

THE RITE OF NEW SKELLIG COMMUNITY

A CONTEMPLATIVE EUCHARISTIC LITURGY

The following Eucharistic liturgy has Celtic roots in the Gallican Rite, and has been adapted for contemporary usage with particular accents on contemplative spirituality and the cosmological insights known to the modern world. Both of these accents--the contemplative and the cosmological --have deep roots in the Celtic Christian tradition, which attended to the mystical--almost palpable--presence of God in the material universe. The language of the liturgy thus assumes a cosmic christology and celebrates deification (theosis) as the telos of Christian faith. As such, the language of the liturgy should not be mistaken as pantheistic (which is incompatible with Christian faith because it renders union with the Divine as something automatic or mechanical), but is rather panentheistic, which eloquently expresses Christian incarnational theology (cf. Colossians 3:11 & Ephesians 1:23), and is rooted in a union rendered by an infinitely loving and free divine sovereignty, par excellence in the Incarnation. Neither is our theology Pelagian, in that we do not reject the doctrine of Original Sin or its effects on the human person. Yet, our view of Creation and the human person remains optimistic precisely because of the Incarnation, which has definitively ameliorated the illusion of our alienation from God.

Celebrated in a contemplative spirit, the liturgy should allow for punctuated silences between readings and an extended period of meditative silence after Communion. The readings should be proclaimed slowly, allowing the Assembly to listen deeply in a communal practice of Lectio Divina. The homily is 'shared' as all sit in silence, allowing members of the community to voice their reflections on the readings, words, or phrases which most poignantly speak to their heart.

Guidelines for the Celebration of the Liturgy

- † *With the exception of the essential aspects of the celebration, adaptations should be carefully discerned to better express the needs and character of the community. Care, however, should be taken to preserve the theological and sacramental integrity of the liturgy.*
- † *Music, chant, and song may be incorporated as the talents of the community permit*
- † ***Bold font indicates that all should pray together***
- † *Antiphonal manner of praying the psalms is to be preferred*
- † *It is customary for the Assembly to make the Sign of the Cross whenever indicated by a ✠ in the rubrics.*

PRELUDE

Lighting of the Candles and Incense

Fifteen minutes before the liturgy begins, meditative prelude music may begin to invite the Assembly to gather in quiet prayer. The Altar candles are lit by the Acolyte or designated member of the Assembly. Then the charcoal in the bowl of incense is lit.

The community gathers in an intimate circle or in choir stalls facing one another. All is quieted and the community sits together in joyful silence and recollection, in anticipation of the Eucharistic celebration.

ENTRANCE RITE

Chiming of the Bell

The Acolyte rings bell three times slowly, upon which the priest stands inviting the Assembly to do likewise:

Priest: Let us stand and greet Christ who comes to us in one another. **Then bowing to the Assembly:** Beannaim Chriost ionat! (“I greet Christ in you”).

All: *Bowing to one another.* Beannaim Chriost ionat!¹

Celtic Lorica: The Deer’s Cry ~ St. Pádraig’s Breast Plate

Priest [*chanting*]:

I bind unto myself \ today
the strong Name / of the Trinity,
✠ by invocation / of the same,
the Three in One and \ One in Three.

Assembly Joins in the Chanting as Priest approaches altar. Reverences with a kiss. Meets Acolyte who assists putting incense on coal. Priest incenses Acolyte then gives thurible to Acolyte to incense Priest. Priest takes bowl of Holy Water as both approach Assembly. Acolyte processes with thurible and blesses the community during Lorica Chant. Returns thurible to its place. Stands beside priest with Altar Book. Holds Altar Book for Penitential Rite. Priest stands before the Assembly with Holy Water bowl until Penitential Rite.

