

From Stages to Strands: Re-interpreting the Liturgical Movement

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Abstract: This study proposes a new model for interpreting the liturgical movement in the Christian denominations of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Most historians have argued that the liturgical movement evolved through clearly defined stages before having a decisive impact on the churches in the 1960s and 1970s. This essay moves away from a “stages model” in favour of a “strands model” of interpretation, arguing that the liturgical movement was always constituted by antagonistic strands of ecclesiastical discourse which effected shifts in the outlook of the movement as the configuration of these strands altered. The pre-Vatican II Australian Church is used as a case study in applying the strands model of interpretation.

FROM THE 1960S onwards, many Christian denominations undertook a thoroughgoing reform of their liturgical rites and/or worshipping practices. For example, following the promulgation of the Second Vatican Council’s Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy in 1963, the Roman Catholic Church embarked on a journey which would lead to unprecedented changes in the celebration of the Mass, reflected in Paul VI’s revised *Roman Missal* of 1970.¹ For Anglicans, the Lambeth Conference of 1958 “marked the beginning of a great deal of liturgical revision throughout the Anglican Communion”.² After a period of experimental rites, the Church of England produced *The Alternative Service Book 1980*.³ In Australian Anglicanism, the 1962 General Synod

1. See Archbishop Piero Marini, *A Challenging Reform: Realizing the Vision of the Liturgical Renewal*, (eds.) Mark R. Francis, John R. Page and Keith F. Pecklers (Collegeville MN: Liturgical Press, 2007).

2. John Fenwick and Bryan Spinks, *Worship in Transition: The Liturgical Movement in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Continuum, 1995) 71.

3. Fenwick and Spinks, *Worship in Transition*, 71-79. See also Stephan Sykes and John Booty (eds.), *The Study of Anglicanism* (Great Britain: SPCK, 1988) 132-33. Importantly, R. T. Beckwith notes that within most Anglican Communion, revised Prayer Books and

opened up avenues for liturgical revision which resulted in *An Australian Prayer Book* in 1977.⁴ And Protestant denominations also undertook significant revisions of their worship, even cautiously validating more eucharistic-centred modalities (in much the same way that the Catholic Church had moved towards more Word-centred modalities in its rites). In England, the Presbyterians issued a *Service Book* in 1968, the Congregationalists brought out a eucharistic *Order of Public Worship* in 1970, and the Methodists produced *The Methodist Service Book* in 1975. In Australia, the Congregationalists, Methodists and many Presbyterians formed the Uniting Church in Australia in 1977 and thereafter issued *Holy Communion* in 1980 – a text drawing together revisions from the constituent churches which, as Geoffrey Wainwright noted, reflected the influences of “the ecumenical liturgical movement”.⁵

This extraordinary period of revision and change resulted from a re-imagining of the nature, role and efficacy of liturgy and worship within the Christian Churches of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In the broadest possible terms, this *liturgical movement*, as it was dubbed, saw in the liturgy a means of revitalising ecclesial life and re-awakening the attachment and commitment of adherents to their faith traditions – especially amid the perceived rampant individualism and social atomisation endemic to modern society. No longer would liturgy remain the sole preserve of ministers and priests; no longer would it remain a science of rubrics or a matter of private devotion. And as the movement continued into the post-1945 period, the ongoing efficacy and relevancy of Christian liturgy and worship was increasingly thought reliant upon its adaptation and reform.

Now the traditional scholarly interpretation of the liturgical movement has often been predicated on precisely these terms: *the* liturgical movement. There has been *one* movement which evolved through various stages according to the shifting influences of differing theological ideas, personalities, places (whether it be countries, institutions or particular associations, scholarly or otherwise), socio-cultural developments and historical events, all leading to the sort of revisions and shifts in worshipping practice described at the beginning of this article. I have termed this the *stages model* of interpretation and it has enjoyed a long reign as the dominant interpretive framework.

Recently, however, some scholars have begun questioning this smooth, linear historical trajectory. According to Mark Searle – writing

Alternative Services Books do not strictly replace the Prayer Book of 1662, but, rather, stand alongside it. See Cheslyn Jones et al. (eds.), *The Study of Liturgy* (London: SPCK, 1997) 109.

4. Bruce Kaye et al (eds.), *Anglicanism in Australia: A History* (Carlton South VIC: Melbourne University Press, 2002) 139-40.

5. Geoffrey Wainwright, “Recent Liturgical Revision”, in Jones et al., *The Study of Liturgy*, 330.

of the liturgical movement as a Catholic phenomenon – if the historian “were to focus on agendas, the history of the liturgical movement would seem less evolutionary, more discontinuous”. For Searle, careful attention to such agendas reveals *two* liturgical movements: the first was “countercultural” and “aimed at weaning nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Catholics from their culturally accommodated devotions and their individualistic piety and bringing them back to the liturgy”. The second “grew out of the first but worked in the opposite direction and with the conviction that the liturgy had to be accommodated to the people”.⁶ Frank Senn, the respected Lutheran liturgical theologian, has actually suggested that there were not two but *four* liturgical movements: a restoration movement which sought to recover “the great historic liturgies of the past”; a renewal movement which sought to promote the full participation of the people in worship; a revival movement which originated in the camp meetings of the Second Great Awakening of the early nineteenth century, later reflected in neo-Pentecostal styles of worship; and a retrieval movement which is characterised by “the desire of many in the postmodern generation to utilise forms of the past to meet their own spiritual needs”. According to Senn, such movements have “flourished not just chronologically but also simultaneously”.⁷

The present study represents an addition to this revisionist historiography. However, whether there were two or four liturgical movements, the tendency remains to see each identified movement as *discursively coherent* in its own right. Of course, a movement can be defined as being a movement precisely because it displays a marked uniformity and continuity in enunciated positions. Yet a close reading of texts within any definable liturgical movement often reveals the presence of different, sometimes even competing, ecclesiastical or institutional discourses. This article seeks to demonstrate that ideas about the liturgy were always expressions of the broader interplay of various strands of ecclesiastical discourse, representing what I would characterise as a *strands model* of interpretation. As such, the very term “the liturgical movement” may best be understood as a discursive effect, an institutional strategy to name and effectively control the exchange and circulation of these ideas. Though I will continue to use the phrase “the liturgical movement”, it should be understood as a form of shorthand for what remained a phenomenon constituted by multiple ecclesiastical discourses.

6. Mark Searle in Barbara Searle and Anne Y. Koester (eds.), *Called to Participate: Theological, Ritual and Social Perspectives* (Collegeville MN: Liturgical Press, 2006) 1.

7. Frank Senn, “Four Liturgical Movements: Restoration, Renewal, Revival, Retrieval”, *Lutheran Theological Journal* 40 (December 2006) 143-46. See also *The People’s Work: A Social History of the Liturgy* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2006).

The article comprises two sections. First, to outline the theoretical underpinnings of the paper, I shall explain the strands model of interpretation using as examples writers and texts from the liturgical movement in Roman Catholicism. Secondly, I shall “test” this interpretive model by examining the liturgical movement in the pre-Vatican II Australian Catholic Church.

