

# Lent, Holy Week and Easter

A commentary on the new rites  
authorised for experimental use  
in the Scottish Episcopal Church

The Liturgy Committee  
&  
The Doctrine Committee

THE SCOTTISH EPISCOPAL CHURCH



# Introduction

The Paschal mystery – the passion, death, and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ – is central to our Christian faith, and therefore to the liturgical year.

For this reason the Liturgy Committee was asked to produce new rites for Lent, Holy Week, and Easter, which would work more naturally with the *Scottish Liturgy 1982* than the current authorised provision, *Services and Ceremonies for Ash Wednesday and Holy Week 1967*. After scrutiny by the Faith and Order Board, the College of Bishops has now approved a new set of rites for the Beginning of Lent (Ash Wednesday), Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and the Vigil of Easter. These rites have been authorised for use by all churches in the Province for an experimental period until they are submitted to the General Synod for the formal canonical process of permanent authorisation.

The Good News of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and the triumph of the Cross are at the centre of these rites. The experience of forgiveness that comes with the Resurrection of Jesus, the principle of living together as a community of forgiven people, a community of Love, reborn through Baptism, are echoed in all the liturgies from Ash Wednesday to Easter. It has increasingly been recognised ecumenically in recent decades that our Christian identity is rooted in our Baptism,<sup>1</sup> and so also is the ministry of the Church in which all Christians are called to share. It is therefore appropriate that we reflect at this time on our baptismal promises, and examine ourselves accordingly as,

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<sup>1</sup>*Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*. Faith & Order Paper 111 (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1982).

through Lent, we seek to grow in holiness, deny ourselves, take up our cross, and follow Christ.

The liturgies are intended to enable us to worship during Lent, Holy Week, and Easter as a community of faith, full of hope in a world marked by suffering; a community focused on sacrificial love and thanksgiving in the light of the Cross and Resurrection.

## Some principles of liturgical revision

As a result of our participation in the ecumenical liturgical movements of the twentieth century there has been a shift from word-focused services and spirituality in the Scottish Episcopal Church – as well as in Anglicanism more generally – to Eucharistic communities. The Parish Communion movement, which began to grow in the 1930s, flourished in the 1970s and 80s, and took hold just as clergy numbers were declining, and so also generating pastoral and liturgical problems. But the renewed focus on the Eucharist and sacramentality led us to formulate the *Service of the Word 2015* so that it can be understood as a liturgy which reflects the shape of the Eucharist. It therefore provides a form of Word-based worship for use by Eucharistic communities when the Eucharistic liturgy itself cannot be celebrated. The new rites have been formulated to work in this context too.

As the Liturgy Committee met to take into account the needs of today's Scottish Episcopalians as well as those to come, we asked ourselves how we should create or even discern a liturgy that is authentic and true to our tradition; a liturgy, which reflects the breadth of our heritage over the centuries, and is amenable to the liturgical needs of a very considerable diversity of congregations across Scotland,

sensitive to the growing presence of the Evangelical tradition – and the deepening appreciation for liturgical worship within that tradition – while also being true to the Catholic and sacramental tradition which has shaped many if not most of our congregations over the last century. And bearing in mind that we have a liturgical tradition that has a stronger affinity with the Orthodox churches of the East than does that of our near neighbours in England, Ireland, and Wales. For as the rump Episcopal Church discerned its theological and liturgical identity during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, it drew inspiration through contacts with Eastern Orthodoxy. The theological anthropology of the Greek tradition provided an alternative to the Augustinian notions dominant in the West, and emphasised in different ways in both the Reformed and the Roman Catholic traditions.

How might we express a theology that has developed out of the historical liturgical tradition of our Scottish Church, and how should we shape a liturgy that expresses all that we understand as a Church about the Paschal mystery of Easter? Would it be possible to shape both a liturgy and a theology that is more than a series of borrowed rites and theologies that are by the mere fact of their appropriation made Episcopalian?

Our task, then, has been as much about understanding the tradition and what it says to us, as about developing a theological view or vision through the liturgy. The task was one of discerning the tradition and adopting (and adapting) it in such a way that we allow it to speak to us, and happen both to us and for us.

*Liturgy, worship, and our use of language*

Our hope has been that we might be able to learn new ways – or re-learn forgotten ways – of thinking about language, action, and the way we understand ourselves and behave as enfleshed persons in liturgical worship. How do we use language about God while remaining faithful to scripture? How do we express the personhood of God without restricting the persons of the Holy Trinity? How do we avoid the alienation of any – and enable the inclusion of all – of the children of God through the language or expectations of liturgical worship?

At all times we should be focusing on how we recognise Christ in the liturgy. We need to ask what the liturgy is letting us see. To what extent is it revealing or showing or manifesting the oneness of the body of Christ? The believer does not just believe, but ‘sees’ – that is, perceives spiritually, intellectually, and physically. This leads to the final point.

*The liturgically engaged human body*

We have designed the liturgies to allow for a liturgically engaged human body. This concern has two aspects. First, how to avoid the largely unconscious tendency to dualism – as if we were only soul. For the season from Lent to Pentecost is the liturgical time above all when we celebrate the sacraments; perhaps we could even say that this period is the liturgical source of the sacraments; and sacraments are unashamedly bodily.

By virtue of our baptism we are full, active and conscious children of God. The fundamental principle of *Sacrosanctum concilium* – catching up (one might say) with the reformers of the sixteenth century – was ‘full, active (or actual) and conscious participation in the liturgy’.

A shared understanding is therefore important so that we act in the same way and can participate fully and consciously. Our external actions express our internal understanding. And these external actions have a further import – either for those whose intellectual capacities are not mature or highly developed – or for those whose sensory perception is impaired. How do we ensure that the human body as well as the human mind is fully engaged in liturgical worship? We must remember that there is no ‘inner person’. Our bodies participate in the image of God, whether we have physical disabilities or are temporarily able-bodied. A person has meaning in relation to the other and in relation to the world. Worship always takes place within special coordinates and that space and the action performed within it is not an expression of an ‘inner reality’. The external is just as real as the internal. The link between existence and place is one of essence. And we must always be mindful that liturgy takes place in this context. The liturgically engaged human body – of various abilities – is particularly allowed for in the imposition of ashes, the Palm Sunday procession, the washing of the feet in the Maundy, the physical attitudes of prayer during the Solemn Intercession of Good Friday and the veneration of Christ Crucified, and finally the varied postures, movements, and sacramental actions of the Easter Vigil.

