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The Evolution of Utraquist Liturgy: A Precursor of Western Liturgical Reform *

David R. Holeton

In the history of the western liturgy, the sacramental and liturgical movement which developed in Bohemia between the mid-XIVc. and its suppression after the defeat of the Bohemians at the Battle of the White Mountain is undoubtedly the least studied. This leaves a major lacuna in our knowledge of western liturgy as a whole, for nowhere else are we presented with a tradition of liturgical reform which has its roots so clearly planted in the late mediaeval church and whose development first prefigures and then runs concurrent with the more-or-less radical reforms of the churches issuing from the Second Reformation of the XVIc. as well as the Tridentine liturgical reforms of the Roman church. Yet, throughout this 250-year period, there was no clearly-articulated programme of liturgical reform. Unlike the liturgical reforms of the Anglican or Lutheran traditions on one hand -- where the mediaeval texts were reformed and quickly vernacularized -- or the new liturgical texts produced in the response to the reforms of the Council of Trent on the other hand, the utraquist tradition offers us no single moment when the liturgical texts are reformed and then imposed by law.

The invention of the printing press, which offered the possibility of liturgical uniformity previously unknown in the history of the church, made possible sweeping liturgical reforms in which traditions could be abolished overnight. When, for example, on the Day of Pentecost 1549 the first Book of Common Prayer was imposed on the Church of England, it alone was to be used and none other. A church which had known a variety of Uses within the framework of the Roman rite was to know but one liturgical Use in which a plurality of practice was not to be tolerated. The thousands of peasants who rose up in the West Country demanding the restoration of the Latin Mass were simply slaughtered or brutally repressed.¹ Similarly, the Tridentine texts were imposed on the Roman Catholic church with no consideration for long-established local Uses or the possibility of a plurality of practice in which the celebration of the liturgy was designed to reflect the nature of the

* The study was presented in the congress *Czechoslovakia, Europe, and the World* held by the Czechoslovak Society of Arts and Sciences, and the Council of Scientific Societies of the ČSFR in Prague (26 June - 2 July 1993).

1) Cf. "The Prayer Book Rebellion", in: A.L. Rowse, *Tudor Cornwall* (The Bedford Historical Series XIV), London: Jonathan Cape, 1957, 253-290.

local worshipping community.²

Utraquist Bohemia offers us no such self-conscious liturgical reform. There is no time when one Use is abolished in favour of another, making an intentional break with the inherited tradition. The student of liturgy is thus given a rare opportunity: the occasion to watch a gradual, somewhat undirected, reform which maintained both a fidelity to the inherited liturgical tradition yet kept a close eye on the pastoral needs of the various communities which the liturgy was to serve.

It is important to note, however, that the liturgical reforms of the utraquists were not without some quite clear principles. These were to be hammered out during the first few decades of the Bohemian reformation largely in reaction to the demands of the more radical Taborites. As should be self-evident, it is impossible to reform the liturgy on the basis of Scripture alone. Of the Four Articles of Prague, only the first which enjoined the communion of *all* the baptized *sub utraque specie* could be said to have a clear foundation in Scripture -- and even that can only be affirmed by an informed reading of the post-biblical tradition of the Church (a tradition which the apologists of the Article read with great accuracy). On most other liturgical matters, the Bible remains silent. The utraquists acknowledged that fact in the earliest days of the debates over the restoration of the chalice. The post-biblical development of the liturgy was freely acknowledged and, except where it contravened Scripture (as in the withdrawal of the chalice from the laity, for example), was otherwise regarded as healthy and good.³ Unlike the Taborites, who had a profound mistrust of the tradition and abandoned it whenever possible, the utraquists elected to maintain it.

In my study of utraquism, there are several basic principles which I believe must be accepted in order to understand the developments within the tradition. First, at least for the initial century or so, we are dealing with a church that is thoroughly mediaeval. While this may seem self-evident, it does

