

**FORMATION FOR SACRAMENTAL LITURGY
AND MUSIC
IN CATHEDRALS**

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Introduction

There has been renewed interest in liturgical formation following the publication of the core *Common Worship* material in 2000. Because there is now a wide range of stable texts for the main services, replacing those of the *Alternative Service Book (1980)*, this is sometimes referred to as a ‘post-text’ period. However, there is still a sense that something is missing. The Preface to *CW* suggests that it is only ‘when the texts are known by heart that the poetry of praise and the passion of prayer can transcend the printed word.’¹ A sustained period of textual assimilation seems to be a prior condition for our worship to ‘take wing and become the living sacrifice of ourselves to the God whose majesty is beyond compare and whose truth is from everlasting.’²

In some ways, it is a pity that liturgical formation did not receive more public attention at an earlier stage in the revision process, since many aspects of it are pre-text issues: among other things they concern shape, actions, symbolic language, engagement and participation. While recognising that ordinary churchgoers need time and encouragement to catch up with the rationale that lies behind the revised texts, the gap between the underlying concerns of professional liturgists and regular worshippers is greater than is often appreciated. Liturgical formation is a process of life-long learning: the result of all that is experienced, felt and absorbed, as well as what is taught, through exposure to liturgy. The impressions of childhood, or of the time when faith is new, are likely to be particularly persistent. Often, people’s faith journeys slow down, or even stop, at a particular point in their development. Those who show resistance to liturgical change frequently exhibit a strongly emotional response, suggesting there are deep underlying issues. As individuals journey through life they need to engage with the questions that challenge their faith, in order that their spiritual and liturgical responsiveness continues to grow. Otherwise, they may remain in a place where they are relatively comfortable and then close their minds to new possibilities. This might be a physical place, such as a particular church or a specific service (those who always go to the 8 o’clock said *BCP* communion), or a state of mind, which internalises resistance to change, allowing anger and resentment to build up behind an exterior that appears to give consent.

Cathedrals and liturgical change

Cathedrals face particular challenges of this kind. Although they have an opportunity to act as liturgical laboratories,³ the reality is that they have generally embraced liturgical change more cautiously than the parishes. As a result, they may attract those seeking refuge from the liturgical mainstream. However, the advent of *Common Worship* may have acted as a watershed, heralding liturgical changes more radical than some members of the congregation were prepared to welcome or accept. As I have already suggested, habits of prayer and patterns of spirituality learned in childhood and practised through a long lifetime are not easily set aside. Such patterns become normative. Any change, even

if it re-introduces texts drawn from earlier layers of the tradition, seems to undermine this secure bedrock, not just of *praxis* but belief.

Those who grew up with liturgical change (particularly in a parish setting) can find this hard to understand. They became accustomed to changes of liturgical style as the resonant cadences of the *Book of Common Prayer* gave way to the innovations of *Series 2*, followed by the stark modernity (relatively speaking) of *Series 3*. From 1980, there was a comparatively stable liturgical period, following the publication of the *Alternative Service Book*. The use of that resource for twenty years allowed previously new patterns to be thoroughly absorbed. While *Common Worship* represents a further step, it is a step on a familiar path.

This contrasts with the experiences of those who worshipped regularly in a cathedral that retained conservative options in their adoption of the *ASB*, with a main Sung Eucharist based on Rite B. Now, with the introduction of *Common Worship*, a resource shaped by clergy whose own liturgical experience differs significantly from that of their predecessors, there is a sense of catching up with changes that have been absorbed (and largely welcomed) elsewhere, exposing some cathedral congregations to modern language texts for the first time.

Ironically, the rich variety of the *CW* options presents another challenge, one that also concerns those cathedrals that had previously adopted a provision based on *ASB* Rite A. In general, liturgists and musicians have welcomed this multiplicity of expression, and have been quick to explore different ways of responding to the challenge contained in the *CW* Preface:

The services . . . encourage an imaginative engagement in worship, opening the way for people in the varied circumstances of their lives to experience the love of God in Jesus Christ in the life and power of the Holy Spirit. In the worship of God the full meaning and beauty of our humanity is consummated and our lives are opened to the promise God makes for all creation - to transform and renew it in love and goodness.⁴

A seasonal approach has often been adopted, in which specific texts, appropriately presented, are chosen to reflect in turn the solemn anticipation of Advent, the intimate joy of the incarnation at Christmas, the disciplined restraint of Lent and the transforming power of Easter. However, for some people the pace of change has been too rapid, and they have lost their sense of feeling at home in the liturgy.

