

The Biblical And Ecclesial Teachings
Of
The Syro-Chaldean Church of North America
And
The Communion of Evangelical National Catholic Churches

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Part I - Teachings

Preface

Preface concerning the name and history of the Syro-Chaldean Church of North America

The Church was originally most fully and correctly known as the Autocephalous Syro-Chaldean Church of North America.

It was Autocephalous and Syro-Chaldean in that it was a totally self-governing and canonically independent daughter, in apostolic succession and liturgical heritage, of the Ancient Holy Apostolic and Catholic Church of the East. That Church had its ancient centers of authority in Syria and Mesopotamia (Chaldea). It is from these centers that the liturgical heritage stems.

The Church is North American because it is organizationally limited to the continent of North America. It is assumed that mission work or ecclesiastical developments from this Church in any other region would eventually become national in character and in communion with the North American Church, there would be formed one united communion of Evangelical National Catholic Churches.

The Syro-Chaldean Church is part of the many branched Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church of Jesus Christ. It is made holy by the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the gift of the sanctifying Holy Spirit. It is Catholic in that it holds the ancient Catholic (universal) faith held by all Apostolic churches. It is Apostolic in that it is a Church in succession of episcopal ordinations. This succession comes through the Holy Apostolic and Catholic Church of the East, and the Russian, Ukrainian, and Slovonian Orthodox Churches.

Worship And Ministry

Introduction

The ministry of the Church is to worship God. This action is the source of all blessing, healing, gifts, and love shown forth in and from the Church, which is the Body of Christ in the world.

Take delight in the LORD; and He will give you the desires of your heart. (Psalm 37:4)

. . .and to know the love of Christ. . . that you might be filled with all the fullness of God. (Ephesians 3:19)

. . .every one who loves the parent loves the child. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and obey His commandments. (I John 5:1-2)

The worship of God is the work and life of the Church. It is the work done and the life lived by all the people of God together. The Christian life cannot be lived divorced from the Body of Christ. Just as the Church is one Body with Christ as the Head, so each member is an integral part of that perfectly ordered Body, and has specific functions to carry out within it. (Cf. I Corinthians, chapters 12 & 14).

Orders Of Ministry

. . .we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God. (Hebrews 4:14)

Jesus, in offering Himself once and for all for the sins of all mankind, has once and for all performed the priestly function for the Church. Jesus is both the Priest who offers the sacrifice and the Sacrifice which is offered.

The People of God, being the Body of Christ and sharing both in His suffering and in His offering, participate in His royal priesthood, bringing salvation to all creation.*

. . .and being made perfect, He became the source of eternal salvation to all them who obey Him; being designated by God a high priest after the order of Melchisedek. (Hebrews 5:9-10)

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, that you may declare the wonderful deeds of Him who called you out of darkness into

* When speaking of the "priesthood" of both Christ and the People of God, it is important to note that the Greek term *hieros*, corresponding to the Hebrew term *cohen* (priest) is used. In the New Testament, *hieros* is never used of the ministers (bishop, presbyter, deacon) of the Body of Christ. The Greek word for elder, *presbyteros*, has been altered in speech through the years to "priest" in English, thus confusing the New Testament Priest with the Old Testament Priest. Even so, there is a similarity between the two. The Old Testament priests offered lambs continually for sacrifices for sin. The New Testament elders offer the continual memorial of that once and for all sacrificial Lamb of God, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

His marvelous light. Once you were no people but now you are God's people; once you had not obtained mercy but now you have obtained mercy. (I Peter 2:9-10)

Beloved, I beseech you as aliens and exiles, abstain from the passions of the flesh, that wage war against your soul. Maintain good conduct among the Gentiles, so that in case they speak against you as wrongdoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation. (I Peter 2:11-12)

He is the head of the body, the church; He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in everything He might be pre-eminent. For in Him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through Him to reconcile to Himself all things whether on earth, or in heaven, making peace by the blood of His cross. (Colossians 1:18-20)

And [God] has put all things under His feet, and has made Him the head over all things for the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all. (Ephesians 1:22-23)

(Cf. also Hebrews 4:12 to 5:10)

Christ also serves as Presbyter or Elder among His people and in all creation. He is *Rabbi* or Teacher, He is Pastor or Shepherd (*I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd is one who lays down his life for the sheep.* John 10:11) and, finally, He is King or Ruler.

