

THE GERMAN MASS
AND
ORDER OF SERVICE

Martin Luther
1526

Concordia Seminary
Saint Louis, Mo.
October 31, 1968

In Nomine Jesu

THE INTROIT PSALM: 46 (TLH, p. 134)

(congregation rises as the Introit is intoned)

Antiphon: "God is our Refuge and Strength."

THE KYRIE (TLH, p. 17)

Lord, have mercy upon us!

Christ, have mercy upon us!

Lord, have mercy upon us!

THE COLLECT (TLH, p. 84)

THE EPISTLE: Revelation 14:6,7

THE GRADUAL HYMN: "We Now Implore God the Holy Ghost"

(Stanza 3 - choir only)

(TLH, #231)

(congregation rises)

THE HOLY GOSPEL: Saint Matthew 11:12-15 Tone V

THE CREED: "We All Believe in One True God"

(Stanza 2 - choir only)

(TLH, #251)

(congregation sits)

THE SERMON

(after the sermon the congregation rises)

THE LORD'S PRAYER (paraphrased)

THE ADMONITION

THE CONSECRATION OF THE BREAD

The elevation

THE SANCTUS: "Isaiah, Mighty Seer, in Days of Old"

(choir only)

(TLH, #249)

(the distribution to the officiants)

THE CONSECRATION OF THE WINE

The elevation

THE AGNUS DEI: "O Christ, Thou Lamb of God"

(TLH, #147)

(the distribution to the officiants)

THE GENERAL DISTRIBUTION

(communicants will approach by the right-hand aisle, kneeling individually at the first vacant place, and leaving promptly after receiving the chalice, individually and without dismissal, moving to their left)

Music during the Distribution:

Steffano Bernardi: "Laudate Dominum"

Orlandus Lassus: "God Is Our Strength and
Fortress"

Heinrich Schuetz: "Lord, in Thee Do I Trust"

Hymn: "O Lord, We Praise Thee" (TLH, #313)

(Stanza 2 - choir only)

THE COLLECT OF THANKSGIVING

THE BENEDICTION

Soli Deo Gloria

Notes

Last year for the 450th anniversary of the Reformation Martin Luther's Formula Missae et Communionis of 1523 was celebrated in our chapel. In this order Luther gives a detailed description and documentation of the evangelical mass in Wittenberg. It was noted then that Luther's approach to the matter of liturgical reform and reconstruction is one of evangelical conservatism. He took the existing rite of the 16th century in northern Europe and cleansed it of those features which perverted or denied the message of the Scriptures, and he retained all those features which could be used legitimately in the service of the Gospel.

Except for the sermon and a scanty supply of hymns the mass was celebrated in Latin. Luther expressed the hope that ultimately a completely German mass might be provided. By 1522 a German liturgy was no longer a novelty. Indeed, so many German masses had been introduced that Luther's friends appealed to him to suggest specific guidelines for liturgical reconstruction in the vernacular.

The first completely German mass celebrated in Wittenberg took place on October 29, 1525. Whether or not the rubrics and format of Luther's German mass were ever used precisely as he wrote them down is open to speculation. Judging from the Kirchenordnungen that eventually developed in the evangelical territories, it appears that certain features of the German mass never were adopted generally.

The German Mass is used this evening in part with the view of demonstrating what form the service would take if Luther's suggestions were applied literally. His liturgical suggestions in this mass stemmed less from any specific competence he had in the field than from the imperative necessities of the situation. The order clearly indicates that the Reformation was not

averse to some radical and, at times, not completely thought-through experimentation. (We can take comfort in this!)

Some features of the mass continue to point to Luther's generally conservative approach to liturgical matters. The vestments, ceremonies and other customs employed tonight were retained in the German Mass. He does specifically suggest that when the people are instructed sufficiently the priest should move behind the altar and face the people for the celebration.

The mass begins with an entrance hymn or introit psalm (an entire psalm). Luther used Psalm 34 as his model in the mass. Since this is the Festival of the Reformation we use the psalm appointed for the Introit, 46. The Schola sings it in organum style according to Psalm Tone VI.

Luther was especially anxious to have the lessons (Epistle and Gospel) sung at the mass. He devotes more time to the musical notation of the lessons than he does to any other portion of the mass.

