

A comparison of the Eucharistic Canon in the 1928 BCP and that of the 1979 book
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Part I

Acknowledgments

Before I begin this article, I do want to acknowledge the help of Fr. Greg and Shirley Miller for their generous help in editing my work, and for offering many helpful suggestions. However, I do want to make it clear that I take full responsibility for the final product, especially for all errors in it.

Introduction to the series

I want to thank my readers for the generous feedback to my previous article. I am encouraged to try my hand at a far more difficult task, which is to compare the Prayers of Consecration in the 1928 BCP versus that of the 1979 book. Due to the length of this article, I have decided to publish it in parts.

Discussing the consecration in the 1979 book in comparison to the 1928 BCP is difficult for two reasons. First, there seem to be something like eight different prayers of consecration in the 1979 book, to wit: Rite I, Prayers 1 and 2, Rite II, Prayers A, B, (the often parodied and almost never used) C, and D, “An Order for Celebrating Holy Eucharist,” Forms 1 and 2.

Why it should be necessary to offer eight different prayers of consecration is puzzling. One possibility is that having all these choices is necessary to keep the Eucharist from becoming “boring” to a generation raised on constant variety and the need to be continuously entertained. (How the Eucharist, if properly understood, could ever become “boring” is beyond my comprehension, but there it is.) The other possibility is that the point subtly being made is that “words” don’t really matter. Of course, the very name “Theology” (words about God) suggests that “words” are very important, even vital.

Second, other than Rite I Prayer I (which seems to be simply the consecration from the 1928 BCP, word for word) the rest of the prayers of consecration are so divergent from any form of the consecration ever used by Anglicans in the first 434 years of the Prayer Book tradition (and from each other) as to make comparisons challenging. I will concentrate my efforts on looking at the consecration from Rite II, Prayer A, which I understand is one of the most commonly used prayers, versus the 1928 BCP.

In future articles I will attempt to analyze these two prayers one section at a time. Attached you will find a side by side rendering of these two prayers, which you may wish to print out or save for use with the future articles.

I can only promise my readers my best efforts. I do want to make it clear that my analysis is far from neutral. I have certain definite biases which will become crystal clear as you read these articles. Nevertheless, I do hope that these articles will be thought provoking, help us better understand the theological worth of the traditional Prayer Book language, and perhaps be just a bit entertaining.

Part II

Sursum Corda, Preface, and Sanctus

Sursum Corda and Preface

1928 BCP	1979 book
<p>After which the Priest shall proceed, saying,</p> <p>Lift up your hearts.</p> <p>Answer. We lift them up unto the Lord.</p> <p>Priest. Let us give thanks unto our Lord God.</p> <p>Answer. It is meet and right so to do.</p>	<p>The Lord be with you.</p> <p>And also with you.</p> <p>People Lift up your hearts.</p> <p>Celebrant We lift them to the Lord.</p> <p>People We lift them to the Lord.</p> <p>Celebrant Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.</p> <p>People It is right to give him thanks and praise.</p>
<p>Then shall the Priest turn to the Holy Table, and say,</p>	<p>Then, facing the Holy Table, the Celebrant proceeds</p>
<p>IT is very meet, right, and our bounden duty, that we should at all times, and in all places, give thanks unto thee, O Lord, Holy Father, Almighty, Everlasting God.</p>	<p>It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and every where to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.</p>
<p>Here shall follow the Proper Preface, according to the time, if there be any specially appointed; or else immediately shall be said or sung by the Priest,</p>	<p>Here a Proper Preface is sung or said on all Sundays, and on other occasions as appointed.</p>
<p>THEREFORE with Angels and Archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we laud and magnify thy glorious Name; evermore praising thee, and saying,</p>	<p>Therefore we praise you, joining our voices with Angels and Archangels and with all the company of heaven, who for ever sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of your Name:</p>

The first and most obvious innovation is the addition of the Salutation, “The Lord be with you. And also with you.” This is a conscious adoption of Roman practice. (Whether this is a good or bad thing, I will leave to High Church/Low Church controversialists.) What makes it amusing is that the Roman Church has recently had the good grace to replace the hideous “and also with you” with the proper translation of “*et cum spiritu tuo*”, “and with thy spirit.” “And with thy spirit” recognizes that the priest is not simply another average Joe, but rather one who has been anointed with the Holy Spirit in his Ordination for the very activity he is preparing to do.

