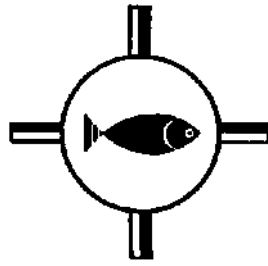


# LIBERAL CATHOLIC INSTITUTE OF STUDIES



## Unit 4

THE LIBERAL CATHOLIC CHURCH : LITURGY

## Paper 2

SOME ELEMENTS OF LITURGY

by

The Right Reverend Sten von Krusenstierna



---

**CONTENT**

CONTENT.....	2
WORSHIP.....	5
The Numinous.....	5
Christian Worship .....	6
Eastern and Western Liturgies.....	8
SOME NOTES ON RITUAL.....	10
Definitions.....	10
TYPES OF RITUAL.....	11
The Nature of Ritual.....	12
How Ritual operates.....	14
The Ritual in Space.....	15
The Ritual in time .....	18
MYTH AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE .....	22
The Relevance of Myth .....	23
Theology and Myth .....	26
SYMBOLS AND SYMBOLISM.....	30
The Meaning of Symbols.....	31
Symbolism and the Psyche .....	33
The Symbolism of the Icon.....	35
Symbols and the Liturgy.....	37
THE LANGUAGE OF CHRISTIAN WORSHIP .....	39
APPENDIX I .....	45
Ritualism .....	45

Symbolism ..... 46

The Sacrifice of the Logos..... 46

Hindu Ritualism ..... 47

The Mass..... 47

The Real Presence ..... 48

The Priest as Celebrant..... 49

APPENDIX II..... 50

## PREFACE

The first paper in this Unit, *The Meaning and Purpose of Liturgy*, served as a general introduction to the subject. The present paper goes a little further into some of the elements that are part of the Liturgy, such as worship (in general), ritual, myth and symbols and liturgical language.

For the latter subject I have used extracts from two talks by Anglican Bishop Iain Ramsey, a recognized authority on the subject, given at the Liberal Catholic Church Congress in England in 1969 and published in *The Liberal Catholic* of June and September 1970.

A chapter on *Sacramental Mysticism* by Mr C. Jinarajadasa (M.A. Camb.), a Buddhist of wide erudition with a great interest in our Church (he composed our Peace collect), has been included as an Appendix. As the texts set for this paper may not always be available to the student, especially in non-English speaking countries, I have quoted important passages from the books in question in the text.

The meeting of the L.C.I.S. representatives from many countries at Ojai, California, in 1981 decided that the subject History of Liturgy should be made elective and be treated separately. The Unit on Liturgy has therefore now been structured as follows:

## UNIT 4 — LITURGY

- \* Paper 1: 040.001 The Meaning and Purpose of Liturgy
- \* Paper 2: 040.002 Some Elements of Liturgy
- \* Paper 3: 040.003-I The Lib. Cath. Liturgy, Vol. I
- Paper 3: 040.003-II " " " Vol. II
- \* Source material I: The Liturgy, by J.I. Wedgwood

## UNIT 4 — HISTORY OF LITURGY

- \* Paper I: 041.001-I History of Christian Liturgy, Vol. I
- \* Paper I: 041.001-II History of Christian Liturgy, Vol. II

Papers marked \* have been completed.

+ STEN

## CHAPTER 1

## WORSHIP

Here then is Man, the half-animal, half-spiritual creature; living under the conditions of space and time, yet capable of the conscious worship of a Reality which transcends space and time.

(Evelyn Underhill in *Worship*)

Worship is a peculiarly human phenomenon and can be found in all cultures and religions from the most primitive to the most advanced. It is natural for man to worship.

The word "worship" is derived from the Anglo-Saxon *weorth-scipe*, honour.

In the past the word was used in a wider sense, but today it is generally used only in religious and legal language. God alone is the proper object of religious worship, but human beings may worship Him (or Her) in many forms or under many symbolic disguises ("the Masks of God"). We must never look down upon what we may have been conditioned to regard as primitive or idolatrous worship. This is very well expressed by Evelyn Underhill:

It is surely mere arrogance to insist that with angels and archangels we laud and magnify the Holy Name, whilst disdaining the shaggy companions who come with us to the altar of faith.

The primitive, sensitive to the mysterious quality of life, worshipping by gift and gesture, and devising ritual patterns whereby all the faculties of his nature and all the members of his group can be united in common action towards God, still remains a better model for human worship than the speculative philosopher or the solitary quietist: for he accepts his situation humbly instead of trying to retreat from it. Those who are prevented by spiritual snobbery from appreciating this fact, will never achieve real understanding of their own religious experience.

(*Worship*. p. 30)

In Catholic Christianity there are what we may call degrees of worship and veneration. Traditionally *dulia* (veneration) is due to the saints, *hyperdulia* (special or higher veneration) to Our Lady. *Latria* (worship) is due to the Trinity only.

## THE NUMINOUS

The German theologian Rudolf Otto used the term *numinous* (from the Latin *numen* in its meaning of divinity) to indicate the holy, the sacred, as it affects us in religious awe or reverential wonder-or even fear. He saw this as a deeply felt religious experience which is the beginning of all worship. It can be compared in some degree to the feeling of beauty, the emotion we may occasionally experience when lifted up in rapture by the beauty of a sunset in the stillness of nature.

The Deity in Otto's view is the "wholly other" and in its many forms is experienced by man as a total mystery, the *Mysterium Tremendum*, of whom man stands in awe and at the same time totally fascinated. Though not all scholars agree with Otto we can see that many of his ideas have validity. There is no doubt that primitive man stands in awe and fear when faced by the unknown and that the great majority of us have an inborn feeling of reverence for the holy, the sacred, and the great mystery we call God.

It must have been from feelings like these that human beings started to worship. We have in our own Liturgy many passages which express such feelings. Good examples are the Sanctus and the Communio, the former giving to those that are sensitive a profound feeling of the holiness of the Highest and the latter an intense feeling of thankfulness. It is interesting to note that on both these occasions we join with the angelic kingdom in their praise and thanksgiving. The Communio is taken from Revelation 7:12 where it is sung by the angels. Bishops Leadbeater and Wedgwood often emphasized that it was of great importance to us to develop a sense of the holy and feelings of love and devotion towards Christ and the Holy Trinity.

#### CHRISTIAN WORSHIP

In the long course of human history many types of worship have developed, the Christian Liturgy being one of them. The central act in the Christian Liturgy is always the Holy Eucharist. We believe that the basic outline and the key-words of this service were given by Our Lord Christ to His followers and that in later centuries the Church was inspired to add further acts of praise and thanksgiving. And so the many different services we now have were developed. In Bishop Leadbeater's view the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament which dates from the late Middle Ages is such a service, inspired by Our Lord Himself.

In the course of the centuries many other types of worship developed among Christians, some of which have long since disappeared while others are still in use today.

It is generally thought that worship *precedes* doctrine and theology:

A matter of great theological importance is the recognition of the priority of worship over doctrinal formulation. The normal order of things is that worship precedes credal formulation and theology. The earliest Christians found themselves worshipping Christ before they had reached any formal theological definitions of his person and nature. To make the point in another way: the earliest Christian confessions of faith would seem to have had their origin in worship.

It was only long after Christ had been worshipped as the divine Lord and Saviour that the Church's theologians began to work out an intellectual *rationale* of Christ's nature as the God-man. Thus, *lex adorandi est lex credendi*: we believe according as we worship. Worship is primary; theology is secondary- a point frequently overlooked in academic circles. Theology is often incredible because worship is neglected. On the other hand, it should be emphasized that theology has a most important function to fulfil in relation to worship.

But the truth remains that worship is the *raison d'etre* of theology, not vice-versa.

(Alan Richardson in *A Dictionary of Theology, SCM*)

This is of course only correct in as far as a more detailed theology is concerned. The early followers of Christ must have had certain beliefs concerning God, angels etc. and about Christ himself and what He taught them; why otherwise worship at all? And the earliest Christian writings, such as the Letters of St. Paul and the Gospels are full of doctrinal statements which have been the basis on which most Christian theology has been founded.

Evelyn Underhill sees four main components or elements of worship.  
She writes about man:

He has certain means at his disposal for the expression of this worship, this response to besetting Spirit; and again and again he tends, at every level of development, to use these means- which indeed are forced on him by his situation, and by his own psychological characteristics. Of these, the chief are (1) Ritual, or liturgic pattern; (2) Symbol or significant image; (3) Sacrament, in general sense of the use of visible things and deeds, not merely to signify, but also to convey invisible realities; and (4) Sacrifice, or voluntary offering...

*(Worship, p. 29)*

She notes that these elements have a twofold quality:

Ritual, Symbol, Sacrament, and Sacrifice all have a twofold quality, which closely parallels our human situation. In their living state they have an outside and an inside; a visible action and an invisible action, both real, both needed, and so closely interdependent that each loses its true quality if torn apart.

Indeed as ritual worship develops in depth and beauty it is seen more and more that its rhythmic phrases and ceremonies, its expressive movement, dialogues, concerted outbursts of praise, are all carrying something else: the hidden supernatural action of the group or church by which the ritual is being used.

Ritual, Symbol, Sacrament, and Sacrifice are therefore more, not less valid expressions of the Spirit of Worship, because they belong at one and the same time to the world of sense and the world of spirit...

*(Worship, pp. 31 and 33)*

We have devoted separate chapters in this paper to the subjects Ritual and Symbols. The Sacraments have been dealt with in the doctrine papers but it is still of interest here to note Evelyn Underhill's definition of a Sacrament:

A symbol is a significant image, which helps the worshipping soul to apprehend spiritual reality. A sacrament is a significant deed, a particular use of temporal things, which gives to them the value of eternal things and thus incorporates and conveys spiritual reality. Hence sacraments involve an incarnational philosophy; a belief that the Supernatural draws near to man in and through the natural. It is true that the distinction between the symbolic and sacramental aspects of cultus is not absolute. All sacraments do and must employ symbolic methods.

*(Worship, p. 51)*

The fourth element of worship she gives as Sacrifice. In all religions this is a common feature of worship:

Worship, the response of the human creature to the Divine, is summed up in sacrifice; the action which expresses more fully than any other his deep if uncomprehended relation to God. As man begins to wake up to the Reality over against him, there comes to him as the sequel to his sense of awe and dependence the feeling that he wants to offer something- indeed, must offer something- to the unseen Power.

(*Worship*, p. 56)

The idea of offering, not only objects such as food or flowers or shells, but ourselves (or sometimes substitutes for ourselves, such as animals) has been part of worship from ancient times. We can find many passages in our Liturgy; the whole service of the Holy Eucharist is one of offering and praise. We offer "ourselves, our souls and bodies, to be a holy and continual sacrifice into Thee." We all so offer the elements after their consecration, the Host and the Sacred Blood, to be borne by "Thy Holy Angel"...." to Thine altar on high."

This is an important part of the great mystery of the Holy Eucharist in which in an inexplicable way we - in our small way- share with God in the great sacrifice "by which the world is nourished and sustained." It is an extraordinary situation, the implications of which we do not usually realize and may never fully understand. Not only are we with the Holy Angels - as it were co-workers with the Deity, but Instruments through which He works, both transcendently and immanently, to slowly raise humanity and the whole of creation towards ultimate perfection. In this way we can see the Liturgy as part of the Divine Plan of evolution, leading ultimately to the "omega-point" as Teilhard de Chardin calls it.

#### EASTERN AND WESTERN LITURGIES

The Liberal Catholic Liturgy with which we shall deal in the following papers is almost entirely based on the Roman Liturgy. It may be useful here to point out that among the many forms of the Christian Liturgy there are mainly two types, the Eastern and the Western. The difference between these two types of Liturgy is perhaps nowhere better expressed than in chapter 12 of Evelyn Underhill's *Worship*:

Hence where Latin worship- true to the Roman genius- inclines to the concrete and the objective, is orderly, open, clear and terse in expression, insists on definitions, factual- ness, exposes its sacred objects for veneration, and aims at realism in its sacred images, Orthodox worship is penetrated by an awed sense of mystery which resists definitions, and avoids naturalistic expression. Its most sacred things and actions are veiled, not declared: they signify,



but do not represent. Its icons are highly stylized, and deliberately avoid realism; for their function is to point beyond the world, and give access to invisible realities.

