

Saint Thomas' Church  
Trinity XIII  
September 15, 2019  
The 1549 Mass  
rmcneely+

Welcome everyone. We are graced by your presence this morning.

We are about to celebrate the first Communion Service ever written in the English Language.

It is a testament to the liturgy,

to the poetry,

to the majesty of the writing

that you hold in your hands

the text of that service

first heard

on Pentecost in the year of our Lord 1549,

just over 470 years ago.

Few written works have so captured the mind and soul of man to have been preserved intact that long.

We will be celebrating the service as close to the way it was originally done as we know how.

But this service is not just an interesting peek into history. It remains a valid Mass

An opportunity for that Communion

That close union with God

Just like every Communion Service here at St Thomas'

So in order for you to participate and to pray the Communion May I offer a few notes:

The words are written in Old English

So spellings will not be what you are used to

In fact spellings are not even consistent

I suggest you think of them as being written phonetically,

They way they sound.

In lieu of a processional hymn, there is a psalm (ps 11 today) sung by the choir.

The responses of the Congregation are in the text and will be familiar to you.

There is a psalm near the beginning of the service. We will sing it together. You will find it in the bulletin. Psalm 23

The Collect, Epistle and Gospel are in the insert with the bulletin

Most of the prayers will be familiar. But follow closely because there are a few word changes in a few of them.

Some prayers come at a different point in the service than what you are used to.

The Lord's Prayer is on page 32 and it was said in a different manner

The priest says the body of the prayer by himself

The congregation says the last phrase "but deliver us from evil" as a response to the prayer. There is no doxology at the end.

You have noticed from the bulletin that there are no hymns in this service and that there are no anthems such as we know them.

But the music of some of the sung prayers and canticles is familiar to you. It was written for this 1549 service and we still use it today.

There is no organ accompaniment, no organ prelude and no organ postlude in the service. Suzy has a day off. The organ had not yet been accepted as a liturgical instrument. The choir sings a cappella throughout the service.

So with that:  
 Good People of Saint Thomas' Church: the 1549 Holy  
 Communion

Saint Thomas' Church  
 Trinity XIII  
 1549 Book of Common Prayer  
 September 15, 2019  
 rmcneely+

We must again board the St Thomas Way-Back Machine  
 And travel to England,  
 London in fact  
 To the year 1529

We find Henry VIII on the throne of England, Wales and Brittany

Some 12 years ago, Martin Luther has posted his 95 thesis on the  
 door of the Roman Catholic Church in Wittenburg Germany ,  
 Asking penetrating questions of church practice  
 And morality

A French lawyer named Jean Calvin has split from the Roman  
 church, fled to Geneva and is writing and preaching a new kind of  
 Christianity.

The Reformation of the Roman Catholic Church has torn Europe  
 apart and is spreading.

We find King Henry engaged in an epic struggle with Pope  
 Clement VII to grant him an annulment of his marriage to  
 Katherine of Aragon.

Henry has no heir and is obsessed with the need to secure the  
 throne to the Tudor dynasty.

He has repeatedly sent envoys to the Pope  
 Arguing that his marriage to Katherine  
 The widow of Henry's brother  
 Was not legal according to the laws of consanguinity  
 And that the dispensation to marry her from Pope Julius II  
 Was in error. Challenging Papal infallibility.  
 Henry was dissatisfied with the work of his Lord Chancellor  
 Thomas Wolsey  
 Who had not been able to obtain the annulment from the  
 Pope as quickly as Henry wanted.  
 So he discharged Wolsey several years ago and appointed Thomas  
 More  
 Became dissatisfied with his work  
 and has just now appointed  
 Thomas Cramner as Lord Chancellor.

Cranmer is an interesting choice.  
 He had been in exile in Germany as a Reformer.  
 Hiding from the Roman Catholic Church and his King.

While in Germany he married a German woman who was the  
 niece of a leading Lutheran theologian.  
 Cranmer managed to hide this fact from King Henry for  
 many years.

Henry was not among the Reformers  
 He had been schooled to join the clergy  
 And had been groomed to be the Archbishop of Canterbury  
 God had other plans and unexpectedly, Henry became King

So Henry was most knowledgeable in all matters of religion, the  
 church and doctrine.  
 He was a devout Roman Catholic before the crisis involving his  
 marriage to Katherine.

Affairs of State, domestic politics and religion cruelly merged on Henry's plate.

He required an heir. Katherine had been unable to provide him one.

Katherine was the niece of the Spanish King and Queen

Ferdinand and Isabella

The marriage had been arranged to smooth the tensions with Spain.

Annulment would jeopardize that peace.

The current Pope was also Katherine's uncle. A complicating factor for Henry. While the Pope never refused the annulment, he would not set the matter for an audience and so it remained unfulfilled.

Politically, Henry barely governed a divided country.

The nobility was strong in many of its regions.

They supported their own armies

They enjoyed the support of the people in their realm.

