

Eucharistic Prayer C, *The Book of Common Prayer* (1979), p. 369-372

*A central feature of Christian prayer throughout the centuries has been remembering (with praise and thanksgiving) the history of God's saving acts. Nowhere is this more evident than in the "eucharistic prayers" (literally, "thanksgiving prayers") that are made when the Lord's Supper is celebrated. The following is one of several prayers for this occasion in *The Book of Common Prayer* (1979), the official worship book of the Episcopal Church. It combines traditional themes and language with vividly modern images.*

In this prayer, the lines in italics are spoken by the People.

The Celebrant, whether bishop or priest, faces them and sings or says

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give him thanks and praise.

Then, facing the Holy Table, the Celebrant proceeds

God of all power, Ruler of the Universe, you are worthy of glory and praise.

Glory to you for ever and ever.

At your command all things came to be: the vast expanse of interstellar space, galaxies, suns, the planets in their courses, and this fragile earth, our island home.

By your will they were created and have their being.

From the primal elements you brought forth the human race, and blessed us with memory, reason, and skill. You made us the rulers of creation. But we turned against you, and betrayed your trust; and we turned against one another.

Have mercy, Lord, for we are sinners in your sight

Again and again, you called us to return. Through prophets and sages you revealed your righteous Law. And in the fullness of time you sent your only Son, born of a woman, to fulfill your Law, to open for us the way of freedom and peace.

By his blood, he reconciled us.

By his wounds, we are healed.

And therefore we praise you, joining with the heavenly chorus, with prophets, apostles, and martyrs, and with all

those in every generation who have looked to you in hope, to proclaim with them your glory, in their unending hymn:

Celebrant and People

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.

The Celebrant continues

And so, Father, we who have been redeemed by him, and made a new people by water and the Spirit, now bring before you these gifts. Sanctify them by your Holy Spirit to be the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ our Lord.

At the following words concerning the bread, the Celebrant is to hold it, or lay a hand upon it, and at the words concerning the cup, to hold or place a hand upon the cup and any other vessel containing wine to be consecrated.

On the night he was betrayed he took bread, said the blessing, broke the bread, and gave it to his friends, and said, "Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

After supper, he took the cup of wine, gave thanks, and said, "Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."

Remembering now his work of redemption, and offering to you this sacrifice of thanksgiving,

*We celebrate his death and resurrection,
as we await the day of his coming.*

Lord God of our Fathers: God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ: Open our eyes to see your hand at work in the world about us. Deliver us from the presumption of coming to this Table for solace only, and not for strength; for pardon only, and not for renewal. Let the grace of this Holy Communion make us one body, one spirit in Christ, that we may worthily serve the world in his name.

Risen Lord, be known to us in the breaking of the bread.

Accept these prayers and praises, Father, through Jesus

Christ our great High Priest, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, your Church gives honor, glory, and worship, from generation to generation. *AMEN.*

[The complete text of this and many editions of the *Book of Common Prayer* may be accessed at <http://justus.anglican.org/resources/bcp/>]

***Exsultet* / Easter Proclamation**

This is a modern translation of an ancient Christian text that is sung near the beginning of the Easter Vigil. This service is celebrated after sundown on the Saturday before Easter in every Roman Catholic church as well as in most Episcopal and Lutheran churches and many other churches as well. The Latin title Exsultet comes from the first word, "Rejoice!" The proclamation announces Christ's resurrection and concludes by blessing the new paschal (i.e., Easter) candle. What biblical events are referred to here? What temporal (i.e., time) relationship is described as existing between the congregation and biblical events?

Priest/Deacon:

Rejoice, heavenly powers! Sing, choirs of angles!
Exult, all creation around God's throne!
Jesus Christ, our King, is risen!
Sound the trumpet of salvation!

Rejoice, O earth, in shining splendor,
radiant in brightness of your King!
Christ has conquered! Glory fills you!
Darkness vanishes for ever!

Rejoice, O Mother Church! Exult in glory!
The risen Saviour shines upon you!
Let this place resound with joy,
echoing the mighty song of all God's people!

My dearest friends, standing with me in this holy light,
join me in asking God for mercy,
that he may give his unworthy minister
grace to sing his Easter praises.

Priest/Deacon: The Lord be with you.
ALL: AND ALSO WITH YOU.

Priest/Deacon: Lift up your hearts.
ALL: WE LIFT THEM UP TO THE LORD.

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

ALL: It is right to give him thanks and praise.

Priest/Deacon:

It is truly right
that with full hearts and minds and voices
we should praise the unseen God, the all-powerful Father,
and his only Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

For Christ has ransomed us with his blood,
and paid for us the price of Adam's sin
to our eternal Father!

This is our passover feast,
when Christ, the true Lamb, is slain,
whose blood consecrates the homes of all believers.

This is the night when first you saved our fathers:
you freed the people of Israel from their slavery
and led them dry-shod through the sea.

This is the night when the pillar of fire
destroyed the darkness of sin.

This is the night when Christians everywhere,
washed clean of sin
and freed from all defilement,
are restored to grace and grow together in holiness.

This is the night when Jesus Christ
broke the chains of death
and rose triumphant from the grave.

What good would life have been to us,
had Christ not come as our Redeemer?

Father, how wonderful your care for us!
How boundless your merciful love!
To ransom a slave
you gave away your Son.

O Happy fault, O necessary sin of Adam,
which gained for us so great a Redeemer!

Most blessed of all nights, chosen by God
to see Christ rising from the dead!

Of this night scripture says:
"The night will be as clear as day:
it will become my light, my joy."

The power of this holy night
dispels all evil, washes guilt away,
restores lost innocence, brings mourners joy;
it casts out hatred, brings us peace, and humbles earthly
pride.

Night truly blessed when heaven is wedded to earth
and man is reconciled with God!

Therefore, heavenly Father, in the joy of this night,
receive our Evening sacrifice of praise,
your Church's solemn offering.

Accept this Easter candle,
a flame divided but undimmed,
a pillar of fire that glows to the honor of God.

Let it mingle with the lights of heaven
and continue bravely burning
to dispel the darkness of this night!

May the Morning Star which never sets find this flame still
burning:
Christ, that Morning Star, who came back from the dead,
and shed his peaceful light on all mankind,
your Son who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

[This text, along with a mediocre recording of it being sung may be accessed at:
<http://www.op.org/domcentral/life/exsultet.ram> (Jan. 22, 2001)]