

EPIPHANEIA

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Joy is the dominating theme in this score that celebrates the three manifestations of Christ, at Bethlehem, Cana and Mt. Tabor. On the 6th January the Orthodox Church celebrates the manifestation of Christ to the magi at Bethlehem, the wedding in Cana, where Christ performed His first miracle, and His baptism in the river Jordan. Eight months later, on the 6th August, the Church celebrates Christ's appearing in glistening white before Peter, James and John on Mount Tabor. This feast is known as the Transfiguration and is closely linked with Christ's baptism for on both occasions God the Father witnesses and declares, "This is my beloved Son".

All three texts have been taken from sermons preached in the 17th century by Lancelot Andrewes, Mark Frank and John Cosin respectively, who belonged to a group of divines, collectively known as Caroline Divines. These divines lived during the great flowering of prose, poetry, drama, music, sculpture and architecture in England, a period often termed "the English Renaissance". It was the time of Queen Elizabeth I, Spenser, Shakespeare, Johnson, Bacon, Camden, Crashaw, Tomkins, Gibbons, Stone and Wren to mention but a few. Not overshadowed by these great artists were the Caroline Divines. Among them were John Donne, George Herbert, Jeremy Taylor, Mark Frank, John Cosin and Lancelot Andrewes. Their sermons and writings had a beauty of style and subject that at times bordered on the poetic. In fact Donne and Herbert were significant poets. Eliot, himself one of the finest poets of the 20th century, insisted that Andrewes' sermons "rank with the finest English prose of their time".

It is obvious that Eliot was very familiar with not only the sermons of Andrewes but also many of those of the Caroline Divines as he wove direct quotations or images or theology from these sermons into his writings. For example in his poem *The journey of the Magi* his opening lines are a paraphrase of part of Andrewes' 1622 Christmas sermon.

*'A cold coming we had of it,
Just the worst time of the year
For a journey, and such a journey.
The ways deep, the weather sharp,
The very days of winter.'*

One theme of his poem *Ash Wednesday* is that of *metanoia*, "to turn again", one of Andrewes' main themes for his Ash Wednesday sermons, that is turn away from sin and to turn to God. In this poem Eliot also quotes an exact idiom from Andrewes' 1605 Christmas sermon, "the Word without a word". There are also shades of Andrewes in *Little Gidding*.

He is familiar with Cosin's sermons and in *East Coker*, he employs this Caroline Divine's desire for celebrating marriage in the old rustic way.

*In that open field
On a summer midnight, you can hear the music
Of the weak pipe and the little drum
And see them dancing around the bonfire
The association of man and woman
In daunsinge and commodios sacrament.*

He knows, also, what I think are the loveliest of all the Caroline Divines' sermons, those of Mark Frank. In his sermon on the Transfiguration, perhaps

prompted by Hebrews 13.14 and the early Fathers' usage of "no abiding city", Frank depicted the disciples as realising that their stay on Mt. Tabor was "no continuing city". This image is captured by Eliot in his second chorus in *Murder in the Cathedral* where the women bewail the consequences of the return of Archbishop Becket.

It is also obvious that the Caroline Divines, especially Andrewes, had a profound effect on Eliot's own life, and his conversion to Anglo-Catholicism. That faith is evident in the famous Christmas day sermon in the above play.

The historical setting for the Caroline Divines is the Post-Reformation Church in England. The Reformation in England began as a political, not a religious, one when Henry VIII denounced the power of the Pope in England and declared himself as Supreme Head in the 1530's. In doing so, he still upheld the Catholic doctrines and structures of the Church. On his death, during the reign of the boy king Edward VI, much influenced by his Protestant tutors and then by the Protestant-dominated Privy Council, the Reformation focused on doctrinal changes. This led to the abolishing of the Latin Mass, many medieval devotions to Our Lady and the saints and to the encouragement of iconoclasm. The Book of Common Prayer replaced the Roman Missal and Breviary. All clergy were expected to use it for services in parish churches. When Mary, a staunch Roman Catholic, succeeded her half-brother in 1553 England reverted to Catholicism under the Pope. In 1553. Many Protestants were burned or executed for their faith. After her short reign Elizabeth I who, like her Father, denounced the Pope as Head of the English Church, succeeded her and throughout her reign steered the Church away from radical Protestantism. The Church maintained its apostolic and episcopal ministry. Although the Prayer Book in 1559 did not vary much from the 1552 Prayer Book of Edward as the official worship for cathedrals and churches she encouraged a beauty of holiness in worship and reverence as seen in the Chapel Royal and Westminster Abbey. She also authorized the publication of a Latin Prayer Book in 1560 that was used in universities

One of the Deans appointed by Elizabeth to Westminster Abbey was Lancelot Andrewes who, like his Queen, had an appreciation of beauty in worship and a firm dislike of the Continental Protestant Reformation. Of all those who are known as Caroline Divines, Andrewes was seen as their mentor, although he only just qualified to be called a Caroline Divine as he died 18 months after Charles I's succession. Through his teaching, steeped in the writings of the early Fathers, and by his examples of piety and living the Christian faith, and his standard of worship he inspired many young priests and lay-folk to be truly catholic in their faith. He gave them a deep appreciation of the past and the continuity of the Church in her ministry and sacraments.

