

**NOTES  
FOR A  
NEWCOMER**



**St. Andrew and St. Margaret of Scotland Anglican  
Catholic Church**

402 E. Monroe Ave. Alexandria, VA

703-683-3343

[www.standrewandstmargaret.com](http://www.standrewandstmargaret.com)

When Anglicans go to church they stand up and assert their belief in the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church. How we express our Catholicity depends largely upon our churchmanship, which can range from “low”(protestant/evangelical) to “high”(catholic/orthodox) or “broad”(a combination of styles). Here is an overview of the Anglican Catholic Church and its practices.

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# NOTES FOR A NEWCOMER

*in an Anglican Catholic Parish.*

MOST important to the Catholic of all the Christian Church's fruits and functions is that "the Church essentially possesses, seeks, finds and leads to God ..."

Over the two thousand years since our Lord's coming, His Church has learned many ways of helping her children to find Him. During the Protestant Reformation in late 16<sup>th</sup> century Europe, many, in their zeal to purge the Roman Catholic Church of corruption and superstition, stamped out many innocent and beautiful ceremonial practices. Countless churches were gutted; horses were stabled in cathedral choir stalls; acres of glorious glass were broken; priceless embroideries torn to shreds and lovely carved statues fed to the flames of bonfires. Many wise forms of worship were abandoned along with the ornaments and vestments which skillful hands had made for the glory of God. Churches and worship alike were made bleak and bare.

The Catholic revival in the 1800's, began the recovery from these deprivations. Today, more and more parishes are returning to the traditional practice of worship in all its depth and richness.

When a visitor first enters an Anglican church, they find an atmosphere of devotion --a profusion of color and candles, and an intricate stately ceremony. We hope that these notes will help to explain the Anglican Catholic experience.

# THE INTERIOR

*of the church.*

To show our love for God we try to make His church as beautiful as we can. When we celebrate festive occasions in our homes we put on our most festive clothes and set out tables with flowers and candles and fine linens to honor those we love. Likewise, in celebrating God, our Church dresses her priests in beautiful vestments and decks God's altar with flowers and lights to show her love for Him. And here each garment, each object and ornament, has a traditional meaning and purpose.

The Church expresses the varying moods of the days and seasons of the Christian year with vestments and hangings of different colors:

White or gold, signifying joy, for Christmas and Easter and other great feasts and for weddings;

White also on the feasts of some saints, particularly the virgins, in token of their purity;

Violet for penitence during the solemn seasons of Advent and Lent and on all penitential days;

Green for immortality during the long Trinity season, the time of growing things, and for Epiphany and for days which are neither feasts nor fasts;

Red for the tongues of fire at Pentecost and for the blood of the martyrs on the feasts of saints who died a martyr's death;

Black for mourning at funerals and on Good Friday.

Upon entering the church you will not see a booth or confessional as in a Roman Catholic church. One of the important tenants of Anglicanism is the belief in the ability to privately confess one's sins to God. However, one can always meet privately with the priest to confess and receive private counsel.

The walls of our church are adorned with fourteen bas-relief plaques, called Stations of the Cross, which depict the principle events of the day of our Lord's crucifixion.

For centuries, Christian pilgrims to the Holy Land have followed the footsteps of our Lord to Calvary, stopping for special devotions on the spot where each event of His last day occurred. These stations enable those unable to make the pilgrimage to Jerusalem to, either singly in their private devotions, or together in a special service, follow Him in the Way of the Cross. Thus, we follow Him and see His Passion, our faith and love and penitence grow stronger.

The transition between the nave (where the congregation sits) and the sanctuary (inside the altar rail) symbolizes the Gate of Death, the passing from mortal to immortal life.

The central ornament on the altar is the Cross, the instrument of our redemption, to remind us that it is only our Lord's death upon the Cross that gained eternal life for us.

The altar is incised with five crosses and there are also five crosses embroidered on its fair linen cloth in token of our Lord's five wounds. Its festive flowers symbolize His resurrection and its lights symbolize that He is the Light of the World.

The use of altar candles began in the first century when Christians were driven underground by ruthless persecution and forced to worship secretly in dark subterranean passages. Even though candles are no longer needed for light, the Church has continued to use them to remind us of those dark days and to symbolize the divine presence.

The two candles on the altar represent our Lord's two natures, human and divine. The six candles on the top of the altar, which are lighted for choir office services, like all candles, represent and signify that our Lord is the Light of the World. To the right of the altar, on the wall, a single candle burns; this signifies the presence of our Lord in the Reserved Sacrament in the Tabernacle above the altar.

