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July 2022

## Box 09, Folder 51 - "The Teaching of the Liturgy in the Light of the Montessori Principles" (E.M.S.)

Edwin Mortimer Standing

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### Recommended Citation

Standing, Edwin Mortimer, "Box 09, Folder 51 - "The Teaching of the Liturgy in the Light of the Montessori Principles" (E.M.S.)" (2022). *Manuscripts, ca. 1921-ca.1966; n.d., Edwin Mortimer Standing*. 102. <https://scholarworks.seattleu.edu/standing-manuscripts/102>

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T H E L I T U R G Y

AND

THE TEACHING OF THE LITURGY

IN THE LIGHT OF

MONTESSORI PRINCIPLES.

.....



THE LITURGY AND THE MONTESSORI METHOD.

What exactly do we mean by the Liturgy? This is

<sup>a</sup> ~~rather difficult to explain~~ <sup>question to answer</sup>

*To this question it is not easy to give a brief & comprehensive answer.*  
*By historical derivation it meant "the public office voluntarily performed by a wealthy citizen of Greece."* *When most persons think of the liturgy they mean*

~~As we think of it it includes the various kinds of~~  
rites, forms and ceremonies carried out in connexion with communal worship.

*N.P.*

Practically all the great religions of the world have  
some form of liturgy <sup>both</sup> in ancient times and in the present.

A few personal experiences if I may to make some points clear.

*later*

The Buddhist Priest: Years ago in India I was watching one saying his devotions. There was a definite series of prescribed actions which included:- certain actions - hand, arm, body: the ringing of a little bell at intervals: certain material elements were used - water, milk: certain things to be said and to be done. Everything circumscribed and precise. cf. The Mass.

Worship without any form of Liturgy is the exception.

I was brought up a Quaker.

The most unliturgical form of communal worship possible.

Do you know the form of Quaker worship?



Imagine a bare room, with hard wooden benches, bare walls, no coloured windows, no pictures, no altar, no decorations of any sort, no pulpit, no organ, no hymn books, no set form of service, nor ordained minister, - even no collection, Practically no movement of any kind.

What are the people doing?

They are all sitting still "waiting for the Spirit to move them."

What is the underlying principle?

It is this - that the spirit of God works directly on the human spirit - spirit to spirit - without any material meditation of any sort.

Creaturely activities:

All external forms, rites, ceremonies, prescribed actions - "bowings and scrapings" (as George Fox called them) were anathema to the early Quakers - and still are.

And the reason?

Because ceremonies being mixed up with matter fetter the free working of the spirit.

"The spirit bloweth where it listeth and you hear the sound thereof, but no one knows whence it cometh nor whither it goeth."

The Point of Contact




It is these things that make religion "hide-bound by tradition".

Hence Quakers have no sacraments and no sacramentals, (holy water and the sign of the cross, etc.)

Quakers believe that the more ceremonies, prescribed actions, the more material elements are to the fore the more surely does the spiritual recede ....

Until - as Wordsworth says - "custom lie upon us with a weight heavy as frost, deep almost as life itself."

SPIRIT VERSUS MATTER? - Is it an antithesis?


 The Quakers say - "Where is the New Testament, can you find any support for such a custom as the using of Holy Water, or the rosary beads, or the wearing of a stole or maniple, <sup>the</sup> ~~for~~ gorgeous vestments, <sup>and</sup> elaborate ritual as High Mass? <sup>of Man, eschew</sup> These <sup>to the same thing</sup> things belonged to the Old Dispensation (see Leviticus and Deuteronomy, etc.) They were <sup>all</sup> swept away by the simplicity of the Gospels Message. But - they have come in again as Pagan accretions <sup>to full Crusader</sup> - just because the original fervour of the spiritual ~~tide~~ <sup>away like a receding tide</sup> has ebbed its immediate inspiration having been lost.

More Experiences in India again (apologies)

Tutor in a family of Jains - Hindus.



In one week - when these things were in my mind - a number of things happened:

In the Temple - a sort of holy water.

(Holy Water) -- The ladies touched themselves with it devoutly. There were also statues of gods which had to be covered with silver paper and washed with milk every day by the priests.

Little Leena and the Rice:

Would you like some of my rice: it is very special rice. Why? My god has blessed it.

Would you like to see my god?

Upstairs to the cabinet with the golden image of Krishna.

A veritable pantheon, including Our Lady and Peter Pan from Kensington gardens!

She describes the ritualistic custom "then our god blesses it and we give it to our friends ecco!

