

A Spiritual Commentary on the Eucharist
Book of Alternative Services

Prepared by the
Doctrine and Worship Committee
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“Love (3)” ~ George Herbert

Love bade me welcome: yet my soul drew back,
Guilty of dust and sin.
But quick-ey'd Love, observing me grow slack
From my first entrance in,
Drew nearer to me, sweetly questioning,
If I lack'd any thing.

A guest, I answer'd, worthy to be here:
Love said, you shall be he.
I the unkind, ungrateful? Ah my dear,
I cannot look on thee.
Love took my hand, and smiling did reply,
Who made the eyes but I?

Truth Lord, but I have marr'd them: let my shame
Go where it doth deserve.
And know you not, says Love, who bore the blame?
My dear, then I will serve.
You must sit down, says Love, and taste my meat:
So I did sit and eat.

Works Cited

- Herbert, George. "Love (3)" in *George Herbert: The Complete English Works*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1995.
- Lamott, Anne. *Help, Thanks, Wow: The Three Essential Prayers*. New York: Riverhead Books, 2012.
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- Rutledge, Fleming. *The Crucifixion: Understanding the Death of Jesus*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2017.
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Introductory Comments

The practice of Christian worship has both a sense of *spontaneity* and *intentionality* to it. That is, there is a part of worship for a Christian that should be an unprompted act because it comes from the overflow of a grateful heart to God. Nobody needs to teach a child to be joyful when they receive a gift! Worship and the offering of ourselves as "living sacrifices" is, theologically speaking, what the Apostle Paul would describe as our "spiritual/reasonable" response to God's mercy (Rom 12:1). If we rarely feel this way, then we need to reflect on whether we have understood what the Good News is.

There is a spiritual rationale acquired from centuries of wisdom in the people of God on what worship is. In this, our service of Holy Communion symbolically, deliberately, and unapologetically follows in the footsteps of those who have gone before us. For example, our understanding of time/seasons/festivals is built upon the foundation laid down in Scripture and the worshipping life of Israel. Another example includes the vestments worn during communion – both by the clergy and the choir – that are symbolic garments designed to remind the entire congregation of the new "clothing" we have received from God in Christ (i.e., white as symbol of purity received in baptism; see Col 3:9-10, 12-14). A third, and important example, is reflected in the very content of the two parts of our service, "The Proclamation of the Word" and "Celebration of the Eucharist." Both movements are drawn from the patterns set in Jewish Synagogues (Part 1) and reflects imagery from the Jewish Passover and the theological reflection of the early Church as they remembered why Jesus died for us (Part 2).

In the Eucharist, as much of what we do is built on the past, we are not only remembering history when we gather together in worship. Jesus said, "I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh" (John 6:51). What we do gathered around the Lord's Table gives focus to our present and shapes our future. All of life and all of time – past, present, and future – is reimagined and reshaped by Jesus. As the orthodox theologian, Alexander Schememann, helpfully reminds us, "in Christ, life – life in all its totality – was returned to [humanity], given again as sacrament and communion, made Eucharist. And it is to show – be it only partially and superficially – the meaning of this for our mission in the world" (*For the Life of the World*, 64). Jesus' presence in us, re-remembered and reinforced in Holy Communion, makes all life and all time sacred: all of life is touched by God and is God's gift to us.

I. The Gathering of the Community

Holy Communion requires the gathering of persons. One person does not make a community. The community can be as few as two or three, but there must be more than one person: a priest cannot celebrate communion alone.

As we gather in worship, our service begins with a greeting (based on 2 Cor 13:13 [14]) that reminds us that we join a community - Lord Jesus Christ, almighty God, and Holy Spirit – that is already assembled. The celebration is already begun! But we do not merely have to watch this loving community from a distance. Rather, we are welcomed – gracefully and lovingly – into this fellowship.

Together, we also remind ourselves that while we still have much to learn about the loving Trinity, we are already known by God (“all hearts are open, all desires are known, and from you no secrets are hidden”). It could frighten us to realize that we are fully known by God. But if we lean into this truth, instead of drawing away under the shame of this knowledge, we discover that God, in knowing us completely, still lovingly welcomes us and cleanses us by the Holy Spirit. Welcomed, cleansed, and loved we are then able to love the Word who incarnated love, Christ our Lord, in return. An image evoked by the word “cleanse” is the traditional foot-washing. In societies where people walk in open-toe sandals along dusty and grimy roads, the first thing to occur when one enters a home is hospitable provision to cleanse one’s feet. As we gather not only in the powerful name of the Trinity, but also in the graceful hospitality offered by the Holy Trinity, we find ourselves welcomed, washed, and loved.