So he passed on to the Caroline Divines a great love for the Sacraments of the Church, especially for the Eucharist. Another love he passed on was the love of beauty in worship. This invariably led to many churches and college chapels being beautified in the 17th century. Many were modelled on Andrewes' own chapel glittering with its altar plate. So angelic singing, incense wafting, candles burning brightly and priests bowing to the altar and to the name of Jesus were commonly practised. In summary the Caroline Divines retained all that was true and lovely of "the old religion" with the Eucharist still being the centre of their worship. They enabled the English Church to retain all that was good in the Catholic religion and were a buffer against those who wanted the English Church to become simply another Protestant Church.

Lancelot Andrewes (1555-1626)

He is the mentor of Reformed Catholicism in the English Church. As Eliot wrote of him in his essay *For Lancelot Andrewes: Essays on Style and Order*, published in 1928, he has “the voice of a man who has a formed visible Church behind him, who speaks with the old authority and the new culture. ... Andrewes is the first great preacher of the English Catholic Church.” Indeed he was. Over a period of fifty years he preached to all sorts and conditions of men, monarchs, courtiers, politicians, gentry, actors, musicians, poets, students, common folk and even clerics.

He was also a great educator. A great part of his life was spent under the turrets of Cambridge. After he graduated from Pembroke he was appointed Catechist, and began those series of catechetical lectures that made him famous throughout Cambridge and elsewhere. In 1589 he was appointed Master of his college, whilst in London he was given a prebendary at St. Paul’s Cathedral and the parish of St. Giles, Cripplegate, now in the shadow of the Barbican. A little later in 1597 he became a prebendary of Westminster Abbey and, shortly after, its Dean. After James I appointed him Bishop of Chichester in 1605, he became the main preacher at Court for the three main festivals of the year: Christmas, Easter and Pentecost.

To-day his book of daily devotions known as *Preces Privatae* is probably better known than his sermons. This book was the product of his spending five hours each day from 4.00 A.M in prayer. He died whilst he was Bishop of Winchester and was buried in what is now Southwark Cathedral.

Mark Frank (1612-1664)

Frank’s *Course of Sermons* appeared in 1672 and is the high-water mark of Anglo-Catholic preaching. Like Andrewes, a great part of his life was spent at Pembroke College, Cambridge. He was a Fellow for ten years before he was ejected by parliamentary visitors when he would not sign the Solemn League and Covenant in 1643. Nothing is known of his life from that date until the Restoration when he became Master of Pembroke, canon treasurer of St Paul’s Cathedral and archdeacon of St Albans. He was also made a D.D. by royal mandate in 1661, along with other distinguished churchmen who had supported the Royalists during the interregnum. Even if we do not know very much about his life, he has left posterity with many delightful and fluent sermons on the Liturgical Year. Although he is obviously very much influenced by Andrewes, and even quotes from his sermons, Frank nevertheless has his own style with its command of balancing and simple sentences. The sermons also have a deep spirituality, a love of sacramental life and for the saints, including the blessed Mother of God. All these come together in the opening of his sermon for Lady Day.

The day will tell you who this ‘blessed among women’ is: we call it our Lady-day; and the text will tell you why she comes into the day, because the Angel to-day came in to her. And the Angel will tell you why he to-day came in to her; she was ‘highly favoured’ and ‘the Lord was with her,’ was to come himself this day into her, to make her the most ‘blessed among women,’ - sent him only before to tell her so- to tell her, he would be with her by and by himself.

Unfortunately for the English Church he died shortly after the Restoration in 1664.

John Cosin (1595- 1672)

Like Andrewes, Cosin was a Cambridge man, where he was a scholar and fellow at Caius. Whilst there he made comprehensive notes about the Book of Common Prayer, in which he included the notes of Andrewes, and which were consulted in compiling the 1662 Prayer Book. He first came to notice with the publication in 1627 of *Collection of Private Devotions*, commissioned by Charles I. This was modelled on the *Hours of the Virgin Mary*, and was intended for use by the Queen's Ladies at Court. The following year as a prebendary at Durham Cathedral, his celebration of Candlemass brought further notice when another prebendary, Peter Smart, publicly protest of his having three hundred candles lit in the church in honour of Our Lady, including sixty on the altar.

However it is in beautifying the chapel of Peterhouse, Cambridge and churches in Durham that he is best remembered. Like Andrewes, he showed his ability to combine the aesthetic with the liturgical. Unfortunately, because of the iconoclasm programme of the 1640's, we are no able to see to-day the beautifying of Peterhouse under Cosin's programme in the 1630's. Angels, cherubim, seraphim, dove, all came crashing down! The Durham churches beautified were St. Brandon, Brancepeth, St. Edmund's, Sedgefield and St. Andrew's, Haughton-le-Skerne. The striking feature in these was the elaborate and intricate woodwork in both Jacobean and Gothic styles. When the Puritans gained control of Parliament after 1642 Cosin had to flee England and he lived as an exile in Paris, often in destitute circumstances until the Restoration.

Cosin was very much influenced by Andrewes, so much so that he often lifted texts from Andrewes' sermons for his own, and often quoted Andrewes in his debates with Roman Catholics in Paris especially on the sacraments. At the Restoration he was appointed bishop of Durham where he remained until his death. The glorious Gothic chapel in Bishop Auckland Palace is Cosin's legacy.