

A “Chapel on the Moon”: Reflections on Roman Catholic Liturgical Imagination in 1967 and in 2007

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The title of this paper may prompt the reader to ask a bemused question: how can an article from the late 1960s, offering plans for a hypothetical chapel on the Moon, offer any inspiration to a contemporary middle-aged specialist in medieval liturgy? The answer lies in the different directions of expression that the energy of the liturgical imagination takes in every century of Christian history. As Father Andrew Greeley has observed about the Roman Catholic liturgical imagination, “Its strength is rooted in the depths of the Catholic psyche with its ability to sense grace lurking everywhere ... [and] ... the artist is a sacrament maker who sees the hints of grace in the world and in human life and illumines them for us.”¹

In medieval western Christianity Christian artists and architects offered many modalities of such illumination; liturgical imagination is an important element in understanding medieval liturgy. For example, the medieval manuscript that I edited for my doctoral dissertation was a *libellus precum* prepared circa 1030 for Sigebert, bishop of the then-prominent diocese of Minden (Westphalia, Germany). This ivory carving of Sigebert (see fig. 1 on the accompanying CD) very likely decorated the cover of this humble little prayer book; here, the importance of the person—the central figure, Minden’s bishop, Sigebert—is shown by that figure’s relative size. In fact, in elaborate liturgical books as well as in the simplest, important texts were set off by expensive decoration (fig. 2), and even the “ordinary” letters were produced by an intense scribal concentration that results in texts of extraordinary evenness and quality (figs. 3, 4). Medieval liturgical architecture also reflects the liturgical imagination of the builders, and their community and patrons. Like the present-day cathedral in Minden (fig. 5) Ottonian-era stone churches presented heavy fortress-like faces to the town square, reflecting not only a more “imperialistic” vision of liturgical celebration, but also a more practical response to the unfortunate tendency of earlier wooden churches to be destroyed by fire.²

Thus the particular expressions of liturgical imagination that I normally work with are about as far away from space exploration and “Star Trek” as you can imagine. However, the intense energy and focus of the medieval liturgical imagination were as much a part of the consciousness of that culture as the elements in “social imagination” were in our culture during the second half of the twentieth century. For example, the western European building “boom” of Gothic cathedrals, which look place a bit later in medieval history (primarily in the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries), has often been compared to the efforts of the American space program in terms of commitment, expense, and sheer labor (if not inspiration and imagination).

What drew my interest to more modern expressions of liturgical imagination was one of my recent projects: serving as a member of the editorial team for *A Commentary on the General Instruction of the Roman Missal*,³ published at the end of 2007. My work in editing this lengthy series of articles commenting on each chapter of the newest edition of the *General Instruction* provided me with an opportunity to reflect on the interpretation of the renewed Roman Catholic liturgy that this most recent explanation of basic principles and concrete directives expressed, one that seemed to differ in significant ways from its earlier edition in 1969/1970. How might these differences have an impact on the liturgical imagination of Roman Catholics in the United States?

The Beginning in the Present

For the purposes of this paper I would like to “start at the end,” that is, with a brief discussion of this most recent edition of the Roman Catholic *Institutio Generalis Missalis Romani* (IGMR 2002); the English translation approved by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops is *The General Instruction of the Roman Missal* (GIRM 2003). In our introduction to the *Commentary* we three editors stated that “The publications of IGMR2002 and MR2002 mark the crest of a fresh wave, a significant moment in the flow of Roman Catholic liturgical life at the turn of the new millennium.”⁴ Before we take a look back at that first wave of liturgical reform, some comments must be made about this most recent document (I will use here the English translation approved for the United States in 2003).

It is important to remember that the new GIRM is based on the previous editions of 1970 and 1975 as well as on changes incorporated along the way (1972, 1983).⁵ While the 2003 text continues to affirm many of the essential characteristics of liturgy articulated from 1969 through 1983 there are shifts in the tone, the tenor, the “cast” of the new text; the ways the original editions of the text (1970, 1975) are edited, amended, and expanded affect the boundaries or possible “parameters” of the liturgical imagination it inspires. Based on the analysis of the IGMR/GIRM by the team of liturgical theologians in the *Commentary*, I offer a brief list of liturgical “characteristics and correctives” both explicit and implicit in the text. This list will anticipate a discussion (below) of the list published in the journal *Liturgical Arts* by Joseph Champlin in 1970, as well as insights from other authors accompanying Champlin’s essay.

In general, one might say that in this most recent twenty-first century perspective the eucharistic liturgy is:

1. Traditional: the stress on tradition is more strongly affirmed in the new GIRM in a number of ways. While the flexibility of the rite is still a key characteristic (as it was in such a striking way in 1970, as will be discussed below), some commentators find that the text’s appeal to authority can be problematic, particularly in its reference to the Council of Trent without a full consideration of Trent’s context.⁶

2. Interior: as we will see, one of the strengths of GIRM 1970 and the Missal it introduced was its personal orientation. The new GIRM continues to reaffirm the goal of full and active participation in the liturgy by all, but this is taken in newer directions. The text’s repeated emphasis on the importance of silence in the liturgy (for example, after the homily) tends to “focus on the interior disposition of the worshipers” and puts less emphasis on other ways that the “faithful” are “engaged.”⁷ Indeed, the participation of the laity in general tends to be seen “primarily in terms of the assembly’s inner meditation on the Word ... or on their inner consent to what the priest does in the liturgy.”⁸

3. Hierarchical: emphasis on community was clearly noted in 1970, as we will see; this is not lost in GIRM 2003, but attention to the liturgical assembly tends to be directed strongly on its hierarchical structure. In several places GIRM calls for distinguishing the laity from the ordained (most often the ordained priest) in various ways: speech, gesture, and spatial placement. For example, a more “traditional” architectural design of the church building is prescribed, with a “clear separation” made between the sanctuary area and the seating/placement of the laity.⁹

4. High quality: GIRM 2003 continues the insistence on high quality in the liturgy and its

celebration already clearly expressed in earlier editions. This applies to furnishings as well as to music. As adapted for the United States the final chapter notes that “the organ is to be given pride of place,” but why this instrument is more appropriate (“apt”) than others is not clear.¹⁰

