

A Liturgy for May, Older American's Month

Prepared by: The Commission on Liturgy and Music of the Diocese of Washington
and distributed by Seabury Resources for Aging

THE HOLY EUCHARIST: RITE TWO

The Word of God

(A hymn may be sung.)

Celebrant: Blessed by God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit

People: And blessed be his kingdom, now and forever.
Amen

Celebrant: Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all
desires known, and from you no secrets are
hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that
we might perfectly love you and worthily
magnify your holy Name; through Christ
our Lord. Amen.

Celebrant: Lord, have mercy.

People: Christ, have mercy.

Celebrant: Lord, have mercy.

The Collect of the Day

Celebrant: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Celebrant: Let us pray.

(The Celebrant reads the Collect of the Day)

Celebrant: **The Collect to Honor Older Adults**

Merciful God, you gave your servants Anna and Simeon the blessing of years of long life and the gift of seeing your blessed Son: Give to us thanks for the years of life you have given to many of us. May we continue to serve you and your people as we are able in our time, and may we honor those who have been blessed with many years and care for them.

People: Amen.

The Lessons

Reader: A Reading from ____ (Acts 13:15-16, 26-33)

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

Reader: The Psalm for today is Psalm 100.
Let us read it together.

Reader: A Reading from ____ (Revelations 7:9-17)

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

The Gospel

Celebrant: The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ
According to John.

People: Glory to you, Lord Christ.

Celebrant: (John 10:22-30)

Celebrant: The Gospel of the Lord.

People: Praise to you, Lord Christ.

The Sermon or Homily

The Nicene Creed (Page 358, Book of Common Prayer)

The Prayers of the People

Leader: Thanks be to you, O Lord, who has held us
in your hand from birth until this day, and
who has told us that we are precious in
your sight.

People: Hear our prayer.

Leader: Help us to remember that long life is a gift not granted to everyone; and we pray that whatever wisdom, knowledge, and fullness of love we may have attained in the past may be used in the present in your service.

People: Hear our prayer.

Leader: We thank you for the friends who have supported us throughout our lives and who surround us today; for those who have laughed and rejoiced with us, and shared the joy of living and loving; for those who have grieved and wept with us, and held our hands when the way was too rough to walk alone; For they have taught us compassion. For those who have needed and need today to have us reach out and hold their hands, and so allowed us to be ministers of your love.

People: Hear our prayer.

Leader: We thank you for the gift of memories: The happy and joyous ones that sweeten our days and nights; the painful and lonely ones that have made us draw closer to you and taught us faith and trust; the embarrassing and shameful ones which keep us humble and tolerant and understanding. May we keep them as precious gifts, and never be tempted to make a prison of them that would keep us from living in the present. Help us to remember that the precious moment is the present moment.

People: Hear our prayer.

Leader: We pray also for all who are homebound,
For those who live in nursing homes, assisted
living facilities and retirement communities,
and for their caregivers and their families.
Help them to love their neighbors and care
for them and to find a sense of mission in
their homes.

People: Hear our prayer.

Leader: Comfort and relieve your sick servants and
give your power of healing to those who
minister to their needs,
that they be strengthened in their weakness
and have confidence in your loving care.

People: Hear our prayer.

Leader: O God of grace, may we rejoice in your gift
of leisure as we retire from the discipline of
our work.
Call us to use the talents you have given us for
new paths of service.
Remove from us all anxiety about the future
and all impatience with infirmities.
And, help us grow ever closer to you and
to all whom we love.

People: Hear our prayer.

Leader: Deal graciously, we pray, with all who mourn;
that, casting all their cares on you, they may
know the compassion of your love.

People: Hear our prayer.

Leader: Look on your servants, lying in great weakness,
and comfort them with the promise of the life
everlasting, given in the resurrection of your

Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

People: Hear our prayer.

Leader: Please offer your own prayers of intercession and thanksgiving at this time.

