

EDITORIAL

We welcome in this number the assistance of Dr Douglas Murray, Callander, who has been appointed by the Council as second Associate Editor with Dr Fraser. He will be largely responsible for the 1979 issues.

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From time to time the Editor receives notes of interesting liturgical material from such sources as the United Church of Canada. Some of this could well be adapted for use in the Church of Scotland, but the major problem is that of accessibility. Postal services are slow, costly and unreliable and a good deal of reference is made to other collections of material not readily accessible in Scotland. In all we are faced with another of the current pressures towards isolation which afflict us in so many fields.

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Attention should be drawn to the "Center for Pastoral Liturgy" at the Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C., founded in 1975.

Notable are the arrangements for training Parish Liturgy Committees and a series of monthly essays under the general title "Catholic Prayer To-day". ("These are produced in a simple format for general distribution to the total parish"). While much of the activity of such a centre is focused around the use of a fixed liturgy, many of its problems are those encountered by our own ministry. Perhaps some of our larger presbyteries could usefully produce plans for courses directed to church members as much as to ministers. Is this a field where the Church Service Society could take a lead in Scotland?

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A computerised study of some recent liturgical texts suggests that the language has moved little and is still too remote from the people who participate (even if the majority are over 50). Seventeenth century biblical conceits which die hard are all very well — or perhaps are very ill, for they fail to communicate other than remotely to those for whom the liturgy is intended to be a communication with God.

Even if due allowance is made for the mystical element in liturgy, we are not going to achieve much if we continue to use smoke signals in communities accustomed to telex!