

Exploring the Episcopal Liturgy - St. David's
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January 9, 2022 - Session One: The Liturgy

I. The Nature of the Liturgy: The work of the people. The service of the Church.

Episcopal liturgies (As outline in BCP 1979): The Daily Office, Holy Baptism, Holy Eucharist, Pastoral Offices (Confirmation, Marriage, Reconciliation, Ministration & Burial) Episcopal Services (Ordinations and Consecrations)

What is it that the Church does when it gathers on the Lord's Day to celebrate the sacred mysteries of the Lord's Body and Blood?

3 lenses: (1) Individual / Communal; (2) Personal Piety / Rubrics (3) Nature of the liturgy

What does this or that ceremony or action mean?

- The liturgy means, does, and is something. The allegorical and the pragmatic (aesthetic) and mystical nature of the liturgy.
- The "allegory only" approach is to treat the liturgy as a gnostic secret whose meaning is only available to the initiated insiders. A good rule is that a layperson should be able to intuit and reason their way to the purpose of liturgical ceremony.
- The "pragmatic only" approach gets lost in preference and liturgical camps.

What is the liturgy? *More* than a sign, a reenactment, or a communal meal.

The Eucharist is a sacrament of the mystery of Jesus Christ. Jesus allows us to join him liturgically and sacramentally in the Paschal Mystery through the Eucharist.

The liturgy "speaks" not just by way of the spoken voice but also by bodily gesture, movement, architectural structure, visual image, fragrance, music, taste, and silence.

The "speech" of the liturgy is much closer to poetry and art than to the precision of dogmatic language.

A sign is distinct from the reality it reveals or represents. The liturgy, we may say, happens to us. For example, the liturgical entrance is the Church's entrance to heaven. We do not symbolize the presence of the angels; we join them in their unceasing glorification of God. Mystagogy leading into the mystery. The liturgy manifests a Christian cosmogony.

The happening of the liturgy: Christians are called to worship and gather in the name of the Lord. Those who are baptized are invited to commune. God meets his people.

Scripture is read and interpreted. The Church on earth joins the Church in heaven in prayer for the world. We confess and receive absolution. We offer ourselves, our souls and bodies. We celebrate the Supper of the Lord.

II. Structure and Historical Development of the Liturgy:

It has four momenta only - Offertory, Thanksgiving Prayer, Fraction, Communion. It thus reproduces exactly the "took bread - gave thanks - broke - gave" of the Gospels.

Early Church - First Century:

- Jewish Christians at first continued to attend the services of the Temple in Jerusalem (Acts 3:1, Lk 24:52-53) following the example of the Lord (Lk 4:15-15, Lk 6:6, John 23:20). If they were outside Jerusalem they went to the Synagogues services (Acts 9:20). In time, followers of The Way had their own meetings distinct from the Sabbath they were made chiefly on Sunday (Acts 20:7).
- The earliest and most detailed account of the Eucharist is found in 1 Corinthians 11, which predates the Gospels. St. Paul's account reads:
 - For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus, the same night in which He was betrayed, took bread, and giving thanks, broke, and said: Take ye, and eat: This is My Body, which shall be delivered for you: this do for the commemoration of Me.
 - In like manner also the chalice, after He had supped, saying: This chalice is the new testament in My Blood: this do ye, as often as you shall drink, for the commemoration of Me. For as often as you shall eat this Bread, and drink the Chalice, you shall show the death of the Lord, until He come.
- The Synaxis (assembly) is based on a Synagogue Service
 - Readings from the Holy Books, Sermon on what has been read, Psalms, Hymns, Prayers, Almsgiving, Profession of Faith and Kiss of Peace
- The Eucharist Proper
 - The four accounts of the Last Supper (Mt.26:26-28; Mk. 14:22-24; Lk.22:19-20; 1Cor. 11:23-25) are showing the essential nucleus of the Sacred Liturgy in any Rite: Prayer of Thanksgiving, Blessing of Bread and Wine by the words of Institution, Prayers remembering Christ's death, and People eat and drink the consecrated bread and wine

Apostolic Times - 2nd Century:

- A familiar pattern in celebration
- Adding Sanctus (Is 6:3; Rev 4:8) et Benedictus (Mk 11:9) and Our Father
- Confession before Communion (Didache);
- A long liturgical prayer can be found in the first Epistle of Clement to Corinthians;

- There is a graduated hierarchy, of which each order has its own duties (Epistle of Barnabas, Letters of Ignatius of Antioch).

Late Second and 3rd Century:

- Pattern according to St. Justin Martyr
 1. Lessons from the Bible
 2. Sermon by the Bishop
 3. Prayers
 4. Kiss of Peace
 5. Bread and wine with water are brought up and received by Bishop;
 6. Thanksgiving said by the Bishop;
 7. Memory of our Lord's passion, including the words of institution;
 8. The people end this prayer saying 'Amen';
 9. Communion under both kinds;
 10. A collection for the poor.

The First Council of Nicea (325 AD) speaks of three primary sees: Rome, Alexandria, and Antioch. Languages: Latin, Greek, Punic, Celtic, Syriac, and Aramaic.

Middle Ages:

By early 700s the two greatest Families of rites: the Byzantine (Greek) and the Roman (Latin). Byzantium takes up the traditions of Antioch and is the Eastern appendage. It branches out from the prominence of the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom. In the West, three ritual groups may be discerned; the Roman, the Gallican, and the Mozarabic.

English Reformation:

At the time of the Protestant Reformation, King Henry VIII (1509-47) drew the Church of England under his temporal control. Under Henry VIII, liturgy remained mostly unchanged.

Under the reign of Henry's son Edward VI (1547-53), many Protestant reformers influenced Edward to abolish "Romish" practices. These reforms moved the Church of England closer to the Calvinism of Geneva than historic Catholicism. Most nobles and common folk were still catholic in practice.

In 1549, The Book of the Common Prayer was issued by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Cranmer. This book was mostly a simplification of the Sarum Mass, the liturgy of the Diocese of Salisbury (or Sarum), used by much of southern England at the time. The Prayer Book was designed to be used by both clergy and laity.

Queen Elizabeth, Puritan Uprising, Restoration, and Oxford Movement