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## Sunday, Bloody Sunday: Martyrial Theology in the Eucharistic Liturgies of the Anglican Church of Canada

Andrew M. Rampton  
*The University of Western Ontario*

Supervisor  
Larson-Miller, Lizette  
*The University of Western Ontario*

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## Abstract

Martyrs were foundational to early Christian life. Their experiences, their commemoration, and their ongoing inclusion in Christian life shaped significant portions of the theology, liturgy, and cultural life of early Christians. This foundation is part of the inheritance of all churches today, including the Anglican Church of Canada (ACC). The ACC states that its own beliefs are best articulated in its liturgies. Much of the belief, understanding, and practice of the ACC's members is shaped by participation in those liturgies.

In order to understand how the ACC's theology of martyrs and its liturgical formation of members around this topic, this thesis offers an examination of the importance of martyrs, both historically and in the present, along with some of their fundamental characteristics; a survey of general principles of liturgical formation; and finally examines the texts of the eucharistic liturgies of the ACC which relate to martyrial observances.

**Keywords:** Anglican Church of Canada, Book of Alternative Services, Book of Common Prayer, communion of saints, ecclesiology, For All the Saints, hagiography, liturgy, liturgical formation, martyrs, martyrdom, worship.

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## Introduction

Early Christians spent much of their thought and discussion on things martyrial. The very real possibility of being killed for one's faith demanded thorough theological response. Martyrs and martyrdom would become central to early Christian identity and one of the cornerstones of early Christian theology.

In contrast, for most twenty-first century Anglicans living in Canada, martyrdom is a distant thought. It is something that happened to Christians in the distant past or perhaps to missionaries who go far afield, to share the good news of the Gospel with people who may be hostile to such efforts. However it is understood, it is a far away and exotic notion; the intersection of martyrdom with a life in Vancouver, Winnipeg, or Montréal is an almost entirely unconsidered possibility.

And yet, the Anglican Church of Canada<sup>1</sup> understands itself to be in the succession of the church of those early Christians. It understands itself as an inheritor of their ideas and experiences; the ACC of 2018 understands itself as a part of the same church that was extant in Smyrna in 155/156<sup>2</sup> when St Polycarp was martyred. With this in mind, the ACC

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<sup>1</sup> The Anglican Church of Canada will hereafter be referred to as "ACC."

<sup>2</sup> This is the traditional date of Polycarp's martyrdom, though Eusebius suggests 166/167. Establishing the date of Polycarp's martyrdom is difficult because establishing the date of authorship of the *acta* is problematic. For detail on the relationship between this issue and liturgical developments, see Paul F. Bradshaw and Maxwell E. Johnson, *The Eucharistic Liturgies: Their Evolution and Interpretation*, Alcuin Club Collections 87 (London: S.P.C.K., 2012), 54-56. For a detailed discussion of the dating of the *acta*, see Candida R. Moss, 'On the Dating of Polycarp: Rethinking the Place of the *Martyrdom of Polycarp* in the History of Christianity', *Early Christianity* 1, no. 4 (1 November 2010): 539-74, <https://doi.org/10.1628/186870310793597051>. See also Jesse Hoover, 'False Lives, False Martyrs: "Pseudo-Pionius" and the Redating of the Martyrdom of Polycarp', *Vigiliae Christianae* 67, no. 5 (1 January 2013):



must have something to say about martyrs and martyrdom that can connect the real experience of early Christians to the lives of Anglicans in Canada today.

*Lex orandi, lex credendi*<sup>3</sup> is an ancient maxim in the Christian tradition. The way in which Christians pray is the way in which Christians believe. The ACC holds this to be true and even describes its beliefs as best articulated in its liturgies.<sup>4</sup> Participation in liturgy is a powerful way of forming belief and understanding. It then follows that whatever the ACC believes about martyrs and martyrdom today will be best expressed in its liturgies, which are also the primary formative tool of its members.

In this thesis, I will argue that martyrs and martyrdom have great importance to the Church, both historically and today but, despite this importance, the liturgical formation regarding martyrdom in the eucharistic liturgies of the ACC is inconsistent and does not entirely reconcile with the ACC's non-liturgical statements about martyrs and martyrdom.

I will do this in three chapters: First, by establishing the importance of martyrs and martyrdom in Christian faith, thought, teaching, and life through an examination of the history, development, and current uses of martyrdom, as well as characteristics common to martyrs. Martyrs are important both as a hagiographical category within Christianity and for the ways in which their commemoration has shaped Christian culture, identity,

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471–98, <https://doi.org/10.1163/15700720-12341140> and Sara Parvis, 'The Martyrdom of Polycarp', *The Expository Times* 118, no. 3 (December 2006): 105–12, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0014524606072683>.

<sup>3</sup> "The law of prayer is the law of belief." Translation my own.

<sup>4</sup> Anglican Church of Canada, 'Our Beliefs', Anglican Church of Canada - About Us, accessed 1 June 2018, <https://www.anglican.ca/about/beliefs/>.

liturgy, and ritual; this thesis will touch on both the breadths of martyrial theology and the liturgical cult of commemoration. Second, I will establish the importance and power of liturgical formation through an examination of the ways in which it shapes the beliefs, theology, understanding, and habits of liturgical participants. Third and finally, I will compare the liturgical texts of the eucharistic liturgies of the ACC to the characteristics of martyrs established earlier, in light of the principles of liturgical formation examined in the second chapter.

Throughout its discussion, this thesis assumes a modern liturgical theology. That is, one located within the scholarship and products of the œcumenical Liturgical Movement of the twentieth century, with its emphasis on the records and sources of the early church. This is in keeping with the character of the primary liturgical documents of the ACC today—*The Book of Alternative Services* and *For All the Saints*—which are similarly located in the *ressourcement* of the Liturgical Movement. As a result of this choice of focus on current liturgical texts and martyrial theology in the ACC, this thesis does not claim to offer an exhaustive examination Anglican martyriology, nor a systematic overview of the historical or theological developments which have contributed to the present day's realities.

## Chapter 1: Martyrs

The Church today understands itself as the same institution, the same body of Christ, as that of the first centuries CE. It is the inheritor of the work, wisdom, tradition and understanding of those generations and the Church today appeals to that inheritance of tradition as a source of identity and formation. The importance of martyrdom in forming the doctrine, theology, and life of the early Church cannot be overstated. Rowan Williams goes so far as to say, “We make the best sense of doctrine in the historical context of the early Church if we see it as an exegesis of martyrdom; with martyrdom itself being an exegesis, a lived exposition, of taking Christ seriously as the one through whom the definition of God’s people has been changed.”<sup>5</sup>

This chapter will establish the importance of martyrs and martyrdom in Christian faith, thought, teaching, and life. It will do so through an examination of the development of martyrdom in the Christian faith, the theology surrounding martyrdom, Christian practices for remembering martyrs, the sorts of records which were kept of martyrdoms. It will also include an overview of the hagiography of martyrs, specifically the different kinds of martyrs in the Christian tradition and their relationship to other saints who are not martyrs. This chapter will also examine how martyrdom is used today, in both Christian and secular contexts. Finally, it will establish some basic characteristics shared by all

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<sup>5</sup> Rowan Williams, *Why Study the Past? The Quest for the Historical Church* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2005), 53.

martyrs, to be used later in this thesis as fundamental criteria for identifying martyrs in liturgical texts.

