

ST TEILO'S CHURCH, ST FAGANS MUSEUM

TUESDAY 21 JUNE 2011
THURSDAY 23 JUNE 2011

MASS IN HONOUR OF
THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

FOLLOWING THE ORDER DRAWN UP AT
SALISBURY CATHEDRAL AND USED IN CHURCHES
IN WALES DURING THE LATE MIDDLE AGES



THE
EXPERIENCE
OF WORSHIP
IN LATE MEDIEVAL
CATHEDRAL AND
PARISH CHURCH

The experience of medieval worship was different from modern practice. At the Mass the priest and his assistants were often distant, and concealed from the people. What they did had an aura of mystery. It was set apart in a special part of the church; what was said or sung was in Latin which few understood (or could hear); and much was expressed in gesture or in unheard prayer – so solemn that it was shared only between the priest and God.

For all this remoteness in the worship, those attending the medieval Mass had an expectation that Jesus Christ would be present among them; that his presence would be as real as it was to his disciples during his life in Galilee and Judea. The priest's vestments represented the garments worn by Christ at his Passion, or the objects by which he was bound and flogged. The priest stood in Christ's place offering the sacrifice on the altar.

When Abraham offered his son, Isaac, for sacrifice on the altar, God intervened: Isaac was spared, and the ram caught in the thicket became the offering. When God offered his Son for sacrifice, he was not spared; and he died to save all peoples of the world. The medieval Mass symbolised that sacrifice; and in the consecration of the bread and the wine, Christ who died on the cross and Christ who rose on the third day was present. Medieval writers remind us that the risen Christ came among his disciples five times; and five times in the Mass the priest turns – as Christ's representative – to greet the people, saying 'Dominus vobiscum', 'The Lord be with you'.

The medieval Mass was conducted by the priest and his assistants – at this Mass, this includes assisting clergy, servers, and singers. The people had no active part, and both prayer and praise were addressed eastwards towards the altar. Even the biblical readings were chanted facing away from the people. Except very rarely (e.g. Easter Day), only the priest received communion. The expectation was that the people would come to hear the Mass. There is therefore not a lot to see from the nave of the church today – and that was the case in the Middle Ages.

That did not mean that there was no expectation of engagement by the people. A number of medieval texts offer guidance as to how the people should behave, act and pray during the Mass. One of those texts is entitled *The Layfolks' Mass Book*. Some of the people acting out the role of the medieval congregation will use the directions and prayers in that book during the Mass. And the notes which follow here are based on its contents.

During the Mass you should feel free to take note of them, or to follow your own instincts. Do not feel bound to them – or to stay for the whole service. From contemporary accounts we know some people came late and (or) left early!

MASS IN HONOUR OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

A SUMMARY ORDER OF THE MASS AS HEARD

Introit

Kyrie eleison

Gloria in excelsis

Collect(s)

Epistle

Gradual

Alleluya

Sequence

Gospel

Creed

Offertory antiphon

The invitation to the people to pray for the priest (silent)

Sursum Corda and Preface

Sanctus and Benedictus

The Canon of the Mass (silent)

The Elevation of the Host (signalled by the bell)

The concluding prayers of the Canon (silent, except the last phrase)

The Lord's Prayer

Agnus Dei

The sharing of the Pax among clergy and people

Communion antiphon

Post-Communion prayer

Ite missa est

The Last Gospel

The indented items are recited by the priest, except for the Epistle (subdeacon), Gospel (deacon), and Ite missa est (deacon)

Additionally, the priest recites prayers constantly throughout the Mass, either alone, or assisted by the deacon and subdeacon.

THE MASS IN DETAIL

FOLLOWING THE PATTERN OF DEVOTION SET OUT IN *THE LAYFOLKS' MASS BOOK* FOR THE PEOPLE TO FOLLOW IN THE NAVE

The singers chant the **Introit**, followed by **Kyrie eleison**. The clergy enter with their assistants. The people are directed to kneel when the priest enters.