Cathedrals have the additional obligation to model good practice for the diocese. Ironically, the nature of cathedrals - the buildings, the resources they have developed (teams of servers, administrators, professional musicians) and the kinds of people who worship in them – can be resistant to this duty. While cathedrals may reach high standards of presentation and excellence this can be at the cost of spontaneity or intimacy. In many places, a void has opened between cathedral and parochial *praxis*. Ordinations, and other occasions when the cathedral plays host to the diocese, present both a challenge and opportunity for bridge building: one positive way forward is to establish a core musical repertoire that is familiar throughout the diocese and which can be used for key diocesan gatherings, wherever they take place.

Two initial points emerge from this analysis. First, that many of the issues about formation are more fundamental than text. Secondly, that the more options we use, the longer the process of assimilation takes - congregations remain dependent on the text for longer and fail to engage with the liturgy at a deeper level. A closer examination of these matters is one of the main themes of this paper. As a counterpoint to it, I hope to raise some important issues about the place of music within the liturgy.

The liturgy and music: possible models

It is difficult to establish points of reference for this discussion. The Church of England has not often produced official ‘position’ statements about the liturgy, still less about the role of music within it. Instead, the Anglican position has to be inferred from a few primary, mostly historical, documents and from a developing *praxis*. There are both strengths and weakness to this position. In recent years, there has been no shortage of unofficial commentaries on the revised services, many of them written by members of the Liturgical Commission. However, it is difficult to construct from them a theological rationale for the use of liturgical music.

For the Roman Church, the situation was different. The foundation document of the Second Vatican Council, *The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (Sacrosanctum Concilium)*, is explicit in its instructions concerning the use of music:

In the musical tradition of the universal Church is contained a treasure of inestimable value. It occupies a place higher than that of other art forms chiefly because it is a sacred chant wedded to words and, as such, constitutes a necessary and integral part of solemn liturgy. . . .Therefore, the Sacred Council [acknowledges] the purpose of sacred music, which is the glory of God and the sanctification of the faithful.⁵

The text adds:

. . . the more intimately church music is linked with the liturgical action the holier it will be. This close connection is achieved in various ways: the music can express prayer more persuasively; it can help in producing unanimity; it can add increased solemnity to the sacred rites.

In the wake of the Council, a number of individuals and bodies struggled to work out the practical implications of the new liturgical world, given that most of the old ways of doing things had to be abandoned. In particular, it was necessary to think through the implications of a key concept of *SC*: *active participation*. It is worth spending a little time to discover what the document actually says about this fundamental issue.

SC para. 14 states that the Church

desires that all the faithful may be brought to take that full, intelligent, active part in liturgical celebrations which the nature of the Liturgy itself requires . . .

and adds that this

full, active participation on the part of the whole people is something that deserves the utmost attention when the reformation and fostering of the sacred liturgy are under consideration, because this active taking part is the first, indeed it is the necessary, source from which the faithful may be expected to draw the true Christian spirit.

This is the bedrock of liturgical formation. However, *SC* also makes it clear that active participation is not only a matter of external involvement: it is to be ‘both internal and external’.⁶ Within the Anglican liturgical tradition, there is still a pressing need to pursue liturgical formation that develops *internal* engagement in parallel with a renewed liturgical *praxis* that creates more opportunities for external involvement.

