A Celtic Eucharist

The Eucharist is a concentrate of God’s presence in all things

Brendanus

Introduction

The question could be asked whether a ‘Celtic Eucharist’ consisting of ancient texts is of any use or relevance in today’s world. I would answer that it is not my intention to ‘mimic’ an ancient Eucharist, but to link our cultural experience into the living tradition of the Church. Liturgy exists in the here and now. The Liturgy is the sacred work of the people of God, and it is to carve the kingdom of God from the raw material of creation. Its real significance is to make all things whole, to bring all things into Oneness in heaven and on earth through the symbols of the elements.

The Eucharist may be celebrated at twelve noon today, but that same liturgy has to link us back in time, even joining in the echo of worship which existed before history began. It may be seen as a pageant, or simple memorial of the First Liturgy, but it is more than that; it must bring the Apostolic City into the now, and then onwards joining with the Heavenly City. The dialogue with the past locates our present in the mainstream of Tradition, and is the guarantee of the Presence now. My ‘now’ exists because of tradition and within the Tradition.

In Scotland, as a child, I heard from my Grandmother about the holiness of the Eucharist, and I learned even more from her body language when present at its celebration. Now I know for myself what the Eucharist is. I am with Christ in Lampeter, Wales, when celebrating the Eucharist in the now, not with the Apostles or literally ‘then’ in the past, but when I look back I know that I am part of the Apostolic Tradition. As I look forward to the Eschaton, my concern with the present is taken into the future. I am part of the constant ongoing celebration of the eternal liturgy in heaven and on earth.
A liturgy is good because it is effective. The question is, does it reflect the Tradition and does it reflect the living reality of today as well as of the past? In our case, does the Celtic Eucharist reflect the Celtic Tradition? In other words, is this the way our Celtic ancestors would have worshipped, albeit in the modern idiom? I believe that it is in the essence of the self-same Tradition.

The Eucharist set out here is, albeit in a modern idiom, very similar to the liturgy celebrated in a Celi De community in the early ninth century. The texts compiled here are adopted from the mainstream early Irish tradition (see notes). They fit easily into the framework of modern worship and are offered as a resource to those who are searching for an authentic ‘Celtic Liturgy’ in praise of the Lord of the Elements, containing all the elements of our Christian roots. I have simply followed the practice of many Celtic scribes, in that I have collected together the prayers and texts which are useful for this particular Celtic Eucharist. It is by no means exhaustive.

Suggestions for Celebrating this Eucharist

The Optional Texts

The following sections are optional and may be left out should the celebrant so wish. The whole Liturgy need not be too wordy and pause for silence in appropriate places is to be encouraged.

The Entrance Rite

The Lorica Litany may be chanted in procession. It is a prayer for divine protection and favour.

The Ceremony of Light

This is designed for use at an evening Eucharist; it may follow the Lorica or take its place.

A Celtic Hymn

This may be chanted to typical Magnificat chant.

The Creed

Tirechán’s Creed is best recited by a lone voice and may be left out if the Lorica, Ceremony of Light and a Celtic Hymn are used.
Notes for the Celebrant

This Celtic Eucharist is designed to be used alongside a modern lectionary, and may equally well be placed with the Roman, Irish, Scottish, Welsh or Common Worship lectionaries. If the celebrant wishes to use a Bible for the Old Testament, Epistle or Gospel readings, then the additional prayers in this book may be used to advantage. They are culled from various Celtic and scriptural sources for ease of use as opening sentences and prayers, prayers over the gifts, communion sentences and closing prayers.

It may also be noticed that the Litany of the Trinity after the Ministry of the Word is used as the Rite of Penance. This is in keeping with the Celtic Rite of practice; indeed the Kyrie (‘Lord have mercy’) in modern liturgies is a direct descendant of such a litany as that of the Stowe Missal.

It seems right to me that, after the heart has been opened by hearing the Word of God, compunction ensues and the need to ask forgiveness of God and neighbour in the sign of peace is in order before we approach the divine table.

The important thing is to use your common sense and sense of liturgical rhythm. The optional texts indicated above are there to enhance the spirit and liturgical practice of the whole work. This is a Eucharist which needs to be celebrated sensitively, gently and in a contemplative manner, with appropriate pauses for silence.

Alternative prayers and sentences are included in the Appendix.

The Entrance Rite

Lorica Litany

St Patrick’s Breastplate or Deer’s Cry

Cantor:
Today I shield myself with threefold pówer,

People:
Invocation of the Trinity.
Belief in the threeness, profession of the óneness.
In union with the Creator.

Today I shield myself with the power of Christ’s baptism,
his hanging and búrial.
His rising again and his ascension,
his descent for the last judgement.

Today I shield myself with the loving power of the Chérubim.
Obedience of angels, service of archangels.
Hope of rising to my reward, prayers of the pátriarchs.
Sayings of the prophets, teachings of the apostles,
faith of confessors, deeds of righteous people.

