


RESEARCH ARTICLE

Intercession and Anamnesis in the Eucharist

Ron Browning 

University of Divinity, Kew, Melbourne, Australia
Email: rmbrow@bigpond.net.au

(Received 9 October 2023; accepted 9 October 2023; first published online 27 March 2024)

Abstract

Examining intercession and anamnesis in the Anglican Eucharist first, a theology of the world in which its brokenness as embraced by the compassion of Christ, is seen to undergird intercession, whereby a ‘natural’ link is found with the anamnesis. Turning to the historical background of relationship between these two topics – in the Early Church, noted are two particular forms as recorded by Justin Martyr and Cyril of Jerusalem; in the English Reformation, it is seen that intercession was maintained as a part of the canon (and therefore had some connection with the anamnesis), and then, the modern period displays a departure in Anglican provinces from the Reformation order with only a loose principle, or none, maintained in its position between Word and Sacrament. The retrieval of Christ overcoming the powers of evil in his redemptive work, as recorded in Hippolytus’ liturgical form, has made its way into the modern liturgy, providing implications for the connection between anamnesis and intercession. The liturgiology of the Orthodox Church strengthens the theme. Present concerns regarding the Anglican practice of Eucharistic intercession are raised and improvements are suggested. It is concluded that, theologically, intercession and anamnesis hold an intimate connection in the Eucharist.

Keywords: atonement; early church; Eucharist; intercession; memorial; modern liturgy; reformation

Introduction

In this essay, intercession will be held up as essentially a Christological activity – prayer enacted in Christ, in and through the compassion of Christ for the world, as he takes the prayers of his Church to the Father. The depth of the meaning of intercession therefore adheres to the memorial – *anamnesis* – of Christ’s sacrifice for the sake of the world in the sacrament of the Eucharist.

How is this relationship to be described? How is it to be undertaken in the liturgies at the Church? How has this been understood historically, particularly in the Early Church and the Reformation period? Eastern Orthodox perspectives will be helpful in this endeavour. The exploration will mainly focus on concerns related

to Anglican Eucharistic order – at the same time, some ecumenical perspectives will be brought to bear.

Christ's compassion for the suffering peoples of the world as portrayed in the gospels forms the basis of intercessory prayer in Christ by the People of God. The placing of intercession in the liturgical life of God's People has had 'a rocky road' historically, and its practice in contemporary Anglican settings could be described as a somewhat 'untidy affair'. The various positions of the intercession in liturgical rites in the Early Church, in the Reformation period and in the modern era, will be traced, so that review and recommendations can be considered in the present.

After 50 years of liturgical revision, we can see that the placing of more free forms of intercession in the contemporary liturgical setting, often lay-led, has had, and indeed requires, some forms of evaluation. Clarification with theological undergirding is needed to deepen the significance of liturgical intercession in practice.

Necessary also to the endeavour here, and in preparation for it, a basic understanding of the meaning of anamnesis needs to be provided. *Anamnesis* translates from the Greek as 'memorial'. In the Upper Room narrative of the night before Jesus died, the clause 'do this in remembrance of me' (1 Corinth. 11:24, 25)¹ points to Christ's redeeming events that are about to take place: his passion, death, resurrection and ascension – with the major focus upon his sacrifice. It is the memorial to do – *poieite* – as Jesus commanded in order to commemorate these events and his self-offering, as looking forward to his Second Coming. It is an active or 'living' memorial in which baptised worshippers participate. The doing of that which Jesus commands is the centrepiece of the Eucharistic order, as it is presented in the prayer of consecration. As the ordained person blesses and breaks the bread and blesses the poured out wine (reminiscent of the sacrificial acts in the temple of the Old Covenant of separating flesh and blood in the offering of animals) – Christ's sacrifice on the cross is remembered and the whole of his redemptive life and work is brought to bear in prayer. That which accompanies this core prayer liturgically, especially in terms of intercession, constitutes an important matter for consideration.

The documents of the Early Church that are available to us make it clear that the Eucharistic action of anamnesis was intimately associated with intercessory prayer. In this regard, the record we have from the writings of Justin Martyr will be a key: describing the anamnesis as 'the living sacrifice' he states that the Church embraces supplementary aspects of the Eucharistic prayer in the epiclesis and intercessions.

The English Reformation took a qualified exception to the historical adherence of anamnesis and intercession, the reason for which is largely to do with the Reformers' standpoint of a basic distancing of any sense of offering in the Eucharistic form and to do with their limited access to relevant historical documents.

By way of the sections (see below), this essay will move in the direction of arguing for Eucharistic intercession to have its main position liturgically as closely attached to the anamnesis, and hence as a major proposal to be placed within the Eucharistic Prayer (after the consecration).

¹The Last Supper narrative described in 1 Corinthians 11 is regarded by scholars as the earliest account.

