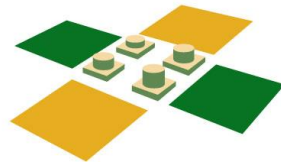


*A form of
Reconciliation of Penitents
according to the Order of the
Use of Salisbury*

*Introductory Notes
The Great Cursing
English Translations*



THE
EXPERIENCE
OF WORSHIP

*Prepared for the
Arts and Humanities Research Council
Medieval Liturgy Network
St Teilo's Church
St Fagans National History Museum
23 and 24 June 2010*

AHRC Medieval Liturgy Network meeting: Performing Liturgical Rites

St Fagans National History Museum, 22-25 June 2010

Reconciliation of Penitents

In the midst of the great liturgies of Holy Week, and just before the Solemn Mass for Maundy Thursday, the rite of the Reconciliation of Penitents took place. Those ejected from the church on Ash Wednesday (either in that year, or even in a previous year) were reconciled and restored 'to the bosom of the Church'.

Rites of public penance can be traced back to the middle of the first millennium, but at St Fagans we shall take advantage of the small church of St Teilo, being reinstated by the museum in the likely state it had in the earlier sixteenth century. What started out as a rite conducted by the bishop in his cathedral was, by the sixteenth century, included in the printed books available for use in any parish (Missal, Manual, Gradual and Processional). It is that parish enactment of the rite that we shall use at St Teilo's.

There are four stages: invitation, procession, psalmody, prayer and absolution. The bishop or his deputy met the expelled penitents at the door of the church, and invited them back into the building. All processed through the body of the church. In the quire and presbytery the clergy recited the seven penitential psalms while everyone knelt prostrate. The presiding clergy recited a series of prayers and an absolution, then Mass began.

Our approach

On Tuesday evening there will be an opportunity to talk through some of the textual and practical issues of implementing the rite. However, it may be useful to offer some preliminary thoughts, and a little reading for train or plane journeys.

Liturgy can only exist in the present (rather like musical performance or drama). The clergy, assistants and singers taking part at St Fagans are practising Christians, and therefore approach the rite as an act of penance and reconciliation. They come from different theological and spiritual backgrounds (Anglican and Roman Catholic), and each will have an individual starting point for this rite. (Of course, by about 1535 – the notional reference date for the enactment – there was already theological and spiritual diversity in Britain.

We are asking everyone else who is taking part in the network meeting to serve as members of the congregation in the church – accepting that this will include a range of belief and non-belief. Furthermore, we hope that some will be happy to serve as 'illiterate' and some as 'literate'. For this we shall offer different resources to use during the rite: some will have texts, others will rely on visual stimulus or story.

There is no attempt to use historical dress, though the clergy, assistants and singers will use traditional vestments and robes. (Since you will spend some time kneeling on the stone church floor, you may wish to consider what will be comfortable and will not show marks from the floor.)

Some preliminary reading

Two files accompany this note: an extract from Henderson's edition of the York Manual (1509), which lists the grounds for excommunication in the 'great cursing'; and an article on public penance c. 1250-1600 by Dave Postles.

John Harper

The Great Cursing

presented in two forms: modernised spelling, and adapted into modern English

taken from *Manuale et processionale ad usum insignis ecclesiae Eboracensis*, ed. W. G. Henderson, Surtees Society, 63 (1874), pp. 119-122

1. With modernised spelling

De Anathemate

At the beginning God and holy Church curses all those that the franchise of holy Church breaks or disturbs; and all that is against the peace or right or the state of holy Church, or thereto assents with deed or counsel; and all that holy church [de]prives of right, or makes of holy Church lay fee that is hallowed or sanctified.

Also all those that wittingly or wilfully tithes falsely; and that gives not to God and to holy Church the tenth part or the ten penny of every thing lawfully won in gain, merchandise, or with any other craft, withdrawing only the expenses and the costages that needfully behoves be made about the thing that the winning is gotten of; not tending the winning of (one) merchandise with the loss of another.

