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## Box 06, Folder 24 - "The Montessori Approach to Teaching Religion, The Liturgy Lecture II / The Liturgy and the Montessori Method: Two Movements Start in Rome" (E.M.S.)

Edwin Mortimer Standing

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# LECTURE II

## THE MONTESSORI APPROACH TO TEACHING RELIGION

### THE LITURGY

YESTERDAY - last lecture - spoke of the TWO GREAT MOVEMENTS THAT STARTED IN ROME .....

LITURGICAL MOVEMENT BENEDICT XV

MONTESSORI MOVEMENT . .

|| Showed how - from the beginning discerning persons recognised an affinity ... *Fr Classen page 2*

NOW RECOGNISED IN HIGH ECCLESIASTICAL CIRCLES ..

QUOTE FROM OSSERVAORE ROMAN DEC 30 62

by Cavalletti - the Montessori religious school

AS WE PROCEED WILL BECOME MORE CLAR

+ Now

.....  
AN EXCURSION INTO COMPARATIVE RELIGIOUS PSYCHOLOGY

WHAT IS THE LITURGY ?

Quote again p 2 MS

Still Quote ...

Personal experience .

A Quaker meeting .

THE UNDERLYING PRINCIPLE

Spirit to spirit directly ...

SPIRIT VERSUS MATTER IS THERE AN ANTITHESIS ?

the examples from India

Leena and the Rice

Mrudula and the lighted candle stick

the Holy Water .

the Praying Beads .



the buddhist priest  
the-mahomedan-family

THE REAL ANSWER Newman

QUOTE FROM NEWMAN

~~LITURGY NECESSARY TO HUMAN NATURE~~

PERENTHETICALLY .....

THE COMPARISON WITH KINDS OF EDUCATION

THE PRTESTANT CHURCH OLD KIND OF TEACHING

THE CATHOLIC CATHEDRAL MONTESSORI

LITURGY NECESSARY TO HUMAN NATURE

QUOTE ~~1~~ 6-7

*The Sum of Awelessness 7*

SOME POINTS ABOUT THE LITURGY

QUOTE pp8-9

THE LITURGY AND CHILDREN

QUOTE (pp 4-5 in book )

or second MS . p 10

long quote from Mammolina

aa A COMMON PSYCHOLOGY

LITURGY AND MONTESSORI METHOD

~~p 15 (2)~~

*p 13  
14  
15*

THE PERIPHERY OF THE CHILD  
external and visible

senses , movement. free choice , behaviours

the CENTRE

Hidden centre of personality  
intelligence  
will  
the pace from which action starts .  
wherethe ego is forged .



Old fashioned type addresses the Centre directly  
( the old Herbartian Steps )

Montessori and the Liturgy is

TO FEED THE periphery

Gives a material -- explains its use

Sets going a peripheral activity

THERE IS A CONSTANT INTERCOURSE BETWEEN THE CENTRE  
and the periphery - THE SYTOLE AND DIASTOLE OF THE  
HEART ... A RHYTHM THAT NEVER CEASES

It is like the rhythm of a wave that never  
ceases ".

WHAT GOES ON IN THE CENTRE IS THE CHILD'S SECRET

WE NEED NOT WORRY ABOUT IT .

THE POINT OF CONTACT

THE Material is a point of contact between  
an external reality

....and ....

the mysterious Centre

Material is a psychic bridge between the soul  
of the child and this external reality ...

x table or Liturgical year

THE ESSENTIALS OF A GOOD TEACHING MATERIALS

MS 2 p 15 the various points

a,b,.....h.

Mrs Hutchinsons Simile .The outwards sign of an  
invisible grace .

2nd Year



## THE LITURGY AND THE MONTESSORI METHOD

### Two Movements Start in Rome

At the beginning of this century two important movements originated in the Eternal City, which still remains the centre of European culture and civilization. One was the Liturgical Movement inaugurated by His Holiness Pope Pius X; and the other was the Montessori movement, started by another great Italian genius about the same time.

Almost from the beginning there were discerning people who realised that there existed, in their very nature, a certain affinity between these two movements. This became more clear as the years passed. Now - after half a century - this similarity has been commented on in the highest Catholic circles. Thus, in December, 1962, an article was published in the Osservatore Romano - the Vatican Daily Newspaper - entitled IL LITURGISMO DEL METODO MONTESSORI which might be translated "The Liturgical Nature of the Montessori Method." In this article the writer, after comparing the psychology behind the Liturgy and with that of the Montessori Method, says "These brief observations should,

I believe, be sufficient to justify the expression of the Liturgist who spoke of the "liturgical nature" of the Montessori method and to explain why such a method is coming to be considered with a particular interest at a time in which a catechistical renewal finds its place in the vast picture of the liturgical renaissance."

The remainder of this chapter forms a comment on this opening theme.



(2)

### What is the Liturgy?

If we ask ourselves: "What exactly do we mean by the Liturgy?", it is not easy to give a brief and comprehensive reply. By historical derivation the word Liturgy meant, "the public office voluntarily performed by a wealthy citizen of Greece". Nowadays when people speak of the liturgy they generally refer to the various kinds of rites, forms, and ceremonies carried out in connection with communal worship. Practically all the great religions of the world, both ancient and modern, have some form of liturgy.