Each candle, which can give light only as it is itself consumed, is the symbol of the Christian life of service and sacrifice.

# WHAT TAKES PLACE

*in the sanctuary*

The service in which we have all come to take part is the one, and the only one, instituted by our Lord Himself; and it is sometimes, for that reason, called the Lord's Supper or the Lord's Own Service, though it has many other names.

It is called the Liturgy, which means service or duty; the Eucharist, or thanksgiving; the Holy Communion; the Holy Sacrifice; the Sacrament of the Altar; but perhaps its most widely used name is the Mass. This is a very ancient word, the exact meaning of which is uncertain, and which, therefore, itself mysterious, is fitted to denote the Holy Mystery of the Altar.

Many will tell you that in the Anglican Catholic Church there are three kinds of celebration of the Holy Communion: the Low Mass, Sung Mass, and High Mass.

The low celebration, traditionally on week days and in the early service on Sunday mornings, is the simplest. It places more emphasis on the [Protestant](#) nature of Anglicanism than broad or high churches and are usually [Evangelical](#) in their belief and practice. It strictly follows the order of service in the Book of Common Prayer. There is no music and the priest is assisted only by a server.

At a Sung Mass the choir is present and much of the service is sung, incense is often used, and there is more ceremony than at a Low Mass.

The High Mass is more elaborate than the Sung Mass. There is usually a procession. The most important difference is that the celebrant, the priest who sings the Mass, is assisted by a deacon and sub-deacon (who, if no one in Holy Orders is available, may be a layman).

In the early Church, as soon as Christian worship emerged from the catacombs, the High Mass with deacon and sub-deacon and many servers, was the usual and general form for the celebration of the Eucharist. The sacrifice of the Mass is an offering of and for all people, and in primitive times the greatest possible number of people took part in it. In the Eastern Orthodox Church this level of participation has always been and remains custom.

These three kinds of celebration traditional. In some parishes and diocese, however, variation has occurred. Our celebration of the Mass at St. Andrew and St. Margaret of Scotland express the three major types of liturgical forms found in the Anglican tradition.

- Our **7:45** service is a “low” Prayer Book Holy Communion with no hymns for those who prefer a quieter, more meditative worship experience.
- The **9:00** service is a “broad” Prayer Book Holy Communion with hymns, some sung prayers, an offertory by the choir, and a sermon – with Morning Prayer on the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of the month.
- The **11:15** service is a “high” Sung Mass with Incense according to rubrics of the *Anglican Missal* and includes the Aspergus before the service, hymns, sung prayers, chanted propers from the Missal, an offertory by the choir, incense and bells.

Each service is an equally valid Mass and each is celebrated with all possible dignity and splendor.

It is helpful for the newcomer to remember that, while the ritual may be confusing, there is a reason for everything that takes place in the sanctuary (within the altar rail). All of the acts and gestures of priests and acolytes are acts of worship. Some are symbolic or commemorative; some are merely practical. But everything that is done is intentional and significant.

What we describe here are the elements of Holy Communion from the 1928 Prayer Book common to all three services. Individual variations are noted where appropriate.

The service usually opens with the entrance. At the 9:00 and 11:15 service this consists of a procession of two altar servers, followed by the priest, and a processional hymn. Having ascended the steps of the Sanctuary, the priest reverences the altar. At the 11:15 service, the priest then blesses the altar with incense, the use of which symbolizes the ascending prayers of the church on earth to Heaven.

At the 11:15 service, once the processional hymn is finished, the choir and congregation chant the opening proper, called the *Intriot* (please note that all the propers are printed on an insert in the bulletin). The *Intriot*, along with the other propers, are portions of the psalms or other passages of scripture that relate to the other readings for each Sunday. Propers are chanted before the reading of the Gospel, at the offertory, and after communion.

With the conclusion of the opening procession, the priest begins the service proper. First is read the Opening Collect, followed by

the Summary of the Law. (In accordance with the Prayer Book, the Ten Commandments are read in place of the Summary on the first Sunday of the month). Then, the *Kyrie Eleison* is read or sung; in the 9:00 service each line is sung once, but in the 11:15 each line is sung 3 times.