The following structure will be followed, presented in relation to Eucharistic anamnesis:

- Christological Intercession: the Compassion of Christ
- Historical Intercession: Early Church, Reformation and Modern periods
- Eschatological Intercession: Eastern Orthodox Liturgy
- Contemporary Intercession: Predicament and Preferences

Conclusion.

Christological Intercession: the Compassion of Christ

The relationship between Christ and intercession can be brought about by means of his compassion for a broken world.

Don E. Saliers, writing within the American reformed tradition, in *Worship as Theology – Foretaste of Glory Divine*,² has a chapter entitled, ‘Interceding: remembering the world to God’. It holds resonances with the incarnational approach to prayer maintained in the Anglican tradition. He has four overlapping points in relation to a theology of Eucharistic intercession in relation to the world:

- i. Interceding is for the pain of the world as an act of solidarity with Christ who loves and has died for the world, created by God.
- ii. Comprehensiveness is maintained as a key quality of intercession wherein the Church, the world, our communities, those in need and the faithful departed are prayed for and given thanks for.
- iii. Intercession is Christological, that is, ‘intercession is written into every Christology with salt, beginning with the letter to the Hebrews: we have an intercessor who knows our pathos and the sufferings of the world. Praying for others is a declaration that God in Christ takes on the death-dealing, moral evil of the world’³ and in the ‘context of Christian liturgy shows a fundamental Christological orientation; ... he encountered the world and so must we’.⁴
- iv. It manifests the Paschal Mystery: ‘God has taken on our suffering and death, and in offering ourselves (as intercessors) to such mercy ... we receive by Grace the vision of a transformed world’.⁵

Considering Salier’s theology here, it presents a theology of Christ as bound to a broken world, with the role of intercession being one of solidarity with Christ and a declaration that God in Christ takes on the moral evil of the world.

Furthermore, this identification of Christ with the sufferings of the world’s peoples has its anchor and centre in Christ’s death and resurrection, the Pascal Mystery (iv. above), wherein our participation moves us into the vision of a

²Nashville, Abington Press, 1994.

³*Ibid.*, p. 131.

⁴*Ibid.*, p. 132.

⁵*Ibid.*, p. 135.

transformed world. At this point, intercession becomes eschatological, thereby caught up in the Eucharistic context in its eschatological thrust; this theme is profoundly present in the liturgies of the Eastern Orthodox tradition (see the discussion below).

In this kind of theological thinking, the liturgical ministry of intercession is clearly defined, not only as a prayerful activity of the baptised in Christ but as adhering to his loving sacrifice for the world, which is expressed foremost in the Eucharistic anamnesis: intercession gains a 'natural' closeness to, indeed a conceptual intertwining with the anaphora, the communal recalling of Christ's offering.

As a reflection on interceding in the Eucharistic form, Saliers has concentrated on prayer for the world and what this means theologically. Whilst he has not included a discussion about praying for the Church as a part of the intercession, it is consistent, nevertheless, with his thinking to see praying for the Church as prayer for God's people to be truly God's instrument of mission, care and justice, bearing Christ's compassion, within the broken world.

Gospel passages reveal Christ's compassion for the broken. 'When Jesus saw the crowd he had compassion on them because they were harassed and helpless . . . ' (Matt. 9:36); 'had compassion' in Greek is *esplagchnisthe* from *splagchnon* meaning 'inner parts' or 'bowels'. Intercession in Christ, therefore, is an act of being caught up in his gut-felt empathy for those who suffer with an intimate adherence to Christ in the act of praying for the most needy, with whom by promise his grace is at work.

Likewise, in the Sheep and Goats Parable of Matthew 25, there is the refrain in this passage, 'in as much as you did this to these' (the naked, the thirsty, those in prison, etc.) 'you did it to me'. In its common interpretation, the most needy of the world is referred to here. In some scholarly interpretations, they are identified as the persecuted Christians of the first faith communities and as such point to the persecuted aspects of the Church's life in following generation. In other words, the Church experiences the world's suffering as the People of God live their life in the world. Hence, we can say that the suffering Church sits at the heart of intercession and there prays in solidarity with the suffering world.

These aspects of the compassion of Christ undergird the prayer of the Church for the world. When intercession in Christ is prayed within the Eucharist, this prayerful activity finds a close association with the memorial of Christ's passion which was for the sake of the world.

Historical Intercession: Early Church, Reformation and Modern Periods

In this section, intercession and its relationship to anamnesis will be explored in each of the periods of the Early Church (100-400 CE), the English Reformation (sixteenth century) and the modern period (late twentieth century).

The Early Church Period

A strong concern in the Early Church period was that the worship and behaviour of the believers witness strongly to Christ, such that they were seen to be purer in relationship to their God and to one another. This lifestyle was to be qualitatively

different from the surrounding culture in which, from the middle of the second century till the early fourth century, persecution was always 'at the door' for those who followed Christ. This quality of the Christian life resonates with Paul's summons in Romans (12:1), 'I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God – this is your true and proper worship'.

