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"THERE WERE ALSO MANY WOMEN THERE": INTRODUCING LAY WOMEN IN THE UNITED STATES LITURGICAL MOVEMENT

Abstract. The article explores the often-overlooked participation of lay women in the Liturgical Movement in the United States between 1920 and 1959. Drawing on archival materials, correspondence, and periodicals such as Orate Fratres, The Catholic Worker, and Liturgical Arts Quarterly, it demonstrates that women were not peripheral observers but active contributors to the renewal of Catholic worship and spirituality. Four case studies – Justine Bayard Cutting Ward, Maisie Ward, Ade Bethune, and Florence Berger – illustrate how women engaged with liturgical reform through music, publishing, visual arts, social activism, and family life. Their initiatives connected the liturgy with education, artistic expression, and domestic practice, revealing the Liturgical Movement as a broad social and spiritual project rather than a merely textual reform. By recovering these women's contributions, the article challenges the androcentric historiography of twentieth-century liturgical studies and highlights the theological and pastoral significance of lay participation. It concludes that the "unfinished and unbegun" work of liturgical renewal, as described by Aidan Kavanaugh, must include the witness and creativity of the many women who embodied the liturgical life in both public and private spheres.

Keywords: Liturgical Movement; Lay Women; American Catholicism; Liturgical Renewal; Participation; Worship

In Advent of 1933, a woman who identified herself simply as "Miss B. M." wrote to Virgil Michel, OSB (1890–1938), the editor of *Orate Fratres*, the central English-language journal of the liturgical movement. In her letter to Michel, she described her home parish:

> The word liturgical is not known here. Our parish church is wonderfully decorated with streamers of pink, yellow, orange, and greenish-blue and red, supplemented

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> by yards of soiled Nottingham lace, dirty paper flowers and endless vigil lights. The altar looks more like a soda fountain than an altar. Any comment brings the reply that it would hurt the feelings of the dear Brother sacristan if it were changed […].In this atmosphere *Orate Fratres* is a great consolation. I have had it since the very first number.[1]

While the writer does not identify herself beyond her first initials, she identifies herself as "Miss," and, importantly, has been receiving *Orate Fratres* since its inaugural number.

Though lay women tend to be absent from narratives of the liturgical movement, witnesses such as Miss B.M. suggest that women have reflected upon, adopted, and pioneered aspects of liturgical renewal from the beginning of the organized liturgical movement in the United States. For present-day scholars of history and the liturgy, a more fulsome and accurate view of the liturgical movement must include analysis of the many women who sought to embrace the liturgical life. Doing so rightly situates the liturgical movement not simply as a textual reform movement, with its end realized in the promulgation and reception of revised liturgical texts. Examining women's experiences both accounts for the voices of the faithful which have traditionally been excluded from our historical narratives, but allows us to more accurately interpret the liturgical movement as a social and spiritual movement which is still ongoing.[2] As the Gospel from the heart of the Paschal narrative suggests: there were also many women there, women ministered to the Body of Christ, and women too should be remembered by those of us who look on from a distance (cf. Matt 27:55-57).

This short introduction orients the reader to the breadth and depth of women's involvement by highlighting a handful of key lay, non-religious women involved in liturgical renewal in the United States in the era of the "liturgical movement," (c. 1920–1959).[3] Following a brief context for the liturgical movement in the United States, the examples selected below illustrate a variety of women's initiatives within the contours of the liturgical movement, including the arts, education and the intellectual life, social action, and liturgical spirituality and family life.

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[1] B.M. Miss, "A Neglected Parish Church, The Apostolate," *Orate Fratres* 7, no. 12 (1933): 571.

[2] Pope Francis invites the continued retrieval of liturgical worship as formational and transformational in his Apostolic Letter, *Desiderio desideravi* (June 29, 2022).

[3] This introduction draws from the more complete treatment of the subject, found in Katharine E. Harmon, *There Were Also Many Women There: Lay Women in the Liturgical Movement in the United States, 1926–59* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2012). Used with permission.

