

The Book of
Common Prayer
Trinity Episcopal Church
Longview, Texas

November 2017 – January 2018

The Rev. Frank W. Hughes, Ph.D.

Session 2: The Holy Eucharist

The Holy Eucharist

The Holy Eucharist is a service which goes back historically to the earthly lifetime of the historical Jesus. It is the only service of worship Jesus ever commanded his disciples to celebrate.

The Holy Eucharist

- The earliest eucharistic prayer that we have is from the *Didache of the Twelve Apostles*, which is found in the Apostolic Fathers. It comes from the late first or early second century of the Common Era (A.D.).
- The Greek text of the *Didache* was not published until 1883, so the 16th century reformers did not have access to it.

Didache, chapter 9

And concerning the Eucharist, hold Eucharist thus: First concerning the Cup, "We give thanks to thee, our Father, for the Holy Vine of David thy child, which, thou didst make known to us through Jesus thy child; to thee be glory for ever."

And concerning the broken Bread: "We give thee thanks, our Father, for the life and knowledge which thou didst make known to us through Jesus thy Child. To thee be glory for ever."

Didache, chapter 9

As this broken bread was scattered upon the mountains, but was brought together and became one, so let your Church be gathered together from the ends of the earth into your Kingdom, for yours is the glory and the power through Jesus Christ for ever."

But let none eat or drink of your Eucharist except those who have been baptized in the Lord's Name. For concerning this also did the Lord say, "Give not that which is holy to the dogs."

Didache, chapter 10

But after you are satisfied with food, thus give thanks: "We give thanks to you, O Holy Father, for your Holy Name which you made to tabernacle in our hearts, and for the knowledge and faith and immortality which you made known to us through Jesus thy Child. To you be glory for ever. You, Lord Almighty, created all things for your Name's sake, and gave food and drink to people for their enjoyment, . . .

Didache, chapter 10

“ . . . that they might give thanks to you, but us you have blessed with spiritual food and drink and eternal light through your Child. Above all we give thanks to you for that you are mighty. To you be glory for ever. Remember, Lord, your Church, to deliver it from all evil and to make it perfect in your love, and gather it together in its holiness from the four winds to your kingdom which you have prepared for it. For yours is the power and the glory for ever.”

The *Didache* of the Twelve Apostles

The Eucharistic prayer in the *Didache* includes these four parts:

1. Thanksgiving for God's gift of his Name to dwell in the hearts of Christians, and for the gift of knowledge and immortality in Jesus.
2. Thanksgiving for the food and drink given to humanity.
3. Intercessory prayer for the church.
4. An interesting ending with "Hosanna to the God of David," a warning against eating unworthily, and the Aramaic word "Maranatha," meaning "our Lord, come!"

From Justin Martyr, *First Apology*

66. And this food is called among us Eucharistia, of which no one is allowed to partake but the man who believes that the things which we teach are true, and who has been washed with the washing that is for the remission of sins, and unto regeneration, and who is so living as Christ has enjoined. **For not as common bread and common drink do we receive these; but in like manner as Jesus Christ our Savior, having been made flesh by the Word of God, had both flesh and blood for our salvation, so likewise have we been taught that the food which is blessed by the prayer of His word, and from which our blood and flesh by transmutation are nourished, is the flesh and blood of that Jesus who was made flesh.**

First Apology, 66, continued:

For the apostles, in the memoirs composed by them, which are called Gospels, have thus delivered unto us what was enjoined upon them; that Jesus took bread, and when He had given thanks, said, "This do ye in remembrance of Me, this is My body;" and that, after the same manner, having taken the cup and given thanks, He said, "This is My blood;" and gave it to them alone.

Justin Martyr, *First Apology*

67. And we afterwards continually remind each other of these things. And the wealthy among us help the needy; and we always keep together; and for all things wherewith we are supplied, we bless the Maker of all through His Son Jesus Christ, and through the Holy Ghost. And on the day called Sunday, all who live in cities or in the country gather together to one place, and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read, as long as time permits; then, when the reader has ceased, the president verbally instructs, and exhorts to the imitation of these good things.

Justin Martyr, *First Apology*, 67

Then we all rise together and pray, and, as we before said, when our prayer is ended, bread and wine and water are brought, and the president in like manner offers prayers and thanksgivings, according to his ability, and the people assent, saying Amen; and there is a distribution to each, and a participation of that over which thanks have been given, and to those who are absent a portion is sent by the deacons. And they who are well to do, and willing, give what each thinks fit; and what is collected is deposited with the president, who succors the orphans and widows and those who, through sickness or any other cause, are in want, and those who are in bonds and the strangers sojourning among us, and in a word takes care of all who are in need.

Justin Martyr, *First Apology*, 67

But **Sunday is the day on which we all hold our common assembly**, because it is the first day on which God, having wrought a change in the darkness and matter, made the world; and Jesus Christ our Savior on the same day rose from the dead. For He was crucified on the day before that of Saturn (Saturday); and on the day after that of Saturn, which is the day of the Sun, having appeared to His apostles and disciples, He taught them these things, which we have submitted to you also for your consideration.

What do we learn from Justin?

Justin Martyr was a philosopher in Rome, and he wrote his *First Apology* about A.D. 150. He was among a group of second and third century fathers of the church called the “Apologists.”