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- 2) The Tridentine reforms were unprecedented in liturgical history. The missal of 1570 fixed the texts and rites and the Sacred Congregation of Rites was founded for the express purpose of preventing any changes. After 1570 there would have been considerable disparity between the Roman rite used in 'catholic' parishes in Bohemia and the traditional Latin Rite of the Bohemian Church should it still have been used at this late date in any utraquist parishes. Trent's suppression of all but four prosae (*Victimae paschali laudes*, *Veni Sancte Spiritus*, *Lauda Sion*, and *Dies irae*) would have left the 'catholic' parishes considerably impoverished musically when compared with utraquist parishes where the large corpus of mediaeval prosae continued to be sung in both Latin and Czech (in addition to the ever-increasing corpus of hymnody).
 - 3) This principle was articulated clearly by Jakoubek of Stribro in his *Epistola pro communiōne infirmorum* (1415) and his tractatus *De Ceremoniis* (1417). Cf. "Les Rites", in: Paul De Vooght, *Jacobellus de Stribro (+1429) premier théologien du hussitisme*, Louvain 1972, 150ff. Jan Rokycana, as spokesman for the Utraquists, affirmed it in his 1431 debate with the Taborite leader Mikulas Biskupec de Pelhrimov. Cf. Amedeo Molnár - Romolo Cegna, *Confessio Taboritarum*, Rome 1983, 298ff.

not seem to be so to many who, in their studies of the Bohemian Reformation, would impose on their subjects the renaissance qualities of the reformers of the XVIc. and their fixation with the principle of *sola scriptura*.⁴ Second, we cannot take too seriously the importance attributed by the utraquists to the catholicity of the Church - not just in the sense of belonging to the Church universal but in the much more specific sense of maintaining a visible continuity with the tradition of the Bohemian church. This was to govern the parameters within which the liturgical reforms of utraquism could take place as much as the tenacity with which utraquists held to the principle of the historic episcopate, a gift which continued to elude the church to its last days.⁵ Thus we should not be surprised to find the Prague masters affirming the seven sacraments of the universal Church in opposition to the priests of Tábor in 1420⁶ or, over a century later, promulgating Articles at the Synod of 24 August 1539 which affirmed that the Bohemian church would continue to celebrate the sacraments in the catholic fashion⁷ and that the mass would be celebrated "according to the institution of the primitive church and ancient use"⁸ in the face of Lutheran reforms. The high value attributed to the catholic character of the church was to temper the pace at which liturgical change could take place within utraquism so that evolution sometimes may seem insignificant for those looking for the more dramatic reforms of the XVIc. - Anglican, Lutheran or Tridentine.

Yet, despite this apparent conservatism, we must not forget that we are also dealing with a tradition whose very existence was based on a liturgical reform - the restored chalice - which, without the earlier restoration of the practice of frequent communion by the XIVc. reformer Jan Milic, its theological legitimation by Matthias of Janov, Vojtech Rankuv and others, its popularization by Tomas of Stitny, and its ecclesiastical approbation by Jan Jesenic, would have been a vacuous gesture.⁹ (There is no impact in restoring

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- 4) "While Hus appeals to the institutionalized church, and encourages his hearers to do likewise, we must in no case ascribe to Hus any sort of *sola scriptura* proclivity. ... the very notion of *sola scriptura* is a sixteenth century assumption and can only anachronistically be applied to Hus and to the fifteenth century." Thomas A. Fudge, "*arsellus dei*" and the Bethlehem Chapel in Prague", [unpublished paper] p.20.
 - 5) The last hope for acquiring the historic episcopate ended with the fall of Byzantium with whom the utraquists were in contact. See F.M. Bartoš, "A Delegate of the Hussite Church to Constantinople", *Byzantinoslavica* 24, 1963, 287-292 and 25, 1964, 69-74 and Antonín Salač, *Constantinople et Prague en 1452* (Rozpravy Československé akademie věd 68,11), Prague 1958.
 - 6) *Congregatio Magistrorum Pragensium cum Sacerdotibus Thaboritarum in Castro Pragensi Anno 1420*, MS Prague BN XVII A 16 f.9b.
 - 7) *De Ordine bono Articuli*, MS Prague BN XVII A 16 f.152.
 - 8) *Ibid.*, f.153.
 - 9) I set this out in my *La Communion des tout-petits enfants: Étude du mouvement eucharistique en Bohême vers la fin du Moyen-Age* (Bibliotheca "Ephemeides Liturgicae Subsidia", 50), Rome 1989, 17-82.

the chalice to a non-communicating laity.) But the same XIVc. reform movement which restored frequent communion was also experimenting with vernacular liturgy¹⁰; so that when, within the first half decade of utraquism, we find the liturgy being celebrated in Czech - a fact attested to by the *directorium chori* commonly known as the Jistebnický Kancionál¹¹, we are witnessing the continuity of a tradition of liturgical reform rather than a novelty.

