Definition of Liturgy

(From the Catholic Encyclopedia)

Liturgy (leitourgia) is a Greek composite word meaning originally a public duty, a service to the state undertaken by a citizen. Its elements are leitos (from leos = laos, people) meaning public, and ergo (obsolete in the present stem, used in future erxo, etc.), to do. From this we have leitourgos, "a man who performs a public duty", "a public servant", often used as equivalent to the Roman lictor; then leitourgeo, "to do such a duty", leitourgema, its performance, and leitourgia, the public duty itself.

At Athens the leitourgia was the public service performed by the wealthier citizens at their own expense, such as the office of gymnasiarch, who superintended the gymnasium, that of choregos, who paid the singers of a chorus in the theatre, that of the hestiator, who gave a banquet to his tribe, of the trierarchus, who provided a warship for the state. The meaning of the word liturgy is then extended to cover any general service of a public kind. In the Septuagint it (and the verb leitourgeo) is used for the public service of the temple (e.g., Exodus 38:27; 39:12, etc.). Thence it comes to have a religious sense as the function of the priests, the ritual service of the temple (e.g., Joel 1:9, 2:17, etc.). In the New Testament this religious meaning has become definitely established. In Luke 1:23, Zachary goes home when "the days of his liturgy" (ai hemerai tes leitourgias autou) are over. In Hebrews 8:6, the high priest of the New Law "has obtained a better liturgy", that is a better kind of public religious service than that of the Temple.

So in Christian use liturgy meant the public official service of the Church, that corresponded to the official service of the Temple in the Old Law.

We must now distinguish two senses in which the word was and is still commonly used. These two senses often lead to confusion.

On the one hand, liturgy often means the whole complex of official services, all the rites, ceremonies, prayers, and sacraments of the Church, as opposed to private devotions. In this sense we speak of the arrangement of all these services in certain set forms (including the canonical hours, administration of sacraments, etc.), used officially by any local church, as the liturgy of such a church — the Liturgy of Antioch, the Roman Liturgy, and so on. So liturgy means rite; we speak indifferently of the Byzantine Rite or the Byzantine Liturgy. In the same sense we distinguish the official services from others by calling them liturgical; those services are liturgical which are contained in any of the official books (see LITURGICAL BOOKS) of a rite. In the Roman Church, for instance, Compline is a liturgical service, the Rosary is not.

The other sense of the word liturgy, now the common one in all Eastern Churches, restricts it to the chief official service only — the Sacrifice of the Holy Eucharist, which in our rite we call the Mass. This is now practically the only sense in which leitourgia is used in Greek, or in its derived forms (e.g., Arabic al-liturgiah) by any Eastern Christian. When a Greek speaks of the "Holy Liturgy" he means only the Eucharistic Service. For
the sake of clearness it is perhaps better for us too to keep the word to this sense, at any rate in speaking of Eastern ecclesiastical matters; for instance, not to speak of the Byzantine canonical hours as liturgical services. Even in Western Rites the word "official" or "canonical" will do as well as "liturgical" in the general sense, so that we too may use Liturgy only for the Holy Eucharist.

It should be noted also that, whereas we may speak of our Mass quite correctly as the Liturgy, we should never use the word Mass for the Eucharistic Sacrifice in any Eastern rite. Mass (missa) is the name for that service in the Latin Rites only. It has never been used either in Latin or Greek for any Eastern rite. Their word, corresponding exactly to our Mass, is Liturgy. The Byzantine Liturgy is the service that corresponds to our Roman Mass; to call it the Byzantine (or, worse still, the Greek) Mass is as wrong as naming any other of their services after ours, as calling their Hesperinos Vespers, or their Orthros Lauds. When people go even as far as calling their books and vestments after ours, saying Missal when they mean Euchologion, alb when they mean sticharion, the confusion becomes hopeless.

The origin of the liturgy

At the outset of this discussion we are confronted by three of the most difficult questions of Christian archæology, namely: From what date was there a fixed and regulated service such as we can describe as a formal Liturgy? How far was this service uniform in various Churches? How far are we able to reconstruct its forms and arrangement?

With regard to the first question it must be said that an Apostolic Liturgy in the sense of an arrangement of prayers and ceremonies, like our present ritual of the Mass, did not exist. For some time the Eucharistic Service was in many details fluid and variable. It was not all written down and read from fixed forms, but in part composed by the officiating bishop. As for ceremonies, at first they were not elaborated as now. All ceremonial evolves gradually out of certain obvious actions done at first with no idea of ritual, but simply because they had to be done for convenience. The bread and wine were brought to the altar when they were wanted, the lessons were read from a place where they could best be heard, hands were washed because they were soiled. Out of these obvious actions ceremony developed, just as our vestments developed out of the dress of the first Christians. It follows then of course that, when there was no fixed Liturgy at all, there could be no question of absolute uniformity among the different Churches.

And yet the whole series of actions and prayers did not depend solely on the improvisation of the celebrating bishop. Whereas at one time scholars were inclined to conceive the services of the first Christians as vague and undefined, recent research shows us a very striking uniformity in certain salient elements of the service at a very early date. The tendency among students now is to admit something very like a regulated Liturgy, apparently to a great extent uniform in the chief cities, back even to the first or early second century. In the first place the fundamental outline of the rite of the Holy Eucharist was given by the account of the Last Supper. What our Lord had done then, that same thing He told His followers to do in memory of Him. It would not have been a
Eucharist at all if the celebrant had not at least done as our Lord did the night before He died. So we have everywhere from the very beginning at least this uniform nucleus of a Liturgy: bread and wine are brought to the celebrant in vessels (a plate and a cup); he puts them on a table — the altar; standing before it in the natural attitude of prayer he takes them in his hands, gives thanks, as our Lord had done, says again the words of institution, breaks the Bread and gives the consecrated Bread and Wine to the people in communion. The absence of the words of institution in the Nestorian Rite is no argument against the universality of this order. It is a rite that developed quite late; the parent liturgy has the words.