Later Roman documents enable us to trace the practical working out of these ideas in the years beyond the Council. *Music in Catholic Worship* is a key text.⁷

The function of music is ministerial; it must serve and never dominate. Music should assist the assembled believers to express and share the gift of faith that is within them and to nourish and strengthen their interior commitment of faith. It should heighten the texts so that they speak more fully and more effectively . . . It imparts a sense of unity to the congregation and sets the appropriate tone for a particular celebration.⁸

Ten years further on, *Liturgical Music Today* revealed a significant shift of emphasis, in which music is no longer subordinate but takes on a more incarnational and sacramental role:⁹

Music does not serve as a mere accompaniment, but as the integral mode by which the mystery is proclaimed and presented.¹⁰

At the same time, the document warns that ‘the musical form employed must match its liturgical function’¹¹ and that it is necessary to guard ‘against the imposition of private meanings on public rites.’¹² This reveals an underlying tension between a view of music as a creative, incarnational, symbolic element, and a utilitarian view, which insists that music must be subordinated to the demands of text and rite.

Although the dogmatic statements of these documents provide the beginnings of a systematic framework, a more recent text offers a view of music more congenial to those whose experience is within the Anglican cathedral tradition. This is the final report of the *Milwaukee Symposia for Church Composers*, a thought-provoking summary that deserves careful study.¹³ Beginning with the statement that ‘Music making is a profoundly human experience’¹⁴ the document explores the implications of its assertion that ‘we are coming to understand how a rite and its sound, its music, are inseparable: serving, enabling and revealing aspects of our belief that would otherwise remain unexpressed.’¹⁵

Music is part of the symbolic language of worship. . . . Sound itself is our starting point for understanding music and its capacity to serve as a vehicle for God’s self-revelation. Sound’s temporality, for example, symbolizes a God active in creation and history; its seemingly insubstantial nature symbolizes a God who is both present and hidden; its dynamism symbolizes a God who calls us into dialogue; its ability to unify symbolizes a God whom we perceive as personal. . . . Music is able to elicit wonder without distancing us from God’s presence and is able to effect our union with other worshippers and with God in a particular and unparalleled way.¹⁶

Those of us who work in cathedrals are in particular need of a model of musical and liturgical *praxis* that supports much of what we regard as normative. Careful consideration of *MSCC* would greatly stimulate the production of such a model.

However, all of this moves us ahead too quickly, and we now return to a more detailed consideration of the pre-text issues of shape, action, symbolic language, engagement and participation as they affect Anglican *praxis*, particularly in a cathedral setting, and consider the use of music in that context.

Shape

Many of the *Common Worship* services, in particular the services of Baptism and Eucharist, present an explicit model of gathering, transformation in word and sacrament, followed by dismissal. This shape is made clear in the sectional headings and in the introduction to the main *CW* volume.

A number of the services themselves . . . are celebrated in stages. In each case, the journey through the liturgy has a clear structure with signposts for those less familiar with the way. It moves from the gathering of the community through the Liturgy of the Word to an opportunity of transformation, sacramental or non-sacramental, after which those present are sent out to put their faith into practice.¹⁷

Because many of those who worship in cathedrals are unlikely to do so from the full *CW* resource, their sense of shape derives from whatever order of service they are given and the ways in which the elements of the service are presented. Many cathedrals have given a good deal of thought about the ways in which the shape can be made explicit in the layout

of the service book, the way the building is used and through the adoption of ceremonial. However, other shapes and models will also be at work, particularly in a choral celebration. The music, above all the use of a unified setting of the Mass Ordinary, will inevitably create its own sense of shape and rhythm, setting up a counterpoint with the liturgical framework of time and space. A substantial Kyrie, followed by a still more substantial Gloria (think of the Mozart *Coronation Mass*, or the *Messe Solennelle* by Vierne) transports the congregation to a frame of reference very different from that of a compact setting such as Haydn's *Missa Sancti Joannis de Deo* (the 'Little Organ Mass'), or one intended for congregational use in a parish church.

Extended musical settings raise a number of implicit questions for those not directly involved with producing the music:

- What should I do during the singing? Is it all right simply to enjoy the music? Do I need to adopt a particular attitude of mind in order to allow the music to transport imagination and spirit? How can I best allow the music to become my offering of penitence or praise?
- To whom is the music offered? If directly to God, on my behalf, does it make any difference whether I attend to it or not? Alternatively, do I have the responsibility to attend to it in order to make it part of my offering?
- Does it matter whether the musicians believe what they are singing?
- Does it matter if I don't understand / like the music?