Today I shield myself with power of heaven, light of the sún.
Brilliance of the moon, splendour of fire.
Speed of lightning, swiftness of wind.

 Depths of sea, firmness of earth, hardness of rock.
Today I shield myself with God’s power to direct me,
**God's strength to uphold me.**
God’s good sense to guide me,
**God's ear to listen for me.**
God’s speaking to speak for me,
**God's hand to guard me.**
God’s path opening before me,
**God's shield to protect me.**
From the snares of demons,
The inducements of my own vices.
The proclivities of human nature,
**And those who wish me evil.**
I summon these powers to come
between me and every cruel and merciless power
that threatens my body and my soul.

Christ be my protection today
**against violence,**
against illness,
**against drowning,**
against mortal wounding,
so that I may come to my ultimate reward.

Christ be with me
**Christ be before me,**
Christ be behind me,
**Christ be inside me,**
Christ be beneath me,
**Christ be above me,**
Christ on my right hand,
**Christ on my left hand,**
Christ when I lie down,
**Christ when I sit down,**
Christ when I rise up,
**Christ all around me.**
Christ in the heart of everyone who beholds me;
**Christ in every eye that sees me;**
and Christ in every ear that hears me.

Today I shield myself with threefold power,
invocation of the Trinity.
Belief in the threeness, profession of the oneness,
in union with the Creator.

The Lord is salvation;
Christ is salvation,
The Lord is salvation;
May your salvation, O Lord, be always with us.

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Ceremony of Light

For optional evening use.

Thy word is a lantern unto my feet,
and a light unto my path.

Prayer bell or gong

Celebrant: At eventide there shall be light.

Lighting of the lamp

Reader:  Blessed are you, O Lord our God,
King of the Universe,
at your word you bring on the evening twilight.
You create day and night;
you roll away light before the darkness,
and the darkness before the light;
you make the day to pass,
and the night to approach,
and divide the day from the night.
Blessed are you, O Lord,
for you bring on the evening twilight.

Celebrant:  Lighten our darkness
we beseech you O Lord,
and of your great mercy defend us
from all perils and dangers of this night,
for the love of your only Son,
Our Saviour, Jesus Christ.
Amen.

Reader:  Daylight has ended
Night is upon us
yet unto Thee
sustainer of all things
Darkness and Light,
all times and all seasons
all are as one
O Lord of Creation.
Phos Hilarion

O Gracious Light, pure brightness of the everliving / Father in / heaven,
O Jesus / Christ, / holy / and blessed!
Now as we come to the setting of the sun,
and our eyes behold the / evening / Light,
we sing your praises, O God: Father, / Son and / Holy Spirit.
You are worthy at all times to be praised by / happy / voices,*
O Son / of / God, O / Giver of / Life,
and to be / glorified / through / all / the / worlds.

Pause

Celebrant: At this evening hour
      may the understanding of all our hearts
be opened to that Light
which enlightens everyone
who comes into the world.
For this is the Light which gives us
true knowledge of the Name over all
by which God is known.

A Celtic Hymn for the Lighting of the Vesper Light

Fiery / creator / of / fire,
Light / Giver / of / light,
Life and / Author / of / life,
Salvation and / Bestower / of / salvation.

In case / the lamps / should / abandon
The / joys / of / this / night,
You who do / not desire / our death,
Give / light / to / our / breast.

To those / wandering / from / Egypt,
You bestow / the / double / grace,
You show / the veil / of / cloud,
And give / the / nocturnal / light.

With a / pillar of / cloud in the / day,
You protect / the / people / as they / go,
With a / pillar of / fire at / evening,
You dispel / the / night / with / light.
You call out to / your servant / from the / flame,
You do not / spurn / the bush / of / thorns,
And though you are / consuming / fire,
You do not / burn / what / you / illumine.

Now it is / time that the / cloudy / bee-bread
Should be consumed, all / impurity / boiled / away
And the waxen / flesh should / shine
With the glow / of / the / Holy / Spirit.

You store now / in the / recesses of / the comb
The sweet food / of / the divine / honey,
And purify the / inmost cells / of the / heart,
You have / filled / them / with / your / word;

That the swarm / of the / new / brood,
Chosen / by / your mouth / and / spirit,
May leave their / burdens and / win / heaven
On / wings / now / free / from / care.

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If the Lorica has not been sung the Celebrant may begin the Eucharist here with the sentence and the following greeting:

In the name of God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
Amen.
Grace and peace be with you,
and also with you.

If the Lorica has been sung the Eucharist continues here.

Gloria

Glory to God in the highest,
and peace to his people on earth.
Lord God, heavenly King,
Almighty God and Father,
we worship you, we give you thanks,
we praise you for your glory.
Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,
Lord God, Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world:
have mercy on us;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father:
receive our prayer.

