

INTRODUCING ANGLICANISM

Presentation V: Eucharistic Theology and Practice

I. Early Eucharistic Practice

1. I Corinthians 10:14-22; 11:17-34: The Church is the community which shares *koinonia* with the risen Christ.

2. *The First Apology of St. Justin Martyr* (d. 165 AD): Christ's real presence among his community.

II. What Happens in the Eucharist?

1. The Eucharist is the Church's central act of giving thanks and praise to God.

2. Through the Eucharist the Church receives the benefits of Christ's passion, death and resurrection.

3. In the Eucharist, Christ's sacrificial death and his institution of the New Covenant sealed in his blood are *re-presented* to the Church thus creating the Church anew.

4. In the Eucharist, we receive a foretaste of our union with Christ in heaven; the Church's sacramental sharing in Christ is preparation for beholding him *face to face*.

5. In the Eucharist, Christ unites the Church to his own sacrifice of himself to the Father; through Christ's sacrifice we become acceptable to God.

6. In the Eucharist, the Church celebrates Christ's victory over sin and death and anticipates that what is an accomplished fact in him will be accomplished for the world.

III. The "Real Presence" of Christ in the Eucharist

1. *The Book of Common Prayer* teaches that the risen Christ is truly and really present in the Sacrament. This is clear in Holy Eucharist, Rite I and Rite II, The Catechism and Article XXVIII of the Thirty-Nine Articles.

2. The Question of Transubstantiation: This doctrine has been present in the Church since 13th century but was first defined dogmatically by the Council of Trent (the canons and decrees of which were promulgated in 1564). The Council defines transubstantiation thus: "...in the August sacrament of the Holy Eucharist, after the consecration of the bread and wine, our Lord Jesus Christ, true God and true man, is truly, really and substantially contained under the species of the sensible things". This means that Christ is "sacramentally present to us in His own substance". *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*, paragraphs 1373-1377, cites the Tridentine definition.

3. The Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission arrived at a Statement on the Eucharist in 1971 which affirms that "Communion with Christ in the eucharist presupposes his true presence, effectually signified by the bread and wine which, in this mystery, become his body and blood. The real presence of his body and blood can, however, only be understood

within the context of the redemptive activity whereby he gives himself, and in himself reconciliation, peace and life, to his own. On the one hand, the eucharistic gift springs out of the paschal mystery of Christ's death and resurrection, in which God's saving purpose has already been definitively realized. On the other hand, its purpose is to transmit the life of the crucified and risen Christ to his body, the Church, so that its members may be more fully united with Christ and with one another."

IV. The Eucharist in Outline

1. The Liturgy of the Word:

Salutation (3 options): Establishes our reason for being in worship. (During Lent, the Penitential Order is used, BCP, 350-352): BCP, p. 355

Collect for Purity: An act of preparation. Through the action of the Triune God we are enabled to worship God: BCP, p. 355.

Song of Praise, Kyrie, Trisagion, Gloria in Excelsis: Sung or said. Each is an ancient canticle. We are reminded that the principle act of worship is to praise God: BCP, 356.

Collect of the Day: A collect "collects" the prayers of the congregation around one theme and offers them to God: BCP, pp. 211-261.

The Lessons: Old Testament, Psalm, Epistle and Gospel: An inheritance from the synagogue. The Gospel is given first place because it is understood to be Christ directly addressing the Church: BCP, pp. 889-931.

Sermon: Focused on the lessons just read. The sermon is part of the liturgy.

The Nicene Creed: Produced by the Councils of Nicea (325) and Constantinople (381). It is also an act of praise, an example of doctrine as doxology.

Prayers of the People: As a priestly people, one of our ministries is that of intercession: BCP, pp. 383-393.

The Collect at the Prayers: The celebrant "collects" the intercessions of the people: BCP, pp. 394-395.

Confession and Absolution: Part of the continuous process of repentance; it comes before our coming to the altar. A period of silence should be kept for self-examination: BCP, p. 360.

The Peace: Confession, repentance and absolution lead to reconciliation: BCP, p. 360.

2. The Liturgy of the Altar:

The Offertory: Consists of both oblations (bread and wine) and money, offered in thanks to God.

The Great Thanksgiving: The word Eucharist comes from the Greek verb meaning "to give thanks". There are six eucharistic prayers, two in Rite I (BCP, p. 333 and 340) and four in Rite II, Prayer A (361), Prayer B (367), Prayer C (369) and Prayer D (372).

Sursum Corda: "Lift up your hearts...": BCP, p. 367.

Sanctus: "Holy, holy, holy...", taken from Isaiah 6: BCP, p. 367.

The Anaphora: Recalls God's mighty acts culminating in Christ's death and resurrection.

Anemnesis: A “making present again” of the events of the Upper Room: BCP, p. 368.

Epiclesis: Invocation of the Holy Spirit to consecrate the bread and wine: BCP, p. 369.

Lord's Prayer: Note the emphasis on future: BCP, p. 364.

Fraction: “Christ our Passover...”. Re-presents Christ's death and sacrifice: BCP, p. 364.

Distribution: The last part of the basic eucharistic actions: took, blessed, broke and gave.

Post-Communion Prayer: Essentially summarizes eucharistic theology: BCP, pp. 365-366 (also p. 339).

The Blessing

The Dismissal