

UNIT 1B: LITURGICAL THEOLOGY

20a: Historical Developments in the Liturgical Rites, East and West

In this lecture I shall confine my survey of the historical liturgical developments in the East and the West to the Chalcedonian churches mainly in the first millennium. Some consideration will be given to the Coptic and Armenian liturgical traditions since these retain much of the pre-Chalcedonian material that lies within our purview here. Much profit can be derived from a closer study of His Eminence Metropolitan John Yazigi's work: *Introduction to The Liturgical Families and Rites*¹ which covers the whole ground descriptively and has an excellent bibliography for a liturgical analysis of the rites themselves. I acknowledge my indebtedness to this work here.

The Eucharist

The liturgical works of **St. Hippolytus**, a Greek speaking, sometime anti-Pope, from the East and hieromartyr who reposed in the Lord in the year 236 are precious historical witnesses to the manner of the offering of the Eucharist as Orthodox in both East and West from the earliest times. Compiled in "The Apostolic Tradition" some 80 years later, Chapter 9 is of note as it shows that in the earliest period the actual content of the Eucharistic anaphora was a good deal more fluid than in later periods and indeed varied from bishop to bishop. These are his rubrics concerning this diversity of usage:-

Let the bishop give thanks in the manner we indicated earlier. It is not necessary, however, that he repeats the same words we provided, as though he had to try to say them from memory in his thanksgiving to God. Let each one pray according to his ability. If he is capable of praying at length and offering a solemn prayer, then all is well and good. But if he prays differently and pronounces a shorter and simpler prayer, he is not to be prevented, provided his prayer be sound and Orthodox.

By the **4th Century**, however, doubtless as a result of both trial and error, of unity and disunity, we see a growing adherence to particular rites in particular places and regions albeit that there is strong evidence for an enduring influence and even translocation between places. In West and East we note an eventual predominance of certain rites which in the West supplant others and in the East achieve a less exclusive but still nonetheless dominant status. This process of standardisation is largely complete by the **12th century**.

The Christian East

In the East, reflecting perhaps the two exegetical schools, there were and are two liturgical families: **Alexandrian and Antiochian**. Although both traditions within Chalcedonian

¹ John Yazigi, *Introduction to the Liturgical Families and Rites* (Balamand: St. John of Damascus Institute of Theology, 2003).

Orthodoxy use the same rites today it was not always thus. The Copts retain the anterior local rite, that of St. Mark. Therefore, it was not just Rome, influenced by Frankish Carolingian reforms that made the Roman rite uniform in the west. A similar standardisation happened in the East, spreading outward from Byzantium, albeit originating in West Syria.

The original Alexandrian liturgical family differed structurally from the Antiochian in two important respects. The Alexandrian diptychs were offered before the sanctification of the gifts, whereas in the Antiochian tradition such intercessions happened after the consecration. In the Alexandria there existed an extra preliminary epiklesis before the Words of Institution which the Antiochian tradition lacked. It should be conceded readily, therefore, that both Alexandrian and Antiochian liturgical families shared the same basic Eucharistic structure and these indeed may be traced back to a common Jewish antecedent in prayers of blessing. The more interesting differences perhaps lie within the liturgical families and between them, as concerning the content of the prayers themselves.

The Alexandrian rites of ancient usage comprise three anaphoras—that of St. Mark, St. Basil the Great and St. Gregory the Theologian. The rite of St. Basil is shorter than that originating in Antioch and has some other minor differences. It may represent a common Basilian patrimony or it may have been received directly from the Byzantine version, widely regarded to be the original. The most ancient anaphora is that of St. Mark and may be traced back to the 4th Century. This was at some point influenced by the Antiochian tradition in the reduction of the number of readings in the Liturgy of the Catechumens and the breaking of the Lamb after and not before the Lord’s Prayer (amongst other examples). The anaphora of St. Gregory the Theologian is unusual in being addressed in the first place to the Son and not to the Father as is the case with the other rites.

The Antiochian family of liturgical forms is immense owing to its geographical and cultural dispersion.

