

Living as an Episcopalian: Spirituality

Living as an Episcopalian

1. History
2. Worship
3. The Church's Teaching and the Bible
- 4. Spirituality**
5. Ministry and Organization. The Mission of the Church

Living as an Episcopalian: Spirituality

majority of material in this presentation is
taken from:

Christian Spirituality. An Introduction.
Alister E. McGrath. Blackwell Publishers.
1999

Spirituality

What do we mean by spirituality?

Theology and spirituality

The Bible and spirituality

The Rhythms of Faith

 Structuring Time

 Liturgy and Prayer

Community and spirituality

**What is
Spirituality?**

What is Spirituality?

intellectual knowledge:

- the creed
- the catechism
- stories of the bible
- works of biblical criticism
- systematic theologies
- the reality of death, the transience of our lives

What is Spirituality?

questions:

- how do we “take to heart” the implications of this knowledge for our lives and the world?
- how do we illuminate the “world of our inner lives” with the “light” of this heartfelt knowledge?
- how do we change the patterns of our daily lives, our sense of time and space, to reflect this heartfelt knowledge?

What is Spirituality?

Definitions

“the quest for a fulfilled and authentic Christian existence, involving bringing together:

- the fundamental ideas of Christianity
- the whole experience of living”

- Alister McGrath. Christian Spirituality

“...fundamentally, spirituality has to do with becoming a person in the fullest sense, . . .”

- John Macquarrie, Spirit and Spirituality

What is Spirituality?

Definitions

“Spirituality has to do with our experiencing of God and with the transformation of our consciousness and our lives as outcomes of that experience”

- Richard O'Brien, Catholicism, p. 1058

Spirituality is a lived experience, the effort to apply relevant elements in the deposit of Christian faith to the:

- guidance of men and women towards their spiritual growth
- the progressive development of their persons which flowers into a proportionately increased insight and joy

- George Ganss, “Introduction” to Ignatius of Loyola

Theology and Spirituality

Theology and Spirituality

Christian beliefs that can change our attitudes and views of the world and our lives if “heartfelt:”

- creation
- the Incarnation
- the Trinity
- redemption
- the Resurrection
- consummation of all things
- the sacraments; a sacramental universe

Theology and Spirituality

Creation

Implications:

- affirms the goodness of creation
 - no need to “withdraw” from the world
 - importance of caring for creation
- something of God may be known through the creation
 - wonder evoked by creation
 - the study of creation
- human nature

Theology and Spirituality

Creation

Implications for Human Nature

human beings:

- are created “in the image of God”
- are made by God and for God: “You have made us for yourself, and our heart is restless until it finds its rest in you.” (St. Augustine)
- it is impossible to be fully human without acknowledging God as creator and redeemer

Theology and Spirituality

The Incarnation

God entered our world and became fully human

“incarnation” from Latin, “being in the flesh”

Implications for:

- our knowledge of God
- the suffering of God
- the goodness of flesh and blood, the human body
- human destiny

Theology and Spirituality

The Incarnation

Our Knowledge of God

What is God like?

- Jesus is the “image of the invisible God” (Colossians 1:15)
- to encounter Jesus is to encounter God
- Eastern church: justifies use of icons to help visualize the divine

Theology and Spirituality

The Incarnation

The Suffering of God

Can God Suffer?

- in becoming human, God has experienced human pain and suffering
- we can turn to God knowing God has experienced first hand human suffering

Theology and Spirituality

The Incarnation

Human Destiny

Eastern Christianity: God became human so we can someday become divine

Maximus the Confessor (580-662)

- each human being is an image of the divine logos
- purpose of human nature is to acquire similitude with God. That is: the movement of human kind is towards communion with God or “deification”

Theology and Spirituality

The Trinity

- the Godhead is a community of being
- all is shared, united, mutually exchanged
- Father, Son, Spirit are differentiations within the Godhead, evident in the human experience of grace and redemption

implications for:

1. the way we comprehend God
2. the way we view prayer

Theology and Spirituality

The Trinity

The Nature of God

“if you can comprehend it, it is not God”
(St. Augustine)

expresses our complex understanding and wonder of God:

- preserves the mystery, majesty and glory of God
- “mystery is like a cliff: we may not be able to scale it, but we can stand at the foot of it, touch it, praise its beauty. So it is with the mystery of the Trinity.” (Leonardo Boff, Brazilian liberation theologian)

Theology and Spirituality

The Trinity

The Nature of Prayer

prayer and worship often involves trinitarian framework

- “through the Son”
- “in the Spirit”

prayer

- is not a purely human activity
- involves the Holy Spirit moving, prompting the believer to turn to God

Theology and Spirituality

Redemption

four central themes/facets:

- the cross as sacrifice
- the cross as victory
- the cross and forgiveness of sins
- the cross and love

Theology and Spirituality

Redemption

stresses:

- the costliness of human salvation
- the reality of human sin and the love of God for sinners

Theology and Spirituality

Resurrection

- Jesus is risen Savior and Lord
- affirms belief we will be raised from the dead, that death has been conquered

Troparion of Easter in Byzantine liturgy

“Christ is risen from the dead!

Dying, he conquered death!

To the dead, he has given life!”

Theology and Spirituality

The Consummation of All Things

the consummation of all things in a heavenly Jerusalem

- destination of our earthly pilgrimage
- the promised land

the “beatific vision” of God

- to see God face to face
- impossible now, just as it is impossible to look directly at the sun

Theology and Spirituality

Sacramental Universe

material world can be a door to the sacred:

God is both:

- transcendent reality beyond the world he has made
- immanent reality who dwells in this world and is active in it

Theology and Spirituality

Anglican Spirituality

Anglican Spirituality has emphasized:

- creation
- the Incarnation
- the sacramental universe

- nature has an inherent goodness (creation; sacramental universe)
 - sin often the misuse of good things
- Christian faith concerned for the whole of life (“body” and “soul”) (Incarnation)
- our purpose is to seek God’s glory, not just avoid sin

The Bible and Spirituality

The Bible and Spirituality

Reading the Bible

four stages in reading the bible (Guigo II, prior of the Grand Chartreuse, d. 1188)

- 1. reading (*lectio*)
 - begin an encounter with God
- 2. meditation (*meditatio*)
 - focus, concentrate upon meaning, imagery
- 3. prayer (*oratio*)
 - appropriate response to our encounter
- 4. contemplation (*contemplatio*)
 - entrance into the presence of God

The Bible and Spirituality

Biblical Images

Mental Images and Themes for Spirituality

the feast

the journey

the exile

the struggle

purification

the desert

ascent

darkness and light

silence

The Bible and Spirituality.

Biblical Images

The feast

the kingdom of God is like a feast:

- a great banquet throw in celebration of
 - a marriage (Luke 14:15-24)
 - the return of a prodigal son (Luke 15:11-24)

suggests:

- an abundance satisfying human hunger
- invitation
- celebration and rejoicing

The Bible and Spirituality.

Biblical Images

The Journey

journeys of the Old Testament:

- wandering in the desert before entering the Promised land
- return to Jerusalem after exile in Babylon

early Christians: followers of the way (Act 9:2, 24:14)

- our lives a journey to the heavenly kingdom

Bible and Spirituality.

Biblical Images

Exile

Old Testament:

- the exile in Babylon after capture of Jerusalem 586 BC

Paul:

- Christians “citizens of heaven” (our true home)
- life on earth a period of exile from the heavenly Jerusalem

Bible and Spirituality.

Biblical Images

The Struggle

“putting on the full armor of God”

(Ephesians 6:10-18); Christians like
soldiers (2 Timothy 2:3)

1 external struggle against those hostile
to Christianity

2. internal struggle against temptation

Jacob’s wrestling with an angel (Genesis
32:22-32)

3. struggle with God

Bible and Spirituality.

Biblical Images

Spiritual Purification

- Day of Atonement ritual (Leviticus 16).
Preparation needed before entering into
the presence of God
- need for cleansing from sin (Psalm 51:2, 7)
 - Revelations 7:14: “being washed in the
blood of the Lamb”
 - water in the sacrament of baptism

The Bible and Spirituality.

