

# AN INSTRUCTED EUCHARIST FOR ADULTS

## RITE II

St. Paul's, Altus, Oklahoma October 14, 2009 -- The Rev. Kathleen F. Murray Celebrant

### A WORD OF EXPLANATION

Congregation remains seated

#### **Narrator:**

The drama of the Eucharist has always been the central event in historic Christian worship, and the pattern for all Christian life.

But there can be times for all of us when the communion service is not an inspiring worship experience, but boring and repetitious, merely a confusing ritual. This can be especially true if we were raised in a part of the Church where the Sacrament was not central to our experience.

So today we have a special narrated explanation throughout our service, to help make clearer the drama that does take place.

Each of us has a part of the action in this event. Our hope is that all of us can learn to deeper, more spiritual level, to wait for the one who promised to be with us whenever two or three gather in his Name.

#### I. THE LITURGY FOR THE PROCLAMATION OF THE WORD OF GOD

##### General Introduction

## Narrator:

The form of worship which we Anglicans call the Holy Eucharist or Holy Communion is the same service that Roman Catholics call the Mass, Protestants call the Lord's Supper, and the Eastern Orthodox call the Divine Liturgy. Christians of all traditions follow their Lord's command to gather for this perpetual representation and renewal of his New Covenant "until he comes again." The name "Eucharist" —a name used increasingly by most traditions—means "Thanksgiving" in New Testament Greek. It indicates the tremendous sense of gratitude that filled the early Christian celebration of what we call the Paschal Mystery, the joyous story of Christ's death and resurrection.

This act of worship had its beginnings in the common meals which Jesus ate with his disciples, culminating in that Last Supper on the night of his betrayal, when he instituted the Sacrament as a New Passover for his disciples to remember the mighty acts of God that were to take place through him.

The service itself falls into two main parts: the Liturgy of the Word of God, beginning on page 355, followed by the Liturgy of Holy Communion, starting on page 361.

The word Liturgy means the official corporate worship of the Church. It comes from the ancient Greek words "Laos," meaning "the People" and "Ergon," meaning "work". The word has a double meaning: it describes both "a work done for the people" and "a work done by the people". It is both God's gracious work

given to us, and our work in response to his love. We are not a passive audience here; we are part of the action.

The two-fold division of the service reflects our Christian understanding of how God communicates with us, both through Word and Action. God's Word to us expressed his will for his people, but it is in his Action that the Word is sealed and made sure. St. John's Gospel says, "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us." This Word of God is not a book, but it is Jesus Christ himself, perfect God incarnate as perfect man. Here and now in our Eucharist, Christ continues to act for his people as he did then, healing and teaching, forgiving sin, setting us free from whatever oppresses us, and reconciling us to the Father, to make us whole and bring us peace.

The service begins.

Processional Hymn (Congregation stands)

Hymnal 390

The congregation will be seated.

## **Narrator:**

### 1. The Liturgy of the Word

We now begin the service of the Word. This part of our service originated as early as the 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C. in the worship of the Jewish synagogue. It focuses on the reading and expounding of the written Word. It is a reminder of Christ's teaching and

preaching ministry in Galilee. In the first five centuries this part of the service was called “The Mass of the Catechumens,” — catechumens are those preparing for baptism by study and discipline. This was the only part of the service which unbaptized persons might observe, since only full members of the Body of Christ could partake in the “Mysteries” or “Mass of the Faithful,” as Holy Communion was called. Our Liturgy today begins on page 355, with a short preparatory rite. The opening acclamation is an exclamation of praise to the Holy Trinity, invoking God’s Kingdom, as all the preaching and teaching of Christ does throughout the Gospels. The collect for Purity then asks the Holy Spirit to cleanse and inspire us with God’s own spirit of love. We typically then use one of the canticles on page 356, all from the early centuries of Christian devotion, as an opening song of praise before proceeding further.

We have thus begun a dialogue between God and his people, which is the very best of the Liturgy, at all times and in all places.

The service continues.  
(Congregation Stands)

ACCLAMATION page 355  
COLLECT FOR PURITY  
GLORIA page 356

(Congregation will be seated)

## **Narrator:**

### 2. Collect and Lessons

Having made our necessary preparations for worship, we turn our focus to the Word of the Lord. The Collect of the Day is a prayer which gathers the theme of the day and focuses our attention for what is to follow. The Lessons come from the ancient sources of our faith, the Holy Scriptures. An Old Testament reading and Psalm may be included. A passage from one of the letters of the Apostles follows. Then a deacon or priest reads the most important of the Lessons, the Holy Gospel, which recounts the life and teaching of the Messiah Jesus.

The way in which we commonly do our service, the congregation responds to the Old Testament reading with a Psalm, a song, of the people of Israel. While Psalms are songs of praise and it has been this church's custom to stand for the psalm during the Eucharistic service, our rubrics (service guidelines) allow for us to remain seated during the psalm, which we will do today. We often respond to the Epistle (Letter) written by early apostles to the early Christian on how to address the thankfulness and triumph of living out the Gospel in the world with a hymn. The Gospel follows which is the Word Incarnate about the life and teachings of Jesus Christ.