In place of the customary Gradual Luther suggests that the congregation and choir sing a German hymn, either "We Now Implore," or any other appropriate one. The hymn is arranged in concertato style by James Brauer of Concordia, Bronxville, N.Y. Following the prelude for organ and English horn, the congregation sings stanzas 1, 2, and 4, and the choir sings stanza 3.

Immediately after the Gospel the congregation is directed to sing the versified Creed, "We All Believe." Following Lutheran practice of alternating stanzas, the choir will sing the second stanza in a setting by the contemporary composer, Konrad Voppel.

Luther eliminated not only the offertory prayers but the offertory action from its accustomed place in

the mass. Nevertheless, the "action" of offertory must take place somewhere. Apparently this occurred during the singing of the creed.

The mass prescribes that immediately after the sermon a public paraphrase of the Lord's Prayer and an admonition for those who want to partake of the Sacrament shall be delivered. Usually this was done from the pulpit. The intercessions of the community will be remembered after the Lord's Prayer.

The priest then goes to the altar to begin the Office of Consecration.

Normally the Sanctus concludes the Preface. In the German Mass Luther places it between the consecration of the bread and the consecration of the wine. He suggests that "Isaiah, Mighty Seer" be used as the Sanctus. The choir sings it in a setting for two choirs by Michael Praetorius. Following the consecration of the wine, the German Agnus Dei is sung by everyone.

Luther does not abolish the elevation but retains it because it goes well with the German Sanctus and signifies that Christ has commanded us to remember Him. He says, "For just as the Sacrament is bodily elevated, and yet Christ's Body and Blood are not seen in it, so he is also remembered and elevated by the word of the sermon and is confessed and adored in the reception of the Sacrament. In each case he is apprehended only by faith; for we cannot see how Christ gives his Body and Blood for us and even now daily shows & offers it before God to obtain grace for us."

Following the dominical pattern of the upper room, Luther separates the consecration and the administration of the Sacrament into two distinct actions. The bread is to be consecrated and distributed to the people as one complete action. The chalice is then consecrated and administered to the people as a complete action.

The intent of this novel rubric will be carried out with the officiating men at the altar but for the sake of time will not be employed with the entire congregation. (It should be noted that in 1526 the number of communicants at any mass would not be large at all, and the time factor was not much greater than that involved in the distribution to the officiants this evening.)

During the Distribution the choir sings settings of texts which amplify the theme of the Introit: God is our refuge and strength. The first, "God Is My Strong Defense," is by Orlandus Lassus, a young contemporary of the Reformation. The second, "Lord, in Thee do I Trust," is a more personal approach to the theme, which is what one would expect from the seventeenth century Lutheran composer, Heinrich Schuetz. The third underscores the response of thanksgiving; it is a short motet by Steffano Bernardi entitled: "Laudate Dominum." The Latin and English texts follow:

Laudate Dominum quia benignus est; psallite
nomini ejus, quoniam suavis est. Omnia, quae-
cumque voluit, fecit in caelo et in terra.

Praise the Lord, for He is merciful; glorify
His name, for the Lord is just and kind.
Everything He wills, He brings to pass both
in heaven and on earth.

The Distribution will conclude with "O Lord, We Praise Thee." The choir sings stanza 2 in a setting by Kurt Fiebig.

The purpose of this service is to provide us with the means to thank and praise God for His mercy, to hear His Gospel spoken to us in our situation, and to receive the Body and Blood of our Savior under the form of bread and wine for the forgiveness of sins, for life and salvation. Let this be our focus and the purpose of our coming together.

Celebrant, the Rev. Prof. John S. Damm; Deacon, the Rev. Prof. Lester E. Zeitler; Subdeacon, the Rev. Prof. Walter Wegner; Assistant, the Rev. Prof. David E. Deppe; Server, Seminarian Mario Barbel; Crucifer, Seminarian Thomas Milke; Torchbearers, Seminarians Arthur Yunker and Eugene Koene; Banner Bearer, Seminarian Carl Prostka.

The organist is Stephen McKersie of Washington University. The choirs are the Schola Cantorum and the Concordia Seminary Liturgical Choir, both under the direction of the Rev. Prof. Mark P. Bangert, who also plays the English horn.