### A QUAKER MEETING

At this point perhaps the writer might be permitted to relate some personal experiences which may help to throw light on the matter. He was brought up in what is perhaps the most unliturgical form of Christian worship that exists, that of the Quakers. Perhaps the reader is not acquainted with the Quaker form of worship. If we went to a Quaker meeting we should see anything from half a dozen up to a hundred people all sitting absolutely still, on hard wooden benches, in a bare room without any ornaments whatever. We should see no colored windows, no pictures on the wall, no statues, no altar, no pulpit, no organ or hymn books, no decorations of any sort, no set form of service, no ordained minister, not even a collection. Complete silence reigns, - the silence of immobility.

What are all these people doing? They are waiting in what the Quakers call a "Living Silence" for the Spirit to move them - or at least some of them - to speak or pray extempore.



And what is the underlying principle of this form of worship? It is this, that the Spirit of God works directly on the human spirit - Spirit to spirit - without any preparation or any material mediation whatsoever. Therefore, all external form, rites, ceremonies, prescribed actions, such as genuflection ("Bowings and scrapings" as George Fox called them) all material aids of any kind were Anathema to the early Quakers, and still are.

Their reasons for this attitude is that they hold that all prescribed ceremonies, anything in fact which is mixed up with matter and rigidity of habitual actions, act as breaks on the free working of the Holy Spirit. "The wind bloweth where it listeth and you hear the sound thereof, but no one knows whence it cometh or whither it goeth." So is it; according to the Quakers, with everyone that is "moved by the Spirit" to take vocal part in their communal worship. The spirit always works Impromptu and all external forms and ceremonies make religion hide-bound by tradition, till, "Custom lies upon us with a weight heavy as frost deep almost as life itself." (Wordsworth)

SPIRIT VERSES MATTER: IS THERE AN ANTITHESIS ?

The Quakers say, "Where in the New Testament can you find any support for such customs as the use of Holy Water, or Rosary beads, making the sign of the Cross, the wearing of gorgeous vestments, the elaborate ritual of Mass, especially High Mass and other religious functions. These things they way belong to the old Dispensation (see Léviticus and Deuteronomy, etc.) but they were all swept away by the simplicity of the Gospel message. They have come back agins - also! - as pagan accretions to original



4

Christianity, because its original fervor, its immediate inspiration, has been lost, the high tide of its original spiritual life has ebbed away leaving religion "In shallows and in miseries."

#### PAGAN ACCRETIONS?

Many years ago I lived in India for a while as tutor in an Indian family. I was still a Quaker, nominally, but was already feeling the pull of Catholicism <sup>AND BUDDHISM</sup> in many respects. My spiritual state at that time could be compared to a pendulum which was swinging now sometimes towards and now sometimes against Catholicism. The main point at issue was still that mentioned just above, the "pagan accretions" which had been incorporated into the Church.

One week, when this matter was specially uppermost in my mind, a number of incidents happened, one after the other, which seemed to bear directly on the problem. <sup>①</sup> One day little Leena aged five came up to me and said, "Mr. Standing, would you like some of my rice; it is very special rice." Upon my asking why it was so special, she replied, "My God has blessed it." Then, in a burst of confidence she went on "Would you like to see by god?" Upon my replying in the affirmative she took me upstairs to her room and showed me a wonderful cabinet in which was a large golden image of Krishna. He was not the only deity in the cabinet, which was a veritable Pantheon with many other images in it including one of Our Lady and one of Peter Pan. Thereupon she described the ritualistic custom which had preceded her original offer to me. "We put rice grains down in front of our god; and we ask him to bless it and then we give it to our friends." How similar externally I thought to myself to the blessing and distribution of the Holy Bread. To those who like to know the end of

The Rice

banisters



a story I might add that I took the ~~xxx~~ grain of rice and consumed in the spirit in which it was offered.



② The day after I met Leema's elder sister, Mrudula, carrying a shining object which looked like a miniature model of the seven bronzed candlesticks which was kept by the Jews in the Tabernacle. I stopped her and asked her what it was and she replied, "We put 'ghi' (melted butter) in the little pits or cups at the top of each stick; then we light it and put it before our god." Aha, I thought, that is where the Catholics got the idea of lighting candles and putting them before the statues of the saints.

③ Usually I had my meals by myself but occasionally I had it with the family in Indian fashion. I noticed that the waiters who carried round the food had a long circlet of beads slung round their bare bosel over one shoulder. On my asking Leena who sat next to me what they were for she replied, "He says his prayers on those." And that? I said to myself, is where the Catholics got their idea of the rosary. T

④ The next day I visited an Indian temple with two Indian ladies and I noticed that there was a sort of stoop with water in it into which the ladies dipped their fingers and touched themselves devoutly. Obviously it was a kind of Holy Water.

⑤ A few days afterwards I had the opportunity of watching a Hindu priest at his morning devotions. He went through a definite series of perscribed actions which included certain movements of the body, arm, hands; the ringing of a little bell at intervals; Certain material elements were used in this ritual such as water, milk, and grains of rice; and everything is done in a circumscribed



and precise manner. It at once reminded me of a Catholic Priest celebrating Mass.

The cumulative effect of all these incidents seemed to prove in my mind that it is quite true that Catholicism has been degraded by a collection of pagan rites which have been superimposed upon the pure simplicity of the Gospel.