The pairing of Sanctus and Benedictus can offer a more intractable problem. How is it possible to assert the unity of the Eucharistic prayer, if there are several minutes of music at its centre? Similarly, when we maintain, from a liturgical point of view, that the Agnus Dei is there to 'cover' the breaking of the bread, should we delay the distribution until Byrd or Langlais have had their say?

Practitioners should not ignore such difficult questions. I suggest that while some liturgical music is essentially utilitarian, displaying a high degree of correspondence between function and form, other music earns its place in the liturgy because it is in some sense revelatory, standing in a complementary relationship with word and sacramental action. It demands an appropriate model of participation. Music beckons us to enter a different time frame and invites patient attention. The monastic tradition, with the chant at its heart, nurtured such an attitude of mind. We might do well to re-engage with this particular kind of spirituality, as a corrective for the current pre-occupation with worship as entertainment.¹⁸ The adoption of the appropriate posture (kneeling for the Kyrie and standing for the Gloria) can also help people to internalise the meaning of the text.

The choice and position of the hymns can also serve to clarify or obscure the liturgical shape. At worst, hymnody can act as a liturgical straitjacket - one whose straps we seem reluctant to loosen. While hymns provide an important opportunity for musical participation, there is still a need to provide music for the assembly that is intrinsic to the main liturgical action.

Moreover, it is possible to regard liturgical celebration as an inherently musical action.¹⁹ The musical potential of the liturgy (even in celebrations without ‘music’ as such) is well characterised by Aidan Kavanagh:

The liturgy, the dwelling place of present and remembered encounter with the living God, itself begins to think and speak for the assembly and turns wholly into music, not in the sense of outward, audible sounds, but by virtue of the power and momentum of its inward flow. Then like the current of a mighty river polishing stones and turning wheels by its very movement, the flow of liturgical worship creates in passing, and by the force of its own laws, cadence and rhythm and countless other forms and formations, still more important and until now undiscovered, unconsidered, and unnamed.

What results from a liturgical act is not only “meaning,” but an ecclesial transaction with reality, a transaction whose ramifications escape over the horizon of the present, beyond the act itself, to overflow even the confines of the local assembly into universality.²⁰

This challenges us to think about shape at a deeper level and to become more aware of the natural rhythms of the liturgy. On occasion, rather than attempting to control the flow of the liturgical river, we might abandon ourselves to its momentum, including the music, in a process of discovery. Music can help to break down barriers of space and time, and to escape the confines of our local assembly through the sound world it creates. All of this implies that good liturgical shape needs a flexible framework rather than a fixed structure. However, in order to feel secure in such a framework, we need some level of reassurance, one that is provided by the recognition of certain familiar actions, presented with sufficient clarity for their meaning and significance to become apparent.

Action

The ordering of the liturgy at Coventry Cathedral, as presented in the service book prepared in 1973, was in many ways a model of good practice.²¹ It set out the Eucharist as a series of actions: taking; blessing; breaking; sharing. Although the model clearly derived from Dom. Gregory Dix’s seminal work *The Shape of the Liturgy*,²² the clarity of the presentation, in both the service book and the liturgy itself, transformed scholarly understanding into a living reality of encounter, embodying the underlying theology. As Kavanagh puts it: ‘a liturgy exists first of all not to be read or studied but to be done.’²³ The meaning of a liturgical transaction is not found only in the words of the service book.

This shape of the *CW* rites is also articulated as a series of actions, and some of the *CW* texts are particularly helpful in pointing beyond the action to its significance:

Preparation of the Table: Taking of the Bread and Wine:

As the grain once scattered in the fields
and the grapes once dispersed on the hillside
are now reunited on this table in bread and wine,
so, Lord, may your whole Church soon be gathered together
from the corners of the earth
into your kingdom.²⁴

Blessing: The Eucharistic Prayer

Jesus blessed you, Father, for the food;
he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and said:
This is my body, given for you all.
Jesus then gave thanks for the wine;
he took the cup, gave it and said:
This is my blood, shed for you all
for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this in remembrance of me.²⁵

Breaking of the Bread:

We break this bread
to share in the body of Christ.²⁶

Giving of Communion:

God's holy gifts
for God's holy people.
**Jesus Christ is holy,
Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.**²⁷

In the large spaces of a cathedral, the actions of taking and breaking may need to be exaggerated in a way that seems over-dramatic at close quarters, if they are to make any impression at all on those half way down the nave. Moreover, we need to think about the meanings which the actions disclose. They have a significance that transcends the literal, and reaches out to universality.

