

# The Anglican Use:

## *Some Historical Reflections*

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AT the present time it is perhaps akin to using a cliché to say that a discussion of the history of Anglicanism should not properly begin without reference to Eamon Duffy's *The Stripping of the Altars*. It is nonetheless true, however, even for a brief reflection, for Duffy has amply laid the groundwork for understanding the profound theological tensions existing within Anglicanism from the very beginning of the English Reformation. In the face of the state imposed schism, some willing to risk martyrdom remained Catholics and did not participate in the established church. Others, still basically Catholic in belief but unwilling to risk fines, loss of property, or death reluctantly conformed to the national church and coexisted there with others of varying degrees of Protestant sentiments.

After the schism with Rome was briefly healed in the reign of Mary I (1553-1558), Elizabeth I came to the English throne, and schism soon became a reality once again. Opposing the new queen's religious policy, England's convocation of bishops spoke out in support of the old faith in early 1559 by affirming Catholic Eucharistic doctrine, stating to all who might listen, that after the consecration of the bread and wine in the Mass ". . . there remains not the substance of bread and wine, nor any other substance but the substance of God and Man. . ." and that ". . . in the mass is offered the true Body of Christ and His true Blood, a propitiatory sacrifice for the living and the dead."<sup>1</sup> Soon, however, these bishops were gone, and state-supported equivocation in doctrine became the order of the day. Over the centuries, of course, voices with a Catholic ring were periodically raised within Anglicanism. The officiant at Elizabeth I's own funeral, for instance, Lancelot Andrewes (1555-1626), possessed a type of piety

that scandalized many of his fellows. His recorded private prayers reflect a tender reverence for the Blessed Mother, “the all-holy, undefiled and highly blessed Mary, mother of God and ever-virgin . . .” and a profound sense of the mystical dimension to the Blessed Sacrament, “the mysteries of . . . [the] Body and Blood . . .” which he declared to be “immaculate, supernatural, life-giving ... saving ... all-holy ...and ...precious....” In the Eucharist, bread and wine are sanctified and offered to God. In his private Eucharistic meditations he asked the Holy Spirit to “come... sanctify the gifts which lie before Thee, and those in whose behalf, and by whom, and the ends for which, they are offered.”<sup>2</sup> Later in the seventeenth century, Jeremy Taylor wrote that

Christ is a Priest in Heaven forever and yet does not sacrifice Himself afresh(,) nor yet without a Sacrifice could He be a Priest, but by a daily ministration and intercession represents His Sacrifice to God and offers Himself as sacrificed, so He does upon earth by the ministry of His servants.<sup>3</sup>

The controversy surrounding Archbishop William Laud, who became Archbishop of Canterbury in 1633, centered partly around the charge that he had reintroduced the Sacrifice of the Mass into Britain. Among other things, Laud had attempted to introduce into Scotland a prayer book containing a concept of a Eucharistic sacrifice. In part, this led to his execution at the hands of the Puritans. He left his mark, however, and even his liturgy managed to survive in the Scottish Episcopal Church.

The writings of Edward Stephens, in the mid-seventeenth century, and those of John Johnson, in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, reflect much of Laud’s thinking. Stephens held to a high doctrine of the Eucharistic sacrifice and thought at times that the break with Rome had left Anglicanism a “schismatical faction.”<sup>4</sup> Johnson wrote of the power and efficacy of the Eucharistic sacrifice as the extension in time of Christ’s sacrifice at Calvary. The offering of the Eucharistic sacrifice is the means by which the Christian receives the benefits of Christ’s action at the first Mass during the Last Supper, when his Body and Blood were then at that moment offered to the Father, just as the sacrificial victims of the Mosaic law were actually offered to God prior to their being slain. *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, so often cited by the Protestant reformers, far from denigrating the doctrine of the Eucharistic Sacrifice, wrote Johnson, maintains it by declaring Christ

a high priest forever in the heavenly tabernacle, and to be a priest, he must have a sacrifice to offer. He noted that by his ministration of his one, eternal sacrifice, “Christ gives life to our Sacrifice.”<sup>5</sup>

Stephens and Johnson both had a consuming interest in the Eastern liturgies of the Church and hoped these would provide a basis for liturgical reform in the Anglican Church. This interest in the Eastern rites took root in Scottish Episcopalian thought, a fact which later significantly affected the liturgy of the American Episcopal Church after the American Revolution. So intent were some of the Scottish Episcopalians on making a definite sacrificial statement in their Eucharistic canon that in 1764 the words in their Eucharistic Prayer, “which we now offer unto thee,” were ordered printed in capital letters.

