

26-02-17 – (1 before Lent)
Final instalment on the Eucharist

SSJM

No wonder that Holy Communion is often known as the Eucharist, as GB reminded us last week; it is the thank you service, & its central prayer the Eucharistic Prayer – for so many times during the service, and specially in this prayer we thank God for all the countless gifts we are given, free, gratis and for nothing,

And if you are puzzled, as I suspect we all are from time to time, by what happens in the Eucharistic Prayer when bread and wine are consecrated, some words attributed to QE I may help:

His was the word that spake it
He took the bread and brake it
And what his word doth make it
That I believe and take it

The Lord's Prayer needs no comment here; and all I would say about the Prayer before Communion: We do not presume *or* Most merciful God is that I greatly value going to churches where neither is said – in the book they are NOT compulsory and I believe are better left unsaid, because we are not in church to grovel before God.

So no surprise that the prayers after Communion continue this 'thank you' theme – every Sunday has a special prayer to balance the Collect at the start of the service – today's is a typical example: starts by calling on God, something about God's works and God's word follows, ending with a final petition that we who have received so much may experience a good outcome of our relationship with God. "Holy God..." we shall pray.

Then: we are invited to pray together one of the two final prayers – most often here we use the first one, shorter of the 2 – final thanks that we have been fed with the b and b of OLJC; an offering of all we

are and have, our whole person, that all we do may be to the praise and glory of God; a final request that we may be sent out to live and work to God's glory – i.e. coming to church isn't all that counts; the other half of the coin is our living out our faith day by day.

Alternative prayer says much the same, though in a longer form. Thanks to God that God has met us in Jesus; that through his life and death Jesus declared God's love, gave us grace, and put us on the way to glory.

So: may we share his risen life, bring life to others, give light to the world -a handy statement of the Xtian's day by day duty.

And: we are given hope from God in Xst ; may God keep us firm in this hope so that we, and all people, may know and experience the freedom of Christ & that in God's time the whole earth may come to praise God's name – 'he will come again in glory' we have said in the creed.

The Presider gives us God's blessing – many and various beginnings, either related to the season of the year or a specific prayer for some gift or grace from God, followed by the Trinitarian blessing.

And the service finishes with the Presider dismissing us – our service ends, not with an exhortation to go out and find some coffee and the Sunday paper BUT to go and love and serve in the name of the Lord.

You've heard what it's all about, the presider says, you've been given, God's grace and been made one with Jesus – now go out, as the apostles did, and get on with it, proclaiming in word and deed OJJC's message of release, recovery, freedom and God's favour.