### *Liturgy and inclusion*

Seldom is the resurrected Christ recognised as [the one] whose hands, feet, and side bear the marks of profound

physical impairment. The resurrected Christ of Christian tradition is a disabled God.<sup>2</sup>

In the light of this insight by Nancy L. Eiseland, we must recognise that the liturgies of Lent, Holy Week and Easter, above all, must be the source for ‘the all-renewing grace of God [which] penetrates and restores human personality and dignity’.<sup>3</sup> As participants in these liturgies, therefore, and in the Eucharist especially, we must all be actively participating in this ongoing restoration of the world’s situation and the human condition.

If our churches are to be places of hospitality and welcome, adults with disabilities and parents of children with special needs have to be able to communicate what is required for their participation, and to learn how they can work together with the congregation towards full inclusion. We must know each other’s needs – whether they be related to hearing or visual impairment, autism or mobility – and that when we ask we will be heard. Many of us are never asked about the best way to include us or our children in religious activities.

Inviting people with disabilities to take visible roles in worship – and as worship planners too – is an important sign of love and value in the community.

Some basic points might include the use of ‘signposting’ in services – e.g. by the rubric in the service sheet or spoken explanations – as well as pacing the service to allow for worshippers to process what is happening and prepare for what will happen next.

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<sup>2</sup> Nancy L. Eiseland, ‘Encountering the Disabled God’, *Bible in Transition* (Bible Society, 2004).

<sup>3</sup> WCC, ‘The Gift of Being: Called to be a Church of All and for All’ (Trondheim, 2016), 17.

An inclusive Christian congregation is not just about welcoming people with disabilities, but truly including those of us with disabilities and respecting what we have to contribute to the worshipping community.

## Ash Wednesday and the character of Lent

The synoptic gospels relate that, after his baptism and before he began his public ministry, Jesus was driven by the Spirit into the wilderness, where he fasted for forty days and was tempted by Satan (Matt 4. 1–11; Mark 1. 12–13; Luke 4. 1–13). Notwithstanding the evidence that Lent (the English word, first used in the thirteenth century, means ‘Spring’) almost certainly originated among early Christians, not as a period of preparation for commemoration of the Passion, but rather, following the Gospel narratives, as the sequel to the commemoration of the baptism of Jesus at the feast of Epiphany, Lent is now attached to the Passion in the Church calendar, and associated with the end rather than the beginning of Jesus’ public ministry. We have therefore considered whether there has been something lost in this change which ought to be recovered, as we have considered appropriate observances for this season. For example, Lent should be regarded as a time of preparation not simply for Holy Week and Easter but also for recalling our Baptism and its significance for the whole of Christian life and ministry.

We should remember that the development of various liturgical observances associated with Lent evolved at different times and in different places in the history of the Church, and that the traditions we have inherited reflect the development of some usages while others have fallen into abeyance. In the western Church, the preferences of

successive bishops of Rome and other prominent sees have tended to overshadow local customs. The nature of such traditions means that very little is fixed and absolute.

In contemporary Anglican practice, Baptism is no longer administered at particular times in the Church calendar, but we have recognised in recent years, as was the case among early Christians, that Epiphany, Easter, and Pentecost testify in distinctive ways to the meaning of the Sacrament. In the Scottish Episcopal Church, catechesis and instruction very often *follows* Baptism, except in cases of converts who have come to faith as adults, or when parents have chosen to defer their children's Baptism until they are able to make profession for themselves of the faith in which they are being raised. In Nicholas Taylor's monograph, *Paul on Baptism: Theology, Mission and Ministry in Context*,<sup>4</sup> he has argued that apostolic practice was for catechesis both to accompany and also follow the integration of the baptised into the community of the faithful. The later practice of a pre-baptismal catechumenate, reflected for example in the *Apostolic Tradition* (probably dating from the early third century) and in Augustine of Hippo's account of his own conversion and Baptism in his *Confessions*, may or may not have served the Church well during the patristic age, but it does not seem to have contributed much to the development of the faith during the course of European missions to other parts of the world in more recent centuries.

Easter is the time above all for Baptism, and Lent is the most suitable time for the instruction of those seeking Baptism. The observance of Lent by those already baptised, however, can be much more than a time for revising and refreshing the baptismal process. The proposed rites therefore emphasise the gift we have already received and

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<sup>4</sup> London: SCM, 2016; Eugene OR: Wipf & Stock, 2017.

which we are seeking to show in our lives. The experience of those preparing for Baptism at Easter will of course be quite distinct, as those who reflect on their own Baptism accompany them during the final weeks of anticipation of their incorporation into the sacramental community of the Church.

That Lent is a penitential season of forty days, connected with observance of the Passion, has become firmly established in the tradition of the Western Church, having been progressively extended from a period of fasting that could be as little as one or two days. There is certainly scope during this period for some diversity of extra-liturgical devotions, disciplines, and observances in prayer, fasting and study that are not directly relevant to our more strictly liturgical discussion here – other than to recognise that the spiritual lives of Christians are held together by the use in our churches of the material we prepare – but are clearly wider than the liturgical lives of our congregations.