Early in the second century, *The Didache*⁶ made a close connection between the Eucharist (as it was celebrated at that time) and sacrifice. This aspect lays a foundation to be noted, as the distinguished liturgical scholar, Kenneth Stevenson, points out:

'Sacrifice first appears as a description of the Eucharist in *The Didache* (and it is) in a moral context. The sacrifice must be pure and therefore members of the community must be reconciled with one another'.⁷

The pure sacrifice, especially in terms of communal relationships, forms a basis for what follows. Stevenson comments, regarding the development of liturgical practice over the following period, wherein sacrifice becomes identified with the 'living sacrifice' of the Eucharistic anamnesis and that which is associated with it:

'The "living sacrifice" of the Church embraces supplementary aspects of the eucharistic prayer in the epiclesis and intercessions. Intercession is seen as a part of the sacrificial activity of the Church as it offers its concerns to God and offers the people of God in love and service'.⁸

The connection between intercession and 'the sacrificial activity of the Church' unfolds throughout the early centuries. Liturgical rites were formulated in three distinct and different positions for the intercession:

'Justin Martyr attests to a position immediately before the eucharistic action, St Cyril of Jerusalem, a position after the consecration and in Rome for a period, before the collect of the day'.⁹

The first two positions become significant as the history of liturgy progresses, particularly at the Reformation and in the modern era. The position to which Justin refers, namely, between the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Sacrament, is taken up in modern Anglican reform and the position that Cyril refers to, namely, within the Eucharistic Prayer, as most commonly seen in the modern Roman Catholic order.

⁶*The Didache* was discovered at Constantinople in 1875, mainly regarded as written between 90 and 120 CE; however, some scholars say earlier and others later.

⁷K. Stevenson, *Eucharist and Offering* (New York, Pueblo Publishing, 1986) p. 6.

⁸*Ibid.*

⁹This summary is in R.C.D. Jasper (ed.), *The Eucharist Today, Studies on Series 3* (London, SPCK, 1974) in the chapter by E.C. Whitaker, 'The Intercessions,' p. 57. Justin was martyred in c. 165.

In Justin Martyr's context of the second century, the prayer offered for the Church and the world was the duty of the baptised after the catechumenal candidates had been dismissed:

'When we have washed a man . . . who has accepted the teaching and made his profession of faith, we bring him . . . to the brethren where they are assembled, to offer prayers in common for ourselves, for the person illuminated, and for all others everywhere . . . that they may be granted to prove to be good citizens . . .'¹⁰

The understanding here is that those who are baptised in Christ are called to intercede in and through Christ for the Church and the world as a high calling. As soon as catechumenal candidates were baptised, the first prayerful action that they are engaged in is the intercession of the faithful. The congregation's prayer is offered in Christ in anticipation of the memorial about to be celebrated, after the Greeting of Peace. In this sense, the connection with the anamnesis comes clearly into view.

The Reformation

Attention here will be directed to the English Reformation in the decades, 1530 to 1560. During that period, the Reformers did not have access to *The Didache* and its foundational teaching on sacrifice. Nor for that matter, did they have access to the writings of Hippolytus (which will be turned to later). Stevenson picks up on this point:

'The reaction against (mediaeval) piety by the Reformers was not guaranteed to be an entirely balanced affair, not least when one takes into consideration that their knowledge of Christian origins, so dear to their hearts, was not as extensive as ours is today. It can only be a cause for regret that the *Didache*, the *Apostolic Tradition* of Hippolytus – and other documents from the first few centuries – were either lost or not yet identified at the time of the Reformation, when they could have served as useful theological cooling-systems in the heat of controversy.'¹¹

The Reformers were emphatic about distancing offering from the prayer of Institution and in their historical context had understandable reasons for doing so, in terms of reacting to the excesses of late mediaeval thought and practice regarding the Mass. Cranmer wrote regarding the priests at the time, they 'extol their masses far above Christ's passion'.¹² In summary, for Cranmer and others in England, the

¹⁰Justin Martyr, 'The Defence and Explanation of Christian, Faith and Practice,' Henry Bettison (ed.), *The Early Christian Fathers* (London, Oxford University Press, 1956) p. 85.

¹¹H.R. McDoo and Kenneth Stevenson, *The Mystery of the Eucharist in the Anglican Tradition* (Eugene Or., Wipf and Stock, 1995) p. 111.