1. A STRANDS MODEL OF INTERPRETATION

It has long been a commonplace among scholars of the liturgical movement to identify differing stages of the movement in the Roman Catholic Church of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Of course, differences remain over where to draw the line between stages and, consequently, what can be classified as part of the movement and what is regarded as antecedent to it. For example, the traditional view consigns the work of Prosper Guéranger and Pius X to a “preparatory” stage, before the movement properly emerged with Lambert Beauduin’s famous address at the Malines Conference in 1909.⁸ Some have actually counted Guéranger, Pius X, Beauduin and even Virgil Michel’s work as constituting the “beginnings” of the movement, after which it moved through further stages (and continues).⁹ Certain scholars draw a line between the movement up to Pope Pius XII’s encyclical *Mediator Dei* in 1947 and the following decade-and-a-half which immediately preceded the Second Vatican Council.¹⁰ And some have located the origins of a liturgical movement in the Enlightenment which, in its more “extreme” form, actually supplanted a “moderate” inter-war movement to deliver a dubious legacy in the post-Vatican II period.¹¹

8. This appears to have been the position of some early assessments. See Ernest Koenker, *The Liturgical Renaissance in the Roman Catholic Church* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1954) 11-12. Though Koenker saw Guéranger and Pius X as “preparatory” to the liturgical movement, he actually regarded the first Liturgical Week given for the laity at Maria Laach Abbey in 1914 as the real birth of the movement. See also H. Ellsworth Chandlee’s entry in J. G. Davies (ed.), *A Dictionary of Liturgy and Worship* (London: SCM, 1972) 217; and Bernard Botte, *From Silence to Participation*, trans. John Sullivan (Washington: The Pastoral Press, 1988). Many non-Catholic scholars appear to have followed this interpretation. For example, the Methodist scholar, Gordon Wakefield, drew upon the work of Louis Boyer to suggest that the Malines conference was “the real starting point”. See *An Outline of Christian Worship* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998) 152.

9. See Virgil C. Funk’s entry in Peter E. Fink (ed.), *The New Dictionary of Sacramental Worship* (Collegeville MN: Liturgical Press, 1990) 695-715.

10. The work of James F. White is most representative of this position. See *Roman Catholic Worship: Trent to Today* (New York and Mahwah NJ: Paulist Press, 1995) 93-95.

11. See Aidan Nichols OP, *Looking at the Liturgy: A Critical View of its Contemporary Form* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1996) 11-48. Nichols suggests that his work is actually based on the original thought of Waldemar Trapp in his *Vorgeschichte und Ursprung der liturgischen Bewegung, vorwiegend in Hinsicht auf das deutsche Sprachgebiet* (Regensburg, 1940; Munster, 1979).

It is not my intention to discredit these approaches or to ally myself with any one. However, instead of delineating stages of the liturgical movement, which can tend to represent it as discursively uniform at any one point in time, I would see the movement better defined as the interplay of *antagonistic* strands of ecclesiastical discourse which were differently configured according to time, place and context. In particular, I shall identify two such strands. But before doing so, it will be helpful to outline briefly the theoretical basis on which this study rests.

Scholars interested in discourse have often drawn extensively from the works of Michel Foucault. This is hardly surprising, given the ongoing popularity of Foucauldian interpretive methodologies within the social sciences.¹² Yet the veritable ubiquity of Foucauldian discourse analysis – with the necessary caveat that one cannot ascribe a singular or unitary Foucauldian approach to discourse analysis¹³ – can tend to overshadow other commentators. While drawing broadly from a theoretical framework consistent with Foucault's *Archaeology of Knowledge*, I also utilise the lesser known work of Michel Pecheux. In his seminal book, *Language, Semantics and Ideology*, Pecheux, building on Louis Althusser's theories of ideology, suggested that discourses are inherently antagonistic. By itself, such a statement is unremarkable: the very existence of different discourses in society is suggestive of antagonistic potential. However, Pecheux was not alerting us merely to a synchronic reality, but, rather, to a diachronic one as well. What is interesting in Pecheux's work, and highly instructive for this study, is Pecheux's argument that discourses and their material effects evolve and develop over time *because* they clash with one another.¹⁴ Though Pecheux's project was Marxist in orientation, his argument can be applied more generally.

My central claim is that "the" liturgical movement evolved over a period of time not through a series of neatly defined stages of thinking, but through a struggle between ecclesiastical discourses. Discernible shifts in the outlook of the liturgical movement represented, therefore, ongoing reconfigurations in the relations of these antagonistic institutional discourses. To follow this line of argument, I identify two mutually antagonistic ecclesiastical discourses. By way of caveat, these particular discourses do not exhaust the list of identifiable Christian

12. Lisa Downing, *The Cambridge Introduction to Michel Foucault* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008) viii.

13. See, for example, Hubert L. Dreyfus' and Paul Rabinow's excellent discussion of key shifts in Foucault's intellectual concerns: *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1983) particularly xxiii-xxvi.

14. For commentaries on Pecheux's theories of discourse see Diane Macdonell, *Theories of Discourse: An Introduction* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986) 43-59; David Howarth, *Discourse* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 2000) 92-98; and Sara Mills, *Discourse* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004) 10-14.

discourses of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries; nevertheless, they are most useful when trying to chart the discursive trajectory of the liturgical movement.¹⁵

We might describe the first strand of ecclesiastical discourse as *agonistic*. This represents an oppositional worldview: the institution understands itself *in opposition* to identified “others”. In such a discourse, the institution sees itself in a struggle, a war against clear enemies. Different positions or modes of thinking are often perceived as threats, deviations from right thinking. And the language of such discourse is combative and dialectical. Though one can find clear evidence of this discourse in earlier Christian history, particularly in struggles with “heresy”, it became particularly dominant within ecclesiastical discourse after the Reformation when opposition between Catholicism and Protestantism and, later, between Christianity and modernity functioned as powerful and long-lasting discursive forces of identity formation and doctrinal boundary marking within the Christian denominations.¹⁶

We might contrast the agonistic strand with its polar opposite, what I have called the *integrative* strand. Unlike the agonistic strand, which casts the other as oppositional, the integrative strand centres on a much more dialogic relation to the other. It validates the plurality of ideas and seeks common ground rather than lines of demarcation or boundary marking. It is inherently synthetic in categorising concepts, and often represents the other as a source of meaningful exchange. In this strand of discourse, then, the other could be drawn upon (without necessarily being completely embraced) to further develop theological positions. Such a strand of discourse should not be interpreted as a wholesale concession to what agonistic discourse regards as enemies; however, in this strand of discourse, the other no longer functions as something to be actively resisted. Like agonistic discourse, one can find numerous examples of this strand in the history of Christianity. One need only think of the gradual but ultimately decisive adaptation of

15. For a broader discussion of discourse and Christianity, see Martin D. Stringer, *A Sociological History of Christian Worship* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

16. A number of historians of early modern Catholicism place great importance on a combative mentality in the post-Tridentine Church. See Hubert Jedin, *Crisis and Closure of the Council of Trent* (London and Melbourne: Sheed and Ward, 1967) 164. R. Po-Chia Hsia, *The World of Catholic Renewal, 1540-1770* (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2005) 217; Guisepppe Alberigo, “From the Council of Trent to Tridentism”, in Raymond F. Bulman and Frederick J. Parella (eds.), *From Trent to Vatican II: Historical and Theological Investigations* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2006) 27-31; John O’Malley discusses the shift in styles of discourse in the pre-Vatican II and post-Vatican II Church, as evidenced by the language of conciliar decrees. According to O’Malley, councils before Vatican II utilised “legislative-judicial” language which was concerned with maintaining right teaching in the face of dangerous dissent. See his essay in *From Trent to Vatican II*, 301-318 and *What Happened at Vatican II* (Cambridge MA: Belknap Press, 2008) 11-12.

Christianity to late antiquity or, in more recent centuries, to accommodations with modernity, such as Friedrich Schleiermacher's theological synthesis.¹⁷ So how can we understand the Roman Catholic liturgical movement as the product of *both* discourses?