<p>1. The West Syrian Liturgical Rite</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) The Antiochian Liturgical Riteb) The Jerusalem Liturgical Ritec) The Byzantine Liturgical Rited) The Maronite Liturgical Ritee) The Armenian Liturgical Ritef) The Georgian Liturgical Rite	<p>2. The East Syrian Liturgical Rite</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) The Nestorian Liturgical Riteb) The Chaldean Liturgical Ritec) The Malabar Liturgical Rite
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It lies beyond the scope of this lecture to examine each of these rites in turn in detail but the following highly selective comments illuminate the landscape of these Syrian type liturgies.

As to the West Syrian branch, the **Jerusalem Liturgical Rite**, typically that of St. James, is still occasionally served in the Chalcedonian Orthodox churches. It was probably and originally the most highly esteemed of all the early rites. The indigenous sources—the Mystagogical Catecheses of St. Cyril of Jerusalem, the Typicon of the Church of the Resurrection and the famous accounts of the pilgrim nun Egeria - testify to a rite which continued to influence and be influenced by the Antiochian liturgical tradition.

The anaphora of **St. Basil the Great** was perhaps the normative rite of the Church in Constantinople although it is widely thought that **St. John Chrysostom** brought what may have been an edited version of the same (attributed but not conclusively shown to be his own work) to that city upon becoming its Archbishop. It is these two anaphoras that have endured of course in the use of the Chalcedonian Churches to this day.

The **Armenian liturgical rite** drew upon the Antiochian Liturgical tradition in the earliest missionary period but later incorporated Monophysite and Latin elements. It also deserves to be listed within the West Syrian family in its primitive form.

The **East Syrian Liturgical rites** are now only known to us in their Nestorian forms but a key original component was the Prayer of **Addai and Mari**, probably a third century composition from Edessa. From an Orthodox point of view, its principle defect is the lack of the Words of Institution, but this may attest to an early mainstream East Syrian type.

The Christian West

During the period when the Western and Eastern patriarchates had not yet divided **the West** experienced a parallel evolution towards a uniform, Roman rite although the Mozarabic Liturgical rite persisted in some parts of Spain until the 15th century. The Roman rite was itself influenced by this and other extant rites in France (the Gallican rite) and Italy (the Ambrosian rite in Milan). Elsewhere and particularly in Britain, the Celtic rites drew on these entire Western and Eastern sources through the contribution of itinerant missionaries. The only other rite of note under Rome's oversight was the now lost Carthaginian rite used in North Africa outside of Alexandria's jurisdiction.

The earliest forms of the **Roman rite** is represented in various usages attested to in Justin Martyr, Hippolytus and the Euchologia of Popes Leo the Great, Gelasius the First and Gregory the Great. In this early period such rites ran in parallel to the other western rites until the 9th century when the Franks promoted the uniform use of the Roman rite. By this time the Roman rite had been revised within a new Gelasian Sacramentary incorporating the original Roman forms and elements from the Gallican rite. Local rites persisted in

Europe for some time and the Roman rite itself varied from place to place. Strict uniformity in the west did not appear until the 16th century Council of Trent (1545-1563).

Finally, we should note some key aspects and questions concerning the non-Roman local rites in the West.

The **Ambrosian rite**, as its name suggests, was instituted by St. Ambrose, (339-397) and was originally a Milanese rite serving northern Italy. Later, it was used in some centres in France and Spain. Its affinities are with the early Roman rites particularly in the anaphora, although there are Gallican resonances and an alleged dependency on eastern liturgical forms. After the Carolingian reforms its use persisted for a time in Milan.

The **Gallican rite** was pluriform and in use in Gaul from the 5th to 9th centuries. These complex rites owe a lot to the Christian East and may have been influenced in their original forms by the legacy of St. Irenaeus of Lyon (177-200), a Greek from Smyrna. Eastern liturgical influences include the chanting of the Trisagion, the Great Entrance with the Holy Gifts, the Kiss of Peace before the Anaphora, the inclusion of an Epiklesis (unusual in the west) and the proclamation of:- “The holy things are for the holy” before Communion. The rite persisted for some time in Lyons after the Carolingian reforms.

The **Mozarabic rite** and its use in Spain is closely associated with St. Isidore of Seville (+636) and the city of Toledo, the centre of the rite. The rite is truly eclectic in its influences from both East and West. It was not replaced by the Roman rite until the 11th century and persisted in Toledo even to the beginning of the 15th century.

