Liturgy in the context of globalization : mediating between the global and the local

19. Liturgy in the Context of Globalization: Mediating between the Global and the Local

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Twenty years after the collapse of Communism in Central and Eastern Europe that is widely considered to mark the effective beginning of political and economic globalization, the ever-increasing networking of market economies, travel and communications, medical and industrial technologies, and educational systems is experienced less and less as a phenomenon and more and more as a context: a global tapestry woven together – *contextus* – around the human community and into which individual human persons and groups such as churches are inextricably woven. This tapestry of globalization is as potentially beautiful as it is shot through with real problems of indignity and inequity. Simultaneously, and at times ambiguously, its inhabitants (that is, each of us) are victims of globalization's lethal liabilities and beneficiaries of its amazing advances. An objective view of globalization is therefore impossible – no one can step outside this context; all are subjects within it, yet experiencing it differently depending on the other contexts (ecclesial, national, socio-economic, etc.) they inhabit.

This contextual subjectivity is largely determinative of how one characterizes globalization, as Nobel Prize-winning economist Joseph Stiglitz describes:

> Those who vilify globalization too often overlook its benefits. But the proponents of globalization have been, if anything, even more unbalanced. To them, globalization (which typically is associated with accepting triumphant capitalism, American style) is progress; developing countries must accept it if they are to grow and to fight poverty effectively. But to many in the developing world, globalization has not brought the promised economic benefits. (Stiglitz 5)

Where globalization presents new and advantageous vistas for commerce and interpersonal networking, people are likely to inhabit it as a positive context and to identify closely with its advances. Where the cost of globalization is the fragmentation of identities and alienation from cultural and economic resources, it is likely to be challenged and resisted. In either case, notes Stiglitz, "We cannot go back on globalization; it is here to stay. The issue is how can we make it work" (Stiglitz 222).

The multiplicity and complexity of phenomena brought together in the context of globalization, and the ambiguous and polarizing attitudes it engenders, collude to make the formulation of a genuinely constructive Christian response to globalization a daunting, though necessary, task. Titus Presler, former professor of missiology at The General Theological Seminary in New York, describes the formation of a Christian response to globalization using the language of identity:

> Many secular expressions of a globalized identity end up distorting and ultimately exploiting human communities, whereas a Christian global identity, centered in Christ and the ever-present and prevenient work of the Holy Spirit, will bend all globalized identities toward justice, compassion, and the dignity of every human being and community. (Presler, Interview)

The precise theological and practical contents of a "Christian global identity" may be debated, and among those peoples for whom Christian missionary efforts went hand in glove with exploitative foreign colonialism, the notion is likely to appear suspect. Nevertheless, within the compass of Christian tradition there must be sufficient resources for churches and ecclesial communities to assemble a common global identity from within which they can effectively harness and "bend" the positive advances of globalization while redressing its inequities and alienating effects.

Konrad Raiser, former general secretary of the World Council of Churches, suggests that catholicity – the church's mark of universality – may be the appropriate Christian expression of a global identity:

> Neither a form of globalization nor a mere acquiescence in plurality, catholicity is based on the recognition that the fullness of God's presence is to be experienced in each local community which gathers in the name of Christ and which recognizes its essential and unbreakable relationship with all other such local communities. (Raiser, To Be 27)

The catholicity of the church (here understood in its broadest ecumenical sense as the community of all the baptized throughout the world) holds together as one the experience of God's presence and activity through the Holy Spirit in each local Christian assembly. Any contradictory "tension between the local church and the universal church must be transformed into a relational understanding of a worldwide church with its foundation in the local communities assembled in each place" (Raiser, To Be 27). Yet this relational understanding of catholicity is not simply mathematical, that is, of parts to the whole. The local church is the catholic church, in its

spatial and temporal realization. So notes Nathan Jennings, professor of liturgy at the Episcopal Theological Seminary of the Southwest in Austin, Texas: "each local unit of church, at work, at prayer and especially in the celebration of the mysteries participates fully in and is a full expression of the universal church in the local church's particular time and place" (Jennings).[1]