¹²*Defense*, cited in P. Brooks, op. cit., p. 80. Regarding what of the 'ancient authors – as Cranmer called them – was available to Cranmer, Peter Brooks' 'classic' work, *Thomas Cranmer's Doctrine of the Eucharist* (McMillan and Co., London, 1965) notes the following: Galasius, Leo, Cyprian, Irenaeus, Cyril, Hilary, Chrysostom, Jerome, and Tertullian (pp. 35. and 50) were available. Omitted from this list are Justin's writings, which actually became available to Cranmer in the early 1530s. It can be, therefore, assumed that he and the other English Reformers did not have access to writings of the other sub-apostolic fathers.

pure and simple memorial of Christ's passion had been severely blemished by the emphasis on the doctrine of transubstantiation (as strongly upheld), attached to which was the priest's role in the Mass of offering the memorial for various causes and in order to lessen people's time in Purgatory. The Reformers strongly objected to these practices and in addition to the practice of the reception of communion as infrequent. A part of the Reformers' response, therefore, was the insistence on distancing other forms of intention or purpose in their composed liturgies apart from those of a preparatory kind, for the memorial of Christ's passion and the receiving of communion.

Regarding the intercession, the English Reformers did not go as far as the Scottish Reformer, John Knox, who in 1556 proposed that the prayer be placed within the Liturgy of the Word.¹³ In the Reformation period, the 1549 rite placed the intercession after the *Sursum Corda*. However, from 1552 until 1662 and following, the intercession was placed immediately after 'the offertory'.¹⁴

What was the significance of placing the intercession after the offertory?¹⁵ In the 1662 rite, the priest places the bread and the wine on the holy table, in readiness for consecration, and then proceeds with the intercession, 'the Prayer of the Church', followed by preparatory prayers and exhortations, leading to the consecration.

We can note, therefore, that within the English context, in not relegating the intercession to the Liturgy of the Word, a balance or an accepted tension is maintained in the placing of the intercession at the start of the canon – hence, having a form of connection to the anamnesis of Christ's sacrifice in the prayer of consecration, albeit a somewhat distant and not explicit connection.

The 1662 Prayer of the Church begins with: '... We humbly beseech thee most mercifully to accept our arms and oblations and to receive these our prayers, which we offer unto thine divine Majesty ...' Although, as noted, the Reformers shunned (generally speaking) the concept of offering, Gregory Dix clearly argued that Cranmer's intention at this point was in terms of self-offering: (Cranmer) had the idea of 'a new expression of *self-offering* in the exhortation, confession, etc ...'¹⁶ after the Prayer of the Church that leads to the prayer of consecration. Disagreement may continue regarding this issue regarding the clear intention of the Reformers, but what is clear is that the Prayer of the Church is maintained in this particular place, and it is 'offered'.

The Modern Period

The changes made in current times (from the 1960s to the early 2000s) in placing the prayer of intercession back into an immediate sequence to the Liturgy of the Word or as a bridge between it and the Liturgy of the Sacrament has significance in terms of changing that which the English Reformation tradition established.

¹³See R.C.D. Jasper, *op. cit.*, p. 165.

¹⁴In the 1549 and '52 orders, 'the offertory' was identified with a collection for the poor.

¹⁵The Reformers did not have available to them Hippolytus' *Apostolic Tradition* which did not allow for the placing of an intercessory prayer after the offertory; rather, the order immediately proceeded to the *Sursum Corda*. See a further discussion on this below.

¹⁶G. Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy* (London, A. & C. Black) 1945, p. 692.

The reforms of Series 2 and 3 in the 1960s were partly based on going back to the Early Church tradition, as it is in Justin Martyr, and also to emphasise the pastoral need for Eucharistic intercession to include the topics of the Church, world, community and those in need, as well as thanksgiving for the departed.¹⁷ As a more comprehensive form of intercession, it was viewed as the people's prayer, involving encouragement of lay leadership.¹⁸

However, the liturgiological issue within the Anglican tradition of intercession being placed within the canon for over 350 years since 1662 has not been seriously addressed with this change. With it, the question remains for Anglican order – what is the connection to be maintained between intercession and the anamnesis, as 'seeded' in *The Didache*, as it is portrayed in the Early Church, and as it appears within the English Reformation?

We have noted the presence of catechumens in Justin Martyr's ecclesial context and their intercessory participation in the Eucharist as newly baptised. In the contemporary Anglican situation with rarely a catechumenate seen¹⁹ – the distinction between those who are baptised and those are not in congregational Eucharistic worship does not come into play; the intercession is simply prayed, as it is in this 'in-between' part of the liturgy. Arguably, it is important to strengthen the focus that intercession belongs to the baptised, to those who have been anchored in Christ by baptism, participating in his compassion for the world, and thereby summoned in relation to the anamnesis of the Lord about to take place, to intercede. They enact their vocation to intercede for the Church and the world, as they move forward liturgically into the memorial. Otherwise, intercession lessens its meaningful place within the flow of the liturgy and becomes 'a stutter',²⁰ and, as we are seeing, it is required that it have a close association liturgically with the anamnesis. Furthermore, it is good to bear in mind at this point that Eucharistic intercession in the fourth century, as Cyril of Jerusalem records, was placed after the consecration with the belief that the prayer offered over the gifts was seen to be 'more efficacious'.²¹

This discussion will be taken up further in section four.

