

The Historical Development of the Eucharist

May 22, 2020



○ Mary,
You shine continuously on our
journey
as a sign of salvation and hope.
We entrust ourselves to you, Health
of the Sick,
who, at the foot of the cross,
were united with Jesus' suffering,
and persevered in your faith.

“Protectress of the Roman
people”,
you know our needs,
and we know that you will
provide,
so that, as at Cana in Galilee,
joy and celebration may return
after this time of trial.

Help us, Mother of Divine Love,
to conform ourselves to the will of
the Father
and to do what Jesus tells us.
For he took upon himself our
suffering,
and burdened himself with our
sorrows
to bring us, through the cross,
to the joy of the Resurrection.

*We fly to your protection,
O Holy Mother of God;
Do not despise our petitions
in our necessities,
but deliver us always
from every danger,
O Glorious and Blessed Virgin.
Amen.*

Last Supper Account

“While they were eating, Jesus took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and giving it to his disciples said, ‘Take and eat; this is my body.’ Then he took a cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, ‘Drink from it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which will be shed on behalf of many for the forgiveness of sins.’” (Matthew 26:26-28 New American Bible Version)

Jesus's Actions at the Last Supper

- *Took* bread and wine
- ***Gave thanks, or said the blessing***
- *Broke* the bread
- *Gave* the bread and wine to his disciples

Jewish Heritage

- What did Jesus say when he “gave thanks”?
- Jewish customs:
 - *Berakoth*: blessings over bread and wine at meals
 - *Birkat ha-mazon*: long prayer over final cup of wine—blessing, thanksgiving, petition
 - Passover meal—commemoration of Exodus
- Early Christians: thanksgiving in context of communal (agape) meal

Didache (1st cent.)

- Instructions: “give thanks in this manner”
 - No institution narrative
 - No mention of Last Supper, Jesus's death, or Resurrection
- Christian versions of *berakoth*, *Birkat ha-mazon*
- Communal meal or special assembly?
 - “When your hunger has been satisfied...”
 - Admonition to let only baptized partake of the “spiritual food and drink”

Justin's *First Apology* (c. 150)

- Description of a special assembly—definitely not a meal
- The presider says a “lengthy eucharist”—prayer of thanksgiving
- The people respond “Amen!”
- The “eucharistified” gifts are distributed
- Clear belief that the bread and wine have become the “flesh and blood of the incarnate Jesus”

Apostolic Tradition (c. 225)

- Attributed to Hippolytus of Rome
- Contains an explicit Eucharistic prayer:
 - Thanksgiving—for Christ's redemptive work
 - Institution account—using Christ's own words
 - Anamnesis and offering—commemorating Christ's sacrifice
 - Epiclesis—invocation of the Holy Spirit
 - Doxology and Amen—offered to the Father through Christ with the Holy Spirit
- Suggested as a template, not a precise prayer to be recited

The Middle Ages

- Doctrine of Real Presence
 - Belief naturally developed over time, esp. in monasteries
 - Made explicit by Pope Gregory VII (11th cent.)
- “Transubstantiation”
 - Term using Aristotelian language to describe *how* Real Presence comes about
 - “Substances” of bread and wine become Body and Blood of Christ; “accidents” (taste) remain

The Middle Ages

- Rise in Eucharistic devotion, but decline in active participation at Mass
 - Latin not vernacular language anymore
 - Eucharistic Prayer was said silently
 - Eucharist became primarily a visual experience; infrequent reception
- Concomitance: you receive the fullness of Christ if you receive the smallest piece of host or drop of Precious Blood

The Protestant Reformation

- Martin Luther and other Reformers objected to:
 - Mass/Eucharist as “sacrifice”
 - “Transubstantiation” (but not so much Real Presence)
 - Sacraments as valid/effective *ex opere operato*
- Probably resulted from people not understanding what was happening at Mass, poor formation for priests