1. LITURGICAL MOVEMENT: THE CATHOLIC RESPONSE TO THE MODERN WORLD

While the liturgical movement has its roots in nineteenth-century spiritual and social renewal particularly around Benedictine centers, the liturgical movement in the United States began more formally with the appearance of its first national journal, *Orate Fratres*, in Advent of 1926. Established by Virgil Michel and a team of collaborators at Saint John's Abbey in Collegeville, Minnesota (USA), this journal and the accompanying Liturgical Press played a key role in connecting interested members of the faithful and in teaching about liturgical renewal. Importantly, in the United States, the "American" liturgical movement organized within an already robust scene of Catholic Action, Catholic intellectual life and arts, and Catholic infrastructure which supported Catholic identity and practice. Unlike its European counterparts, the American Catholic Church was unencumbered by the devastation experienced after two world wars, and upward social mobility and increasing access to education buoyed active involvement on the part of lay women, as well as lay men and children, in the life of the Church more broadly. Thus, the American liturgical movement became a natural focus for men and women who were interested in greater spiritual understanding, intellectual grasp, and active realization of their faith as Roman Catholics. In fact, focusing on women's experiences within liturgical renewal offers useful insight into these unique complexities of the liturgical movement as realized in the United States,[4] for laywomen were frequently attracted to liturgical renewal out of a desire for social renewal – be it through the arts, social action, or family life. Lay women repeatedly identified liturgical formation as the avenue for a sacramentally-informed or *Catholic* response to the modern world, paired liturgical renewal with initiatives in Catholic Action,[5] and relied upon the theological motif of the Mystical Body of Christ.[6]

To illustrate the variety of ways in which Catholic lay women were inspired by and contributed to the liturgical movement, we'll turn to four brief examples.

[4] Godfrey Diekmann, "Is There a Distinct American Contribution to the Liturgical Renewal?" *Worship* 45, no. 10 (1971): 578–587; Gerald Ellard, "The Liturgical Movement: in and for America," *The Catholic Mind* 31 (1933): 61–76; and Gerald Ellard, "The American Scene, 1926–51," *Orate Fratres* 25, no. 11/12 (1951): 500–508.

[5] Katharine E. Harmon, "That Word 'Liturgy' is So Unfortunate: Learning the Mystical Body and Practicing Catholic Action in the United States Liturgical Movement (c. 1926–1955)," *American Catholic Studies* 127, no. 1 (2016): 25–44.

[6] See, for example, Virgil Michel, "Natural and Supernatural Society," *Orate Fratres* 10 (1936): 244–245; and Margaret M. Kelleher, "Liturgy and Social Transformation: Exploring the Relationship," *U.S. Catholic Historian* (1998): 59–60.

While far from exhaustive, the individuals chosen below offer an inroad to considering the variety of initiatives within the liturgical movement, revealing a common desire to advance the transformation of society, inspired by liturgical prayer and practice.

2. JUSTINE BAYARD CUTTING WARD (1879–1975): LITURGICAL ARTS

Justine Bayard Cutting Ward was born in New Jersey in 1879 to parents of the New York "aristocracy" of the Gilded Age. From her childhood, she excelled in music, studying composition, orchestration, and music theory. After her conversion to Catholicism at the age of 25, Ward identified the music of the Church as the location in which she wished to spend her musical energy and the financial resources which she had inherited. Drawing from Pope Pius X's motu proprio, *Tra le sollecitudini* of 1903, on Sacred Music, Ward began to write articles for national American reviews in which she promoted the development of church music and expressed frustration with the inferior quality of Catholic "musiquette."[7] At the same time, Ward began developing a program for teaching chant to children that would become internationally known as the Ward Method of School Music. Ward, along with Mother Georgia Stevens, RSCJ (1870–1946), co-founded the Pius X Institute of Liturgical Music at Manhattanville Academy in New York (USA) in 1920, which began a decades-long work of training students and teachers to sing and conduct Gregorian chant.

In May of 1925, Justine Ward received her first inquiry from Virgil Michel about his wish for her involvement with his forthcoming publication, to which she responded:

> The Review is a splendid idea and I like very much the proposed title, "Orate Fratres." It would be a beautiful thing if we could develop through this review the close connection between the liturgy itself and its living voice – the Chant – and go more deeply into this than is possible in any review which exists at present. I think there is much unexplored ground here.[8]

Ward had been interested in incorporating the liturgy into her summer school at the Pius X Institute in a more intentional manner, and told Michel that

[7] J. Kelly, "La Réforme grégorienne aux Etats-Unis," *Revue Grégorienne* (1920): 69; and Leo P. Manzetti, "Echoes of the Gregorian Congress," *Cathedral Choir* (1920): 114.

