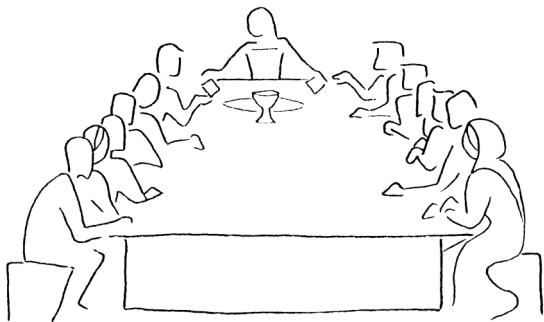


again. "Ite missa est" - "Go, the Mass is ended". As the bread must be broken in order to be shared among and to feed those who have come, so the Body of Christ, the Church, must be broken in order to bring comfort and love to the world.

Our life as Christians is centred on the Holy Communion. Here we receive that peace and joy that comes from our unity with Christ and our fellowship with each other. It is joy and peace that the world needs.

Here we receive a sense of fellowship and belonging, that helps us go forward with courage. Other people should see that fellowship outside the Church as well as inside, and want to share it. Here we experience God's care and concern for us and for our problems, that should help us go out and bring love and care to the suffering, the sick, the sad, the lonely, the bereaved and all in need.

Unless there is this sort of response from us, then God's gift is wasted. "With one mind they kept up their daily attendance at the Temple, and, breaking bread in private houses, shared their meals with unaffected joy, as they praised God and enjoyed the favour of the whole people. (Acts 2 :46).



I believe, Lord, and confess,
that you are the Christ,
the Son of the living God
who came into the world to save sinners,
of whom I am the chief.
I believe also that this is indeed
your most pure Body,
and this is indeed your precious Blood.
Wherefore I pray:
Have mercy on me and pardon my offences.

Receive me now, O Son of God,
as a partaker of your mystical supper;
for I will not betray
your Mystery to your enemies,
nor give you a kiss like Judas,
but like the thief I will confess you:
Remember me, Lord, in your Kingdom.

*This leaflet was largely the work of
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Holy Trinity Church



What we do in Church and Why!



Holy Communion

The Church Has Changed

From the small group of men and women who first chose to follow the way of Christ, to the vast, complex and diverse structure we have today, each generation has seen changes in the way the Church is organized, in the way it worships, in the understanding it has of itself and of its mission to the world.

Yet one thing has remained constant. Throughout the centuries the Church has remained faithful to Jesus' command to "do this in remembrance of me". The Holy Communion has remained for all generations the one, fully satisfying and fulfilling, central act of worship.

It is a service so abundant in riches that it speaks to Christian men and women of all ages, types, intellects; it may be in a vast gothic cathedral full of people, or in a small village church in the depths of Africa. For all Christians it speaks of Jesus and draws them closer to him.

How, then, can one summarise that complexity and richness? Probably only by looking at the names that have been given to it.

The Liturgy

"Do this in remembrance of me" , said Jesus to his apostles. So they and Christians through the years have obeyed their Lord's commands and have done their duty. Liturgy means service; it is what we do in obedience to the will of God. It is our way of expressing our need to worship the almighty, and so we do it to the very best of our ability. In a church like Holy Trinity, music, vestments, lights, colour, ceremonial are used to express our adoration and our love for the God who has shown his love to us through his Son, Jesus Christ.

The Word of the Lord

In recent times, we have rediscovered that the Holy Communion involves learning and listening as well as receiving. Jesus said, "Unless you eat the flesh of

the Son of Man and drink his blood you can have no life in you" (John 6:53); but he also said "Man cannot live on bread alone; he lives on every word that God utters." (Matthew 4:4).

As Christians come to the Holy Communion they need to be instructed by God, to be encouraged, challenged, warned, chastised. The Christian's life cannot be stagnant, we must constantly listen to and learn from God in his Word - read, preached and living among us.

The Sacrifice

"Do this in remembrance of me" said Jesus on the night before he died. St Paul wrote, "Every time you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the death of the Lord, until he comes." (I Cor 11:26).

Christians try to share with Christ in his suffering and to link their own suffering with that of Jesus, so that they may share his joy too. So, as the Church celebrates the Holy Communion, we do not offer our own sacrifices to God, but join ourselves to the one perfect sacrifice made by Jesus on the cross. As he offered himself to God willingly and faithfully to give life to the world, so we offer ourselves to God in Christ, praying that he will use us for his purposes in the world.

In the service we also, therefore, bring our concerns and those of the world to God, and lay them before him in yearning, love and prayer.

The Eucharist

The death of Jesus was not the end of the story. On the first Easter Day Jesus rose again from the dead to prove that God's love had triumphed and that everybody who follows in his footsteps will find peace and happiness that lasts.

Sunday is the Christians' holy day. In a sense every Sunday is an Easter Day and as we come to Church Sunday by Sunday, we celebrate not only Christ's victory, but ours as well. The word "Eucharist" means "thanksgiving". It is a great feast, a party, when we celebrate Christ's resurrection, and how right it is that our modern worship reflects that joy and happiness.

The Supper and Holy Communion

The heart of the Holy Communion is a simple meal, a memorial of the Last Supper that Jesus ate with his apostles. Meals bind people together in relationships - we don't usually invite people to dinner whom we dislike. At weddings and christenings we even send a piece of cake to those who cannot be with us, so that they can share something of our joy. We eat and drink in order to get strength to carry on; so we eat the bread and drink the wine to receive strength from God to carry on our lives as Christians.

We come together as the family of God, finding communion with Jesus and, through him, with each other. It is a time of fellowship, when we not only build up our personal union with Christ, but also our Christian community. "When we break the bread, is it not a means of sharing in the body of Christ? Because there is one loaf, we, many as we are, are one body;".

In practice this creates something of a problem in anything but a very small group. It is hard to achieve a sense of personal communion with God and to be fully aware of our fellows. Many services achieve one, few achieve both. Yet this is what we should work towards.

The Mass

The Holy Communion is a celebration of our unity with Christ and with each other. But if that is the end of the story, then the Church becomes a ghetto or sanctuary into which we run to escape from the world outside.

We have come in order to learn to be better Christians. We have come in obedience to God's will, to bring ourselves and the world we live in and offer them to God. We have come to celebrate the fact that God is in control of the world and triumphs over suffering, evil and death. We have come to be fed with the food from heaven and to be strengthened by our fellowship with Christ and with each other.

But in the end we must go out into the world