But we find much more than this essential nucleus in use in every Church from the first century. The Eucharist was always celebrated at the end of a service of lessons, psalms, prayers, and preaching, which was itself merely a continuation of the service of the synagogue. So we have everywhere this double function; first a synagogue service Christianized, in which the holy books were read, psalms were sung, prayers said by the bishop in the name of all (the people answering "Amen" in Hebrew, as had their Jewish forefathers), and homilies, explanations of what had been read, were made by the bishop or priests, just as they had been made in the synagogues by the learned men and elders (e.g., Luke 4:16-27). This is what was known afterwards as the Liturgy of the Catechumens. Then followed the Eucharist, at which only the baptized were present. Two other elements of the service in the earliest time soon disappeared. One was the Love-feast (agape) that came just before the Eucharist; the other was the spiritual exercises, in which people were moved by the Holy Ghost to prophesy, speak in divers tongues, heal the sick by prayer, and so on. This function — to which 1 Corinthians 14:1-14, and the Didache (10:7, etc.) refer — obviously opened the way to disorders; from the second century it gradually disappears. The Eucharistic Agape seems to have disappeared at about the same time. The other two functions remained joined, and still exist in the liturgies of all rites. In them the service crystallized into more or less set forms from the beginning. In the first half the alternation of lessons, psalms, collects, and homilies leaves little room for variety. For obvious reasons a lesson from a Gospel was read last, in the place of honour as the fulfilment of all the others; it was preceded by other readings whose number, order, and arrangement varied considerably (see LESSONS IN THE LITURGY). A chant of some kind would very soon accompany the entrance of the clergy and the beginning of the service. We also hear very soon of litanies of intercession said by one person to each clause of which the people answer with some short formula (see ANTIOCHENE LITURGY; ALEXANDRINE LITURGY; KYRIE ELEISON). The place and number of the homilies would also vary for a long time. It is in the second part of the service, the Eucharist itself, that we find a very striking crystallization of the forms, and a uniformity even in the first or second century that goes far beyond the mere nucleus described above.

Already in the New Testament — apart from the account of the Last Supper — there are some indexes that point to liturgical forms. There were already readings from the Sacred Books (1 Timothy 4:13; 1 Thessalonians 5:27; Colossians 4:16), there were sermons (Acts 20:7), psalms and hymns (1 Corinthians 14:26; Colossians 3:16; Ephesians 5:19). 1 Timothy 2:1-3, implies public liturgical prayers for all classes of people. People lifted up
their hands at prayers (1 Timothy 2:8), men with uncovered heads (1 Corinthians 11:4), women covered (1 Corinthians 11:5). There was a kiss of peace (1 Corinthians 16:20; 2 Corinthians 13:12; 1 Thessalonians 5:26). There was an offering of goods for the poor (Romans 15:26; 2 Corinthians 9:13) called by the special name "communion" (koinonia). The people answered "Amen" after prayers (1 Corinthians 14:16). The word Eucharist has already a technical meaning (1 Corinthians 14:16). The famous passage, 1 Corinthians 11:20–29, gives us the outline of the breaking of bread and thanksgiving (Eucharist) that followed the earlier part of the service. Hebrews 13:10 (cf. 1 Corinthians 10:16–21), shows that to the first Christians the table of the Eucharist was an altar. After the consecration prayers followed (Acts 2:42). St. Paul "breaks bread" (= the consecration), then communicates, then preaches (Acts 20:11).

Acts 2:42, gives us an idea of the liturgical Synaxis in order: They "persevere in the teaching of the Apostles" (this implies the readings and homilies), "communicate in the breaking of bread" (consecration and communion) and "in prayers". So we have already in the New Testament all the essential elements that we find later in the organized liturgies: lessons, psalms, hymns, sermons, prayers, consecration, communion. (For all this see F. Probst: "Liturgie der drei ersten christl. Jahrhunderte", Tübingen, 1870, c. i; and the texts collected in Cabrol and Leclercq; "Monumenta ecclesiæ liturgica", I, Paris, 1900, pp. 1-51.) It has been thought that there are in the New Testament even actual formulæ used in the liturgy. The Amen is certainly one. St. Paul's insistence on the form "For ever and ever, Amen" (eis tous aionas ton aionon amen. — Romans 16:27; Galatians 1:5; 1 Timothy 1:17; cf. Hebrews 13:21; 1 Peter 1:11; 5:11; Revelation 1:6, etc.) seems to argue that it is a liturgical form well known to the Christians whom he addresses, as it was to the Jews. There are other short hymns (Romans 13:11-2; Ephesians 5:14; 1 Timothy 3:16; 2 Timothy 2:11-3), which may well be liturgical formulæ.

In the Apostolic Fathers the picture of the early Christian Liturgy becomes clearer; we have in them a definite and to some extent homogeneous ritual. But this must be understood. There was certainly no set form of prayers and ceremonies such as we see in our present Missals and Euchologia; still less was anything written down and read from a book. The celebrating bishop spoke freely, his prayers being to some extent improvised. And yet this improvising was bound by certain rules. In the first place, no one who speaks continually on the same subjects says new things each time. Modern sermons and modern ex tempore prayers show how easily a speaker falls into set forms, how constantly he repeats what come to be, at least for him, fixed formulæ. Moreover, the dialogue form of prayer that we find in use in the earliest monuments necessarily supposes some constant arrangement. The people answer and echo what the celebrant and the deacons say with suitable exclaims. They could not do so unless they heard more or less the same prayers each time. They heard from the altar such phrases as: "The Lord be with you", or "Lift up your hearts", and it was because they recognized these forms, had heard them often before, that they could answer at once in the way expected.