[8] Justine B. Ward to Virgil Michel, May 10, 1925, The Virgil Michel Papers Z 28: 6, Saint John's Abbey Archives, Collegeville, Minnesota [hereafter cited as SJAA].

she had "always felt that our school was incomplete because of its absence" and hoped to incorporate a liturgy course into the general training for music, as well. She concluded by telling Michel that "I feel sure that by uniting our forces we will accomplish wonders for the object which we all have at heart."[9] Michel began regularly including notes about the Ward Method in his "Liturgical Brief" section, for example, praising the success with which the Method had been used in the parochial schools of the Archdiocese of St. Paul, Minnesota for the summers of 1921–1924 by a graduate of the Pius X School of Music.[10] After Michel's contact, Justine Ward invited Michel to lecture at the St. Pius X summer school, and he gave a course of lectures on the liturgy in the summer of 1926.[11]

At the point of Ward's incorporation with the mainstream liturgical movement and her collaboration with Virgil Michel, thirteen thousand teachers of chant had studied with her, mostly men and women of the religious orders, but also laypersons. In Ward's view, uniting the "efforts for the apostolate of the liturgy and of the chant" would enrich the church musicians' formation far more than what could be given from a musical standpoint alone.[12] She saw the development and promotion of chant as absolutely inseparable from the development and promotion of the liturgy. Wanting to link her work as closely as possible with the liturgical movement, she assured Michel of her readiness to "contribute according to my small capacity" and her hope to "link up the movement for the development of liturgical music with the whole movement in favor of the liturgy."[13]

Justine Ward was among the earliest and widely effective promoters of liturgical music, and thus central to the renewal of Catholic liturgical arts. Yet, the relationship between liturgical renewal and music was challenging to maintain in the decades closer to the Council.[14] Divisions increased between those who sought to promote "pastoral liturgy" and chant, regarding what form of music might encourage the faithful to actively participate.[15] Ward was deeply disappointed with the near-rejection of congregational chant singing following

[9] Justine B. Ward to Virgil Michel, May 10, 1925, The Virgil Michel Papers Z 28: 6, SJAA.

[10] "Liturgical Briefs," *Orate Fratres* 1, no. 3 (1927): 95–96.

[11] "Liturgical Briefs," 96.

[12] Justine B. Ward to Virgil Michel, May 10, 1925, The Virgil Michel Papers Z 28: 6, SJAA.

[13] Justine B. Ward to Virgil Michel January 23, 1926, The Virgil Michel Papers Z 28: 6, SJAA.

[14] See, for example, George Devine, *Liturgical Renewal: An Agonizing Reappraisal* (New York: Alba House, 1973).

[15] See Katharine E. Harmon, "Guitar-totin' Nuns and Hand-Clappin' Love Songs: How the Implementation of the Vernacular Transformed American Catholic Church Music," *U.S. Catholic Historian* 39, no 3 (2021): 79–103, here at 85.

the Second Vatican Council.[16] In more recent decades, a resurging interest in Gregorian chant has prompted a renewed interest in her work. In 2007, the Church Music Association of America decided to reissue Ward's *Advanced Studies in Gregorian Chant* (1949) as well as her four-volume set of music for teaching children in primary schools.[17] Ward died in her home in Washington, D.C. (USA), in 1975.

3. CATHOLIC INTELLECTUAL TRADITION AND EDUCATION: MAISIE WARD (1889–1975)

Born in 1889 in England to an elite family, Mary "Maisie" Ward joined the Catholic Evidence Guild, an organized group of speakers who gave public lectures on Catholic doctrine and faith. Her involvement in street-preaching introduced her to working class and professional people, and formed her conviction that all persons had the ability for powerful spiritual reflection.[18] Maisie Ward married fellow Guild member Frank Sheed (1897–1981), and the couple worked together to found the publishing house, Sheed & Ward, the first Catholic publisher exclusively dedicated to offering Catholic texts geared to an audience composed of cleric and lay persons.[19] Ward served as vice-president of the publishing house, and was involved with selecting, editing, and translating manuscripts, cultivating authors, and drawing up contracts, among other duties. In 1933, while the Catholic intellectual revival in England had reached a standstill, American Catholics proved to be an eager audience.[20] Very few American publishers sold Catholic materials, and a burgeoning American Catholic audience interested in study clubs, Catholic libraries, Catholic education, and Catholic

[16] Anthony Ruff, *Sacred Music and Liturgical Reform: Treasures and Transformations* (Chicago: Hillenbrand Books, 2007), 223.