One could argue that the liturgical movement originated largely as an expression of agonistic discourse. In the course of the nineteenth century, ecclesiastical discourse, particularly vulnerable to currents of Romanticism and the anti-modern and centripetal tendencies of the papacy, increasingly saw the modern world as its great enemy.¹⁸ A liturgical movement emerged as something of a weapon in this struggle. The term "liturgical movement" first appeared in the writings of Dom Prosper Guéranger in 1851.¹⁹ Born in 1805, Guéranger entered the seminary of Le Mans in November 1822 and was ordained in October 1827, but his attraction to religious life manifested itself in his efforts to save the abandoned Benedictine priory of Solesmes from demolition after it was put on the market in 1831. That a venerable architectural structure such as Solesmes, originally founded in 1010, should stand in danger of destruction was unremarkable in early nineteenth-century Europe: by the end of Napoleon's reign, less than 2% of the fifteen hundred Benedictine abbeys existing in 1790 had survived as monastic houses.²⁰ After gathering support, financial and ecclesiastical, Guéranger was able to restore Solesmes as a monastic house of prayer in 1833, and shortly thereafter re-establish the Benedictine congregation in France.²¹

The voluminous writings of Guéranger make it clear that his monastic project was directed against a perceived secular assault upon Christianity. Guéranger read Francois Chateaubriand, Joseph de Maistre and Felicite Robert de Lamennais: all viewed contemporary society as a dangerous age in which rampant individualism and secularity had inevitably followed in the wake of Catholicism's rejection and banishment. In his *Liturgical Year* – a 10,000 page

17. See, for example, Averil Cameron, *Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991) particularly 1-14. On Schleiermacher and modernity, see Hans Küng, *Christianity: Essence, History and Future* (New York: Continuum, 2008) 694-717.

18. See O'Malley, *What Happened at Vatican II*, particularly Chapter 2 "The Long Nineteenth Century", 51-92.

19. R. W. Franklin, "The Nineteenth Century Liturgical Movement", *Worship* 53 (1979) 12.

20. D. H. Farmer, *Benedict's Disciples* (Great Britain: Ebenezer Baylis and Son, 1980) 282.

21. Cuthbert Johnson OSB makes the point that initially Guéranger and some monastic aspirants entered Solesmes without any formal monastic formation. The opening paragraph of the *Constitutions* written up by Guéranger made it clear that the community would wait for a period of time before seeking admission to the Benedictine order. See Cuthbert Johnson, *Prosper Guéranger (1805-1875): A Liturgical Theologian: An Introduction to his Liturgical Writings and Work* (published Ph.D thesis, Rome: Pontifical Liturgical Institute, 1984) 139-40.

commentary on the liturgical year, progressively written and published between 1841 and 1866 – Guéranger warned that “we are fast approaching that awful time, when the want of faith will paralyze men’s hearts”.²² For Guéranger, the decline in faith was a direct result of the dire spirit of individualism: “the spirit of independence and of liberty which reigns today makes belief in God rare; it is one of the wounds of our time”.²³ And this spirit of independence had relegated the Church to the social and political wasteland – “Now-a-days, the Liturgy has none of her ancient influence on society; Religion has been driven from the world at large.”²⁴

But according to Guéranger, the Church was uniquely placed to rescue civilisation from the scourge of individualism. At heart, the Church was essentially a corporate entity whose lifeblood was ultimately found not in doctrines or moral absolutes but, rather, in the liturgy. If the liturgy could be restored to pride of place both within the Church’s life and, therefore, within society at large, then the present damage could be undone. For such purposes, the eucharistic liturgy was particularly efficacious in Guéranger’s mind: “it is the Eucharist which creates community, for in recovering Christ the walls of the self are broken down and the worshipper is engrafted into a great union which surmounts the natural order, Christ’s body, the Church”.²⁵

Guéranger’s liturgical project was clearly predicated on an oppositional or reactionary worldview. And because of this fundamental outlook, the ideas within this strand of discourse centred on *restoration* rather than reform of the liturgy. Guéranger’s enterprise was to restore the former glory of the liturgy as he imagined it. This former glory was often located in the medieval era, with its grand cathedrals, melodic Gregorian chant, a pervasive sense of mystery and awe, and a perception of the Church as the centre of social and political life. In the nineteenth-century movement, then, to recover elements of liturgical life harking back to the medieval Church was to equip the contemporaneous institution with a blueprint for victory against society in the shadow of the Enlightenment. The strong sense that only a re-emphasis on communal life could effectively counter modern individualism actually underpinned a number of movements which took shape across Europe from the 1830s: the Oxford movement in Anglicanism, German Catholic Romanticism, represented most notably by Johann Mohler, and the work of N. S. F. Grundtvig in Denmark. All

22. R. W. Franklin, *Nineteenth-Century Churches: The History of a New Catholicism in Wurttemberg, England, and France* (New York and London: Garland, 1987) 421.

23. Franklin, *Nineteenth-Century Churches*, 422.

24. Franklin, *Nineteenth-Century Churches*, 421.

25. Franklin, *Nineteenth-Century Churches*, 423.

these movements sought a panacea for modern ills by returning to past models of communality and rituality.²⁶

Yet as dominant as the agonistic strand was in Guéranger's works, one can discern the presence of the integrative strand. Indeed, despite being somewhat muted, the operation of an integrative strand within Guéranger's thinking in fact formed a *necessary* part of his project. How could the Eucharist "create community" if the people remained ignorant of its meaning? "Liturgical prayer would soon become powerless," he declared, "were the faithful not to take a real share in it, or at least not to associate themselves to it in heart. It can heal and save the world, but only on the condition that it be understood."²⁷ There can be little doubt that Guéranger was here expressing sentiments consistent with certain Enlightenment notions, principally an emphasis on *Verstand* or comprehension.²⁸ Though Guéranger never conceived of any move to change or reform the liturgy – given the strong agonistic underpinnings of his thought – the growing influence of the integrative strand in the twentieth century would witness this notion pressed into an agenda for liturgical reform.

By the early twentieth century, a *gradual* shift in favour of the integrative strand is discernible. In 1909, Dom Lambert Beauduin, a Benedictine monk from the Belgian abbey of Mont César, delivered a paper at the Congress of Catholic Workers in Malines, Belgium. In this address, Beauduin identified the liturgy as the heart of the Church's spiritual life and, accordingly, called for the active participation of all God's people in the liturgy. Many of his ideas were later enumerated in his book *Liturgy, the Life of the Church*, first published in 1914. A number of historians who have utilised the stages model of interpretation have identified Beauduin's work as marking the beginnings of the liturgical movement. For example, in his entry on the liturgical movement in J. G. Davies' *A Dictionary of Liturgy and Worship*, H. Ellsworth Chandlee writes, "It is this conference which was probably the real inauguration of the Liturgical Movement."²⁹ And more recently, Keith Pecklers has argued that "the Liturgical Movement began in Belgium in 1909 at the *Congrès national des oeuvres catholiques* held in Malines"³⁰

26. Franklin discusses some of these movements in *Nineteenth-Century Churches*. See also his "Guéranger: A View on the Centenary of His Death", *Worship* 49 (June-July 1975) esp. 323-25 and "Johann Adam Mohler and Worship in Totalitarian Society", *Worship* 67 (January 1993) 2-17.

27. Franklin, *Nineteenth-Century Churches*, 425.

28. Nichols, *Looking at the Liturgy*, 31.

29. J. G. Davies (ed.), *A Dictionary of Liturgy and Worship* (London: SCM, 1972) 217.

30. Keith Pecklers, *Worship: New Century Theology* (London and New York: Continuum, 2003) 91. Such a position is also reflected in *The Oxford History of Christian Worship* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006) 699.

Such assessments are perfectly understandable: some of the principles which Beauduin enunciated in his papers and books were later enshrined in the liturgical reforms of Vatican II. For example, Beauduin drew upon an ecclesiology which was extremely novel for the time – the ecclesiology of the Mystical Body of Christ – but which has now become an important ecclesiological model.³¹ However, until it was validated by Pius XII's encyclical *Mystici Corporis* in 1943, it remained a radical idea precisely because it moved outside the traditional ecclesiology of the hierarchical Church which had become dominant in the post-Tridentine period *in opposition* to less-hierarchically oriented Protestant ecclesiologies.³² Similarly, Beauduin dared to speak of the “priesthood of the people”, a notion which had dropped out of ecclesiastical discourse in the post-Tridentine period because it appeared to veer dangerously close to a Protestant view of ministry.³³ According to Beauduin, the people's participation in the liturgy fundamentally rested on their realisation as sharers in Christ's priesthood:

For all alike, wise and ignorant, infants and adults, lay and religious, Christians of the first and Christians of the twentieth century, leaders of an active or of a contemplative life, for *all the faithful of the Church without exception*, the greatest possible active and frequent participation in the priestly life of the visible hierarchy, according to the manner prescribed in the liturgical canons, is the *normal and infallible path* to a solid piety that is sane, abundant, and truly Catholic, that makes them children of their holy mother the Church in the fullest sense of this ancient and truly Christian phrase.³⁴

Importantly, Beauduin went on to stress that the people's participation in the liturgy should move beyond understanding or “interior participation”, and instead embrace the “activities of the senses”. “To

31. See Avery Dulles, *Models of the Church* (New York: Image Books, 2002) 39-54. Note that by Vatican II another ecclesiological model, the “People of God”, was increasingly preferred to the “Mystical Body of Christ”.

