leaven and life. When we have a church that is more cultic and parochial than universal, in the hard, daily meaning of the word, we have a church far removed from either the Christ of the beatitudes or the Christ of Calvary.

We must look carefully, indeed, at the question: Whose drama is it? If the Triduum is to be authentic at all, the answer must surely be that it is all of ours: Jews and Christians, priests and people, men and women.

We are about a great and difficult task. The words say that the church is paschal mystery, leaven and life, universal. It is ours to make it so, and that will not be easy in the face of Roman control and social pressures. But we have been able to come from Latin to English, from private Masses to the Mass of the faithful, from personal spirituality to a sense of social sin. And we can make Easter, too, the liturgy of our communal life with Christ—if, of course, we really are who and what we say we are. We may yet be far from that, but Rilke encourages us: “Live the questions now. Perhaps you will then gradually, without knowing it, live along some distant day into the answer.” But first we must have the courage to face the question: Whose drama is it, anyway?
Think Big . . .
Real Big!

BY VIRGIL C. FUNK

One of the great moments in modern science was Copernicus’s announcement in the early sixteenth century of his theory that the sun, not the earth, is the center of our planetary system. The reaction of church officials to this “Copernican revolution” has been told in various forms, none more dramatic than Bertolt Brecht’s play, Galileo Galilei, about the man whose astronomical observances proved the truth of Copernicus’s heliocentric theory. Brecht portrays the church officials’ concern as being not so much about Galileo’s promotion of the sun-earth relationship as about the consequences of the discovery for religion. They argue: “If the earth is not the center of the universe, then we are not the summit of creation. And if we are not the summit of creation, then Jesus Christ is not the summit of all humankind. We cannot tolerate this revolution.”

In a nutshell, the dilemma of those seventeenth century ecclesiastics captures the heart of the current problems that cosmology poses for religion. For a remarkable 446 years since Copernicus published his theory, we as church have basically ignored the consequences of scientific cosmology for religious belief and, equally important, religious practice.

The stakes have been heightened, in our own time, by further discoveries based on the work of Copernicus and Galileo, such as earth’s place on the edge of its galaxy and the probable origins of the still-expanding universe in a “big bang.” Yet despite the observational foundation of such theories, we continue to address our prayers to a God who is “up” from our perspective; we continue to discuss a heaven that is “beyond,” “out there” or “up there”; and we speak of the transcendent and supernatural in remarkably physical images, even when we “know” better scientifically.

Rev. Virgil C. Funk is President of the National 22 Association of Pastoral Musicians.

The same thing is true of our theology, filled with pre-Copernican images and references and based on ancient Greek metaphysics. And Aristotle’s “metaphysics” is certainly based on his physics and the world view derived from it (it is the heart of Aristotle’s thinking). Scholastic theology, and much of western civilization as well, perhaps, is rooted in these presumptions and mindsets.

From Theory to Myth

Society, and hence religion, could not ignore these scientific advances forever, however. Remarkably, it was the event of putting a human being on the moon and beaming television pictures back to earth from the moon landing that forced the issue at the end of the
1960s. Now there was no way to deny that human beings could occupy the physical region called “outer space.” The initial television image was pounded home even further in that remarkable photograph of the whole earth seen from the moon. This concrete image was undeniable, although some people tried. A few die-hard biblical fundamentalists maintained that we really did not go to the moon, but we were shown scenes shot on a television studio set. Old ideas die hard, and real change in thinking—especially at this level—is revolutionary. Some of us have managed to include the moon in our earth-centered view of the cosmos, but we have been unable to go any further.

The space program provided the images on which to build: our next-door neighbor, the moon, and planets in the far solar system and beyond. Next came the “story” that built on and explained the images, through the popularization of a number of theories about the birth of the earth, the universe, and finally, the cosmos. Through educational programs and space adventure stories (Star Trek) we began to take for granted the classification of stars into types, the discovery of the diverse life-cycles of stars, and the various hypotheses about the birth of the cosmos, the most popular of which is the “big bang” theory. What is so mind-boggling for those of us with deep religious convictions is that this new creation myth makes the place of the earth—and the evolution of life on this planet—so relative and incidental to the cosmic development. As one scientist puts it, “There is no indication that the earth is the focus of creation.”

The scientific discoveries themselves, with their connecting theories and hypotheses, did not a revolution make. Equally important, particularly for religious imagination, is the way these ideas have seeped into the background imagery of the popular mind. Change begins to occur as people perceive, believe, accept, and then take for granted new images and stories. At that point these realities begin to have real, cultural consequences for people’s lives.³

Carl Sagan’s television series, Cosmos, began to force the meaning and significance of the moon landing and the photographs of earth taken from “outer space” into the consciousness of countless Americans. And now school science programs routinely use those photographs and teach those theories, providing the young with the beginning power to envision in an automatic or instinctive manner a “world view” quite different from that of their parents and grandparents.

From Myth to Religious Image

When the images have entered popular consciousness, old images begin to fall, or at least their creaky foundations start to show. That is as true of religious images as of any other kind. Every moment becomes an opportunity for a new insight about the cosmos and our relationship to it. Here are a few examples. We know that the sun doesn’t rise in the east and set in the west—the sun’s journey across the sky is an illusion. But we continue to use the poetic metaphor (which was originally considered a scientific fact, provable by observation), though it is clearly part of an outdated cosmic view. And we continue to use it in our prayer life, announcing that “from east to west” [the Latin original says “from the rising of the sun to its setting”] a perfect offering is made to God’s majesty.

Another false image that comes initially from observation concerns motion. We claim that we can tell when we’re moving because we sense it; some people even get “motion sickness,” a malady that does not originate with motion, but from a dysfunction of the middle ear. In reality we are moving with planet earth at about one thousand miles per hour around a central, if wobbly, axis. And we are hurtling through space even more rapidly, thanks to the big bang. While we don’t sense this motion with our middle ear, it is part of our fundamental reality, and an ability to experience this motion (which is related to our sense of “time”) may be the next step in our evolutionary powers. Such motion is certainly basic to our myth, more basic than any reliance on “terra firma.” Yet such common perceptions are only beginning to affect our prayer language.⁴

So we could conclude that our perception of what is steady, permanent, or stable versus what is moving, transient, and changing is fundamentally incorrect. And what is true of our sense of motion is also true of change. Our experience tells us that when we put paper in a fire, it is destroyed. This experience leads us to conclude that matter is destructible (finite, limited) as opposed to spirit, which is indestructible (infinite, eternal). Yet the scientific description of the fire-paper relationship says that while the paper is destroyed, its constituent matter is not. It is transformed by heat energy into another form of matter (gas, energy, ash).

Scientific observation has concluded that, within the boundaries of the cosmos, there are limited amounts of matter, energy, mass, momentum, and electrical charge.⁵ What happens when the paper burns, according to the laws of conservation, is a rearranging of the particles within the confines of the cosmos. And what is true of the burned paper is also true of every change we can imagine. Thus, what obviously appears to be a destruction (a death) to our sense observation can equally be understood in a death-resurrection image from the vantage point of the “new story” of cosmic consciousness.

Our vocabulary has been passed down to us from our pre-Copernican ancestors. That vocabulary includes the way that we shape the images we perceive with the words that we use, as well as our grammar and habits of perception. And those words, concepts, grammar, and images have all been prejudiced by the limited world view of our ancestors. Our words and grammar are so much a part of how we perceive our reality that to challenge them may seem ludicrous at first. But they
are being challenged, as new realities become part of the
background of our existence. Such challenge and
change is rooted in the same kind of shift that has
turned “Negro” into “Black” in our time, and “man”
and “chairman” into “person” and “chairperson.” Such
shifts in language seemed strange at first, yet for many
people they have become the foundation of a new
consciousness—and consequently they have provided
new insights into the reality of the relationships that
they name. The same is becoming true for the vocabu-
lar of cosmology—it is giving rise to a new set of
images that ground a new, cosmic consciousness.

The Cosmos and the Triduum

What, then, do these new insights have to do with
the reform of Holy Week? In my opinion, everything.
Present youth and the next generation are steadily
building a change in their consciousness of the cosmos
they live in. It is not just a question of discovering that
Paris, Rome, and even Beijing exist on this planet, or
that physical as well as cultural events in China and
Russia affect the quality of our land and air, as this
generation discovered to its horror with the meltdown
at Chernobyl and the slaughter at Tiananmen Square.
Nor is it an extension of military metaphors into near
space through our “conquest” of the moon or our
construction of a “Star Wars defense.”

We are in the midst of a giant revolution of conscious-
ness about who we are in relation to the cosmic order.
And this relationship is precisely at the heart of the
celebrations of the Easter Triduum. The traditional
symbols of “fire, water, word, and food” used at the
Vigil were not given to us through the specific teachings
of Jesus; we can date their combined use approximately
to the year 300 C.E. in Jerusalem. Our ancestors in faith
used these images to include their perception of the
cosmos and give it meaning in the transforming act of
the death and resurrection of the Christ. They are the
ones who created these ritual acts and they did so
within the limits of their world view, their conscious-
ness.

