


Two Speeds: Time of Three Opera and Time of Users

Dos velocidades: el tiempo de las tres óperas y el tiempo de los usuarios

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ABSTRACT

The form of faith is a living form, starting from a *Urform*, according to an aesthetics manner. Art and architecture have the same virtual capacity of ritual to create the counterintuitive world. We have two ways of transmitting faith: *repetition* and *emotion*. *Repetition* is the form of the ritual and *emotion* is what all the three *opera* must have in common. Liturgy, Art and Architecture are understood as *opus*. There is a temporal relationship between vital becoming of this three *opera* and the user. Forms change over time and they should continue communicating on the basis of a positive relationship with users. In the Italian context there is a fracture between some users and the making of the form. The fracture needs to be reconciled through an appropriate education of principals and worshippers. The methodological process for Alberto Gianfreda's liturgical adaptation of Tolentini's church in Venice is brought to attention.

KEYWORDS

Opera, Repetition, Emotion, Alberto Gianfreda, Tolentini

RESUMEN

La forma de la fe es una forma viva que comienza desde una *Urform*, de acuerdo con una forma estética. El arte y la arquitectura tienen la misma capacidad virtual de ritual para crear el mundo contraintuitivo. Tenemos dos formas de transmitir fe: *repetición* y *emoción*. La *repetición* es la forma de ritual y la *emoción* es lo que las tres *óperas* deben tener en común. Liturgia, Arte y Arquitectura se entienden como *opus*. Existe una relación temporal entre la transformación vital de estas *ópera* y el usuario. Las formas cambian con el tiempo y deben continuar comunicándose en función de una relación positiva con los usuarios. En el contexto italiano, hay una fractura entre algunos usuarios y la realización del formulario. La fractura necesita ser reconciliada a través de la educación adecuada de fieles y líderes. Se destaca el proceso metodológico para la adaptación litúrgica de la iglesia de los padres tolentinos, en Venecia, realizada por Alberto Gianfreda.

PALABRAS CLAVE

Opera, repetición, emoción, Alberto Gianfreda, tolentinos

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INTRODUCTION

In the project of liturgical adaptation of the church of St. Nicola from Tolentino, the issues concern the form and the positioning of the places in respect of both the liturgical reform and the extraordinary sacred space. The two issues are inseparable and both deserve the same respect. The risk otherwise is to operate in a merely functional or *artistic* way without taking into due consideration the meaning of the space under examination and its parts. They are regarded as in close relationship with *repetition* and *emotion*, respectively *tradition* and a *living form*.

Faith, ritual, art and architecture

The form of faith is a *Gestaltung*, a living form, always in the making, starting from an unmodified and unmodifiable Urform. The form of faith is the ritual itself and it is closely connected to time in the liturgy according to its initiatory dynamic and its temporal-eschatological directionality. As a twine of sensitivity and action, which is a ritual, the form of faith is an aesthetic form.

The ritual has always to do with a transformation that takes place in «betwixt and between» (Turner 1967, 93-111) temporal space, defined as liminal. *Liminality* means the middle phase in which the transformative performance of the ritual takes place. The liminal experience, constitutive of the religious experience itself, is a *living through*, a journey between transcendence and immanence.¹ Aldo Terrin asserts that the meaning of liminality «is the ultimate root and in some way the *conditio sine qua non* of religious experience itself and of its linguistic-symbolic explication» (Terrin 2014, 19). Liminality has always to deal with a material passage and therefore with space. In this transformative-liminal phase of the ritual there is the metaphorical language. This is the only capable of expressing living in a *betwixt and between*, it allows us to say what would otherwise not be possible and to unite what could not be together. Terrin thus expresses his thesis on metaphorical language in liminality: «Liminality is semantically linked to *marginality*, marginality is one step away from *dualism* and dualism is enriched with a symbolic and metaphorical discourse, which in the end turns out to be like the grounds of the very possibility

of speaking of *another world*» (Terrin 2014, 19). In one study, Williams and Boyd (2008) have dealt with ritual liminality and the virtual in art, starting from Susanne Langer's theories. The Scholar defines architecture as a plastic art that achieves an illusion and has to deal with the created space, a virtual entity. Architecture, when it is not strictly linked to functionality, as in the case of sacred spaces, creates a world or a microcosm different from everyday life. It enables us to live in the reality it creates. Sacred space is in fact a construction of a virtual space and real space together (Langer 1953). The parts and objects, which constitute and *fill* space, have a symbolic function (Langer 1953), as those represented in a painting.² It can make us feel as under a sky, which is actually a dome, but we will feel ourselves *covered* by paradise. The metaphorical language of the liminal phase works as a *virtual capacity* of art, according to Langer. This capacity only increases the effectiveness of the liminal phase by producing an *other* world that *re-structure* participants by transforming them.

