



ST GEORGE'S LECTURES

3 - Liturgical Principle and Cathedral Practice

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Liturgical Principle and Cathedral Practice

Michael Perham MA (Oxon)

Vice-Dean and Precentor, Norwich Cathedral

This third St George's Cathedral lecture, which I am privileged to give tonight, is entitled "Liturgical Principle and Cathedral Practice". I want to explore four principles or, more accurately, four clusters of principles, and then in a kind of epilogue to wonder out loud how a Cathedral may be an exemplar of them. Of course liturgical principle could very easily be narrowly academic and in danger of irrelevance in the realities of pastoral experience in Christian congregations. My hope is that you will think these principles firmly rooted in pastoral reality. But, in any case, liturgical principle is never the whole matter. Decisions about the ordering of worship in any community have to bring together clear thinking about the needs of the people in that place, the opportunities and constraints of the building in which they worship, and other concerns, all tested against the liturgical principles. But, if there are no principles to act as a yardstick, worship drifts and loses its mystery or its cutting edge. One word more by way of introduction before we plunge in. Let me give a working definition of liturgy. *Worship* is the offering of ourselves, our souls and bodies to God. *Liturgy* is that corpus of words, gestures, forms and rules that give shape to our worship. We often slip from one word into the other and I shall do so tonight, but at heart there is a distinction. Worship is what we offer to God. Liturgy is the means by which we are helped to offer it.

Here is the first principle. In a sense it's what I've just been saying, but it needs some exploration. *Liturgy is primarily a setting for communion with God.* This may seem obvious, but I believe we must be very clear, when we plan worship or participate in it, that this is, deep down, what it is all about. We are seeking, individually and corporately, to express to God our love and our longing in such a way that our sense of his reality is more sharply focused for us. There is real communion with him. Heaven and earth meet. We are swept off our feet by the divine presence. That's what worship is all about. Not about teaching or converting or engendering fellowship (though more of them in a moment), but encounter with the living God, the offering of worship in spirit and in truth. For me there is no phrase in the liturgy that carries more truth and longing than "therefore with angels and archangels and all the company of heaven", for in the liturgy the christian is playing at heaven, clocking in for a while to the eternal. Of course I am expressing an ideal. Fallen human beings as we are, our worship will often be earthbound and pedestrian. When heaven opens up for us, when the sense of God is suddenly very real, it will be fleeting, a glimpse, a hint, not much more than a possibility. But that's enough. That will sustain us. But the sadness is that, all too often, this longing for the heavenly realities is simply not on our agenda. We do not expect it. It is not our primary aim. All sorts of worthy lesser intentions fill our minds as we plan the liturgy and share in it. But we must recover this principle: liturgy is primarily a setting for communion with God. We shall recover it by teaching about it, by yearning for it and by an open expectancy that does not always settle for something less. But what of teaching and conversion and



ST GEORGE'S LECTURES

3 - Liturgical Principle and Cathedral Practice

engendering fellowship? Are they not legitimate intentions in the celebration of the liturgy? I believe that these things do indeed happen in the liturgy, but not so much because we set out to make them happen, but more because of the way God acts. We bring to God all that we can offer, the thankful loving worship of our hearts in spirit and in truth, nothing more than that, but nothing less, and, because he is the kind of God he is, he takes what we offer and returns it to us as a gift. By the touch of his Spirit worship becomes the means of all these other good things. The liturgy is indeed, for instance, a wonderful teacher. People can learn the mysteries of the Christian faith through celebrating it at a deeper level than they will learn through a hundred sermons or a thousand books of theology. But it is as the church offers worship that God turns it into a fruitful teaching experience. Similarly, the liturgy is a powerful setting for conversion. It is not that we set out to convert people through our services – we set out only to give our worship to God – but the stranger or the enquirer, stumbling into the christian assembly at worship, may well be touched by that encounter with deep reality. He or she may not immediately understand what is going on (and the constant drive for immediate accessibility in worship is a mistaken policy), but understanding is not what needs to happen first. The stranger or enquirer recognises that these worshippers are deeply engaged in something that has really gripped them, there's an authenticity and a total absorption that may indeed touch and disclose the divine. And if our liturgy too often fails to convert, it is not because it is inaccessible, but because there it too little worship in it; there is little genuine engagement with the living God. Worship turned into gift is God's way. Teaching, converting, engendering fellowship, forming people in Christ's pattern, and the list could and does go on. But the heart of it is this. All these things are gifts of God received in the liturgy. Yet they are not of our devising (at very least, they are not the primary focus of our planning). Our duty and our joy is more single-minded: to want the liturgy to be primarily a setting for our communion with God, and to offer worship in spirit and in truth, confident that we shall be given a glimpse of heaven.