The “alpha and omega, beginning and end, now and
forever” stenciled into the candle names our ancestors’
claim for the power of God based on their view of the
cosmos. The transformations of water into baptism and
bread and wine into eucharist reflect not only the
sacramental signs inherited from Jesus and the early
church, but our claim that we are “lords of creation,” as
trumpeted year after year in our proclamation of the
Genesis account at that same Vigil, able to manipulate
(in Christ and through the power of the Spirit, to be
sure) the very meaning of physical reality.

The challenge of the new creation myth, derived from
scientific observations and theories reaching back to
Copernicus, calls for more than a minor adjustment of
our words and actions in this central celebration of our
religious myth, our story of salvation. The issues are
considerably more than whether or not the presider
“metaphorically” lifts his eyes to “heaven” (i.e., up)
when he prays the eucharistic prayer. Make no mistake
about it, what I am saying here goes far deeper than any
easy “fix” and is a revolutionary viewpoint. The new
cosmic consciousness challenges us to reform our rites
to include more accurately what we now know about
our reality.

The scientific discoveries first put forward by Co-
pernicus and Galileo have frightening ramifications on
the meaning of Jesus Christ and his God, as well as on
Jewish and Christian views about death, change,
resurrection, and afterlife. The cosmic awareness that is
becoming rooted in the popular consciousness is creat-
ing assemblies who can no longer be satisfied with
images that do not correspond to their understanding
of their reality or offer the hope of answers that can
wrestle with the great contemporary problems. The
concern over the destruction of the world by nuclear
war, so frequently named as the angst of the young that
causes drug abuse and growing suicide rates, may in
fact be overshadowed by what they feel deep down to
be equally true, that our domesticated, earthbound (or
at least earth-centered) view of God does not fit the way
the cosmos is.

Liturgy is basically conservative and resists any
change that is “too rapid.” Copernicus’s “revolution”
began with the publication of his book in 1543. It is time
for a change in the liturgy of Holy Week—our central
statement of our faith—that includes a new under-
standing of the relationship between the revelation and
redemptive power of our God that we affirm and the
new consciousness of the cosmos and our place as an
incidental part of its expansion, for that, too, is our
reality.

1. Heliocentric theories had been proposed as long ago as
the first half of the third century B.C.E., but the geocentric
theory of Claudius Ptolemaeus (second century C.E.), which
put the earth at the center of the entire universe, had held
populor dominance for fourteen hundred years, at least
partly because it fit so well with Christian views of the
centrality of the human race to God’s plan.

2. Galileo published his observations in Dialogue Concerning
the Two Worlds Systems (1632), in which he defended the
Copernican system over the Ptolemaic one. He was brought
before the Inquisition in Rome in 1633 and forced to recant his
support of Copernicus.

3. For an interesting mythic version of this new creation
story see Cynthia Seijak, R.S.M., Music and the Cosmic Dance

4. Eucharistic Prayer C (Holy Eucharist, Rite II) in The Book
of Common Prayer, for instance, includes this statement: “At
your command all things came to be: the vast expanse of
interstellar space, galaxies, suns, the planets in their courses,
and this fragile earth, our island home.”

5. These “laws” of conservation were combined by Albert
Einstein into a unified theory, the “general and special
theories of relativity,” which is beginning to spawn its own
“myth.”
How Do I Know That I'm Redeemed?

BY GORDON E. TRUITT

For the last four hundred years, the western Christian traditions have been looking for answers to a question posed by Martin Luther in the sixteenth century: "How do I know that I'm redeemed?" Luther's problem was not "objective" salvation, the reconciliation accomplished in the ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus the Christ. He believed in that. His problem was more personal: How do I know that this reconciliation applies to me?

Luther's own answer was straightforward: I don't. There is no way that I can know for sure that I am saved, so I must simply believe that I am and act as if it were so. I must have faith that what God says is true and that it applies to me, as the Scriptures have proclaimed. All I have to rely on, in the end, is faith, and that should be enough, Luther thought, quoting Paul's letter to the church at Rome (1:17): "In the gospel is revealed the justice of God which begins and ends with faith; as Scripture says, 'The just person shall live by faith'."

The Roman Catholic Church's response to Luther's question, expressed at Trent and in other ways, was a variation on Luther's own answer: You can rely on the word of the church, for the church is the guarantor of salvation, entrusted by God with the word and power of salvation, operating especially through the sacraments. So if you enter into the kind of life that the church identifies as the life of believers, especially in its

What if I don't experience the conversion moment or see signs of God's reign around me?

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sacramental elements, and if you have the proper dispositions, then you can reliably believe that you share in salvation.

Note that this answer does two things. It offers a communal witness (the church) to confirm the Gospel’s message, and it pushes Luther’s question back a notch, from what it would take to guarantee the knowledge that I partake in salvation to an analysis of the internal and external operations that, by the church’s definition, make up the practice of redemption. How do I know when I’m living like a redeemed person? The church promises to describe such a life for me, so I have some measure by which to judge. But then how do I know that I have the right dispositions? The answer to this one is tougher, and the official response has usually been negative and minimal: As long as you are not actively opposed to the Christian lifestyle, you probably have the right dispositions, but there are still no guarantees.

Recently, as in the Introduction to the Rite of Penance (1973), there has been a more positive emphasis on developing the right dispositions by living into a deeper acceptance of conversion and redemption. We should move, the Rite tells us (#6a), “toward a progressively deeper enlightenment and an ever-closer likeness to Christ.” This positive emphasis suggests that we can find out, somehow, whether or not we have the right dispositions, so that we can develop them interiorly and build our practice on them.

Other churches (and even the Lutheran tradition after Luther) could not be content with Luther’s and Trent’s bald reliance on personal faith, even when supported by the community of believers, so they looked for clearer signs in the realms of disposition and practice to

prove that Christ’s victory applied to individual believers, things that could be experienced as proof of salvation. Some theologians, especially in the Evangelical or Presbyterian tradition, sought objective proof in the “good life.” If you were blessed with a good job and family, with wealth and position, for instance, you could believe that you were one of the elect. Only those cursed by God, in this line of thought, would suffer in this life.

God’s victories, we now seem to understand, are often small and occasionally invisible to observers.

Oh, What a Feeling!

An increasingly popular answer to Luther was found in the realm of the emotions: you can feel redeemed. At first this answer was accepted only by small sects apart from the mainline traditions. People like the Anabap-
through a particular experience called “religion”) in the early nineteenth.

In the twentieth century the study of salvation has continued to focus largely on the experience of salvation as a present reality, one to be completed in the reign of God, surely, but one that is available now, in some form. Its signs can be pointed to, theologians say, and it can be described, although such descriptions presume a context of belief. Some Catholic theologians (Karl Rahner, Bernard Lonergan) have made the personal experience of salvation—described as conversion—the basis for their theologies. Without such an experience, even if that experience goes unacknowledged by the individual to whom it happens, they say, there can be no theology and ultimately no doctrine, for doctrine and theology are essentially reflections on the conversion experience.

Other teachers, like the liberation theologians, look toward more “objective” signs of God’s salvation at work, particularly in society. These theologians read the Bible’s descriptions of the reign of God as the presence of freedom, equality, peace, and justice, in particular, and they teach that, since the death and resurrection of Christ inaugurated the reign of God (even though it still awaits completion), there should be signs of that reign around. Particularly among the anawim in any society, God’s poor ones, you should be able to point to the kingdom making inroads in sinful and unjust society. You should find signs of salvation at work now, in people’s lives, and the church has to be seen as supporting those kingdom inroads, for that is the only way, these theologians say, that people will come to believe in the good news. Along with Rahner and Lonergan, contemporary theologians like James Cone and other black liberation theologians, Rosemary Ruether and the feminist theologians, and more recently, Latin American liberation theologians like Gustavo Gutierrez, Jon Sobrino, and the Boff brothers start with conversion, but the focus of all these theologians of liberation is on the societal implications of Christian conversion.

Dangers and Challenges

The twin focus on an individual and corporate experience of a present salvation poses several dangers and challenges to the church, especially in its worship. The most obvious danger, of course, is the problem that confronted Luther long ago: What if I don’t have such an experience? What if I don’t experience the conversion moment or see signs of God’s reign around me? Does that mean that salvation is not a reality or that it doesn’t apply to me?

Many people in today’s society would agree that salvation is a hoax precisely for those reasons. The nineteenth century’s exaggerated focus on religious experience, particularly in the United States, gave rise to much of the disillusionment that is behind the secularization of today’s society. Psychology proved, for instance, that many of the experiences labeled “religious” could be created in a nonreligious context. And the emphasis on creating objective proofs of salvation through the preaching of the social gospel in the early years of this century foundered on a similar problem: the obstacles seemed to be too big for the church’s claims that it could progressively transform society. Racism, injustice, inequality, poverty, and war still mark the most “enlightened” societies, even now, eighty years after the publication of Walter Rauschenbusch’s social gospel manifesto, Christianity and the Social Crisis (1907).

These twin streams of “proof”—individual experience and objective evidence of social change—are still being relied on by the churches, although claims for them are much narrower and, perhaps, more realistic these days. We seem to have matured to the point that we have put such “proofs” into a wider context, recognizing that various interpretations can be put on human experience and that only limited victories are possible in the realm of peace and justice (and that there are dangers involved in identifying a particular cultural or societal development as an “act of God”). God’s victories, we now seem to understand, are often small and occasionally invisible to observers, and sometimes they seem to be overwhelmed by the murder, genocide, injustice, and terror that plague the world in the latter days of the twentieth century. But the victories are there, liberation theologians remind us, small flames perhaps, but still lights in the darkness that stubbornly refuse to be extinguished.

