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Updates and Reflections on the Eucharistic Prayer (EP) since the International Anglican Liturgical Consultation (IALC) Dublin Report 1995

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Abstract

This paper revisits the 1995 IALC Dublin Statement on the Eucharist, focusing on the Eucharistic Prayer. It reviews newer insights and studies on the Eucharistic Prayer, and suggests how that broadly may impact subsequent Anglican use of ‘classical patterns’. It also puts forward suggestions and questions posed by some more recent Anglican revisions as well as revisiting some areas of the Dublin Statement that are still useful or so far have not been fully embraced in Anglican liturgical revision.

Keywords: consecration; contextualization; eschatology; Eucharistic Prayer; gestures; structures; Trinity

Facebook users often get a message that says: ‘A lot has happened on Facebook since you last logged in. Here are some notifications you’ve received from friends.’ A similar message is appropriate in our context: a lot has happened in studies and reflections on the Eucharistic Prayer (EP) since 1995, and I hope to mention some notifications, though I certainly make no claim to know everything that has happened, and probably not everything that I know has happened will be directly helpful in the Anglican context.

In New Testament and early Christian studies it became increasingly popular to locate the New Testament accounts of the Last Supper and Lord’s Supper in the wider context of the Greek Symposium and Roman Convivium, and to be concerned with the minutiae of those meal ceremonies.¹ There are signs in some more recent studies of a move away from endless discussions on the presumed

¹Dennis E. Smith, *From Symposium to Eucharist: The Banquet in the Early Christian World* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003); Hal Tausig, *In the Beginning Was the Meal: Social Experimentation and Early Christian Identity* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009). More recently, see also Susan Marks and Hal Taussig (eds.), *Meals in Early Judaism. Social Formation at the Table* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).



commonalities with Greco-Roman meals to focus instead on what was different about the Last Supper. In other words, the bread and wine and the interpretive words as well as their context in the greater echoes of Old Testament themes in each Gospel, using the insights and methods espoused by Richard Hays.² This entails a move away from isolating the narratives as Form Criticism taught us to do, and discussing Greco-Roman banquets and instead to view each narrative as it is embedded in the overall theology of each of the Synoptic Gospels, and 1 Corinthians.

Second, it is now fairly well established that in the pre-Nicene period, the term 'Eucharist' covered a variety of meals, and only later – perhaps as the canon of Scripture became established – was the Eucharist always and only a remembrance of the Last Supper, and this may account for the words of institution being incorporated into the Eucharistic Prayer from the fourth century onwards.³

Third, since 1995 a number of texts have become available. From Egypt, the Barcelona Manuscript, though available in its entirety in 1995, was little known. This anaphora has been supplemented by translations of some of the fragmentary texts of the White Monastery.⁴ Achim Budde has made an important contribution on the development of Egyptian St Basil.⁵ A new treatment of the Coptic anaphora of Gregory has been published by Nicholas Newman.⁶ Professor Baby Varghese has published two volumes of the Syrian Orthodox anaphoras with English translations.⁷ An important study on the Georgian anaphora of St James was published by Lili Khevsuriani, Mzekala Shanidze, Michael Kavtaria and Tinatin Tseradze, with a Greek retroversion by Stéphane Verhelst.⁸ Though not in English, Gabriel Winkler and Hans-Jürgen Feulner have made available critical texts of the Armenian anaphoras, and mention should also be made of the recent study of the anaphora of St John Chrysostom by Stefano Parenti.⁹ Fresh insights on the Ethiopian Orthodox anaphoras have been made by Emmuel Fritsch.¹⁰ Elsa Rose has

²Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2016). See on St Mark, for example, Timothy C. Gray, *The Temple and the Gospel of Mark* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008); Kelli S. O'Brien, *The Use of Scripture in the Markan Passion Narrative* (London: T & T Clark 2010); Rikki E. Watts, *Isaiah's New Exodus in Mark* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 1997).

³See Andrew McGowan, *Ascetic Eucharists: Food and Drink in Early Christian Ritual Meals* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999).

⁴R. Roca-Puig, *Anafora De Barcelona* (Barcelona: Gratos, 1994); Mary Farag, 'The Anaphora of St. Thomas the Apostle. Translation and Commentary', *Le Muséon* 125 (2010), pp. 317-61.

⁵Achim Budde, *Die ägyptische Basilius-Anaphora. Text- Kommentar Geschichte* (Münster: Aschendorff, 2004).

⁶Nicholas Newman, *The Liturgy of St. Gregory the Theologian: Critical Text with Translation and Commentary* (Belleville: Saint Dominic's Media Inc., 2019).

⁷Baby Varghese, *Awsār Slāwōt'o 4. West Syrian Anaphoras* (Kottayam: St. Ephrem Ecumenical Research Institute, 2017); *Book of the Order of the Anaphoras according to the Tradition of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church* (Kottayam: Malankara Orthodox Church Publications, 2021).