The observance of Ash Wednesday dates from the early medieval period in the West, and is noted for the custom of the imposition of ashes, whereby the sign of the cross is marked on the foreheads of the faithful during the course of the liturgy. Abandoned in many of the Reformation churches, this was officially revived in our own liturgical provision in 1967 and was featured in many of the Anglican liturgical revisions in the latter part of the last century. The symbolism of the imposition of ashes is, it has to be said, somewhat confused, if not undermined, in the lectionary readings for the day from the *Book of Common Prayer* to the *Revised Common Lectionary* of 1994, taken from Joel 2 and Matthew 6. The theme of preparation for God's judgment is overshadowed not so much by Joel's 'Rend your hearts and not your garments' (2. 13), as by the

dominical sayings in the Sermon on the Mount of Matthew 6 which condemn making an exhibition of piety. Two observations are worth making: in Joel the traditional mourning rite of tearing garments has been appropriated as a sign of repentance, of turning to God, and the prophet is concerned that this be internalised, and therefore made real, and not merely expressed visibly; the Gospel reading makes no explicit reference to repentance at all, but to public and ostentatious displays of acts of righteousness, and of fasting. We need to be aware that fasting and deeds of righteousness had acquired a vicarious character in the Judaism of Jesus' day, including the notion of confessing and seeking to atone for the sins of others. Jesus' point is that such devotions should be offered to God, not exhibited as a sign of affected holiness. The idea that the goodness of the righteous, and their suffering, can in some way turn God's judgement and work for the salvation of Israel is deeply rooted in the Hebrew prophetic tradition, most conspicuously in the servant songs of Deutero-Isaiah, and developed further in Jewish martyr theology which early Christians both inherited and appropriated, but also applied almost (but not quite) exclusively to Jesus.

There seems to be a fine distinction to be drawn between the identification with Jesus in his Passion (which can never be absent from the sign of the cross) and in proclamation of the Gospel to the world, on the one hand, and on the other the attribution of saving significance to our devotions and the visible symbolism attached to them. In this we may be helped by considering the origins of the sign and symbolism of the cross.

In his book, *The Cross before Constantine: The Early Life of a Christian Symbol*,<sup>5</sup> Bruce W. Longenecker has

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<sup>5</sup> Minneapolis MN: Fortress, 2015.

demonstrated that the cross was a pre-Christian Jewish symbol of redemption, known as such in the *Psalms of Solomon* and the *Damascus Document*, and originating in the exegesis of Ezekiel 9. In this passage, the prophet records a vision in which a scribe marks the foreheads of those of the people of Jerusalem who would be spared at the impending destruction of the city. The Hebrew word for 'mark' is *tav*, also the name of the last letter in the alphabet; in the calligraphy of the period this letter was formed through two intersecting strokes of the pen. The mark would therefore have been cruciform, and have resembled the first letter of the Greek word *christos*, 'anointed' or 'messiah'. The apostle Paul therefore inherited a fertile imagery, enabling him to transform the instrument of execution into a symbol of redemption.

The rite for the beginning of Lent, whether observed on Ash Wednesday or on another day when the congregation gathers to celebrate the Eucharist, emphasises the Christian's identification as a member of the redeemed people of God, through Baptism and through the Passion of Christ, and which this rite represents and realises in our lives. The liturgy focuses our Lenten observance on this realisation of identification with Christ in our lives, so that our celebration of the Passion can hold together both the recollection of historic events and their continuing significance for our Christian lives today. Repentance and penitential disciplines have an important place within this, but redemption through Christ needs to transcend grief, and the rite emphasises the sense of being a recipient of the benefits of Christ's redemptive work, rather than any sense of becoming a co-redeemer through penitence.

### *A Rite for the Beginning of Lent*

The rite of imposition of ashes traditionally forms part of the Eucharist of Ash Wednesday, and can be traced back at least to the tenth century. In some congregations this may not be possible or practicable, in which case there is no reason why it may not be included in the liturgy of the Sunday before Lent or of the first Sunday of Lent or, indeed, on any of the intervening days. This is in keeping with custom for much of the first millennium of Christian history, when the first Sunday in Lent was known as *Caput Quadragesimae*, the first of the forty days preceding the commemoration of Jesus' Passion. In congregations in which there is no celebration of the Eucharist during this period, this rite may be incorporated into a celebration of A Service of the Word. If used on a Sunday, the Collect and lectionary readings of that Sunday should be used; if on a weekday, those of Ash Wednesday should be used.

When used with the *Scottish Liturgy 1982*, sections 2 to 7 of that liturgy are omitted. The rite is celebrated after the Sermon, replacing sections 13 to 15. The Liturgy resumes with the Peace at section 16. The Address (which is optional) may be used after the Greeting at section 1, or instead of a Sermon at section 12.

If used with *A Service of the Word 2015*, the Address may be used at 2.2 or instead of a Sermon at 7. Sections 2.3 to 4 are omitted. The rite replaces section 9, and 10.1, the main liturgy resuming with 'Lord have mercy' and the Lord's prayer at 10.2. A hymn of penitential character should be used at section 13, and not *Gloria in Excelsis* or *Te Deum*.

A litany has anciently formed a part of the liturgical pattern for Ash Wednesday, and its use on this day was maintained in the Scottish Book of Common Prayer and by

implication in the liturgical pattern for the day when the 1967 rites were produced. The (optional) Litany provided in the new rite is taken from the *Scottish Ordinal 1984* (amended 2004), derives from that in the Prayer Book, and is in continuity with the tradition. It could be used in procession around the church. In this context, the use of the language of the Devil and Satan has been retained, by contrast with our modern baptismal liturgies, where the more abstract ‘evil’ (as in the English Lord’s Prayer) is used (see Appendix).

The prayer over the ashes and the imposition of ashes may be done by a lay-president if the worshipping community does not have the ministry of a priest.

The concluding prayer is adapted from the collect for the First Sunday in Lent (Year B) in a volume published by the International Commission on English in the Liturgy (ICEL) and the ecumenical Joint Liturgical Group of Great Britain (JLG) in 1998. It draws on the imagery of the lections for Lent 1B, where the flood and Jesus’ baptism are associated with his forty days in the wilderness.

### *Unbaptised and Catechumens at Worship*

The Christian commitment to hospitality and to mission imply an expectation that people who are not presently integrated into the life and fellowship of the Church will from time to time attend worship. Welcoming them requires that they be invited to receive Baptism and so to become members of the sacramental Body of Christ. Until they are ready to do so, their position in the worshipping congregation is inevitably and necessarily liminal. They share in the worship of God, and hear Scripture read and the Gospel proclaimed, in the conviction that their prayers are

answered. Nevertheless, it remains for them to be baptised before they share in the Eucharist.

