SERVICE OF THE SACRAMENT

PMM 142 Lutheran Worship

PREFACE


The preface is present in Hippolytus (ca.215):

- **Salutation**
- **Sursum corda**
- Invitation to thanksgiving

Gradually sentences reflective of the particular season or day of the church year were added. These are known as the "proper prefaces." The large number of proper prefaces were reduced by Pope Gregory the Great (590-604). The proper prefaces in Divine Services I and II are based on the Latin prefaces prior to the reforms of the Council of Trent.

- The salutation proclaims the presence of the risen Lord as the host and liturgist in His Sacrament.
- The call for the lifting of up the hearts announces the posture of our receptivity. See Lamentations 3:41 and Colossians 3:1-3.
- The invitation to thanksgiving draws us toward the gift of the Sacrament.
- The proper preface is directed to the Father through the Son (see Romans 1:8; Ephesians 5:20; Colossians 3:17).
- The proper preface links our thanksgiving with that of "angels, archangels, and the whole company of heaven" (see Revelation 4:8; 7:11-12; Psalm 103:20-22).
- The proper prefaces provide the basis and content for our thanksgiving by proclaiming what the Holy Trinity has done for us. Thus the proper preface is reflective of the day or season of the church year.
- The thanksgiving ends with the introduction to the Sanctus. It announces that the congregation, together with the whole church on earth, is joining with the angels and saints in singing their eternal heavenly hymn. Note the scriptural basis: Hebrews 12:22-24; Revelation 5:11-14; 7:9-12; 10:1-8. Also see Philippians 2:9-11.
SANCTUS

For Further Reading: Brunner, 94-106; Jungmann, 202-203; Precht, 294-295, 422-423; Reed, 330-333; Torkelson, Daniel T. "Luther's Joy of the Sanctus" Perspectives on Worship: Reflections Toward the 21st Century (Concordia Seminary, St.Louis); Spinks, Bryan. The Place of the Sanctus in the Eucharistic Prayer (Cambridge).

The Sanctus is drawn from Isaiah 6:3 and Psalm 118:26a with "hosanna" being added from the Palm Sunday narrative (see John 12:13). Kleinig notes three changes that are made to the Isaiah text:

- The angelic proclamation about God's holiness becomes an act of adoration addressed to Him for his holiness and glory.
- The addition of 'heaven and' changes the location of the Lord's presence from the temple in Jerusalem to the heavenly sanctuary.
- The name 'God' has been added from Rev. 4:8 to 'Lord of hosts/Lord almighty' in Is. 6:3.

Kleinig makes several other observations about the Sanctus:

- In keeping with the application by John of Is. 6:3 to Jesus in John 12:41 as the incarnation of the Father's glory, the Sanctus is addressed to Jesus as Lord together with the Father and the Holy Spirit.
- By singing the Sanctus the congregation acknowledges that through Jesus it stands together with the angels as 'saints' in the heavenly sanctuary and joins with them in their adoration of the Holy Trinity (cf Rev. 4b-8).
- This differs from the use of the Sanctus as the proclamation of the Lord's holiness in the daily morning service of the synagogue before the recitation of the Shema, in the third of the 18 benedictions, and in the prayer for the redemption of Zion. In the synagogue the sanctification of the Lord's name on earth corresponds to but is not united with the angelic sanctification in heaven.
- Luther's relocation of the Sanctus after the Words of Institution was probably meant to indicate that through Christ's body and blood we join with angels in the heavenly sanctuary.
- While scholars argue whether the references to the Sanctus in Rev. 4:8 and I Clement 34:5-8 show that it was an ancient part of the liturgy or not, it clearly became a regular part of almost all known eucharistic liturgies from 200 AD.
PRAYER/ OUR FATHER


Luther carefully distinguished the Verba of Christ from the prayer of the congregation. Instead of the canon of the mass, LW provides for a brief prayer of thanksgiving that concludes with the Our Father prior to the speaking of the words of consecration. The prayer in Divine Service II is adapted from the Agende I of the United Evangelical Lutheran Church of Germany. Following the Berakah form of Jewish prayer, this prayer blesses God for His mercy in sending us His Son and gives thanks for the redemption that we have in Him. The prayer implores God to send us His Holy Spirit that we may be established in a living faith and so be prepared to "remember our Redeemer and receive him who comes to us in his body and blood."

Our "table prayer" in coming to Christ's Supper is the prayer that He has given us to pray, the Our Father. Gregory the Great wrote "To be it seems most unseemly that we should introduce a prayer even of the learned over the elements and speak over the Body and the Blood of the Redeemer any prayer except the prayer he has given us" (quoted in Evanson, The Effects of Evangelicalism and the Liturgical Movement, 28).

CONSECRATION


In the Formula of Concord (FC-SD VII: 83-84, the confessors argue for three essential acts:

- Consecration
- Distribution
- Consumption
The words of Jesus (Matthew 26:26-28 and I Corinthians 11:22-25) are at the heart of the Supper. They effect and proclaim the real presence of Christ's body and blood. Where they are not spoken the body and blood of Christ are not present and there is no sacrament (FC-SD VII:73-90). The pastor may elevate the body and blood as a visual proclamation of the testament of Jesus Christ.