Some felt the Tudors should be replaced by a less

Controversial monarchical family

Perhaps one more generous than the Tudors

The Church in England was also divided.

Bishops and Archbishops in each of the regions of England

Practiced their own doctrine

Their own liturgy

Their own brand of religion

And the people of each congregation bore loyalty to their Bishop

Not to their King.

Oh my!

Henry needed to unify them behind him.

Henry saw the opportunity to solve all these problems.

And to begin to unify his country

Under his rule

But he needed an heir to secure his throne and the Tudors

And that required the annulment

Enter Thomas Cranmer.

Cranmer had declared that his allegiance to his King was

Superior to his allegiance to the church.

He had declared that the King's authority was superior to that of the Pope. He would follow his King.

Just the man for the job.

And within the year of Cranmer's appointment,

Parliament passed the Supremacy Act

The Supremacy act ended all authority of the Pope in England and replaced it with the authority of the King.

The Ecclesiastical Courts would be appointed by and be responsible to the King.

The king would determine who would be consecrated Bishop and Archbishop.

The King became the head of the church in England.

The original Christian Church became the National Religion  
And Henry was on his way.

He made Cranmer the Archbishop of Canterbury. The most important of the Archbishoprics.

As Archbishop and Lord Chancellor

Cranmer began the annulment proceedings.

Perhaps in a fit of optimism, prescience or lust, Henry married Anne Boleyn 4 months before Cranmer secured the annulment from Katherine of Aragon from the Church of England.

Henry was no reformer.

He insisted the mass be said in Latin in the Church of England. That the 7 sacraments of the Roman Church be secured in the Church of England

That Catholic doctrine, save the rule of clerical celibacy be observed in the Church of England.

He made almost no other doctrinal or liturgical changes.

With his third wife, Catherine Parr, Henry finally got his son, Edward and his throne was secured.

Henry was consolidating his power.

He had brought the church under his dominion

He had required that the Bible read in church services be a English translation.

It became known as the Great Bible due to its sheer size.

And Henry required that it be chained to the lectern

To insure that it and no other would be read to the people  
Henry was working on compelling the loyalty of the nobility.

But in 1547 Henry died and the crown was passed to his nine year old son, Edward VI.

By law a Lord Protector and Regents were appointed to rule in the boys place until he came of age.

Cranmer still Archbishop of Canterbury was perfectly situated and became one of the Regents.

Thomas Cranmer began his reform work on the Book of Common Prayer

The first prayer book to be written in the English language

Cranmer had an extensive personal library of liturgy. From the various Church of England services being used in

Salisbury

From Devonshire

From York

From Durham

He had the historic Roman rites from France and Germany

He had the liturgy of Spain written by Cardinal Quinones.

And of course he had the Latin service that the Roman Church was using in England.

Cranmer went to work

He spent a year and

by December 1548 he had the Book of Common Prayer completed.

It was an amazing work.

He compressed the seven daily services of the hours into the two offices of Morning and Evening Prayer

He had written collects

for most of the Sundays and

special feast days of the Church year.

Many of them were based upon their Roman counterparts.

He adjusted the Kalendar to include days of commemoration for the Apostles, for the New Testament prophets and kept the major feast days.

He wrote services for the life of a Christian

Baptism,

Confirmation

Matrimony

Services for the sick and dying

For the burial of the dead

The 1549 Book of Common Prayer

Is a book to live

Love and

Die to.

It was written for daily use.

He wrote the services for the ordination of Deacons and Priests  
And for the consecration of bishops

He made few substantive changes to the ancient Roman liturgy  
which he translated into English as the Book of Common Prayer.

The word “Common” in its title is not to indicate that it is  
unpretentious, banal or coarse.

Rather it is to point out that this prayer book

Is for the use of all people

Aristocrat

Peasant

King or Royal

Tradesman

Clergy

Merchant/banker

Every class of English society was brought together  
with a single devotional work.

All English-speaking peoples would share a Common

Devotion to God

And his English was unlike anything that had preceded it.

It was poetic . . . almost lyrical

It was rhythmical

It had meter

It had majesty

It set the standard for English literature.

Cranmer, Lord Protector Sommerset and the Regents took the Book of Common Prayer to Parliament for its approval .

In a short time, it swept Parliament

The First Uniformity Act was passed mandating its use

It is difficult for us to even imagine that the 1928 Book of Common Prayer could fetch a majority of both the American Senate and House.

The Uniformity Act required that all Churches, now under the dominion of the King,

use only the new prayer book beginning on Pentecost Sunday 1549.

It is difficult for Americans to comprehend what it means for the State to sponsor a religion.

It was a crime for any clergyman to conduct any service other than from the 1549 Book of Common Prayer.

Even for the Roman Catholic Church

Which the Supremacy Act had more or less sent underground.

Roman priests would be arrested if they used the Roman service or said the mass in Latin. And they were.

Cranmer knew the change from Latin to English would be tough on the people and clergy.