Another dimension that comes into play in the modern period is to do with the contribution of the Eucharistic form in Hippolytus' *Apostolic Tradition*.²² Two aspects are relevant. First, as mentioned, the order of the Eucharist during his time did not include intercession after the offertory, as we see it in the 1662 order.

¹⁷The intercession, the Prayer of the Church, in the Reformation period, and also in 1662, was solely for the Church and not for the world: prayer for kings, princes and governors was only for 'all Christian kings, princes and governors.' In noting the present breadth of liturgical intercessory prayer, Charles Sherlock writes that it is 'common prayer that is offered rather than individual petitions, (ranging) beyond the immediate life of those present to the world and the Church' – *Australian Anglicans Worship, performing APBA* (Mulgrave, Broughton Publishing, 2020) p. 282.

¹⁸See more on this point in Ormonde Plater, *Intercession, A Theological and Pastoral Guide* (Cambridge, Mass., Cowley Publications, 1995) p. 24.

¹⁹For an Anglican presentation of the contemporary catechumenate, see the author's *Taking the Plunge - Seeking, Accompanying, Baptising* (Eugene, Or., Wipf and Stock, 2010).

²⁰This particular point is further discussed in section 4 under 'Predicament.'

²¹Cited in Whitaker, op. cit., p. 57.

²²The document was identified in 1915, dated c. 215 C. E.

The reforms in the Church from the 1960s followed the Hippolytan form as a significant precedence, which meant that the intercession had to be placed elsewhere.

Secondly, that which we are remembering in the anamnesis in terms of the meaning of Christ's death is quite different in Hippolytus' liturgy. This point has significance for the meaning of the intercession within the Eucharist and requires careful attention. In the Eucharistic Prayer of his time, the priest prayed:

'... and when Christ was betrayed to voluntary suffering that he might destroy death and break the bonds of the devil and tread down hell and shine upon the righteous... and manifest the resurrection, he took bread...'²³

Here a text becomes available to the modern Church that involves a significant retrieval from the early period of the understanding of Christ's death in terms of defeating the powers of evil: '... and break the bonds of the devil'.

The Anglican form prior to the modern period solely provided the substitutionary understanding of Christ's death, as emphatically presented in the 1662 prayer of consecration:

'Almighty God, our heavenly Father, who of the tender mercy did you give thine only Son Jesus Christ to suffer death upon the cross for our redemption; that he who made there by his one oblation of himself once offered a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation and satisfaction, for the sins of the whole world...'

The influence of Hippolytus' Eucharistic theology has been significant in the modern period in terms of enabling the inclusion of Christ's liberating work manifested on the cross of overcoming the powers of evil. Consequently, included in several contemporary Eucharistic Prayers there is the provision of a more complete understanding of Christ's redemptive work, for example:

'Bright image of your glory, he learnt obedience to you in all things, even to death on the cross, breaking the power of evil, freeing us from sin and putting death flight'.²⁴

Having a more inclusive form, with the 'classical' focus represented in the anamnesis, the question arises, what are the implications for the meaning of intercession in the Eucharist? With the once-and-for-all, substitution emphasis, worshippers are led to a focus on a 'sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving' (as Cranmer provided in his prayer books in the post-communion prayer) in keeping with what he taught were 'the benefits of Christ's passion', then accompanied by prayer for active service as befits thanksgiving. This was Cranmer's approach. Intercessory prayer, in fact, does not have a ready or 'organic' place in this perspective. At the

²³*The Apostolic Tradition*, Jasper & Cuming, op. cit., p. 22.

²⁴A Prayer Book for Australia, Thanksgiving 2, p. 131.

same time, however, he insisted on including intercession, as we have seen, in the canon of the liturgical order, as that which is offered.

The inclusion of the classical theory presents a different scenario.²⁵ The People of God are caught up in the sacrificial, liberative Passover of Christ in order to move forward *for* sacrificial prayer and service in Christ; they participate in the sacrifice that sets forth the new Exodus of God's People. Intercession naturally finds its place in this perspective, praying in and with Christ as his people go forward in his strength.

Indeed, it is true to say that we are 'caught up' eucharistically in his prayerful mission to the world. In a contemporary commentary on Mark's Gospel, Brendan Byrne brings this focus into view, referring to the Last Supper narrative, he notes that the disciples *share* in the broken bread/body and wine/blood of Jesus in a particular way:

Eating the bread that is his broken body and drinking the cup that is his blood poured out forges a union with Jesus . . . It is a union that not only confers benefits on those who partake but also *catches them up* . . . in the rhythm of his self-giving life. They will become not only passive beneficiaries but active participants in the mission of the One who came not to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many (Mark 10:45).²⁶

Intercession is incorporated in this active participation, being 'caught up in the rhythm of his self-giving life'. The liturgical significance of this point will be taken up further in section four.

