

# The Cathedral and Worship

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If we are to avoid merely talking about worship in general, we shall have to take a good many other things for granted and concentrate on the *peculiar* role of cathedral worship. I assume that cathedrals do have a special liturgical function, differing from that of parish churches and chapels; and I shall try to focus on the special characteristics of that function.

Secondly, I assume that we are discussing worship in the context of 'indigenous patterns'. 'Indigenisation' has now been replaced by the W.C.C. pundits by the longer and more impressive word 'Contextualisation', by which is meant a whole complex of relationships and attitudes between the worshipping community and the wider social, cultural and political *milieu*. It is an important change of emphasis. 'Indigenisation' is now regarded as implying a slightly patronising attitude, and suggests that something is injected *into* an otherwise alien culture: 'Contextualisation' suggests that something grows *out of* a culture of which it is already a part. I doubt if it is any longer desirable to speak glibly about 'Indianisation of worship'. Each worshipping group of Christians in India has its own context, and its own symbols of worship must develop from within the context. The context of St Paul's Cathedral, Calcutta, is very different to that of St Bartholomew's Cathedral, Barrackpore, only fifteen miles away; and it is equally different to that of the Sacred Heart Cathedral, only two miles away. Each has a vital liturgical function for the particular grouping of Christians who look to it as a 'mother-church'. But gone are the days when we could assume that by filling each of them with oil-lamps and a vaguely suggestive Bengali *décor*, we had somehow 'Indianised' them. It is all much more complex than that; and I must therefore ask you mentally to transpose anything which I have to say into symbols and concepts which are instinctively *yours*. I shall stick to general principles, thankfully aware that I am perhaps dodging one of the central issues. Just how basic this question of contextual symbols is, was brought home to me recently when a group of theological students burst into fits of giggles when confronted with a reproduction of the great 'Christ in Majesty' at Coventry; but the same students, when asked what should be symbolised in a cathedral, unhesitatingly replied, 'The Lordship of Christ'.

Thirdly, I assume that we are discussing public or corporate worship. Yet we know that cathedrals are used by all kinds of smaller groups, and by individuals or families who avail themselves of a

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particular pastoral ministry exercised in a cathedral. Cathedrals are used for 'diocesan occasions' (this is one of their primary justifications) and they are also the natural place for 'civic' services of various kinds, where the majority of worshippers may actually be non-Christians who are there by invitation (Memorial Services and National Occasions, even some weddings). This diversity makes it difficult to generalise about the liturgical function of a cathedral. It also makes it extremely difficult to design a cathedral: the kind of building which may cater magnificently for a big diocesan service once a year may be the very worst kind of building for the cathedral family to worship in every Sunday morning.

There are a number of other problems which are peculiar to cathedrals, and which affect their liturgical function. One is the sociological composition of the normal worshipping group. Unlike most parish churches, the cathedral congregation (at least in the cities) is usually diverse and 'gathered', reflecting a wide range of cultural background, and very often including a large number of waifs and strays who for linguistic or social reasons do not fit easily into any parish set-up. The cathedral family in Calcutta, for example, is an all-India family, and it is also surprisingly international. For one reason or another, most of its members would not feel entirely at home in any of the surrounding parish churches. Such a congregation very often comes to regard itself as an *élite*, which is regrettable. It also inevitably receives a large influx of visitors and 'casual' worshippers, not to mention non-Christians who find themselves more easily accepted—or at least unnoticed—than they would in a more cohesive and monochrome parish church. This provides pastoral opportunities, and the possibility of experiment; but it also raises problems which the parish church does not have to face. There is a danger that in trying to cater for the diversity of its worshippers, cathedrals fail to cater adequately for anyone at all in depth. Visitors may go away impressed, while the 'regulars' feel that something is lacking; yet without the 'regulars' there can be no continuity and cohesion.

Another major problem, felt more acutely in our cathedrals than in the parish churches, is the architectural legacy of history. Many of the existing C.N.I. and C.S.I. cathedrals were bequeathed not just by the British Raj, but by the Anglican Raj; or in the case of our Roman Catholic friends, at least reflect attitudes and concepts which are an embarrassment today. Cathedrals were usually intended to be conspicuous, and to make spiritual, temporal and civic claims which the Christian community today repudiate. However much we may transform the interiors, and patterns of worship, it is the exterior which impinges on the majority of the population; and what is communicated, consciously or subliminally, by even the choicest specimen of 18th century neo-classical, or Victorian gothic or Portuguese baroque, is regrettable to say the least. As we shall see later, the missiological dimension of cathedral worship is crucial, but it is often negated by the structure in which it is embodied.