[17] Justine B. Ward and Elizabeth Ward Perkins, *Music First Year* (Washington: Catholic Education Press, 1914); Justine B. Ward and Elizabeth Ward Perkins, *Music Second Year* (Washington: Catholic Education Press, 1916); Justine B. Ward, *Music Third Year* (Washington: Catholic Education Press, 1919); and Justine B. Ward and André Mocquereau, *Music Fourth Year* (Washington: Catholic Education Press, 1923).

[18] Debra Campbell, "The Gleanings of a Laywoman's Ministry: Maisie Ward as Preacher, Publisher and Social Activist" (Colby College, 1985), General Print Collection [hereafter cited as PGEN] 103/4549, University of Notre Dame Archives [hereafter cited as UNDA]; see also, Debra Campbell, "Gleanings of a Laywoman's Ministry: Maisie Ward as Preacher, Publisher and Social Activist," *The Month* 258 (1987): 313–317.

[19] Campbell, PGEN 103/4549, UNDA.

[20] See Greene, *The Living of Maisie Ward*, 86.

identity fueled an intellectual revival.[21] Sheed and Ward moved to New York City (USA) in 1933.

Maisie Ward saw great intersections between the Catholic intellectual revival and liturgical movement initiatives, especially as they were fed by the theology of the Mystical Body of Christ.[22] Ward believed that a complex network of the liturgy, intellectual societies such as the Catholic Evidence Guild, and "a very ardent intensification of lay spirituality and of Catholic home life" were all needed to form a profound spiritual and liturgical life for the Catholic.[23] Following Pope Pius XI's encouragement for "Catholic Action," she felt her responsibility to support the wider lay apostolate in its growth in learning about its role as the Body of Christ, and its responsibility to respond in love and service to the world.

Ward felt that the ground for Catholic Action in the world began in participation in liturgical worship, especially the Mass. But, reflecting on her own experience in liturgical prayer, Ward noted that in "nothing was the lack of a Catholic mind more manifest in my youth than in our attitude towards the Mass," thinking of it as mere machinery for producing communion.[24] In contrast, Ward promoted the use of the dialogue Mass (in which the congregation spoke the responses out loud during a "low Mass"), encouraged the use of the vernacular, and recommended that the presider face the people, to better bring "understanding of the Action of the Mass."[25] Active participation and comprehension of the Mass was significant, because the Mass itself served as a catechetical and formational opportunity: if the faithful did not understand, could not see, and could not hear, they could not be formed by the sacramental experience of Christ.[26]

Maisie Ward saw liturgical renewal as walking hand-in-hand with movements for social justice, especially in groups choosing to live in voluntary poverty so that the Mystical Body of Christ might be realized.[27] These intentional communities made the Mass and the Divine Office the "food of an intense Catholic

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[21] Greene, *The Living of Maisie Ward*, 85.

[22] Maisie Ward, "Problems of the Apostolate," *Orate Fratres* 24, no. 1 (1949): 28.

[23] Ward, "Problems of the Apostolate," 28.

[24] Maisie Ward, "Maisie Ward," in *Born Catholics*, ed. Frank J. Sheed (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1954), 143.

[25] Ward, "Maisie Ward," 143. See also Ward, "Changes in the Liturgy: Cri de Coeur," *Life of the Spirit* 16, no. 183, (1961): 130.

[26] See Harmon, *There Were Also Many Women There*, 137–138, 142–145.

[27] Her understanding of the Mystical Body is apparent in *This Burning Heat* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1941), which she wrote in response to the Second World War, and the connection between the Mystical Body and activism is explained in *Be Not Solicitous*, ed. Maisie Ward (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1953).

life."[28] But, after the Second World War, as the liturgical movement shifted from larger goals of social reform to interest in promoting liturgy in the family in the post-Second World War era, Ward moved her energies to this strain of the liturgical movement. She composed a collection of essays considering marriage, spirituality, and the family, in *Be Not Solicitous: Sidelights on the Providence of God and the Catholic Family* (1953), where she critiqued the tendency of Catholic organizations to divide families into men, women, boys, and girls. The Mystical Body, as Ward described, was best represented by an integrated family life, one which was honored at home and supported by Church life and worship.[29] All family members, including children, had the ability to be formed in the Christian life, and to cultivate their faith through participation and prayerful reflection.[30]