Council of Trent

- Doctrine of the Eucharist
 - Jesus accomplished the one, eternal, perfect sacrifice on the Cross
 - Mass *re-presents* that bloody sacrifice in an unbloody manner on the altar of the Eucharist
 - Reaffirmed transubstantiation
 - *Ex opere operato*: sacraments confer grace simply by their being done by a valid minister
- Decided not to re-introduce vernacular into liturgy, in order to put up a “united front” against the Protestants

1570 *Roman Missal*

- Pius V promulgates *Roman Missal* after Trent
- Mass standardized with conformity in entire western Church, with few exceptions
- Heavy focus on sacrificial language
- Very few changes to Mass until after Vatican II

Vatican II

- Recaptured ecclesial/communal nature of liturgy
 - “Full, conscious, active” participation
 - Liturgical ministries
- Christ's four-fold presence in the Mass:
 - The priest
 - The assembly
 - The Scriptures proclaimed
 - The Eucharist itself

Vatican II

- Centrality of the Paschal Mystery
 - Anamnesis: memorial of Christ's passion, death, resurrection
 - Connection between liturgy and life
 - Eucharist is “source and summit” of Christian life
- Called for “richer fare” of God's word to be provided—results in Lectionary (3-year cycle for Sundays/holy days, 2-year cycle for weekdays)

1970 *Roman Missal*

- Paul VI promulgates revised *Roman Missal*
- From one to four Eucharistic Prayers:
 - EP I: Roman Canon (longest)
 - EP II: based on Hippolytan EP (shortest)
 - EP III: new; proposed as alternative to RC/EP I
 - EP IV: new; borrows from Eastern anaphoras—fuller account of salvation history, with own unique preface
- Ritual simplified, entire EP audible
- Epiclesis: invocation of the Holy Spirit

Ongoing Liturgical Renewal

- Liturgy of the Word: something happens when God's word is proclaimed...
- Balance between sacrificial/vertical dimension and communal/horizontal dimension of Eucharist
- Distinction between objective validity and subjective experience
- Connection to the “liturgy of the world”, Christian life in general

Questions?
Comments?

**Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of
your faithful.**

**And kindle in them the fire of your
love.**

**Send forth your Spirit and they shall
be created.**

**And you shall renew the face of the
earth.**

O God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit, did instruct the hearts of the faithful, grant us in the same Spirit to be truly wise and ever to rejoice in His consolation.

Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Eucharistic Prayer

- Purpose from 2002 *GIRM*:

“Thanks is given to God for the whole work of salvation, and the offerings become the Body and Blood of Christ” (n. 72)

“The entire congregation of the faithful should join itself with Christ in confessing the great deeds of God and in the offering of Sacrifice” (n. 78)

Thanksgiving and *Sanctus*

- Introductory dialogue between presider and congregation
- East: invariable thanksgiving—comprehensive view of salvation history
- West: variety of prefaces—each give motive for thanksgiving based on the particular celebration
- *Sanctus* taken from Isaiah 6; *Benedictus* added from Mt 21 (Ps 118)
- Acclamation sung by entire congregation

Institution Narrative, Anamnesis, Offering

- Institution narrative begins with Last Supper, with mention of Jesus's impending death
 - Differences in narratives due to particular Scriptural sources, traditions
- Anamnesis: paschal mystery recalled—death and resurrection (and ascension, second coming)
- Jesus's saving work is re-presented (analogous to Exodus in *seder*?)
- Offering: the gifts are offered to the Father as Christ offered himself

Epiclesis and Intercessions

- Epiclesis: invocation of the Holy Spirit...
- So that bread and wine become Body and Blood, and communicants receive grace / become one in the Spirit
 - No explicit invocation of the HS in Roman Canon
- Controversy over primacy of institution narrative (West) vs. epiclesis (East)
- Intercessions varied—generally for those who contributed the gifts, for communion with the church hierarchy and the saints in heaven

Doxology and Amen

- Trinitarian doxology always ends the anaphoras/EPs—glory, praise offered to God
- The entire congregation acclaims “Amen”—function of the baptismal priesthood