### THE REAL ANSWER

And so the pendulum swung away very definitely from Catholicism; and it was only months afterwards that I found the true answer to this problem in Newman's Development of Doctrine. In that he says, "Every great movemtn which stirs the minds of men has - in proportion to its original vitality - the power of assimilation. As it goes forth into the world of men and of ideas it has the power to assimilate, or absorb into itself everything that will be useful to it: just because it has such vitality it will be able to 'digest' these foreign edements into itself, thereby making them its own, and it becomes the stronger and the more effective by this process."

### THE LITURGY IS ESSENTIAL TO OUR HUMAN NATURE

By his very nature, being a compound of spirit and matter, souldand body, man needs something material as well as the purely spiritual. Spirit and matter are not really, an essentially, in opposition to one another; they are not contrasting elements that make war upon each other. The f

The fundamental fact behind Christianity - the Incarnation - means nothing less that God, the infinite Spirit, became Flesh and dwelt amongst us in an indissoluable welding together of Spirit and Matter (quote from Emerson here).

J. Montrose

Comparison



In us, as completed human beings, these two elements are equally essential to our complete nature, and will be to all eternity. Our Lord Himself as man rose in His material Body (which He still has) as Our Lady was assumed into Heaven in hers. For us too a body is necessary for our completingg, as necessary as the soul. This is the signifigance of that article in the Creed, "I believe in the ressurection of the Body."

ALL GREAT RELIGIONS HAVE A LITURGY

One often hears it said that "all the great Religions teach more or less the same truths but differ in their outward form and expressions." As a matter of fact it would more true to say that all Religions have very much the same outward forms - e.g., a priest, an altar, and the sacrifice, - but differ in the truths which they teach. (Insert here quotation from Chesterton's Orthodoxy.)

The great mistake which the Quakers, and the Puritans generally make is what Maritain calls the "sin of angelism", i.e., treating men who are composed of soul and body, as if they were just like angels composed only of spirit. This is the reason why a religion like Quakerism can never appeal to a great variety of persons. It is too austere or abstract just because it is lacking in any external forms. En passant it would be interesting from this point of view to speculate what form of worship could be carried on by pure Spirits. It is impossible for us to imagine it; and even the author of the Apoclypse has recourse to a material metaphor when he describes the elders "casting down their golden crowns before the Lamb." The prophet Ezekial describes the coming and



going of the angels as "living flashes of light", - light the most immaterial element in the universe around us.

~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~

People are often very illlogical in these matters, and you may find the very same person who is shocked by the lighting of the candle to place before the image of a saint, thinks nothing of lighting twenty candles on a birthday in honor of a very ordinary person.

### Liturgy Outside the Church

Liturgy is something so essential to human beings, when they act together at any solemn function, that it is found outside the Church, or at least something which corresponds to it. One takes for example of the precise and complicated ritual which accompanies the Coronation of a King. We get the same sort of thing on a smaller scale in the ordinary etiquette of a court, or such ceremonies as the trooping of the colors, masonic initiations and so on. Such definite and prescribed ways of doing things seem to spring up spontaneously when people in unison repeatedly perform the same act together.

### SOME POINTS ABOUT THE LITURGY

Let us sum up some of the main characteristics of the Liturgy:

- (1) It is something which arises as a consequence of our twofold nature - e.e., being composed of soul and body.
- (2) It unites, and holds together a group of people engaged in a communal act of worship - even if they are not of the same nation or language. This is especially true of the great central act of worship - the offering of the sacrifice of the Mass.
- (3) It is a means for carrying on the continuity of worship



from the vagaries and eccentricities of individuals. In times of spiritual slackness - i.e., when religious fervour is at a low ebb, it acts in the Church as a sort of driving wheel which carries on the momentum of the Past into and through the present. It also preserves and keeps ever ready the forms by which the deepest religious experiences can be expressed.

- (4) Actions speak louder than words as the saying is. In religious, as in social life, our deepest emotions can often be better expressed by means of actions rather than words. Thus a kiss or a hand-shake, or even a glance can "shock volumes." And so it is in the religious service. How many such significant actions are incorporated into the liturgy - e.g., kissing the altar, raising the hands, genuflections, raising the eyes to heaven, standing up at the Gospel, the sign of the cross, the lighting of candles, the wonderful service of Tenebrae and in fact the whole of the Easter Services.
- (5) The Liturgy is charged with symbolism: Symbols are an unrivalled means for bringing certain truths most swiftly and effectively into our minds and hearts. For example, the Crown of Thorns, the mixing of the water and wine, the image of the Sacred Heart.
- (6) Another important function which is carried out by the liturgy is what one might call the preserving a minimum of decency and dignity in the religious functions. In this way even a rather careless and indifferent celebrant



is kept - during the fulfilment of his office - within certain bounds of dignity and decorum.

This applies also to the congregation; for in a similar way making the Sign of the Cross on entering the Church with Holy Water, genuflecting before entering the pew, standing up when the priest enters - all these, and similar actions, make for the prevention of slovenliness and ~~careless behavior~~ careless behavior in the house of God, and give it solemnity and dignity and reverence.