### **Who Are Martyrs?**

Christianity's earliest days were spent as a fringe movement within Judaism, already itself a fringe religion in the Roman Empire, centred around a few Jews in Jerusalem who believed that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah promised by their religion's prophecies. The faith grew quickly, however, and began to attract the attention of Imperial authorities. These ever-more-numerous Christians had strange customs, refused to engage in the Roman civic religion, and their own beliefs did not have the weight or value afforded by an ancient origin.<sup>6</sup>

Why Christians were targeted for persecution by Roman authorities is a subject of discussion among scholars—a discussion covered in more detail later in this chapter—but regardless of the reasons, Christians lived in a perilous state in the Empire. The new faith soon became a favourite scapegoat, notably receiving public blame for the Great Fire of Rome in 64 CE. Michael Perham cites this event as particularly important, because it

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<sup>6</sup> Roman culture had a distinct preference for practices with ancient origins and religion was no exception to this. For a more detailed examination of the differences and tensions between Christianity and Roman religious practice in the first centuries CE, see Peter Brown, 'The Holy and the Grave', in *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity*, Enlarged Edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), 1–22.

establishes public precedent for treating Christians as a known minority within the Roman Empire, and therefore vulnerable to crime, prejudice, and further persecution.<sup>7</sup>

Official Imperial persecutions of Christians continued sporadically until 303 CE, in the reign of Diocletian. On 23 February 303, the emperor signed an edict aimed at outlawing the Christian Church; the Empire had declared war on the religion.<sup>8</sup> These mass persecutions did not prove as straight-forward as the authorities might have hoped and, in many regions, won popular support for the Christian cause. In spite of its efforts to paint them as criminals, disloyal subjects, and worthy of marginalization and scorn, the trials and public execution of Christians, as well as the response of Christians to these events, only increased the religion's popularity. Testament to the exploding popularity of Christianity is that in 313 CE, within a decade of the last official mass persecution, the Edict of Milan was issued, mandating tolerance of Christianity in the West. Licinius, emperor in the East, did not end persecutions until the early 320s,<sup>9</sup> but even using the widest possible dates, Christianity's movement from an illegal cult whose practices were punishable by death to a religion recognized and tolerated across the Empire happened with astonishing rapidity.

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<sup>7</sup> Michael Perham, *The Communion of Saints: An Examination of the Place of the Christian Dead in the Belief, Worship, and Calendars of the Church*, Alcuin Guides 62 (London: S.P.C.K., 1980), 4.

<sup>8</sup> W. H. C. Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution in the Early Church: A Study of a Conflict from the Maccabees to Donatus* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1965), 477.

<sup>9</sup> Robert Bartlett, *Why Can the Dead Do Such Great Things? Saints and Worshippers from the Martyrs to the Reformation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), 4.

Between the early first-century beginnings of Christian faith and its official toleration three centuries later, being a Christian was a dangerous proposition. Many were charged with the crime of not worshipping the emperor. Many of those so charged refused to apostatize and maintained their statements of faith in Jesus Christ. For this, they were publicly executed: martyred. The witness of these martyrs was deeply important to Christian communities; their memories and actions were freighted heavily with theological significance.

For early Christians, the ideal Christian life was one lived in imitation of Christ. The espousal and demonstration of the characteristics and virtues of Christ—grace, charity, mercy, wisdom, generosity, compassion, love, and perhaps most of all, faith—was key to a life well-lived. The demonstration of these virtues in concrete action was highly valued. Service to the sick, imprisoned, poor, orphaned, widowed, and other marginalized groups, as well as mutual encouragement among Christians in these acts is central to Christian life from its earliest days.<sup>10</sup> Christians are also told to expect to be misunderstood and badly treated by the world for this behaviour, especially when connected to their faith in Jesus Christ.<sup>11</sup> If the ideal Christian life is one lived in imitation of Christ, then taken to its logical conclusion, this should include a death that imitates that of Christ as well.

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<sup>10</sup> Christian scripture repeatedly exhorts these behaviours. See Matthew 25.31-40, Hebrews 10.25, Hebrews 13.1-6, James 1.27, 1 Thessalonians 5.11.

<sup>11</sup> Matthew 5.1-12

When Christians were arrested and executed for their faith, their communities mourned them and remembered them. Martyrs, however, were not “average” dead Christians. Martyrs had died in ways that were clear and obvious perfect imitations of the death of Christ. Just like Christ, they had been accused unjustly, tried unfairly, and executed in humiliating public spectacle. The martyrs took on a special quality in death. They could not be mourned in the normal way because they had become, to use Peter Brown’s phrase, the “very special dead:”

They had died in a special way; they lay in the grave in a special way; this fact was shown by the manner in which all that was most delightful and most alive in late-antique life could be thought of as concentrated in their tombs and even (perhaps, as we shall see, particularly) in detached fragments of their dead bodies.<sup>12</sup>

While they could not be mourned in the usual way because of their special status, the prime criterion of being a martyr was to be executed; there were no martyrs among the living. The memorialization of these Christians took on deep theological importance and the ceremonies around their remembrance quickly developed cultic elements.

### Martyrial Theology

The idea of martyrdom as being in any way positive rings strange to most twenty-first century ears. Even most Christians, especially those from the First World, have trouble reconciling themselves to the idea that their faith demands preparation for a bloody, violent

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<sup>12</sup> Peter Brown, *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity*, Enlarged Edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), 70–71.

death at the hands of those who would persecute and revile them for its sake. Christianity has been not only legal, but the dominant religious and cultural force in the Western world for nearly 1,700 years. Martyrdom has not been absent in this time, but was easy to understand as an isolated incident, largely the exotic peril of missionaries in non-Christian parts of the world. Nor would most Western Christians believe that there was anything desirable or valuable in a violent death. In stark contrast is the understanding of martyrdom by early Christians, as Candida Moss reminds us: “It is a grounding premise of the early church, however, that suffering and death could serve a redemptive and transformative function for early Christians.”<sup>13</sup>

Martyrdom and its attendant theology are not an isolated response to theodicy, but rather are part of a larger plan, in evidence from very early days, for Christians to imitate the life of Christ in their own lives. Rather than a set of principles enshrined in laws—divine or human-made—it is the person and teachings of Jesus Christ which are the guiding principles for Christian behaviour. As Jesus says in John’s gospel, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life.”<sup>14</sup> Christ is not simply a guide along a particular path; Christ is himself the path, the way, the λόγος. Christ himself is to be imitated by Christians. John Behr argues for the necessity of Christ as an example of how to live as “true humanity.”<sup>15</sup> Martyrs, then,

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<sup>13</sup> Candida R. Moss, *The Other Christs: Imitating Jesus in Ancient Christian Ideologies of Martyrdom* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 19.

<sup>14</sup> John 14.6. All scriptural quotations are taken from the New Revised Standard Version unless otherwise indicated.

<sup>15</sup> John Behr, ‘Older Than All Creation’, *Communio Viatorum* 55, no. 3 (2013): 249.



as icons of Christ, are further reflections of Christ's example. This *imitatio Christi*, taken to its extreme logical end of dying for and in the manner of Christ, causes anxiety. Surely so among early Christians, but also among present-day Christians and those who write and talk about martyrdom. Martyrdom becomes the "inescapable but repugnant" keystone of Christian life, rather than a distant, unlikely potential experience.<sup>16</sup>

In some accounts of martyrdom, the imitation of Christ is explicitly described by the narrator, such as in the martyrdom of Polycarp. At other times there are clear allusions made to the similarity between the death of a particular martyr and the death of Christ, but the connection is left for the reader to make, rather than being explicitly drawn by the author. Moss describes this phenomenon as a consciousness on the part of the authors of martyrial accounts that Christ's own death is always present at the death of martyrs, but occasionally "invisible" in the record.<sup>17</sup>

The connection between the death of Christ and the death of martyrs, with its attendant consequences, becomes rooted in Christian thought and teaching very early. As the references to this connection in the *Martyrdom of Polycarp*, the *Acts of the Scillitan Martyrs*, and other records—discussed in more detail later in this chapter—show, the idea was central to martyrial narrative by the second century. Daniel Boyarin points out that this identification as martyrs, rather than Christians who happen to be defiant

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<sup>16</sup> Moss, *The Other Christs*, 21.