5. Rubrical: one of the concerns of GIRM 2003 is to correct abuses and make changes to the earlier editions in the light of almost thirty years’ worth of liturgical practice. While this can be understood as a component of the “clarity” lauded in 1970 (it is “in general ... more precise than previous Instructions”¹¹), at certain points these revisions and additions seem to direct attention to the rubrics of the liturgical act, which might be seen as a reversion to an overly-legalistic or “rubricist” attitude (one criticized during the early years of the implementation of the liturgical reform).¹²

6. Sacrificial: while many of theological images and understandings of the Eucharist continue to receive attention in GIRM 2003, throughout the document the sacrificial nature of the Mass predominates over others (e.g., memorial, eschatological banquet).¹³ This serves again to throw the unique role of the ordained priest in the assembly into sharp relief, resulting in a “tendency to focus on the priest as the apparent lone subject of each action.”¹⁴

Named after a “friend of the architect,” Oratorian Father Emeric Doman, the chapel building serves a number of functions (figs.12-13). First and foremost, the lowest level offers a worship space designed and furnished according to principles familiar to us almost forty years after the promulgation of the Missal of Paul VI (1970), but that must have seemed quite “pared down” by the standards of earlier Catholic sensibilities in liturgical architecture. Suggestions for additional furnishings were also reproduced (as reverse frontispiece and frontispiece): a statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary (“Our Lady of the Moon,” described as “cast aluminum sculpture, by Grover Henricks”²⁸) (figs. 14-16) and the corpus for a crucifix for the chapel (“welded steel, by Robert Cariola”) (figs. 17-18).²⁹

Clerical staffing for this chapel was to be provided by Oratorians “specially trained” in both pastoral ministry and clinical psychology (although most science fiction writers both then and now assume that Jesuits will be the first priests in space). Their living quarters were to be constructed on the upper level of the chapel, not an unusual arrangement given the limits on living space and resources for a Moon colony (fig. 12). The studies/libraries are both open to a circular walkway, and access to this level seems to be freely open to anyone. A conference room and kitchen/dining room are also situated on this level.

Other essays accompany this display of images. One, “The Cosmic Adventure: A Challenge to Theology,”³⁰ specifically dealing with the future shape of the ordained priesthood, was written by Father Clifford Stevens, then an Air Force chaplain and author, later founder of Tintern Abbey. This essay offers an interesting answer to the question: what kind of priests would staff this new chapel, and how would they understand the nature of their priesthood as part of this expansion into space? Here, in reflecting on the call and character of priesthood in a future space age, Stevens offers some key insights. The future priest (who must be an able theologian) sees technological progress and space exploration “as an immensely stimulating opportunity” for human knowledge and thought; the “aerospace mentality—the thrust into space—is quite in keeping with the theologian’s view of man” since this view is predicated on “the marriage of faith and reason,” and the reaction of the theologian is to “marvel” at the “space effort” and its achievements, as well as “the rich rewards and benefits deriving from it for the human race.” To be “the light of the world” and “the salt of the earth” (which Stevens described as the “Magna

Carta of his priesthood”), the priest actively helps to strengthen this union between faith and theology, bringing “the vision and strength of theology” to the “wearying and complex business of space exploration.” In fact, Stevens views this “thrust into space” as “an activity which approaches the religious ... [the] vastness and ... boundless of space ... mirrors the greatness and eternity of God.” One clearly see the theological shape of the priestly ministry that Stevens is imagining here: one open to the experiences of both physical limitations (i.e., finitude) and cosmic spirituality (an “infinitude”) that would pose challenging horizons for human beings engaged in space exploration.

Stevens’s view of why human beings will engage in this exploration will strike some contemporary readers as a kind of pioneering utilitarianism, like the earlier American vision of taming the wilderness. “What man will build from the virgin forests of space, it is not possible to say,” but he does offer categories of new achievements and accomplishments in civilizations, arts, science, education, industry, “new cosmic nations,” economies, law, medicine, and sociology. In these endeavors the priest-theologian is not “a mere observer” but “a participant” in the “human scene”; he is “a child of his age and his century” and “is part of its effort and achievement.” Stevens cites the example of the priests who accompanied European explorers, from the Vikings to Magellan, and declares that it is “not unfitting for the theologian, symbolically or otherwise, to put on a space suit.” In the end Stevens offers a vision of the “priest-theologian” that seems once again to evoke the image of the pioneer priest in the American West: “He will inhabit his chapel on the edge of space and help to open the doors to a whole new dimension of human existence. As his Master foretold, he will bring out of his treasures things old and new and find new ways and shape new tools in the task of bringing man to God and God to man.”

Two other short articles accompanied this exploration of the “Moon chapel”: “Moon People’s Liturgy,” by Constance Parvey,³¹ and “The Impact of the Space Program,” by T. W. Adams.³² An addition to this series of articles was a two-part musical piece by the composer Johannes Somary: “Two Reflections in Honor of the Moon” (fig. 19). As Somary’s webpage explains, the commission by the journal *Liturgical Arts* was paid for by the U.S. government; the text also notes the condition that this piece may not be performed before its official premiere, which must be in a chapel on the Moon. A commentary explains that the piece is written for “high voice” and instruments that might be easily carried to the Moon: flute, clarinet, handbells, and gong.³³

Clearly the excitement of the Apollo Moon program, combined with anticipation of the approaching liturgical renewal, provided a rich context for this highly speculative approach to liturgical design, ministry, and music. This imagined flexible, economical liturgical space, staffed by priests trained for the demands of psychological counseling and spiritual ministry in a new, hostile, and challenging living-and-working environment, was published in *Liturgical Arts* in reasonable (if futuristic) continuity to the openness of the immediate post-conciliar church to the demands of modern human culture and technology. The project was an example of liturgical imagination at its farthest and most optimistic stretch. The flexibility of approach, and the willingness to engage with human endeavor at the forefront of human work and life in the world (in space exploration), stressed in many of the documents of the Second Vatican Council, was to be embodied (as we will see) in the first editions of the General Instruction of the Roman Missal, accompanying the “new” Mass in the Missal of Paul VI (1970).