People: (Prayers and thanksgivings)

Leader: Hear our prayer.

Leader or
Celebrant: Creator God, we thank you for the great gift of days. As Sarah rejoiced with Abraham in the fulfillment of your promise of new life in their old age, we rejoice that the Holy Spirit enables us to continue learning and teaching, sharing with others our own growing understanding of your love.
AMEN.

Celebrant: Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

Celebrant and People:

Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone.
We have not loved you with our whole heart;
We have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.
We are truly sorry and we humbly repent.
For the sake of your son Jesus Christ, have Mercy on us and forgive us; that we may Delight in your will and walk in your ways,
To the glory of your Name. Amen

The Peace

Celebrant: The Peace of the Lord be always with you.

People: And also with you.

(The ministers and the people may greet one another in the name of the Lord.)

THE HOLY COMMUNION

(The service continues exactly from the Book of Common Prayer, beginning on page 361 and ending on page 366.)

Resources for the Liturgy for Older Americans' Month

Compiled and portions written by the Rev. Michael W. Hopkins

Distributed by Episcopal Senior Ministries for May 1999

Introduction

During most, if not all of May, the Church continues its celebration of the 50 days of Easter. Although no other celebration should take precedence over this sustained joy in the resurrection, it is certainly appropriate to structure one of the season's celebrations so that the gifts of the elder generation among us are lifted up and their ministries prayed for. If nothing else, the resurrection means that as human life approaches death, it approaches its fullness.

Suggested Lectionary Texts

Among the Prayer Book Lectionary texts that most often occur in May, perhaps the following are most appropriate for a Sunday to celebrate the lives of the elders of our communities.

Year A: Easter 5 (Deuteronomy 6:20-25; Psalm 66: 1-8; Acts 17:1-15; John 14:1-14)
Easter 7 (Acts 1:1-14; Psalm 47; 1 Peter 4:12-19; John 17:1-11)

Year B: Easter 6 (Acts 11:19-30; Psalm 33:1-8, 18-22; 1 John 4:7-21; John 15:9-17)

Year C: Easter 5 (Leviticus 19:1-2, 9-18; Psalm 145:1-9; Acts 13:44-52; John 13:31-35)

In addition, the following canticle may be used in place of the psalm, or in some other appropriate place (a metrical version can be found in the hymnal supplement "Wonder, Love, and Praise" at 906).

A Song of Pilgrimage *Sirach 51:13-16, 20b-22*

Before I ventured forth, even while I was young,*
 I sought wisdom openly in my prayer.
In the forecourts of the temple I asked for her, *
 and I will seek her to the end.
From first blossom to early fruit,*
 she has been the delight of my heart.
My foot has kept firmly to the true path,*
 diligently from my youth have I pursued her.
I inclined my ear a little and received her;*
 I found for myself much wisdom and became adept in her.
To the One who gives me wisdom will I give glory,*
 for I have resolved to live according to her way.
From the beginning I gained courage from her,*
 therefore I will not be forsaken.
In my inmost being have I been stirred to seek her,*
 Therefore I have gained a good possession.
As my reward the Almighty has given me the gift of language,*
 And with it I will offer praise to God.

From Enriching our Worship (New York: Church Publishing, 1997)

Celebration of the Ministry of Seniors

Senior members of the congregation might be invited to bring a symbol of their ministry to Service with them, and, after the Creed, be invited to come forward holding them, or perhaps, place them on a table in the sight of all. In addition, some token of the congregations' prayer and thanksgiving might be given to them at the close of these prayers, such as a spring plant, a small book of prayers, drawings done by Sunday School children, or some other appropriate item.

The "Presenters" in this form might be the Wardens, or some person(s) involved with Senior Ministry in the congregation.

After the Creed, the Celebrant invites Seniors in the congregation to stand and come forward.

Presenter I present these elder members of our congregation and ask the prayers and thanksgivings of this congregation on behalf of their lives and ministries.

