

**Instructed Eucharist by Dr. Marion Hatchett - February, 1982 with additional instruction from David Bateman Copyright © 1997 & 2009, Used with Permission.**

**(Modified and adapted for use at St. Paul's Church, Winter Haven)**

*(The service of Holy Eucharist begins on page 323/ 10:30am 355 of the Book of Common Prayer.)*

***(Read from the Lectern, prior to procession)***

Today is an Instructional Eucharist. Typically, when Episcopalians gather for public worship on a Sunday, we have a service of Communion, also known as the celebration of the Holy Eucharist. We do this because this is the way Christians have worshiped since the earliest days of the Church. When Jesus instituted the first Eucharist at the Last Supper, he commanded all of his followers to continue the practice. It is the clearest, strongest way we know to tell the story of Jesus' death and resurrection, and to maintain our bond with him and with one another.

The first mention in Scripture of this activity is the description in Acts 2:42, "So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. And they devoted themselves to Apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of the bread, and the prayers." Thus was the beginning of the liturgical life of the Christian Church. These followers of the Way worshipped God in a pattern of rite (which refers to the spoken words of liturgy) and ceremony (which refers to the manual actions). From time to time both the words and actions have been changed and modified, but the principal act of Christian worship on the Lord's Day and other major Feast Days continues to be in the apostolic tradition of teaching and fellowship, the breaking of bread and the prayers. The people of God have worshipped the one God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit - with the whole person: body, mind, and spirit.

We come today to worship God in a service of Word and Sacrament.

The first part of the service - The Word of God - involves reading and preaching the Scriptures within the framework of praise and prayer. This part of the rite evolves from the services of the Jewish Synagogue. The second half of the service - The Holy Communion - involves the offering of bread and wine and giving thanks to God over them, breaking the bread and distributing the sacramental elements. This evolved from the Jewish Seder Meal celebrated at Passover and other religious meals celebrated each week and on special occasions in the homes of the people. The word "Eucharist" is one of the oldest and most universal names given this service and means thanksgiving for the Mighty Acts of God. It is the keynote of the whole rite that reaches its climax in the Eucharistic prayer of The Great Thanksgiving.

Justin Martyr writes this account of the worship of Christians in the year 155 A.D.:

"On the day called Sunday, all meet in one place ... and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read as time permits. Then the presider, in a discourse, urges/invites us to the imitation of these noble things. Then, we stand up together and offer prayers. And, when we have finished the prayers, we greet one another with the kiss of peace. Then, bread is brought and wine and water, and the presider offers prayers to the best of his ability on our behalf."

In today's church, the bishop or priest is the presider. The words and some of the accouterments have changed over the years, but this basic form has remained. How exciting it is to consider that each Sunday we are offering this worship in communion with the Church Universal, throughout the world and throughout time, joining our voices with all the saints whose prayers support us continuously!

*(10:30)* Let us also talk about music. Music in worship is chiefly a vehicle of our devotion, a means through which we proclaim our love for God. That is why even when

we are listening to a prelude or postlude or an anthem or soloist that time is time for us to allow our own hearts be lifted to God through the music being offered. That is why it is customary not to clap for musicians or choirs because we are not passive spectators, but participants through our own response to this vehicle of worship. Music is the place where perhaps we are touched most personally. For in the poetry and cadence of music we enter into worship, not only with our minds, but also with our emotions and our whole physical being. A hymn sung with joy and vigor is quite literally, soul stirring, and is for many people one of the most significant dimensions of worship.

The rubrics on page 322 (or 354,) “Concerning the Celebration,” designate a Eucharistic celebration in which all four orders of ministers take part: lay persons, bishops, priests, and deacons. Laypersons read the lessons and present the offerings. They may lead the intercessions and function as cantors, choir, instrumentalists, ushers, servers, ministers of the chalice, and members of the altar guild. All of the laity participate in certain responses, songs and prayers of the people, and unison portions of the rite.

It is the prerogative of the bishop, when present, to function as the chief celebrant and preacher. In the absence of the bishop, a priest serves as his deputy.

A deacon, if present, acts out the role of a deacon as servant and as witness to the world and to the church by reading the Gospel, leading the intercessions, preparing the table, assisting in the administration of the elements, taking care of the ablutions, sending the people back out into the world, and ensuring that communion is taken to those unable to be present at the celebration.

*(The procession takes place here)*

*10:30am Celebrant blesses the children for Children’s Church*

***(Read after the procession;)***

We begin with the gathering rite. Now that we are assembled in one place, those people who have designated roles in the service enter in procession while we all sing praise to God. The procession allows everyone to take their appointed places, while at the same time helping the service begin on a note of dignity and reverence. When all are ready, the minister in charge of the celebration, known as the celebrant or presider, begins a dialogue of praise with the congregation. This is known as the Opening Acclamation. After a prayer to prepare us for worship, we commonly say the Trisagion or sing a second hymn of praise that has been used for centuries in the gathering rite. It is known by its opening words “Glory to God.” The gathering rite concludes with a prayer, or collect, that reflects the themes of this particular Sunday.