Priests and the Liturgy (1969)

An article published in *Liturgical Arts* in 1969 offers another interesting perspective on priesthood. "The Liturgy and the 'New Breed'" is an early piece by the noted Sri Lankan Jesuit theologian Aloysius Pieris.³⁴ Pieris takes up the subject of the role of the priest in liturgical celebration. To begin, he decries the fact that some priests are still "rite-minded" (as called for by their training in the Tridentine rite), and focus only on a detailed knowledge of documents and rubrics; they are "post-conciliar versions of the pre-conciliar rubricists ... [they betray] the 'rite-attitude'." However, according to Pieris's starting principle, that "the liturgy of the Church determines the quality of her priests," the liturgical renewal has produced its "first fruits" in some of the clergy. The real "new breed" of priests should instead be "sign-minded" as they approach the liturgy, moving with the process of "de-ritualization ... from being a dead rite [to] a living sign." Such signs are "an ontological necessity" for human beings and their expressions of self; for Christians, "three orders" of signs express "our communion with the father": "Christ, Church, and the sacraments."

For Pieris the use of the word "rite" has become problematic in terms of reformed liturgy, since to his mind it connotes "ritualism ... an ever imminent threat to our liturgical life." For him the words "life" and "liturgy" are and should be interchangeable, and are connected to "rite" by the use of the "sign" concept, which keeps liturgy "relevant," "contemporary," and "meaningful." He is most critical of the pre-conciliar concept of sacraments as "mechanical rite(s),"³⁵ and insists that "the liturgical revival is not concerned with a change of rite but with a renewal of life." Pieris pays special attention to the translation and composition of new "canons" (eucharistic prayers), stressing the value and authenticity of using a number of contemporary and variable texts: "The arrival of the new canons, then, is an indication of a new awareness in the Church"; not just "cling[ing] to verbal formulations ... [but in] becoming mature ... [the Church] ... will no longer be rite-oriented." Thus, the new breed of priests will be "sign-minded" priests, comfortable with improvisation and at "ease at the altar and pulpit"; the priest will be a true *alter Christus* in his true humanity, not in his separation as a "paragon" from "an emulating flock." Pieris's "new breed" of priests would be right at home donning Stevens's space suits and staffing Mills's chapel on the Moon; they are willing and able to make the deep connection between the sacred symbolism of the liturgy and the ordinary patterns of human life, and have the spiritual flexibility to do so in the most technologically challenging and physically demanding settings.

Characteristics of the Liturgy (1970)

We can see some of the explicitly liturgical principles underlying the vision of "a chapel on the Moon" spelled out a few years later, in 1970, in an article in *Liturgical Arts* by Father Joseph Champlin, then associate director of the United States Conference of Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy. Prompted by media expectations of wide-spread resistance by American Catholics, Champlin, in "A New Epoch in the Liturgy,"³⁶ analyzes the basic principles of the new liturgy about to be promulgated (Advent 1970) through a brief reading of the then-new GIRM 1970. While he notes that "a small, even if extremely vocal and articulate minority ... cling to and cherish the past, dread an uncertain or unfamiliar future, [and] appear threatened by additional reforms in the Church," "the vast majority look forward to this 'new epoch' in our Church's life." The reasons for such optimism can be found in the "new" GIRM of 1970; as Champlin analyzes the text, he finds this "restored liturgy" is:

1. Flexible: Unlike the earlier Roman Missal, in use since 1570, the “renewed” Missal offers a response to cultural diversity. “Forms of worship frozen for four hundred years will not accommodate themselves very well to a contemporary culture changing rapidly in every way”; in fact, “The GIRM seeks to take ... diversified conditions into account.” However, this openness is not all-out license: “It is not exactly a ‘do your own thing’ worship manual and may not go far enough for some, but the initiation of ‘official flexibility’ cannot be questioned and its advancement of liturgical renewal should not be underestimated.”

2. Personal: Previous stress on the correct way to perform rubrics is set to one side in the 1970 text: “We need not beat our breasts any more about the magical approach ... the too formalistic view of sacraments and liturgy ... We must move on. The revisions do so.” The participation and engagement of everyone, priest and laity, is the goal: “The free, faith-filled response of each person is what we want in worship.”

3. Varied: Champlin uses the examples of the then popular TV series *Laugh-In* and American football to note how the renewed liturgy addresses the cultural needs of Americans. “The action is fast, the scene constantly changing, variety, the name of the game. We in the United States tire quickly of the same thing. The liturgy revisions may reduce routine and make freshness of presentation in a varied Sabbath program now feasible.” He continues by offering the example of the three-year lectionary, and the opportunities for more variety in liturgical music.

4. High quality: The new choices and options offered in the renewed liturgy should not be implemented in a haphazard way. “Probably the most essential directive for any liturgical service is the insistence that those who have special roles to fill ... should perform them with care and seem to lend an atmosphere of superior quality to the celebration.” He notes that this applies to every element of the liturgy, including music, the readings, and church furnishings, especially as regards church renovations: “One worships better in an attractive and well appointed building.”

5. Clearer: Here Champlin specifically brings in one of the major points made in the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy from the Second Vatican Council: that the liturgy should be characterized by simplicity and clarity.³⁷ “Gone in the new rites are the needless repetitions, the once meaningful, now unclear gestures... Prayers are shorter and with less of the verbal overkill which simply destroys a message’s effectiveness in this multi-media, visual age of ours.”

6. Community-centered: The liturgy does not “belong” only to the priest or to a select few participants. “Worship must involve all present A communal act, liturgy stands or falls, rates high or low in success to the degree that everyone shares in the service.” Here, he envisions baptisms taking in front of “crowds,” possible at Sunday Mass, weddings at which the community adds its “amen” to the blessings, and liturgical committees that “plan a variety of Sunday services” for the different worshipping communities in the parish.

