

# The Liturgy That Does Justice

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The Liturgy That Does Justice  
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TO  
CHRISTOPHER GERARD KIESLING, O.P.  
1925 - 1986  
THE LITURGIST WHO DID JUSTICE

## Authors' Note

It is not easy to define liturgy. The word is used equivocally today. The classical definition means a function undertaken on behalf of the people such as some public service. One of the meanings of liturgy in the New Testament is that of divine worship. Early in the history of the church the word was restricted to meaning the Mass. This is still the meaning in the churches of the East. There is no agreement among the Christian churches today on the meaning of liturgy. For some it refers to the outward forms of worship as they are governed by positive law. This is the juridical definition of liturgy. Here liturgy equals what is prescribed in the official liturgical books of a denomination. The modern liturgical movement has broadened the notion of liturgy to mean all worship offered to God by the church. According to this approach liturgy means the "public worship of the Mystical Body of Christ," a view embraced and promoted by the encyclical, *Mediator Dei* (1947). Under the umbrella of this more comprehensive definition are found the more specific ones with their varying emphases on the centrality of the priesthood of Christ, or the reactualization of the redemptive actions of Christ, or the sanctifying power of God in the church's worship.

We have opted for the more comprehensive definition of liturgy as the worship offered to God by the church. While acknowledging the need that liturgy be regulated by ecclesiastical authority, we reject a purely juridical notion of the liturgy. Liturgy is more than what can be found in the approved books of ritual. We do not endorse a definition of liturgy which would consider the private recitation of the breviary as liturgical but would not allow the notion of liturgy to include a group of Christians engaged in the communal praying of the rosary. This does not mean that all worship by Christians is liturgy. Private prayer is true worship. But liturgy is the church as such at worship. This takes place when the

church becomes a visible reality, when the church sums itself up in the assembly at prayer. It is the kind of worship that stresses the communal over the individual and which is characterized by Christological and trinitarian dimensions. Liturgy may reach its highest form of expression in the eucharist, but it cannot be restricted to that one liturgical service.

We use the word, liturgy, in this book in a somewhat equivocal manner since it is impossible to do otherwise today. Our use is almost always broader than the eucharist and is never limited to the juridical reality. It is not the same as private prayer. Our usual use of the term, liturgy, will refer to the rites of the church in the approved ordering. But our overarching definition of liturgy is more inclusive. Thus, we see no need to make use of the category, *paraliturgical*. We consider worship often so designated, e.g., the stations of the cross, to be true liturgy. Such services may not have the same kind of approval as do the rites of baptism and marriage. But to the extent that they are instances of the church coming to an event of offering itself to God in assembly, they are authentic acts of liturgy. In this sense, liturgy means for us, the symbolic articulation of the Christian community's relationship with its God in communal ritual activity.

A difficult and confusing area in theological writing today is the matter of inclusive language. This is especially true when composing a book on liturgy and social justice. To the best of our abilities we have tried to model the proper use of gender-inclusive language throughout the book. But this has been done according to our own best insights and careful judgment. As anyone sensitive to the use of language in theology and liturgy knows, there are still areas of ambiguity and unresolved issues. We have had to make our own decisions here. Many will not agree. We can only hope that our struggle with this important issue of social justice will not offend. We believe it to be more important to raise consciousness in this area than to resolve the questions of inclusivity. Others will reach other concrete conclusions regarding inclusive language.

Some decisions were made. The biblical texts are taken from the *New American Bible*. Although our book is ecumenical in its concerns, there is a certain Roman Catholic emphasis. We believe the readers will respect and expect this

since the authors are both Roman Catholic. Quotations from the official rituals as well as from primary and secondary sources are for the most part left with their gender bias, if such be the case. If the biblical material and the quotations were for public proclamation, clearly, a different decision would be required. But this book is for study purposes and the reader should be able to make the necessary adjustments. For instance, the chapter on the lectionary is written for a church which is not yet fully sensitive in this area. We cannot be oblivious to the fact that many congregations still pray to God with the words, "Father," and "Lord." We have tried to address this fact by often supplying "Mother" in conjunction with "Father." We do not do this in every case, but only enough times to make the point. "Lord" is more difficult because it is not always clear if the referent is God or Christ. For some, "Lord" is clearly sexist and should never be used. Others have not made a final determination in this matter. We have chosen to live with some of the ambiguity here.

Both of us have tried to be careful to be inclusive in the writing of the text itself. This is easy when referring to human beings. But we have no consistent principle which governs our use of gender language when referring to God. Sometimes, we use both masculine and feminine references together; sometimes, we use masculine references in some sentences and feminine references in other sentences. Sometimes we refer to God more abstractly. Sometimes we use circumlocutions. We hope here to model a variety of ways of dealing with issues without opting for one solution as the final one.