*(Here follows The Entrance Rite through the Collect of the Day)*

***(Read after the Collect of the Day and after people are seated)***

We now enter upon the reading and exposition of the Scriptures, the heart of the Liturgy of the Word. The 1979 Prayer Book recovers the ancient system of three lessons and a psalm. In selecting the proper readings for services on Sunday and Holy Days, the Revised Common Lectionary provides in a three-year cycle, known as Year: A, B, and C, for the reading of almost the whole of the New Testament and a major portion of the Old Testament.

The first lesson is generally from the Old Testament, though in the Easter Season, in accordance with ancient tradition, this lesson is taken from the Acts of the Apostles. The first lesson is chosen for its relationship to the Gospel of the day. It is followed by a selection from the psalms which bears a relationship to the first lesson. The early church fathers spoke of this psalm as the lesson from the psalms. It is known as the gradual and is read or sung from the Lectern with the congregation seated. Occasionally, a canticle is used in place of the Psalm.

It is our custom to stand, sit, or kneel at different parts of the service. Most of these postures are optional, but we find them useful in helping to worship with our bodies and not just our minds. Typically, we follow the biblical Jewish and Christian traditions of standing to praise God and to pray, sitting in order to listen, and kneeling in order to express penitence or devotion. If you have a physical condition which makes any of these difficult, you are always welcome to adopt a more comfortable position.

*(Here the Old Testament Lesson and Psalm is read)*

***(Read following the lesson and the Psalm)***

The second lesson is normally from one of the New Testament Epistles (letters). This lesson may be followed by a psalm, hymn or anthem. At St. Paul's, we almost always sing a metrical hymn from the Hymnal. This hymn is known as the sequence and serves as a response to the epistle or to prepare the faithful for the reading of the Gospel. During the 4th Century, the people began honoring the Gospel reading by standing for it, and soon it began to attract to itself introductory and concluding exclamations of praise and such ceremonials as candles and incense. The ceremony of processing into the congregation with the Gospel is a symbol of John 1:14, "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us." At the Gospel, the reader, usually a deacon, makes the sign of the cross in a unique way before proclaiming the Gospel. This is part of the prayer, "The Lord be in my mind, on my lips and in my heart. May God be in my understanding, in my speaking, and in my feeling." Many people like to join in making this sign of the cross.

*(Here the New Testament Lesson, sequence and Gospel are read and sung)*

***(Read after the reading of the Gospel)***

On Sundays and major Holy Days, the Liturgy of the Word reaches its climax in the proclamation by the celebrant and congregation of the statement of belief of the universal church in the Nicene Creed.

It is the official statement of the faith of the Universal Church accepted by the Councils of Nicaea and Constantinople in the 4<sup>th</sup> century. In short, these are the major points agreed upon by all orthodox Christians.

*(Here follows the recitation of the Nicene Creed)*

***(Read after the Nicene Creed)***

In the last portion of the Liturgy of the Word, we pray for the church and for the world, and make our final preparation for the Communion part of the service. Our prayers always include the entire universal Church, the nation, the welfare of the world, the concerns of the local community, those who suffer or are in trouble, and those who have died. We usually use a pattern of prayer that allows everyone in the congregation to make responses. When the prayers are concluded, we say together a general confession of our sins and listen as the celebrant pronounces God's forgiveness.

*(8am)* After the absolution the celebrant would read the sentences of scripture commonly called the "Comfortable Words." All previous editions of the BCP required that all 4 be said every service and were introduced by the celebrant saying, "Hear what comfortable words our Savior Christ saith unto all who truly turn to him," and the third was introduced by the celebrant saying, "Hear also what St. Paul saith," and the final one, "Hear also what St. John saith." All four of these date back, in this place in the service, to the Order for Communion 1548.

We are now prepared to exchange God's Peace, in which we briefly greet those nearby in the name of the Lord. The ancient custom of passing the Peace expresses our unity in Christ and our readiness to receive Communion. The Peace ties together the two halves of the liturgy. It concludes the Liturgy of the Word and introduces the Liturgy of the Table. It is an expression of hospitality, of reconciliation, and of fellowship, for it is the Lord's Peace that we pass. It is an appropriate time for greeting of the newly baptized or of newcomers or strangers, for reconciliation between the estranged, and for fellowship among those who are about to share the Lord's banquet.

*(Here follows the Prayers of the People, Confession, Absolution, and the Exchange of the Peace)*

***(Read following the Peace and Announcements)***

We now move into the second half of the rite, The Holy Communion. As the first half has centered about the pulpit, symbol of Christ's presence in His Word, the second half will center about the altar or table, symbol of Christ's presence in the Sacrament.