At times when the Church reflects upon Baptism into Christ, and Christians renew their baptismal promises and examine themselves in the light that Baptism, those who are not yet baptised may look forward to their Baptism, but are not able to examine themselves in the light of the sacrament they have not yet received. Baptism wipes out the stain of all past sin, and Christians thereafter grow in faith and are nurtured so as to model their lives on Christ. In the meanwhile, the unbaptised should be drawn to Baptism, and those preparing to be baptised in the near future should be encouraged to reflect, not upon promises they have not yet made, but on how the promises they will make will transform their lives. Clergy who plan to baptise at Easter should bear this in mind when addressing the congregation during Lent, especially on Ash Wednesday and Maundy Thursday.

## Palm Sunday

Palm Sunday marks the beginning of the ‘Great Week’, the highpoint of the Church calendar, in which we celebrate the suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Evidence for its early dramatic celebration in Jerusalem is available in the fourth century work known as *Egeria’s Travels*, written by a Spanish pilgrim for the benefit of the sisters of her spiritual community at home in Spain.<sup>6</sup>

The entry of Jesus into Jerusalem, riding a donkey from the Mount of Olives to the acclaim of the crowds, fulfils messianic prophecies and gives expression to his kingship

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<sup>6</sup> John Wilkinson (transl.), *Egeria’s Travels* (London: SPCK, 1971).

(Matt 21. 8–10). His triumph is not complete until he has been crucified and raised from the dead, but on this day, at the start of the week, Jesus is hailed by the pilgrim crowds, reflecting their expectation of liberation by a king of David's dynasty. The events of Palm Sunday, while confirming the identity of Jesus as the heir of David, are the prelude to a sequence of events in which popular Jewish notions of messiahship become quite fundamentally reinterpreted: Jesus is deserted, crowned with thorns, nailed to the cross, and buried in the tomb of a stranger, before he is raised to glory, his kingship both universal and eschatological. Yet we should also bear in mind that St John's gospel inverts this imagery, so that as his Passion drew near, Jesus spoke of the cross as the hour of his glory (Jn 12. 23): in being lifted up, he would draw all people to himself (Jn 12. 32; cf. 3. 14).

The liturgy of Palm Sunday then has two emphases: the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem, and the Passion as a whole, of which this forms the prelude.

Where possible, the triumphal entry is recalled liturgically with a procession. The congregation can gather in a hall or at an outdoor venue where the Liturgy of the Palms may begin. Where this is not possible, the procession can take place entirely within the church, the Liturgy of the Palms being conducted near the main door.

Crosses made from palm leaves are now carried during the Palm Sunday procession in many churches. But the green branches of real palms, the olive tree, willow, rosemary, or yew, are just as appropriate. These can be distributed as the congregation arrives, the people lifting them above their heads when the presiding celebrant prays over them, or they may be distributed after these prayers.

The Gospel of the Passion should be read at the principal Eucharist in every congregation on this day; and if the Eucharist cannot be celebrated, then it should be read at the Service of the Word. The Gospel of the Passion can be read (or chanted) in the traditional way with three voices and a chorus. There is no introductory or concluding response to Gospel of the Passion.

If there is an additional early celebration of the Eucharist, without a procession, the Gospel of the Liturgy of the Palms may be read at section 11 in *Scottish Liturgy 1982*. Either or both the Collects may be used at section 8. Palms may be distributed as the congregation departs after the Dismissal.

## Maundy Thursday

Maundy Thursday marks the beginning of the time known as the *Triduum Sacrum*, the three-day observance of the death and resurrection of Jesus.

All four Gospels recount a meal Jesus shared with his disciples before his arrest. In Matthew, Mark, and Luke, this is a Passover meal, during which Jesus institutes a new rite, the Eucharist, in which bread and wine become for us his body and blood, and thereby a sign of the death he was about to undergo. In John, this is not a Passover meal, but the death of Jesus the following day coincides with the slaughter of the Passover lambs in the temple. John's narrative is noted for the lengthy discourses of Jesus to his disciples, in which the 'new commandment' to love one another is given, and what is commonly known as the 'high priestly prayer' (John 14–17). These are preceded in the Fourth Gospel by a ritual not recounted in the synoptic Gospels, in which Jesus strips off his outer garments and washes the feet of his disciples. The dialogue with Simon

Peter, when the latter protests against this, is profoundly suggestive. Jesus alludes to the disciples having already bathed, referring not only to the Jewish ritual wash in a *mikveh* in the vicinity of the temple, which pilgrims entering Jerusalem would customarily have undergone, but also to the baptism of John, which in the Gospels is a type (antecedent or model) for Christian baptism. The washing of the disciples' feet is not only an exemplary act of humble service on Jesus' part, which Christian bishops and other priests have emulated in the liturgies of Maundy Thursday and on other occasions, such as baptisms and ordinations, throughout Christian history. It is also suggestive of the token post-baptismal washing, most often affusion or sprinkling, which accompanies the renewal of baptismal promises in many traditions. The density of symbolism, not to speak of the practical difficulties, in this liturgy require that it be planned and conducted with some care, ensuring that, in the words and actions used, due emphasis is given to its place in the institution of the Eucharist, as well as giving appropriate expression to the diverse meanings of the ritual described by John.

The importance of the washing of feet as a part of the Maundy Thursday liturgy should not be underestimated, and every attempt should be made to perform it. For in John's gospel the dominical command is to do this, rather than the breaking of bread and sharing of the cup.

For the washing of feet, the Bishop, when present, should at least begin the washing for some (traditionally twelve people) or all of those present. Otherwise the rite should be led by the Priest in the community who is most senior in authority. When vestments are worn, the chasuble should be removed to perform the washing. If many people in the

congregation are to receive the washing of feet, other assistant (lay) ministers may perform the washing after the presiding priest has alone first administered the rite to several of them. If the rite takes place as part of a service of the word led by a lay minister, the people may wash each other's feet from the beginning, in accordance with the dominical precept (Jn 13:14). A hymn may be sung, or the rite may be administered in silence.