- (7) Speaking historically the Liturgy has been the means of incorporating into regular public worship the inspirations of holy men in the past. Thus somebody must have been the first who, in the depths of his emotion, stooped down and kissed the altar on which Our Lord had so recently descended, or where the bones of the Saints were placed, just as an ardent lover would say of his mistress that he would kiss the very ground she trod upon. In the same way, someone must have been the first to kiss the book of the Gospel after he had finished reading from it, just as it was probably some far off Presbyter or Deacon who made the people stand up at the reading of the Gospel. These actions were felt to be so right and apposite that they were incorporated - bit by bit - into the regular performance of the rite. And thus, century after century, the Liturgy grew and developed, like a great work of art under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.



(8) We must not of course forget that some of the actions of the liturgy are more than symbolic. The sacraments are in fact the actual channels of invisible Grace, working ex opere operante. There, too, in the most striking form, we realize who wonderfully Our Lord, in His dealings with us, adopted means most suitable to our twofold nature of spirit and matter. "He knoweth our frame; He remembereth that we are dust."

(9) The Liturgy is somethings which makesits appeal to the learned and the unlearned alike - to those who cannot read, as well as to the scholar; and further is an appeal which is independent of language, and so can be understood and appreciated by foreigners as well.

#### CHILDREN AND THE LITURGY

The fact that the liturgy appeals to the learned and the unlearned alike brings us to the next point in our discussion, viz., that even children can take a real interest in, and feel a real appreciation for the liturgy. Indeed children are inveterate liturgists by their very nature. At the early age of two and a half to four they are most insistent on having thing done in the correct, that is the accustomed way. In fact I have heard Montessori compare the samll child at this Sensitive Period ofder to a Master of Ceremonies at a religious function. And as we have pointed out in other patts of this books it is possible for the small children to appreciate much of the liturgy at a sensorial level before the age of reason sets in.

It was the Holy Pontiff Benedict XV who initiated the great movement in the Church towards a fuller appretiation of



Matter and the Sacraments:

(8) We must not of course forget that some of the actions of the liturgy are more than symbolic. The sacraments are in fact the actual channels of invisible Grace, working ex opere operante (1) <sup>too</sup> And there, in the most striking form, we realise how wonderfully Our Lord, in His dealings with us, adopted ~~the~~ <sup>most suitable</sup> means ~~of helping us~~ to our twofold nature ~~of~~ of spirit and matter. "He remembereth our frame; He knoweth that we are dust."

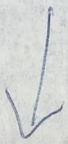
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CHILDREN AND THE LITURGY.

The fact that the liturgy appeals to the learned and the unlearned alike brings us to the next point in our discussion: viz., that even children can take a real interest in, and feel a real appreciation for the liturgy. (X) And, as we shall see later, they can do this to an appreciable amount even before the age of reason sets in.

It was the Holy Pontiff Benedict XV who initiated the great movement in the Church towards a fuller appreciation of

They are unlearned liturgies  
 x See over page





Indeed children are unrelentingly hungry  
by their very nature. At this early age:

(~~3-5~~) ~~to~~ 2½ - 4 - they are most  
insistent on having things done  
in the morning - that is to be accustomed  
very. In fact Monerem somewhere

commenced to small child at this 5. P  
for order to a Morning Ceremony  
at a Religious function.

Gen



the Liturgy. "Let us educate the people to take a more active participation in the Liturgy" and - as Montessori says - and with the people therefore, the little children were to be admitted to the most intimate and sublime act of religious life - communion with Jesus Christ."

Montessori goes on :-

"The Liturgy, magnificent expression of the content of the Faith, may well be called "the pedagogical method" of the Catholic Church which - not satisfied with teaching by means of the word preached to the faithful, makes the various acts of religion real, makes them, as it were, live, and allows the people to take part in them each day. And to find life-giving food for his soul the child has but to open these portals resplendent with divine light, portals resplendent with all the solemnity given to them through the ages, by the lives of the Saints, who found in the Liturgy a means of fructifying the virgin soul of their souls, open to the sweet influence of divine grace.

Formerly, when teaching was limited to telling the child the facts of Sacred History and making him memorize the Catechism answers, the truths of Christian Doctrine, we were, if I may be allowed to express myself so, drawing the child away from the Church.



But if the adult needs not only to know but to "live" his religion, the need is all the greater for the child, who is more adapted to live it than to know it. Are not up to now the limits of the problem concerning the religious education of the child identical with those of the various methods of learning and memorizing? But in fact, knowledge, in our case is nothing else but the first indispensable step in opening out for the soul the paths of life.

Here then is a necessary complement of the religious instruction of the child: make the Liturgy accessible to children. The grand ceremonies of the Church, the sacred symbolism, the deep significance underlying everything, the exact use and end of all the objects, the systematic distribution of the various offices ---- all give a fundamental importance to the place where the faithful meet, and at the same time afford sensible means, such as lights, colours, sounds, which help the soul, just as benches and kneelers assist the body to remain long in Church without becoming fatigued. And so the teaching of the Liturgy soon became widespread for young people but not for little children.



Two Movements start in Rome  
In the beginning of 10 Century.

A NATURAL AFFINITY EXISTS BETWEEN THE MONTESSORI  
METHOD AND THE LITURGY IN THEIR PSYCHOLOGY.

