

SEMINAR ON SACRAMENTAL AND LITURGICAL THEOLOGY

The topic for the two meetings of this year's seminar was liturgical inculturation with the following preparatory readings: Anscar Chupungco, *Liturgies of the Future* (New York/Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1989) and M. Amaladoss, "Re-launching the Indian Liturgy—Some Reflections on our Experiments," *Vidyajyoti Journal of Theological Reflection* 49 (1985): 446-55. Each day the seminar sessions began with presentations, the first by Thomas Kane, C.S.P. (Weston School of Theology) and the second by Thomas Krosnicki, S.V.D (Washington Theological Union).

Thomas Kane introduced and commented upon a video presentation which summarized his experience and study of liturgical inculturation in parts of East, Central, and West Africa in 1978. Specifically the video reviewed Roman Catholic parish and monastic liturgies from Kenya, Malawi, Zimbabwe, Zaire, Cameroon, and Ghana. In contrast with the sobriety of the restored Roman rite these liturgies lasted a longer time and were characterized by emphasis on movement and dance. Dr. Kane explained that many of the dance steps adopted into the liturgy were from tribal ritual dances; one example was based on a dance which male tribe members engaged in before entering into battle. He explained that some of the vesture used by priests derived from the apparel of tribal chiefs and that some of the marks of reverence shown to priests had a similar origin. Some of the more expressive inculturated liturgical gestures showed reverence to the eucharistic species during Mass (at the consecration) or after it (Corpus Christi feastday celebration at Nandom, Ghana). The inculturation of a Good Friday service in Turbo, Kenya included an elaborate dramatization of the passion involving over one hundred participants which preceded the celebration of the liturgy of Good Friday (at which the customary passion narrative was read, hence it was repeated). An important element of the inculturated morning prayer at the Poor Clare Monastery in Lilongwe, Malawi was the adoption of sounds from grinding cornmeal which are commonly heard each morning as local people engaged in preparation for the day's baking and the preparation of food to eat.

The discussion which accompanied the presentation raised a number of questions, many of which concerned the appropriateness of these specific adaptations in light of contemporary postconciliar theology as well as appropriate liturgical theology and practice. Specific issues concerned whether the homage given to tribal leaders was appropriately adapted for priests; in other words, is the role of the priest the same as tribal chief? With regard to examples of inculturation of the liturgical year the question was raised about whether dramatization of the passion was not an example of liturgical "historicization" which highlights the suffering and death of Jesus, as opposed to a liturgical celebration commemorating the whole paschal

mystery. A number of questions about the eucharist were raised including whether adaptations surrounding the moment of consecration or devotions derived from the celebration of eucharist were appropriate considering the present reform of the liturgy of the eucharist which emphasizes the Lord's presence in the Word as well as sacrament and the theology of the eucharistic prayer which emphasizes the anamnesis and epiclesis (liturgically and theologically) and the great Amen as important moments in a unified blessing prayer of praise and thanksgiving.

Thomas Krosnicki presented a paper entitled "Liturgy and Inculturation" based on the seminar readings and a number of other contemporary sources. He discussed appropriate terminology from the revised liturgical books and contemporary authors about liturgical inculturation and adaptation, the relationship between liturgy and culture, the fact that liturgical inculturation is related to a wider theological process and that the hoped for result of an inculturated liturgy is that it would help foster and facilitate an experience of prayer and homage offered to God. In this section of the paper Krosnicki argued that "adaptation" refers to changes presently encouraged and made locally within the existing liturgical rites. "Inculturation" refers to "that profound attempt to articulate and integrate significant and acceptable cultural values, forms and symbols within liturgical expression." Thus he argued that a document such as "In Spirit and Truth: Black Catholic Reflections on the Order of Mass" published by the Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy of the NCCB is not an example of liturgical inculturation but rather liturgical adaptation.

Krosnicki then noted a number of cautions which some contemporary authors have raised about the process of liturgical inculturation. He termed "ecclesial skepticism" the reaction of those who view attempts to inculturate the liturgy as a last ditch effort to deal with situations whose evangelization and catechetical methods were not sufficiently inculturated. "Liturgical vandalism" describes the usurpation of rites and symbols from other religions for Christian use (similar to the "Christianization" of the seder to explain the Last Supper) with the result that violence is done to established cultural practices. The term "cosmetic superficialism" refers to superficial changes which do not reach to the depth of the cultural reality of a people; "nostalgic archeologism" refers to seeking solutions based on past cultural patterns rather than present day cultural patterns; "cultural imperialism" refers to the temptation to impose values and expressions on a culture, rather than deriving them *from* the culture and "fixed inculturated rites" refers to the temptation to want to seek "final" solutions rather than approaches to inculturation that allow for ongoing liturgical adjustment.

The discussion which ensued covered a range of issues, some of which derived from participants' experience with adapted and inculturated liturgy. (Dr. Krosnicki himself worked for several years with the liturgy in Papua, New Guinea.) The distinction between "changeable" and "unchangeable" elements in the liturgy made in the Liturgy Constitution of Vatican II (n.22) evoked comment because it is vague, has not been interpreted officially and yet is often referred to when people discuss the purposes and process of liturgical inculturation. Some participants offered that this phrase might mean the use of water at baptism or food at the eucharist. It was observed that the customary use of bread and wine need not be meant by the use of food at the eucharist. However it was further asked

what might be lost to the church's communal memory if water, wheat bread and wine were not used at baptism and eucharist. To this was added the observation that fundamental to the church's use of such elements in liturgy is the assembly's use of them, not the elements per se.

Another interpretation of what is "unchangeable" refers to the elements that constitute a eucharistic prayer (as seen in the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, n.55) in terms of thanksgiving, memorial prayer, epiclesis, intercessions, etc. Such an approach implicitly allows for great flexibility within a given ritual structure. However the question of whether one ritual structure is necessarily meant was also raised. Another approach suggests that what is required in liturgy is the proclamation of the word leading to a ritual action; such an interpretation of "unchangeable" is therefore less structural and therefore less fixed. Still another interpretation would mean intention and grace as operative through the liturgy (e.g., sacrament of penance where these have perdured amid enormous variety and changes in its liturgical structures).

Some observations on Chupungco's book were raised in the discussion. It was observed that the work is the result of what was a series of articles; hence internal cohesion and continuity is often absent. The author was criticized for being too liturgical in the sense that the work does not reflect dialogue with other theological disciplines or other fields such as cultural anthropology, sociology and psychology.

Toward the end of the second session the participants discussed possible topics for next year's meeting of the seminar, the determination of which will be left to the incoming seminar coordinator, Dr. Julia Upton of St. John's University. Dr. Kevin Irwin was thanked for his work as group coordinator for the past three years.

KEVIN W. IRWIN

The Catholic University of America