Many people have contributed to this book indirectly. A special note of gratitude is due to those members of the North American Academy of Liturgy who participated in the study group on liturgy and social justice. They helped to shape the thought of the authors of this book. We wish to acknowledge the following permissions: to Simon and Schuster for a lengthy quotation from Michael Harrington's *The Vast Majority: A Journey to the World's Poor*; to *Worship* for revisions in the article, "Liturgy and Consumerism," by Christopher Kiesling, which appeared in volume 52 (July 1978); and to *New Catholic World* for some of the material in an article, "Social Justice and the Eucharist," by Christopher Kiesling which appeared

in the July/August 1981 issue. A special note of thanks to Patrick F. Norris, O.P., for his research into the sociological and economic data for this book. We are grateful to Shane Martin, S.J., who was most helpful in the final editing of the manuscript.



### *Special Note From James L. Empereur, S.J.*

Christopher Gerard Kiesling, O.P., died September 2, 1986. Chris had very much wanted to see this book in some published form before he died. It is a personal sadness for me that it was not possible. It is to Chris that I owe a great deal of my sensitivity to the relationship of social justice to the church's worship. This Jesuit was often called to justice by this Dominican. For many years Chris chaired the study group on liturgy and social justice at the meetings of the North American Academy of Liturgy of which I was a member. I am indebted to Chris Kiesling for some of my deepest theological convictions. All liturgists should see his life and his interest in justice issues as a challenge. Chris was able to transcend the narrow perspective that sometimes characterizes the professional liturgist. He was able to do this because he was such an exemplary member of the Order of Preachers. In one of his many letters to me, Chris was reflecting on how easy it is to find excuses to avoid doing difficult things, in this case, to finish our book. He wrote: "It is so easy to find an excuse not to start. I hope I can see this as a penitential aspect that I need to incorporate into my life as a Dominican dedicated to a ministry of the word, to be engaged in when convenient and inconvenient, in season and out of season." With esteem, gratitude, and love I dedicate *The Liturgy That Does Justice* to Christopher Kiesling, O.P.

Epiphany, 1990



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## The Challenge

On our TV screens we have seen glimpses of miserable starving children in famine-struck Ethiopia or other parts of the world. But, as Arthur Simon says in *Bread for the World*, "famine is merely the tip of the iceberg. Beneath that tip is the far more pervasive and stubborn problem of chronic malnutrition."<sup>1</sup> According to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, at least 450 million people in developing countries are malnourished.<sup>2</sup> But people have a *right* to adequate food, shelter, and clothing.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, according to the World Bank, in 1980, 750 million persons were without the basics of life; they were living in "absolute poverty." This number constitutes one-third of the population of developing countries. Half of this number was children.<sup>4</sup> Those bloated stomachs and protruding eyes appear on our TV screens because peoples in developing countries are powerless. They do not have control over their resources, production, and products. They are manipulated by the rich nations of the world and by the rich classes within their own borders.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Arthur Simon, *Bread for the World*, rev. ed. (New York: Paulist Press; Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1984), p. 8.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>3</sup>James B. McGinnis, *Bread and Justice: Toward a New International Economic Order* (New York: Paulist Press, 1979), pp. 10-11, 22-25.

<sup>4</sup>Simon, *Bread for the World*, p. 7.

<sup>5</sup>McGinnis, *Bread and Justice*, pp. 27-35, 44-49; Michael Harrington, *The Vast Majority: A Journey to the World's Poor* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1977), pp. 129-51.

But hunger, poverty, and powerlessness are not restricted to the developing countries in Africa or Latin America. They are found right here in the United States. In 1962 Michael Harrington shocked the conscience of the United States with his book, *The Other America: Poverty in the United States*.<sup>6</sup> He revealed the appalling poverty that lay hidden behind the facade of abundance in the "affluent society" described by the well-known economist John Kenneth Galbraith in his book by that name.<sup>7</sup> Again in 1984 and 1985 the U.S. bishops in the drafts of their pastoral letter on the U.S. economy have noted the poverty which continues to infect a considerable portion of the population of the wealthiest nation on earth and threatens middle-class citizens.<sup>8</sup>

Denial of the rights to food, clothing, and shelter is not the only injustice widespread in our society and around the world. Amnesty International reported in 1984 that from January to December 1983 there were at least 5,073 prisoners of conscience in the world (that is, persons held in captivity solely for their beliefs, not because of any violence on their part); and torture was practiced in sixty-six countries.<sup>9</sup> The Center for Disease Control in Atlanta reported that 1.3 million abortions were performed in 1981 in our country alone.<sup>10</sup> Women are discriminated against in the job market because of their sex.<sup>11</sup> Education in inner-city schools is inferior, perpetuating the inability of the poor

<sup>6</sup>(New York: Macmillan, 1962).