Catholicity thus provides one example of an authentic Christian global identity. Yet more than an identity, catholicity is – like globalization – a context: a tapestry-like network into which Christian lives are woven together in the experience of being church, the body of Christ in the world. Because catholicity discloses the universal dimension or "mark" of the church through its fundamental realization in the local assembly, it offers a highly suitable framework from within which "the problems posed by globalization" may be effectively addressed by the church on the local level, "focusing not on the [context of] globalization per se, but on specific issues of economic oppression and exploitation, and the unfettered use of oppressive power on a geopolitical scale" (Presler, Interview). Above all, it is through liturgical worship that each local church manifests the context of catholicity from which it must attend to the challenges of globalization. Thus Mattijs Ploeger comments, "Although the church is far more than just 'a cultic institution,' the celebration of the sacraments is central in the life of the church, because they always readdress the church's focus to its *raison-d'être* [*sic*]" (Ploeger 490). The remainder of this essay explores how liturgy mediates between global and local concerns within the dual contexts of catholicity and globalization.

Ordo: The Catholic Inheritance of the Local Eucharistic Assembly

In the eucharistic assembly, the local church expresses its catholicity by appropriating a liturgical inheritance shared both intra-denominationally and ecumenically. Extreme care, however, must be exercised in asserting what constitutes this shared inheritance. Liturgical approaches to ecclesio-

[1] As Jennings points out, what in actual practice is understood to be the local church varies in the estimation of different ecclesial communities. Many Reformed and Pentecostal bodies conceive of the local church parochially, in terms of the particular congregation, whereas for Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Anglican, and some Lutheran bodies the local church subsists at the level of the diocese, centered in the ministry of the bishop.

logical questions are not well served by over-determined preconceptions. Foundationally, it is *ordo* – the structure or order of the liturgy – that forms a common liturgical inheritance; shared traditions of text and music, though important, are secondary. Lutheran theologian Gordon Lathrop suggests that "catholic continuity resides in the tradition of what they do: the *ordo*, the enacting of the faith, the reading and preaching of the scriptures, the doing of the sacraments. . . . While the pattern of the action has a long history in many places, it always becomes local" (Lathrop, Holy Things 87). *Ordo* is one expression of catholicity in the worship of local churches, the *doing* of what all Christians have always done, everywhere.[2]

Of course, not all Christians have always and everywhere made use of the inherited liturgical *ordo*. Lathrop suggests that the majority who do utilize its basic contours, and the minority who do not, may benefit one another through "mutual witness":

> Quakers, Salvationists and some non-baptizing Christian groups of Asia and Africa need the churches who actually, physically perform the *ordo*. They need *ordo*-like catechesis and community formation, so that their own spirituality does not become gnostic. But the sacramental churches also need the witness of those for whom the only water is that of the interior speech of the Spirit and for whom the resultant life of self-giving service is "participation in the Body of Christ." (Lathrop, Holy People 147–48)

Those who do not follow the inherited liturgical *ordo* do not compromise its catholicity thereby; rather, they challenge Christians whose worship is grounded in an inherited structure to consider carefully whether that structure, and the liturgy it supports, promotes fidelity to the gospel. Conversely, those whose worship follows an *ordo* may call Christians who refrain from such practice to examine the incarnational dimensions of their belief and devotion, including their relationships to the larger Body of Christ.

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[2] The allusion here to the canon or rule of faith in Vincent of Lérins, *Commonitorium* 4.3, is quite intentional: too often catholicity is presented in terms of belief as intellectual assent to a core set of doctrines. Emphasizing *ordo* as one aspect of catholicity suggests that when the church is gathered, there is a catholic way of acting that is at least as important as, and perhaps logically and practically prior to, the catholic way of believing. This notion can be recognized as implicit in the concept of *lex orandi, lex credendi*, though in popularized theological discourse that axiom is often incorrectly reduced to a dependent predication of the latter upon the former, and frequently in terms of propositional belief as dependent on liturgical text.