Liturgical symbols

We enter here the realm not just of symbolic language but also of symbolic action. One of the most welcome developments of recent liturgical revision has been the recovery of more poetic liturgical texts with a wide frame of reference. Nevertheless, some liturgical symbols operate at a level more fundamental than language. Indeed, the primary symbol of worship may be regarded as the gathering of the people of God in order to become *ecclesia* - the body of Christ.²⁸ We need to be open to the potential of such enacted symbols in order to enter the new reality that they disclose.

The challenge of creating liturgy that is appropriate to any gathered group lies in bringing into being a ritual act that truly expresses *their* Christian identity and commitment. But how can we encourage the bodily experiences that would activate the awareness of being “body of Christ” or the psychologically prior awareness of the presence of the risen Christ?

Central to any such consciousness-causing ritual activity must be the action of the assembly, people must do the ritual and they must be aware that they are doing it. This means that a group of Christians brought together for Eucharist must understand that they, gathered in the name of Christ and acting as his body, are co-celebrants with Christ present in their midst.²⁹

Transformation results from encounter and meeting, when we begin to glimpse something of the divinity of Christ in each other’s humanity, and through the gifts of word, prayer and sacrament. As bread is broken and wine outpoured, when we join together to sing a hymn, as we pray for our neighbour and for the world, when we turn to each other at the Peace, as the choir fills the echoing spaces with interweaving sound or when we enter the silence, there is the potential for this to happen - so much depends on attention and recognition.

When people no longer expect transformation or revelation, the consequences are easy to identify: the church ‘may begin to dissemble its nature and function, becoming a commune of friends whose main purpose is to get along with each other, a moral uplift society, a group dedicated to aesthetics or therapy, a sheepfold of the unsure, a home for the dull.’³⁰ Kavanagh’s provocative language reminds us that if essential issues about the worshipping community are not addressed, no amount of familiarity with the revised texts will bring about fundamental change.

Engagement

Seen in this light, liturgical formation is all that encourages people to regard themselves as part of the 'holy common people of God.'³¹ The process depends, in part, on education, explanation and an explicit passing on of a traditional understanding; but it is much more a matter of experiencing, of learning by doing.

Formation for liturgy teaches the languages of the community: the basic repertoire of gestures and words, postures and songs that will enable the baptized to enter the liturgy. . . . Participation and not mere attendance is the expected stance of all believers in worship. For participation to be full, conscious and active, it is necessary the faithful are conversant with the basic repertoire of liturgical symbols that will allow their total engagement in the liturgy and, therefore, their formation in and by the liturgy. The liturgy itself, consistently celebrated with such participation by the community, is its own best teacher.³²

We return to the observation that this may be more of a challenge in a cathedral situation, where there is the likelihood that a few will be doing, and many will be spectators. We have forgotten, or failed to learn, those habits of attention that lead to engagement. This issue becomes more significant in a culture in which so much is mediated through a television or computer screen. We expect to be entertained and, if what is on offer does not grab our attention, we switch off.³³

The habits we need to bring to worship are of a different order: courtesy and respect towards our fellow worshippers, waiting in quiet and stillness, focus, listening to the scripture and letting it resonate with the body of scriptural texts which chime through the liturgy. Formation of this kind can only come through a long process of exposure and commitment. Within a familiar framework, items are combined in new contexts. The fabric of meaning is woven not just from the juxtaposition but also from our own mental habits. It is these mental structures which take a lifetime to form.

Cathedral Sunday schools, where these exist, make an excellent place to begin the formation process. Salisbury Cathedral has a programme of teaching Eucharists, held in the Cathedral School at the same time as the regular Sunday morning service. Once every three months, the Eucharist is celebrated in a liturgy that is reduced to its essentials, so that there is time to explain what is happening and why it is being done. The children are involved as much as possible. Some of the adults who attend seem to appreciate these services as much as the children do! There are many other opportunities to extend this approach into the adult arena - through sermons, workshops, through written commentaries in service books. However, the liturgy itself needs to be celebrated in such a way that what is taught can be experienced and verified.

