



# The Shape of Worship

Going Deeper Together

Dean's Forum #27  
7 March 2021



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## Exploring the Shape of our Worship

- Why rituals matter
- Culture and spirit
- Ancient shapes
- Eucharistic Rite

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## Ritual Matters

- Ritual enriches the everyday
- Identifies points of significance
- Reinforces things that matter to us
- May have developed from practical needs long ago
- But now have a deep significance
- Lighting a candle

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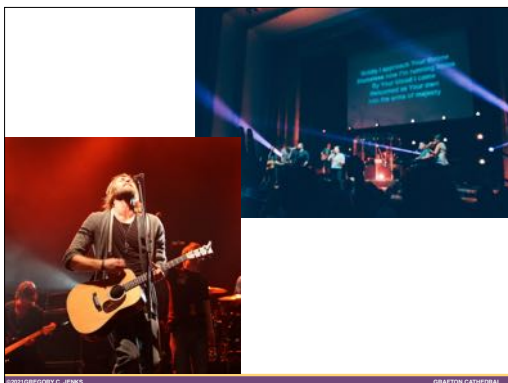
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- Rituals can become stale
- Participants may not 'appreciate' them
- As time passes they cease to function
- May not resonate in different cultural contexts
- But they remain part of public & private life
- Crown - Parliament - Courts - Church - Military - Home

## Culture and Spirit

- Reflect on interaction of culture and faith
- Religion and politics always mix
- Our sense of the sacred is embedded in culture
- A fish may not see the water
- We may not see the cultural elements of our worship
- We may be offended by new cultural forms in worship



## The baby and the bathwater

The principles are reasonably clear:

- Humans are creatures of ritual and pattern
- Some rituals and symbols are 'primal'
- Others are transitional
- Some are retained beyond their usefulness
- Some retain their power to draw us deeper
- All benefit from intentionality
- How to keep the baby while discarding the bath water?

## Primary rituals (symbols)

- Fire
- Light / Dark
- Water
- Bread & Wine
- Oil
- Sacred sites
- Sacred people
- Sacred times



## Formative influences

- Ancient Jewish & pagan temples
- Jewish synagogue practices
- Home religious practices
- KOLLEGIA: voluntary religious associations
- Underground religious communities
- BASILIKA: the 'town hall' as a venue for worship
- Monasteries and Cathedrals

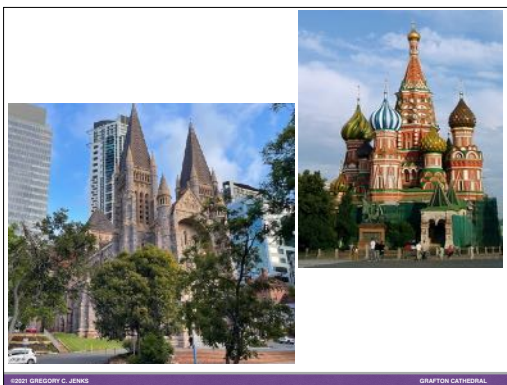
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## The Shape of our Churches