¹ Pronounced: Ben-im Kreest in-ot

All:

I bind this day to me \ for ever,
by power of faith, Christ's / incarnation;
His baptism in the / Jordan River;
His death on cross for \ my salvation;
His bursting from the \ spiced tomb;
His riding up the / heavenly way;
His coming on the / day of doom,
I bind unto \ myself today.

I bind unto myself \ today,
the great love / of the Cherubim;
the sweet "Well done" / in judgment hour,
the service \ of the Seraphim;
Confessor's faith, \ Apostle's word,
the Patriarch's prayers, the / Prophet's scrolls;
all good deeds / unto the Lord,
and purity \ of virgin souls.

I bind unto myself \ today
the virtues of the / starlit heaven
the glorious sun's / life-giving ray,
the whiteness of the \ moon at even;
the flashing of the \ lightning free,
the whirling wind's tem/pestuous shocks,
the stable Earth, the / deep salt sea,
around the old \ eternal rocks.

I bind unto myself \ today
the power of God to / hold and lead
his eye to watch, his / might to stay,
his ear to hearken \ to my need.
The wisdom of my God \ to teach,
his hand to guide, his shield / to ward;
the Word of God to / give me speech,
his heavenly host to \ be my guard.

Against the demon snares \ of sin,

the vice that gives temp/tation force;
the natural lusts that / war within,
the hostile ones that \ mar my course;
or few or many, \ far or nigh,
in every place, and / in all hours;
against their fierce / hostility,
I bind to me these \ holy powers;

Against all Satan's \ spells and wiles,
against false words of / heresy,
against the knowledge / that defiles,
against the heart's \ idolatry,
against the wizard's \ evil craft,
against the death wound / and the burning,
the choking wave and / poisoned shaft,
protect me Christ, till \ your returning.

Christ be with me, Christ \ within me,
Christ behind me, Christ / before me;
Christ beside me, Christ to / win me,
Christ to comfort and re\store me;
Christ beneath me, Christ \above me,
Christ in quiet, Christ in / danger;
Christ in hearts of all that / love me,
Christ in mouth of friend \ and stranger.

I bind unto myself \ the Name,
the strong Name / of the Trinity;
by invocation / of the same:
+ The Three in One and \ One in Three
of whom all nature \ has creation:
Eternal Father, / Spirit, Word;
praise to the Lord of / my salvation,
salvation is of Christ the \ Lord. Amen.

PENITENTIAL RITE

Priest: ✠ In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen.

Priest: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Love of God and the Communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

All: And also with you.

Priest: Let us pray. Bound in love to the Triune God, let us call upon the Lord of our salvation and recollect in silence those times when we have failed to live as beings created for love, either because of that which we have done or for that which we have failed to do.

Silent Reflection. Then...

Let us pray together then, to the God of Mercies...

All: I confess to Almighty God, and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have sinned through my own fault; in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done, and in what I have failed to do. And I ask blessed Mary, ever virgin, all the angels and saints, and you my brothers and sisters, to pray for me to the Lord our God. Amen.

Priest blesses Assembly on their foreheads with holy water as the following is chanted:

Priest: *Kyrie eleison.* **All:** *Kyrie eleison.*

Priest: *Christe eleison* **All:** *Christe eleison.*

Priest: *Kyrie eleison* **All:** *Kyrie eleison.*

Priest: May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins and bring us to everlasting life.

All: Amen.

Gloria I: God of Redemption

Glory to God in the Highest,
And peace to all people on Earth.
O God, heavenly Light, almighty God, Creator;
we worship you,
we give you thanks,
we praise you for your glory.
Lord Jesus Christ,
Holy One of the Ages,
Lord God, Lamb of God,
You take away the sin of the world:
have mercy on us;
You are seated at the right hand of the Creator:
receive our prayer.
For you alone are the Holy One,
You alone are the Lord,
You alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God forever.
Amen.

