

The Whys of Worship: What Christians do on Sundays and why we do it.
Class#6: Walking through our Sunday Service, Part B: The Liturgy of the Table
2/11/18, TCP

The Peace of the Lord:

A sign of our reconciliation with God and with each other in Christ, and his peace.

“Necessary announcements may be made before the service, after the creed, before the offertory, or at the end of the service, as convenient.” (BCP, p.407)

Care must be taken to avoid the announcements overtaking the service or interrupting the flow from the Peace to the Table.

The verbal announcements are the most sought after piece of real estate in the church!

Our aim is no more than three, focusing on large scale events, or items needing particular attention.

The Liturgy of the Table:

The Offertory:

“Representatives of the congregation bring the people’s offerings of bread and wine, and money or other gifts, to the deacon or celebrant. The people stand while the offerings are presented and placed on the altar” (BCP, p.361).

Notice that the bread and the wine are the primary gifts being presented, not the money. Food for the poor is often among the “other gifts.”

The Great Thanksgiving (“Eucharist” means “thanksgiving”)

- Starts with the “Sursum Corda,” Latin for “Lift up your hearts”
The Eastern Orthodox say we are lifting ourselves into heaven, before the throne of God.
- The Proper Preface begins the prayer, specific to the season or occasion.
- The Sanctus (Latin for “Holy”) taken from Isaiah’s vision of the throne room of God (which is why we bow during the Sanctus, as Isaiah did).
“Sanctus Bells” ring during the Sanctus and at the elevation of the elements.
?Draws attention—was helpful when the service was in Latin! Now it’s a tradition...
- God’s saving acts are recounted, especially the life, death and resurrection of Jesus.
- The “words of institution” from scripture: “...This is my body...this is my blood...”
- The “epiclesis” asks the Holy Spirit to sanctify the bread and wine (and us who receive).
- The Great AMEN. *This is a key way the congregation participates! Say it with gusto!*
- The Lord’s Prayer.

The Breaking of the Bread

The “Fraction”

Fraction anthem: varies in the season (no alleluias in Lent).

In Rite I, the “prayer of humble access,”

Describing our approach to God and God’s generous grace to us.

Communion

All are welcome to come forward: for a blessing if one is not baptized or does not wish to receive, or to be in communion with Christ and his church if one is a baptized Christian of any denomination. This is a newer discipline: it used to be required to be confirmed in the Episcopal Church; since 1970, the emphasis is on Baptism instead.

Communion (*Continued*)

- *Receive the bread alone, or the wine alone, or both the bread and the wine (any of the three ways of receiving count as receiving communion). Receive the bread on palms stretched out flat and lifted up a bit; Receive the wine by holding the base of the chalice to guide it to your lips; Or dip the wafer in the cup (“intinction”); neither is more sanitary (but don’t touch the chalice rim or the wine with your fingers).*
- *If you drop the wafer, pick it up and consume it; or the server will do so and give you another wafer.*
- *The consecrated bread and wine are handled with reverence (but not idolatry). They are consumed or poured down a special sink (called the “pacina”) which drains to the ground, not the sewer.*

The sending of Eucharistic Visitors

Eucharistic Visitors are lay people licensed to “extend the altar rail down the street” by taking communion to those who, for good cause, cannot join us for the service. They are sent by the priest from a specific celebration of the Eucharist before the post-communion prayer. Thus, they serve like “Eucharistic Ministers” to people in their homes. But they are not deacons, and therefore have a very focused role. We ask God’s blessing on them as they go.

The post communion prayer

We give thanks for the Eucharist and ask God to send us into the world to serve God.

The Blessing

The Dismissal (*the liturgical deacon’s role*)

Note that the alleluias are in the response only if they are in the “call.” Alleluias are especially omitted in Lent and Advent, and especially included in Easter season and the feast of Pentecost.

Notes about Posture:

- In the last several hundred years, the tradition in the west has been to sit to listen, stand to praise and say the creed, and kneel to pray.
- But standing is also a posture of prayer with more ancient roots (many Eastern Orthodox churches do not have seats because of this). Some advocate for standing at the Eucharistic Prayer in a sense of joyful celebration of the renewal Jesus gives us (especially in Easter Season).
- The BCP often offers the option to stand *OR* kneel. Some congregations value a diversity of postures at the same time. Some value a posture shared by everyone: either uniform through the year, or changing in the seasons. Our custom in recent years has been to all kneel in Lent and all stand in Easter season.
- There is always something particularly appropriate about kneeling for confession (though not required).