The challenge is to find ways to celebrate those small societal and even political victories liturgically. Despite all the psychologists’ caveats about interpreting emotional events as indications of religious transformation, we don’t seem to have any trouble celebrating individual experiences of conversion. Those are being channelled into the rites of adult initiation with great vigor and wide success. Listen to the testimony, for instance, at any rite of election or at the Easter Vigil. Our problem is in finding ways to celebrate the more public, political, communal signs of God’s reign without blowing them out of proportion, on the one hand, and without collapsing our liturgy into a pep rally for a liberal ideology, on the other. Where does such a celebration of God’s present victories fit, for instance, in the Easter Triduum? How do we celebrate the continuing communal challenge to let ourselves be transformed from church to reign of God? How do we repent of our share in communal sin so that we can rejoice in God’s victories among the anawim? And one more question, how do we integrate individual experiences of conversion into a communal movement to make the reign of God a reality, especially for those who have all but lost faith? These may be the most striking challenges that contemporary descriptions of salvation present to our celebrations of the Easter Triduum.
Should We Make Our Sinners Public?

BY ROBERT H. BLONDELL

Tradition has it that John, the evangelist, exiled to the island of Patmos, fell asleep and had a dream. That dream became the Book of Revelation with its glorious scenes of heaven and heavenly worship. In similar fashion, a pastor of a large suburban parish is exiled to an island of discontent following the annual celebrations of the Triduum, and his dreams of word and rite being in sync are only beginning to be realized. The full reality still remains the undiscovered treasure of future generations.

One walks humbly in the company of Gerard Sloyan, Joan Chittister, Virgil Funk, Gordon Truitt, and Rob Strusinski. As a pastor, I hear their cries for a more authentic Triduum liturgy, for music that prevents historicizing, for word and ritual celebrations that are real, for sensitivity to a renewed cosmology, and for celebrations of God’s reign that are more political and communal. And with the ministry of my particular parochial assembly, I accept their challenges with vested interest on our part and no little joy over what this community has managed to ritualize in celebration of the Paschal Mystery.

Holy Thursday: Choose a Theme

One of the most obvious issues that has to be confronted about Holy Thursday is the problem of multiple themes. This celebration has more thematic accretions than any other feast of the Lent-Easter season. For some people it is the great day to celebrate the anniversary of the very first Mass; for others it is the apostles’ ordination day. Or it heralds the origin of the ministerial priesthood, with an accompanying renewal of celibacy. Others focus on the mandatum by washing the feet of parish council members. Yet other planners place undue emphasis on eucharistic adoration at the repository, almost as an act of reparation for the demise of the Forty Hours observance. Rarely, however, is there any acknowledgement of our ancient tradition that this is the day for reconciling penitents in the Roman Church. (Other rites, such as the Mozarabic Church, have traditionally used Good Friday as the day for solemn reconciliation.)

To the degree that Lent has been trivialized for all but the sincerest catechumens and candidates for admission to full membership in the church, and in the absence of a restored order of penitents, we lose touch with our Holy Thursday tradition. This was once the great day for formal penitents to return to the table of the Lord along with all the faithful, who had become liturgical penitents on Ash Wednesday intent on Lent’s penitential journey. All Lenten penance has this goal: to come back to the table of apostles and witnesses. There we can celebrate in word and sacrament our communal healing, liberation, and forgiveness.

A community that wants to rescue Lent from the trivality into which we have abandoned it must involve itself in significant processes of fasting, praying, and giving alms. It can then appreciate the significance of Holy Thursday as a day of solemn reconciliation at the Lord’s table. There is a growing awareness that this full reconciliation is realized in the eucharist. Christ has come to reconcile the world to the Father, and that achievement is celebrated most completely in the table fellowship of Christ’s victory over sin and death.

An Evening of Reconciliation

Our Holy Thursday celebration at St. Ephrem’s begins with a solemn presentation of oils blessed and consecrated that morning in the cathedral church. Normally a “Stephen Minister,” who works with the sick, presents the oil of the sick with words suggesting its healing effects. The oil of catechumens is presented by a member of our RCIA team, and its presentation is accompanied by a statement about this oil’s welcoming nature, its power to bear the prayers of the faithful to new members. Finally, the sacred chrism is brought into the assembly by a member of the team that prepares teens for confirmation. These sacred oils are positioned in a place of honor and reverenced with incense.

After the opening prayer, all are seated in hushed silence to hear the word from the Hebrew Bible that tells
the story of our liberation. The institution narrative is proclaimed from Corinthians, and then we stand to hear the new commandment, the "mandatum novum." After a brief homily that situates our lives as wounded healers and servants of the Master, the assembly waits for the members of the order of penitents to be led into the church by a leader of the team that ministers among the penitents.

Led to the altar with their companions (previously reconciled penitents who have walked the journey of this Lent with the penitents), the group waits while the team leader petitions the presider. She recounts how these penitents have prayed, fasted, and given alms during the Lenten journey and how the faithful have supported them in their penance. Then she urges the presider to grant the absolution that will restore them to the Lord’s table.

After this petition the presider rises and welcomes the penitents, thanking them for the witness they have given their brothers and sisters in the assembly of the faithful during Lent. Assuring them of his joy at the sincerity of their return, the priest prays over them, asking God to hear the community’s prayers and forgive the penitents, who are restored through the blood of Christ. He then grants individual absolution to the penitents and their companions. These companions then remove the ashes from the penitents’ foreheads and take away the small wooden crosses they have worn around their necks during their penitential journey. The penitents are then given a place of honor in the sanctuary, and their feet are washed as the community sings the hymn "I Was Hungry." The hymn is quite literally Matthew 25 put to music; it is especially powerful in this community now that a Lenten project in which we provided housing for thirty homeless people. That outreach, a form of "foot washing," attracted some six hundred parish workers and is a good example of what Joan Chittister said about the need for our words to be congruent with the rite that confirms some happening in the community.

The pastor and associate wash the penitents’ feet, then pitchers and basins are provided so the penitents can do for some other members of the assembly what has just been done for them. The mandatum concludes with the peace rite, anticipated from the communion ritual. As the assembly comes forward to offer gestures of peace and reconciliation to the penitents, family and friends are recognized and invited into this healing embrace.

When all is quiet, penitents are invited to set the table, while various parish ministers come in procession with gifts of food and clothing for the poor. This is not tokenism; this community is an emergency food outlet for the entire county. A full-time staff person heads the Department of Christian Service, appointed by the city to administer federal funds for food, shelter, and utilities. Outreach to the poor is a major thrust of this parish.

"I Was Hungry" has become a parish theme song that takes us as a Christian community, as Rob Strusinski has suggested, beyond the surface of a historical event to singing about the social implications of our lives. Our reputation in the community has become that of "caretakers" of the poor and homeless. The hymn, then, celebrates and confirms that reputation liturgically.

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From Ashes to Altar

It is important to note that all parishioners are invited to come to aural confession with the more formal penitents before Lent begins. Priests are available on Ash Wednesday from six in the morning to eleven at night to hear the stories of sin and brokenness, to negotiate a penance with each person, and to encourage the keeping of that penance throughout the season of Lent. Absolution is postponed until Holy Thursday, when priests are again stationed in the church from six o’clock until just before the Mass of the Lord’s Supper to offer absolution.

This model was proposed in a formal intervention by Cardinal Bernardin at the 1983 Synod on penance and reconciliation (the official text was published that same year in Origins). This has been our parish’s pastoral practice for the last three years, as an alternative to granting absolution immediately after negotiating a
penance. Parishioners are offered the option of delaying absolution in order to reintroduce some form of process into the rite, which was the common practice of the church in its early centuries.

This practice of early confession on Ash Wednesday and delayed absolution invites the whole community to become liturgical penitents. It has the capability of restoring Lent as a marvelous occasion for deeper conversion for the entire community. While a small band of catechumens/candidates for admission and formal penitents at the core of our worshiping community give witness to the call to penance and metanoia, all parishioners are called to “turn away from sin and practice the Gospel.”

With the absolution of penitents after the homily of the Mass of the Lord’s Supper, in effect, the whole worshiping community is invited into the eucharistic prayer for reconciliation. All now come to the Lord’s table with a new set of relationships to the church. We assemble at that table as apostles and witnesses celebrating our victory over sin and death in Jesus.

The communion rite begins with an invitation to the penitents to take a place at the table. Once the last penitent reaches the altar, they all bow profoundly and reverence the altar with the presider, symbolically celebrating their return and reconciliation. The presider speaks a “welcome home” that is met with thunderous applause from the assembly. When all is quiet again, the presider joins hands with the newly reconciled and, together with the assembly, they sing the Lord’s Prayer.