Here is the second principle. *The liturgy is celebrated by the whole people of God through participation in word and action and silent prayer.* Now that is a more complicated principle than the first and we need to explore it bit by bit. "The liturgy is celebrated by the whole people of God." Let's concentrate on that for a few moments. I suppose this has been one of the key rediscoveries of recent years, this sense that it is the people who celebrate, not the priest alone. This recovery has focused on the way we understand the Eucharist, but it applies to all liturgical celebrations. Every baptised person is a celebrant in the liturgy. Or, to get hold of a deeper truth, it is the community of the baptised gathered for worship that is the celebrant. It is a corporate act in which all participate. This is not to undermine the role of the bishop or the priest. The more active the participation of the whole people of God in the liturgy, the more they need the ministry of the one who will preside over them, be an anchor to the liturgy, and give it stability and direction. But it is a presidency of the celebrating community; it is not a singular role appropriately called "the celebrant". There is a proper place for deacons, priests, and bishops, but that proper place is in distinctive ministries that enable the whole community to celebrate more effectively. It is the people, the *laos*, the assembly, that is primary.

One of the ways that this receives expression is in calling out lay people from the congregation to serve the community's celebration in particular ways. This may be in reading the scriptures (traditionally only the gospel reading belongs to the ordained, and that to the deacon, not the priest or bishop) and in offering prayers of intercession, classically called "the prayers of the people". This is right and proper, especially in an articulate literate age. But it has its own dangers. One is a strange tendency to clericalise those laity – they begin to speak like the clergy, dress like the clergy; they cease to look like people moving in and out of the congregation. Another is to



ST GEORGE'S LECTURES

3 - Liturgical Principle and Cathedral Practice

define too narrowly what constitutes a lay ministry in the Eucharist – for that is not just a matter of the “up front talking into microphone” roles; those who sing in the choir; those who bring the elements to the altar, those who smile and welcome at the door are all exercising a liturgical ministry in the service of the community gathered for worship. You do not need to be a confident public speaker to be bringing your distinctive gifts to the liturgy. But the greatest danger of this calling out for ministry is that it may obscure a deeper form of participation in which all share. Let us now turn to that.

“The liturgy is celebrated by the whole people of God through participation *in word and action and silent prayer.*” Our participation is not chiefly through our being called out for representative special ministries, but through what we do together as members of the assembly. And, in this principle, I have identified that by three elements: word, action and silent prayer. ‘Word’ is, I suppose, the most obvious. There is a rather obvious sense of participation when we open our mouths and say or sing liturgical texts together. The participation does seem the more real when we ‘say’, rather than ‘hear said’, and sing rather than ‘hear sung’. But it is possible to pursue this aspect of participation rather crudely and to imagine that good liturgy involves much chorus speaking by the entire assembly. Yet the key word in good liturgy is ‘dialogue’ – listening and speaking. Dialogue, whether between leader and people, or between cantor or choir and people. The mouth is not the only organ through which we may participate, and relentless congregational text leaves us exhausted rather than stimulated.

