

## Derek Olsen, Age 35, on Liturgical Reform

*[Editor's note: this unsolicited email letter to me seems worth posting.]*

Dear Father Ruff,

Thank you very much for the introduction of PrayTell! It has great promise for presenting liturgical reform in the Roman Catholic and related liturgical churches from the moderate/progressive perspective.

I'm an Episcopalian trained by Don Saliers and Ted Hackett at Emory University where I did both my MDiv and my PhD. My PhD is in New Testament, and my dissertation is largely an exploration of the interpretation of Scripture in early medieval monastic liturgy and how that influences how we read the homilies from that period. Thus, I know my liturgy and am not a reactionary.

While my wife and I identify with the Anglo-Catholic movement in the Episcopal Church, she's the ordained one in the family (and in addition to studying with Don at Emory did her STM in Liturgics with Jim Farwell at GTS).

We're relatively young, (I'm 35) but we represent a growing trend in the Episcopal Church of people who are progressive in discipline but moderate to conservative in doctrine and liturgy. We don't want to roll back the Vatican II Reforms. We don't want a restoration of the 1928 BCP. We don't want a return to the old days. We want to go forward with a reverent English liturgy that incorporates the richness of our liturgical heritage.

In short--we're natural allies.

Fr. Unterseher's post really connected with me. I had some disagreements with it, but it engaged me.

The post by Fr. Giles was antagonizing and alienating.

The young progressive Episcopal liturgists in the circles I move are not pleased... (See, for example, this thoughtful post on the Rite I Eucharistic Prayer 1: <http://contemplativevernacular.blogspot.com/2010/01/in-defense-of-rite-one-prayer-i.html>) I can understand your disagreements with the NLM folks, but if posts like that one continue, you'll be opening a second front in the verbal war--but this one will serve only to push away those who largely agree with you.

Please--help us to help you! A little sensitivity towards the differences between the Episcopal and Roman Catholic liturgical landscapes will get a lot more of us behind you at Pray Tell.

Thank you,  
Derek Olsen