Sharing the eucharistic insights of the 'Star Wars Prayer': a step on our pilgrim journey towards being one in Christ.

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Since our earliest days as disciples of Jesus of Nazareth the churches, local communities that came together in Jesus' name to praise the Father while sharing the cup and breaking the loaf,[1] have continually borrowed from one another. This borrowing has been of material resources – Paul's collection in Greece for the relief of famine in Palestine; people – the teachers, prophets and evangelists were all travellers between the communities; texts – it was the copying and sharing of letters and the recorded performances of the evangelists that generated the body of texts that eventually formed the canon; and items of liturgy – such as hymns we find embedded in letters and the texts for blessing the Father we find within the *Didache*. Indeed, it was the constant interchange that formed the links between the communities and made them aware that no one church was an island but we formed one body, one *oikumene*, one people. The *una sancta* they confessed was not a theological abstraction but a felt sense of belonging built up by the way each church contributed to, and received from other churches.

This giving and taking continued for centuries with regards to the liturgy. Indeed, the history of the liturgy is, very largely, the story of how one ritual spread from one place to another. Some of these borrowings were confined to specific areas – and thus we can speak of Antiochene or East Syrian liturgical tendencies, and some became almost universal such as the inclusion of the memorial of the Last Supper ('the institution narrative') in the Eucharistic Prayer.[2] Some of the borrowings can be traced to an

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[1] See T. O'Loughlin, 'One or two cups? The Text of Luke 22:17-20 Again' in H.A.G. Houghton ed., *The Liturgy and the Living Text of the New Testament: Papers from the Tenth Birmingham Colloquium on the Textual Criticism of the New Testament* (Piscataway, NJ, 2018), 51-69.

[2] See L. Ligier, 'The Origins of the Eucharistic Prayer,' *Studia Liturgica* 9(1973)161-85; and R.F. Taft, 'Mass Without the Consecration? The Historic Agreement on the Eucharist between the Catholic Church and the Assyrian Church of the East Promulgated 26 October 2001,' *Worship* 77(2003)482-509.

exact moment – such as the introduction of the *Agnus Dei* into the Latin liturgy[3] – and while other links are so obscure that they have generated decades of academic dispute.[4] But one fact is certain: travellers between churches always seem to have had an eye open for new ideas which were brought home, adopted, and which soon seemed as native and traditional as the rest of the liturgy.[5]

This process for borrowing, adapting and adopting has not ceased. The most outstanding example is the 1969 lectionary for the Eucharist produced by the Catholic Church. Its origins lie in an initiative of the Protestant Church in France in the 1950s, which was adapted by Catholics in the late 1960s, and has now spread, with varying degrees of adaptation, to church after church.[6] Its use is an important factor in helping us to pray with one heart and mind and voice.[7] However, that leaves us with the question as to whether there are other liturgical developments in particular churches which should be more widely known whose adoption / adaptation could enrich other churches and which might be yet one more sinew linking the various members of the Lord's body? One very real possibility is that the churches could learn from one another in the most demanding of liturgical forms: the composition of Eucharistic Prayers. It is the argument

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[3] See J.A. Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite: Its Origin and Development (Missarum Sollemnia)* (New York, NY 1955) vol. 2, 332-40.

[4] The outstanding example is the case of debates surround the Sanctus; see R.F. Taft, 'The Interpolation of the Sanctus into the Anaphora: When and Where? A Review of the Dossier,' *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 57(1991)281-308 and 58(1992)83-121.

[5] A good example is the triple genuflection during the adoration of the Cross on Good Friday which was brought to the west from the use of imperial court ritual within liturgy in Constantinople in the seventh century. For an early (if not the earliest) western attestation, see Adomnán, *De locis sancti*s 3,3 (D. Meehan ed., Dublin 1958, p. 108-11) which presents it as a curiosity, but one clearly worth imitating.

[6] See T. O'Loughlin, *Making the Most of the Lectionary: A User's Guide* (London 2012).