We find too very early that certain general themes are constant. For instance our Lord had given thanks just before He spoke the words of institution. So it was understood that
every celebrant began the prayer of consecration — the Eucharistic prayer — by thanking God for His various mercies. So we find always what we still have in our modern prefaces — a prayer thanking God for certain favours and graces, that are named, just where that preface comes, shortly before the consecration (Justin, "Apol., " I, xiii, lxv). An intercession for all kinds of people also occurs very early, as we see from references to it (e.g., Justin, "Apol., " I, xiv, lxv). In this prayer the various classes of people would naturally be named in more or less the same order. A profession of faith would almost inevitably open that part of the service in which only the faithful were allowed to take part (Justin, "Apol."., I, xiii, lxi). It could not have been long before the archetype of all Christian prayer — the Our Father — was said publicly in the Liturgy. The moments at which these various prayers were said would very soon become fixed, The people expected them at certain points, there was no reason for changing their order; on the contrary to do so would disturb the faithful. One knows too how strong conservative instinct is in any religion, especially in one that, like Christianity, has always looked back with unbounded reverence to the golden age of the first Fathers. So we must conceive the Liturgy of the first two centuries as made up of somewhat free improvisations on fixed themes in a definite order; and we realize too how naturally under these circumstances the very words used would be repeated — at first no doubt only the salient clauses — till they became fixed forms. The ritual, certainly of the simplest kind, would become stereotyped even more easily. The things that had to be done, the bringing up of the bread and wine, the collection of alms and so on, even more than the prayers, would be done always at the same point. A change here would be even more disturbing than a change in the order of the prayers.

A last consideration to be noted is the tendency of new Churches to imitate the customs of the older ones. Each new Christian community was formed by joining itself to the bond already formed. The new converts received their first missionaries, their faith and ideas from a mother Church. These missionaries would naturally celebrate the rites as they had seen them done, or as they had done them themselves in the mother Church. And their converts would imitate them, carry on the same tradition. Intercourse between the local Churches would further accentuate this uniformity among people who were very keenly conscious of forming one body with one Faith, one Baptism, and one Eucharist. It is not then surprising that the allusions to the Liturgy in the first Fathers of various countries, when compared show us a homogeneous rite at any rate in its main outlines, a constant type of service, though it was subject to certain local modifications. It would not be surprising if from this common early Liturgy one uniform type had evolved for the whole Catholic world. We know that that is not the case. The more or less fluid ritual of the first two centuries crystallized into different liturgies in East and West; difference of language, the insistence on one point in one place, the greater importance given to another feature elsewhere, brought about our various rites. But there is an obvious unity underlying all the old rites that goes back to the earliest age. The medieval idea that all are derived from one parent rite is not so absurd, if we remember that the parent was not a written or stereotyped Liturgy, but rather a general type of service.

The liturgy in the first three centuries
For the first period we have of course no complete description. We must reconstruct what we can from the allusions to the Holy Eucharist in the Apostolic Fathers and apologists. Justin Martyr alone gives us a fairly complete outline of the rite that he knew. The Eucharist described in the "Teaching of the Twelve Apostles" (most authorities now put the date of this work at the end of the first century) in some ways lies apart from the general development. We have here still the free "prophesying" (10:7), the Eucharist is still joined to the Agape (10:1), the reference to the actual consecration is vague. The likeness between the prayers of thanksgiving (9-10) and the Jewish forms for blessing bread and wine on the Sabbath (given in the "Berakoth" treatise of the Talmud; cf. Sabatier, "La Didache", Paris, 1885, p. 99) points obviously to derivation from them. It has been suggested that the rite here described is not our Eucharist at all; others (Paul Drews) think that it is a private Eucharist distinct from the official public rite. On the other hand, it seems clear from the whole account in chapters 9 and 10 that we have here a real Eucharist, and the existence of private celebrations remains to be proved. The most natural explanation is certainly that of a Eucharist of a very archaic nature, not fully described. At any rate we have these liturgical points from the book. The "Our Father" is a recognized formula: it is to be said three times every day (8:2-3). The Liturgy is a eucharist and a sacrifice to be celebrated by breaking bread and giving thanks on the "Lord's Day" by people who have confessed their sins (14:1). Only the baptized are admitted to it (9:5). The wine is mentioned first, then the broken bread; each has a formula of giving thanks to God for His revelation in Christ with the conclusion: "To thee be glory forever" (9:1, 4). There follows a thanksgiving for various benefits; the creation and our sanctification by Christ are named (10:1-4); then comes a prayer for the Church ending with the form: "Maranatha. Amen"; in it occurs the form: "Hosanna to the God of David" (10:5-6).

The First Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians (written probably between 90 and 100) contains an abundance of liturgical matter, much more than is apparent at the first glance. That the long prayer in chapters 59-61 is a magnificent example of the kind of prayers said in the liturgy of the first century has always been admitted (e.g., Duchesne, "Origines du Culte", 49-51); that the letter, especially in this part, is full of liturgical forms is also evident. The writer quotes the Sanctus (Holy, holy, holy Lord of Sabaoth; all creation is full of his glory) from Isaiah 6:3, and adds that "we assembled in unity cry (this) as with one mouth" (34:7). The end of the long prayer is a doxology invoking Christ and finishing with the form: "now and for generations of generations and for ages of ages. Amen" (111:3). This too is certainly a liturgical formula. There are many others. But we can find more in I Clem. than merely a promiscuous selection of formulæ. A comparison of the text with the first known Liturgy actually written down, that of the "Eighth Book of the Apostolic Constitutions" (written long afterwards, in the fifth century in Syria) reveals a most startling likeness. Not only do the same ideas occur in the same order, but there are whole passages — just those that in I Clem. have most the appearance of liturgical formulæ — that recur word for word in the "Apost. Const."