⁸Lili Khevsuriani, Mzekala Shanidze, Michael Kavtaria and Tinatin Tseradze, with a Greek retroversion by Stéphane Verhelst, *Liturgia Ibero-Graeca Sancti Jacobi* (Münster: Aschendorff, 2011).

⁹G. Winkler, *Die Basilius-Anaphora* (Rome: Pontificio Istituto Orientale, 2005); *Die Armenische Liturgie des Sahak* (Rome: Pontificio Istituto Orientale, 2011); *Die Jakobus-Liturgie* (Rome: Pontificio Istituto Orientale, 2013); Hans-Jürgen Feulner, *Die Armenische Athanasius-Anaphora* (Rome: Pontificio Istituto Orientale, 2001); Stefano Parenti, *L'Anafora di Crisostom* (Münster: Aschendorff, 2020).

¹⁰Emmanuel Fritsche, 'The Anaphoras of the Ge'ez Churches: A Challenging Orthodoxy', in Cesare Giraud (ed.), *The Anaphora :Genesis of the Institution Narrative in Light of the Anaphora of Addai and Mari* (Edizioni Orientalia Christiana; Valore: Lilsme, 2013), pp. 275-316.

made available in English many of the Gallican anaphoras.¹¹ Work done by Dominic Serra, Matthew Olver and Christiaan Kappes on the Roman *canon missae* also shed some light on that Eucharistic Prayer.¹² All this is to say that for a communion that makes appeal to the consensus of the first five centuries, we have some new information about anaphoras from that period, and also how subsequently in the following five centuries the patterns were maintained but developed.

Another important factor is that several new Anglican liturgies have appeared subsequently to the 1995 report, some emerging simultaneously with it, and not all having the benefit of the Dublin report. These include West Indies 1995, the 1995 Australian Prayer Book, *Common Worship* of the Church of England 2000 and the 2004 Irish Prayer Book, amongst others. Additionally, the diocese of Sydney Australia produced its own liturgy as an alternative to the 1995 book, and it seems not to have had much regard for the International Anglican Liturgical Consultation (IALC) recommendations concerning the structure of EPs.

A further factor is that, what constitutes an Anglican liturgy is now contested. The Anglican Church in North America produced a Prayer Book in 2019; the Free Church of England has a new interim revision; and *Divine Worship* of the Ordinariate presents us with a Cranmerian Eucharist with the Roman *canon missae*, as well as another alternative EP. Given the fact that, for example, the diocese of Ballarat in Australia at one time gave permission for use of the Roman rite; that the South African Prayer Book included one of the Roman EPs, and one in the West Indies Prayer Book is based directly on one of the Roman EPs, boundaries of what is Anglican have become less clear than in the past, and a variety of EPs now fill the Anglican landscape. It has become like the expanding universe.

Out of this abundance, I would like to make some observations for further thought.

The Dublin Statement outlined three possible structures for the Eucharistic Prayer.¹³ The outlines gave priority to the Syro-Byzantine pattern, but the reality is that many EPs are still constructed in the shadow of the perceived structure of the Roman *canon missae*, and with either a conscious or unconscious acceptance of the Roman decision not to have an epiclesis for the elements after the narrative, which in the Roman context, might undermine the conviction that the recitation of the words of institution effect consecration. This, so I understand, is a position held by many Anglo-Catholics. The fact that this pattern is in use needs to be acknowledged. Furthermore, though popular, there is nothing sacrosanct about the Syro-Byzantine pattern and so perhaps the variety of patterns in antiquity needs to be acknowledged, with emphasis that all are valid, and that Anglicans do not give priority to one pattern over another. All are welcome at the table!

¹¹Els Rose, *The Gothic Missal* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2017).

¹²Dominic Serra, 'The Roman Canon: The Theological Significance of its Structure and Syntax', *Ecclesia Orans* 20 (2001), pp. 99-128; Christiaan Kappes, 'Lactantius and Creation of the Roman Canon for Imperial Liturgy', *Questiones Liturgique* 100 (2020), pp. 84-137; Matthew S.C. Olver, 'Hoc Est Sacrificium Laudis: The Influence of Hebrews on the Origin, Structure, and Theology of the Roman Canon Missae', PhD dissertation, Marquette University 2018.

¹³David R. Holeton (ed.), *Renewing the Anglican Eucharist: Findings of the Fifth International Anglican Liturgical Consultation, Dublin, Eire, 1995* (Cambridge: Grove Books, 1996), pp. 25-26.