The Gospel narratives all recount that Jesus and his disciples went from the meal to the Garden of Gethsemane, where Jesus was arrested. In the synoptic Gospels, Jesus' arrest is preceded by a lengthy and anguished period of prayer. The rituals which conclude and follow the Eucharist commemorate, but do not re-enact these events. This is an important distinction and must be clearly kept in mind. In the words of one Anglican theologian, Douglas Jones, 'we do not think of assisting worshippers by mental effort to go back to the first Palm Sunday[, Maundy Thursday] and Good Friday. We think of assisting them to make a present liturgical celebration'.

The altar is stripped of its ornaments, recalling Jesus' discarding his outer garment to wash his disciples' feet, which in turn represents Jesus' having relinquished his divine and immortal nature in being born a human, and the violence with which he was stripped of his liberty and dignity, and ultimately of his life, in the hours which were to follow. The elements of the Eucharist are carried to the altar of repose, not merely recalling the walk to Gethsemane, but, more importantly, emphasising the continuity between Maundy Thursday and Good Friday, the sacrificial meal inaugurated at the last supper and the death of Jesus on the cross. The Watch provides an opportunity to pray and reflect

upon the events of the Passion while listening to the reading of the Last Supper discourses from the Fourth Gospel.

The proposed Liturgy is based on the Eucharist according to the *Scottish Liturgy* (1982). In addition to provision for the additional rites described above, there are variations which intentionally and provocatively disturb the familiarity of the authorised liturgy, and give particular emphasis and expression to the significance of this commemoration.

In some churches it has become customary for all priests present to ‘concelebrate’ the Eucharist. There should nevertheless always be a presiding celebrant.

If it is not possible for a congregation to celebrate the Eucharist, *A Service of the Word* (2015) should be used. Subject to the availability of a Deacon or authorised lay minister, Communion from the Reserved Sacrament may follow, before the altar is stripped of moveable ornaments. The Reserved Sacrament may be placed on the altar of repose for the Watch.

## Good Friday

As the second part of the *Triduum* – the great three-day celebration of the institution of the Eucharist, the Passion, and the Resurrection – the Good Friday Liturgy of the Lord’s Passion is a continuation of the Maundy Thursday liturgy and hence begins in the silence with which that rite ended. By tradition, the altar is completely bare until covered by a clean cloth of white linen at the Holy Communion.

Custom has varied greatly over the centuries, not least since the Reformation. In many churches of the Anglican/Episcopal tradition, the pattern would have been Morning Prayer, the Litany and ante-Communion from the

English or Scottish Book of Common Prayer, concluding the day's liturgical observances with Evening Prayer (and Compline).

The Seven Last Words from the Cross<sup>7</sup> have since at least the fifteenth century been central to preaching on this day, and for much of the twentieth century formed the basis of a three-hour devotion, from 12 to 3 p.m., with addresses interspersed with hymns and periods of silence. This custom has proved of enduring value across the Christian denominations, but is difficult to incorporate into a liturgical Office such as that provided here.

The Stations of the Cross are an extra-liturgical devotion, which may be observed in various ways, and at all times of the year. They are an appropriate form of devotion throughout Lent, and on Fridays through the year. The origins of the tradition lie in the route followed by pilgrims through the streets of Jerusalem, with 'stations' subsequently introduced to recall the events of the Passion in places which had come to be associated therewith. While Egeria depicts a highly mobile observance of Holy Week in and around Jerusalem, it was the Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land which from the fourteenth century shaped these essentially private observances into a devotional procession, and which encouraged returning pilgrims to introduce this practice elsewhere in western Christendom. Franciscans in Europe began building series of outdoor shrines on the routes to churches from the fifteenth century, and from the

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<sup>7</sup>Luke 23:34: Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do; Luke 23:43: Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise; John 19:26–27: Woman, behold your son. Son, behold your mother; Matthew 27:46 & Mark 15:34 My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?; John 19:28: I thirst; John 19:30: It is finished; Luke 23:46: Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.

seventeenth these were installed inside churches. The number of Stations has varied greatly, from seven to thirty, before being fixed at fourteen during the eighteenth century. More recently, a sequence has been introduced in which every station recalls an incident in one of the Gospel Passion Narratives, and the extra-biblical traditions are omitted. This has made use of the Stations in ecumenical devotions much more widely accepted. Some churches have artistic depictions of the Stations installed, usually at intervals along the inside walls of their buildings, to facilitate either mobile private devotion or a corporate processional observance. It is also possible to reflect on the sequence of readings from Scripture, and to use the associated prayers, while stationary, and with or without the assistance of pictures. Whatever form it may take, if the Stations are used in public worship on Good Friday, this should precede and not replace the Liturgy of the day.

### *The Liturgy of the Lord's Passion*

This rite consists of three discrete parts. The Liturgy of the Word should always be used, with either the Solemn Intercessions provided or other appropriate intercessory prayers which reflect the solemnity and significance of the day. The Veneration of Christ Crucified may be used according to local circumstance. Communion may be received, either from the Reserved Sacrament or at a celebration of the Holy Eucharist, according to the forms provided below.

#### (i) The Liturgy of the Word

Readings from the Psalms, the Epistles, and Gospels where they speak of the Lord's Passion are known to have been read on Good Friday from at least the fourth century in

Jerusalem, ending with the account of the crucifixion in John's gospel.

The Solemn Intercessions are an ancient, distinctive and important feature of the Good Friday liturgy and form the basis and model of the intercession in the Eucharist during the rest of the year. The intercessions spread out, like the arms of the Cross in an all-encompassing embrace. Forms of solemn intercession on Good Friday are preserved in written form from eighth-century Francia. These prayers should be seen as a continuation and reflection of our Lord's own ministry, revealing God's love for all humankind and all creation, as well as our Lord's solidarity with and commitment to all of God's creation. They set forth an expectation of the baptismal life, for individuals and for the entire Church: it is the responsibility of baptized persons to carry on the Lord's ministry of love and solidarity and of prayer for all. The pattern of movement *suggested* emphasises the participation of all the people in the prayer and the physical as well as mental activity involved in prayer and worship more generally.

