

Living as an Episcopalian 2. Worship

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1. What is Worship?

1.1. Definition

Webster's definition:

- reverence (profound, adoring, awed respect) offered to God
- the act of expressing such reverence

1.2. God and worship

God:

- personal
- the Creator
- holy, unknowable, infinite
- the Alpha and the Omega
- "I AM who I AM"

worship:

- our reverent response to the personal, holy, unknowable, infinite God

1.3. The roots from which springs our worship

“Thou hast made us for thyself, and our hearts are restless till they find their rest in thee.”

- St. Augustine of Hippo (b. 354)

Worship is rooted in our:

- sense of the mystery of existence
- desire for transcendence, meaning
- sense of beauty
- love
- human needs, fears, joys

1.4. The diverse settings and expression of worship

Worship can involve language, music, art, dance, all the senses

- the Eastern Orthodox Divine Liturgy to a Quaker meeting

May be corporate or private.

Can be in diverse locations: Gothic cathedral to private home.

1.5. The dual actions of worship

Worship involves both:

- *receiving* something from God
- *offering, giving* something of ourselves to God

2. A Sacramental Universe. The Sacraments

2.1. Intimations of the Divine in the Created World: A Sacramental View of The Universe

Intimations of the divine in the created world as described in literature:

“Teach me, my God and King, in all things thee to see”

- George Herbert, Anglican poet

**“Earth’s crammed with heaven,
And every common bush afire with God;
But only he who sees takes off his shoes,
The rest sit round and plunk blackberries.”**

- Elizabeth Barrett Browning

**“To me, the meanest flower that blows can give
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.”**

- William Wordsworth

“Ever since the creation of the world his eternal power and divine nature, invisible though they are, have been understood and seen through the things he has made.”

(NRSV)

- St. Paul, Romans 1:20

- we are embodied beings existing in a very material world
- we can feel intimations of beauty, mystery, meaning through this material world (a bush, a flower, a sunset. . .)

A “sacramental” view of the universe links the two pieces of this duality:

- the material world is good
- the material world can be “door to the sacred”

2.2. The Basis for a Sacramental View of the Universe

Fundamental basis of a Sacramental View of the Universe is:

1. *the material world is good:*

- created by God
- in the Incarnation, God freely took on embodied existence, lived in space and time

2. *the 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

2.3. Sacramental Rites in Our Daily Lives

There are many “sacraments:” material objects, or physical events/actions that can be “doors” to the sacred

We have many “rites” = ritual physical actions, that express and are “doors” to feelings, inner realities, meaning beyond the mechanics of the act:

- touching, embracing another person
- making love
- sharing a meal together
- giving a gift
- gestures of hospitality and welcome

2.4. Sacramental Rites or Rituals in the Church

Church has defined seven “sacramental” rites or rituals: “Sacraments”

Two Sacraments of the Gospel:

- Baptism
- Holy Eucharist

Other Sacramental Rites that evolved under guidance of the Holy Spirit:

- Confirmation
- Ordination
- Holy Matrimony
- Reconciliation of a Penitent (Confession)
- Unction (Anointing of the Sick)

2.5. The Outward Parts and Inward Spiritual Reality of a Sacrament

1. outward or visible part = “matter” and/or “form.”

- the material object and/or physical action that is the “door” or “portal” to the sacred
- Catechism: “the outward and visible signs”

2. inward spiritual reality = “*res*”

- heart of the sacrament
- the action of God on the human spirit
- Catechism: “the inward and spiritual grace”

3. The Eucharist

3.1. Introduction

The Eucharist is the “supreme” sacrament

Other names for the Holy Eucharist:

- Lord’s Supper
- Holy Communion
- Divine Liturgy
- the Mass
- the Great Offering

3.2. The Eucharist and Christ

Christ is the

- founder of the Sacrament
- minister of the Sacrament
- the supreme example of the grace bestowed by the Sacrament

3.3. The Holy Eucharist as Sacrament: Matter, Form, and Grace

The outward part:

1. “matter” and/or “form”

- **matter:** bread and wine
- **form:** “four-fold” shape of the Eucharist
 - Jesus *took* bread
 - *blessed* it
 - *broke* it,
 - and *distributed* it

The inner spiritual reality:

2. “*res*”

- richness of the Eucharist makes it almost impossible to name a specific grace. “Body and Blood of Christ given to his people”
- self-giving

3.4. The Three Facets of the Holy Eucharist

The three facets of the Holy Eucharist:

- 1. a meal
- 2. the real presence of Jesus
- 3. a remembrance of the sacrifice of Jesus

3.5. The Holy Eucharist as a Meal

3.5.1. *Original setting was in a Jewish meal*

The original setting of the Holy Eucharist (the last supper) was a Jewish meal.

Note the form of the Jewish *beraka* (blessing or thanksgiving):
before meal:

- host takes small loaf of bread
- “Blessed are you, Lord God of the universe, you bring forth bread from the earth.”
- host breaks bread and distributes it

after meal:

- host takes cup of wine
- “Blessed are you, Lord God of the universe, you create the fruit of the vine.”
- passes cup round the guests

3.5.2. Meals in the Ancient World

In Israel and ancient world: a meal was not merely an occasion for eating, drinking, but a sacred occasion.

In the ancient church, the Eucharist began as a regular meal; then gradually became a symbolic meal.

