



Baptismal Mission Forum



Volume 2, Issue 1

Winter 2014

BAPTISMAL MISSION FORUM The Newsletter for Episcopalians on Baptismal Mission

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FROM THE EDITOR

In the fall issue of Baptismal Mission Forum, I pointed out that in supporting members of our congregations in their missions in daily life, the Prayer Book liturgies was an ideal resource. The first three articles spelled out this concept in practice.

In this winter issue, the thought is pursued further in relation to the Eucharist, Daily Office, Pastoral Offices, and Collects, Prayers, and Thanksgivings. The summer issue will add two articles on Episcopal Services to complete the presentation of the Book of Common Prayer in its relation to baptismal mission in daily life.

If this stimulates in you any questions or comments about this presentation, I would be delighted to hear from you!

CHRIST'S MISSION ACTING THROUGH THE EUCHARIST

By Peyton G. Craighill



How does Christ employ our congregation's Eucharist to advance his mission?

To answer this question, we must first consider the relation between our baptism and our weekly Eucharist. In our baptism, Christ gave us two great gifts that transformed our lives. The first was the gift of Christ's sharing with us *his mission* of love and justice in and for the world in which we live our daily lives. The second was the gift of *his covenant* that inspires, empowers, and guides us in living out our mission.

How does Christ use his gift of the Eucharist to renew our missions in our daily lives, shared with him? In answering this question, we must notice an important fact. The Eucharist is a microcosm of Christ's mission in macrocosm. As we experience our Sunday Eucharist, Christ leads us through his mission, thus re-empowering, re-guiding, and recommitting us to our mission shared with him.

How does Christ lead us through the Eucharist, renewing the mission he gave us in our baptism? In the Eucharist, the first stage through the Gloria can be called The Gathering.

After his baptism and temptation in the wilderness, Christ returned to Galilee to gather his followers.

Every Sunday morning, Christ's gathering of his followers happens again. He calls us to follow him by gathering with his other followers for his Eucharist in our churches. Some can only gather in spirit, and other people for various reasons turn down the invitation. But a number of us gather to form Christ's fellowship in church.

The second stage can be called The Word of God

After Christ gathered his followers, he led them up a mountain to share with them the Word of God.

We hear God's Word communicated to us through the lessons from the Old Testament, Epistles, and Gospels, and sermons.

The third stage can be called The People's Response *Christ and his followers responded to God's Word by proclaiming the Good News of the Kingdom and by showing forth the power of God through works of mercy.*

We respond to the Word of God in four ways, by -

1. Renewing our baptismal covenant through proclaiming the Nicene Creed.
2. Praying for God's people, near and far.
3. Confessing our sins against God and our neighbors.
4. Sharing with each other the Peace of Christ.

The fourth stage can be called The Great Thanksgiving

With his followers, Christ went down to Jerusalem to share the Passover meal. The meal consisted of giving thanks to God for the food, breaking the bread, distributing to all gathered around the table, who consumed it. After supper, he took the cup, blessed it, and gave it to his followers to share with one another.

In this short article, I have space only to point out a few clues about how Christ as presider over the Passover meal changed its meaning from God liberating his servant people from slavery in Egypt to Christ liberating all people in the world from slavery to sin through his death and resurrection.

1. "Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

By these words, Christ means, "This bread no longer stands for the sacrificial lamb that gave its

life for the salvation of the Hebrew people from slavery in Egypt. It now stands for my body that I will offer up tomorrow on the Cross for all people in the world”.

2. *“Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the New Covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me.”*
 - The Mosaic covenant made at Mt. Sinai was made by the blood of oxen. (Exodus 24:6)
 - The New Covenant was made by the Blood of Christ on the Cross.
 - The Mosaic Covenant was made for the Hebrew people.
 - The New Covenant made by Christ was made for all people that would accept it.
3. *“Take, eat...Drink this, all of you”*

By sacramentally eating Christ’s Body and drinking Christ’s Blood as a communal action, we are renewing our membership in the Body of Christ, the Church, thus also renewing and receiving new power to share with Christ in his mission.
4. Our motivation for our mission shared with Christ isn’t the motivation of fear, as so many of our motivations are in our lives. It is the much more powerful and lasting motivation - love for Christ responding to his love for us. We demonstrate our love for him by offering thanks to him, which turns into a life of

thanksgiving. This is our basic motivation for our mission in and with Christ.

The fifth and last stage of the Eucharist can be called The Commission.