Penitents and their companions are the first to communicate, because this is the goal of the whole process. This act brings them back to the very core of what it means to be the church, and all of that meaning is sacramentalized in their coming to the table to eat with the faithful again. Communion is given with the greatest care on this night, and the symbols are the rich bread and the abundant wine that Gerard Sloyan pines for in his article. Ministers of communion take great pains on this holy night to use the names of the parishioners and evoke as much faith as possible when they present the “Body of Christ,” the “Blood of Christ.”

All is brought to a close as a few families, a representative from the senior citizens’ residence, and a member of our parish AA group come to the altar for the blessed sacrament. Hosts are placed in pyxes on beautiful China plates, and these folks take communion to the sick and those who could not be present. This is also an occasion to have the eucharist present in the neighborhoods, so that people can gather in block groups for prayer and adoration until midnight, when the eucharistic minister returns the host to the chapel tabernacle. Senior citizens in their own gathering rooms have the eucharist available, too, as does the AA group that meets in one of the leader’s homes, who invites the whole group in for prayer and adoration.

As these people leave church, a simple candlelight procession takes the sacrament to the repository in the chapel, giving the whole parish an opportunity for adoration until midnight. The altar is stripped, and all withdraw in silence.

Holy Thursday in this parish has become the great day for reconciliation of penitents and, indeed, the whole parish membership. This is the goal of Lent, and it lauds the greatest ramification of the mandatum, which is the primary mission of Christ still present in the church, continuing to reconcile the world to the Father. This is the ministry of the entire parish, and on this night we renew our commitment to this central ministry. St. Paul says that we are all ambassadors of reconciliation; a focus on this central theme of the saving paschal mystery can bring to Lent and the Triduum a new vitality, saving it from the urge of folks to historicize it. It has brought to this parish a more obvious ecclesial dimension in the Triduum.

While this focus on reconciliation has been very successful here, I know well that it is just the beginning of one small pastoral effort to let ourselves be transformed from church to kingdom of God. The North American Forum on the Catechumenate has a division called “Re-membering Church,” which aims to give pastoral groups an experience of a restored order of penitents. I have been part of the team giving these workshops and helping to fan a little flame into a blaze of excitement over a grassroots movement that rescues Lent, the Triduum, and sacramental penance through a new approach to the ministry of reconciliation. Our work is definitely accompanied by the dream of a new and restored approach to the Holy Thursday and Good Friday celebrations. The dream has as much potential for the renewal of a whole people as the RCIA does. It affects more than just a small group of penitents; it touches the whole parish. That’s a big dream for a pastoral heart!


2. About nineteen workshops have been conducted in as many dioceses around the United States, Canada, England, Ireland, and on an army base in Germany. For more information, write: North American Forum on the Catechumenate, 5510 Columbia Pike, Suite 310, Atlanta, VA 22204. (703) 671-0330.

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Music for the Three Days

BY ROBERT STRUSINSKI

I remember sporting my new dress shoes while walking proudly the half-mile to St. Casimir Church in spring 1956. Choosing a new pair of shoes each year was no casual affair; I scoured catalogues and newspaper ads carefully to select the latest style that would give me the fit and feel of being “cool.” These shoes could only be worn somewhere special, like church or grandma’s. This ritual of search and selection coincided each year with Holy Week, which meant vacation, which meant lots of time in church. And in this particular year there seemed to be a rising demand for altar boys and extra practices with Father for some new, complicated way of doing Mass.

Even though I was a novice, I somehow managed to be chosen to crew the “big” Holy Week events, no doubt due to a proclivity for parroting Latin and a knack for stage directions. I can still almost see my penciled-in blocking in my first “New Holy Week” booklet (a precursor of the missalette), the one with the paschal lamb logo on the cover. To this third grade server, the seemingly monumental task of learning the new rubrics gave a feeling of awe and terror, just when I was becoming comfortable with the rigors of the regular “low” and “high” Mass routine.

Living Participation

Five months before Holy Week that spring, the decree “Maxima Redemptionis” had been issued by the Sacred Congregation of Rites. It was meant, its authors suggested, to offer the church a “living participation” in the culmination of the liturgical year. Its reforms confirmed the 1951 experimental restoration of the Easter Vigil, simplified the rites, and returned to the earlier practice of single evening and afternoon liturgies for Holy Thursday and Good Friday, so that the whole church could “re-live the great central mystery of redemption with greater conscious, active and devout participation.” This renewal was successfully implemented in parishes where the decree’s stress on catechesis to understand the “liturgical meaning and pastoral purpose of the rubrics” was taken seriously. Special booklets of “Masses of Holy Week and the Easter Vigil” were in high demand; one publisher sold over a million copies that first year. A report on the new Holy Week in America (April 21, 1956) showed glowing support for the solemn rites and indications that people participated as never before:

Participated they did . . . they came in vast numbers despite weather sometimes adverse. They eagerly entered upon every part assigned to them. They were profoundly awed and moved as the solemnities unfolded in their midst. Afterward they spoke of the entire experience with enthusiasm. It struck home to their souls.

This was a dramatic challenge to the average Catholic, whose previous celebration of Holy Week had consisted of Palm Sunday, the stations of the cross on Friday, Easter egg dying on Saturday, and Easter Day itself.

For the under-forty crowd or those whose memories might blur a bit, the rituals’ musical “ordo de rigueur”
can be found in the pre-Vatican II Roman Missal or in "The Rites of Holy Week," Chapter Four, "Rules for Music." 

From the recovery of the rites in the 1950s to today's evolution of the Triduum, music has shaped our celebrations and altered our understanding of the Triduum event. The General Norms for the Liturgical Year (1969) instill a unity and singular focus to the three days that transcend past cultural and ecclesial traditions of historical representation. Any reference to distinct passion/death events occurring on three distinct days (Thursday, Friday, and Saturday), with the assignment of a separate cause for celebration on Easter Sunday, has to come to grips with the term pascha, which the new calendar uses to denote the passion as well as the resurrection. Because of the more fluid musical environment to which we have moved since the 1950s, our choices can affect the meaning of the rite. For instance, one practice that could enhance the unity of pascha would be the use of one piece of music that could accompany a different rite each day: the foot washing, veneration of the cross, and the communion rite.

Singing beyond the Surface

In recent years parishes have moved beyond the surface of the paschal events to singing about their significance and their social implications. We are becoming aware that we cannot rejoice in the rising of Jesus without first sharing in the dying experience of others.

One important question to ask before choosing the music and texts for the Triduum is: How do we focus ritually on Jesus Christ? Are we singing about Jesus' (historical) death, or are we celebrating Christ's dying today? It takes a far different commitment to sing about the Christ Jesus of faith than the Jesus of history.

This question poses some serious challenges to our conceptions of Holy Week. For instance, does Holy Thursday solemnize the doctrine of transsubstantiation and the institution of the ministerial priesthood, or is it a time for the entire parish to celebrate and renew its commitment to ministry? If this liturgy is a parish commitment to ministry, the foot washing (and not some euphemistic substitute) becomes a significant symbolic act—deeper than a sign of humility—and it is shaped by the texts sung while it takes place. A parish might choose, then, to sing Richard Gillard's "The Servant Song":

Will you let me be your servant, 
Let me be as Christ to you. 
Pray that I may have the grace 
to let you be my servant, too.

Other possibilities to express similar meaning would include the Ghana folk song translated by Tom Colvin, "Jesu, Jesu," and Jeffery Rowthorn's text, "Lord, You Give the Great Commission."

Good Friday's passion narrative might take on a whole new character if, instead of playing the familiar
role of the "crowd," the assembly joins in singing acclamations of faith or stanzas of a hymn at selected places during the proclamation. Christopher Walker's "Passion Acclamation" would serve nicely: "Jesus has given his life for us?" Other possibilities include Willard Jabusch's "When We Think How Jesus Suffered" and Alexander Means's and Marty Haugen's "Good Friday Hymn," sung to the American tune Wondrous Love:

As you have shown the way, let us love, let us love...
As you have shown the way, so teach us every day.
To simply be the way of your love, of your love... 6

And here are a few examples of music for the Easter Vigil and Easter Day that communicate strong interrelationships between the totality of worship and life: Christopher Walker's "Paschal Procession," Bernard Hufnagel's "Maybe, Now and Then," Fortunatus's sixth century Salve festa dies translated and set to R. Vaughan Williams's tune as "Hail Thee, Festival Day," and Brian Wren's "Christ Is Alive."

Herald of the Future

Music is usually thought of as reflecting the dynamic of a social system. But Jacques Attali, a French economist and philosopher, makes a case for music as a proactive element, foreshadowing trends that shape society. Whether he is tracing the economic climate of the nineteenth century to influences from eighteenth century classicism, or tracing the political activism of the 1960s to the radical folk tone in the music of Bob Dylan and his comrades, Attali sees music and sound as heralding new meaning, new ritual, and new communication. Similarly, music has the potential to foreshadow, shape, and express the future of liturgical rites and their meaning. In this capacity our song becomes "not only the image of things but the transcending of the everyday—the herald of the future. It makes audible a new world that will gradually become visible."

No amount of theorizing or catechizing on the RCIA can create the kind of prophetic influence that music can have on the rite and the community. The implications of that fact for the Triduum are enormous, beyond the reach of our imaginations at present. Let's hope that David Haas's collection, Who Calls You by Name: Music for Christian Initiation, is a harbinger of the kind of synergy needed to keep our rituals from becoming frozen, meaningless voids.

