



LATIN LITURGY

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Latin Liturgy and Gregorian Chant for the Church of today



Cologne Cathedral April 2023

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Open Meeting and 2023 AGM in Cambridge

As announced in the previous issue of *Latin Liturgy*, there will be a day of liturgies, discussions, a talk and the 2023 AGM, on **Saturday October 7th** at the Church of Our Lady and the English Martyrs in Cambridge, by kind permission of the Rector, Mgr Eugene Harkness. This is a particularly important meeting, because it was at OLEM that the ALL began its existence, in the tumultuous post-Conciliar period of the late 1960s. In many ways that time of confusion and indecision seems to be returning today, which means that the role of the ALL is more important than ever. A small poster is enclosed for our UK members: please display it as prominently as possible.

This is the schedule planned for the day:

10.00 onwards: Welcome, with coffee.

10.20 Schola rehearsals for Mass. Members wishing to join the Schola for the day's singing will be welcome.

11.00 Solemn Mass of Our Lady of the Rosary, with the Proper from the *Graduale Parvum*, directed by Fr Guy Nicholls, and a polyphonic Ordinary sung by the OLEM Choir conducted by Nigel Kerry. The preacher will be Fr Paul Keane, Chaplain of Cambridge University.

12.45 Lunch in the Parish hall. You need to book in advance for this: either fill in the enclosed form and post it with a cheque, or pay on our website.

2.15 Talk by Bishop Emeritus Alan Hopes: “Fully conscious and active participation” in the Liturgy’, followed by questions and discussion.

3.30. Annual General Meeting of the Association. Agenda:

1) Reports on progress during the last year from the Chairman and Treasurer.

2) Election of Council for 2023 – 2024: the Constitution provides for a Council with a maximum of twelve members, three of whom hold the offices of Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Treasurer, with the others being Ordinary Members. The three Officers retire annually; Ordinary Members serve for periods of two years. All are eligible for immediate re-election. The Council has the power to co-opt Ordinary Members to serve for two years, provided that the maximum number of Council members is not exceeded. Accordingly, Christopher Francis (Chairman), Fr Guy Nicholls (Vice-Chairman) and Bernard Marriott (Treasurer) retire, but all three are willing to offer themselves for re-election.

The following Ordinary Members were elected for a two-year term in 2021: Brendan Daintith and Mgr Bruce Harbert, so this year are due, and have consented to offer themselves, for re-election. Members of the Association may, if they wish, make alternative nominations for these positions, in which case the names of nominees (whose prior consent must be

obtained) and those of proposer and seconder, must be received by the Chairman at least two weeks before the meeting. According to our Constitution, if no nominations are received from members, Council's nominees will be deemed elected without a vote being taken.

You are reminded that there are currently two vacant seats on Council, so if you wish to serve the Association and the Church in this way, here is an opportunity to do so. Persons able to offer a particular skill or specialised knowledge will be particularly welcome. Contact the Chairman if you are interested: Christopher.Francis@Latin-Liturgy.org

3) If time allows, there will be an opportunity for a brief discussion on practical matters.

4.00 Sung Vespers and Benediction. Those who joined the Schola for Mass earlier are again invited to sing.

5.00 Tea and departure. For those who wish to stay for the parish Vigil Mass, which will be that of the Dedication of the church, it starts at 6.00.

How to get there

Cambridge is well served by trains from various parts of the country, and the station is within easy walking distance of the church. If you are coming by car, there are five Park and Ride sites around Cambridge. Using them is likely to be simpler than trying to park near the centre of Cambridge, but there are a limited number of places at the church, for those who particularly need to park close the venue. Please email the Chairman (see address above) well in advance if you wish to request one.

The 40th anniversary of the Ordination of Fr Guy Nicholls

Members of long standing, if they turn to Newsletter 56 of September 1983 will be able to re-read Fr Ray Matus' account of the first Mass celebrated by Fr Guy Nicholls at the church of St Mary & St John, Wolverhampton on the day after his ordination. Members of less long standing will be able to turn to Newsletter 133 of Michaelmas 2008 and see my account of Fr Guy's 25th anniversary Mass in the same church. But there's no real need to dig into the archives because each celebration was Mass either of the Assumption or its Vigil, at the same church, each in sung in Latin, including the Roman Canon, apart from the Readings, and each accompanied by a large congregation of parishioners and friends.

The church of St Mary & St John has a beautiful interior as can be seen from the photo gallery on the parish website. The Bishops' Conference's 'Taking Stock' website says of the church: "A large and important Gothic Revival church in the style of c. 1300 built in the 1850s by one of the leading church architects of the time [Charles Hansom], and reflecting the confidence of the Catholic Church at the time of the restoration of the hierarchy. The fine polygonal, gabled apse was added later ... The church interior is a fine space, notable for the quality of its carved stonework. It has largely escaped major post-Vatican II alterations. With the adjoining brick presbytery, the church makes a noteworthy contribution to the St John's Square Conservation Area."

The congregation were equipped with a comprehensive booklet with the words of the Propers and Ordinary, and translations together with the chant for the congregation's parts of the Mass. Present on the sanctuary were Bishop Stock of Leeds, Dom Paul Gunter, Abbot of Douai, and members of the Pauline community who serve the parish, with two deacons and servers from amongst students at Oscott where Fr Guy lectures. The Mass Ordinary was Mass

IX, *Cum Iubilo*, with *Credo III*, plus the motets *Ave Verum* and *Ave Maria* by Fr Antonio Grimaldi, who was parish priest of Ss Mary & John, all sung by a small schola, accompanied by the parish organist. Propers were sung from both published and (as yet) unpublished parts of the *Graduale Parvum*, written, of course, by Fr Guy. It was a ceremony with singing well within the resources of most parishes.