While Ward was supportive of changes in practice of liturgy (*e.g.*, use of the vernacular), Ward expressed reserve about "the little handful of people who may be called the pundits of the liturgical movement," who, when anything was "changed or dropped cry out that this is only a beginning."[31] Ward reflected upon the danger in changing liturgical practice from a pastoral standpoint: "Our nerves are kept in a constant state of jitters by the threat that we are going to lose things which mean very much to us, which are immensely helpful to the fullness of our mass, but which are under relentless attack – an attack sometimes delivered by rather unfair methods."[32] She referred to, for example, the last Gospel of John, which she saw as explaining why the Mass had become central for worship of the Creator: "'The word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us – and we saw his glory.' What better words than these can sound in our ears as we leave the place of our sacrifice to take the message of salvation into the world?"[33] Ward consistently emphasized the need for liturgical renewal to center on the needs of the faithful. Liturgical development should draw on the Church's many-sided advances in theological and socially-oriented thought and action, but, at the same time, liturgical change needed to be sensitive to the pastoral needs of the people, in order to be effective and lasting.[34] Maisie Ward died in New York on January 28, 1975.

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[28] Ward, "Journal," 8, Sheed and Ward Family Papers [hereafter cited as CSWD] 13/19, University of Notre Dame Archives, Notre Dame, Indiana [hereafter cited as UNDA].

[29] Maisie Ward, "Plea for the Family," in *Be Not Solicitous*, ed. Maisie Ward (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1953), 37.

[30] See Ward, "Journal," 7, CSWD 13/10, UNDA.

[31] Ward, "Cri de Coeur," 131.

[32] Ward, "Cri de Coeur," 131–132.

[33] Ward, "Cri de Coeur," 133.

[34] Ward, "Cri de Coeur," 131–132.

4. JOINING LITURGY AND LIFE WITH LITURGICAL ARTS: ADE BETHUNE (1914–2002)

Liturgical artist and Catholic Worker, Marie Adélaïde de Bethune (commonly known as "Ade Bethune") represents several key dimensions of the liturgical movement through her keen attention to the significance of the arts and to social action. Born in Brussels, Belgium in 1914, she emigrated as a child to America with her family in 1928. In 1929, she began attending art school, eventually enrolling at the well-respected Cooper Union Day Art School of New York City (USA). Shortly after she began her study, in the Fall of 1933, Bethune first visited the Catholic Worker soup kitchen on East 15th Street in New York. While she was impressed with the notion of radical hospitality, she was disappointed by the poor quality of the illustrations in *The Catholic Worker* newspaper.[35] Bethune began developing her own images, focusing on works of mercy, depicting each work with a figure, or figures, in action.[36] In contrast to most religious art of the time, she did not produce static figures, or emphasize the miracles associated with saints; she drew the saints doing ordinary work. Bethune thought it particularly appropriate that the saints who appeared in the *Catholic Worker* should, themselves, be workers. These first pictures began a long relationship with the Catholic Worker, and Dorothy Day herself.[37]

Bethune's work was compelling to those interested in the liturgical movement for the philosophy of art, labor, and faith which it exuded, and attracted the attention of liturgical pioneers as she began writing for the *Liturgical Art Quarterly* and speaking at national events such as the Catholic Arts Association.[38] Bethune insisted that the faithful's humble tasks of work and living allowed them to share in the creative art of God,[39] comparing daily labor and the "work" of the Mass:

> [W]hen we offer the bread and the wine at Mass what is it that we offer but the works of our life? Thus there are not so many Masses, offered at seven, eight, nine thirty, ten fifteen and eleven forty-five. There is only *one* Mass. It was offered once, and we participate in it, each generation in turn. All day long, and all our life long, we fashion

[35] Ade Bethune, "The Work and Works of Mercy," *Orate Fratres* 15, no. 2 (1940): 53.

[36] See Judith Stoughton, *Proud Donkey of Schaerbeek: Adé Bethune: Catholic Worker Artist* (St. Cloud: North Star Press of St. Cloud, 1988), 37.

[37] Adé Bethune, "The Work and Works of Mercy," *Orate Fratres* 15, no. 2 (1940): 54. See also Katharine E. Harmon, "Drawing the Holy in the Ordinary: Adé Bethune, the Catholic Worker, and the Liturgical Movement," *American Catholic Studies* (2012): 1–23.

[38] See Harmon, *There Were Also Many Women There*, 202–204.