32. The literature on developments in Catholic ecclesiology in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries is considerable. Some useful references include Avery Dulles, “A Half Century of Ecclesiology”, *Theological Studies* 50 (1989) 419-29; Michael J. Himes, “The Development of Ecclesiology: Modernity to the Twentieth Century”, in Peter C. Phan (ed.), *The Gift of the Church: A Textbook Ecclesiology in honor of Patrick Granfield OSB* (Collegeville MN: Liturgical Press, 2000) 45-67; Edward P. Hahnenberg, “The Mystical Body of Christ and Communion Ecclesiology: Historical Parallels”, *Irish Theological Quarterly* 70 (2005) 3-30.

33. See Edward Schillebeeckx, *The Church with a Human Face: A New and Expanded Theology of Ministry* (London: SCM Press, 1985) 200. Clifford Howell makes similar observations in his chapter “From Trent to Vatican II” in Cheslyn Jones et al. (eds.), *The Study of the Liturgy*, 288.

34. Lambert Beauduin OSB, *Liturgy, the Life of the Church*, trans. Virgil Michel OSB (Collegeville MN: The Liturgical Press, 1929) 12-13.

depreciate ritual piety," he declared, "because it is not purely mental, to diminish one's participation in liturgical acts under the pretext of fostering a more interior life, is to withdraw oneself just to that extent also from the sanctifying action of the Church...to lessen the influence of the priesthood of our Lord upon the soul."³⁵

Yet despite the rising stocks of integrative discourse within Beauduin's work, agonistic discourse continued to shape his thinking. Beauduin, like Guéranger, drew attention to the dangers of modern individualism: "whatever the liturgy loses," he wrote, "is gained by individualism".³⁶ For Beauduin, Catholics were living in a dangerous age: "We are living in a social and political atmosphere that is saturated with this secular spirit." He went on to suggest, "The Latter tries to insinuate itself into Catholic life in many subtle and equivocal forms: tolerance, respect for opinions, religion discreet and reserved, piety in which the spirit plays a larger part than the rites..."³⁷ Like Guéranger, Beauduin did not see any need for wide-ranging liturgical reform. Dom Bernard Botte, a contemporary of Beauduin, expressed this clearly when he wrote,

We should note that the Liturgical Movement, at its beginning, was not a reformist movement. Dom Beauduin knew very well that there were some cobwebs on that venerable monument called Liturgy. One day or another these would have to be dusted away. But he did not consider this as essential and, at any rate, it was not his business.... He regarded the Liturgy as a traditional given which we first of all had to try to understand.³⁸

But the ascendancy of integrative discourse in the Church, especially discernible in the 1950s and 1960s, brought the question of reform to the fore. Indeed, a chiasmic play of terms which emerged in the 1950s aptly summed up the increasing dominance of this strand of discourse in the liturgical movement. In his book *Bringing the Mass to the People* (1960) the American H. A. Reinhold included this piece of second-hand reporting:

It is reported that the late Pius XII, to whom we owe so much in this field, told a group of European liturgists, about the year 1952, before one of their study meetings, that the liturgists had tried with commendable success to bring the "people to the Mass" by several devices like the dialog Mass in its various forms, but they had reached an impasse. It was now time, he said, to "bring the Mass to the people by reform and adaptation," and before his time

35. Beauduin, *Liturgy, the Life of the Church*, 15.

36. Beauduin, *Liturgy, the Life of the Church*, 24.

37. Beauduin, *Liturgy, the Life of the Church*, 28.

38. Taken from Alcuin Reid, *The Organic Development of the Liturgy* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2005) 81.

came to die he hoped to achieve so much in this field that the advance would have been irreversible and would have laid down clear principles for future work.³⁹

Quite apart from the accuracy of Reinhold's information, this notion – that you must bring the Mass to the people, that is, reform the Mass – reflected a radical reconfiguration of ecclesiastical discourse within the liturgical movement. And it proved both controversial and divisive. It signalled, for example, the operation of a strand of discourse which did not see in modern categories of thought, to which the notion of reform was seen as peculiarly characteristic, only a dangerous adversary. "A discussion of a reform in the liturgy is not an unhealthy sign of disloyalty to the Church", John Murphy declared in *The Mass and Liturgical Reform* (1956).⁴⁰ In the course of key liturgical conferences and publications throughout the 1950s and early 1960s, the call for reform was increasingly predicated on ideas consistent with aspects of the Enlightenment and modernity: the necessity of liturgical adaptability, the virtue of simplicity, the importance of the intelligibility of the liturgy (which underpinned calls for the vernacular in the liturgy), and the notion that liturgy could be relevant and responsive to its immediate cultural setting.⁴¹ By 1962, Josef Jungmann, the well-known Austrian liturgist and historian, could write that "like every living organism, the liturgy has to adapt itself to the present conditions of life". He went on to write, "As a rule this is achieved by silent growth: but there are times of almost complete standstill, and times of stormy advance."⁴²

"Stormy Advance", however, was not the story of the liturgical movement in the period immediately preceding the Second Vatican Council. Agonistic discourse remained strong enough to render "reforms" modest and tentative. In 1948, following the publication of Pius XII's encyclical *Mediator Dei* (discussed below), the Vatican established a secret body known as the Pian Commission.⁴³ The brief of the commission was to make a detailed study of the liturgy and then prepare necessary reforms. The reasons for the secret nature of the

39. H. A. Reinhold, *Bringing the Mass to the People* (London: Burns and Oates, 1960) 24.

40. John Murphy, *The Mass and Liturgical Reform* (Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Company, 1956) 152.

41. It should be emphasised that the integrative strand was not *only* open to more "modern" ideas: it could also be predicated on past models of thinking. For example, a significant body of thought within the liturgical movement drew upon the early Church and patristic sources to stimulate renewal. Looking back – or *ressourcement* as it was termed – was not inherently reactionary. Instead, *ressourcement* was perceived as a means of recovering past ideas within a modern context. In the agonistic strand, by contrast, looking back to the medieval Church was indeed championed as a rejection of modern thinking.

42. Josef Jungmann, *Pastoral Liturgy* (London: Challoner, 1962) 92.

43. See Annibale Bugnini, *The Reform of the Liturgy: 1948-1975* (Collegeville MN: The Liturgical Press, 1990) 7-20.

commission's work are unclear, but it may be read as a sign that liturgical reform often represented a sensitive issue. The commission was responsible for a number of reforms: the restoration of the Easter Vigil in 1951 (though technically experimental until 1955), the reform of Holy Week in 1955, and the simplification of rubrics in the breviary and missal, also in 1955. The 1953 apostolic constitution *Christus Dominus* reduced the rigours of the eucharistic fast and permitted evening Masses. But none of these reforms could be said to breach any acceptable limits conceived within agonistic discourse.

On the eve of the Second Vatican Council, then, the liturgical movement was not univocal or monolithic. We have identified a broad discursive trajectory: beginning as an expression of agonistic discourse, ideas within the liturgical movement increasingly shed an agonistic worldview in favour of a more integrative one. Yet the agonistic outlook which first dominated thinking within the liturgical movement did not cease to exist in the post-World War II period. And those who advocated reform were often undecided or differed considerably in their views on the necessary degree or extent of such reform. When the moment of "stormy advance" occurred, the liturgical movement represented a pastiche or hybrid of opposing strands of ecclesiastical discourse.