The opening section of Dublin underscored the importance of the doctrine of the Trinity. The structures of the EP are all capable of expressing Trinitarian belief, but the tendency has still been to follow the Western acceptance of those African Councils which insisted that public prayer be addressed to the Father.¹⁴ This tends to undermine the mature doctrine of the Trinity, with all the christological and pneumatological sections being addressed to the Father. The Syrian Orthodox anaphoras nearly all transition to address the Son in the anamnesis.¹⁵ The Church of Ireland, in its third Eucharistic prayer, has boldly given full Trinitarian expression, and addresses the three divisions of the EP first to the Father, the next to the Son, and the third to the Holy Spirit. This might suggest itself as an important paradigm to other Provinces. If many Christians find the Trinity confusing, it is not helped by only addressing EPs to the Father. The anaphora of St James is also a good example to encourage an unpacking of the Spirit's work in salvation history in the section which contains the epiclesis.

The Dublin Statement under Thanksgiving and Blessing noted: '5. The Institution narrative is part of the series of mighty acts which we remember. Rather than being a formula for consecration it is best understood as the mandate for the performance of the eucharistic action, and the promise of Christ's presence'.¹⁶ Dominic Serra has argued that in the early manuscripts of the Roman *canon missae*, there is a comma before the words, emphasizing their use as a warrant for the offering rather than as a consecration formula.¹⁷ Ambrose's interpretation of the words are just that – Ambrose's *interpretation*. There are still too many clergy who seem to make the narrative a formula for consecration, particularly by their use of manual acts, gestures, touching and genuflecting, so that, as one scholar remarked to me, it makes Jesus dizzy.¹⁸ Paul Bradshaw has argued that when in the early documents such as Justin Martyr or Cyril of Jerusalem the narrative is quoted, it is in a catechetical context (which seems to be its use in 1 Cor. 11) and not as being part of the Eucharistic Prayer.¹⁹ It is acknowledged by most liturgical scholars that Addai and Mari is our earliest Eucharistic Prayer that has been in continual use, and of course it has no narrative but only a reference to 'the example that is from you'. Interestingly, one or two of the Syrian Orthodox anaphoras and Ethiopian Orthodox, give a very brief precis of the narrative. For example, the anaphora of Thomas of Harkel has:

He took bread and wine and blessed and sanctified and broke and gave to his apostles saying: take, and partake of them and do thus. Whenever you receive it, believe and be confirmed that you are eating my body and drinking my blood for the memory of my death until I come.

¹⁴See Edward Kilmartin, 'The Liturgical Prayer in Early African Legislation', *Ephemerides Liturgicae* 99 (1985), pp. 105-27.

¹⁵See further, Bryan D. Spinks, 'The Place of Christ in Liturgical Prayer: What Jungmann Omitted to Say', in Bryan D. Spinks (ed.), *The Place of Christ in Liturgical Prayer. Trinity, Christology and Liturgical Theology* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2008), pp. 1-19.

¹⁶Holeton, *Renewing the Anglican Eucharist*, p. 11.

¹⁷Serra, 'The Roman Canon'.

¹⁸My thanks to Canon Dr Kirkley Sands for this à propos remark.

¹⁹Paul F. Bradshaw, *Eucharistic Origins* (London: SPCK, 2004), chapter 1.

In order to reinforce the Dublin Statement, Provinces might compile an EP that has a precis of the Institution.

An interesting hallmark of a good many of the later Syrian Orthodox anaphoras is to unpack and expand the eschatological references in the anamnesis.²⁰ The concern for petition to be delivered from the pit, the fires of Gehenna, and the worm, are probably not appealing to the postmodern West, but other eschatological themes and implications could well be developed at this point in EPs.

As some will know, in 1996 the Church of England Liturgical Commission published new EPs, which for non-theological reasons failed to pass in the House of Laity of the General Synod. One of those prayers was mainly the compilation of Bishop Kenneth Stevenson. For his PhD, Kenneth had studied the nineteenth-century Church, the Catholic Apostolic Church, sometimes called Irvingite. Its liturgiographers compiled an EP that had a variety of proper prefaces, but these were inserted at various points in the prayer, and not simply at the beginning. And of course, the Roman *canon missae* had proper inserts for the *Hanc igitur* and the *Nobis quoque* in addition to the proper preface. Kenneth's proposed prayer did the same. This might be circulated, with the suggestion that according to the feast or season, the points of insertion might vary. Thus, creation at the beginning, but Christ's works in the post-Sanctus, the work of the Spirit before or after the epiclesis. It should be recalled that the East Syrian anaphoras of Theodore and Nestorius have the epiclesis just before the final doxology.

