

# **An Instructional Eucharist**

## **1979 Book of Common Prayer**

*Rite 2, Eucharistic Prayer A*  
*Easter Season*

## **The Church of The Resurrection**

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## **The Holy Eucharist Rite Two**

### INTRODUCTION

This morning we are going to depart from our usual worship. As we celebrate the Holy Eucharist today, we are going to examine the different parts of the service and explain them as we go along. Our aim is to help us better understand the worship and help us to participate more fully in the Holy Eucharist. The Holy Eucharist is the principle act of Christian worship.

As we proceed, we will pause for explanation of why we are doing what we are doing. There will be some historic and some theological explanations. This is a departure from our usual worship but hopefully it will help us all better appreciate and understand the richness of our liturgy.

#### *Vestments*

The vestments the priest wears are derived from dress clothing of the late Roman Empire. The white outer garment is called an alb. It gets its name from the Latin word *albus*, which means white. It is derived from the commonest under garment in classical Italy, the tunic. It symbolizes purity, decency and propriety. It also represents being washed clean in the waters of baptism.

The girdle or cincture is usually made of white linen or hemp. Functionally, it is for ease of movement when wearing the alb. Symbolically, it represents how we are all bound together in Christ.

The stole was derived from a Roman ceremonial garland or scarf worn by Roman officials as an indication of his rank. Priests have worn the stole since at least the fourth century. It symbolizes the priest's authority and the priest taking on the yoke of Christ. The priest wears different colored

stoles depending upon the liturgical season.

The chasuble is also descended from classical Roman society. Like the poncho of Mexico and Central and South America, all classes of Roman citizens wore the chasuble as an outer garment. Today the priest in some parishes wears it whenever Eucharist is celebrated. In other parishes, it is reserved for very special occasions such as Christmas and Easter. The chasuble is a "dress up" garment.

Each of these vestments – the alb, cincture, stole, and chasuble – has been worn for centuries. Besides their individual symbolic meaning, they remind us of our heritage, our link to the past and the saints who have gone before us. Finally, it is important to remember that when the priest puts on these vestments, they are worn for us. The priest represents the people. The vestments represent our baptism, our binding together in Christ, the yoke of Christ, and our dressing up to bring our very best to Christ.

## The Word of God

*A hymn, psalm, or anthem may be sung.*

*The people standing,*

*Opening hymn and procession.*

### OUR WORSHIP

The Holy Eucharist has been celebrated for 2000 years. The early Christians assembled in private homes and often celebrated the Eucharist in combination with a larger meal. Practical difficulties resulted in the Eucharist eventually being separated from the larger meal. The early Church organized its life around the Sunday Eucharist. The service began with the words "The Lord be with you." A lector would read Old Testament, Psalms, and New Testament lessons. The celebrant would preach a sermon while seated in a chair. Anyone not baptized would then be dismissed and a deacon would lead intercessory prayers followed by the "kiss of peace." The people would bring their offerings of bread and wine to the linen covered table. The celebrant would lay hands upon the bread and wine and recite prayers of blessing and prayers entreating the descent of the Holy Spirit. The bread would then be broken and the priest would give it to the people, by either the people coming forward to receive or the priest circulating among the people. Bread and wine would be taken to people who could not attend. Does this sound familiar?

Almost two thousand years later, Holy Eucharist remains the principle act of Christian worship.

Our worship begins with a processional with the entire congregation singing. In the early church, the priest would enter casually, visiting with the people along the way. By the fifth century, the formal procession was instituted to help prepare the congregation to be attentive. The celebrant and other liturgical assistants process to the altar as representatives of the whole congregation. This symbolizes the procession to heaven. It is at the altar where heaven and earth meet. It is where we symbolically go up to heaven to the Lord's heavenly feast and it is where God comes down from heaven to meet us.

*the Celebrant says*

Alleluia, Christ is risen.

*People* The Lord is risen indeed. Alleluia.

Amen.

We follow the order of worship as written in the 1979 Book of Common Prayer. We will see that our worship follows closely the first Anglican Prayer Book of 1549. We also see that our 1979 Prayer Book captures some of the earliest first and second century traditions.

Our Book of Common Prayer offers three Acclamations: one for ordinary times, one for Easter day through Pentecost, and one for Lent and other penitential occasions. The Acclamation used today is for the Easter season. It reminds us of the Easter event.

*The Celebrant may say*

Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all

The Collect for Purity is said next. Originally, it was said only by the priest during the singing of the processional psalm. The 1552 Book of Common Prayer made the Collect for Purity a public prayer. It is required in our Rite I and it is optional in Rite II.

desires known,  
and from you no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy Name; through Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

*When appointed, the following hymn or some other song of praise is sung or said, all standing*

Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his people on earth. Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father, we worship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glory.

Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, Lord God, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world: have mercy on us; you are seated at the right hand of the Father: receive our prayer. For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. *Amen.*

Next we sing or say the *Gloria in excelsis*. It is a song of praise. When it is not used, the *Kyrie* or *Trisagion* are said or sung.

*The Celebrant says to the people*

The Lord be with you.

*People* And also with you.

*Celebrant* Let us pray.

The Salutation, "the Lord be with you," is next. It is based upon Boaz's greeting to the reapers in Ruth 2:4. In our Eucharist liturgy, the Salutation appears here and later at the beginning of the Great Thanksgiving. It draws our attention to the two important parts of the Eucharist: the liturgy of the word and the liturgy of the table.