The study of utraquist liturgy is complicated by the very phenomena which make it atypical for its time - the plurality of liturgical practice that appears to have been tolerated and the lack of canonical legislation on liturgical matters. Liturgical communities using Latin exclusively as their liturgical language, others entirely committed to Czech as the only language for liturgical use and still others committed to a mixture of both Latin and Czech coexisted until almost the end of the XVIc. when Czech finally became the normative liturgical language. Some communities were remarkably conservative in their liturgical use, preserving the basic shape and content of the mediaeval office and mass whether they were using Latin or Czech as their liturgical language. The large *graduale* and *antiphonale* we have from Hradec Kralové¹², Mladá Boleslav¹³, Louny¹⁴, Klatovy¹⁵, Kouřim¹⁶, Chrudim¹⁷, Jindřichův Hradec¹⁸ and both Holy Trinity and St. James Kutná Hora¹⁹ all attest to this conservative tradition. Other manuscripts, some of them much earlier, witness to a much more flexible tradition which provided a number of liturgical alternatives, a tendency that was to increase in time. Similarly, the richness of liturgical life varied from community to community. Some, where there were a significant number of clerics, maintained the mediaeval pattern of a seven-office day (all sung) as well as daily sung mass. Others seem to have had a much more restricted liturgical life with few offices and the eucharist only on Sundays and a few Holy Days.

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- 10) Jakoubek of Stribro, Hus' successor as preacher in Bethlehem Chapel and the first major theologian of utraquism, tells us that it was Matthias of Janov who first introduced the reading of the liturgical epistles and gospels in Czech. Jakoubek also tells us that, at the same time, an un-named priest at the parish of SS. Philip and James close to the Bethlehem Chapel sang the passion gospels in Czech, a practice for which he received an ecclesiastical summons (and presumably a reprimand). cf. Rudolf Holinka, "Nová betlémská postila M. Jakoubka ze Stržbra", *Věstník české akademie věd a umění* 60, 1951, 26.
- 11) MS Prague Bib. Mus. Nat. II C 7 (c.1417).
- 12) MS Hradec Králové Mus. Reg. II A 1 (end XV c), II A 2 (c. 1470) II A 3 & II A 4 (1470) and II A 6 (1505).
- 13) MS Mladá Boleslav Mus. Reg. I/70a olim II A 1 (end XV c).
- 14) MS Louny Arch. Reg (1530).
- 15) MS Klatovy Mus. Reg. Kl. 403 (1537) and Kl. 1 (1560).
- 16) MS Prague Bib. Nat. XIV A 1 (1470).
- 17) MS Chrudim Mus. Reg. sine sig (1530).
- 18) MS Jindřichův Hradec Arch. Nat. 1 (1491).
- 19) MS Vienna ÖNB 15 492 (1495) and 15 501 (c. 1490) respectively.

All of this complicates the study of utraquist liturgy to no end, as the usual pegs for periodization simply do not appear to exist. At the same time, canonical legislation is of a generally conservative nature and tends to reenforce traditional practices rather than give approbation to innovations. From that we might conclude either that liturgical matters were of such a sensitive nature that they would not become a matter of synodical debate unless it was clear that something was getting out of hand or that liturgical pluralism was seen as one of utraquism's strengths and, therefore, not subject to restrictive legislation.

The study is further complicated by the absence of any catalogue of utraquist liturgical manuscripts (a lacuna I am now engaged in filling) as well as a general imbalance in types of manuscripts extant. Graduals and antiphonals are, for example, relatively plentiful, while I have discovered only one missal (and that a mutilated text). I have yet to find either a ritual or processional clearly designed for utraquist use. I do not expect that there ever was an utraquist pontifical.

All that said, there are observations that can be made about liturgical evolution within utraquism. I would like to make some tentative forays into this field.

The Eucharist:

As I mentioned earlier, I know of only one utraquist missal²⁰ and it has been mutilated so that it contains only the propers. It represents a conservative use within the tradition (the MS dates from the second half of the XVc.) as it retains Latin for the variable prayers and Czech only for the liturgical epistles and gospels - a canonical minimum for vernacularization (along with the creed) at least according to the Canons of the St. James' Synod of 1434²¹. Our knowledge of utraquist eucharistic practice must be gleaned from graduals and hymnaries.

What is significant in utraquist eucharistic practice is the evolution from the mediaeval shape of the rite in which all was prescribed to one in which much more choice was possible. This centres primarily around the increasingly permissive use of hymnody as a substitute for the traditional psalmody. The gradual, offertory and *communio* are, in many manuscripts, at first replaced by specific hymns either cited in full or by incipit. Later, the choice of hymnody was left entirely in the hands of the priest or master of the choir, who could choose from an ever-increasing corpus of Czech or Latin hymns

20) MS Prague Bib. Mus. Nat. IV B 6.