Among the majority who engage in worship according to a received pattern, emphasizing *ordo* over more specific liturgical elements serves to highlight the transtemporal, transcultural, and transdenominational dimensions of worship and sacramental practice. For example, the same foundational structure employed in a second-century Eucharist at Rome can be recognized in liturgies from sixteenth-century Canterbury or Uppsala, eighteenth-century Utrecht, and twenty-first-century Manila or New York. Liturgical scholars and reformers often fall prey to discussion of the "organic development" of liturgy, on the one hand, and to the idealization of certain periods of liturgical history as high points in such organic development, on the other hand. The Roman Benedictine Prosper Guéranger (1805–1875) and Anglican priest Percy Dearmer (1867–1936) each sought correctives for perceived deficiencies in the liturgies of their respective churches in early medieval catholic practice, while early- to mid-twentieth-century study focused on the patristic period as the springtime of the liturgy.

Such idealization can certainly lead to more intensive beneficial research and a deeper recognition of unifying elements such as the *ordo* in the midst of what amounts historically to synthetic (and not organic) liturgical development.[3] More often than not, however, this idealization only serves to promote as normative and superior the cultural, linguistic, or musical genius of one culture over against all others. Such attitudes are evident, for example, among some in the Anglican Communion with respect to the Book of Common Prayer 1662, and among some in the Roman Catholic Church with respect to the *Missale Romanum* 1962. The underlying liturgical *ordo* in each of these books is transtemporal and transcultural – as well as identical – but they remain properly local liturgies, even if promulgated or implemented for multi-national use.

The basic eucharistic *ordo*, evident rudimentarily in the New Testament, is a twofold structure encompassing the Word of God/Liturgy of the Word and The Holy Communion/Liturgy of the Eucharist. By about 150 C.E., a fivefold *ordo* was evident in at least one community in the city of Rome: Gathering, Word, Prayers of the People, Eucharistic Meal, and

[3] That is to say, history does not reveal patterns of liturgical development in total isolation from one church to another; rather, liturgies are synthesized. They "grow" through processes of appropriating and adapting elements from the worship of one church by another.

Sending.[4] Both the twofold and the fivefold structures are evident throughout liturgical history; both often appear as headings in the contemporary liturgical books of many Christian churches and ecclesial bodies. The third working-group paper on eucharistic structure by the International Anglican Liturgical Consultation (IALC), in its fifth meeting, at Dublin, August 6–12, 1995, highlighted the fivefold *ordo*, noting among its "Principles and Recommendations" that

> In the future, Anglican unity will find its liturgical expression not so much in uniform texts as in a common approach to eucharistic celebration and a structure which will ensure a balance of word, prayer, and sacrament, and which bears witness to the catholic calling of the Anglican Communion. (Holeton 261 n. 6)[5]

But this observation of the IALC needs to be extended beyond global Anglicanism: the fivefold ordo is already a common Christian inheritance (not an Anglican peculiar), a hallmark of catholicity, and a rich potential foundation for official ecumenical conversations on liturgy and sacramental theology (Lathrop, Holy People 117–58).

Incarnating *Ordo* in the Local Church

Beyond *ordo*, the liturgical inheritance of a particular local church is largely determined by its ecclesial and cultural heritage, by its polity or forms of governance, and perhaps also by its ecumenical commitments. The tissue with which each church or ecclesial community incarnates *ordo* as liturgy – patterns of praying and singing, art, architecture, and vesture, ritual movement and gesture – may be largely predetermined by these commitments or may be open-ended. Simply stated, the factors involved in the local appropriation or *inculturation* of Christian liturgy are numerous and complex.

And yet it seems that a certain championing of the local church's right and responsibility to undertake for itself the task of inculturation is in order. The local church is best situated to determine pastorally how liturgy is to be celebrated in its particular place and time. This pastoral impulse is evident in a note appended to the first Book of Common Prayer, entitled "Of Ceremonies, Why Some Be Abolished, and Some Retained." Most

[4] See Justin Martyr, *First Apology* 67, 1–5. On the particularity (and therefore potentially limited value) of this text, see Bradshaw 63–64.