<sup>7</sup>*The Affluent Society* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1958).

<sup>8</sup>*Catholic Social Teaching and the U. S. Economy*, nos. 8, 187-204, in *Origins* 14 (1984): 342, 362-64; second draft, nos. 20, 169-83, in *Origins* 15 (1985): 260, 274-75.

<sup>9</sup>*Amnesty International Report 1984* (London: Amnesty International Publications, 1984), p. 382.

<sup>10</sup>Center for Disease Control, *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, 6 July 1984. Other groups of institutes provide higher figures for years since 1981, so that the figure for 1985 is more likely around 1.5 million.

<sup>11</sup>U. S. Commission on Civil Rights, "Disadvantaged Women and Their Children," (Washington, D. C., 1983); Jill Craig, "U.S. Women: Hardship or Hope?" *Network* 11 (July-August 1983): 11-18; Margaret Casey, "Feminization of Poverty," *Network* 13 (May-June 1985): 10.

to better their condition.<sup>12</sup> The list of injustices could go on—not simply scattered unjust deeds here and there, but unjust patterns in the organization and conduct of life nationally and internationally.

### *A Challenge to Christian Worshipers*

In 1977 Michael Harrington wrote in his book *The Vast Majority*:

Though I left the Catholic Church long ago, I have always had an affection for Christ—which is to say the Christ of the *Catholic Worker*, of the Sermon on the Mount, of compassion and gentle love. But now I want to curse him. Who is he to set up his anguish as a model of meditation for the centuries? He was crucified only once, that is all. If you assume that he was God, which I do not, then you can say that he must have felt a terrible psychological loss as they nailed his divinity to the cross. But only one time; only for a matter of hours. Just one excruciating struggle up the hill with the means of his death on his back; just one crown of thorns. A terrible, but just one. In Calcutta, I think, people are crucified by the thousands every day, and then those who have not died are crucified again and again. If he were half the God he claims to be, he would leave his heaven and come here to do penance in the presence of a suffering so much greater than his own, a suffering that he, as God, obscenely permits. But he does not exist. There is no easy transcendental answer to this agony. There is only our fallible, failing, necessary fight. And if we were to win it, the happiness of numberless generations would not pay these people back for a single day of their suffering.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>12</sup>Gene I. Maeroff, "Despite Head Start, 'Achievement Gap' Persists for Poor," *New York Times*, 11 June 1985, p. 19; Charles M. Payne, *Getting What We Asked For* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1984), pp. 7-42; Charles Viet Willie, *The Sociology of Urban Education* (Lexington, Mass.: D. C. Heath Co., 1978), pp. 1-52.

<sup>13</sup>(New York: Simon and Schuster, 1977), p. 95.

Harrington's cutting words challenge Christians who gather weekly to worship Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Those words forcefully call Christian worshipers to make God-in-Christ's-reality, presence, compassion, and healing of humanity visible and tangible through their efforts to establish social justice in neighborhood, city, nation, and world community—and, yes, in parish, diocese, presbytery, district, synod, and universal church. Every age needs its theodicy, its justification for the existence of God and for God's ways. In our day the "faith that does justice"<sup>14</sup> is the necessary apologetic.

So we Christians who gather to worship must see to it that our liturgy expresses and fosters a faith that does justice. How liturgy may do that can be dealt with at three levels.<sup>15</sup> First is the level of actual celebration in a specific place at a definite time. Only those involved in such particularized instances of worship can shape it to express and inspire effectively a faith that does justice. A second level for dealing with liturgy which entails doing justice is that of the liturgical rites of churches. These rites are generally formulated by official groups in the various churches, or at least require approval by church officials before use as a church's own worship. A third level of dealing with liturgy's connection with social justice is that of our understanding of liturgical rites. We ourselves can begin now to discern more fully and more clearly the message calling us to do justice that is already in the existing liturgical texts and rituals.

Current liturgical rites can surely be improved in their expression and power to evoke faith that does justice. But liturgical reforms take a long time. It has to go through the gauntlet of official groups and official approval at level two. We cannot afford to wait. We must look carefully at the churches' liturgies which we now celebrate, casting upon

<sup>14</sup>See John C. Haughey, ed., *The Faith That Does Justice* (New York: Paulist Press, 1977), especially the essay by Avery Dulles, "The Meaning of Faith Considered in Relationship to Justice," pp. 10-46.

<sup>15</sup>Christopher Kiesling, "Liturgy and Social Justice," *Worship* 51 (1971): 359-60.

them the light of prolonged thought until we perceive in them the call to social justice latent there. Then, when we celebrate actual liturgies at level one, we will experience them differently; they will say things to us that we did not hear before. We can celebrate them, or supplement them, in ways that highlight their subtle social message. Such scrutiny at the third level can also help church liturgical commissions and officials at the second level see what improvements need to be made.