In his conclusion, Champlin, buttressed by his exposition of this renewed series of liturgical characteristics, answers the naysayers with a firm optimism: “I have no doubt that Catholics of the United States, particularly after they experience these changes, will receive them with joy, accept them with pleasure and use them with care.” It is important to remember here the context within which these changes had been proposed: in the wake of a devastating world war and the social upheaval that ensued in the two decades that followed; in the midst of an unprecedented technological expansion in industry, and especially communications; and as a

seemingly endless Cold War between two nuclear powers raised the specter of global annihilation. The reactions to liturgical renewal in the Roman Catholic Church reflected these tensions between the unknowns of a fast-changing future (filled with unguessable potential for good and evil) and the familiar stability of a traditional past (marked by monolithic unchanging forms but increasingly distant from the human experience of the twentieth century).

The 1971 Project: The Oceans

A second foray into the liturgical future, marking the fortieth anniversary of the journal, can be seen in another liturgical project presented in a 1971 issue of *Liturgical Arts*: a submarine chapel.³⁸ By this time the mood of American Catholicism had shifted away from the unbridled optimism of the mid-60s. This sense of disillusionment had many sources. Problematic political, social, and cultural developments in the United States played an important role, like the implosion of the “summer of love” in 1967; the assassinations of Martin Luther King, Jr., and Robert Kennedy just months apart in 1968; growing social unrest over the war in Vietnam; and dissatisfaction with the presidency of Richard Nixon (including the invasion of Cambodia on 30 April 1970 and the resultant shootings during a student protest at Kent State on 4 May). Heedless military and industrial expansion brought additional worries; for example, increasing awareness of serious ecological issues led to the observance of the first Earth Day on 22 April 1970.

Difficult issues also rocked the American Church. While some were rooted in more general political problems (for example, Vietnam and the Civil Rights movement), others sprang from ecclesiastical issues, for example controversies over “dissident” priests and religious (both on the left and the right); Catholic moral teaching (*Humanae Vitae*, 1968, on artificial birth control); the role of women in the church; and the beginning of the “decline in numbers” of several Catholic structures (e.g. seminarians, Catholic grammar and high schools³⁹).

This new project, then, would have a different tone. Instead of the optimism and heroism that marked the Apollo project and the plans for a chapel on the Moon, this project would turn to the concrete problems of life on this planet in the light of seeming endless struggles: the war in Vietnam, the war against poverty, the struggle for civil rights, and growing concerns about the environment. And so the architect of the Moon chapel, Mark Mills, traveled back to “Spaceship Earth” and turned to support human exploration of the seas in his design of the “*Bea* submarine chapel.” The opening editorial for this issue⁴⁰ stresses a global mission for this submarine as “a tangible expression of good will toward all men [that] travel[s] around the world.” Writing at a time of intense controversy about the war in Vietnam, the editors hope that this “underwater chapel, devoted solely to peace ... is a possible dream” like the Moon chapel before it. A five-year mission is envisioned for the submarine; with a multi-religious crew and passengers, it would travel around the world from its departure port of San Francisco (Alcatraz would by then, according to the editors, have been returned to the Native American community) to its arrival in Philadelphia just in time for the 1976 World’s Fair. In addition to other ports of call, it would make “*atonement* stops at Bikini, Hiroshima and Nagasaki” (see fig. 20 for a map). So, like the chapel in the Moon colony, this submarine chapel would be engaged in the peaceful exploration of a new frontier, at once hostile and rewarding; more explicitly, however, than the lunar colonies envisioned as a result of a Cold War “Space Race,” this chapel would be truly free from all national boundaries and borders.

Rejecting the shark-like shape of military submarines, Mills notes that a more peaceful and flexible sea creature, the manta ray, is the model for this “peace ship”⁴¹ (figs. 21-25⁴²). The submarine is to be called the *Bea*, named to honor both Augustin Cardinal Bea (1881-1968), the German Jesuit who headed the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity from 1960 until his death in 1968, and Charles Darwin’s ship of exploration, the *Beagle* (a “BEA-gle II”).⁴³ The *Bea* is to be “a marine symbol dedicated to peace,” and is designed to embody literally a peace symbol in the fork of its “bow-stern axis” and in the shape of the “chapel frame as seen through the large central dome.”⁴⁴ The *Bea*’s chapel is an “ecumenical chapel, a super-structure shell with domes ... a spiritual ‘radiation lab’.”⁴⁵ In this chapel the scientific research and transportation functions of the submarine were to represent the quest for a greater understanding of God: passengers, researchers, and crew would “worship God through a variety of faiths and liturgies.” In addition, the chapel would be a multi-purpose room, serving as “theater, conference room, banquet hall, exhibition and recreation room.” The small domes in the “chapel shell” would serve as natural stained-glass windows when the submarine was under water; indeed, to incorporate the sense of being at one with the ocean, “actual sea sounds can be incorporated into church liturgies by means of special equipment.” When it surfaces the “chapel domes are screened with translucent shades of richly-tinted patterns” (fig. 26). Note, too, that the submarine “can shroud herself in a cascade of light, water, and fireworks” on entering a harbor, and can even release “flocks of doves on special occasions” (fig. 27⁴⁶). From a twenty-first-century perspective, the ethics of keeping birds caged on a multi-year voyage just to be used as a decorative element is questionable at best, especially during a mission with such strong environmental and preservationist overtones.

The accompanying essays also seem to have shifted in theme from those accompanying the Moon chapel project, both theologically and technologically. The Jesuit theologian Clement McNaspy’s reflection, entitled “Man, the Sea, and Peace,” begins by making a contrast between the 1960s (“the decade of outer space”) and the 1970s (“[the decade] of inner space”).⁴⁷ In retrospect, his observation that in terms of outer space the 1970s would be known as “an epoch of consolidation rather than ‘firsts’” (like the “century following Columbus and Magellan”), turned out to be correct. However the advances in sea exploration in the 1970s and beyond, as we know today, were carried out only in more limited ways; even NASA did not build a semi-permanent undersea training facility (for astronauts, ironically) until 2001 (fig. 28).⁴⁸ In reality, the network of undersea cities that the *Bea* was to visit remains unbuilt even today, toward the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century.