<sup>17</sup> Moss, 4.

revolutionaries standing against the Empire, is a Christian particularity. In Jewish records of martyrdom, developing at about the same time in the same region, there is some confusion over whether certain executed rabbis are religious martyrs, or political revolutionaries. By contrast the number of records and the geographic distance over which they are spread speaks to an early and thorough adoption of the theology of martyrdom by Christians.<sup>18</sup>

This closeness to both the current presence of Christ and the imitation of his death grants a special theological status to martyrs. They are not equal to or the same as Christ, but they share an intimacy with Christ that cannot be replicated in any other way. They are, to use Moss's term, the "other Christs" and have a privileged place in heaven.<sup>19</sup> In the earliest days of Christianity, it was believed that the dead did not enter heaven immediately upon their deaths. Rather, they waited in repose until the final judgement of the eschaton, when they would rise up in a general resurrection and proceed to their eternal homes.<sup>20</sup> Martyrs were special because they not only entered heaven immediately upon their deaths, but occupied a privileged place in the heavenly hierarchy, both courtesy of their closeness—

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<sup>18</sup> Daniel Boyarin, *Dying for God: Martyrdom and the Making of Christianity and Judaism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), 120–21.

<sup>19</sup> Moss, *The Other Christs*, 7.

<sup>20</sup> Moss, 118.

their conformity—to Christ.<sup>21</sup> They have “leapfrogged the grave” and attained their place as “the very special dead.”<sup>22</sup>

Heaven, in this context, does not refer to a particular physical location or lay any claim to a perfect description of what the eternity with God in resurrected glory, which is the “sure and certain hope”<sup>23</sup> of Christians, might look like. Rather, it is the term used by generations of Christians to describe that state of eternal glory. It is worth noting that, since the sixteenth century, there has been a division in Anglican thought and belief about the procession to this eternal glory after death. Some Anglicans maintain the earlier view that, upon death, there is a period of waiting to be kept before final judgement and potential admission to the glory of heaven. Others maintain that final judgement occurs at the moment of death and the eternal state is entered into without any intermediate experience.<sup>24</sup> Because of assumption in this thesis of a modern liturgical theology, as noted in the introduction, the typical view of the early church, that of a waiting period—the antechamber of heaven—is the one espoused here, rather than the later idea of judgement at the moment of death.

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<sup>21</sup> Frend, *Martyrdrom and Persecution in the Early Church*, 15.

<sup>22</sup> Brown, *The Cult of the Saints*, 69–70.

<sup>23</sup> Anglican Church of Canada, *The Book of Alternative Services of the Anglican Church of Canada* (Toronto: Anglican Book Centre, 1985), 587.

<sup>24</sup> A full discussion of this debate within Anglicanism is beyond the scope of this thesis. For a more detailed discussion of both sides see Michael Perham, *The Communion of Saints: An Examination of the Place of the Christian Dead in the Belief, Worship, and Calendars of the Church*, Alcuin Guides 62 (London: S.P.C.K., 1980) and N. T. Wright, *For All the Saints? Remembering the Christian Departed* (New York: Morehouse Publishing, 2004).

The chief figure in heaven is, of course, God. The Father is most often described as being seated upon a throne with the Son at his right hand. The pre-eminent mortal figure in heaven is Mary, Theotokos, who would later, in the West, gain the title of “Queen of Heaven.” Just below Mary are the choirs of angels and, equal to them, the noble army of martyrs. This close association between martyrs and the angelic citizens of heaven appears in early descriptions of what martyrs are doing while in heaven. The first role of martyrs, as of all in heaven, is to attend the heavenly banquet.<sup>25</sup> Martyrs are intercessors for the living, mentors and messengers who appear in visions and dreams, miracle-workers, heavenly attendants to God, and resurrected, mortal witnesses of the events of the eschaton, rather than participants in its resurrection and judgement.<sup>26</sup>

The holiness of the martyrs’ state is reinforced in this description as they not only occupy heavenly places and serve alongside the angelic choirs, but have also met their final judgement already. Indeed, Stuart Hall reminds us that Dionysius the Great, bishop of Alexandria during the persecutions of the mid-third century, writes about the heroic acts of martyrs from his community and describes them as sharing in the fellowship, decisions, and judgement of Christ. So strong is the bishop’s sense that martyrs share in judgement, he suggests that their capacity to pronounce absolution upon the repentant begins even before they die. The surety of a sentence of execution for being Christians seems to be the

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<sup>25</sup> Moss, *The Other Christs*, 133.

<sup>26</sup> Moss, 114.

beginning of the fullness of the Spirit of God which so often accompanies descriptions of martyrs.<sup>27</sup>

The pre-mortem ascription of certain martyrial attributes remains important and becomes a critical precedent in the fourth century. With Christianity a tolerated religion in the Empire, the possibility of being martyred is dramatically reduced. In the time of transition between illegality and toleration, a class of Christian called “confessors” appears. These were “those who had confessed the faith and been imprisoned and tortured and so given their ‘witness,’ but had not become martyrs in the strict sense that the word had now come to mean.”<sup>28</sup> Which is to say that they had behaved like martyrs in every way, save being executed. Confessors will be treated in more detail later in this thesis, but what is key here is the recognition by the community of profound holiness and connection to Christ in the confessor, and the attendant martyr-like capacity to pronounce absolution upon repentant Christians. These men and women became “incorporated into the cult of saints as ‘martyrs by extension.’”<sup>29</sup>

Martyrs are also consistently depicted as singing in the praise of God that is the eternal sound of heaven. This activity seems to indicate a similar status to, though distinctly different from, angels, who are the workers and servants of the needs of heaven. The

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<sup>27</sup> Stuart G. Hall, ‘Women among the Early Martyrs’, in *Martyrs and Martyrologies*, ed. Diana Wood, *Studies in Church History* 30 (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1993), 2–3. Hall also calls our attention to the allusions to Matthew 19.28, 1 Corinthians 6.2-3, and Revelation 20.4

<sup>28</sup> Paul Bradshaw and Maxwell Johnson, *The Origins of Feasts, Fasts and Seasons in Early Christianity*, *Alcuin Club Collections* 86 (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2011), 189.

<sup>29</sup> Bradshaw and Johnson, 189.

martyrial choir is explicitly present and singing in early *acta* and becomes more frequent over time.<sup>30</sup>

This direct route for martyrs into heaven is so well-known that the *Martyrdom of Polycarp* records the saint as asking, as he is being martyred, that he would be received into heaven the same day.<sup>31</sup> The heavenly ascent of martyrs is firmly in mind even at this early time. And an ascent it is. Some martyrs are described as climbing ladders, others are led by angelic hosts, while still others scale the heavens like a fortified tower. These martyrs are, most often, met and welcomed into the heavenly realm by Christ himself, others by angels, and others by earlier martyrs. All martyrs, no matter by whom, are met with rejoicing, celebration, and in the fashion of conquering heroes.<sup>32</sup>

Daniel Boyarin, in his work on martyrdom as it relates to both Judaism and Christianity, draws our attention to a fourth-century development in depictions of the victory of martyrdom: eroticization. In earlier *acta* the image of the victorious competitor is the most common. But by the fourth century, when women are martyred, they begin to be depicted as virgin brides, finally achieving their goal of complete union with Christ, and their welcome to heaven is intimate in a different way. “The fourth-century virgin martyrs

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<sup>30</sup> Moss, *The Other Christs*, 136.

<sup>31</sup> Moss, 127.

<sup>32</sup> Moss, 131.

are ecstatically ravished brides, not victorious combatants, at the moment of ‘completion.’”<sup>33</sup>

Some of the earliest theological imagery used to describe martyrs is that of competition. The winners of public athletic games in the first century would receive victors’ crowns as their prize. St Paul describes, in his first letter to the church in Corinth, these crowns as corruptible and compares it to the incorruptible crown won by faithful Christians.<sup>34</sup> This idea is repeated in Hebrews, where Christ is described as wearing a glorious crown,<sup>35</sup> and the first letter of Peter, where, at the appearance of the chief shepherd, faithful Christians are given crowns of glory which will never fade.<sup>36</sup>

In the ancient world, along with crowns, palm leaves were also common rewards to the victorious in competitions or contests. In the Revelation to St John, the army of martyrs are described as being clothed in white, holding palm leaves.<sup>37</sup> This becomes typical of the iconography of martyrs: clothed in white, often with red ornaments, and holding palm leaves.<sup>38</sup> the white clothes represent the completed judgement of martyrs and their having

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<sup>33</sup> Boyarin, *Dying for God*, 122.

