



Cymbals & Dances

a vibrant handbook, spiritual tonic,
and instruction manual.

Cymbals & Dances, by **Joseph Poole**,
explains what church liturgy is for,
what it does, how it is affected by
many factors – from architecture to
music – how it has evolved, and how it
necessarily connects to current culture.

Rev Canon J.W. Poole was the first Precentor of the new Coventry Cathedral and created all the Cathedral's liturgy for and following its consecration in 1962. Joseph Poole compiled the book *Cymbals & Dances* following decades of commitment to the creation of stimulating, meaningful and dignified services of Christian observance and celebration in Cathedrals and parish churches, festival events and pubs.

In the first part of the book he describes the origins of Anglican liturgy, the essential and possible elements of a service, and how you blend the parts of a liturgy with the right components for your context.

When it comes to elements in an order of service, Poole gives a list of thirty different liturgical forms, which he subsequently unpacks, pointing out from the start that some of them you will never have occasion to use and that they will not all be used in any one service. *"Most of them should be tucked away in your mind, ready to be summoned for duty at a moment's notice."*

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In a later section he takes poignant 1662 collects and shows how to turn a 'searching, lovely prayer' into something equally powerful in easy modern English. He then devotes four pages to referencing all the themes you can find in the Prayer Book collects including,

among many other things, faithfulness, forgiveness, God, sex, peace, pilgrimage and wisdom.

For each explanation about form and style of any part of liturgy, Poole offers a check list, its reasoning, and also provides complete examples. Those examples range from the laying up of a Regiment's Colours, Memorial services, Weddings, and welcoming a significant visitor, to a Christmas Eve Service and a Festival of Flowers. He paints a stirring picture of several of the events before presenting the example liturgy.

You can almost sense the twinkle in the author's eye as he gives various practical examples of using the language of today in liturgy.

Of rubrics he says they show *"either that the church is a museum, or that it is a company of living, breathing men and women"* and then, to bring the point home, invites the reader to translate the stage directions in

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Shaw's 'Pygmalion' to the style of the Prayer Book.

"This said, Liza shall go out; and Pickering having gasped shall sit down."

In describing how singing of Psalms evolved and how they can best be sung or said, Poole concedes, as a musician, that the 1973 music for metrical Psalms *"is sometimes commonplace, and will not please professional musicians. Let them credit the compilers with that pastoral good sense which every liturgical situation requires; and let them recall an affirmation in the earlier chapter on cultural relevance:*

"A living liturgy is the expression of the worship of a community in terms which are natural to that community."

Thanks to Stephen Gadd and Trixie Gadd of Durocracy, The Poole Family are now able to publish Cymbals and Dances, Joseph Poole's book on Christian liturgy. The Gadds had transcribed the book from the original typescript of 1980.

Price will be in the region of £22 per copy (P&P included).

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