And also all those that of the fruit of the earth, or of the cattle, or of any other thing that renews in the year, gives not their tithes wholly, without any withdrawing of the costages.

Also all those that for evil will of the parson or the parish priest, or the clerk, or of any other minister of holy Church, withholds tendings, rents, offerings, or any thing that ought to be given to or to holy Church.

Also all those that the freedom of holy Church lets, or break, or disturbs; that is to say, if a man flee to the church or churchyard, whoso him lets or outdraw, or thereto procure or assents.

Also all those that does sacrilege; that is to say, for to take any holy thing out of any holy place, or that that is not hallowed out of any holy place.

Also all they that letters purchase in any Lord's court, that processes of right may not be determined nor judged.

Also all those that the land disturbs.

Also all those that blood draw of any man or woman in violence or in any other felony in church or in churchyard; wherefore the church or the churchyard is interdicted, or suspended, or pollute.

Also all those that are against the King's right.

Also all those that the war sustains against the King's peace wrongfully.

Also all robbers and rovers [?] or men slayers, but if it be himself defendant.

Also all those that are against the King's great charter, which is confirmed by the court of Rome.

Also those that false witness beareth or procures, them witting; and namely in cause of matrimony, in what court so ever it be, or out of court.

Also all those that false witness brings forth right matrimony to disturb, or any man or woman, or desert of land or of rent, tenement, or any other cattle [chattel?].

Also all false advocates that for mead putteth forth false exceptions and quarrels, wherefore right matrimony is fordone.

Also all those that for mead or for favour or for any other encheson maliciously other man or woman brings out of their good fame into wicked fame, or causeth them [to] lose their worldly goods or honours ; or putteth wrongfully to their purgation, of the which they were never infamed of before.

Also all those that maliciously disturbs or lets the right presentation of a church, the which the very patron should present, or thereto procure with word or deed, or with false inquest, or with other power.

Also all those that maliciously despise the commandment to take a cursed man that hath lain in the sentence 40 days and no remedy will seek; and all that the takers disturbs with judgement or false inquest.

Also all those that mead takes to break peace, where as love should be, or contake or strife maintains with word or deed, till they have yield again the mead to them of whom they it take, they may not be assoiled.

Also all that houses, manors, granges of persons or vicars, or of any other men of holy church against their attorney will any manner of good movable or unmovable away bears, or with strength or wrongfully away draws or wastes: of the which cursing they may not be assoiled till they have made restitution to them that the wrong is done to.

Also all those people that any manner of good beareth out with violence of holy Church or of houses of religion, the which is laid therein because of warrants or succour or to keep; and all that thereto assents or procures.

Also all witches, and all that on them believes.

Also all those that lays hand on priest or clerk in violence, but it be himself defending.

Also all that Saracens counsel or help against Christian men.

Also all women that their generation or children destroys as with drinks or other craft.

Also all they that their children wrongfully fathers or w[e]ights on any man maliciously

Also all they that wilfully lease their children, or leaves them in field, or in town, or in church door, or in any other place, and leave them succourless.

Also all false money makers and their consenters

Also all they that good money clips for their advantage.

Also they that falses the pope's bulls or counterfeits the King's seal

Also all they that buys or sells with false measures or false weights; that is to say, to buy with one and sell with another.

Also all they that falses the king's standard.

Also all they that maliciously disturbs man or woman, wedded or unwedded, to make their testament lawfully, and they that lets the execution lawfully made.

Also all they that forswear them on the holydom, willing or witting, for love or for hatred, or for to cause any man to lose his good or his honour.

Also all they that burns churches or houses of any man's in land of peace.

Also robbers or rovers openly or privily by day or by night that any man's good steals, by which good men were worthy to suffer death

[Also robbers or rovers openly or privily by day or by night which good worthy to suffer the other court forche against the any man's good death.]

Also all they that withholds any man's goods that hath be asked openly in holy Church themself witting.

Also all feloners and their maintainers.

