

## **Introduction**

The purpose of this pamphlet is to explain the different parts of the Eucharistic worship service. This is done in the hope that it will help the reader to understand what each part means and the purpose it serves in the service as a whole.

## **Origin of the Eucharist**

The Eucharist celebrates the Resurrection of Christ. It was given to the Disciples by Jesus in the Upper Room on the night before He died. He said: "Do this in remembrance of me." (1 Cor. 11:23-25). Therefore, the service has been the central act of worship for Christian people down through the 20 centuries since the time of Christ.

Jesus rose on Sunday - the first day of the week. We call it The Lord's day. For us as Christians, Sunday replaced the Sabbath or Saturday as the day on which we gather to worship God. The Old Covenant was fulfilled. Now the New Covenant has begun.

## **Symbols of the Eucharist**

The chief note of the Eucharist is Joy in celebrating Jesus as Risen and Reigning Lord. The Cross on the Altar reminds us that it is by Jesus death on the Cross that we have forgiveness of our sins and oneness with God. It is an empty Cross because Jesus is not dead - He is alive and risen.

The Paschal or Easter candle and the candles on the Altar symbolize Jesus as the Light of the world. He has come to bring us out of the darkness of sin into the light of God's love.

The flowers on the Altar way that Jesus is the Resurrection and the Life. He is the way to eternal life for all who believe in him.

The Altar is the Table in the Upper Room. The Priest leads the congregation in celebrating the worship service. For this reason the priest is often called the presider instead of the presider, because everyone is a presider.

## **Introit or Opening Hymn (As announced)**

For many centuries it was the custom to sing a hymn or introit as the clergy entered the church.

## **ORGANIZATION OF THE SERVICE**

One helpful way to think of the service is as a great drama in which we act out the whole sweep of our relationship to God.

The service consists mainly of the two parts:

The Liturgy of the Word.

The Liturgy of the Altar.

“Liturgy” means work.

The Liturgy of the Word is centered about the Bible as God’s Word which sets forth the Good News of Christ, and prepares us to enter into Communion with God.

In order to stress the difference between these two main parts – and depending on church architecture – the presider remains outside the Altar area for the first part. He approaches the altar area as we come to the second part of the service.

### **Our Preparation**

For us to enter meaningfully into the service of Holy Communion or Eucharist depends very much on our willingness to prepare ourselves for it. Our private self-examination and preparation by setting apart quiet time, say on Saturday night, is the wedding garment with which Jesus bids us be adorned as we approach his Banquet.

## **THE LITURGY OF THE WORD**

### **The Greeting 323/355 (Stand)**

The service begins with the Greeting being exchanged between Priest and People as a call to worship.

Note: We will list each part of the Service as we come to it in the Prayer Book. Since we use Rite I on Wednesday and Rite II on Sunday, we will list the page numbers in that order; the first number will be for Rite I and the second number will be for Rite II.

### **Collect For Purity 323/355 (Stand)**

No communion with God or our neighbor is possible unless we are ready first of all to accept God's ultimate demand that we seek to be pure even as He is pure - to be holy as He is holy. In this prayer we ask God the Holy Spirit to cleanse and fit us to offer God the holy worship that He alone deserves.

### **Summary of the Law 324 / - - - (Stand)**

*Note: This is contained only in Rite I.*

God gave the Commandments or Law to the Hebrew people as a guide to strive towards. Jesus summed up both the Law and the teaching of the Prophets in Two Great Commandments.

### **Song of Praise: *Gloria in Excelsus* 324/356 or *Holy God* 324/356 or *Kyrie* 324/356**

There now follows a hymn of praise in the form of the Gloria in excelsus or the "Holy God". These signify God as the focus of all our worship.

The other option at this point is the Kyrie or "Lord, have mercy" which acknowledges our need of God's mercy because we have fallen short in fulfilling his righteous demands on us.

Next comes a special prayer, a Psalm and three other readings from the Bible that are appointed for this particular Sunday. Because they are the appointed or proper ones for the day, they are called The Propers.

### **The Collect For The Day (stand or kneel) 325/357**

A Collect is the name given to a short prayer which “collects” together the intentions and prayers of the whole congregation on one given theme.