He did not make wholesale changes to the ancient liturgy

Perhaps to obtain the votes from the Puritan and Reformer members of Parliament to the first Act of Uniformity

Cranmer quietly pressed for the elimination of flowers at the altar

Elimination of bells rung during the service

Elimination of the elevation of the body and Blood of Christ

During the Consecration

## Elimination of Hymns

And so for authenticity you will not see or hear those things today.

But he left the content of the service itself intact.

Cranmer thought he was moving in baby steps

But beginning on Pentecost, 1549 things did not go well.

In the western part of England; Stampshire Courtney, Devon,  
Exeter: the people revolted and rioted.

All the new prayer books that had been sold there were  
collected and burned in huge demonstrations.

The Army was called out to quell the rebellion. The power of the  
State to compel compliance to the new law was something we can  
not imagine.

Soldiers surrounding churches to arrest those who did not  
Conform. To arrest those who did not attend church.

What Cranmer viewed as a mild change was too much for the  
people.

At the same time the Puritans  
and Calvinists  
and other reformers

were becoming a formidable political power in England.

The State religion was the province of the State government.

Now that they heard in English what they had been saying in Latin  
for years

They objected that the prayer book was too papist.

That it did not go far enough toward Calvinism

They flexed their new found political muscle and over the  
following years pushed for such things

As the elimination of rings at wedding ceremonies

They insisted that the altar be called the Lord's Table

So as not to imply the sacrifice that is inherent in the  
notion of an altar (an early example of politically  
correct speech)

They were profoundly anti-clergy and especially anti-priest

And the 1549 Book of Common Prayer maintained a role for priests.

They would later succeed in eliminating candles  
Statuary

They would eliminate vestments for the priests  
Vestments for the chalice at the altar.  
The host could not have any markings on them.

Kneeling in prayer and to receive communion was banned.

Imagine what today's service would be like  
No reminder of Mary and the baby Jesus  
No candles  
No tabernacle for the reserve sacrament to be used for  
hospital and home administration of communion  
No vestments for the clergy  
No vestments for the Chalice on the altar (or Lord's Table)

But in the ensuing years and after a long civil war in England the reformers lost their political power  
And things more or less returned to 1549 normal

The English Reformation  
Was lead by thinking men of Cambridge and Oxford  
Their writings and influence restored the Church  
To its ancient forms, liturgy and practices  
of the Apostolic age  
to its rich musical tradition  
but at the same time  
rid the church of the Roman excesses and heresies.

In America things took an even more orthodox turn  
Freed from the State religion of England

And freed from the politics that ruled over the church there  
The Church of England became the Episcopal Church of the  
United States of America

And in 1789 their first prayer book was much like the 1549  
Book of Common Prayer.

During the 1800's there was a movement to move the American  
Church further toward the Apostolic era

And in 1928 a new Book of Common Prayer was adopted  
The one you have in the pews here at St Thomas'

You have already seen just how similar the 1549 service is to the  
1928.

But you will see more important similarities  
In the remainder of the service that is to come.

Archbishop Thomas Cranmer did not survive the Crown of Queen  
Mary, who succeeded Edward VI

She had Cranmer burned at the stake  
Because he was not catholic enough for her reign.

But Cranmer's work of 1549

Lived on

It became one of the most extraordinary books in history.

It traveled the globe

To all the countries of the English Empire

To all the cultures with which British trade was conducted

With the explorers

It was first read in this hemisphere

Not far from here on the Marin shores

When the chaplain of the Golden Hind, Sir Francis Drakes'  
ship landed here in 1579.

It was read, heard or possessed by millions of English speaking people and was perhaps the most widely known work in history.

It went with missionaries, to Africa, Asia, the orient.

It went with English colonists to the Americas,  
 To the Caribbean  
 The South Pacific  
 New Zealand, Australia

It has seeped into our language and mediates our culture.

We commit to love and to cherish  
 To honor and keep in sickness and health  
 In weddings  
 We come to terms with our own mortality with  
 Earth to earth, Ashes to ashes, and dust to dust  
 Millions of English speaking people  
 Godly  
 Wicked  
 Or indifferent  
 Have been baptized, married or buried to the words of the 1549  
 Book of Common Prayer.

We who so love the language, poetry, cadence and meter of the  
 1928 Book of Common Prayer  
 Owe a great debt of gratitude to its principal author Thomas  
 Cranmer

He stated the doctrine of the Church with eloquence and accuracy.  
 He preserved the majesty and mystery of the early Apostolic era.

Many people contributed to this service this morning  
 To help make it as authentic as we could.

I want to publicly acknowledge their efforts.  
Esther Torres designed and published a new bulletin and the insert  
for your convenience.

Lisa May and the choir researched and performed the ancient  
music

The acolytes trained for a service they had never before  
encountered

Norman and Nikki Durieux helped in the research of the text for  
the service kindly gifting a number of books on the subject.

I hope you find the 1549 Service

Interesting

Uplifting

And its story inspiring