Art has an augmentative power over efficacy, participating totally and actively in ritual performance and not simply being an accessory. Thus, art and architecture possess the same *virtual capacity* of the ritual of creating the counterintuitive world through the same symbolic-metaphorical language.³ In the ritual context, art and architecture do not have a didactic function but a performative one. They determine the effectiveness of the liturgical action. The link between the three *opera*⁴ is therefore very close, since it is based on the same capacity. From the theological-liturgical point of view, Bonaccorso notes that the harmony between art and liturgy is not to be found in the binomial God-beauty, but in the aesthetic modality with which the man experiences beauty and God (Bonaccorso 2013). Also for Sequeri there is a thread that unites aesthetic conscience, ethical conscience and believing conscience, since they are

... tied by an intrinsic circular link (...) on the one hand, the intuition of the transcendence of fulfilment (that the imaginary untiringly elaborates and proposes again in its elusiveness in all the three dimensions of consciousness), and on the other, the feeling of the unavoidable symbolic density

of every perception (that the emotion, namely the universe of the resonance of every experience, brings to light in terms always irreducibles in the dimension of words, gestures and representations) (Sequeri 1993, 12).⁵

THE THREE *OPERA* AND TIME

There is also a historicity of the forms which usually change liturgy, art and architecture. If ritual is characterized by fixedness, which allows the repeatability, it will necessarily undergo mutations over time. In the ritual «there are possibilities for, and even demands for, variation within the most invariant of liturgical orders» (Rappaport 1992, 37), although the change does not concern the original canonical elements, but the possible variations, which are to be considered as responses to external disturbances to the system (historical, social, cultural) (Comiati and Leto 2011). If canonicity is necessary, which allows us to maintain the tradition and continuity in time, it will be also true that «the ritual contains in itself a non-negligible capacity for variation» (Leto 2017a, 136). Anthropologists never put the concept of absolute immutability into the definitions of ritual. Indeed, Tambiah observes that the ritual «oscillates in historical time between the poles of *ossification* and *revitalism*. All the substantive features which nourish the formalism of ritual also conspire to empty it of meaning over time» (Tambiah 1985, 165-166).

We can observe the form of the Rite of Penance which has changed radically over time, or analyze the eucological texts, their modifications in liturgical books, or the choice of biblical pericopes, the creation and then the abolition of some literary liturgical forms and related books and much more. The same applies to architecture, not only from the point of view of style, which has changed over time, but also for what concerns the different affordability of space. That is the invention of some liturgical places, changed in shape and position in time, until the disappearance and then the subsequent recovery, as happened at the ambo. Even the figurative Arts have changed stylistically over time, but above all there has been a change of paradigm. We have gone from a figurative art, of the first twelve centuries, which

make «present the true reality which is the transcendent reality of the represented divine» (Zanchi 2018b, 137), to the Tridentine and post-Tridentine images, which represent «the true reality which is that immersed in the space and time of the earthly world» (Zanchi 2018b, 138).

There is therefore a temporal relationship between the vital becoming of the three *opera* and the user. Quoting Ferdinand Lion, Dorfles writes:

The aesthetic form becomes the complex game with which the past both preserves and opens the path towards future in the historical irreversibility (Dorfles 2011, 151).

He goes on speaking of an «indispensable awareness of the Erlebnis of time both by the creator and the user of the artistic work» (Dorfles 2011, 155). The forms therefore change over time and should continue to communicate according to a positive relationship with the user, since the works of man, nature and art can be traced back to the same *becoming* (Dorfles 2011).

Symbolic language is common to art, liturgy and architecture (of sacred spaces). In the three *opera* we have to pursue the form that is capable of bringing a religious experience to life. The cultural anthropology, in relation to neuroscience, shows that there are two ways of transmitting faith: *repetition* and *emotional simulation* (Pyysiäinen 2003). *Repetition* is the form par excellence of ritual and *emotion* and it is what all three *opera* must have in common. *Repetition* is what maintains the link with the past. *Emotion* is what helps to keep it alive, namely, a living form. Liturgy, art and architecture are also types of communication within a specific form. In the ritual there is verbal communication, communication of symbols (as in art and architecture). It is also a multi-dimensional and polycontextual communication and this, based on the fact that it presents itself as *frozen* autopoiesis of communication,⁶ does not only dependent on *subjects*, but also on *forms* (Thomas 2008). The form of ritual is a fundamental and unavoidable element, characterized by the *repetition* and closely connected to time.⁷ Our liturgy has developed across time (Smith 1992),⁸ and the ritual can create temporal

orders (Rappaport 1999) and replicate in churches peculiar temporal events (Thomas 2008). For example, the command of Jesus given at the Last Supper is inextricably linked to his death and resurrection. Based on this, a symbolic *map* becomes a real territory (Thomas 2008). In this symbolized spreading *across* time rituals contribute to the invention of tradition (Thomas 2008).