[7] See the Reims Statement on the Lectionary by the English Language Liturgical Consultation available at www.englishtexts.org/the-reims-statement (accessed 20/062019).

of this paper that one case calling out for such borrowing and adaptation is provided by the related prayers known as 'Prayer C' (from the Episcopal Church of the USA) and 'Prayer 4' (from the Canadian Anglicans) which have now become famous through their slightly derogatory, mightily inapt, but very memorable nickname: 'the Star Wars Prayer.'

Multiple anaphoras in the western liturgy

When the Catholic Church introduced a plurality of texts of the Euchartistic Prayer in the 1960s,[8] few could have imagined that this would spark a whole new genre of liturgical composition across almost the whole range of western churches. Churches that had used a single prayer since the sixteenth century have since produced suites of prayers, while other churches with a less 'liturgical' identity have adopted new anaphoras as models for use in worship, and the creativity continues as can be seen by a quick computer search.[9] This copying of one another – so many churches now have four or more Prayers paralleling the four main prayers of the Roman Rite – is itself an excellent example of ecumenical borrowing of liturgical ideas.

Moreover, this radically new development has led to reconsideration of how the Eucharist is understood as an event in the life of Christian communities by an even wider spectrum.[10] This massive increase, dare one say an explosion, in the composition of these Great Prayers of Thanksgiving is a phenomenon without parallel within Christian history. Although the universal Church is no stranger to a variety of anaphoras – the notion that there should be but one, a canon, was confined to the western churches – most of these prayers bear the marks of gradual evolution over time, and their actual origins are usually lost in a past clouded by hagiographical myth. Now we have texts that were composed consciously as whole units, they were

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[8] A convenient, almost contemporary, account is J.B. Ryan, *The Eucharistic Prayer: A Study in Contemporary Liturgy* (New York, NY 1974).

[9] See T. O'Loughlin, '*Gratias agamus Deo*: a reflection on specificity in our eucharistic prayers,' *Australian Journal of Liturgy* 15,4(2017)254-265.

[10] See A. Wilson, *Spirit and Sacrament: An Invitation to Eucharismatic Worship* (Grand Rapid, MI 2018).

produced as fixed texts in the manner of modern literary works, and they have appeared in a quantity never seen before over a very short period of time.

Despite being produced with the fixity of text that is a function of a print culture, these prayers are also oral texts: they are designed to be heard in an assembly and so are subject to widespread scrutiny in use in a way that is relatively new. For Catholics the contrast is greatest – not only was the Roman Canon recited in Latin but in silence – and even for those churches who prayed the Eucharistic Prayer aloud and in the vernacular, the actual use of a variety of texts was intended for a situation where they should be listened to with care, so that through hearing these differing eucharistic perspectives there would be a renewal in eucharistic understanding. We have moved from 'the minister doing his bit' to this prayer being the property of the whole gathering performed as a dialogue of presider and community. This has produced a curious effect in that there is a formally fixed text, yet oral texts are inherently 'living texts' continuously being moulded by the needs of the community hearing and using them.[11] Even in churches with a tradition of exact verbal conformity between usage and book – Catholics and Anglicans for example – there has arisen the phenomenon of local variations that go beyond the variations envisaged in the texts themselves. While there has been a significant recent effort (2011) to curb this tendency from the Catholic authorities,[12] the actual dynamics of oral performance make such minute control almost impossible.

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[11] For the background to the notion of living texts, see D.C. Parker, *The Living Text of the Gospels* (Cambridge 1997); and it has been further developed by E.J. Epp in several articles: 'The Multivalence of the Term "Original Text" in New Testament Textual Criticism,' *Harvard Theological Review* 92(1999) 245-81; 'Issues in New Testament Textual Criticism moving from the Nineteenth Century to the Twenty-First Century' in D.A. Black ed., *Rethinking New Testament Textual Criticism* (Grand Rapids, MI 2002), 17-76 [with additional notes in: *Perspectives on New Testament Textual Criticism. Collected Essays, 1962-2004* (Leiden 2005), 641-97]; and 'It's All about Variants: A Variant-Conscious Approach to New Testament Textual Criticism,' *Harvard Theological Review* 100,3(2007)275-308.

