

## Australian Academy of Liturgy National Conference – January 2009

### Public Lecture Details

**Public Lecture Title:** “Grounding the Timeless in Place: Exploring the Influence of the Physical Environment on Liturgical Conceptions of Time.”

**Synopsis:** Liturgical literature and ecclesial policies promoting Christian understandings of the liturgical year have long emphasized the ‘time’ aspect of Christian worship, indeed, the ‘timelessness’ of our worship. Largely ignored to date has been a commensurate focus on the ‘place’ aspect of Christian worship. Beyond questions of architecture and internal church design, attention needs to be paid to understanding the impact of our experience of ‘place’ on the ways in which we envision and imagine our localized experience of the transcendent and express this experience meaningfully in our worship practices. In both obvious and subtle ways the environment, geography and ecology in which we live influences our physical, psychological and spiritual behaviour. Our experience and conceptualization of time (both secular and sacred) cannot help but be shaped by our experience of place, which differs considerably depending on our locale. The influence of ‘place’ on shaping a people’s consciousness, lifestyle and Christian imagination should not be underestimated, especially in a period of heightened awareness regarding humanity’s environmental impact, legacy and responsibilities. This lecture will explore the need to ground our understanding of the timeless aspects of liturgy in an understanding of the inevitable and inescapable influence of our localized experience of ‘place’ if we are to continue to maintain and promote an authentic experience of God within human experience via relevant and meaningful liturgical celebrations.

**Presenter:** Dr. Clare V. Johnson

Dr. Clare V. Johnson is Senior Lecturer in Sacramental Theology at The University of Notre Dame Australia (Fremantle), where she also coordinates the undergraduate Core Unit in theology. Her academic background includes a B. Mus. (Hons) from the University of Melbourne, a B. Theol. (Hons) from the Melbourne College of Divinity, an A.Mus.A. (Singing) from the AMEB, a research M.A. (Theology) from Catholic Theological Union at Chicago, and a Ph.D. in Liturgical Studies from the University of Notre Dame du Lac, Indiana, USA. As an adjunct assistant professor of theology at Notre Dame (USA) she taught theology, preaching, liturgy and music, and coordinated satellite theology courses on behalf of Notre Dame at Michigan State University. She has facilitated workshops and seminars on pastoral liturgy, liturgical music and sacramental theology both in Australia and the USA. She has published articles in *Worship*, *Studia Liturgica*, *Pastoral Music*, *The Summit*, *Liturgy News*, *Pastoral Liturgy* and the *NDCPL Bulletin*, and is the editor of *Ars Liturgiae: Worship Aesthetics and Praxis* (Chicago: LTP, 2003).