Forty days after Christ’s resurrection, before he returned to his Father in Heaven, he gave his followers what we call the Great Commission, “Go into all the world and proclaim the Good News to the whole creation.” (Mark 16.15 NRSV)

If the first stage of the Eucharist, The Gathering, is the link between our daily lives and the Eucharist, The Commission is another link back to our daily life. But we should return renewed in our dedication to Christ’s mission, as were the original followers of Christ. In the words of the concluding prayer in the Eucharist in the Book of Common Prayer:

“And now, Father, send us out to do the work you have given us to do, to love and serve you as faithful witnesses of Christ our Lord.”

Peyton Craighill served as a missionary, primarily in theological education, in Taiwan for 21 years. After returning to the USA, he served in a number of different ministries in the Diocese of Pennsylvania. In retirement, he lives in Lexington, Virginia.

THE DAILY OFFICE – TRAINING FOR WHOLE-LIFE MISSION AND MINISTRY

By Demi Prentiss



Just as Eucharist provides sustenance for us Christians in every aspect of our lives, the Daily Office provides the power of renewed vision, structure, and routine. That stability, like a drum-

beat, equips us Christians to continue moving forward, growing into the full stature of Christ. The very daily-ness of the daily office – like calisthenics – builds spiritual muscle and reflexes, as well as familiarity with the words of scripture and the patterns of Christian living.

The Daily Office – read by an individual or a group, led by laity or clergy, focused on hearing God’s voice, with multiple opportunities for daily observance – provides book-ends to the communal, clergy-led, eucharistic celebration of God’s feeding and deliverance of the faithful. Building and maintaining a relationship with God is furthered by this practice of regular, daily, intentional prayer. Faithfully practicing this routine embodies the Benedictine ideal of obedience – laying down our own agendas to listen with the ear of the heart for Christ’s call to mission through our daily living.

One of the virtues of the daily office is that practicing daily prayer helps remind us of the daily-ness of the Christian life. Following Jesus is an every-day, often un-glamorous practice. Sunday-focused, celebratory church-centered worship, if that’s our only intentional contact with our creator, can allow us to compartmentalize our conception of God in convenient isolation, to be accessed as needed. The daily office – like daily contact with a co-worker

or a family member – gives us practice in the messiness of recognizing God’s ongoing claim on our lives.

Back in the 16th century, Thomas Cranmer created the Book of Common Prayer (BCP) as a manual of devotion for *all* faithful people, not only the ordained. The services and prayers used the vernacular spoken by the people. Recognizing the constraints that working people face, Cranmer combined the seven offices that shaped monastic daily life into two – Morning and Evening Prayer – echoing the morning and evening recitations of the sh’ma (“Hear O Israel”) by pious Jews. Such daily prayers remind us that all time is sacred because, like us, all time belongs to God.

The 1979 BCP restored Noonday Prayers and Compline as optional offices. The four offices invite ordinary people to tune their daily clocks to a rhythm of prayer. There are abbreviated forms (“Daily Devotions”) for use by individuals or families that offer even the chronically busy a prayer-book-based respite four times a day.

In the context of the offices we meet God face-to-face, by setting aside time for an intimate encounter; we hear *God’s* story intersect *our* story in scripture; we, along with the communion of saints, pray in community, even when we are by ourselves; we re-ignite hope as we say (or sing) canticles and psalms that have sustained Christians across the centuries; we reaffirm our creedal faith; and we join in the General Thanksgiving, that potent reminder that our faith is an every-day, incarnational mission:

“... give us such an awareness of your mercies, that with truly thankful hearts we may show forth your praise, not only with our lips, but in our lives, by giving up our selves to your service, and by walking before you in holiness and righteousness all our days.”

Taking time, daily, to re-member our relationship with God, through praying even a portion of the Daily Office, forms us deeply, increasing our awareness that God is God, and we are not God. That daily re-membering is one way that we “clothe ourselves with Christ,” as Paul says (Galatians 3:27), as we claim our baptismal calling. Becoming *alter Christi* (“another Christ” – the calling of all Christians), we can transform the environments we touch – carrying on Christ’s work of reconciliation in the world, as the Catechism explains. (BCP, p 855)

Safe inside our houses – or our churches – reading the Daily Office (or celebrating Eucharist, for that matter) may feed our spirits, and may even

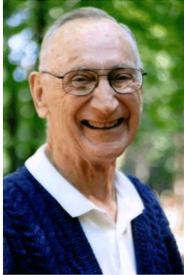
bring us closer to God. But Christ calls us *out*, to live a life of risky engagement with God’s people (who are *all* people), often at the margins of society, where Jesus spent much of his time. That’s where we are empowered to share with Christ in his mission as *our* mission and ministry, in every aspect of our daily lives, Monday through Sunday. That’s where the liturgy’s concluding commission calls us to go, following Jesus on The Way.