Though there is a profound evangelical strain in Orthodox devotion, and the Gospels are well-known, read, and loved by the devout, the tone and colour are Johannine rather than Synoptic. The liturgic emphasis lies more on the solemn truth of the Incarnation of the Logos, the mystery of the Divine Wisdom and Light coming into the world to save the world, than on the human method and cost of its accomplishment. Here the focus of adoration is not so much the suffering Redeemer on the Cross, as the majestic figure of the risen Christ living in His Church, as He is presented in the great creations of Byzantine art. The Crucifix is one icon among others; and does not hold the unique place which it occupies in the West.

Thus the positive and affirmative note of Early Christianity, that conviction of the presence here-and-now of the Logos, the Living Christ in whom "all things consist," which is the essence of Pauline and Johannine realism, is central to Orthodox devotion.

(p. 264)

I have quoted somewhat at length from this chapter as it gives us the essential difference between the Eastern and the Western approach. In words, actions, vestments and in the whole setting of its Liturgy the L.C.C. follows the Western pattern. But in some respects - such as in our emphasis on the living Christ and the Divine Sacrifice from the beginning of the world - as against the emphasis on the suffering Christ on the cross in Roman Catholicism - we are much nearer to the Eastern Churches.

Another interesting fact is that the great Byzantine Liturgies, such as the *Liturgy of St. Chrysostom* and the *Liturgy of St. Basil*, are very much older than the Western rites. They have remained practically unaltered since the fourth century while the Western rites have been altered and changed many times. The most stable of the Western rites has been what we now call the Tridentine Mass (in Latin) which dates from the Council of Trent in the 16th century. Since the recent liturgical revisions it is no longer used, except by some conservative groups defying the Roman Authorities.

In the Eastern Liturgies we can still in many respects see the Liturgy as a Mystery Rite, with aspects dating from the times when Christianity itself was one of the Mystery Religions of antiquity. What we call sacraments in the West are called mysteries in the East. The consecration of the bread and wine take place behind the screen of the iconostasis which shields the altar and the sanctuary from the people. The sanctuary is thought to re-present the heavenly world and at certain points in the service one of the three doors in the *iconostasis* are opened, giving a glimpse of the inner sanctum, and the deacon or priest with their assistants emerge either to read the Gospel or carrying the oblations.

In the Byzantine rites the actual consecration of the elements is perceived to take place during a succession of words and actions, not only at the well-known words of institution "This is my Body, this is my Blood," as in the Roman and Liberal Catholic rites, According to orthodox theology the whole Eucharistic prayer, including the words of institution, the Anamnesis (the recollection of the resurrection etc. of the Christ) and the Epiclesis (the invocation - in this case of the Holy Spirit upon the elements) which follows, are regarded as necessary to complete the consecration.

I have gone briefly into some aspects of the Byzantine rite to show that different rites containing different words and actions still are equally valid.

-----

Books for further study:

Otto, R. *The idea of the Holy* (Pelican 1959)

Underhill, E. *Worship*. (Fontana 1962)

## CHAPTER 2

### SOME NOTES ON RITUAL

Thou, O most dear and holy Lord, hast in thine ineffable wisdom ordained for us this blessed sacrament of thy love, that in it we may not only commemorate in symbol that thine eternal oblation, but verily take part in it and perpetuate thereby within the limitations of time and space, which veil our earthly eyes from the excess of thy glory, the enduring sacrifice by which the world is nourished and sustained.

(From the Liberal Catholic Liturgy)

### DEFINITIONS

In Paper 1, *The Meaning and Purpose of Ritual*, the author gave some definitions of the word "ritual" and related concepts such as "rite" and "ceremony." We may add here that in strict ecclesiastical usage ritual or rite usually refers to the prescribed *words* used, while ceremony or ceremonial refers to the actions used in worship. But often in ordinary usage the two are treated as synonymous.

In general usage the words rite and ritual are also given a much wider meaning. Rite is then "any form of procedure required or usual in a religious or solemn observance" and ritual "the prescribed order of performing a rite" or "any procedure involving religious or other rites" (*Concise Oxford Dictionary*). Rite is derived from the Latin *ritus*.

Ritual is a universal human phenomenon to be found in all religions. In spite of its importance the study of ritual has emerged comparatively late among anthropologists, theologians and students of religion. There are rituals of many kinds but we are mainly concerned with the religious type of ritual, i.e. rituals of which the object is to establish contact with some aspects of the "supernatural be it cosmic or angelic forces or the Deity itself. Many attempts have been made by scholars to classify religious and other types of ritual, none of them very satisfactory. For the purpose of this paper I suggest the following classification:

---

#### TYPES OF RITUAL

(An attempt at classification)

- a. Rituals associated with ecological cycles:  
The Seasons - planting and harvesting - sun and moon, etc.
- b. Rituals associated with the human cycle:  
Birth - puberty - marriage - death, etc.--"Rites of passage"
- c. Magic-type Rituals:  
Divination - curative - fertility - purificatory, etc.
- d. Rituals invoking and bestowing blessing upon the world:  
Mystery Rituals - Sacraments - Meditative Rituals

It is mainly with the last type that we in the Liberal Catholic Church are concerned, through rituals based on the other types also have their place in the Church.

Baptism, Confirmation, Matrimony and Funeral rites can also be classified under b. Some of our festivals are linked to the seasons, the astronomical or ecological cycles. Baptism is also a purificatory rite and Exorcism and Healing can also be classified under c. Most rituals, whether Christian or of any other religion, usually have elements of all the types mentioned; one reason for the difficulty of classification.

The Class d. type ritual can be viewed as a more advanced type, among which we may include the rituals of some of the ancient mystery religions (e.g. the Egyptian Mysteries), the

Christian Holy Eucharist, the Hindu Prajapati ritual and some of the Buddhist Mahayana rituals and meditative practices.

Ritual is a very large subject and we have to limit ourselves to fundamental principles only.

### THE NATURE OF RITUAL

Every true ritual (especially if it belongs to the class d. type above) must in some way reflect or mirror the higher worlds or the cosmos *or* the act of creation or some element of the evolution of man. The ancient Hermetic axiom "as above, so below" is the relevant principle in ritual.

Since ancient times myth and symbols have been used for this purpose and we shall devote separate chapters to these important aspects of ritual.

The principle outlined above has been recognized by scholars, as may be seen from the following quotations:

When repetitive actions refer to essential structures of the universe and paradigmatic modes of being, then we have genuine ritual.

(E. Zuesse in *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*.  
September 1975")

Mircea Eliade claims that every true ritual has a "divine model, an archetype." Quoting Hindu Scripture he says:

"We must do what the Gods did in the beginning. Thus the Gods did; thus men do."

This Indian adage summarises all the theory underlying ritual in all countries.

(M. Eliade in *Cosmos and History*)

True religious ritual may this be seen as symbolic recreation of a cosmic event or situation - in many cases the creation of the world and the eternal sacrifice of the Deity by which the world is sustained. This gives the ritual its power and ability to invoke the presence of that which is considered most sacred, holy and real. In addition to this concept bishops Leadbeater and Wedgood considered the main purpose of ritual to be the provision of a channel for spiritual forces to be poured out for the perfecting of humanity and the whole creation.

Even services which are purely worship and praise of the Divine such as Prime and Vespers have in this view an important function; they help the worshipper to focus and pour out his feelings of love and devotion towards God. This pouring out of devotion receives a definite response from on high (see *Science of the Sacraments*, pp. 17-20, 7th edition). Thus the "thread" which binds our consciousness in a mysterious way to the Deity may be strengthened. This can be seen as one of the meanings of the word religion - from *re-ligare*, to "bind back." It is by total

commitment and devotion to God (or some aspect of God) that the true mystic eventually reaches his goal: union with the Divine. We see then that ritual in its many forms has a very definite purpose and can be viewed as part of the divine plan for the perfecting of creation.

From a recent theological view on ritual as given by J. G. Davies in a *Dictionary of Ritual and Worship* (SCM) we can derive that at the basis of any religious type ritual we generally find four basic concepts:

1. Symbolism

"All rituals have a symbolic character whereby the natural object or action symbolises the Divine."

There are usually several layers of symbolism contained in a ritual.

2. Consecration

"Their main function is to enable the human situation, in its entirety or in certain aspects, to share in a principle which goes beyond it and is its basis" (i.e. the Divine).

To consecrate is to "make holy," to set apart as sacred. We consecrate a place of worship, an altar stone, holy oils, a bishop, and so on.

3. Repetition

"The Divine Power is thereby represented as being brought into the present..... in the sense of a representation of the original sacred action" (i.e. the creation of the world, the first Holy Eucharist, etc.)

This is in the view of some scholars (Mircea Eliade in particular) a reversal of time, in which a primordial creative act by the deity or its representative by being re-enacted symbolically projects the actors into that primordial time. In our Liturgy we find phrases such as "from the beginning of the world;" also "throughout all ages of ages;" "in the eternal" etc. We can also see this not so much as a return to primordial time as an effort to raise our consciousness at least partially into a "timeless state" in which we may realize something of the great mystery of time and space.

4. Remembrance

"Rituals are the media for preserving and transmitting the founded tradition of the community and at the same time for sharing experience. This shared experience through the rites sustains the common faith and framework of understanding whereby the community is perpetuated and renewed."

The words of the *Anamnesis*: "As oft as ye shall do these things ye shall do them in remembrance of me," reported to have been uttered by Christ himself at the institution of the Holy Eucharist are a prime example of this.

## HOW RITUAL OPERATES

Whatever may be the views of some scholars or theologians, true ritual always acts as a bridge between the physical and the super-physical, the seen and the unseen, between physical reality and alternative orders of reality (to use a modern expression).

Religious ritual therefore by its very nature is also enacted in the inner or higher worlds not perceptible to our senses and necessitates the cooperation of denizens of those worlds, the angels or devas.

For the proper functioning of ritual three elements are needed; a doer or actor, a plan, and the action itself. We find then:

1. The Actor. The person or persons who perform the action of the ritual.  
This function in true ritual is nearly always dual - on the physical level a human being (a priest, a Brahmin, a lama etc.) and on higher, non-physical levels, an angel or deva. (C. W. Leadbeater and G. Hodson are not the only ones having observed angels taking part in the services of the Church. Some Church Fathers and medieval mystics have made the same observations, but without perceiving the angelic function in detail).  
Only a person specially set apart for this work and with the proper link (in Catholic Christianity a duly ordained priest, in Hinduism a Brahmin, in Buddhism a member of the Sangha) with his angelic counterpart can ensure the effective working of the ritual. We see here the importance of the apostolic succession.
2. The Plan. The lay-out or traditional scheme to be followed. Physical man lives in space and time. Ritual, though it has to reflect the cosmos and the divine action still has to be enacted in space and time. It therefore divides itself into ritual performed:
  - a) in space. Since ancient times altars and temples have been built as the setting for the performance of ritual - sacred space.
  - b) in time. This is the sequence traditionally laid down for the actions in a ritual (invocation, consecration, etc.) and at the same time the symbolical recreation in time of the primordial event on which the ritual is based - sacred time. Such a sequence is graphically illustrated in Parry and Godby. *The work of transformation*.
3. The words and actions of the ritual which take place in time and space. Each ritual has certain key-words or words of power, certain actions and uses certain substances which bring about the desired result. In Catholic theology we know these as form, matter etc. (see chapter 11 of Paper 3 on L. C. Doctrine).

### THE RITUAL IN SPACE

Geometric lines speak the language of belief, strong, passionate, enduring belief. In them the eternal laws of proportion and symmetry reign supreme, The cycle of what is divinely generated is reproduced in the numerical language of choir, transept, nave, aisle, doorway, window, column, arcade, gable and tower. Every feature has its unit of measure, its mystic symbolism.

(Hermon Gaylord Wood, *Ideal Metrology*)

Since ancient times the six directions of space (the four directions of the compass and zenith and nadir) have been regarded as embodying the layout of the cosmos in our three-dimensional world. The Four Cardinal Points are seen as presided over by great beings called *Devarajas* in Hinduism and Buddhism and the Children in Horus and Egypt. They correspond to "the four living creatures" of Ezekiel and "the four beasts" of Revelation. The East was of particular significance as the sun rises in the East. The orientation of altar and temple was of extreme importance as it was to symbolize the cosmos.

A fact that must never be lost sight of is that to the ancients as well as to the people of the Middle Ages physical space, envisaged in its totality, is always the objectivation of "spiritual space". In truth it is nothing else, because its logical homogeneity resides as much in the spirit of the knower as in physical reality.