We are now beginning to discover that the rites do not dictate the use of music that celebrates the past. Instead, our music has a voice in shaping our rituals and thus our spirituality. Claiming our past is an important step toward creating our future, but a thoughtless reliance on texts that try to place us in the upper room, at the foot of the cross, or in the tomb can be a disservice to the real meaning of the paschal rites. Equally tempting to empty illusion is ritual music that creates an aesthetic atmosphere for its own sake, filling time, responding for the sake of response. We don't need music for the Triduum that celebrates a church mimicking, representing, or repeating itself; we need compositions that nourish a faith inspiring us to re-create, serve, and live.

8. William F. Jabusch, "When We Think How Jesus Suffered," in the Peoples Mass Book (Schiller Park, IL: World Library Publications, 1984); Alexander Means (st. 1) and Marty Haugen (st. 2-5), "Good Friday Hymn," in Gather (GIA, 1988).
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Organbuilders Institute:
New Exec and Editor

Howard Maple, an NPM member, has been appointed executive secretary and editor for the American Institute of Organbuilders, following the retirement of Earl J. Beharz. He will edit the Institute’s quarterly publication, Journal of American Organbuilding, and will also handle correspondence and other administrative duties. Mr. Maple received the AIO Journeyman Organbuilder certificate in 1984, and he serves as organist at St. Martin’s Lutheran Church in Houston. The AIO is a growing organization with nearly 300 member organbuilders. Correspondence for the AIO may be addressed to: American Organbuilders Institute, PO Box 130982, Houston, TX 77219.

Organ Newsletter

ICMI/Heyligers offers a newsletter free to readers of Pastoral Music. It pictures a number of their latest installations and offers information on their organ products. Write: ICMI Organ Products, 1200 Ferris Road, Amelia, OH 45102. (513) 752-4731.

New Digital Keyboard

RolandCorp US has announced a new digital keyboard—the Kr-33—that features sampled sounds for two acoustic pianos, harpsichord, vibraphone, electric piano, organ, strings, and choir. It includes a 76-note, touch-sensitive keyboard, 32-voice polyphony, multimbral capabilities, built-in stereo chorus and tremolo effects, and a built-in stereo sound system. There is also a built-in capability to play any two sounds in unison, and a MIDI connection allows for a sequencer hook-up for one additional sound. For more information: RolandCorp US, 7200 Dominion Circle, Los Angeles, CA 90040. (213) 685-5141.

Apexx Video

Apexx Systems Ltd., the leading manufacturer of signal processors for professional audio applications, has produced a 17-minute VHS promo-

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Oregon Catholic Press composers and clinicians travel throughout the country conducting workshops for liturgical ministers. Listed below are the dates and the places at which these persons are currently scheduled to appear. If you would like more information about any of these events, or if you would like to know more about scheduling a workshop of your own for your parish or diocese, please call us toll-free at 1-800-547-8992 (in Oregon, 1-800-422-3011). We will be happy to customize a workshop to fit your individual needs, location, and resources. Our goal is to work with you and for you.

## Will we be in your area?

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Reviews

Video

Coming Alive: Choral Directing
Featuring Lloyd Pfautsch

_Augsburg-Fortress Video. 1988. 40 minutes. VHS. 23-5070. $34.95._

It is possible to learn a great deal from books on conducting, but much is lost without the visual element. This videotape provides a forty-minute lesson in how to train a choir to sing well. It covers three key areas: warm-ups, breath support, and diction. The goal is excellent choral sound: unified vowels, clear consonants, rhythmic precision, energized tone. Many practical exercises are demonstrated. Given the time constraint, Pfautsch deals very successfully with this narrowly focused material.

Conducting gesture is not discussed at all, and perhaps this is just as well. Pfautsch is clearly a master technician who communicates effectively with the choir. However, his conducting lacks expression. The rhythm is crystal clear, but consistently heavy downbeats prevent the charm of the music from shining through.

The twelve-member choir sings several sections of the _Messiah_. Using such well-known demonstration pieces makes the lessons accessible, although I would have preferred a slightly larger group of singers. Three singers to a part makes blend difficult, especially for a recording (due to microphone placement, acoustics, and the like). Pfautsch is always clearly audible, but the recorded sound of the choir is not as good as it should be. (Perhaps small speakers in the television used for playing this tape contribute to the problem.)

The video is well edited and attractively packaged; an outline of the material presented is included with the cassette. It is geared for church choirs of all denominations, but will also be helpful for school musicians and in the training of conductors in colleges.

Be sure to wait for the very end of the tape. Pfautsch’s parting line, a “zinger,” captures the reality of a choral conductor’s life.

Michael Connolly

Handbells

King Out

_Arranged by Melvin Rotermund. Augsburg. 1988. 25 pages. 71-7997. $3.00._

This collection of hymn tunes for the church year is designed for a three-octave beginning adult or junior (high school) handbell choir. Hymn tunes include “Deo Gratias,” “Gelobt sei Gott,” “Gloria,” “Ihr Kinderlein, komm’et,” “In dulci jubilo,” “The Ash Grove,” and several others.

Although the book is designed for beginners, I would make certain that my ringers are very secure and comfortable in ringing alone, since many of the pieces contain single line melodies within the arrangements.

It is also possible to use these selections to accompany congregational singing or to alternate with other instruments. Be creative!

Joy Medley


“While by My Sheep” and “Joy to the World” are the tunes employed in this well-crafted, two-octave arrangement. The accompaniment moves in eighth notes through most of the arrangement and often uses scale and arpeggio patterns. If you own any type of handbell chimes, you could include them on the final page of the arrangement to add more variety. This selection is of medium difficulty; it is not for the beginning handbell choir.


This two-octave handbell arrangement incorporates several ringing techniques—thrum damp, martellato, and shakes—and is fun to ring. The melody weaves through all bell ranges, beginning in the middle octave, moving to the bass, and finally ending in the high bells. Difficulty levels range from easy to medium.

Jean McLaughlin

Recitative

As in a musical recitative, in which the text is declaimed “straight,” in the rhythm of natural speech, but with slight melodic variations, see list music from one or more publishers here, but offer brief comments about some selections. In this issue we include music from two Oregon Catholic Press Choral Subscription Packets.

OCP Subscription Packet
August 1988

_Glorious King_. Fritz Bohlmann. _Assembly, SSATB choir, cantor, and keyboard._ #8748. $1.50. Rhythmic vigor and assertive strength make this a perfect processional piece for the Solemnity of Christ the King. Overall range and divisi writing present a challenge choral, especially in the antiphon. A variety of performance forces for the verses lends interest. Optional parts for brass quintet are available from the publisher.

To You O Lord. Scott Soper. _Assembly, unison choir (optional three-part), keyboard, and guitar._ #8979. $0.75. A simple and effective setting of Psalm 25, a common psalm for Advent. Both the harmony and accompaniment reflect the quiet longing expressed by the text. Also commendable is OCP’s layout, which has nicely eliminated page turns.

_Advent Wreath Service_. John Schiacone. _Assembly, cantor, SATB choir, guitar, and organ._ #8968. $0.95. Attractive material incorporating the lighting of the Advent wreath into the penitential rite for the Sundays in Advent. Includes spoken prayers, sung penitential petitions, and assembly responses.
Lift Up Your Eyes, Jerusalem. Eugene Lindusky. SAB choir and organ. #8484. $0.85. A nicely crafted SAB Advent anthem that smaller choirs would find challenging and rewarding.

A Child Is Born. Robert Griglak. SATB choir and organ. #8870. $0.60. A fine setting of the Puer Natus text in English adaptation. Solo verses are accompanied by an attractive homophonic organ part with solid and accessible four-part writing in the antiphon.

Songs of the Angels Break Forth This Night. Martin Willet. Assembly, SATB choir, keyboard, and guitar. #8983. $0.85. This quiet Christmas anthem in the folk idiom features a durable, engaging text. Though the harmonic vocabulary and choral writing are predictable, both combine with the text to make the piece alluring.

The Angel Gabriel. Dolores Hruby. SAB choir and two trumpets, or optional organ. #8981. $0.60. Points of text are separated by instrumental fanfare; the choral parts in the final strophe utilize a counterpoint based on the Ave Maria plainchant. Lack of textural variety could create monotony.

Laetentur Coeli. Sr. Ethan Marie O’Doherty, SNJM. SATB choir and optional organ. #8125. $0.60. A nice anthem in a more traditional a cappella polyphonic style, using an Advent/Christmas text. Voice leading and text setting are logical and attractive.


Be It Done unto Me. Bob Hurd. Assembly, SATB choir, organ, guitar, and solo instrument. #8794. $0.75. Mary’s Fiat from the Magnificat is used as an antiphon; the verses are rich with images and implications of the incarnation, including texts from the institution narrative. The setting is direct, memorable, and very satisfying. Appropriate for Marian and eucharistic liturgies.

Blessed Mary/Ave Maria. Alfred V. Fedak. Assembly, cantor, SATB choir, and organ. #8962. $0.75. An English antiphon alternates with Latin verses that are adaptations of the plainsong utilizing a variety of textures.