THE PAX DOMINI, THE AGNUS DEI, AND THE DISTRIBUTION


Augustine had declared that the Pax Domini was a good preparation for communion and defended its placement before the distribution. The Pax went from altar to congregation. Where its path was blocked by unforgiven sin, it was the duty of the pastor to go to the place where it was stopped and bring about confession, forgiveness and reconciliation (see Matthew 5:23-24).

Luther saw the Pax Domini as "a public absolution of the sins of the communicants, the true voice of the Gospel announcing the forgiveness of sins, and therefore the single most worthy preparation for the Lord's Table, as faith holds itself to these words as coming from the mouth of Christ Himself" (AE 53:28-29).

The Pax Domini is a benediction that announces the gift of peace from the risen Lord (see John 20:19-26) to the communicants. The pastor may hold up the elements as he speaks the Pax Domini.

The Agnus Dei was an ancient Roman canticle, based on John 1:29.

- It was originally spoken by the priest or sung by the choir as the host was broken in preparation for distribution.
- It became a congregational hymn with the Reformation.
- It acknowledges the real presence of Christ body and blood and implores Him for mercy and peace.
- During the singing of this canticle the pastor may commune himself and others who are assisting him with the distribution.

The pastor ought always to distribute Christ's body as he has responsibility for who is admitted to the altar. Deacons may assist in the distribution of the chalice. The formula of bestowal proclaim what it is that the communicants receive—the true body and blood of Christ.
POST-COMMUNION CANTICLE AND COLLECT

For Further Reading: Grime, Paul. The Use of the Nunc Dimittis in the Liturgy of the Eucharist (Unpublished MDiv Thesis at Concordia Theological Seminary Library); Precht, 314-316, 432-434; Reed, 379-383.

The Nunc Dimittis is the song of Simeon in Luke 2:29-32. Like Simeon who held in the incarnate Savior in his arms, we have received the body and blood of our Lord into our mouths and so we bless Him for His redemption. The Nunc Dimittis was used as part of the minister's concluding prayers in some ancient liturgies like that of St. John Chrysostom. It is used in some of the German and Swedish liturgies of the Reformation era. Loehe includes it as a post-communion canticle in his Agende of 1844.

Divine Service II includes a canticle based on selected verses of Psalm 105 as an alternate. As this canticle includes "Alleluias" it is not appropriate for use in Lent.

Divine Service II provides two post-communion collects. The first is from Luther's Deutsche Messe of 1526. This collect gives thanks to the Father for the salutary gift of His Son's body and blood and petitions Him to strengthen us through the same in faith and love. This collect captures the dynamic of Luther's description of the Christian life in "On the Freedom of the Christian" where he maintains that a Christian lives outside of himself by faith in Christ and in love for the neighbor: "We conclude, therefore that a Christian lives not in himself, but in Christ and in his neighbor. Otherwise he is not a Christian. He lives in Christ through faith, in his neighbor through love. But faith he is caught up beyond himself into God. By love he descends beneath himself into his neighbor" (AE 31:371).

Further, Luther's comments in his 1526 treatise, "The Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ-Against the Fanatics" are a fine commentary on this prayer: "For it is necessary for each one to know that Christ has given his body, flesh, and blood on the cross to be our treasure and to help us receive forgiveness of sins, that is, that we may saved, redeemed from death and hell. That is the first principle of Christian doctrine. It is presented to us in the words, and his body and blood are given to us to be received corporeally as a token and confirmation of this fact. To be sure, he did it only once, carrying it out and achieving it on the cross; but he causes it each day anew to be set before us, distributed and poured out through preaching, and he orders us to remember him always and never forget him. The second principle is love. It demonstrates in the first place that he has left us an example. As he gives himself to us with his body and blood in order to redeem us from our misery, so ought we too give ourselves with might and main for our neighbor" (AE 36:352).

The second collect confesses God's goodness in sending His Son into our flesh, gives Him thanks for the pardon and peace given us in the sacrament, and implores Him to keep and guard us.
BENEDICTION

For Further Reading: Brunner, Luther, "Genesis Commentary" AE 5:140-147; 134-139; Precht, 434-435; Reed, 384-387; Westermann, Claus. Blessing in the Bible and the Life of the Church (Fortress).

The final Aaronic Benediction is a Lutheran innovation which was chosen because it was the only blessing instituted by God. See Numbers 6:22-27.

• Just as the high priest blessed the congregation at the climax of the service in Jerusalem (Deut. 10:8; I Chronicles 23:13 ), so the risen Lord who has ascended into heaven as our high priest blesses us from the heavenly sanctuary (see Luke 24:50-51).
• The triple use of "Lord" expresses the three persons of the Holy Trinity.
• By this blessing, the Lord's presence, protection, approval, attention are granted to His people.

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Revised XII.4.2001