#### (ii) The Veneration of Christ Crucified

By the fifth century Good Friday was widely kept as the commemoration of the Cross. Earlier still, in Jerusalem on Good Friday, the veneration of the relic of the true Cross is vividly recorded by Egeria, and probably began with Cyril of Jerusalem (c.315–87). The empress Helena, mother of Constantine, had visited Jerusalem after his conversion, to oversee the establishment there of Christian institutions, especially on sites associated with events of salvation-historical significance. In the course of excavation for building work, timber was discovered, which was identified as the cross on which Jesus had been crucified. In the old

liturgical calendars, the feast of the 'Invention of the Holy Cross' (meaning the 'discovery') was observed on 3rd May (the feast was more recently combined with a second feast day, the 'Exaltation of the Holy Cross' on 14th September). The cross is significant as a symbol of salvation, representing the death and resurrection of the one who had died upon it, and had already been revered as such since the earliest days of the Church. It is not the cross itself that is venerated, so much as Jesus and his saving death which the symbol so vividly represents.

(i) The Entrance of the Cross may be seen to symbolise the journey of God's chosen people out of bondage and slavery to the promised land; it also allows for movement and meaningful purpose during the singing of the Reproaches. This is a traditional text based on Old Testament prophetic passages (see Micah 6:3-4) and the Trisagion (*Hagios ho Theos*). The crucified Christ recalls God's mighty acts for the salvation of the human race and reproaches us for our own hardness of heart and failure of discipleship. The words, 'My people', refer to the Church and not to our Lord's own contemporaries. During these verses, a wooden cross may be carried in. The cross may be covered with a veil. It is suggested that during the first section, the cross is brought into the church; at the second section, to the centre of the people; and at the last section, to the front of the nave, or to the altar. This pattern foreshadows the three stations of the paschal candle at the Paschal Vigil.

(ii) The Showing of the Cross is the point at which the wooden cross is shown to the people to be venerated. If a threefold unveiling is performed, it again foreshadows the threefold showing of the Light of Christ at the Paschal Vigil.

(iii) The Veneration allows for devotions to be offered in silence or with singing, which may be accompanied by movement. The people may approach and perform a physical act of veneration, such as a deep bow, kneeling, or kissing the wood of the cross. During the veneration, the traditional Psalm (67) and hymn (*Crux fidelis*), as provided, may be sung, or some other suitable hymn; alternatively, a period of silent devotion would be most appropriate.

### (iii) Holy Communion

There is very early evidence from the second century of the Mass of the Pre-Sanctified from the reserved sacrament, though probably in peoples' homes rather than in Church, for which there is no documentary evidence until the seventh century.

From the seventh century, the custom developed in the West of receiving communion on Good Friday from the Sacrament reserved after the Maundy Thursday Eucharist. In Rome the Eucharist was celebrated on Good Friday in city churches, though not at the papal liturgy. It should be noted that the celebration of the Eucharist on Good Friday has never been forbidden in the Scottish Episcopal Church, and the 1967 rites explicitly provided for such a celebration.

Nevertheless, if the *Triduum Sacrum* is being celebrated in full, a separate celebration of the Eucharist (as opposed to Communion from the reserved sacrament of Maundy Thursday) may best be omitted: the use on Good Friday of elements consecrated at the Maundy Thursday Eucharist emphasises the essential unity of the liturgy, and the intrinsic connection between the rite which Jesus instituted at the last supper and his death on the Cross some hours later.

The Liturgy of the Lord's Passion is *rememorative* in character and not *representational*. There is no attempt simply to reconstruct or re-enact past events, but rather to assist the people of God in making a present liturgical celebration. The sequence of observances from Palm Sunday to Easter assists the worshippers to appreciate the Passion from different perspectives, and to direct their devotions accordingly. The cross and the resurrection are inseparable, and the crucified Lord is worshipped in the light of the resurrection. The Lord does not die again, and is not dead and buried on Good Friday.

## Holy Saturday and the Vigil of Easter

The Good Friday liturgy concludes with commemoration of the burial of Jesus. While the Gospel accounts of this are brief, readers are to recognise this not simply as a practical exercise in the disposal of a corpse, but as the funeral of Jesus. However perfunctory and truncated the rituals may have been in the circumstances, we should nevertheless understand that those performing the culturally ascribed funeral rites were concerned to ensure that Jesus was conveyed to the tomb, through which he would continue his journey to *Sheol*, the abode of the dead. The expressions of grief and ritual acts which accompany the journey to the tomb and the depositing of the corpse therein, in other words the funeral rites, restore so far as is possible the dignity of which Jesus had been deprived by the manner of his death, in the hope that his journey to the afterlife would be expeditious.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> See B. R. McCane, *Roll back the Stone: Death and Burial in the World of Jesus* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 2003).

That this has implications for Holy Saturday should be fairly clear. Theology has been reminded of this very powerfully by Hans Urs von Balthasar in *Mysterium Paschale*,<sup>9</sup> not as a resurgence of mediaeval myths of the harrowing of hell, reflected still in Eastern Orthodoxy, but in very much more measured terms rooted in ancient Christian beliefs reflected in the New Testament and early Fathers. The Apostles' Creed speaks of Jesus' descent to 'the dead', which in older English renderings was expressed, 'He descended into hell', clearly implying a place rather than an abstract concept. Similarly, the apostle Paul speaks of Jesus' having been raised 'from the dead' (Rom 6. 4), the Greek *ek nekron* to be understood as meaning 'from [among] the dead [people]', i.e. those who rest in *Sheol* or *Hades*, the abode of the dead; symbolically Christians are buried with Christ in baptism into this state and place of death, so that they may be raised from there to new life with Christ.<sup>10</sup> In later Christian belief, Jesus came to be understood to have entered Hades to proclaim the Gospel to those who had died (1 Peter 4. 6), giving expression to the hope that those who had not heard the Gospel during their life on earth might nonetheless receive its benefits in the hereafter.<sup>11</sup> A still later development was the depiction of Jesus entering Hades in triumph, breaking down the doors through which the deceased were held prisoner, binding Satan, and leading out the righteous dead, most notably Adam.<sup>12</sup> This found expression in the Scots poetic tradition,

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<sup>9</sup> Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Mysterium Paschale: The Mystery of Easter*, trans. Aidan Nichols (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1990).

