

EXPLORING OUR FAITH

Session 5 – Gathered to / Gathered from – October 16, 2022

Opening

- This is the fifth week we have spent on the Gathering rite, because it's also been an opportunity to look at some very basic questions of why we come to church, what common prayer or liturgy is and how it works, and the importance of things like worship environment or architecture and furnishings
- Today is the last in the series on the Gathering rite
 - Next week we take a little excursion to talk about Rite I, because it will be a "family service" week so I will be doing a bulletin cover only for 8:00 and so I want to devote it to Rite I
- So today I want to do three things
 1. Look at the structure of the collect form and what it tells us about prayer in the Eucharist
 2. Look at a whole laundry list of possible things that could be included in a Gathering rite
 3. And from there move outward to reflect on what we "gather to" and what we "gather from" – we "gather to" the presence of God and of the baptized community; we "gather from" or cast aside . . . what?
- We open with a prayer from the service for Confirmation
 - It was composed by a monk of the Order of the Holy Cross, Bonnell Spencer, who was an important figure in the reforms of worship that issued in the 1979 BCP
 - Note how nicely it sums up the whole theology of baptism that we talked about last week: the paschal mystery of death and resurrection that we bind to ourselves in the covenant of Baptism, the sending forth upon a baptismal life of service in the power of the Spirit
 - A reminder that the BCP states that Confirmation is a rite to administered "at maturity," not as a puberty rite

The Collect Structure

- Work through the outline on the handout
 - The acknowledgment reminds us who God is and what God is about – orients us towards God's purposes and away from our self-centeredness, and thus prepares us for the Eucharist
 - The petition then brings us into the action, asking something for us but with God's help and participation
 - The aspiration and conclusion look forward to the coming of God's kingdom and conclude with a doxology or words of praise
- This is the pure collect form, but over the centuries some of the collects in the BCP have been altered so that they do not strictly adhere to this form
- But in any form, the Collect of the Day sums up and concludes the Gathering rite: as we gathered from the world and our separate concerns, we gather to the presence of God and God's common concern for the salvation of the world

Gathering Rite Options from the BCP

- Using the book, briefly go through the many things that could be part of a liturgy that “gathers us” from the world and to the presence of God
 - Examples: Christ Church Cathedral, Holy Cross Black church in Chicago, Nicaraguan base communities, African celebrations
 - History behind the Sunday morning line-up
 - Search for alternatives today: e.g., “dinner church,” services for seekers like college students
- Options within the BCP
- General need to avoid overloading the Gathering rite at the expense of the main elements of the celebration

Conclusion: Gathering from and Gathering to

- Open discussion