The Sermon (which we omit today) ordinarily follows the Gospel in order to explain and apply to our present life and times what we have heard out of God's Word. The Scriptures are not the

word of God because he once spoke them long ago, but because the Word Incarnate, Jesus Christ, continues to speak to us through them in this day. What a priest may say from the pulpit will not be merely his own private opinion: he is there to faithfully teach what the Church teaches, in the words the Spirit gives him. As the Lord told his Apostles when he first sent them out: “He who hears you hears me, and he who rejects you rejects me, and he who rejects me rejects him who sent me.” (Luke 10:16)

The service will continue.

COLLECT (STAND)

OLD TESTAMENT READING ( SEATED)

PSALM (SEATED)

EPISTLE (SEATED)

HYMN (STAND)

Hymnal 637

GOSPEL (STAND)

Congregation will be seated

**Narrator:**

### 3. The Nicene Creed

The Nicene Creed follows the sermon, summing up the entire story of salvation and expressing our pledge of allegiance to the

God who creates, redeems and sanctifies us. Written in A.D. 325 at the Ecumenical Council of Nicaea, and completed at the later Council of Constantinople in 381, the Nicene Creed places all the readings and the commentary of the sermon within the total perspective of God's redeeming action. Recitation of the Creed is now required only on Sundays and major feasts. The "we" form is original and emphasizes our expression of the collective faith of the whole Church throughout history.

The service continues.  
Congregation stands

CREED page 358

Congregation will be seated

**Narrator:**

#### 4. Prayers of the People

Since at least the second century, the prayers of the Church have followed after the readings and sermon. They form our response to the proclamation of God's love and power. There are six forms available for the prayers (rotated each week), but the outlines are all identical to that on page 359. We pray, in order, for:

The Universal Church, its members and mission

The Nation and all in authority  
The welfare of the world  
The concerns of the local community  
Those who suffer and those in any trouble, and  
The departed, (sometimes also commemorating our  
parish patron saint, Paul.

Participants in the service are given the opportunity to include their own special concerns. The celebrant concludes the prayers with a “collect” to gather all the prayers together.

## 5. The Confession, Absolution and the Peace.

Having offered our prayers for others, we turn to our own needs. First, we admit that we need to be forgiven and to be assured of our Father’s continuing acceptance and love. Our confession together affirms that we have sinned and that we are, in Christ, cleansed and restored to the relationship we had beginning with our baptism. Together we rejoice in our restoration to God’s love by hearing and taking into ourselves the priest’s pronouncement, on Christ’s own promise, that God has forgiven everything that might have come between us and our neighbors and God.

We then move to the passing of the Peace, which concludes the service of the Word, as it did in the ancient liturgies, coming just after the dismissal of the catechumens.

The Peace expresses the reconciliation that God's forgiveness brings into effect among his people; where God's love and power are at work, no barriers can long remain. In effect, we are acting out the phrase of the Lord's Prayer, "forgive us...as we forgive those who trespassed against us."

In various cultures the passing of the Peace has taken different forms: a kiss on the cheek or lips, an embrace, clasping or kissing one another's hands, or a formal bow. The custom submerged after the Reformation period, but was revived first in the Church of South India and is now in use in one form or another in most of the liturgical churches. The momentary break in the service which the Peace provides may help us overcome a sense of isolation as individuals that sometimes may creep into our worship. We are now reminded that we worship corporately as a body, not as individuals in a private transaction between ourselves and God. At the same time, we should respect those who wish or need a certain distance.

No special words are necessary after the Celebrant's greeting and the congregation's reply, but remember that we greet one another not only as friends, but "in the name of the Lord."

The service continues.

INTERCESSION FORM III, page 387 (Kneel)

CONFESSION page 360 (Kneel)

PEACE (Stand)

ANNOUNCEMENTS (Seated)

BIRTHDAY'S/ANNIVERSARIES

## II. THE LITURGY FOR THE CELEBRATION OF THE HOLY COMMUNION

The congregation will be seated.

**Narrator:**

### 6. The Offertory

We have now come to the second part of the Eucharist, the Liturgy of Holy Communion, which begins with the offertory and preparation of the table—you can see the rubrics on page 361. The scene shifts from the pulpit and lectern to the altar. This part of our celebration corresponds to the sacrifices of the Temple under the Old Covenant, for it celebrates what those rites only anticipated, the once and for all sacrifice of Christ on the Cross for the sins of the world.

In the early church each communicant brought a small piece of bread to add to the offering, and excess being shared by the ministers and the poor. At the Reformation the offertory was eliminated from the service entirely, since for the Reformers the idea of offering God anything was thought to be too “Popish.”

Only slowly has the offertory been recovered over the past 300 years, singing the “Doxology” or saying a sentence when receiving the alms was added in 1892. These are no longer used

since the Eucharistic Prayer itself presents our doxology, which means an offering of praise and glory to God.

