

Australian Academy of Liturgy 2011 Conference 18th January Melbourne

Approximately 60 persons present from all states Catholic Anglican and UCA

Below is a summary of notes taken and given at this 4 day conference.

There were 3 Speakers

The Rev. Dr Gerard Kelly, President of the Catholic Institute of Sydney

Gerard gave a talk and then answered questions for an hour about some of the issues raised in his presentation.

His talk was about **‘What is the purpose of Liturgy?’** and some aspects of his talk that I particularly noted are given below.

Liturgy is meant to be missional because mission is an attribute of God himself.

Every church has to be in mission or it is not really a church.

The liturgy aims: to Gather; to build; to send.

Newer styles of church are missing out many of the heritages of liturgy.

Some aspects of this that the church has learnt over years are:

The gathering

It has a role to move people from the ordinary to the sacred

It begins when people leave their homes

It occurs when Jesus is present as two or three meet.

It is unique for each community and each individual

The sending out

It is not a dismissal because that implies nothing happens until we meet again

It is a signal that our mission now begins

The Rev Dr David Orr OSB

David is a member of the Benedictine community

Currently he is pastor of the Catholic Parish of Arcadia. His topic was

: "**You are a priest forever**" – He drew lessons from our traditions and practices regarding the Priesthood of the Faithful.

Some of the points he made I found very challenging:

Jesus Christ is understood to be a priest but:

He didn't claim to be a priest;

He didn't have a family role or background as a priest;

His claim to priesthood was based on his incarnation and the fact that he 'did the will of the Father'

This signifies a new style of priesthood.

The old priesthood had people representing the people before God.

Jesus' new priesthood was established by people with access to the Father.

This new priesthood has people acting as priests:

By the way they related to creation;

By the way they lived each day;

By the priority they give to God in their whole life.

People are being drawn into priesthood all the time by God.

We demonstrate and support this in the church by ceremonially baptizing people to become priests, agents of Christ's presence in the world.

The church has lost a lot of this understanding of priestly people. David Orr then challenged us with the idea that before the reformation and still in many places today.

- Liturgies have become clericalised and this had differentiated the role of priests and laity.
- The church has made so many additions to scriptures that the meanings are becoming misunderstood or clouded by all.
- The church liturgies had become allegorical

The result of some of these errors has meant laity are seen and understood by people as spectators of the clergy and the laity are understood to have a diminished role and importance.

The reformation among other matters raised the issue to the fore again with the idea that all believers are spiritual priests before God.

Vatican Council in the catholic church affirmed that in today's society everyone is a spiritual priest. It can be understood that the Roman Catholic church today supports the idea of a baptized priesthood that can include laity in leadership. This meaning has not however been linked into acceptance of lay leadership for the sacraments and eucharist. Yet there are liturgical changes that make the claim that all participants in the eucharist are priests.

Catholics and Anglicans will not today openly discuss lay presidency at the eucharist

Ross Neville, Rural Consultant for Evangelism and Mission with the NSW Uniting Church Board of Mission then Spoke about: '**Worship and liturgical practices**' with the many different styles evolving in rural situations. Ross gave concrete explanations and stories about how many forms of worship and liturgy are changing. He then had over one hour of questions about the issues raised.

Ross defined the purpose of liturgy as a guide to give expression to the local life and faith of a gathered worshipping community.

There are three ways to worship Worship occurs through: the head;
the heart;
the joining of heaven, creation and humans

Most liturgy focuses on head worship.

The UCA encourages a basic framework to guide worship across Australia.

This includes Gathering; Receiving the word; Celebrating the Lord's supper; Being sent on God's mission.

In the 21st century rural society in the UCA church worship Ross is seeing some of the following changes.

Leadership is changing. The changes are from: clergy only led;
to team led;
to lay led;
to congregational led.

The example was given of Project Reconnect DVD with only some worship elements on recording allowing congregations to begin to do their own local liturgy and worship.

Structural societal changes are happening. Worship is becoming multimedia; multicultural; using non jargon or non church language; more participatory; less formal and structured.

The example of the 'Rediscovering Hope' resource material was used to demonstrate how a meal had the capacity to become a worship event.

Church is being developed to allow **the dechurched and non churched to be drawn into allowing people to express their own understanding of relating to God**

Messy church with intergenerational craft activity were being used to teach and guide reflection and worship of God.

Worship with the joining of the heavens creation and humankind

Enviro church and Desert Journeys are two ways the UCA is allowing people to meet in the middle of creation and allowing God to minister through creation and then worship.

Worship with the heart is being explored and developed

Historical Christian practices in meditation, prayer, quiet days, retreats in daily life which are all building the capacity of all the people of God to contact God through their hearts.

Groups such as the faith community 'Waterhole' are an ecumenical group that is growing and deepening people faith and experience of God. These people becoming God's priest in their daily lives as they learn to live in and through Him.