There are subsidiary architectural problems. Being built on a more ample scale than parish churches, it is correspondingly more

difficult to adapt the interior of cathedrals to modern notions of liturgical propriety. Altars cannot be brought forward to a central position without leaving the choir behind, and upsetting the whole architectural meaning of the building. Vast ranks of heavy pews, in which our ancestors slumbered or 'heard Mass', cannot easily be redistributed to comply with a modern understanding of the nature of the gathered Body of Christ focused upon the central action of the Eucharist. Stained glass windows, arches, recesses, organ-fronts, pillars and reredoses, carefully and skilfully designed to impart a sense of the numinous, or to divide clergy from laity, or to enhance a grand triumphalist effect, cannot just be reshuffled like a pack of cards. We are prisoners of a liturgical past, and its architecture.

Finally, it was often assumed by those from whom we have inherited our cathedrals, that there would always be an adequate staff of clergy, ample (paid) choirs, and an ample congregation to fill the pews. None of these assumptions are any longer true, and their absence further emphasises the sense of liturgical alienation: a Christian remnant camping out in ludicrously inappropriate surroundings, conscious of a departed splendour, and listening wistfully to the last low whispers of a dying liturgical tradition.

You can no doubt think of many other practical problems. But let us not be defeatist! Most handicaps can be surmounted and turned into opportunities. Recently the vast acres of nave in Calcutta cathedral were put to unexpected use when a group of theological students and staff staged a Calcutta street scene, complete with bicycles, motor-scooter, beggars and a lady of easy virtue. Never had they enjoyed an act of worship more; and it was the Vicar who had to cope with the outraged protests of his regular congregation. Let us turn from the negative to the positive angle.

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Worship is the reflection and articulation of the life, faith and calling of the People of God, the mystical Body which Christ is ever forming and re-forming about Himself in history. It is localised ('contextualised') yet has a universal and eternal dimension. At the same time, it is in worship that God confronts and enables us; and through us, the world. A cathedral, like any place of worship, should be a place of liturgical celebration of what God is accomplishing in and through His people in the world; and it should also be the place where (in struggle and bewilderment yet with eager expectation) His people try to articulate, in prayer and praise and celebration, what they are discovering themselves to be called to be. It should be a place where this vision, dimly grasped, should be pondered upon and ever more sharply defined and communicated in liturgical action and creative symbols, and meaningful cultural patterns.

No doubt we shall hear many exciting and radical statements about new cathedral-based forms of witness and service, involvement and participation. These will help to clarify the nature and calling of a cathedral congregation, and will shed light on the function of the buildings and the people centred upon them. Quite simply, the

worship of the cathedral *should celebrate all that*; and in celebrating it before God, it will find that its worship becomes a focus and a locus of the divine love, reproof, judgement and acceptance.

Albert van den Heuvel, some years ago, ventured a definition of a cathedral under no less than fourteen heads:<sup>1</sup>

- A sign of pro-existence.
- A symbol of diversity in unity.
- A Pentecostal laboratory.
- A theatre of basic drama.
- A temple of dialogue.
- A centre of creativity.
- An academy of committed information.
- A clinic for public exorcism.
- An international exchange.
- A broadcasting station for the voice of the poor.
- A tower of reconciliation.
- A motel for pilgrims.
- A house of vicarious feasts.
- The hut of the Shepherd.

The liturgical function of a cathedral, in Calcutta or Madras as much as in Coventry or Chicago, *is to celebrate all that*. Most of van den Heuvel's points might be true of any place of Christian worship, and it is these functions which justify the localisation of worship in time and place. Where the cathedral differs from the parish church is that it is the focus for the celebration of the wider Christian group which we call the diocese; and it is the place where (in worship as much as in any other respect) the local church meets the universal church. All this is represented in the ancient liturgical function of the bishop. Our reflections on cathedral worship have led us back to that uncomfortable piece of liturgical furniture, the bishop's 'cathedra' or seat, which stands beside the table in the 'Shepherd's Hut'.