- ✓ **Justin describes in good detail the normal Sunday worship of the church, which was, in his words, a “Eucharistia.”**
- ✓ **The Eucharist is no longer a “real meal” but has become a Sunday assembly.**

The Eucharist in Christian tradition

By the time of later church fathers like St. Augustine of Hippo (fourth and fifth centuries), it is well established that **the Eucharist was the main worship celebrated by the church on Sundays.**

The development of the Eucharist

- In the church in the era of the early fathers, there was no overarching authority which had enough authority to enforce anything on the church in any other city.
- The bishop of Rome would not be called “Papa” for some centuries to come.
- Because the early church was pretty decentralized, different areas of the church developed their liturgies in different ways.

East *versus* West

- As the church grew, especially after the Council of Nicaea (A.D. 325-328), the church of the East and the church of the West developed their liturgies rather separately from each other.
- Partially this was because the language of the **western** church was originally Greek and became Latin, and the languages of the **eastern** church were originally Aramaic (the language of Jesus) and Greek (the language of Paul and of the New Testament) and grew to be a multitude of languages.

East *versus* West

- The liturgies in the East grew into a multitude of liturgies, often associated with the names of saints, such as the Liturgy of St. James (the oldest one) and the Liturgy of St. Basil the Great.
- The liturgies in the West also grew into a multitude of Latin liturgies, associated with the names of cities or regions, such as the Roman rite, or the Gallican rite, or the Sarum (Salisbury, England) rite, or the rite of Hereford or the rite of York.

The Reformation

- At the time of the Reformation, the Council of Trent determined that the Roman rite would become the preeminent (if not the only) rite in the Western Catholic church.
- The churches of the Reformation developed in many different ways. Some Reformation churches reacted strongly against mediaeval Western liturgies. This was the more radical Reformation.

The English Reformation

- The Church of England went back and forth in its Reformation. Under King Edward VI, Archbishop Thomas Cranmer wrote and the church issued the first two editions of the *Book of Common Prayer*, in 1549 and 1552.
- The 1549 Prayer Book was Protestant, and the 1552 Prayer Book was heavily Protestant.

The English Reformation

- Under Queen Mary, who was Roman Catholic, the Reformation was suppressed quite bloodily. Archbishop Thomas Cranmer was burned alive as a heretic, as were Bishops Hugh Latimer and Nicholas Ridley.
- When Queen Elizabeth I came to the throne, the Church of England became more moderately reformed. (Less of the bath water was thrown out, in order to preserve more of the baby!) This is known as the Elizabethan Settlement.

Two Reformation principles

- A deeply important Reformation principle is that the worship of the church should be in a language that the people understand and can participate in.
- Another Reformation principle is that the people should be given the opportunity to receive the Holy Communion in both kinds, meaning both the host (the Body of Christ) and the chalice (the Blood of Christ).

The Liturgical Movement in the Twentieth Century

- The twentieth century Liturgical Movement was a movement that reformed liturgy not on the basis of late mediaeval or Reformation-era liturgical texts, but on the basis of what went on (as far as can be determined) in the undivided church of the early centuries.
- Early liturgies were found such as in the so-called *Apostolic Tradition* of Hippolytus, as well as other early church documents.

The Liturgical Movement in the Twentieth Century

- A group of liturgists in the twentieth century put together an ecumenical eucharistic prayer. It was based on the Liturgy of St. Basil the Great.
- It is found in the 1979 Prayer Book as Eucharistic Prayer D (pp. 372-375).
- It is also found as Eucharistic Prayer IV in the Roman missal (*Novus Ordo Missae*) after the Second Vatican Council.

Transubstantiation?

- The philosophical theory that the substance of the bread and wine is changed when the priest consecrates the Eucharist is called “transubstantiation.”
- It is based on Platonic and Aristotelian philosophy. Despite the distinction between substance and accidents, there is no good philosophical explanation for how the bread ceases to be bread and the wine ceases to be wine.

The definition of a sacrament

- ✘ St. Augustine said a sacrament was the “visible form of invisible grace” and “a sign of a sacred thing.”
- ✘ The classic Anglican definition of a sacrament is this: **“an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace given unto us, ordained by Christ himself, as a means whereby we receive the same, and a pledge to assure us thereof.”** This is from *The Book of Common Prayer* of 1662.

The Book of Common Prayer of 1979

From “An Outline of the Faith commonly called the Catechism” (p. 857):

Q. What are the sacraments?

A. The sacraments are outward and visible signs of inward and spiritual grace, **given by Christ as sure and certain means by which we receive that grace.**

Three points of emphasis!

1. Outward and visible signs
2. Inward and spiritual grace
3. Sure and certain means by which we receive that grace

Richard Hooker

Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity

“ . . . where the signs and sacraments of His grace are not either through contempt unreceived, or received with contempt, we are not to doubt but that they really give what they promise, and are what they signify. For we take not Baptism nor the Eucharist for bare *resemblances* or memorials of things absent, neither for *naked signs* and testimonies assuring us of grace received before, but (as they are indeed and in verity) for means effectual whereby God when we take the sacraments delivereth into our hands that grace available unto eternal life, which grace the sacraments represent or signify ”

Laws, Book 5, chap. 57

Structure of the Holy Eucharist

1. Gathering: opening prayers
2. Liturgy of the Word: readings from Scripture and preaching on the readings; intercessory prayers
3. The Peace
4. Liturgy of the Table
 - a) Offertory: Jesus **took** bread and wine
 - b) Eucharistic prayer: Jesus **blessed** the bread and cup
 - c) Breaking of the bread: Jesus **broke** the bread
 - d) Communion of the people: Jesus **shared** the bread and cup
5. Dismissal