McNaspy is clearly concerned with the problems of oceanic pollution and overfishing; human beings are “wasteful of our watery resources,” a point made even clearer by a recent report that the Pacific Ocean now contains an area of plastic refuse the size of “the continental U.S.”⁴⁹ However, following Teilhard de Chardin he notes that human beings “can learn to humanize (‘hominize’ is the more accurate and Teilhardian term) the sea”; by this he means to control certain natural disasters and “use the sea’s riches to feed humankind.” Unfortunately the international system of ecological management that he envisions also failed to materialize, and we find ourselves in this century confronted by an oceanic barrenness caused by chemical pollution and overfishing (for example, the “dead zone” in the Gulf off the coast of Louisiana, caused by agricultural fertilizer runoff from the Mississippi River, grows each year⁵⁰).

However the real prize of sea exploration is peace, in McNaspy’s opinion, as nations (ideally) cooperate to develop its resources, for example, for food and desalinization of water. Once

again, the example of the pioneers of the American West is used to illustrate such cooperative sharing, and “civic peace” centered on the sharing of water resources. The *Bea* would be more than just another research vessel, however; it would be “a seafaring place of worship to all men ... [going] out to men, rather than waiting for men to approach ... [and offering] a mighty symbol of peace to all men ... [it] beckons all men to the blessed vision of peace.”

McNaspy’s concluding remarks on the effects of the submarine *Bea* on religious life are picked up in an essay by another Jesuit theologian, Francis P. Sullivan. His article, “Saline Theology: for a Church at Sea,”⁵¹ presents a rather poetic picture of a church in motion, always responsive to immediate needs when and where they are felt. He reflects on the idea of “an ocean-going church ... the Vatican submerging near Gibraltar or shouldering the river up to Memphis ...,” a kind of mobile center that would offer a corrective to “nationalism” and “gods” of land and war: “if god is at sea, if the church is at sea, if love is at sea, and mercy, and justice, there is no warrant for claiming gods of the land as a back-up blank check to one’s mastering heaven and earth by force.” This Vatican “would thus pervade religious imagination everywhere ... [as] a sign of how the world appears, disappears, reappears, to the process of the soul’s growth,” offering an image of a fluid, tidal, mystical view of reality, “a world so real that it shouts the love of God with every pore.” Sullivan offers a picture of a church that has “rediscover[ed] that symbolic reality does exist,” a church shaped by the symbolic images of water, “a church that lives the meaning of death-rebirth ... daily and everywhere ... [which creates in those on land] some radical, saving attitudes ... a gradual reconstruction of new forms containing a fresh push of life and possessing a power of creativity ... a graphic process of regeneration, re-creation” instead of clinging to old, fixed “land-structures” of architectural forms, theological summas, and canon law. In the end, Sullivan stresses that this “saline theology” is both transformative and eschatological (“one moves from idolatry to sacrament”), bolstered by the daily experience of “rebirth, learned from birth and death,” an alternative experience of the paschal mystery expressed to the world by “the ever dying, ever being reborn Church of the Sea.” For Sullivan, the transformative tension here is seen in the sharp contrast between “the dead forms of land” and the new life offered to them by the “sign, the symbolic density” of “the church at sea”: these renewed land-forms, theological, architectural, canonical, ritual structures are “no longer [as] idols to be adored but as transparencies through which one glimpses the pervading love of God calling man to voyages, to many ports, to many stranger islands.”

The projects situated on the “cutting edge” in a periodical like *Liturgical Arts* are clear evidence of a kind of liturgical imagination that seemed to some outré even at the time. In its “News and Views” column *Commonweal* offered brief coverage of events in American Catholicism that seemed unusual, embarrassing, or otherwise out of the ordinary. In its January 1972 issue other short editorial notes were headed by a full two-column spread on the Moon chapel and the *Bea* submarine, entitled “Liturgical and Science Fiction.” Here the submarine project unveiled in the fortieth anniversary issue of *Liturgical Arts* is judged as “sound[ing] a little nutty,” and the then managing editor, John Deedy, asks “Who’s going to finance this scheme? I don’t know, and *Liturgical Arts* doesn’t say. It’s all one big dream ... [even though the *Liturgical Arts* editorial offers the hope that dreams may be realized]... . Maybe; but I’m not betting on it. I’m not betting either that *Liturgical Art’s* moon chapel will be ‘an approachable reality’ in the 21st century.”⁵² Deedy reflects some of the pessimism of the time as he concludes: “I know people who even want odds *on a 21st century*” (*italics mine*).

Conclusion

This preliminary examination of an admittedly extreme set of imaginative liturgical projects published in the late 1960s and early 1970s in the American journal *Liturgical Arts* shows clearly that a shift has taken place in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries in Rome and in the liturgical imaginations of some (or many) American Catholics. Certainly these authors' ideas "sound[ed] nutty" to some of their contemporaries (as well as to some bloggers of today). However, as far-reaching and perhaps visionary as these liturgical "chapels of the imagination"⁵³ seem today, I would argue that in other ways these earlier imaginations fell short. For example, in terms of technology neither of the *Liturgical Arts* pieces ever envisioned the existence of the Internet or cell phones, devices that make instantaneous communication, opinion-sharing, and information-accessibility a vital reality in this century—ideas that would have seemed also to be the stuff of science fiction at that time (although one of the articles on the submarine *Bea* does focus on the role of televised events during its five-year tour⁵⁴). More surprising is the lack of imagination in the authors' references to and discussions of the human community. They do not use inclusive language—although it was not until 1975 that the National Council of Teachers of English issued inclusive language guidelines, prepared by the Committee on the Status of Women in the Profession.⁵⁵ These liturgical imaginations do not seem to include any awareness of gender issues (the National Organization for Women issued its "Bill of Rights" in 1968⁵⁶), and, to a lesser extent, issues of race and class (for example, the United Farm Workers organized a national and international boycott of California grapes between 1967 and 1970, which was extended to California lettuce in 1970⁵⁷).