“Glory to God whose power, working in us, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine.” (BCP, pp 102, 116; Ephesians 3:20)

Demi Prentiss serves as ministry developer/administrative officer for the Diocese of Fort Worth. For more than 25 years she has worked to support and equip laity and clergy in fully realizing their baptismal callings.

**OUR MISSIONS IN DAILY LIFE AND THE PASTORAL OFFICES
IN THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER**

By Wayne Schwab



If you are a lay or ordained leader in your congregation and are also committed to promoting baptismal mission in daily life, how will you approach the Pastoral Offices in The Book of Common Prayer?

Confirmation:

You are looking at a group of seven candidates ranging from eighth graders to seniors – some to reaffirm their baptismal covenant, some to become Episcopalians. How will you use the baptismal covenant as a framework for teaching them? The covenant is made up of eight promises – five on the faith of the candidates and their life in the church, and three on their life in the world. Preparing them for the first five is relatively easy compared to the task of the three about what they will say and do in their daily lives. The group may rightly think and even ask, “What are we getting ourselves into?”

Make *mission* the focus on all of the promises – the first five on the mission of God and of Christ, and the final three on us as Christians. To be both fresh and biblical, help them to reaffirm their promise to share in God’s mission through Jesus Christ empowered by the Holy Spirit. Help them to see how they might share in God’s mission to

make every area of daily life more loving and more just – home life, daily work, their community, issues in the wider world from social customs to institutional systems, leisure or play-time, spiritual health, and congregational life. The scope will undoubtedly alarm them. To ease their anxieties, look at what they are doing right now in each of those areas. Then consider what they might do next.

You will need to find some form to do this teaching. Review what is available – e.g., <http://bit.ly/1gHtsWF> – and adapt what you find to make it your own. The candidates will come to the bishop more ready for commitment and more expectant of help from the Holy Spirit in each area of daily life.

A Form for Commitment to Christian Service:

Focus your preparation on the Act of Commitment of the person involved and on the specific area of daily life in which the candidate is making his or her commitment. Since the rite includes reaffirmation of the baptismal covenant, consider including the part of confirmation preparation from above for that area of daily life.

Marriage:

To the extent that time allows, review what each is doing in each area of daily life and

how it impacts their relationship. Encourage them to find a counselor experienced in preparing couples for marriage.

A Thanksgiving for the Birth or Adoption of a Child:

Help parents to see that now, or soon enough, their child will experience all the areas of daily life and anticipate this reality in counsel and the liturgy. Even the wider world will impact their child through the consumerism of television and super market.

The Reconciliation of a Penitent:

Repentance and amendment of life need to be lived in all seven areas of daily life. Offer a way to discern new paths for each area, or as many areas as are appropriate.

Ministration to the Sick:

Discern which areas of daily life are of most concern to the sick person. Include these in your

prayers and Laying on Hands, Anointing, and Communion.

Burial of the Dead:

Be sure readings and prayers reflect the specific areas of daily life in which the deceased was involved. As a way to honor the one they have lost, encourage the family and friends to give special care to their living in those specific areas.

A. Wayne Schwab, founder and coordinator of the Member Mission Network (www.membermission.org); consultant and trainer; Episcopal priest; and first Evangelism Officer for TEC.

PRAYERS IN THE PRAYER BOOK FOR FIVE AREAS OF MISSION IN DAILY LIFE

By Peyton G. Craighill

If we look hard enough, in our Prayer Book we can find prayers to support our mission in five areas of daily life – home, workplace, local community, wider world, - and even one prayer for leisure!

Home

P. 137 – 140, 815, 828 – 833, 841

Workplace

P. 134, 208, 261, (two collects on each page).

Local community

P. 822, 825 - 826

Wider World

P. 258 - 261, 820 – 828

Leisure

P. 825

If you find prayers in the Prayer Book for these five areas of mission that I have missed, please let me know!

Comments and questions about articles in this publication are indeed welcome. Contact information is on the first page.