The writer Anne Lamott suggests that there are only three basic ways to answer the God who speaks to us: “Help,” “Thanks,” and “Wow.” The words of welcome in the gathering of the community anticipate the help we need even before we may know it. As we recognize this, the normal reflex of the soul to this gift is gratitude (“Thanks”) and awe (“Wow”). An “act of praise” – often in joyful song – is, then, a most appropriate response to God.

The last movement in the gathering of the community is the “collect” of the day. This word may be pronounced somewhat oddly – CO-lekt (emphasis on the first syllable) – but its origin is ancient, from the Latin word *collecta*. It refers to the “gathering” of people and, beyond that, to the “collecting up” of the theological theme(s) of this particular Sunday in a succinct prayer.

Before the collect is prayed by the celebrant, the congregation is invited to keep silent. This is an important invitation; it is the first of four such biddings (before the collect; after the sermon; before confession; and after the Lord’s

We ask you to send your Holy Spirit upon the offering of your holy Church. Gather into one all who share in these sacred mysteries, filling them with the Holy Spirit and confirming their faith in the truth, that together we may praise you and give you glory through your Servant, Jesus Christ.

All glory and honour are yours,
Father and Son, with the Holy Spirit in
the holy Church, now and for ever.

People **Amen.**

The service continues with the Lord’s Prayer on p. 211.

The Lord’s Prayer

Celebrant As our Saviour taught us, let us pray,
All **Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, your
will be done, on earth as
in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us
our sins as we forgive those who sin
against us. Save us from the time of trial,
and deliver us from evil. For the king-
dom, the power, and the glory are yours,
now and for ever. Amen.**

Dismissal

The celebrant may bless the people. The deacon, or other leader, dismisses the people, saying in these or similar words,

Go forth in the name of Christ.

People **Thanks be to God.**

Or the following:

Leader Go in peace to love and serve the Lord. *People* **Thanks be to God.**

Or the following:

Leader Go forth into the world,
rejoicing in the power of the Spirit.

People **Thanks be to God.**

Or the following:

Leader Let us bless the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God.**

From Easter Day through the Day of Pentecost, Alleluia is added to the dismissal and the people’s response.

Our worship continues in prayer. We pray as our Saviour taught us. The Lord's prayer is simple; even children can remember it. It is designed to keep the focus shifted from us to God. God knows our needs – in fact, God knows better than we do what we need. This is our Father we are dealing with. With a God like this loving us, we can pray simply and honestly and then joyfully receive, hands outstretched to receive tangible reminders of God's love in bread and wine. In this simple act of eating and drinking we are re-membered, nourished, and loved.

IV. Dismissal

A Deacon (usually) dismisses us from gathered worship and commissions us for the life of worship that we will do in our everyday rhythms of sleeping, eating, playing working, and walking around (cf. Romans 12:1-2). Some of us might gather for meals in the parish hall or in our homes or in restaurants after the service of worship. What we do together in corporate worship – in eating and drinking from the *Lord's Table* – anchors and connects all of what we do between our times of corporate worship. The *Eucharist* is that big, it is that important. It unites everything together in *communion* with God.

Concluding Comments

A "Spiritual Commentary" on the Eucharist can never be exhaustive. Holy Communion is a deep mystery that is beyond any complete human comprehension. Yet, God does put enough in our grasp to be edified, informed, and sustained by what we can know. After all, again, as Jesus says, "I am the living bread... Whoever eats of this bread will live forever" (John 6:51). As we gather in worship for Holy Communion, we are invited to the Table in love and by Love. As we are re-membered by Love we are welcomed into the unity of the Triune God and the unity of Christ's beloved bride, the Church.

Holy Communion is the fundamental Christian practice that reminds us that in worship we are accompanying, on earth, the celebration that is already occurring in heaven. Holy Communion – from start to finish – is more than a text that is being read and words that are being heard; it is a liturgy ("the work of the people") that is being *prayed*. In this sense, what we are doing is similar to the experience of the two disciples on the Road to Emmaus with Christ. In continuity with their experience, our service takes us on a journey to an encounter with the crucified and risen Christ: we *listen* and *understand* what Moses and all the prophets say about Jesus and, as our eyes are opened by the Word, we *recognize* the Lord in the breaking of the bread. As we leave that encounter with the risen Christ, like those two disciples, our hearts will burn within us and we will/should spontaneously and joyfully want to tell others about this Jesus we encounter. 16

THE GATHERING OF THE COMMUNITY

All stand. The presiding celebrant greets the community

Celebrant The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.