The clergy now move to the altar, and representatives of the congregation bring to the deacon or Priest the people's offerings of bread and wine and money and other gifts. These gifts represent the life and labor of the People: the offering of "our selves, our souls and bodies."

*(Here the Priest says, "Ascribe to the Lord the honor due his name . . .*

*The Offertory Procession moves forward to the Altar. )*

***(Read following the reception of the collection)***

This presentation of the bread and wine is the first of the four acts of the Liturgy of the Table. As the words and action at the altar unfold, they do so according to a four-fold pattern first used

by Jesus when he miraculously fed the multitudes with bread and fish, and also used again at the Last Supper. First he *took* the bread. Then he *gave thanks* over the bread. He *broke* the bread, and finally he *gave* it to the people. As we involve ourselves in the drama of communion, together we remember what happened in such a vivid way that this memory is brought right back into the present moment.

After the preparation of the table, the celebrant moves to the table for The Great Thanksgiving. This prayer is derived from the ancient Jewish meal prayers which began with thanksgiving to God for his work in creation and for the redemption of his people. These prayers gave expression to the “eschatological” or future hope of the people and offered petitions for the community, with a concluding song of praise. These themes and their ancient structure have been recovered in the Eucharistic prayers of the 1979 Prayer Book. One of these is the prayer of St. Basil, which goes back to the 4th Century; another is based upon the 3rd Century prayer of Hippolytus.

Each of these is Trinitarian in structure; We praise the Father for his work in creation and redemption; we recall the work of Christ with anticipation of his second coming; we pray for the benefits of the Holy Spirit: concluding the prayer with a Trinitarian doxology. The people's role in this prayer is symbolized by their vocal participation in the opening dialogue, the Sanctus, Memorial Acclamation, the Great Amen, and the Lord's Prayer.

*(Here follows The Great Thanksgiving and the Lord's Prayer)*

***(Read after the Lord's Prayer)***

During the Great Thanksgiving our attention has been focused on the one loaf and one cup upon the altar - symbolizing that we all partake of one cup in this holy sacrament. After we have participated in the Lord's Prayer, the prayer of the family of God, the celebrant breaks the

bread. This signifies Christ's body broken for us. After the breaking of the bread, the fraction anthem and the invitation, any additional chalices needed for the communion of the people are brought to the altar. The assisting deacon then pours from the cruet or flagon into these chalices, an act which signifies Christ's pouring out of his blood for the sins of the world.

The fact that we eat together at one table is signified by the rubric which does not permit the clergy to receive until the people have begun to move forward to receive. The ancient and Eastern standing posture for the reception of communion is now rubrically permitted, symbolizing our resurrection in Christ Jesus. Distribution of communion may be accompanied by psalms, hymns, or anthems.

*(Here follows the fraction anthem.)*

Through all of our prayers, we believe that God has now transformed the bread and wine so that Christ is truly present in them. Together they are an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace – the traditional definition of a sacrament. Every baptized Christian is encouraged and invited to receive communion by coming forward near the altar. The ushers will guide you. You may either stand or kneel. The celebrant or deacon will first bring a wafer of bread to you, placing it on your outstretched hands for you to eat. Then the lay Eucharistic minister will bring round the chalice of wine. It has always been Christian practice to drink communion wine from this common cup, and you may do so by grasping the chalice at the bottom and tipping it slowly. Though there are no recorded cases of any illness ever being spread through the common cup, we recognize that some may prefer not to drink from it for various reasons. You are welcome to receive the bread only (and not the wine) by crossing your arms over your chest as the cup comes by, or you may have the minister dip your bread in the chalice and then place it on your tongue. After you have received communion, you may return to your seat or move to St. Mary's chapel for individual intercessory prayer.

*(Here follows the invitation and distribution)*

*(Read while table is being cleared)*

The deacon (or priest) clears the altar in much the same way as you might clear your own table after dinner, removing the dishes and cloths and eating or storing any leftovers. In church, we place the remaining bread and wine in the tabernacle behind the altar. This is called the reserved sacrament because it is reserved and taken to those who are not able to attend the church. The red candle is lit beside the tabernacle to indicate the presences of Christ – the consecrated bread and wine..

The celebrant then leads everyone in saying a post-communion prayer followed by a blessing. Before the 4<sup>th</sup> century, there was no evidence of a blessing at the end of the service, but one developed in Egypt. It was intended to be a prayer by the celebrant “as if a laying on of hands on the people.” Many Eastern liturgies today with small groups of people actually do a laying on of hands at this point. For larger congregations, and as we do here, the laying on of hands is symbolized by having the priest extend their hands over the people. Seasonal blessings may replace the standard blessing.

After the Blessing comes a hymn and the closing procession. The final act of our common worship is the dismissal, which formally closes the worship with a call for us to go as Christ’s servants out into the world. It reminds us that the purpose of worship is not simply to encourage and build ourselves up, but for all of us to be empowered and sent forth as ministers of Christ.

*(Here follows the post communion prayer, blessing, procession out and dismissal)*