With regards to *emotion*, we know that it plays an important role in the transmission of religious ideas.⁹ These ideas are always involved in religious experience and therefore also in rituals: «Ritual implies emotions and on the another side produces emotions, and these same emotions undergo transformations» (Bonaccorso 2015, 144). Returning to art, Langer states that it is «the creation of forms symbolic of human feeling» (Langer 1942, 40) and the symbolization of feelings has to do with the so-called non-discursive symbolism which symbolizes a certain aspect of human feeling by repeating patterns of the life of feeling in an abstract form. Langer then adds that the symbols which are the closest to those of art are those of myth, ritual and metaphor (Langer 1942). If art and ritual create symbolic forms of human feeling, it is necessary to investigate the relationship between *emotions* and feelings. *Emotions* are changes of the body and can be of two types: primary and innate emotions and secondary emotions, definable as involuntary responses to conscious manipulations of images. He then defines feelings as a conscious experience of an emotion and the underlying feelings between emotions which are of a bodily nature (Damasio 1996). So what unites the three *opera*¹⁰ are the symbolized feelings, which make the shape of each *opus* vital and therefore put them in the becoming of time. Thus liturgy, architecture and art, when interconnected, are attractive to the user if they implement mechanisms related to *repetition* and *emotion*. In other words it means having a link with *tradition* and being able to create emotions. We, thus, should ask ourselves what ritual, space and art cause in man (Leto 2017b). The implications between ritual and emotions have been studied from different

points of view. Within the ritual, emotions can be communicated, transformed and recalled by rituals themselves, and they can give life to other rituals. *Emotions* within the ritual framework are neither simply preexisting nor simply resultant. They are both inherent in the ritual and constantly recreated or strengthened in the same process (Lüddeckens 2008). On an architectural level, it is not the contents of a space themselves that must be *built*, but the architectural forms which can give the possibility of having a religious experience, which is emotional, and which can also operate, in the participant, a transformation (Leto 2017b). As for art, a lot of writing has been made. Dorothea Lüddeckens states that ritual performance is combined with the available emotions through the use of certain symbols. Starting symbols and emotions can be linked to other emotions by transmitting unexpected messages.

Furthermore, it is possible for rituals to take up symbols from a plurality of sensory levels in a system of symbols and to exploit them emotionally (Lüddeckens 2008). Therefore if the ritual space is able to influence different sensory levels, that contribute to an emotional and, therefore, immersive increase of the ritual itself. The built sacred space develops positive emotions and, therefore, pleasant. Pleasure in a biological sense is not a sensation, but the result of a system that, by responding to environmental stimuli, evaluates and codifies the subjective and emotional value of pleasure and pain.¹¹ If dwelling a certain sacred space causes pleasure, a preconscious positive emotion will emerge. In fact in the aesthetic experience is involved the hedonic circuit (Mallgrave 2013). Thus, the worshipper who experience a positive emotion in a space with certain works of art will be induced to return. If you add a positive emotion given by the liturgy performed, the positive experience of space will only add up to it. If the space is designed taking into account the men who will dwell it, based on the human behavioral needs of gathering and participating, it will also be possible to strengthen the sense of belonging of that community.¹²



THE FRACTURE IN THE ITALIAN CONTEXT: AN ISSUE OF TIME

The aesthetic experience, that involves the aesthetic pleasure, depends also on the cultural level. A study shows us how, in the specific field of architecture, «expertise not only modulates cognitive processing, but also modulates the response in reward related brain areas» (Kirk and others 2008, 307). The response of an architect's reward system to an architectural space is different from the one of who has not had specific training.

This is one of the causes of the issue of the Italian context in which there is a showy fracture between part of the users and the becoming of the form of art and architecture (Santi 2017; Zanchi 2014 and 2018a). In an article Zanchi makes a lucid synthesis of the problem:

The aesthetic sensibility that dominates the basic Christian life, for which Picasso and Matisse are at the maximum of the frontier of the contemporary (...) is indeed a reflection of a believing culture that on average it is abundantly below, in terms of knowledge and skills, of the average civil culture (Zanchi 2014, 4).

Moreover, the form of the *opera* is historically frozen on the Tridentine model. During the International Liturgical Convention of Bose in 2012, Albert Gerhards, to summarize the work, observed:

Some courageous liturgical transformations of ancient churches which in many countries, for example in Austria, have been accepted for a long time, in other countries often remain the devout wish of some experts and enthusiasts (Gerhards 2013b, 262).

Among these other countries we can certainly count Italy.

We have to consider that the issue of cultural *education* in the field of contemporary art and architecture does not exclusively concern the liturgical field.