(T. Burckhardt in *Sacred Art in East and West*, p. 47)

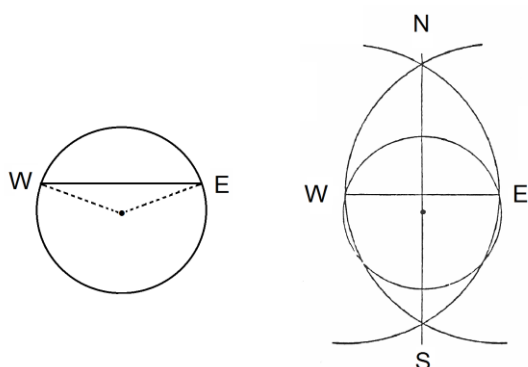
The oldest known altar is the Vedic altar of Hinduism. It is built of 365 bricks, laid one every day of the year, with at the bottom a miniature golden figure of a man with its head towards the east and its face turned towards the sky, symbolizing *Agni-Prajapati* who was sacrificed from the beginning of creation that the world might come into being.

We may see a correspondence to this in the early Christian stone altar which was often the tomb of a martyr. Later relics of saints or a consecrated Host (from Latin *Hostia*- victim) were enclosed in the altar or the altar-stone.

In the early Middle Ages the stone altar was in the form of a cube and came to signify the body of Christ. We still strip the altar on Good Friday of its linen cloths and other adornments to symbolize the stripping of Christ before his crucifixion. The five crosses carved in the altar stone symbolize the five wounds of Christ. Later the cube-shaped altar assumed the elongated form we know today. Underlying this symbolism Liberal Catholics may discern apart from the sacrifice of Christ-also the concept of the eternal sacrifice of God entombed in matter, "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (L. C. Liturgy).

The lay-out of the temples of the ancients and also of the great medieval cathedrals always began with an elaborate rite of orientation, described in detail in the ancient Hindu books. The exact east-west and north-south axes were determined by the shadow of a pillar cast on a circle traced around it at sunrise and sunset. From these points the *mandala* (Sanskrit: circle) or lay-out was developed, containing basic geometrical figures such as the circle, the square, the triangle and the *vesica piscis* (Latin: fish bladder). The last figure is produced when two circles of equal size are drawn through each other's centres. These basic figures were regarded as having cosmic significance and as expressing the elements of the divine plan which underlies the created world.

As man is created in the image of God – the temple ordained by the Creator to house the spirit - so we find that the human body in many cases is the model for a sacred edifice. The great Gothic cathedrals of the Middle Ages were laid out on the basis of the cross, the circle and the *vesica piscis*, thus symbolizing not only the crucified Christ but also the cosmos, represented by the cross and the circle. This symbolism had been taught by several of the Church fathers, including St. Augustine and St. Maxim the Confessor, who saw in the church building the earthly symbol of both Christ, man and the universe.

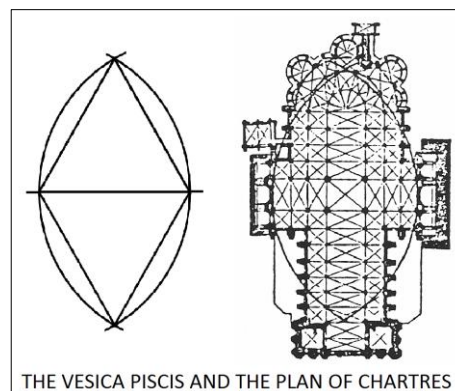


Circles of orientation, from the  
Mārasāva Shilpa-Shāstra

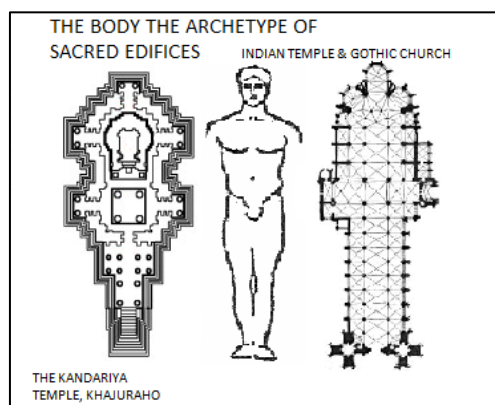
The basic plan of the temple is derived from the procedure of its orientation, which is a rite in the proper sense of the word, for it connects the form of the sanctuary with that of the universe, which in this case is the expression of the divine norm. A pillar is set up in the place chosen for the building of the temple, and a circle is traced around it.

The pillar serves as gnomon, and its shadow thrown on to the circle, marks, by its extreme positions in the morning and in the evening, two points that are connected by an East-West axis.

(*Sacred Art in East and West* p.23; see ref. Burckhardt [page 21])



THE VESICA PISCIS AND THE PLAN OF CHARTRES





When a church is consecrated it becomes "sacred space," fit for the performance of the sacred ritual. The symbolism of the Heavenly Jerusalem as found in chapter 21 of the Book of Revelation seems to have been the model for the consecration rite:

"and the wall of the city had twelve foundations and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb" (Rev. 21:14).

In the traditional Roman rite twelve crosses on the inner walls of the building (three on each wall) are anointed with chrism by the bishop with the words: "May this temple be hallowed + and consecrated + in the Name of the Father + and of the Son + and of the Holy Ghost + in honour of God and the glorious Virgin Mary and of all the Saints, to the Name and Memory of Saint.....Peace be to thee."

This is regarded as the essential part of the consecration rite. In the Liberal Catholic rite the bishop anoints the seven "Ray" crosses (each containing a jewel belonging to one of the seven rays) around the church with chrism using words of similar import, but at each cross addressed to a particular aspect of the Deity, such as strength, wisdom, beauty, etc. each of these qualities being thought of as represented by one of the Seven Great Spirits before the Throne of God (Rev. 1:4) and their angelic hosts. This action is intended to link each cross to the particular division of the angelic host it is thought to represent.

The church building, in this way, is seen as a symbolic and microcosmic representation of God's universe, the altar being His throne and the crosses representing the Seven Spirits before the Throne (Rev. 4:2-5).

In the Eastern Church the symbolism is quite clear:

On the one hand, the church is conceived as imitating the Heavenly Jerusalem, even from patristic times; on the other, it also reproduces Paradise or the celestial world. But the cosmological structure of the sacred edifice still persists in the thought of Christendom; for example, it is obvious in the Byzantine church. The four parts of the interior of the church symbolize the four Cardinal directions. The interior of the church is the universe. The altar is paradise, which lay in the East. The imperial door to the altar was also called the Door of Paradise. During Easter week, the great door to the altar remains open during the entire service; the meaning of this custom is clearly expressed in the Easter Canon: 'Christ rose from the grave and opened the doors of Paradise unto us.' The West, on the contrary, is the realm of darkness, of grief, of death, the realm of the eternal mansions of the dead, .....

(M. Eliade: *The Sacred and the Profane*, p. 61)

## THE RITUAL IN TIME

The time a ritual takes may be anything from 5 minutes to 365 days. Within that period a sequence of actions and words- in accordance with a traditionally prescribed formula - is enacted.

Strictly speaking, liturgical action consists of mental, emotional and physical action and involves the whole personality of both the minister or actor, his helpers and the congregation. The physical action may be gestures or the words said or sung. The emotional element is mainly composed of the love and devotion directed to the Deity and the mental action is the guiding thought and concentration upon the work being done. Ritual IS a "holistic" process. Bishop Wedgwood was most emphatic on this point. There is of course also the involvement of the Higher Self of man, and the student will find many references to this in *The Science of the Sacraments* and in *New insights into Christian Worship*.

Many aspects of Ritual are connected with the time element. As we saw before, true ritual by its very nature is a repetition in time of an original sacred act or event, whether it be the first Eucharist or "what the gods did in the beginning." The student should at this stage study the short chapter *Sacramental Mysticism* by C. Jinarajadasa, in the Appendix.

A common feature of ritual is the use of certain physical substances. In the Christian sacraments these include water, salt, oil, juice of the grape, wheat etc. Each of these have particular qualities, both physical and super-physical, of which we make use in the ritual. In all ritual, in addition to words and gestures certain physical phenomena which influence our senses are used, such as light (or fire) and colours, sound in various forms, and incense. Light, sound and perfume do not only have an impact on our senses but each can constitute a link with worlds beyond the physical:

Both fire and light are powerful factors in communication with higher worlds, for those who know how to take advantage of them. The fire of our candles, our sanctuary lamp, our incense is not kindled for naught; the forefathers who handed these traditions down to us had inherited them from students of the ancient Mysteries who had a scientific basis for their actions.

(*Science of the Sacraments*, p. 471, 7th Ed.)

The lighting of a candle with religious intention is analogue to a prayer and always invokes a down-pouring of force from on High.

(*The Hidden Life in Freemasonry*, p. 133)

The burning of incense also has an effect far beyond the physical. Its main purpose is purificatory and the creation of an atmosphere of devotion and worship. The act of censuring also

has the effect of "activating" certain principles in man and the links existing with the rays and the angelic kingdom. The student should read what Bishop Leadbeater writes on the subject (*The Science of the Sacraments*, pp. 84-86, 94-96 and 155-161.)

Sound and the spoken word are an integral part of every ritual. Music, chanting and singing of hymns are part of worship in all religions though they differ widely in practice. Bells, gongs, and various musical instruments are also used. Here again we find that sound acts as a bridge between the physical and super-physical worlds. As there are angels of incense, so there are also angels of music (Sanskrit: *Gandharvas*). In Christianity music and singing has been specially developed; in the Eastern religions the chanting of certain words or sentences (*mantras*) has become the custom, though similar incantations are not unknown in Christianity.

The universe is thought of as having been created symbolically by- and is continually maintained by-sound. The word in John 1:1 (Greek: *Logos*, Latin: *Verbum*) corresponds to the *Vac* of the Hindu Vedas, the creative power which dwells in the highest heaven and brings the worlds into manifestation. Upon this principle the concept of the power of *mantras* is based. They involve our whole being, both physical and non-physical.

Typical of the Vedic ritual is the sounding of certain words and phrases credited with specific evocative power. We may gather from the scattered references that the very sound of words inspired from deep within the heart in moments of worship quickened both in men and in the celestial entities being invoked a response to loftier thought and influences which in turn brought the worshipper in harmony with the Cosmic Order, the fountain-spring of truth (*ṛta*). The whole aim of prayer, and this kind of recitation which could be considered as an introduction to it, is to create those harmonious conditions wherein the worshipper may contact the highest within himself, and through that highest that which corresponds to it in the Cosmic Order.

(J. Miller in *The Vedas*, p. 63)

The use of words is an essential part of Liturgy. Not only do the words spoken convey meaning to those present but they are part of the creative process by which the ritual under the right circumstances (such as the right "actor" using the right words in the right place and at the right time) causes "the inward and spiritual grace" of the Sacrament to flow.

There is a definite relationship between language and the myth of creation. The method used for the Creation of the World is the divine thought (the plan) followed by the divine Word which brings the world into being.

Ernst Cassirer wrote in *Language and Myth* (p. 45):

There must be some particular, essentially unchanging function that endows the Word with this extraordinary, religious character, and exalts it *ab initio* to the religious sphere, the sphere of the "holy". In the creation accounts of almost all great cultural religions, the Word appears in league with the highest Lord of creation; either as the tool which he employs or actually as the primary source from which he, like all other Being and order of Being, is derived.

Thought and its verbal utterance are usually taken directly as one; for the mind that thinks and the tongue that speaks belong essentially together.

We also have to mention the gestures used in ritual. Gestures are not only of a practical nature but often have a symbolic significance. This applies not only to Christianity but also to the hand movements (*mudras*) in Hinduism and Buddhism. Making the sign of the cross, either over oneself or over others, is of great significance (see p. 50, *Science of the Sacraments*). We not only link our consciousness with the "Christ within" but also activate certain force centres (*chakras*) in the etheric part of our physical body.

The position of prayer with hands extended at the level of the shoulders (fig. 11 p. 50 *Ceremonies of the L. C. Rite*) is very ancient. It has come down to us from the Jews, who in their turn derived it from ancient Egypt.

Finally a few words on "Sacred Time" by one of the foremost scholars in the field :

For religious man time too, like space, is neither homogeneous nor continuous. On the one hand there are the intervals of a sacred time, the time of festivals (by far the greater part of which are periodical); on the other there is profane time, ordinary temporal duration, in which acts without religious meaning have their setting. Between these two kinds of time there is, of course, solution of continuity; but by means of rites religious man can pass without danger from ordinary temporal duration to sacred time.

One essential difference between these two qualities of time strikes us immediately: *by its very nature sacred time is reversible* in the sense that, properly speaking, it is *a primordial mythical time made present*. Every religious festival, any liturgical time, represents the re-actualization of a sacred event that took place in a mythical past, "in the beginning." Religious participation in a festival implies emerging from ordinary temporal duration and reintegration of the mythical time re-actualized by the festival itself. Hence sacred time is indefinitely recoverable, indefinitely repeatable.