Jesus appointed men to serve under Him within the Body as presbyters; to be teachers, shepherds, rulers, spokesmen, and to preside over the offering of the Church as it participates in the one offering and sacrifice of Jesus, our supreme High Priest.

. . .He said to him, "Feed my lambs." (John 21:15ff)

" . . .on this rock I will build my church, and the powers of death shall not prevail against it. And I will give to you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. (Matthew 16:18-19)

Now you are the body of Christ, and individually members of it. And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, then healers, helpers, administrators, speakers in various kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? (I Corinthians 12:27-30)

Bishops

Within the Church and under Christ, the Bishop is the head, the pastor and overseer. He follows in the apostolic calling of the Twelve who were chosen by Christ Himself, and who chose their successors.

The fullness of the presbyterate is found in the bishop. He fully represents the priesthood of the People of God. As successor of Peter and the Twelve, he is entrusted with the keys of the kingdom. He leads the Church just as James led in Jerusalem (cf. Acts 15:13-21). To him is entrusted the responsibility of preaching the Gospel, of setting a Christlike example, of teaching the faith, of caring for the Church, of ruling in disputed or unclear areas, and of presiding over the worship, the offering of the People of God. He appoints and ordains men and women to share with him the various aspects of his ministry.

Presbyters (Elders)

Presbyters, or priests, are men whom the Bishop ordains from the diaconate to share in his preaching, teaching and pastoral responsibilities. The presbyters assist the Bishop in his work. They are delegated by the Bishop to preside over the sacramental worship of the people and to pastor individual congregations. The presbyters join the Bishop as he leads Christ's Church on earth.

Deacons

The Bishop appoints and ordains men and women to the diaconate to assist him in the care and service of the Church. They assist in the worship; in teaching the Scriptures and the doctrines of the Church; in caring for the sick and the needy; in waiting on the table at the Lord's banquet, the Eucharist. They also carry out such other duties as they may be assigned. Deacons and Deaconesses do not participate in the ruling of the Church.

Minor Orders

In addition to the major orders of the episcopacy, the presbyterate and the diaconate, there are two minor orders. These are orders of preparation to the full and permanent ministry of the Church. The first is that of Reader, the second, that of Sub-deacon.

When a person receives God's call to full participation in the ministry of the Church, and that call is recognized by the Body, the Bishop ordains that person a Reader. In being ordained a Reader, he receives grace to prepare for his ministry. He commits himself to a period of study and discipline under the Bishop or his delegate. The Reader may assist in minor duties of the diaconate.

After a period of time, determined by the Bishop, the Reader is ordained Sub-deacon. The Sub-deacon takes on a greater share in the duties of the diaconate in order to gain experience under the guidance of a deacon or deaconess. The Sub-deacon continues in study and discipline. When the Bishop feels that the Sub-deacon is sufficiently prepared, he ordains him to the diaconate.

Delegated Authority For Appointment

The Bishop delegates to those presbyters whom he has appointed as pastors of congregations the authority to appoint men and women to the many lay ministries in the Church. These are generally considered to be temporary appointments. Such action includes the appointment of all duly elected officers and council members, all lay readers, acolytes, musicians, teachers, ushers, etc.

The Sacraments

Introduction

The worship and ministry of the Church is carried out through the sacraments, the services of worship and teaching, all other meetings, tasks, or functions of the People of God, through each person's individual life of prayer and discipline.

Just as the body is made up of many members, so too the successful completion of the work of the body depends on each person leading a well ordered life suffused with prayer.