The rites used in Britain in the first millennium, the so-called **Celtic usages**, are only known now from fragmentary remains in the Bobbio Missal, the Antiphony of Bangor, the Stowe Missal and the Lectionary of Luxeuil. The revised Roman rite replaced these in England in the 9th century, in Scotland in the 11th century and in Ireland in the 12th century. In England as elsewhere the old but revised Orthodox Roman rite existed in an interesting variant in the south of England called the **Sarum rite** which may have been influenced by the rite used in Rouen in France. Variants of the Sarum rite existed in cathedral usage in Lincoln and Westminster with more substantial revisions existing in Hereford, Bangor, York and Aberdeen.

In this broad sketch of liturgical developments of Eucharistic forms in the East and the West **three periods** may be discerned:

- (1) A time of significant diversity in the first three centuries where rites developed in particular places and associated with local bishops, most of them saints.
- (2) A second period of consolidation and the emergence of rites, perhaps fewer in number, that continued to influence each other across the Christian Church.

(3) A third period of standardisation that from the 9th to the 12th century reduced the scope of the former diversity in favour of rites that predominated through both hallowed usage and political conformity in both the East and the West.

The reader is left to judge whether such developments towards uniformity of rite were either providential and / or in some ways perhaps regrettable!

The Hours (Horologion / Office)

The origin of Christian Hours of Prayer, adopted by monastics and in modified form by cathedrals, parishes and individual believers alike undoubtedly lies with the sanctification of the day and night in Judaism. However although Psalm 119 (118):164 indicates seven times of prayer this should probably not be interpreted literally as in Jewish numerology seven was a symbol of completeness; and in this context perhaps the sort of continual prayer referred to by St. Paul.² Judaism by the time of our Lord seemed to have adopted the threefold daily pattern referred to in Psalm 55 (54):17-18:

As for me, I will call upon God, and the Lord shall save me. Evening and morning and at noon I will pray, and cry aloud, and He shall hear my voice.

Apostolic Christianity in the times of persecution added four daily hours of prayer at times following the Roman division of the day into three hourly segments. This was adapted by early Christian monasticism into a full 24 hour cycle of prayer every three hours. In most places the Christian day began, (as it had in Judaism), at sundown with the Lighting of the Lamps, a ritual incorporated into Vespers. One of the earliest witnesses to such daily prayer and the other liturgical services comes from the travelogue of the nun Egeria who made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land from 381 to 384.³

As the Church expanded to the furthest reaches of the Roman Empire and beyond, a vast diversity of local usage developed but essentially sharing the same common core of psalmody, prayer and hymns, (with or without scriptural readings). Elements such as the Lighting of the Lamps would atrophy and even in places disappear, (this example especially in the West), while other elements would develop into greater prominence (for example, strophic hymns, prose poems and canons in the East; canticles in the West). This is an exceedingly complex picture, and for a detailed analysis of the different forms of the Hours and their evolution across the Christian East and West one should consult specialist works.⁴

² I Thessalonians 5:17.

³ <http://www.ccel.org/m/mcclure/etheria/etheria.htm>.

⁴ Excellent encyclopaedic accounts can be found in Gregory W. Woolfenden, *Daily Liturgical Prayer, Origins and Theology* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2004) and Robert Taft, *The Liturgy of the Hours in East and West, The Origins of the Divine Office and its Meaning for Today* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2nd ed., 1993).

Fr. Gregory Woolfenden in a helpful summary chapter identifies certain enduring common elements of these liturgical cores that inform both Christian prayer and theology.⁵ These, in relation to Evening and Morning Prayer within the Hours are as follows, albeit very greatly simplified:-

The Evening Office

- Introductory Material, often concluding the day
- Current psalmody (when present, always in the first part)
- The “Core” of the Evening Office – Lights and Incense
- (Readings not usually present)
- Intercession, Prayer in preparation for the night, other prayers
- Originally processional appendices (Not always present)

The Morning Office

Pre-dawn Vigil

- Introductory material
- Current psalmody
- (Readings – not everywhere)

Dawn to sunrise

- Psalm 50 [51] (not everywhere)
- Canticles and / or Morning Psalms

Morning Praise

- Psalms 149-150
- Morning Hymn / Doxology / Canticle
- Intercession and Prayer
- Concluding material (including appendices)

A contrast is immediately apparent in the relative simplicity of Vespers and the more developed complexity of Matins. Fr. Gregory comments:⁶

Vespers may have developed around a central core, often approached quite slowly, and then rather more quickly drew to a devotional and ceremonial close. Matins, on the other hand, appears to move from darkness into increasing light, and finally reaches its ritual climax in the sunrise praise of and prayer to the risen Christ.