This book works at the third level and aims at promoting understanding of the liturgy's connection with social justice or sometimes social injustice!

### *A Separation to be Overcome*

In an address delivered in Boston in June, 1983, at a Consultation on Future Liturgical Renewal, Monsignor John J. Egan of the Archdiocese of Chicago called attention to the split between the movements for liturgical reform and social justice.<sup>16</sup> He noted the different situations earlier in this century in the United States. Dom Virgil Michel of St. John's Abbey in Collegeville, Minnesota, not only pioneered a liturgical movement in this country beginning in the 1920's, but was also concerned about social life in the nation.<sup>17</sup> The Liturgical Conference, which emerged in Chicago in 1943, for many years drew the interest and participation of men and women who were concerned both about liturgical reform and about the quality of life in society and in the church. In some of the themes of the annual National Liturgical Weeks sponsored by the Liturgical Conference, we see a double focus on liturgical renewal and social life: *Sacrifice and Society* (1943), *The Family in Christ* (1946), *Liturgy and Social Order* (1955),

<sup>16</sup>"Liturgy and Justice: An Unfinished Agenda," *Origins* 13 (1983): 245-53. For the split in Protestantism, see James F. White, *Sacraments as God's Self Giving* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1983), pp. 93-94.

<sup>17</sup>Paul Marx, *Virgil Michel and the Liturgical Movement* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1957), pp. 106-75, 298-347.

Education and the Liturgy (1957), *Worship in the City of Man (sic)* (1966).

A coupling of liturgical renewal and social justice concerns is found in the eighteenth century in John Wesley's compiling a pocket-sized dictionary explaining difficult words because he was "earnest in his belief that literacy must be part of the salvation of the laboring class."<sup>18</sup> Social reform was linked to liturgical renewal in the Puseyite movement in the Anglican Church of England in the nineteenth century.<sup>19</sup> Another instance of combined social and liturgical reform occurred in England in the earlier part of this century with experiments in "house churches" in parish life and neighborhood renewal.<sup>20</sup> The late John A. T. Robinson of *Honest to God* fame wrote inspiringly of the liturgy in relation to social action in his book *Liturgy Coming to Life*, which was based on actual experience.<sup>21</sup>

Why the separation today? Monsignor Egan, in the address mentioned above, attributes it to the specialization of our age. So much knowledge is required and so much concentration demanded to achieve even modest changes in worship or social order that a person can scarcely engage in both. Another possible reason for the separation is people's personalities. Some people are oriented to vigorous action and they take naturally to fighting for social justice. Other persons are more contemplative or artistic and are attracted to liturgical renewal. A certain vindictiveness may also be at work among us. Social justice activists write off liturgists and liturgy because the liturgists seem unconcerned that their liturgy may be reinforcing an unjust status quo. Liturgists are turned off by the social actionists and their objectives because the social actionists appear to have no interest in, or respect for, the canons of authentic liturgy.

<sup>18</sup>Margaret Lane, *Samuel Johnson and His World* (New York: Harper and Row, 1975), p. 108.

<sup>19</sup>R. W. Franklin, "Pusey and Worship in Industrial Society," *Worship* 57 (1983): 386-42.

<sup>20</sup>E. W. Southcott, *The Parish Comes Alive* (London: A. R. Mowbray, 1956).

<sup>21</sup>(Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1964.)

But a concerted effort to overcome the split must be made. Liturgical renewal and reform are impossible in isolation from efforts to restructure the social order, as we shall see in chapter eleven. The social justice ministry without renewed worship, on the other hand, lacks roots and cannot achieve its goal, as we shall point out in chapter twelve.

### *The Nature of Social Justice*

Our concern is liturgy and *social* justice. The expression "social justice" has precise meaning which increases the challenge facing Christian worshipers today. The term is not simply a fashionable word for good deeds, loving action, or ethical conduct which one would expect to flow from liturgical participation. Nor is it simply the "in way" of referring to the fact that Christian worship and life have a social dimension.

Four kinds of justice are distinguishable. (1) There is one-to-one justice, called *Commutative justice* (*Commutatio* in Latin means "exchange"). When I respect my neighbor's reputation and property, or do an honest day's work for my wages, I practice this sort of justice. (2) *Distributive justice* is practiced by those who distribute the common wealth of the community, and by those who cooperate with that distribution. The government official who gives plush jobs in return for a "kickback" violates distributive justice, and so do those who give the bribes and take the jobs. (3) We practice *General justice* when our individual conduct promotes the common good, when, for example, I do not drive a car while I am intoxicated and liable to an accident which will foul traffic and injure or even kill people. The term *legal justice* can embrace the above forms of justice insofar as their norms become embodied in civil and criminal law. (4) The precise meaning of *social justice* has shifted in the course of recent decades, but today the term generally refers to the structures, patterns of organization, or institutions of society, the manners in which they function, and the corresponding judgments and attitudes in the minds of people.<sup>22</sup> As such, social justice very much sets