21) MS Prague BN XVII A 16 f.56a-b. As the ordinary is missing from this MS, we do not know whether or not the creed was in Czech or Latin. Certainly the number of graduals from decades after 1434 with the creed in Latin would give us no confidence in speculating on the language of the creed in this particular MS or the extent to which these or similar canons were observed in many utraquist parishes.

which were bound either with the gradual or, separately, as a true kancionál. While viewed from the last years of the XXc., this evolution may seem insignificant, it is, from a liturgical point of view, a significant development. On the other hand, it is interesting to note that the utraquists seem to have felt no need to heed Trent's suppression of all but four of the mediaeval sequences or prosae. Thus, that rich corpus of music remained in the utraquist tradition until the defeat at the White Mountain.

The Office:

The Bohemian reformers, unlike all but the Anglican reformers of the XVIc., assumed that the daily office would constitute an ongoing part of the life of the Church and its observation was enjoined synodically in 1421²² and 1434²³. Initially, at least in those places which could muster sufficient clergy, the daily round of seven sung offices was assumed. In time, however, the number of communities where this could take place diminished greatly or disappeared altogether.²⁴ While one can postulate from the utraquist emendations to the printed breviary of 1492 that, at least some, clergy continued to recite all or most of the offices daily, the manuscript evidence would lead us to conclude that, by the early XVIc., the only sung office regularly observed was vespers. Sundays and major Holy Days are usually provided with I and II Vespers, occasionally Matins and, only very rarely, with the other offices with Lent standing out as a period of heightened religious activity. In a church which was not defined in clerical terms, this balanced regimen between office and eucharist must count as a serious pastoral reform of the liturgy.

The Pastoral Offices:

Because I have not yet been able to discover a manuscript Ritual designed specifically for utraquist use, what we can say about the celebration of the pastoral offices (baptism, penance, confirmation, marriage and the anointing of the sick) must be drawn from other sources. Here we must rely on canonical sources as well as what we can determine from indirect sources, particularly illuminations. These two sources give us quite different impressions. The canons, because they are often hammered out in the light of

22) F.M. Procházka, *Miscellaneen de Böhmischen und Märischen Litteratur*, Prague 1784, 303.

23) Blanka Žilynská, *Husitské Synody v Čechách 1418-1440*, Prague 1985, 114.

24) The ecclesiastical fabric suffered badly during the utraquist period. It is estimated that there were 1,200 clerics in Prague around the year 1400 and only 200 a century later. Country parishes which had three priests before the calixtine period were reduced to one. Cf. Frantisek Smahel, "A l'aube de l'idée oecumenique: la réforme hussite entre occident et orient", in: *L'Église et le peuple chrétien dans les pays de l'Europe du centre-est et du nord (XIV^e - XV^e siècles)* (Collection de l'École Française de Rome 120), Rome 1990, 277. The effect of this diminuation of the clergy on the pattern of liturgical life - particularly on the sung office - would have been enormous.

demands for more radical reform, tend to be conservative in that they defend the legitimacy of the inherited tradition. In baptism, for example, the consecration of the water, the use of oil and chrism as well as the continuation of godparents is repeatedly defended in the canons. Similarly, the anointing of the sick, which was a frequent subject of attack, is supported by the canons over a long period of time. From a reading of the canons, one could expect these practices to have continued much as they always had. Yet when they are pictured in illuminations, they appear to have been the subject of a fairly radical reform. In Roman Catholic manuscripts of the late middle ages, the office for the dead, for example, often depicts the commendation of the dying with clerics vested in copes reading the office of the dying attended by deacons vested in dalmatics or servers in surplices holding the oil of the sick, an aspergillum and a thurible. The parallel illustration in the St. Mark's Gradual²⁵ (1532) shows a man being laid out in grave clothes while his wife and a friend look on, overcome by grief. In the foreground six clerics habited only in academic (or perhaps choir) dress sing the office of the dead. Here we have a clear break from the mediaeval ritual tradition, knowledge of which, at present, is accessible to us only in this second-hand manner. There is clearly much work to be done before definitive statements can be made about utraquist practice in these areas of pastoral liturgy.

