



# Church of St. Francis

THE LIBERAL CATHOLIC CHURCH  
Province of the USA • Villa Park, Illinois



## The Order of Our Lady

With the coming into existence of the Order of Our Lady as one of the organs of the Church within its corpus, one of the major issues that arises, and should be resolved, is: “How may the Order of Our Lady, as a new line of service, be functionally integrated into the life of the Church in a meaningful way and to the greater glory of God?”

In the words of the original proposition, which led to its founding, the Order was meant to be an instrument for “*the Holy Lady Mary, Queen of Angels and our heavenly Mother, ... for spreading light and blessing and consolation into the world.*” The Order was conceived as a feminine line parallel to the masculine line of Minor Orders, but going beyond it to terminate in the Office of Deaconess, which may be thought of the counterpart to the Office of Deacon in the masculine line.

However, to obviate any misunderstandings by anyone, the Committee believes it is totally justified (by the clear statements made at GES12, 13 & 14) in unequivocally stating that: The Order of Deaconess is not one of the Holy Orders of The Liberal Catholic Church. We desire, on the contrary, to affirm that the Office of Deaconesses is an Office *sui generis*; the one Office of Ministry open to women, but an Office which both from the solemnity of its admission and the importance of its functions can satisfy the fullest desires of women to share in the official work of the Church. The nature and functions of the Office of Deaconess (first established in 1976), which may be said to epitomize the nature and functions of the Order of Our Lady as a whole, are stated in the admission service to that office (pp.425-6 of the Liturgy) is as follows: *“The office of deaconess is established in the church to further the work of the Holy Lady Mary, our heavenly Mother. She ... has ever been regarded by the Church as the pattern of humility and purity, of love and compassion, the very spirit of motherhood. As the Lord Christ fulfils his ministry to mankind through bishops, priests and deacons ... so the Holy Lady Mary works through mothers, nurses and dedicated helpers in many fields .... in her ministry as divine mother of the world”*

The deaconess-to-be is then told that it will be her *“privilege to aid in the work of the Holy Lady Mary, our heavenly Mother, by service to the little children, the mothers, the helpless, the aged and the sick”*. Also that in performing her duties she should pattern herself after the holy Mother, showing forth Our Lady’s purity and tenderness in her thoughts, her feelings, her words and her actions.

These functions assigned to the apex of the Order of Our Lady, and so to be regarded as shed, or radiated, down the stages/ranks of the Order, are, and as can be clearly seen, radically different in character and ethos from those of the Deacon. Whilst the ministry of the Clergy (Deacon and Priest) is, essentially, sacramental and within the Sanctuary, those of the Deaconess (and so of the Order) are non-sacramental and, therefore, essentially outside of the Sanctuary. Indeed, the sphere of her work extends beyond the confines of the church into the world at large. To that extent the work of the Order may be said to represent the arm of the Church extended in service to the world outside the periphery of its walls. Thus the Church now has two complementary lines of service; traditional Holy Orders for men and the Order of Our Lady for women.

As far as work in the Sanctuary is concerned, it has been laid down that membership of the Order does not of itself, admit a member to the Sanctuary and that any member who chooses to work in the Sanctuary has to be, after proper training, formally admitted thereto as a server. The Committee strongly recommends therefore, that all new members of the Order receive such training and be admitted as Servers ~ with the caveat that members of the Order are not necessarily required to act as Sanctuary servers. Can any other bridges be built to

link the two lines ~ intermediary points at which the masculine and the feminine currents, creatively interact with each other? Can we in other ways integrate the Order of Our Lady functionally into the overall ministry of the Church in the parish?

### **A Fulfilling Role in Church Services**

As far as the work within the church is concerned, especially that relating to church services, it is suggested that some specific duties be assigned to members of the Order according to the several stages of the Order. Each stage is directed at the cultivation of a specific aspect of the member’s human constitution with a view to rendering that aspect a better instrument of service. The intentions of the various stages can, therefore, be promoted by assigning duties in the church which correspond in intention to the work of self development, which the members undertake at the various stages. Such a scheme, of responsibilities was worked into the Order of Mary which G.E.S.11 (1996) approved for experimental use in the Scandinavian Provinces. These may be considered, with modifications, for application to the Order of Our Lady.

### **The Stage of Purity**

At stage one the member is asked to direct her self-endeavour at the physical body: *“Therefore it becomes your duty in this Stage of Purity to hasten the process of fully controlling your physical body and of learning rightly to express yourself through it. As far as is possible, therefore, your body is to be kept in perfect health and cleanliness, and you are to see that it devotes its energies to God’s service in harmony and rhythm. In your gesture, in your manner and your speech strive to show forth the ideal of beauty, never forgetting that our physical bodies are temples of the Holy Ghost”*.

### **Stage of Devotion**

The self-development undertaken at stage two concerns the emotional nature. *“In this Stage of Devotion you offer your heart to the Holy Lady Mary, our heavenly Mother, to be moulded in the image of her own heart of love for all and compassion for all who suffer... Thus will you receive empowerment of your heart for the life of service”*.

### **Stage of Knowledge**

At stage three the self development is directed at the mind: *“In this stage - that of Knowledge - it will be your duty at once to train your mind and to influence for good the minds of others. To this end you must develop the power of concentration... In addition to holding the mind under control, it should be kept pure ... Also in this stage of Knowledge, your mind should be employed effectively in study”*.

### **Stage of Love**

Stage four is for the development of the faculty of Intuition: *“This Stage of Love is to help you quicken your spiritual faculties, especially the Intuition, through which the light of divine love and wisdom may illumine mind and heart.*



Congratulations to Rabecca Collin and Julie Hamilton who were raised to the Stage of Will, Vicky Fitzmaurice to the Stage of Love, and Renee Turner to the Stage of Knowledge by Bishop William on Sunday January 29, 2012.



Congratulations to Keith Callier of Milwaukee and Josh Novak who were raised to the Minor Order of Doorkeeper, and Jaimini Boender from Fairfield IA and Raymond Amegatcher to Acolyte. We thank Bishop William for his visit on Transfiguration weekend.

*So will you begin to perceive your oneness with your fellowmen and with all living creatures, and to cultivate and strengthen your power of love... Whatever is in consonance with love that you will think and feel and do with all your strength: from whatever is against the spirit of love you will turn firmly aside”.*

### **Stage of Will**

Learning to be resolute in overcoming human weaknesses and ultimately submitting the human will to the Divine Will is the purpose of the Stage of Will. It is recommended that in symbolic resistance to evil, the member at this Stage sees to it that the celebrant prepares the holy water and that this water is available at the church entrance. Ensures also that the thurible is ready for use and also learns how to cense with the right intention, if so needed.

### **Stage of Wisdom (Office of Deaconess)**

The Committee recommends that the member has now to participate actively in the work of the Parish. This includes assisting the priest, when necessary, to visit the sick and all those who need counselling. She should also assist the priest in other pastoral activities as directed.

### **Conclusion**

In light of the above recommendations and recognising the new climate which is being created in the Church to enable women to play a more fulfilling role, the Committee is of the opinion that it must be said, in a very profound sense, what they should give to the Church should be themselves as women, not imitations of men; that which only women can give. In the words of Clara Codd, addressed to women, “We must cease to copy men and dare to be ourselves”.

