

TRINITY NEWS

WEEK 37.
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Proper 18

Changing Liturgies

*L*iturgies are not static: like everything else in life they evolve and change, even the most conservative traditions do not stand still.

For the most part the change is gradual and consists of minor additions or subtractions, but every once in a while it seems, the Spirit decides that it's time of a change and shakes things up, and the liturgy – or liturgies of the various churches – undergo a major overhaul.

Those of my generation (the Boomers) lived through the last big shake-up, which occurred in the late sixties and early 70's. The movement started in the Roman Catholic Church: Pope John the XX/III summoned an ecumenical Council – the Second Vatican Council – that resulted, under his successor Paul IV, in a pretty drastic revision of the Roman Rite, which had remained more or less unchanged since it was authorized by the Council of Trent in the late 1500's.

The changes were radical. The use of Latin as the liturgical language was abandoned in favor of the vernacular; at the Eucharist, the priest no longer stood in from the altar with his back towards the people, but behind it, facing them; lay participation in the liturgy was strongly encouraged. These are only a few of the changes, but perhaps the most noticeable ones, that changed the whole 'feel' of the liturgy.

The spirit of reform was not confined to the Roman Catholic Church, however: almost all the western denominations were affected by it. In our own Anglican Tradition, for example, the Tudor (Rite I) English was replaced for the most part with Modern English; for us too, the priest was now facing the people, and such elements as the Passing of the Peace were introduced. And it didn't stop there - changes were introduced that the Roman Catholic Church had not even

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toyed with, such as the ordination of women to the priesthood – a radical break with the past.

Of course, every reform produces a reaction, and some elements in all traditions resisted these changes – and there are to this day factions within the churches that favor a return to the older ways. But by and large, the reforms seem to have become the norm – and that means, of course, that it may be time for the Spirit to shake things up again. But more on that later.

SAINTS OF THE WEEK:

Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, 15 September. Born in Carthage in about the year 200, Cyprian was a teacher of rhetoric and a lawyer in the city before his conversion to Christianity. He gave away his pagan library and set his mind to study the sacred Scriptures and the commentaries that were beginning to proliferate. He became a priest and then, in the year 248, was elected Bishop of Carthage by the people of the city, together with the assembled priests and other bishops present. He showed compassion to returning apostates, whilst always insisting on the need for unity in the Church. During the persecution of Valerian, the Christian clergy were required to participate in pagan worship; Cyprian refused and was first exiled and then condemned to death. He died on this day in the year 258.

Ninian, Bishop of Galloway, 16 September. Ninian was born in about the year 360 and was the son of a Cumbrian chieftain who had himself converted to Christianity. It seems he visited Rome in his youth, where he received training in the faith. He was consecrated bishop in the year 394 and returned to Britain, where he set up a community of monks at Candida Casa from where they went out on missionary journeys as far as Perth and Sterling. Ninian died in about the year 432.



Probably the gravest fault of which the majority are guilty in their mode of approach to life is what is called selfishness in the individual, provincialism or insularity in social matters, and sectarianism in religion.

They are all devotees to the cult of the incomplete.
(Charles Henry Brent, *The Mount of Vision* 1918 p. xiii)