

The Gospel and the Catholic Church

25th April to 26th April 2018

Reply to Bishop Christopher Cocksworth's 'The Character and Gifts of Anglican Worship'

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FIRST I must say a word of thanks for the invitation to take part today. It is a particular pleasure to respond to Christopher Cocksworth. Years ago he told me that he heard me preach on the Doctrine of Justification by Faith, when I was curate of Beeston and he was a student at St John's, Nottingham. Apparently I got it right – I doubt whether I should now. Christopher was a good friend on the Church of England Liturgical Commission and I worked with him on DOG, the Daily Office Group, of which I have very warm memories. Then I should also mention Jonathan Goodall, pastor of the most radical See in the Church of England and, by all accounts, a very good pastor too. The lovely faithful of Ebbsfleet are in good hands even if, as I am bound to say, they are not yet home and dry.

Michael Ramsey, whom I remember lumbering up to the altar at New College when he was on a weekend visit, was one of those prelates whom it was simply thrilling to see, to hear, and to meet. Though he is famous for his meeting with Pope Blessed Paul VI – the first Anglican archbishop to visit

Rome robed in the convocation dress of an archbishop¹ – he did have this to say:

[T]he Anglican Communion is not a body seeking to be attached to the See of Rome. It has always looked in other directions as well...[I]f the Anglican Communion were to disappear because of its good and great service in the reconciliation of all Christians, then its disappearance would be something in which we should rejoice.²

So, if we are looking for archbishops urging Anglicans to go for the Roman option, we cannot pray in aid Michael Ramsey and that extraordinary moment when Pope Paul gave him his episcopal ring. That is not to say, of course, that the Holy See is not longing for the return of Anglicans. As former Anglicans, reconciled with the Holy See, we find particular irony in the Catholic sentiments of some hymns Anglicans sing. How about ‘We pray thee too for wanderers from thy Fold...O bring them back...Back to the Faith which Saints believe of old, Back to the Church which still that Faith doth keep’? ‘And I hold in veneration...Holy Church as his creation, And her teachings as his own’ which Anglicans also cheerfully sing is not, of course, from Newman’s Anglican days.

¹ When Archbishop Geoffrey Fisher went to the Vatican he was presented simply as ‘Dr Fisher’.

² In Michael Ramsey, *The Anglican Spirit*, London, SPCK, 1991, a posthumous collection of addresses edited by Dale Coleman, pp. 141-2

Let us stay with the possibility that something is still lacking in the See of Rome which justifies, in the words of Michael Ramsey, the Anglican Communion in 'looking in other directions as well'. I have always stumbled around in the foothills of theology but, perhaps, we could put together Christopher Cocksworth's 'Pentecostal principle that there is "no gospel without the Spirit"' and Michael Ramsey's 'looking in other directions'. Christopher observes that 'Ramsey is strangely silent about the Spirit, at least in *The Gospel and the Catholic Church*' and notes that he himself is writing after the new Pentecostal awareness of recent years. Some of the phenomena noted would be applauded by Ramsey no doubt – the ecumenical movement and even the renewed emphases of Cardinal Suenens' *A New Pentecost?* that classic of the 1980s. Despite the famously mobile eyebrows of Michael Ramsey, I wonder how comfortable he would be with the charismatic worship of much modern Anglicanism. No, I suspect Michael Ramsey would be pointing us to the Christian East, and to the much more integrated pneumatology of Orthodoxy.

Here, of course, we could have done with a contribution from Geoffrey Rowell, who was to speak at this conference, but has been taken from us. Christopher Cocksworth explores Rowell's recommendation to him of Ian McGilchrist's *The Master and his Emissary; the Divided Brain and the Making of the Western World*. This was new to me and my one question – with which one could interrogate the whole

tradition – is still how to get from the Two to the Three. When Christopher tells us that the Spirit ‘is, in the words of Calvin “the bond of communion” between the Father and the Son and joins us to Christ, we are still saying more about the Personhood of the Two than the Personhood of the Three. As Christopher notes, Geoffrey Rowell would have pointed us back, no doubt, to the interest of Caroline Divines, Non-jurors, and Tractarians in the Holy Spirit. We should have heard about the Ante-Nicene Fathers and the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers. Then, from modern times, there would have been Sergei Bulgakov and I am not sure what else. My own, perhaps simplistic, observation, as a former musician, is that, just as the Middle Ages regarded three-time as *tempus perfectum* (signified by a circle) and two-time as *tempus imperfectum* (signified by the semi-circle, still used as a time signature), so we moderns find two easier to deal with than three. Everything is binary. Only the divine is trinary.