Also all conspirators or false swear[er]s in assizes or in any other court

Also all they that any false plants puts forth against the franchises of holy Church or of the Kinge or of the realm

Also all they that offerings that is offered in church, or in churchyard, or in chapel, or oratory, or in any place within the province of York, that is withholden or put away in any other place against the person's will, or his parish priest of the parish that it is offered in, but if they be privileged.

Also all they that their goods gives in dread of deed in fraud of holy Church, or for to forbear their debts and all that thereto counsels or helps.

Also all they that lets prelates or ordinaries of holy Church for to hold consistory, session, or chapter for to enquire of sin or of excess that needs to be for the health of the soul.

Also all heretics that believe not in the sacrament of the altar, the which is God's own body in flesh and blood in form of breed, and other sacraments that toucheth the health of man's soul.

[York MS. — 'Also all usurers, as if a man len[d] his cattle or his good[s] till another to take advantage be covenant for lending of his cattle. For if there were any swylk in a city, the city should be interdicted that no sacrament should be done therein, to thai war put out of that city.

These be the points of the great cursing that our holy fathers, popes, and archbishops hath ordained, for to be published at the last iii. [times] in the year, in every parish church: that is to say, the first Sunday of Lent or the second; and also some Sunday after Magdalen-tide, or else before, as it may best fall ; and also some Sunday in the Advent before Christmas, and thus holy Church useth throughout all the places in Christendom.

2. Presented in a modern English adaptation

De Anathemate

At the beginning God and his Holy Church curse all who break or disturb the church's freedom; all who oppose its peace, its rights or its state, or assent to suchlike opposition in deed or in counsel; and all who deprive the church or its associated rights, or who make money out of its sanctified rights.

It also curses all those who knowingly or wilfully subvert tithes; who fail to offer to God and the Church a tenth part of everything that they have lawfully acquired through gain, merchandise, or anything else, withdrawing requiring expenses and costs required however the money is gained, and failing to compensate the earnings of one merchandise with the loss of another.[?]

Also all who fail to pay their full tithes (whether of the fruits of the earth, or cattle, or any other annual crop), by withdrawing costs for themselves.

Also all who withhold tithes, rents or offerings (or anything else that should be given to the church) because they bear a grudge against the parson, the parish priest, the clerk, or any other minister.

Also all who undermine or break or disturb the freedom of the Church; i.e., someone who allows a man to flee to the church or the churchyard, or procures his escape [?] or assents to it.

Also all who commit sacrilege; i.e. by removing a holy object (or a secular object) from any holy place.

Also all who purchase letters in any Lord's court, in order to subvert the determining or judgement of rightful processes.

Also all who disturb the land.

Also all who by violence or any other crime draw blood from any man or woman in the church or churchyard, so that it becomes deprived of its privileges, or suspended, or polluted.

Also all those who oppose the authority of the King.

Also all those who make war wrongfully in times of peace.

Also all robbers, marauders [pirates?] and murderers (unless acting in self-defence).

Also all who oppose the King's Great Charter, as confirmed by the court of Rome.

Also those who bear false witness or knowingly procure false witness in the cause of matrimony, whether within or outside the court.

Also all those who procure false witness in order to undermine either rightful matrimony, or any person, or rightful land or rent, tenement, or cattle.

Also all false advocates who put about falsities and quarrels against rightful matrimony in order to procure strong drink.

Also all who maliciously bring anyone of good character into disrepute, or cause them [to] lose their worldly goods or honours; or wrongfully bring them to be purged of sins which they have not committed, in order to procure drink or to curry favour or for any other reason.

Also all who maliciously disturb or fail to uphold a church's rightful presentation by the patron, or procure it by word or deed, or by false inquest, or by any other means.

Also all who maliciously despise the commandment to seize a cursed man who has been under arrest for 40 days without doing anything about it; and all who undermine those seeking to take that man through false judgement or false inquest.

Also all who imbibe strong drink so as to disturb the peace when there should be love, or who maintain dissention or strife by word or deed; that person may not be absolved of the sin until the drink is restored to its owner [??].

Also all who take away anything good, portable or fixed, from the house, manor, or grange of the parson or vicar, or any other churchman against their attorney, or take it away or waste it by force or wrongfully; that person may not be absolved of the sin until they have made restitution to the person they have wronged.