<sup>10</sup> See further, Taylor, *Paul on Baptism*, 57–64.

<sup>11</sup> This is reflected also in such early Christian documents as the early second-century *Shepherd of Hermas*. See J. A. Trumbower, *Rescue for the Dead* (Oxford: OUP, 2001).

<sup>12</sup> C. E. Laufer, *Hell's Destruction* (London: Routledge, 2016).

for example in William Dunbar (1460–c.1520), ‘On the Resurrection of Christ’.<sup>13</sup>

One does not need to understand these stories literally to recognise the importance of taking account, liturgically, of the reality of Jesus’ death, and its meaning for human death. Recently the Presbyterian theologian, Alan E. Lewis wrote *Between Cross and Resurrection: A Theology of Holy Saturday*,<sup>14</sup> while dying of cancer; and the Baptist Paul Sheppy has reflected on the significance of these motifs for funerals in *Death Liturgy and Ritual*.<sup>15</sup> The hiatus of Holy Saturday is significant, and should be seen not merely as an opportunity to decorate the church building for Easter.

This leads naturally to the question as to the order in which the first two Parts of the Vigil are observed. In most rites the Liturgy of Light precedes that of the Word, the light of the Paschal Candle illuminating the readings from Scripture. *Common Worship* makes provision for this, but also suggests, as a more ancient pattern, that the Liturgy of the Word precede and prepare for the Vigil of Light. This has significant advantages, not least in that the Liturgy of the Word could be extended to last all night, or begin during daylight on Holy Saturday, with the Liturgy of Light to accompany the dawn of Easter day.

For this reason we have made provision for a rite that can begin anytime on Holy Saturday, which gives due emphasis to the theological significance of that day, and places preparations for Easter in their liturgical context. The readings of the Liturgy of the Word in the Easter Vigil correspond largely to those of Vespers in the Byzantine rite,

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<sup>13</sup> *The Poems of William Dunbar*, ed. H. Bellyse Baildon (Cambridge: CUP, 1907), 203–4.

<sup>14</sup> Cambridge: W. B. Eerdmans, 2001.

<sup>15</sup> 2 vols, Aldershot; Ashgate, 2003–04.

customarily observed at midday on Holy Saturday. A custom initiated by one member of the Liturgy Committee in his own charge has been to hold devotions on the hour through the day on Holy Saturday. The first of these includes a bidding, which sets the day in liturgical context, followed by the first of the readings, psalms, and collects from the Liturgy of the Word. Subsequent devotions include the second and third readings, psalms, and collects, and so forth. The sequence is resumed at the start of the Easter Vigil the following morning. The rite we have provided allows for such a liturgical arrangement.

### *Daily Prayer*

Morning Prayer on Holy Saturday follows the order of The Suffering Christ in Daily Prayer, with the Collect:

O God, creator of heaven and earth: as the crucified body of your dear Son was laid in the tomb, and rested on this holy Sabbath; so may we await with him the coming of the third day, and rise with him to newness of life; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who now lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end. **Amen.**

If the Easter Vigil does not take place until the morning of Easter Day, then Evening Prayer likewise follows the order of The Suffering Christ in Daily Prayer, with the above Collect of the Day.

### *The Vigil of Easter*

The Easter Vigil was revived in Anglicanism in the 1970s and is a truncated form of an all-night endurance feat – the

second or even the third such in three nights according to ancient tradition. Egeria's account of the rites of Jerusalem towards the end of the episcopate of Cyril (c. 380) is again the earliest record, and speaks of rites created to be performed at the places associated with the events they commemorate. That the customary of Jerusalem became a model for some, but not all, liturgical traditions that developed elsewhere is evident. What is appropriate for the Scottish Episcopal Church, however, is a somewhat different question.

Given that it is unlikely that an all-night vigil will become *commonplace* in the Scottish Episcopal Church in the near future, the liturgy had to be amenable to some variability of use. There will be congregations in which the Vigil is kept on the evening of Holy Saturday, and others where early on Easter morning is the appointed time. And there will be congregations in which the Vigil may be broken into separate rites to be performed on different occasions, and possibly in different places in linked charges. The Easter Vigil is divided into four parts:

1. The Liturgy of the Light, during which the Easter fire and the Paschal Candle are lit, from which the congregation light tapers. For practical reasons the fire is normally lit out of doors. A procession into the church building follows, the Paschal Candle is housed on a stand, and the *Ex(s)ultet* is sung. We shall return to several aspects of this in due course.
2. The Liturgy of the Word, during which readings from the Old Testament and Psalms locate the celebration of Easter within salvation history.

3. The Liturgy of Baptism, or Renewal of Baptismal Promises.
4. The Liturgy of the Eucharist.

The Vigil begins either with the Liturgy of the Word or with that of the Light. While the former order would appear to be the more ancient, a sound historical and theological case can be made for the latter: it is in the light of the risen Christ that Christians receive and interpret the Old Testament. *The Liturgy of Light is clearly most meaningful if it takes place at night, either on the evening of Holy Saturday or before dawn on Easter day.*

The Liturgy of the Word, consisting of readings from the Old Testament, Psalms, and Collects, may form the first or the second part of the Vigil. If it follows the Liturgy of Light it takes place either during the night of Holy Saturday or in the first light of Easter morning. Care needs to be taken to ensure that there is adequate light for reading, and that the texts of Scripture and of the rite are sufficiently clear to be read with limited lighting. A side Chapel or other room may be more convenient than the nave of the church building.

If the Liturgy of the Word precedes that of the Light, the reading and reflection on Scripture give expression to the anticipation of God's saving work in the resurrection of Jesus.