The priest stands to make his confession to all present, and the deacon and subdeacon confess to him. Although this is not heard, it is intended for all who are willing to confess. The people are directed to confess their sins therefore; and (in order that they may receive the benefit), to recite the Lord's Prayer, the angel's greeting to Mary ('Ave Maria gratia plena' – 'Hail Mary full of grace') and the Apostles' Creed. These are the only texts they are expected to know; and they form a constant resource throughout the Mass. The people are told to ask for the intercessions of the Blessed Virgin Mary, of all the saints, and of the priest, asking that Jesus Christ, who has himself taken human nature, will pity them and forgive.

After confession, the clergy approach the altar. As they do so, the people stand, while the clergy recite the Introit and Kyrie eleison at the altar. The people are told to pray that all present may be well prepared – to pray that the priest be kept this day without sin, and complete this Mass to the honour of Christ, his mother, and all the saints; to pray for the health of the souls of all who hear the Mass and their friends; and to pray for glory everlasting for all.

The priest intones **Gloria in excelsis**, and the singers take up the angels' song. The people are encouraged to make the song of the angels in their own heart.

The **Collect** (the special prayer of the day) is intoned by the priest. Then the assisting sub-deacon chants the **Epistle** (a biblical reading). The choir then sings the chants of the **Gradual**, **Alleluya** and **Sequence**. Meanwhile the altar is prepared. The people either cannot hear or understand what is being sung

by clergy and singers. They are encouraged to make their own prayers, saying especially the Lord's Prayer.

The deacon comes to read the **Gospel**. The people are directed to stand. As the Gospel is announced, they are told to sign themselves with a large cross, and to pray in the name of the Trinity that they may gladly receive God's word. As the Gospel is read, they are advised to meditate on Christ their Redeemer, and to pray for grace and strength to do his will.

The priest intones 'Credo in unum Deum'. While the Nicene **Creed** is chanted, the people are expected to say the Apostles' Creed in English.

When the singing of the Creed is finished, the **Offertory** begins. Just as the Magi who brought gifts at Christ's birth, so the people are told to ask that Christ may receive their prayers to his praise, fulfil their good desires, and be their help in time of need. Then, still standing, they are asked to recite the Lord's Prayer, whilst the priest is washing his hands, and the singers are censed and kiss the Gospel book

The priest then bows before the altar and turns to ask our prayers: smite your breast and pray that the Holy Ghost may come upon him and rule his heart. The people are expected to kneel down: with uplifted hands they are to pray that God may receive the sacrifice of the priest and all present, for help to the living, and eternal rest to the dead.

The priest makes the first of several silent prayers, this one known as the Secret (shared between himself and God). Then he turns, greets the people, and sings 'Lift up your hearts' – '**Sursum corda**', followed by the **Preface**. The people are to lift up heart and body, to raise a thankful heart to the Lord, and pray that they may evermore praise him with the angels in the bliss of heaven.

The singers respond to the Preface by chanting **Sanctus** – 'Holy, holy, holy Lord God'. When this is finished, the priest begins the solemn prayer: the **Canon of the Mass**, in which he consecrates the bread and wine to be the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. He frames this action with prayer, and the people are directed to follow the same pattern.

They are to kneel and devoutly offer thanksgivings and intercessions for all estates of humankind: to give thanks for good talents of nature, right mind, and grace in divers perils (for these are the gifts of Christ the Redeemer; and he is ready to forgive all sin). Then they are to make thanksgiving for good gifts; pray for pardon of past sins, strength in the future and a good will to do God's will. Following this, they are to make intercession for Church, monarch, and government; for kinsmen, friends, tenants, and servants; for all of every age and station; for all living in sin or sorrow; for the sick and captive, the poor, banished, and dispossessed; for such as please them, that God may grant the grace of perseverance, order the course of this world for our good; send weather that we may receive fruits of this earth; ordain all things as seems best for their everlasting glory.

The bell is rung inside the church to alert the people to Christ's coming in the consecrated bread. They are to do reverence to Jesus Christ now present; he who suffered for mankind and shed his blood; who died and rose again; who will come to be our judge. The most solemn and climactic moment occurs at the priest's **Elevation of the Host** (the consecrated bread) as the Body of Christ. This moment is known as the **sacring**. After the **sacring**, there is an extended period of silence, while the priest **concludes the Canon** of the Mass. Having prayed before the consecration for the living Church and the world, priest and people now pray for those who have died. The people are to pray for all the dead, especially for parents, kinsmen, friends and those who wished them well; for benefactors; and for all souls in purgatory, for their release and everlasting glory.

