

THE EUCHARIST MAKES THE CHURCH III

Summary of 1st talk:

Scripture and the Canon of the New Testament:

- the church comes before the bible.
- as the church is logically prior to the bible, so the Eucharist is logically prior to the scriptural accounts of it.

Church: a sacrament

- Christ is the sacrament of God
- The church is the sacrament of Christ
- The Eucharist is the sacrament of the church

2nd talk:

1. Synoptic Relationships.

Order of composition: Mark, Matthew & Luke; John comes later; the significant parts of Paul are earlier.

2. Institution Narrative and NT genres

Letters, gospels and apocalyptic

- 'This *is* my body'
- 'Do this'
- 'The blood of the covenant'

3. Was the last supper a Passover meal?

Matthew Mark and Luke *say so* but don't provide the detail of a Passover Meal.

John describes Jesus *as* the Passover Lamb and so reports his death as simultaneous with Passover.

All these elements combine to place the Eucharist at the heart of Christian life.

3rd talk:

1. Why this topic is essential to our Christian life and the being of the Church
2. Recap on Passover character of the Last Supper
3. Survey of church documents from the first four centuries, before the Canon of scripture was fixed.

4th talk

Shape and purpose of the Eucharist

Fourfold shape as expressed in A Prayer Book For Australia:

1. Gathering

Greeting, Penitential Rite, Kyries, Gloria, Collect

2. Word

Old Testament (or Revelation), Psalm, New Testament letter, Gospel, Homily, Creed, Intercessions

3. Sacrament (which includes a fourfold Eucharistic shape)

[Peace]

a. Offertory of Bread and Wine

b. Eucharistic Prayer ('Prayer of Consecration'; 'Great Thanksgiving')

c. Breaking ('the 'Fraction')

d. Sharing (Communion)

4. Dismissal

Four Eucharistic actions which are the focal points of section 3:

Offertory - taking

Eucharistic prayer - prayer

Fraction - breaking

Communion - sharing

Anaphora & Canon: The Eucharistic Prayer or 'Great Thanksgiving'

Sacrifice

Max Thurian (reformed theologian of Taizé Community) *The Eucharistic Memorial*:

The Eucharist is a sacrifice for three reasons:

1. It is the sacramental *presence* of the sacrifice of the cross, the power of the Holy Spirit and the Word, and it is the liturgical *presentation* of the Son's sacrifice by the Church to the Father, in thanksgiving for all His blessings and in intercession that He may grant them afresh.

2. It is the *participation* of the Church in the intercession of the Son before the Father in the Holy Spirit, that salvation may be accorded to all men, and that the Kingdom may come in glory.

3. It is the *offering* which the Church makes of itself to the Father, united to the Son's intercession, as its supreme act of adoration and its perfect consecration in the Holy Spirit.

This sacrificial understanding of the Eucharist, in the light of the biblical memorial, provides a basis for a Christian definition of sacrifice: *sacrifice is an act of presentation of a reality to God, for the purpose of a blessing upon that reality or upon him who presents it.*

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The Church's offertory, when it brings its material and spiritual goods to the altar, is a kind of movement, involving an offering, which precipitates a crisis. When the Church has gathered everything together to offer it to God, it realizes its poverty; there is nothing left for it to do but to remit this misery into the hands of Christ who, gathering it up into His own sacrifice presented in intercession, makes it into a true act of praise, an effective, a sacrifice which is acceptable "by him, and with him, and in him".

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Structure of the Anaphora/Eucharistic Prayer/Great Thanksgiving

Opening dialogue ('Lift up your hearts' etc.)

Preface

Sanctus (/Benedictus)

Memorial of the Incarnation

Words of Institution

Anamnesis ('remembrance' / 'memorial')

Epiclesis (invocation of the Holy Spirit on the elements, on the people or on both)

Intercession

Doxology (words of praise).

Books:

Paul Bradshaw, Eucharistic Origins

Raymond Brown, The Death of the Messiah

Dom Gregory Dix, The Shape of the Liturgy

Avery Dulles, Models of the Church

Morna Hooker, The Gospel According to St Mark

Michael McGuckian, The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass

Max Thurian, The Eucharistic Memorial