The Liturgical Year:

The celebration of both the *temporale* and the *sanctorale* illustrate the conservative nature of utraquism as well as its readiness to incorporate new developments. The *temporale* remains generally faithful to mediaeval use. Yet modern feasts like those of the Lance of the Lord, the Transfiguration and the Visitation often, but not always, found their way into utraquist liturgical texts. There are, however, some otherwise unheard of innovations: the designation of the propers for Pentecost XXII, for example, as *Domenica pro peccatis* in the Jistebnický Gradual.²⁶

The sanctorale shows more signs of development. While the large graduale and antiphonale of the XVc. have much in common with their Roman Catholic homologues in the sense that they witness to a rich appreciation of the communion of saints, there are clear signs of a calendar in the process of reform. When calendars are pared of names, those that are first to go are those of monastics. This is not surprising in a church that was virulently anti-monastic. Martyrs were highly favoured to remain. Again, this is not surprising in a church where the living memory of those who had paid with their lives either in Constance or at the hands of catholic crusaders played such a significant rôle in the utraquist church's very existence. In the most

25) MS New York, St. Mark's Library, The General Seminary, f. 209b.

26) MS Prague, Mus. Nat. XII F 14 f. 56.

skeletal calendars the names commemorated are generally biblical figures, to which are added some of the most popular women saints of the late middle ages (Barbara, Margaret of Antioch, Catherine of Alexandria, Dorothy, Cecelia, Ursula and Lucy). While the former adumbrates later Anglican and Lutheran reforms, it is significant that the Bohemian reforms do not bear the naïve biblicism which was the foundational premise of later calendrical reforms in Germany and England.

The most significant reform of the *sanctorale* was, of course, the elevation of Jan Hus, Jerome of Prague and the Bohemian Martyrs to the altar and the celebration of their collective feast on 6 July. This commemoration, which appears to have been observed from the time of the first anniversary of Hus' death, became, for some, the touchstone of utraquism's will to remain in communion with Rome. Jan Rokycana, for example, seems to have felt himself unable to observe the feast until Pius II unilaterally repealed the *Compactata*.²⁷ While the feast produced a wealth of liturgical material²⁸, its observance was by no means universal. Propers for the feast are contained in some of the most conservative MSS (where they would be least expected) and not in some of those more obviously 'hussite' in spirit, where their presence might be more natural. As a feast it was kept both by communities who used Czech and by those that used Latin as their liturgical language. I have yet to be able to discern the criteria for who did and did not keep the feast. None of the obvious correlates have yet made sense in determining which communities observed this feast.

One of the interesting evolutions to be found in the *sanctorale* is the evolution of doctrine on the rôle played by the intercession of the saints. This certainly was a major issue in the early debates between Prague and Tábor which, for the Praguers, was settled by affirming the traditional doctrine that permitted the invocation of the intercession of the saints. On the principle of *lex credendi lex orandi*, this was reflected in the liturgical texts. Later, perhaps under the influence of more reformed churches (because the changes were made in the XVIc.) or because of an internal evolution of doctrine within some utraquist communities, liturgical texts were emended to reflect a new theological position which no longer invoked the intercession of the saints. This can be found in both the Kolín Gradual²⁹ and the St. Mark's Gradual in New York.³⁰ While this is one of the most conspicuous examples

27) F. M. Bartos, *The Hussite Revolution 1424-1437* (East European Monographs 203), Boulder 1986, 157.

28) See: Jana Fojtková, "Hudební doklady Husova kultu z 15. a 16. století", *Miscellanea Musicologica* 29, 1981, 51-142 and my "The Office of Jan Hus: An Unrecorded Antiphonary in the Metropolitan Library of Estergom", in: J. Neil Alexander, (ed.) *Time and Community*, Washington 1990, 137-152.

29) MS Prague Mus. Nat XII A 25.

30) For example in the Kolín Gradual on Easter Eve (f. 112) the text "Ora primum tu pro nobis virgo maria" is erased and a new (illegible) text inserted. On the Conversion of S.

of doctrinal change in the MSS, it represents a rarity in the MSS tradition as a whole and, again, seems to point to the pluralism that was allowed within utraquist liturgical life.