Biblical Images

The Desert or Wilderness

wandering of Israel in the desert wilderness

John the Baptist in the wilderness

Jesus' withdrawal to the wilderness for 40
days

desert:

- retreat from the world's distraction and temptation; place to focus on God and spiritual life
- life as wandering through desert wilderness

The Bible and Spirituality

Biblical Images

Ascent

Moses ascending Sinai to receive the law

Jesus ascending mountain for the

transfiguration

Jacob's dream of a ladder between heaven
and earth

symbol of transcendence:

- St. John of the Cross (1542-91). The

Ascent of Mount Carmel

- Thomas Merton. *Seven Storey Mountain*

The Bible and Spirituality

Biblical Images

Darkness and Light

at creation: darkness = chaos and confusion

God's presence and power as illumination

- Isaiah 9:2 “people who walked in darkness see a great light”

- John 8:12: Jesus the light of the world

Moses approaches God through darkness and cloud

Paul: we are “seeing through a glass darkly”

The Bible and Spirituality

Biblical Images

Darkness and Light

- darkness as an image of doubt
- darkness as a symbol of sin
- darkness as a symbol of divine unknowability

The Bible and Spirituality

Biblical Images

Silence

Habakkuk 2:20: whole earth should be silent
in the presence of the Lord in the temple
Job 40:1-3: Job reduced to silence, aware of
his foolishness in the sight of God
Revelations 8:1: “silence in heaven”

humanity is reduced to silence confronted
with the majesty and awe of God

The Bible and Spirituality

Biblical Images

Silence

Eastern Christianity hesychasm in the 8th century:

- *hesychia* = tranquillity and silence
- inward silence to focus on God
- Jesus prayer “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me” (Luke 18:38)
- Gregory Palamas (1294-1346): allowed a vision of the “divine energies;” divine essence beyond human reach

The Rhythms of Faith

The Rhythms of Faith: Structuring Time The Christian Week

Sunday:

- day on which resurrection of Jesus celebrated
- “space” set aside for physical rest and spiritual refreshment

Wednesdays and Fridays: “fast days” in early Christian communities

- Wed: day Christ betrayed
- Fri: day Christ crucified

The Rhythms of Faith: Structuring Time The Christian Year

Advent:

- focuses on two “advents” or comings of Jesus:
 - in humility, as an infant
 - second coming in glory

Christmas:

- celebration of the birth of Jesus, the Incarnation

The Rhythms of Faith: Structuring Time The Christian Year

Lent:

- preparation for Easter
- period of repentance
- 40 days reflects Jesus' time in the wilderness before his public ministry

Easter:

- Jesus is Lord
- death conquered; Christian hope for a personal resurrection

The Rhythms of Faith.

Structuring Time

The Christian Day

Monasticism: goal of continuous prayer;
“habitual recollection” a constant sense
of God’s presence in the whole of life
day structured 7 times of prayer (“offices”)
during day, one at night

- Mattins
- Vespers
- terce (latin for third)
- sext (latin for sixth)
- none (latin for ninth)
- Compline (final time of prayer before bed)
- Prime (early morning prayer)

The Rhythms of Faith. Structuring Time

1979 Prayer Book has “offices” for four times during the day

The Rhythms of Faith

Liturgy and Prayer

theology $\leftarrow \rightarrow$ worship and prayer

lex orandi, lex credendi. The way you pray
shapes what you believe (and visa versa)

The Rhythms of Faith

Liturgy and Prayer

prayer: “responding to God, by thought and by deeds, with or without words”

kinds of prayer:

- adoration
- praise
- thanksgiving
- penitence
- oblation
- intercession
- petition
- “centering” prayer

Community and Spirituality

Community and Spirituality

Anglican spirituality “corporate, liturgical, sacramental”

church a community of members who:

- find their center in common worship
- go out into the world to serve according to the gifts and opportunities given them

based on:

- Incarnational faith
- goodness of creation, a pouring out of the being of God
- sacramental view of the universe