(M. Eliade: *The Sacred and the Profane*, p. 68)



○ Amen-hotep IV and his Wife adoring Aten (From W. Budge: *The Gods of the Egyptians*)

-----

Recommended for students interested in further study of the subject:  
Burckhardt, T.; *Scared Art in East and West* (Perrenial Books 1967)  
Eliade, M.; *The Sacred and the Profane* (Harcourt Brace 1959)  
Hall, T. W. (Ed.); *Introduction to the Study of Religion* (Harper 1978)  
Pennick, N.; *Sacred Geometry* (Harper 1980)  
Watts, A.; *Myth and Ritual in Christianity* (Beacon 1968)

## CHAPTER 3

**MYTH AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE**

A myth is far truer than a history, for a history only gives a story of the shadows, whereas a myth gives a story of the substances that cast the shadows. As above so below; and *first* above and *then* below.

A. Besant: *Esoteric Christianity*)

Christian theology has gone through many phases this century. The process (begun in the 16th century) of theology being constantly pushed back and re-placed by Science as the originator and upholder of western man's *world-view* has continued unabated. At the time the L.C.C. came into being a liberal theology was prevalent, an example being the works of R. J. Campbell, extracts from whose books have been used in our introductory paper on theology: *Religion and Christianity*.

Later the neo-orthodoxy of Karl Barth and his school came into prominence, followed by Bultmann and others who tried to "de-mythologize" Christianity. None of these movements in theology have been very successful in helping us to understand the Christian religion in the light of present-day thinking and theology is at a lower ebb than ever. An exception is the theology of Teilhard de Chardin who in his visionary outlook has tried to combine elements of science and theology.

With the spectacular growth this century, of the "science of man," psychology and anthropology in particular, subjects such as mythology and mysticism have become fields for investigation. It is probably in these fields that the future of Christian theology lies, though only few theologians seem to have taken much notice of these subjects yet.

The works of scholars such as William James (*Varieties of Religious Experience*) and Rudolf Otto (*The idea of the Holy*) have slowly changed the negative attitude to religion and we find that religion and religious study are now taken more seriously. Mystical and religious experience has been a subject of scientific study. The very forefront of Science - atomic physics - has come to a point where they can go no further, unless they use terms and concepts very similar to those used in mysticism (example: Fritjof Capra's *The Tao of Physics*).

In the L.C.C. we have had a whole new dimension added to the study of religion through the insights into inner worlds gained by the clairvoyant research of C. W. Leadbeater, Geoffrey Hodson and others. They have found that the physical side of ritual and sacrament is only as it

were the tip of the iceberg, the larger part of the action taking place in the inner worlds. They have also found that the creeds and main dogmas of Christianity - if rightly interpreted - are pointers towards the universal truths behind all religions. But we cannot base our theology on this added dimension though it can be extremely helpful to many of us personally. We also have to keep up with new developments in science and scholarship, even though we know that today's theories are often tomorrow's rejects.

We find today that myths and symbols are no longer looked upon as childish stories invented by primitive man but are regarded as archetypal models related to the deeper layers of human consciousness. They often embody truths which cannot be otherwise understood or absorbed by the human psyche. The investigations of the great psychologist Carl Gustav Jung has helped us to gain a deeper understanding of the universal validity of myths and symbols. The Jungian school and scholars such as Ananda Coomaraswamy, Mircea Eliade and Joseph Campbell have independently continued and developed this work, even though there is still a school of "diehard" materialists (and theologians!) who deny any deeper value in myths.

#### THE RELEVANCE OF MYTH

We can try to define and classify myth in various ways, whether in connection with psychology, philosophy, anthropology or religion, but such definition is not an easy task as all true myths have layers upon layers of meaning. Plato made frequent use of myths in his dialogues and Jung has discovered the great importance of myth for psychology. True myth is more than just an allegory or a fairy-tale. It has power of its own affecting us from "the inside."

All throughout history myths seem to rise and disappear. What has happened for instance to the myth of Isis, Osiris and Horus which existed for millennia in ancient Egypt? It has disappeared in that particular form but has possibly passed into Christianity in a much altered form. We may also consider the modern myths of our day such as those expressed in the ideals of Communism and Nazism.

The former has as its mythical basis the old myth of Utopis or the coming Golden Age brought about by the elect (the proletariat); the latter the ancient Germanic myth of the heroes and gods whose reign ends in *Ragnarok* or total destruction, an event which as we all know has already come to pass!

We shall now look at some attempts at defining the concept of myth:

Myths are original revelations of the preconscious psyche, involuntary statements about unconscious psychic happenings, and anything but allegories of physical processes. Such

allegories would be an idle amusement for an unscientific intellect. Myths, on the contrary, have a vital meaning.

(C. Jung and C. Kerényi: *Essays on a Science of Mythology*)

Myth is the embodiment in symbolic language and story of the spiritual philosophy of man and, as such, its imagery and characters embody archetypal principles. Myth is the basis of all religious expression and of all valid ritual. It tends to form round historical characters (e.g., Jesus, Krishna, Buddha), the historical person becoming obscured and lost in the myth. Schweitzer, for instance, states that he can find no historical evidence for the Jesus of the Gospels, who has become mythological in character. Yet there was undoubtedly a historical person round whom the myth gathered. This does not in any way affect true Christianity, which rests on timeless and spiritual truth. Myth depicts these timeless truths both about the cosmos and man in the language of everyday thought. Hence it is more "absolutely" true than history, though it may blend through legend into history.

(I. J. Bendit : *Keywords of the Wisdom Tradition*)

Myths reveal the structure of reality, and the multiple modalities of being in the world. That is why they are the exemplary models for human behaviour-, they disclose the true stories, concern themselves with the realities.

(M. Eliade in *Myths, Dreams and Mysteries*)

It is one of the prime errors of historical and rational analysis to suppose that the "truth" and "original form" of a legend can be separated from its miraculous elements.

It is in the marvels themselves that the truth inheres: Wonder- for this is no other than the very beginning of philosophy," Plato, *Theatetus* 1550, and in the same way Aristotle, who adds, "So that the lover of myths, which are a compact of wonders, is by the same token a lover of wisdom" (*Metaphysics* 982 B). Myth embodies the nearest approach to absolute truth that can be stated in words.

(Ananda Coomaraswamy in *Hinduism and Buddhism*)

In these views myth is an extraordinary thing, closely connected with the inner, deeper side of human nature. How do myths originate? Jung sees myth as basic to our life here on earth:

Only here, in life on earth, where the opposites clash together, can the general level of consciousness be raised. That seems to be man's metaphysical task- which cannot accomplish without "mythologising." Myth is the natural and indispensable intermediate stage between unconscious and conscious cognition.

The need for mythic statements is satisfied when we frame a view of the world which adequately explains the meaning of human existence in the cosmos, a view



which springs from our psychic wholeness, from the co-operation between conscious and unconscious.

No science will ever replace myth, and a myth cannot be made out of any science. For it is not that "God" is a myth, but that myth is the revelation of a divine life in man.

*(Memories, Dreams, Reflections)*

Alan Watts sees myths as attempts by the great teachers of the past to communicate elements of the *Perennial Philosophy* (the basic doctrine behind all religions) to man:

In some cases myth may have originated in parable or allegory, that is to say by the deliberate composition of "tales of instruction" by teachers of the traditional doctrine. But probably in many more cases the origination of myth is unconscious and spontaneous, in the manner suggested by Jung, but represents the same truth as the doctrine- because it springs from a submerged level of the mind which has never actually been "taken in" by the illusion of the conventional world.

*(Myth and Ritual in Christianity, p. 17)*

Mircea Eliade specially stresses the time aspect in myth, what he calls the *illud tempus* (that time):

Nevertheless, the religious experience of the Christian is based upon an imitation of the Christ as exemplary pattern, upon the liturgical repetition of the life, death and resurrection of the Lord and upon the contemporaneity of the Christian with *illud tempus* which begins with the Nativity at Bethlehem and ends, provisionally, with the Ascension.

One is always *contemporary with a myth*, during the time when one repeats it or imitates the gestures of the mythic personages, Kierkegaard's requirement of the true Christian was that he should be a contemporary of the Christ. But even one who is not a "true Christian" in Kierkegaard's sense still is, and not *not* be, a contemporary of Christ; for the liturgical time in which the Christian lives during the divine service is no longer profane duration but is essentially sacred time, the time in which the Word is made flesh, the *illud tempus* of the Gospels. A Christian is not taking part in a commemoration of the Passion of Christ, as he might be joining in the annual celebration of the Fourth of July or the Eleventh of November, for example. He is not commemorating an event but re-actualising a mystery.

*(Myths, Dreams and Mysteries, p. 30)*

Although he asserts that the concept of sacred time as in the archaic religions also applies to Christianity and the Christian myth, he sees a difference because Christians see Christ as an historical person:

Just as a church constitutes a break in plane in the profane space of a modern city, the service celebrated inside it marks a break in profane temporal duration. It is no longer today's historical time that is present- the time that is experienced, for example, in the adjacent streets- but the time in which the historical existence of Jesus Christ occurred, the time sanctified by his preaching, by his passion, death, and resurrection. But we must add that this example does not reveal all the difference between sacred and profane time; Christianity radically changed the experience and the concept of liturgical time, and this is due to the fact that Christianity affirms the historicity of the person of Christ.

The Christian liturgy unfolds in a historical time sanctified by the incarnation of the Son of God

*(The Sacred and the Profane, p. 72)*

Logically this should then also apply to Buddhism and Islam as both Gautama Buddha and Mohammed are definitely historical persons. We know that numerous legends have already grown up around these teachers just as they have around the figure of Jesus. Such legends, though they may have a basis in historical events, have been embroidered upon through the centuries and eventually reached the status of myth. They have a kind of gripping effect on some of us as if there is a response from our inner self, a kind of recognition of a truth veiled in myth and symbol.

The myth itself, being a succession of events given in the form of a tale or legend and usually involving archetypal figures, may have several layers of meaning. Typical Christian myths of this kind are the story of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, the Virgin Birth, the Adoration of the Magi, the Judgment Day and the Resurrection of the Dead. The Revelation of St. John contains most superb mythology.

## THEOLOGY AND MYTH

In the view of Alan Watts theology almost from the beginning went wrong by confusing myth, philosophy (metaphysics) and Science. In the early Church some of the Church Fathers understood this but later generations were more and more subject to the "materializing tendency" Bishop Leadbeater speaks of. The result has been that theology has tried to constitute itself as both philosophy and natural science and asserted that the Christian myth had to be taken literally as recorded history. With some exceptions this is of course now no longer the case, but theology now finds itself in a position where it has to acknowledge myth:

The change referred to is that from the understanding of religious truths as made up of propositions containing, among other things, divinely revealed "information" on almost any topic of interest, to the understanding of them as a system of symbols which make no authoritative assertions about concrete matters of fact. With- in the last century the mythical

language of religion, which, when systematically reflected upon, becomes theological discourse, has relinquished the claim to be able to make indicative statements about matters of fact; in its place this language has seen itself as "solely myth," or "broken myth"....

(Langdon Gilkey in *Religion and the Scientific Future*, p. 4)

To de-mythologize Christianity, to try to make it into an "exact science" would be the end of it as a religion-and as a science too, as myth can never be proved in the way physical experiments can prove natural law. Myth has to be given its proper status and meaning. It belongs to a different category altogether. And there are many types of myths, from a simple story to a very complicated cosmology.

An Anglican theologian, Brother George Every, writes in his introduction to *Christian Mythology*:

The disparagement of myth in our own civilisation arises partly from objections to idolatry, which made the early Christians prefer to use some other word, such as mystery or enigma, when they took account of the kind of experience that in other religions gives rise to a myth. This objection was intensified at the Reformation, not only among Protestants but among Catholics in reaction against the revival of classical mythology in the Renaissance. It has been reinforced by the prestige of science, which leads us to make our own myths in scientific terms, and then to read the myths of others as if they were unsuccessful shots at the solution of scientific or metaphysical problems.

Alan Watts has shown us, perhaps better than anyone else, the confused state of theology and its misinterpretation of myth in his book *Myth and Ritual in Christianity*.

I would strongly advise the student to read the Prologue in that book. For those unable to obtain a copy I quote here some of the relevant points:

Christian dogma combines a mythological story which is for the most part Hebrew, and a group of metaphysical "concepts" which are Greek, and then proceeds to treat both as statements of fact- as information about objective realities inhabiting (a) the world of history, and (b) the "supernatural" world existing parallel to the historical, but on a higher plane. In other words, it talks about mythology and metaphysics in the language of science. The resulting confusion has been so vast, and has so muddled Western thought, that all current terms, our very language, so partake of the confusion that they can hardly straighten it out.