The Celebrant says to the Seniors

We give thanks to God for your lives, for the many blessings bestowed on this Congregation through you, and for your continued service in the name of Christ to the Church and to the world.

Will you continue in this ministry, sharing your wisdom and the fruit of your long lives with us?

Seniors We will.

The Celebrant says to the Congregation

Will you continue to support these persons in their ministries, listen to their experience and wisdom, and give thanks for their lives?

People We will.

Celebrant Let us pray.

We thank you, O God, for the gift of age, for the wisdom and compassion that it brings when we have lived close to your love, and for the fruit it bears when we have sought your kingdom all the years of our lives. Bless these elder members of our congregation in their lives and ministries, give them courage and hope in the latter days of their lives, and help us all to seek their wisdom and maturity for the benefit of your Church and for your Kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven. We ask these things in the Name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Amen

The Celebrant (or Presenter) may say
We now present to you as a token of our affection and prayers...

The Service continues with the Prayers of the People.

Prayers of the People

The following petition may be added to Form 1 (BCP, p 383) or Form V (BCP, p 389) of the Prayers of the People.

For the Elder members of this congregation and for all older Americans and persons throughout the world, that they may live in dignity and hope, continue to serve you in wisdom and compassion, and bless us with their ministries, [we pray to you, O Lord].

The following Collect may end the Prayers of the People

God of all the ages, we thank you for the great gift of all our days, and the promise of new life you hold out to us always. Receive our prayers and fill each one of us, and all for whom we pray, with a lively sense of your goodness, that, whenever we are on the path of our journey, we may know your presence and be inspired to live as your beloved daughters and son; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen*

Hymns

The following hymns are especially appropriate in addition to hymns of the season. An additional hymn might be sung after the Creed if the Celebration of Ministry (above) is used.

From the Hymnal 1982

- S-180, S-231 or S-236 "Glory to you, Lord God of our Fathers" (Canticle 2, 13)
428 "I'll praise my maker while I've breath"
657 "Love divine, all loves excelling"
680 "O God, our help in ages past"
686 "Come, thou font of every blessing"
690 "Guide me O thou great Jehovah"

From Lift Every Voice and Sing II

- 1 "Lift every voice and sing"
54 "Nearer My God, to thee"
72 "Just a closer walk with thee"
136 "I have decided to follow Jesus"
196 "What a fellowship"

From Wonder, Love and Praise

- 743 "O threefold God of tender unity"
775 "Give thanks for life, the measure of our days"
778 "We all are one in mission"
906 "Even when young, I prayed for wisdom's grace"

Resources for a Liturgy on Aging
(for use during May 2000, Older Americans' Month)
Compiled by the Rev. Sherrill L. Page, Rector, St. Barnabas, Oxon Hill
Distributed by Episcopal Senior Ministries

Introduction

During the month of May, 2000 the Church celebrates the joy of the resurrection of Jesus Christ in the Great Fifty Days of Easter. As we celebrate God's victory over the power of death to destroy us, we celebrate life as we know it now even with its limitations and can look forward to a new life with our Creator in which we know no limitations of any kind. The Easter season is an appropriate time to offer thanksgiving for the rich gifts we have received from God and from one another. It is also an appropriate time to honor the many gifts we receive from our elders, especially the faithfulness in their ministry with others and the wisdom gained from their life experiences.

One way to honor the ministry of our elders could be in a gathering of the faith community for worship, story sharing and refreshments (or a meal) similar to a birthday party in which the elders are the guests of honor. A liturgy for this celebration could take the form of morning or evening prayer. If preferred, these scripture texts and prayers can be incorporated into a Eucharistic liturgy which precedes a festive reception.

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Officiant We will praise the name of the Lord; ascribe greatness to our God.
 Open our lips, O God;
People and our mouth shall proclaim your praise.