People **And also with you.**

Or from Easter Day through the Day of Pentecost,

Celebrant Alleluia! Christ is risen.

People **The Lord is risen indeed. Alleluia!**

Celebrant May his grace and peace be with you.

People **May he fill our hearts with joy.**

The following prayer may be said.

Celebrant Almighty God,

All

to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hidden. Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Then may follow an act of praise: one of the following hymns, or a canticle or other hymn. It is appropriate that the hymn Glory to God be used during the Christmas season and from Easter Day through the Day of Pentecost, but not during the seasons of Advent and Lent. During Lent it is appropriate that Kyrie Eleison or the Trisagion be used. Other canticles may be found on pp. 72–95.

Glory to God

Celebrant Glory to God in the highest,

All

and peace to his people on earth.

Lord God, heavenly king, almighty God and Father, we worship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glory.

Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, Lord God, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world: have mercy on us; you are seated at the right hand of the Father: receive our prayer.

For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Kyrie Eleison

May be sung in three-fold, six-fold, or nine-fold form.

Kyrie eleison.

Christe eleison. Kyrie eleison.

Or

Lord, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Prayer) during Holy Communion. We do not keep silence well in our culture. Silence is not merely the passive absence of sound – it is an active listening. In silence we listen patiently to God with the “ears” of our hearts before we answer with the collected prayer of our mouths. Silence is rarely welcome in our culture. More often than not we are compelled to fill empty audible space with music, talk radio, or banal chatter. The quartet bidding to keep silence in the BAS communion service is a form of resistance to the culture and a tuning of our souls to God. If the celebrant doesn’t succumb too quickly to speak, these silent moments – over time – can dig out clogged ears (“you have given me ears to hear you” – Ps 40:6[7]) in a congregation so that they can better hear the voice of God.

II. The Proclamation of the Word

The Word and Sacrament are in dynamic relationship with each other. “The Word is as sacramental as the sacrament is ‘evangelical’” (Schmemmann, *For the Life of the World*, 77). That is, in the reading we “hear” Christ in Scripture (not just in the NT or Gospel lesson; but in the OT & Psalms as well); at the table we “see” Christ in bread and wine. The Gospel lesson is often stepped out (the Latin word for “step” is *gradus*; this is why we might sing a “Gradual Hymn” accompanying the stepping out – it is *not* because we sing the hymn slowly!) into the congregation as a symbol of “the Word become flesh and dwelling among us.”

Gospel lessons are the most central part of the proclamation and act as a reminder that our God is not distant from us but is our “Emmanuel” (“God with us”). God stepped into our world in the flesh, in Jesus, so that he might be fully acquainted with us and act as a bridge, our *pontifex maximus* (lit. our great bridge-maker), between us and the Father and lead us to life. As the writer of Hebrews expresses this:

Since, therefore, the children share flesh and blood, he himself likewise shared the same things, so that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by the fear of death. For it is clear that he did not come to help angels, but the descendants of Abraham. Therefore he had to become like his brothers and sisters in every respect, so that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the people. Because he himself was tested by what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested.” (Hebrews 2:14–18 NRSV)

Eucharistic Prayer 2

Celebrant The Lord be with you.
People **And also with you.**

Celebrant Lift up your hearts.

People **We lift them to the Lord.**

Celebrant Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

Celebrant We give you thanks and praise, almighty God, through your beloved Son, Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Redeemer. He is your living Word, through whom you have created all things.

By the power of the Holy Spirit he took flesh of the Virgin Mary and shared our human nature. He lived and died as one of us, to reconcile us to you, the God and Father of all.

In fulfilment of your will he stretched out his hands in suffering, to bring release to those who place their hope in you; and so he won for you a holy people.

He chose to bear our griefs and sorrows, and to give up his life on the cross, that he might shatter the chains of evil and death, and banish the darkness of sin and despair. By his resurrection he brings us into the light of your presence.

Now with all creation we raise our voices to proclaim the glory of your name.