3.5.3. Problems with Eucharist as regular meal

Problems with doing the Eucharist as part of a regular meal in the early world are documented in the New Testament (a name used for these gatherings of a meal and the Holy Eucharist was "love feast"):

I Cor 11: “**I do not commend you, because when you come together, it is not for the better, but for the worse . . . it is not the Lord’s Supper that you eat. For in eating, each one goes ahead with his own meal, and one is hungry and another is drunk.**”

Jude 1:12: “**These are blemishes on your love feasts, as they boldly carouse together, looking after themselves.**”

3.5.4. Summary of the Eucharist as a Meal

As a meal, Eucharist includes:

- table fellowship
- praise and thanksgiving for God’s blessings to us
- foretaste of the “feast to come”

3.6. The Holy Eucharist as the Real Presence of Jesus

3.6.1. The Mystery of the "Real Presence of Jesus" in the Eucharist

We affirm that the body and blood of Christ are "truly present" in the Eucharist, that the flesh of Christ is in some way "life-giving." But how can this be? This is a matter of continued theological speculation, but ultimately remains a mystery.

St. Augustine's description is still an apt description of the mystery of the real presence of Jesus in the Eucharist.

“That which you see is bread and the cup, which even your eyes declare to you; but as to that in which your faith demands instruction, the bread is the body of Christ, the cup is the blood of Christ. . . these things are called sacraments for this reason, that in them one thing is seen, another thing is understood.”

- St. Augustine of Hippo (b. 354)

3.6.2. Transubstantiation

During the Middle Ages a view called **Transubstantiation** attempted to provide an explanation for the real presence:

Transubstantiation is based on Greek view of reality. Every “thing” has:

- a physical being detectable by our senses: "accidents"
- metaphysical reality: "substance"

Transubstantiation says that the "substance" of bread and wine is changed into the "substance" of the body and blood of Christ; the "accidents" of the bread and wine remain, still genuinely there.

The view of transubstantiation however is difficult to reconcile with the atomic and molecular view of matter in modern science.

3.6.3. Summary: The Holy Eucharist as the Real Presence of Jesus

In the material objects (the "matter") of bread and wine, a "door" is open to us, and we truly receive Jesus

The "how" is a mystery and a continued matter for theological speculation

3.7. Holy Eucharist as Sacrifice

3.7.1. Sources of the View of the Holy Eucharist as Sacrifice

Last Supper likely a Passover meal, a sacrificial feast:

- Jesus' the paschal lamb of the new covenant

Scripture also refers to the sacrificial nature of Jesus' mission:

- Mark 10:45: "For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many."
- Mark 14:24: "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many."
- "Do this in remembrance of me"

3.7.2. Remembrance: not Repetition, but Re-presenting

We affirm Jesus' death on Calvary is a unique and sufficient sacrifice for the sins of humanity. A "repetition" of Calvary in the Holy Eucharist is thus unnecessary and an affront to this affirmation.

- Reformers accused Roman Catholic Church of teaching Eucharist is a *repetition* of sacrifice of Calvary (probably an unfair charge)

Jesus asked: "Do this in "remembrance" of me." What is meant by "remembrance?"

- remembrance = Greek *anamnesis*
- not a mere remembering but a "re-presenting:" a "past" event recalled and experienced so that its significance and power are known and felt as if the event were present

In the Holy Eucharist, we "re-present" the sacrifice of Calvary. This "re-presenting" of Calvary is not merely a psychological "trick," but a recognition of a metaphysical reality:

- event of Calvary is not only a historical reality in space-time, but also was "slain from the foundation of the world" (Rev 13:8)
- all moments of space-time are eternally present to God, including Jesus' suffering and death on Calvary

3.8. The Holy Eucharist: Summary

The Holy Eucharist is a:

1. table fellowship of thanksgiving and praise
2. "sacramental" door to communion with Christ
3. re-presenting of Jesus' sacrifice on Calvary, acknowledging that sacrifice as eternally "present" to God

4. The Prayer Book

Note: a copy of the current **Book of Common Prayer** of the Episcopal Church U.S.A. can be downloaded as a hyperlinked Microsoft .lit ebook from our **download page**.

4.1. Centrality of the Prayer Book to Anglicans and The Episcopal Church

The Prayer Book is central to the Episcopal church. Other denominations have theologians:

- Lutherans -- Luther
- Reformed Churches -- Calvin
- Roman Catholic Church -- Thomas Aquinas (Pope in 1879 declared Thomism eternally valid)

The Anglican Church does not have a dominant theologian, but rather finds unity through its prayer book.

4.2. The Prayer Book: History and Development

1549: first Prayer Book

- largely work of Archbishop of Canterbury Thomas Cranmer

Today, each Anglican Church has its own Prayer Book

4.3. Table of Contents

Note the Holy Eucharist lies at the center of the book (It is easier to use a book opened at its center).

- The Daily Office (p. 37)
- The Great Litany (p. 148)
- The Collects: Traditional (p. 159)
- The Collects: Contemporary (p. 211)
- Proper Liturgies for Special Days (p. 264)
- Holy Baptism (p. 299)
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- An Outline of Faith or Catechism (p. 845)
- Historical Documents of the Church (p. 864)
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- The Lectionary (p. 888)
- Daily Office Lectionary (p. 934)

5. The Daily Offices

5.1. Origin of the “Daily Offices” in Medieval Monasticism

Medieval Monasticism in the West defined “offices” of prayer through the day:

- Nocturns
- Lauds
- Prime
- Terce and sung mass
- Sext
- None
- Vespers
- Compline

5.2. "Daily Offices" in the Prayer Book

First Prayer Book tried to make prayer part of daily life with two "offices" of prayer: morning and evening

The 1979 Prayer Books has short (< 5 minutes) prayers for four times during the day:

- morning
- noonday
- early evening
- evening

5.3. Motivation and Importance of the Daily Offices

The Daily Offices reflects a biblical image of church as a people of prayer

6. References

The main references for this session were:

A Guide to the Sacraments. John Macquarrie. Continuum. New York. 1998

Welcome to the Episcopal Church An Introduction to Its History, Faith, and Worship. Christopher L. Webber. Morehouse. 1999