In the "Apost. Const." the Eucharistic prayer begins, as in all liturgies, with the dialogue: "Lift up your hearts", etc. Then, beginning: "It is truly meet and just", comes a long thanksgiving for various benefits corresponding to what we call the preface. Here occurs
a detailed description of the first benefit we owe to God — the creation. The various things created — the heavens and earth, sun, moon and stars, fire and sea, and so on, are enumerated at length ("Apost. Const.", VIII, xii, 6-27). The prayer ends with the Sanctus. I Clem., xx, contains a prayer echoing the same ideas exactly, in which the very same words constantly occur. The order in which the creatures are mentioned is the same. Again "Apost. Const.", VIII, xii, 27, introduces the Sanctus in the same way as I Clem., xxxiv, 5-6, where the author actually says he is quoting the Liturgy. This same preface in "Apost. Const." (loc. cit.), remembering the Patriarchs of the Old Law, names Abel, Cain, Seth, Henoch, Noah, Sodom, Lot, Abraham, Melchisedech, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Josue. The parallel passage in I Clem. (ix xii) names Enoch, Noah, Lot, Sodom, Abraham, Rahab, Josue: we may note at once two other parallels to this list containing again almost the same list of names — Hebrews 11:4-31, and Justin, "Dialogue", xix, cxi, cxxxi, cxxxviii. The long prayer in I Clem. (lix-lxi) is full of ideas and actual phrases that come again in "Apost. Const.", VIII. Compare for instance I Clem., lix, 2-4, with "Apost. Const.", VIII, X, 22-xi, 5 (which is part of the celebrant's prayer during the litany of the faithful: Brightman, "Eastern Liturgies", p. 12), and xiii, 10 (prayer during the litany that follows the great intercession. Brightman, p. 24). Other no less striking parallels may be seen in Drews, "Untersuchungen über die sogenn. clement. Liturgie," 14-43. It is not only with the Liturgy of "Apost. Const." that I Clem. has these extraordinary resemblances. I Clem., lix, 4, echoes exactly the clauses of the celebrant's prayer during the intercession in the Alexandrine Rite (Greek St. Mark. Brightman, 131). These parallel passages cannot all be mere coincidences (Lightfoot realized this, but suggests no explanation."The Apostolic Fathers", London, 1890, I, II, p. 71).

The question then occurs: What is the relation between I Clement and — in the first place — the Liturgy of "Apost. Const."? The suggestion that first presents itself is that the later document ("Apost. Const.") is quoting the earlier one (I Clem.). This is Harnack's view ("Gesch. der altchristl. Litteratur", I, Leipzig, 1893, pp. 42-43), but it is exceedingly unlikely. In that case the quotations would be more exact, the order of I Clem. would be kept; the prayers in the Liturgy have no appearance of being quotations or conscious compositions of fragments from earlier books; nor, if the "Apost. Const." were quoting I Clem., would there be reduplications such as we have seen above (VIII, xi, 22-xi, 5, and xiii, 10).

Years ago Ferdinand Probst spent a great part of his life in trying to prove that the Liturgy of the "Apostolic Constitutions" was the universal primitive Liturgy of the whole Church. To this endeavour he applied an enormous amount of erudition. In his "Liturgie der drei ersten christlichen Jahrhunderte" (Tübingen, 1870) and again in his "Liturgie des vierten Jahrhunderts und deren Reform" (Münster, 1893), he examined a vast number of texts of the Fathers, always with a view to find in them allusions to the Liturgy in question. But he overdid his identifications hopelessly. He sees an allusion in every text that vaguely refers to a subject named in the Liturgy. Also his books are very involved and difficult to study. So Probst's theory fell almost entirely into discredit. His ubiquitous Liturgy was remembered only as the monomania of a very learned man; the rite of the "Eighth Book of the Apostolic Constitutions" was put in what seemed to be its right place, merely as an early form of the Antiochene Liturgy (so Duchesne, "Origines du
Culte", 55-6). Lately, however, there has come again to the fore what may be described as a modified form of Probst's theory. Ferdinand Kattenbusch ("Das apostolische Symbol", Tübingen, 1900, II, 347, etc.) thought that after all there might be some foundation for Probst's idea.

Paul Drews (Untersuchungen über die sogen. clementinische Liturgie, Tübingen, 1906) proposes and defends at length what may well be the germ of truth in Probst, namely that there was a certain uniformity of type in the earliest Liturgy in the sense described above, not a uniformity of detail, but one of general outline, of the ideas expressed in the various parts of the service, with a strong tendency to uniformity in certain salient expressions that recurred constantly and became insensibly liturgical formulae. This type of liturgy (rather than a fixed rite) may be traced back even to the first century. It is seen in Clement of Rome, Justin, etc.; perhaps there are traces of it even in the Epistle to the Hebrews. And of this type we still have a specimen in the "Apostolic Constitutions". It is not that that rite exactly as it is in the "Constitutions" was used by Clement and Justin. Rather the "Constitutions" give us a much later (fifth century) form of the old Liturgy written down at last in Syria after it had existed for centuries in a more fluid state as an oral tradition. Thus, Clement, writing to the Corinthians (that the letter was actually composed by the Bishop of Rome, as Dionysius of Corinth says in the second century, is now generally admitted. Cf. Bardenhewer, "Gesch. der altkirchl. Litteratur", Freiburg, 1902, 101-2), uses the language to which he was accustomed in the Liturgy; the letter is full of liturgical ideas and reminiscences. They are found again in the later crystallization of the same rite in the "Apostolic Constitutions". So that book gives us the best representation of the Liturgy as used in Rome in the first two centuries.