All **Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest.**

**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

Celebrant Holy and gracious God, accept our praise, through your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ; who on the night he was handed over to suffering and death, took bread and gave you thanks, saying, “Take, and eat: this is my body which is broken for you.” In the same way he took the cup, saying, “This is my blood which is shed for you. When you do this, you do it in memory of me.”

Remembering, therefore, his death and resurrection, we offer you this bread and this cup, giving thanks that you have made us worthy to stand in your presence and serve you.

when he concludes his collection of poetry, *The Temple*, with the poem “Love (3).” In this memorable poem (see the beginning of this commentary), he names the Lord as “Love” who bids us in welcome to come and sit and eat supper with him. This is fitting. Our Lord is the Lord of love, and his table points to Love’s greatest expression. Jesus told his disciples that the bread on the table pointed to his body that would be hung on a cross, and the wine on the table pointed to his blood that would be shed for the forgiveness of their sins. Every one of the six Eucharistic prayers in the BAS contain the common theme that remind us what God has done through Jesus for us is the act of Love. One of his most penetrating sayings recorded in the Gospel is when Jesus declares that “the Son of man... came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Mark 10:45; cf. Matt 20:28). Jesus, God incarnate, has come in complete congruence with the nature of God, to offer himself for us in self-sacrificing love.

Gratitude is our fundamental response to God’s gracious self-giving love. This is why we also use a singular word to refer to our entire service as the **Eucharist**. The word “eucharist” is derived from the Greek word, *eucharisteō*, “to give thanks.” Jesus commanded his disciples to continue the special supper often in remembrance of him. We remember with deep gratitude.

“Remember” is a covenant word; it is a relational word, not an informational word. It is not about “remembering” a piece of history but bringing our “members” into covenant with God. When God says that “I will remember my covenant” (Gen 9:15) this does not simply mean that God recalls something, but that God will recall *and* take action (for example, see Gen 8:1; Exod 2:24; Lev 26:44, 45). Remembering is restorative. As we remember, we give thanks that God has made us worthy to stand in God’s presence.

Finally, the bread and the wine are more than bare signs. The apostle Paul tells us that when we eat and drink them, we experience intimate **Communion** with God (1 Cor 11:27-32). Fleming Rutledge, an Anglican preacher and theologian, reminds us that “it is God’s very nature to go out from God’s self in love... The self-sacrificing love that we see in the cross is present within the Godhead from before the creation; it was not an innovation prompted by the fall of humankind” (*The Crucifixion*, 63-1-8). God does not need us to experience intimate communal love. Rather, the cross of Jesus reminds us that our God is One who gives love and invites us to receive love. We have *communion* (“unity together”) with the Triune God because this God makes room in the circle of love for us. In this supper, which we remember with thankfulness, God “gather[s] into one all who share in these sacred mysteries.”

Trisagion

May be sung three times or antiphonally, and may include Glory to the Father.

**Holy God, holy and mighty, holy
immortal one, have mercy upon us.**

The Collect of the Day

Celebrant Let us pray.

The community may pray silently. The celebrant then sings or says the collect, after which the people respond, Amen.

THE PROCLAMATION OF THE WORD

The Readings

A first reading as appointed.

Reader A reading from . . .

At the conclusion of the passage, the reader says,

The word of the Lord.
People **Thanks be to God.**

Silence may be kept. Then shall follow a psalm as appointed.

On Sundays and major festivals a second reading as appointed is read.

Reader A reading from . . .

At the conclusion of the passage, the reader says,

The word of the Lord.
People **Thanks be to God.**

Silence may be kept. A psalm, canticle, hymn, or anthem may follow.

All stand for the Gospel.

Reader The Lord be with you.
People **And also with you.**

Reader The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ
according to . . .
People **Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

At the conclusion of the Gospel, the reader says,

The Gospel of Christ.
People **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

We follow a common “lectionary,” that is, it is in “common” with other Christians (e.g., Roman Catholic, Lutheran; Presbyterian; etc.). This commonality is important. We do not read and interpret God’s Word in isolation. We confess in our creeds that we are part of the universal (that is what the word “catholic” means) Church. As we read Scripture with the Church this reminds us that we are not alone, and that God speaks to our congregation by the same Word and by the same Spirit that is spoken to congregations across town and across the world.