<sup>34</sup> 1 Corinthians 9.24-25.

<sup>35</sup> Hebrews 2.9.

<sup>36</sup> 1 Peter 5.4.

<sup>37</sup> Revelation 7.9-17.

<sup>38</sup> I recall being struck on my first Palm Sunday as a cleric, when I saw the reflection of the priest and I in a window: red chasuble, dalmatic, stoles, and each of us carrying large palm leaves, ready for the procession. We looked like nothing so much as figures who had stepped out of a martyrial icon. A beautiful and sobering reminder of the tremendous living faith tradition to which we belong and the price which we may be called to pay for that membership.

been found in a holy estate; the red decoration represents their own bloody deaths in imitation of Christ; the palm leaves represent their victory in the contest of life.<sup>39</sup>

Despite the fondness for depicting martyrs as victors in contests, prior to the eleventh century, the term “martyr” was very seldom applied to those who died in battle, even when fighting against non-Christians. It cannot be certain that a Christian who dies in war is being killed for their faith—the prime criterion of martyrdom—or whether they are being killed for other reasons.<sup>40</sup> There may also have been an unsettledness about declaring killed Christian soldiers as martyrs and the possibility that it might encourage Christians to join the war, seeking martyrdom. Christ did not seek to die but accepted that sentence willingly when it was pronounced. Therefore, martyrdom was to be accepted and endured if encountered, but was never to be actively sought by the faithful. Rowan Williams explains this nuance in martyrial theology:

The celebration of martyrdom...is neither a cult of suffering for its own sake...nor an affirmation of the importance of dying for your conscientiously held beliefs. The martyr is the conduit of divine presence who vindicates the claim to another citizenship.<sup>41</sup>

The deaths of some martyrs are cast as sacrificial, but that language is very rare. Much preferred is the image of martyr as a representation—an icon—of the Passion of Christ. The metaphors and images used to describe martyrs and martyrdom varies from

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<sup>39</sup> Bartlett, *Why Can the Dead Do Such Great Things?*, 174.

<sup>40</sup> Bartlett, 178.

<sup>41</sup> Williams, *Why Study the Past? The Quest for the Historical Church*, 39.



region to region. Greek and Roman regions frequently see martyrs described as above: victors in contests of athletics. In Gaul and North Africa, martyrs are more often cast as victors in a great cosmic battle with Satan. These heroes, in their deaths, join the “noble army of martyrs” described in the *Te Deum*.<sup>42</sup> In each case, regardless of specifics of the depiction, the martyr’s death confirms the power of God and the ultimate citizenship of the Christian in heaven, rather than here on earth; this is a belief articulated not only in the tradition of the Church, but repeatedly in Christian scripture.<sup>43</sup> For example, in the Letter to the Ephesians, the author writes:

So he came and proclaimed peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near; for through him both of us have access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone.<sup>44</sup>

The specifics of how martyrs are depicted and what devices are used to describe them may vary, but martyrdom is always presented as salvifically valuable, always depends on the power of God, and always comes with the reward of an immediate place in heaven, alongside the angels, affirming citizenship in an unearthly kingdom.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Moss, *The Other Christs*, 110.

<sup>43</sup> See 1 Thessalonians 4.13-18, Hebrews 11.9-10, Revelation 21.1-7.

<sup>44</sup> Ephesians 2.17-20, New Revised Standard Version.

<sup>45</sup> Moss, *The Other Christs*, 111.

### Practices for Remembering the Martyrs

Prior to the late twentieth century, the cult of martyrs<sup>46</sup> was dismissed by most theologians and historians as a cultural appendage of pagan custom to Christianity. The assumption made was that the cultural norm of travelling from holy site to holy site for celebrations and festivals was too beloved to be left behind, even in a new religious practice. The rapid development of a Christian habit around visiting martyrs' shrines to celebrate the anniversary of their deaths was, on the surface, too near pagan custom for the comfort of some.<sup>47</sup> Indeed, there seems to have been some overlap.

For Christians, whose faith centres on a ritual sharing of meal and who were keenly interested in remembering the martyrs from their communities, the pagan custom of the *refrigerium*—an annual commemorative meal eaten in the burial place of relatives—was too perfect to leave behind. This pagan custom of a graveyard picnic with one's deceased family members became the Christian celebration of the eucharist at the tombs of martyrs, in spite of the unease this connection caused some church authorities.<sup>48</sup>

Peter Brown argues that this development of popular practices surrounding the ritual commemoration of martyrs contributes to a more accurate history of the early church than previous histories which focused solely on records of official teaching left by

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<sup>46</sup> "Cult," here and throughout this thesis, refers to the system of beliefs and rituals surrounding particular objects of veneration. In this case, martyrs as a whole, but may also refer more broadly to the veneration of all saints, or more particularly to the beliefs and practices regarding the veneration of a particular martyr in a particular place at a particular time.

<sup>47</sup> Bradshaw and Johnson, *The Origins of Feasts, Fasts and Seasons in Early Christianity*, 171.

<sup>48</sup> Bartlett, *Why Can the Dead Do Such Great Things?*, 14.

church authorities. He states that the piety of Christian communities could not be dictated solely from the top down by church authorities, but instead developed in a dialogue between clergy, laity, intellectuals, official teaching, and popular practices.<sup>49</sup> Recent archaeological work on ancient Christian centres suggests that perhaps five percent of the Christian community in urban centres were elites who could regularly participate in the Church's official worship, while the other 95 percent had their identity and understanding formed by communal celebrations structured around popular piety. Key to this piety were festivals and celebrations at the tombs of martyrs.<sup>50</sup>

The identification and description of this dialogical relationship between official teaching and popular piety is one of the most valuable insights of Brown's work. Prior to his arguments, it was assumed that popular religious practice was a degraded mutation of a "proper" religious practice or, even less desirable, a failed adoption of a practice from another religious or cultural context grafted onto Christianity. In the case of martyrial festivals, the assumption of theologians and historians was that pagan temple celebrations of local deities and heroes had been inserted into the Christian framework.<sup>51</sup> Brown's work dismantles this assumption and demonstrates convincingly that rather than an entirely top-down or bottom-up system, "proper" Christian religious practice existed somewhere in the centre, where those two streams of identity, practice, and understanding met.

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<sup>49</sup> Brown, *The Cult of the Saints*, xxiii.

<sup>50</sup> Bradshaw and Johnson, *The Origins of Feasts, Fasts and Seasons in Early Christianity*, 172.

<sup>51</sup> Brown, *The Cult of the Saints*, 19.

Observing this phenomenon, St Augustine comments that people come to learn about their faith from martyrs, but also to participate in the ongoing lives of these miraculously holy people from their communities. The faithful come to be blessed, retrieve tokens that are proof of martyrial intercession, to dream revelatory and portentous dreams, and to see and hear the glory of the heroes of their faith.<sup>52</sup> John Baldovin describes early Christian communities as desiring a concrete point of entry into participation in the mystery of Christ. Martyrs, as icons of the life and death of Christ, provide that concrete bridge. Martyrs connected the congregation here, on earth, and the congregation there, at the throne of God in heaven.<sup>53</sup> This connection was of critical importance because of the benefit that could flow from having a direct connection to the heavenly congregation. As Robin Darling Young puts it,

[Martyrdom was] not only the point of encounter between the church and the world, and furthermore between heaven and earth, martyrdom was also the locus of an economic exchange between these last two; an offering went up, and upon acceptance, benefits came down. To put it crudely, martyrdom was a bargain for Christian communities. One member of the community died faithfully and many investors were rewarded.<sup>54</sup>

Pagans sometimes criticized Christians for their attachment to the earthly remains of the dead. While the *refrigerium* tradition has pre-Christian origins, it was an

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<sup>52</sup> Brown, xxvii.

<sup>53</sup> John F. Baldovin, 'On Feasting the Saints', *Worship* 54 (1980): 338.