This is confirmed by the next witness, Justin Martyr. Justin (d. about 164), in his famous account of the Liturgy, describes it as he saw it at Rome (Bardenhewer, op. cit., 206). The often quoted passage is (I Apology 65-67):

65. We lead him who believes and is joined to us, after we have thus baptized him, to those who are called the brethren, where they gather together to say prayers in common for ourselves, and for him who has been enlightened, and for all who are everywhere. . . . We greet each other with a kiss when the prayers are finished. Then bread and a cup of water and wine are brought to the president of the brethren, and he having received them sends up praise and glory to the Father of all through the name of his Son and the Holy Ghost, and makes a long thanksgiving that we have been made worthy of these things by him; when these prayers and thanksgivings are ended all the people present cry 'Amen' . . . . And when the president has given thanks (eucharistesantos, already a technical name for the Eucharist) and all the people have answered, those whom we call deacons give the bread and wine and water for which the 'thanksgiving' (Eucharist) has been made to be tasted by those who are present, and they carry them to those that are absent.

66. This food is called by us the Eucharist" (the well-known passage about the Real Presence follows, with the quotation of the words of Institution).
67. On the day which is called that of the Sun a reunion is made of all those who dwell in the cities and fields; and the commentaries of the Apostles and writings of the prophets are read as long as time allows. Then, when the reader has done, the president admonishes us in a speech and excites us to copy these glorious things. Then we all rise and say prayers and, as we have said above, when we have done praying bread is brought up and wine and water; and the president sends up prayers with thanksgiving for the men, and the people acclaim, saying 'Amen', and a share of the Eucharist is given to each and is sent to those absent by the deacons.

This is by far the most complete account of the Eucharistic Service we have from the first three centuries. It will be seen at once that what is described in chapter 67 precedes the rite of 65. In 67 Justin begins his account of the Liturgy and repeats in its place what he had already said above.

Putting it all together we have this scheme of the service:

- 1. Lessons (lxvii, 3).
- 2. Sermon by the bishop (lxvii, 4).
- 3. Prayers for all people (lxvii, 5; lxv, 1).
- 4. Kiss of peace (lxv, 2).
- 5. Offertory of bread and wine and water brought up by the deacons (lxvii, 5; lxv, 3).
- 6. Thanksgiving-prayer by the bishop (lxvii, 5; lxv, 3).
- 7. Consecration by the words of institution (? lxv, 5; lxvi, 2-3).
- 8. Intercession for the people (lxvii, 5; lxv, 3).
- 9. The people end this prayer with Amen. (lxvii, 5; lxv, 3).
- 10. Communion (lxvii, 5; lxv 5).

This is exactly the order of the Liturgy in the "Apostolic Constitutions" (Brightman, "Eastern Liturgies", 3-4, 9-12, 13, 14-21, 21-3, 25). Moreover, as in the case of I Clement, there are many passages and phrases in Justin that suggest parallel ones in the "Apost. Const." — not so much in Justin's account of the Liturgy (though here too Drews sees such parallels, op. cit., 58-9) as in other works in which Justin, like Clement, may be supposed to be echoing well-known liturgical phrases. Drews prints many such passages side by side with the corresponding ones of the "Apost. Const.", from which comparison he concludes that Justin knows a dismissal of the catechumens (cf."I Apol.", xlix, 5; xiv, 1;xxv, 2, with "Apost. Const.", VIII, vi, 8; x, 2) and of the Energumens (Dialogue with Trypho 30; cf. "Apost. Const.", VIII, vii, 2) corresponding to that in the Liturgy in question. From "I Apol.", lxv, 1; xvii, 3; xiv, 3; deduces a prayer for all kinds of men (made by the community) of the type of that prayer in "Apost. Const.", VIII, x."I Apol.", xiii, 1-3, lxv, 3; v, 2, and Dialogue with Trypho 41, 70 and 107 give us the elements of a preface exactly on the lines of that in "Apost. Const." VIII, xii, 6-27 (see these texts in parallel columns in Drews, "op. cit.", 59-91).

We have, then, in Clement and Justin the picture of a Liturgy at least remarkably like that of the "Apostolic Constitutions". Drews adds as striking parallels from Hippolytus (d.
235), "Contra Noetum", etc. (op. cit., 95-107) and Novatian (third cent.) "De Trinitate" (ibid., 107-22), both Romans, and thinks that this same type of liturgy continues in the known Roman Rite (122-66). That the Liturgy of the "Apostolic Constitutions" as it stands is Antiochene, and is closely connected with the Rite of Jerusalem, is certain. It would seem, then, that it represents one form of a vaguer type of rite that was in its main outline uniform in the first three centuries. The other references to the Liturgy in the first age (Ignatius of Antioch, died about 107, Ephesians 13 and 20; Philadelphians 4; Romans 7; Smyrnaeans 7 and 8; Irenæus, died 202, Against Heresies IV.17-18 and V.2; Clement of Alexandria, died about 215, The Pedagogue I.6 and II.2; Origen, d. 254, Against Celsus VIII.33; "Hom. xix in Lev.", xviii, 13; "In Matt.", xi, 14; "In Ioh.", xiii, 30) repeat the same ideas that we have seen in Clement and Justin, but add little to the picture presented by them (see Cabrol and Leclercq, "Mon. Eccles. Liturg.", I, passim).

The parent rites, from the fourth century

From about the fourth century our knowledge of the Liturgy increases enormously. We are no longer dependent on casual references to it: we have definite rites fully developed. The more or less uniform type of Liturgy used everywhere before crystallized into four parent rites from which all others are derived. The four are the old Liturgies of Antioch, Alexandria, Rome, and Gaul. Each is described in a special article. It will be enough here to trace an outline of their general evolution.

The development of these liturgies is very like what happens in the case of languages. From a general uniformity a number of local rites arise with characteristic differences. Then one of these local rites, because of the importance of the place that uses it, spreads, is copied by the cities around, drives out its rivals, and becomes at last the one rite used throughout a more or less extended area. We have then a movement from vague uniformity to diversity and then a return to exact uniformity. Except for the Gallican Rite the reason of the final survival of these liturgies is evident. Rome, Alexandria, and Antioch are the old patriarchal cities. As the other bishops accepted the jurisdiction of these three patriarchs, so did they imitate their services. The Liturgy, as it crystallized in these centres, became the type for the other Churches of their patriarchates. Only Gaul and north-west Europe generally, though part of the Roman Patriarchate, kept its own rite till the seventh and eighth centuries.