Eschatological Intercession: Eastern Orthodox Liturgy

The rich symbolism of the Eastern Orthodox Eucharistic form involves an interactive relationship of intercession with the anamnesis and provides insights regarding the role of intercession within 'the drama' of the Eucharistic order (in both the liturgies of St John Chrysostom and St Basil).

The understanding of the sacraments in the Eastern Church is that they are manifestations of the Kingdom. The Eucharist manifests the Kingdom as a liturgical movement from start to finish, of the life the Church and the world going forward to the Kingdom as both present and future – anticipating the consummation of God's Kingdom. The liturgical movement begins with the preparation (prothesis) of the sacramental bread, 'the lamb', ('who takes away the sins of the world' – John 1:29 – and who is the apocalyptic Lamb of the Book of Revelation, who leads his servants to the End) – to be brought with the wine to the altar at the offertory, the Great Entrance; they are placed there for thanksgiving, consecration, oblation and communion. Because this action involves the movement of the Church gathering up the life of the world, orientated towards the Kingdom, the liturgy is interlaced with moments of intercessory litany. Here, therefore, we have a pattern of 'eschatological

²⁵The reason that the classical theory almost disappeared over centuries of Western church history is referred to in Gustaf Aulen's important work in which he brings the theory back into focus within the mid-20th century: *Christus Victor* (London, SPCK, 1953), pp. 23–29.

²⁶Brendan Byrne, *Costly Freedom* (Collegeville, Liturgical Press, 2008) p. 222.

intercession'. At the same time, the focus on the lamb in terms of the offered bread, from the beginning to the end of the liturgy, holds forth the sense of anamnesis as covering the whole of the rite: intercession and anamnesis proceeding hand-in-hand.

This liturgical scenario can speak powerfully to the West. In modern revisions of our liturgies, emphasis upon the Kingdom of God and Christ's Second Coming has been more included than they were in the Reformation rites – most commonly seen in the acclamation, 'Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again'. However, in the East, the whole liturgy is presented and permeated with the Kingdom and the anamnesis as primary in terms of focus. Then, in the dynamic of the liturgy, interlaced with intercession, the longings of the worshippers are gathered up.

'The cosmic outlook that longs for the transformation of man',²⁷ that is, the eschatological orientation of the liturgy, becomes the ground on which serial intercession takes place. We can recall here Saliers' view of intercession (in section 1) as involving 'the vision of a transformed world'.

Early in the rite, at the offertory and then immediately before and after the administration of communion, intercessory litanies occur.²⁸ The 'longing for transformation' is gathered up in 'the pathos' (Saliers) of the recurring intercessions within the movement forward in the sacramental order.

'The expansion of intercessory material into various liturgical places most likely addressed the spiritual needs of eastern Christians who required intentional, repetitive prayer . . . (that) dealt with ordinary human concerns'.²⁹ Worshippers intercede in pathos-shaped prayer for present concerns in the light of the eschaton,³⁰ participating in the Church's prayer in the compassion of Christ.

The Orthodox Eucharistic form in its interplay between Kingdom, the anamnesis of Christ's sacrifice and intercession, is not something literally to be adopted in the West. We have a different sequential and more rationalistic view of liturgy. At the same time, the Orthodox witness gives encouragement to entertain more seriously the intimate connection between the two themes. In practice, this can mean that we can consider flexibility in the placing of intercession within the liturgical rite, as we too emphasise in our liturgical forms an orientation to the glory of the End time and our longing for it whilst living within a broken world.

Contemporary Intercession: Predicaments and Preferences

Gathering up the discussion so far with the major theme of the connection between intercession and anamnesis being seen in the Eucharist, awareness of this theme can inform present concerns regarding Eucharistic intercession.

In this section, the predicament in terms of the practice of the intercession in contemporary versions of the Anglican Eucharist will be reviewed, being aware that

²⁷Evelyn Underhill, *Worship* (Guilford, Eagle, 1991) in her section on Eastern Orthodoxy, p. 201.

²⁸At the Great Entrance, a litany becomes the focus of the offertory and again prior to communion, the 'Remember, Lord, . . .' litany is chanted. Regarding the former, the Orthodox liturgical scholar, Alexander Schmemmann, writes, 'the Church in its separation from the world remembers the world and the whole creation and takes it in to love to God' – in *For the Life of the World* (New York, St Vladimir's Press, 1973) p. 57.

²⁹Plater, op. cit., p. 21.