<sup>54</sup> Robin Darling Young, *In Procession before the World: Martyrdom as Public Liturgy in Early Christianity*, The Père Marquette Lecture in Theology 2001 (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2001), 11–12.

occasional—usually annual—observance, and there was certainly no suggestion that the dead were in any effective way present. The Christian fixation on celebrating, touching, and moving about the bodily and other material relics of their martyrs, as well as speaking to them, sleeping in the tombs, and begging the martyrs for their assistance was foreign and off-putting to the pagan tradition. Christian bishops regularly responded to these criticisms by pointing to the success of their religion and its wildfire spread throughout the Empire; this was clear evidence that the Christian mode of interaction with the dead was the correct one. Obviously, the martyrs, from their places in heaven, were aiding Christian efforts on earth and surely this was the result of appropriate memorials and celebration of these Christlike individuals.<sup>55</sup>

Indeed, in some cases the rivalry between the pagan establishment and the comparatively new Christian communities grew so intense that martyrial relics were brought in as a means of inter-religious warfare. The earliest recorded case of this is the translation of St Babylas, a bishop of Antioch who was martyred during a third-century persecution. Outside of Antioch was a hilltop site called Daphne, on which was a temple to Apollo. It was known to Christian writers as a place of inappropriate revel and drunkenness. When Gallus, a Christian, was emperor (r. 351-54) he built a martyr church near Apollo's temple and had Babylas's relics translated to it from the cemetery at Antioch. Immediately the drunken revelries ceased and Apollo's oracle was silenced. When Julian

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<sup>55</sup> Brown, *The Cult of the Saints*, 9.

became emperor (r. 361-363) and sought to restore pagan traditions, he commanded that Babylas's body be returned to its previous home. The saint, according to the record, did not wish to be returned and caused fire to fall upon the temple, burning both the roof and the image of Apollo within. Clearly the martyrs held mighty, heavenly power, well beyond that of the old pagan gods.<sup>56</sup>

This idea of the martyr as a connection between earth and heaven, as ones who share a particular intimacy with Christ as described earlier, creates an attraction to the physical remains of martyrs. At first the proximity to martyrial remains manifests as celebrations around a martyr's tomb, but soon spreads to a desire to touch and to possess these relics of their time on earth. What Baldovin, Darling Young, and so many others have described as the meeting point between heaven and earth was this physical connection. The martyrs were assuredly in heaven, singing the praises of God, but some portion of their physical body—the same physical body which would somehow participate in their eternal lives in the eschaton—was yet on earth, in the hands of their brothers and sisters in Christ. A martyr's bones were still connected to the martyr and represented, materially, the immediate connection between the congregation on earth and the congregation in heaven. So important were a martyr's early remains that their memorial was most appropriately celebrated with the martyr—or at least their relics—in the most literal sense.

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<sup>56</sup> Bartlett, *Why Can the Dead Do Such Great Things?*, 10–11.

The intense desire to possess relics gave rise to the translation of bodies and remains from their original resting places to new homes, where they might be adopted by new communities. Some martyrs' remains were split up so that the saint might repose and commune with more than one community at a time. As the celebrations of these martyrs grew more elaborate, greater shrines and martyria were built, which in turn spread the fame of their saintly residents and caused more demand for their relics in more and more communities.<sup>57</sup>

The process of translating relics became a prominent industry in Europe and the Mediterranean basin from the fourth century on. Almost as quickly as the practice appeared, so did a black market for relics, as well as the production of many dubious relics recovered from tombs with equally dubious locations.<sup>58</sup> Accusations abounded of precious relics being of the wrong person, an entirely average dead person—perhaps not even a dead Christian—or, worst of all, the bones of dogs or pigs! The potential of fraudulent relics was so great that, when communities sought to acquire relics to translate to their local churches, investigators would be sent to check the merchandise over prior to it being paid and moved. Interrogations of merchants and shipping agents, fact-checking of stories and maps, even

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<sup>57</sup> Bradshaw and Johnson, *The Origins of Feasts, Fasts and Seasons in Early Christianity*, 183.

<sup>58</sup> Kevin Donovan, 'The Sanctoral', in *The Study of Liturgy*, ed. Cheslyn Jones, Geoffrey Wainwright, and Edward Yarnold (London: S.P.C.K., 1978), 426.

demands that the relics to be acquired be made to perform miracles—a sure sign of their veracity—were not uncommon.<sup>59</sup>

Patrick J. Geary reminds us that the bodies of martyrs were important and powerful, not just for what they represented in connection to the past—deceased members of the Christian family—and the present—martyrs interceding in heaven for the earthly congregation—but also for what they represented in the future. Early Christians took the promise of resurrection literally and fully expected that, at the final judgement, the martyrs would again take possession of their earthly remains. Those connections between heaven and earth would be made very real and present. Close proximity to the newly-resurrected martyrs would be highly desirable.<sup>60</sup> Many of the memorial inscriptions and records from the early church which refer to a deceased person as resting “near the saints” refers to a burial very near to the local martyr’s tomb.<sup>61</sup> Proximity of one’s own tomb to that of a martyr became a sign of prestige within the community. The ability to acquire such a precious place of final rest was a display of wealth, favour, and power, as well as a statement of their certainty of nearness to profound holiness in the resurrection of the last day.<sup>62</sup>

The attention to the material remains of martyrs and the idea of their presence in the resurrection had great theological value in debates among early Christians. On the

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<sup>59</sup> Patrick J. Geary, *Furta Sacra: Thefts of Relics in the Central Middle Ages*, Revised Edition (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 54.

<sup>60</sup> Geary, 30.

<sup>61</sup> Bartlett, *Why Can the Dead Do Such Great Things?*, 16.

<sup>62</sup> Bradshaw and Johnson, *The Origins of Feasts, Fasts and Seasons in Early Christianity*, 184.



question of whether or not the soul alone or both soul and body would be resurrected on the last day, martyrs and their relics provided a strong case for the latter argument. Joyce Salisbury comments on this: “[The martyrs’] death in the flesh proved the necessity for its resurrection, and the miraculous power remaining in their relics offered the final proof for believers that the martyrs’ flesh—and our flesh—like Christ’s would be resurrected on the last day.”<sup>63</sup>

While the official focus of worship in Christianity was, is, and always has been, God, in later centuries as the religion spread throughout Europe, a hagiocentric model proved useful to missionaries. Kings and local elites were happy to identify themselves with Christ in his powerful, resurrected, kingly character, holding the adoration and worship of Christ as the centre of the religion. But by the ninth century, Frankish church dedications, liturgies, and popular devotions contain far more text about local saints and martyrs than they do Christ himself.<sup>64</sup> There were also marked differences between East and West in the understanding or emphasis placed on martyrs. In the East, martyrs always served as icons of Christ; they were perfect Christian lives to be imitated as thoroughly as possible. In the West, martyrs were also examples to be imitated, sometimes more accessible models than the perfection of Christ, especially in light of the growing anti-Arian emphasis on the divinity of Christ. The role of martyrs as intercessors is much more pronounced in the

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<sup>63</sup> Joyce E. Salisbury, *The Blood of Martyrs: Unintended Consequences of Ancient Violence* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 53.

<sup>64</sup> Geary, *Furta Sacra*, 31.

West. In this martyrial theology, martyrs are often understood as being between the faithful and Christ in a way that they are not in the East. This station of martyrs between the earthly congregation and Christ is not in a capacity as roadblocks or gatekeepers, but as helpful, familiar points of entry.<sup>65</sup>

While Christians shared many common saints—Mary, the Apostles, and so on—the desire for local saints was very strong.<sup>66</sup> Many of the best-known martyrs were “celebrities” who had many churches dedicated to them and relics spread almost anywhere that Christians were found, but this meant that they also had global responsibility; their attentions were divided. Local saints were accessible and “belonged” to the communities that knew them and recognized them. In the same way that martyrs share a deep intimacy with Christ, Christians wanted to share a deep intimacy with their local martyrs.<sup>67</sup> The desire for a concrete, local connection between earthly and heavenly congregations was no less present in European converts than it had been in Mediterranean Christians seven or eight centuries prior. And how much more satisfying to have a local son or daughter serve as that connection than the finger-bone of some distant, long-dead North African!<sup>68</sup>

Many martyrs and saints had only local reputations; their relics were not translated, nor were they famous, perhaps not even known outside of their local community. However,

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<sup>65</sup> Lizette Larson-Miller, ‘To Imitate Their Perfection: A Comparison of the Relationship of Christology and Martyrial Liturgy in Sixth Century Gaul and Syria’ (PhD, Graduate Theological Union, 1992), 163–82.