(Page 62, Beacon Ed.)

....the official doctrines betray a strange anxiety to *prove* the literal factuality of the myth as a basis for *belief*. But this believing in myth, this anxious clinging to it as fact and certainty, utterly destroys its value and power. A God conceptually defined, a Christ believed in as a factual rock, is at once changed from a creative image to a dead idol.

(Page 21, Beacon Ed.)

Alan Watts - at the end of his Prologue - sees in Catholic Christianity four main expressions of the Christian myth: the Liturgy (the Sacraments), Scripture, the Creeds and non-Sacramental worship:

A similar shift of perspective must apply to the ordering and interpretation of the sources of the Christian Myth. A modern Protestant would base everything on the Bible, but for a Catholic the primary source of Christian revelation is "Christ/in/the/Church", or rather the Holy Spirit himself informing and inspiring the living Body of Christ. This gives rise to the Catholic principle *lex orandi lex credendi*- the law of worship is the law of belief.

*Lex orandi*, the law of worship, is not mere liturgical rule; it is the state of the Church in worship, which is to say, in the very act of union with God here and now. Thus the Church, in this authoritative position, promulgates, first, the Liturgy.

This includes primarily the Mass and the Six other Sacraments, all of which are held to have been instituted by Christ himself and thus to embody the earliest and most basic law of the Christian life. Second in order come the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, and the Apocrypha, considered to have been written or approved by the Church in such a way that the authority of scripture derives from the Church, and not *vice versa*. Third in order come the Apostles' and the Nicene Creeds, being the Church's official summary of the essential points taught in both scripture and tradition.

Fourth in order Comes another part of the Liturgy, the Divine Office, contained in the Breviary and consisting of the day/ to/ day worship of the Church outside the Mass itself- composed of the Psalms with their seasonal antiphons, the official hymns of the Church, and various lections from the scriptures and the writings of the Fathers.

These sources, with the special perspective involved in their hierarchical arrangement, give the basic structure of Christian Myth, and as the bare branches of a tree are filled in with innumerable leaves and flowers, this structure is en- foliated with the vast wealth of symbolism in art and ceremonial, of legend, hagiography, and tradition, to make- as a veritable Tree of Life- one of the most complete and beautiful myths of all time.

I have gone a little deeper into the subject of myth as some knowledge and understanding of this subject is needed for the appreciation of ritual, sacrament and liturgy. The efficacy of particular rituals can be affirmed by clairvoyant observation, but there are deeper aspects which can only be, at least partly, understood by considering the underlying myth or symbolism.

The study of mythology is at present a rapidly expanding academic subject. Already different schools of interpretation and method have arisen such as the psychological, phenomenological, structural, etc. At this stage it is not possible to say what future developments will be. Theology is bound to be strongly influenced. For the time being our interest in this field is mainly focused on Jung and his school and on the works of Mircea Eliade.

-----  
Books for further study:

Eliade, M.; *Myths, Dreams and Mysteries* (Fontana 1968)

Eliade, M.; *The Sacred and the Profane* (Harcourt Brace, 1959)

Every, G.; *Christian Mythology* (Hamlyn 1970)

Hall, T. W. (Ed.); *Introduction to the Study of Religion, Chapter 3: Myth* (Harper 1978)

Jones, C. (Ed); *The Study of Liturgy: Part I, A Theology of Worship* (SPCK 1978)

Watts, A.; *Myth and Ritual in Christianity* (Beacon Press, 1968)

## CHAPTER 4

**SYMBOLS AND SYMBOLISM**

The symbol reveals certain aspects of reality- the deepest aspects- which defy any other means of knowledge.

Images, symbols and myths are not irresponsible creations of the psyche; they respond to a need and fulfil a function, that of bringing to light the most hidden modalities of being.

(Mircea Eliade in *Images and Symbols*)

Symbols are basic to human language, culture, art and expression. The very words we use stand for something, either for an object or for a concept or idea; they are actually symbols. The letters and figures we use in writing are symbols.

The word symbol is derived from the Greek *symbolon*, "thrown together" meaning a mark or token. In a wider sense a symbol is anything that stands for or depicts something else. In a more restricted sense it is usually a representation of something abstract (such as an idea or a quality) by a sign, object, word etc. which is thought to have some analogy with what is represented, for example: white may stand for purity.

It is in the more restricted sense that symbols are used in religion. Myth is related to symbols and symbolism as most myths describe or depict events and subjects using symbols or symbolic characters. In the Garden of Eden the Tree of Knowledge is a symbol, the serpent a symbolic character, the whole story of Adam and Eve is the myth. Adam and Ève are al so symbolic figures representing man and woman. They are archetypes (models, proto-types) of humanity.

Today only some fundamentalist groups take such myths literally as history. An example of the present attitude in theology can be found in The Doctrine of the *Church of England* (1938), p. 45:

There is in any case a sense in which, on the Christian view, the creative activity of God must be regarded as continuous. No objection to a theory of evolution can be drawn from the two Creation narratives in Gen i. and ii., since it is generally agreed among educated Christians that these are mythological in origin, and that their value for us is symbolic rather than historical. It is to be noted that a non-literal interpretation of these chapters is to be found in some ancient Fathers.

This was the case with many of the Church Fathers, Clement of Alexandria, Origen and St. Augustine in particular. Protestants generally seem to have found it more difficult to accept symbolism and allegory. Alan Richardson writes under Symbol, Symbolism in *A Dictionary of Christian Theology* (SCM);

.....both Testaments are full of profound poetic imagery, and it can be argued that without such imagery the transcendent truths of religion cannot be adequately communicated or sustained. The whole history of Christianity is filled with symbolism, from the cross itself or the fish of the catacombs to the glories of mediaeval or baroque architecture and adornment. Protestantism has often been suspicious of symbolism (*cf* 'puritanism'), but this is doubtless by way of reaction from the excesses of Catholicism.....

But the subject is one which is increasingly recognized to be of great importance and it is today attracting the serious attention of scholars and theologians. What is the difference between religious and secular symbolism? Is there any value at all in religious symbolism in a secular ('religionless') age?

Typical of the great Reformers was the attitude of Martin Luther who tried to work out the exact place, geographically, where the Garden of Eden had been, using the name of the four rivers given in Genesis.

One reason why we do not find more mention of symbols in Scripture and early Christian writings is largely because St. Paul and the Church Fathers used different words for what we now call symbols and symbolism. St. Paul, for instance uses words such as allegory, "type and shadow. The word *symbolon* was used by Philo and by some of the Church Fathers, but it seems that generally words such as allegory, parable and type were used for what we now call symbol and myth.

#### THE MEANING OF SYMBOLS

As in the case of myth the meaning of symbols and symbolism are not easy to define. There is the effect of the symbol on each one of us and there are usually layers upon layers of meaning to be found. I quote from the *Encyclopaedia of Traditional Symbols* by J. C. Cooper:

The study of symbolism is not mere erudition; it concerns man's knowledge of himself. Symbolism is an instrument of knowledge and the most ancient and fundamental method of expression, one which reveals aspects of reality which escape other modes of expression.

The symbol does not merely equate; it must reveal some essential part of the subject to be understood; it contains the vast ever-expanding realm of possibilities and makes

possible the perception of fundamental relationships between seemingly diverse forms or appearances.

Strictly speaking, the symbol differs from the emblem and allegory in that it expresses, or crystalizes, some aspect or direct experience of life and truth and thus leads beyond itself.

A symbol need not arise from any one source, but can adapt or respond to different ages, religions, cults and civilizations. Exclusiveness is a primitive and immature characteristic; the symbol is inclusive and expansive, and there may be many and diverse applications of the same symbol which can become ambivalent or polyvalent in accordance with its subsidiary connections. A symbol may also have both an esoteric and exoteric meaning, so that the most obvious and usual interpretation is not necessarily complete and can be merely a half-truth; it may both reveal and conceal.

Traditional symbolism assumes that the celestial is primordial and that the terrestrial is but a reflection or image of it: the higher contains the meaning of the lower. The celestial is not only primordial but eternal, and confers on the symbol that undying power which has remained effective over the ages and continues so to the extent that it evokes the sense of the sacred and leads to a power beyond itself.

Symbolism is basic to the human mind; to ignore it is to suffer a serious deficiency; it is fundamental to thinking, and the perfect symbol should satisfy every aspect of man- his spirit, intellect and emotions. All religious rites have a symbolic significance and quality without the understanding of which they become empty and 'superstitious'. In ceremonial there is a wide symbolism of attitude and posture, such as the *mudras* and postures of supplication or submission, of direction assumed in prayer and worship, of sound and movement- all profoundly meaningful and inter- woven in the fabric of human nature and needs. As Dean Inge says of symbols: 'Indifference to them is not, as many have supposed, a sign of enlightenment and spirituality. It is, in fact, an unhealthy symptom.' Mircea Eliade sees in the recovery of symbolism the chance to 'rescue modern man from his cultural provincialism and, above all, from his historical and existentialist relativism'.

(from the Introduction)

The student should look up in the Dictionary the meaning of such words as allegory, fable, sign, emblem."

Symbols can be of many kinds: objects, images, words. They have always been important in Christianity but came particularly into prominence in the Eastern Orthodox Church in the form of icons (from Greek: *eicon*=image) of Christ, Mary and the Saints. The Eastern Church has a well formulated explanation for the importance of symbolism in its worship:



What is symbolism? Symbolism expresses indirectly, through images, that which cannot be expressed directly in material or verbal forms. Being a mysterious language, symbolism also hides truths which it reflects from those who are not initiated and makes them understandable to those who know how to approach them. Everyday language frequently confuses the ideas of "sign" and "symbol," as if they were identical. In fact, there is a necessary spiritual distinction between them. A sign only portrays reality; a symbol always qualifies it in a certain way, bringing forth a superior reality. To understand a symbol is to participate in a presence; to understand a sign is to translate an indication. Let us take the example of the cross. In arithmetic, it is a sign of addition; as a road sign, it announces the Crossing of two roads. But in religion, it is a symbol which expresses and communicates the inexhaustible contents of Christianity.

In the Church, symbolism plays a very important role because the entire Church is, in a way, both material and spiritual. That which is material is directly accessible to us; that which is spiritual is indicated through symbols. The symbolism of the Church cannot be effectively studied outside of the liturgy because it is a liturgical symbolism and it is through the liturgy that the Fathers explained it.

(L. Ouspensky: *Theology of the icon*, p. 21)

#### SYMBOLISM AND THE PSYCHE

The current enormous expansion of psychology into new fields, both in what is termed *depth-psychology and transpersonal psychology* has added much knowledge to the study of human consciousness. One of the discoveries has been the importance of symbols and symbolism and their influence on man. Symbols are the language of the psyche. We may encounter them in dreams, in meditation or in moments when our minds are not actively "thinking." They may also speak to us through objects perceived. What would Christianity have become if the Emperor Constantine had not seen a symbol of the cross in the Heavens?

The use of symbols in religion and particularly in liturgy is essential, as archetypal symbols of whatever kind affect the deeper layers of human consciousness. A symbol is different from a concept. A true symbol has a mysterious quality of opening up a recognition of something beyond our normal perception:

A religious symbol- even if verbal- is different from and in many ways opposite to a religious concept. The symbol, as Mircea Eliade has pointed out, "is not a mere reflection of objective reality," but "reveals something more profound and more basic," and does so in a way that brings out the complexity of inner meanings. A symbol is multivalent; it expresses simultaneously a number of meanings whose relationships may not be immediately apparent, yet which are joined in the fullness of the religious experience.

The cross expresses death and life, individual salvation and the institution of the church, among much else.

Symbols, verbal and otherwise, are then capable of bearing the ambivalence or paradox that exists in great religious intuitions when they are aware they have touched something beyond ordinary human capacity. It is only through symbols, in fact, that we can express the diversity yet underlying oneness of the paradoxical complexes that make up religion.

Symbols strive to be inclusive, to carry meanings on several levels and to reconcile or transcend seeming inconsistencies. Concepts, on the other hand, strive to clarify and rationalize. Descending to the plane of ordinary life and thought, they emphasize distinctions, establish themselves on only one side of inconsistencies and polarities, and align themselves with one logical, philosophical, or theological system.