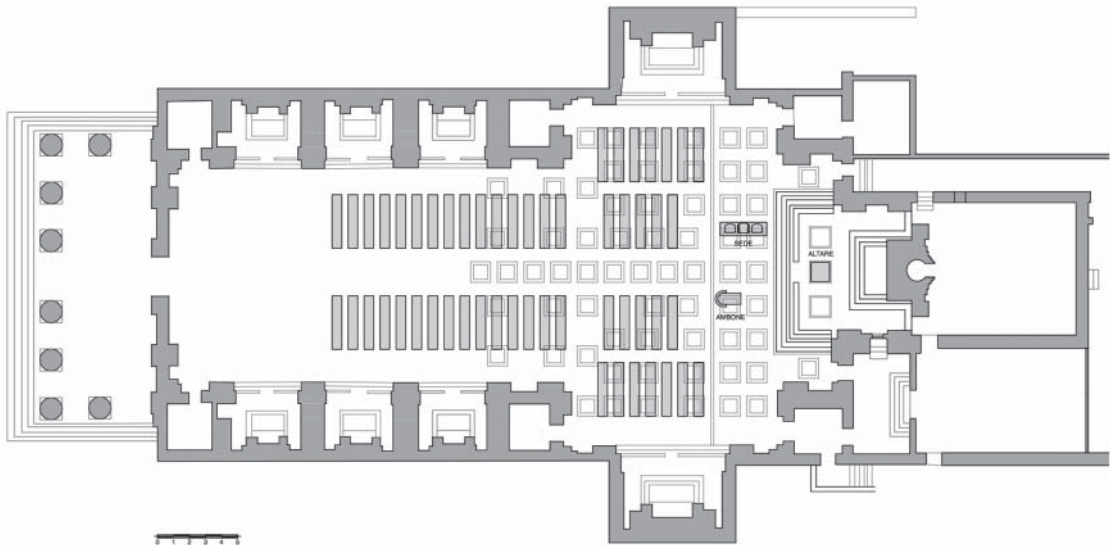
The average Italian, among whom I insert graduates, at the sight of an image of the LC4 chaise-longue by Le Corbusier, at the request of setting a date, replies that it is a contemporary piece of art. Some Italian examples (Galleria San Fedele in Milan, Museo Bernareggi in Bergamo, the Lercaro collection in Bologna) show that it is possible to start a path for the diffusion of a certain culture in the artistic-architectural field. I think that many diocesan museums could do that. After being released from the only task of conservation, they should begin to focus on promotion. But we return to the need for adequate training for the directors of these museums, the principals and the worshippers, otherwise we will continue to have removals of works already placed, biting battles and we will continue to ask ourselves:

Why no one is offended by the junk that disfigures our churches? If the ecclesial world speaks of beauty as a gateway to the divine, it is not clear why *ugliness* and *bad taste* are promoted (Dall'Asta 2013, 72).¹³

THE ADAPTATION OF THE TOLENTINI'S CHURCH: HOW TO RECONCILE THE DIFFERENT TIMES

The adaptation project in question was included in the exhibition, *A.R.T.*, Advanced Refrigeration Technology: Nutrition and conservation of art, promoted by the Office of Pastoral Care of Culture and the University of the Patriarchate of Venice and by the Department of Art and Anthropology of the Sacred of Academy of Brera. It was a cross-project between Milan and Venice which, in line with the themes of Expo 2015 and Biennale d'Arte, focused its attention on the anthropological and spiritual implications of food. The exhibition *A.R.T.*, by Prof. Andrea Del Guercio, collocated at the church of S. Andrea della Zirada, was placed in an exhibition project between Milan and Venice, which involved several locations, 36 artists, including 9 masters of Contemporary Art and 11 young people. In Venice among multiple locations the Tolentini church (Fig. 01) was chosen to collocate site-specific works with a *permanent* character.¹⁴

Fig. 01-02. Vincenzo Scamozzi y Andrea Tirali, San Nicola da Tolentino, Venice (Italy), 1590-1714



The sculptor to whom the task was assigned is Alberto Gianfreda, with my collaboration as liturgist and architect, together with the precious contribution of the architect Giovanna Ferrari.

The church is part of a pastoral unit that also includes the church of San Pantalon and therefore our direct principals were Rev. Gilberto Sabbadin and Rev. Marco Scarpa. In 2012 the acquaintance and the collaboration with Marco Scarpa, who at the time was still alone with the two parishes, begun. He had me appointed with Rev. Gaetano Comiati and the artist Father Vittorio Buset for the liturgical adaptation of the church of S. Pantalon. Lately this adaptation has been unfortunately modified in the placement of the liturgical places according to that bad habit that implies that the new appointee in a parish, often even without considering the paths made with the community and the desire of the same, modifies what he finds. The provisional adjustment with some recycled materials was already under discussion since then. There was therefore a long time of experimentation in both churches. When the first one was over, we turned to the Tolentini to find a solution together. We discussed and experimented and the community was directly involved in the choices because it was invited to celebrate also according to spatial relationships between people and the place, between people and places, between the places and the spaces in which they are immersed, which is among the people themselves.

The building has an important historical-artistic evidence with which we must confront before starting any thoughts of design. Between 1591 and 1602, Theatines built the church of Tolentini designed by the architect Vincenzo Scamozzi.¹⁵ Later, between 1706 and 1714, it was completed with the facade designed by Andrea Tirali. The interior is extraordinarily rich in stucco ornaments, frescoes and canvases arranged

along the walls. The main altar of the church was erected and completed in 1672 on a design by the architect Baldassare Longhena. The sculptural apparatus is a work by the young sculptor Giusto Le Court. The tomb of the Patriarch Gianfrancesco Morosini (1678), by Filippo Parodi, is placed on the left wall of the presbytery with statues and a marble ark. The floor of the church is a large cemetery for nobles and common people together, with over one hundred and nine earthy tombs (Fig. 02).