But participation by *action* also. We worship with souls and *bodies*. In the past Catholic Christians have often seemed to hold on to this truth more readily than Reformed Christians, in bowings, and crossings and varieties of posture and processional movements, as well as in more fundamental sacramental signs. In our own day Christians in the Reformed tradition have been recovering some of these aspects of worship, not least, in charismatic circles, by the lifting of arms and hands in prayer and praise. We have sometimes not been generous in recognising in other people’s particular forms of outward worship, worship with the body, worship in action, the same instinct that we have to express our worship in a different series of outward forms. But the instinct to bodily worship is a good one, and the recognition that, in liturgy as in much else in life, actions often speak louder than words is a sound one. There is a whole host of areas for exploration here, at which in this brief time I can do no more than hint. But we need, first of all, to recover a more natural sense of the symbolic. We do things in Church heavily laden with symbolism, but if people do not have eyes that are open to the possibility of meaning, if people are not expecting truth to jump out at them from the symbolic action, opportunities are lost. We need also to look quite rigorously at the symbols, actions and movements we employ in worship. Do we know why we do them? What do they mean to us? Or what might they convey to others – is it gospel truth that shines through or something rather less or even opposite?

Yet we need a degree of reticence in establishing too precisely the meaning of action and symbol, for part of their power and their attractiveness is that they can operate at a series of levels; there are meanings, not one meaning only. And, beyond that, it makes little sense to ask too closely “What is the meaning of this?” in some carefully choreographed patterned movement of ministers in the sanctuary in some great liturgy, for the meaning lies not in the significance of each aspect of what is almost a slow liturgical dance, but in the fact that here is a work of artistry, and the meaning is in the offering of the whole to God, each participant contributing, through disciplined care in movement and gesture, to what is being offered up as worship, though not a word be spoken.

But then every good thing has its dangers, and that description of liturgical movement and gesture may make liturgy sound like a spectator sport. Although we may be aided in our devotion by the visually pleasing, in the end liturgical



ST GEORGE'S LECTURES

3 - Liturgical Principle and Cathedral Practice

action is something you *do*, not something you *watch*. The ministers in the sanctuary moving around in patterns and raising arms and hands and bowing knees are not – please God – intent on pleasing themselves or even on giving aesthetic pleasure to the people in the pews; they are making a creative but disciplined offering to God. The person in the pew also needs to be given that dimension to their worship. To see a procession of robed ministers is one thing. To get up out of your pew and to process is quite another. For to process is, in small symbolic measure, to be on pilgrimage, and to be on pilgrimage is to be walking in step with the Lord; it is spiritually significant. “To do is to worship.” We need to recover that much more – to participate with our bodies as well as with our souls.

Participation in word and action and *silent prayer*. This last part is, I suspect, the most important. If the liturgy is really to breathe life, it has to be *prayed*. Christian people all too easily fall into the error of regarding their personal praying and the public worship of the church as two quite different things. But they feed one another, the liturgy as a stimulus to personal prayer, but personal prayer the very heart-beat of the liturgy itself. If every person does not bring to the liturgy a prayerful heart and fill every space in the liturgy with prayer, there will be a hollow shell, a beautiful form but nothing more. I use the word ‘space’ advisedly. But of course our liturgy all too often lacks a spirit of prayerfulness because there is a relentless character to worship that has *no* space, no silence, no time to pray. The loveliest work in the Latin liturgy is *Oremus*. It takes three words in English, “Let us pray”. It is a jewel, that phrase, a gracious invitation – “Let us pray”. But we have all too often turned it into an instruction about posture, or made it a run-in to a collect without even a pause. But it means what it says: “Let us *pray*”, not kneel, or say a collect, but pray. Be silent, be still, be open, listen, yearn, wait, engage with God. Every liturgy should have its silences, and in the Eucharist at very least silence should break out near the beginning – “Let us Pray” and silent praying, the community going deeper into prayer, before the president draws their praying together, *collects* their praying up, in the collect. Later there should be silence in the intercessions, which are a series of blocks of silence, stimulated by a few words, in which the people can pray. Finally there should be silence after the distribution – communion with God maintained in silent prayer. And if you can recover that sense of praying the liturgy at key moments like that, you find that for the rest of the service the prayer does not cease as we turn instead to reading, sermon, peace or song; the silent prayer simply goes underground; beneath the surface is a kind of undercurrent of praying that sustains the liturgy from beginning to end. It is often the missing ingredient. But it is the deepest form of participation – when we are most silent and most still – and the liturgy cannot live without it.