<sup>22</sup>For examples of these social structures, see Joseph Gremillion, *The Gospel of*

the norms for other kinds of justice—what constitutes a fair price in a one-to-one exchange; whether a gift of money is bribe or simply a way of doing business; whether one's possession of a gun violates general justice.<sup>23</sup>

Determined by societal patterns of organization, social justice or injustice escapes individual control. I alone cannot change the economic organization of world trade and thereby conquer once and for all the hunger, malnutrition, and death which plague East Africa. I alone cannot reverse the feminization of poverty in the United States. In fact, once institutionalization of any practice occurs in a society, it is extremely difficult for even large groups of people to change the practice.<sup>24</sup> It is easier to level a mountain range for a highway than to remove racism from the U. S. way of life. Even if old laws can be changed or new ones put in place, they can be dodged, or loopholes found, by unconverted hearts. So social justice both in the objective sense of a just organization of society and its practices, and also in the subjective sense of individuals' wanting and doing what makes a justly functioning society, is very difficult to achieve.

When, therefore, we seek liturgy which fosters social justice, we are confronted with an immense challenge—celebrating liturgy which changes not only the hearts of worshipers but, through them, the way the world—and the church—are organized and function.

### *A Judeo-Christian Perspective*

Social justice in a Judeo-Christian perspective, we must always keep in mind, is not a cold, dry, impersonal, legal

*Peace and Justice* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1976), pp. 15-21, 47-55; Harrington, *Vast Majority*, pp. 130-51; McGinnis, *Bread and Justice*, pp. 6-74, 100-113, and, for an especially graphic expression of structural oppression, 246-53.

<sup>23</sup>For more ample treatment of the various kinds of justice, see Christopher Kiesling, "Social Justice in Christian Life according to Thomas Aquinas," *Spirituality Today* 31 (1979): 231-45.

<sup>24</sup>For the intractability of social structures, see Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality* (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday, Anchor Book, 1967; original 1966). For a more popular presentation, see Peter L. Berger, *Invitation to Sociology* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, Anchor Books, 1963).



equality between people. The blindfolded woman balancing scales is not an adequate symbol of social justice for Christian or Jewish faith. Social justice is born of love of God and of neighbor as self; it has the warmth, compassion, forgiveness, tenderness of love about it. It is highly personal. Social justice is, really, a factor in our love of neighbor, for justice gives structure to love, as Paul Tillich would say,<sup>25</sup> so that our love is not mere good feeling. Only love, moreover, embracing mercy and forgiveness, assures the authenticity, integrity, and fullness of social justice, as Pope John Paul II argues in his encyclical *Dives in misericordia* (Rich in mercy).<sup>26</sup>

This integral sense of justice approximates the notion of justice in the Bible. The Hebrew Scriptures contain the words *mispāt* (translated sometimes as "judgment" —in the sense of establishing someone in the right, sometimes as "justice" or sometimes as "just"), *sedek* (translated sometimes as "righteousness" or "justice"), and *sedekah* ("righteous" or "just"). These words express concrete actions or qualities of actions or persons which meet a standard legally or in some other context, such as the religious sphere. They can signify conduct in accord with the Law, or they can refer to God's saving work, as the New Testament equivalents tend to do. They can also signify rights, in the sense of claims, or laws. They do not refer much to things, or to equality. So the biblical notion of justice has an expanse to it of which our popular notion of justice is only a part, unless it is thought of together with love, mercy, forgiveness, and other qualities.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>25</sup> *Love, Power, and Justice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1954), p. 71. For continuity in Catholic thought between present emphasis on justice and previous stress on love, see Stanley F. Parmisano, "Social Justice: The Broader Perspective," *Spirituality Today* 37 (1985): 13-26.

<sup>26</sup> 30 November 1980, nos. 145-58, in Claudia Carlen, comp., *The Papal Encyclicals* (Wilmington, N. C.: McGrath publishing Co., 1981) 5:293-94.

<sup>27</sup> For a more complete treatment of the biblical notion of justice, see John L. McKenzie, *Dictionary of the Bible* (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1965), s.v. "Judgment" and "Righteous, Righteousness"; Xavier Leon Dufour, ed., *Dictionary of Biblical Theology* (New York: Desclee, 1967), s.v. "Justice"; Jose Miranda, *Marx and the Bible* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1974), pp. 109-99; John R. Donahue, "Biblical Perspectives on Justice," in John C. Haughey, ed., *The Faith That Does Justice* (New York: Paulist Press, 1977), pp. 68-112.