One of the most moving parts of the ceremony was a short address at the end by someone who described herself as just an ordinary parishioner. She spoke entirely without notes to thank Fr Guy on behalf of parishioners for his years of ministry and wish him well for the future.

The evening concluded with first-class refreshments, accompanied by all singing *For he's a jolly good fellow*, followed by the clergy with their elegant rendering of *Ad multos annos*. And *Ad multos annos* from the Association too!

Bernard Marriott

Report on the US Latin Liturgy Association Convention, July 2023

Last month, the American Latin Liturgy Association held its Twelfth National Convention in Fairfield, New Jersey, in the Catholic Archdiocese of Newark. The first European settlers in that area were Protestant Dutch and Calvinist French Huguenots, a world away from what we had come together to discuss. The Association normally convenes every other year but had not met for quite a while, partly due to the pandemic. Regina Morris, the Association's President, with the help of Dr Joseph Daly, the local contact known as the Convention Chair, did an outstanding job both in the organising of the weekend and by ensuring the smooth running of the schedule.

The hotel in which we were accommodated was blessed with a fine Italian restaurant. What was described each day on the Agenda as a Hot Lunch Buffet in the main meeting room was in actual fact a freshly cooked three course Italian meal. The hotel was the venue for all seven addresses by various speakers, as well as providing space for the celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours on the Saturday evening, and a room for vendors to sell their various wares. Our Association had its own stall in this room. By the end of the weekend, the table was bare. It was pleasing to see the extent of the interest in our publications.

All the speakers were favourably received by the delegates. There was a good balance of topics, ranging from the more obvious subject of the importance of Latin in the Liturgy (Raymond de Souza KM), to matters concerning church music (for example, Latin Cantorales from the Spanish Colonial Period by Dr Richard Haefer, an ethnomusicologist), to the Restoration or Traditional Catholic Sculptures and Art, delivered by Michele Bowman-Dumey.

Representing the ALL at the Convention, my talk was on the *Graduale Parvum*. I was rather surprised to receive applause before I spoke. The delegates were charmed by the fact that I had travelled all the way from England to be with them! I demonstrated the noble simplicity of the project's Introits with the help of the relevant page on YouTube (to find it, simply search for *Graduale Parvum* on that platform). I had thought that the following day's celebration of Mass would be the Seventh Sunday after Pentecost, and so had planned to play the Introit for that day.

However, I was informed during the talk that we were instead going to have Mass of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. I was fortunately able to think on my feet! Liaising with Fr Guy beforehand, we were keen to display the latest work on the project, partly to show that the *Graduale Parvum* will ultimately contain all the Propers of the Mass, of which the

Introits are only the first stage. I was able to demonstrate to the Convention the Gradual and Alleluia for the Vigil of the Assumption, with their own separate musical flavour. These were also favourably received. Regina had already expressed her personal interest in wanting to purchase a copy of the Introits, so I was delighted to be able to present her with a copy of this publication with a special inscription to commemorate the Convention and the friendship that exists between our two Associations.



As is the custom at LLA Conventions, there were two celebrations of Mass scheduled: one in the Ordinary Form on the Saturday, the other in the Extraordinary Form on the Sunday. Both Masses involved a journey by coach from the hotel. The Saturday location was the Cathedral of St John the Baptist in the neighbouring Diocese of Paterson. The celebration was *ad orientem* with a team of servers who knew how to carry out their duties well. The Mass was that

of St Bonaventure, and opened with the hymn *For All the Saints*, before moving into the Gregorian Introit, *In Medio Ecclesiae*. As this was sung, I mused upon how the Introit set the scene much better for the celebration of this Doctor of the Church than did the hymn. 'In the midst of the Church he opened his mouth, and the Lord filled him with his spirit, the spirit of wisdom and understanding.' Although the small schola made a good attempt at the chant, it also reminded

me of how useful the *Graduale Parvum* will be for choirs not used to singing the chants for the Mass. The celebrant of the Mass, a priest of the diocese, evidently had training in the Extraordinary Form, shown, for example, in the way he introduced the Gospel: *Sequentia sancti evangelii*, rather than *Lectio*. The Mass Setting was the *Missa de Angelis*.

One unusual feature at this Mass was the presence on the right hand side of the sanctuary of around sixteen small boys and girls, all arrayed in red cassocks and cottas. Given their age and the length of the Mass, they were very well behaved. Their moment came at the end of Mass when they stood in two rows in front of the altar and sang some simple polyphony. Proud parents in the congregation stood up to take pictures. Whatever reaction these children may have had to Mass in Latin, it was a timely reminder to me of our need to share a love of the liturgy with future generations.

Back at the hotel on Saturday evening, I was asked to lead First Vespers in Latin for the Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time. Having seen the booklet beforehand, I had been a little disappointed that only the Hymn and Magnificat were to be sung. However, it turned out that Regina had been prudent to arrange it in this way, as she had felt that probably not as many people would be in attendance with varying musical abilities. It was a simple and worthy celebration.

That day finished a couple of hours later with Compline according to the former Roman Breviary. A Franciscan Friar of the Renewal was due to lead this but had to get back earlier than expected to his community. I was asked at the last moment to lead. Having never celebrated this order of Compline before, I managed well, partly due to my knowledge of traditional Benedictine Compline to which the previous Roman Breviary was similar, with the exception of the ordering of the psalms.

Sunday's celebration of Mass, a Missa Cantata, saw us at the National Blue Army Shrine of Our Lady of Fatima.