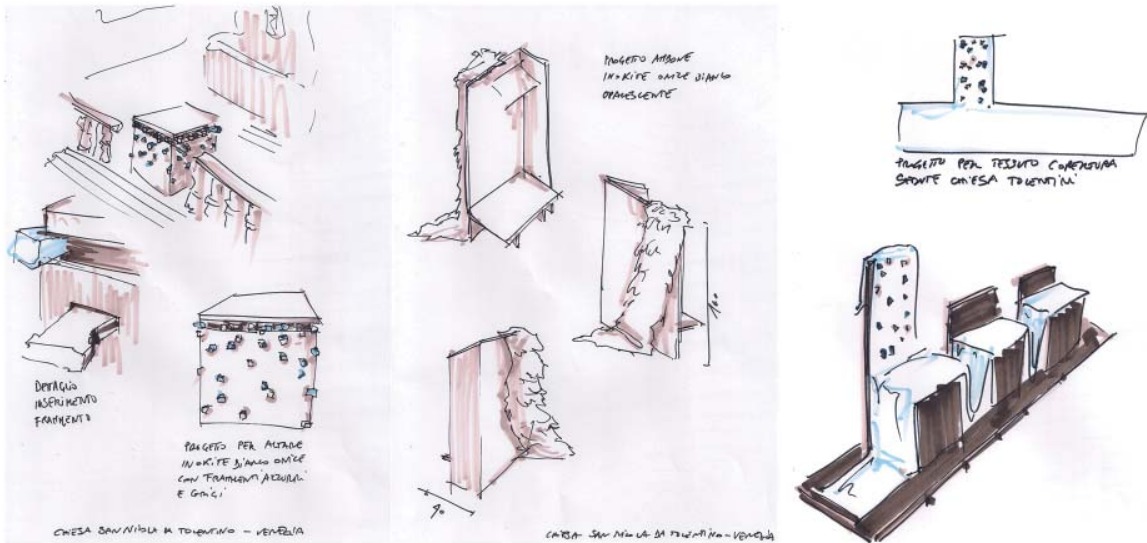
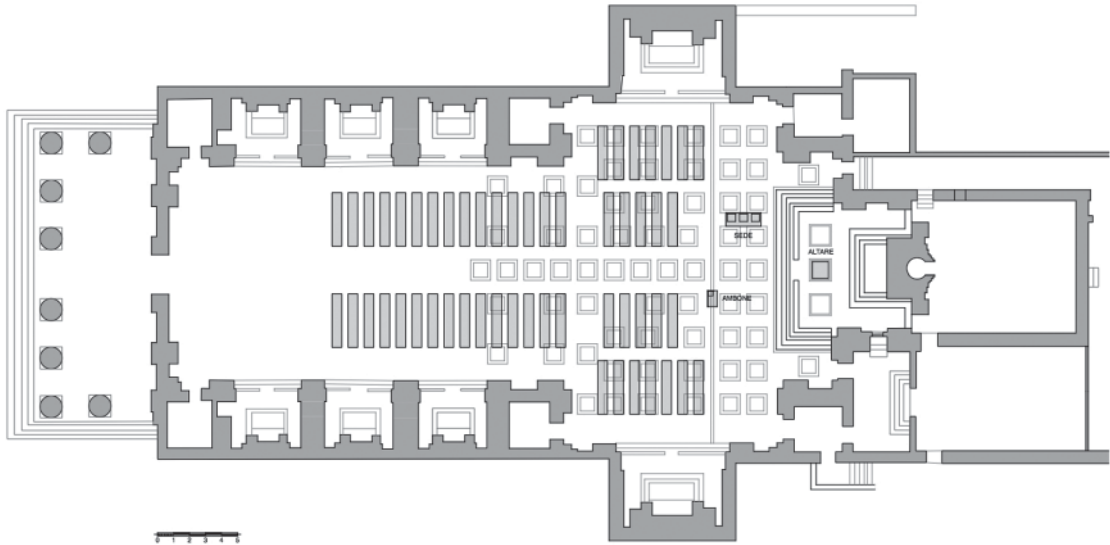
Once the historical, artistic and architectural analysis of the place was done, the study on the spatial arrangement of liturgical sites began with the enlightened client and with the collaboration of the architect Rev. Gianmatteo Caputo, Delegate of the Diocesan Office for Ecclesiastical Cultural Heritage. It is necessary to specify that in Venice it is not possible to make definitive adaptations, with the meaning of non-removable and transformable without being able to return to the *original* situation, where by *original* we mean that of the state of fact. Because of this, the present project still has the value of *provisional*,¹⁶ with the meaning of not definitive by virtue of its not absolute and unsurpassable stability. But it goes far beyond the improvised, in a form that has characterized the temporary solution, which unfortunately most of the churches still share. In spite of this non-finality (which is anyway ephemeral in any case), every project must in any case be subject to the approval of the Superintendency.¹⁷

The Pastoral Note of Italian Episcopal Conference on the adaptation of churches immediately introduces three criteria which in my opinion should be the guiding light of every intervention:

«The conservation effort, the search for adaptation to new needs and the promotion of new works corresponding to the nature of each age». Furthermore among the criteria: *Creativity and conservation, adaptation in safeguard* (Conferenza Episcopale Italiana 1996). So we observe that neither it is about revolution and break with the liturgical and historic-artistic tradition, nor with conservatism and archeologism fixed in immovable positions. When working in a space of strong historic and artistic value, it is necessary to place oneself in the «develop-

Fig. 03. Alberto Gianfreda and Francesca Leto, San Nicola da Tolentino, Venice (Italy), 2016; first plain of provisional liturgical adaptation.