The life of the Church is a sacramental life, a life consecrated to God, sharing in the ministry of salvation, the transforming work of the Holy Spirit. Every act of life, every form of worship and ministry is sacramental. In a sacrament (in Greek, μυστηριον [mysterion] or mystery), the Holy Spirit works in such a way that the power of sin, which has defiled God's creation, is completely overthrown and a change occurs. Sacramental worship and action make use of the physical, visible realm and offer it with the invisible to God, that all may be changed by the power of the Holy Spirit and made spiritual, that it may be healed and brought to salvation.

The Church calls seven specific acts sacraments, but the sacramental action of the Holy Spirit is in no way limited to these.

These seven Biblically based Holy Sacraments are as follows:

Two Sacraments of Initiation:	Baptism (1), Confirmation (1).
Two Sacraments of Healing:	Reconciliation (3), Anointing with oil (4).
Two Sacraments of Ministry:	Holy Matrimony (5), Holy Orders (6).
The Sacrament of Life:	Holy Eucharist (7).

Bishop's Responsibilities

The Bishop bears the responsibility for administering the sacraments. He has received a special gift of the Holy Spirit to represent Jesus as the Head, and the People as the Body, as he leads in the present participation in the priestly work of Christ. In certain situations, the Bishop delegates this work to other presbyters.

Sacraments Of Initiation

There are two sacraments of initiation. They are the *Sacrament of Baptism* and the *Sacrament of Confirmation*.

The Sacrament of Baptism

The Sacrament of Baptism is the immersion in water of a person who desires to be joined to the Body of Christ. In baptism the "old man" of sin is put to death as the person enters into Christ's death on the cross. As the baptized person emerges from the water, he is joining in the victorious resurrection of Christ, and becomes a new man, filled with the Holy Spirit. He is a member of Christ and with Christ a joint heir of the kingdom of heaven. In baptism, his sins are washed away and he receives eternal life.

... "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."
(Acts 2:38)

And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and in earth has been given to me. Go therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and, lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age."
(Matthew 28:18-20)

"He who believes and is baptized will be saved. . ." (Mark 16:16)

"And now why do you wait? Rise, and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name." (Acts 22:16)

What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin, that grace may abound? By no means! How can we, who died to sin, still live in it? Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.
(Romans 6:1-4)

For by one Spirit were we all baptized into one body - whether we be Jews or Greeks, slaves or free - and all were made to drink of one Spirit.
(I Corinthians 12:13)

But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Saviour appeared, He saved us, not because of deeds done by us in righteousness, but in virtue of His own mercy, by the washing of regeneration, and renewal in the Holy Spirit, which he poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Saviour. (Titus 3:4-5)

Note:

In order that the full symbolism inherent in the sacrament be realized, the person to be baptized should be fully immersed in water whenever practicable. If this is not practicable, it is sufficient to pour water over the person's head three times.

The sacrament is ordinarily to be performed by a Bishop or Presbyter; however, in cases of extreme emergency, anyone may do it.

Each person to be baptized is presented by at least two believing sponsors. The sponsors vouch to the Church for the genuineness of the candidate's conversion and commitment. In the case of children, the sponsors pledge that they will see that the child is raised in the Faith and the Church.* In all cases, the sponsors continue to provide spiritual guidance for the young Christian throughout his life. For these reasons sponsors should be chosen with care and in prayer.

* "Let the little children [infants – *βρέφος brephos*] come to Me and do not hinder them; for it is to such as these that the Kingdom of God belongs." As the children of the Israelites were entered into the People of God as infants of eight days by the rite of circumcision, the "Sign" of the Old Covenant, and thereafter expected to take on responsibilities of God's people as maturity permitted, so infants of believers of the New Covenant are

And you have come to fulness of life in Him, who is the head of all rule and authority. In Him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of flesh in the circumcision of Christ; and you were buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised with Him through the faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. And you, who were dead in trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our trespasses. (Colossians 2:10-13)

The Sacrament of Confirmation

The Sacrament of Confirmation is the laying on of hands and anointing with oil for the infilling of the Holy Spirit for life and for the work of God in the Church and the world. By this sacrament, the Christian is ordained to and empowered to fulfill his ministry as a member of the Body of Christ.

