

THE PROPOSED REVISION
OF THE CANADIAN ORDER FOR
HOLY COMMUNION

A group of eight to fifteen clergy of Montreal, under the leadership of the Rev. A.S. Dewdney, met weekly in the Montreal Diocesan Theological College to discuss the proposed revision. Most of our meetings have been preceded by a celebration of the Holy Communion according to one of the rites of the Anglican Communion. Besides its devotional purpose, we have felt it essential to share by experience, as well as by study, in those movements for liturgical revision which are influencing the whole Anglican Communion as well as other parts of the Church. One of our disabilities in the Canadian Church is that we tend to stand aloof from and remain ignorant of what does not seem to concern us directly. In this survey of liturgies, we have taken part in the 1549 rite, the Scottish Liturgy, the American, the proposed American Revision, the South African, the English 1928 rite. We hope later to take part in the Japanese, the Indian, and other modern revisions. This course, which was undertaken with the approval of the Bishop has proved stimulating and helpful. We commend this method of liturgical study by participation, to others.

Finally, we celebrated privately the proposed Canadian rite. Our conclusions, and some of the reasons for them, are contained in the following pages. They are being sent to the committee on revision, to the clergy of the Diocese of Montreal, and to other groups across the country interested in revision.

We are grateful that an opportunity for revision is being given. We are also grateful that there is evidently a willingness, even on the part of those who see no need for change themselves, to allow for other points of view. We recognise the need of formulating the new service in such a way that all points of view within the Church may feel at home in using it, and also that it may continue to commend itself to the vast majority of faithful lay people who dislike mere novelty. At the same time we feel that the revision is an opportunity to do a positive, constructive work of advance and enrichment, and that too much caution may lead us to miss a chance which will not soon return again. If some of our suggestions are more far-reaching and radical than those proposed, we do not believe that they contain theological implications which should be unacceptable to any group in the Church, nor that they make the service strange or difficult to those who are used to our present rite.

Specifically our criticism of the proposed revision touches the following points.

1. We see no point in preserving the initial "Our Father" as a semi-private preparation for the Priest alone. We do not like the proposed opening salutation. The service might open with the traditional "The Lord be with you" followed by the Collect for Purity.
2. We approve the shortened form of the 10 Commandments, but are doubtful of the value of adding the commandment of love in this way. It seems to make the commandment of love merely one more commandment instead of that which should be the motive behind the last six.
3. We prefer the present form of the Summary of the Law, and we would like this made an alternative to the Kyries rather than an addition to them. A form of the Kyrie is already said in the response to the Commandments or to the Summary.

4. We suggest that it unnecessary to give out chapter and verse in announcing the Epistle and Gospel, and that the Epistle might be called a "Lesson" when read from the Old Testament, the Acts, or the Revelation. The Gospel should be preceded by the Salutation to mark out its importance and dignity. Direction should be given for a Deacon to read the Gospel when present, thus preserving his liturgical function, and we would like permission given to a licensed Lay Reader to read the Epistle.
5. We approve the corrections made in the Nicene Creed, but would suggest the following additional ones as being closer to the original meaning :
 - a. "I believe in one God" on a separate line, followed by a colon.
 - b. "through whom all things were made"
 - c. "And I believe in One, Holy . . . Church"
6. We would like the Offertory of Bread and Wine to receive still clearer emphasis by the addition of other sentences, by a change in the rubric from "present" to "offer", and by an Offertory prayer which more clearly refers to these elements. We do appreciate that there has been a real attempt in the present revision to make some room for this emphasis.
7. In the Prayer for the Church and its biddings, the definition of the Church should not limit it to those on earth. We would like to see more specific prayer for the departed and thanksgiving for the Saints. We do not think there is any longer a considerable objection to these, but if desired some section of the prayer might be made permissive.
8. Exhortation - "Sustain and strengthen you" rather than "your comfort". The present phrase is misleading to modern ears.
9. Comfortable Words. Place these between Confession and Absolution as its scriptural ground. For the last one substitute 1 Jno.1:9 as in the American revision.
10. "The peace of the Lord be with you". We do not like this position for the Pax, which is completely out of line with all other Anglican rites. It should come either at the Offertory at the beginning of the Eucharistic action, or, preferable, just before the Communion. Replace here with the ordinary salutation which traditionally marks important points in the service.
11. Preface. Punctuate: ". . . O Lord holy, Father Almighty, Everlasting God".
12. Proper Prefaces. We appreciate the inclusion of additional prefaces, but would like to have propers for Advent and Lent. The Preface for Easter is not suitable for "memorials", and a separate one is needed. Also we would like to see the Christmas Preface used until the Epiphany.
13. Benedictus qui venit. We would like to see this inserted in the text of the service after the Sanctus, to be used permissively. It is, of course, already authorised by its inclusion in the Hymn Book.
14. The Prayer of Consecration. This is the most important part of the service. We appreciate the attempts to enrich this prayer, especially in the initial emphasis on thanksgiving, and the restoration of a form of anamnesis of the mighty acts of God in Christ. We like the way that the opening words "Blessing and glory

and thanksgiving" pick up and carry on the characteristic notes of Benedictus, Sanctus and Sursum Corda, and that these are no longer separated by the Prayer of Humble Access. We also like the addition in the opening section of the words "to take our nature upon Him". Some of us would like to see the words "oblation and satisfaction" removed, mainly to make the language simpler and more direct. These ideas are already in the more inclusive word "sacrifice". Objection is felt by some to the word "satisfaction" as non-scriptural and implying an Anselmian doctrine which the Church has never officially adopted. We also suggest "a perpetual memory of that his precious death and sacrifice" as in the American book.