- Traditional Wording 159 - 210
- Contemporary Wording 211 - 261

## **The Lessons 325/357**

There now follows three readings from the Bible. The first of these is usually from the Old Testament. On occasion, it is from the Book of Acts or from the Book of Revelation. The attempt has been made by those who developed the Lectionary readings to choose readings which focus on a common theme.

*Note: The Lectionary is simply the name given to the schedule of lessons to be read during the Church Year. The Lectionary giving the lessons to be read at the Sunday Eucharist and for Holy Days and Special Occasions is found in the Prayer Book on pages 889-931. It uses a three year cycle denoted as Year A, 2005; Year B, 2006; and Year C, 2007.*

There is also a Lectionary for the Daily Office which is the name given to Daily Morning Prayer and Daily Evening Prayer. This is found on pages 936-1001. It uses a two year cycle of readings. Year One is used when the year ends in an odd number; Year Two is used when the year ends in an even number. These are the readings that are ordinarily listed at the bottom of the page in Forward Day By Day.

The purpose of using a Lectionary both in the Sunday Eucharist and in the Daily Office is to expose us to the whole story of the Bible, rather than just such parts as we might choose on our own.

## **The First Lesson (sit)**

## **The Psalm (sit)**

The Book of Psalms from the Old Testament is included in the Prayer Book in its entirety and contains 150 Psalms in all. It is also called the Psalter. A Psalm is chosen for the day to tie in with the Sunday lessons. The Psalm may be read or sung,

in unison or responsively, in a variety of ways. When the Psalm comes between the first two lessons it is called the Gradual Psalm.

### **The Epistle (sit)**

The second lesson is called The Epistle - and is usually taken from one of the letters in the New Testament. The purpose of the Epistle is to tell us how to live and act out our faith in Christ.

### **The Sequence Hymn (stand as able)**

Between the Epistle and the introduction of the Gospel, a hymn is sung which ties in with the Gospel reading. It is called a Sequence Hymn. During it, the Gospel book is brought down into the midst of the congregation.

### **The Gospel (stand as able)**

Now comes the high point in the Liturgy of the Word as we hear the reading from one of the four accounts of the life of Christ, called the gospels. "Gospel" literally means "Good News". We face towards the Gospel Book to hear Jesus speaking to us, through the reading, of the Kingdom of God that is brought into being in the events of his Life and continues in our life by the empowerment of the Holy Spirit today.

### **The Gospel (stand)**

### **The Sermon (sit) 326/358**

Following the Gospel reading, the Priest preaches the Sermon. It is meant to relate the message of the Bible readings to the everyday life of the listeners. The real preacher is the Holy Spirit who seeks to help us as God's people live out the Gospel in our every day lives.

### **The Nicene Creed 326/358 (stand)**

Hearing the Word of God read in the lessons and proclaimed in the sermon leads naturally to our response of faith in Jesus as our Lord as we recite the Creed.

The Nicene Creed was formulated by the Christian Church in the fourth century at the Council of Nicea. Together with Apostles' Creed, which is the Baptismal Creed, it has been used by the whole Church down through the centuries as a corporate confession of faith.

The Priest kneels or bows at the words "came down from heaven" as an outward act of thanksgiving for God's great gift of his Son for us.

### **Prayers of the People 328/359 (kneel)**

We now pray to God for his wholeness to his Church and his World. We ask that we, as his Church, may truly serve his purpose for us and live and grow in his truth, unity and love.

Prayer is a chief work of each of us as a disciple of Christ. It is the special work of the people of God each time they gather for worship.

The option is provided of inviting the members of the congregation to voice their own petitions and thanksgiving. The invitation may also be given asking persons with needs to be prayed for in connection with this prayer.

### **Confession of Sin (kneeling as able) 330/359**

Our offering of ourselves to God is a time to examine ourselves for the actions and thoughts we are not proud of, the hurts we have caused ourselves and others and the consequences of our selfishness and pride. Before we come to church we examine ourselves in order to identify those sins for which we especially need to ask God's forgiveness, and it is here that we acknowledge those faults.