Here is my third principle. *The words of the liturgy express doctrine, bind the church together and ‘feed the soul’*. I want here to look at two things, first the tension between ‘common prayer’ and liturgical diversity, but secondly the search for a new liturgical rhetoric. But first the issue of ‘common prayer’. By ‘common prayer’ I mean that experience that whenever and wherever you go to worship, you encounter sufficient family likeness to the liturgy that you are never at a loss, always able to participate in familiar words and actions. Now common prayer is not simply a matter of words – style and ethos, music, ritual, architecture all contribute to it, but I want to concentrate in this short time on the words, for, at least for Anglicans, the common words of the liturgy have always been the heart of the matter. Anglicanism was built on common prayer. Indeed one could argue it was built on something even tighter – liturgical uniformity. Until the present century we accepted a liturgy in which there was very little room indeed for variation, local or cultural considerations, seasonal variety, least of all spontaneity. There was no struggle between common prayer and liturgical diversity. Liturgical uniformity ruled. In every Church the present century with its Liturgical Movement and its growing emphasis on local culture has seen a modification of the concept of common prayer, and a recognition that different communities and different occasions require a liturgical diversity that had



ST GEORGE'S LECTURES

3 - Liturgical Principle and Cathedral Practice

been lost for more than a thousand years. In our own Anglican Communion, there has been a fairly relentless march away from common prayer towards a growing variety of liturgical text and practice over a period of thirty years. I believe that it has brought much blessing. Liturgy has been set free to be the vehicle of renewal in many communities. It has been the setting for much spiritual growth, corporately and individually. The liturgy has been enabled to reclaim its place at the heart of life. So I would not want to argue for a return to the straight jacket of a past uniformity. But I would want to question how far some of our churches are going down this path of diversity and to wonder whether the loss of common prayer is not a very dangerous thing. I cannot speak for Australia, but in England the renewal of common prayer is becoming an important part of our agenda.

“The words of the liturgy express *doctrine*.” The danger in the loss of common prayer is threefold, and the first aspect of it is the loss of a doctrinal norm. More than any other church in Christendom, Anglicans have claimed that you can discover their doctrinal stance, what they believe, by looking at the way they worship. A church does not have to protect its doctrine in such a way; other churches have other ways, whether a *magisterium* or a foundation confession, but Anglicans define their doctrine by their historic liturgical texts and assimilate their doctrine through the liturgy they use week by week. Changes in the liturgy can have doctrinal implications, which is why synods are right to look at liturgical texts line by line, for it is the faith that is at stake. But if we go relentlessly down a path of liturgical diversity, in which every local church chooses its texts or even feels free to compose them, where is the doctrinal norm? It is a path fraught with danger.

Secondly, “the words of the liturgy *bind the Church together*”. This is an ecclesiological, rather than a theological, argument. It has always been our liturgy that has bound us together as Anglicans, not just doctrinally, but in our sense of *koinonia*, fellowship, belonging. Internationally it was, until a few decades ago, more the Book of Common Prayer than the Archbishop of Canterbury or the Lambeth Conference that was seen as the sign of unity, and even now, both internationally and locally, it is the family likeness of worship (even with its cultural and churchmanship varieties) that keeps us in communion one with another. It is a risky business to undermine that by encouraging local variety beyond a certain point.

Thirdly, “the words of the liturgy *feed the soul*”. This is neither ecclesiological nor theological in any precise way; it is a spiritual matter. The words of the liturgy are important for us not only, not chiefly, when we are at worship, but when we need them to come to our aid at many points in our lives and especially at many times of crisis, sickness, fear and or even death itself. At times when spontaneous prayer simply will not come, things deep in our Christian memory need to come to our rescue, and these things will usually be scripture and liturgical text. Where we hear the scriptures read in a different translation on every occasion, there is a real danger there will be little of the bible deep in our memory to feed our souls. And where liturgical texts are constantly changing, and where variety and spontaneity are always valued above familiarity, liturgy will also let us down when we most need it. It is important that we hold on to sufficient common text – old and new – that can be a kind of core of liturgical material that everybody has in their memory bank and which can be relied upon to be a common currency among us. There is some evidence that this will not simply happen naturally. We need quite consciously to hold on to common prayer in order to feed our souls.