*The Celebrant and people say the Collect together.*

*(The collect of the day)*

O God, whose blessed Son made himself known to his disciples in the breaking of bread: Open the eyes of our faith, that we may behold him in all his redeeming work; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

The Collect of the Day is a prayer that is said by the celebrant alone or by the whole assembly. There is a different Collect for each Sunday and for each Holy Day. The Collect follows the theme of the season or Holy Day. The word 'collect' comes from the Latin word for assembly. The collect is a prayer for the whole assembly. The Collect is a summing up of our individual prayers.

<p><i>People Amen.</i></p>	
<p><b>The Lessons</b> – Hebrew Scripture / First Reading, Psalm, New Testament, and Sequence Hymn</p>	<p>Following the synagogue tradition, the reading and exposition of scripture has always been a part of the Christians' worship. Hebrew scripture was read and Christian writings were added to the readings. Our New Testament is composed of writings selected from material that was in general use in Christian worship. Our lessons are in a three-year cycle. Today we read almost the entire New Testament and most of the Old Testament on Sundays during each three-year cycle.</p> <p>The response following the lesson, "Thanks be to God," dates from the Middle Ages and is an acknowledgement that the lesson has been heard. A short period of silence follows each lesson for recollection or reflection.</p> <p>The use of a psalm after the Old Testament reading can be dated to the mid-fourth century. The psalms are the hymnbook of Hebrew worship. A psalm, hymn or anthem may be said or sung after each reading.</p>
<p><i>Then, all standing, the Deacon or a Priest reads the Gospel, first saying</i></p> <p>The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to _____.</p> <p><i>People</i> Glory to you, Lord Christ.</p> <p><i>After the Gospel, the Reader says</i></p> <p>The Gospel of the Lord.</p> <p><i>People</i> Praise to you, Lord Christ.</p>	<p>The Gospel reading is the climax of the lessons. It is often read following a special ceremony to stress its importance as the primary scripture of our faith. The people stand in reverence to hear the teaching of Jesus and to acknowledge the Gospels as the central teachings of our faith.</p>
<p><b>The Sermon</b></p>	<p>A sermon or homily has been required at the Eucharist from the time of the 1549 Prayer Book. Today, the instructional commentary replaces the sermon.</p>
<p><b>The Nicene Creed</b></p> <p>We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.</p> <p>We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with</p>	<p>The sermon is followed by the Nicene Creed on Sundays and other Major Feasts. The Council at Constantinople, in 381, adopted this expanded version of the Nicene Creed as a statement of the essential faith of the Christian community. The Creed proclaims our faith in the Trinitarian - God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. In our tradition, the Creed was made a fixed part of our first Prayer Book in 1549.</p>

the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified. He has spoken through the Prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

## **The Prayers of the People**

### **Form III**

*The Leader and People pray responsively*

Father, we pray for your holy Catholic Church;

*That we all may be one.*

Grant that every member of the Church may truly and humbly serve you;

*That your Name may be glorified by all people.*

We pray for all bishops, priests, and deacons;

*That they may be faithful ministers of your Word and Sacraments.*

We pray for all who govern and hold authority in the nations of the world;

*That there may be justice and peace on the earth.*

Give us grace to do your will in all that we undertake;

*That our works may find favor in your sight.*

As early as the second century, the prayers of the people followed the reading of scripture and the sermon. In the early Eastern tradition, they were often read as a litany with the people responding "Lord have mercy." In the early Roman tradition, they were often read as bidding prayers with each prayer followed by a period of silence. Our Prayer Book offers prayers in both of these traditions. The Rite 1 Prayers of the People is very similar to the 1552 Prayer Book version. The 1979 Prayer Book restored the Prayers to their historic setting following the sermon and Creed.

Have compassion on those who suffer from any grief or trouble;

*That they may be delivered from their distress.*

Give to the departed eternal rest;

*Let light perpetual shine upon them.*

We praise you for your saints who have entered into joy;

*May we also come to share in your heavenly kingdom.*

Let us pray for our own needs and those of others.

*Silence*

*The Celebrant adds a concluding Collect.*

Almighty God, to whom our needs are known before we ask, help us to ask only what accords with your will; and those good things which we dare not, or in our blindness cannot ask, grant us for the sake of your Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

*Amen*

## **Confession of Sin**

*The Deacon or Celebrant says*

Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

*Silence may be kept.*

*Minister and People*

Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed,

by what we have done, and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly

The corporate confession of sin became a separate part of the liturgy during the Middle Ages. In the early Church, the acknowledgement of sinfulness was included in the Eucharistic prayers and the Lord's Prayer. In the current position, the confession serves as preparation for receiving communion. The first forms of the general confession were included in the 1548 Prayer Book. The words of the absolution are derived from the 1549 Prayer Book.

repent. For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us; that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your Name. Amen.

*The Bishop when present, or the Priest, stands and says*

Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you all your sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life. *Amen.*

## **The Peace**

*All stand. The Celebrant says to the people*

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

*People* And also with you.

*Then the Ministers and People may greet one another in the name of the Lord.*

The kiss of peace is evidenced in thirteen different New Testament passages. In the early Church, it was part of the baptismal liturgy and the peace could not be exchanged with the unbaptized. By the fifth century, the peace was used as a preparation for communion. Although the 1549 Prayer Book contained the Peace, by this time it was not widely practiced. It was revived in the second half of the twentieth century and the peace was returned to its original place in a service of Eucharist. In various cultures, the exchange of the peace takes the form of a kiss on the cheek, an embrace, a handshake, a bow, or some combination of these. With the confession, absolution, and peace, we are prepared to proceed to the Lord's Table as a repentant, forgiven, and reconciled people.

Please continue this instructed Eucharist with the liturgy of Holy Communion.