The priest intones the final phrase of this great prayer, and then continues to chant the **Lord's Prayer**. The people are to pray the Lord's Prayer silently as he prays.

The singers chant **Agnus Dei** three times, asking twice for God's mercy and then for God's peace. The people are told that they cannot be at peace if they are not in charity (caritas). Therefore at the **Pax** (the ritual of the Peace), they should pray for peace and love (caritas). The medieval writers alert the people to three kinds of love: love of the Lord, love of yourself, and love of your neighbour. Only in love and charity with God and all men, by the Mass and presence of the sacrament could the people expect to obtain forgiveness and grace.

The priest kisses the chalice, containing the Blood of Christ; then he kisses the Pax, symbolically transferring Christ's peace from the chalice. The Pax is then shared with the clergy and people. (The Pax – sometimes known as the Pax Board – used today is based on a late medieval survival now in the church of Sandon, Essex.)

The priest alone makes his **Communion**. The singers chant the Communion antiphon. Then, while the priest washes the vessels, the people are directed once again to recite the Lord's Prayer, Ave Maria and the Creed.

The priest turns to greet the people, and says the **Post-Communion** prayer. Ask for God's protection in all dangers, the people are told. They should pray that if they were to be overtaken by sudden death, this Mass might serve instead of absolution and visitation of the sick. They are to keep repeating the Lord's Prayer until the end of the Mass.

Ite missa est ('Go, the Mass is ended) is sung, and the priest makes his final prayers. Then he recites the **Last Gospel** – the opening verses of St John's Gospel ('In the beginning was the Word'). When the words 'Verbum caro factum est' are said, the people are told to kiss the earth, stone, wood or metal: by this might their tribulation in purgatory be shortened a little through an indulgence.

Before leaving the church, the people are directed to say a prayer to thank God for this Mass, and to pray for the acceptance of its offering. They are to make the sign of the cross in memory of Christ crucified and risen, as they ask God's blessing.

Celebration of **Mass in honour of the Blessed Virgin** dates back to at least the eighth century, and by the later Middle Ages a weekly (or even daily) Lady Mass was a common occurrence in many parish churches. The texts of the Mass changed with the seasons, but for the greater part of the year the '**Missa Salve**' was sung, taking its title from the Introit 'Salve sancta parens' ('Hail holy parent, who gave birth to the king who rules heaven and earth'). Here Mary is addressed as Mother of Mercy, whose virginity remains inviolate. To the people, she is both Queen of Heaven and all-compassionate intercessor, who appeals directly and continuously to Christ, her Son, for sinful humanity. By this, those who remember her hope for deliverance from sorrow and a share in everlasting joy.

FORTHCOMING PROJECT EVENTS

Tuesday 13 September 2011, repeated Thursday 15 September:

St Teilo's Church, St Fagans Museum

11.30-12.45 Latin Mass of the Holy Name

(preceded by Procession at 11.00 on Thursday only)

16.00-16.40 Latin Vespers of the Holy Name

Thursday 6 October, 2011: Salisbury Cathedral

17.30 Latin Eucharist of the Holy Name of Jesus

Sunday 9 October, 2011: Salisbury Cathedral

9.30 Procession before the Eucharist

There will also be a series of related small-group reflections on Wednesday 5 and Thursday 6 October at Sarum College, Salisbury (advance booking required).

FURTHER DETAILS AND BOOKING

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THE RESEARCH PROJECT

This Latin Eucharist has been devised as part of the research project *The Experience of Worship in late Medieval Cathedral and Parish Church*. The project is part of the UK-wide research programme, *Religion and Society*, funded jointly by the Arts and Humanities Research Council and the Economic and Social Research Council. The project is led by Professor John Harper, director of the International Centre for Sacred Music Studies, Bangor University. The other core members of the research team are Dr Sally Harper and Judith Aveling (Bangor University), Dr Paul Barnwell (Oxford University), and Dr Magnus Williamson (Newcastle University). The partner organisations in the research project are Salisbury Cathedral and St Fagans National History Museum Wales, near Cardiff.

The Experience of Worship project team wish to express their warmest thanks to the curatorial, interpretative and educational staff of St Fagans National History Museum, for their support and collaboration in this venture.