In his homily the celebrant, Fr Peter Stravinskas, drew attention to the unusual situation of preaching about Our Lady of Mount Carmel in a Shrine dedicated to Our Lady of Fatima. He then went on to say that in her last apparition at Fatima on 13th October, 1917, Mary appeared as Our Lady of Mount Carmel. He also



quoted from the Collect of the same Mass in the Ordinary Form which I found helpful in encouraging people to respect and value Mass in both forms.

During the homily, everyone's mobile phone sounded an alarm for a New Jersey State Flood Alert in the same manner as the Government here in the UK sent an experimental alarm to all UK smart phones on 23rd April. The schola sang the Mass Propers beautifully, and the setting was Mass IX *Cum Jubilo* for Feasts and Solemnities of Our Lady. At the end of Mass was the Carmelite antiphon *Flos Carmeli*, a personal favorite of mine, having grown up not far from Aylesford Priory in Kent. There was so much to see and do at the shrine that I wished I could have spent the whole day there.

It was a great pleasure to represent our Association at this Convention, and various members there spoke warmly of members of our Association they had known from previous

Conventions, including the late and greatly missed Jeremy de Satgé. There was some discussion as to how future Conventions will take shape. Some members suggested that there could be more frequent local meetings of the LLA. Whatever future course our sister Association takes, we can be all assured of the enduring strong bond between us.

Fr Anton Webb

**Report on Schola Gregoriana chant singing event
at Douai Abbey, May 2023, with ALL participation**

Members of the Association were invited to attend the Schola Gregoriana's event at Douai Abbey. The programme, which ran from a Tuesday afternoon to the Thursday lunchtime, was run by the Schola's Director, Iain Simcock, and included rehearsing and then singing Compline on the Tuesday, Mass and Vespers on the Wednesday, the feast of Sts Philip and James; and Mass on the Thursday, the feast of the English Martyrs.

The Abbot, Fr Paul Gunter OSB, was invited to address the group, and he spoke about the outlook for Gregorian chant, saying that it lies entirely within the new rite. His view is that congregations have changed enormously in the last fifty years, mostly being completely unfamiliar with the much more pensive approach of the old rite. He sees celebrations of the old rite as replicas of how they should have been celebrated around 1962. He observed that there could be an element of picking and choosing, saying that many at old rite Masses seemed quite at ease with the subsequently relaxed requirements for fasting before Communion. There is, of course, also the matter of what to do about the old calendar in relation to saints canonised since 1962.

Fr Paul went further, saying that as members of the Church we should follow what the Pope requires of us, essentially without demur.

There was a good deal of discussion over dinner that evening, much of which centred around the failure of the Church to implement the changes properly, and a feeling that nothing much will change until the bishops take on the need to look carefully at, and implement, the changes actually mandated by Vatican II, deal with abuses, promote the need for trained choirs, and take seriously the decline in church attendance.

A good deal of cynicism was expressed about apparently being expected to be blindly obedient to the Pope, especially as the current Pope has a very different attitude to his predecessor regarding the use of the old rite, and there seems to be nothing to prevent the next Pope reverting to the *status quo ante*.

Bernard Marriott

**‘Work Hard in this Nothing and this Nowhere’
Dionysian Influences on the *Cloud of Unknowing*
and its role in Shaping English Spirituality**

[Editor’s note: we are pleased to present here this enhanced and expanded essay, first heard in a condensed form as a talk to the Association during its meeting at St Mary’s University, Twickenham last October. Part 1 is printed here, and Part 2, with the Bibliography, will appear in the next edition of *Latin Liturgy*.]

This article explores some of the spirituality essayed in the medieval English text *The Cloud of Unknowing*. It will be argued that, following authors such as Walsh, it can probably best be understood as being associated with the

English Carthusian tradition. As an adaptation, and transmission of the medieval Dionysian tradition it holds a unique place in the ‘vernacularisation’ of that tradition and, as I conclude, anticipates much of the flowering of late medieval/early modern Catholic spirituality.

Introduction: The *Cloud corpus*

Academic scholarship continues to be divided over the authorship of the fourteenth century Middle English manuscript, *The Cloud of Unknowing*, and its associated works. The *corpus* as such consists of four letters and treatises on the contemplative life:

The Cloud of Unknowing itself (hereafter C);
The Book of Privy Counselling (hereafter BPC);
A Pistle of Preier, and
A Pistle of Discrecioun of Stirings.

As well as these four original texts there are three translations or adaptations of works by other authors:

A Treatise of Discrecyon of Spirites – A translation of St Bernard’s *Sermones de Diversis*;
Deonise Hid Divinite (hereafter DHD) – a translation of Book One of Dionysius’ *Theologia Mystica* from Sarracenus’ version with some of Gallus’ *Extractio*; and
A Treatyse of the Stodye of Wysdom that Men Clepen Beniamyn – a translation of Richard of St Victor’s *Benjamin Major*.¹

¹ I shall use here the Middle English versions edited by Phyllis Hodgson in her 1944, 1958 and 1982 editions of *The Cloud of Unknowing* and the other related treatises (details in Bibliography), I have adapted her text from the Middle English script to contemporary English script. For contemporary translations into Modern English I have drawn upon James Walsh’s *The Cloud of Unknowing* (1981) and *The Pursuit of Wisdom* (1988); however I have modified these translations for the purposes of this article to bring them closer to the Middle English originals.

Dispute also continues as to how far all seven pieces can be ascribed to the same author. Phyllis Hodgson, in her definitive editions of the works, essays all the possible candidates for authorship, ranging from Walter Hilton (to whom they are attributed by, amongst others, James Grenehalgh, fifteenth-century monk of the Sheen Charterhouse [which was just down river from where St Mary's is now] and author of one of the earliest commentaries on the *Cloud* still extant); a secular priest (advocated by Dom Justin McCann OSB in his commentary); a cloistered monk but not a Carthusian (Evelyn Underhill in her commentary) and either a solitary or anchorite (Hodgson and Helen Gardner).