While the writers cited above did not hold views in total conformity to Catholic teaching, they do illustrate that among some Anglicans a concept of the Real Presence and the Eucharistic sacrifice survived. However, given the presence within the same fold of many who did not share these concepts, there was always among the “Catholic minded” a worrisome sense that something was wrong. This had led Lancelot Andrewes, for instance, to pray God to “supply what is wanting” in the Church of England and for “the strengthening of what remains in it ...”<sup>6</sup>

Viewed on the whole, Anglicanism could appear schizophrenic. Two popular Prayer Book commentaries from the nineteenth century were poles apart regarding the Eucharist: one, published in England, expounded a doctrine of the Eucharistic sacrifice largely in agreement with Catholic sacramental theology,<sup>7</sup> while the other, published in the United States, was largely Protestant in outlook.<sup>8</sup> When the American commentator, a bishop, came to the prayer of oblation in the Eucharistic canon, he simply passed over it with the comment that these words had been imported in 1789 from the Scottish liturgy. Thus the anomaly of Anglicanism.

With the Oxford Movement of the nineteenth century, there was a tremendous increase in the number of Anglicans who held to a Catholic doctrine of the Eucharistic sacrifice. In England itself there was little opportunity to give expression to this in the state-controlled liturgy. This dilemma gave rise to much unofficial and technically illegal

local liturgical revision. It was not until the growth of the Anglican Church in various parts of the British Empire in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that any official Anglican liturgy, other than those of Scotland and America, gave clear expression to a Eucharistic offering. Free from official oaths of conformity to the prayer book used in England, some colonial Anglican provinces developed liturgical usages clearly expressive of pre-Reformation belief and practice.

Among the first of these was the liturgy used in the Anglican diocese of Zanzibar. Its language was straightforward: what was being offered to God was “. . . this pure offering, holy offering, offering without spot, the Bread of eternal life, and the Chalice of everlasting salvation . . .” words of course taken from the Roman Canon.<sup>9</sup>

This same clarity of intent soon appeared in a revised South African liturgy in 1929<sup>10</sup>, in the rites for Nyasaland (Malawi)<sup>11</sup> and for Korea in 1933,<sup>12</sup> and Japan and the West Indies in 1959.<sup>13</sup> Also, by the beginning of World War II, largely through the efforts of men such as Percy Dearmer in Great Britain and Winfred Douglas in America, Anglican hymnody tended to reflect concepts both of the Real Presence and of the Eucharistic sacrifice.

So successful did the Oxford Movement become, that to many the other side of the Anglican coin seemed to be fast fading. Sometimes it was possible to forget or even perhaps never to have known that there was another side to the Anglican coin. This could be true particularly with young people. About fifty years ago, I can recall kneeling at the Eucharist in the cathedral of the diocese in which I lived saying the *Anima Christi* from a devotional pamphlet purchased from the tract table in front of the cathedral's War Memorial. I also bought there a tract extolling the truth of Transubstantiation. While I was aware that *The Articles of Religion* said something quite different from the tract about that particular doctrine, it seemed to me that no one took those articles seriously anymore. Also, in my confirmation classes there was great stress laid on the Apostolic Succession. And I had only to turn to the Ordinal in the Book of Common Prayer used in those times, to read that when a bishop ordained a priest, he uttered the words: “Whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven; and whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained. . . .” A few pages on, I could also find a prayer—used in those times—which addressed Our Lord as One who had “promised to be with the Ministers of Apostolic Succession to the

end of the world. . . .”<sup>14</sup> It was not difficult, then, at the beginning of the 1950s, for the children of the Oxford Movement to believe that the sacramental way would soon become or already was the way of Anglicanism.

The Oxford Movement had always produced a steady flow of converts to the Catholic Church. However, the prevailing school of thought held that by remaining to witness within Anglicanism an eventual corporate reunion with the Holy See would be more likely to happen. And for a time, about mid-century, this goal seemed about to take shape at least on the horizon. Many still recall the vibrant conversations about such a prospect in the early 1960s.