See

Two

notes

no great problem

That is why it is ~~easy~~ to teach the liturgy to children according to Montessori Principles, if <sup>one</sup> you really understand them.

The Doctrine of the Centre and the Periphery.

We can regard the child from two aspects:-

- (a) the Centre;
- (b) the Periphery.

The Periphery - that part which is external and visible - includes the senses, movements, his choice, behaviour.

The Centre - The innermost hidden centre of his personality, his intelligence; his will; it is the place from which action starts. His inner ego; the mysterious centre where his personality is formed - is forged. It is the place where what he receives through the periphery is built into his very self.

Contrast in Methods: In ordinary methods the teacher applies himself directly to the centre - to his intelligence, gives him information, and exhorts him to work and remember.

The teacher provides the ideas directly and the child has to absorb them directly. Therefore the old

Herbartian Steps:- Preparation, presentation, development, assimilation, etc. Preparing her lessons (and expression)

Can in  
Principles



Montessori is different. Our job is to FEED THE PERIPHERY. We set going a peripheral activity (through the Montessori materials) the child working a long time on the materials by himself.

There is a constant intercourse between the periphery and the mysterious centre. Bystole and diastole of the heart. "It is like the rhythm of a wave that never ceases."

What do you see in a Montessori School? A Teacher teaching all the children? No: all the children busy on their own account - with materials. Or a teacher presenting a new material to the periphery. This some she goes away and leaves the child working alone with the material.

We needn't worry about what is going on at the Centre so long as we see that concentration going on at the Periphery. "That is the child's secret."

#### THE POINT OF CONTACT.

We must set up the point of contact between

- (1) An external reality ---- and ----
- (2) The child's soul, - the centre.

This point of contact must be set up and working before real development takes place.

It is a psychic bridge between the soul of the child and some external reality (Number, language, geometry ---- or religion.)

29  
The Stations of the Cross



The Example from Music:

Children marching to music - with no response - just unrelated, disordered movement (even with a jazz band!) Something is missing - the Point of Contact. But now - the idea - to move in unison with the rhythm of music - that is missing - and now is understood. What happens? Order, limitation, precision, harmony, concentration ---- and development.

The way is opened to development and self-perfection. The same on the Mental Plane, e.g.  $6 \times 3 = 18$   
Note: The Gate is narrow but not the life to which it leads.

Application to the Liturgy : Comparison - Similarity.

The liturgy is an external reality and that reality makes contact with our souls through a point of contact i.e. - lighting a candle, the sign of the cross, the stations of the cross.

The Essentials of every good teaching material:

- So we see that every good teaching material must:-
- (a) be related to some definite piece of external reality, i.e., it must teach something.
  - (b) It must solicit in the child a definite activity both of body (hands and muscles) and of mind in the centre.
  - (c) It must be an activity exact, definite, purposeful and leading to knowledge and the digestion of knowledge through what is called "auto-education."



- the Stations*
- (d) It must be an activity that can be repeated and which leads to repetition by the child's desire.
- (e) It must in some way spread out the knowledge already known in such a way that the mind can rise above it and see new relationships.
- (f) These activities leading to their own particular points of contact must be ready to hand in the Prepared Environment and be so laid out that they seem to say "Come and use me."
- (g) And for this reason each must have its own "Motive of Activity."
- (h) These activities must be of such a nature that they lead the child - who uses them - along the road of self-development and self-perfection.

Mrs. Hutchison's Simile :-

*slow*

Mrs. Hutchison sent out by the London County Council to Rome. "Gentlemen this is not a report; it is a rhapsody!" She spoke of - The outward action at the periphery and the inner development at the inner mysterious centre, e.g., the mysterious repetition with the cylinders - and said: "It is the Outward sign of an invisible grace!"

Note: NOT TO DO AWAY WITH COLLECTIVE LESSONS.

Especially Bible Stories. O.T. and N.T. the best and most interesting stories in the world.



Also definite oral instruction together on such subjects as God, the Holy Trinity, the Sacraments, the fall of man, etc.

Definitions: A Montessori School is a Prepared Environment in which the children can live their own individual - and social - lives according to the laws of their inner development unimpeded by too much adult intervention.

Later on - Education is an Aid to Life.

50 years ago her first essay in religious education under the title - Bambini viventi nella Chiesa. Emphasis on the living their religion.

A Montessori School is a place where life is being lived wholly and completely and spontaneously.

Religion is a part of that life.

The Sine qua Non of this spontaneously living and development is - or rather are -

Prepared Environment;

Freedom;

Direction .... and ....

Knowledge of and respect for the

"Sensitive Periods."

Psychological not Logical analysis of the subjects studied,

e.g., Geometry - The Old approach. Begin with the Axioms

and Postulates. Everything to be depended on Reason. Q.E.D. Quod erat demonstrandum.



How different Montessori! Geometry at four years.  
So also with the Teaching of Religion.

STAGES.

The Absorbent Mind - 0 - 7 years.

Taking the baby into the Church.

Quote from the C.E.G. letter.

First Part : 0 - 3 years. Unconscious - absorbs the whole environment.

Second Stage : 3 - 6 years. More and more conscious and through movement. Sensory - motor period. *il bambino impara movendosi.*

Sensory-Motor Stage & 2½ - 5 years.