Also all who take out violently from the church or any religious house anything good which has been put there because of warrants or need or for safekeeping; and all who assent or allow it to happen.

Also all witches, and all who believe in witches.

Also all who violently lay hands on a priest or clerk, unless in self-defence.

Also all who counsel heathens against Christians or help them.

Also all women who destroy their own family or their children with strong drink or other cunning.

Also all who wrongfully father children or oppress anyone maliciously

Also all who wilfully hire out their children, or abandon them in the field, or in town, or at the church door.

Also all who make money falsely, and those who let them do it.

Also all who fraudulently dock good money to their own advantage.

Also those who falsify a papal bull or counterfeit the King's seal

Also all who buy or sell using false measures or weights; that is to say, they buy with one weight and sell with another.

Also all who falsify the king's standard [ensign, flag].

Also all who maliciously disturb any married or unmarried person from making their testament lawfully, and those who prevent that testament from being lawfully carried out.

Also all who willingly or knowingly swear falsely on a holy place or a holy relic, for love or for hatred, or in order to cause anyone to lose their good or their honour.

Also all who burn down churches or anyone's house in a peaceful land.

Also robbers or marauders who openly or secretly steal anyone's good by day or by night so that that person might appear worthy to suffer death

Also all who withhold anyone else's goods, knowing that they have been asked openly for them in holy Church.

Also all villains and those who support them.

Also all conspirators or those who swear falsely in the Assizes or any other court

Also all who plant falsehood against the freedom of the Church or the king or the realm

Also all who [withhold] offerings left in church, in the churchyard, in chapel, oratory, or any place within the province of York, that have been withheld or put away in any other place against that person's will, or offered to the parish priest, unless they be privileged to do so [?].

Also all who give their goods in dread of fraud against the holy Church, or to abstain from paying their debts, and all who counsel or help them to do so. [?]

Also all who prevent priests or laymen of the Church hold consistory, session, or chapter in order to enquire of sin or other excess necessary for the health of the soul.

Also all heretics who do not believe in the sacrament of the altar, which is God's own body in flesh and blood in form, and in the other sacraments concerning the health of the soul.

[York MS. — 'Also all usurers, as when a man lends his cattle or his goods to another in order to take advantage as a bargain for the loan. If such a thing happens, that city should be cut off from the privilege of receiving the sacrament until that man is removed from it.

These are the points of the Great Cursing that our holy fathers, popes, and archbishops have ordained. They are to be published at least three times a year in every parish church: i.e., on the first or second Sunday of Lent; one of the Sundays falling after Mary Magdalen's day (22 July) or just before, depending on when it will best fall; and also a Sunday during Advent before Christmas. And thus holy Church observes this throughout all Christendom.

Reconciliation of Penitents

from Warren's translation of the Sarum Missal

In the first place, the reconciliation of penitents shall take place in the following manner. When None has been sung, the priest of the highest rank shall go to the door of the church, having put on his priestly vestments and a red silk cope, attended by two deacons in albs and amices, but without the sub-deacon, and without the cross. A sackcloth banner is to precede him through the midst of the quire. The penitents who are to be reconciled should be placed outside the door of the church.

The priest shall begin the anthem, Come ye, come ye, inside the aforesaid door, turning to the east, and making a sign with his hand, as it were beckoning: Then the deacon, on the part of the penitents outside the door shall say, Let us kneel. Another deacon, on the part of the priest, shall say, Rise, and this shall be done thrice, in such way, however, that after the third repetition of the Anthem, Let us kneel is not said, but the quire follows up the whole Anthem, the precentor beginning, Come, ye children, hearken unto me, I will teach you etc. Then shall follow the Psalm: I will always, the whole Psalm being said and the Anthem is to be repeated after each Verse.