James Walsh SJ in his commentary for his *Classics of Western Spirituality* edition favours the attribution of the four principal works to a Carthusian. He is able to make a good case for this attribution based on the internal evidence of the text. Walsh also emphasises throughout the connecting links between the *Cloud* corpus and the writings of Hugh of Balma (although sadly not always giving full references for these). The fact that the *Cloud* manuscripts circulated so widely amongst the British and continental Carthusian houses suggests, if nothing else, a certain acceptance amongst the Carthusians that they were working with the text of a kindred spirit whose version of late medieval Dionysianism clearly appealed to their cloistered life.

Hodgson in her text lists 17 extant manuscripts of the *Cloud* (Hodgson 1944: lxi - lxii), three of which have inscriptions from Carthusian houses: MS. Harl. 2773, written at Mount Grace Charterhouse in Yorkshire and annotated, as noted, by Grenehalgh at Sheen and MSS Douce 262 and Parkminster D.176 both copied at the London Charterhouse.

These two latter copies would make their way to the Low Countries during the Reformation and owe their survival due to the recusant Catholic communities there (see also Lees

1983: 380). Lees concludes that ‘what is known of the attitudes to Dionysian theology in the English branch of the Carthusian order tends to confirm rather than exclude its members as likely contenders for the authorship of the text’ (Lees, p.410).

From the dialect of the author of the *Cloud*, Hodgson concludes that the Charterhouse of Beauvale at Gresley (founded 1343) is the most likely candidate for the home of the author; other suggestions have included Hull (founded 1378-9), Coventry (1381) and Mount Grace (1398), although the latter is probably too late in foundation to be considered likely.

For the purposes of the present article I shall concentrate primarily on the texts of the *Cloud* itself, the translation of Dionysius’ *Mystical Theology* as *Deonise Hid Divinitie* and the *Book of Privy Counselling* as best illustrative of the *Cloud* author’s work in contributing to his own distinctive late medieval spirituality.

Key Themes in the Spirituality of the *Cloud*

1. Hiddenness and Hierarchy: the Esoteric and the Exoteric

Dionysius, whom the author of the *Cloud* draws closely on in developing his treatises, begins his *Divine Names* by stating that what he is about to set down, must, by necessity, transcend the ‘realm of discourse or of intellect’ (DN: 1.1). The ‘hidden divinity’ cannot be set down by means of ‘words or conceptions’. The heart of this revelation lying in the ‘sacred oracles’ or ‘scripture’ (DN: 1.4). He talks of a ‘divine enlightenment’ ‘into which we have been initiated by the hidden tradition of our inspired teachers’.

Like the pre-Christian Dionysian rites, this is a secret initiation that must be hidden from the scorn and derision of

the uninitiated: ‘if the profane were to see or listen to these rites of ours I think they would laugh heartily and pity us for our misguidedness’ (EH: 7.3.1), ‘which to the man in the street appear quite extraordinary [*multis monstruosas (E), prodigiales locutiones (S)*].’

Among uninstructed souls the fathers of unspeakable wisdom [*secretae sapientiae patres (S)*] give an impression of outstanding absurdity when, with secret and daring riddles [*S: per quaedam occulta quidem et praesumpta aenigmata*], they make known that truth which is divine, mysterious, and, so far as the profane are concerned, inaccessible [*S: manifestant divinam et mysticam et inviam immundis veritatem*]’ (Ep: 9.1).²

In the *Divine Names* Dionysius exhorts Timothy, his addressee, to ‘guard these things in accordance with divine command and you must never speak nor divulge divine things to the uninitiated’ (DN: 1.8), for he should ‘let such things be kept away from the mockery and the laughter of the uninitiated [*S: et ipsa ab indoctorum risibus et delusionibus auferentes*].’

In similar vein, the *Cloud* author urges the one under instruction:

² The most recent scholarly edition of the original Greek texts of Dionysius is the *Corpus Dionysiacum* edited by Suchla, Heil and Ritter (1990). In this article as I am largely concerned with the twelfth century interpretations of the text that formed the tradition of *theologia mystica* in the West I shall concentrate on the Latin versions of the text found in *Dionysiaca* (1937 – 1950) and *Patrologia Latina* (1844). For English Translations I draw upon *Pseudo-Dionysius: The Complete Works* translated by Luibheid (1987), *Dionysius the Areopagite on the Divine Names and Mystical Theology* and *Denis Hid Divinity* edited by McCann (1924). See Bibliography for full details. DN = *On the Divine Names*; MT = *The Mystical Theology*; EH = *The Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*; CH = *The Celestial Hierarchy* and Ep = *The Epistles*. Latin translations are referred to as follows: S = Sarracenus; E = Eriugena; G = Gallus (Vercellienis).

Neither thou rede it, ne write it, ne speke it, ne yit suffre it be red, wretyn, or spokyn, of any or to any, bot yif it be of soche one or to soche one that hath (bi thi supposing) in a trewe wille and by an hole entent, purposed him to be a parfite folower of Criste (Prologue, Hodgson 1982: 1).³

For only those souls who have reached ‘the sovereynne pointe of contemplatif leving’ can appreciate what will be written here.