Sim - to nurture a religious sentiment, rather than an intellectual appreciation of the truths of religion, e.g., the child loves his Mummy and expresses it through actions, - a hug, or a gift of a flower. So - as always with Montessori - through action.

The Sensitive Period for Fixing Motor actions: e.g., Exercise of Practical Life. Analysis of Movements. Love of exactness and precision and repetition.

So such actions as the Sign of the Cross, genuflections, moving about in the Church (to the Altar). Flowers before an altar. Carrying lighted candles in procession.



Lighting candles before prayers. Use of holy water, etc.

S.P. for good manners (also in the Church).

Child loves it at this stage. "He is more strict and exact than a Master of Ceremonies."

But these are to be learned not in the Church - but in the Atrium.

The Atrium : Very brief description of the idea. The ante-room to the Church. A room dedicated to religion on all its levels.

Examples:- What is the Altar? (through movement)

The Liturgical table - with liturgical table-cloths, and liturgical flowers. The special feast on a constant background. Great Field for Research.

Wanted a Children's Liturgy: e.g., for Easter Week.

(some experiments in France). The procession at Iglis.

Children carrying the crown and nails, etc.

The Supernaturalization of the Ordinary Occupations:

e.g., the interest in colours; colour tablets stage - and Liturgical colours of the liturgical table mentioned above.

Hand washing --- the holy water.

Arranging flowers --- for the altar or statue.

Laying the table --- arranging the things on the altar.

The care of the environment.



Careful movement --- and in the chapel.

The Silence Game; .... and in the Church.

Walking round the line with glass of water ---  
for a statue.

In fact - as Montessori says:-

"Meanwhile, the application of the method followed in my Children's Houses" produced this excellent fruit - the Church almost seemed to be the end of the education which the method proposed to give.

The "Silence" observed in class, to accustom the child to be recollected, here found its application: it became the interior recollection observed in the House of God, amid the gentle flickering of the candlelight in an atmosphere dim, yet resplendent with gleaming white and gold.

Again the following actions were practically repetitions of what the child had learnt to do in the class-room: walking silently avoiding all noise, placing chairs quietly, standing up and sitting down composedly, passing between benches and by-standers without knocking against them, carrying objects, even fragile ones, with care so as to let no harm come to them, for example - carrying lighted candles without covering hands and clothes with wax, or baskets of flowers, or vases of water to be filled with flowers and then placed at the foot of the altar.



Such things must therefore appear to their tender minds as the end of effort patiently sustained, whence issues for them a pleasing sense of joy and new dignity. Before such an apprenticeship, these tiny members of the Church feel that they are servants executing material tasks without understanding what they do; after it, and after what they have learnt has been applied in Church, they begin to comprehend and to distinguish between the different circumstances. In order to grasp this idea one ought to know the Montessori Method in the Children Houses which prepares the children in the daily life of the classroom by exercises which are, in themselves, quite independent of the religious education, but which seem to be a preparation for it. In fact they aid in perfecting the child, in making him calm, obedient, attentive to his own movements, capable of silence and recollection.

When this preparation has been made the child finds the means for its application in the Church which are attractive, varied and deeply significant, and he receives as a result, a sense of dignity and satisfaction.

Moreover, the very fact of performing for different purposes acts which though similar are capable of diverse application and significance constitutes in itself another source of intellectual development.



The child of four is not ignorant of the difference between the holy water font into which he puts his tiny hands before blessing himself, and the basins in the next room where he washes his hands. Now just this appreciation of the difference between like things is real, intellectual labour which the little creature initiates when he begins to realize that he is a child of God, lovingly received in the house of the great Heavenly Father, though hitherto he has been considered almost incapable of rising to any idea or concept."

I had yet to meet many persons incredulous of the reality of such impressions. "Do you know why my little nephew wants to go to school in time for Mass?" It is because you let him put out the candles; that is all. Would it not be better to apply this pleasing exercise to arithmetic? - for example, to hold ten lighted candles and then to put them out counting one, two, three, etc."

The critic who spoke thus to me had but a poor spiritual understanding and little knowledge of children. The Arithmetic exercise with the candles would have lasted at most a week, the time necessary - more or less - to learn to count from one to ten. But those children as they grew older, and continued their instruction, either in general or religious knowledge, would observe, in Church, the putting out of the candles that consume themselves, burning in the presence of



Jesus descended amongst them, and they would understand that the act was not a mere childish past time but a religious function to be reverently fulfilled, because done in a sacred place and bearing on the worship paid to God."

Later Sensitive Periods & The "Transition Stage."

The beginnings of Writing and Reading and Number.

The same idea of supernaturalisation. Reading names and putting to Objects. Sacred Vessels, vestments, parts of the Church. Biblical Geography. Biblical animals. Religious symbols, e.g., the dove, the cross, the fish, the lion, the Stations of the Cross, the Creed - separated and written out on separate bits of card.

The Age of Reason: The whole question for the Catechism. Always based on a study of the psychological characteristics which have come to the fore - the new sensitive periods, e.g., the interest in the right and wrong of actions; the hero-worshipping tendency; the love of a fight; the gang spirit. The desire to have all things bound together in a "legame rationale") the "inner connexions of Froebel."



4) The Silence Game -- now the recollected silence in the House of God .