While the Psalm and its anthem are being sung by the quire, the penitents are to be continually handed, one by one, by some priest of the quire, without any change of vestment, to the officiating priest, and by him they are to be restored to the bosom of the Church. This done, the procession shall return in the usual way to the quire. Then shall they all prostrate themselves, and the clerks in the quire shall say the seven penitential psalms, with Glory be to the Father etc. and As it was etc., and the Anthem Remember not with Lord have mercy upon us, Christ have mercy upon us, Lord have mercy upon us. Our Father. All this in front of the altar, as has been previously laid down for Ash Wednesday. Then shall the priest rise, and standing on the right side of the altar, and facing east, say:

And lead us not into temptation.
But deliver us from evil.

My God, save thy servants and thy handmaidens,
Which put their trust in thee.

Turn thee again, O Lord, at the last,
And be gracious unto thy servants.

Send unto them, O Lord, help from thy holy place.
And defend them out of Sion.

Help us, O God, our Saviour.
And for the glory of thy name deliver us; and be merciful unto our sins, for thy name's sake.

Lord, hear my prayer.
And let my cry come unto thee.

The Lord be with you.
And with thy spirit.

Let us pray.

Collect.

Be favourable, O Lord, to our supplications, and graciously listen unto me, who first of all stand in need of thy mercy; and grant unto me, whom, not by election of merit, but by the gift of thy grace, thou hast appointed unto this ministry, confidence in fulfilling the duty which thou hast laid upon me, and do thou of thy loving kindness work in our ministration. Through *etc.*

All these Collects are to be intoned as Lessons.

Let us pray *is to be said before each, but The Lord be with you before the first Collect only.*

Collect.

O God, most gracious creator, and most compassionate restorer of mankind, who by the blood of thine Only Son hast redeemed mankind, cast down by the envy of the devil from immortality, quicken these thy servants, whom thou desirest in no wise to die unto thee, and do thou who dost not leave them to stray, receive them back after correction. Let the sorrowful sighings of these thy servants, O Lord, we beseech thee, move thy loving kindness. Do thou heal their wounds, and stretch out thy saving hand to them as they lie before thee. Let not thy church be robbed of any part of her body. Let not thy flock suffer loss. Let not the enemy rejoice over the injury to thy family. Let not a second death get possession of those who have been born again in the laver of salvation. To thee, therefore, O Lord, we humbly offer our prayers; to thee we pour out the sorrows of our heart. Spare thou them that confess; that by thy aid they may so weep over their sins in this mortal life, that in the tremendous day of judgment they may escape the sentence of eternal damnation, and may never know, most loving Father, the terrors of darkness, and the gnashing of teeth in flames; but that returning from the errors of their way into the path of righteousness, they may be wounded no more; but let that which thy grace hath bestowed, and thy pity hath reformed, be made whole and entire, and abide with them for ever. Through *etc.*

Collect.

O Lord, holy Father, almighty everlasting God, who hast deigned to heal our wounds, we thy humble priests desire and beseech thee mercifully to incline thine ears to our prayers, and by our confession to be moved to repent thee; and that thou wouldest forgive all our sins, and pardon all our offences; and that thou wouldest give to these thy servants, O Lord, pardon for punishment, joy for sorrow, life for death: so that they who trusting in thy mercy have arrived at so great a hope of the heights of heaven, may be accounted worthy to attain unto the blessings of the reward of thy peace, and unto thy heavenly gifts. Through *etc.*

Then without saying Let us pray, the Priest shall turn to the people, and, with extended hand, say the Absolution in monotone [= sine nota]

We absolve you in the place of blessed Peter, prince of the apostles, on whom the power of binding and loosing was conferred by the Lord, and so far as accusation pertaineth to you,

and remission to us, may almighty God be unto you life and health, and the gracious pardoner of all your sins, Who liveth *etc.*

When the Priest says the words Who liveth etc. all shall rise from their prostration, kissing the benches or the ground.

Then solemn Mass shall be begun, without ruling of the quire.

At Mass

Office.

But we ought to glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, in whom is our salvation, life, and resurrection, through whom we have been saved and freed.

Ps. God be merciful unto us, and bless us: and shew the light of his countenance upon us, and be merciful unto us.