[5] See also Irvine.

likely the words of Thomas Cranmer, the note waxed eloquent on the principles of ongoing liturgical reform in the Church of England. Among its insights is this remark regarding the place of the local church in liturgical development:

> And in these our doings, we condemn no other nations, nor prescribe any thing, but to our own people only. For we think it convenient that every country should use such ceremonies, as they shall think best to the setting forth of God's honor or glory, and to the reducing of the people to a most perfect and godly living, without error or Superstition.[6]

In Cranmer's view the local church was the national church, as by law established. Yet even where the local church does not enjoy boundaries coterminous with the nation, or the advantages and challenges of state sponsorship, Cranmer's fundamental pastoral principle seems still to hold good.

How so? Fundamentally, liturgy is a concentrated, ritualized, and communal means by which human persons encounter and respond to that toward which, in spite of their sinful condition, they nonetheless naturally tend.[7] For that encounter and response to be real – for it genuinely to speak the truth of God into the vicissitudes of real human lives, evoking faith in the saving power of God – the praise and thanksgiving, confession, lamentation, and intercession of liturgy must be *intelligible*, both intellectually and bodily. Liturgy purposes to lead people as whole persons into the paschal mystery of Jesus Christ, not explaining it away but demystifying it, making it transparent. The dual mission that theology claims for liturgy – God's glorification and human sanctification – is severely compromised when liturgy fails to make sense. The catholicity of the church does not require that liturgy should take on a universal form, even if it does both depend on and contain certain universal characteristics. Rather, catholicity requires of liturgy that access to the mystery of faith become universally available, a graced entrée for all the people of God. Such universal accessibility, however, can only be achieved through the particular instantiations of local liturgical celebrations.

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[6] "The Booke of the Common Prayer and Administracion of the Sacramentes, and Other Rites and Ceremonies of the Churche after the Use of the Churche of England" [1549], *The First and Second Prayer Books of Edward VI*, Everyman's Library 448 (New York: Dutton, 1952) 288 (spelling modernized).

[7] See Thomas Aquinas, *Super Boethium De Trinitate*, q.6, a.4 ad 5; Thomas Aquinas, *De Veritate*, q.22, a.1 c.

This emphasis on the particular and the local does not deny the universality of God's saving will for humanity, as revealed and enacted in the life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. But the good news of God, the gospel of Jesus Christ, cannot be made known, accepted, appropriated, or celebrated except on a local level. This requires a work of translation – not simply of text, whether biblical or liturgical – but a "moving across" of the *kerygma*, the contents of the whole gospel into a local culture. The necessity of such translation is perhaps the theme in the field of missiology that bears most keenly upon liturgy as well. Yale missiologist Lamin Sanneh notes: "The fact of Christianity being a translated, and translating, religion places God at the center of the universe of cultures, implying free coequality among cultures and a necessary relativizing of languages vis-à-vis the truth of God." Approaches to liturgical inculturation that favor the transmission of liturgies whole and entire from one local church to another often fall far short of respecting such a "free coequality" among cultures. "No culture is so advanced and so superior," Sanneh continues, "that it can claim exclusive access or advantage to the truth of God, and none so marginal or inferior that it can be excluded. All have merit; none is indispensable" (Sanneh, Whose Religion 105–6).

One might be left wondering what becomes of the context of catholicity when such strong emphasis is laid on the local church and its particular culture. Does a high level of local appropriation or inculturation not endanger the catholicity of the local church? Such a question becomes pressing when one considers the ancient schism between Eastern and Western Christianity, the divisions that persist among various Lutheran synods, or the declarations of broken or impaired communion among certain Anglican provinces. Is it possible for different local churches to maintain a high degree of autonomy without thereby compromising catholicity?