I would like to take you back, for a moment, to the latter part of the 4th century, though we need not leave the soil of Asia. St John Chrysostom has left a description of the throbbing and pulsating liturgical life of the great cathedral church of the city of Antioch.<sup>2</sup> It is all unashamedly magnificent and alive: the art, architecture, music, colour, vestments, icons, incense, the great candelabra, the soaring singing, and the crowds of rich and poor, beggars and monks, theologians and shopkeepers, all mixed up together in an overwhelming liturgical celebration of the life of a great cosmopolitan Christian city. Nominally Christian, anyway, and notoriously wicked. Over it all presides the bishop, 'like the captain of a great ship', exhorting the sailors (the clergy) and rowers (the laity), teaching the catechumens while the deacons organise the children and stop the women from

<sup>1</sup> M. S. Stancliffe, 'The Cathedral' *Theology*, Vol. LXXIII, Feb. 1970, p. 52.

<sup>2</sup> F. E. Brightman, *Liturgies Eastern and Western*; Oxford, 1896, pp. 475ff. Cf. also 'Apostolic Constitutions', Bk. II (*ibid.*, pp. 28, 29.)

chattering. Crowds come and go, washing at the marble fountain at the porch, kissing the threshold of the great doors, and venerating the icons. Choirs compete, and squads of serving-boys and acolytes form up in processions and perform the intricacies of the liturgy. No doubt there were many more modest 'parish churches'; but there is no doubt that here we are at the heart of the diocese, where the liturgical life of the city found its focus.

It was in the same city, two hundred and fifty years earlier, in the midst of persecution and before the conversion of Constantine had made Christianity public and respectable, that St Ignatius enunciated the same liturgical principle, that at the heart of the liturgical life of the diocese is the bishop's cathedra:<sup>3</sup>

Let that Eucharist be considered valid which is under the bishop or him to whom he commits it. Wherever the bishop appears, there let the people be, even as wherever Christ Jesus is, there is the Catholic church. It is not lawful apart from the bishop either to baptize, or to hold an agapé.

It is not a very far cry back from Ignatius to the groups of believers in Ephesus and Corinth and Philippi and Rome, and Antioch itself, where the Lord's Supper was the focal bond of unity, presided over by the 'President of the Brethren'. No magnificent church or liturgy; but still the cathedra.

Quoting directly from Ignatius, the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* of the Second Vatican Council, one of the crucial documents for the development of the modern Liturgical Movement, re-emphasised in 1963 the centrality of the 'Bishop's Liturgy' in the liturgical life of the Church:<sup>4</sup>

The bishop is to be considered the high priest of his flock. In a certain sense it is from him that the faithful who are under his care derive and maintain their life in Christ. Therefore all should hold in very high esteem the liturgical life of the diocese which centers round the bishop, especially in his cathedral church. Let them be persuaded that the Church reveals herself most clearly when a full complement of God's holy people, united in prayer. . . exercise a thorough and active participation at the very altar where the bishop presides in the company of his priests and other assistants.

The same point was made, dramatically, in the city of Rome for many centuries, when a small particle from the consecrated bread at the bishop's Mass was taken round and distributed to the parish churches.

I emphasise this because I believe it gives a valuable historical clue to the liturgical function of the cathedral as 'mother-church' of the diocese. The daily worship in the cathedral, whether it be large and urban or humble and rural, should surely serve as a reminder to

<sup>3</sup> Ignatius, 'To the Smyrnaeans', VIII, 1-2.

<sup>4</sup> *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, Dec. 4, 1963, Ssc. 41.

the diocese as a whole that it is one in Christ, called to 'be the Church' in a particular area of India, yet linked to every other grouping of Christians the world over.

Obviously this can be felt as a reality more strongly in a small diocese, where the majority of church members have access to the central place of worship at least occasionally, for special gatherings of one sort or another (diocesan councils, ordinations, confirmations etc.). It will certainly *not* be experienced if the cathedral is not also a place where there is experiment, stimulation and flexibility. Ideally, the worship in the cathedral should not only embody the local and 'domestic' concerns of the diocesan family, but also offer more than a hint of a wider, more objective, more universal and more unceasing worship. This certainly was regarded as the vocation of the medieval cathedrals in the West, where the worship was literally more or less 'unceasing', and was offered not in competition with the parish churches, but as a summing-up and focusing of the total 'liturgy' of the diocese.