Following the *Kyrie* at the 11:15 service, the *Gloria in excelsis* is sung, as indicated in the Anglican Missal; this practice is in keeping with the liturgical traditions of the Western churches. At the 7:45 and 9:00 services the *Gloria* is said or sung after the communion service as indicated in the Prayer Book; this practice is in keeping with centuries of Anglican liturgies. Either form is liturgically valid, the difference again being one of churchmanship. Please note that the *Gloria* is not sung during the penitential seasons of Advent and Lent.

At this point in the service the Priest reads the Collect of the Day and any additional collects as appropriate. This is followed by the readings of the Epistle and the Gospel.

The reading of the Epistle and Gospel take us back in its symbolism to the earliest days of the Church. The Epistle is always read or intoned at the south side of the altar because that is the direction from which the epistles of St. Paul and the other apostles came, from Jerusalem to the newly-founded churches in Asia Minor and Greece.

The Gospel, however, is always read on the north side of the altar, because it was in that direction that the heathen tribes lived and to whom the Gospel must be revealed. The reading of the Holy Gospel is preceded by prayer and surrounded by ceremony because it records our Lord's own words and recounts the events of His life. The congregation stands at this time to show our readiness to

follow Him. The first part of the Mass ends with the Creed (our profession of faith) followed by the sermon.

The second part of the Mass is concerned with the Eucharistic action, with the fulfillment of our Lord's command, *Do this in remembrance of me*. It is important for the priest, acting in our Lord's place, do the things our Lord did *on the night in which he was betrayed*. Our Lord did four things:

1. He took bread and wine (the Offertory)
2. He blessed them (the Consecration)
3. He broke the blessed Bread (the Fraction)
4. He gave the consecrated Bread and Wine to His disciples (the Communion).

This part of the Mass begins with the priest's *taking* first the bread, the required number of wafers, and then the wine which he mixes with a little Holy Water in the chalice. As he takes each element he holds it up and offers it to God, asking Him in a silent prayer to accept the offerings. While the priest is making these preparations, the offerings of the people are collected and are later presented to God in the song of prayer.

During the 11:15 "High" service, the priest offers incense, censuring the altar and the offering; then, the altar server (called the *Thurifer*) censes the priest, the other server, and the congregation.

The offering collected represents our work -- our first fruits, no less than the bread and wine is part of the offering which we make to God of all our life and substance, of ourselves, our souls and bodies. It is at this point in the service that the priest will offer the intention of the Mass and ask your prayers for those of the parish and of special need.

Then the acolyte will approach the priest with a small bowl, pitcher of Holy Water and linen towel for the symbolic washing of the priest's hands. This ceremony is meant to remind the priest and people of the inward purity, without which we cannot worthily approach the altar of God.

The offertory section of the Mass continues with the beautiful Prayer for the Whole State of Christ's Church (the Church Militant here on earth, the Church Expectant of those awaiting judgment, and the Church Triumphant of those in heaven), the General Confession of sin, and the Absolution of the people, and ends with the Comfortable Words of Saint Paul and Saint John.

The second thing our Lord did at the Last Supper was to *bless* the bread and wine. This the priest does in the Prayer of Consecration. By blessing the bread and wine as Christ did, and by saying in the consecration prayer the words which Christ said, the bread and wine become verily and indeed the Body and Blood of our Savior Jesus Christ.

*The doctrine of the Real Presence ... takes us beyond the limits of our human understanding. Yet the idea of God's presence in any way is bound to be beyond our complete comprehension. In one way, He is present to us in the world of nature; in another way He is present in the soul by Grace; in the earthly life of our Lord He was present by means of our human nature; and the incarnate presence is still with us in the most Holy Sacrament. We rightly see in the Blessed Eucharist a special fulfillment of our Lord's own words: "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."*

It is during this part of the 11:15 “high” service that the *Sanctus* bell, which visitors always notice, is rung as a signal to the faithful; for the Church well knows that not all her children are capable of sustained attention. It rings once at the beginning of the Prayer of Consecration and three times on each of four other occasions: first at the *Sanctus*, the beautiful angelic hymn which begins Holy, Holy, Holy; then as the priest elevates (holds up) the consecrated Bread, genuflecting in adoration before and after he does so; then again with the same actions for the chalice. It is rung for the final time during the Centurion’s Prayer (Lord, I am not worthy) as a means to summon the people to Communion.

Our Lord’s next act was to *break* the Bread, and this the priest does at the conclusion of the Lord’s Prayer. Although it is no longer necessary to break large pieces of bread into small fragments for distribution at the Communion, as our Lord did at the Last Supper, the consecrated host, which is the Body of Christ, is broken here in the sacrifice of the Mass just as His human Body was broken in the sacrifice of the Cross.