(R. Ellwood: *Mysticism and Religion*, p. 88)

Not all of us are consciously open to the influence of symbols. Unless we pay special attention to them - whether they are images, objects or words - they usually pass us by. "Hearing they hear not, seeing they see not" (Mat. 13:13). It is only in meditation, in concentrated awareness or in what has been called religious experience that they assume a deeper meaning for us.

Jung found beyond the personal level of the unconscious what he called the collective unconscious, which includes a level where symbolic images and archetypes are encountered which usually have a profound influence on the psyche. Beyond this level is still that of "self-realization" or "individuation."

In Zen Buddhism, Christian Mysticism and other spiritual disciplines, several layers of consciousness have been recognized. Though they vary from system to system, one of these levels is seen as the "symbolic" one, where symbols and archetypal characters are vividly experienced (See chapter on Zen Buddhism in Tart C. (Ed.) *Transpersonal Psychologies*).

Symbols then fulfil a purpose in that they point to a higher reality only dimly understood. They must not be confused with ultimate reality or with the spirit itself which cannot be pictured or reproduced in any way. Theologian Nicholas Berdyaev has expressed this very clearly:

We cannot dispense with symbolism in language and thought, but we can do without it in the primary consciousness. In describing spiritual and mystical experience men will always have recourse to spatial symbols such as height and depth, to symbols of this or another world (first mode of knowing). But in real spiritual experience these symbols disappear.....

Spirit is never an object; nor is spiritual reality an objective one. In the so-called objective world there is no such nature, thing, or objective reality as spirit. Hence it is easy to deny the reality of spirit. God is spirit because he is not object, because he is subject...In objectification there are no primal realities, but only symbols.

(*Spirit and Reality*, 1939)

#### THE SYMBOLISM OF THE ICON

In the Eastern Orthodox Church visual symbols in the form of images or icons are prominent. In some Liberal Catholic places of worship we also have pictures or statues of Christ and Our Lady. As we all know pictures and statues are common in Roman Catholic churches in which symbols play an important part. We must always realize that such pictures etc. are *symbols*, though there may be some degree of likeness to the original.

In the Eastern Church the icons fulfil a very special function as they are regarded as part of the Liturgy. They help the worshippers to visualize the great figures and events of the complex Christian myth:

It is in the Eastern Orthodox Church that images are most directly integrated with the liturgical drama. They adorn more particularly the iconostasis, the barrier that divides the Holy of Holies- the place of the Eucharistic sacrifice enacted under the eyes of the priests alone- from the nave to which the majority of the faithful have access. According to the Greek Fathers the iconostasis is the symbol of the limit that separates the world of the senses from the spiritual world, and that is why the sacred images appear on that barrier, just as the Divine Truths which reason cannot directly apprehend are reflected in the form of symbols in the imaginative faculty, which is intermediate between the intellect and the sensorial faculties.

(T. Burckhardt: *Sacred Art in East and West*, p. 6)

The icons or images are just as the Church itself (the sacred space) a definite part of the setting for the liturgical drama as it is enacted in the Eastern Church:

In the sanctuary, the first row of paintings, beginning from the bottom, represents the Fathers, authors of liturgies, and with them, the other holy hierarchs and the deacons in their rank of concelebrants. Above these, the Eucharist itself is represented in the form of the communion of the apostles, in the two forms of bread and wine. Above the Eucharist, the image of the Mother of God is placed directly behind the altar. Her place close to the sacrament corresponds to Her place in the Eucharistic canon, where she is mentioned as the head of the entire Church, immediately after the fulfilment of the Eucharistic mystery. At the same time, the Mother of God personifies the Church itself, because She contained in Herself the creator of the world whom the whole world cannot contain. This is why, in this part of the sanctuary, She is usually represented in the *oranta* position, that is, interceding before God for the sins of the world, which is simultaneously Her role and the

role of the Church. This representation of the Virgin in *oranta* in the very place where the sacrifice is fulfilled reflects a very special meaning. The uplifted hands are a gesture which completes the sacrifice.

This is why the priest also makes this same gesture during the liturgy. This position of uplifted hands is not a formal requirement, but it has become deeply rooted in the liturgy, as it is bound with the sacrifice and is the image of prayer itself.

Because the sanctuary is the place where the unbloody sacrifice established by Christ is offered, the image of Christ is placed above that of the Virgin. It is He who is Himself the offered sacrifice and the Sanctifier who offers, and His image has a uniquely Eucharistic significance here. Finally, Pentecost is represented in the vault. This image indicates the presence of the Holy Spirit by whose virtue the sacrament of the Eucharist is fulfilled.

This very brief survey permits us to see the capital importance of the sanctuary: It is the place which sanctifies the entire church. When the Royal Doors are opened during the liturgy, it is as if the heavens themselves were opened a bit, permitting us to catch a glimpse of their splendour.

The nave of the church, as we already know, symbolizes the transfigured creation, the new earth and the new heavens, and at the same time, the Church. This is why the leader of the Church, Christ the Pantocrator, is painted on the cupola. The Church had been announced by the prophets and established on the apostles; they are represented immediately under the image of Christ. There are followed, in the four corners, by the four evangelists, who announced the good news and preached the Gospel in the four parts of the world. The columns which support the building are decorated with the images of the pillars of the Church: the martyrs, the hierarchs and the ascetics. The most important events of sacred history are found everywhere on the walls, particularly those events which the liturgical feasts celebrate, the "pearls of divine dogmas," in the words of St. Germanus of Constantinople. Finally, on the western wall, the Last Judgment is presented: the end of church history and the beginning of the age to come.

(L. Ouspensky: *Theology of the Icon*, p. 32)

The icons have been painted in accordance with very strict traditional rules and are regarded as sacred, especially when very old. They are basically copies (at least in style) of originals which are thought to have had a miraculous origin:

It is very significant for Christian art, and for the Christian point of view in general, that these sacred images have a miraculous origin, and thus one that is mysterious and at the same time historical. This fact moreover makes the relation between the icon and its prototype very complex: on the one hand the miraculous image of Christ or of the Virgin is to the work of art what the original is to the copy; on the other hand the miraculous portrait is itself no more than a reflection or a symbol of an eternal archetype...

The doctrinal foundation of the icon determines not only its general orientation, its subject and its iconography, but also its formal language, its style. This style is the direct result of function of the symbol: the picture must not seek to replace the object depicted, which surpasses it eminently; according to the words of Dionysius the Areopagite it must "respect the distance that separates the intelligible from the sensible."

(T. Burckhardt: *Sacred Art in East and West*, p. 66)

I have included the subject of icons or images here as I feel it will help us to understand a little better one aspect of Christian worship.

### SYMBOLS AND THE LITURGY

Throughout the ages Christian art has found much of its inspiration not only from doctrine but also from the Liturgy which after all has been the chief active component of the Christian religion, the main channel through which the grace has flowed from on high. Symbolism has been widely used both in architecture, sculpture and painting. Also the various objects used in the Liturgy, including vestments, chalices etc. often have not only practical but also symbolic significance.

The sacred art of Christianity constitutes the normal setting of the liturgy, of which it is an amplification in the fields of sound and of sight. Like the non-sacramental liturgy, its purpose is to prepare and to bring out the effects of the means of grace instituted by the Christ Himself. When Grace is in question no environment can be "neutral," it will always be for or against the spiritual influence; whatever does not "assemble" must inevitably "disperse."

It is quite useless to invoke "evangelical poverty" in order to justify the absence or the rejection of a sacred art.

True enough, when the Mass was still celebrated in caverns or catacombs, sacred art was superfluous, at least in the form of plastic art; but from the time when sanctuaries began to be built they had to be subject to the rules of an art conscious of spiritual laws. Not a single primitive or medieval church in fact exists, poor though it be, the forms of which do not bear witness to a consciousness of that kind, whereas every non-traditional environment is encumbered with forms that are empty and false.

(T. Burckhardt: *Sacred Art in East and West*, p. 59)

Our own Liturgy is full of symbolic language and action. The student should study pp. 227-231 , 245-46 and 259-60 in *The Science of the Sacraments* (7th ed.) where Bishop Leadbeater has given us an illuminating account of some of the symbolic actions in the Holy Eucharist. The diagram "Symbolism of the Holy Eucharist" from *The Science of the Sacraments* has been included in this paper as Appendix II He should also read Appendix III, *The Symbols of*

*the Altar*, by J. B. Parry and M. Godby, which gives an interesting interpretation of the various symbols of the altar. Leadbeater's diagram gives us not only two layers of symbolism in the Holy Eucharist but is also of theological interest.

In many other ways our Liturgy, our "Public Work" constantly uses symbolism. The words we use in our worship very often are symbols. To take just a few examples:

"Christ is our Foundation - and our chief cornerstone"

"Star of the Sea:"

"The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world"

"Thy Great White Throne whence flow all love and light"

The setting of our worship, the "sacred space," the church, chapel or oratory, is itself a symbol of God's universe, the macrocosm. The altar is the throne of God the seven Ray Crosses the Seven Spirits before the Throne.

The altar itself presents a manifold symbolism, including the cross, the tabernacle the six Ray candles, the sanctuary lamp and so forth. The little ceremony "Lighting and Extinguishing the Candles" in the booklet *Services of our Lady* contains a wealth of symbolism.

The service of the Holy Eucharist which takes place in "sacred time" is in itself a symbol of the beginning, evolution and end of the manifested world in which we live. It is a re-enactment not only of the sacrifice on Golgotha but of the divine sacrifice "from the foundation of the world..... by which the world is nourished and sustained" by "the eternal high priest who forever offers himself as the eternal sacrifice" (*Liberal Catholic Liturgy*).

With all the symbolism surrounding us during our worship we must not forget the reality of the body and blood of Our Lord, for He is ever present with us through the great mystery of the transubstantiation. Every time the priest speaks the ordained words that great miracle takes place. This is where the "occult," the hidden dimension becomes so valuable to us, where the description of the observations of those sincere men and women who have "seen" by using an otherwise un- developed faculty, helps us to dimly sense the great mystery of the presence of that "divine aspect of Himself which is Very God of Very God." (*Science of the Sacraments*, p. 210).

-----  
Books for further study:

Burckhardt, T.; *Sacred Art in East and West* (Perrenial Books 1967)

Cooper, J. C.; *Encyclopedia of Tranditional Symbols* (Thames & Hudson 1978)

Eliade, M. ; *Images and Symbols* (Sheed & Ward 1969)

Ouspensky, L.; *The Theology of the Icon* (St. Vladimir's Press N.Y. 1978) Tart, C.; (Ed)  
*Transpersonal Psychologies* (Harper 1975)  
Watts, A.; *Myth and Ritual in Christianity* (Beacon Press 1968)

## CHAPTER 5

**THE LANGUAGE OF CHRISTIAN WORSHIP**

By The Right Rev. Iain Ramsey, D.D. Lord Bishop of Durham  
(Extracts from a Talk given at the Liberal Catholic Church Congress, Nottingham, 1969)

With this title in mind- 'The Language of Christian Worship'- I think it may be helpful if I may recall for you a passage on pages 15 and 16 of the Preface of your Liturgy. "In our conception," I read, "worship has a threefold aspect and purpose. It is firstly the offering of worship, that is, praise and honour to Almighty God. Secondly it is intended to help the worshippers, and thirdly, most important of all, it is intended to help the surrounding world at large through the instrumentality of the worshippers by pouring out upon it a great flood of spiritual power."

It is around that threefold aspect of worship that I would like to develop my thoughts to you today, and to discuss in particular the language involved in each of those three aspects. First of all the situation of worship itself, as is said there, "the offering of praise and honour." What situation is this and how do we structure the language appropriate to it? In particular, and secondly, what is the significance of this worship for the worshippers and what is the appropriate language here, and thirdly the hearing of all this on the world around us?

Leading to a rather different kind of question, what is the function of words in prayer and how do we connect prayer and action?

So you see that my paper will fall into two parts taking those questions 1 and 2 together- what might be called worship and worshippers- and then the second part- the theme of prayer.

First, then, what kind of situation is worship? "The offering of praise and honour to Almighty God" as your Preface has it- an occasion when, in other words, we are taken out of ourselves in praising and honouring, lost in wonder, love and praise. Let us look in a little more detail at this kind of situation.

Praise: We are moved to praise when an ordinary flat situation comes alive, takes on depth, and we respond appropriately with a sense of life and freedom and fulfilment. It entirely accords with that account that we praise a man, for instance, when what he has done is not only necessary, not only useful, not only appropriate, but is so unexpected, so outstanding, and so

striking as to stir us. We praise a man when, in that sense, around his behaviour pattern there occurs what we can call a "disclosure" of worth and value; when we see and respond and praise.