In rendering the services assigned to them, they will do so from the core of their being as women - “with the feminine touch”, as it is said in common parlance, in everything seeking to discover and to express that which makes them women.

The difference is qualitative, and it is that which fundamentally differentiates the roles. Thus we may move towards the blending of forces in the Sanctuary.

SOURCE: Taken from “The Liberal Catholic Church Order of Our Lady Recommendations & Guidelines” as authorized by The Synod



We thank Bishop William for his visit on Transfiguration weekend. The ordination of new acolytes Jaimini Boender from Fairfield IA and Raymond Amegatcher took place on Saturday January 28, 2012.

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## Healing Service

The purpose of the Service of Healing is to bring spiritual upliftment to those in need, and secondly to give some relief, whenever possible, to those who are suffering from various physical ills. All are welcome.

Father Daniel will conduct a Healing Service followed by Communion on the first Wednesday of each month at St. Francis, beginning at 6:30pm.

### Upcoming dates:

March 7, 2012

April 4, 2012

May 2, 2012



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## Rosary of the Seven Rays

The Church of St. Francis invites you to chant the rosary in honor of Our Lady on the third Monday of each month. The rosary used in this meditation is based on the Franciscan Crown Rosary, also called the "Rosary of the Seven Joys of the Blessed Virgin Mary."

The sanctuary will open at 6:30 p.m. for any who wish to meditate to soft Marian-themed music. Services to Our Lady will begin at 7:00 pm. No rosary is needed. It is a sung meditation. All are welcome. For more information please contact Rabecca Collin.

### Upcoming dates:

February 20, 2012

March 19, 2012

April 16, 2012



Seven Ray Rosaries are now available from St Francis. They are made from imported Czech Fire Polish beads, and the crucifix, centerpiece and chain are imported from Jerusalem. Each rosary is hand assembled by a member, has been blessed by one of our Priests, and comes with a blue velour pouch, informational card, and certificate.

They're \$25 each plus shipping cost. (Similar rosaries are comparable at \$45 - \$60 elsewhere.) To order, email [stfrancisvillapark.org](mailto:stfrancisvillapark.org).

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## Candlemas

Candlemas is a traditional Christian festival that commemorates the ritual purification of Mary forty days after the birth of her son Jesus. On this day, Christians remember the presentation of Jesus Christ in the Temple.

It is the day of the year when all the candles, that will be used in the church during the coming year, are brought into church and a blessing is said over them - so it is the Festival Day (or 'mass') of the Candles.

In pre-Christian times, this day was known as the 'Feast of Lights' and celebrated the increase strength of the life-giving sun as winter gave way to spring. This ancient festival marks the midpoint of winter, halfway between the shortest day and the spring equinox.

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## Adult Education

Sunday March 11, 2012 — **"The Diversity of Early Christianity"**

11:30am following Holy Eucharist.

Modern Christianity is widely diverse in terms of its social structures, beliefs and practices. But this diversity is mild in comparison with Christianity during the first three centuries, when people claiming to be Christian did not agree on the most basic of issues. This video lecture, presented by Bart D. Ehrman, professor and Chair of the Department of Religious Studies at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, considers the diversity among early Christians and situates the formation of the Christian "cannon" of Scripture in the struggles over what we believe.

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Sunday March 25, 2012 —

**"The Significance of The Easter Story"**

presented by Bishop Ruben Cabigting

11:30am following Holy Eucharist.

Rt. Rev. Ruben Cabigting is a staff member at the National Center of the Theosophical Society in Wheaton, and an Auxillary Bishop in the Liberal Catholic Church.



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*To stimulate and serve our membership, the vestry approved the installation of a plasma monitor to display various adult education pieces, such as special presentations by Bishop Ruben Cabigting, informative podcasts like Tolle's "A New Earth", and special movies such as What the Bleep.*

*They asked me to conduct a special search for donations, outside the realm of our most common and loyal contributors. Additionally, it has been suggested that we might request a special one dollar donation from attendees to help defray costs of equipment and programming. We also have wonderful materials produced over the years that need to be updated to modern media, including an excellent series of slides and tape from Australia on the Transformation of the Eucharist.*

*Can you help us to continue to communicate the special nature of our humble little church by making a one-time contribution earmarked for the adult education fund? Your generosity could be rewarded for many lifetimes to come because of the immediate and positive impact it could have on the lives of others.*

*Father Dan*



## Fellowship & Flapjacks

Join us after Holy Eucharist for our Fifth Sunday Pancake Breakfast, featuring of course pancakes, vegetarian sausage, hashbrowns and other yummy fixings. Visit with old friends, and make some NEW ones! Bring a friend – All are welcome.

### Upcoming Dates:

April 29, 2012

July 29, 2012

September 30, 2012

December 30, 2012

2/12	Sexagesima Sunday	<i>The Holy Spirit as Sanctifier</i>	Fr. Jeffrey	
2/19	Quinquagesima Sunday	<i>The Holy Spirit as the Fire of Love</i>	Fr. Terrence	Vestry
2/20	Third Monday Rosary of the Seven Rays		Rabbecca	7:00pm
2/22	Ash Wednesday			
2/26	1st Sunday in Lent	<i>Self-examination</i>	Fr. Daniel	
3/4	2nd Sunday in Lent	<i>Control of Speech</i>	Fr. Jeffrey	
3/7	First Wednesday Healing Service		Fr. Daniel	6:30pm
3/11	3rd Sunday in Lent	<i>Understanding</i>	Fr. Daniel	11:30am Adult Education: <i>TBA</i>
3/18	4th Sunday in Lent	<i>Spiritual Refreshment</i>	Fr. Terrence	
3/19	Third Monday Rosary of the Seven Rays		Rabbecca	7:00pm
3/25	Passion Sunday	<i>Humility</i>	Fr. Daniel	11:30am Adult Education: <i>Significance of The Easter Story</i> , presented by Bishop Ruben Cabigting
4/1	Palm Sunday		Fr. Jeffrey	
4/4	First Wednesday Healing Service		Fr. Daniel	6:30pm
4/8	EASTER SUNDAY		Fr. Terrence	

## St. Francis Liberal Catholic Church

12 West School Street • Villa Park IL 60181 • 630-834-3320 • <http://www.stfrancisvillapark.org/>  
Holy Eucharist Sundays at 10:00am. followed by refreshments and fellowship hour.

Please visit our website or FACEBOOK site for schedule additions and updates.  
The above event schedule is correct at the time this newsletter is published, but may be subject to changes.