Perhaps a lesson can be learned on this point from second-century Christianity. While a fair amount of diversity in baptismal and eucharistic practices was undoubtedly known among the several churches at that time, such differences were not considered church dividing. Another liturgical issue was seen as far more controversial: determining the date of Easter. Eusebius of Caesarea describes the situation thus:

> All the Asian dioceses thought that in accordance with ancient tradition they ought to observe the fourteenth day of the lunar month as the beginning of the Paschal festival – the day on which the Jews had been commanded to sacrifice the lamb: on that day, no matter which day of the week it might be, they must without fail bring

> the fast to an end. But nowhere else in the world was it customary to arrange their celebrations in that way: in accordance with apostolic tradition, they preserved the view which still prevails, that it was improper to end the fast on any day other than that of our Saviour's resurrection. (Eusebius 5.23, Williamson ed. 170–71).

To read Eusebius's entire account of the controversy gives one a sense for how deeply this issue was perceived as a threat to the churches' context of catholicity.

In illustrating how the situation was dealt with practically, Eusebius quotes a letter attributed to Irenaeus of Lyons, in which the latter describes a mid-second-century meeting between the bishops of Smyrna and Rome:

> when Blessed Polycarp paid a visit to Rome in Anicetus' time, though they had minor differences on other matters too, they at once made peace, having no desire to quarrel on this point. Anicetus could not persuade Polycarp not to keep the day, since he had always kept it with John the disciple of our Lord and the other apostles with whom he had been familiar; nor did Polycarp persuade Anicetus to keep it: Anicetus said that he must stick to the practice of the presbyters before him. Though the position was such, they remained in communion with each other, and in church Anicetus made way for Polycarp to celebrate the Eucharist – out of respect, obviously. They parted company in peace, and the whole Church was at peace, both those who kept the day and those who did not. (Eusebius 5.24, Williamson ed. 173)

The peace achieved between Polycarp and Anicetus, essentially an agreement to disagree amicably, suggests how local churches can maintain diverse liturgical customs and practices – even those that touch on core issues of faith – without condemning one another as having abandoned catholicity, or refusing to share eucharistic communion with one another.[8]

It may seem paradoxical that the local church should maintain its context of catholicity precisely through the diversity that inculturation of *ordo* affords; yet, as Presler explains,

> a world religion endures as a world religion not only by virtue of temporal and cross-cultural continuity, but also by virtue of its local discontinuity. Its unity endures by virtue of its diversity; its mutability and immutability are interdependent; its continuity depends on change; the old and the new are inextricably bound together. (Presler, Transfigured 262)

[8] Sadly, by the end of the second century, the "Quartodecimans" or "Fourteeners" – those keeping the Paschal feast on the fourteenth day of Nisan – had been excommunicated by a successor of Anicetus, Victor I; see Eusebius 5.24, Williamson ed. 172–73.

What at first glance may appear as a sort of balkanization is, in fact, integral to the local church's ability to bring the mysteries of faith presented in the liturgy to bear upon the lives of faithful persons in faithful communities. This is not a matter of liturgy's promoting positive feelings, of being relevant, hip, or trendy, but of the real power public worship exerts in the process of shaping human persons ever more and more into the image of God, and transforming communities into agents of reconciliation and positive change. Insofar as locally appropriated and inculturated liturgy supports those formative and transformative ends, it assumes a critical role in fashioning the church's response to globalization.

Identity, Place, Presence

Turning now to specific effects of globalization, one notes that, in ways both helpful and harmful, the context of globalization stretches human self-understanding and reconfigures relationships – and with mixed results. Through the internet and digital telephony, persons in disparate and often remote parts of the world can be instantly connected with one another, creating a sense of community and solidarity in a truly global village. Archbishop Rowan Williams notes, however, that "the solidarity of the secular world continues to distort our perceptions and taste even when we *think* we are choosing" (Williams 212). Distorted perceptions and tastes are symptomatic of distorted identities, misshapen understandings of self before God and in the world. Identity is above all relational, since without the other, "I" would have no capacity for language, no frame of reference for cognition, no means of being reflected back to "myself." Thus Timothy Radcliffe notes,

> One's identity is not a solitary possession, discovered through mental introversion, through disengagement from the webs of relationship, me thinking about myself. It is given by membership of one's community – the family, the tribe, the clan, or the nation. One becomes a person through integration into the community, by embracing one's position and enacting one's role. (Radcliffe 135)

And just as one "becomes a person through integration into the community," so through integration into the community of faith one takes on a new identity, that of a Christian – one who has been conformed to Christ in community, in whom Christ dwells as a constitutive truth, and through whom Christ continues to minister to the world.