For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High,
Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.
The Homily or Address

The Creed

*(May be recited by a lone voice)*

Our God is the God of all humans,
the God of heaven and earth,
the God of sea and rivers,
the God of the sun and moon,
the God of all the heavenly bodies,
the God of the lofty mountains,
the God of the lowly valleys.
God is above the heavens;
and he is beneath the heavens.
Heaven and earth and sea,
and everything that is in them,
such he has as his abode.
He inspires all things,
he gives life to all things,
he stands above all things,
and he stands beneath all things.
He enlightens the light of the sun,
he strengthens the light of the night and the stars,
he makes wells in the arid land and dry islands in the sea,
and he places the stars in the service of the greater lights.
He has a Son who is co-eternal with himself;
and similar in all respects to himself;
and neither is the Son younger than the Father,
nor is the Father older than the Son;
and the Holy Spirit breathes in them.
And the Father and the Son and Holy Spirit are inseparable.
[Amen.]

Or

A Declaration of Faith Patrick’s Confession

There is not, nor ever was, any other God – there was none before him and there shall not be any after him – besides him who is God the Father unbegotten: without a source, from him everything else takes its beginning. He is, as we say, the one who keeps hold of all things.
And his Son, Jesus Christ, whom we declare to have always existed with the Father.

He was with the Father spiritually before the world came into being; begotten of the Father before the beginning of anything in a way that is beyond our speech. And ‘through him all things were made’, all things visible and invisible. He was made man, and having conquered death was taken back into the heavens to the Father.

‘And he has bestowed on him all power above every name in heaven and on earth and under the earth, so that every tongue may confess that our Lord and God is Jesus Christ’.

In him we believe, looking forward to his coming in the very near future when he will judge the living and the dead, and ‘will repay each according to his works’.

And ‘the Father has plentifully poured upon us the Holy Spirit’, the gift and pledge of immortality, who makes those who believe and listen into ‘sons of God’ the Father and ‘fellow heirs with Christ’.

This is whom we profess and worship, One God in Trinity of sacred name.

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Bidding Prayer of St Martin

**Celebrant:**
With all our hearts and minds we pray to the Lord, who looks upon the earth and makes it tremble.

**Reader:**
For peace and tranquillity in our time and for your holy Catholic Church from one end of the earth to the other.*
For our Bishop and Shepherd and for all bishops, presbyters and deacons, and all who administer in your Church.*
For this place and for all who dwell in it.*
For all who are in authority; for the bereaved, the dispossessed and those who seek refuge.*
For those who travel; those who do penance; those who learn the faith.*
For those who in your holy Church bring forth the fruits of compassion.*
For ourselves; through the prayers of your holy apostles and martyrs, grant us, Lord, your forgiveness.*
Grant us, Lord, a Christian and a peaceful end.*
Grant us, Lord, your holy bond of love; to abide for ever among us.*
Guard, Lord, the holiness and purity of our Catholic faith.*

Merciful Father
Accept these prayers
For the sake of your Son,
Our Saviour Jesus Christ
Amen.

Either

A pause for silent prayer

Or
Lord, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

**Litany of the Trinity**

*(May be sung Litany style)*

Have mercy upon us O God the Father Almighty,
O God of Hosts,
O High God,
O Lord of all the world,
O inéffable God,
O Creator of the Elements.

Have mercy upon us, O Almighty God, Jesus Christ, Son of the Living God,
O Son twice-born,
O Only-begotten of God the Father,
O First born of the Virgin Mary,
O beginning of all things,
O completion of the world,
O Word of God,
O Way to the heavenly Kingdom,
O life of all things,
O Intelligence of the mystic world.

Have mercy upon us, O God Almighty,
O Holy Spirit;
O Spirit that is highest of all spirits,
O Finger of God,
O Protection of all Christians,
O Comforter of the sorrowful,
O Clement one,
O merciful Intercessor,
O Imparter of true wisdom,
O Author of the Holy Scriptures,
O Ruler of speech,
O Spirit of wisdom,
O Spirit of understanding,
O Spirit of counsel,
O Spirit of strength,
O Spirit of knowledge,
O Spirit from whom is ordered every lofty thing.
O Holy Spirit you rule all created things,
visible and invisible,
Have mercy upon us.

O Almighty God, the heavenly Father,
and the only-begotten Son,
Have mercy upon us.

Have mercy upon us,
O Father, O Son, O Holy Spirit.
Have mercy upon us, O only God,
O God of heaven, have mercy upon us.
Have mercy upon us, O God,
from whom and through whom
is the rule of all created things for you, O God,
To whom be glory and honour
for ever and ever.
Amen.

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Absolution

May almighty God have mercy on us,
forgive us our sins,
and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.

Holy Sprinkling (optional)

The Peace

Celebrant: Lord, peace you commanded, peace you gave us, peace you have left us. Grant us your peace from heaven and order this day and all the days of our life in your peace. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Or

Lord Jesus Christ, you said to your apostles ‘I leave you peace, my peace I give you’. Look not on our sins but on the faith of your Church, and grant us the peace and unity of your Kingdom, where you live for ever and ever.