As the years passed, however, it became increasingly clear that Anglicanism, rather than growing closer to Rome, was being pushed by secular and other pressures into a change of direction, and that rather than gaining ground, the Oxford Movement—as a force capable of molding Anglicanism—had actually run its course. A new climate had settled in, a climate which meant to some that they could no longer in conscience remain where they were. Some left the Episcopal Church to form new ecclesial communities. Others counseled that for those truly shaped by the Oxford Movement, the appropriate direction in which to move was the same direction in which the Oxford Movement had pointed, a direction in which some over the decades had moved quickly, others slowly. Briefly put, some of us came to that waymark where there is the realization that the Catholic Church simply does not exist apart from the chair of Peter, and that by entering the bark of Peter one was not deserting the truth residing in what he had been and done, but was actually bringing this to a fulfillment.

As I saw the situation, the formation of a new ecclesial community could only add to the scandal of Christianity’s fragmentation unless, and only unless, such a new community intended immediately to continue the historic Anglo-Catholic move toward Rome in a serious, pro-active manner. I soon concluded that within these communities the impetus for such a move was lacking. I believed I detected among those who formed these groups a hesitation to seek a rapprochement with Rome for fear that the Holy See might want to control their group – which I thought was precisely the point.

Providentially, other voices began to be heard such as those of

Canon Albert J. du Bois, Father William T. St. John Brown, and Father James Parker. Canon Albert J. du Bois, on a tour of the country in the summer of 1978, spoke in Houston on the possibility of petitioning the Holy See for the reconciliation of Anglicans to the Catholic Church with the preservation of elements of Anglican liturgical tradition. Father du Bois was a prominent churchman in his time and in my experience was the first to introduce into this area of the United States the hope that what was later embodied in the 1980 papal Pastoral Provision might even be a possibility. In early 1979, with the permission of Archbishop Furrey, Canon du Bois presided at a meeting in San Antonio of Catholics and Anglicans from various states and Great Britain to explore further the possibility of such a petition. The meeting was held at Casa San José, with the archdiocesan vicar-general in attendance.<sup>15</sup> The following June, Canon du Bois was among those who sponsored a symposium at the University of Dallas in which both Catholics and Anglicans made contributions on topics later addressed by the Pastoral Provision.<sup>16</sup>

By 1979, Canon du Bois was well past seventy and approaching the end of a life devoted to furthering a Catholic understanding of the gospel within the Anglican Communion, a life spent in what was then called the “Anglo-Catholic” tradition. A product of the diocese of Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, a region with a long history of adherence to this tradition, Canon du Bois was ordained to the priesthood in 1931. After serving as canon pastor of the cathedral of Fond du Lac, he served from 1938 to 1950 as rector of Ascension and St. Agnes Church in Washington, D. C. (except for four years as a U.S. Army chaplain in World War II). In 1950, Father du Bois became the executive secretary of the American Church Union (A.C.U.), the American counterpart of the (English) Church Union which since its founding in 1859 had furthered the principles of the Oxford Movement.<sup>17</sup>

For almost twenty-five years as the leader of the A.C.U., and editor of its publication, *The American Church News*, Canon du Bois spoke often, wrote incessantly, encouraged many, irritated others, but never gave up his efforts to present a Catholic-minded point of view amidst what ultimately became a deluge of opposition. When already past seventy, rather than go into retirement in spite of a heart attack and several by-passes, Father du Bois was moved to leave the Episcopal Church and actively seek union with the Holy See. After an

arduous schedule in 1979, in company with Father William T. St. John Brown, a former associate in the work of the American Church Union, and other priests, Canon du Bois journeyed to Rome in October to meet with His Eminence the late Franjo Cardinal Seper, who led the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. On All Saints' Day, 1979, with the blessing of Cardinal Seper, Canon du Bois celebrated the forty-eighth anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood on the altar of the American Martyrs at the North American College in Rome. On that occasion he and others signed a petition to the Holy Father asking for entrance into the Roman Catholic Church with an allowance for the preservation of elements of the Anglican liturgy. This petition was presented by Cardinal Seper to his holiness Pope John Paul II. According to one account, upon receiving the petition, the Holy Father said, "I get so much bad news each day, it's so good to have good news."<sup>18</sup>