It was a commonplace of my upbringing that the Holy Ghost was under-emphasised in the Latin West. Yet we were very Trinitarian. We began Communion with the Collect for Purity and, whenever the Prayer Book neglected to do so, we High Churchmen lent every collect a full Trinitarian doxology. We sang John Cosin’s translation of the *Veni, creator Spiritus* at every Ordination – a frequent occasion for a cathedral chorister – and there were a few Holy Spirit hymns, such as Robert Bridges’ ‘Love of the Father’ and Bianco da Siena’s fifteenth century hymn ‘Come down, O Love divine’. But we

were told that there needed to be more mention of the Spirit in the words prayed and the invention of *epicleses* became, somewhat like A Detection of Aumbries and The Hunting of the Snark, an obsession of High Church liturgists. Something of the same was happening in the Roman liturgical movement and we ended up with Eucharistic Prayers II-IV, all more pneumatic in tone, and, in Prayer IV, a version of Coptic Basil, albeit with the split epiclesis, as required by Western eucharistic theology. To my mind, an unfortunate loss, in the revision of the Roman Missal, was this prayer from the Offertory:

Veni, Sanctificator omnipotens, æterne Deus: et benedixit hoc sacrificium tuo sancto nomini præparatum.

Come, O thou Sanctifier, almighty, everlasting God, and
✠ bless this sacrifice, made ready for thy holy Name.

It was there in the pre-conciliar Mass, it remains there in the 1962 Mass, and it has been included in *Divine Worship: The Missal*, though not when the modern *Berakot* version of the Offertory Prayers is used.

The dilemma about how the Spirit is represented happens in another area of Catholic worship. I remember being told by an Australian lecturer at St John's College, Nottingham, where, in earlier times, Christopher Cocksworth had been a student, that the Catholic Trinity is not Father, Son, and Holy

Spirit, but Father, Son, and Virgin Mary. At the time this seemed arrant nonsense and rather crude anti-Catholic polemic. The most that could be said about this was that it was an observation about popular devotion rather than theology. And it is certainly true, in my experience, that there is a symmetry between Catholic Marian piety and the excesses of Motherhood piety amongst some where God becomes 'She'. This could take us in various fanciful directions. The *Didascalia Apostolorum* and its feminine deacon or deaconess liturgically imaging the Holy Spirit. The liberation of all language about God, banishing not only masculine pronouns but also language of a military or politically dominant kind. God is not the Lord, nor is God King, however glorious the apparel. I do think Anglicanism – particularly Evangelical Anglicanism - continues to struggle with its all-male religious *dramatis personæ*. Jung said something of the same about the Swiss Calvinism of his youth.

There is an interesting reflection on some of this by Edward Schillebeeckx.³ Schillebeeckx is discussing Pope Blessed Paul VI's 1964 definition of Mary as 'Mother of the Church', a definition not asserted by the Second Vatican Council. He speaks of 'Mariological titles of honour', such as those found in the Litany of Loreto, as

³ Edward Schillebeeckx and Catherina Halkes, tr. John Bowden, *Mary Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow*, London SCM Press, 1993.

a second level transference. They are transferred from the Holy Spirit to the Church, and from this ecclesiological transference “transferred” once again, specifically to Mary, the mother of Jesus, the first and pre-eminent member in faith of the Church’s community of faith.

My own reflection on this, in ‘Mother or Maiden’, a chapter in my book, *Heaven and Earth in Little Space: The Re-enchantment of Liturgy*⁴ is that, when Schillebeeckx notices ‘how the Marian titles are derived from the Holy Spirit - and therefore, one might say, from his overshadowing’

we are helped to see that any unease we might feel about the confusion of Holy Wisdom, a *Theotokos* who can save (that is co-redeem and co-mediate), guard and protect - with the Sovereign Spirit can be set aside, at least at a popular level, provided that due vigilance is shown by those who supervise the rites of the Church.⁵

Though there are arguably some excesses in the East, those who supervise the rites in the West are duly vigilant. I make no apology for dwelling on this Marian dimension because, if moving to the Roman obedience has taught me anything, it has taught me that the add-on, exuberant Marian piety of Anglo-catholicism (singing things at Walsingham that they would never sing at home) is rather different from the highly-

⁴ Andrew Burnham, *Heaven and Earth in Little Space: The Re-enchantment of Liturgy*, Canterbury Press, 2010

⁵ *Ibid.* p191.

integrated Marian piety of a traditional Roman Catholic. There remain many Roman Catholics whose daily prayers are the *Aves* of the Rosary, preceded by a *Pater* and succeeded by a *Gloria Patri*, matching the canonical psalmody of the – still mainly clerical and monastic – Divine Office. Reflecting further on this, I think I have noticed how different the ‘Father-Jesus’ extempore praying of Evangelicals is from the praying of Catholics. For Catholics, the more informal, personal address, in the *Angelus*, the Rosary, and the Stations of the Cross. is to Jesus and Mary, those in whom and through whom the eternal God has made himself known.