Amen.

The Peace of the Lord be with you always;
and with your spirit.
Let us offer one another a sign of peace.

The Offertory

Celebrant: Thank you, O Lord God Almighty,
Thank you for the earth and the waters,
Thank you for the sky, the air and the sun,
Thank you for all living creatures.

Come, O Lord, in the Bread of Life.

Praise be to you, O Lord God Almighty,
For our homes, our families,
Our friends, and loved ones.
Praise be to you for all the people
Around us everywhere in this wounded world.

Come, O Lord, in the Cup of Healing.
The Prayer over the Gifts

A mention of the departed may be included:

We offer this spiritual sacrifice for [N and for] all who sleep, who have gone before us in the peace of the Lord Jesus, from Adam to the present day: you named them and you know their names.

The Great Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you,
And with your spirit.
Lift up your hearts.
We lift them up to the Lord.
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give our thanks and praise.

The Stowe Preface

Father, all powerful and ever living God,
We do well always and everywhere to give you thanks through Jesus Christ our Lord.
You [O Father], with your only begotten Son and the Holy Spirit are God.
You are God, one immortal;
Incorruptible and unmoving;
Invisible and faithful;
Wonderful and worthy of praise;
Strong and worthy of honour;
You are God, most high and magnificent;
Living and true;
Wise and powerful;
Holy and splendid;
Great and good;
You are God, awesome and peace-loving;
Beautiful and righteous;
Pure and kind;
Blessed and just;
Tender and holy;
You are God, not in the singularity of one person,
But in the Trinity of substance.
We believe you;
We bless you;
We adore you
And praise your name for evermore.
We praise you
Through Christ who is the salvation of the universe;
Through Christ who is the life of human beings;
Through Christ who is the resurrection of the dead.

Through him the angels praise your majesty;
the dominations adore;
the powers of the heaven of heavens tremble;
the virtues and the blessed seraphim
concelebrate in exultation;
so grant, we pray you,
that our voices may be admitted to that of the chorus,
in humble declaration of your glory,
as we say/sing:

Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.

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Eucharistic Prayer I (The Gelasian)

Most merciful Father, we humbly pray and implore you, through Jesus Christ your Son, our Lord, to be pleased to receive and bless + these gifts, these holy unblemished offerings.

We offer them to you in the first place for your holy Church throughout the whole world. Be pleased to keep her in peace, to watch over her, and to gather her in unity and to guide her, and also for [N] your servant our bishop, and all the bishops and all right believing teachers of the Catholic apostolic faith.

Remember, Lord, your servants and handmaids [N and N] and all here present whose faith and devotion are known to you. We offer for them, or they themselves offer, this sacrifice of praise for themselves and all their own, for the
redeeming of their souls, for their hope of safety and salvation; and they now send up their prayers to you, the eternal, living and true God.

Being in fellowship we reverently bring to mind, firstly the glorious Mary, ever virgin, Mother of our God and Lord Jesus Christ, and then your blessed apostles and martyrs; Peter and Paul, Andrew, James, Bartholomew, Matthew, Simon and Jude, David, Ninian and Patrick, Columba, Teilo, Brigid, Deiniol and Samson, Asaph, Iltud, Dyfrig, Petroc, Padarn (* please note that regional saints may be varied according to the country and diocese) and all your saints: grant by their merits and prayers that at all times we may be defended and helped by your protection. Through the same Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Be pleased, O God, to bless + this offering, to accept it fully, to make it perfect and worthy to please you, so that it may become for us the Body and Blood of your dearly beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Who, the day before he suffered, took bread into his holy and venerable hands, and with his eyes lifted up to heaven, to you, God, his almighty Father, giving thanks to you, he blessed, broke and gave it to his disciples saying: Take and eat you all of this, for this is my body.

In like manner, after he had supped, taking also this chalice into his holy and venerable hands, again giving thanks to you, he blessed and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and drink you all of this: for this is the chalice of my blood, of the new and eternal testament: the mystery of faith: which shall be shed for you and for many for the remission of sins. As often as you shall do these things, you shall do them in memory of me.

Wherefore, Lord, in memory of the blessed passion of the same Christ, your Son, our Lord, of his resurrection from the dead and of his ascension to heavenly glory, we your servants and with all your holy people offer to your sovereign majesty, from among your gifts bestowed upon us, a victim perfect, holy and spotless, the holy bread of everlasting life and the chalice of everlasting salvation.

Be pleased to look upon these offerings with a favourable and gracious countenance; accept them as you were pleased to accept the offerings of your servant Abel the righteous, the sacrifice of our father Abraham, and that of Melchisedech, your high priest, a holy sacrifice, a spotless victim.

We humbly implore you, almighty God, that these offerings be carried by the hands of your holy angel to your altar on high, in the sight of your divine majesty, that all who are partakers at the altar of the precious Body and Blood of your Son may be filled with all heavenly grace and blessing. Through the same Christ our Lord.