Liturgical celebration of the sacraments is fundamental to the formation of such relational identities, over against the false solidarities and distorted identities on offer through globalization, because sacraments configure, reconfigure, and enrich the relationships that form the community of faith. As Louis-Marie Chauvet remarks,

> Rite assigns positions. This means that, unlike the life of faith and the moral life which are more or less in conformity with the gospel (one could say that they are "analogical"), ritual practice does not accept the more or less. One is a catechumen or not, one is baptized or not, and one cannot make a half-communion. One could say that ritual practice is of the binary order or that it is "indexical" because like an index it shows everyone's position. (Chauvet 110)

(To which might be added "in relationship to one another.") For one to say "I am baptized" – and note that this is most often said conversationally in the present tense – is to say "I have undergone a transformative liturgical experience. My frame of reference with regard to my self-understanding within the community of believers is that event." Admittedly, not all Christians have achieved that level of integration wherein they understand baptism as their defining moment. Nevertheless, the rite has assigned a position, established the baptized person in relationship to others. So far as the community of the faithful is concerned, this one will always have that ritually conferred identity – in relationship to both the church and the world.

This relational identity received in the sacraments highlights the identity distortion that often accompanies globalization. Global marketing strategies have effectively branded all human persons as consumers, even those for whom such consumption is beyond their financial means. A mentality of competition for scarce but desirable goods colludes with disposability of income and of products in such a way that even human relationships can come to be treated as disposable commodities. When difficulties arise in a given relationship – whether of love or of labor – one can simply suspend interaction, discontinue communication, and terminate the association, as if to say, "if the relationship fails to work, throw it away and get a new one!" A relational identity effected through sacramental celebrations has no truck with such commodified relationships.

Above all, it is the personal presence of Christ given and received in the Eucharist that militates against any understanding of relationship as disposable commodity. The sharing of sacramental food and drink within the liturgical assembly intensifies relational identity, while also conferring

a sense of place. The accelerated travel and instantaneous communication technologies that many would credit as positive advances of globalization have served to compress human spatial correlations, resulting in what William T. Cavanaugh refers to as "detachment from any particular localities" (Cavanaugh, World 70). This detachment undercuts the potential for meaningful relationships to the land and its resources, to home as place, people, and culture. Boundaries are dissolved and landmarks lose their significance as "the illusion is created that all the world's peoples are contemporaries occupying the same space-time" (Cavanaugh 75). Robert Schreiter points out that "If boundaries play an important role in the semiotics of identity by helping us define who we are by who we are not, they are now so crisscrossed by globalization processes that they seem to have lost their identity-conferring power" (Schreiter 11). Such is the cost of life in the global village.

The Eucharist overcomes this illusory compression of space by giving precedence to the space of the local church, as J.-M. R. Tillard declares: "The moment when the local church expresses itself in its most profound reality and returns to its roots is the Sunday eucharistic synaxis" (Tillard 20). This synaxis or gathering is indeed profoundly local, rooted in a particular time, place, and culture; yet it is also the catholic space where the whole church – every local church – is gathered into the one bread and one cup. Thus Philip Sheldrake comments that

> Every Eucharist, in which the Body of Christ is practiced, is local and particular. Yet, at the same time it collapses all conventional boundaries not only of place but also of time. . . . Participation in the Eucharist draws the community into a catholic narrative of place that embraces all contingent times and all specific locations. (Sheldrake 87)