[12] The 2011 translation does not highlight those places where the presider can use similar words, and this had lead to the

Moreover, these new prayers are being performed in a wide variety of situations in cultures that are themselves experiencing change at a rate unknown even a generation ago, and so there is a conscious awareness of the need to adapt texts that is itself a new element within liturgical consciousness. How, for example, is a prayer composed in the 1960s fitted to the situation half a century later? One way around this is to imagine the new Eucharistic Prayers as re-working of ancient texts and, thereby, imply that there is a timelessness about these texts. However, the price of such a 'timeless' perspective is a failure to acknowledge the very need to utter thanks in our own culture and language that is implicit in the move away from a single canon to a variety of prayers. Thus if we are to acknowledge the need for adaptation while also retaining a relatively fixed text – a 'printed text' of some sort – then we need to assume that these texts will be periodically revised. Furthermore we shall have to acknowledge that the lifespan of any particular form of an anaphora is to be count in terms of decades rather than centuries – indeed we see below just how short-lived can be some parts of an anaphora. In such a situation we need to observe the developments around us not only with an eye to borrowing, but as pointers to how our current formulations may be deficient and in need of revision. The Eucharistic Prayer of another church is not simply 'a target for acquisition,' but a finger wagging at us reminding us that we need to renew our anaphoras far more regularly than in the past.

The Star Wars Prayer: two texts

I know of no contemporary eucharistic compositions that so merit close study than these two texts. They come from churches with a similar history and ethos – Anglican; both were composed in the language of their expected use – English; both come from cultures that are relatively close - the United States and Canada; and are separated by just six years in terms of publication – 1979 and 1985; yet exhibit such differences, especially when viewed with the hindsight of forty years, that they serve as a model for our exploration of the need for a process of on-going revision of such texts. The American prayer came into use around the time the film phenomenon Star Wars – the first of the sequence appeared

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phenomenon in recent years of the same formula being used on every occasion.

in 1977 – began to be a significant text in our culture and while the name seems to ridicule the opening images of the Prayer it does bring home to us how this Prayer uses a range of images that are far more immediate within our culture than many we normally hear in the liturgy and which suppose a familiarity with biblical and early Christian culture that might appeal to scholars but is without significant echoes for the vast majority of worshippers. These are unashamedly modern texts – a massive contrast to those created for the Roman Rite of 1970 where there was a deliberate desire to ground new prayers by an appeal to historical precedents – and deserve attention as such. Moreover, the differences between the original American text and its Canadian 'revision' invite us to note how the experience of use should lead to revisions and improvements based on how 'they work.' In this case the revised version profits from 'road testing' of five years of use; again, this is the opposite of what has happened in the Catholic Church where the 2011 revision of the translation was not based on lived experience but on the *a priori* belief that a closer verbal fidelity to the Latin original[13] [itself not subject to revision] should be the chief criterion of improvement. Likewise, we see how over just that short period there were cultural shifts that have made the US Prayer seem far more 'dated' than its Canadian sister text: the cultural map of western society does not stand still and it is in each new day that we have to proclaim the gospel.

While the historical instincts of many liturgists would seek to explain the differences between these two prayers in terms of their authorship and genesis within the world of the late 1970s and 1980s, this will be eschewed here in favour of comparing them as texts we encounter – analogous to how they would be experienced by someone hearing them in a liturgy – and seeing how they as liturgical artefacts relate to our situation today if we were to use them. So let us start by reading them in parallel.

The two texts[14]

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[13] See P. Jeffrey, *Translating Tradition: A Chant Historian Reads Liturgiam Authenticam* (Collegeville, MN 2005) for the background.

[14] These are taken from the websites of the two churches, both of which offer pdfs of their sacramentaries.

Here the words used by the presider are given in ordinary Roman type (e.g. ‘Lord be with you’); the responses of the gathering are in italics (e.g. ‘and also with you’); rubrics are given in bold (e.g. **The Celebrant, whether bishop or priest** …); while the numbering is supplied by me to facilitate identifying text later in the article.