But we do one more thing. Together, we also confess and ask forgiveness for the sins of all people. As Jesus prayed, "Father, forgive them" so we pray, "Father forgive us all". It is called a General Confession because it is made by all of us together on behalf of all humanity.

### **The Declaration of God's Forgiveness 332/360 (kneel as able)**

The presider has knelt with the congregation for the Confession because, at this point, he is one of the congregation, sharing in the sins that beset humanity.

***The absolution.*** The presider now rises to act as God's representative in declaring that if we truly repent us of our sins, and intend to amend them, God does forgive us. We need to be very clear here that the authority of the Priest to make this declaration, and the forgiveness itself, is not from the Priest but from God. The Priest makes the sign of the Cross as a visible reminder that this forgiveness cost God the death of his Son on the Cross as Love's self - offering for us. When used at this point, the comfortable Words (Rite I) assure us of the reality of God's Forgiveness.

### **The Peace (stand) 332/360**

By Jesus' death and Resurrection, we who were enemies of God and alienated from him are now made one with God and share in his Love. We have God's Peace in us. We now exchange the Peace - sharing this Peace of God with each other.

## **THE LITURGY OF THE TABLE**

We now begin the second half of the Eucharist, called the Liturgy of the Table. It centers around Jesus who offered himself to God in fulfillment of God's will.

### **The Offertory 333/361**

The first action in this second part is called the Offertory. The reason we come to Church, week by week, is to offer OURSELVES to God - - and to partake anew of Jesus' once for all offering of himself for us.

This offering of ourselves is symbolized outwardly by three important things:

- **THE BREAD AND WINE.** The Ushers bring these forward from the back of the Church as an offering of all of all of the people. These elements also symbolize the offering of OURSELVES here and now, in this Eucharist.
- **OUR MONEY:** This represents the fruit of our labor under God's Providence. The Bible teaches us that a proportion of all we have belongs to God - the tithe.

- **OUR PRAYERS:** We offer the Eucharist for ourselves, for all in our Church Family, and for all people everywhere - both here and in life eternal.

As the offering is being received, the Priest prepares the bread and wine at the Altar. Both wine and water are poured into the chalice: the wine representing that Jesus is God – the water symbolizing that Jesus is man. The washing of the Priest’s hands is a preparation for the actual consecration, and a symbol of the spiritual cleanliness we ask God to give us as we come to take our part in this Banquet of his Son.

Jesus bids us to come to the Marriage Feast of the Bridegroom. For a moment we are bid to share in a foretaste of the Heavenly Banquet which awaits us. Christ is the Bridegroom. We - the Church - are his Bride. He bids us - :”Come to the Banquet.”

The table is set for the celebration of Holy Communion. During this time it is customary for the choir and/or the congregation to offer music in praise and thanksgiving.

### **The Doxology (stand)**

As the final offering(s) are brought to the altar, we sing a second shorter piece of music called the “doxology.” It is a short hymn in praise of God, the giver of all that is ours.

### **The Great Thanksgiving 333/361 - 6 (kneel)**

The Eucharistic prayer, beginning with the *sursum corda* and ending with the great *AMEN* (the only italicized and capitalized word in the prayer book) is called “The Great Thanksgiving.” It is here that we give thanks to God for creation and for Jesus’ sacrifice, and for the coming of the Holy Spirit.

### **Sursum Corda 333, 340, /361, 367, 369, 372 (stand)**

Ever since the second century, this second half of the Eucharist has begun with the phrase known as the *Sursum Corda* from the Latin for “Lift up your hearts”.

### **Proper Preface 344-349 / 377-382**

This is followed by a Proper Preface which underlines the theme of the current Church Season or a particular occasion being celebrated. There is no proper preface in Eucharistic prayers C and D.

### **Sanctus 334, 341/362, 367, 371, 373 (stand)**

The Sanctus or “Holy, Holy, Holy” is one of the most beautiful hymns of adoration in all Christian worship. It is taken from the prophet Isaiah’s vision of the glory of God that he witnessed in the Temple.