[or] Gloria II: God in Creation

Glory to God in the Highest,
And peace to all people on Earth.
Loving God, your name is blessed
from the rising of the sun to its setting;
from the dawn of creation to its consummation;
You give us breath to praise you,
and from east to west all creatures reflect your glory.
You send forth your Spirit
and renew the heart of the Cosmos.
From knowing to unknowing you reveal yourself in Christ, the Holy One:
The Light which darkness cannot overcome;
The Peace which the world cannot give;
The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world;
The Love of God, poured into Creation.
And so, with one voice and one accord,
we praise you Triune God:
✠ Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier, now and forever.
Amen.

Collect

Using this or alternative collects...

Priest: O God of unchangeable power and eternal light, look favorably upon your church throughout the world. By your mysterious providence, carry out in tranquility the plan of salvation; for all time belongs to you, and all Ages. We pray then, in the fullness of *your* time bring all things to perfection in Christ, through whom all things were made—Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God of Love, for ever and ever.

All: Amen.

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

Readings are typically taken from the Roman lectionary or Revised Common Lectionary of The Episcopal Church, though may be altered to accommodate local feasts, customs or communal events of significance.

First Reading

Psalm

Second Reading

✠ Gospel

Priest/Deacon: Let us stand and greet Christ who comes to us in the proclamation of the Word.

Priest/Deacon: Alleluia! *(with optional refrain...)*

All: Alleluia!

Priest/Deacon: May the Lord be with you.

All: And also with you.

Priest/Deacon: ✠ A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to **N**.

All: Glory to you O Lord.

Here the priest or deacon reads the Gospel

Priest/Deacon: The Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

The priest or deacon kisses the book praying quietly:

Priest/Deacon: May the words of the gospel awaken us to the Word of Silence.

[or] May the words of the gospel be made flesh in us.

Homily: Communal *Lectio Divina*

Community is seated in contemplative silence. The Presider leads the community in voicing a word or phrase that spoke to his or her heart from the readings. The community follows in circle, voicing the sacred word or words that spoke most powerfully to them. A communal immersion in silence invites all to practice contemplative listening. Each member is now free to reflect on the readings without critique or debate. The members of the community listen with open hearts, practicing loving-kindness toward one another.

Profession of Faith

Priest: Let us stand and together proclaim our *profession of faith*, which has been handed down to us from ancient of days.

I. The Nicene Creed

From the Council of Nicea-Constantinople, 325/381AD

All: I believe in one God,
the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and Earth,
of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the Only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,

consubstantial with the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,

All bow here.

*and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate
of the Virgin Mary, and became man.*

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate,
he suffered death and was buried,
and rose again on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures.
He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom
will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father,
who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken
through the Prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church.
I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins
and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

II. Tírechán's Creed

From The Patrician Texts from the Book of Armagh, 670AD

Our God is the God of all humans,
The God of heaven and Earth,
The God of the sea and rivers,
The God of the sun and moon,
The God of all the heavenly bodies,
The God of the lofty mountains,
The God of the lowly valleys.

God is above the heavens;
And beneath the heavens.
Heaven and Earth and sea,
And everything that is in them,
Such he has as his abode.
God inspires all things,
gives life to all things,
stands above all things,
And stands beneath all things.
God enlightens the light of the sun,
strengthens the light of the night and the stars,
makes wells in the arid land and dry islands in the sea,
And places the stars in the service of the greater lights.
God has a Son who is co-eternal with himself;
And similar in all respects to himself;
And neither is the Son younger than the Father,
Nor is the Father older than the Son;
And the Holy Spirit breathes in them.
And the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit
are inseparable.
Amen.

Bidding Prayers

*Priest informally invites prayers and suggests a prayerful response...
At the conclusion the priest prays in these or similar words:*

Priest: Lord God, hear the prayers of your people; those which we have given voice, those which we hold in the silence of our hearts, and those for which we have yet to find words. We entrust these to you who knows better than ourselves our deepest needs, offered in the name of your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

All: Amen.