<table>
<tr><td></td><td>US Prayer C</td><td>Canadian Prayer 4</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>1.</td><td>In this prayer, the lines in italics are spoken by the People.
The Celebrant, whether bishop or priest, faces them and sings or says</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>2.</td><td colspan="2">The Lord be with you.
And also with you.
Lift up your hearts.
We lift them to the Lord.
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give him thanks and praise.</td></tr>
<tr><td>3.</td><td>Then, facing the Holy Table, the Celebrant proceeds</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>4.</td><td>God of all power, Ruler of the Universe,
you are worthy of glory and praise.
Glory to you for ever and ever.</td><td>It is right to give you thanks and praise,
O Lord, our God, sustainer of the universe,
you are worthy of glory and praise.
Glory to you for ever and ever.</td></tr>
<tr><td>5.</td><td colspan="2">At your command all things came to be: the vast expanse of
interstellar space, galaxies, suns, the planets in their courses,
and this fragile earth, our island home.</td></tr>
<tr><td>6.</td><td>By your will they were created and have their being</td><td>By your will they were created and have their being</td></tr>
<tr><td>7.</td><td></td><td>Glory to you for ever and ever</td></tr>
<tr><td>8.</td><td colspan="2">From the primal elements
you brought forth the human race,
and blessed us with memory, reason, and skill;</td></tr>
<tr><td>9.</td><td>You made us
the rulers of creation.</td><td>you made us
the stewards of creation.</td></tr>
<tr><td>10.</td><td></td><td>Glory to you for ever and ever</td></tr>
<tr><td>11.</td><td colspan="2">But we turn against you, and betray your trust;
and we turn against one another.</td></tr>
<tr><td>12.</td><td>Have mercy, Lord, for we are sinners in your sight.</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>13.</td><td>Again and again, you called us to</td><td>Again and again you call us to</td></tr>
</table>

	return. Through prophets and sages you revealed your righteous Law. And in the fullness of time you sent your only Son, born of a woman, to fulfill your Law, to open for us the way of freedom and peace.	return. Through the prophets and sages you reveal your righteous law. In the fullness of time you sent your Son, born of a woman, to be our Saviour. He was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities. By his death he opened to us the way of freedom and peace.
14.	*By his blood, he reconciled us.* *By his wounds, we are healed.*	*Glory to you for ever and ever.*
15.	[And][15] Therefore we praise you, joining with the heavenly chorus, with prophets, apostles, and martyrs, and with those in every generation who have looked to you in hope, to proclaim with them your glory, in their unending hymn: *Holy, holy, holy Lord,* *God of power and might,* *heaven and earth are full of your glory.* *Hosanna in the highest.* *Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.* *Hosanna in the highest.*	
16.	And so, Father, we who have been redeemed by him, and made a new people by water and the Spirit, now bring before you these gifts. Sanctify them by your Holy Spirit to be the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ our Lord.	
17.	**At the following words concerning the bread, the Celebrant is to hold it, or lay a hand upon it, and at the words concerning the cup, to hold or place a hand upon the cup and any other vessel containing wine to be consecrated.**	
18.	 On the night he was betrayed	Blessed are you, Lord our God, for sending us Jesus, the Christ, who on the night he was handed

[15] Omitted in the Canadian text.

	he took bread, said the blessing, broke the bread, and gave it to his friends, and said,	over to suffering and death, took bread, said the blessing, broke the bread, gave it to his friends, and said,
19.	"Take [this, and] eat [it][16]: this is my body which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me." [In the same way,][17] after supper, he took the cup of wine; he gave [you][18] thanks, and said, "Drink this, all of you: this is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."	
20.		*Glory to you for ever and ever.*
21.	Remembering now his work of redemption, and offering to you this sacrifice of thanksgiving, *We celebrate his death and resurrection, as we await the day of his coming.*	
22.		Gracious God, we recall the death of your Son Jesus Christ, we proclaim his resurrection and ascension, and we look with expectation for his coming as Lord of all the nations.
23.	Lord God of our Fathers: God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ:	

[16] The American text reads 'Take, Eat: this …'.
[17] Omitted by the American text.
[18] Omitted by the American text.