⁵ Woolfenden Ch. 14, p. 277f.

⁶ Woolfenden, Ch. 14, pp. 285-286.

Whereas, in parish use Vespers can be practically celebrated in conformity with the diurnal cycle, this is not possible with Matins. In the West and in the Greek tradition of the East, Matins is celebrated well into the morning past sunrise. In the Slav tradition parishes often combine Vespers and Matins into an evening Vigil, but even so Matins is rarely if ever celebrated at the correct time outside major feasts. Only perhaps in monasteries can the power of prayer in the context of the full symbolism of the diurnal cycle be fully experienced and appreciated. In the West after the Reformation, in many if not all Protestant traditions, the Hours in their classic form became dismembered and reduced to two services in the morning and the evening, retaining some vestiges of the past but with much greater prominence given to readings and a sermon. Today Protestant worship is more or less non-liturgical and, sadly, only traditionally orientated Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches continue to draw significant numbers of the faithful to the celebration of the Hours. This has had a marked effect also on the decline of saying the Hours of Prayer at home, although this trend has perhaps been less noticeable in the Orthodox churches than in the post-Schism churches of the West.

Conclusion – a Renewal in the Hours of Prayer

In the opinion of this author there is a great need for the decline in attendance at the Hours of Prayer to be arrested by good practice and effective teaching in the parishes. Local churches that do not pray regularly together outside the Eucharist are hobbling along rather than walking or running toward the Kingdom. The demands made on peoples' time and attention by modern, secular, technocratic societies is a pressure that must be resisted by a renewed martyric spirit among the People of God. God first, always.

As a practical worked example of the principles and process of composition laid out in the 9th Homiletics talk (Lecture 19), the following commentary is offered by Archpriest Gregory Hallam, the author of a sermon preached to the Orthodox parish of St. Aidan, Manchester on the First Sunday of Great Lent 2015. The sermon, entitled “The Journey and the Voice,” should be read first, before studying this commentary.⁷ The textual part of the commentary follows a paragraph by paragraph annotated index in the sermon itself. This section follows an introductory section in which the rationale of the sermon is explained. Since the sermon’s author is also this lecture’s author, I shall now adopt an autobiographical style.

A Reflection on the Sermon’s Composition and Process

The theme of the day (being the First Sunday of Great Lent) was initially uppermost in my mind. The Triumph of Orthodoxy and the restoration of the Holy Icons has had from 843 AD a prominent place both in liturgical celebrations and in the agendas of preachers. However, this theme pertains liturgically only to the conclusion of the Liturgy in the Office and Procession of the Triumph of Orthodoxy. Interestingly, the readings and hymns have not substantially changed from their pre-843 appointments and reflect the antecedent theme of the first Sunday of the Great Fast: Christ as the fulfilment of the Law and Prophets. After prayer I decided that I would tackle this theme directly from the readings rather than this year preach again on Seventh Ecumenical Council and its aftermath. I had confidence in doing this perhaps because we do not at St. Aidan’s follow the trend in some places of leaving out the anathemas in the concluding Office. Indeed, it is my strong belief that the anathemas should be extended to include some contemporary heresies! The first paragraph had to cover this change in approach; and so it is to the textual commentary that I now turn. (Please consult the annotated sermon). First, I needed an objective and main theme.

Objective / Main Theme Guiding the Sermon’s Composition

Christ is the fulfilment of the Law and the Prophets. Like St Philip and St. Nathanael, some people are seekers and explorers needing to “Come and See!” Others are ready to live the Christian life and are ready now to listen to the voice of Christ urging them to “Follow me!” I was seeking to equip the community to both explore and to follow. Therefore, the title I chose for this sermon was: “The Journey and the Voice.”

Paragraph 1

This section directs the community’s attention both to the theme of the day and my intended change in direction. It will be a surprise to many that the pre-843 lections, hymns

⁷ <http://www.antiochian-orthodox.co.uk/lectures/journey-voice.pdf>

and intentions for this Sunday have not in fact been changed; although arguably they have been neglected in places.

