



LITURGICAL CATECHESIS

Week 6

"Without a doubt the heathen adoration and worship of the sun developed out of the teachings received from Adam. For he taught his family and children to bend their knees at sunrise and praise the Lord of heaven and earth and to acknowledge the innumerable benefits which God bestows on the world through that beautiful light. Then Adam's descendants did indeed retain this rite and ceremony of bending the knee toward the sun; but they forgot to thank God for creating light and the sun for their benefit, and they made an idol of the sun.

All this developed out of the pious teachings of the fathers. For wherever Christ builds a church and gathers a congregation, the devil is always wont to ape Him to devise idolatrous forms of worship and teachings that resemble the true doctrine and the true worship of God. But he takes away the promise and the spirit of the fathers, meanwhile arranging splendid pomp and magnificent ceremonies. Under the guise of religion and sanctity he outdoes and obscures even the true worship and the church." -Martin Luther

Why use the ancient (traditional) liturgy of the Church?

What comes to mind when you think of "liturgy"?

Four Reasons to Follow Tradition:

- 1) Tradition Mediates (Teaches) the Word to Us
- 2) Tradition Shows our Respect for the Past (Exodus 12:24)
- 3) Tradition Represents the "Greater Church"
- 4) Tradition Provides Perspective in Our Changing World (Hebrews 13:8, John 17:15-17/Rom. 12:2)

Six Levels of Tradition - A Worship Hierarchy

- 1) Biblical Traditions
- 2) Catholic (universal) Traditions
- 3) Confessional or Lutheran Traditions
- 4) National, Synodical, or Denominational Traditions
- 5) Parochial, Local, Congregational or Pastoral Traditions
- 6) Personal Traditions

Why a worship Hierarchy?

This worship hierarchy is important because we can seek to move toward higher levels of tradition rather than remain at a lower level. As we recognize and use higher levels of tradition, we discover that we can include more of them in our worship experiences with beneficial results. We also find ourselves living more as the "Church catholic." That is we find unity with the broader Christian Church on Earth.

For many worshipers, personal or congregational traditions are hardest to change. We “like” them, though there are logical and theological reasons why a biblical or Catholic tradition may strengthen our relationship with Jesus Christ. Thus, in our postmodern society in which personal considerations (self-centered experience) seem to dominate, the higher worship traditions are often ignored or rejected rather than cherished and celebrated. As Lutheran Christians we have opportunities to expand and enhance our worship life by recognizing the hierarchy of traditions.

(video segment: Liturgy: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow)

The Greek word “leitourgia”:

a. It’s a secular word that meant to “serve.”

For example: By paying your taxes, fulfilling your obligations or following through on your responsibilities. People were moved to serve in such ways for the sake of the empire.

b. The Church eventually adapted the word for its own use. God serves us *in his kingdom* through worship (Divine Service) by giving us His Son for our spiritual and physical lives themselves and for the nourishment of our faith. Furthermore, we receive God’s service, namely the gifts He distributes for the life of the world.

How do we receive God’s gifts? (choose one)

a. *Actively - as if we have the ability of ourselves to take them.*

b. *Passively - through the gift of faith, which God has freely given to us.*

How does a Christian respond to God’s gifts?

How might knowing that the Christian’s “leitourgia” is to receive the Lord’s gifts, change the way you think about Sunday worship?

What gifts does the Lord give through His Service or liturgy? (Sacrament of the Altar - Benefits?)

a.

b.

c.

What are the means through which God gives those gifts?

a. *James 1:18 -*

b. *Acts 2:38-39 -*

c. *Matthew 26:26-28*

Name two very important points regarding worship, liturgy, God’s service to us:

a. *Jesus Christ is _____ for us.*

b. *God _____ to us in his _____.*

Conclusion:

Liturgy is a means by which God’s people receive God’s gifts (Divine Service), worship Him and communicate the Gospel message to each other. The historic Lutheran liturgy seeks to do just that. In addition to delivering the Gospel, the Lutheran liturgy serves as a channel for the worshipper’s response in song, prayer, praise and giving thanks (2nd Commandment). Only when the worshiper understands and appreciates the liturgy of his church will he be able to participate in it meaningfully and derive full benefit from it.