Alexandria and Antioch are the starting-points of the two original Eastern rites. The earliest form of the Antiochene Rite is that of the "Apostolic Constitutions" written down in the early fifth century. From what we have said it seems that this rite has best preserved the type of the primitive use. From it is derived the Rite of Jerusalem (till the Council of Chalcedon, 451, Jerusalem was in the Antiochene Patriarchate), which then returned to Antioch and became that of the patriarchate (see ANTIQUE LITURGY and LITURGY OF JERUSALEM). We have this liturgy (called after St. James) in Greek (Brightman, "Eastern Liturgies", 31-68) and in Syriac (ibid., 69-110). The Alexandrine Rite differs chiefly in the place of the great intercession (see ALEXANDRINE LITURGY). This too exists in Greek (Brightman, 113-43) and the language of the country, in this case Coptic (ibid., 144-88). In both cases the original form was certainly
Greek, but in both the present Greek forms have been considerably influenced by the later Rite of Constantinople. A reconstruction of the original Greek is possible by removing the Byzantine additions and changes, and comparing the Greek and Syriac or Coptic forms. Both these liturgies have given rise to numerous derived forms. The Roman Rite is thought by Duchesne to be connected with Alexandria, the Gallican with Antioch (Origines du Culte, p. 54). But, from what has been said, it seems more correct to connect the Roman Rite with that of Antioch. Besides its derivation from the type represented by the Liturgy of the Apostolic Constitutions there are reasons for supposing a further influence of the Liturgy of St. James at Rome (see CANON OF THE MASS, and Drews, "Zur Entstehungsgesch. des Kanons in der römischen Messe", Tübingen, 1902). The Gallican Rite is certainly Syrian in its origin. There are also very striking parallels between Antioch and Alexandria, in spite of their different arrangements. It may well be, then, that all four rites are to be considered as modifications of that most ancient use, best preserved at Antioch; so we should reduce Duchesne's two sources to one, and restore to a great extent Probst's theory of one original rite — that of the "Apostolic Constitutions".

In any case the old Roman Rite is not exactly that now used. Our Roman Missal has received considerable additions from Gallican sources. The original rite was simpler, more austere, had practically no ritual beyond the most necessary actions (see Bishop, "The Genius of the Roman Rite" in "Essays on Ceremonial", edited by Vernon Staley, London, 1904, pp. 283-307). It may be said that our present Roman Liturgy contains all the old nucleus, has lost nothing, but has additional Gallican elements. The original rite may be in part deduced from references to it as early as the fifth century ("Letters of Gelasius I" in Thiel, "Epistolæ Rom. Pontificum", i, cdlxxxvi, "Innocent I to Decennius of Eugubium", written in 416, in P.L., XX, 551; Pseudo-Ambrose, "De Sacramentis", IV, 5, etc.); it is represented by the Leonine and Gelasian "Sacramentaries", and by the old part of the Gregorian book (see LITURGICAL BOOKS). The Roman Rite was used throughout Central and Southern Italy. The African use was a variant of that of Rome (see Cabrol, "Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne", s.v. Afrique, Liturgie postnicéenne). In the West, however, the principle that rite should follow patriarchate did not obtain till about the eighth century. The pope was Patriarch of all Western (Latin) Europe, yet the greater part of the West did not use the Roman Rite. The North of Italy whose centre was Milan, Gaul, Germany, Spain, Britain, and Ireland had their own Liturgies. These Liturgies are all modifications of a common type; they may all be classed together as forms of what is known as the Gallican Rite. Where did that rite come from? It is obviously Eastern in its origin: its whole construction has the most remarkable conformity to the Antiochene type, a conformity extending in many parts to the actual text (compare the Milanese litany of intercession quoted by Duchesne, "Origines du Culte", p. 189, with the corresponding litany in the Antiochene Liturgy; Brightman, pp. 44-5). It used to be said that the Gallican Rite came from Ephesus, brought by the founders of the Church of Lyons, and from Lyons spread throughout North-Western Europe. This theory cannot be maintained. It was not brought to the West till its parent rite was fully developed, had already evolved a complicated ceremonial, such as is inconceivable at the time when the Church of Lyons was founded (second century). It must have been imported about the fourth century, at which time Lyons had lost all
importance. Mgr Duchesne therefore suggests Milan as the centre from which it radiated, and the Cappadocian Bishop of Milan, Auxentius (355-74), as the man who introduced this Easter Rite to the West (Origines du Culte, 86-9). In spreading over Western Europe the rite naturally was modified in various Churches. When we speak of the Gallican Rite we mean a type of liturgy rather than a stereotyped service.

The Milanese Rite still exists, though in the course of time it has become considerably romanized. For Gaul we have the description in two letters of St. Germanus of Paris (d. 576), used by Duchesne "Origines du Culte", ch. vii: La Messe Gallicane. Original text in P.L., LXXII). Spain kept the Gallican Rite longest; the Mozarabic Liturgy still used at Toledo and Salamanca represents the Spanish use. The British and Irish Liturgies, of which not much is known, were apparently Gallican too (see F.E. Warren, "The Liturgy and Ritual of the Celtic Church", Oxford, 1881; Bäumer, "Das Stowe Missale" in the "Innsbruck Zeitschrift für kath. theol.", 1892; and Bannister, "Journal of Theological Studies", Oct., 1903). From Lindisfarne the Gallican Use spread among the Northern English converted by Irish monks in the sixth and seventh centuries.