Psalm 23. Tom Conry. Assembly, SATB choir, descant, organ, piano, guitar, solo instrument, and trumpet. #8966. $0.85. The antiphon in this setting of the psalm makes effective use of modal harmony in the choral writing. The triplet figures in the verses seem overdone.

Those Who Seek Your Face. Christopher Walker. Assembly, SATB choir, cantor, organ, guitar, solo instrument, and Bb instrument. #7150. $0.85. A setting of Psalm 27 especially appropriate for the Scrutinies in the RICIA. Both lyric and chant settings are provided for the solo verses, along with an alternate set of chant verses using Psalms 26 and 32.

Signing of the Senses. Randall DeBruyn. Assembly, cantor, SATB choir, guitar, and organ. #8834. $0.75. Useful setting of this ritual taken from the RICIA.

Coventry Acclamations. Paul Inwood. SATB choir, cantor, assembly, and organ. #9011. $0.75. An attractive hymn setting of a Michael Joncas text that speaks of hope and renewal using the baptismal image of living water. Harmonically awkward in places, but flexibly written to accommodate choirs of varying resources and capabilities.

Bread of Life. Bernadette Farrell. Assembly, cantor, SATB choir, guitar, keyboard, solo instrument (in C), and Bb clarinet. #7152. $0.75. This eucharistic text is suitable for a wide variety of liturgical uses; a set of alternate verses is provided for Christmas. The setting is simple, evocative, and highly engaging, enhanced especially by the instrumental parts.

Gentle Shepherd/Jesu, Pastor Tan Dulce. Tobias Colgan, OSB. Assembly, two-part choir, organ, guitar, and two solo instruments. #8977. $0.75. A bilingual text based on Psalm 23 is set using an attractive refrain and three verses. The verses do not measure up to the quality of the refrain: the variants necessary for the bilingual texts create sporadic rhythm and/or harmonic clumsiness. The use of dotted slurs to adapt the musical typography to both languages makes reading difficult.

Holy is God. Robert Griglak. A cappella SATB choir. #8669. $0.60. The accessible writing is reminiscent of the eastern choral school and requires a balanced ensemble for effective performance. The text is from the ancient Improperia, traditionally chanted during the veneration of the cross. Two of the reproaches are set as solo verses in a freer, more declamatory style.

How Can I Repay the Lord. Stephen Dean. Assembly, cantor, SATB choir, keyboard, and Bb clarinet. #7119. $0.60. Dean’s setting of Psalm 116 features attractive, animated writing in the SATB refrain, but the solo verses seem harmonically contrived and lack the directness that might better suit the texts.

I Will Not Die. Tom Conry. Assembly, unison choir, organ, solo instrument (optional coda with piano), trumpet, and handbells. #8805. $0.85. An alternate arrangement of this favorite from the album Justice Like a River. With the exception of the organ part, most of the instrumentation unique to this arrangement appears in the optional coda.

Lamentation. Bob Hurd. Assembly, SATB choir (optional Spanish descant and verse), organ, guitar, and solo instruments I and II (parts in C). #8788. $0.75. A refrain based on Psalm 137 is given a
About Reviewers

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quiet choral setting with a haunting descant sung in Spanish. The verses are from the same psalm ("By the rivers of Babylon"), set for two parts, and include a verse to be sung in Spanish. Hurd’s suggestions for guitarists are welcome and helpful. Solid, crafted, and alluring writing, suitable for quiet and reflective liturgical moments.

**Wondrous Love.** Beatrice Miller. SATB choir and organ. #8994. $0.75. This arrangement of the familiar Lenten hymn from the Southern Harmony features a chaconne-like organ part accompanying an interesting variety of choral textures. Of moderate difficulty for an average parish choir.

**Yes, I Shall Arise.** Owen Alstatt. Assembly, SAB choir, guitar, and organ. #8988. $0.60. Effective two- and three-part choral writing make this setting a welcome addition to the repertory for funeral liturgies, well within the capabilities of smaller parish choirs.

**We Believe.** Christopher Walker. Assembly, cantor, SATB choir, harp, descant, keyboard, and guitar. #7155. $0.90. A vigorous setting of the Apostles Creed, with recurring refrain for the assembly. The verses are set rhythmically, and the repetition seems to create an overall and repetitious setting. The composer provides unison and harmonized versions of the refrain and the verses.

**Missa Bilingüe.** Kevin P. Joyce, arr. Craig S. Kingsbury. Assembly, cantor, SATB choir, organ, guitar, 2 trumpets, and 2 trombones. #8973. $0.85. A singable, durable, and effective setting of the Order of Mass that achieves a concision lacking in other bilingual settings through judicious selection and juxtaposition of both languages.

**The Asperges.** Richard Keys Biggs. SATB choir with optional organ. Latin text with optional English and Spanish. #9055. $0.60. The traditional plainchant setting of Psalm 51 with optional organ accompaniment; especially suitable for the sprinkling rite.

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An example of the decline of one central element is the sad story of what happened to adult initiation at Rome in the middle ages. According to the Pontificals (the books of directions for the pope's master of ceremonies in Rome), the pope was still bringing adults into the church through water, anointing, and the eucharist all in one ceremony, long after other churches had abandoned the practice. But it eventually occurred to the papal ceremonialists that the practice of full adult initiation at the Easter Vigil was, at best, "symbolic" of antiquated practices and needed to be updated. The updating led to the gradual abolition of baptism in the rite and its reduction to a "symbolic" confirmation of three children, who had to be named Peter, John, and Mary, or sometimes Peter, Paul, and Mary ("Let's all sing our entrance song: 'How many roads...').

An example of a minor element exalted into prominence is the veneration of the cross. It was probably not a common part of the Good Friday service in the western church until the early middle ages (and it is still not part of the service in the eastern churches). It originated in Jerusalem as a veneration of the true cross, and its observance spread as relics of the cross were carried or sent by pilgrims and, later, crusaders to cathedrals and pilgrimage churches. The relic was usually encased in a full wooden cross, and eventually in a crucifix with an image of the dying Christ on it. Churches that could not get a relic of the cross had to settle for a copy of its case, and so crucifixes came to be venerated on Good Friday, and this ceremony gradually dominated the ritual, to the point that people who could not make it to the service on Friday afternoon, for one reason or another, would stop by the church in the evening or early the next day to kiss the cross.

Other parts of these fairly complex services usually go wrong, no matter what we do—or will do, probably, into the next century. You can name them; you've been there. At the Vigil the problems usually start right away, with the new fire, which won't light or, because of the careful attention of the local scout troop, sings the hair of people within fifty yards when it bursts into flame. There are the grains of incense, too. One of the five often disappears or breaks off while being inserted into the candle, or the wax nails melt onto the priest's or deacon's fingers during theinsertion procedure (leading to some unusual acclamations during this solemn moment). The candle may not fit into the stand, when the procession finally arrives up front. And that's only the beginning of the troubles...

My favorite gone-awry moment occurred a few years ago during the singing of the Exsultet. In this parish church, the side pews were flush against the outer walls, restricting the possibility of placing candles on the windowsills for the lighting of the church during the procession with the Easter Candle, and local fire laws would not permit the congregation in the pews to hold lighted candles (and the local fire chief was a parishioner). So, in an attempt to find some creative ways to spread the light of the Easter candle, the liturgy committee suspended candles from the rafters of the sanctuary ceiling... using plastic chains.

You got it. While the deacon was wailing his way through the Exsultet, the candles began to melt the plastic chains, and the candle stands, with the candles still lit, began to rain down on the ministers in the sanctuary—about twenty people in all. There was a mad scurry away from the flaming missiles, a scramble in the dark for candle snuffers, a frantic beating at burn holes in vestments. Through it all, the deacon sang on about "a pillar of fire that glows to the honor of God." The sudden dramatic appearance of the flames of Pentecost raining onto the ministers in the sanctuary was out of the organist's line of sight, but she heard the candles thumping to the sanctuary floor. "How interesting," she thought at the time. "They've put on a sound-effects record of the stone rolling back from the tomb. What a clever idea!"

Benet Wellums is a pseudonym adopted by the various contributors to this column.
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I opened the manual to what seemed to be the English section. The words looked familiar, but nothing made sense. This was my initiation into the cultic language of MIDI users, "Anglo/Japanese Techno-Speak." Only later did I learn that this was all part of the initiation ritual. Manuals are written for people who already know all about the equipment. Because no one reads the manuals, they're not intended to be useful, and because they're not useful, why would anyone read them?

Finally, like intrepid MIDI explorers before me, I figured things out on my own, and began dancing across the Elysian fields of MIDI bliss to the intoxicating sounds of synthesized brass, strings, and woodwinds. The sounds of waterfalls and alien worlds filled my headphones. Finally the day arrived when I took my synthesizer to church for the first time.

Instead of the impressive triumph I had visualized, I learned that church p/a systems are not meant to deal with the sonic range of modern musical instruments. Sometimes the sound was too loud or too soft, and the sound system conveyed none of the richness and quality I had anticipated. The pastor and the assembly seemed pleased, but I was dreaming of the majestic sweep of Chariots of Fire, not this anemic blend of snap, crackle, and pop.

Sadly I faced the need to purchase my own sound system. (By the way, the users manual for the sound system made the synthesizer manual seem like a tower of lucidity.) Even with the new system, my synthesizer didn’t sound the way it did through my headphones. Someone told me I needed a digital delay unit to “fatten” the sound up a bit.