Fig. 04. Alberto Gianfreda and Francesca Leto, San Nicola da Tolentino, Venice (Italy), 2016; first provisional liturgical adaptation.



ment of the original project» (Tagliaferri 2017, 151). It is also necessary to work with an adaptament that

should consist in the almost imperceptible delicacy of the transformations, so that the ancient space continues to transmit a vibration of sacred presence for a reformed rite that does not want to distort for the taste of the new, but to make the sacramental efficacy of the liturgy more productive and participatory (Tagliaferri 2017, 152).

A previous provisional adaptament had seen the introduction of a large platform, covered in carpet, placed in front of the balustrades on which the various liturgical places were arranged precariously and provisionally.

This kind of solution that we could define as proxemic-functionalism reduces the adaptament to the conciliar reform to questions regarding the distance altar-people, to a certain «ecclesiocentrism» (Tagliaferri 2017, 151) and to the simplistic collocation of the «all together and everything close» for that anti-ritual concept that characterized the immediate post-conciliar period.¹⁸ This type of approach completely forgets the initiatory and eschatological dimension of space, reducing everything to the relationships between men, who forget the theandric nature of the liturgy.¹⁹ The original nature of the space was also completely distorted. Then the space of the altar became something else, the symbolism of the apse was reduced and the space under the dome, generated by the intersection of the nave and the transept, was distorted. I consider lucid Giuliano Zanchi's recent observation:

The altar is not the midpoint of the assembly. In fact, inscribed on it there is the eschatological tension to which Christ in the Original Supper refers to the meaning of his gift/sacrifice. The altar therefore gathers and orients (Zanchi 2019, 5).

Fig. 05. Alberto Gianfreda and Francesca Leto, San Nicola da Tolentino, Venice (Italy), 2016; second plain of liturgical adaptament.

Fig. 06. Alberto Gianfreda, San Nicola da Tolentino, Venice (Italy), 2016; study sketches of new liturgical places.

The altar is indeed a center but it has to orient towards the beyond and up (Leto 2017b). The adaptament project places the new altar in the space destined for it, namely the *bema*. This is a raised place towards which all proceed, and it is also the *center*, meaning a place of maximum height of theandric sacramentality, which we overstep with the gaze (Valenziano 2005) while we are turned towards the *beyond* (Fig. 03).

The action of the Spirit, that descends on the offerings, is made almost visible by the *epicletic* line of connection between the ancient ceiling and the new altar. The tension of going up and going through the whole assembly is allowed by the sliding of the eye towards the bottom of the apse from which we wait for the Second Coming of Christ. A funerary inscription on the earthly tomb number 41 reminds us of that eschatological tension: «*Domus secunda donec tertia venerit*» which takes the form of a journey of the people of God in the liturgical space towards the altar, that alludes to the one of the heavenly banquet.

The dome is ideally built around a vertical axis, considered as a space of descent of God between men and as a space from which the man yearns to rise to the sky. This axis shapes the theandric relationship and has to remain empty. The iconographic theme of the vault, *The Glory of Saint Gaetano*, displays the saint welcomed by Christ, is in close connection to the tombs of the worshippers. This connection is there to indicate that one day the dead, through the death and resurrection of the Son, they will be able to become consorts of the divine nature and joint-heirs of glory in the heavens. This is the place that celebrates the resurrection. This place was not designed to collocate the altar, but to let the gaze and therefore the body, by embodied simulation,²⁰ to imagine climbing towards it (Leto 2017b). If «the People of God are joined together primarily by the word of the living God» (*Presbyterorum ordinis* 4), it can be deduced that neither the ambo is trivially comparable to a lectern, nor can it be placed as an insignificant appendage of the bema or of the balustrades, especially within the bema. Tradition has always placed the ambo in the nave/hall as a place around which the



Fig. 07. Alberto Gianfreda and Francesca Leto, San Nicola da Tolentino, Venice (Italy), 2016; interior view of liturgical adaptament.

people gather to hear the announcement of the Risen One. The long experimentation, motivated by competent ministers, has meant that the community reached its present form without any pre-comprehensions with regards to a ritual action that expands space and time. This ritual action, derived from architectural practices and ancient rituals, demands consistency between form and content according to the symbolic way. Between *monument* and *presence* the form of *presence* has been chosen.²¹ A *monument*, as a high place according to the idea of Valenziano, should have had a spatial relationship with considerable dimensions in a space already strongly characterized.



Fig. 08. Alberto Gianfreda, San Nicola da Tolentino, Venice (Italy), 2016; new altar, and antique altar of Baldassare Longhena with Giusto Le Court and ceiling.

Moreover, the ambo would not have been feasible on this floor covered with tombstones. The community has immediately appreciated its proximity despite its very temporary forms of experimentation.