The Offering of Peace

Priest: ☩ Blessed be God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

All: ☩ And blessed be the Reign of God, now and forever. Amen!

Priest: Lord, you taught us always to be reconciled with our sisters and brothers before bringing our gifts before your Altar. As we prepare to bring our gifts to you in the celebration of this Eucharist, let us strive to be faithful to your law of compassion: that we may forgive seven-times-seven, that we may love even our enemies, and bless those who curse us. And where we struggle Lord, let our earnest striving be enough for you, who sent your Son Jesus to be a healing balm of love. In His Name, O God, have mercy.

All: Amen.

Priest: My sisters and brothers, the peace of Christ is with you!

All: And also with you.

Priest: Let us embody Christ's peace for one another.

THE LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

Invitatory Sentence

In preparation for the Offertory the Priest may proclaim an Invitatory Sentence as an invitation for the Assembly to begin gathering around the Altar for the Liturgy of the Eucharist. Hebrews 4:14-16 or other appropriate verse.

Since then in Jesus, the Son of God, we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, let us hold firm to our profession of faith. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but who in every way has been tested as we are, apart from sin. Let us, then, have no fear in approaching the throne of grace to receive mercy and to find grace to aid us in time of need.

The Offertory

The Assembly now gathers around the Altar as the priest assisted by an acolyte begin to prepare the linens and sacred vessels. Once all have gathered around the Altar, the priest begins with the Offertory.

Priest holds patent with bread slightly raised:

Priest: Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation. Through your goodness we have this bread to offer, which Earth has given and human hands have made. It will become for us the Bread of Life.

All: Blessed be God forever.

Priest first pours small amount of water into chalice, then pours wine while praying quietly:

Priest: By the mystery of this water and wine may we come to share in the divinity of Christ, who humbled himself to share in our humanity.

Priest holds patent with bread slightly raised:

Priest: Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation. Through your goodness we have this wine to offer, fruit of the vine and work of the human hands. It will become our spiritual drink.

All: Blessed be God forever.

Priest bows and prays quietly:

Priest: Lord God, we ask you to receive us and be pleased with the sacrifice we offer you with humble and contrite hearts.

Acolyte assists Priest with lavabo as Priest prays quietly:

Priest: Lord wash me of my iniquity, cleanse me of my sin.

Priest extends and then joins his hands, saying:

Priest: Pray, my sisters and brothers that our sacrifice may be acceptable to our All-Loving God.

All: May the Lord accept this sacrifice at our hands,
for the praise and glory of God's Name,
for our good, and the good of all God's Church.

The Prayer Over the Gifts

The Priest then offers a prayer over the gifts in these or similar words:

Priest: God of Love, we offer ourselves to you, in and through this Eucharist. By the celebration of these mysteries, make us partakers of your divine nature and transfigure us ever-more fully into the Body of Christ. We ask this in the name of Jesus our Lord.

All: Amen.

Eucharistic Prayer

Inspired by the Gallican Rite

Priest: May the Lord be with you.

All: And also with you.

Priest: Lift up your hearts.

All: We lift them up to the Lord.

Priest: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All: It is right to give God thanks and praise.

Priest: Blessed are you, loving and faithful Creator God. All your works, the heights and the depths, time and space echo the cosmic hymn of your praise. From the Abyss of Eternity your Silent Word summoned existence: oblivion withdrew and creation dawned. Eons passed as your Love gave birth to untold stars and galaxies, while unseen waters gathered on the face of the deep. By the power of your immanent Spirit life emerged.

In the fullness of time, as your cosmos struggled to become, humankind evolved and the Universe came to self-consciousness, reflecting your own divine image. Flesh-inspired, inspired-flesh, you gave us minds and hearts, breath and voice, that we might join with all Creation in the ageless hymn of your glory:

All said or sung:

Holy, Holy, Holy Lord!
God of power and might!
Heaven and Earth are full of your Glory,
Hosanna, in the highest!