This Judeo-Christian understanding of social justice prevents the pursuit of justice for all from becoming simply materialistic. People need decent housing, so the buildings in an area are leveled by bulldozers and functional high-rise apartments are built. In the process, a neighborhood is destroyed—a whole network of interpersonal relationships which are more necessary for human life than freshly plastered walls. Justice is not done to these people, even though they now have “decent” housing.

The wholesome notion of social justice prevents the establishment of justice for the oppressed from becoming simply an exchange of places between those “on top” and those “on the bottom.” Pope John Paul II strongly reminds us that the experience of the past and our own time testifies that the struggle for justice alone can beget spite, hatred, and cruelty, and, in the name of justice, enemies are killed, freedom limited, and fundamental human rights denied.<sup>28</sup>

The full Judeo-Christian ideal of social justice has a depth, a richness, and a personal quality to it that goes beyond legislation and laws, for it participates in the very justice of God.<sup>29</sup> The social justice which we seek requires, ultimately, spiritual discernment, a “reading of the signs of the times” in the light of the gospel. Something more than economic and sociological data are needed in planning the just society. A vision of the whole human person and of the human person’s destiny is at least equally important. A respect and love for each person and his or her unique identity are required. A sense of the beautiful must also be incorporated into the effort. Liturgy is not the exclusive source of this vision, love, respect, and sense of beauty, but it is a significant one. It can, therefore, be an important contributor to the struggle for social justice. But we need to examine it closely to appreciate what it has to offer.

In the following chapter, therefore, we will reflect on the liturgy and its relationship to the world, and thus to social justice, in terms of the relationship between the sacred and the

<sup>28</sup> *Dives in misericordia* nos. 119-21, in Carlen, *Papal Encyclicals*, 5:289-90.

<sup>29</sup> Mark Searle, “*Serving the Lord with Justice*,” in Mark Searle, ed., *Liturgy and Social Justice* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1980), pp. 15-17.

secular. In chapter three, the social justice implications of the rites of Christian initiation will be examined. Chapters four and five will consider the word of God and social justice, first as this word is presented through the liturgical year in the *Lectionary*, and then as preached in the homily or sermon. The mostly implicit, but not negligible, references to social justice in the liturgy of the Lord's Supper will be studied in chapter six. Crucial for social justice is reconciliation between peoples; chapter seven will consider the liturgy of reconciliation in its relationship to social justice. Ordination and other rituals of appointment to ministry in the church raise questions about the justice of the structures, not of society, but of the church—questions which will be noted in chapter eight on liturgies of ministry and social justice. The liturgical celebration of marriage opens the door to considering in chapter nine a host of justice issues because marriage is a fundamental human reality and one that perdures, or is meant to endure, for a lifetime and affects the larger community. Chapter ten about the anointing of the sick brings explicitly to the fore human suffering and how social institutions, procedures, and attitudes heal it or cause it. An eleventh chapter focuses on the impact of consumerism on liturgy, with a view to illustrating that liturgical renewal and reform suppose changes in the social order, whereas chapter twelve shows that the social justice effort to change society needs the movement for liturgical reform and renewal.



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The author explores how we might respond to the issues raised by the theologians of liberation. There is a brief treatment of how liturgy can be an enabling factor.

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The author analyzes the reasons for continuing underdevelopment in many nations and notes the tendency of societies to settle for inequality and to sacralize it. He then describes how the churches can contribute to the transformation of the world.

Egan, John J. "Liturgy and Justice: an Unfinished Agenda," *Origins* 13 (1983): 245-53.

This address describes the split between the liturgical movement and the social justice movement in the churches, adduces reasons for overcoming the separation, and proposes future interaction and cooperation between the two efforts.

Fiorenza, Francis Schüssler. "The Church's Religious Identity and Its Social and Political Mission," *Theological Studies* 43 (1982): 197-225.

After sketching various theological interpretations about how the pursuit of justice relates to the church's religious purpose, the author offers a theology which incorporates work for justice into the church's religious mission.

Harrington, Michael. *The Vast Majority: A Journey to the World's Poor*, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1977.

Harrington describes his encounters with poverty in India, Africa, and elsewhere. He inserts into this travelogue accounts of how the modern world's poverty developed historically, how current organization of the world aggravates it, and how it might possibly be changed.

Haughey, John C. ed., *The Faith That Does Justice*, New York: Paulist Press, 1977.

These essays thoroughly probe the relationship between faith and justice in the present time, in the church's tradition, and in future directions to be taken, and so contribute to appreciating "the liturgy that does justice."

Kiesling, Christopher. "Liturgy and Social Justice," *Worship* 51 (1977): 351-71.

Emerging from a study group of the North American Academy of Liturgy, this article describes the concerns people have about relating liturgy and social justice, makes precise the questions which arise, and notes ways they can be addressed.