Take next honour: We honour a man when we not only know many of his biographical details, not merely respect his views, think well of his policies or enjoy his books and his company, for we may do all that. We honour a man when, around those biographical details, those views, those policies, those books, those meetings there emerges such a worth, such a value claim, such an ideal as calls forth from us admiration, devotion, honour.

So it is that worship occurs when the world around us on ordinary occasions, routine states of affairs and so on takes on depth; takes on a new dimension; becomes occasions of what I call "disclosure."

Something akin to worship occurs when we look at the splashes and daubs of paint on a picture, and then see not just so many coloured areas, which anyone can see and be guaranteed to see, but, as we would say, the picture strangely "moves" us. We are strangely "moved" by it all. It makes a strange impact upon us.

There is another way of describing these situations of worship, not only in terms of words like praise and honour, interpreted as I have tried to interpret those words, but also in terms of the word "glory." Worship occurs, we might say, when the ordinary becomes the extraordinary, when the eternal shines through the temporal, when ordinary situations take on depth or glory.

Worship, then is a situation where a fiat, ordinary situation takes on glory, takes on depth, takes on a new dimension; when the ordinary becomes the extraordinary, when the eternal is revealed in the temporal, when situations of glory call us to praise and honour. Specifically Christian cases might be illustrated from the New Testament- from the Woman of Samaria and from Mary Magdalene.

Mary Magdalene in St. John, chapter 20, Mary, weeping and sad- a fiat situation, a bleak situation, a dark situation indeed, the mist of the morning and the mist of tears. And in the darkness and the mist she discerns a figure. "She turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him,

Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away." That definite description "The Gardener" was comparable, you see, to "The Electors," "The Rate- payers," "The Workers," "The Management," "The Traveling Public"- all definite descriptions in logic suited to flat, impersonal, run-of-the-mill situations. No light has dawned, no depth to the situation, no risen Christ. And then: "Jesus saith unto her, Mary." And with that personal word, that proper name instead of a definite description, the situation takes on depth, a new dimension. Mary sees all that she saw before but more. She now sees the risen Christ. She says "Rabboni" my master, my teacher, my Lord.



Those are just paradigms, as it were, of the basic features of Christian worship. Christian worship is a situation which takes on depth, takes on a new dimension: where the world comes alive in such a way that God discloses His love and power in Jesus Christ.

Finally in this first section of my paper, an important new point, for so far I have been concerned with worship in general- praise, honour, glory- and Christian worship in particular. Now I will just give a brief word on the worshipper. When these situations of the kind I described occur we, as worshippers, in responding to the disclosure of God not least His love and grace in Christ, in acknowledging the glory, in being moved to praise and honour, find a new life and freedom, and fulfil ourselves.

We find that, as and when we respond to this authoritative disclosure of God in Christ through word, rite and ceremony, we worship. What have these reflections to suggest about the language of worship? First, we shall expect this language of worship to contain phrases which relate to situations of an ordinary, secular, down-to-earth kind- situations which provide us with what I have called (and call again today) "models." We shall expect that language, then, to contain terms and descriptions which qualify those "models." We shall expect the language to contain not only down-to-earth words easily recognizable and easily understood but also these other words or phrases I call "qualifiers" which qualify the other words in such a way as to point us forward from the fiat, ordinary, well-understood situation to situations of praise, glory, depth and a new dimension.

So it is that "qualified models" become apt currency for situations of worship. I now give some examples. First we may begin with love- love in its ordinary human sense, the bond between two people which everyone can understand. Being between finite persons such love will never be full nor will it ever be exercised without hindrance or difficulty, and, of course, it will be, like those who show it, mortal. But we can develop these situations of mortal love, not entirely full and not entirely free-flowing. We can develop situations from this understanding of human love to make the love fuller and freer, to broaden our perspective. We can do this until a "disclosure" occurs of depth and glory and we discover God, or better God discovers us, in the context of worship. The "model" discourse, then *qualified* "mortal" love, "full and free," becomes- notice- "immortal love forever full, forever flowing free"- language which, with *qualified* models, is logically suited, entirely adequate for talking about God. This is, as you know, the hymn in your Liturgy at the Service of Healing.

I have taken my second example from one of your Collects,

Prime- reminiscent of the English Prayer Book "At Morning Prayer." We rightly start with qualified models. When we speak of God we think of Him as modelled in terms of "Father" who is powerful and living over a time. But that cannot be adequate and so these features are qualified "O Lord, Heavenly Father, All-powerful, Almighty and Everlasting." That gives us the language appropriate to the worshipful situation.

Here are models of fatherhood and power and living over a time, suitably qualified. We begin on the right logical level for a discourse appropriate to worship. Not only is the language of "Heavenly Father, Almighty, Everlasting" appropriate to the worshipful situation and to God, it also then licenses a certain pattern of discourse. The models give us a springboard, as it were, on which to develop our reflections. In this context, which is suggested by a licence, by the models, it is highly appropriate and proper to think of a new day and to have the themes of defence and power and guidance. "Defend us in the same with thy mighty power that we may manfully strive against sin and selfishness, that all our doings may be ordered by thy governance."

Now, by contrast for the moment- for you will see that the story turns quite soon- to try to bring out my point the more clearly, let me turn to your Act of Faith at Prime. If you read the first sentence of that we have: "We believe that God is love and power and truth and light." If that sentence stood by itself the implication that I have been saying already is that it would be logically incomplete. All those are "models" without "qualifiers." "God is love and power and truth and light." To make it logically adequate it would be "ineffable love, infinite power, perfect truth and fullness of light." But this is no rule-of-thumb logic and we soon, in your Act of Faith, get to the right logical level. "We believe that perfect justice rules the world, that all His sons shall one day reach His feet." In this way the Act of Faith, regarded as one unit of discourse, has the qualifiers in it and is then from a logical point of view highly appropriate as discourse about God, taking place within worship.

Now from a third example, I was interested, from the language point of view, to see the phrases used in that bracketed section in your Prayer for Consecration for the Holy Eucharist in its longer Form. On the one hand, and to me this was logically fascinating, there is the church throughout all the ages, within the limitations of space and time, taking part in the sacrament, a joyful sacrifice. That, as you know, is using phrases from your Consecration Prayer itself. In other words, you see, here in these Eucharists we have a series of symbols- dare I call them models?- pointing to what they symbolize, as a mathematical sequence might point to another bound, as the set of polygons might point to the circle. But that to which they point is the full worship of God Himself. So that same prayer which contains modern words, the church limited in space and time, each sacrament a joyful sacrifice, speaks also of a God, (and notice the qualified models) who is "omnipotent, all-pervading" with boundless love, who is unchangeable, with "wondrous power." This succession of models in time points to one eternal sacrifice.

Here, you see, with great logical aptness, we have language and acts in time- *models* and a rite and a ceremony disclosing the *eternal*. The qualified models are appropriate to adoration and mystery and worship, what the prayer calls "heartfelt love and reverence."

Fourthly, another point which is rightly made in your Preface is that phrases must be suitable contextualised (this is on page 13). "In the Gloria in Excelsis," you say, "the phrase Lamb of God has been eliminated as such characterization of our Lord does not impress the virgin

mind with anything but a sense of the ridiculous." You continue, "once in the Canon, where the symbology of the allusion is explained, the phrase has been kept."

Now whatever you may think or I may think of those decisions we are certainly reminded there that very much of the language of our worship centres around models embedded in discourse that in years past was appropriate language for worship because, in one way or another, it was suitably qualified. The phrase "Lamb of God" already occurred in a sacrificial worship context and came with that built-in guarantee. But by now all of us would agree that that model is often unfamiliar and its qualification is often unrecognised. None of us know that worshipful character of the situations which were Old Testament sacrifices- which means, of course, that not the least problem for any church to- day, yours or mine, is how to make sure that its language has the disclosure basis which once it had. How do we recapture that situation of depth and glory to which it once belonged? Meanwhile, of course, I entirely agree that the failure to allocate models to a context, still more the failure to recognise a model for the model, are among the most frequent causes of misunderstanding about the language of worship.

Poetry in general can do with words what artists do with daubs of paint. So there often occurs what we call 'beautiful' language. We can be led in this way by a pattern of words in itself to a situation of worship. But it is all the better if the words help us to explicate that disclosure by a sense of God. In this connection I thought the comments in your Preface on page 14 were extremely interesting and significant. You say: "Some poets may be accused of a tendency to lapse into language which sounds beautiful, regardless of its meaning anything in particular." I have heard people say, "Do read that passage about it from Ecclesiastes again- about the cisterns being broken. I do not know what it means but it sounds wonderful - extremely worshipful."

But as you imply there can be understanding as well and the point is made quite explicitly a little further on: "Beautiful language serves to stir people to devotion though often that devotion is vague. But if the co-operation of the mind can also be enlisted the effect will obviously be greater, not only on the individual worshipper but on the resulting process as a whole." On the other hand, if there is to be a situation of genuine worship there must be depth and glory. Hence it is that the precise and accurate language of Science is rarely suited to a worshipful situation. Again, as your Preface rightly says: "The scientist will often express his facts in language precise and accurate but with no thought for beauty of utterance or for the larger ideas which in the scheme of things lie behind"- depth, another dimension- "the minor investigations he has recorded." In other words no depth nor glory, nor broader perspective would be there with language which is over-precise, descriptive, literal and accurate. At the same time these two requirements of glory and understanding are sometimes in conflict, and you yourselves I was interested to see (I have heard the same point made in my own church) judge the beauty of the language sometimes too precious a thing for the Authorized version to be dispensed with in relation to the Revised. I think you say on page 16: "The Authorized Version

of the scriptures has, for the most part, been used, for though the Revised Version is the most faithful rendering of the original it leaves so much to be desired as not to compensate in our opinion for the loss of the majestic English of the King James's Version."

What I have done so far has been to try to elucidate somewhat the kind of situation we call worship, praise, honour, glory, the taking on of depth, the new dimension, and to show how the language of worship in terms of qualified models is appropriate currency for situations like that. My point has been that the language of worship must point at the situation in depth, must be grounded in the disclosure where the world comes alive and, quite briefly as earlier, the bearing on ourselves.

So we look for the language of worship insofar as it concerns the worshippers, pointing out these themes of life and freedom and fulfilment. We find it, if I may take an example almost at random, in your own Collect for the Eighth Sunday after Trinity where God again is contextualised in terms of qualified models- the source of wisdom and strength, someone disclosed- when the whole Universe shines with beauty. "O God, who art the wisdom of the wise and the strength of the strong, whose beauty shines through the whole Universe." That is the worshipful situation with qualified models. But the worshipper is then one who, opening himself to that Spirit, to that activity of God, himself becomes wise and strong and holy." May we so open our hearts to this Spirit of Wisdom and understanding that we may be strong in Thee and show forth in our lives the beauty of holiness." There is the *logic* of the Collect, the *language* suited to a disclosure of God, the language suited to the condition of the worshipper who *finds his life and freedom and fulfilment* in what he worships

I recall that passage on page 16 of your preface where your church aims at making its members "strong and efficient workers in His service." What I have tried to do has been to spell out in terms of our thoughts about worship and prayer just what is the significance of that phrase. Christian prayer and worship, broaden, of necessity and logic, into *action* and we are pointed forward to the view that prayer and action, worship and life are but two ways of styling the one situation. Indeed, the *deepest spirituality* and the most *active participation are one*, and the language of Christian worship can be that framework and should be that framework in which is set the languages of all other disciplines- of laboratory and market place, of the sciences and the humanities. So that, indeed, from those small- scale exercises of prayer we can go on into the large-scale exercises of full Christian thought and action.

## APPENDIX I

From C. Jinarajadasa: *The Nature of Mysticism* (T.P.H. 1917) Chapter VII.

## RITUALISM

SACRAMENTAL mysticism, involving as it does rites and ceremonies, seems to many a hindrance to worship rather than a help. But this view is in no way borne out by his story. If anything, sacramental mysticism may be said to be not only the earliest conscious form of mysticism, but also the most persistent. Every religion has a ceremonial phase; even Buddhism, which in its spirit is utterly against priestcraft and ceremonial, has now developed ceremonial as one of its expressions. Like all other forms of mysticism, sacramental mysticism too has its theme, its method, its obstacle, and its ideal.

*The Theme.*- This is the doctrine of the "Real Presence." It means that, in some unfathomable yet intensely real way, Divinity as a Person comes *directly* into touch with His worshipper who is on the lowest plane of existence. While some forms of mysticism derive their vitality from the ascent of the human soul up to God, this sacramental type gains its life because the Spirit of God *descends* to man.