After the lessons are read a sermon is offered. Again, this follows the synagogue tradition, a tradition that Jesus (e.g., Luke 4:16-27), the apostles (e.g., Acts 13:14-41), and preachers today continue to follow. The function and purpose of the Sermon is to renew our encounter with Christ in our day, in the circumstances of our lives. The gospel story is declared throughout Scripture and that story is meant to be lived in our neighbourhoods, the marketplaces, and the families in which we live. Eugene Peterson describes the declarative work of sermons this way: “[the sermon] takes God’s words, written and spoken in the past; takes the human experience, ancestral and personal, of the listening congregation; and then reproduces the words and experience as a single event right now, in this present moment. A sermon changes words about God into words from God. It takes what we have heard or read of God and God’s way and turns them into a personal proclamation of God’s good news. A sermon changes water into wine” (As Kingfishers Catch Fire: A Conversation on the Ways of God Formed by the Word of God, 55).

The second mark of silence is kept after the sermon. Again, the point of the silence is for an active listening to what God has been speaking through the proclaimed Word. “What is the Spirit’s whisperings to us?” is a good question to reflect on here in the silent space before we speak again, together, as a community in the confession of our faith.

Unlike its position before the sermon in *The Book of Common Prayer*, the Creed (Nicene, Apostles’, or Athanasius) is said just after the sermon in the *Book of Alternative Services* and before communion. Opinion differs on whether this was a helpful or harmful amendment. What can be affirmed by everyone is that there can be no communion without the unity of faith. The Creeds, like the common reading of Scripture, tethers us to people of God in a posture of faithful obedience. The Creeds are more than just statements about God that we robotically recite – like “we believe in one God.” James observes that “You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that – and shudder” (James 2:19, NIV). A Catholic ministry, *ODB Films*, released a video that asks believers: “When you recite the Creed, are you being real or are you being a robot? Do you even know what you are saying? Is there a difference

Celebrant
All Most merciful God,
we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbours as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent. For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us, that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your name. Amen.

Celebrant Almighty God have mercy upon you, pardon and deliver you from all your sins, confirm and strengthen you in all goodness, and keep you in eternal life; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

People Amen.

The Peace

All stand, and the presiding celebrant addresses the people.

People The peace of the Lord be always with you.
And also with you.

The members of the community, ministers and people, may greet one another in the name of the Lord.

THE CELEBRATION OF THE EUCHARIST

The Preparation of the Gifts

It is appropriate that a hymn be sung during the offertory. Representatives of the people may present the gifts of bread and wine for the eucharist (with money and other gifts for the needs and responsibilities of the Church) to the deacon or celebrant before the altar.

The Prayer over the Gifts

When the gifts have been prepared, the celebrant may say the Prayer over the Gifts, following which the people say, Amen.

The Great Thanksgiving

One of the following eucharistic prayers shall be used.

The peace also reminds us that we encounter Christ in others and “without that encounter it is impossible to meet God” (p. 177, BAS). “If anyone says, ‘I love God,’ and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen” (1 John 4:20).

And, finally, the peace is also, appropriately, a *celebration* – again, not because it is “recess” – because we are anticipating the foretaste of the banquet of the Kingdom that is yet to come. As such, our hearts and hands are prepared for the next major movement in our worship as we turn to the Table and receive the bread and the wine of the feast.

III. The Celebration of the Eucharist

The celebration of the Eucharist is the climax of the gathered life of the Church in worship. There is so much that has been written (For a detailed overview of only *Anglican* approaches to the Eucharist, see *Anglican Eucharistic Theology*, <http://anglicaneucharistictheology.com>) – and, sadly, argued about – when it comes to Communion, that the danger in a reflection like this is that we only add to the discussion in unhelpful ways. The goal, at this time, is not to be exhaustive, but helpful. Helpful so that as we gather in worship around the table, we might be nourished and, more importantly, give glory to the Triune God.

To begin with, how should we approach the Table? The Celebration of the Eucharist is *prayer*, not performance. It might be tempting to stand and simply observe the celebrant “perform” their priestly duties without entering into prayer *with* them. The opening words of the prayer are there to remind us that we are in the presence of the Lord. “The Lord be with you” is not an aspiration, but an acknowledgement of God’s presence here and now. While some may wish to “watch and pray” as the celebrant leads in prayer, the intent is that we join together in the prayers, lifting our hearts together to the Lord.

One way that might be helpful to keep us leaning into our prayerful response to God’s love expressed to us is to reflect on three common titles we use to refer to this part of our worship: The Lord’s Table, the Eucharist, and Communion.