Amen.
Remember also, Lord, your servants and handmaids [N and N] who are gone hence before us, marked with the sign of faith, and sleep the sleep of peace. To them, Lord, and to all that rest in Christ grant, we implore you, a place of happiness, light and peace. Through the same Christ our Lord.

Amen.

To us also, your sinful servants, who hope in the multitude of your mercies, be pleased to grant some place and fellowship with your holy apostles and martyrs and all your saints. We pray you admit us into their company, not weighing our own merits but bestowing on us your own free pardon. Through Christ our Lord.

Through him, O Lord, you ever create these good things, and you hallow, quicken and bless + them as gifts for us.

By him and with him and in him are ever given to you, God the Father Almighty, in the unity of the Holy Spirit all honour and glory for ever and ever.

Amen.

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Eucharistic Prayer II (Gallican Rite)

The Gallican Preface

It is right, just and fitting, here and everywhere, to give you thanks, Lord, holy Father, eternal God; you saved us from everlasting death and the last darkness of hell, and gave mortal matter, put together from the liquid mud, to your Son and to eternity.

When you had overcome the chaos and confusion of the beginning and the darkness in which things swam, you gave wonderful forms to the amazed elements: the tender world blushed at the fires of the sun, and the rude earth wondered at the ways of the moon.

And lest there be no one to adorn the world and wonder at your Creation, you created humankind out of the clay and brought it to life in the Spirit.

Although we were formed in the likeness of your Son, we abandoned the commandments of your blessed majesty and were plunged, mortal once more, into the earth from whence we came, and mourned the loss of the eternal comfort of your gift. In your great goodness you sent the Word of salvation from heaven, that he should be made flesh by taking a human body, to care for the ancient wounds and for all that which the age had lost.

Therefore all the angels with all the saints praise him with unceasing voice, saying/singing:

Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.
As the heavenly creatures resound on high the praise of your glory, your goodness wished that it should be known also to your servants; and this proclamation, made in the starry realms, to be as a gift, not only to be known but also to be imitated.

Therefore Jesus, the night before he suffered for the salvation of us all, in the midst of his apostles and disciples, took bread in his holy hands and looking up to you, God the father Almighty, gave thanks, blessed and broke it. Then giving it to his disciples said, 'Take, eat, this is my body which is given for you: do this for the life of the age.'

In like manner after supper taking the cup in his hands, and looking up to heaven to you, God the father Almighty, gave thanks, blessed it, and handed it to his apostles, saying: 'Take, drink from this, all of you; for this is the cup of my holy blood, of the new and eternal covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. As often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, do it in remembrance of me, showing my passion to all and looking for my coming again.'

Therefore, most merciful Father, look upon the commandments of your Son, the mysteries of the Church, your gifts to those who believe: through Jesus Christ your Son, our God and Lord and Saviour, who, with you Lord and the Holy Spirit, reigns for ever, eternal Godhead, to the ages of ages.

Amen.

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Eucharistic Prayer III (Hippolytus)

We give you thanks, O God, through your beloved servant Jesus Christ, whom at the end of time you sent to us as saviour and redeemer and the messenger of your will; who is your Word, inseparable from you, through whom you made all things, and in whom you are well pleased.

You sent him from heaven into the womb of the Virgin; and, dwelling in the womb, he was made flesh and was manifested as your Son, being born of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin. Having fulfilled your will, and winning for you a holy people he spread out his hands when he should suffer, that by his death he might set free from suffering those who believed in you. Jesus the Christ, when he was betrayed to his willing death, that he might bring to nought death and break the bonds of the devil, tread hell under foot, give light to the righteous, set the limit and manifest his resurrection, taking the loaf and giving thanks, said:

'Take, eat, this is my Body, which shall be broken for you.' Likewise also the cup, saying: 'This is my Blood which is shed for you; as often as you do this, do it in memory of me.'

Remembering therefore his death and resurrection, we offer to you this bread and this cup, giving you thanks as you have counted us worthy to stand before you and minister to you.

We pray you therefore to send your Holy Spirit upon these offerings gathered here, that all those who receive may be filled with your Holy Spirit for the confirmation of faith in truth, that they may praise and glorify you. Through your servant Jesus Christ, through whom to you be all honour and glory, with the Holy Spirit in your Holy Church, both now and to the ages of ages.

Amen.

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The Holy Communion

As our Saviour taught us, we pray:

Our Father who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name,
thy Kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the Kingdom,
the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever.
Amen.

