

# TRINITY NEWS

WEEK 30.  
July 23, 2023  
Proper 11

## Revisiting the Liturgy #1

“**T**his morning we gather, as we do Sunday after Sunday, to offer common worship to God as part of the Christ’s Body, the Church. Along with the vast majority of Christians (Anglicans, Roman Catholics, Eastern Orthodox, Lutherans, etc.) we are celebrating the Holy Eucharist. The liturgical styles, ceremonial, music etc. vary considerably from tradition to tradition; indeed, within our Anglican Communion itself there is great diversity; but the basic structure and the intention is always the same: the Proclamation of Christ’s Life, Death and Resurrection and Coming Again, and our sharing in the Divine Life of the Holy Trinity through our Communion with Jesus Christ in the Holy Sacrament.”

The paragraph above is taken from the first article in the series I did when I first got here in the late summer of 2019 as your interim. I’ve decided, in these final weeks? month? of my Covid-induced stint as your rector, to return to this theme which is, as you by now know, very dear to my heart. Not only that, but when I assigned here as interim the bishop asked that I should focus on bringing this congregation into line with the rest of the Province by finally switching from the American Book of Prayer to the new Filipino one. The goal was not to impose complete uniformity, but rather to make sure that this congregation is thoroughly familiar with and comfortable with the standard liturgy of the Province by the time I left. Well, I’ve had more than enough to do that, and I think I’ve more or less accomplished that goal.

So, what follows is largely taken from what I wrote in 2019, with some new observations and corrections.

“A few introductory thoughts;

When Anglicans are asked what they believe, instead of citing founding theologians or specific doctrine, often either refer the questioner to the Book of Common Prayer, or invite them to join us in worship; they point to the liturgy, in other words. Often they quote a Latin saying: *Lex orandi lex credenda statuat*: “the law of prayer establishes the law of belief,” (and vice versa). How we pray (our liturgy) and what we believe (our doctrine) are mirror images of each other.

**To page 2**

## ***From page 1***

But note: our liturgy is not simply the written script we follow in our Prayer Book or in our booklets: it is the event itself, something that happens, something we do. And it is the event itself that expresses what we believe, which is to say that the meaning of the liturgy – what we believe – is conveyed not only in words, but in the setting, the sacred vessels and vestments, the music, the gestures, movements, sounds and smells that accompany them. The whole person, in other words, the body, the senses, the imagination as well as the mind, is called to respond, and so our beliefs become not a set of doctrines filed away in our brain, but a part of who we are as persons

As we celebrate the liturgy week by week, it gradually shapes us as a community and as individuals, because at the liturgy, we rehearse, through our rituals, the kinds of behaviors and attitudes we aspire to make our own. When we stand to praise, sit to listen, kneel to pray, acknowledge our sinfulness, pray for those in need, pass the peace and so forth, we are practicing for our lives as Christians in the “world out there.” By this constant rehearsing, the church can very gradually grow towards being the community it is meant to be.”

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## **SAINTS OF THE WEEK:**

**Bridget of Sweden, Abbess of Vadstena, 1373, 23 July.** Bridget's father was governor of Uppland when she was born in about the year 1303. She married at the age of fourteen, had eight children and often attended the royal court, where she continued to experience the mystical revelations she had known since childhood. These increased in intensity after her husband's death and, three years later, she responded by founding a monastery for nuns and monks at Vadstena in 1346. Bridget's daughter Catherine was the first abbess of the so-called Brigettine Order, which became very influential in northern Europe. After travelling to Rome to obtain the pope's approval for her plans, Bridget never returned to Sweden but spent the rest of her life as a pilgrim, an adviser to rulers and church leaders, and a minister to all in need. Her Revelations were recorded by her confessors before her death, which occurred on this day in 1373.

**James the Apostle, 25 July.** James, often called 'the Great', was a Galilean fisherman who, with his brother John, was one of the first apostles called by Jesus to follow him. The two brothers were with Jesus at his Transfiguration and with him again in the garden of Gethsemane. They annoyed the other followers of Jesus by asking to sit one on his left and the other on his right when he came into his glory and they were present for the appearances of Christ after the resurrection. James was put to death by the sword on the order of Herod Agrippa, who hoped in vain that, by disposing of the Christian leaders, he could stem the flow of those hearing the good news and becoming followers in the Way. James' martyrdom is believed to have taken place in the year 44.