Reflecting the passage from the *Mystical Theology* which is translated by the *Cloud* author as ‘beware that none of thees vnwise men yit wonyng in here wittys here thees thinges’,⁴ the *Cloud* author not only transcribes Sarracenus, but he interjects his own words to underline the esoteric nature of the revelation being given (repeated also in the Epilogue to the text):

‘Thees men I clepe alle thoo that ben fastnyd in knowing and in louyng of thees things that ben knowable and han begynnyng, the whiche han opinion that nothing is souereyn-substancialy abouen thees forseide beyng thinges’ (Hodgson 1958: 3. 20-23).⁵

Whereas Dionysius himself only urges caution against those ‘caught up with the things of the world’ unable to

³ ‘Neither read it yourself, write it, tell others about it or allow it to be read, written or spoken about, by anyone to anyone unless that person has (according to your opinion) a true will and wholesome intent to be a perfect follower of Christ.’

⁴ ‘Beware that no unwise men, though having adequate wit, hear these things’. The Latin text of Sarracenus reads: ‘Vide autem ut nullus indoctorum ista audiat. Istos autem dico qui in exsistentibus sunt formati, nihil super exsistentia supersubstantialiter esse opinantes, sed putantes scire ea quae secundum ipsos est cognitione, eum qui ponit tenebras latibulum suum.’ Hodgson 1958: 95. 5-8.

⁵ ‘I call all these men those who are fastened to knowing and loving those things that are knowable and have a beginning; those, that is, who think that nothing exists above the aforesaid mentioned things.’

comprehend anything above ‘instances of individual being’ and relying solely on their own intellectual resources, the *Cloud* author goes further in castigating those who ‘love the things of the world’, ‘living within their bodily senses which they have in common with the beasts’ (Walsh 1988: 75-76).

Here the *Cloud* is close to the similar sentiments in Gallus’ commentary who condemns ‘simple yokels and idolaters who have scarcely more than sense-knowledge’ (Walsh 1988: 90). In the *Cloud* these ‘yokels’ are classed as ‘fleschely janglers, opyn preisers and blamers of hemself or of any other, tithing tellers, rouners and tutilers of tales, and alle maner of pinchers’ (Prologue, Hodgson 1982: 2).⁶ To this group of reprobates are added ‘corious lettred or lewed men’. So the Dionysian prohibitions are now extended to include not just the unlettered tittle-tattlers and rude mechanicals but also the learned and clergy who are puffed up with their own knowing.

The *Cloud* author’s texts thus have a specific esoteric function, reflecting as they do the ‘hidden’ or ‘mystical’ nature of Dionysius’ own texts. Within this hidden tradition the secret teaching will thus be passed by a special initiation to which we turn next.

2. The Nature of the Initiation

As I have argued elsewhere (Tyler 2011), following his teacher Hierotheus, Dionysius also engages in a method of what might be termed ‘indirect transmission’ to convey his teachings. Dionysius’ texts, like those of his late medieval interpreters, can be called *performative* rather than *informative*. In the *Divine Names* Dionysius makes reference to his teacher Hierotheus who is for him a ‘surpassing

⁶ ‘Worldly chatterboxes, who brazenly flatter or censure themselves or others, the rumour-mongers, the gossips, the tittle-tattlers and the fault-finders of every sort’ (Walsh 1988: 102).

genius' whose work 'is like a kind of second sacred scripture which discloses itself immediately to those who are divinely inspired'. His 'vision, self-witnessed, of the spiritual revelations' and his 'synoptic manner of teaching' presupposes a spiritual power that stands (*presbytikē*) closer to God' (DN: 3.2). Thus, the 'object' of the discourse, that is, our engagement with the material can only be 'grasped' by a 'circling movement' where we are 'mutually implicated' in the method (c.f. Ep: 8):

Whatever he learned directly from the sacred writers, whatever his own perspicacious and laborious research of the scriptures uncovered for him, or whatever was made known to him through that most mysterious inspiration, not only learning but also experiencing the divine things [S: *non solum discens sed et patiens divina*, E: *non solum discens sed et affectus divina*, Gk: καὶ παθὼν τὰ θεῖα]. For he had 'sympathy' [S: *compassione*, E: *coaffectione*, Gk: συμπαθείας] with such matters, if I may express it that way, and he was perfected in a mysterious union with them and in a faith in them which was independent of any education. (DN: 2.9)

This is the 'indirect initiation' of Hierotheus, reflecting the *myesthai* of the classical initiation into the Dionysian cult (see also DN: 1.8, 3.1, 3.2; CH: 2.5 and 1.5 where the whole of Christianity is described as a mystery religion). Dionysius, following Plato and his neo-Platonic interpreters, makes a contrast between the rational philosophy that persuades by dialectic and the means of *logos* and reason and this latter kind of 'initiation' that is formulated through the *mythos*, for example:

Theological tradition has a dual aspect: the ineffable and mysterious on the one hand [S: *hanc quidem secretam et mysticam*], the open and more evident on the other [S: *illam apparentem et notiozem*]. The one resorts to symbolism and involves initiation [E: *eam quidem symbolicam et perfectivam*], the other is philosophical and employs the

method of demonstration [E: *hanc vero philosophicam et approbativam*]. The one uses persuasion and imposes the truth of what is asserted. The other acts and, by means of a mystery which cannot be taught, perfects the soul in God [S: *illud autem operatur et collocat in Deo indocibilibus mysteriorum perfectionibus*]. (Ep 9:1, Dion: 638)

The *Cloud* author in his Prologue agrees with Dionysius that there is a difference between the ‘knowing’ that comes from disputation and the ‘exoteric sciences’ of the theologies and that which comes from the ‘mystical initiation’. This is the ‘divine enlightenment’ [S: *deifica lumina*, Gk: θεογονικά φώια] into which, according to Dionysius, we have been ‘initiated by the hidden tradition [S: *occulta traditio*] of our inspired teachers – a tradition at one with scripture’ (DN: 1.4).