For the person who has obviously received the power, the gifts of the Holy Spirit, the Sacrament of Confirmation is the Church's endorsement of and sealing on this fact. The Holy Spirit Himself determines how He will manifest His gifts through each member for the benefit of other people.

[Jesus] charged [the apostles] not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, He said, "You heard from me, for John baptized with water but before many days you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit." So when they had come together, they asked Him, "Lord, will you at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" He said to them, "It is not for you to know the times or seasons which the Father has fixed by his own authority. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." (Acts 1:4-8)

Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent to them Peter and John, who came down and prayed for them to receive the Holy Spirit; for it had not yet fallen on any of them, but they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was given through laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money, saying, "Give me also this power, that anyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit." But Peter said to him, "Your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money." (Acts 8:14-20)

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of working, but it is the same God who inspires them all in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit of the common good. To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to

incorporated into the New People of God by the rite of Baptism, the "Sign" of the New Covenant. Christian baptism, as an initiation rite analogous to circumcision, is taught by St. Paul who calls Baptism "Christ's Circumcision."

distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. All these are inspired by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills. (I Corinthians 12:4-11)

Note:

The Bishop, as the overseer and pastor, as the successor to the apostles, and in the fullness of his presbyterate, bearing the responsibility to ordain individuals to their ministry, performs this sacrament, but may delegate it to the presbytery.

Sacraments Of Healing

There are two sacraments of healing. They are the *Sacrament of Reconciliation* and the *Sacrament of Anointing for Healing*. These two are intimately linked in the Scriptures.

Is any among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer of faith will save the sick man, and the Lord will raise him up; and if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. Therefore confess your sin to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man has great power in its effects. (James 5:14-16)

The Sacrament of Reconciliation

The Sacrament of Reconciliation is the means by which a person who, through his sin has become separated from God, from the Church, and from health, is once again reconciled. Through confessing his sins and receiving absolution for those sins, the lost one is reunited with God and His Body. Then the Lord's power to heal (given to the Church) is released.

A frequently use confessional prayer is that of an individual alone to God, confessing his sin with a sincere intent to repent (not commit that sin again).

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just, and will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (I John 1:9)

Another means of confession is the congregational prayer of confession within the Eucharistic Liturgy. This prayer has the advantage of our being aware that we *all* sin and we are *all* confessing our sin. Also, there is a freeing effect when the priest speaks the words of absolution.

But when sin seems to take root and neither of these forms of confession are succeeding, and when the congregant is officially excommunicated or simply knows that he is out communion with God and His Church, then the Sacrament of Reconciliation is the only means of reconciliation and restoration.

Note:

The authority to forgive sins (*If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.* John 20:23), to grant absolution is given by Christ to the Church and entrusted to the presbyterate. Only the Bishop or the Presbyters may complete the sacrament by granting absolution. In many situations, others may hear a person's confession of sin and counsel with him.

Such counselors have the responsibility to then direct the penitent to the heads of the Church for complete reconciliation as needed.

The Sacrament of Anointing with Oil

The Sacrament of Anointing with Oil is for God's healing power to be poured out upon the sick, bringing healing of body, mind, and spirit.

Note:

Because anointing for healing is given after confession and reconciliation, and because it is the Church's special act of healing, this sacrament is entrusted to the leadership of the Church: the Bishop and the Presbyters.

Other members of the Body are encouraged to pray for healing and to lay on hands to that effect. There are some called by God to exercise a special gift (charism) of healing, who, because their ministry shows itself in the healings which occur, need no special appointment. These acts of prayer and faith for healing are accomplished without the use of anointing oil.

Sacraments Of Ministry

There are two sacraments of ministry. They are the *Sacrament of Holy Matrimony* and the *Sacrament of Holy Orders*.