Conclusion:

Those looking for sudden and dramatic changes in liturgical use will likely be disappointed by this study.³¹ In the history of liturgy, sudden and dramatic shifts in liturgical use are generally restricted to the XVI c. and to the last thirty years of our own century. While the evolution in utraquist liturgical use might appear to pale in the light of the reforms of the Second Reformation, I would suggest that that is a false standard by which to judge. Those looking for that sort of radicalism can find it (and more) by looking to Tábtor and its liturgical deconstruction. In the XVc., when Czechs were presented with the possibility of Tábtorite radicalism as a way towards liturgical reform, most chose a more catholic-looking reformation. A century later, when again faced with the possibility of more radical options for liturgical reform with the incursion of German Lutheranism into the Czech lands, Czechs chose to remain faithful to their own reformation rather than join its foreign homologue.³²

Liturgical change, at the best of times, is not a popular exercise. Historically, it is generally imposed from the top on a laity that is often cool to the idea if not actually fractious. The Bohemian Reformation gives us a model of a different sort of liturgical evolution, one that appears to have been both popular and moderate. But, most important of all, one that tolerated an otherwise-unknown degree of pluralism in liturgical use. It has taken most churches another five hundred years to discover that this might be another way forward in their own reformation of liturgical texts. If heeded earlier, they might have made many of the monuments to the religious terrorism of the Counter-reformation which dot the face of Bohemia unnecessary.

Paul (f. 169b-170) the text "Tu es vas electionis sancte Paule apostole gencium doctor 'pro omnibus nobis ora deum qui te elegit' has been changed to 'ut praedices Christum salvatorem omnium'." Again, on the Assumption (f. 246) the prose has been changed so that "Tibi suam manifestatem. . .implorans 'Maria' becomes 'Iesu Christe'. In the Stabat mater (f.285) there are a whole series of changes including: "Eya Mater" to "Eya Christe" and "Sancta Mater" to "Deus Pater".

- 31) This paper is little more than a progress report on a much more extensive project on the evolution of sacramental and liturgical life in Bohemia between the mid-XIV c. and the White Mountain.
- 32) Cf. F. Smahel, *o.c.* 283.

RESUMÉ

Vývoj utrakvistické liturgie: Předchůdce západní reformy liturgie

Tématem kongresu SVU, konaného v červnu 1992 v Praze, byl přínos Československa evropské kultuře. Jeden z těchto příspěvků evropské kultuře, který je obecně opomíjen, má svůj počátek v historii utrakvistické reformy liturgie. Zatímco svět všeobecně zná Jana Husa, restauraci kalicha a počátky radikální reformace za Petra Chelčického, velmi malá pozornost byla věnována reformám liturgie a svátostí, které se v zemích Koruny české odehrávaly v období od poloviny 14. století do bělohorské porážky.

Počínaje hnutím týkajícím se svátostí, které jako první obnovilo úřední postavení přijímání pro eucharistický život české církve (a díky tomu nejradikálnějšího hnutí týkajícího se svátostí ve středověké Evropě), kalich a přijímání všech pokřtěných následovalo jako logický a přirozený důsledek tohoto vývoje. Na základě výše zmíněného obnovení bohoslužebného života se rozšířilo hnutí za reformu liturgie, které bylo ve svém zaměření překvapivě moderní. Téměř jedno a půl století před druhou reformací šestnáctého století se začaly uskutečňovat pokusy s převáděním liturgie do národního jazyka. Tyto pak začaly nabývat na intenzitě po Husově smrti v Kostnici.

To, co je na těchto reformách pozoruhodné na rozdíl od reforem jak protestantských reformátorů tak jejich tridentských odpůrců v XVI. století, je skutečnost, že se neřídily žádným jasně formulovaným postupem. Zdá se, že jednotlivým komunitám bylo dovoleno, aby si zvolily rychlost, s jakou se připravovaly reformovat svůj liturgický život. Pro některé to znamenalo rychlý přechod na českou liturgii a opuštění tradičních forem; pro jiné to znamenalo zachování středověkého latinského ritu dokonce i po jeho reformě na Tridentském koncilu, a ještě pro jiné komunity to znamenalo postupné převádění liturgie do národního jazyka při současném zachovávání mnoha latinských středověkých textů a tradic.

Pro současné badatele jsou kališnické Čechy mikrokosmem, v jehož rámci je možné sledovat proces vývoje liturgie jiným způsobem, než je kontext nabízený jak stoletím šestnáctým tak radikálními reformami liturgie mnoha církví během minulých třiceti let. Popularita vývoje v Čechách (jak je dosvědčena také extrémními prostředky použitými protireformací k jeho vykořenění po Bílé hoře), jeho umírněnost a tolerance vůči odjinud neznámému stupni plurality v liturgické praxi, činí z tohoto fenoménu významný model pro církve dnešních dnů, které usilují o reformu liturgie.

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