In the remainder of this study I use the strands model of interpretation to evaluate the nature of the liturgical movement in the Pre-Vatican II Australian Catholic Church. The current historiography reveals divergent assessments on its influence in Australia, ranging from negligible to significant.⁴⁴ But the question is not really, was there a liturgical movement operative, but, rather, which of its voices, which of its strands, were evident and in what configurations during the pre-Vatican II period?

2. EARLY UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE LITURGICAL MOVEMENT IN AUSTRALIAN CATHOLICISM

When did the liturgical movement emerge as an object of ecclesiastical discourse in the Australian Church? An obvious place to look would be the texts and papers delivered at eucharistic congresses in Australia in the late 1920s and 1930s. Eucharistic congresses were the

44. Michael Wilson argues that those who saw "liturgy beyond rubrics" in Australia were few: "Changing Society and a Changing Church: Some Aspects of the Liturgical Movement and the Second Vatican Council's Support for Change in Ritual", MA Thesis (La Trobe University, October 1987) 147. Edmund Campion, on the other hand, suggests that there was "considerable evidence from well before Vatican II that Australian Catholics were alive to the currents of thought that would issue in the council's reforms". *Australian Catholics: The Contribution of Catholics to the Development of Australian Society* (Ringwood, Victoria: Penguin, 1987) 203. Katherine Massam takes a more nuanced approach, which will be discussed later in the paper. See note 50.

product of the devotional revivals associated with the nineteenth century. The first international congress was held in Lille, France, in 1881. Functioning as a forum for papers and addresses concerned with eucharistic devotion, they soon became better known for their extraordinary displays of public faith in the Eucharist. Sydney was chosen as the host of the 29th international congress in 1928; however, this event spawned a number of national and even regional events across the country: Melbourne in 1934, Adelaide in 1936 and Newcastle in 1938.⁴⁵ The collected papers of Sydney's International Eucharistic Congress do not make any reference to a liturgical movement.⁴⁶ Yet only four years later, at Melbourne's National Eucharistic Congress in 1934, the liturgical movement had indeed emerged as a new object of ecclesiastical discourse in Australia. What we find at this congress may not be the very first references to a liturgical movement in Australia; however, given the forum, it certainly provides us with a paradigmatic understanding of the movement at the highest levels.

Entitled "The Liturgy and the Laity", Reverend T. O'Shea, Archbishop of Wellington, delivered a paper which called attention to the "wonderful progress" of "The Liturgical Movement". "We may describe it," O'Shea declared, "as a movement having for object to lead the laity back to a right understanding and use of the liturgy and affect a greater participation on their part in the official common worship of the Church."⁴⁷ Interestingly, O'Shea suggested strongly that the liturgical movement was "not something new or of recent growth", nor was it a "modern or passing phenomenon of Catholic life". Though Pius X had given it "tremendous impetus", O'Shea stressed that the movement extended back into the early centuries of the Church, coming to the fore when historical circumstances proved providential. And for O'Shea, its re-emergence in the twentieth century was no less providential: "To meet the needs of the twentieth century the Holy Spirit brings forth a very old thing indeed, but something that has been dormant for a long time in the Christian mind – and this is the doctrine of the Mystic Body."⁴⁸

45. Each congress produced a volume of papers and addresses: *The National Eucharistic Congress, Melbourne, Australia, December 2nd-9th, 1934* (Melbourne: Advocate Press, 1936); *Australian Catholic Education Congress, Adelaide, Australia, November 8th-15th, 1936* (Melbourne: Advocate Press, 1937). Though the theme of this congress was education, it also represented an extraordinary display of eucharistic devotion. *The Story of the Regional Missionary and Eucharistic Congress, Newcastle N.S.W., Australia, 16th-20th February, 1938* (Newcastle: Specialty Publications, 1938).

46. *Addresses delivered at the Twenty-Ninth International Eucharistic Congress, Sydney, Australia, September 1928* (Sydney: Green Press, 1929). There is evidence in some of the addresses of awareness of an ecclesiology of the Mystical Body of Christ, but this is not linked to a "liturgical movement".

47. *The National Eucharistic Congress*, 97.

48. *The National Eucharistic Congress*, 97-98.

O'Shea's clear reference to the "Mystic Body" is highly significant, for it reveals that even in its earliest manifestations an integrative strand was present in the emergence of the liturgical movement as an object of Australian ecclesiastical discourse. This seemingly novel ecclesiology stood at the centre of O'Shea's paper. The persistence of a "passive attitude" among Catholics to the liturgy was "because they do not realise the implications of the doctrine of the Mystic Body; otherwise the faithful would understand that when their Head, Christ, is offering up the Mass, they, the members, cannot remain passive". Furthermore, O'Shea used an idea which Beauduin had also begun popularising: the priesthood of the people. Quoting from Pius XI's encyclical *Miserentissimus Redemptor* (1928) and from scriptural texts, O'Shea reminded the laity that they too were sharers in Christ's priesthood: "The essential thing is to grasp the sublime truth involved – namely, the people's share and participation in the priesthood of Christ." For O'Shea, this "sublime truth" had disappeared only because

in the sixteenth century Protestants took these words of St. Peter out of their context and mixed the truth with falsehood. Hence Catholic writers and preachers have not been insisting as much as they might have done on the Christian priesthood as something shared by all baptised persons.⁴⁹

"What a tremendous difference it would make in our devotional attitude," O'Shea imagined, "if all Catholics could be brought to thoroughly recognise that they shared with the clergy in the only priesthood that is worthwhile – that of Christ!"⁵⁰

Despite the presence of this integrative strand, we should take care not to misread the more dominant discursive underpinnings of O'Shea's text. And the clue is found in what follows the above quote: "It would *bring back* the spirit and attitude that prevailed throughout the Catholic world centuries ago." The phrase "bring back" actually discloses the primary worldview of O'Shea's text. For O'Shea, the birth of the modern world, the time of the "Renaissance and the Reformation", had witnessed the emergence of a terrible affliction: "Christians," O'Shea declared, "had been influenced by individualism and selfishness of both these movements.... We condemn the individualism of modern times and the spirit of greed as the chief causes of troubles in the world." This rampant individualism, which had sundered the perceived organic unity of medieval life, had made itself felt even in Catholic spiritual life: "Do we reflect sufficiently on the fact that our spiritual and devotional life has been suffering recently from a similar individualism, and that our prayers and

49. *The National Eucharistic Congress*, 99-100.

50. *The National Eucharistic Congress*, 99-100.

devotions may have been prompted by the spirit of gain?" "Can we hope to cure the evil of selfishness in our modern economic life," O'Shea asked, "while we allow it in our spiritual life?"⁵¹ The solution lay with the liturgical movement: "To counteract the modern individualism in our prayers and devotions the same spirit has prompted this 'widespread, organised attempt to bring about a better understanding by all of the public worship of the Church, with a view towards a more complete and active participation therein by the entire body of the laity'".⁵²

We can see here strong shades of Guéranger's critique: the view that modernity had atomised social life and that the Church must respond by restoring its own communal life vis-à-vis the liturgy. Though integrative strands of discourse were present in O'Shea's text, they were not the primary elements of the discursive worldview, which was fundamentally agonistic in outlook.

This dominant agonistic outlook is also evident in the work of arguably the first Australian cleric to make contact with the centre of the liturgical movement in the United States. Reverend (later Monsignor) John T. McMahon originally hailed from Ennis, Ireland, but came to Australia as a graduate of All Hallows in 1921. Pursuing his interests in Catholic education, McMahon embarked on a distinguished career, becoming Director of Catholic Education for the archdiocese of Perth from 1921, and, between 1926 and 1928, completing doctoral studies in education at the prestigious Catholic University of America in Washington DC.⁵³ While studying in America, McMahon was closely associated with the *Orate Fratres* group based at St John's Abbey, Minnesota and, until 1932, was an associate editor of *Orate Fratres*. Yet according to Katharine Massam, McMahon's subsequent writings were strangely silent about an idea fundamental to the *Orate Fratres* group: awareness of the "broader critique of church and society" underpinning various initiatives within the American liturgical movement.⁵⁴ In McMahon's educational texts and articles, many of which sought to inculcate ideas of participation in the Mass

51. *The National Eucharistic Congress*, 98.