Purchasing the digital effects unit did nothing to improve my finances, although I began the elusive search for sounds that I could be really happy with. Programming sounds (or “patches” as they’re known by the initiated) by using the front panel on a synthesizer is a formidable operation, so I began reading MIDI-oriented magazines and learned that a computer could help significantly with the task. I also learned about using the computer for sequencing, which allowed me to record anything I played on my synthesizer. It wasn’t long before I learned that with the right software those sequences could be translated into written nota-
tion. Imagine how much time I could save in composing and arranging!

Getting in ever deeper, I acquired the software and the computer system upgrades to handle the simplification of those mundane musical tasks. More memory, more storage, more programs, more manuals, more magazines. But with sequencing and playback you need more sound modules. More modules, more MIDI cables and patch cords, more signal processors and utilities, as well as more software to simplify and increase productivity. Pretty soon, the whole system was so complex, I dreaded taking any of the equipment to church—it was such a hassle disconnecting and reconnecting.

Now my MIDI system is more or less complete: everything in it is outdated and totally obsolete. My life is a shambles, but boy, can I be creative! I can do just about anything musically imaginable, but I just never seem to find time to do the creative things that I dream of. As for making music in church with my MIDI system, I can only do that on those special occasions that are really worth all the trouble. Can you imagine, the other day somebody from the church wanted to borrow my synthesizer? "Back! Back! Get back!" I said. "It's mine, all mine, I tell you..." I'm falling, falling... falling.

The Dilemma of Creative Technology

While the foregoing is somewhat apocryphal, elements of my story are common experience to other MIDI musicians. We pursue the technology to allow us to be more creative and, we hope, more effective. Sometimes we lose sight of our original objectives, however. More, easier, faster, and newer seem to be sirens calling attracting pastoral musicians to MIDI. While it is a wonderful, exciting world to explore, it is also filled with pitfalls.

Perhaps the most common pitfall that others involved in pastoral music have shared with me is the information problem. On the one hand there is information overload—sorting out the truth from the marketing "hype" about new equipment and technologies. Keeping up with product introductions and the latest developments is an enormous job. On the other hand, there's a shortage of information about how to use equipment effectively once you have it. The manuals and documentation are frequently inadequate, while retailers and manufacturers are not prepared fully to support the questions and problems users encounter.

As I understand it, NPM is about people and prayer—not about equipment. As pastoral musicians we're involved in helping people to pray through the medium of music. We may employ new technologies, old technologies, or no technology at all—depending on the needs and circumstances of the prayer experience we are trying to serve. The focus of MUSIG (MIDI Users Special Interest Group) is to help provide a context for current users, newcomers, and hopefuls to understand and employ or (dare I say it?) avoid these technologies in various situations.

In the future, we'll be looking at creative technology issues and trends that are developing—with a special emphasis on MIDI, but not entirely limited to those technologies. Perhaps we'll explore certain types of tools, but always with the emphasis on the application and people, not just the technical specifications and features.

Well, it's time for me to get back to my toys. Now where did I leave that sequencer manual...?
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My Dearest Kelly,

It was so good to hear from you during those first few weeks after Easter. Your letter touched the straws in my heart that I remember fondly the days we spent together at Catholic University. I am glad that you are doing better after your painful divorce. Why such experiences have to exist is another unanswered cosmic question that I plan to put to the Almighty (if that is what one does) when we finally stand face to face in one that stands in the presence of the Most High. Watch—with my luck she'll be a Boston lawyer without much sense of humor.

Life for me has been good. Some wonderful things have been going on these past months. I am in love, but not with a person as much as with a mystery. This long letter that I'm putting on the comet will explain what I mean, I think.

I told last spring that we would simply not have a resident priest any longer (the clergy shortage). At first we were pretty upset, but in time we became aware that, in most things, we lay people had already become responsible for the parish, and besides, most of us have always been "self-starter" anyway.

The parishioner who comes to the parish twice a month for the Eucharist is a nice enough fellow, but he is not terribly good at social skill. He has three other parishes that he has to handle (2,000+ families), and that makes it sort of tough on holidays.

As you know, I have been working with the catechumenate here for several years, and I wanted to inquire that, regardless of whether there was a Vigil available, we would have the best experience of the Easter Vigil that any of us ever had. Maureen Fleming and Dan Deiter, our parochial administrators since last spring, were completely supportive of this goal. So we decided to meet with the priest early on to begin talking about the way we wanted to celebrate the Vigil.

When we met with Fr. Kennedy and told him our plans, you would have had to see it to believe it! It was wonderful. In that it was not one of those occasions where people hope for a Vigil or Easter, etc., etc., it is that they are sometimes expensive. Fr. Kennedy took our offer of making a Vigil as a matter of the church, and we were more than willing to cooperate on our plans.

Kelly, the parish team asked me to preside at the beginning of the Vigil this year (because Fr. Kennedy already had another one scheduled, and the times for the liturgies were overlapping). I said yes, but that probably won't surprise you.

Our Vigil began at about 10:00 P.M. We gathered the elect, their families, sponsors, and assembly out in the parish cemetery, among graves and tombs that were anywhere from three months to one hundred and twenty years old, we lit the

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Commentary

Easter 2019—A Letter from the Future

BY DON NEUMANN

It is exciting and treacherous to gaze into ecclesial crystal balls. One thing that is clear from the present experience of parishes, at least in this country, is that the "sensus fidelium" has overwhelmingly adopted and embraced the liturgical reforms of the last twenty-five years and, without much doubt, will continue to do so for the next twenty-five to thirty years. Another undeniable fact, in contrast, is the clear desire in some Catholic circles to reverse the liturgical renewal and return to safer days that have long since passed.

Whether the church or anyone can ever go back is doubtful. But the real question is whether the church will survive this present "pulling apart in opposite

Rev. Don Neumann is pastor of St. Pius V Catholic Church in Pasadena, TX. He lectures on liturgy at various Catholic universities in Texas and also serves as Treasurer for the North American Forum on the Catechumenate.
biggest, most beautiful bonfire you could imagine. We sang that
great new song, "Come, Lord Jesus, Dispel the Darkness of Life," and
it was so impressive to see the reflections of God's fire
dancing off the faces and shaking the shadows of these people who
are so much a part of my family. I prayed this great blessing
fire of Mount Olympus, and the fire that warmed Peter as he
stood by the emissaries as a "pillar of cloud by day, and a pillar of
the flames that danced above the disciples when the Spirit
descended on them at Pentecost. I called up allusions to fire
and tradition as invitations of stepping back from the flames, because
that the Almighty was going to sweep in and take over, doing
exactly what I was praying for, before asking if I had any
prayer's attention) After the
prayer we carved a cross into the mighty paschal cake and
processed to the parish hall, where seats were arranged for the
liturgy of the word.

I hope you don’t mind me writing such a long description. I
haven’t lost my Marquis: it’s just that I’ve endured major
frustrations for years watching well-meaning but inept priests
could do better. It’s so invigorating to be able to say: I think
the day when it doesn’t matter what sex the minister is, as long
Anyway. We all sat in the hall in darkness, with just the
light of the paschal candle. Listening to the stories of
Abraham's and Sarah's test of faith, the Passover
Israel's great song "Come to the Water", and the story of the
three faithful young Jews in the fiery furnace. Because the
people in them, with short breaks in between the assembly were
their own faith stories. Sometimes a couple of people would take
a brief stroll through the rose garden or along the courtyard.
It worked so well: everyone was able
to relax and enjoy the richness of these salvation stories.
Bible, before the epistle reading from Romans, the candidates
were to disburse in preparation for baptism. They rejoined us in a
few minutes, while their sponsors held on to them for dear life.

After we introduced the elect to the assembly, we processed
by candlelight to the font, singing as we went a tremendously
and officially recognized saints. Fat some from the end of the
Vanier, the South African Martyrs, and even some of our
contemporaries (the Chilean Martyrs, the caregivers in the
nuclear meltdown zones). We kept singing for them to pray for us.

The more pressing issue for the next
generation is whether people will even
have the energy or literacy for imagination
in thirty years.

directions." Clearly the pulling and stretching (to the
breaking point) is occurring, and without a reversal of
the mutually opposing forces, it is hard to believe that
the church will not find itself divided in some way in
the not too distant future. The tragedy will be that one
side will be labeled as the "bad guys," while the other
side will name itself the "good guys." The truth is that
both sides will have drifted, unintentionally and without
conscious premeditation, into completely separatist
camps. Like a dysfunctional family that does not face its
issues, conflicts, and seemingly irreconcilable
differences, the church could find itself back in the trenches
(as in previous eras) with the battle lines clearly drawn,
one side claiming the inheritance of orthodoxy and
labeling the other side unorthodox.
The chasm between the pastoral, theological common sense of the faithful and the preservationism of the institutional church is growing daily, but I am not sure that this is all fault or failure for either side. This may be another opportunity for the church to undergo rebirth in its mission and perception of who it will be in today's world. That birth might be violent because of the attempt to impose a vision by a misuse of power, or it might be born of the Spirit, whose evidence is always hope, truth, and peace.