Along with invitation to confession that “invites [us] to his table” the first three lines of the Eucharistic Prayer (for the purposes of this commentary, Eucharistic Prayer 2 is provided, but what is written applies to all six Eucharistic Prayers in the BAS) reminds us we are celebrating at **The Lord’s Table/Supper**. Jesus Christ, our crucified King, is the Lord who welcomes us to his table. The poet and priest, George Herbert (1593-1633), clearly has this in mind

Sermon

A silence for reflection may follow.

The Nicene Creed shall be said on major festivals. On Sundays either the Nicene Creed or the Apostles’ Creed is appropriate.

The Nicene Creed

The celebrant may invite the people, in these or similar words, to join in the recitation of the creed.

Celebrant

Let us confess our faith, as we say,

All

**We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and
earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of
God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God,
Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten,
not made, of one being with the Father. Through him
all things were made. For us and for our salvation he
came down from heaven:**

**by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the
Virgin Mary, and was made man.**

**For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he
suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the scriptures; he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come
again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his
kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of
life, who proceeds from the Father. With the Father
and the Son he is worshipped and glorified. He has
spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy
catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one
baptism for the forgiveness of sins.**

**We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the
world to come. Amen.**

between believing there is a God and believing in God?” (see: <https://odbfilms.com/film/the-creed>). Their point is that the Creed is meant to be prayed rather than simply recited.

After praying through our belief in the Triune God who creates us, saves us, and gives us life, the appropriate response is to continue our prayers for the world that God loves. The last paragraph of the Creed reminds us that it is the Holy Spirit who gives us life. Part of that life which the Spirit gives to all believers is the desire to pray. When we pray to “Abba, Father” it is the Spirit who guides us in our prayer (Rom 8:15-16). If we don’t know how or what to pray, it doesn’t matter. The Spirit does our praying in and for us, making prayer even out of wordless groans and sighs, because the Spirit intercedes for God’s people and the world in accordance with the will of God (Rom 8:26-27).

Spirit-inspired prayer continues as we turn, corporately, to confession. God knows us already in our need, in our sinfulness, in our shame, and yet we are reminded even here that we are extended mercy; we are loved, and we are welcomed to his table. This mercy and love allow us to approach God not fearfully, but confidently (see Heb 4:16). The third (after the opening collect and post-sermon) invitation to keep silence allows us to recollect this for ourselves. Silence teaches patience, and patience gives birth to our prayer of confession.

The rubrics in the BAS offer a helpful reminder of the spiritual dynamics in the next movement of worship (see p. 177). Our penitent prayer is answered with forgiveness and results in reconciled fellowship with God through Jesus Christ the Lord. The fruit of reconciliation is “peace.” As a natural extension of this, “The Peace” responds to the reality that we have been reconciled with God. As we offer “the Peace” to brothers and sisters in Christ, we are alerted to Jesus’ own word that before we approach the altar with our gifts, we must be reconciled to our brother or sister (Matt 5:23-24).

Not everyone is comfortable with some of the informality that the sharing of the Peace entails; others, seem to relish the opportunity to “greet” others this way. However, one may feel at this moment in the service, it is important to be aware that the passing of the Peace is not a time for simply saying “hello.” Of course, there should be a solemn joy to it because the love that we share with one another flows from the truth that Jesus is our peace. This means that it is Jesus’ peace that we extend to one another and not merely the words of “greeting” that we pass. As such, the passing of Christ’s Peace is not “recess” from the service, rather, it is the reality that Christ is with us and dwells among us.

The Apostles’ Creed

The celebrant may invite the people, in these or similar words, to join in the recitation of the creed.

Celebrant Let us confess the faith of our baptism, as we say,
All **I believe in God,
the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.**

The Prayers of the People

A deacon or lay member of the community leads the Prayers of the People after the following model. Intercession or thanksgiving may be offered for

*the Church
the Queen and all in authority the world the
local community those in need the departed.*

A short litany may be selected from pp. 110–127. Other prayers are found on pp. 675–684. These prayers may be modified in accordance with local need, or extempore forms of prayer may be used.

Confession and Absolution

The following prayers may be used here if the Penitential Rite was not used before the Gathering of the Community, or if penitential intercessions were not used in the Prayers of the People.

The people are invited to confession in these or similar words.

Celebrant Dear friends in Christ,
God is steadfast in love and infinite in mercy;
he welcomes sinners and invites them to his table.
Let us confess our sins, confident in God’s
forgiveness.

Silence is kept.