Deliver us, we implore you Lord, from all evils, past, present and to come, and by the intercession of the blessed and glorious Mary, ever virgin, Mother of God, and of your blessed apostles Peter and Paul, and of Andrew and all the saints, mercifully give peace in our days; that through the help of your mercy we may always be free from sin and safe from all troubles. Through the same Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

The Fraction of the Host (From the Stowe Missal)

They recognized the Lord, Alleluia;
In the breaking of the loaf, Alleluia [Luke 24.35];
For the loaf that we break is the body
of our Lord Jesus Christ, Alleluia;
The cup which we bless is the blood
of our Lord Jesus Christ, Alleluia [1 Cor. 10.16–17]
For the remission of our sins, Alleluia [Matt. 26.28];
O Lord, let your mercy come upon us, Alleluia;  
**In you O Lord have I put my trust, Alleluia** [Ps. 31.1];  
They recognized the Lord, Alleluia;  
**In the breaking of the loaf, Alleluia** [Luke 24.35].

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*Celebrant:* O Lord, we believe that in this breaking of your body and pouring out of your blood we become your redeemed people;  
We confess that in taking the gifts of this pledge here, we lay hold in hope of enjoying its true fruits in the heavenly places.

**Agnus Dei**

Jesus, Lamb of God: have mercy on us.  
Jesus, bearer of our sins: have mercy on us.  
Jesus, redeemer of the world: give us your peace.

Or

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world: have mercy on us.  
Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world: have mercy on us.  
Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world: Grant us peace.

*Celebrant:* Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. Happy are those who are called to his supper.  
Lord, I am not worthy to receive you, but only say the word and I shall be healed.

**The Communion Antiphon**

*The Celebrant receives Holy Communion and says:*  
He gives heavenly bread to the hungry, and to the thirsty water from the living spring.  
Christ the Lord himself comes, who is Alpha and Omega. He shall come again to judge us all.
Prayer of Elevation

Come, you holy ones, receive the body of Christ, drinking the holy blood by which you were redeemed.

Stowe
Or

Praise to the Son of David.
If anyone is holy, let him come.
If anyone is not holy, let him repent.
Maranatha. (Come, Lord)
Amen.

Didache

The Sacrament is administered with these words:
The Body of Christ.
Amen.
The Blood of Christ.
Amen.

A Hymn may be sung during Communion.

Prayer after Communion (see Appendix)

The Dismissal

The Lord be with you;
And with your spirit.

The Priest may say this or a different blessing:
(Alternative blessings may be found on page 250)
The peace of God which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord: and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be amongst you and remain with you always.
Amen.
Let us go forth in peace;  
In the name of Christ.  
Amen.

Or

I bless you, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Sacred Spirit, the One and the Three. May God give you to drink of his cup, the sun shine bright upon you, may the night call down peace, and when you come to his household may the door be open wide for you to go in to your joy.

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.  
In the name of Christ.  
Amen.

Recessional Hymn

Appendix: Alternative Prayers and Sentences

Additional Prayers I

Sentence

You are my strength Lord, I will love you,  
Under the shadow of your wings protect me.

The Prayers of Moucan Welsh, eighth century

Opening Prayer

Kindle in our hearts, O God,  
The flame of love that never ceases,  
That it may burn in us, giving light to others.  
May we shine for ever in your temple,  
Set on fire with your eternal light,  
Even your Son, Jesus Christ,  
Our Saviour and Redeemer.
Amen.

St Columba
Prayer over the Gifts

Lord God,
May the gifts we offer increase our love for you
And bring us to eternal life.

Communion Sentence

He gives heavenly bread to the hungry,
And to the thirsty, water from the living spring.

Prayer after Communion

We believe, O Lord, that in this breaking of your body and pouring out of your blood we become redeemed people. We confess that by our sharing of this sacrament we are strengthened to endure in hope until we lay hold and enjoy its true fruits in the heavenly places.

Stowe Missal

Additional Prayers II

Sentence

Let us adore the Lord,
Maker of marvellous works,
Bright heaven with its angels,
And on earth the white-waved sea.

Ancient Irish

Opening Prayer

O Lord Jesus Christ, you are the way, the truth and the life: suffer us not to stray from you, who are the way, nor to distrust you, who are the truth, nor to rest in any other thing than you, who are the life. Teach us by your Holy Spirit what to believe, what to do, and wherein to take our rest. We ask it for your Name’s sake. Amen.

Erasmus

Prayer over the Gifts

Praise to you, O Christ,
King of eternal glory!
Man does not live on bread alone,
But on every word that comes from the mouth of God.
Praise to you, O Christ,
King of eternal glory!
Communion Sentence
This is the living bread which comes down from heaven, 
He who eats of it shall live for ever.

Prayer after Communion
Lord, may we be wakeful at sunrise to begin a new day for you; 
Cheerful at sunset for having done our work for you; 
Thankful at moonrise and under starshine for the beauty of your universe; 
And may we add what little may be in us to add to your great world. 
Amen.

The Abbot of Greve

Additional Prayers III

Sentence
Brothers and sisters, be joyful, and keep your faith and belief, and do the little things which you have heard and seen with me.

St David

Opening Prayer
O God, your name is blessed from the rising of the sun to its setting; fill our hearts with knowledge of yourself and our mouths with your praise, that from East to West all may sing your glory, with one voice and accord, in Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord. Amen.