Calendar: <http://ical.me.com/teammetz/Church%20of%20St%20Francis>

Subscribe to our calendar: [webcal://ical.me.com/teammetz/Church%20of%20St%20Francis.ics](http://webcal://ical.me.com/teammetz/Church%20of%20St%20Francis.ics)

## St. Francis Vestry & Congregational Guardians 2011-2012

Rev. Terrence Metz, *President* • Rev. James Ascareggi, *Vice President* • Rev. Jeffery Forth, *Junior Warden*  
Rabbecca Collin, *Secretary* • Lori Jo Metz, *Treasurer* • Vicky Fitzmaurice, *Ladies' Guild President*  
Julie Hamilton • Felite Manila • Pat Meike • Frank Pepich • Dawn Regnier • Marion Schulte

### Servers

Stephanie Chantos • Dawn Regnier • Renee Turner • Emily Berrum • Raymond Amegatcher • Frank Pepich • Josh Novak

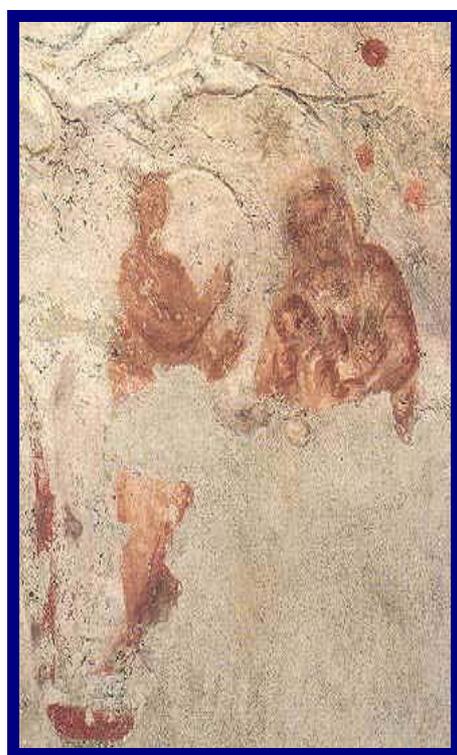
*We are very happy to announce that we have expanded our newsletter to seven issues a year:*  
Christmas • Candlemas • Easter • Whitsuntide • Midsummer • Lammass • Autumn

Unfortunately, our meager resources will only allow us to print and mail the Easter and Christmas issues at this time, with the others available in PDF form available through email and our website. Please send your current email address to [tlcc\\_lector@mac.com](mailto:tlcc_lector@mac.com) so that we can continue to keep you informed and connected with the Church of St. Francis. A small donation is always much appreciated (so is a large one).

Send articles or information for inclusion in future issues to [fpepich@gmail.com](mailto:fpepich@gmail.com).

# THE LIBERAL CATHOLIC

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*the international journal of  
The Liberal Catholic Church*

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January 2012

## **THE LIBERAL CATHOLIC**

This magazine is issued three times a year under the direction of the Presiding Bishop, the Most Reverend Graham S. Wale, on behalf of the General Episcopal Synod of The Liberal Catholic Church. Contributors are free to express their opinions and beliefs for which they remain responsible; this freedom and responsibility also applies to writers of editorial matter. The Church is responsible only for statements or information marked **Official**. Contributors accept full responsibility for the content of their articles.

All sincere and legible contributions are welcome. These may be submitted to your local Correspondent or directly to the Editor by way of email (Microsoft Word, Open Office or similar program preferred) or standard postal delivery (preferably typed double-spaced on one side of the sheet only if sending by mail). Publication will be subject to suitability and availability of space as determined by the Editor. All editorial correspondence should be sent to the Editor. The deadline for the Easter 2012 edition is **March 15, 2012**.

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Cover illustration: *Madonna and Child with Prophet*, ca 2<sup>nd</sup> through 4<sup>th</sup> century. Artist unknown. Catacomb of Priscilla, Via Salaria, Rome.

For subscription information or inquiries to *The Liberal Catholic Magazine*, please contact the Regionary Bishop of your Province by way of your Clerical Synod or appointee for subscription information.

Thank you.

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THE LIBERAL CATHOLIC  
Founded 1924

## Editorial

*Father Ian Carman, Editor*

**Happy New Year!** Let me begin first of all with my humblest apologies – I generally make every reasonable attempt to have each Edition of *The Liberal Catholic* ready for distribution at least a week or more prior to the respective Feast for a given issue (in this case, Christmas), but various events and circumstances have determined otherwise. At any rate, here we are at last!

I do have a few thoughts I would like to share with our readers concerning *The Liberal Catholic* and the world in general. To begin with, when I accepted the editorship in 2007 and discussed its content and format with the Presiding Bishop, Bishop Graham Wale, I admit I was unsure how well an “electronic distribution” would be received after decades of printed copies. It is here I must confess my bias in favor of a good old ink-on-paper copy I can hold in my hands and read comfortably. Four years and almost a dozen Editions later, I can comfortably say the transition has been a smooth one – we are able to distribute *The Liberal Catholic* faster and to a wider audience, and more cost-effectively than before. It was only this week, however, that I read the December Edition of a well-read Jesuit-printed magazine that treats on pastoral issues and homiletics, in which their editors announced that the very issue I was then holding in my hands would be the last one printed as such, as they too were forced to make the change to electronic media. Two other theologically themed magazines to which I subscribe have also made the same change within the last year. Finally, *Ubique*, the official publication of the Province of the U.S.A. has also recently switched to electronic distribution, so *The Liberal Catholic* is far from unique, and far from alone, in this regard.

While there are those, including myself, who lament the passing of an ages-old medium of the press, I must say that this has actually been a tremendous gain. Not only has the expense of printing and distributing hard copies been virtually eliminated, but (as the above mentioned Jesuit journal mentions) we are now able to distribute to a much wider audience than before and in less time, and each Province (and in some cases, each Parish) is given freer reign in how to distribute *The Liberal Catholic* among their Members.

Aside from these matters, a more wide-reaching topic has presented itself and deserves comment. In 1997, when my wife and I visited Chicago, IL (U.S.A.) on a University research project,

we were blessed by the hospitality and generosity of the late Bishop Lawrence Smith and his wife Dimpna. One afternoon as we sat in their living room, we talked about the spiritual well-being of our country and the world at large, when Bishop Lawrence explained that humanity was on the cusp of a great spiritual awakening, a spiritual “Golden Age” of sorts, the likes of which have not been seen for centuries, if ever. He also mentioned that we (the younger generations) would be truly blessed to see this age begin to manifest, even if he didn’t. This “spiritual awakening” would not be specifically Liberal Catholic or Christian for that matter, but would transcend all religions, cultures, beliefs, and nations. Finally, he mentioned that, as humanity begins to wake from its spiritual slumber, there would be friction and inertia as “the Past” would resist and push against this awakening, and that the first years of the new Millennium would be a challenge – but this spiritual awakening would be inevitable and will prevail.

With that in mind, we now stand at the dawn of 2012, and recent events in the news and in the

world show that something has been changing for almost a decade, and indeed *something is changing* – what that shall be remains to be seen. The “friction and inertia” of the Past is plainly evident, but so is the growing awareness that we *are* truly a global people, united with technologies and social networking and a globalised culture that had only a few years ago seemed unimaginable. Moreover, many people of

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many different faiths, beliefs and philosophies are openly expressing an awareness, a sense of a new awakening, a sense that we have truly begun to enter the Aquarian age. Even various popular movements in this country and elsewhere are showing a strong spiritual dimension to their activism! To this end, in the Church Center where I currently serve, we have decided to seize the opportunity, to make 2012 “the Year of Spiritual Awakening” and to continually build this Intention and its Thought-form to its fullest fruition, in our individual and collective Prayers and Initiatic Work.