✠ Blessed is He who comes
in the name of the Lord,
Hosanna in the highest!

Priest: How marvelous are the works of your hands, O Lord! As a mother lovingly gathers her children, so you gathered a People to yourself, to be as a light unto the nations and a sign of your covenantal love. From age to age, you promised mercy to our ancestors, and filled your People with a hunger and thirst, which only you could satisfy. In the tender compassion of your love you raised up Jesus, foretold of ancient seers; Emmanuel, God-with-us, in whom all hungers are fulfilled.

He embodied your reign in the world, preached the Good News of your love, healed the sick, comforted the poor, and empowered the oppressed. To a world that dwelt in darkness, he was Light, to a humanity enslaved by sin and death, he was Life. Though the powers of darkness would seek to destroy him, with a love stronger than death, he opened wide his arms on the cross, and reconciled all things to himself, surrendering his Spirit to you, his Abba.

Epiclesis and Consecration

Priest: Therefore, O God, we pray you, open wide *your* arms and surrender now to us the Holy Spirit, poured out upon these gifts of bread and wine, that they may become for us + the Body of Christ broken for the world, and the Blood of Christ poured out for the many.

On the night before he died, Jesus came to table with his disciples. He took bread into his hands, and giving thanks to you, O God of Creation; he said the blessing, broke the bread, and gave it to his beloved, saying:

TAKE THIS, ALL OF YOU, AND EAT OF IT, FOR THIS IS MY BODY, WHICH WILL BE GIVEN UP FOR YOU.

Priest genuflects. All may bow.

When supper was ended, taking also the cup of wine into his hands, and again giving thanks to you, O God of Redemption, he said the blessing and gave the cup to his beloved, saying:

TAKE THIS, ALL OF, YOU AND DRINK FROM IT, FOR THIS IS THE CUP OF MY BLOOD, THE BLOOD OF THE NEW AND ETERNAL COVENANT, WHICH WILL BE Poured OUT FOR YOU AND FOR MANY FOR THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS. DO THIS IN MEMORY OF ME.

Priest genuflects. All may bow.

Memorial Acclamation

Priest: Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

All: (from among these options)

- A.** you destroyed illusion, rising you restored our union, *maranatha* come Lord Jesus, Alpha and Omega.
- B.** Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.
- C.** When we eat this bread and drink this cup, we proclaim your death, Lord Jesus until you come in glory.
- D.** Dying you destroyed our death, rising you restored our life. Lord Jesus come in glory.

Priest: Thine own of Thine own we offer You O Lord: Christ's Body, broken and sacrificed now as bread and wine, now as your People gathered. Death could not bind him, for you raised him up in the Spirit of holiness, and by his resurrection christified the Universe. As we awaken to the fullness of his coming, may we be

ever watchful in prayer, strong in love, and faithful to the breaking of the bread.

Awaken to us the unity of your pilgrim church on Earth, together with your servant, Pope **N.**, Bishop of Rome, that he may truly be a servant and symbol of that unity in Christ, which cannot be torn asunder; with Archbishop **N.** of Canterbury; Ecumenical Patriarch **N.** of Constantinople; all bishops, priests, pastors, and all people who serve you in love; especially, Presiding Bishop **N.** and our own bishop **N.**, that under their watchful guidance we may remain faithful to the Gospel and undivided from the Church that is one, holy, catholic, and apostolic.

Remember, your servant(s) **N.** (and **N.**) for whom this liturgy is offered. Remember all who are gathered here, and all who seek to be transfigured in You.

Lord of All, awaken to the perpetual light of the resurrection, those who have fallen asleep in Christ. Gather all of Creation into communion with Mary *Theotokos*, [St. **N.** and **N.**] and with all your saints wherever they may be. Then, at last will all Creation be one, forever consumed in your triunity, though Jesus Christ our Lord.