The Liturgy of Light should, weather-permitting, take place out of doors. A cemetery or memorial garden is a particularly appropriate venue, giving vivid expression to the Christian belief that those who are united with Jesus in his death will share his risen life. A brazier or other container in which a fire can safely be lit (and left untended) is needed, in which a suitable quantity of combustible

materials should be prepared in advance. Worn and torn Bibles and liturgical texts, as well as other paper and wood may be complemented by the dregs of the previous year's Holy Oils, leftover palm crosses, broken furniture, etc. The Paschal Candle should be of substantial proportions, and prepared with the appropriate symbols. Traditionally, a cross is incised into the candle. Above and below the cross are inscribed the  $\Lambda$  and  $\Omega$  (the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet). In the four quarters are traditionally inscribed the numerals of the year in Arabic characters. Incisions should be prepared at the four points of the cross and at the intersection to receive the incense grains, symbols of the five wounds of Christ. A stand of appropriate height and stability should be prepared for the Paschal Candle, and placed near the pulpit, or, if there is no pulpit, the lectern.

Once the Paschal Candle has been lit from the Easter fire, it is carried by the Deacon into the church, escorted by the congregation bearing candles which are lit during this manoeuvre. The candles are part of the rite, and not an optional extra. The Liturgy of Light concludes with the Easter Proclamation, sometimes known as the *Exultet* or *Exsultet*.

The *Exsultet* is an ancient part of the rite in the West, and its performance requires careful consideration. The traditional version demands a particular competence in chanting. If the clergy in a particular charge do not have the skill to sing the *Exsultet* a lay-person may do so, but it would be better not to sing it than to sing it poorly. There is, however, at least one metrical version available – which has been provided in the rite – enabling the *Exsultet* to take the form of a hymn sung by the whole congregation.

To allow for flexibility, Baptism, and/or Affirmation or Renewal of Baptismal Promises have been provided for use

either at the Vigil or at the Eucharist of the day of Easter. We can reasonably expect adult candidates to appear at the Vigil but this is likely to be more difficult with infants and their parents, for whom the Eucharist at the time families customarily attend on a Sunday morning may be much more suitable.

The Easter Vigil has since the earliest centuries of the Church been recognised as a particularly appropriate occasion for the administration of Baptism, and, at some times and in some places, the only such occasion. Baptism of adult catechumens and their families is not at present the usual experience of Baptism in the Scottish Episcopal Church, which makes the connection between conversion and the death and resurrection of Jesus rather less obvious but no less important. Easter remains an appropriate occasion for Baptism, but for practical reasons the Vigil may not be the opportune time for infant baptism. The rite of Renewal of Baptismal Promises, however valuable in itself, is a very much more recent innovation, and one which may appropriately be conducted at different times in the year, not least on the Sunday after Epiphany or at Pentecost.

The Easter Vigil appropriately concludes with a celebration of the Eucharist. If this is not possible, the Liturgy of Light is followed by the Collect, New Testament lesson, and Gospel of the Vigil, a Sermon or other reflection on the Word, and the Intercessions. The Bishop will make arrangements for the congregation to receive Easter Communion.

# Appendix

## Naming the Supernatural in the Liturgy

Christian Scripture and liturgy presuppose the existence and operation of supernatural powers in the universe. The god identified in Christian doctrine as the creator and sovereign of the universe may be conceptualised very differently in various cultures and philosophical systems, and the liturgies of the Church must be framed as to respect the heritage of faith while connecting with the experience of Christian people in different contexts.

God is described and addressed in Christian worship variously as Lord, Almighty, Eternal, Gracious, etc. God is also conceptualised as Trinity (although some find the use of the masculine terminology of Father and Son challenging, and prefer the gender-neutral expressions Creator and Christ, for example). That the language of worship includes references to God and not an abstract creative force, however, is generally accepted.

It is in the depiction of evil that most controversy remains. In Scripture and Christian tradition, evil is personified, and this remains the mode of expression for some but not all Christians. The origins of notions of personified evil in ancient near eastern mythology are obscure and probably irrelevant, not least in that the moral bipolarity of later cosmologies is not reflected in such texts as are extant. Satan enters the biblical tradition in Job, not as the embodiment of cosmic evil but as the angelic being charged with testing the moral fibre of human beings, and at times subjecting them to tests of their character. The Devil, as the supreme evil being in the cosmos, competing with God for sovereignty, derives from Persian influences on

Jewish apocalypticism, in which cosmic dualism superseded polytheism, and spiritual beings of varying power, role, and moral character replaced the gods of the ancient pantheon.

Christian liturgy traditionally refers to Satan or the Devil as the personification of cosmic evil. In some schools of thought on the supernatural, a plethora of evil spirits continues to be envisaged as engaged in a struggle against God and all that is good for supremacy in the world. Demons are perceived to inhabit or possess particular people and places, causing evil and misfortune of various kinds, to which exorcism was the antidote. Jesus in the synoptic gospels is portrayed as a powerful exorcist. Medical science has offered alternative interpretations for mental illness and its behavioural consequences, but there remain even in the modern western world Christian practitioners who believe that spiritual possession, and deliverance, have a valid part in the healing ministry of the Church. The abstraction of moral evil would not be considered helpful in these contexts, not least in that it implies a degree of individual human freedom of choice which may not be the experience of many people in western societies as well as in more traditional cultures.

Abstract references to evil in the liturgy are not going to be found helpful in all contexts, in public worship as well as in the administration of pastoral rites. Figurative interpretations of any personification of evil are available to those whose cosmology does not accommodate supernatural beings of any kind, or who believe that all evil in the world is the consequence of morally neutral human error. The power of moral evil as a force in the world needs to be acknowledged, however, whether or not the Devil or Satan actually exists. That evil is experienced as a threatening spiritual power by many Christians is part of the pastoral

reality in which the Church serves. If the Church is to offer an effective ministry to people afflicted with such conditions, then the language of the liturgy must give expression to the power of God, the saving work of Christ, and the assurance that spiritual evil of any kind can and will be overcome in the world, and in the lives of troubled people.

## Further reading

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