In this issue, we are pleased to present to you “Occupy the Godhead” by Father Thomas Miller, rector of Saint Gabriel’s Liberal Catholic Church in Fairfield, IA (U.S.A.). Also, we present a re-print of Father Nicholas Ford’s “A Sermon for Epiphany,” originally published in the October 1991 edition of *The Liberal Catholic*. Finally, we continue our series of chapters from *Partaking in the Christian Mysteries*, by the late Bishop Sten Von Krusenstierna, with “The Central Mystery.”

On behalf of the Presiding Bishop and myself, I would like to extend to our readers – and to all humanity – the warmest fraternal and charitable blessings for the coming year and for the spiritual awakening of us all!

*Ad Maiorem Dei Gloriam,*  
Father Ian Carman

Solemnity of Mary  
January 1, 2012



## Occupy the Godhead

*Father Thomas Miller  
Saint Gabriel, Fairfield, IA  
Province of the U.S.A.*

**Advent is a preparation for Christmas**, a time of preparation for birth of Christ within each of us. Through this season, God sends us great help in preparing for this birth. For Christmas is not only a commemoration of the birth of Our Lord, but a time of special outpouring of spiritual force to powerfully aid us in our spiritual evolution. By God's will all of the kingdoms of Creation swell up in rejoicing – the Angels and all the other kingdoms of Nature – the carol says, "*let Heaven and Nature sing*".

As a part of our spiritual heritage we humans have total freedom of will. During Advent we have a special opportunity to use our will and make the choice to attune ourselves with the rest of Creation in receiving and benefiting from the special outpouring of Christmas. If we prepare ourselves, we shall receive more. The preparation may need to begin with an attitude shift. The days of Advent and the Christmas season are rightly known as holidays – Holy Days – days especially dedicated to the holy. They are meant to help lift us out of the mundane and upward to our goals of spiritual development.

We actually have to do something about preparing a place in our personality for the expected guest, lest there be “no room at the inn” on Christmas. Remember the scripture: “*Take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness and the cares of this (material) life, and that Day come upon you unawares.*” We are encouraged by the Church to deliberately make these days of Advent and Christmas Holy Days. And the Church gives us help and guidance in doing so.

*A successful spiritual life – a life that manifests spirit in the world - requires both freedom from slavery to materialism AND enough natural, God-given material abundance to freely express spiritual values and to glorify God.*

Our Advent Collect contains the key thought “*Being ever mindful of our spiritual heritage*”. This is the key to the practice of Advent – encourage thoughts and take actions which create mindfulness of our spiritual heritage in ourselves and others. Just what is our

Spiritual Heritage? Spirit itself! Spirit is our essential nature, we are made in the image and likeness of God, a Godspark, a little Trinity which is who we are, our essence.

Spirit as spirit has no needs. It is self-sufficient. But a spiritual life is a *life* – a continuity of experience and expression in time and space within a personality. A so-called *non-spiritual life* is a continuity of experience in time and space which ignores it's essence, it's spiritual heritage, like the Prodigal Son. A *spiritual life* is a life which has a place for the spirit – our essence, or spiritual heritage – in the midst of time and space, throughout experience and expression. A successful spiritual life – a life that manifests spirit in the world - requires both freedom from slavery to materialism AND enough natural, God-given material abundance to freely express spiritual values and to glorify God.

Discrimination, our first intent for Advent, is a tool to help create this balance which is necessary to build a spiritual life for ourselves. The following Advent Sundays will supply additional tools in this purpose. If someone says that I have discrimination, it usually means that they believe that

*The Liberal Catholic*

I agree with their opinions. But spiritual discrimination is more, much more. The Latin root of the word is *discriminatio*: which is said to mean *the contrasting of opposite thoughts*.

Discrimination is a faculty of the subtle part of the mind we call the intellect. A master has said, "*the mind considers, the intellect decides*." The intellect has the ability to receive knowledge about opposites and to register the differences.

It is common in our times for people to criticize the intellect. "*You're living too much in your head*." But it is not the intellect itself which is at fault. Rather the culprit is our Western, scientific habit of trying to use the intellect to control everything. Our culture and our schooling program us to employ the intellect as the "*one hammer for all nails*", but that is a cultural habit, not the Divine intention. As Albert Einstein said: "*We should take care not to make the intellect our god; it has, of course, powerful muscles, but no personality*."

*The intellect can achieve many things, but its best role is to behold the absolute, infinite nature of God and simultaneously experience the finite, personal, glorious and adorable divinity of God.*

The intellect can achieve many things, but its best role is to behold the absolute, infinite nature of God and simultaneously experience the finite, personal, glorious and adorable divinity of God. In this knowing we both experience and participate in the unity of the Blessed Trinity, the Three in One, One in Three Persons of the Godhead.

"*Be still and know that I am God*." This has been called the Beatific Vision. This process of sublime knowing is the inner Christmas, the birth of the Christ child within us. It is our spiritual heritage and the wellspring of our enlightenment.

The first step of our preparation for Christmas is to deliberately make the days of Advent holy by giving ourselves to spiritual discrimination which comes in the deepest experiences of silence, our simplest form of awareness. Meditate, pray, receive Holy Communion, be generous and spread joy! Let all of the celebrating, decorating, and giving be inspired from the inner birth. May God make it so.

- Father Thomas Miller



## **A Sermon for Epiphany**

*Rev. Nicholas Ford*

*Originally published in  
The Liberal Catholic, Vol LX No. 3, October 1991, pp. 21-24.*

**Today is, of course,** the Feast of the Epiphany, which from the fourth century has been commemorated by the Church as the anniversary of the birth of Jesus – as well as the twenty-fifth of December: whichever date an individual church celebrated depended upon whose calendar they were using.

Increasingly over the succeeding centuries, the Western Churches showed a preference for the December celebration, and those of the East for the January one. Eventually, though, a compromise was reached whereby the Nativity was celebrated more or less universally on the twenty-fifth of December, and the commemoration of the Visitation of the Magi became a sort of subsidiary festival on the sixth of January – but it continued to be known by its original name of Epiphany, from the Greek *Epiphanyos*, or “Manifestation”.

Now I think we have missed something by moving the celebration of the Birth from this day, for we are told that everything of significance is revealed to us in a threefold fashion: today being also the commemoration of the Baptism of Jesus and also of the First Miracle at Cana in some earlier traditions.