In the offertory we present ourselves before the Lord whose Word has been spoken to us. We offer tokens of our common life and work—bread, wine, and water—and money, the fruits of our labor. By these offerings we respond to God’s offering of himself; in these offerings we present him with ourselves, our souls and bodies. It is important that as these symbols are placed on the altar, we see ourselves identified with them and placed there too.

The service continues.

The congregation will remain seated.

OFFERTORY SENTENCES

PREPARATION OF THE TABLE

DOXOLOGY (The congregation stands.)

Congregation remains standing while the explanation of the Great Thanksgiving is read.

**Narrator:**

## 7. The Great Thanksgiving

With the offertory, we begin the great action of God in the Sacrament to transform our offerings and ourselves into the instruments of his grace. Now in the Eucharistic Prayer we will

ask God's blessing to consecrate the bread and wine, "to make it holy" for us as the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ.

The dialogue which begins the service echoes the Jewish table liturgies of the first century. When we "lift up our hearts," we are lifted up out of time and space to the Divine Presence. As we sing (or say) the Holy-Holy-Holy, called the Sanctus, we share the vision of St. John the Divine (in Revelation chapters 4 and 5) of the heavenly banquet, of which our Eucharist is a reflection and anticipation.

The great events in the history of salvation are recounted in the prayer that follows, culminating in the words of Christ as he gave us this New Passover and made us a New Israel. As we repeat this action by his command, we discover the Risen Lord really present with his people. This is not just a memorial of something long ago and far away. Christ is with us who gather in his name, as he promised he would be, and as a sure promise he will come again. To him we offer our sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving; from him we ask the blessing of his Holy Spirit, not only to make bread and wine the sacramental signs of his presence, but to transform us as well to be sign of his life in the world.

The consecration concludes with our great Amen. Then we offer to the One we dare to call our Father, the prayer His Son taught us as the summation of all our prayers.

During the Eucharistic Prayer one may either kneel or stand. The choice is yours.

The service continues.

SURSUM CORDA

SANCTUS page 362

After the singing of the Sanctus (Holy, Holy, ...) the congregation can either remain standing or kneel

CONSECRATION

LORD'S PRAYER (kneel or remain standing) page 364

The congregation will remain kneeling or standing.

**Narrator:**

## 8. The Breaking of the Bread

After the consecration is complete, we must still accomplish one other action before we share in the meal. In the Breaking of the Bread, we repeat the third of Christ's four actions on the night he was betrayed:

- (1) He took the bread and wine, as we did at the offertory,
- (2) He blessed them, as we did with the Eucharistic Prayer,
- (3) He broke the bread, as we do now, and then
- (4) He gave it to his disciples.

In order to share Christ's body, it must be broken—as he accepted the cross and poured out his life for us, so we must now remember, and break, and share.

This is the moment of special intimacy with our Lord. We feed on him by faith. He nourishes our spirits as the bread nourishes our bodies. Receive the Body and Blood of Christ reverently and eagerly: lift up your hands with the palm open to accept it; take hold of the cup at the base and guide it to your mouth. As you receive the sacrament, you might pray silently something like, "Whatever you give me, Lord, I humbly receive, and I offer you all that I am and all that I have." To the minister's words of administration, respond with a firm and happy "Amen!"

The service continues.

The congregation may kneel or stand.

FRACTION

FRACTION ANTHEM

INVITATION

COMMUNION

The congregation will be seated.

**Narrator:**

## 9. Postcommunion, Blessing and Dismissal

Our worship climaxes in the communion, so the service closes quickly. The ministers clear the Table after the meal, and then we offer a short prayer of thanks for what God has done for us in this celebration. After the Celebrant pronounces a final blessing, we

may sing a hymn, and then we are dismissed, sent from the Table to carry into the world what we have received here.

Only in the world can the actual fulfillment of God's will be made complete; any worship that stops short of that is sterile and ultimately idolatrous. As we live our daily lives Eucharistically—remembering that “Eucharist” means thanksgiving—what we celebrate in the Liturgy becomes realized in life. We are sent out as apostles, to carry forward Christ's own work to change the world to reflect more and more the Kingdom of the Father. The spirit has transformed bread and wine for us in our Eucharist; so now he works in us, to transform us and our world. We go out from the Church gathered to be the Church sent forth in mission and ministry to the world.

The service continues.

The congregation will kneel.

POSTCOMMUNION PRAYER page 365

BLESSING

HYMN (The congregation will stand.)

Hymnal 492

DISMISSAL page 366

### Some Definitions:

“canticle” — a “little song” derived from scripture and used in public worship.

“ceremony/ial” — the actions necessary or customary for celebration of a liturgical rite.

“collect” — a short prayer stating the chief theme of our day’s worship, intended to collect or summarize our thoughts and prayers.

“doxology” — an ascription of glory in praise of God.

“Eucharist” — from the Greek “eucharistia,” meaning thanksgiving: the act of worship celebrating the central events of Christian faith.

“Liturgy” — the official public services of the Church (as distinct from private devotions). (from Greek “laos” = people, and “ergon” work).

“ritual” — the written text of the Church’s liturgy.

“rubrics” — the written text of the Church’s liturgy. worship term derives from their formerly having been printed in red (L., ruber)