Song of Praise *(said in unison with a pause at the end of each line)*

The Steadfast Love of the Lord (Lamentations 3:22-26)

The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases:
 God's mercies never come to an end;
They are new every morning:
 Your faithfulness O Lord is great.
You are all that I have:
 and therefore I will wait for you.
You, Lord, are good to those who wait for you:
 to all those who seek you.
It is good to wait in patience:
 for the salvation of the Lord.

A Reading from Deuteronomy 4.32-40

Psalm 66:1-12

A Reading from 1 John 1.1-2.2

A Reading from John 14.15-21

(Note: these are the lectionary texts for Easter 5-May 21)

Each reading can be followed by a period of silence.

The homily could be a time in which those gathered are invited to share stories of how God is at work in their lives and in their ministries. Those who are being honored can be encouraged to bring photographs or symbols of their ministries. The story of “Wilfred Gordon McDonald Partridge” by Mem Fox (see Attachment A) also can be told. Suggested hymns are listed in Attachment B.

Prayers

Ring a bell for each elder being honored
Holy and gracious God, Wondrous Worker of Wonders,
we praise you not alone for what has been,
or for what is,
but for what is yet to be,
For you are gracious beyond all telling of it.
O God of timelessness and time,
we thank you for our time
and for those things that are yet possible and previous in it:
daybreak and beginning again,
midnight and the touch of angels,
the taming of demons in the dance of dreams;
a word of forgiveness,
and sometimes a song,
for our breathing...for our lives.

Ring a bell for each elder being honored
O God, complete the work you have begun in us.
Release through us
a flow of mercy and gentleness that will bring
water where there is desert,
healing where there is hurt,
peace where there is violence,
beauty where there is brokenness,
beginnings where there are dead-ends.

Waken in us
gratitude for our lives
love for every living thing,
joy in what is human and holy,
praise for you.

Renew our faith that you are God
beyond our grasp but within our reach;
past our knowing but within our searching;
disturber of the assured, assurer of the disturbed;
destroyer of illusions, creator of dreams;
source of silence and music, light and darkness, death and life.

Ring a bell for each elder being honored
O Keeper of promises, composer of grace,
grant us glee in our blood,

prayer in our hearts, trust at our core,
songs for our journey
and a sense of your kingdom.
Thank you for the sharp senses of the timeless stirring in our time,
and your praise in our hearts;
For the undeniable awareness, quick as now,
that the need of you is the truth of us,
And your presence with us is the truth of you,
which sets us free for others,
for joy,
and for you;
For your grace...my life...forever. Amen.
Ring a bell for each elder being honored.

(This prayer is adapted from prayers in Ted Loder's "Guerrillas of Grace")

Silence

Prayers of thanksgiving and intercession are invited at this time.

The Lord's Prayer

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.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power and the glory
for ever and ever. Amen.

A Collect

O God, you have prepared for those who love you such good things as surpass our understanding. Pour into our hearts such love towards you, that we, loving you in all things and above all things, may obtain your promises which exceed all that we can desire; though Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Concluding Sentence

Glory to God whose power, working in us, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine: Glory to God from generation to generation in the Church, and in Christ Jesus for ever and ever. Amen (Ephesians 3.20,21)

Attachment A

Wilfrid Gordon McDonald Partridge – Mem Fox

There was once a small boy named Wilfrid Gordon McDonald Partridge. His house was next door to an older people's home and he knew all the people who lived there. He liked Mrs. Jordan who played the organ. He listened to Mr. Hosking who told him scary stories. He played with Mr. Tippett who was bonkers about baseball. He ran errands for Miss Mitchell who walked with a wooden stick. He admired Mr. Drysdale who had a voice like a giant. But his favorite person of all was Miss Nancy Alison Delacourt Cooper because she had four names just like he did. He called her Miss Nancy and told her all his secrets.