Each of these three is an Epiphany, or Divine Manifestation: the first being that of the Saviour coming into the world – the Incarnation in the physical body of the historical Jesus the man, the teacher, prophet and healer. The second is that of his initiation or Baptism by John, whereby the man Jesus becomes the Christos, the Anointed One – at which event all three persons of the Holy Trinity are recorded as having manifested together at the same point in time and space:

*[We] are told that everything of significance is revealed to us in a threefold fashion: today being also the commemoration of the Baptism of Jesus and also of the First Miracle at Cana in some earlier traditions. Each of these three is an Epiphany, or Divine Manifestation....*

the Son of Man, candidate for initiation as the Son of God; the voice of the All-Father acknowledging Jesus as His Son; and the Holy Ghost descending upon (and presumably into) Jesus the Anointed. So it is that the higher powers incarnate in the man Jesus, are quickened by the Holy Ghost, and the Man assumes truly a Divine nature. The third is the first canonical mention that Jesus is now able to exceed the limitations of physical law as it applies to the ordinary, undeveloped human beings – according to the Gospel of John, apparently by rearranging the molecules of a household water supply so that it becomes wine: certainly an example of Transubstantiation. Esoteric tradition has it that this ceremonial meal at Cana was in fact a Mass – a “wedding feast” only insofar as it was a rite confirming the marriage of two complementary opposites effecting the union of the outer selves of the participants with their inner self, or soul: the coming of the bridegroom to the bride is an allegory Jesus uses frequently when instructing his disciples – and, after all, the sacramental meal which took

place on Maundy Thursday is called “The Last” – the last Jesus celebrated bodily with the faithful – which presupposes that there had previously been others.

These, then, are the three stages or levels of Manifestation of the Divine descent onto the material plane: physical incarnation or reincarnation of a developed soul as a suitable human vehicle; the metaphysical incarnation when the “Avatar” is embodied; and its dispensation of healing and enlightenment; or to summarise it even more briefly: the arrival of a physical channel; its establishment; and the beginning of its effectual action.

As Liberal Catholics, we are at liberty to read the Biblical accounts of the events we commemorate at this season and on this day as either literal, historical fact or as symbolic, eternal and universal principles given to us in the form of mythical narrative.

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Now according to my imperfect understanding, these Biblical narratives are indeed historical events – at least, I believe, insofar as they have a basis in historical fact although accretions of older myth and later garbled tradition have partly obscured them.

But even if we choose to regard them as exclusively historical events alone, we certainly have to admit that Truth is stranger than Fiction – as History often proves to be; we can allow the past to inspire us in our own development and

refinement by emulation: we can take the enigmatic aspects as a challenge to sharpen our exegetical and research skills, whether academic or clairvoyant, and strive to interpret them more clearly... but there is in my view something that we must *not* be tempted to do, and that is to regard these events as in any way unique.

For it is not uniqueness which should commend an event to our attention as being of importance for us, but a cynical pattern of repeated events is what we ought to take as significant – for it is by repetition that everything in Creation grows and develops. The study of History teaches us that all situations in Time repeat themselves in their essential aspects, and they always will as long as there is Karma to be worked out and until the human race grows up. What is borne out by repetition is the inner meaning, or nature of an event – and if we allow ourselves to contemplate the recurrent pattern of the heroic descent of the Divine onto the material plane of the uplifting of the lower orders of Creation – the sublime sacrifice of the all-merciful Creator sending forth his long-suffering emissaries *because* of the backwardness of the human condition rather than despite it – instead of looking at the Epiphany as just one isolated event in time and History to be believed or disbelieved as the fancy takes us, the nature of Epiphany can become for us all the more wonderful, all the more challenging, all the more inspiring.

An impression of the apparent uniqueness of things is, I think, a sort of hallucination brought about by an illusory way of looking at the world, and to cherish notions of uniqueness is to fail to see the whole picture and thus lose the opportunity of learning from the interconnectedness of things.

I remember, for example, that the first few times I attended a Liberal Catholic Mass I was most perplexed and displeased at the singing of the “Adeste, Fideles” – “O Come, All Ye Faithful”, after the Consecration. Why, I ask myself, are they singing a Christmas carol? This was a song I had cherished ever since my early childhood for its cultural associations with an historical event I believed to have

been unique in Time – in much the same way I “believed” as a child that fir trees, snow and oranges went with the Crib and the Baby Jesus. It was to me as if roast turkey and plum pudding had been served up for dinner ever Sunday – a feast, if you will, held to be unique to one day only in the culinary year. Surely, I thought, this repetition will cheapen it, and make it commonplace. Now to me, the really depressing thing about this attitude of mind is that I was not six years old at the time – but twenty-six!

Well, it was foolish of me: for it has slowly dawned on me since that every Mass celebrates the Incarnation – indeed, more than that, it *demonstrates* it. Each Mass is, in a very real sense, Christ-Mass, because there never was and never can be a Mass at which Christ is not really present. And in the same way it *is* Epiphany, for anyone who has the eyes to see and who has the gift of clear sight can tell you that consecrated Host and Chalice radiate with the Divine manifestation. Now for all I know, this might well explain why for the first three hundred years after the Ascension there is no evidence that the Church regarded Christmas or Epiphany as justifying a special celebration in the form of a Festal Mass, and why two centuries appear to have passed before the Church even bothered to work out a date on which the historical event was supposed to have happened.

Now I am certain that a special concentration of high force descends upon our planet at the Midwinter Solstice, and for a few days afterward, as at no other time in the year; but that is in the nature of the Midwinter Solstice, and always will be, whether the soul of a Saviour or an Avatar descends to Earth with the transmission or not.

I am also certain that known anniversaries of any specific event are occasions of exceptional power for anyone wishing to make an occult connection with the forces released by that past event, or to communicate physically with the persons who originally took part in it. It is easier to contact a deceased loved one who has not reincarnated, for example, on the anniversary of his or her death than at any other time: it is also easier, for whatever reason, to re-create that event, and confirm and strengthen its Akashic record by doing so, thereby adding to the reservoir of force originally generated by that event. And it is perhaps for this

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reason that, in the fourth century after the soul that was incarnate as the man Jesus left this plane, when it was perhaps felt for whatever reason that our connection with the Master was not as strong as it could (or perhaps as it might have been) that Mother Church thought it good to make a special anniversary commemoration or remembrance. And it is evidently good that we should continue to do so. Traditionally, the great feasts of the Church – Christmas, Easter and Pentecost – were the occasion on which all the faithful were especially enjoined to communicate. Indeed, it was at Epiphany Mass that the date of the next Easter was solemnly announced to every congregation. And to this day, attendances at churches throughout the world are doubled or tripled on these occasions – as if it is thought that one will be getting something special at those times, and that, by contrast, other Masses throughout the year aren’t worth bothering with.

How much people miss! For while it is no doubt true that something extra is given at such times, there is always, as Bishop [Charles Webster] Leadbeater observed through his many clairvoyant

examinations of the Mass at different times and in different places with differing intensities of devotion and of intention, there is always a guaranteed minimum effect. There is always a Divine hypostasis, a down-rushing of force higher than all but the very highest part of ourselves, transfiguring the Elements and the celebrant. And when a communicant takes into himself this aspect of the Hypostasis manifested in the transformed Host, those who can see tell us that the aura of the recipient manifests a brilliance and intensity for some hours afterward – just as a greater light shone around Bethlehem when the Great Soul was born as Jesus – and just as the astral plane is illuminated, sometimes for a radius of several miles, around the place where the Mass is celebrated.