It is beyond the scope of this paper to summarize all of the influential events shaping religious and liturgical imagination since 1967 and 1971, although in terms of the history of the Catholic Church the events of the lengthy papacy of John Paul II, with its emphasis on travel and world communication, spring to mind. However, some things are clear. Even though GIRM 2003 shares a common base text with GIRM 1970, the cultural conditions that shaped the imaginative projects of mid-century have changed radically from 1967 to 2007. Our reactions as we view these images may vary from amused (or contemptuous or embarrassed) astonishment, to (for some older readers) a kind of nostalgia, a fond regard for the idealism and impetuosity of youth. Even contemporary observers at the time questioned the practicality of such plans, albeit then within the context of a deeper pessimism concerning the future of religion and society (rooted in the violence and turmoil that marked the years between 1968 and 1971). Today, almost forty years after Vatican II's reform of the liturgy, it is possible at least to begin a more detached assessment of these reforms, rooted (one hopes) not simply in a rejection based on bad experience of inept or careless celebrations, or in the projection of a past "golden age" of liturgical purity, which is based in its turn (at best) on hazy memories and a desire for a so-called simpler time.

Clearly, liturgy is not a static "thing," but an on-going process, shaping and shaped by the experiences of the Christian communities of the past and of the present, and rooted in the human experience of the transcendent dimension in the present and eschatological hope for the future. In his foreword to our *Commentary on the General Instruction* Bishop Donald Trautman, former chairman of the Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy, reiterates the key insight that "Transformation is the goal of all liturgical celebration" and directs that "we must always have before us the ultimate questions: Has the renewed liturgy renewed us? Have the revised rites and liturgical norms led to a transformation of people?"⁵⁸ These seemingly extreme projects

from forty years ago are clearly flawed; both projects envision a church, a liturgy, and a priesthood unafraid to enter the new “spacial locations” of the Moon and the oceans both physically and conceptually, but still chained to other then-unquestioned limitations that show a failure of imagination. However, the editors and authors contributing to these immediately post-conciliar projects showed courage in projecting a vision of a future in which the transformative power of liturgy is an essential and integral component. At the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century, we (in the Roman Catholic Church, at least) are engaged in a wide re-examination of a foundational liturgical document (the GIRM 2003, and the English translation of the new Roman Missal that will eventually embody it). Our liturgical imagination will be reshaped in response. In what ways will we meet this new challenge and opportunity? How will we answer Bishop Trautman’s questions over the next forty years?

ENDNOTES

1. Andrew Greeley, “Catholics and the Fine Arts: An Investigation of the Liturgical Imagination” (1995) <http://www.agreeley.com/articles/finearts.html> (accessed 2/01/09).
2. The cathedral used by Sigebert was the second at Minden, rebuilt in 947 after the first building (constructed in the first years of the ninth century) burned; in turn, Sigebert’s church was itself burned to the ground over Pentecost, 1062, during a visit by the Holy Roman Emperor Henry IV, a casualty (it seems) of a riot between members of the imperial entourage and the town’s inhabitants. See Joanne Pierce, *Sacerdotal Spirituality at Mass: The Prayer Book of Sigebert of Minden (1022-1036)* (Ph.D. diss., University of Notre Dame, 1988) 8-13; this is currently being revised for publication through the Henry Bradshaw Society.
3. Edward Foley, Nathan D. Mitchell, and Joanne M. Pierce, eds., *A Commentary on the General Instruction of the Roman Missal* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2007).
4. *Commentary*, ix. MR stands for *Missale Romanum*, or Roman Missal.
5. There have been three official editions of the IGMR: 1970, 1975, and 2002; small changes in the texts of these official editions account for the slightly different versions of 1972 and 1983 (the 1969 text was a preliminary to the 1970 official edition). See John M. Huels, “A Commentary on the General Instruction of the Roman Missal,” *Worship* 8 (2008) 433-45; his discussion of these different editions is on pp. 434-35.
6. David N. Power and Catherine Vincie, “Theological and Pastoral Reflections,” in *Commentary* (note 3), 59. This and the following notes refer to this volume.
7. Edward Foley, “Chapter 2: The Structure of the Mass, Its Elements and Its Parts,” 148-49.
8. Power and Vincie, 53.
9. See Mark Wedig and Richard Vosko, “Chapter 5: The Arrangement and Furnishings of Churches for the Celebration of the Eucharist,” 359-60.
10. See the discussion by Mark Francis and Gary Neville, “Chapter 9: Adaptations Within the Competence of Bishops and Bishops’ Conferences,” 459-60.
11. Foley, 113.

12. This tendency to elaborate and specify instructions beyond the texts of GIRM 1970 and GIRM 1975 runs throughout GIRM 2003. See, for example, Bruce Morrill and Susan Roll, "Chapter 3: The Duties and Ministries in the Mass," in *Commentary*, 199-222, esp. 205-6, 210-12, 221-22. Morrill and Roll conclude by referring to the "warning against any legalistic ritualism" offered in Vatican II's Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy 11 (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*) of 1963.

13. See, for example, Power and Vincie, 64, 66; Foley, 163.

14. Foley, 163.

15. See the entry for Monday, May 16 (2005):

http://holywhapping.blogspot.com/2005_05_01_archive.html (accessed 2/03/09).

16. *Liturgical Arts* (1931-1972) was a publication of the Liturgical Arts Society, an important American association of liturgists, theologians, artists, and architects during four important decades of the twentieth century. Its archives are held at the University of Notre Dame (<http://archives.nd.edu/findaids/ead/index/LIT001.htm>); for more information see Susan J. White, *Art, Architecture, and Liturgical Reform: The Liturgical Arts Society (1928-1972)* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press/Pueblo, 1990).

17. Another disparaging reference to the issue (November 1967) can be found in an entry (dated 11/14/06) on the conservative Catholic blog entitled "The New Liturgical Movement."

<http://www.newliturgicalmovement.org/2006/11/curiosities-uncovered-on-visit-to-new.html> (accessed 1/18/09).