“The words of the liturgy express doctrine, bind the church together and feed the soul.” That may be true. But it is, as I said, not an argument for a return to uniformity. The path from a rigid common prayer to a greater diversity and flexibility has been a good one. The debate is simply about how far to go, and at what point to say “this far, and no further”.



ST GEORGE'S LECTURES

3 - Liturgical Principle and Cathedral Practice

Of course one of the problems in terms of memorability is in the quality of the new texts we create. We have still a long way to go in the search for a satisfying contemporary liturgical rhetoric; not surprisingly so. It may be helpful to spend a few minutes looking at this before turning to the fourth and final principle which emerges from it.

For reasons to which I will return, the art of creating liturgical texts was almost lost in the history of Christendom. In Anglicanism it fossilised mainly because of parliamentary control in England and a period of three hundred years during which the Book of Common Prayer remained almost unchanged. Fundamental to the fresh approach to liturgy in the 1960s and 1970s was the belief that a contemporary liturgical language had to be found. People talked of the “language of every day”, though of course liturgical language could never be quite that. The concerns uppermost in people’s minds were intelligibility and theology, probably in that order. “How can we make the liturgy straightforward, easy to understand, accessible?”

Parishes adopted new forms with a wonderful optimism that new words would bring in new people. But behind that there was always, at least for some, a theological concern. The kind of language in which we address God indicates the kind of God we believe in. And it is one of those ironies of Anglican liturgy that the “thee-thou” form that Archbishop Cranmer chose to use to address God because it was the language of personal intimacy acquired within a couple of generations a quite different ‘register’ as a special language for the deity alone, with a hint of the extra reverential, so that some of those who defend that language now defend it not because it expresses a particular intimacy towards God but because it preserves God from the language of every day, the very thing it set out to be. Be that as it may, the search for contemporary liturgical language is never entirely literary or linguistic; there is always a theological element in it.

Talk in the 60s and 70s was not about the search for resonance or rhythm, poetry or form. It was about direct, intelligible, simple communication. What emerged, not surprisingly – and remember the era, remember the kind of buildings we were putting up then, remember the kind of poets and playwrights we were extolling then – was stark, direct, plain and simple, economical, and in contrast with what had gone before. That was not a failure. It was what seemed to be needed. For Anglicans there was inevitable loss in committing ourselves to international and ecumenical texts of forms such as the *Gloria*, *Creed* and *Sanctus*, for, in an international and ecumenical body, the starting point was never Thomas Cranmer and his ‘incomparable prayers’, but the Latin (or occasionally the Greek) newly translated. The old resonances were lost. But there was ecumenical gain and there was a vibrancy and a freshness. There was a directness of communication. In a sense the Church got what it thought it wanted. But in the years since, the stark has worn thin, the direct has seemed to lack memorability. People now asked for poetry, for resonance, for rhythm. Sometimes they found it by clinging to the old. The old may be good, but liturgy is a living thing and each generation must add to the treasury with new words.

Why is it so difficult? Partly because the liturgical text is a specialized form. Its writer is a ‘wordsmith’, not a poet. “Bring in the men (and women!) of literature” is not the answer. For the poet expresses his own perception of truth, but the liturgist has to express the faith of the Church. The poet writes for people to read and hear, but the liturgist often for the people to say, in chorus. The poet writes words to be read once, perhaps twice or three times, but then to lay aside for a while, maybe for many years; the liturgist writes words to repeat week in week out, year in year out. It is an immensely demanding discipline. And there are few people working at it in parallel fields. Rhetoric is not the preoccupation of our culture. Public communication is more often informal and homespun; it is not the age of the orator. We work almost alone at an art form that lay dormant for centuries. We work at a time when language is



ST GEORGE'S LECTURES

3 - Liturgical Principle and Cathedral Practice

changing faster than for a very long time, but when there is little consensus about change, as, for instance, in the issue of gender-inclusive language, on which we are hopelessly divided at the present time. It is not surprising that the search for liturgical language that is thoroughly contemporary, but has the beauty, the subtlety and the memorability that at first evaded us, is a difficult one. But the work must go on, and there are some signs of progress, and we do well both to be patient and to go on pressing for only the best.

