

1. The key to the recreation of humanness at any point in history has been and will always be the drama of the liturgy. The liturgy is the retelling of the primordial story of how consciousness is birthed, transformed and sent into the future. These are the acts: waking up to reality, having a word pronounced in your life that gives you permission to give thanks for it, and then living it out in the midst of reality. This primordial drama that the church has had at the center of its gathered corporate life is that without which there is no humanness. Therefore this kind of activity is that without which an ecumenical parish is nothing.
2. Fundamentally, there have been three different strains of liturgy in the life of the Christian community over the last two thousand years. Each has had a fantastic insight. When you put them together you have the happening that the liturgy is and will be in history.
3. In the first several hundred years in the life of the church the downbeat was almost exclusively on how you hold the dimension of Being, of mystery and wonder. The Eastern liturgy rehearses how it is that Jesus embodied, articulated and incarnated that wonder, that mystery, that otherness. That is a fantastic gift to history. It is maintaining a grasp of the otherness, the utter transforming power of just being creation. They have developed an incredible liturgy to get that said. In the three, four and five hour masses that the Orthodox Church gets caught up in, Being is exposing itself, divulging its power. The Eucharist, the rehearsal of the Word, is fairly minimal. The downbeat is on the holy of holies and the rehearsal of the presence of mystery.
4. We have been grappling for several months with how we get hold of that in the Daily Office. We have decided to experiment again with the Daily Office, with its dramaturgical form. We have re-instituted the high altar at the liturgical East. One perversion in the renewal of the liturgy in our time is in the architecture of our places of worship. You are getting architecture that is utterly protestant. It is the circular, with its focus on the communal. When you have the circular congregation there is no way to talk about the altar as the unsynonymous. It becomes the familiar. The table is in the midst of the people, but not the altar. Without the rehearsal of the unsynonymous that you are over-against there is no humanness. It is the rock, the abyss, the thereness. And local man, you and I, take the occasion daily to walk over to the edge of that abyss, which is belching out fumes of creativity, of humanness, of awe, and there be reminded that we live before the Final One in life and nothing less. Humanness is always forged out on the anvil of Being. Somehow we have to have that kind of drama going on in the life of every local man so that when they walk out into the street they know what they are pointing to with Awe or Mystery, and it is not some emotion or some feeling, but a phenomenological reality. They know what awe is about because they have run into it in the Daily Office, in the liturgy, in the rehearsal.
5. The Mass, as the celebration of the Mystery, has primarily to do with the act of thanksgiving. Thanks-giving has to do with man's relationship to the Mystery. The Roman Church in the West has come down primarily on the Word, on the Eucharist as the feast at the table. Remember the fantastic insight that was captured in the word "transubstantiation." When you get that out of a two-story

universe and the world of substances you have something like "trans-relationships." In the simple act of the breaking of the bread and the spilling of the wine you have manifest the very deed of Christ. You are exposed to that radical deed that the Jesus Christ of history was, but is now in the midst of your life. You drive that into your own bowels as you feast. It is the drama of seeing that right in our midst. It is the recurrence of the humanizing happening that was Jesus Christ in history, and is the only humanizing happening. To recover the table is to recover the Word as the happening of happenings in every man's life.

6. Our fathers were willing to fight to death over this issue. They insisted that the church never get confused over the relationship between the awe and the Word, or between the Father and the Son. They are utterly different manifestations, different dynamics of the same reality. That is why you and I have to be fanatical trinitarians, because all of us would like to collapse at least one of the three dynamics of the Trinity, and just pass a little bread and wine around a table in the middle of the Sanctuary and have a little fellowship. The danger there is in losing the transubstantiation dimension of that eucharistic event, along with losing consciousness of the Mystery, of the Father present in the midst of life. We would lose the experience of that which exposes our sin, points out our escape from reality and calls us to consciousness that we are accountable to Being. We would lose that which gives us permission to authentically confess our escaping from life. We would thereby prevent the Word of absolution from being pronounced to give us permission to go back and live in the midst of reality. The Eucharist is grasped as the Word, Christ becoming flesh, the crucified body and blood of Jesus. This is the gift of the Roman tradition in the liturgy.

7. The third one has to do with the dynamic of the Holy Spirit and is held primarily with the pluriform protestant emphases. How is it that you have that "fellowhood" of the community which lives before that Word and that Mystery? Fellowship happens when the community beholds the Word incarnate in the midst of the community as it stands before the Mystery. How do you have that happen with people? This is the authentic push here, in our experimentation. How do you allow the spirit to flow through our lives together as a body of people, as we grapple with our destiny and with the calling of the Lord of history? Most of the protestant liturgies have talked about remembering the event of Jesus. They have talked about it, recollected, re-membered the last supper of Jesus with his disciples. There is an insight there I think which has to do with how the neighbor is a mediator of the Word. They rehearse the fact that the neighbor is a part of encountering life, often the occasion of my experiencing grace, and experiencing mystery in my life. But we are recovering authentic fellowship of the body gathered around the table and before the altar, in which all three of the dynamics of the Trinity are released to be fantastic everyday life happenings.

8. I am convinced, I do not know how long it is going to take, maybe just a year or two or five years, but I am convinced that people are going to get up and run to worship. I mean they would not miss the first gong of that service for their life. It may just happen today again, and I do not want to miss it. I do not want to miss it. It just may happen today that grace happens in my life, in our life as the body of Christ, and we be once again transformed and sent forth as the radically new human beings. Again and again we breathe the fumes of mystery or awe and experience the permission to live our broken lives in the Word, and experience the fellowship that comes in a body of people who live in that

Word, before God the Father. Can you imagine that? Can you imagine yourself running to get there on time, to be there, never miss a Sunday, never miss a Daily Office, or whatever form that worship takes in our life? Can you imagine running to worship just because of the anticipation of once again being given permission to be a great life in the midst of our despair, to be transformed and broken loose again?

9. Without that kind of humanizing activity going on in the life of local man and local community, nothing else is worth it. The local congregation has been trapped in the perversions that the church has to do primarily with education. The Sunday School movement was a fantastic movement and every religious outfit on this planet picked it up, including the Buddhists and the Hindus. Now, clearly we have to have education, but without the liturgy that is nothing. Without the liturgy, pastoral counseling is nothing. Without the liturgy training in mission is nothing. Without the rehearsal by this body of people of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, there is no humanness.

10. What is the new form of the liturgy? How do we see that the liturgy happens? What is the new form of the congregation which will see to it that the liturgy is central, and is that which all the other things relate to? What will help us grasp the significance of the liturgy? What will embody that liturgy in history, that Word, the Mystery, the fellowship? One day I will find myself, and I am beginning to sense that even now that I would not miss it for fear that the happening would happen and I would not be there. What is happening is forgiveness. The Word is happening in your life. What is happening is meeting God in the midst of your Sunday morning congregation. Remember how we used to do it in the frontier days? People would come for miles to church. That was the happening of the week for the frontiersman. They would drive those buggys and those wagons and ride horses for a day to make it to that service. But I am convinced that the central part was the mass, the liturgy. And then they had fellowship, and they had an incredible journey. And, I think it was because the regular corporate experience of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Ghost that released them to see and experience the fulfillment of life in every moment and in every place.