18. According to a note on the inside front cover the photo of the lunar surface was a "segment of the first telephoto picture taken by the camera of NASA's Lunar Orbiter IV spacecraft" on 11 May 1967.

19. For the text of the Apollo 8 Christmas message, and the famous photo of "Earthrise" over the lunar surface, see: http://www.nasa.gov/multimedia/imagegallery/image_feature_102.html (accessed 1/18/09).

20. See: http://www.foxnews.com/printer_friendly_wires/2007Sep21/0,4675,AldrinapossScriptures,00.html (accessed 1/18/09). For more information on

the note see the auction catalogue description at:

http://historical.ha.com/common/view_item.php?Sale_No=669&Lot_No=25370&type=&ic=rightcolumn-buzznotes-092107#Photo (accessed 1/18/09). For his account see Buzz Aldrin, *Return to Earth* (New York: Random House, 1973) 232-33.

21. "Editorial," *Liturgical Arts* 36 (November 1967) 1.

22. "Ecosynthesis in Architecture (A Moon Installation)." Sims includes a chapel as part of the design of his lunar colony (p. 2). He later published a report on his thesis, originally delivered at a 1963 conference on space exploration: "Architecture of the Lunar Base," *The Proceedings of the Lunar and Planetary Exploration Colloquium* 3 (November, 1963) 73-81. Images from his thesis that later appeared in the 1963 *Proceedings* and in the 1967 issue of *Liturgical Arts* are used here by permission of the author.

23. The chapel was deliberately situated “on top of the life support system ... the regenerative recycling system” (William Sims, private conversation, 1/26/09).

24. The drawing and Asimov’s article appeared in *The New York Times Magazine*, 28 May 1967.

25. To see the original of the image that was reproduced in *Liturgical Arts* in color go to Roy Scarfo’s home page, “Beyond Tomorrow,” and scroll down to the link on the left that is entitled “Advanced Lunar City”:

<http://thefutureinspace.com/blog/index.cfm?section=blog&fuse=singlepost&&author=1&id=26> (accessed 2/05/09). The chapel takes the place of the university building marked no. 9 on the illustration.

26. “The Doman Moon Chapel,” *Liturgical Arts* 36 (November 1967) 3. The following quotations are from this essay.

27. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *Hymn of the Universe* (New York: Harper, 1961) 76, cited in “The Doman Moon Chapel.”

28. This appears to be an error. According to a notice by Sister Gabrielle Corbally, R.S.H.M., in a 1992 alumni newsletter, the statue, originally entitled “Our Lady of the Meadow,” was the work of the Lithuanian sculptor Vytautas Kazamirus Jonynas, commissioned in 1966 by the classes of 1965 and 1966 as a gift to their high school, Sacred Heart of Mary, in Rolling Meadows, Illinois. The statue was renamed “Our Lady of the Moon” in 1969, after the first lunar landing and Moon walk. In 1987 the Sacred Heart School merged with another Catholic high school, St. Viator in Arlington Heights, Illinois, and the statue was moved to that campus in 1992. Most recently, in a brief ceremony in May 2005 it was re-sited outside a new campus building as noted in materials provided by Judith Wampach Amberg, director of alumni relations at St. Viator. Images of the statue in its current location, taken during that ceremony, offer a sense of its height and physical impact; these are reproduced here by permission, with many thanks to Ms. Amberg and to the current president of St. Viator, Rev. Mick Egan, C.S.V.

29. The photo that appeared in *Liturgical Arts* was mistakenly attributed to the photographer Jack Mitchell; according to Mitchell, the actual photographer is unknown (email 2/06/09). The statue is now located at St. Anselm’s Abbey School (Washington, D.C.), where it hangs on the north side of the commons. Many thanks to Mr. Peter Collins, director of publications, and Father Peter Weigand, O.S.B., president of St. Anselm’s Abbey School, both for this information and for providing an image of the sculpture as it is situated today. Many thanks also to the sculptor Robert Cariola, who described the piece and its original context for me, and directed me to its current location.

30. *Liturgical Arts* 36 (1967) 10. The following quotations are from this essay.

31. *Ibid.*, 11-12.

32. *Ibid.*, 12-13.

33. “A most unusual commission: in October, 1967, *Liturgical Arts*, a magazine edited by Maurice Lavanoux, commissioned Johannes Somary, with the blessings of the United States Government (from which the check eventually came), to write a composition to be premiered in

the interdenominational chapel designed to be built in the university **on the moon!** This resulted in 'Two Reflections in Honor of the Moon' for flute, clarinet, handbells, small gong, and high voice (presumably instruments that could be easily transported to the moon). Liturgical Arts printed a photocopy of the original manuscript and the composer received his check with the stipulation that the piece was not to be premiered on Earth before it had been premiered on the moon. The atonal composition patiently awaits its premiere!"

(www.johannessomary.com/compose.html, accessed 2/05/09)

34. Aloysius Pieris, "The Liturgy and the 'New Breed'," *Liturgical Arts* 38 (November 1969) 2-4.

35. Note the implicit connection to the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy 11; see note 12 above.

36. Joseph Champlin, "A New Epoch in the Liturgy," *Liturgical Arts* 38 (May 1970) 82-83.

37. See, for example, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy 34.

38. *Liturgical Arts* 40 (November 1971).

39. According to The Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) at Georgetown University (<http://cara.georgetown.edu/bulletin/index.htm>), the number of seminarians in 1965 was 8,325; in 2008, that number was 3,286. In 2008, again according to CARA, there were 6,165 Catholic elementary schools and 1,213 Catholic high schools; in 1965, according to the historian James Hennesey, there were 10,879 elementary schools and 2,413 high schools. See James Hennesey, S.J., *American Catholics: A History of the Roman Catholic Community in the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983) 323.

40. "Editorial," *Liturgical Arts* 40 (November 1971) 3.