The fourth and last part of the Eucharistic event is the Communion, in which Christ, having blessed the bread and wine, gave it to his disciples, saying,

*Take, eat, this is my Body, which is given for you; and Drink ye all of this; for This is my Blood of the New Testament, which is shed for you, and for many, for the remission of sins.*

The priest first makes his own communion at the altar, offering again a prayer for the celebrant, and then takes the Blessed Sacrament to the people who kneel at the altar rail to receive the Body and Blood of our Lord, to be *made one body with him, that he may dwell in us and we in him.*

This sacrament of love transcends time and space; for not only are we made one with Him who is eternal, but also, through sharing in His life, with all faithful Christians near and far, living and departed. This is the meaning of Communion, our oneness in Him and with Him – and, through Him, with one another.

After the Communion the priest returns to the altar and cleanses the chalice and other vessels and places any consecrated hosts (wafers now consecrated, being the “host” for the Body of Christ) that are left in the tabernacle, himself consuming all the remains of the consecrated Wine. Then after the Prayer of Thanksgiving and the *Gloria in Excelsis* he dismisses the people with a blessing.

The Mass, properly speaking, ends with the blessing, but at the 11:15 service it is the custom to add the Last Gospel. This consists of the first fourteen verses of the Gospel According to St. John. At this time, standing again for Gospel reading, it is most fitting for us to hear this glorious passage in which St. John sets forth the outline for our religion and sums up the meaning of our Lord’s life.

As he leaves the church, the visitor should be aware that something far more deep and difficult than reverence has been expressed. It is holiness that is sought and found here. Here, indeed is God’s name hallowed. The Anglican is irresistibly drawn, with a clear fascination, not only by the beauty of holiness but by the holiness of beauty; and it is along the paths of beauty and holiness that he is led to God.

“*As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, ...*” (from the Last Gospel)

# THE CONGREGATION'S PART

*in the service.*

Many visitors to the “broad” and “high” service may find the first half a time of incessant motion. The members of the congregation kneel, stand, bow their heads, sit, drop to their knees, and rise to their feet again. Every so often, and for no apparent reason, they make the Sign of the Cross. Following the Offertory, however, they settle down and spend what seems an interminable time on their knees, rising only to go to the altar rail to receive the Holy Communion.

*“For the full and proper Worship of God, both body and soul must have their part.”*

Material acts produce spiritual effects, and because man is a creature compounded of body and spirit, certain physical gestures and attitudes not only express, but increase the devotion of his spirit. The use of the material body, which is the vehicle of his immortal soul, helps him to *worship the Father in spirit and in truth.*

We kneel to pray because it expresses our adoration, our penitence and gratitude, our helplessness and humility before God. It also helps to prepare us for God's speaking to us in prayer.

We stand to praise, to pour forth our joy and exultation in hymns and psalms.

We sit for instruction because we are most relaxed, best able to concentrate on the sermon or meditation.

The visitor will notice that everyone who faces or passes an altar where there is a light burning, on or near the altar or in a hanging lamp above it, genuflects (i.e., bends the right knee until it nearly touches the ground) or bows as a gesture of adoration for our Lord, who is present there.

Not only do we genuflect or bow as we pass an altar where He is present, but we kneel while we await our turn at the altar rail and, when we return to our pews afterward, we remain kneeling while the Sacrament is being administered to others.

When a worshiper enters his pew, especially if his churchmanship is high, he kneels and makes the Sign of the Cross, asking the blessing of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost on his worship.

For nearly two thousand years, Christians have made this sign, sealing vows, exorcising evil spirits, invoking God's help in trouble or temptation or danger, imploring His forgiveness, receiving His absolution and His blessing.

When the Holy Gospel is announced, three small Signs of the Cross are made, on the forehead, lips and over the heart, with the prayer that the Gospel remain on our mind, that we may speak it with our lips, and hold it in our hearts. At the end of the Creed the Sign of the Cross is made at the words *And the Life of the world to come* because it is only our Lord's death on the Cross that makes that life possible.

After the General Confession, when the priest pronounces the Absolution, he makes the Sign of the Cross over the people, who at the same time cross themselves, because all forgiveness is through the power of the Cross.

Some kneel or bow during the Creed at the words *And was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, And was made man* not, as some people suppose, out of reverence for the Virgin Mary, but because the Incarnation, the fact that God was made man, is the basic fact of the Christian religion.