24.	Open our eyes to see your hand at work in the world about us. Deliver us from the presumption of coming to this Table for solace only, and not for strength; for pardon only, and not for renewal. Let the grace of this Holy Communion make us one body, one spirit in Christ, that we may worthily serve the world in his name. *Risen Lord, be known to us in the breaking of the Bread.*	
25.		We who have been redeemed by him, and made a new people by water and the Spirit, now bring you these gifts. Send your Holy Spirit upon us and upon this offering of your Church, that we who eat and drink at this holy table may share the divine life of Christ our Lord. *Glory to you for ever and ever.* Pour out your Spirit upon the whole earth and make it your new creation. Gather your Church together from the ends of the earth into your kingdom, where peace and justice are revealed, that we, with all your people, of every language, race, and nation, may share the banquet you have promised;
26.	Accept these prayers and praises, Father, through Jesus Christ our great High Priest, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, your Church gives honor, glory, and worship, from generation to generation.	
27.		through Christ, with Christ, and in Christ, all honour and glory are yours, creator of all. *Glory to you for ever and ever.*
28.	Amen.	

What is worthy of note?

By far the most startling element in this pair of anaphoras is the opening lines of the preface: 'At your command all things came to be: the vast expanse of interstellar space, galaxies, suns, the planets in their courses, and this fragile earth, our island home.' It is all too easy to dismiss this, as I have heard more than once, as no more than 'a pious reading of the opening scene from [the original series of] Star Trek!' But a moment's reflection notes that one of the yawning gulfs between contemporary Christians and our Christian forebears is the implicit cosmology of our broader culture. We speak of billions of years since 'the big bang' and refer to its on-going background radiation as a casual fact. We speak of the solar system not as a closed world beneath a further series of angelic hierarchies,[19] but of an evolving system which we investigate with our probes and date using millions of years.[20] We have to make sense of the universe as a home in the face of an image of seemingly infinite darkness and with Pascal utter: 'the eternal silences of these infinite spaces frightens me.'[21] Yet it is in this very world, rather than within a cosy anachronism, that we have to imagine the hand of God at work. If God is the creator then this is the creation that comes from God – and it is this world that must supply our imagination when we pray. Yet most of our creation images within the liturgy are derived from a cosmological imagination that we have abandoned for all but religious purposes centuries ago. Such a dualism of scientific and religious imaginations not only fuels the myth of an irreconcilable chasm between faith and reason, but (more importantly from the standpoint of the liturgy) it assumes an alienation between cult and world, between the Creator and the actual world of our endeavours. I have heard comments that these images of 'galaxies and planets' is a "cold image" but we

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[19] See T. O'Loughlin, 'The Quincentenary of Schedel's Map of the Creation: A Turning Point in the Development of the Modern Mind', *Milltown Studies* 31(1993)30-52.

[20] I take today's paper as witness to this: there is a notice that NASA have just sent a probe to orbit the asteroid Bannu which itself comes close to the earth every six years; it notes that the asteroid is between 700 million and two billion years old (*The i*, 19/06/2019, p. 25).

[21] *Pensées*, n. 206.

should note that all such images, such as that in Job 38:31: ‘Can you bind the chains of the Pleiades, or loose the cords of Orion?,’ are “cold” – the warmth is the vision that they are not ‘just there’ but the work of God calling forth our scientific curiosity and wonder: ‘The heavens are telling the glory of God; and the firmament proclaims his handiwork’ (Ps 19:1). This Prayer is a modern take on a fundamental theme in our theology of creation.

To many Christians there is only one language range with which to address the theme of creation: that of Genesis presented usually in a mix of the twin theologies of the hexaemeron and that of Eden. This language is wholly absent and I welcome this because we all too often forget the problems that this language causes those who are listening. Sometime ago I was listening to Gen 1 being read in the liturgy while two small children nearby were playing with model dinosaurs on the church floor blissfully unaware of the sounds coming from the reader. We all too easily dismiss this dissonance by insisting that, in the words of one of my students, this is ‘simply a case of being aware that the bible must be read as a series of mythic theologoumena.’ Alas, most people make the (unfounded) assumption that there is some direct link between what is read with authority, from the bible, from the lectern, by the church, and ‘the facts’ as empirically perceived. This may be an inadequate liturgical hermeneutic, but it is a fact – and so part of the existential situation within which we worship. By contrast, presenting a creation language that is consonant with the larger language within the culture is an act of evangelisation which is dynamically equivalent to the work of the Priestly Author who presented a radically new theology of creation, the metaphysic of *creatio ex nihilo*, by adapting the cultural expectations of Mesopotamia.[22] The avoidance of biblical images does not mean that the language of the scriptures is absent from the Prayer (see item 6 and 13 drawing heavily on Pauline language) but that this language has been made *our* language of worship rather than being used as ‘bible quotations.’