*We are not simply remembering past events enacted once by others – we are participating in a mystical process that is true for all time, just as surely as if we were at Bethlehem or on the banks of the Jordan or in the house at Cana.*

The historical event, the splendid anniversary commemoration, the everyday remembrance - they are all the same, differing one from the other only in degree. Just how qualitatively different the remembrance or re-enactment are from the original event that inspires them is entirely up to us. How glorious, how effective, how noticeable the manifestation of the arrival and dispensation of

the Christ is, depends upon our intention and our subsequent practice – today, and every day we invoke the Christ, receive the Sacrament and take Christ into us. For we are not simply remembering past events enacted once by others – we are participating in a mystical process that is true for all time, just as surely as if we were at Bethlehem or on the banks of the Jordan or in the house at Cana. The *Epiphany* is ours to assist as much or as little as we choose. May we therefore work to the best of our abilities to be as worthy of the descent of Christ into us as in the perfect man Jesus, Christ was fully manifest.

- Rev. Nicholas Ford



## **The Central Mystery**

*The Right Reverend Sten Herman Von Krusenstierna  
(1909-1992)*

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**The central mystery** of the Christian Mysteries is of course the Holy Eucharist, also called the Mass. *Eucharist* actually means “thanksgiving”. It is without any doubt the great and central mystery of the sacraments of the Christian Church. Although there are great variations in the rites of the different Catholic Churches, the consecration of the elements of bread and wine into the “Body and Blood” of our Lord is the central part, and takes place in all rites when performed by a duly ordained priest or bishop.

### **The Sacramental System**

We shall first have a look at the sacramental system as a whole from the Liberal Catholic point of view as expressed by some of our early bishops.

At all stages of human evolution, religion is designed to help progressing souls. But it is when the conflict is most keen that this help is most effectual because then it is most needed. It was to help men to reach salvation that Christ founded the Christian church. Through other great faiths – Hinduism, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, the same Lord helps others to reach the same salvation, for there are many folds but one Shepherd. In the Christian religion, especially in the Catholic parts of it, the “means of grace” or sacraments are especially His means of help. Scriptures, prayers, fellowship one with another, are useful accessories of religion. But the very essence of the Catholic religion is the grace or power of the Lord Himself, distributed to us on Earth through the sacraments.<sup>1</sup>

Though Christ’s teaching has had great influence on the Western world there was no doubt in the minds of the Liberal Catholic fathers that the sacraments, as instituted by Christ and administered by the Church Catholic, were by far the most important aids to man’s spiritual evolution. The sacramental concept is not exclusive to Christianity; similar systems have existed in the older religions, but usually in secret.

In chapters 25 and 26 of *The Christian Gnosis*, Bishop [Charles Webster] Leadbeater tells us that Christ appears to have adapted a system used in the Egyptian Mysteries for the spreading of spiritual blessing over the world in such a way that it could reach a very much larger number of people. He calls the Catholic sacramental system a kind of culmination of the earlier system. The main purpose of the ancient Egyptian system was to “ray” out spiritual blessing over the country. This is what the Christian Church still does, even though we do not know how it works, unless we can see the inner worlds as in the case of Bishop Leadbeater. A sacrament has been defined as “an inward and

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<sup>1</sup> Frank Waters Pigott, *The Parting of the Ways* (Sidney: Saint Alban Press, 1925), Ch. 9.

spiritual grace given through an outward and visible sign”.

Bishop Pigott writes:

The sacramental system is an elaborate piece of machinery, chiefly super-material, whereby the real presence of Christ is constantly brought very near to the person who receives the sacraments. This cannot be proved except by those who can see with the inner sight and by them only to themselves. But still, that is the claim of Catholic Christians. There may be and probably are other ways by which a similar contact may be established, but this on the Catholic Christian theory is the main purpose of the Christian Church – to make possible just that close union, and for that purpose the Catholic organisation with its apostolic succession is necessary. The end and aim of the sacraments is not just that man should have this close union with the Lord, but that with the help of that union his embodied life should the more quickly effect a union with his life in the eternal and so with all life, which is God, and that he should become more and more conscious of that union and so become progressively more godlike.

Another main purpose of the sacramental system, so the Liberal Catholic [Church] claims, is that this grace which is received in the sacraments is, at the Eucharist particularly, spread far and wide over the neighbourhood of the church in which it is celebrated, scattering spiritual blessings like showers over innumerable people and helping them, though they know it not, just in proportion as they are capable of being helped. For this purpose also the organisation of the Church is necessary. Thus the Christian Church, as the Catholic sees it, with its sacramental system, is almost a unique arrangement. It is mechanism but a mechanism which is mainly super-physical; it is mechanism by which grace from higher worlds is received and transmitted.<sup>2</sup>

### **Its Occult Nature**

The sacramental system is occult in the sense that its actual working is hidden (the Latin word *occultus* means hidden) from our physical senses and that it principally affects the inner vehicles or bodies of man. Its main purpose is to bring spiritual forces down from higher levels to assist the spiritual evolution of humanity. Bishop Leadbeater tells us that in this remarkable process the following factors are necessary:

1. The Lord Christ Himself, the great world teacher, the head of all religions, who is one with the Second Aspect of the Trinity. We speak of the Holy Trinity in Christian terms as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Other religions have different names for it. For this planet our Lord Christ is the channel for and one with the Son, the Second Aspect of the Holy Trinity.
2. Those who through ordination have been prepared to act as conveyors of His powers: the bishops, the priests and the deacons of the Church Catholic. They are linked in a certain way to the Christ himself which enables Him to work through them. It is quite a remarkable system, and those of us who have been ordained into the orders of the

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<sup>2</sup> *The Liberal Catholic Magazine*, Fall 1929.

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Christian Church know that at our ordination something unusual happens, something quite extraordinary. I know in my own case, for instance, that after my ordination to the priesthood I was somehow a different person. I think many other priests have felt the same.

3. The great “reservoir” of spiritual power from which the ordained clergy can draw. [Bishop] Leadbeater tells us that it is possible to give spiritual blessings to the world because there is this spiritual power reservoir. We use words of engineering here, but it is the only way it can be properly explained; by words like “channel”, “reservoir”, etc.
4. Certain angelic beings which are set apart for this work and assist in the conveying of the spiritual forces. They do the necessary work on the planes above the physical with which the priest would be unfamiliar. There, “on the other side” in the inner worlds, are other beings that do their part of the great work. The angels are also the ones that help us to distribute these particular powers, these spiritual forces. This is of course nothing new. In early Christian literature we find mention of the angels that some people had seen at services, particularly at the Holy Eucharist. This was known to the church fathers also. Saint [John] Chrysostom, for instance, mentions that “you must pay your respect to the angels – they are coming down now to help us in the Holy Eucharist”.
5. The recipients of the sacramental grace which include not only humanity but also the other kingdoms of nature in so far as they are able to respond.

In traditional theology each of the sacraments must have a minister, a subject, “matter” and “form”, These are the terms that were coined by the theologians in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. They specified that what is needed for the proper working of the sacrament is first of all a minister (a person who has been set apart for that particular work, a priest or bishop), a subject on which it is bestowed, matter, a material object used such as water in baptism, oil in confirmation, etc., and form – the words used. These constitute the mechanics of an effective sacrament from the theological point of view. If any of these are left out the sacrament is not valid. Even so it has at times been the Catholic view that the Lord Christ, in His wisdom and compassion, may confer the sacrament, even though there was a deficiency in its administration. But we cannot be sure of this, and it is therefore essential that all sacraments be administered with the greatest of care, following exactly the authorised liturgy in every detail. In the Liberal Catholic Church we are very careful to exactly follow the liturgy and the words given.