Thus the presbiteral and deacon chairs were placed in front of the ambo, close to the assembly and not in front of it, leaving the altar to be the focal center to which all are directed, including ordained ministers. Ambo and presbiteral chair face each other, leaving the gaze free to slide towards the altar and beyond. At the same time, before meeting them, eyes and body together become aware of their ultimate destination for which everything that happens



Fig. 09. Alberto Gianfreda, San Nicola da Tolentino, Venice (Italy), 2016; new altar in relationship with the tomb of the Patriarch Francesco Morosini, by Filippo Parodi.

in the liturgy and in the sacraments was given to the man by God through the Son with the Holy Spirit (Fig. 04-05). Now, just as the ritual has a symbolic form that becomes *opus*, so it must necessarily be for art and architecture. If so far it has been possible to concretize spatial relationships in the form of *affordances*, now it is the turn of the aesthetic form to become *opus* (Fig. 06).

Alberto Gianfreda's sculpture has given shape to the place of the Eucharistic sinassi and to the one of the announcement of the resurrection (Fig. 07).

The *altar* is characterized by a slight opalescence of the surface, which is able to load the light, that



Fig. 10. Alberto Gianfreda, San Nicola da Tolentino, Venice (Italy), 2016; new ambo.

is a specific characteristic of the chosen material.²² Small pieces of colored, blue and grey material condense on it. The single faces of the altar appear as screens with the dual capacity of projecting towards the celebrating assembly a luminous extension and attracting towards them the wedge-shaped fragments. These are inserted and participate in the brightness of this central pole, becoming a constitutive and decisive part of it. The fragments in fact concentrate themselves towards the upper part of the altar until they are grouped together to create the distinction between *ara* and *table*. The *table* is underlined by a slight detachment that emphasizes the importance of the *table*,

thus reaching the expressive and meaningful apex of this liturgical pole (Fig. 08-09).

The *ambo* contributes to give continuity of meaning with the altar in the use of the same basic material and in the rigor of the form. The image it refers to is that of the empty Sepulchre. A fabric made of a material, which is rigid, stuck and static by nature, becomes lithe and soft, as a memory of a shifted robe, of an angel wing and of a word that extends. Also in this case the disclosure leaves room to a surface of light (Fig. 10).

Both poles, in addition to responding to the liturgical function for which they are designed, are inserted by form, materials, and references, in the complex panorama of the languages of contemporary sculpture (...): the continuous relationship between what is permanent and static (the nature of the sculpture itself and its materials) with respect to the temporary nature of the *things* we live. The sculpture responds by fragmenting and rebuilding itself until it conquers mobility as a potentiality within the materials (Fig. 11).

Instead the *president chair* differs in terms of materials from the places of the word and of the Eucharist to get closer to the assembly. (...) The continuity between the president chair and the other two benches is underlined by a platform which unifies their functions, while the difference of their roles is marked by the different heights of the backrests. The chairs live precisely thanks to the exceptional nature of the function of proximity to the assembly and of guiding it. If wood gives proximity, the fabric, made to cover and adorn them, increases their value. A woven pattern of white, blue and gray covers the three chairs and the back of the celebrant giving him importance (Gianfreda 2019).

CONCLUSION

I believe we can say that we have succeeded in the intent of adapting the place to the liturgy and the liturgy to the place since, as Albert Gerhards says: «The liturgy cannot be celebrated in contrast with the existing space» (Gerhards 2013a, 150). Furthermore, the forms of sculpture find a relation with the sculpture of the context thanks to shapes and colors. Nevertheless the forms of the three *opera* have changed over time, but their becoming has enriched liturgy, architecture and art with new possibilities.

The three *opera* have agreed with the users' feelings, without ever being a limit for each other, but in a perceivable interlacement without being disruptive. I also believe that the two characteristics highlighted at the beginning, namely *repetition* and *emotion*, have been kept in mind, so that the three forms, in their being anchored to tradition, can continue in their vital becoming.

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NOTES

1. This liminal living operates a sort of interruption with everyday life, placing itself as a difference in which a transformation occurs.

2. Both are dissociated from the real space, namely the space of the painting, because what is represented are not physical objects, namely the built space. Therefore, space and objects, their arrangement in it and their relationships, are designed and symbolically built as building of another world.

3. Thomas Lawson (2008) has investigated the problem of the difference between a ritual action in a religious context and an ordinary action. These are distinguished by the fact that the participant, in the first, identifies the presence of a so-called counterintuitive agent CI. The normal human capacity or competence to represent agents and actions is the same one used to represent ritual acts but subtly altered to serve religious actions. According to the Principle of Superhuman Agency in a ritual there is always a counterintuitive agent CI, connected both to the agent of the ritual and to the patient of the ritual (or ritual instrument). The counterintuitive agent therefore coincides with the divine.

4. From latin *opus*.

5. Furthermore, in relation to the question of the relationship between aesthetic, ecstatic and theological, Sequeri writes that «in fact it concerns the theological substance and the anthropological form of faith, even before the figures of sacred art» (Sequeri 1993, 34).

6. Frozen autopoiesis refers here to ritual communication, understood as a system, which reproduces itself in an always identical form and in a way that is essentially independent of possible external modifications. The communicative modality is more rigid than the ritual itself because it can be interfered with.

7. *Repetition* does not create a bond exclusively with the past. Bonaccorso, in this regard, notes: «It is precisely the respect for the past event in its originality, which promotes the respect for the present event, in its novelty» (Bonaccorso 2010, 201).

