

Habemus ad Dominum. Therefore it is an honour, and not arrogance; and because this is an honour, that we have lifted up the heart to the Lord, have we ourselves done it? Could we ourselves, of our own strength? Have we lifted up the earth that we were to heaven? God forbid: he has done it, he has stooped down, he has held out his hand, he has stretched forth his grace, he has caused what was below to be on high. Therefore when we said, *Sursum cor* and you answered, *Habemus ad Dominum*, lest you should ascribe to yourselves that you have your heart on high, I added: *Gratias agamus Domino Deo nostro.* These are short but great mysteries: we say short words, but great in desire. For you say this to yourselves quickly and without a codex, and without reading, and without long disputation. Bear in mind what you are, and in what you must persevere that you may be able to come to the promises of God.

Note: Texts are given in the Douai-Rheims version where St. Augustine's Latin is that of the Vulgate; where it differs his text is translated direct.

LITURGICAL PROPAGANDA

By

L. C. SHEPPARD.

A recent correspondence in a Catholic weekly newspaper on the subject of the vernacular in the public worship of the Church showed that there is some feeling on this topic among a certain section of the faithful. The correspondence was noteworthy for it brought out clearly two things which should prove useful in the future: the unsuitability of newspaper columns for the discussion of such a question, and the strange ideas that exist among many as to the proper function of the public worship of the Church in the spiritual life of the faithful—the strange ideas, be it said, were not confined to the laity.

I.

For some years now, throughout the West, we have been in the throes of what has come to be known as the Liturgical Movement; here in England we have, in many ways, felt its effects in lesser degree perhaps than in some other countries. On account of the war, which has brought about a great shifting of population, in many parts of the country one has been able to obtain a rough but certainly interesting estimate of the advance of the liturgical movement. In the majority of cases indeed that evidence has pointed to a lamentable lack of penetration of those ideas for which the movement stands, and the present time, of upheaval seems hardly propitious for their further intensive propagation.

On the other hand the actual state of ferment of ideas provides certainly a suitable moment for sowing useful seeds. If in the past there have been mistakes, and serious mistakes, in present-

ation, on account of which many people have a wrong idea, and the majority perhaps no idea at all, of what the liturgical movement is, surely now is the time to seek the reason for so sorry a condition of affairs.

We have been told endlessly that the object of all this liturgical propaganda is the active participation of the faithful in the public worship of the Church, but have heard less often what these terms imply; the groundwork has in so many instances been but too scantily sketched out so that silent congregations enduring plainchant from a choir which might just as well be singing Gounod, ceremonies carried out 'correctly', churches which conform to the latest new idea (justified, of course, by historical precedent, functionalism or evolution) together combine to give an idea of the liturgical movement which is false. It suggests, in such circumstances, the picture of a heavy waggon lumbering along with an unwilling nag ambling slowly behind. So curious a condition of affairs is not universal in this country, but it is sufficiently widespread to cause concern.

Yet there is no doubt, and in spite of all this, that the remedy is to be found in active participation, but envisaged differently—a participation of the whole man, not an exterior taking part, merely.

Most of our troubles are of our own making, and they come, of course, not from the end in view, but from the means which are adopted to attain it. There are for example three time-worn and faulty approaches by which many who should know better seek to interest others in the liturgy or impose it on them. There are the so-called pedagogic method, the historical approach, and the psychological approach. By the first people are taught to *do* without understanding—Missals, plainchant and the rest are boosted by press and pulpit, almost as a 'stunt', and intensive propaganda has, as always, some effect. Too often though it is that of the blind leading the blind.⁽¹⁾

Then there is the historical point of view, by which the liturgy is painted as the revival of things and manners of thought and prayer now regrettably fallen into desuetude. The psychological approach is that of the pastors or professors who, realising the immense gains to be had from an appreciation of the exterior public acts which express the Christian spirit, strive to draw on the treasures of the liturgy, and teach the faithful to use them. Against all these it is frequently urged that the exterior piety of congregations though impressive may still lack the interior informing spirit, and although many may be caught up in the movement of the crowd there are others to whom such methods

(1) A Benedictine, a leading authority in the matter of popularizing the liturgy, wrote to me from the U.S.A. a little while ago: "I am appalled at the tremendous propaganda, most of it commercial, to make people use a Missal in Church. I am sure it does harm in many cases."

do not apply, that the Church is a living body, and a return to the past is not only not always practical, but seldom possible or advisable, and that though the liturgy has undoubtedly a marvellous spiritual efficacy it is not the sole method of spiritual life. Such rejoinders are not uncommon, and perhaps those to whom they are given deserve the replies they get.

Thus one is driven to analyse still further, and to ask whether active participation does not, over and above these various ways of approach, derive from a more radical foundation, from the very truth of Christianity itself, the teaching of the Church and the doctrine of the sacraments. In so far as it does, consequently, should active participation be considered no longer as an excellent though optional method, but as one that must be achieved at all costs. In this comprehensive sense active participation in the public worship of the Church embraces not only those acts by which we offer praise and homage to God but those acts too by which we receive gifts from him.

II.

To begin at the bottom of the scale there must be of necessity an external element, be it but a mere act of presence. But as we are dealing with a human act, an interior element is also necessary—if it be only the intention behind the act—in order that the act of presence may be truly called participation. It should be added that wherever these two elements are present there is participation, and in rudimentary form perhaps, active participation, nor is there any real participation without them. From this stage on to that fulness of activity which is desirable there is a long step.