[39] Ade Bethune, "This 'Here' Life," 10, Ade Bethune Collection 11/Writings, St. Catherine University Library.

> the offerings which we shall take to the altar whenever the priest officiates. They are the works of our life which are works of mercy when they are works of love.[40]

For Bethune, the ultimate work for the Christian was the Mass, and all work reflected that one perfect offering of Christ:

> The mass feeds the hungry and instructs the ignorant. It visits the sick and the prisoner; and it admonishes and forgives the sinner. It gives alms to the poor; it consoles the sorrowful and it gives advice to those in doubt. It bears wrongs patiently. It buries the dead. It prays for all.[41]

Bethune concluded that, for herself, who had drawn "so many pictures" of the saints, she had drawn only one picture in endless variation: the Mass. All human work, from the work of the saints to the work of ourselves, found its inspiration and its end in the one great work of Christ.

Aside from hundreds of images created for *The Catholic Worker*, one of the most concrete ways in which Ade Bethune was able to apply her skills as an artist and her hopes for advocating the laity's involvement and ownership of their faith occurred in the realm of church architecture. She began working as a liturgical consultant, a service which extended to thirteen of the U.S. states, and international settings.[42] Like Maisie Ward, Bethune firmly believed in the significance of lay involvement and active participation, and regularly invited local parishioners to take part in the creation of her art.[43] Bethune served as a liturgical consultant through the 1980s on projects from chapels to mission churches, and had the honor of being commissioned to design the brass candlesticks for the papal altar in the Vatican at the closing session of the Second Vatican Council.[44] Ade Bethune died in her home town of Newport, Rhode Island (USA) in 2002.[45]

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[40] Bethune, "The Work and Works of Mercy," 56–57.

[41] Bethune, "The Work and Works of Mercy," 57.

[42] Bethune's liturgical consultant work is catalogued in the Ade Bethune Collection, held in the St. Catherine University Library. The Ade Bethune Collection has wonderful examples of Bethune's process of work, from letters and blueprints to three-dimensional models of projects on which she worked.

[43] See Harmon, *There Were Also Many Women There*, 212–216.

[44] "Parish Directory, 50th anniversary, The Church of Saint Paulinus," 13–14, Ade Bethune Collection, Series 1, Churches in the U.S. 5, St. Catherine University Library. Judith Stoughton details some of these projects in *The Proud Donkey of Schaerbeek*. See also Adé de Béthune, "Philippines Adventure," *Liturgical Arts Quarterly* 19, no. 4 (1951): 10–13.

[45] See James A. Johnson, "Artist on the Point helped shape the local landscape," in *The Newport Daily News* (5 May 2010): A3.

5. FLORENCE BERGER (1909–1983): THE LITURGY, THE HOME, AND THE LITURGICAL APOSTOLATE

For pioneers of the liturgical movement, the final frontier for living the liturgical life was not the public, but the private realm. Particularly after the Second World War, and in concert with the domestic turn within the wider United States' cultural context, American liturgical reformers became more interested in the home as the location for the most basic and natural training to the liturgical life to occur. Rather than relegating liturgical formation to parochial schools alone, or to experimentation in radical lifestyles which many lay faithful could not practically adopt (such as the Grail Movement or the Catholic Worker), the "domestic Church" of the Christian family was identified as a fruitful location to reflect liturgical worship.

A key contributor to the domestic evolution of the American liturgical movement is found in Florence Sudhoff Berger, her husband Alfred, and their children. Florence Berger was born in 1909, in Cincinnati, Ohio (USA), and eventually attended the University of Cincinnati, earning her both a masters and a bachelors' degree specializing in early childhood education.[46] She worked in the public school system of Cincinnati for several year before she married Alfred (Al) Berger in 1933. Following the difficult birth of her fifth child in which she came close to death, Florence Berger felt compelled to become more active and committed to her faith. She became involved with the newly-formed American Grail Movement (with its headquarters near Cincinnati), as well as the National Catholic Rural Life Conference.[47] Both of these movements emphasized a connection between simplicity, wholesomeness, and an intentional way of living as a Catholic Christian.[48] Berger's involvement with the Grail also introduced her to the broader liturgical movement.