Ever since the fourth century there have been people who, though professing to be Christians, have denied the divinity of our Lord, maintaining that He was merely a good man. So for sixteen centuries Catholic Christians have at this point in the Creed born witness to the fact that they believe Him to be the Son of God, both True God and True Man.

In some parishes the entire service is sung; some parts by the priest, others by special cantors or by the choir, others by the congregation.

To be able to *sing unto the Lord* is for many people a joy beyond expressing. Music gives a new dimension to our worship. It accompanies and stresses the varying moods of the liturgy, overcomes our inarticulateness, and lifts us out of ourselves.

In some parishes the late service on Sunday (as with our 11:15 service) is preceded by the Asperges, the ceremony of sprinkling the altar, the clergy, acolytes and people with holy water. This consecrated water, in which blessed salt has been placed as a symbol of incorruption, is also kept in special receptacles in the vestibules of some churches. Its use, whether sprinkled by the priest or dipped up by the individual worshiper, is accompanied by the Sign of the Cross and gives not only ritual cleansing and purification but the renewal of baptismal grace. Holy water reminds us of our baptismal vows.

Those of us who really live by the liturgy find that the bodily movements, the ceremonial acts, and material things which comprise its outward forms of expression are deeply helpful to our worship. These very movements which we perform together, and so self-consciously at first, these bright objects which at first distract us, soon become not only comforting but emancipating. They help free us; and it is only when we are freed from imprisonment within ourselves that we can enter into supernatural communion with God, our creator and our divine delight.

# FASTING COMMUNION

*putting first things first*

A practice dear to the hearts of Christians is the Communion Fast.

Ever since the earliest days of the Church, when Christians went to worship before dawn in order to evade their persecutors, it has been considered a blessed privilege to make the Body of our Lord Jesus Christ the first food of the day.

The ancient, and formerly universal custom, and the present ideal is to abstain from all food and drink after midnight before receiving Holy Communion. During the 18<sup>th</sup> century this devout custom, like most others, ceased to be observed in the English Church. It was revived by the Oxford Movement of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

A more modern practice among Christians in the Catholic tradition is to abstain from food or drink (except water) at least 1 hour before Communion. Regardless of which tradition one adopts, however, the practice of the Communion Fast is still one of great respect and love of our Lord.

# CALLING A PRIEST FATHER

*respect and affection*

Visitors are sometimes surprised to hear parishioners calling their priest Father, but they soon learn that this is a happy solution to a rather difficult and delicate problem.

It is right and proper that we should feel both respect and affection for our clergy, respect because in Ordination they have received *the Holy Ghost for the Office and Work of a Priest in the Church of God*, affection because they play an intimate part in the happiest and saddest events of our lives and often become our cherished friends.

To call a priest by his first name puts our relationship with him on a false footing and, especially if he is very young, makes it difficult for us to remember *into how high a Dignity, and to how weighty an Office and Charge* he has been called. Familiarity neither expresses nor encourages respect.

To call a priest Mister is stilted and commonplace, and does not convey any of the warmth with which we like to regard a man who, even though he may be a stranger, administers the sacraments to us, shares so many of our joys, and comforts us in so many of our afflictions.

Because it is a form of address that expresses both respect and affection in just the right degree, many are adopting the helpful custom of calling a priest Father.

# CONFESSION

*“Go in peace; the Lord hath put away all thy sins”*

A means of grace that gives most humble and hearty thanks is the Sacrament of Penance -- the privilege of confessing our sins to God privately in the presence of one of His priests who has the power to absolve. (*Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; ...*)

We can sometimes achieve release from tensions by confessing to a psychiatrist and discussing our weaknesses and shortcomings. It is possible to receive spiritual advice and help in overcoming sin through a counseling session in the rector’s office. But it is only in the Sacrament of Penance that we receive assurance of God’s forgiveness, the blessed peace of Absolution.

Those to whom Sacramental Confession is difficult are comforted by the fact that “The rite is very nearly anonymous; at least it is as impersonal as possible; it is under the seal of secrecy and cannot be discussed and enlarged upon later; it is performed in an atmosphere of holiness.”

“The self-surrender of confession and the actuality of the act earn it an important place in sacramental Christian living . . . It makes vivid and effectual the Forgiveness of Sins, restores to us the Communion of Saints, and gives courage and grace to seek anew in our own lives the life everlasting.”

If you would like to confess privately, please speak to the priest.