<sup>66</sup> Bartlett, *Why Can the Dead Do Such Great Things?*, 130.

<sup>67</sup> Philippe Rouillard, ‘The Cult of Saints in the East and West’, in *Liturgical Time and Space*, trans. Madeleine Beaumont, Handbook for Liturgical Studies, V (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 2000), 312.

<sup>68</sup> Bartlett, *Why Can the Dead Do Such Great Things?*, 28.

local martyrs proved a tradition which continued even after papal efforts to centralize the canonization process of saints in the thirteenth century. Cults of local saints and martyrs, even with evidence of miracles and episcopal approval, were not allowed. However, in the same way that traditions of martyr festivals developed at the intersection of official teaching and popular piety, local hagiographies abounded and plenty of unofficial saints and martyrs received prayers and veneration in their local shrines.<sup>69</sup>

In the same way that official Church practice and popular piety, when combined, produced “real” Christian practice and defined a thin space between heaven and earth, where executed brothers and sisters in Christ could be met, heard, and touched, martyr shrines and their associated festivals offered a liminal social space. On a festival day, Christians from the city and the country would meet at the martyr’s tomb or shrine to mix, mingle, and engage in the celebration. When the official liturgy had concluded, there was much food and drink to be had, as befit a festival. This pattern of liturgy followed by social celebration caused concern among church officials with regard to what might be happening in connection with holy observances.

Many social norms and barriers, otherwise obvious and known to all, became hazy and vague at martyrial festivals. People of differing social classes and groups spoke and interacted with one another in ways that they might not do on the other days of the year. Young men and women often met one another with romantic intent at such celebrations,

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<sup>69</sup> Bartlett, 59.

perhaps hoping that the local martyr would offer a blessing and cast a heavenly eye on their budding relationship.<sup>70</sup> Ramsay MacMullen points out that St Ambrose of Milan and St Augustine of Hippo are both concerned with the length and intensity of the partying, rather than the pious worship, taking place in connection with martyrial festivals. Most deeply troubling to these bishops is the belief of some Christians that, if they do not celebrate appropriately in the very martyr's tomb, their supplications may not be heard.<sup>71</sup>

When the festival ended, martyrs' shrines offered an uncommon space to marginalized people. The poor, the sick, women, and any others who did not fit neatly into society's expected, or desirable, classifications could find in the shrines a quiet, calm, safe space not generally available to them elsewhere. Particularly for people living outside an urban centre, the local shrine became a locus of expressing membership. Those who congregated there were members of a self-selected, chosen family and could support one another outside of the resources of the city proper, often inaccessible to them.<sup>72</sup>

### Records of Martyrs

In the same way that the shrines of martyrs offered a place of refuge within the Christian community for those who were otherwise marginalized, the idea of martyrdom and the retelling of martyrs' stories served as a unifying focus for Christians in a time of persecution and rapid change. Elizabeth Castelli argues that in times of great stress and uncertainty, a

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<sup>70</sup> Brown, *The Cult of the Saints*, 43.

<sup>71</sup> Ramsay MacMullen, *Christianizing the Roman Empire (A.D. 100-400)* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984), 76.

<sup>72</sup> Brown, *The Cult of the Saints*, 46.

shared history and cosmology provide a unifying account of the past and a possible future. This collective understanding of where the community has been and where it ought to be headed is exceptionally powerful and useful as societal “glue” in times when there are external pressures trying to force the group apart, such as execution-happy Roman governors.<sup>73</sup>

Over time, the recording of martyrdoms—a genre of writing named *acta martyrum*—develops and comes to include a number of recognizable conventions or tropes. Among these is the description of the spontaneous conversion of bystanders, observing the martyrdom. This frequent trope reinforces the connection between martyrdom as an exemplary witness to Christian life and faith in death, and the generation of new life in the baptisms which will follow the moments of conversion of the witnesses to the martyrdom.<sup>74</sup>

The practice of connecting a martyr’s story with sacramental imagery is, in itself, a larger trope. The *acta* of Polycarp and Laurence, for example, both contain explicitly eucharistic imagery. In Polycarp’s martyrdom while he fails to burn, the smell coming from the fire is that of baking bread. Laurence is tied to a grill and roasted, his physical execution resembling the baking of a loaf of bread. The interconnected nature of Christian life and its

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<sup>73</sup> Elizabeth Castelli, *Martyrdom and Memory: Early Christian Culture Making (Gender, Theory, and Religion)* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 29.

<sup>74</sup> Moss, *The Other Christs*, 14–15.

attendant sacraments, the life and death of Christ, and the deaths of martyrs is key to understanding how Christians interact with martyrs and martyrdom.<sup>75</sup>

Telling the stories of martyrs was not solely about relating facts. The authors of the *acta* were writing as Christians, for Christians. To Roman officials, the execution of martyrs may have been viewed as the fair dispensation of justice. For Christians, however, martyrs were paragons of Christian faith, and the sharing of their stories provided the Church yet another especially powerful avenue for educating and forming its congregations. As Candida Moss points out: “By placing doctrinal statements on the lips of the martyrs, an author or community could authorize its position using the martyr’s seal of authority—an authority connected to the martyr’s association with Christ.”<sup>76</sup>

Judith Lieu also notes this and reminds us that while we know Christians of the first three centuries CE are a minority, their texts, particularly the *acta* of martyrs, are, surprisingly, written from the viewpoint of a majority, claiming great power within their own tradition.<sup>77</sup> The telling and retelling of martyrs’ stories, coupled with their liturgical and social remembrances, all done from an eschatological narrative viewpoint where their victory is complete and present—rather than from a locus in their present, ugly deaths—was a cornerstone of early Christian identity.

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<sup>75</sup> Moss, 14.

<sup>76</sup> Moss, 17.

<sup>77</sup> Judith Lieu, *Neither Jew nor Greek? Constructing Early Christianity* (London: T & T Clark, 2002), 230.

In addition to the *acta* recording the lives of martyrs up to their deaths, books of miracles attributed to martyrs begin to appear, detailing the activities of the saints in heaven which have visible consequences on earth. The earliest of these records are the miracles of St Stephen the Protomartyr performed in the North African city of Uzalis.<sup>78</sup> This record contains descriptions of about twenty miracles, including feats of healing, resurrection, the release of prisoners, prophetic dreams, and the miraculous cleansing of spilled wine without leaving a stain!<sup>79</sup>

A record of miracles attributed to St Thecla appears in the 440s detailing 46 miraculous events attributed to her.<sup>80</sup> Thecla is an oddity among martyrs because her remains were never retrieved and enshrined. Nevertheless, her reputation is such that her festivals and commemorations persisted even in the absence of the relics necessary for so many other martyrs. The miracles attributed to her in the fifth-century record include the silencing of pagan oracles, the defence from foes of cities in her favour, advice offered to bishops, healing, and the prevention of shipwrecks through miraculous apparitions. St Thecla not only aids those she favours, but also punishes those who have earned her ire. There is record of a man who dies horribly after lusting after a woman during Thecla's feast.

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<sup>78</sup> The modern city of Al 'Aliyah in Tunisia.

<sup>79</sup> Bartlett, *Why Can the Dead Do Such Great Things?*, 22.

<sup>80</sup> Bartlett, 24.

