

TRINITY NEWS

WEEK 37. September 8, 2019. Proper 18

Notes on the Liturgy 3

Time 1

In the Liturgy, past, present and future intersect, and our true relationship with time is revealed to us. This is most noticeable in the Eucharist where we remember and make present Christ's death and resurrection, celebrate his presence to us now in Word, Sacrament and Fellowship, and declare our faith in his future coming again in glory, but it is true of any liturgical act.

We are reminded of this intersection the moment the liturgy begins with the procession of the ministers, which mirrors a typical first century group of well to do Romans or Greeks on their way to a dinner party. The torch-bearers light the way, the crucifer carries the family standard or emblem, the incense marks the event as festive and protect the party from any unpleasant first-century odors!

All are clothed in archaic garb: all the ministers wear in *albs*, simple white tunics, the common street garment of the Roman world, and the clerics colored *stoles*, or scarves. *Dalmatics* and *chasubles* in the appropriate liturgical colors, are worn by deacons and priests respectively, the Greco-Roman equivalent of formal evening wear. All this clearly plants us firmly in the past.

Moreover, though the basic patterns and forms remain Greco-Roman, every age since has left its mark. There is a wide variety of cuts and decorative motifs that reflect Early and Late Medieval, Renaissance, Baroque, Classical, Neo-Gothic and 20th century fashions, and our age too, of course has its own styles. The choir's robes, for example, reflect medieval developments.

Even at this very basic level of clothing then the Liturgy makes the past present to us. But it also, in a very real way, links us to our future. Because we can be pretty sure that, barring the Second Coming, 100, or 500 or even 1000 years from today, a gathered people will be rising for the entrance of a procession of ministers that we would recognize at once, however different the circumstances, in order to celebrate, as we do this morning, the Death, Resurrection and Coming-Again of the same Jesus Christ, our Lord and theirs. We are all, past, present and future, one people on the one Journey and that, in the true sense of the word, is awesome.