52. *The National Eucharistic Congress*, 98.

53. McMahon penned an autobiography which detailed these early experiences: *College, Campus, Cloister* (Nedlands WA: University of Western Australia, 1969).

54. Katharine Massam, *Sacred Threads: Catholic Spirituality in Australia 1922-1962* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 1996) 175. Virgil Michel was particularly interested in the link between the liturgical movement and what he called "social reconstruction". See Virgil Michel, "The Scope of the Liturgical Movement", *Orate Fratres* 10 (1936) particularly 442. See also Paul B. Marx, *Virgil Michel and the Liturgical Movement* (Collegeville MN: Liturgical Press, 1957) particularly 371-92; R. W. Franklin and Robert L. Spaeth, *Virgil Michel: American Catholic* (Collegeville MN: Liturgical Press, 1988) particularly 90-103; Keith Pecklers, *The Unread Vision: The Liturgical Movement in the United States of America, 1926-1955* (Collegeville MN: Liturgical Press, 1998) particularly 124-36.

among teachers and students, this critique was decidedly absent. Why? Did McMahon simply not appreciate such a vital link?

Massam argued that McMahon's omission of this connection in his writing reflected what she saw as the primary understanding of the liturgical movement in Australia:

efforts to encourage a full and vibrant liturgy could be presented as noble ends in themselves.... liturgy did not have to encompass an understanding that the Mystical Body which the community was celebrating was the key to a new society, or imply a change in the perception of power in the church.⁵⁵

This is certainly a fair observation. However, it is also very likely that McMahon's ideas reflected a more agonistic outlook: it wasn't that a critique was absent; rather, it was couched in the dominant notion that liturgical renewal represented a bulwark against the dangers of modern society and its pernicious ideologies. There is clear evidence, for example, that McMahon envisaged the teaching of full participation in the liturgy as a means of drawing youth away from the dangers of modern society. In his third article in the series "On Teaching the Mass", published in the *Australasian Catholic Record* in 1941, McMahon declared,

The Mass is the arena of great personal conflicts, the battleground of self-discipline and self-control. And the battle for adolescents is ever on, for the fires of growing bodies to-day are fed by screen, by illustrated magazines, by song, by dance and by the talk of their elders. How can we hold youth except through the heroism inspired by the Mass?"⁵⁶

"Our youth are living in a world that is fast losing its sense of the super-natural," he declared in "Teaching the Mass to Children", published in the same journal in 1954. For McMahon, "the remedy lies in the glorious doctrine of the Mystical Body.... In the ages of faith the Church educated the people through the Mass."⁵⁷ Even the phrase "in the ages of faith" seemed to carry strong overtones of an anti-modern worldview. McMahon was wholly typical of a cleric who had imbibed the dominant agonistic worldview of the Australian Church. But was agonistic discourse always so *universally* dominant within the liturgical movement in the Australian Church?

Religion and Life

What is interesting about the liturgical movement in Australia is its early influence not in the parishes but in groups and organisations

55. Massam, *Sacred Threads*, 174-75.

56. John McMahon, "On Teaching the Mass: Part III", *Australasian Catholic Record* (hereafter ACR) 18 and (October 1941) 248.

57. John McMahon, "Teaching the Mass to Children", ACR 31 (January 1954) 24-25.

which promoted the lay apostolate within what was a largely hierarchical and patriarchal institution. The value of liturgical renewal as a formative instrument of social activism was recognised by some leaders within the specialised Catholic Action groups that had been established in the early 1940s under the auspices of the National Secretariat of Catholic Action.⁵⁸ The Young Christian Workers (YCW) was an important organisation within Catholic Action in Australia. From its earliest days, the YCW adopted more participatory styles of liturgical celebration in its many functions and training programs. This new style of spirituality clearly set the YCW apart from the well-established sodalities and confraternities that continued to foster more traditional expressions of piety. A report to the Episcopal Committee on Catholic Action (ECCA), prepared for its meeting to be held on April 17-18, 1944, noted the importance that the YCW placed on the integration of spirituality and life. This connection was contrasted with the focus of earlier men's movements, particularly the Catholic Young Men's Society:

It [Catholic Young Men's Society] developed a type of piety that was divorced from the real issues of life. Religion and life were put into separate compartments and were not coordinated. Piety was not associated with the ordinary job, with one's leisure and one's interests; it was something apart. It is the essential discovery of J.O.C. that, for the worker's religion to be affected, it must be linked up at every point with his daily struggles and problems on the factory and in the office. Otherwise it will not stand up to the pressures of the modern environment.⁵⁹

Such a connection reflected the operation of more integrative stands of ecclesiastical discourse: the move to integrate a religious perspective with everyday life began to break down the predominantly other-worldly character of Catholic worship which was aimed at strengthening the divorce between Catholicism and modernity. Accordingly, the YCW attempted to incorporate more participatory styles of liturgical prayer: in addition to the annual Labour Day Mass, Dialogue Masses became a common feature of many YCW functions from the late 1940s.⁶⁰ And at a time when they were still regarded with some

58. See Bruce Duncan, *Crusade or Conspiracy? Catholics and the Anti-Communist Struggle in Australia* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2001) 21-23. Also, Colin H. Jory, *The Champion Society and Catholic Social Militancy in Australia, 1929-1939* (Sydney: Harpham, 1986) 90-97.

59. Report to the Episcopal Committee on Catholic Action, 1944. Beovich Papers: Box 374, Adelaide Catholic Archives (hereafter: ACA). [The initials "J.O.C." stand for "Jeunesse ouvrière chrétienne", the original French title of the movement known in English as "Young Christian Workers" (YCW) - Editor]

60. *The Priest in Catholic Action* 15 (February 1, 1952) 20. The Dialogue Mass, also known as the *missa recitata* or *missa dialogata*, represented a form of the Mass where the people spoke various parts in Latin, usually the Introit, Kyrie, Gloria, Creed, Orate

suspicion within mainstream clerical culture: writing to the *Australasian Catholic Record* in 1939, for example, "Pastor" requested some "rules to regulate external participation of the laity in Low Mass, especially what is called the *missa Dialogata*". What he received from the chief organ of the Church in Australia was typical for the time: "Is this parrot-like use of the Latin language of any spiritual advantage? Of what value are Latin words to people who know not Latin?"⁶¹

But other groups which saw a vital link between more participatory styles of liturgy and the lay apostolate drew heavily upon the integrative strand of the liturgical movement. Known as "the Women of Nazareth" or "Ladies of the Grail" or just "the Grail",⁶² this proactive women's organisation, which came to Sydney in 1937, but later continued its work in Melbourne from 1939, saw a valuable and distinctive role for women within the Church. According to Sally Kennedy, the group "saw potentially great power for women resulting from control of the cultural integration of religious faith and practice within Catholic community life". Never wary of innovation, the Grail placed great importance on participatory liturgical celebration not only as an expression of community lifestyle, but also as an instrument of women's creativity and self-expression.⁶³ Formation courses in Melbourne, referred to as the "Quest" course and run at a property called Tay Creggan in Hawthorn, were well ahead of their time:

The concept of innovation in expressions of religion was particularly important. The emphasis on a communal base which was not dependent on the direction of a cleric was a highly unusual, potentially liberating concept for most participants. And the six months' residence at Tay Creggan during the course underlined them in practice.... Gregorian chants and dialogue masses were features of Quest programmes from 1940 on, and served to make communality of prayer an accepted practice among Quest participants. These were new experiences to most. But there was still more to it. The Grail Nucleus encouraged spontaneity and innovation in all these practices. Thus a service might be arranged outside, a Mass celebrated in a dining-room, a ceremony organised under a particular tree or in a garden which had some significance

Fratres, Sanctus, Pater Noster, Agnus Dei, Domine non sum dignus and Communion Antiphon. The first recorded Dialogue Mass was celebrated in 1914 at Maria Laach Abbey.