It is a comforting reflection for many clergy and lay people, in their separation and isolation, that somewhere at the heart of the diocese there is a daily eucharist, and that regular prayer is being made *for* the parishes and institutions to which they belong. In the situation of today it is unlikely that the ancient ideal of an unceasing round of cathedral worship can, or should, be maintained in a literal sense. Yet surely the central House of worship should be a place where Christians and non-Christians may reasonably expect to find liturgical activity going on, on weekdays as well as Sundays, at least at the beginning and end of the day: as indeed they should—but probably won't—in any parish church? Perhaps you will permit me to quote, here in India, the blunt affirmation of the Dean of Winchester Cathedral, that 'the *primary* function of a cathedral is to offer with unceasing regularity worship on behalf of all God's creatures'<sup>5</sup>

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The real fun begins when we ask the question, 'What kind of worship?' It would be impertinent for me to offer specific suggestions, but perhaps you will allow me to suggest certain general principles, and to fly one or two kites.

The 'Liturgical Movement' which has so dramatically cut across denominational and confessional boundaries in recent decades, has helped the Churches to re-discover three important dimensions of worship, and I believe that each of them can be related very specifically to the liturgical function of cathedrals, in India as much as anywhere else.

*Worship must be Pastoral.* It must seek to express the total experience and total personality of the worshipper as a child of God; and at the same time become a channel for the gifts which Christ supplies to heal and restore and build up the individual. And because worship means this for the individual, it must mean this still

<sup>5</sup> M. S. Stancliffe, *op. cit.*, p. 53.

more for the community. Corporate worship is the place where broken relationships are transcended, and where our insufficiency and incapacity are confronted by the sufficiency of God and the enabling and healing power of His Holy Spirit. And because worship means this for the Christian community, it is a focus for something which is beginning to happen to the 'secular city' around it. The W.C.C. 1968 Uppsala Report on Worship put this with startling emphasis, in curiously mythological and powerful language:<sup>6</sup>

In its worship as surely as in its witness in the world, the Church is called to participate fully in Jesus Christ's reconciling work among men. In worship we enter God's battle against the demonic forces of this world which alienate man from his creator and his fellowmen, which imprison him in narrow nationalism or arrogant sectarianism, which attack his life through racism or class division, war or oppression, famine or disease, poverty or wealth, and which drive him to cynicism, guilt and despair. When we worship, God shows us that in this battle the final victory belongs to Jesus Christ.

And because worship is 'Pastoral', it stands to reason that it must seek expression in forms and symbols which communicate meaningfully, and which are not alien to the life and situation and aspirations of the worshippers. It is here that worship again has a transforming and transfiguring dimension far beyond the little group of men and women gathered in Christ's name in a particular building. To quote Uppsala again:<sup>7</sup>

Christian worship should be related to the cultures of the world. It should help a person to be truly Christian and truly a man of his own culture. It should take the risk of indigenisation. If the questions raised can be met creatively without compromising the Christian faith, our worship will have a richer meaning.

When the first draft of this Report was considered at Montreal in 1963, this section went on, magnificently:<sup>8</sup>

In this way Christian worship not only takes root in the culture, *but converts it to Christ* and so shares in the reconciliation of the whole creation to God. We ought not to be so much concerned with adapting worship to the local culture that we forget that *the culture itself is to be transformed*. Indigenization, we believe, is more nearly conversion than accommodation.

It is sad that between 1963 and 1968, someone's nerve failed, and these sentences dropped out.

<sup>6</sup> *The Uppsala 1968 Report*, Ed. Norman Goodall, W.C.C., Geneva 1968, p. 79.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 80.

<sup>8</sup> H. C. Hageman, 'The Coming of Age of the Liturgical Movement', *Studia Liturgica*, Vol. II, No. 4, p. 263.

*Worship must be Theological.* In other words, Christian worship articulates the actual experienced and living faith of the worshippers, and reflects before God and the world what the Christian community in a given context truly understands itself to be, and what it believes God to have done. In worship, the community not only confronts the reality of God in a very special way, but at the same time makes public affirmations about God. Symbols (verbal, visual, audial) are used to point to and disclose the depths of reality within and beyond the assembled worshippers; and also to celebrate and re-enact and re-experience the historical drama of God's gracious approach to humanity in His 'saving acts'. It stands to reason that the community must constantly test its forms of worship, its received liturgical texts, and all its acquired lumber of symbolism, against its own shared experience of this reality. While the community has the duty to conserve and transmit the no less real experience of the past, it equally has the duty to purge and prune and re-think and re-state in its own context. In the Orthodox tradition, the sacred Liturgy has always been regarded as the place where 'Theology' (God-talk) achieves its highest and most penetrating expression. At a time when both Protestant and Catholic theologians seem to speak diffidently and with confusion, it seems to me to be a hopeful and rather significant fact that some of the most exciting 'Theology' today is being done not, as one might expect, by the professional theologians, but by those who have been gripped and stimulated by the Liturgical Movement. It is perhaps they who have experienced most vividly the new insights (actually, very ancient insights) into what it means to be a part of the worshipping Body of Christ in a secular world. Whereas in the past the liturgists have limped along behind the theologians, today it is the liturgists who seem to be out in front. Let us hope that in our cathedrals they will be given every opportunity and encouragement. Liturgy is a valid area of theological formulation; and is entitled to draw upon all the resources of art, architecture, music and poetry to put its vision across.