The *Cloud* author establishes a similar relationship with the addressee of his texts in both the *Cloud* and texts such as the *Book of Privy Counselling* (BPC). In BPC he stresses that he wants to be the ‘souereyn goostly’ (Hodgson 1944: 153.4-5) of the neophyte and that obedience to him is necessary, so that the neophyte will not get stuck in ‘the sotil examinacion of thi corious wittys’ (Hodgson 1944: 152.20) which will hide the ‘werk’ of the *Cloud*-practice from him. Up to now the neophyte has been ‘ouer wise in thi wittys’ (Hodgson 1944: 152.22) which has obscured the work from his soul. For such ‘corious witte’ which stands in the way of the love message, he wants to transmit in the manner prescribed by Hierotheus and Dionysius which transcends the *Cloud* author’s ‘steringes of a fleschly tonge’ (Hodgson 1944: 153.18). Tixier, in his penetrating commentary on the work, suggests that the text itself is shot through with the loving affection that the Dionysian *pathein* relationship between teacher and student demands:

These texts, when carefully observed, reveal the existence of an inner law of self-effacement which affects not only the relationship between master and disciple, but also the

author's style, his choice of images, and even the form in which he presents his teaching... Writing itself may eventually be seen as a work of love aiming to stimulate the reader to persevere in his 'louely werk'.

(Tixier 1997: 126)

For the author is working on a style of writing that 'is an attempt to formulate "something" about him whom no formula can contain' (Tixier 1990: 245). In this respect the *Cloud* author follows his master, Dionysius, in using all the performative games of language at his disposal to initiate the disciple into the mystery that cannot ultimately be put into the words of the 'fleshly tongue'. This is what he refers to throughout his writing as the 'cloude of vnknowyng' (Hodgson 1944: 154.15-17), 'the priue love put in purete of spirit' that he has learnt from Dionysius: 'his wisdom and his drewry, his lighty derknes and his vnknowyn kunnynges'. For such, he understands, is the only way of approaching the Divine nature from the human perspective.

3. Darkness and Apophasis: Entering the Cloud

If such 'divine names' transcend all conception and words, how then does Dionysius speak about them, for 'the union of divinised minds with the Light beyond all deity occurs in the cessation of all intelligent activity' (DN: 1.5)? Inspired by scripture, he suggests that the names of God are primarily *praised*. Thus, the Trinity, for Dionysius, cannot be expressed, only the 'aporias of unknowing' can contain it.⁷ To do this, Dionysius introduces his *hyper*- terms in DN2.4 ('supra-essential subsistence, supra-divine divinity, supra-excellent goodness, supremely individual identity') which will be reproduced at the beginning of the *Mystical Theology*. God, for Dionysius, is 'beyond every assertion and denial'. For in the following chapters of the *Divine Names*, Dionysius

⁷ For a full account of the 'mystical languages of unsaying' in Dionysius and his followers see Sells 1994.

does not try and *describe* the divine reality but rather plays with various models and pictures of the divine.

McGinn suggests that the theological heart of the text seems to be how the utterly unknowable God manifests himself in creation in order that all creation may return to this unknowable source (1991:161). On the level of thought – *intellectus* – the divine is utterly unknowable. This is the point of the aporia, the incomprehensibility, heralded by Dionysius' apophatic strategies which lead to the necessary transformation required by the texts. In this respect, the *Cloud* employs similar strategies of disorientation, contradiction, aporia and unknowing to lead the initiate to the place where they too may experience the utter fullness of God's being.

This will become Dionysius' famous *stulta sapientia* in DN: 7.1, (Gk: μωρία σοφία) that will play such an important role in the late medieval Dionysian tradition winding its way through the 'mystical discourse' of the late middle ages, reaching the English-speaking world via the writings of the *Cloud* author.

In this respect, the *Cloud* author stresses the darkness and unknowing of God that will be central to the initiation into the Divine of his pupil. In Chapter Three of the *Cloud* he states:

Lift up thin herte unto God with a meek steryng of love; and mene Himself, and none of His goodes. And therto loke thee lothe to thenk on ought bot on Hymself, so that nought worche in thi witte ne in thi wille bot only Himself. And do that in thee is to forgete alle the creatures that ever God maad and the werkes of hem, so that thi thought ne thi desire be not directe ne streche to any of hem, neither in general ne in special. Bot lat

hem be, and take no kepe to hem (Hodgson 1982: 9.11-15).⁸

For, as he famously states:

Lette not therfore, bot travayle therin tyl thou fele lyst. For at the first tyme when thou dost it, thou fyndest bot a derknes, and as it were a cloude of unknowyng, thou wost never what, savyng that thou felist in thi wille a nakid entent unto God. This derknes and this cloude is, howsoever thou dost, bitwix thee and thi God, and letteth thee that thou maist not see Him cleerly by light of understanding in thi reson, ne fele Him in swetnes of love in thin affeccion (Hodgson 1982: 9.28-34).⁹

Once in this darkness of unknowing we shall ‘cry to the one we love’, ‘for yif ever schalt thou fele Him or see Him, as it may be here, it behoveth alweis be in this cloude and in this derknes. And yif thou wylte besily travayle as I bid thee, I triste in His mercy that thou schalt come therto.’ (Hodgson 1982: 9.36-39).¹⁰

⁸ ‘Lift up your heart to God with a meek stirring of love; and have Himself in your sight, and none of His goods. And thereto, be careful not to think of anything but Himself. So that there is no work for your wit, nor in your will to focus on, but only Himself. And do that in yourself so as to forget all the creatures that ever God made and the works of them; so that your thought and your desire are not directed nor stretched to any of them, neither in general nor in particular, but let them be, and take no heed of them.’