³⁰See John D. Zizioulas, *The Eucharistic Communion and the World* (London, T. & T. Clark, 2011) p. 51 and Schmemmann, op.cit., p. 45.

while the liturgical form varies from province to province, in most parts of the Anglican Communion the intercession is found in the 'in-between' position of the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Sacrament. Gaining an appreciation of the pastoral or practical situation at hand will provide a helpful way to consider in more detail preferences for the position of intercession in the Eucharistic rite.

Predicament: Reviewing Practice

After two decades of liturgical reform from the 1960s in England, the following comment was made by the pastoral theologian, Robin Green, in relation to the practice of Eucharistic intercession:

'Intercession raises issues about the ultimate meaning of our behaviour. In it our understanding of divine providence and its relationship to human pain and opportunity to put to its surest test The lectures to God that we hear so often at this stage of the Eucharist are little more than a sign of mistrust . . .'³¹

Some Anglicans may say that the intercession in their churches is measured as a genuine lifting up of supplication. The sense, however, according to Green, is that the intercessions sometimes or often become 'lectures to God' rather than trustingly imploring God's grace. Furthermore, they become 'sermons', instructing the people. At times, the prayer emotively presents various world problems, which worshippers are somehow meant to ponder in a form of mental gymnastics, instead of enabling individual and communal prayer by a widely embracing form.

The dangers and difficulties here in leading the intercession can be summarised as:

Psychological – the leader is not aware of their own biases.

Emotional – some present issues disturb the leader and hence they are projected onto the people, rather than led with pathos.

Political – a deliberate stance is taken.

Moral – the congregation is told to be 'more aware of' or 'we should . . . ' – rather than making supplications directly to God, having little awareness that the focus of this ministry is not primarily petition (prayer for ourselves).

In reflecting on this pastoral predicament, Ormonde Plater has the following advice to give for the ministry of intercession:³²

1. Because the intercessions are the prayers of *the people*, they belong to the assembly, who hears them, sings them and offers them to God; it is a community enterprise.
2. If one person writes the prayers, that person should appear to the assembly as an authority on prayer – one who prays daily.

³¹Robin Green, *Only Connect, Worship and Liturgy from the Perspective of Pastoral Care* (London, DLT, 1987) p. 43.

³²Plater, op. cit., p. 37f, writes within the context of TEC (The Episcopal Church of the USA). The Church of England's *Common Worship* website provides similar advice: <https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/topical-prayers/leading-prayer-through-intercessions> (as at 3.4.23).

3. Intercessors should have training in liturgical prayer and be acknowledged to have a spiritual gift in this regard.
4. Where congregations have a deacon (who are traditionally entrusted with leading the intercession), s/he should be involved in this ministry as assisting or coordinating.

'Extensive intercession' was articulated as the character of Anglican liturgical practice by the fifth Anglican Consultative Council in Prague (2005) on 'Liturgy and Anglican Identity'. 'Extensive' presumably means covering a breadth of topics, rather than being of an extended length.

The litany form comes into view as a significant option of congregational interceding due to its succinctness and rhythmic character, having the potential to gather up the people's prayers in a corporately spiritual manner, at times prefaced by brief biddings. This approach has been seen to be of pastoral importance within the liturgical practice of the Orthodox Church.

Preferences: Reviewing the Position

We have seen that in the discussion about the 1662 rite and prior to it, there was an insistence by the Reformers to maintain the intercession immediately after the offertory, which implies a connection, albeit at a distance, with the prayer of consecration.

Any review of this position in the light of the Hippolytus' *Apostolic Tradition* in recent decades has been seen 'to preclude' the 1662 Prayer Book position of the intercession in terms of any contemporary re-ordering – on the basis of his order of the Great Thanksgiving, *Sanctus* and consecration as sequential after the *Sursum Corda*. The options, therefore, in relation to Anglican order, become a matter of looking at placing the major form of intercession within the Eucharistic Prayer or as a further possibility, in the Cranmerian position of intercession – see below.

Viewing the 'in-between' place, with which Anglicans are familiar, in the light of the liturgical situation of Justin Martyr and the presence of catechumens, we saw that contemporary practice lacks the sharp edge and focus of the identity as the baptised in Christ, called in their vocation to bring the concerns of Church and the world to God, in anticipation of the anamnesis about to be prayed.

A further reason for this being a weak position can be noted as follows: in reviewing the placement of intercession in the English Series 2 in the 1960s, Whitaker made the following remark in relation to the intercessions being a hinge 'in-between' the Word and Sacrament as being 'a little eccentric' and 'in danger of losing their identity':

'The arrangement of Series 3 is a little eccentric and does not accord to the Prayers of the Faithful the dignity which is due to them.³³ . . . The intercessions are submerged with the prayers of penitence in one section entitled The Prayers and so seem to be in danger of losing their separate identity altogether'.³⁴

³³Whitaker op. cit., p. 59. Series 3 has the first section of the eucharistic rite entitled 'The Word and The Prayers' rather than simply the Liturgy of the Word – 'The Prayers' include the intercession and confession/absolution.