Here, more briefly, for it emerges from the last, is my fourth and final principle: *Liturgy evolves: new and old belong together*. The natural state for liturgy is to be evolving, and so it was through most of the first millennium, and has been so more recently in churches where law has not totally suppressed liturgical creativity. In a church where liturgy evolves, each new generation adds to the words and rituals in a natural way responding creatively to changing situations. Some words and rituals disappear through a kind of neglect that is almost imperceptible. But where liturgy has stopped evolving, where there has been the fossilisation of centuries, what has happened in the last thirty years has seemed more like revolution than evolution. In England, freedom from control by parliament meant sudden innovation. In the Roman Catholic Church, the Second Vatican Council made for yet more radical change. In all churches, the insights of the Liturgical Movement, conspiring with the freedoms claimed by the Charismatic Movement, blew more like a hurricane than a breeze. It has been, for some, a time of excitement and growth, for others, of pain and loss and anger. It has brought many to deepened faith, but driven many out of the church, unable to cope when familiar landmarks have been removed. After the fossilisation, revolution was probably inevitable. There could be no other way to make the shift that was needed, not least into contemporary liturgical language. But now we need to return to a model of evolution. The Church will not be well served by a liturgical provision that staggers from stability to revolution once in every generation. We need to develop the right relationship between law and liturgy that will allow each generation to add creatively, and to lay aside sensitively, so that almost imperceptibly the liturgy evolves and therefore lives and grows.

As part of that we need to understand again that in liturgy new and old belong together. Perhaps it was necessary as part of that fundamental shift into new language to believe for a while that everything needed to be in one style. But that cannot be true of an evolving liturgy. With such an evolutionary model, we should expect to find the words, the songs and the rituals of many centuries co-existing happily and creatively in one service book and in one liturgy. It is music that has most clearly shown the way. I can employ a Schubert Mass, a Wesley hymn, a Taizé chant and a renewal song in one service in my Cathedral without any sense of artificiality or conflict. I could do it badly and put things together in a way that did create dislocation and unease. I have to work at it, but if I do, I may be enabled to create something all the richer for drawing on all these musical and spiritual traditions. Similarly there is no need for us to fear the mixing of literary styles or even of languages in the spoken words of one service, providing we do it with care and subtlety. What we can then create is not some lowest common denominator liturgy that will keep everybody quiet, but something rich and many-layered that really will feed our souls. There is no reason why the very proper search for satisfying contemporary forms need entail us abandoning our liturgical inheritance, which includes both the words and the music of four hundred years of Anglicanism and a broader western tradition longer still. Those who devise liturgy do well to be like the householder in Matthew 13.52 "who can produce from his treasure both the new and the old".

There they are: four broad liturgical principles. If we had longer, I would willingly give you more, for these four are only a beginning. But in the remaining moments let me try to apply these to cathedrals which have a special role. This



ST GEORGE'S LECTURES

3 - Liturgical Principle and Cathedral Practice

is another vast area, and I like a fool, intend to deal with them in seven or so minutes. So I can do no more than indicate some areas of exploration. There are seven of them; the first is a warning, the other six positive ways in which cathedral practice can serve the liturgical enterprise.

But first the warning. It is in that area that my second principle addressed – “The liturgy is celebrated by the whole people of God”. Never is the danger of clericalisation and the wrong sort of professionalism more real than in the cathedral. “The liturgy must be exemplary, so leave it to the professionals.” Lay people (except ones dressed up to look like clergy), stand clear! “There are lots of clergy in cathedrals. They must all have a part in the liturgy.” Lay people, stand clear! Those kind of arguments have to be resisted. If liturgy is the work of the whole people of God, it is too important to be entrusted to the clerics and the professionals, and the cathedral that is an exemplar will ensure that the more important the liturgical occasion the greater care taken to see lay people retain their place.

But now the six more positive things.

