



In your first Q+A sheet on Anglican liturgy you said that this is “the type of worship that best does what the historic Christian Church intends to do when it gathers on Sundays and major Holy Days. It is not an occasion for individual emotional inspiration or intellectual doctrinal/Biblical exegesis as is often the case in Protestant churches.”

Just what is it that the historic Catholic Church intends to do when it gathers for corporate worship on Sundays and major Holy Days?

Protestant corporate worship services historically are for the purpose of individual inspiration and are centered in the preaching of a sermon. In the classical Reformed (Calvinist) tradition and the Methodist tradition services are to inspire persons to live Christian lives (emphasis on *obedience*). In the Biblical Fundamentalist (Anabaptist) tradition services are to inspire persons to “accept Jesus Christ as their personal savior and be saved” (emphasis on *submission*).

The purpose of Catholic [Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Anglican, Old Catholic, Oriental] corporate liturgy is *Anamnesis* and Sacrifice; it is sacramental and centered in the Eucharist. The Sacrament of the Eucharist celebrated by a Priest validly ordained in the Apostolic Succession is an *Anamnesis* and a Sacrifice.

Anamnesis is a Biblical Greek word which means “to make present again.” At the Last Supper Jesus took bread and wine and said, “This is my Body which is given for you. This is my Blood of the New Covenant which is shed for you. Do this, whenever you do it, for the *anamnesis* [for the making present again] of me.”

The historic Christian Church has always taught that Christ becomes truly and actually present in the Eucharist in the fullness of His life. His ministry, passion and death, resurrection, and ascension all become present. The full benefits of His life and saving work are made available to us through the Eucharist in exactly the same way they were available to the Disciples two thousand years ago. The Eastern Orthodox like to say that the Eucharist is a “window to Heaven” that breaks through the barriers of time and space.

When we receive Holy Communion, we take Christ’s life into our lives in the transformed Bread and Wine which have become His true body and blood, soul and divinity.

The contemporary New Testament scholar, John Dominic Crossan, has written that all religious worship in the Biblical world was sacrificial. However, Biblical sacrifice is misunderstood by many people today who equate sacrifice with suffering. Dr Crossan points out that the word sacrifice means “to make holy”. It comes from the Latin *sacra* [holy] and *facio* [make].

In Biblical sacrifice something is given to God. God receives it, makes it holy, and often gives it back to His people in order to make them holy.

The Sacrament of the Eucharist is a Sacrifice in which:

- We offer bread and wine to God, and at the same time we offer God ourselves and our lives.
- The Priest in the Eucharistic Prayer re-presents Christ's offering of Himself on the Cross. God the Father receives our offering of bread and wine and our offering of ourselves just as He received Christ's presentation of His life two thousand years ago.
- The bread and wine are transformed into the Body and Blood of Christ, which are given back to us so that we may take Christ's life into our lives and be transformed into His likeness.

The purpose of the Christian Life, as Anglicanism understands it, is to grow into *union* with the Triune God: a process in which we become a part of the divine life of God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—and in which God becomes an integral part of our lives, so that we may be transformed into all that God created us to be.

Anglicanism believes that the historic liturgy of the Catholic Church, an *Anamnesis* and Sacrifice in the Eucharist, is the type of corporate worship that best does this.

As Archbishop Cranmer's Eucharistic Prayer (Rite I in the American Book of Common Prayer) puts it so beautifully:

...here we offer and present unto thee, O Lord, our selves,
our souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy, and living
sacrifice unto thee;
humbly beseeching thee that we, and all others who shall be
partakers of this Holy Communion,
may worthily receive the most precious Body and Blood
of thy Son Jesus Christ,
be filled with thy grace and heavenly benediction,
and made one body with him that he may dwell in us and
we in him.