Prayer over the Gifts
God our Creator, 
May this bread and wine we offer 
As a sign of love and worship 
Lead us to eternal joy.
Communion Sentence
We know and believe in God’s love for us.

Prayer after Communion
See that you are at peace among yourselves, my children,
And love one another in Jesus, the Christ, our Lord.

St Columba

Additional Prayers IV

Sentence
Help us, Unity in trinity,
Trinity in Unity, take pity.

Laidcenn, Irish, seventh century

Opening Prayer
Let us pray to God the Father, God the Son,
And to God the Holy Spirit
Whose infinite greatness
Enfolds the whole world,
In persons three and one,
In essence simple and triune,
Suspending the earth above the waters,
Hanging the upper air with stars,
That he may be favourable to sinners
Who righteously justifies all who err,
Who ever-living lives.
May God be blessed for ages. Amen.

Moucan, Welsh, eighth century
Prayer over the Gifts

Receive, Lord, we pray, the offerings which we make to you of what you have given us, so that by the power of your grace these holy mysteries may sanctify our present life and bring us to everlasting joys.

Prayer after Communion

Grant within us, Lord, the gift of your glory, that against all the evils of this present age, the power of the Eucharist we have received may be our protecting wall.

Additional Prayers V

Sentence

My soul’s desire is to see the face of God, and to rest in his house.

St Columba

Opening Prayer

Father, your love for us surpasses all our hopes and desires. Forgive our failings, keep us in your peace and lead us in the way of salvation.

Prayer over the Gifts

Lord, receive our gifts. Let our offerings enable us in the way of healing and holiness.

Communion Sentence

Dear Lord, you alone know what my soul truly desires, and you alone can sanctify those desires.
Prayer after Communion

May this sharing, Lord, in your Son’s Body and Blood be the washing away of our sins, the strength of the weak, and our protection against the dangers of the world. May it set us free from evil and grant us our share in the joy of your Kingdom.

*Stowe*

Additional Prayers VI

Sentence

The grace of God’s love dwells in our hearts as a jewel of gold is placed in a silver dish.

*Iona, sixth century*

Opening Prayer

God of all creation, we worship you as Lord. God, you are ever close to us, we rejoice to call you Father. From this world’s uncertainty we look to you for strength. Keep us one in your peace, secure in your love.

Prayer over the Gifts

God of power, giver of all gifts, accept the offerings of your people, who offer them that you may make them a sacrament of our healing.

Sentence

My soul’s desire is to enter the gates of heaven, and to gaze upon the light that shines forever.

Prayer after Communion

Lord, you satisfy our longings with this gift from heaven. Cleanse us from our secret faults and from the assaults of the evil one.

*Stowe*
Additional Prayers VII

Sentence
Let the summits of heaven praise you with roaming lightning,
O most loving Jesus, O righteous King of Kings.

Iona, sixth century

Opening Prayer
O Holy Jesus,
Gentle friend,
Morning star,
Midday sun adorned,
Fountain ever-new, ever-living, ever-lasting
Son of the merciful Father without mother in heaven,
Son of the Virgin Mary, without father on earth,
True and loving brother,
Give, grant, and impart to us your holy grace and your Holy Spirit, to protect and preserve us from all our sins, present and future.

The Broom of Devotion, early Irish

Prayer over the Gifts
Lord, hear the prayer of your people and receive our gifts.
May the worship of each one here bring healing to all.

Prayer after Communion
We give thanks, Lord, Holy Father, Almighty God; we shared the Body and Blood of Christ your Son and so you have fulfilled all our needs. Humbly we beg your mercy, that this your sacrament may not bring us the punishment of our sins but may speak to you for our forgiveness and salvation.
Additional Prayers VIII

Sentence

The King is knocking.
If you would have your share
of heaven on earth,
open the door of your heart
and let in the King.

*Hebridean*

Opening Prayer

You are our King. Yours is our flesh, our body, we love you blessed Christ, for our soul is yours.
May we be in your royal dwelling all our days. May we eat the feast from your table. Do not leave us behind, O God our King.

*Welsh*

Prayer over the Gifts

Lord God, accept our prayers and offerings, convert the hearts of us all to yourself so that we, delivered from worldly covetousness, may rise to desire the things of heaven.

*Stowe*

Prayer after Communion

God, we give you thanks because it is through you that we have celebrated these holy mysteries.
We beg from you your gifts of holiness: have mercy on us, Lord, Saviour of the world, King for ever and ever.

*Blessing*

The High-King’s blessing be upon you,
may He be upon your daily trail;
the High-King’s blessing be upon you,
that you be spared perils and pain.

*Gaelic*
Alternative Dismissal Prayers

Let us go forth,
In the goodness of our merciful Father,
In the gentleness of our brother Jesus,
In the radiance of his Holy Spirit,
In the faith of the apostles,
In the joyful praise of the angels,
In the holiness of the saints,
In the courage of the martyrs.