Similarly, some might welcome help to form the mental habits necessary for the appreciation of some of the musical repertoire that adorns the regular pattern of cathedral worship. Consider, for instance, Byrd's *Mass for Five Voices*. In order to hear the music properly, it is necessary to listen contrapuntally. The music reveals more of itself on closer acquaintance. Encountering such a composition for the first time is like meeting a diffident stranger – either is easily dismissed and forgotten. It is necessary to give real attention in order to notice what lies underneath the surface. Only then is it possible to discern the complex richness of life that may begin to resonate with one's own thought processes. It is in this way that a relationship begins.

David Burrows, a writer of musical phenomenology, makes these observations about the experience of listening to polyphony:

Polyphony is an accommodation of diversity very different from the antiphonal negotiations between separate individuals that make up conversation. It seldom occurs to two conversationalists to say the same thing at the same time, and when they do they are embarrassed, or amused, or both. But musicians are always making a point of doing the same or carefully related things at the same time. In polyphony the individual ranges and timbres of the contributing voices and instruments submit to a single evolving image, and the participants' sense of autonomy shades over into a collective identity, that of the performing group and, in a more distanced and passive form, that of the temporary society of an audience.³⁴

That feeling of collective identity is certainly part of the experience which music can bring about. Although for many people this will happen more readily with music that is more accessible - for some a Mozart Mass, for others a Kendrick worship song - nevertheless, I believe that 'difficult' music offers particular satisfactions. These result from a growing awareness of the relationships in the musical organism which lie beneath the surface. I share Burrows' belief that 'a complex mind is not fully addressed and engaged by simplicity.'³⁵ However, the satisfaction I get is not primarily an intellectual one: rather, it results from giving my attention so fully to the life of the music that other thoughts and concerns are pushed aside. Burrows puts it in this way:

Music is about the centering of awareness. The more centred awareness is, the more everything in awareness becomes a function or an aspect of the centre. And music centres awareness in an object with no sharply defined utilitarian location in the world: the more centred awareness is in such an object, the more does that object come to be provisionally identified with the totality of the world, and the less is the other a consideration. When this is carried still further, everything becomes centre.³⁶

While resisting any temptation to equate music with the divine, for me the use of Byrd's music in worship helps me to pray, it gives me a glimpse of divine revelation and it helps me to become more aware of myself as an integrated being in relationship with others. At the same time, because much of this music does not give up its secrets easily, many will never make sufficient effort to enter its world.

Participation and the gathered community

Much of this paper has been concerned with a re-examination of ideas about participation. Finally, I want to look at a particular expression of that theme: the influence of the cathedral buildings in which we worship on the assembly and the way in which it participates.

It should be obvious that the way in which worship is experienced is affected by basic considerations: is the building light and warm? are we made to feel welcome? These important issues have been dealt with elsewhere.³⁷ In the present context, I simply want to focus on the way in which such a simple issue as where people sit changes perceptions of community and participation.

It follows from all that has been said so far that a good model of participation would recognise the importance of all those who assemble to worship: the gathered people (some of whom may have particular responsibilities during the course of the service, such as reading or leading the intercessions); ordained and lay ministers of various kinds; those who worship with and through the professional skills they bring to the worship - the musicians, but also the operator of the sound system, for example; those who worship with and through the service they offer to the rest of the community - stewards and churchwardens. All come together for worship, all have different ministries. At this point, there is no difference between the situations in a cathedral or parish church. Additionally, it is likely that different groups will gather in their own designated areas - the choir in the practice room, the stewards in the vestry, etc. However, a cathedral, because of its great size, may offer a number of spaces for worship with the result that people habitually gravitate to different parts of the building, according to preference.

Not all cathedrals share this problem. At Carlisle, the historical destruction of the nave compels everyone into the choir, which provides a space for the gathered assembly that is intimate and unified. Although Eucharistic ministers have their own space and choreography, and the singers of the choir occupy designated places, it *feels* as though everyone is involved in the same act of worship because of their physical proximity to each other, whether or not they are actually involved in singing or saying.