⁹ ‘Do not hang back, therefore, but work hard on it until you feel the quickening desire. For when you first begin the exercise you will only find darkness, and as it were a cloud of unknowing. You don’t know what it is, except that you feel a naked intent towards God. This darkness and this cloud will be, no matter what you do, between yourself and your God, and it causes you neither to see Him clearly by the light of understanding in your reason, nor feel Him in the sweetness of love in your affection.’

¹⁰ ‘For if you will ever feel Him or see Him, as it may be here, it will always be in this cloud and in this darkness. And if you work hard on it as I bid you, I trust in His mercy that you shall come to this place.’

Hodgson suggests that the *Cloud*'s 'naked intent', 'implies a purified action of the will, freed from all discursive thought, directed to God, solely by faith, believing that God is, but straining to understand what God is' (Hodgson 1944: 185). Following this, the seeker is thus urged to cultivate a 'cloud of unknowing' (whence the title of the work) and 'forgetting' between themselves and all created things:

And yif ever thou schalt come to this cloude, and wone and worche therin as I bid thee, thee byhoveth, as this cloude of unknowyng is aboven thee, bitwix thee and thi God, right so put a cloude of forgetyng bineth thee, bitwix thee and alle the cretures that ever ben maad. Thee thinketh, paraventure, that thou arte ful fer from God, forthi that this cloude of unknowing is bitwix thee and thi God; bot sekirly, and it be wel conseyved, thou arte wel ferther fro Hym when thou hast no cloude of forgetyng bitwix thee and alle the creatures that ever ben maad (Hodgson 1982: 13. 24-27).¹¹

For by these means alone, according to the *Cloud* author, will we come to the communion with the Divine which his instructions are urging upon his pupil:

But now thou askest me and seiest: "How schal I think on Himself, and what is Hee?" And to this I cannot answeere thee bot thus: "I wote never." For thou hast brought me with thi question into that same derknes, and into that same cloude of unknowyng that I wolde thou were in thiself. For of alle other creatures and their werkes - ye, and of the werkes of God self - may a

¹¹ 'And if ever you shall come to this cloud and dwell and work therein as I bid you, then just as this cloud of unknowing is above you, between you and your God, so put a cloud of forgetting beneath yourself; between you and all the creatures that were ever made. You think, perhaps, that you are very far from God because this cloud of unknowing is between you and your God, but surely, if you consider it carefully, you are much further from Him when you have no cloud of forgetting between yourself and all the creatures that were ever made.'

man thorou grace have fulheed of knowing, and wel to kon thinke on hem; bot of God Himself can no man thinke (Hodgson 1982: 14. 14-20).¹²

For the *Cloud* author, quoting Dionysius, this is ‘that which is known by unknowing’:

On this same maner goostly it farith within in oure goostly wittys, when we travailen aboute the knowyng of God Himself. For have a man never so moche goostly understandyng in knowyng of alle maad goostly thinges, yit may he never bi the werk of his understandyng com to the knowyng of an unmaad goostly thing, the whiche is nought bot God. Bot by the failyng it may; for whi that thing that it failith in is nothyng ells bot only God. And herfore it was that Seynte Denis seyde: "The most goodly knowyng of God is that, the whiche is knowyn bi unknowyng." (Hodgson 1982: 69.37-70.6).¹³

This will be the means, then, whereby we are ‘oned with God’, (Hodgson 1958: 6), not by thinking of saints or angels (or indeed anything) but by ‘that dark unencumbered feeling of myself’ (Hodgson 1958: 8). What is noticeable however is that the *Cloud* author in particular diverges from Dionysius’ apophasis by stressing the naked IS of God rather than

¹² ‘But now you ask me and say, “How shall I think of Himself, and what is He?” and to this I cannot answer but can only say: “I have no idea.” For by means of this question you have brought me into that same darkness, and into that same cloud of unknowing, that I would you were in yourself. For a man by grace may know of all other creatures and their works, yes, and of the works of God’s self, and he may well reflect upon them. But of God Himself no man can think.’

¹³ ‘The same is true spiritually about our spiritual capacities, when we work hard on knowing about God himself. For no matter how much spiritual understanding a man may have knowing about all such matters, yet by means of his intellect can he never come to knowledge of an uncreated spiritual thing, which of course is God. But by relinquishing the understanding he may. For the understanding fails in nothing else but God alone. And it was for this reason that Saint Denys said: “the best means to come to knowing God is through the unknowing-knowing”.’

stressing Dionysius' definition of God as being *hyper-ousia* (in contrast, for example, with Meister Eckhart).

McGinn, amongst others, points out here that the *Cloud* author's ignorance of Dionysian doctrine of God being 'above being' (as the 'hyper'-words discussed above suggest). In this respect McGinn argues that the '*Cloud* author is certainly Dionysian but in a limited sense' (McGinn 2012: 398), or as Walsh puts it: 'it is difficult to estimate just how familiar the author is with all the "works of Denys"' (Walsh 1981: 256, see also Hodgson 1958: 4; 143.17-22 and 144.1-4 where she draws attention to the difference between the naked IS of the *Cloud* author in contrast to Dionysius' 'over-being').¹⁴

It seems to me that the author of the *Cloud* whilst being saturated with the language and style of the Dionysian writings, especially as refracted through the Victorine affective interpretation, does not feel constrained from feeling free to adapt them so that they may flourish in the very different soil of late medieval English mystical discourse.

Peter Tyler

[To be concluded in our next edition.]

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¹⁴ See also McGinn 2012: 398, 634 for a good discussion of this: 'Since the *Cloud*, Chapter 70, cites DN 7:3, it would seem that this is a conscious disagreement on the author's part'.

Book Review: A Forest of Symbols

Abbé Claude Barthe: *A Forest of Symbols: the Traditional Mass and its meaning*. 194 pp. Angelico Press, New York.
Paperback: \$17.95 / Hard cover: \$28.