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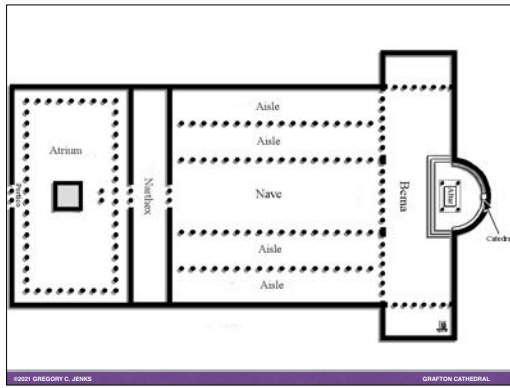
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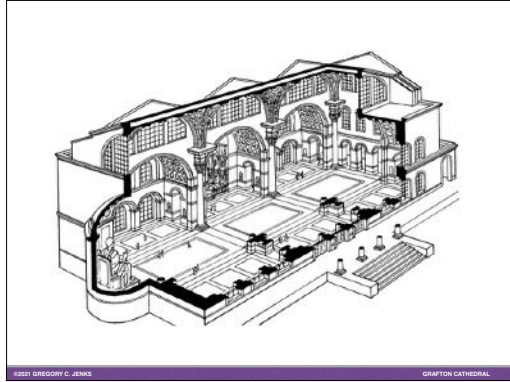
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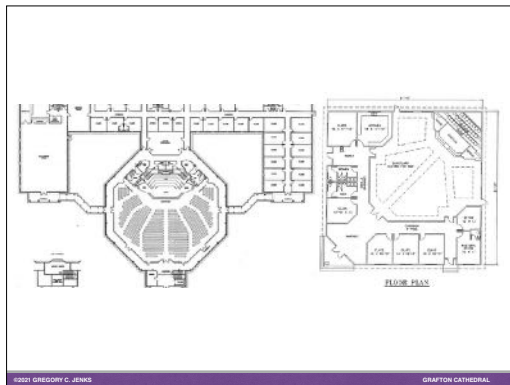
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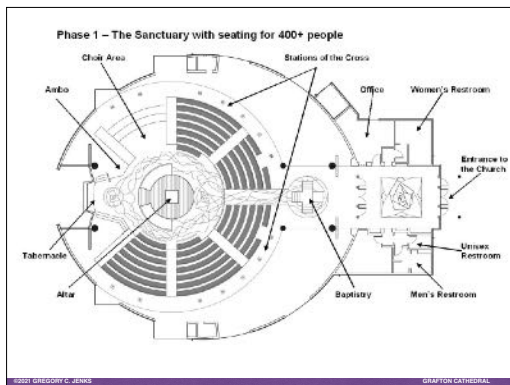
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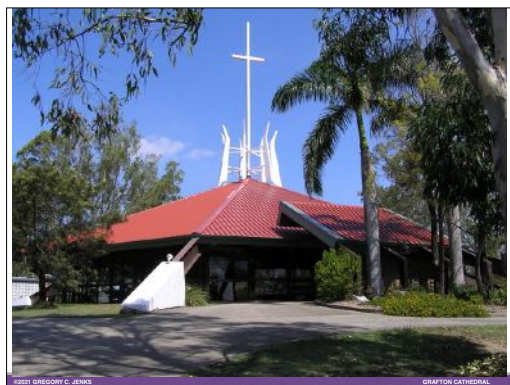
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## The Shape of our Liturgy

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### Beware the assumptions

Especially the unspoken ones

- Most prominent sacred object?
- Catholic/Orthodox - Altar
- Protestant - Pulpit
- Methodist - Organ
- Baptist/Churches of Christ - Baptistry
- Pentecostal - Stage

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### Basic liturgical shape

- Gathering
- Scripture
- Teaching
- Prayer
- Sacramental Action
- Dispersal

Baptising  
Confirming  
Holy Communion  
Reconciliation  
Holy Unction  
Marriage  
Ordination

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### The shape of the Eucharist

- GATHERING RITE
- LITURGY OF THE WORD
- PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL
- LITURGY OF THE TABLE
- BLESSING & DISMISSAL

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## The shape of the Eucharist

### GATHERING RITE

- Entrance of the Choir & Clergy
- Greetings & Call to Worship
- Reconciliation
- Song of Praise
- Collect (Prayer of the Day)

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## The shape of the Eucharist

### LITURGY OF THE WORD

- First Reading (usually from Old Testament)
- Canticle or Psalm in response
- Second Reading (from the Apostles)
- Gospel
- Sermon
- Creed

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## The shape of the Eucharist

### PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

- Prayers for the world and the church
- Prayers for special local needs
- Recognition of ministry
- Reconciliation, if not done earlier
- The Pax

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## The shape of the Eucharist

### LITURGY OF THE TABLE

- Pax
- Offertory
- Great Thanksgiving Prayer
- Lord's Prayer
- Anthems (Agnus dei, etc)
- Holy Communion
- Post-Communion Prayers

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## The shape of the Eucharist

### SENT FORTH ON MISSION

- Notices
- Blessing
- Dismissal
- Departure of the Choir & Clergy

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## Decorating our liturgy

- The basic shape or structure is the same
- But seasonal variations
- Liturgical seasons and holy days
- Readings from the lectionary cycle
- Music from the repertoire of hymns old and new
- Intros and anthems from repertoire of Choir
- Sermons by the assigned preacher of the day

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## Hearts and lips together

- What matters most
- Not the ritual
- Not the eloquence of the preacher
- Not the skill of the choir and musicians
- But the hearts of the participants

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## The choristers' prayer

Bless, O Lord, us thy servants,  
who minister in thy temple.  
Grant that what we sing with our lips,  
we may believe in our hearts,  
and what we believe in our hearts,  
we may show forth in our lives.  
Through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen.



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