61. ACR 16 (July 1939) 268.

62. It should be noted that the title of the organisation changed after 1945, becoming "Grail Nucleus" or "Nucleus members". See Sally Kennedy, *Faith and Feminism: Catholic Women's Struggles for Self-Expression* (Manly NSW: Studies in the Christian Movement, 1985)137.

63. Kennedy, *Faith and Feminism*, 195-97.

for the event, a work party might pause to draw up some ritual or means of expressing some religious aspect of its work.⁶⁴

“Spontaneity” and “innovation” clearly reflected the greater influence of the integrative strand within the liturgical movement. There is plenty of evidence that other Catholic groups with interests in the lay apostolate also adopted more participatory styles of liturgical prayer in their spiritual programs.⁶⁵ But the onset of the 1950s witnessed a paradoxical resurgence in the influence of the agonistic strand within the liturgical movement in Australia.

Mediator Dei and the Paradoxical Dominance of the Agonistic Strand in the Australian Church

In 1947, Pope Pius XII issued the encyclical *Mediator Dei*. It was a critical moment in the life and course of the liturgical movement, for it represented the papal verdict on the perceived aims of the liturgical movement. Outright condemnation could serve to effectively extinguish its influence or, at best, drive it into the ecclesiastical shadows; approval could confer on it official status and an endorsement of its ongoing renewal agenda.

Mediator Dei made some positive noises. Pius XII noted “an unprecedented revival of liturgical studies” which he attributed to the “devoted zeal of certain monasteries of the renowned Benedictine Order”.⁶⁶ He affirmed the doctrine of the Mystical Body of Christ, something initially done in his earlier encyclical *Mystici Corporis* of 1943, and commented favourably upon the greater appreciation of the liturgy which had followed in the wake of the movement’s ideas and initiatives. Yet *Mediator Dei* did not read as an unqualified laudation of the liturgical movement; in fact, it sprang from a fear that “exaggeration and error” were creeping into the movement. “We observe...with anxiety and some apprehension,” Pius XII wrote, “an undue fondness

64. Kennedy, *Faith and Feminism*, 195-196.

65. Liturgy schools and summer courses on liturgy were set up by the Therry Society in the 1940s and 1950s: see *Advocate* (March 7, 1943) 32 and *Advocate* (June 17, 1943) 7; *Southern Cross* (March 12, 1954) 15 and *Southern Cross* (June 11, 1954) 15. The Holy Name Society organised some Dialogue Masses and ran various articles on participation in the Mass in its main organ, the *Holy Name Monthly* (HNM). See HNM (August 1, 1941) 14 (a report on the Dialogue Mass in a Perth branch); HNM (May 2, 1938) 19, and HNM (June 2, 1939) 18 (articles on the theology of the Mystical Body); and a series of articles entitled “Everyman at Mass” between March and July 1945, and run again in early 1960. For the Legion of Mary, the 1939 *Official Handbook of the Legion of Mary* included a section on the theology of the Mystical Body. Percy Jones was also involved with the Legion and encouraged the liturgical apostolate within the organisation. See his paper “The Liturgy and the Legion of Mary”, in *The Legion of Mary: Seminarian’s Summer School, 1962* (East Brunswick: Wightons Print, 1962) 20-48.

66. Pius XII, *Mediator Dei* (London: Catholic Truth Society, 1961) 8.

for innovation and a tendency to stray from the path of truth and prudence."⁶⁷

From the perspective of this study, *Mediator Dei* is a fascinating text. In the first place, the text represents an exemplary statement of the marriage of papal teaching and governing authority. This remarkable development did not stretch back to time immemorial – it was a legacy of the nineteenth century, a legacy which the doctrine of papal infallibility and the definition of the Immaculate Conception had helped cement. Rome pronounced judgement and the matter was settled.⁶⁸ *Mediator Dei* was only one in a long series of encyclicals which had sought to bolster this claim. The encyclical pronounced clearly that it is "Our duty, in all that has been done, to praise and approve what is right and to check and condemn what is wrong." It followed, moreover, that "the Sovereign Pontiff alone has the right to permit or establish any liturgical practice, to introduce or approve new rites, or to make any changes in them he considers necessary".⁶⁹

A close reading of *Mediator Dei*, however, also reveals the chief points of antagonism between the two poles of ecclesiastical discourse within the liturgical movement. And in terms of this discursive continuum, it is evident that, while the integrative strand was present, *Mediator Dei* operated principally out of an agonistic worldview. For example, while the encyclical affirmed the "public worship of the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ" it also warned against efforts to "depreciate subjective and personal devotion or even to eliminate it altogether".⁷⁰ It affirmed the social character of the Mass, but, at the same time, defended the validity of the private Mass: it regarded as erroneous those who "disapprove of Masses that are offered privately without a congregation" or "say that priests cannot say Mass at several altars at the same time, because this is to split up the community and jeopardise its unity".⁷¹ Both the content and style of writing suggests clearly that the text was couched in a more agonistic outlook.

As an authoritative papal text, *Mediator Dei* could not be disregarded. Yet it is also clear that it did not necessarily limit the scope of ideas in given scholarly settings and ecclesiastical forums. Throughout the 1950s, a series of liturgical conferences in Europe and the United States tentatively pushed these limits, imagining the possibilities for the "reform" of the liturgy – a clear indication that

67. Pius XII, *Mediator Dei*, 9.

68. See Giuseppe Alberigo, "The Authority of the Church in the Documents of Vatican I and Vatican II", in Leonard Swidler and Piet F. Fransen (eds.), *Authority in the Church and the Schillebeeckx Case* (New York: Crossroad, 1982) 124. See also Paul Collins, *Papal Power* (Blackburn, Victoria: HarperCollins, 1997) 23.

69. Alberigo, "The Authority of the Church in the Documents of Vatican I and Vatican II", 28.

70. Pius XII, *Mediator Dei*, 18.

71. Pius XII, *Mediator Dei*, 41.

integrative strands of discourse were becoming more dominant within the international movement. However, in Australian ecclesiastical discourse, *Mediator Dei* served to validate and strengthen agonistic understandings of the movement. This stands as a paradoxical development: while the 1950s and early 1960s have been read by historians as a period which witnessed a more progressive stage in the liturgical movement, in Australia, it witnessed the occlusion of earlier, more integrative expressions of the movement in the inter-war period. And *Mediator Dei* represented a discursive limit that was never crossed during the remaining pre-Vatican II years. We can see evidence of this in the addresses and papers of Australia's first Liturgical Week, held in Melbourne in 1955.⁷²

In his opening address of welcome, Percy Jones, a leading light of the liturgical movement and sacred music in Melbourne, declared, "It can truly be said that the two great Encyclicals of the present Pontiff, 'Mystici Corporis' and 'Mediator Dei' form at once the basis and inspiration of this Liturgical Week."⁷³ Lest this be thought merely lip service, any survey of the given papers revealed no mention of "reform of the liturgy". There was plenty of discussion of the sacrificial and sacramental dimensions of the Eucharist, the doctrine of the Mystical Body of Christ, and how full participation in the liturgy could be promoted in primary and secondary education. Though the forum was new for Australia, a "Liturgical Week", these theological ideas were mostly unremarkable, even in 1955. There is plenty of evidence, for example, that the Mystical Body of Christ and the priesthood of the people as ideas were relatively well-known. What is missing from the papers, and what one can see in some of the international liturgical conferences at this time, is the consideration of liturgical *reform* to any degree. That is, discussion which reflected the operation of a more integrative strand of discourse. On the contrary, ecclesiastical discourse in the Liturgical Week was permeated by a strong agonistic worldview. Jones' preface to the published volume of papers exemplifies this aptly:

The day of religious individualism is past. The ferocious persecution of the Church in Europe and Asia, the increasing indifference and paganism of countries like our own, now experiencing the terrible fruits of four generations of secular education, the materialism and selfishness that has seeped into public and private life, all these varied attacks on Christ's own standards and ideals, demand that Catholics today must be conscious of their common

72. This forum came rather late to the Australian Church: "Liturgical Weeks" had been convened in the United States since the 1940s.