I believe that this rebirth cannot be achieved via the old tactics or authoritarian pronouncements. Birth can only come through openness, dialogue, and a desire for mutual understanding and union. It is the inspiration of the Spirit, and without it, the church will once again be ripped apart by schism, tragically bereft of a corporate imagination of “how things might have been, if only….”

Chittister’s article, “Whose Drama Is It, Anyway?”, artfully states that

the church is ministering in a world where three issues dominate the human agenda, calling for Gospel truth and Christian commitment: the desire for universal human participation, the growth in consciousness of the immorality of oppression, and the reality of globalization touching every facet of life, political, economic, and social. Glasnost, perestroika, and democratization are not governmental strategies; they are ideas whose time has come.

There is no longer any room for double messages. Today the church faces the question of whether it will be directed by the Spirit of the Lord, who blows in a variety of ways and wherever it will, or by the limitations of a specific branch of cultural Catholicism among those who have power and influence. We are standing at a crossroads, yet the letter from “T.J.” to Kelly doesn’t see much hope for a dramatic change.

In his article in this issue, Virgil Funk challenges us to participate in a new formulation of the great mythic story of creation and redemption, reverencing all the facts of scientific study and research that have been disregarded by the story-tellers for centuries. He is astute in writing that “assemblies … can no longer be

Storm Center or Dead Calm

Aidan Kavanagh’s description of the Triduum, and especially of the Vigil and Easter Day, as “the storm center of the universe” helps to focus our attention. Joan
garments, the rest of the assembly gathered around the font to
renew their own baptismal vows, singing and signing each other.
The music and singing was so powerful. Kelly, that people forgot
about the candles they had been holding for at least twenty-
we passed our first candles, just as the neophytes came out and
be to see, but we got a little redundant. anyway, with the next
in the western dawn in Easter white and spring colors. Nothing had
part of the liturgy: you have clothed yourselves in Christ, you
gave them lighted candles, and
Darkness."
As we gathered at the Lord's table, the deliciousness of the
evening began to overtake us. Fr. Kennedy, too, had been swept
up he whispered, "Aren't we the people who should continue to lead
and be led in the service. And we both felt that was correct. "How long, O Lord;
freely in the past, words that I had heard so
distinctly pleasure on this night.
At communion time, before the neophytes shared in the bread
and cup, they first took a sip of water, then a sip of warm milk
since Friday, and they were bound to be a little light-headed.
Hippolytus recommended this practice to Christians in the third
and the cup of salvation, and we all returned to our seats to
grace and God has done.
The reception for the neophytes began at about 2:45 A.M. and
lasted until about 5:00. I was fascinated by the way I got a
champagne and food trays were magnificent. (If I do say so
moving. I was so glad I had warned them that they might set a
be the case that the experience too clearly for a couple of
because they couldn't talk about the liturgy right away.
years, the parish's companionship with them was nourishment for
enough, each time I said, that's what the fifty days of Easter
about—unpacking the moment.
After all that I didn't think it would be possible, Kelly,
but the day's Easter liturgy was also very moving. Because of
the clergy shortage, we were forced to have only one
It was great (especially since I could relax. I wasn't
enough. We added the local high school football stadium.
opposing this one). Our neophytes were integrally involved,
putted in a special place and referred to often. Fr. Ed, who
end, of course, the rest of us got a chance to savagely
take and make sure we wouldn't forget one word of what he

satisfied with images that do not correspond to their
understanding of reality or offer the hope of answers
that can wrestle with the great contemporary prob-
lems." I would suggest that the more pressing issue for
the next generation is whether people will even have
the energy or literacy for imagination in thirty years.

If all our images continue to be created for us through
the increasing technological advances of television and the
cinema, will people even desire to read and let their
imaginations create visions that liberate, challenge, or
inspire? We are told that robots will be household items
in fifty years and VCRs will play movies that are more
like holograms. Instead of passively awaiting a movie's
outcome, we will be able to determine the course of
events as we watch. Computers will control even the
simplest facets of our lives. Perhaps the greatest danger
we face as we move into the next thirty years is whether
there will be enough imagination left in human life to
foster the religious rituals we tend to presume will
always be held sacred. How will the awesome rites of
Christian initiation at the Vigil and the Lord's table on
Easter Sunday be able to offer inspiration amid all the
technical advances that will emmesh them?

Beyond Flat Literalism

Ritual actions and language shape life, self-
understanding, and the framework of reality in which we live.
Unless we are able to continue to move beyond the
"flat-minded literalism" that so often incarnerates our
liturgies and sacramental understandings, we are cer-
tainly doomed to frustration in the next thirty years.
Our ability to shape words and rituals with the artistry
that creates visions of life and reality at its mythic best
is part of the challenge before us. Amid our culture's
technological dominance, will religion and religious
ritual have the power to grasp people's imaginations, or
will a good movie be just as satisfying? The foundations
of belief are being challenged by our ability to manip-
ulate reality so effectively.

Regarding the traditional reverence Jews and Chris-
tians have for creation: Will the brilliant images of the
Exsultet be credible any longer if tragedies like the
Alaskan oil spill or the systematic burning of the
Amazon forests continue? It will become increasingly
more difficult to sing "Exult all creation around God's
throne" when cancers abound because a previous 51
said). People lingered in the stadium for a good while, some taking home lilies they had donated in memory of departed loved ones.

At seven that evening, the neophytes, their sponsors, and some parishioners joined together in the church for evening prayer. Dan, a parish administrator, presided. He invited one of the neophytes to tell all of us what she had said to him earlier about her experiences that day. She was so beautiful. Holding back the tears (but not too well), she spoke about how she had been part of a dysfunctional family for years, with little hope of ever finding a place where she would be accepted with all her strengths, emotional scars, and all. She spoke about her first experiences of acceptance when she began attending the Adult Children of Alcoholics group five years before; then, now, two and a half years ago, she found us and started coming to our church. And now, last year and Dan introduced her to me, and the rest is history.

But the joy came, Mary said, when she realized that the same dynamism that nurtured her in the ACA group were also cherished and practiced by us in the catechumenate. “Never,” she said, “never did I dream that I would have the chance to join a community of people who valued the same ideals that I hoped to live by, and here at Holy Comforter parish, I’ve found my true family.”

I winced inside a bit when she said that, because I suspect that she will find out soon enough that we’re like any family, with our own share of dysfunctionality. But trusting in providence and mercy, I handed her over to the Lord and said, “All right, do your stuff, Lord! Keep her close to you forever!”

Well, Kelly, this letter has been long enough, but as you can see, I’m excited about what’s happening here, and I am so excited about love, as I said. Maybe now you can understand that the object of love is the Multiplication Mystery.

If you ever recover from plodding through this letter, commit or fax me as soon as you can.

Much love!

T.J.

generation of humans were not good stewards of earth’s atmosphere or the proper disposal of nuclear wastes. It will be difficult to imagine what the metaphor “the night will be clear as day” will mean if pollution continues to loom over our cities and poison the air. As the singer proclaims, “May the Morning Star which never sets find this flame still burning,” it will be hard to look admiringly at the Paschal Candle, if the only notion of perpetual flames we have is that of gases constantly belching from America’s refineries and industrial plants. It is no longer just a matter of being nice to creation or sensitive to the cosmos; the planet’s very life is at stake in the way we steward the creation entrusted to us as we face the next thirty years.

Crystal ball gazing is always risky. Without intending to cast fear, I still want to affirm that the truth is that the stakes are higher for the present and next human generation than they have been for any previous generation since the dawn of the planet. The importance of careful choices by everyone on the planet in every issue before them is crucial. Human life literally depends on the deliberate, informed, and universal sense of responsibility of every person on the planet for the good of every other. Continued greed in the first world, for instance, will move the third world toward revolution; the poor will inherit the earth, but it might not be a very peaceful or pretty thing to observe. Now, more than ever before, the crying plea to work inside and outside the church for the unity and good of all humanity must be heeded. There is simply no more time to tolerate the game of “haves vs. have-nots.” Power must be redefined as energy to work for the

unity and good of all. Working to make a more human world (as God intended in the incarnation) must preoccupy the church as its mission in the next thirty years.

Perhaps a way into the future that offers hope is best described in a quotation from Robert Fulghum’s recent best seller, All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten (New York: Villard Books, 1986, 1988):

Wisdom is not at the top of the graduate-school mountain, but there in the sandpile at Sunday School. These are the things I learned:

Share everything.
Play fair.
Don’t hit People.
Put things back where you found them.
Clean up your mess.
Don’t take things that aren’t yours.
Say you’re sorry when you hurt somebody.
Wash your hands before you eat.
Flush.
Warm cookies and milk are good for you.
Live a balanced life—learn some and think some and draw and paint and sing and dance and play and work every day some.
Take a nap every afternoon.
When you go out into the world, watch out for traffic, hold hands and stick together.
Be aware of Wonder. Remember the little seed in the Styrofoam cup. The roots go down and the plant goes up and nobody really knows how or why, but we are all like that.
Goldfish and hamsters and white mice and even the little seed in the Styrofoam cup—they all die. So do we.
And remember the Dick-and-Jane books and the first word you learned—the biggest word of all—LOOK.
Everything you need to know is there somewhere ...
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