The Sacrament of Holy Matrimony

The Sacrament of Holy Matrimony is the sacrament through which two people, a man and a woman, become one. In their union, they bear the supreme witness to the union of Christ with His Bride, the Church. Their love for each other bears witness to the everlasting love of the Father for His children.

Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ. Wives, be subject to your husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ is the head of the church, His body and is Himself its savior. As the church is subject to Christ, so let wives also be subject in everything to their husbands. Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her with the washing of water with the word, that He might present the church to Himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. Even so husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no man ever hates his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, as Christ does the church, because we are members of His body. "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." This mystery is a profound one and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. (Ephesians 5:21-32)

The new family and household which is established through matrimony become an integral part of the Church. As the family is strong and healthy, it reflects the power of God and the strength of the Church. It contributes to the Church its strength and is a support for everyone else in the family of Christ.

And, as the union in Christ bears fruit, it adds to the Kingdom of God and to the Church new children to grow and minister in their own special way, one day to take up their responsibilities in doing God's work in the world.

Note:

Christian marriage is a sacramental union representing the eucharistic union of Christ with His Church.

Christ is the head of the church, His body and is Himself its savior. . . This mystery is a profound one and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church.
(Ephesians 5:23b, 32)

Therefore, it is to be performed by the Bishop or a Presbyter and in the context of the Holy Eucharist. Two people who have already been united outside the Church receive the sacramental fulfillment of that union in sharing the Body and Blood of Christ together in the Holy Eucharist. If the couple desires to receive the Church's blessing on their marriage, this may be given by the Bishop or a Presbyter; however, no new sacramental act, other than sharing together in the Communion, may be performed.

The Sacrament of Holy Orders

The Sacrament of Holy Orders is the setting apart of individuals in the Church to bear special responsibilities and to perform certain tasks. The ordained person receives a special gift or grace of the Holy Spirit to perform that work. This is given in response to the prayers of the Church. The person so ordained takes a new place in the perfect ordering of Christ's Body.

For just as the body is one, and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body - Jews or Greeks, slaves or free - and all were made to drink of one Spirit.

For the body does not consist of one member, but of many. If the foot should say, "Because I am not the hand, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. And if the ear should say, "Because I am not the eye, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would be the hearing? If the whole were an ear, where would be the sense of smell? But as it is, God arranged the organs in the body each one of them, as He chose. If all were a single organ, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, yet one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you," nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." On the contrary, the parts of the body which seem to be weaker are indispensable, and those parts of the body which we think less honorable we invest with greater honor, and our unpresentable parts are treated with greater modesty, which our presentable parts do not require. But God has so composed the body, giving the greater honor to the inferior part, that there may be no discord in the body, but that the members may have the same care one for another. If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all members rejoice together.

Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, then healers, helpers, administrators, speakers in various kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? (I Corinthians 12:12-29)

Hence I am reminding you to rekindle the gift of God that is within you through the laying on of my hands; for God did not give us a spirit of timidity but a spirit of power and love, and self-control. (II Timothy 1:6-7)

This is why I left you in Crete, that you might amend what was defective, and appoint elders in every town, as I directed you, if any man is blameless, the husband of one wife, and his children are believers and not open to the charge of being profligate or insubordinate. For a bishop, as God's steward, must be blameless; he must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain, but hospitable, a lover of goodness, master of himself, upright, holy, and self-controlled; he must hold firm to the sure word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to confute those who contradict it. (Titus 1:5-9)

See also I Timothy 3:1-3 and I Peter 5:1-5.

Note:

Because the Bishop is the head of the diocese, that portion of the Church entrusted to him, his consecration is normally performed by at least three bishops, that the fullness and unity of the Church be shown.

The Bishop ordains the Presbyters to serve as his assistants and counselors and share in the overseeing of the Church. He also ordains those who will be carrying out his instructions in service to the Church, the Deacons and Deaconesses.