³⁴*Ibid.*, p. 58.

The issue of 'losing their identity' makes sense when considered in terms of the intercession needing to be closely linked either to, or both with, the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Sacrament. Its eccentricity is to do with it being 'a stutter', having no ready connection to what has been before it and what is to come after it.

In the Roman Catholic reforms of the 1960s, the solution regarding placement of the intercession was to situate it in part at the conclusion of the Liturgy of the Word (*not* as 'in-between' it and the Liturgy of the Sacrament), as a brief and lay – involved, introduced and concluded by the celebrant with an evocation of the theme of the day in the readings, and then, as the Prayer of the Church within the Eucharistic Prayer (in the spirit of Cyril of Jerusalem).

The liturgy of the Lima Conference in 1982 follows the same pattern, evolved after the highly significant ecumenical discussions that produced the *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* (BEM) document of 1982.³⁵ From the Reformed tradition, Saliers makes the point that 'there is a special efficacy of intercessory prayer when made while the Eucharistic elements remain on the table before distribution . . . in the prayer of the Great Thanksgiving'.³⁶

Liturgical forms in some provinces of the Anglican Communion follow a similar but different line of ordering for an intercession, using the 'in-between' position and included in the Eucharistic Prayer.³⁷

Whatever liturgical commissions decide to do in practice in response to these issues, the urging here is to emphasise primarily the intimate connection between intercession and the anamnesis. At the same time, it becomes clear that the Roman Catholic/Lima form is arguably the most preferable for the placing of intercession in modern liturgical rites.

A further consideration to include here is the possibility of 'breaking rank with Hippolytus' in modern Anglican forms and returning to Cranmer's positioning of the intercession immediately after the offertory. To do so would need to give expression in some way or another of an adherence of the prayer to the pending anamnesis.

Conclusion

A theology of intercession has been explored in terms of solidarity with Christ's gut-felt compassion for our broken world, in his ministry and manifested on the cross. The prayer of the baptised for the world participates in the Paschal Mystery, hence relating the prayer closely to the anamnesis, the centrepiece of Eucharistic worship.

A layered form of argument has been developed to see the connection between intercession and anamnesis. The legacy of liturgical forms, first, in the Early Church speaks of the intercession being the action of the baptised, as they approached the

³⁵In composing this liturgy, the aim was to illustrate the solid theological achievements of the Faith and Order Commission in the BEM document . . . The convergence could be expressed in other liturgical forms, according to other traditions . . . (However) the Lima liturgy is characterised by its fullness . . . Max Thurian (ed.), *Ecumenical Perspectives on BEM* (Geneva, WCC, 1983) p. 225.

³⁶Saliers, *op. cit.*, p. 129.

³⁷For example, in the Provinces of the USA, Canada and South Africa. See Colin Buchanan (ed.), *Anglican Eucharistic Liturgies 1985-2010* (Norwich, Canterbury Press, 2011).

anamnesis of Christ and his passion; the newly baptised having entered into Christ, immediately performed their intercessory vocation within the assembly (Justin Martyr). Then two centuries later, intercession belonged to prayer immediately after the consecration (Cyril of Jerusalem).

Secondly, in the English Reformation the intercession was placed in the first part of the canon (after the offertory) and therefore held a certain, albeit not clearly defined, connection to the consecration that was progressed to in the order.

Thirdly, the modern placing of the intercession between the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Sacrament departs from the Reformation mode and only weakly reflects the force of Justin's sense of the praying vocation of the baptised. Furthermore, retrieving the theme of Christ's overcoming the powers of evil in modern liturgies strengthens the connection between anamnesis and intercession.

The Eastern Orthodox Church presents an approach of repeated, pathos-oriented intercession liturgically, as a longing for a transformed world. The Lamb, as 'the image' of anamnesis, permeates the whole Eucharistic rite. Hence, encouragement for us in the West is kindled faithfully to explore options.

An examination of the present situation of how intercession variably functions in the Eucharist displayed areas of need, with ideas mentioned for improvements in leading the prayer.

Acknowledging the close connection between intercession and anamnesis, to include intercession in the Eucharistic Prayer, is seen as valid and appropriate, to function in a complementary manner with a brief form placed within the Liturgy of the Word.

Alternatively, as a possibility, placing the intercession in the Cranmerian position immediately after the offertory could be considered.

Whilst pondering these matters, Kenneth Stevenson, in *Eucharist and Offering*, came up with the phrase, 'anaphoral intercession', to emphasise the intimacy between intercession and anamnesis. The act of interceding in the Eucharist is intertwined with the anaphoral nature of the sacrament, both in relation to the rite as a whole and in relation to the (specific) anaphora or canon itself.