The derived liturgies

From these four types — of Antioch, Alexandria, Rome, and the so-called Gallican Rite — all liturgies still used are derived. This does not mean that the actual liturgies we still have under those names are the parents; once more we must conceive the sources as vaguer, they are rather types subject always to local modification, but represented to us now in one form, such as, for instance, the Greek St. James or the Greek St. Mark Liturgy. The Antiochene type, apparently the most archaic, has been also the most prolific of daughter liturgies. Antioch first absorbed the Rite of Jerusalem (St. James), itself derived from the primitive Antiochene use shown in the "Apostolic Constitutions" (see LITURGY OF JERUSALEM). In this form it was used throughout the patriarchate till about the thirteenth century (see ANTIOCHENE LITURGY). A local modification was the Use of Cappadocia. About the fourth century the great Byzantine Rite was derived from this (see RITE OF CONSTANTINOPLE). The Armenian Rite is derived from an early stage of that of Byzantium. The Nestorian Rite is also Antiochene in its origin, whether derived directly from Antioch, or Edessa, or from Byzantium at an early stage. The Liturgy of Malabar is Nestorian. The Maronite Use is that of Antioch considerably romanized. The other Eastern parent rite, of Alexandria, produced the numerous Coptic Liturgies and those of the daughter Church of Abyssinia.

In the West the later history of the Liturgy is that of the gradual supplanting of the Gallican by the Roman, which, however, became considerably gallicanized in the process. Since about the sixth century conformity with Rome becomes an ideal in most Western Churches. The old Roman Use is represented by the "Gelasian Sacramentary". This book came to Gaul in the sixth century, possibly by way of Arles and through the influence of St. Cæsarius of Arles (d. 542-cf. Bäumer, "Ueber das sogen. Sacram. Gelas." in the "Hist. Jahrbuch der Görres-Gesellschaft", 1893, 241-301). It then spread throughout Gaul and received Gallican modifications. In some parts it completely supplanted the old Gallican books. Charles the Great (768-814) was anxious for
uniformity throughout his kingdom in the Roman use only. He therefore procured from Pope Adrian I (772-795) a copy of the "Roman Sacramentary". The book sent by the pope was a later form of the Roman Rite (the "Sacramentarium Gregorianum"). Charles imposed this book on all the clergy of his kingdom. But it was not easy to carry out his orders. The people were attached to their own customs. So someone (possibly Alcuin — cf. Bäumer, loc. cit.) added to Adrian's book a supplement containing selections from both the older Gelasian book and the original Gallican sources. This composition became then the service-book of the Frankish Kingdom and eventually, as we shall see, the Liturgy of the whole Roman Church.

In Spain Bishop Profuturus of Braga wrote in 538 to Pope Vigilius (537-55) asking his advice about certain liturgical matters. The pope's answer (in Jaffé, "Regest. Rom. Pont.", no. 907) shows the first influence of the Roman Rite in Spain. In 561 the national Synod of Braga imposed Vigilius's ritual on all the kingdom of the Suevi. From this time we have the "mixed" Rite (Roman and Gallican) of Spain. Later, when the Visigoths had conquered the Suevi (577-584), the Church of Toledo rejected the Roman elements and insisted on uniformity in the pure Gallican Rite. Nevertheless Roman additions were made later; eventually all Spain accepted the Roman Rite (in the eleventh century) except the one corner, at Toledo and Salamanca, where the mixed (Mozarabic) Rite is still used. The great Church of Milan, apparently the starting-point of the whole Gallican Use, was able to resist the influence of the Roman Liturgy. But here too, in later centuries the local rite became considerably romanized (St. Charles Borromeo, died 1584), so that the present Milanese (Ambrosian) use is only a shadow of the old Gallican Liturgy. In Britain St. Augustine of Canterbury (597-605) naturally brought with him the Roman Liturgy. It received a new impetus from St. Theodore of Canterbury when he came from Rome (668), and gradually drove out the Gallican Use of Lindisfarne.

The English Church was very definitely Roman in its Liturgy. There was even a great enthusiasm for the rite of the mother Church. So Alcuin writes to Eanbald of York in 796: "Let your clergy not fail to study the Roman order; so that, imitating the Head of the Churches of Christ, they may receive the blessing of Peter, prince of the Apostles, whom our Lord Jesus Christ made the chief of his flock"; and again: "Have you not plenty of books written according to the Roman use?" (quoted in Cabrol, "L'Angleterre terre chrétienne avant les Normans", Paris, 1909, p. 297). Before the Conquest the Roman service-books in England received a few Gallican additions from the old rite of the country (op. cit., 297-298)

So we see that at the latest by the tenth or eleventh century the Roman Rite has driven out the Gallican, except in two sees (Milan and Toledo), and is used alone throughout the West, thus at last verifying here too the principle that rite follows patriarchate. But in the long and gradual supplanting of the Gallican Rite the Roman was itself affected by its rival, so that when at last it emerges as sole possessor it is no longer the old pure Roman Rite, but has become the gallicanized Roman Use that we now follow. These Gallican additions are all of the nature of ceremonial ornament, symbolic practices, ritual adornment. Our blessings of candles, ashes, palms, much of the ritual of Holy Week, sequences, and so on are Gallican additions. The original Roman Rite was very plain,
simple, practical. Mr. Edmund Bishop says that its characteristics were "essentially soberness and sense" ("The Genius of the Roman Rite", p. 307; see the whole essay). Once these additions were accepted at Rome they became part of the (new) Roman Rite and were used as part of that rite everywhere.

When was the older simpler use so enriched? We have two extreme dates. The additions were not made in the eighth century when Pope Adrian sent his "Gregorian Sacramentary" to Charlemagne. The original part of that book (in Muratori's edition; "Liturgia romana vetus", II, Venice, 1748) contains still the old Roman Mass. They were made by the eleventh century, as is shown by the "Missale Romanum Lateranense" of that time, edited by Azevedo (Rome, 1752). Dom Suitbert Bäumer suggests that the additions made to Adrian's book (by Alcuin) in the Frankish Kingdom came back to Rome (after they had become mixed up with the original book) under the influence of the successors of Charlemagne, and there supplanted the older pure form (Über das sogen. Sacr. Gelas., ibid.).