Before finishing, I need to apologise for not addressing more closely Bishop Christopher’s paper, to which I am replying. But it is time that I mentioned the Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham, not as a recruiting sergeant, or as a theologian, but as a liturgist. It is a wonderful joke: all these Anglicans who insisted on using Roman liturgy as Anglicans, now having to use Anglican liturgy as Roman Catholics. There is also a note of condescension about how few there are of us. How few, when Rome called the bluff of Anglo-catholicism, responded as they had said they would. The Rock from which we were hewn, and all that. I remember being accused, by Archbishop Rowan Williams, at the time my immediate ecclesiastical superior, of putting my foot on the ecumenical accelerator. I wanted to write it down, get him to sign it, and put it up on the wall. It might be what I need to get into heaven. There are fewer parishes, fewer priests,

and fewer laity in the Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham than there were in the care of the three serving bishops who made the journey to the Tiber. Ebbsfleet alone was – and, I think, still is – quite a bit larger than the Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham. Nonetheless it is part of a journey which has been looked into since the time of Archbishop Laud and undertaken by groups and individuals at least since the reign of King James II. It gained fresh impetus at the time of Blessed John Henry Newman’s conversion in 1845, and has been happening in fits and starts ever since. What is new now – and this is truly remarkable – is that a large compendium of Anglican liturgy – the work of Cranmer, his seventeenth century revisers, the Tractarians and the ritualists – has been officially integrated into the Latin Rite. There is the Ambrosian Rite. There is the Mozarabic Rite. And there is the Ordinariate Use of the Latin Rite. With Morning and Evening Prayer, as enshrined in the *Customary of Our Lady of Walsingham*, I can continue to be a member of the Prayer Book Society – whether associate or full I am unsure – and, more importantly, no one can now say that the Roman Catholic Church lacks a public Office in which all can join.

What we longed for, as Anglicans, was an Order of the Eucharist that was orthodox in shape and theology, and clear in sacrificial and sacramental language. The history of liturgical revision, from 1928 onwards, through the synodical struggles of the last quarter of the twentieth century, could

be written as the story of High Churchmen fighting this battle and Evangelicals fiercely resisting them. Colin Buchanan debunking the Offertory. Negotiations for a Prayer Book shape for modern liturgy, which we find as a minority report in the ASB and as Order Two in *Common Worship*. By the time of *Common Worship* we find integrated into the prayers and praxis of the Church of England two or three contradictory theologies as we move, culturally, from studied ambiguity (which satisfied no one) to choice. And even then we find Evangelicals pursuing informal liturgies, in suits or jeans, and Anglo-catholics going over entirely to Roman liturgical books and dressing in Latin chasubles.

For myself, looking back I sometimes struggle to understand how and why, for sixty years, I looked for and rejoiced in Roman and Latin liturgy and music in the Church of England. Why was I not content with the noble simplicity of mainline Anglicanism – the weekday surplice and stole Communion I served at in my youth, and the daily glories of choral Evensong? Why abandon *The Shorter Prayer Book* of 1946, only 314 pages long, and go back to the situation which Thomas Cranmer so acutely describes: ‘to turn the book only was so intricate a matter, that many times there was more business to find out what should be read, than to read it when it was found out’?⁶ The answer, I think, is that what drove High Churchmen, at least from the nineteenth century

⁶ Preface to the First Prayer-Book of Edward VI

on, at least in part, was the romantic movement. In that sense æsthetics led theology by the nose. For me, it was growing up at Worksop Priory (founded in 1103), singing as a schoolboy at Southwell Minster (founded in 956), and then attending daily Evensong at New College (founded in 1379). Though the Sarum loyalists with their reconstructed liturgies disagreed with the Ritualists and their holiday imports of statuary and vestments from across the channel, all were driven by the longing to re-inhabit these and similar buildings with what Geoffrey Rowell described as the Vision Glorious.

Michael Ramsey's words surely continue to haunt all of us – particularly those of us for whom the Anglican Communion, and, alas, the Church of England, are nowadays not what once they were :

[I]f the Anglican Communion were to disappear because of its good and great service in the reconciliation of all Christians, then its disappearance would be something in which we should rejoice.

East Hendred 25th April 2018