Canon du Bois' days were now short, a situation of which he was fully aware. The previous June, on the morning of the symposium at the University of Dallas, a Catholic academic, noticing Father du Bois' frail condition, remarked that he hoped he would not be like Moses, leading the Hebrews to the land of promise, only to be permitted himself to view the land from afar. Obviously not feeling well, Canon du Bois responded that he now believed it unlikely that he would live to see the fruition of his quest.<sup>19</sup> Nonetheless, his preparation for the autumn trip to Rome continued. Returning from Rome in late 1979, Father du Bois made one last speaking tour in several states. His last visit to Houston and San Antonio was in early 1980. This last and difficult effort was in logical sequence to the rest of his career. To those who knew him, it seemed to be his way of doing all he could, literally to the end of his physical life, to fulfill the thrust of his entire career. Death came to him on June 6, 1980. Several weeks later the Pastoral Provision was announced.

The Holy See appointed Bishop Bernard Law of Springfield-Cape Girardeau as the Ecclesiastical Delegate for the Pastoral Provision and its implementation. Working in close association with the Ecclesiastical Delegate, who soon became the Cardinal Archbishop of Boston, was Father William Stetson, a priest of Opus Dei. Simultaneous to Canon du Bois' efforts, other groups had made overtures to the United States Conference of Bishops. One group, largely drawn from the Society of

the Holy Cross (SSC), was led by Father James Parker. Father Parker, who became an assistant to the Ecclesiastical Delegate, was the first to be ordained a Catholic priest under the Pastoral Provision. To help implement the Pastoral Provision in the Southwest, a meeting was held at Holy Trinity Seminary in Dallas in October, 1981. Cardinal Law and Father Stetson led the meeting at which many of us who later became Catholic priests were present. The assessment process for priests was in place by late 1981 and dossiers were prepared under the guidance of local ordinaries. Other meetings in the assessment process followed, including one with Cardinal Law in San Antonio in 1982. Ordinations and the erections of parishes followed. With the ordination of Father Christopher G. Phillips in August, 1983, Our Lady of the Atonement Church in San Antonio became the first Pastoral Provision parish. Several other parishes were erected in the following months, including Our Lady of Walsingham in Houston in April, 1984, when Father James Ramsey and I were ordained by Bishop John L. Morkovsky.

Father Phillips later traveled to Rome as one of the consultants in the preparation of the Anglican Use liturgy subsequently approved for Pastoral Provisions parishes. Father Joseph Frazer of St. Margaret of Scotland parish in Austin and Father Phillips also served on a similar committee here in the United States chaired by Bishop John McCarthy of Austin.

The Pastoral Provision, the Anglican Use, in some ways is such an unlikely occurrence, that surely we must see the hand of God within it. In those discussions of thirty-five years ago such an occurrence did seem unlikely; yet, even then just possible, an occurrence which in the providence of God might yet prove a model for the reunion of others with the See of Peter.

## Notes

1. Dom Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy* (London: Dacre Press, 1970), p. 675.
2. Hugh Martin (ed.), *The Private Prayers of Lancelot Andrewes* (London: SCM Press, 1957), p. 60, 111, 78.

3. Taylor, as quoted in Paul Elmer More and Frank Leslie Cross (eds.), *Anglicanism* (London, SPCK, 1957), pp. 495.
4. W. Jardine Grisbrooke, *Anglican Liturgies of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (London: SPCK, 1958), pp. 37-55.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 73-74.
6. Martin, p. 40.
7. John Henry Blunt, *The Annotated Book of Common Prayer* (London: Rivingtons, 1876), p. 188.
8. Thomas Church Brownell, *The Family Prayer Book* (New York: Stanford and Swords, 1850), pp. 386-388.
9. Bernard Wigan, *The Liturgy in English* (London: Oxford University Press, 1962) p. 165.
10. *Ibid.*, pp. 78-79.
11. *Ibid.*, pp. 155-156.
12. *Ibid.*, pp. 170-171.
13. *Ibid.*, pp. 133-134.
14. *The Book of Common Prayer*, 1928.
15. Personal recollection of author.
16. Personal recollection of author.
17. *The Clerical Directory* (New York: The Church Hymnal Corporation, 1956, p. 113.
18. As reported by Rev. William T. St. John Brown.
19. Conversation in presence of author.

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