

H. A. Reinhold

(1897–1968)

For those who worship “in spirit and truth,” the liturgy is life’s guide. In an era so dominated by the horrors of war in Europe and by a Church questioning how to respond, H.A. Reinhold promoted liturgical participation as the key to healing the world’s pain and fear.

Hans Emil Alexander Reinhold was born in Hamburg, Germany on September 6, 1897. As a boy, he was encouraged to develop interests in languages, art, and architecture. During his studies in philosophy in Freiburg, he experienced a moment of enlightenment while reading Romano Guardini’s *Vom Geist der Liturgie*. In Reinhold’s words: *The Spirit of the Liturgy* “proved to be a turning point in my life, giving me not so much new insight into the liturgy as a positive attitude towards Catholic teaching” (*H.A.R.: The Autobiography of Father Reinhold*, 38). Discerning a vocation to the priesthood, Reinhold began seminary training. He explored religious life at the Benedictine monastery of Maria Laach. At this abbey noted for its liturgical scholarship, Reinhold first experienced the “Dialogue Mass” and was influenced by Dom Odo Casel and Fr. Burkhard Neunheuser. While Reinhold did not complete the novitiate, he became an oblate of Maria Laach in 1924 and retained the religious name “Anscar.”

Returning to diocesan life, Reinhold was ordained for the Diocese of Osnabrück on December 18, 1925, and assigned to a resort village on the Baltic Sea. In 1929, he was appointed as the bishop’s secretary to the seaman’s apostolate. When Adolf Hitler came to power, Reinhold was systematically persecuted. Transferred inland to Hamburg, Reinhold continued to work with seamen until he was forced to flee Germany. He found his way to U.S. soil on August 20, 1936. “I came penniless, but with a great deal of ambition and hope” (*H.A.R.*, 38).

After a brief stay in New York City and a short teaching stint in Newport, Rhode Island, Reinhold moved to Seattle, Washington. There he began a mission for seamen and in 1944 was made pastor of St. Joseph’s Church in Sunnyside in what was later the Diocese of Yakima.

“The liturgy . . . is close to life. It has its ascetic and social philosophy, and the liturgy itself, if integrated into our lives, is a safe spiritual guide. . . . It heals the prevalent legalism of so many faithful, and is poison to smugness, naturalism and other deadly vermin that undermine the life of grace, even when outward appearances look all right.”

(*The Tidings*, January 26, 1945, 7)



Photo courtesy of John J. Burns Library/Boston College

Reinhold was first and foremost an educator. From the moment he came to the United States, he sought opportunities to herald liturgical reform and

economic justice. In 1938, he was selected by Fr. Godfrey Diekmann, OSB, to continue writing Virgil Michel’s column “Timely Tracts” in *Orate Fratres* (now *Worship*). This column and his eighteen-month series on the liturgy published in the Los Angeles archdiocesan newspaper, *The Tidings*, became Reinhold’s platforms for education. He believed that devotional practices had lulled the faithful into a deep malaise that prevented their looking at the deeper truths of life. Thus, in his column, “Worship in Spirit and Truth,” Reinhold wrote: “The liturgy of the Church is on a higher and therefore more difficult and exacting level. It demands thinking attention. It is not soothing and relaxing like so many popular devotions” (July 7, 1944, 6). In addition to his columns and numerous articles, Reinhold authored seven books, among them *Bringing the Mass to the People* (1960), *Liturgy and Art* (1966), and his memoir *H.A.R.: The Autobiography of Father Reinhold* (1968).

Nothing deterred Reinhold’s efforts as a prophet of hope. Shortly before his death, he wrote: “One day we shall have the great experience of realizing what we are doing, and tears of gratitude will flow for our having been chosen to take part in the great praise offered to God through Christ by the whole family of the Church” (“Timely Questions,” *The Living Light*, 1964).



**CONSTITUTION ON
THE SACRED LITURGY
50 YEARS**
LITURGY TRAINING PUBLICATIONS