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In our *Statement of Principles* Bishop [James Ingall] Wedgwood wrote concerning the sacraments: “Through these means of grace He is ever present in His church, giving to His people the privilege of fellowship and communion with Him, guiding and protecting them at every stage from the cradle to

the grave”<sup>3</sup>.

Let us see how the sacramental system is set up by our Lord. It has been created by Him for the benefit of humanity and each sacrament has a special function to fulfill. Baptism and Confirmation prepare the incarnating soul for the life to be lived in a personality here on earth. For this purpose the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation confer what we call a definite “character” on the recipient. Both in the occult and in the theological sense this is a distinctive “mark” impressed upon the subtle bodies and a link established with the Lord Christ. As [Bishop] Leadbeater tells us, it can be seen in the etheric body of a person that he has been baptised – one can see a little cross on the forehead.

The Holy Eucharist gives the personality spiritual help and upliftment throughout his life. Penance and Holy Unction help to restore him to psychic and physical health when needed and assist him at the end of his physical life. Matrimony links a man and a woman together with the various degrees to the Christ as channels for His grace. It is by this sacrament that through the episcopate the sacramental system continues to function throughout the ages. This sacrament also confers a definite character or mark.

### **The Nature of Ritual**

For a further understanding of how the sacramental system works we have to look at ritual in general. Ritual is something that we find not only in Christianity but in all religions. Even a religion such as

*[Every] true ritual must in some way reflect or mirror the higher worlds or the cosmos, or the act of creation, or some element in the evolution of man. The ancient Hermetic axiom “as above so below” is usually the relevant principle in ritual.*

Buddhism, which is thought to be a purely philosophical religion, has developed very complex rituals. Ritual has been studied by some prominent scholars this century.

They have come to the conclusion that every true ritual must in some way reflect or mirror the higher worlds or the cosmos, or the act of creation, or some element in the evolution of man. The ancient Hermetic axiom “as above so below” is usually the relevant principle in ritual. Since ancient times, myths

and symbols have been used in ritual. The principle just outlined, “as above so below”, has been recognised by scholars as indicating what they call genuine ritual. True religious ritual is seen as a symbolic recreation of a cosmic event or situation. It may be the creation of the world, the eternal sacrifice of the Deity by which the world is sustained, or the Last Supper in the upper room. 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 Wedgwood 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 of creation.

A current theological view of ritual is given by the Reverend G.R. Davies in *A Dictionary of Liturgy and Worship*. As the basis of any religious-type ritual or rite, he gives four basic concepts:

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<sup>3</sup> *Statement of Principles and Summary of Doctrine*, Ninth Edition (London, Saint Alban Press, 2007), 3. The Ninth Edition of the *Statement of Principles and Summary of Doctrine* reads “Through these means of grace He is ever present in His church, giving to His people the privilege of fellowship and communion with Him, guiding and protecting them at every stage of life.”

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1. Symbolism – All rituals “have a symbolic character whereby the natural object or action symbolises the divine”. (We human beings constantly work with symbols. Even the words we speak or write are symbols conveying the thought of the writer or speaker.)
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, or what is beyond us human beings in our ordinary personalities as we are down here. We must not forget that there is a divine spark in each one of us).
3. Repetition – “The divine power is thereby represented as being brought into the present... in the sense of the representation of the original sacred action” (i.e. the creation of the world or the first Holy Eucharist, etc.).
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.”

### **How Ritual Operates**

Now let us look at it from another point of view, how ritual actually operates. The ritual is the bridge between the physical and the super-physical, the outer and the inner, the seen and the unseen. Between physical reality as we know it and “alternative orders of reality”. 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. For the proper functioning of any ritual three elements are needed:

1. The person or persons who perform the action of the ritual. That function is nearly always dual in true ritual: on the physical level a human being, a priest, a brahmin, a lama, and on higher non-physical levels an angel, or as they are called in the East, a *deva*. Only persons 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 or layout of the traditional scheme to be followed. We live in space and time. Ritual, though it has to reflect the cosmos and the divine action, still has to be enacted by us in space and time. Since ancient times we know that temples and churches have been built as the setting for the performance of ritual, they constitute “sacred space”. The symbolical recreation of the primordial event on which a ritual is based takes place in time, “sacred time”.
3. The actual 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 together bring about the desired result.

Strictly speaking, liturgical action consists of combined 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 the concentration upon the work being done. Ritual is a holistic process. Bishop Wedgwood was most emphatic on this point.

In all ritual, in addition to words and gestures, certain physical phenomena which influence our senses are used, such as light or fire, colours, sound in various forms, incense. Light, sound and perfume do not only have an impact on our senses, but each constitutes a link with worlds beyond the physical. This has been known from time immemorial. Bishop Leadbeater writes;

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.<sup>4</sup>

### Sacred time

It is most remarkable that when a true ritual is performed there is according to scholars a kind of “reversal of time”. We are then in “sacred time”, the time in which the ancient primordial ritual is repeated. Professor Mircea Eliade, one of the foremost scholars of our time in the field of religious studies, writes in his book *The Sacred and the Profane* that for religious man there exists not only ordinary, “secular” time, but also “sacred” time.<sup>5</sup> This time is periodically recoverable. By means of rites and during great festivals the participants may pass from ordinary time into this sacred time.

*One of the main differences between sacred time and ordinary time is that sacred time by its very nature is reversible. It is a primordial mythical time, made present whenever the ancient archetypal rites are re-enacted.... [It] is actually there all the time, in a passive state, or in a higher dimension perhaps, but is brought into action by reciting the words of the divine rite in the name of the Blessed Trinity.*

This means that when our *Liturgy* is enacted we are in a mysterious way back in sacred time, in the time when the world was young and God the Son “in the mystery of His boundless love and His eternal sacrifice did breathe forth His own divine life into His universe”.<sup>6</sup> Or we are in the time when the first Holy Eucharist was celebrated, when Christ and His disciples met in the Upper room at the “last supper”, prototype of all Holy Eucharists ever since and in the future.

In some strange way this is a revival, a continuation – whether we are aware of it or not – of the original myth on which the rite is based. We must remember that true myth is nearer to reality than

<sup>4</sup> Charles Webster Leadbeater, *The Science of the Sacraments*, Sixth Edition (Adyar: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1920), 471.

<sup>5</sup> Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane* (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1957), 68-95.

<sup>6</sup> *The Liturgy of the Liberal Catholic Church*, Fifth Edition (London, Saint Alban Press, 1983), 215.

the fleeting everyday happenings around us. Myths are today no longer looked upon as childish stories invented by primitive man, but are seen as archetypal models related to the deeper layers of human consciousness.