One: The cathedral must be a liturgical exemplar. Not in the sense that every parish church ought to copy everything the cathedral does. God preserve us from that – it has happened before and introduced a liturgical style often quite inappropriate in a little parish church. No, the cathedral is a liturgical exemplar in the sense that its liturgy should be a working out of liturgical principles. Taking part in it, people from parishes should catch something of its principles, its logic, in such a way that they can begin to reinterpret for their own, perhaps quite different, liturgical situation. But it means that in a cathedral people need to be very clear why they do things. “We do this because.....” rather than “we’ve always done it”. The reason cathedrals can justify people like Precentors or Masters of the Music is that it enables them to be confident that the questions of principle are asked, that the liturgy has the integrity that comes from sharp minds and sound knowledge as well as from praying hearts. The cathedral as the exemplar of liturgical principle worked out in practice.

Two: The cathedral, at least one like this or larger, has the opportunity to be more creative than most churches in its handling of the relationship between liturgy and space. This cathedral is not one room – it has a nave church, a chancel, transepts, chapels, upstairs and downstairs, big open awesome space, tiny intimate space. There is not just one cathedral experience to be had, but many – as many as there are spaces, and many more in the movements between them. All that I said about action and movement and procession applies here. How very dull if you always sat in one place and even imagined it was yours! A cathedral is a wonderful building in which to play pilgrimages – moving around and surging forward expressing the Christian journey. The cathedral as the meeting point of liturgy and space.

Three: The cathedral as the place of the bishop’s liturgy. The cathedral is the bishop’s church (in some cases the archbishop’s!) that is why it is a cathedral. Being a bishop is (they tell me) a fairly difficult liturgical experience. You wander here and there, always the president of a liturgy you don’t quite feel in control of, half treated as host and half as slightly threatening guest. The cathedral needs to minister to the bishop by providing him with his liturgical stability and the bishop needs to be willing to receive that. He should find in the cathedral team men and women who understand both liturgical principle and also the particular demands of his episcopal vocation and can work with him to make sure that his liturgical ministry, based at the cathedral but going out into the parishes, is well developed and appropriate. The cathedral should provide the normative – normative, but not necessarily frequent – setting where he may do what bishops do: preside at the Eucharist, baptize new Christians, ordain deacons and priests. The



ST GEORGE'S LECTURES

3 - Liturgical Principle and Cathedral Practice

bishop needs to find in his cathedral the means of his own liturgical formation, so that in his ministry in the diocese he may effectively form his clergy and people liturgically as in other ways.

Four: The cathedral as the guardian of the breadth of tradition. Because of its rich pattern of services and its resources, including human resources, the expertise of its staff, the Cathedral has the opportunity to keep alive a very wide range of liturgical forms and styles and spiritualities. A cathedral should never have a narrow tradition. There needs to be something of the supermarket about it. (There are limits of course.) There is a special obligation to keep alive those parts of the tradition that are out of fashion. In one generation that may be good sound solid preaching; in another it may be a strong corporate experience of the daily office. Whatever it is, the cathedral must never simply go with the fashion. It has a proper *conservative*, in the best sense of that word, role.

So, five, you will not be surprised to hear, is the opposite side of the coin. Cathedrals ought to be also the liturgical laboratories of the church. Free of some pastoral constraints, encouraged by wise bishops to be bold, less hampered by reactionary church councils, staffed by men and women of imagination, not as financially up against it as the parish churches (I am stating an ideal), cathedrals will work away at new words, commission new music (not all of it of the highbrow kind), devise experimental liturgies. Being prepared to fail dismally, engage with the wider world of the arts, and just occasionally give people a liturgical experience that is challenging, life-changing and God-revealing. Cathedrals as laboratories: we need to see more of that.

And, finally, (and I've kept it till last, but it is the simplest thing and the most fundamental): cathedrals, with their daily worship by a committed community – clergy, choir, vergers, and what I like to call godly hangers-on – have the opportunity and the duty to proclaim, in season and out of season, the priority of worship. Cathedrals may and should do many other good things. But at the heart of it all they exist to remind the world, and to remind the church (which sometimes needs as much reminding) that the priority is worship – deep, loving, longing communion with the eternal trinity, grasping the heel of heaven.