Having a thorough going theology of creation is a fundamental need in worship; but this has taken on a new twist and urgency with the ecological crisis. Only decades ago reference to ‘the

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[22] See R.S. Kawashima, ‘The Priestly Tent of Meeting and the Problem of Divine Transcendence: An “Archaeology” of the Sacred,’ *The Journal of Religion* 86(2006)226-57 at 232..

stewardship of creation' was imagined as little more than a pious avoidance of causing suffering to animals; today it is the challenge that faces every human being and is at the core of discipleship. Whether we read Pope Francis's *Laudato si'* or not, if Christianity is to take its moral duty seriously then it must accept that abusing and destroying the environment is a moral issue and that if there is a confession of God as the Creator then this is close to the heart of our message. However, this new consciousness has arisen *after* the creation of most of our contemporary Eucharistic Prayers in the late 1960s: we are without adequate liturgical expression of our environmental situation. Moreover, while we speak about the creation we are often left without a vision of the environment as God's work. This is probably the greatest contribution this Prayer has to make to churches which might borrow it: it presents a lyrical vision of the universe as the creation, and it emphasises our role as those, who in the Christ, bring it to its completion – a priestly work – or who can, though selfishness and neglect bring it to destruction. Put simply, any church which does not adapt the Star Wars Prayer will still have to adopt a Prayer almost identical to it.

If we note on the one hand how the Star Wars Prayer picks up the theme of the creation with an explicitness we would not have expected only a decade earlier, we should note how already over a period of less than a decade it was in need for revision because of a significant shift in our faith perspective. The American version used the inherited language of power over the creation (e.g. the phrase 'Ruler of the Universe' in n.3) and of the human role of being master within the creation (e.g. 'You made us the rulers of creation' in n.9) which can be traced back to Gen 1:28: 'fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.' But as the first stirrings of the environmental crisis were heard in the late 1970s and early 1980s this theme of 'filling and subduing' was seen as one of the fundamental flaws in western approach to nature. Christianity was seen by many not as a solution but as one of the basic problems that had led to the mess. So it is significant that in the Canadian version we have God presented as the 'sustainer' rather than the 'ruler' and human beings presented as 'stewards' rather than 'rulers.' There is a similar move with regard to male-centred language. While the American version invokes the image of 'Lord God of our Fathers: God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob' – an echo

of Mk 12:26 and parallels – there is no such imagery in the Canadian prayer.[23] This change should not merely point out to all churches that there are rapid cultural shifts taking place within society today, but that all Prayers in living language need to be 'road tested' by use with a congregation as to how they are received and understood, and then revised accordingly. My own church, writing as a Catholic, has almost no awareness of this need as witness the continued use of the 2011 translation which has been wholly immune to such road testing: here is a situation arguing not only for borrowing of texts but borrowing of practice.

While the most obvious feature of this Prayer is its creation imagery, the other beauties as this anaphora should not be overlooked. The first of these is the way it locates the eucharistic action of its gathering within the sweep of the history of salvation. There has been a tendency to separate the notions of incarnation, linking it to the plan of salvation unfolded in Israel's history, from the redemption, linked to the reconciliation after sin often presented within Protestant texts in terms of 'the atonement.' Not only is it unhelpful to make these divisions, even at the linguistic level, but it adds further confusion when this happens in the context of the Eucharist. The presentation of n.11 to n.13 can, therefore, be seen as an elegant restating of these themes which presents them as one, single history of the divine love ending with the non-judgemental eschatological vision: 'By his death he opened to us the way of freedom and peace.' How we conceive the end – doomsday or liberation – is central to the vision of God we transmit within the liturgy.