THE ATRIUM WOULD HAVE A LITTLE ORATORY IN IT AND A LITTLE SACRISTY .

5) ALL THE MOVEMENTS REQUIRED IN THE HOUSE OF GOD .

This is the period for the joyful acquisition of perfected movements.

Sign of the Cross , this and that Genuflect .

standing up and sitting down and kneeling walking gracefully

6)

Walking on the Line  
WALKING ON THE LINE

carrying glass of water

So - for Little Processions

Putting flowers before the statue .

first arranging the flowers - as they do .

Carrying lighted candles .

In fact a WHOLE CHILDREN'S LITURGY will spring up is springing up

Lanternier and savalet 1

Easter ceremonies -- through action

Parables through action

The Story through action

the Empty Tomb -- the model

Names and Places of Objects

6666

The Sacred Vessels  
The Priests vestments .



THE LATER STAGE READING AND WRITING

56

Some examples - hurriedly

1) The Movable Alphabet

e.g. Annunciation

Little scenes made - models ( that Hong-Hong book )

The child composes a little story on the mat about the scene with the movable alphabet . ( see picture )

2) Objects - or pictures - of them - with their names on slips of card board .

The Sacred Vessels .

The Priests' vestments

The different parts of a church  
pew , pulpit , altar rail etc.

The various materials used  
water , oil , wine , etc.

3) The Stations of the Cross

Example How to Motessori-ise the Station

i.e. turn it into an activity .

A) an activity

B- a control of error .

c) Possibility of repetition and self-perfectionment

d) Freedom of choice .

The Rosary (4)

Explain with an example . two ways .

5) Reading Commands

See Book page 39

6) Composition

a) movable letters

b) free compn in writing in books

(illustrated )

7) Biblical Animals



Biblical Animals First tell the stories as stories

The Material

- a) Picture of the animal
- b) A brief story on a corresponding card

say eight or ten at a time .

Put out the pictures -----then---- read the story

put it to the right picture .

Examples

The Creation of the Animals

some good pictures

The Serpent

1- the Garden of Eden( till the serpent came ! )

2) The plague of serpents in the desert

The Bronze Serpent .

" as Moses lifte up the serpent in the wilderness  
so will the Son of Man be lifted up "

3) The donkey that spoke

Balaam and his Ass

Balaam s donkey saw the angel  
And stöpped short in fear  
Balaam didn't see the angel  
Which was very queer .

4) Noah's Ark

First the whole story of the Deluge .  
Special reference to Noah's Dove .

famous pictures .

the sacrifice of t hankgivin

5) The plagues of Egypt .

frogs , flies , locusts .

6) The quails in the desert ( The Golden Calf )



7) Jonah and the Whale

8) Elijah and the Raven

9) The Lion

David slays a lion and a bear .

10) The imperiment boys and the prophpet .

"Go up thou bald head " and the bear comes

II) NEW TESTAMENT

II) The Donkey

Flight into Egyp

the Entry into Jerusalem palm Sunday

12 ) The Mother - Hen

13) Sheep and shepherds

The Good Shepherd

see the Parable and Cavalletti's book

14) Swine

<sup>Gaderene</sup>  
The Dixerene Swine

The prodigal son .

Pearls before swine .

15) Fish

The miraculous draught of fishes.

the temple money tax in the mouth of a fish .

(also Tobias and the fish )

16 ) Camel

It is harder for arich man etc.



HANDWORK IN THE 66 TRIUM

Great scope

e.g The Travelling Church The Tabernacle in the Desert

see Schuster's Illustrated Bible p81 and text

the The Sanctuary

The Holy of Holies.

The Objects contained there in

the Huge Altar with ramp

the Ark of the Covenant

the Vandle sticks .

The 66 Parts of the Tabernacle

1) for the Priests and 2) for the people

like our present Churches .

BIBLICAL HISTORY

The new emphasis - instead of the Catechism .

BIBLE STORIES the best in the world .

Sensitive periods and Stories

a) the Little ones -- God's protection

b) The adolescent --- God the God of History and Destiny of  
"ations

c) The Gangsters

A New view of the Life of Christ

The Rival Gangs .

The whole idea of the Herd Instinct .

It would make a lecture in itself

The Pharisees -- the Saduccess , - the Herodians

Our Lord the "head of His Gang . the Disciples

Always sticks up for his own gang .



BIBLICAL HISTORY CONTD

---

History Charts are old ideas

The TIME -LINE

brings with it a prolonged activity ,  
possibility of repetition  
control of error .

Leads to new discoveries .

EXAMPLES OF TIME LINE

a) BC. 2000 to

A. D. 2000

b) The Life of Our Lord

Useful also for secular history

And can combine the two together excellently

(Show the Diagram of the Roman Empire  
that History Chart

the principle of spreading out your knowledge .

BIBLICAL GEOGRAPHY

The Jig - saw map

Names of places with Key map

Model of Jerusalem

Model of Palestine

BIBLICAL HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY COMBINED

Show them the example if it has been done

IMPORTANCE OF ACTING THE STORIES

often comes spontaneously . THE Birth and Nativity.