*Worship must be Missiological.* It is through worship that the Good News of the Kingdom is proclaimed and celebrated. To quote Vatican II again:<sup>9</sup>

The liturgy is the outstanding means . . . by which the faithful can express in their lives and manifest to others, the mystery of Christ and the real nature of the true Church . . . Liturgy marvellously fortifies the faithful in their capacity to preach Christ. To outsiders the liturgy thereby reveals the Church as a sign raised above the nations.

Once again, it surely goes without saying that no effort should be spared to ensure that what we Christians do inside our cathedrals or churches, should communicate with and attract those outside. It can do this only if it is seen to be something *totally meaningful to us*. I suspect that what has most effect, as a witness to others, is not necessarily

<sup>9</sup> *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, Sec. 2.*



the 'special service', cunningly designed to bait the hook and catch the unwary passer-by, but forms of worship which are seen to absorb and transfigure us Christians, and which send us out into the street radiant and reconciled. But at least we should take the trouble (a matter primarily of self-criticism) to ensure that our worship is expressed under forms and symbols and images which really do captivate the imagination and 'speak' to the world around us. Much 'modern' worship, both Protestant and Catholic, strikes me as lacking in poetry and daring mental imagery: perhaps here as in other things we have much to learn from the Orthodox tradition, which at least can never be accused of banality.

Yet it is a hopeful sign that the great 20th century rediscovery that liturgy is a function of 'the-Church-in-the-world', rather than 'the-Church-at-worship' has challenged all inherited patterns of worship, and has made Christians more sensitive to the hopes, fears and aspirations of the society around them. Perhaps to be more truly 'missiological' in its worship, the Church needs to cultivate the humility to *listen*, before we even try to offer up what we hear, or overhear, as our own prayer.



The three dimensions of worship of which I have spoken, *Pastoral, Theological, Missiological*, are not necessarily peculiar to cathedral worship. Let me therefore in conclusion try to sketch out some ways in which our cathedrals may express them in a particular way.

### **1. A cathedral should be a place of liturgical initiative**

In some ways this is made easier by the peculiar make-up of the average cathedral congregation. But whether this is so or not, at the centre of the diocesan family life there is need of what van den Heuvel called a 'Pentecostal laboratory'—a place where the Spirit is allowed to vouchsafe new insights and guide us into new paths of worship. This may take the form of consciously bringing together and experimenting with different traditions and patterns of worship (we are trying to do this in the C.N.I. diocese of Calcutta): and it may take the form of deliberately 'putting on' (with adequate explanation before and evaluation afterwards) totally unfamiliar forms of worship. I vividly recall the impact made in a Scottish cathedral when a group of Orthodox Christians were allowed to 'put on' the full Orthodox Vespers; and I also remember, gratefully, participating for the first time in the C.S.I. Liturgy in an English cathedral. Now that the C.N.I. has its own Order for the Lord's Supper, I would hope that every diocese will invite clergy and laity to participate in a central celebration of the new rite, performed with the utmost care and forethought. But it is essential that such acts of worship should be accompanied by careful explanation and discussion by informed study-groups. The aim should be to enrich, not merely to titillate.

### **2. A cathedral should be a place of liturgical inspiration**

Historically, one of the functions of a cathedral has been to set and maintain the very highest possible standards for the conduct of

worship. Vast amounts of money have been spent, in the West, on training choirs, because without them a musical tradition quickly perishes. That is not possible in India, and anyway it may be that the Indian tradition of church music can be better served by a musically literate congregation. Yet I do seriously raise the question of how much money a diocese is prepared to budget for the maintenance of the highest standard of worship in its mother-church. I suspect that in many dioceses this is a very *low* priority; and we must be realistic about this. But it does not require any money at all to see that servers and assistants are properly trained, that the liturgy, however simple and unassuming it may be, is carefully and immaculately offered week by week, and that articles of liturgical use receive adequate attention with Sunlight Soap and Brasso. Informality and spontaneity are the keynotes of the Liturgical Movement: but they should not be an excuse for slipshod sloppy ways. These things are not an end in themselves, and I am not recommending fussiness; but I am convinced that one of the liturgical functions of a cathedral is to set a standard for the diocese as a whole.