And the twelve summoned the body of the disciples and said, "It is not right that we should give up preaching the Word of God to serve tables. Therefore, brethren, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint to this duty. But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word." (Acts 6:2-4)

He also performs the ordination of persons to the preparatory orders, Reader and Sub-deacon.

The Bishop may delegate to the Presbyter in charge of a particular congregation the authority to appoint men and women to all the many lay ministries.

The ordination of Bishop, Presbyter and Deacon should always be performed during the Holy Eucharist shared in by all those whom they will be serving and whom they may be leading.

The Sacrament Of Life: The Holy Eucharist

This sacrament of worship, presided over by the pastor of the congregation and shared in by the faithful, is the central act of the Christian life of the Church corporate.

This is the sacrament whereby bread and wine, the products of nature and mankind, are offered to God and by the power of the Holy Spirit assumed into the Body and Blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, and then offered to the People of God. Through the common sharing in Christ's Body and Blood, the Church is nourished, healed, reconciled, and brought into union with God. The separate individuals who come to participate are transformed into one body. All the faithful participate in the sacrament, each according to his calling.

I speak as to sensible men; judge for yourselves what I say. The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread. (I Corinthians 10:15-17)

When Jesus offered Himself up as the one, perfect and sufficient sacrifice for the sin of the world, He gave His Body and Blood to be an eternal sacrifice. "Once for all. . ." (Hebrews 9:12) He commanded His followers to share continually in His Body and Blood which are life-sustaining for every baptized believer.

And [Jesus] took bread, and when He had given thanks He broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." And likewise the cup after supper, saying, "This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood." (Luke 22:19-20)

Jesus then said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven; my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven, and gives life to the world." They said to Him, "Lord, give us this bread always." Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; he who comes to me shall not hunger, and he who believes in me shall never thirst." (John 6:32-35)

"This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that a man may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any man eats of this bread, he will live for ever; and the bread that I shall give for the life of the world is my flesh."

The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in you; he who eats my flesh, and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He who eats my flesh, and drinks my blood, abides in me, and I in him. As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats me, even he will live because of me. This

is the bread which came down from heaven, not such as the fathers ate and died, he who eats this bread will live for ever. (John 6:50-58)

In sharing the Eucharist, we are not only worshiping with those gathered together in that particular place, but with the whole Church throughout the world. We join the very hosts of heaven in their eternal hymn to the glory of God. In the sacrament, all are caught up into the presence of God and share eternally with all those who have gone ahead and with those yet to come who worship the Lord. All are participating in Christ's "once for all" sacrifice and resurrection. He is the High Priest who offers and consummates the sacrifice.

Note:

Because of the power and meaning of this communion in the Body and Blood of Christ, the celebrant is responsible to see that those who share in it are at one with each other. Anyone who rebels against the love and forgiveness of Jesus Christ, and is not one with His Body, the Church, ought not receive lest he eat and drink condemnation. In the same way, those who have not yet entered into Christ's Body through baptism ought not to share in His Body and Blood.

For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of profaning the body and blood of the Lord. Let a man examine himself and so him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment upon himself. That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died.
(I Corinthians 11:26-30)

The Eucharist is celebrated in all churches on Sundays and major feasts, at marriages, baptisms and ordinations. It may also be celebrated on other occasions. The Body and Blood are to be taken to the sick and to the shut-in as often as practical.

Forms Of Worship

The Church's worship is offered by the People of God assembled as a body. This worship, including prayer, praise, reading, study, teaching, sharing, exhortation and prophecy, is often offered in an unrestricted manner by a group of people united in the Holy Spirit. When we come together for any service of worship, especially for one without set form, it is important that the assembled people are together in spirit and truth. When it is so, there will be order and unity, the Body will be edified. Discord indicates that there is not unity of purpose or desire, there is not unity of Spirit. In such a situation, there is no complete submission to the Holy Spirit.

"But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for such the Father seeks to worship Him. God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth."
(John 4:23-24)

What then, brethren? When you come together, each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification. . .