Interested in integrating her family life with her faith, Berger began experimenting by creating a resource for women to use for recipes which would be suited to the liturgical calendar. She claimed to first get the idea from a Bishops' statement on secularism as the "greatest evil of today" and from Pius XI "who is reported to have said that festival days did more to further religion than any official pronouncements of the church."[49] As Berger wrote, the kitchen was a place

[46] "About the Author," book jacket, Florence Berger File, The Ohioana Library Association, Ohioana Library, 274 East First Avenue, Columbus, Ohio [hereafter cited as Ohioana Library Association].

[47] Ann Berger Frutkin, *Florence and Al Berger: A Collaborative Memory of a Cincinnati Family* (Hilton Head Island: Studiobooks, 2009), 17.

[48] Berger Frutkin, *Florence and Al Berger*, 17.

[49] "Writes Religious Cookbook," Florence Berger File, Ohioana Library Association.

uniquely the women's and, thus, offered unique opportunity for women to bring Christ into the home and live out their own apostolates:

> If I am to carry Christ home with me from the altar, I am afraid He will have to come to the kitchen because much of my time is spent there. I shall welcome Him on Easter and He shall eat new lamb with us. I shall give homage to Him on Epiphany and shall cook a royal feast for him and my family. I shall mourn with Him on Holy Thursday and we shall taste the herbs of the Passover and break unleavened bread. Then the cooking which we do will add special significance to the Church Year and Christ will sanctify our daily bread. That is what is meant by the liturgical year in the kitchen.[50]

In *Cooking for Christ*, which would become a recommended textbook for American Catholic schoolgirls,[51] "liturgically appropriate" meals were interspersed with brief lessons on the meaning of feasts, the histories of saints, and the social implications of liturgical practice. For example, during the Octave of Easter, Berger explained how to use a family's left-over lamb in creating an "Easter Soup":

> Too many children still hunger for bread in this world of mal-distribution […] Christ, Himself, gave us the example of gathering up remnants – and no meat lends itself to stews and casseroles so well as lamb does.[52]

Berger saw wastefulness as a sin against one's fellow human community, but also against God. Resonating with interests of the National Catholic Rural Life movement for responsible use of resources, Berger believed that not only farmers but city dwellers as well were called to good stewardship of their gifts and resources.[53]

In the face of the lethargy which had "crept upon the Christian spirit," Berger proposed that, "perhaps mothers and daughters can lead their families back to Christ-centered living and cooking," thus echoing the charge of her contemporary liturgists and scripture scholars calling for more active lay participation and understanding.[54] Just as liturgical participation and comprehension of

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[50] Florence Berger, "Introduction," *Cooking for Christ: the Liturgical Year in the Kitchen* (Des Moines: National Catholic Rural Life Conference, 1949), n.p.

[51] Ethel Marbach, "The Eternal Woman," *Catholic Digest* 28 (1964): 79–81.

[52] Berger, *Cooking for Christ*, 76–77.

[53] Harmon, *There Were Also Many Women There*, 222–224.

[54] Berger, *Cooking for Christ*, "Introduction."

scripture had opened the Christian spirit to the reality of God, so might the work of the kitchen perform this task. Eating together as a family would add to and complement other venues of "churching" the domestic church, including family Mass and family prayer. Such a production was prime material for inclusion in *Orate Fratres*, where she described her work as "a strange hybrid," which aimed to bring the liturgy closer to home, as a "most informal study of liturgy."[55] Doing so, Berger noted, made theories about liturgical living practical, and available to a wider audience.[56]

In their home parish and through the diocese of Cincinnati, the Bergers were active in promoting the liturgical movement in a variety of venues, especially after the liturgical reforms of the 1950s such as the restored Easter Vigil and Holy Week were being implemented in parishes. In the latter 1950s, both Bergers were involved with the National Liturgical Weeks, and Florence served on the Board of Directors along with several other lay women.[57] Florence Berger died in Hilton Head, South Carolina, on April 13, 1983.

CONCLUSION

From the inaugural issue of *Orate Fratres* in 1926 through the Second Vatican Council, Roman Catholic lay women reflected upon and realized the impulse to lead the liturgical life during the liturgical movement in the United States. Importantly, an examination of lay women reveals how important the involvement of the liturgical apostolate of laypersons was for making the liturgical movement in any way successful. Likewise, focusing on lay women's involvement illuminates the socially-transformative impulses of the liturgical movement: repeatedly, American Catholics identified active participation in communal, liturgical worship as a chief avenue to restore a truly Christian way of life in the face of the evils of industrialism, modernism, secularism, and individualism.

