

Views from the Pews: Liturgical Practises

As Anglicans we may engage in a variety of practices in our participation in the liturgy of the Eucharist. This is because we accept that we are able to live together in peace while holding different views of the Life, Passion, Death, and resurrection of our Lord. Tolerance is required to do this and for the most part Anglicans are a pretty tolerant. We are obliged only to subscribe to what is known as the "Lambeth Quadrilateral", i.e., the Scriptures, the Creeds, the Sacraments of Eucharist and Baptism, and the Episcopal ministry. Although there are differences among them it seems that this formula is fairly common to most of the Episcopal denominations.

"Churchmanship" means that Anglicans may be grouped in one or other of the practises as either "low", "middle" or "high". Among the "low" churchmen are many of those of an evangelical persuasion while at the other end, the "high" churchmen include Anglo-Catholics. Many Anglicans stand between these two ends of the spectrum but all are sisters and brothers in Christ and need always to remember this,

Whether we bow at the name of Jesus, genuflect at the presence of God in the sacrament, use the sign of the cross or simply stand or sit, does not alter the efficacy of the liturgy or the sincerity of the worshipper. What it does do is concentrate, the users' attention on the worship of the Lord.

In terms of liturgical practise, services may vary in formality from the very informal with a variety of musical instruments, modern hymns and songs and little in terms of liturgical attire to the very formal with a concentration on a more classical approach to liturgical music, a variety of hymns from across the ages, and formal Eucharistic vestments.

Whatever our personal churchmanship choices, we need always to allow our sisters and brothers to express their love of God in ways that they find the most comfortable and helpful. That is what it means to be an Anglican.

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