For God is not a God of confusion but of peace. . . So, my brethren, earnestly desire to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues; but all things should be done decently and in order. (I Corinthians 14:26-25,33,40)

And His gifts were that some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. (Ephesians 4:11-13)

True worship is the result of complete submission to the Holy Spirit in any worship service, whether it has a prescribed form or not. Unprepared services can be restrictive and binding; set forms can and should be used with spontaneity, allowing for complete, yet disciplined, freedom in the Holy Spirit.

Over the years, the prescribed liturgy has developed in response to the human need for order and form, and to enable all to be united in the worship. This development has been carefully guided by the Church so that all accepted forms of liturgy are founded on Scripture, free from doctrinal error, encourage worship, glorify God, and do not incorporate unacceptable habits.

The direct responsibility for guiding the ongoing process of liturgical development rests with the overseers of the Church, the Bishops. The official forms for all services are only those approved by the Synod of Bishops. Variations within a given parish are guided by the diocesan Bishop.

Each congregation is to use the official liturgy of the Church in its regular worship. Any local variation is subject to the pastoral consideration of the Provincial Metropolitan, subject to the confirmation of the Metropolitan Primate.

Note:

Each dioceses is to have a standing committee on liturgy appointed by the Bishop. This committee is to monitor the liturgical development and variation within the diocese, reporting to the Bishop.

The Metropolitan is to appoint a standing committee on liturgy for the National Church.

See also the following references: Matthew 6:7-9, Acts 2:42-47, Acts 4:32, I Timothy 2:1ff, Revelation 4,5,15:1-4,19:1-10.

Part II - Canon Of Scripture, Festivals, And Lectionary

Old Testament

The canon of the Old Testament Scriptures in use by this Church shall be that Canon decided by the Jewish Academy at Jamnia, Israel in the year A.D. 90, the commonly known "Hebrew Scriptures," namely:

Genesis (L)	II Chronicles (W)	Daniel (W)
Exodus (L)	Ezra (W)	Hosea (P)
Leviticus (L)	Nehemiah (W)	Joel (P)
Numbers (L)	Esther (W)	Amos (P)
Deuteronomy (L)	Job (W)	Obadiah (P)
Joshua (P)	Psalms (W)	Jonah (P)
Judges (P)	Proverbs (W)	Micha (P)
Ruth (W)	Ecclesiastes (W)	Nahum (P)
I Samuel (P)	Song of Solomon (W)	Habakuk (P)
II Samuel (P)	Isaiah (P)	Zephaniah (P)
I Kings (P)	Jeremiah (P)	Haggai (P)
II Kings (P)	Lamentations (P)	Zechariah (P)
I Chronicles (W)	Ezekiel (P)	Malachi (P)

The letters in parentheses above indicate in which section of the three fold division of the Hebrew Scriptures (the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings) the book is found.

The Church also uses books, other than those in the Hebrew Canon, which were included in the Septuagint. The Septuagint is the Jewish translation of the Scriptures into Greek made in the second or third century before Christ. It is the translation quoted in the New Testament and used by the Christian Church of the First Century and in succeeding centuries. These books are commonly called Deuterocanonical ("second canon").

New Testament

The Canon of the New Testament is that which has been the common Canon of the Christian Church from the Fifth Century, namely:

Matthew	Ephesians	Hebrews
Mark	Philippians	James
Luke	Colossians	I Peter
John	I Thessalonians	II Peter
Acts	II Thessalonians	I John
Romans	I Timothy	II John
I Corinthians	II Timothy	III John
II Corinthians	Titus	Jude
Galatians	Philemon	Revelation

Calendar

The cycle of festivals, fasts, commemoration of saints, and other holy days which make up the Church Year, as observed by this Church, generally coincides with that of the Western Church (Anglican and Roman). Certain holy days are observed according to the calendar of the Church of the East (Syro-Chaldean).

The Church year has two cycles: one which is dependent upon the date of the Feast of the Resurrection determined according to the Lunar calendar; the other is dependent on the Feast of the Nativity fixed according to the solar calendar at December 25th. All saint's days are also fixed according to our common solar calendar.