Realized locally, Eucharist embraces universally. Bread and wine – simple, local, and particular – give way to the mystery of Christ, at once ubiquitous yet personally present in the sacramental symbols. As Sheldrake explains, "The most challenging, but rarely noted, element of a doctrine of Real Presence is the question of who and what Jesus brings with him into the eucharistic space. In receiving Jesus Christ the disciple receives at the same time all that makes up his Body" (Sheldrake 86). The space or place is ultimately a bodily place, not simply the fleshly-and-bloody space into which the sacramental gifts are gratefully received as food and drink, but a locale, a place inhabited by *other* bodies. "The doctrine of the Real Presence is a kind of Trojan horse that outflanks our defenses and brings into

our space all that, from our limited perspective, we would rather exclude" (Sheldrake 86).

Eucharistic Presence is unrelenting in its inclusivity; its context of ultimate catholicity welcomes the poor and the outcast, the marginalized and the oppressed – all for whom the context of globalization is anything but home. Bodies undernourished, bodies impoverished, bodies crushed by age or disease or indifference: these bodies too (and perhaps above all others) are comprised in the Bread of Heaven and Cup of Salvation. All who would receive these bodies in Holy Communion must, as Monika K. Hellwig says, "enter into their need and find ways to satisfy their hunger, to challenge the structures of the world that keep some peoples and some populations hungry, to question the sick and inordinate desires that maintain those structures" (Hellwig 87).

Conclusion

As much as globalization is a context, it continues to evolve and mutate with ever-increasing rapidity, marking advances with enticements too good to be true. Why then, twenty years into the globalized experience, do so many find themselves crying out with Israel in the wilderness, "If only we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the fleshpots and ate our fill of bread; for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger" (Ex 16:3)? For these, the context of globalization is just the next in an ancient line of successive *mitzrayim*, narrow and harrowing places of distortion, disease, and death.

Even as it too is bound into this context of globalization, the church extends its catholicity as another context, with an alternate vision. This catholicity cannot be asserted but only disclosed, above all in the liturgy of the local church. This context of catholicity is experiential and enacted: more than simply believing what all have always believed, it is a doing of what all have always done: gathering and praying, listening and responding, eating and going forth. The common *ordo* that each church must locally appropriate and inculturate is one benchmark of its universality, for "this eucharist, celebrated by the local church, is the same eucharist of the same Lord in all other local churches as well" (Ploeger 540).

In all of its sacraments, but especially in the Eucharist, relationships are created, renewed, and restored – relationships that impart identity, dignity, and worth – thereby challenging on the human level any reduction of the personal image of God to the status of either consumer or commod-

ity. The effect of the Eucharist upon human relationships flows from the church's experience of the eucharistic liturgy, wherein it discovers its own identity as the Body of Christ. Thus Ploeger states:

> The church is nowhere deeper inserted into Christ, and therefore nowhere nearer to its own identity, than in the eucharist, where the historical/resurrected, eucharistic and ecclesial meanings of the body of Christ merge. The church is most itself during the eucharist celebration. Everything else that can be said of or done by the church finds its source and summit there. (Ploeger 483)

From that source and summit each local church must learn, in cooperating with other churches, what else it must do. As Lathrop explains,

> liturgy carries within itself a connection to the widespread human need for meaning: the need for wider availability of food, for festivity, for life instead of death, for cleanliness, for words that work and do not lie, for authentic location in an ordered world, for times that flow from work to rest, for just and free community. (Lathrop, Holy Things 116)

Certainly, the churches must speak out together against injustice, rage against every form of neocolonialist oppression, and engage in ministries that ease the suffering of the last and least. Accomplishing these and similar tasks at times may involve not denial of or resistance to globalization but a subversive unraveling of the globalized tapestry, in order to reweave it for the good of all. Faithful stewardship of globalization's advances and forthright critique of its indignities and inequities are the fruitful works of communities secure in their identities, united in their context of catholicity, given and received in the sharing of the cup and the breaking of the bread.