Activity varies, too, from one rite to another. In Holy Mass the part of the priest is greater than that of a simple member of the congregation, in marriage it is the couple themselves who are the ministers of the sacrament—they give to each other that which they receive. In penance the action of the penitent has an essential part since it forms the matter of the sacrament. And so on.

In like manner the internal degree of participation may vary. Each act of worship may be willed actually with a present intention; or the intention may depend on an initial act of the will, the impulse and strength of which virtually subsists though the original intention seems in the obscure background.

The faithful may content themselves with the general intention to take part in the acts of worship as the Church desires they should take part, and leave it at that; if they have no deeper appreciation they have done what they can, and may be satisfied with this; others, better instructed, may have clearer intentions; knowing what the Church intends they will model themselves more exactly on her ideal and strive to realize it.

These preliminary notions are important for they show us

how complex is the problem, and in striving for active participation we must do so with full conscience of reality. With these thoughts in mind we may examine more closely the sense of what we are asked to do by active participation.

III.

Holy Mass is, in the first place, an offering made by the faithful, and the fact that the priest offers it in their name does not on that account relieve them of their obligation of offering it too. Priest and people should be one; the souls of the faithful, their interior dispositions and prayers, their exterior acts and gestures, therefore, should be in union with their priest because his sacrifice is and remains theirs. When in ancient days the very material of the sacrifice was brought to the altar by the faithful this truth was vividly expressed; it still is in some degree to-day in the dialogue before the Canon at the beginning of the Preface, which knits priest and people together solidly in one offering assembly.

Holy Mass is also an offering of the faithful as one body not as of people who are physically together by chance in the same place, but of those formally united in one supernatural community, one body, by a common faith and baptism: the Church. The Mass is the sacrifice of the Church, namely of Christ the Head, with his members the baptised faithful. From this sacrificial assembly goes up a great wave of suppliant adoration, from the hearts of all joined together in one powerful choir.

In this choir not all have the same part to play; the part of the priest is not that of the faithful. But each has his part, and from the collaboration of many the organic unity is built up. So that each one must consciously avoid anything whether exteriorly or interiorly which is an obstacle to the close knit union of all in the offering of the sacrifice. One still reads discussions in the Catholic press on whether one should recite the Rosary during Mass. If principles are borne in mind the answer is simple enough: does such a practice unite you to the sacrifice, or does it make you pray as an isolated unit part?

That of course is merely negative. For we must not only avoid what is contrary to our common participation, we must take our proper part: interiorly by attuning the soul to what is being done, exteriorly by joining physically by gesture and by voice.

And what is true of Mass is true, *mutatis mutandis*, of the other acts of worship, the sacraments especially. Whether we give or receive, it must be done with maximum intention, faith and intelligence.

IV.

Practical working out of these principles must, of course, be in proportion to the understanding of the great mysteries involved. Many nowadays have such a vague idea of Holy Mass

as the prayer of the Church, that it is useless to dragoon them to sing plainchant or use a Missal before they understand what all this is about. Of course it can be done—in the past it has indeed been attempted too often; the strange ideas which are so often fathered on the liturgical movement are merely one result of forcing people into liturgical straight-jackets.

In conclusion we may paraphrase an extract from Dom Lambert Beauduin's little book *La Pieté de l'Eglise*⁽²⁾: thousands of Englishmen come together every Sunday with the sole purpose of being present at a liturgical assembly . . . to carry out an act that is in the words of Pius X the primary and indispensable source of the Christian spirit. That is a material reality of which we are witnesses every Sunday and Holiday of Obligation. It remains for us to make of this reality a living act. Here is no need to get people together, to provide a place for them to meet. The programme and the speakers, too, are for Christians incomparable: the drama of Calvary and the ministry of Jesus Christ. All is ready: it remains but to intensify, galvanize into action the members of his body. Can the necessity and practicality of such an undertaking be denied?

(2) One of the earliest and still one of the best expositions of the ideals of the liturgical movement. There is an English translation published in the U.S.A. (Liturgical Press, Collegetown, Minn.) under the title: *Liturgy, The Life of the Church*.

THE STUDY OF LITURGY

By

CONRAD PEPLER, O.P.

There has been a marked change in liturgical writing in the last few years. It can hardly be called a change for the better, for that would imply disrespect for the great liturgical work of the beginning of the century. A great deal of the work immediately connected with the liturgical movement has not indeed merited deep respect in so far as it has indulged in a facile and over-naturalistic philosophising which ill becomes the humble worshipper. But the great historians of the liturgy, men like Neale, Brightman, Bishop or Fortescue, performed the scholarly task of research without which our modern writers would have nothing to say.

The previous work still continues in such important studies as Mr. Dugmore's researches into the Jewish ancestry of the Divine Office⁽¹⁾. In this book the author has done for the Divine Office what Oesterley, in his study of Jewish origins, did for the Eucharistic worship. He has moreover opened a new way of approach in the more neglected study of the non-eucharistic parts of Christian worship. He shows not only that the Pro-Anaphora

(1) *The Influence of the Synagogue upon the Divine Office*, by C. W. Dugmore, B.D. (Oxford University Press; 10/6).