McGinnis, James B. *Bread and Justice: Toward a New International Economic Order*, New York: Paulist Press, 1979.

McGinnis shows the roots of world hunger in patterns of economic and political organization and explains the New International Economic Order which nations of the South have called for but which has been resisted by nations of the North, including the U. S.

Simon, Arthur. *Bread for the World*, rev. ed. New York: Paulist Press; Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1984.

This book explains the problem of hunger around the world and in the U. S. and shows how its solution involves such factors as international trade, land ownership, use of water, lifestyles, tariff barriers, and arms production.

Synod of Bishops, Second General Assembly, 1971. *Justice in the World*. In *The Gospel of Peace and Justice: Catholic Social Teaching Since Pope John*. Presented by Joseph Gremillion. Maryknoll, N. Y.: Orbis Books, 1976. Pp. 513-29.

This document affirms work for social justice as integral to the preaching of the gospel, and calls the church to examine and reform its own structures and practices in regard to justice to make credible its call for justice in the world.

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## Liturgy: A Spirituality of Human Liberation

### *The Need for a Just Liturgy*

That the liturgy is the church's spirituality is now as much a truism as the familiar phrase "liturgy presupposes community." The liturgy is the climactic expression of the spiritual life of the church. It is the way that the Christian community symbolically re-enacts its relationship with God. This liturgical spirituality implies the actual participation in the mission of the church as a means of opening ourselves to the saving power of Christ and the transforming actions of the Spirit. This spirituality is a concrete way of living the gospel under the inspiration of the same Spirit. There is, then, a direct relationship between social justice and the way liturgical spirituality leads the Christian to experiences of transcendence. This is seen in the values affirmed in this kind of spirituality. For instance, one such value is a responsiveness to the signs of the times. This often calls people to awaken the consciences of others with regard to basic human rights. They may demand that world governments respect the rights of minorities, promote racial equality, and move in the direction of the solving of population problems. Another value is personal freedom and responsibility. These are found wherever people accept the task of proclaiming the gospel courageously and with initiative in collaboration with others in a pluralistic society.

There are many other such values. Any list would include:

1) poverty, which witnesses through a sparing and sharing life style and a responsible use of what one possesses; 2) the word of God, in terms of its liberation themes as the basis for one's response and as the criteria for decision-making; 3) the continual conversation with Christ, which includes a deep commitment to discover the hidden roots of selfishness in people in order to move forward to establish community; 4) participation in a faith community, which exists as a sign of love and service to enable persons to receive support and discernment on justice concerns; and finally 5) joy and hope, to sustain others in their struggles as well as to attract to the cause of justice those who are unaware or lack motivation.

Liturgical spirituality presupposes an understanding and experience of what it means to be human and of the inter-relatedness of all reality. This understanding and experience is thematized in the celebration of the sacraments, where the deepest levels of human life and human decisions are grasped and transformed in Christ Jesus. And because the liturgy is composed of social symbols, our human experiences and decisions must be ritualized in the context of the Christian community.<sup>1</sup> This leads to a central element in our liturgical lives, namely, that of the Christian social consciousness, which places a priority on the dignity of the human person and the human rights and duties which protect and enhance that dignity. What makes it possible to have an authentic liturgical celebration is the radical social nature of human existence, the responsibility of the individual to society and vice versa.<sup>2</sup>

The church's mission as sacrament to the world requires that it often be prophetic and counter-cultural in the matter of injustice. The liturgical spirituality of the church should reveal the paschal character of the *human* experience of social justice. It is theologically true that every liturgy brings to expression

<sup>1</sup>For a further discussion of the relationship between liturgy and spirituality see James L. Empereur, S. J., "Liturgy and Spirituality," in *Worship Points the Way*, edited by Malcolm C. Burson (New York: The Seabury Press, 1981).

<sup>2</sup>How a lack of this connection between the sacraments and human responsibility has been reflected in a "magical" approach to the liturgical rites has been detailed by John H. McKenna in his article, "Liturgy: Toward Liberation or Oppression?" in *Worship* 56:4 (July, 1982): 297 ff.



those saving actions of Christ which we call the Paschal Mystery, namely, the death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ. But the danger is that Christ's own passover will remain on the abstract level. Liturgy celebrates the dying and rising of Christ when it does so by means of our daily, often quite pedestrian, dyings and risings. Christians who live according to such a liturgical spirituality can be both symbol and cause of God's action in situations of injustice by embodying in their lives the justice and mercy of God. Their sacramental living, then, reveals the meaning in suffering and oppression and calls upon all persons to eliminate the demonic forces which control society.