One day Wilfrid Gordon heard his mother and father talking about Miss Nancy. "Poor old thing," said his mother. "Why is she a poor old thing?" asked Wilfrid Gordon. "Because she's lost her memory," said his father. "It isn't surprising," said his mother. "After all she is ninety-six." "What's a memory?" asked Wilfrid Gordon. "It's something you remember," said his father.

But Wilfrid Gordon wanted to know more, so he called on Mrs. Jordan who played the organ. "What's a memory?" he asked. "Something warm, my child, something warm." He called on Mr. Hosking who told him scary stories. "What's a memory?" he asked. "Something from long ago, me land, something from long ago." He asked Mr. Tippett who was bonkers about baseball, "what's a memory?" "Something that makes you cry, my boy, something that makes you cry." When Wilfrid asked Miss Mitchell who walked with a wooden stick what a memory is, she answered, "Something that makes you laugh, my darling, something that makes you laugh." Mr. Drysdale told him with his voice like a giant, that "a memory is something as precious as gold, precious as gold."

So Wilfrid Gordon went home again to look for memories for Miss Nancy because she had lost her own. He looked for the shoe-box of shells he had found long, long ago last summer, and put them gently in a basket. He found the puppet on strings which always makes everyone laugh and he put that in the box too. He remembered with sadness the medal which his grandfather had given him and he placed it gently in the basket next to the shells. Next he found his football which was precious as gold, and last of all, on his way to Miss Nancy's, he went into the hen house and took a warm, fresh egg from under one of the hens.

Then Wilfrid Gordon called on Miss Nancy and gave her each thing one by one. "What a dear strange child to bring me all these wonderful things" thought Miss Nancy. Then she started to remember. She held the warm egg and told Wilfrid Gordon about the tiny speckled blue eggs she had once found in a bird's nest in her aunt's garden. She put a shell to her ear and remembered going to the beach by train long ago and how hot she felt in her button-up boots. She touched the medal and talked sadly of the big brother she had loved who had gone to war and never returned. She smiled at the puppet on strings and remembered the one she had shown her little sister, and how she had laughed with a mouth full of cereal. She bounced the football to Wilfrid Gordon and remembered the day she had met him and all the secrets they told one another. And the two of them smiled and smiled because Miss Nancy's memory had been found again by a small boy with a big name and an even bigger heart.

Attachment B
Hymns for the Liturgy honoring Senior Members during May, 2000

From the Hymnal 1982:

Easter hymns:

- 178 "Alleluia, alleluia, give thanks to the risen Lord"
- 180 "He is risen, he is risen!"
- 204 "Now the green blade riseth from the buried grain"
- 209 "We walk by faith, and not by sight"
- 293 "I sing a song of the saints of God"

General hymns:

- 416 "For the beauty of the earth"
- 439 "What wondrous love is this"
- 460 "Alleluia! Sing to Jesus"
- 488 "Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart"
- 490 "I want to walk as a child of the light"
- 508 "Breathe on me, Breath of God"
- 517 "How lovely is thy dwelling place, O Lord of hosts, to me!"
- 522 "Glorious things of thee are spoken"
- 580 "God, who stretched the spangled heavens"
- 593 "Lord make us servants of your peace"
- 599 "Lift every voice and sing"
- 602 "Jesu, Jesu, fill us with your love"
- 636 "How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord"
- 657 "Love divine, all loves excelling"
- 692 "I heard the voice of Jesus say"
- 707 "Take my life, and let it be, consecrated, Lord, to thee"
- 711 "Seek ye first the kingdom of God"

From Lift Every Voice and Sing II

- 58 "The Lord is my light"
- 72 "Just a closer walk with thee"
- 115 "Spirit of the living God, fall fresh on me"
- 129 "I am thine, O Lord"
- 160 "This little light of mine"
- 179 "Remember me"
- 184 "Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine!"
- 196 "Leaning on the everlasting arms"
- 201 "I've got peace like a river"
- 219 "This is the day"
- 232 "Thank you, Lord"