

Views from the Pews: the Shape of the Liturgy Part 2

Scene 3 engages the congregation in a number of scriptural imperatives all grouped around a theme. The Old Testament passage is followed by an extract from one of the Epistles and these lessons are followed by a Gospel reading all built around the theme of the day. The sermon is part of Scene 3 and the preacher is now able to expound on the theme relating the scriptural passages to the theme and to teach the congregation what it means in terms of the daily life of the Christian. Scene 3 concludes with the recitation of the Creed a statement of assent to the Gospel Message and an expression of our hope for the future.

Scene 4 encompasses the prayers of the people. Intercessions and thanksgivings are offered together with invocations for those who are ill, for those who have died and for those who are experiencing illness or adversity of other kinds. IN this scene we remember our sisters and brothers world-wide especially those who are part of the great Anglican family. There are set forms for this scene although the rubrics allow for ministers and lay people to lead with prayers, "in their own words.

At this point in the liturgy, there is a change of focus. Hitherto in the liturgy we have been preparing ourselves by confession, absolution, and teaching to prepare ourselves to meet our Lord in the sacrament. Now we begin this process by sharing the peace with those around us. This is not half-time and should be recognised as a transition from present earthly worship to the heavenly adoration. Because we are about to visit, in a spiritual sense, Our Lord at the Last Supper. Having symbolically made peace with our sisters and brothers we move to the next scene.

Scene 5 is a short scene in which we present our gifts to the Lord, gifts of bread, wine, and money, as well as food for the hungry and dedicate them to the use of the church.

(To be continued)
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