Paragraph 2

This sections provides the context and rationale for this Sunday being a celebration of Christ as the fulfilment of the Law and the Prophets—namely, the final stages of preparation for the catechumens before their baptism at Pascha. There are other surviving vestiges of this context in the public worship of the Church, notably the Lectio from Genesis and Proverbs in the Liturgies of the Pre-Sanctified Gifts throughout Great Lent, but I decided not to refer to this as it would overly distract from my main theme. (In every sermon it is essential to remain focused on the main theme.) This paragraph introduces the idea of Christ (Hebrew: Messiah) as the Way for the Journey and also the Promise from times past (the Hebrews reference from the Epistle).

Paragraph 3

At St. Aidan's we try and include the children with relevant interactive material at some point in the sermon. Here the preceding theme of "waiting for something (Someone) good" seemed appropriate to their life situation and experience.⁸ We never script this section of the sermon, because it has by the nature of its delivery to be more extempore. Children are never that predictable!

Paragraph 4

In this part I wanted to show the difference between St. Philip and St. Nathanael in their encounter with Christ. Starting with St. Philip, I explained how Christ sought him out as already ready to follow, whereas St. Nathanael still had certain questions which made the "Come and See!" approach more suitable. The two quotations from the Fathers (St. John Chrysostom and St. Theophylact) bring this out in relation to St. Philip. St. John Chrysostom majors on St. Philip's readiness to respond to Christ's voice and follow. St. Theophylact, who often contributes a fresh perspective on the great Chrysostom's interpretation, adds that St. Philip would by this point have been thoroughly conversant with the Messianic promise in the Law and the Prophets.

Paragraph 5

Although St Philip still had misunderstandings concerning Christ (referring to Him as "Son of Joseph"), he was ready to follow. In this paragraph I explain that St Nathanael had much more to learn, so St Philip invited him to "Come and See!"—that is, to spend some time with Christ in order to be taught. I decided to use a quotation from the Fathers, St John Chrysostom again, in order to make this point clear about St Nathanael. The next section

⁸ Often we find adults commenting on how much spiritual benefit they have also derived from the children's section!

within this paragraph is rather crucial, because it is essential to explain and emphasise to the community how these two alternate invitations, namely “Come and See!” and “Follow Me”, apply to these two men in the light of their particular circumstances and understandings concerning Jesus as the Messiah.⁹

Paragraph 6

It is time for the sermon to offer the community and the persons within it divinely guided insights from within the Gospel on how to apply its teaching to Christian faith and living. Therefore, I decided to summarise this teaching and explain how the discernment between “Come and See!” and “Follow Me” is an insight that we need to apply in our own lives and also in our dealings with others as we witness Christ to them. As I make explicit in this section, getting this discernment and distinction wrong can be disastrous. I use two examples in order to make this point: the first, a prevaricating catechumen; and the second, the impetuosity of St Peter before his denial of Christ.

Paragraph 7

In this final paragraph, I develop this application of the Gospel teaching further by giving some practical advice on how we might personally both “Come and See!” and follow Christ. Whichever applies at any one time, it is still the same voice of Christ and still the same journey toward the Kingdom of God.

Epilogue and Conclusion

I am not suggesting that this sermon is of an especially high standard, but I do believe it observes working principles which reflect good practice. Every preacher and teacher is different with varying charisms and natural abilities. Some of these are strengthened by prayer (the charisms), others are improved by training (natural abilities). Even so, the sermon process will work out differently for each preacher. My intention here is modest: that something of value may be learned by those who read and hear. What is unhelpful should be discarded!

Appendix – Liturgical Composition and Glossaries

An intermediate level manual of liturgical composition according to the Typicon and derived from a number of sources can be found here.¹⁰

⁹ It should be noted that the Gospel reading (John 1:43-51) is only concerned to present Jesus as the Messiah. Bringing other Christological titles into the sermon at this point would be extraneous to the intention of the text as a record of the events concerned and their implications. The so called prologue of John’s Gospel (1:1-18), where St John speaks as a theologian in his own right, is the appropriate place to consider Christ as the Logos, the second person of the Holy Trinity, but not here! In a sermon less confined to the text of the Gospel in hand, this self-restraint on behalf of the preacher would not be necessary. This sermon has a more expositional character in relation to the text.

¹⁰ <http://www.antiochian-orthodox.co.uk/lectures/liturgical-composition.pdf> .