Doxology

All: (*chanting*) Through Him, with Him and in Him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor are yours almighty Father, forever and ever. Amen!

Priest: Let us join then with the disciples of all ages, as we pray together in the Way of Christ:

All: (*chanting*) Our Father, who art in Heaven,
Hallowed be thy name;
Thy Kingdom come,
Thy Will be done,
On Earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread
And forgive us our trespasses,
As we forgive those who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation,
But deliver us from evil.

Priest: Deliver us, Lord, from every evil and grant us peace in our day, in your mercy keep us free from all anxiety as we wait in joyful hope for the coming of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

All: For the Kingdom the power and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.

The Fraction Rite

As the priest breaks the host over the paten the following is said or sung:

All: Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world: Have mercy on us
Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world: Have mercy on us
Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world: Grant us peace.

Meanwhile, the priest takes a small piece of the host and places it in the chalice, praying quietly:

Priest: + May this mingling of the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ bring eternal life to us who receive it.

Priest: *(quietly)* Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, by the will of the Father and the work of the Holy Spirit your death brought life to the world. + By your holy body and blood free me from all my sins, and from every evil. Keep me faithful to your teaching, and never let me be parted from you.

Priest: *Raising Bread and Cup together.*

This is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are we who are divinized in him.

All: Lord, make me your other self, that I may embody God's love in the world. Heal me of my iniquities, that I may be as an icon of your Holy Spirit.

Priest: May the body and blood of Christ, deify us in him.

All: Amen.

Priest now passes the plate of Bread in a circle to begin each-to-each communion, then passes the chalice of Wine in like manner, as the Assembly sacramentalizes what it means to be 'Christ for one another.' All wait to consume the bread until everyone has received. The traditional manner of receiving is as follows:

Priest/Minister: The Body [Blood] of Christ.

Communicant: Amen.

Once all have The Body of Christ in hand:

Priest: See Who you are, become Who you see.

All: Amen.

All eat of the Bread, slowly and meditatively. The Cup is passed in like manner.

After all have received the Body and Blood of Christ, the priest proclaims a final time:

Priest: *(Bowing to Assembly)* The body of Christ.

All: *(Bowing to one another reverently as 'alteri Christi')* Amen.

Contemplative Silence

Members of the community now return to their original places, or some appropriate location in the home for 20 minutes of contemplative silence. A chime may be set to signal that all should prepare for the closing prayer and final blessing.

Purification of Sacred Vessels

As the Assembly enters into Sacred Silence, the priest purifies the sacred vessels while praying silently:

Priest: What has passed our lips as food, O Lord, may we possess in purity of heart, that what has been given to us in time may be our healing for eternity. Amen.

Post-Communion Prayer

At the conclusion of 20 minutes of contemplative silence, the bell is rung to call the Assembly to join together in the closing prayer:

Priest: Let us pray. *All Stand.*

Priest: Triune God, in thankfulness we praise you. For through this Eucharist you have renewed us in your own Image, in which there is no room for division, or dualism or false self. There is only Christ: who is everything and who is in everything. Continue to renew us in the Love of your Holy Spirit.

All: Triune God, in the transformation of bread and wine, let the Incarnate Christ be not only revealed *to* us, but *in* us, so that we may be transformed evermore-so into the Body of Christ. Lord Jesus, make my hands your Hands, my feet your Feet, my heart your Heart. Let me see with your eyes, listen with your ears, speak with your lips, love with your heart, understand with your mind and serve with your Will. By the power of the Spirit, make me your other Self.

Final Blessing & Dismissal

Priest: And may our All-Loving God, ☩ Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you and keep you now and forever.

All: Amen.

Priest/Deacon: This celebration has ended. Let us go in peace to love and serve Christ in one another.

All: Thanks be to God.

Alternative Dismissal:

Priest/Deacon: *(Chanting)* *Procedamus in pace.*

All: *(Chanting)* *In nomine Christi, Amen.*