**Later medieval liturgies**

We have now arrived at the present state of things. It remains to say a word about the various medieval uses the nature of which has often been misunderstood. Everyone has heard of the old English uses — Sarum, Ebor, etc. People have sometimes tried to set them up in opposition to what they call the "modern" Roman Rite, as witnesses that in some way England was not "Roman" before the Reformation. This idea shows an astonishing ignorance of the rites in question. These medieval uses are in no sense really independent rites. To compare them with the Gallican or Eastern Liturgies is absurd. They are simply cases of what was common all over Europe in the later Middle Ages, namely slight (often very slight) local modifications of the parent Rite of Rome. As there were Sarum and Ebor, so there were Paris, Rouen, Lyons, Cologne, Trier Rites. All these are simply Roman, with a few local peculiarities. They had their own saints' days, a trifling variety in the Calendar, some extra Epistles, Gospels, sequences, prefaces, certain local (generally more exuberant) details of ritual. In such insignificant details as the sequence of liturgical colours there was diversity in almost every diocese. No doubt, some rites (as the Dominican use, that of Lyons, etc.) have rather more Gallican additions than our normal Roman Liturgy. But the essence of all these late rites, all the parts that really matter (the arrangement, Canon of the Mass and so on) are simply Roman. Indeed they do not differ from the parent rite enough to be called derived properly. Here again the parallel case of languages will make the situation clear. There are really derived languages that are no longer the same language as their source. Italian is derived from Latin, and Italian is not Latin. On the other hand, there are dialectic modifications that do not go far enough to make a derived language. No one would describe the modern Roman dialect as a language derived from Italian; it is simply Italian, with a few slight local modifications. In the same way, there are really new liturgies derived from the old ones. The Byzantine Rite is derived from that of Antioch and is a different rite. But Sarum, Paris, Trier, etc. are simply the Roman Rite, with a few local modifications.
Hence the justification of the abolition of nearly all these local varieties in the sixteenth century. However jealous one may be for the really independent liturgies, however much one would regret to see the abolition of the venerable old rites that share the allegiance of Christendom (an abolition by the way that is not in the least likely ever to take place), at any rate these medieval developments have no special claim to our sympathy. They were only exuberant inflations of the more austere ritual that had better not have been touched. Churches that use the Roman Rite had better use it in a pure form; where the same rite exists at least there uniformity is a reasonable ideal. To conceive these late developments as old compared with the original Roman Liturgy that has now again taken their place, is absurd. It was the novelties that Pius V abolished; his reform was a return to antiquity. In 1570 Pius V published his revised and restored Roman Missal that was to be the only form for all Churches that use the Roman Rite. The restoration of this Missal was on the whole undoubtedly successful; it was all in the direction of eliminating the later inflations, farced Kyries and Glorias, exuberant sequences, and ceremonial that was sometimes almost grotesque. In imposing it the pope made an exception for other uses that had been in possession for at least two centuries. This privilege was not used consistently. Many local uses that had a prescription of at least that time gave way to the authentic Roman Rite; but it saved the Missals of some Churches (Lyons, for instance) and of some religious orders (the Dominicans, Carmelites, Carthusians). What is much more important is that the pope's exception saved the two remnants of a really independent Rite at Milan and Toledo. Later, in the nineteenth century, there was again a movement in favour of uniformity that abolished a number of surviving local customs in France and Germany, though these affected the Breviary more than the Missal. We are now witnessing a similar movement for uniformity in plainsong (the Vatican edition). The Monastic Rite (used by the Benedictines and Cistercians) is also Roman in its origin. The differences between it and the normal Roman Rite affect chiefly the Divine Office.

Table of liturgies

We are now able to draw up a table of all the real liturgies used throughout the Christian world. The various Protestant Prayerbooks, Agendæ, Communion-services, and so on, have of course no place in this scheme, because they all break away altogether from the continuity of liturgical development; they are merely compilations of random selections from any of the old rites imbedded in new structures made by various Reformers.

In the first three centuries

A fluid rite founded on the account of the Last Supper, combined with a Christianized synagogue service showing, however, a certain uniformity of type and gradually crystallizing into set forms. Of this type we have perhaps a specimen in the Liturgy of the second and eighth books of the "Apostolic Constitutions".

Since the fourth century

The original indetermined rite forms into the four great liturgies from which all others are derived. These liturgies are:
Antioch

1. Pure in the "Apostolic Constitutions" (in Greek).
   - Modified at Jerusalem in the Liturgy of St. James.
   - The Greek St. James, used once a year by the Orthodox at Zacynthus and Jerusalem.
   - The Syriac St. James, used by the Jacobites and Syrian Uniats.
   - The Maronite Rite, used in Syriac.
2. The Chaldean Rite, used by Nestorians and Chaldean Uniats (in Syriac).
   - The Malabar Rite, used by Uniats and Schismatics in India (in Syriac).
   - The Byzantine Rite, used by the Orthodox and Byzantine Uniats in various languages.
   - The Armenian Rite, used by Gregorians and Uniats (in Armenian).

Alexandria

1. The Greek Liturgy of St. Mark, no longer used.
2. The Coptic Liturgies, used by Uniat and schismatical Copts.
3. The Ethiopian Liturgies, used by the Church of Abyssinia.

Rome

1. The original Roman Rite, not now used.
2. The African Rite, no longer used.
3. The Roman Rite with Gallican additions used (in Latin) by nearly all the Latin Church.
4. Various later modifications of this rite used in the Middle Ages, now (with a few exceptions) abolished.

Gaul

1. Used once all over North-Western Europe and in Spain (in Latin).
2. The Ambrosian Rite at Milan.
3. The Mozarabic Rite, used at Toledo and Salamanca.

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