**Prayer of Consecration Rite I: I- 334-336 II- 341-343; Rite II: A- 362-363 B- 368-369 C- 370-372 D- 373-375. (Note that there are also three forms of Eucharistic prayers in *Enriching Our Worship*)**

**Stand or kneel.** The prayer book suggests that it is appropriate to stand or kneel for the prayer of consecration. You are invited to do either as your personal piety dictates.

The Sanctus leads directly into the Prayer of Consecration. The words of institution are those which St. Paul indicated that Jesus said at the Last Supper.

*Note: Our Prayer Book provides a variety of forms for the Prayer of Consecration. In Rite I, two are provided (I & II); in Rite II, four are provided (A, B, C & D). There is also a forming the BCP for the prayer of consecration (so-called Rite III). The authorized supplemental text *Enriching Our Worship* also contains three Eucharistic prayers. Hence there is a wide variety of prayers that can be used, and many churches use the variety of prayers to mark the seasons of the church year.*

The Priest asks God to bless the elements of bread and wine as the channels for Christ’s Life to come anew into ours. The elevation of the Chalice and Host symbolize our uplifted prayer to God to bless our offering and unite it with Christ’s sacrifice on Calvary.

### **Lord’s Prayer (kneeling as able) 336/364**

To the Prayer of Consecration, we now add the prayer Jesus gave us as the most perfect prayer we have to bring our prayer of consecration to its fulfillment - - The

Lord's Prayer. *At St. George's, the tradition is to chant the Lord's Prayer using contemporary language.*

### **The Fraction (The Breaking of the Bread) 337/364 (kneel as able).**

Jesus saw his Mission as mirrored in the experience of the Hebrew people in Egypt. As God led the Israelites out of bondage into freedom in the Passover experience, so Jesus saw himself as the Lamb of God and his death as the means whereby God acts to deliver all people from the bondage of sin and deliver them into the freedom of the children of God. By God's grace, the Holy Spirit has brought us through our Baptism into the Reign of God. In Christ, we have passed from death to life eternal. Priest and people now proclaim this New Life in which we are called to share.

*Agnus Dei (Christ Our Passover).* Music often accompanies the fraction.

**Prayer of Humble Access 337/ - - - .** This is a prayer that is part of the celebration of the Rite I Eucharistic celebration.

### **The Communion**

The priest now bids us come forward to his Banquet. As we have offered ourselves, our souls and bodies, in the symbols of bread and wine, so now Jesus uses these same symbols to give us our lives back again - and through the consecrated bread and wine as receive it, he enters into us anew to live his Risen Life through us. We live in him. He lives in us. Thus do we know and experience Eternal Life in Christ even as we yet continue to live in this world.

It is customary to kneel, sit, or stand while waiting for the usher to come to your pew. Many people will kneel, sit, or stand in silent prayer or join in the singing of communion hymns. Let your own spirituality direct you in this matter.

*Note: It is the understanding of our Church that to receive in just one kind (such as the bread and not the wine) is still to receive the full Sacrament. Both are one.*

A person may receive the wine by receiving the chalice. Or, they may dip or instinct the bread in the wine.

## **Post Communion Prayer 339/365-366**

Having received the spiritual Body and Blood of Christ in the Sacrament, we now join in offering our thanks to God, and ask for his help to live as his Resurrection people.

## **The Blessing 339/366**

The Priest now asks God to bless us that we may truly know within ourselves the Peace of God which is the warmth and strength of our communion with him in his Son by his indwelling Spirit.

## **Closing Hymn (stand)**

We say our own closing prayer to God as the candles are put out. We then rise to sing a hymn in praise for what we have received. We look to heaven as our home, and Christ as our King.

## **Dismissal 339-340/366**

Through us, Christ is now to be carried forth from this place into the world to do his saving work. We are the “Christophers” - “bearers of Christ” into the world. In Church, worship is our work. In the world, discipleship is our work. We are sent forth to be Christ to heal and love his broken world.

The service ends with the words of the dismissal given by the deacon or other appointed person, spoken in English, Spanish, or other languages as appropriate. The words remind us that our work as disciples is in the world outside the walls of the church, and that we are to go forth rejoicing!