41. Mark Mills, "A 'Batoid' Peace Ship," *ibid.*, 10-16; here 10. His designs are used here with permission.

42. The illustrations of various species of fish included here as a runner along the foot of the page were done early in her career by the well-known American artist Brenda Bettinson as a personal favor for the editor, Maurice Lavanoux, and are reproduced here by permission.

43. Neil Hurley, "Liturgy and Play in Our Expanding Tele-Civilization," *ibid.*, 6-8; here 6.

44. Mills, "A 'Batoid' Peace Ship," 10.

45. *Ibid.*, 11; compare this with Sims's comments on the placement of the chapel in his lunar colony design. The following quotations are from Mills.

46. This drawing of the *Bea* arriving at the port of San Francisco, included as the frontispiece of the issue, was also done by Bettinson (see note 42) as a personal favor to the editor Maurice Lavanoux; it is reproduced here by permission.

47. Clement J. McNaspy, "Man, the Sea, and Peace," *Liturgical Arts* 40 (November 1971) 4-6; here 4.

48. In the NASA Extreme Environment Mission Operations (NEEMO) program, NASA operates an

underwater “habitat” named *Aquarius* for the purpose of training astronauts for longer-term space missions, e.g., to the International Space Station.

49. See “Why Trashing the Oceans is More Dangerous Than We Imagined,” in *Popular Science* (popsci.com; posted 4/01/08): (<http://74.125.47.132/search?q=cache:3hu09q8nur0J:www.popsci.com/taxonomy/term/29416/all+ocean+plastic+refuse+size+north+america&hl=en&ct=clnk&cd=8&gl=us>).

50. “The Gulf’s Growing ‘Dead Zone,’” *Time* (June 17, 2008): (<http://www.time.com/time/nation/article/0,8599,1815305,00.html>).

51. Francis P. Sullivan, “Saline Theology: For a Church at Sea,” *Liturgical Arts* 40 (1971) 9, 16.

52. “Liturgical and Science Fiction,” *Commonweal* (January, 1972) 389.

53. With a nod to Carl Sagan and his “spaceship of the imagination” in his PBS program *Cosmos: A Personal Voyage* (1980).

54. In an article by Neil Hurley, another Jesuit author; see note 34.

55. See NCTE’s “Guidelines for Gender-Fair Use of Language”: (<http://www.ncte.org/positions/statements/genderfairuseoflang>).

56. For the original text, see: <http://coursesa.matrix.msu.edu/~hst203/documents/nowrights.html>.

57. For a chronology, see the United Farm Workers’ “History” page: http://www.ufw.org/_page.php?menu=research&inc=_page.php?menu=research&inc=history/01.html.

58. *Commentary* (note 3) viii.

FIGURES (on the accompanying cd)

Figure 1: *Berlin, Ms. Germ. Qu. 42*: Ivory cover, Sigebert of Minden (center) (Berlin, Deutsche Staatsbibliothek, Preussischer Kulturbesitz)

Figure 2: Minden Gospel lectionary, *Ms. Theol. Lat. Qu. 3*, f. 3v (beginning of book of Matthew; Berlin, Deutsche Staatsbibliothek, Preussischer Kulturbesitz)

Figure 3: Minden Prayer Book, *Herzog August Bibliothek, Cod. Helmst. 1151*, f. 32v: Gloria initial (Herzog August Bibliothek, Wolfenbüttel, Germany)

Figure 4: Minden Prayer Book, *Herzog August Bibliothek, Cod. Helmst 1151*, f. 57v: Creed text

Figure 5: Minden Cathedral (present)

Figure 6: Earthrise, December 24, 1968

Figure 7: Photograph of Buzz Aldrin on the lunar surface, July 20, 1969

Figure 8: Sims Lunar Colony, Overview and Legend

Figure 9: Sims Lunar Chapel (sections A-A and C-C, no. 29)

Figure 10: Doman Moon Chapel (vertical exterior)

Figure 11: Doman Moon Chapel, interior (vertical cutaway)

Figure 12: Doman Moon Chapel, upper level (residence and meeting level)

Figure 13: Doman Moon Chapel, lower level (chapel)

Figure 14: “Our Lady of the Moon” photo, *Liturgical Arts* 1967 (sculptor, Vytautus Kazamirus Jonynas; photographer unknown)

Figure 15: “Our Lady of the Moon” (originally “Our Lady of the Meadow”), before being re-sited, May 2005; note the plaque at its foot

Figure 16: “Our Lady of the Moon,” at the re-siting ceremony, May 2005

Figure 17: Corpus for a crucifix for the Moon chapel, *Liturgical Arts* 1967 (artist, Robert Cariola, photographer, Marge Kane)

Figure 18: Cariola’s Corpus sculpture at St. Anselm’s Abbey School, 2009 (photographer unknown)

Figure 19: Somary, “Two Reflections in Honor of the Moon” (manuscript score, *Liturgical Arts*, 1967)

Figure 20: Map for the projected voyage of the *Bea* (by Joseph P. Ascherl)

Figure 21: The submarine *Bea* (top view), with artist’s rendition of fish species at foot of pages (Brenda Bettinson)

Figure 22: Same image, *Bea* alone, with center fold shadow removed

Figure 23: The submarine *Bea* (side views) with text

Figure 24: *Bea*, side view (top of Figure 21), with center fold shadow minimized

Figure 25: *Bea*, center section (bottom of Figure 21), with center fold shadow minimized; note the position of the altar (2, top), over the atomic reactor (3, bottom)

Figure 26: Artist’s rendition of the submarine *Bea* in San Francisco harbor (Brenda Bettinson)

Figure 27: Illustration that appeared on the back cover of the *Bea* issue (1971); with many thanks to the artist, Brenda Bettinson

Figure 28: *Aquarius* undersea habitat (NASA)

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Catholic imagination refers to the Catholic viewpoint that God is present in the whole creation and in human beings, as seen in its sacramental system whereby material things and human beings are channels and sources of God's grace. This terminology was popularized by the Roman Catholic priest Andrew Greeley who wrote: The central symbol (of religion) is God. One's "picture" of God is in fact a metaphorical narrative of God's relationship with the world and the self as part of the world. ...The