*La Nature est un temple où de vivants piliers
Laissent parfois sortir de confuses paroles;
L'homme y passe à travers des forêts de symboles
Qui l'observent avec des regards familiers.*

That is the opening stanza of *Correspondances* (1857), the fourth poem in Baudelaire's *Les Fleurs du Mal*, and probably his best-known single poem. The verse might be paraphrased thus: 'Nature is a temple, from the pillars of which confused words occasionally emerge, and there man passes through forests of symbols, which watch him with a familiar look.' And Adrien Cart, commenting on the poem in the Larousse edition of Baudelaire, observes: *Voir dans les choses des symboles, c'est leur prêter un sens caché, mystique: c'est rapprocher le monde matériel d'un monde spirituel et moral auquel il correspond*: 'to see symbols in things is to lend them a hidden, mystical sense; it is to bring the material world closer to a spiritual and moral world to which it corresponds'.

And of course just as in literary expressions of human experience, such correspondences are an integral and central part of the Christian religion, most especially of Catholic Christianity and particularly of its liturgy. It is this 'correspondence' in the liturgy of the Mass that the Abbé Barthe's book investigates and explains, in very great depth and detail. As Peter Kwasniewski says in a review, 'Fr Barthe explains why we should recover the mystical interpretation of the Mass, and then shows how it is done.'

But first we must observe that the labour and skill of translators is too often overlooked and taken for granted. A

really good translation, for example that by Louise and Aylmer Maude of Tolstoy's *War and Peace*, is one in which the reader detects very few signs that it is a translation at all. I am glad to say that is certainly the case with David Critchley's translation of *La messe: une forêt de symboles* (first French edition 2011).

Further, for a consistent stylistic tone in the scriptural quotations, he has wisely chosen Douai/Challoner. The Jerusalem Bible, with its all-pervading banality and its very limited vocabulary, would not have worked at all, though the RSV might have done. The Translator's Note indicates that happily he has been able to work in consultation with the author; many translators are not so fortunate. The Preface, authoritative, and thoughtful in its discussion of the 'old' and the 'new' rites of Mass, is by Robert, Cardinal Sarah.

In keeping with its title and with its subject, this is a dense and complex work, requiring close attention. Regular readers of *Latin Liturgy* and members of the ALL will know that the Association was founded, and now exists and works, for the extensive use of Latin in the contemporary, post-Vatican II rite of Holy Mass, whereas this book is devoted exclusively to the rite subsequent to the Council of Trent. However, as a member of the Association wrote to me recently, 'The unjust and horrendous attacks on the 1962 missal [emanating, alas, from the Vatican] don't do our cause for promoting the use of Latin for the *novus ordo* any good at all, because they undermine any proper understanding of tradition.'

This is an intensely, minutely detailed book: it would be very hard for even the most critical reviewer to discern any omission in the huge amount of information that the author has assembled and documented. To many people it will probably not be a work to read through in one sustained effort, but it is an immensely useful book for reference – though how much more would it be so, if only there were an index! Indeed the only possible disappointment about the

book can be that it does *not* have an index. There is an itemised list of chapter contents on pp xi & xii, which goes a little way to providing directions, but a full index would make this book a work that could be quickly and systematically used for reference.

In the system on which the book operates (and a completely comprehensive system it is too) *everything* has a meaning as a symbol. Here are two examples at random: the ‘three appendages, called peaks or horns’ of the biretta are ‘three in number because clerical authority comes from the Trinity’; ‘the subdeacon represents the Old Testament... [and] as is appropriate the subdeacon always occupies the lowest rank, that of incompleteness’. Sometimes there is a reference to a ‘correspondence’ in the secular world which is of a sort that is very far from the minds of most of us, for example this: ‘the departure from the sacristy anticipates the real entry of Christ and his ministers, corresponding to his entry into the world, much as the real rising of the King at Versailles might take place before the official ceremony of the *levée*.’ That is very French, of course, but to the average British or American reader it will seem pretty odd.

All in all, though, this is a fascinating book, now accessible to a very large English-speaking readership, theologically rich and elaborate, full of allusions and references, especially as the narrative develops from the beginning of Part 2 onwards.

The last twenty-one pages are occupied by the text of the Ordinary of the Mass in Latin and English. This is hard to understand: any reader of this book would surely have his or her own Missal ready at hand. These pages could be so much more usefully occupied by that index which I mentioned earlier! Nonetheless, highly recommended.

Christopher Francis

Some notes on rites and languages

Although *The Tablet* is not widely read by those who aren't drawn to modernism (to use a general term) in liturgy, it nonetheless provides a useful channel for the communication of liturgical news and ideas. The 15th July edition reported (albeit in a regrettably incomplete and selective way) the twelfth annual St Bede liturgy lecture given on 8 July at Ealing Abbey by Mgr Bruce Harbert, an eminent member of the ALL, and formerly executive director of the International Committee on English in the Liturgy.

Then the edition of 29th July carried an article by Vincent Twomey, Emeritus Professor of Moral Theology at Maynooth, entitled 'Is it too late for liturgical reconciliation?' In a small space he tackled some of the many current difficulties, making it clear that 'we must face up to some weaknesses in *both* the reformed and the older forms of the Roman rite'.

Finally, the same edition carried news of the approval by Cardinal Roche, head of what is now called the Dicastery for Divine Worship, of the introduction of the new lectionary for England and Wales. The English Standard Version – Catholic Edition, which was first published in India in 2018, will replace the Jerusalem Bible on the First Sunday of Advent 2024. See: <https://www.catholicbible.org/>



Cologne Cathedral April 2023 (the blur in the middle is a passing pigeon!)



Cologne Cathedral April 2023

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