One of the main differences between sacred time and ordinary time is that sacred time by its very nature is reversible. It is a primordial mythical time, made present whenever the ancient archetypal rites are re-enacted. It seems to me that it is actually there all the time, in a passive state, or in a higher dimension perhaps, but is brought into action by reciting the words of the divine rite in the name of the Blessed Trinity.

It is difficult to realise this, we are not used to this concept. Our whole way of thinking is so set within the two borders of ordinary space and time. How is it possible that we can reverse time? Here is an eminent scholar (and he is not the only one) who says that sacred time, the time of the creation of the world, or the time of the supper of Jesus with his disciples in the upper room, can be repeated and that by the “re-enactment” we are somehow back in that “sacred time” of the original event.

Just as a church or temple constitutes “sacred space”, so the religious service celebrated inside it takes place in “sacred time”, a time quite different from that in the streets outside. During the service we are in a different time dimension, in the mythical time in which Our Lord walked on this earth and instituted the Sacraments.

*During the service we are in a different time dimension, in the mythical time in which Our Lord walked on this earth and instituted the Sacraments.*

We know when we take part in a service that there is something wonderful happening, something unusual. We feel uplifted by it. We can't quite explain why. Maybe it is because we are in “sacred space” and “sacred time”.

### **The Real Presence**

There is another aspect of the central mystery, what we call “the real presence”. Whether Christ is actually present in the consecrated elements on the altar, and in what way, has been a matter of dispute among theologians for centuries. Views range from the actual flesh and blood of Christ's body being present, to the elements simply being symbols of Christ's sacrifice on the cross. The real presence and the process of *transubstantiation* has been and remains one of the greatest mysteries of Catholic Christianity. The Liberal Catholic fathers, in all reverence, have been able to throw some further light on this subject in addition to the traditional Catholic view. We must of course remember that we work with symbols when we say “this is my body”. “this is my blood”. Bishop Wedgwood writes:

Students of the hidden side of Christianity know that when the consecration of the bread and wine takes place in the Mass, the substance – *SUB STANS*, that which stands beneath or behind that bread and wine – is changed by the Angel of the Presence who comes from the Christ, and that there flows through the Sacred Elements a direct ray of light, a line of living fire from our Blessed Lord, and through Him, we are told, even from the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity Himself. That is what is meant when it is said that the bread is the body of the Lord. For a body is that which is a vehicle for life or consciousness or power; that which expresses the life. Our physical bodies are the instruments that we use in this physical world for expressing ourselves. And so also in this sacrament the bread is the body of Christ in the sense that the life and blessing of

Christ pour through that bread as their vehicle on the physical plane. Whenever the consecration takes place a great stream of influence pours forth from the church over the surrounding neighbourhood, and there is a second manifestation of power when anyone who is present at the service sends a thought or aspiration, of devotion, of worship to the Christ. A ray of living light connects him with the sacrament upon the altar. The adoration that he outpours calls forth from the consecrated Host a great response, far greater of course than the effort he puts out.<sup>7</sup>

We must then look upon the consecrated elements as the physical vehicles of our Lord present on thousands of altars. Instead of the flesh and blood of the human body which He used 2,000 years ago, He is now present with us in the form of consecrated bread and wine.

*In addition to the Holy Eucharist the service of Benediction of the Most Holy Sacrament is dependent on the fact, asserted by the Catholic Church and confirmed by clairvoyant observation, that The real presence remains in the consecrated Host for a long period, actually until the bread disintegrates.*

The word “transubstantiation” has been used by theologians since the twelfth century to explain what takes place when the elements of bread and wine are changed into the body and blood of Christ. In the thirteenth century the doctrine of transubstantiation was formulated by Saint Thomas Aquinas. According to this doctrine the substance (Latin *sub* – under, *stans* – standing), is that which stands under or behind an outer physical object, and of which the object we perceive with our senses is the physical expression. That substance of the bread and wine is transubstantiated (Latin *trans* – across) into the body and blood of Christ, while the “accidents” – the physical appearance of the bread and wine –

remain the same.

The Liberal Catholic fathers were generally in agreement with the Catholic doctrine, except that they would not have agreed with those who interpreted it in such a way as to assume the actual physical flesh and blood of Our Lord as being present. To quote Bishop Leadbeater:

Though the outer form of the bread and wine is unchanged after the consecration, the manifestation of the divine life which underlies them is utterly different. It was divine life before, for all life is divine, but now it is a far fuller and closer epiphany of God.<sup>8</sup>

Of the substance of the bread and wine he says:

It is switched aside with the speed of a lightning flash and its place is taken by what looks like a line of fire, a single thread of communication, reaching up, without division or alteration to the Lord Christ himself as the Teacher and Head of the Church. And through Him to a height beyond any power of clairvoyant vision which we have at present at our disposal, into that other divine aspect of Himself which is Very God of

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<sup>7</sup> Bishop James Ingall Wedgwood, *New Insights into Christian Worship* (London, Saint Alban Press, 1976), 129,130.

<sup>8</sup> Leadbeater, *The Science of the Sacraments*, 209.

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Very God.<sup>9</sup>

In addition to the Holy Eucharist the service of Benediction of the Most Holy Sacrament is dependent on the fact, asserted by the Catholic Church and confirmed by clairvoyant observation, that the real presence remains in the consecrated Host for a long period, actually until the bread disintegrates. Bishop Leadbeater again tells us that in the service of Benediction, as seen by the clairvoyant, a special radiation like a beam of light is emitted when the Benediction with the Host in the monstrance is given. When the priest makes the sign of the cross with the monstrance over the congregation, a tremendous blessing comes down from the Lord Christ himself.

✠ Sten



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<sup>9</sup> Leadbeater, *The Science of the Sacraments*, 210.

## **Alphabetical Directory of Countries & Bishops of The Liberal Catholic Church**

For all communication to any named representative of the Church, please send your correspondence to the Editor at [editor.tlc@TheLCC.org](mailto:editor.tlc@TheLCC.org) who will forward it to the appropriate recipient.

**NB:** Any Bishop claiming to be a Bishop of The Liberal Catholic Church and whose name does *not* appear in the following List is not a member of this Church.

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### **Argentina**

*Regionary Bishop:*

*Bishop Miguel Batet* [RegionaryBp.Argentina@TheLCC.org](mailto:RegionaryBp.Argentina@TheLCC.org)

*Auxiliary Bishop:*

*Bishop Arnoldo Salzmänn* [BpSalzmänn.Argentina@TheLCC.org](mailto:BpSalzmänn.Argentina@TheLCC.org)

### **Australia**

*Regionary Bishop:*

*Bishop Graham Preston* [RegionaryBp.Australasia@TheLCC.org](mailto:RegionaryBp.Australasia@TheLCC.org)

*Diocesan Bishop Western Australia:*

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**Congo-Brazzaville**

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**Cuba**

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**Denmark**

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**Germany**

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**Ghana**

*Regionary Bishop:*

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**Gt. Britain & Ireland**

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**Indonesia**

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**Ivory Coast (Côte d'Ivoire)**

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**Puerto Rico**

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**Slovenia**

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**South Africa**

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**Spain**

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**Sweden**

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**Switzerland (Suisse-Romande)**

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**Togo**

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