Similarly, a group of thieves meet a gruesome supernatural end as they celebrate their latest purloinings with rowdy abandon too close to the saint's shrine for her liking.<sup>81</sup>

The reputation of some martyrs to intercede as dispensers of justice to the unrighteous created theological difficulty for some church authorities in teaching about virtue. The intercession of saints is a positive aid which the faithful are encouraged to seek in most Christian traditions. However, some Christians seem to have considered revenge and punishment as the sort of aid they should be asking for. Gregory the Great (r. 590-604 CE) is recorded as having preached against requesting martyrs to cause ill-fortune and death to befall one's rivals and enemies.<sup>82</sup>

There is a subcategory of "martyr" worth noting here: the collection of boys who were named as martyrs after their deaths, supposedly murdered by the Jews. The earliest of these cases dates from 1144 in England. The body of a young man, William of Norwich, was found and the monk who investigated the murder pronounced it as part of an annual ritual conducted by the Jews in a deliberately contemptuous spurning of Christ. The boy was named a martyr and his cult was present in Norwich, though did not spread widely, until the Reformation.<sup>83</sup>

More important than the cult of William of Norwich, however, is the enthusiasm with which the idea of Jews ritually murdering Christian boys—quickly termed "blood

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<sup>81</sup> Bartlett, 25.

<sup>82</sup> Bartlett, 105.

<sup>83</sup> Bartlett, 179.



libel”—was adopted and spread through Europe. Dozens of such cases would appear through the Middle Ages, and still more in the modern era.<sup>84</sup> Cases of blood libel gave rise to numerous cults of child martyrs, linked to the story of the Holy Innocents executed by Herod in his search for the infant Jesus.<sup>85</sup> They also gave rise to many false accusations, official persecutions, and attempted genocides of Jews by Christians. The term was used erroneously by former Governor of Alaska Sarah Palin in a media statement in January 2011, provoking much outrage and controversy.<sup>86</sup> More recently claims of blood libel have been adopted by other groups hostile to Judaism. As recently as 2014, former Jordanian minister Sheik Bassam Ammouh delivered a Friday sermon wherein he claimed that Jews kill children and collect their blood to be used in the making of matzos.<sup>87 88</sup>

#### Different Kinds and Colours of Martyrs

When Christianity was afforded toleration, and later became the imperial religion, martyrdoms became much less common. The killing of Christians did not end entirely; Christian missionaries were frequently killed for their evangelistic efforts and, in more recent centuries, Christians killing Christians over disputes of doctrine would become

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<sup>84</sup> Bartlett, 180.

<sup>85</sup> Matthew 2.16-18.

<sup>86</sup> Peter Beaumont, 'Sarah Palin's "blood Libel" Blunder', Newspaper, The Guardian, 12 January 2011, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/cifamerica/2011/jan/12/sarahpalin-arizona-shooting-blood-libel>.

<sup>87</sup> MEMRI TV, 'Friday Sermon by Former Jordanian Minister: Jews Use Children's Blood for Their Holiday Matzos', 22 August 2014, <https://www.memri.org/tv/friday-sermon-former-jordanian-minister-jews-use-childrens-blood-their-holiday-matzos>.

<sup>88</sup> The idea of Jews ritually killing Christian children is a myth discussed in detail in Hannah Johnson, *Blood Libel: The Ritual Murder Accusation at the Limit of Jewish History* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2012).

depressingly common.<sup>89</sup> Following the legal toleration of Christianity in the Roman Empire, the likelihood of martyrdom decreased dramatically. Martyrdom was still, however, the most perfect—most Christlike—end to a Christian life. Without the realistic possibility of being martyred, how was this key witness to the faith to be maintained? Some local communities, most notably in Egypt, began to add desert ascetics to their local sanctoral cycles. These men and women became known as confessors: holy people who, only for lack of opportunity, did not die for their faith, but instead lived for it in heroic ways.<sup>90</sup> Confessors were also sometimes termed “white martyrs,” having lived their lives in intense prayer and physical discipline, but without a bloody death for the faith as its conclusion.<sup>91</sup>

This idea of white martyrdom seems to have been communicated to the Irish church early on. Robert Bartlett cites the *Thesaurus palaeohibernicus* as describing three colours of martyrdom: red, white, and green. Red martyrdom is clearly the traditional martyrdom of death by execution for one’s faith. The distinction between white and green martyrdom is less clear, though both involve giving up material desires, fasting, toil, and penance, all for God’s sake. Bartlett theorizes that the distinction between these two unbloody martyrdoms may be a difference between monastics and penitents.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> Bartlett, *Why Can the Dead Do Such Great Things?*, 175.

<sup>90</sup> Bartlett, 17.

<sup>91</sup> Bradshaw and Johnson, *The Origins of Feasts, Fasts and Seasons in Early Christianity*, 189.

<sup>92</sup> Bartlett, *Why Can the Dead Do Such Great Things?*, 176.

Leaving the colour spectrum behind, there is also differentiation in martyrology between martyrs of faith and martyrs of charity. Martyrs of faith are those who are most commonly assumed when the term “martyr” is used: Christians who have been killed for their faith. Martyrs of charity are those Christians who die as a direct result of performing charitable acts.

In Roman Catholic canon law this differentiation is unofficial, though Pope Paul VI did name St Maximilian Kolbe a martyr of charity at his beatification, against the recommendation of the advisory commission. The commission felt that Kolbe should be commemorated as a confessor rather than a martyr. The pope believed that the Nazi regime and the systemic hatred of their beliefs were a form of hatred sufficiently directed at the Christian faith to render Kolbe’s work a martyrdom. When Pope John Paul II canonized Kolbe he reiterated the title, but it remains honorary and unofficial in the Roman Catholic hagiographical scheme.<sup>93</sup>

Other martyrs of charity include St Damien of Moloka’i, who died of leprosy, having spent eleven years serving as priest to the leper colony on the island for which he is named; the Cassandra Martyrs of Charity, who died saving victims of a shipwreck in the Philippines in 1983; Jonathan Daniels, an Episcopalian seminarian who was killed in 1965 while shielding then 17-year-old Ruby Sales in an altercation about black voting rights.

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<sup>93</sup> Anna Lisa Peterson, *Martyrdom and the Politics of Religion: Progressive Catholicism in El Salvador’s Civil War* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997), 94.

None of these people were killed because they were Christian, rather they died because their faith compelled them to take actions of charity which led to their deaths.

#### Saints Who are Not Martyrs<sup>94</sup>

Robert Taft argues that martyrs were the first, and for many years the only, saints celebrated liturgically because they represent the ultimate self-giving. “Martyrdom was proof of holiness not because of stoicism or because there is any value in pain, but because it was a sign of lasting love unto the end.”<sup>95</sup> Robert Bartlett reminds us that Taft’s comment has good precedent. St Augustine is recorded as saying that it is not the suffering of a Christian, but the cause for which they suffer that qualifies them as a martyr.<sup>96</sup> This statement seems to be a reasonable point of theological precedent for the existence and understanding of martyrs of charity. I have not, however, been able to locate a direct link made between this statement of St Augustine and the idea of martyrs of charity either by St Augustine, his contemporaries, or theologians since.

We have previously discussed the move from red martyrdom—a bloody death because of one’s faith—to confessors, or “white” martyrs—those who turn to asceticism and deep prayer as a bloodless self-sacrifice for the faith. Holy women who remained virgins their entire lives—sacrificing the estates of marriage and motherhood in a life

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<sup>94</sup> A complete discussion of saints other than martyrs is well beyond the scope of this thesis; this section is intended to provide a brief overview of how the other categories of saints present in both historical and contemporary sanctoral cycles came to be.

<sup>95</sup> Robert F. Taft, *Beyond East and West: Problems in Liturgical Understanding*, 2nd ed. (Rome: Edizioni Orientalia Christiana, 2001), 83.