The Feast of the Resurrection is observed on the first Sunday after the full moon occurring on or after the vernal equinox, March 21st. It cannot be earlier than March 22nd or later than April 25th.

The sequence of all Sundays in the Church Year depends upon the date of the Feast of the Resurrection, except for the Sundays of Advent and Christmas. The Sundays of Advent are always the four Sundays before the Feast of the Nativity (Christmas Day).

The beginning of Lent, Ash Wednesday, and the Feast of the Ascension which is the Thursday forty days after the Feast of the Resurrection, are dependent upon that feast.

The date of the Feast of the Resurrection and most other Holy Days observed by the Church may be found in The Book of Common Prayer and Administration of the Sacraments and Other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church according to the use of The Episcopal Church, 1979, The Church Hymnal Corporation and The Seabury Press.

Feasts Of Our Lord

All Sundays are celebrated as Feast of Our Lord. Certain other days are also celebrated as Feasts of Our Lord. The celebration of these days takes precedence over Sunday if they occur on that day. They are the following:

- The Feast of the Resurrection (always a Sunday)
- Ascension Day (always a Thursday)
- The Feast of the Nativity (Christmas Day - December 25th)
- The Circumcision of Our Lord (Holy Name Day - January 1st)
- The Feast of the Epiphany (January 6th)
- The Presentation of Our Lord in the Temple (February 2nd)
- The Annunciation to the Virgin Mary (March 25th)
- The Visitation of the Virgin Mary to Elizabeth (May 31st)
- The Transfiguration of Our Lord (August 6th)
- The Exaltation of the Cross (Holy Cross Day - September 14th)

Other Principal Holy Days

Certain other feasts are of major importance. These days are either always on a Sunday or, if they fall on a Sunday, take precedence. They are the following:

The Feast of Pentecost (the Sunday ten days after Ascension)
The Feast of the Holy Trinity (the Sunday after Pentecost)
All Saints' Day (November 1st)

Other major feasts, but not taking precedence over Sunday are:

All feasts of the Apostles
All feasts of the Evangelists
The Nativity of John the Baptist (June 24th)
St. Stephen, Deacon and First Martyr (December 26th)
The Holy Innocents (December 28th)
St. Joseph (March 19th)
St. Mary Magdalene (July 22nd)
The Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of Christ (August 15th)
St. Michael and All Angels (September 29th)
St. James, First Bishop of Jerusalem, Brother of the Lord and martyr (October 23rd)

Note:

The dates of the feasts of the Apostles and Evangelists are according to the Western calendar with the exception of the Feast of the Apostle Thomas. This is observed according to the usage of the Church of the East on July 16th.

In addition to the feasts numerated above, the Church observes days of fasting and penitence. There are two Solemn Fasts:

Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent
Good Friday, the day of Our Lord's crucifixion

Holy Saturday, the day following Good Friday and before the Sunday of the Resurrection, is also observed as a day of fasting and prayer.

The seasons of Lent, preceding the Feast of the Resurrection, and of Advent, preceding the Feast of the Nativity, are observed as times of penitence, preparation and reflection. They are also times of fasting and special discipline.

Other Holy Days

In addition to the principal feasts and fasts of the Church, many other days are observed as commemorations of saints and special events of both universal and local significance. The lesser saints' days according to the calendars of both the Eastern and Western Churches may be observed by any who wish to remember the heroes of our faith. Those which are of universal significance include Biblical Patriarchs and Prophets, the Seventy sent out by the Lord, the early Fathers and the Martyrs from the period before the divisions in the Church. Of special significance to the Syro-Chaldean Church are the Fathers and Martyrs of the Church of the East.

The Lectionary

The Lectionary of Readings from Holy Scripture for use in this Church at the Celebration of the Holy Eucharist and on all Sundays and Festivals shall be that which is found in The Book of Common Prayer (cited above). This three year cycle corresponds generally to that which is in use in other Western Churches.