MUSIC IN THE ATRIUM

Gregorian

Singing hymns



THE STUDY OF THE MASS IN THE ATRIUM

The great central act of Catholic worship

This is of course very much in focus in the Atrium  
Deal with it on a separate occasion

~~The Study of the Liturgical Year~~

THE LITURGICAL YEAR - and the Liturgy generally

5

Also on a special occasion - next lecture .

THE ATRIUM A LIFE OF ACTIVITY

But you see already a glimpse of a new kind of Religious instruction - a more intense and vital one .

It is a LIFE OF ACTIVITY

It has never been carried out completely as Montessori would have it .

But I have seen it - and it is astonishing as Montessori children working spontaneously are always astonishing .

The nearest thing is perhaps the Scuola Montessori Religiosa in Rome

Marches Cavalletti

Her wonderful little book .

But this is a separate school

it is not an integral, organic part of a complete Montessori school .

But - please God - it will come in His good time .



MONTESSORI'S APPROACH TO THE TEACHING OF RELIGION

6

LECTURE ONE THE ATRIUM

E. M. Standing .



- 1 -

MONTESSORI'S APPROACH TO THE TEACHING OF RELIGION

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THE ATRIUM

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TWO MOVEMENTS BEGIN AT THE OPENING OF THIS CENTURY IN ROME  
I

The Liturgical Movement --- Benedict XV

The Montessori Movement .

They were destined to be united more and more  
by a special affinity - a common element (Lecture II)

THE MONTESSORI MOVEMENT A SPIRITUAL APPROACH TO THE CHILD

Recognised by most people  
of the ideas of Dewey .

ESSENTIALLY CATHOLIC IN ITS NATURE AND BACKGROUND .

Much more so than is generally known .

QUOTE ... THE REAL START ...

More like the beginning of a Religious Order .

MORE I THAT SUGGESTION THAN YOU WOULD THINK

Montessori and the idea of a Religious Order .

--the man compared with a Bulldozer --

Still hoping and praying for that Order

In God's good time .

BRIEF OUTLINE OF MONTESSORI'S WORK FOR RELIGION

The Barcelona Experiment

Father Clascar's comparison 1909

Quote

BAMBINI VIVENTI NELLA CHIESA

coming out in THE CHILD IN THE CHURCH .

The church the end and consummation of our work

QUOTE FROM MONTESSORI .



AN ORIENTAL APPROACH FROM THE BEGINNING

Growing the wheat and the grapes

QUOTE .....

must pass on .

WRITINGS ON RELIGION

The Mass Explained to Children .

The Life in Christ ( Liturgical Year )

The Mass Cards ( Lecture III )

The Children's Missal

The Mystical Drama of the Mass .

HER IDEAS DEVELOPED WITH THE YEARS

A) Conversations ( Child in the Church )

B) Lectures --- Cambridge Summer School ( ditto new edition )  
Assumption Convent .

.....( Introduction )...

THE ATRIUM

ASKED HER ONCE WHAT ABOUT A PREPARED ENVIRONMENT FOR RELIGION

ANSWER It is already there -- the Church

What is the Church if not a Prepared Env't.

( I got many of my ideas from the Church )

THE CHURCH IS FOR WORSHIP .... NO INSTRUCTION

QUOTE .... P.

QUESTION Would you have Religious Apparatus ?

Yes

Would you have it mixed up with the ordinary

Apparatus . No .



QUOTE CHILD IN THE CHURCH P 31

p 32

THUS THE ATRIUM WOULD BE A PLACE WHERE THE CHILDREN COULD LOVE THEIR LIVES FREELY UNHINDERED BY UNNECESSARY ADULT INTERVENTION ... WHERE THE RELIGIOUS SENTIMENT COULD BE NURTURED .

IT IS NOT A PLACE FOR "RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION " from 9.30 to 10.45 - a class subject .

#### A FEW FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES

1- Spontaneous " Suffer the little children to come unto Me- and how they come ' . and how joyfully ( Cavalletti's little book )

2-The child learns through activity - Mvendo-si - Thus we are helping a child - who has a principle of activity in himself .

And we do not realise how tremendous is the urge to learn and develop in him .

3-We must give him this creative activity in relation to the SENSITIVE PERIODS THROUGH WHICH HE IS PASSING .

4) He must be allowed to work and live at the rhythm of his own life -- not ours

#### A WORD ON SENSITIVE PERIODS

5

Like a search light , coming from within , which illumines certain aspects of his environment to the exclusion of others .Varies according to his age .



## THE ABSORBENT MIND

works differently from that of the Adult .

USUAL AGE TO BEGIN INSTRUCTION IN RELIGION 6 - 7 years

WHY ?

Because that is the age when the reason begins .

But the child absorbs knowledge on different levels

## THE SENSORY -MOTOR STAGE

Begins years before .

He can take in Religious influences right from birth .

( Mothers take their babies to church when they visit it )

I) ~~THE~~four Tablets

I) The Colour Tablets

Interest in colours .... so.... The Liturgical Colours  
Have the stuffs for vestments on the Walls .

the five liturgical colours -

Their meaning .

The Liturgical Table ( more about it next time )

The table cloths --vases - flowers etc.

Thus the children realise at a sensoril level these changes  
whih take place on amore or less fixed back ground .

2) Hand washing .... The Holy water stoup

a real intellectual difference

3) Laying the Table .....

So now preparing the Table of Our Lord .

( more meaning than you think they could realises )