The outline for EPs in Dublin reveals where we all were, and where we might still be now. These patterns are Euro-North Atlantic extrapolations from history. An important question for our time now is whether these are too constricting for some Anglican Provinces who wish to engage more seriously with contextualization. Are there broader guidelines or suggestions for Provinces who wish to author EPs that depart from the classical structures? An interesting ad hoc Eucharistic Prayer was composed recently for Emancipation Day in Barbados, and although this led to an elongated preface in the section before the narrative of institution, it is a reminder that contextualization needs encouragement. The 1995 West Indies Prayer Book is based on material from the 1980 ASB and the ECUSA 1979 Prayer Book, and the Roman Mass, but, as I heard from many in a recent visit to Codrington College, it lacks a Caribbean Heart.

Sixteenth-century arguments over presence and sacrifice continue to be an issue in some Provinces, and there is a clear difference between some Provinces how both are phrased and articulated. Dublin was helpful, but more needs to be said. Since in the ancient classical world, religious meals and the concept of offering were inseparable, it is possible to see why some early writers saw the eucharist as a fulfilment of Mal. 1.11, though how the meal was a sacrifice was left undeveloped and undefined. It would have been unthinkable not to have some form of gift exchange in Roman culture, and the whole intention of the exchange between earth and heaven is perhaps summed up in the *Supplices te*. Because of sixteenth-century

²⁰Bryan D. Spinks, "The Expansion of the Theme of Judgement in the Anamnesis and Epiclesis: A Feature in Some of the Syrian Orthodox Anaphoras, Illustrated by Those Attributed to Philoxenus of Mabbug", forthcoming in a festschrift for Baby Varghese *The Harp* (Kottayam: St Ephrem Ecumenical Research Institute).

debate and division, great exception was taken to the 'offering' in the Roman *canon missae*, though all fourth-century anaphoras have the concept of offering somewhere. Some contemporary Anglican EPs have 'bring before', 'bringing', 'set before', which in the English language may sound different from 'offer', but in the Latin, Greek and Syriac antecedents they are synonyms and mean exactly the same thing. Here I wish to quote from a preparatory essay for Dublin that Kenneth Stevenson and I compiled which is still relevant:

All that we do in [Christ's] Name is in, with and through the one obedient and victorious Christ, who is now before the Father in eternity. Eternity is outside space-time, yet all our language is space- and time-bound. Thus, whether we do this in memory or remembrance, or celebrate, or bring before, or plead the sacrifice, re-present, or offer (all of which expressions and ideas are found in the classical divines), the eucharistic action is performed by an eschatological community in Christ at a moment when time and eternity become one in the presence of God. In this context, 'we offer this bread and cup' is no more or less legitimate than 'with this bread and this cup we do as our Saviour commanded.'²¹

Here I return to the Roman *canon missae*. I personally do not think it a good EP. However, the work by Matthew Olver demonstrates that it was a conscious working out of a meaning of offering sacrifice and praise from the Letter to the Hebrews, and its authors regarded it as biblical.²² Christiaan Kappes has also argued, convincingly to my mind, that it reflects the general Roman religious thought of Varro, mediated through Lactantius, and it used Roman legal language, and it was primarily for the Imperial court.²³ We know from Ambrose that much of it is at least as old as the fourth century. Sixteenth-century Catholic and Protestant polemicists read back into its wording doctrines that they either espoused or denounced that never existed when the *canon missae* first took shape, and in honest scholarship, this needs to be acknowledged, and the sixteenth-century eisegesis on both sides of the Reformation disputes need to be left behind, and not simply by a deafening silence on the subject.

As far as presence is concerned, while some evangelicals have voiced opposition to an epiclesis calling for change in the elements, on the grounds that it is unbiblical to call the Spirit on inanimate objects, since the new EP of the Free Church of England does have an epiclesis, we may assume that the evangelicals in that Church see that the Spirit is called to make inanimate objects life-giving, which is a concern reflected in many of the Syrian Orthodox anaphoras. Here the 2008 study on the epiclesis in Anglicanism by David Kennedy is important.²⁴

I conclude with two questions:

²¹David R. Holeton (ed.), *Revising the Eucharist: Groundwork for the Anglican Communion* (Alcuin/GROW Liturgical Study 27; Bramcote: Grove Books, 1994), p. 55.

²²Olver, *Hoc Est Sacrificium Laudis*.

²³Kappes, 'Lactantius and Creation of the Roman Canon for Imperial Liturgy'.

²⁴David Kennedy, *Eucharistic Sacramentality in an Ecumenical Context: The Anglican Epiclesis* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2008).

Why is it that clergy (Roman Catholic as well as Anglican) tend to use the *shortest* EP available? Is thanksgiving a chore to be rushed?

When it comes to rubrics directing gestures, in my experience most laity are not watching the antics of clergy at the table, but they are concerned with their own devotions. Is it time to stress again that drawing attention to one particular part of the EP detracts from current understanding that the whole prayer sets apart, and it should not be choreographed at certain points? As I used to tell my students, I was taught not to play with my food.