Murdula and the seven branched candlestick and the little pits in which we put (melted butter) and light it and put it before our god. Ecco! - again.

Conclusion: So you see that proves it: Catholicism is just a collection of pagan rites superimposed upon the pure spiritual simplicity of the Gospels - pagan accretions, etc.

③ The Beads

④ Kay  
Walm

⑤ Prest at  
his prayer

5



The Real Answer: It was only months afterwards that I realised the real answer (Newman's "Development of Doctrine")

*(Just in our next lives)*

I. Liturgy is essential to our human nature.

*(Cap)*  
By the very compound nature of man - i.e., being a compound of spirit and matter - body and soul - he needs something material as well as spiritual. Spirit and matter are not really, essentially, in opposition to one another; they are not contrasting elements that make war on one another.

The fundamental fact behind Christianity - the Incarnation, - means nothing less than God became Flesh and dwelt amongst us "in an indissoluble welding together of Spirit and Matter." *(Emerson quote)*

In us - as men - these two elements are equally essential, and will belong to us for all eternity. (believe in the Resurrection of the Body) Our Lord rose in His material body and Our Lady was assumed in hers - which no longer remained upon the earth.

Just the other way round:

(1) One sometimes hears it said - "All religions really teach more or less the same truths but differ in their outward forms and expressions of them. As a matter of fact it would be much more true to say that "All religions have much the same outward forms, (e.g., a priest and altar and a



sacrifice, etc.) but differ in the truths which they teach.  
(Cf. G.K. C's. Orthodox )

(2) The Second Great truth is (as Newman points out)  
"every great movement 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 elements into itself, thereby  
making them its own: and it becomes the stronger and more  
effective by this process. *So much X9*

The Montessori Principles and the Power of Assimilation.

*Monte?*

This is true of another great and vital movement  
besides Catholicism - i.e., The Montessori Movement. As the  
years pass - are passing and will pass - it has assimilated into  
itself many other elements which were not in it at the outset.  
It has assimilated these elements without losing any of its  
true nature and vitality. Our present course which considers  
the application of Montessori Principles to the whole sphere  
of religion is a perfect example of what we mean. Such vital  
truths are like a leaven which a woman took and put in two  
measures of meal. They go on until the whole lump is leavened  
(And in the sphere of education to-day there are some very  
"lumpy" parts.) *See Mont & Dewey Chapter*



Page 7 →

The Sin of Angelism:

The great mistake which the Quakers - and the Puritans generally - made 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. *x People*

Such persons imagine that religion can only be spiritual if it is divorced from anything material: there must be no admixture of matter or external form however small.

*Ev. Maritain*

It would be interesting to speculate - from this point of view - what must be the form of worship of the various angelic choirs. *to have stunts.* Not even the sacred writers can depict their worship without using material metaphors - as the prophet said: The four and twenty elders casting down their crowns continually before the Lamb. He describes the coming and going of the angels as living flashes of light the most immaterial element in the world around us.

Liturgy Outside the Church:*Religion*

Liturgy is something so essential to human beings when they act together at any solemn function that is found outside the Church; or at least something which corresponds to the Liturgy.

*ceremonies that account to some degree of a life*

Take for instance the various forms of etiquette which are to be found in the court of a king; or on such an occasion as the Trooping of the Colours, Masonic rites.

6MS

(2)



It is something which seems to arise spontaneously when people act together. It is even found sometimes at a football match - as when the Bishop ceremoniously "kicks off."

(Illogically inconsequent) You may find the very same person who makes a fuss and objection to the lighting of a candle to be placed before a Saint's image who will have <sup>thick waxy</sup> twenty candles burning on a birthday cake.

### SOME POINTS ABOUT THE LITURGY

Let us sum up some of the aspects of the liturgy mentioned. *main characteristics of*

#### Value of the Liturgy :

(1) It is something which arises as a consequence of our twofold nature - i.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 Mass.

(3) It is a means for carrying on the continuity of worship from century to century, preserving it at the same time 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 *P*ast into and through the present.



*Keep*

It ~~also~~ preserves and ~~has~~ 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* e.g., a kiss or a hand-shake, or even a glance, *Can "shak vinnu"* 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, ~~Tenebrae~~ etc. *to wonderful service of Tenebrae + in fact the whole of 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 the 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* ~~So that~~ even a rather careless and indifferent *celebrant* priest 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 behaviour 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 <sup>he had</sup> ~~it~~ ~~had been used for~~ <sup>it;</sup> reading from, 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.