Two other major differences between the American and Canadian version concern the self-presentation of what is taking place when the Prayer is being used by a church. The American version is still recognisably a 'traditional western' anaphora with an epiclesis before the institution narrative focused on the phenomenon of the consecration of the elements (n. 16), while in the Canadian prayer the invocation of the Spirit (n. 25) has moved to the 'eastern' location and is descriptive of the whole work of the Spirit who is the giver of live within the Church. This shift in pneumatology is to be welcomed not only because of its

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[23] I have heard American presiders adapt this by adding 'and God of our mothers' but the effect is to weigh the Prayer down in what is clearly an attempt to get around gendered language.

forming a potential link with the Orthodox but because it presents the Spirit's work within the grand narrative of the Prayer. Moreover, it serves the emphasis that the whole Prayer is a Spirit-empowered act of worship in the Christ to the Father rather than a prayer of consecration to 'make present' the Christ in the elements.

The other major difference between the two versions is in how they approach the institution narrative.[24] A major problem with most Eucharistic Prayers is the transition from a prayer directed to the Father to the narration of the Last Supper context and the so-called 'words of institution' which is carried out as if it were an absolute recitation thus effecting / confecting 'the Eucharist' as a sacramental object. Moreover, in many traditions this event is seen as the 'sacramental form' which stands alone and relies simply on the power of orders. While most churches have moved away from this theology, the very structure of the Prayers used seems to demand its return. Presiders present the opening part of the anaphora as a prayer to the Father and a narrative of anamnesis, then default to presenting a re-enactment combining the words of Jesus with the narrative comments and sometimes the actions referred to in the narrative.[25] So while we have moved from referring to this part of the anaphora as 'the consecration' to the 'institution narrative'; the performance is that of 'consecrating' the bread and the wine. In this the American version, n.18, is wholly traditional. However, the Canadian version is a wonderful improvement presenting the recollection of the Last Supper within an haggadic anamnesis, framed within the form of a blessing (*beraka*) such that the attention never leaves the Father nor is there any sense of an interruption of the Prayer. For this alone, this text is an important gift to other churches and is an element worthy of being borrowed and made at home. This consistent eucharistic focus – offering thanks to the Father – of the Canadian version is enhanced by two other omissions. First, in the American version there is a text inspired by the Prayer of Humble Access (n. 24) which presents the Eucharistic Prayer as a necessary facilitation of receiving the

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[24] See T. O'Loughlin, 'The "Eucharistic Words of Jesus": An Unnoticed Silence in our Earliest Sources,' *Anaphora* 8,1(2014)1-12.
[25] See T. O'Loughlin, 'Blessing and breaking: a dissonance of action and interpretation in the Eucharistic Prayers of the Roman Rite,' *Anaphora* 7/2(2013)53-66.

Christ present in the elements at Communion. This has disappeared in the later version so that the whole thanksgiving is a blessing of the Father as part of the meal gathering of the baptised. Second, the rubrics of the American version (nn. 1, 3, and 17) which are conducive to approaching the Prayer as one that effects a consecration have been omitted by the Canadians. This not only allows a greater freedom of styles of prayerful presiding, but lessens the temptation for the presider to mime the Last Supper rather than lead a community in their eucharistic activity where they are gathered.

Old and new

Borrowing and adapting is at the core of liturgical activity of those churches which see themselves, however imperfectly, as parts of the *oikoumene*. We have borrowed since the beginning and will continue to do so, and in this give and take the bonds of our oneness in the Christ become more visible, tangible and felt. When it comes to liturgical borrowing we tend to be rather historical in our tastes: an anaphora, for example, from the fourth century seems most worthy of being dusted off and brought back into use or at least found worthy of providing a structure which we can imitate. But these prayers – particularly the Canadian version – are new, products of our culture and its needs and urgencies. This very newness, which sounds even more threatening if rendered as 'novelty,' makes many hesitate before using them, yet it is precisely in this freshness that their value lies. The Spirit is inspiring the churches now as much as in the early centuries, and these speak for us today and if they do this well, then they are worthy of our use. Tradition is, as Picasso once remarked, having a baby, not wearing your grandfather's hat!