We are agreed as to the general desirability of an Epiclesis in the prayer of Consecration, as has been done in almost all modern Anglican rites. We feel that it is important that the Holy Spirit as well as the other two Persons of the Trinity should have a place in this prayer. There has been some disagreement as to the place for this. Most prefer it before the words of Institution in some such form as the following: "Hear us, O merciful Father, we most humbly beseech thee, vouchsafe to bless and sanctify by thy Holy Spirit these thy creatures of Bread and Wine, that we . . ." OR "By thy Holy Spirit send down thy blessing upon us and upon these thy creatures, etc."

We would like to see the manual acts at the consecration limited to (a) and (d), changing "Paten" in the former to "Bread". These acts sufficiently indicate what is to be consecrated. Most of us would like to see the Fraction restored to its scriptural and traditional place before the Communion. Our Lord broke the Bread after He had given thanks and we should do the same. Making the Fraction as a preliminary to distribution makes it easier to emphasise that we all partake of the one Bread.

In the balance of the prayer we agree generally with the form suggested by the Toronto "Anglican Action" Group. This removes the objection of some to the use of the "Prayer of Oblation" here since the Oblation of ourselves is then included in the final Thanksgiving Prayer.

15. Insert the Lord's Prayer here at the climactic point of the service. It should come within, not after, the Eucharistic action. And the Fraction, Pax, and Agnus Dei should follow here, at least permissively.

16. We like this position of the Prayer of Humble Access, but would prefer the rubric that it be said by the people to be a permissive one. We would also like the wording changed, as in the American book, removing the mediaeval idea of a separate effect of the Body and Blood.

17. Rubric for reconsecration. There is a very definite feeling that when reconsecration is necessary, it should be in both kinds and should include Epiclesis as well as words of Institution. We feel that the present practice, while defensible, tends to seem mechanical.

18. Gloria in Excelsis. We like the omission of the superfluous clause. We would like the opening sentence altered to "peace to men of good will". We see no reason why permission should not be given to use this at the beginning of the service if desired. We would prefer a rubric stating that it shall be used on certain days, rather than one which states when it may be omitted. This would stress the fact that it is an act of thanksgiving and praise on great days, rather than that we are allowed to omit it on certain days when we want to shorten the service.

19. We suggest omitting the rubric that the priest is to replace the elements on the Table after Communion covering it with a fair linen cloth. This rubric conflicts with the third rubric at the end of the service, which apparently order what remains to be consumed immediately after the Communion. We welcome this latter rubric. Apart from the fact that there is no point in keeping the Elements on the Altar after the Communion is over, there is a practical point that the Ablutions in this position allow ample time for the communicants to reach their seats and compose themselves before the final prayers begin.

SUGGESTED PRAYER OF CONSECRATION

Blessing and glory and thanksgiving be unto thee, Almighty God, our heavenly Father, who of thy tender mercy didst give thine only Son Jesus Christ to take our nature upon him and to suffer death upon the Cross for our redemption; who made there (by his one oblation of himself once offered) a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice for the sins of the whole world; and did institute, and in his holy Gospel, command us to continue, a perpetual memory of that his precious death and sacrifice until his coming again.

Hear us, O merciful Father, we most humbly beseech thee; vouchsafe to bless and sanctify by thy Holy Spirit these thy creatures of Bread and Wine; and grant that we, receiving them according to thy Son our Saviour Jesus Christ's holy institution, in remembrance of His death and passion, may be partakers of his most blessed Body and Blood; who in the same night that he was betrayed in remembrance of me.

Wherefore, O lord and heavenly Father, in union with all thy holy Church, we thy humble servants, do celebrate and make here before thy divine majesty with these thy holy gifts, which we now offer unto thee, the memorial which thy Son hath commanded us to make; having in remembrance his wonderful Incarnation, His blessed passion and precious death, his mighty resurrection and glorious ascension; rendering unto thee most hearty thanks for the innumerable benefits procured unto us by the same.

And we entirely desire thee of thy fatherly goodness mercifully to accept this our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving; most humbly beseeching thee to grant that by the merits and death of thy Son Jesus Christ, and through faith in his blood, we and all thy whole Church may obtain remission of our sins, and all other benefits of his passion; and that all we, who are partakers of this holy Communion, may be fulfilled with thy grace and heavenly benediction.

And although we be unworthy, through our manifold sins, to offer unto thee any sacrifice, yet we beseech thee to accept this our bounden duty and service; not weighing our merits, but pardoning our offences, through Jesus Christ our Lord; by whom and with whom in the unity of the Holy Ghost, all honour and glory be unto thee, O Father Almighty, world without end. Amen.

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