Celtic

I beseech you, Jesus, loving Saviour, to show yourself to all who seek you so that we may know you and love you.
May we love you alone, desire you alone, and keep you always in our thoughts.
May love for you possess our hearts,
May affection for you fill our senses, so that we may love all else in you.
Jesus, King of Glory,
You know how to give greatly
And you have promised great things.
Nothing is greater than yourself.
We ask nothing else of you but yourself.
You are our life, our light, our food and our drink, our God and our all.

from an ancient Irish Prayer

The Celebrant may end with the blessing:
And may the blessing of Almighty God,
The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,
Come upon you and remain with you for ever.
Amen.

Celebrant: Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.
Alternative Blessings

May Mary Virgin’s Son Himself
Be a generous lamp to you,
To guide you over
The great and awful ocean of eternity
And the blessing of God Almighty . . .

*Carmina Gadelica* (13)

The love and affection of the angels be to you,
The love and affection of the saints be to you,
The love and affection of heaven be to you,
To guard you and to cherish you.
And the blessing of God Almighty . . .

*Carmina Gadelica* (13)

God’s blessing be yours,
And well may it befall you;
Christ’s blessing be yours,
And well be you entreated;
Spirit’s blessing be yours,
And well spend your lives,
Each day that you rise up,
Each night that you lie down,
And the blessing of God Almighty . . .

*Carmina Gadelica* (13)

May the Creator bless you and keep you,
May the beloved compassion face you and have mercy upon you;
May the eternal Spirit’s countenance be turned to you and give you peace;
May the Three in One bless you.

*Hebridean*
May God give us light to guide us,
Courage to support us,
And love to unite us,
Now and evermore.
And may the blessing of God Almighty . . .

Celtic

May the Lord bless you and protect you.
May the Lord smile on you and show you his favour.
May the Lord befriend you and prosper you.
And may the blessing of God . . .

Celtic

God’s grace distil on you,
Christ’s grace distil on you,
Spirit’s grace distil on you
Each day and each night
Of your portion in the world;
On each day and each night
Of your portion in the world.

Carmna Gadelica (13)

May the road rise to meet you,
May the wind be always at your back,
May the sun shine warm upon your face,
May the rain fall soft upon your fields,
And until we meet again,
May God hold you in the hollow of his hand.

Gaelic

The palmful of the God of Life
The palmful of the Christ of Love
The palmful of the Spirit of Peace
Triune of Grace
Bless you, in the Name . . .

Early Scottish
My Christ, my shield,
my encircler,
each day, each night,
each light, each dark,
be near me, uphold me,
my treasure, my triumph.

* Iona

Salvation is of the Lord,
Salvation is of Christ.
May your blessing, Lord,
be upon your people,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
Amen.

*adapted from Nuall Fir Fhio: ‘Fer Fio’s Cry’ (trans. John Carey) (18)*

The holy lord of creation,
Christ, son of the holy Mary,
Jesus, beloved pillar –
may he go before the human race.
And the blessing . . .

*from Felire Oengusso (18)*

    Blessing and brightness,
    Wisdom, thanksgiving,
    Great power and might
    To the King who rules over all.

    Glory and honour and goodwill,
    Praise and the sublime song of minstrels,
    Overflowing love from every heart
    To the King of Heaven and Earth.

    To the chosen Trinity has been joined
    Before all, after all, universal
    Blessing and everlasting blessing,
    Blessing everlasting and blessing.

*Irish, ninth century*
The Lord bless us, and preserve us from all evil,  
and bring us to everlasting life;  
and may the souls of the faithful,  
through the mercy of God, rest in peace.

*Sarum Primer*

May the grace of the Lord Jesus sanctify us and keep us from all evil;  
may he drive far from us all hurtful things, and purify both our souls and bodies;  
may he bind us to himself by the bond of love,  
and may his peace abound in our hearts.

*Gregorian Sacramentary, sixth century*

May God the Father bless us;  
May Christ take care of us;  
May the Holy Spirit enlighten us  
all the days of our life.  
The Lord be our Defender  
and Keeper of body and soul  
both now and for ever,  
to the ages of ages.

*Book of Cerne, tenth century*

May the King shield you in the valleys,  
May Christ aid you on the mountains,  
May the Spirit bathe you on the slopes,  
In hollow, on hill, on plain,  
Mountain, valley and plain,  
May the Three in One bless you . . .

*Hebridean*

May we all reach the Kingdom that is without end,  
May we deserve it,  
May we dwell there for ages unending.  
Amen.

*from the Rule of the Celi De*
May the Three Who are over you,
The Three Who are below you,
The Three Who are above you here,
The Three Who are above you yonder,
The Three Who are in the earth,
The Three Who are in the air,
The Three Who are in the heaven,
The Three Who are in the great pouring sea –
bless you,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
Amen.

Gaelic