In contrast, consider the effect of the larger spaces available in a cathedral such as Salisbury.³⁸ The normal arrangement at Salisbury is for the choir to sing the Eucharist from stalls in the quire. As far as possible, the ceremonial makes use of the whole building: the procession enters from the west end of the nave; the first reading is from the

quire lectern; the Gospel is read in the body of the nave; the sermon is preached from the nave pulpit and the intercessions are led from the quire lectern. At the offertory procession, all the Eucharistic ministers move to the high altar at the presbytery at the east end of the quire. The Communion is distributed from a number of different stations throughout the building. During the final hymn, the procession moves to the west end of the nave for the dismissal.

Although considerable thought has been given to the most appropriate way in which to present the liturgy in a great medieval building, perceptions about what is happening change according to the place in which people choose to sit. Many people regard the quire as the best position. The choral singing has clarity and impact and there is a good feeling of participation in the hymns, acclamations and creed, which the congregation and choir sing together. The first reading feels immanent, since the reader can be seen, as well as heard. However, when the procession moves out of the quire for the reading of the Gospel, the impression is not of the word of God coming nearer, but of it going further away, moving either towards the congregation in the nave (is the implication that they are more in need of the good news than those in the quire?), or towards the world outside the cathedral (perhaps a more appropriate interpretation of the symbol). This is despite the fact that there is an excellent sound reinforcement system, so that it is usually possible to hear what is being said from any part of the building. For the sermon, the preacher stands in the nave pulpit, Janus-like, trying to look forward to the congregation in the nave, and back towards those in the quire - it is not an ideal arrangement. For those in the quire, the offertory and Eucharistic prayer at the high altar once again have immediate impact. At the same time, there is a sense in which these things are happening in the space they already inhabit: they are not forced to make a significant journey. On the other hand, during the final hymn, the choir moves into the nave for the dismissal, leaving the quire congregation to fend for themselves, which they usually do with gusto! The final (sung) dismissal seems to happen in the far distance, with the organ doing its powerful best to hold the forces in quire and nave together.

Not all members of the congregation fit into the quire. Some people sit in the nave from choice or conviction, but many sit there because they arrive later, or because they are not regular worshippers. In many ways, they get a more balanced view of the liturgy as a whole, and a more immediate impression of the Gospel and sermon. However, there is a real danger that they feel somewhat on the outside of the Eucharistic action, which while clearly visible, is a little distant. If the hymns are well known, those who are confident singers feel able to join in, even though their efforts do feel somewhat solitary. The sung creed is another matter, since the sound of the congregation in the quire does not have sufficient 'body' to reach out across the void.

A third (much smaller) group sits in the south transept. For the most part, this consists of the children, together with their parents and teachers, who have attended Sunday school during the first part of the service. They see very little, but at least they do not feel they are disturbing anyone else. In fact, they seem quite content with their liminal status.

All of this combines to present a somewhat idiosyncratic view of the body of Christ, one that expresses its fragmentary nature rather than unity. Oddly, when a nave altar is used, a more curious situation emerges. Most people choose to remain in their accustomed seats. Those in the quire seem to prefer to be near the musical rather than the liturgical action (there is insufficient room for nave choir stalls when the altar is at the nave crossing, so the choir stays in its usual place). Certainly, from this ‘behind the scenes’ position, little of the liturgical action can be seen clearly. However, for those in the nave, everything now falls into place, and even the children, on their return from Sunday school, get some impression of what is going on.

Conclusion

This somewhat anecdotal account provides a vignette of the challenges we still face in liturgical formation. There are no easy solutions. The paper has drawn on theoretical models of good practice, which resulted from liturgical revision in the Roman church. At the same time, it has tried to look at actual *praxis* and to ask the question: ‘what does what we do reveal about what we believe?’ When we ask this apparently simple question of the liturgy, we go to the heart of our theology, since the liturgy is ‘the church’s first theology and the primary expression of the church’s belief.’³⁹

Those who provide liturgical and musical leadership, at this time of liturgical consolidation, have a particular privilege and responsibility:

Flexibility is recognised today as an important value in liturgy. The musician with a sense of artistry and a deep knowledge of the rhythm of the liturgical action will be able to combine the many options into an effective whole. For the composer and performer alike there is an unprecedented challenge. They must enhance the liturgy with new creations of variety and richness and with those compositions from the time-honoured treasury of liturgical music which can still serve today’s celebrations. Like the wise householder in Matthew’s Gospel, the church musician must be one “who can produce from his store both the new and the old.”⁴⁰

This task remains urgent and necessary. But alongside it is a more fundamental challenge: the formation of the holy common people of God. Fortunately, in the final analysis, this is a process we support rather than initiate:

Belief is always consequent upon encounter with the Source of the grace of faith. Therefore Christians do not worship because they believe. They believe because the One in whose gift faith lies is regularly met in the act of communal worship – not because the assembly conjures up God, but because the initiative lies with the God who has promised to be there always.⁴¹

¹ *Common Worship*, p. x.

² *ibid.*

³ See Perham, Michael, “‘Liturgical Laboratories of the Church’”: The role of English cathedrals in Anglican worship today’ in Dudley, Martin, ed. *Like a Two-Edged Sword: The Work of God in Liturgy and History*, Norwich: The Canterbury Press, 1995.

⁴ *Common Worship*, p. ix.

⁵ *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy), 1963, para. 112.

⁶ *SC*, para 19.

⁷ *Music in Catholic Worship*, 1972 is in *The Music Documents*, Portland: Oregon Catholic Press, 1995, pp. 7-32.

⁸ *MCW*, para. 23.

⁹ *Liturgical Music Today*, 1983 is in *The Music Documents*, pp. 33-54.

¹⁰ *LMT*, para. 10.

¹¹ *LMT*, para. 11.

¹² *LMT*, para. 20.

¹³ *The Milwaukee Symposia for Church Composers: A Ten-Year Report*, 1992.

¹⁴ *MSCC*, para. 1.

¹⁵ *MSCC*, para. 4.

¹⁶ *MSCC*, para. 13.

¹⁷ *CW*, p. x

¹⁸ *MSCC*, para. 66 refers to ‘the pervasive influence of television . . . and the promotion of the entertainment model as the primary mode of discourse in our society.’

¹⁹ See Harper, John, *Music for Common Worship III: A Basic Guide*, Dorking: RSCM, 2000, in particular, pp. 26-8 & 92-6.

²⁰ Kavanagh, Aidan, *On Liturgical Theology*, Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1984, p. 88.

²¹ *The Communion in Coventry Cathedral, AD 1973*, Coventry Cathedral, 1973.

²² Dix, Dom Gregory, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, London: A & C Black, 2nd edition 1945, reprinted 1982.

²³ *On Liturgical Theology*, p. 96.

²⁴ *CW*, p. 292, Supplementary Texts: Prayers at the Preparation of the Table.

²⁵ *CW*, p. 195, Eucharistic Prayer D.

²⁶ *CW*, p. 179.

²⁷ *CW*, p. 180.

²⁸ *MSCC*, para. 77.

²⁹ Cooke, Bernard J, “Body and Mystical Body: The Church as *Communio*” in ed. Morrill, Bruce T., *Bodies of Worship*, p. 49

³⁰ Kavanagh, *On Liturgical Theology*, p. 63.

³¹ Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, p. 744.

³² *MSCC*, para. 19.

³³ See *MSCC*, para. 66 and note 19 *supra*.

³⁴ Burrows, David, *Sound, Speech, and Music*, Amhurst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1990, p. 68.

³⁵ *ibid.*, p. 76.

³⁶ *ibid.*, pp. 74-5.

³⁷ See, in particular, Giles, Richard, *Repitching the Tent*, Norwich: The Canterbury Press

³⁸ The choice of Salisbury as a focus for this discussion is the result of working there (since July 2002) in a role (as Head of Liturgy and Music) that allows me to reflect on life as a member of the congregation after many years of service as organist and director of music.

³⁹ *MSCC*, para 14, drawing on the maxim of Prosper of Aquitaine: ‘lex credendi lex statuat supplicandi’. Kavanagh, *On Liturgical Theology*, offers a full exposition of this concept: see pp. 91 following.

⁴⁰ *MCW*, para 76.

⁴¹ Kavanagh, *op. cit.*, p. 91.