73. *Australian Liturgical Week* (Melbourne: Advocate Press, 1955) 2. On Percy Jones, see Donald Cave, *Percy Jones: Priest, Musician, Teacher* (Collingwood, Victoria: Melbourne University Press, 1988).

life in Christ. If Catholics cannot pray together we hold out little hope that they will stand together when the more obvious attacks press nearer our own shores.⁷⁴

The argument that agonistic discourse dominated understandings of the liturgical movement in Australian Catholicism in the post-1945 period should not be misunderstood. It does not mean, for example, that dioceses were unresponsive to various practical initiatives such as Dialogue Masses or more engaging hymnody. Archbishop Guilford Young of Hobart was one of the more proactive bishops when it came to implementing liturgical renewal. Since becoming archbishop in 1955, Young worked assiduously to encourage the full participation of the people in the liturgy. In his first Pastoral Letter entitled "The Worship of God", Young declared, "Our immediate task is to get the whole congregation to participate as actively as possible in every Mass."⁷⁵ The Pastoral came with an attached directory that mandated congregational responses during Low Mass and the use of certain hymns for congregational singing.

Similarly, Archbishop Daniel Mannix directed that steps be taken to facilitate liturgical renewal within the archdiocese of Melbourne. In a circular letter to all priests of the archdiocese, dated 7 December 1961, Mannix wrote, "I take this opportunity to urge you to work towards the full participation of your people in the worship of the Church." The letter contained a ten-point plan that outlined directives drawn originally from an instruction which had been issued by the Congregation for Rites in 1958. The first three directives dealt specifically with the participation of the people in the Mass:

High Mass or Missa Cantata, with the people singing those parts which are properly theirs, should be a regular feature of parish worship on Sundays and great feasts. The regulations concerning the music and singers as contained in the Encyclical, "Musicae Sacrae Disciplina", and the instruction of 1958 must be strictly observed.

Apart from the Sung Mass, the normal form of public Masses, especially on Sundays and Holy days should be the Dialogue Mass. The degree of participation will be determined by the capabilities of the particular congregation.

It is highly desirable that at least some of these Dialogue Masses should be made more effective by the congregational singing of

74. *Australian Liturgical Week*, preface.

75. Taken from W. T. Southerwood, *The Wisdom of Guilford Young* (George Town, Tasmania: Stella Maris Books, 1989) 100.

suitable hymns or psalms at the appropriate times, as indicated in the instruction.⁷⁶

However, all these ritual initiatives remained within the constraints of the Latin liturgy. This is a fundamental observation. In the agonistic worldview, any sense of wide-ranging reform, change or adaptation was regarded as anathema, an inglorious surrender to the spirit of the modern age which indulged in innovation and spurned tradition. While such initiatives had been used by some groups in the interwar period, they could also be framed as expressions of lay leadership, spontaneity and innovation. In the post-1945 period, those same ritual initiatives were clearly expressions of the hierarchical Church in its war against secularity.

Is there any evidence that Australian bishops or others advocated *reform*? There are hints of it, so to speak. Of course, modest reforms instituted by the Vatican in the 1950s were enthusiastically endorsed. International journals, including *Orate Fratres*, carried articles on the possibilities of more extensive reform which some in the Australian Church would have read, and some Australian-based journals reproduced significant articles.⁷⁷ There is evidence that some liturgical commissions in the 1950s included Australian theologians.⁷⁸ However, broadly speaking, the Australian Church evinced little institutional ferment around such endeavours. And recent work by Jeffrey Murphy on the suggestions of Australian bishops to the ante-preparatory commission for the Second Vatican Council reveals that a majority of the bishops did not see any need for liturgical reform. Of the 23 residential bishops who submitted a "vota", only six "advocated or responded positively to suggestions concerning liturgical reform".⁷⁹ To draw attention to this situation is not to censure or pass judgement upon the pre-Vatican II Church in Australia; it is, rather, to make the clear point that on the eve of Vatican II, the liturgical movement in Australia remained a true child of the agonistic worldview.

76. Letter to Priests, December 7, 1961. Vicar General's Files: Liturgical and Sacred Music, Melbourne Diocesan Historical Commission.

77. Edmund Campion writes that the journal *Harvest* included an article by H. A. Reinhold on the use of English in the Mass in 1955. See Campion, *Australian Catholics*, 209.

78. Keith Pecklers notes that representatives from Australia were included in "an additional sixty-four consultants" to specialists in a commission considering the place of the vernacular within the liturgy in 1951. See Pecklers, *The Unread Vision*, 65.

79. See Jeffrey Murphy, "'Up to Jerusalem': Australian Bishops' Suggestions for the Agenda of Vatican II", *ACR* 78 (January 2001) 33. See also William Ryder, "The Australian Bishops' Proposals for Vatican II", *ACR* 65 (January 1988) 62-77.

CONCLUSION

In this study I have proposed a new model for interpreting the history of the liturgical movement in the pre-1960s period. Focussing on Roman Catholicism, and using the Australian Catholic Church as a case study, I have argued that the liturgical movement did not progress through a series of stages, but, rather, remained from its beginnings to the Second Vatican Council a product of the interplay between at least two antagonistic ecclesiastical discourses. At one end of the discursive continuum, agonistic discourse saw liturgy as a means of returning to an idealised (often named as medieval) community of faith in a perceived deadly struggle against modernity. And at the other end, integrative discourse imagined that the efficacy of liturgy in the modern world required modern adaptations and reforms. Discernible shifts in the outlook of the liturgical movement, therefore, resulted from reconfigurations in the relationship of these discourses.

Using this strands model of interpretation, my argument has been that the discursive matrix of the liturgical movement in the pre-Vatican II Australian Catholic Church was uneven. While the liturgical movement was initially read in Australian Catholicism as an agonistic project, there is evidence that it was re-interpreted by some groups in the interwar period along more integrative lines. However, papal intervention inevitably redefined the nature of its influence. The agonistic outlook of *Mediator Dei* in 1947 was replicated in the Australian Church until the Second Vatican Council decisively turned the tables on the agonistic worldview. It remains for other scholars to “test” the viability of this model of interpretation in assessing the liturgical movement in other Christian denominations.

Though I have confined my analysis here to the pre-Vatican II period, the story of the liturgical movement continues. Indeed, anyone familiar with contemporary issues surrounding the nature of liturgy in the Roman Catholic Church will recognise that Vatican II’s *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* was not an end point but a beginning. If the earliest efforts to implement the reforms envisaged by the Constitution were dogged by criticism, the passing of decades has given rise to vigorous debates and concerns about the very legacy bequeathed to the Church by the liturgical movement. Was the “true” vision of the liturgical movement betrayed by those charged with implementing the liturgical reforms? Should earlier voices of the movement be recovered in an effort to “reform the reform”? Or has the spirit of the liturgical movement yet to be fully realised?⁸⁰ No doubt some of these debates

80. See John F. Baldovin, *Reforming the Liturgy: A Response to the Critics* (Collegeville MN: Pueblo, 2008) particularly the introduction 1-12.

centre upon the historical and administrative dynamics particular to the post-Vatican II period. However, it is also clear that the interplay of antagonistic ecclesiastical discourses has *continued* to define and shape the contours of debate even into the twenty-first century.⁸¹ Indeed, such ongoing debate is a sure sign that the liturgical movement was never a well-harmonised choir of voices singing to one tune or a neatly delineated series of stages which led step by step to the liturgical reforms of Vatican II. The liturgical movement in the Roman Catholic Church has always been, and no doubt will continue to be, an expression of the deep cleavages and creative tensions emanating from the ongoing clash of agonistic and integrative worldviews.

⁸¹. See essays in *Eucharist: Toward the Third Millennium* (East Peoria IL: Versa Press, 1997).