### **3. A cathedral should be a place of the fullest liturgical celebration**

Once again let me protect myself by stressing that I am not appealing for 'elaboration' for its own sake. Cathedral worship may be utterly simple and straight-forward. Yet the sheer size of some inherited cathedrals does provide scope for imaginative use of *space* in worship. A procession, or a dance or a drama which might seem ludicrously inappropriate in a parish church, may be the most natural and appropriate means for making a liturgical point in a cathedral, once we can get away from the misconception that a cathedral is only a 'large church' for holding 'large services' in. Again, because of acoustical problems, it may be that cathedrals are less suitable than parish churches for oral communication, at least from the pulpit. Yet one does not have to stand in a pulpit to communicate the Gospel, and here the visual arts can help us; why not films? why not drama? why not break the evening congregation up into groups to *do* things and *discuss* things? There is plenty of room! Or again, a cathedral is an extremely bad place in which to rattle off lengthy strings of prayers. Yet prayers may be offered very effectively and even startlingly from concealed positions all round the building. Have we the imagination to make maximum use of even the faults and defects of our cathedral buildings, and to make them places for the fullest and richest liturgical celebration?

### **4. A cathedral should be a place of liturgical articulation**

Most of our cathedrals stand at a cultural meeting-point, the social economic and political crossroads of the area which they serve; and hence the cathedral worship has a unique opportunity to reflect and confront the manifold movements and cross-currents of the area. This may take the form of 'Special Services', designed to raise and articulate specific issues (I can think back to notably effective acts of

worship in Calcutta on such themes as 'Voices of the City', the confrontation of labour and management, the plight of the old and the lonely, pavement-dwellers and refugees, the aspirations of the unemployed, etc.). But a cathedral also has the opportunity of reflecting in its symbolism all the diverse sides of the life around it, so that even the casual or hostile visitor may catch a glimpse of the Christian belief in the Lordship of Christ in human affairs, and the concern of the Christian community for even the most unsuspected aspects of contemporary society. If I may again draw upon the iconography of the cathedral most familiar to me, the visitor to St Paul's cathedral, Calcutta, is confronted by the very challenging paintings of a young Bengali artist. He will see Christ in agony in a Gethsemane formed by the familiar Calcutta skyline; he will see the Pentecost experience in the surprising context of a Calcutta bustee; and he will see the Incarnation of the Son of God depicted shatteringly in the heart of the all-too-familiar pavement world of beggars and dispossessed and alienated men and women. The art of a cathedral is surely a valid part of its worship. Money is required but a Cathedral should be a patron of artists, who must live.

##### **5. A cathedral should be a place of liturgical availability**

By this I mean a place where Christians and non-Christians alike can find whatever it is that they are looking for: quiet, solitude, a sense of the 'beyond' in the midst of human struggle, counsel, security, acceptance. It is not every casual visitor who wants to be slapped on the back and given a cup of tea,—though some may. There should be enough uncluttered space available to house the casualities of the office rush and the overcrowded transport system and the lack of privacy: at least in the cities. These things are a luxury, and perhaps cathedrals should think seriously before they dispose of vacant land or cram in some extra use of available space. Because the Cathedral is usually central and conspicuous, it attracts such people; and even when there is no 'service' in progress, they should be helped to feel that they have reached a haven of peace, a pool of spirituality, a place of surrender. It may be that they are also looking for some specific pastoral ministry; and it is to be hoped that the cathedral clergy are not *all* out doing good works so that none of them is left behind to mind the shop. (Before I am told that there is a shortage of cathedral clergy, let me suggest that this too may be a new priority for the diocese, instead of deploying its available manpower in redundant churches which should be closed down anyway.) Be that as it may, if a cathedral really is a place of 'Christian celebration' in the fullest possible sense, then something of that healing and transforming atmosphere will surely rub off on those who seek it. *But it will certainly not do so if we keep our cathedrals bolted and barred, shut up against the invasion of the swarming teeming humanity outside.* The Cathedral and its worship are our humble gift to our fellow men: let us trust that God will make the gift more worthy of them.