

Foreword

The 2025 Annual Meeting of the North American Academy of Liturgy took place from 2-5 January on the campus of Valparaiso University in Valparaiso, Indiana...a hop, skip, and a drive from Chicago.

This year's meeting was pivotal. For the first time in decades, we gathered not at a downtown metropolitan conference-capable hotel but on the campus of a university. The change has been key to the Academy's survival into the future. Despite the new arrangement being not quite as metropolitan as we are used to, Valparaiso (both the university and the city) proved more than capable of hosting our meeting.

This year's Plenary Sessions unsettled, stirred, and challenged.

In his Vice-Presidential Address, James Farwell asked, "what we liturgical scholars can offer and can learn in the context of religious hybridity," persuasively questioning the adequacy of our notion of "assembly" and the boundaries of belonging and authentic participation: "We must think about...the sacramentality of other religious traditions."

We might also rethink the liturgical year, and the Mysteries celebrated therein. Since 2024, a global and ecumenical (even if not wholly representative) group of liturgical scholars, ecumenists, and church leaders has been gathering in Assisi to deliberate the if, why, and how of adding a Feast celebrating the Mystery of Creation to Western liturgical calendars, following the example and invitation of the Eastern churches, and in the face of our planetary environmental crisis. Many in our Academy—those whose presentations appear in Part 1, but also me and others—have been active in this movement, seeing an emergent and synergistic ecumenical opportunity and imperative in our historical moment. The questions are numerous, the hurdles high, and the opportunity immense.

Never to be surpassed, *Berakah* recipient Teresa Berger—and, indeed, the nature of the cosmos—requires of us an "epistemic transformation." What worships is a "multi-creaturely assembly of everything created." Occluded by the turn to Modernity, a retrieval and activation of this knowledge in liturgical studies is required in the face of "the reality of our life on a planet on life support."

We work hard while we are together, focussed most intensely in the work of our Seminars, documented in Part 2. Thanks to the Seminar Conveners for their lead-

ership. Eighteen Seminars met this year, with members attending both in-person and online. A new Practitioners Pre-meeting was also held for the first time.

This year also marks the second year of *Proceedings*' publication on our new Public Knowledge Project open-access platform—a transition I initiated and undertook as Editor with the permission and support of the Academy Committee over several years. The university setting along with the new platform seem to have energized our members and visitors toward publication in *Proceedings*, with seven peer-reviewed papers appearing this year in Part 3. Sincere thanks to the Editorial Advisory Board for its expert advice and to the authors for their engagement in the revision process.

The Academy Committee for 2025 was Kimberly Belcher (President), James Farwell (Vice-President), Christy Condyles (Secretary), Nathaniel Marx (Treasurer), Khalia Williams (Delegate for Seminars), Andrew Wymer (Delegate for Membership), and Glenn CJ Byer (Past-President). The AC was ably assisted in its work by Layla Karst as Webmaster, Anne McGowan as Archivist, and Courtney Murtagh as Meeting Manager. At our Business Meeting, Sarah Kathleen Johnson was elected Delegate for Seminars and Lester Ruth was elected Vice-President. We will gather again from 2-5 January in Atlanta, Georgia, most likely in and around the Candler School of Theology at Emory University.

May the *communitas* that coalesced during our liminality endure for many decades to come.

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Editor

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