8. The thesis is summarized by these words: «When spread across time, ritual can create temporal

orders and replicate in designated spaces peculiar temporal events» (Smith 1992, 445).

9. In this regard, see the study by Pyysiäinen in the fifth chapter. In this part he analyzes religious faith, religious experience and ritual in relation to emotion, reaching the thesis that: «Whereas belief can be established through the sheer *repetition* of the relevant beliefs, religious experience always involves *emotion* (with the possible exception of certain *mistical states*)» (Pyysiäinen 2003, 142).

10. This is possible if we include the architecture of sacred space within the arts. This happens due to the fact that architecture for sacred space does not have as its sole purpose a functional space, but also a symbolic one. The functional in the liturgical space is inherent to the ability to provide affordances, not so much to perform ordinary actions, but ritual actions, therefore symbolic. It is different to put a book on a lectern to read it, from staging the ritual action linked to the proclamation of the Gospel.

11. If a work of art produces pleasure in being observed or, in the case of architecture, moving within it, it activates the pathways of dopamine which connects the parts of the so-called hedonic circuit and which consists of a neurotransmitter that controls the centers of reward and pleasure by regulating our emotional responses.

12. From Ellen Dissanayake's studies, we know that the reward values of beauty, love and social bonding spring from the very same impulse (Mallgrave 2013). If space induces a pleasant emotion, feelings of social bonding are probably more easily triggered (Mallgrave 2013).

13. Zanchi, on the aesthetic level of our churches, writes after careful consideration: «The average aesthetics of our churches and the imaginary that reigns uncontested are the manifesto of the cultural alienation of the Church from the rest of the world» (Zanchi 2018a, 80).

14. Starting from the fact that every church is the place where the Eucharist is celebrated, that is the sacrament for which the worshipper literally feeds of the body and blood of Christ. Taking care of the design of an altar, it is possible to take care of the place around which «fed by the Body of Christ (...)

here the faithful drink of your Spirit (...) the spiritual rock» (Preface, Christ himself is the Altar). But there are two places of nourishment in a church. The ambo is also a nourishment table, since from it the Gospel is announced and on it is the Evangeliary, in fact: «The Church has always venerated the divine Scriptures just as she venerates the body of the Lord, since, especially in the sacred liturgy, she unceasingly receives and offers to the faithful the bread of life from the table both of God's word and of Christ's body» (*Dei Verbum* 21). For these reasons the liturgical adaptation project has become part of this wide-ranging project.

15. The Regulars Clerics of the Order of the Theatines departed from Rome in 1528 to find refuge in Venice and to settle in the ancient seat of the brotherhood at the Parish of San Pantalon. In the space of forty years the work of the Theatines in the Venetian social fabric led the order to establish itself to the point of needing an appropriate space to officiate and an architecture capable of representing the Order itself. In 1567 the Theatines became independent from the Brothers of San Pantalon and in 1570 they began to think about the idea of a new project for the Church dedicated to San Nicola from Tolentino. Firstly the oratory was built.

16. In the Pastoral Note of the Italian Episcopal Conference, the adaptation of the churches according to the 1996 liturgical reform, we read: «We also intend to emphasize the need to move gradually from temporary to definitive solutions» (Conferenza Episcopale Italiana 1996, 1).

17. With the offices of the Superintendency of Venice, competents for this church both from the artistic and architectural point of view, there was an intense exchange that took place also in a series of profitable inspections.

18. Zanchi, with regard to the aesthetic quality of most of the post-conciliar liturgical adaptaments, says that it has not even «fully understood what aes-

thetic aspects of the liturgical reform were calling for» (Zanchi 2018a, 80).

19. Albert Gerhards speaks of a forgotten eschatological dimension, underlining that the assembly is not realized in itself but it is realized by called of the Father and must live in a tension between memory of the past and expectation of the future as we read in *Sacrosanctum Concilium* 2 (Gerhards 2013b). Roberto Tagliaferri explains how sacred space should not be limited to symbolizing the church and how the ritual is not generated by the church, but that it generates the church itself. The only self-celebratory pedagogical function should be excluded, but the sacred space has sacramental efficacy in order to access the mystery (Tagliaferri 2017).

20. Space can increase the effectiveness of actions performed, making emotionally perceptible also those that are only imaginable. Man empathizes space in general and therefore also the sacred space. If spaces are placed for the divine, man emphatically and perceptively empathizes God's presence, even though he can only imagine certain actions. In this regard, see the relationship between architecture and neuroscience in Mallgrave's text.

21. For the two different *forms* of the ambo, namely *presence* or *monument*, see the respective articles of Debuyst and Valenziano in the volume of the proceedings of the International Liturgical Conference of Bose on the ambo held in 2005 (Debuyst, 2006; Valenziano, 2006).

22. The material is a technical marble, Okite. Okite was a sponsor of exhibition.

SOURCE OF IMAGES

Fig. 01-02. Didier Descouens.

Fig. 03-05. Giovanna Ferrari.

Fig. 04. Marco Scarpa.

Fig. 06. Alberto Gianfreda.

Fig. 07-11. Marco Cappelletti.