A vague belief that "God is with us," or that "We are one with God," does not make sacramental mysticism. This mysticism means nothing less than that God, in the fullness of His Reality, as a Fact and not as a symbol, comes to the worshipper,

And that a higher gift than grace Should flesh and blood refine,  
 God's Presence and His very Self,  
 And Essence all-divine.  
 As above, So below.

How can the Highest and the lowest, complete Divinity and imperfect humanity, ever meet? For the simple reason, according to this mysticism, that the Highest is reflected in all lower things. "As above, so below," is the fundamental due; all earthly events are therefore a reflection of a Procession of Events in the Divine Mind. Now, earthly events can be so coordinated that they can become a miniature model of the Heavenly Events. When this happens, sacramental mysticism comes into being, for a sacrament is an act or a series of acts "here below" which perfectly mirrors a similar act or series of acts "above." But how may earthly events be made models of the heavenly?

## SYMBOLISM

*The Method.*- Symbolism expressing itself in ritual is the method. Each symbol is chosen to represent a heavenly event, and the symbol is the same for all time. For we must not think of the Divine Procession of Events which reveals the Immanence of God as beginning long ago with one event of a series, and that therefore that beginning is long past now; for sacramental mysticism, the first event is, at every moment of subsequent time, still the first event. Similarly, every event in the series, while happening in its due order, is yet happening at each moment of time.

What therefore is "Past" to our consciousness is a "Now" for this mysticism: the Divine Events "above," which happened once upon a time, are happening even now, in the same foreordained divine order. If men can create a set of symbolic acts, and coordinate them into a procession of events by means of the ritual, then, by means of the ritual, "Above and "Below" become one, and Divinity descends to man.

This is the hidden structure of Ritualism. A ritual is not a mere series of acts, but a series so carefully constructed that each act in it points to a particular recurring Event in the heavenly worlds. The whole ritual series here below then mirrors the beginning, the middle and the end of the Divine series yonder above. Whether a ritual has slowly been put together throughout the centuries or is constructed quickly, it is a true ritual only if it correctly symbolises the Divine Order. Those who are drawn to sacramental mysticism know at once, as if by clairvoyance, when a ritual "works," for they become part of the ritual, and themselves one of the series of Divine Events. In true ritual worship, there is a dependence between Divinity and man, for while Divinity is brought down to man, man's co-operation at the same time is made necessary to God.

## THE SACRIFICE OF THE LOGOS

There is one ever-recurring Divine Event which is always the theme of the great rituals. It is the sacrifice of the Logos, "who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven."- Without this voluntary self-sacrifice and limitation of God, the universe cannot exist; all objects, animate and inanimate, exist only because God "died" to the fullness His nature. But His Self-Chosen "death" is only in order that, through the co-operation of those for whom He died, He may rise to a more glorious existence- more glorious because those He died for live with Him in a conscious communion. Now, man from the beginning is an expression of Divinity; man's aim in existence is to know himself as God. This realisation is given in some types of mysticism through love or contemplation or ecstasy; sacramental mysticism achieves the same result through a ritual.

## HINDU RITUALISM

There are three great rituals which show this archetypal basis of true ritualism; they come from Egypt, India and Europe.

Widely different though they seem in externals, Masonry, and the Prajapati ritual of ancient Hinduism, and the Mass of the Christian Church, all three tell of the primordial sacrifice of the Logos or God. We need but take the Prajapati ritual and the Mass for comparison. In the former, God as Prajapati, "Lord of Creatures," lays Himself down on the altar as a voluntary victim, to be slain and dismembered by the Devas, the elder children of His family. From the dismembered parts of Prajapati then arise all creation; men exist in their individual natures only because He was slain. It is this sacrifice of Prajapati which is commemorated each day in the great ritual.

As His sacrifice takes place in Time, so the earthly ritual requires the four priests of the four Vedas to symbolise the four seasons; as the dismembered Godhead can be made whole and resurrected from the dead only by God Himself, so man (who is God) must himself perform the commemorative sacrifice and "make Father Prajapati whole once more." When, after the sacrifice, which lasts a year, Prajapati is made whole, two wonderful results ensue: first, the human sacrificer becomes one with Divinity, and hence deathless and immortal; secondly, Father Prajapati lays Himself down once more as a voluntary victim to be slain and dismembered again. Indeed, were Prajapati not to sacrifice Himself after He had been resurrected from the dead, the universe, says the ritual, would vanish into nothingness; it requires a perennial sacrifice of Prajapati to make the universe live and grow from year to year.

## THE MASS

The Mass in Christianity commemorates the voluntary sacrifice of God as Christ; He is called "the victim" (*hostia*, or Host). He came foreknowing His crucifixion, and it is only because of His crucifixion that men can be saved. Every act of His life was foreordained, and He was "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." Therefore His whole mission, from the Descent from heaven to the Ascent, was but a reflection of a Divine Procession of Events in the heavenly worlds. The ritual of the Mass in symbol enacts the whole life of Christ, and it must be performed every day. At each celebration, Christ is resurrected, and gives to the worshippers the promise of their resurrection.

In the ancient Hindu ritual, it is never forgotten that the human sacrificer is of the nature of God. When the altar was built for this sacrifice, which commemorated the descent of the Logos into matter, it was made out of 365 bricks, laid one at a time each day; at the bottom of them all was laid a miniature of a man in gold on a sun made of gold, for God "in the Sun" is also man, the human soul. The human soul, symbolised by the miniature golden man, rises through

the altar up to heaven with his sacrifice, and so makes Prajapati whole once more. For, without man's aid, God who died for us cannot be resurrected,

The identity of the human sacrificer with Prajapati was further shown in one striking way; as Prajapati once laid Himself down to be slain, so the human sacrificer laid himself down during the ceremony on the ground with outstretched arms. In the ritual of the Mass, there are certain places where the celebrant "unites himself" to Christ; and as Christ was laid on a cross, so in symbol, to show that the priest is both man and Christ, the priest's chasuble bears a great cross at its back.

### THE REAL PRESENCE

In the great rituals, there is always the climax when Divinity reveals Himself through the ritual. This is the moment of the "Real Presence," and it is this alone that makes a ritual really sacramental. In the Hindu ceremony and in the Mass, there is the moment of consecration when God is present in Person, and not merely symbolically. He is then resurrected "from the dead;" and this resurrection of the Godhead is the theme of sacramental mysticism, and the ritual is the method.

There are very few descriptions of the effect on the worshipper of sacramental mysticism, especially at its climax, the moment of the Real Presence. But the reality of the effect is, as millions will testify still, beyond imagination. It transcends the power of death, it purifies the foulness of hell, and transforms for the time human weakness into Divine Strength. Those who worship God through this mysticism need bring before His presence no special attribute of culture or wisdom; when He descends to the lower worlds, then to all who open their hearts to Him, sinner and saint, ignorant peasant and man of wisdom, He gives His Presence, and as God the giver to Man the receiver- both One and the same- He gives His communion.

*The obstacle.* The obstacle is naturally incorrect performance of the ritual. Every act in the series must be performed, and if one of them is omitted, the mystic magic will not create the necessary forces. Knowledge has little to do with the magic; as the turning of a switch will set a hundred electric bulbs alight, provided one knows where the switch is, so anyone who is taught the ritual can perform the magic. But to achieve the result, he must perform it according to the rubric, keeping to the ancient landmarks; to omit or to add mars the ritual and hinders the magic. For the rubric was made carefully by those who knew in what way each part of it should point to an event in the heavenly world. Sacramental mysticism ceases to be sacramental when there is not the perfect mirroring of the heavenly acts by the earthly actions.



### THE PRIEST AS CELEBRANT

*The ideal.* - This is the priest. He must of course be formally consecrated for his function, for the magic of this mysticism will not work unless the operator is a true priest. In Hinduism a man must be consecrated as a priest; in Christianity he must be ordained; in Masonry the Right Worshipful Master must be duly installed. Here comes the great question of the validity of "Orders" in Christianity, or the regularity or irregularity of Masonic bodies; but this matter goes deeper into Occultism than can this brief treatise on Mysticism.

The consecrated priest, of Hinduism or of Christianity, or the R.W.M. of a Masonic Lodge, plays a dual role; he is a worshipper for himself, but he is also a celebrant who re- presents others who are his congregation, or his Lodge. It is his function to unite in himself their devotions and offerings, and with his own, or rather through his own, offer them up to God; then to the priest is given from above what God has for the worshippers. At the ceremony, each worshipper is, at the moment of the Real Presence, directly in the presence of God. But the moment was made possible only because of the consecrated character of the priest and of the ritual which he alone can perform. The priest is therefore a messenger of the people to God, and a messenger of God to the people.

It is all these mystical thoughts, acts and realisations which make sacramental mysticism. To one who studies and understands and lives it, this type of mysticism is not second to any other type. It is especially noteworthy in the religious life of the world to-day, because sacramental mysticism is once again becoming a fuller expression of the life of both God and man than it has been for many ages.

**APPENDIX II**

From C.W. Leadbeater: *The Science of the Sacraments*.

**The Symbolism of the Holy Eucharist**

ELEMENTS AND VESSELS	SYMBOLISM OF THE TRINITY											
	MANIFESTED IN THE SOLAR SYSTEM	MANIFESTED IN MAN										
Host	The Deity (whole and indivisible), or God the Father	The Monad: the unseen Cause of all.										
Wine	God the Son	Individuality or Ego in the causal body (Intimately mingled with personality)										
Water	God the Holy Ghost	Personality										
Paten	The Root of Matter (before the bubbles are blown)	The Triple Spirit-Spirit, Intuition and Intelligence (through which the Monad acts on matter).										
Chalice	Vivified Matter (the bubbles equally distributed throughout all space)	Causal body.										
<b>SYMBOLISM OF THE DESCENT INTO MATTER OF THE-</b>												
ELEMENTS AND VESSELS	CHRIST, THE SECOND PERSON OF THE TRINITY	CHRIST THE WORLD TEACHER										
Host	The Eternal Unity. Christ within the bosom of the Father	His Spirit										
Wine	Christ informing matter (positive or male)	His Intuition										
Water	Christ manifested as matter (negative or female)	His Intelligence										
Paten	<table style="border: none; margin: auto;"> <tr> <td style="border: none;">The Virgin Seas</td> <td style="border: none; font-size: 3em; vertical-align: middle;">}</td> <td style="border: none; text-align: center;">In a nascent Solar System</td> <td style="border: none; font-size: 3em; vertical-align: middle;">{</td> <td style="border: none;">Bubbles equally distributed</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border: none;">Physical Matter</td> <td style="border: none; font-size: 3em; vertical-align: middle;">}</td> <td style="border: none;"></td> <td style="border: none; font-size: 3em; vertical-align: middle;">{</td> <td style="border: none;">Bubbles aggregated into chemical elements</td> </tr> </table>	The Virgin Seas	}	In a nascent Solar System	{	Bubbles equally distributed	Physical Matter	}		{	Bubbles aggregated into chemical elements	<p>“The Veil of the Enlightened” The Secret Doctrine, Vol. III, p. 376</p>
The Virgin Seas	}	In a nascent Solar System	{	Bubbles equally distributed								
Physical Matter	}		{	Bubbles aggregated into chemical elements								
Chalice	Physical Matter	The Body of Jesus										

So much for their effect; but in addition to that we shall do well to remember that all through the Holy Eucharist there runs a double symbolism- that of the Holy Trinity as well as of the descent of the Christ into matter. (Diagram 9.) The Host typifies God the Father, and also stands for the Deity whole and indivisible; the Wine stands for God the Son, whose life is poured down into the chalice of material form, and the Water represents God the Holy Ghost- the Spirit who brooded over the face of the waters and yet is at the same time Himself symbolized by water.

When we apply the same imagery to manifestation of the Deity in man, the Host signifies the Monad, the totality, the un- seen cause of all, while the paten means the Triple Atma or Spirit through which that Monad acts on matter; the Wine indicates the individuality, poured into the chalice of the causal body, and the Water represents the personality which is so intimately commingled with it. That is why at an earlier stage, when we are typifying a condition in which the Monad is merely hovering over the Tower manifestation, the paten is hidden under the corporal or under a veil clasped to the breast of the subdeacon; when it is brought forth and the Host is laid upon it, we symbolize the time when a junction is effected.

From the point of view of the descent into matter the Host stands for the Eternal Unity- the Christ within the bosom of the Father; while the Wine and the Water represent the dual manifestation of the Christ in matter- positive and negative, or male and female.

*The Science of the Sacraments*, pp. 227-229, 7th Ed.