But is liturgy such a concrete expression of the community's spirituality? So much of the contemporary scene is dominated by ineffective liturgy. On the grass roots levels, is there an integrated experience of liturgical spirituality and justice? Where can one go to participate in a liturgy that does justice? Nathan Mitchell has written about the need to keep liturgy and this world together in our worship of God:

Liturgy and sacrament are moments when we consciously recognize and ritually respond to the God who acts always and everywhere in the ruddy colors and ruinous catastrophes of this world. The drama of the liturgy is nothing more or less than the drama of human history, permeated by God's presence. One world, one history, one God who acts in them: this is what we confess and celebrate when we assemble for worship. When liturgy becomes a self-absorbed attempt at "religious behavior," or when it calls attention to itself as something "unworldly," it ceases to be worship and becomes an exercise in self-consciousness. Christian worship is inherently worldly. Its primary symbols are drawn from the messiest activities of human life: giving birth and dying, washing and smearing bodies with oil, eating and drinking, unburdening one's heart in the presence of another. All this is the septic stuff of the world's drama—and the stuff of Christian liturgy as well.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup>"The Spirituality of Christian Worship," *Spirituality Today* 34:1 (March, 1982): 10.

Because liturgy so rarely fulfills Mitchell's description of it, it is no wonder that many of those who work in social justice fields are unaffected by liturgy or at most celebrate it infrequently and informally.

But what is a "worldly" liturgy? The task of this chapter is to attempt an answer to that question. Clearly, it is easier to say what is *not* a liturgy that does justice. It is not, for instance, a liturgy that incarnates injustice in its very structures because it reflects a church which is unjust. Such is the case in certain churches where people are prevented from ministering fully in community. In those several Christian churches where women are excluded from ordained ministry, every liturgy carries with it an element of injustice as long as that situation obtains. Something similar can be said of the Dutch Reformed Church of South Africa as long as it provides *any* basis for the practice of apartheid.

Again, a just liturgy is not one which has intercessory prayers which deal with economic and political tensions, but which continues to employ the kind of imagery and language which sets up a sacred/secular dichotomy in world view and spirituality. A just liturgy is not one which has a sermon on what may be the prevailing social concerns, but which continues to operate according to an institutional model of liturgical understanding. A just liturgy is not one which is celebrated by and for gay/lesbians, women, blacks, or any other oppressed group, but which manipulates symbols, confusing them with signs, creating an imbalance by reducing the total prayer experience to a one dimensional attempt to achieve some political action as a result of the liturgical celebration. Nor is liturgy just if it becomes the opportunity for some angry, conflicted people to avoid the expense of psychotherapy by engaging in free group sensitivity, dominating the ritual with personal agenda.

A liturgy that does justice is not one which calls the worshipers to be just only after they leave their worship and itself does not change ritually and spiritually. Such has been the case of too much liturgy in the past. Nor is the just liturgy one which presupposes that one is just before one comes to it. Such preparation is laudable, perhaps even necessary, but that does not guarantee that liturgy will be just in spirituality and structure. Christians who are sensitive to justice concerns may

well be required to worship in an unjust liturgy. Today this is hardly exceptional.<sup>4</sup>

What then is the liturgy that does justice? What is a justice-oriented liturgical spirituality? Such a liturgical experience is one which must possess the qualities of justice which one finds outside of worship. Liturgy as a form of ritual, that is, as patterned symbolic activity, must be permeated by a way of thinking, a way of acting, and a way of relating where individual worth, fairness, rights, and responsibilities are recognized and promoted. Worshipers who engage in this bundle of symbols called liturgy must find themselves within an open-ended situation where they have the opportunity and room to experience justice among themselves and justice within themselves. They must be able to experience a sense of the wholeness of human life in terms of the rite which ultimately speaks of the Paschal Mystery. Through their continual participation they know on all levels, not just the intellectual, what human justice is. A liturgy that does justice certainly makes it easier for people to recognize what forms justice should take in any concrete situation outside of worship. But it does not do this by becoming a recipe book for people working on international issues, or in the inner city, or in the various areas of sexual oppression. Rather it does this by creating the possibility for worshipers to have a justice experience which they can then use as a norm or measure to judge what would be and are the authentic experiences of justice in the rest of life. We cannot know what to do justice-wise simply through analytical study or hortatory instruction. It is important to have other analogous experiences of justice before we can recognize injustice and can facilitate programs for justice.

Perhaps, an example will clarify what is meant here. An art critic is someone who is able to respond to a work of art such as a painting, a sculpture, or a piece of music and judge it to be of high quality, poor quality, or merely mediocre. This skill is not acquired primarily through lectures, reading books, or

<sup>4</sup>Some of the limitations of the present situation are discussed by Joseph Gelineau in his article, "Celebrating the Paschal Liberation," *Politics and Liturgy* (Consilium 92) edited by Herman Schmidt and David Power (New York: Herder and Herder, 1974).