

Preface to the eBook

Just as the late Juzo Itami's based his Japanese film, *Tampopo*, on *The Magnificent Seven*, which was based on *The Seven Samurai*, so my approach to liturgy is based on Stanislavski's approach to acting, which is based on the spiritual exercises of Ignatius of Loyola, according to Eisenstein.¹ The circle closes in both cases.

This small book was originally submitted to the Faculty of Theology,² Saint Paul University, Ottawa, as partial requirement for the Master of Arts degree (Theology), 1977. During the rather large gap between that writing and my first eBook, *Kids Pray the Darndest Things: Effective Liturgy* (2002), I kept an eye out for research that would answer the call for a *liturgical event* analysis. While pursuing a career as an actor, writer, director and producer, I published over 100 articles that dealt with liturgy-as-event in popular, trade and refereed journals. I still kept an eye out for developments in *liturgical event* research. None appeared that succeeded with the event side of liturgy, in my view.

Authors tried different approaches, some dealing with aesthetics, others with semiotics or hermeneutics: but these ignored event. The aesthetic attempts seemed to arise from poetry or the plastic arts instead of the performing arts. The semiotic and hermeneutic attempts tried to address "action" but were rooted, still, in text-based analysis.

Currently, I am researching live *liturgical event* methodology that is based on theatrical praxis. In the interests of tossing one attempt into the fray at the level of event analysis, I decided to publish this work. I do so, with 30 years hindsight and without

¹ Eisenstein, Sergei Mikhailovich; Albera, François; Kleiman, Naoum, Eisenstein, le mouvement de l'art, (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1986), 80

² The thesis was prepared under the supervision of William Marravee, professor of theology at Saint Paul University. Many thanks to Dr John van den Hengel for his great help, and to the student liturgical community at Saint Paul, which was able to voice its problems and reflections on its worship.

much rewriting or updating of citations and references to research within that 30 year gap. Why? Frankly, the same call for an event analysis method for liturgy has arisen again and again without much advance. When you read this, you may be startled that the same decades-old questions are being addressed today. Consequently, I decided to allow the historicity of the document to speak for itself. I do wonder, now, if releasing it 30 years ago would have made any difference to the advance of research, but that is a mug's game.

What this research accomplishes is a workable approach to liturgy-as-event without a text-based analysis. It presumes that both theatre and liturgy are performing arts among the great variety that exists in the world, including dance, mime, puppetry and ritual. It relies on a specific performance analysis that certainly takes into account the dramatic or liturgical script, but is by no means bound to, or even reliant on that analysis. Dissecting what "happens" in time and space is one way to undertake an analysis of a 'staged'³ event but not, by any means, the only way. And so, let's to it.

3. By 'staged,' I mean any action that uses words and actions written by a third party, as distinct from those words and actions that arise from oneself in real life, or in an improvised event.