

Twenty-first Sunday in Ordinary Time

August 22, 2010

Worship 9:30

MEDIEVAL CHURCH WORSHIP

(600-1215)

The medieval period of history witnessed a shift in the meaning of worship. The Early Church gathered for a worship experience that was focused on building the followers of Jesus into community. In worship the people considered the teachings of Jesus as they related to the present and future Reign of God, while also celebrating the fellowship and new life that Christ made possible. Worship in the early church seemed to actualize and anticipate the Kingdom of God as proclaimed by Jesus. Throughout the medieval period, Christian worship gradually added more ceremony, as it added the trappings of the Roman Court. Clergy dressed in elaborate vestments; processions with candles, incense, and chanting became the norm to begin the gathering for worship. Worship became a “mystery” in which God was made present, as was Jesus in the bread and wine. There was an increased emphasis on the actions of the worship leaders and the mystery behind their actions. Consequently, an ever-widening gap developed between the clergy and the laity.

In the Early church of the 3rd and 4th centuries, a debate surfaced over “when” the elements of Holy Communion (bread and wine) became the body and blood of Christ. The Medieval Church changed the question, spending centuries arguing over “how” the elements were changed. A resolution would not be accepted until the 13th century when at the Lateran Council (1215 C.E.) the church officially adopted the doctrine of Transubstantiation. These debates and others like them were related to the church’s emphasis on the mysterious nature of the actions of worship.

The role of music in the Medieval Church became another element of worship that served to separate church members into professional and lay camps. Music became more complicated, requiring professional training. Soon, churches had professional choirs. Eventually, some churches forbid lay singing all together. Adding to the mysterious feel of the worship service and the necessity of having a professional choir, was the insistence that the official language of the church be Latin, no matter the native tongue of the lay members.

Today’s worship service includes two features that were incorporated during the late medieval times. The first, was the addition, at the beginning of the service, of a time for “Penitential Preparation.” The emphasis on human sin and the need for worthiness, that was emphasized to the extreme in medieval life, led to heightened attention to the need to confess, plead for mercy, and hear about the blessings of Christ. The end of the service was also elaborated. After the “Liturgy of the Upper Room” long prayers and canticles of thanksgiving, plus “Prayers for Worthiness and of Intercession” were added.

Worship, in Medieval Church could be characterized as employing on excessive use of candles and incense, focusing too heavily on ritual and mystery, and emphasizing the difference between clergy, professional church leaders and the laity. Today's worship service is meant to give a flavor of medieval worship.

Resources The Church of Our Fathers, Roland Bainton
History of Christian Worship, Richard Spielmann
Worship Old and New, Robert Webber
A Brief History of Christian Worship, James White

GATHERING FOR WORSHIP

Greeting, Announcements, and Introduction

Organ Prelude and Chancel Processional

*Invocation

Alcuin of Tours (c. 735-804)

Eternal Light, shine into our hearts;
Eternal Goodness, deliver us from evil;
Eternal Power, be our support;
Eternal Wisdom, scatter the darkness of our ignorance;
Eternal Pity, have mercy upon us,
that with all our heart and mind and strength
we may seek your face
and be brought by your infinite mercy to your holy presence;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

*Opening Hymn

"Jesus Shall Reign"

#300
Verse 1

PENITENTIAL PREPARATION

*Call to Confession

Remember that our Lord Jesus can sympathize with us in our weaknesses,
since in every respect he was tempted as we are, yet without sin.
Let us then with boldness approach the throne of grace,
that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.
Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

(A pause for silent reflection.)

*Prayer of Confession

Merciful God,
you pardon all who truly repent and turn to you.
We humbly confess our sins and ask your mercy.

We have not loved you with a pure heart,
nor have we loved our neighbor as ourselves.
We have not done justice, loved kindness,
or walked humbly with you, our God.

Have mercy on us, O God, in your loving-kindness.
In your great compassion,
cleans us from our sin.
Create in us a clean heart, O God,
and renew a right spirit within us.
Do not cast us from your presence,
or take your Holy Spirit from us.
Restore to us the joy of your salvation
and sustain us with your bountiful Spirit.

* The Kyrie

#750

Lord, have mercy upon us.
Lord, have mercy upon us.
Christ, have mercy upon us.
Christ, have mercy upon us.
Lord, have mercy upon us.
Lord, have mercy upon us.

*Hymn

"Rock of Ages"

Insert

*Declaration of Forgiveness

The mercy of the Lord
is from everlasting to everlasting.
I declare to you, in the name of Jesus Christ,
you are forgiven.

May the God of mercy,
who forgives you all your sins,
strengthen you in all goodness,
and by the power of the Holy Spirit
keep you in eternal life.

Amen.

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

Psalms sung by cantor between the Lections

A Reading from Psalm 137:1-5

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*Lections (Law, Prophets, Epistles, and Acts)

A Reading from Hebrews 12:15-28

*A Reading from the Holy Gospels — St. Luke 13:6-9

*Alleluia

#765

**Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia,
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!**

Sermon

THE LITURGY OF THE UPPER ROOM

Collection of Alms and Offerings

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

God of mercy,
we praise you that in love
you have reached across the abyss of our sin
and brought us into your embrace.
We thank you for the sacrifice of your Son on the cross,
for the breaking of his body for our sakes,
and for the spilling of his blood
to seal us in the covenant of your love.

By your Spirit,
give us the grace of repentance,
and guide us in ways of righteousness.
Take our humble offerings
as tokens of our commitment
to follow Jesus Christ, our crucified and risen Lord. **Amen.**

Hymn

"Come, My Way, My Truth, My Life"

#331

Holy Communion

The level in which the lay members of the Medieval Church participated in Holy Communion had changed greatly from the time of the New Testament Church. In the first century, the faithful gathered around a table to share a full fellowship

meal that included the "Breaking of Bread" and the "Pouring of the Cup." They remembered Jesus' words, "This is my body . . . This is the cup of the New Covenant." Over the next centuries, the fellowship meal disappeared from the worship service, what remained was the symbolic breaking of bread and sharing from the cup. The Communion Table also eventually disappeared, replaced by an altar that reflected the changed emphasis of the meal. Instead of the faithful remembering and celebrating the presence of the living Lord in their midst, the members of the Medieval Church revered the Sacrifice of Christ and participated in the benefit of that sacrifice.

As the centuries passed, first the Cup was withheld from the laity, and then the bread. All that finally remained for them, was watching the actions of the clergy and hearing the "sounding of a bell" signifying that the elements of bread and wine had become the body and blood of their Savior. Even though the lay members of the Medieval Church did not receive Holy Communion, they stood every Sunday in church, watching and listening to the drama of the Liturgy of the Upper Room.

LITURGY OF THE PEOPLE

Sursum Corda

Leader: Lift up your hearts

People: We lift them to the Lord.

Leader: Let us give thanks to the Lord.

People: It is meet and right to do so.

Prayer for Worthiness and for Intercession

Alcuin, 735-804

O King of glory and Lord of valours, who hast said, 'Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world': be thou victorious in us thy servants, for without thee we can do nothing. Grant thy compassion to go before us, thy compassion to come behind us: before us in our undertakings, behind us in our ending. And what more shall we say but that thy will be done; for thy will is our salvation, our glory, and our joy.

*Recessional Hymn

"Our God, to Whom We Turn"

#37

*The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

*The Blessing

*Postlude