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[55] Florence Berger, "The Liturgical Year in the Kitchen," 550. *Orate Fratres* reviewed *Cooking for Christ* in January, 1950: "The reviewer's competence in the field of creative cooking is strictly a minus quality. But he spent several hours on the evening of the book's arrival, devouring recipe after recipe (*in voto*), and absolutely fascinated by the running commentary of the text. The book is a feast for soul as well as stomach (Lucky Mr. Berger and children). Even most of the fast-day recipes sound attractive; if less so, there is always the good sauce of an interesting and edifying story. Without a doubt, this is, in a field all its own, a book of the year." "Cooking for Christ, Review," *Orate Fratres* 24, no. 2 (1950): 91.

[56] Berger, "The Liturgical Year in the Kitchen," 550.

[57] Rev. John P. O'Connell to H. A. Reinhold, May 22, 1958, H.A. Reinhold Papers, MS2003-60 Series 1, 6/4, John J. Burns Library, Boston College.

At the end of the day, as liturgical scholar Aidan Kavanaugh, OSB (1929–2006), would summarize more than ten years following the Second Vatican Council, the work of the liturgical movement was at once "unfinished and unbegun."[58] So, too, is an appreciation of its advocates. Nathan D. Mitchell (1943–2024), liturgical scholar, writer, and teacher, identified the androcentric vision of the liturgical movement in 1994, noting that women's absence from the narrative:

> does not mean, of course, that women have failed, factually, to make any contribution to worship studies and pastoral praxis in the twentieth century – only that their contributions have been neglected or, more commonly, sought for in the wrong places.[59]

Indeed, one finds a liturgical "foremother" in places one would not expect: a Catholic Worker House, a publishing house, or her own house. But, these women's liturgical contributions are not "un-liturgical," "lacking seriousness," or "on the fringes." Lay women's work was integral to the development of the liturgical movement, and to its success or failure. The practical experiences of lay women liturgical pioneers testify to the liturgical movement as a work in progress – a work which evolved, and a work which increasingly needed lay Catholics to understand and embrace it. Certainly, there were also many women there during the liturgical movement in America – women who knew that the work of the liturgical life had only just begun.

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[58] Aidan Kavanaugh, "Liturgical Business Unfinished and Unbegun," *Worship* 50, no. 4 (1976): 354–364.

[59] Nathan D. Mitchell, "The Amen Corner: A Mansion for the Rat," *Worship* 68, no. 1 (1994): 68.

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„TAM RÓWNIEŻ BYŁO WIELE KOBIET". WPROWADZENIE KOBIET ŚWIECKICH W AMERYKAŃSKIM RUCHU LITURGICZNYM

Streszczenie

Artykuł poświęcony jest często pomijanej roli świeckich kobiet w ruchu liturgicznym w Stanach Zjednoczonych w latach 1920–1959. Opierając się na materiałach archiwalnych, korespondencji i czasopismach, takich jak *Orate Fratres*, *The Catholic Worker* i *Liturgical Arts Quarterly*, autorka pokazuje, że kobiety nie były biernymi obserwatorami, ale aktywnie przyczyniły się do odnowy kultu i duchowości katolickiej. Cztery studia przypadków (Justine Bayard Cutting Ward, Maisie Ward, Ade Bethune i Florence Berger) ilustrują, w jaki sposób kobiety angażowały się w reformę liturgiczną poprzez muzykę, publikacje, sztuki wizualne, aktywizm społeczny i życie rodzinne. Ich inicjatywy łączyły liturgię z edukacją, ekspresją artystyczną i praktykami domowymi, ukazując ruch liturgiczny jako szeroki projekt społeczny i duchowy, a nie jedynie reformę tekstową. Odkrywając wkład tych kobiet, artykuł podważa androcentryczną historiografię XX-wiecznych studiów liturgicznych i podkreśla teologiczne oraz duszpasterskie znaczenie udziału świeckich. Artykuł kończy się wnioskiem, że „niedokończone i nierozpoczęte" dzieło odnowy liturgicznej, jak opisuje je Aidan Kavanaugh, musi uwzględniać świadectwo i kreatywność wielu kobiet, które ucieleśniały życie liturgiczne zarówno w sferze publicznej, jak i prywatnej.

Słowa kluczowe: ruch liturgiczny; kobiety świeckie; katolicyzm amerykański; odnowa liturgiczna; uczestnictwo; kult