<sup>96</sup> Bartlett, *Why Can the Dead Do Such Great Things?*, 184.

turned entirely toward communion with Christ and often resisting unholy marriage arrangements by family—as well as particularly pastoral local bishops also began to appear in local sanctoral cycles, counted among the confessors of the faith.<sup>97</sup>

Worthy of special mention in the category of saints who are not martyrs is Mary, mother of Jesus. At the Council of Ephesus in 431 CE she emerges as the saint of saints, with a fulsome liturgical presence already in evidence. There is record of devotion to Mary as Theotokos<sup>98</sup> as early as the middle of the second century CE and it seems to be widespread, rather than a localized cult in one or two communities.<sup>99</sup> Walter Ray has suggested that the date of 15 August as the feast of Mary Theotokos, actually belongs to the earliest, first-century calendrical developments in Jerusalem.<sup>100</sup> This does not seem implausible, given the widespread observance of the date and devotion to its festival. Ephraim the Syrian, Gregory of Nyssa, and the Cappadocian Fathers all express devotion to Mary in their writings. Remarkably, this devotion seems consistent among Christians, without much deviation based on differing Christologies. By the time Nestorius arrived in Constantinople and preached against giving Mary the title of Theotokos, he found powerful and vocal opposition from the Christians there. A history of liturgical recognition of Mary

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<sup>97</sup> Donovan, ‘The Sanctoral’, 425.

<sup>98</sup> Greek for “Mother of God,” “God-bearer,” or literally “one whose offspring is God.”

<sup>99</sup> Paul Bradshaw and Maxwell Johnson, ‘Mary: Devotion and Feasts’, in *The Origins of Feasts, Fasts and Seasons in Early Christianity*, Alcuin Club Collections 86 (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2011), 196.

<sup>100</sup> Walter Ray, ‘August 15 and the Development of the Jerusalem Calendar’ (PhD, University of Notre Dame, 2000).

as Theotokos had formed a strong sense of identification with her among Christians of nearly every stripe.<sup>101</sup>

The basic categories of saints that we know and use today were well-established by the beginning of the fifth century. Martyrs were the first category and had confessors, virgins, the singular Theotokos, and, later, doctors<sup>102</sup> added to their ranks. Specific names would be added and removed, control over the cycle would be a perpetual contest between local and central authority, but the categorization of these holy people would not change dramatically.<sup>103</sup>

### **Why do Martyrs Matter?**

There is a long-standing belief among Christian communities that martyrs, and all kinds of saints, were established by God to be helpers to humanity. They are given places of privilege and honour in heaven and through their invocation and intercession, humanity on earth is given assistance.<sup>104</sup> Rather than being some sort of cosmic vending machine where prayers go in and favours are dispensed, the action of saints reinforces the Christian doctrines of the communion of saints, of the second coming, and of the shared life of baptism. The beneficial connection between the earthly faithful and saints displays the shared life of Christians, the communion in Christ which binds all together, and gives the living a

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<sup>101</sup> Bradshaw and Johnson, 'Mary: Devotion and Feasts', 203 ff.

<sup>102</sup> Those who exemplified the teaching and expansion of human understanding of the faith.

<sup>103</sup> Donovan, 'The Sanctoral', 427.

<sup>104</sup> Bartlett, *Why Can the Dead Do Such Great Things?*, 103.

glimpse at the post-judgement heaven that awaits them. This shared life is, of course, more than a metaphor or sentiment. Each Christian is baptized into life in Christ, together forming the mystical body of Christ that is the Church. A Christian of orthodox baptismal theology in the fourth century, the fourteenth, or the twenty-first cannot understand themselves as an island of faith—an “I”—but always understands themselves as part of a “we” which includes all Christians, past, present, and yet to come.

Martyrs, and the *acta* which describe them, were deliberately incorporated into Christian life with modelling in mind. The memories of martyrs, especially their anniversaries when the *acta* were customarily read during the liturgy, were opportunities to train and prepare other Christians for similar experiences. The *acta* are intentional efforts to form hearers—being formed in their liturgical participation—with the principles and ideals of martyrdom.<sup>105</sup>

When related to the living faithful, the graphic circumstances of martyrs’ deaths were testament to the power of God to empower something as weak as an average human being and employ them to great purpose.<sup>106</sup> Indeed, so astonishing are the events and context of many martyrs’ deaths that they are described in the *acta* as being possessed by the spirit of God. These men and women serve as a channel for the divine presence, rather than acting entirely of their own accord.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> Moss, *The Other Christs*, 105.

<sup>106</sup> Michael Slusser, ‘By the Power of Jesus: The Roots of Christian Sanctity’, *Liturgy* 5, no. 2 (1985): 24.

<sup>107</sup> Brown, *The Cult of the Saints*, 79.

One of the earliest examples of this attribution of divine intervention during a martyrdom is in the record of St Polycarp's death, the *Martyrdom of Polycarp*. Polycarp describes himself as having lived eighty-six years at the time of his death, which places his martyrdom in the middle of the second century, but the precise date is uncertain.<sup>108</sup> The actual martyrdom is traditionally dated to 23 February 155/156.<sup>109</sup> The *acta* describes Polycarp being tied to a stake and set alight, but not complaining of the heat, nor being burnt, but rather giving off the odour of baking bread.<sup>110</sup> When his executioners finally stab him in frustration, the blood gushes forth in the shape of a dove and douses the flames. Only then does the martyr finally expire. The record also details how when the smoke had cleared—presumably both literally and figuratively—the members of Polycarp's community gathered his bones “as being more precious than the most exquisite jewels, and more purified than gold,”<sup>111</sup> and took the relics to a safe place, looking forward to the celebrations of the anniversary of his martyrdom “both in memory of those who have already finished their course, and for the exercising and preparation of those yet to walk in their steps.”<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> There is no doubt that Polycarp was martyred, but the precise date on which this happened is the source of much scholarly conversation. Details of this work are noted in the Introduction to this thesis.

<sup>109</sup> Maxwell Johnson, ‘Martyrs and the Mass: The Interpolation of the Narrative of Institution into the Anaphora’, *Worship* 87 (2013): 4.

<sup>110</sup> A reference directly connecting his martyrdom with the eucharist.

<sup>111</sup> Herbert Musurillo, *The Acts of the Christian Martyrs* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972), 16–17. Greek original: οὕτως τε ἡμεῖς ὕστερον ἀνελόμενοι τὰ τιμώτερα λίθων πολυτελῶν καὶ δοκιμώτερα ὑπὲρ χρυσίον ὅσα αὐτοῦ ἀπεθέμεθα ὅπου καὶ ἀκόλουθον ἦν.

<sup>112</sup> Bradshaw and Johnson, *The Origins of Feasts, Fasts and Seasons in Early Christianity*, 173–74.



The details of Polycarp's martyrdom may sound to some uncomfortably like the stories of pagan heroes, undefeatable in battle and capable of surviving the most intense torture to emerge victorious. Kate Dooley draws our attention to the fact that the legends of martyrs, their lives and their deaths, are not written in an effort to accurately report facts. Rather, they are written from the beginning with the intent to transmit principles and ideals; they impress upon their readers and hearers the immense and inescapable power of God and the call to be faithful to that God, even up to one's own martyrdom.<sup>113</sup>

Commenting on this usage of martyrial *acta* as formative, Robin Darling Young refers to the *Acts of the Scillitan Martyrs* with regard to this practice, focusing on the dialogue of their sentencing by a Roman official. The Scillitans are accused of participating in Christian ceremony and their leader, in response to the accusation, speaks as though referring deliberately back to his liturgical crimes: "Deo gratias agimus. Hodie martyres in caelis sumus. Deo gratias."<sup>114</sup> These Scillitan Christians have been formed, through their liturgical experience of martyrial festivals and hearing *acta* read, to respond to their own martyrdom not with dread or anxiety, but with faith and gratitude.<sup>115</sup> Nienke Vos calls our attention to the especially powerful use of martyrial *acta* in the midst of liturgical contexts. She makes reference to a comment in *Martyrium Polycarpi* where the Christians who

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<sup>113</sup> Kate Dooley, 'The Company of Saints: Catechesis for a Community of Faith', *Liturgy* 5, no. 2 (1985): 97.

<sup>114</sup> Musurillo, *The Acts of the Christian Martyrs*, 88–89. Translation: "We thank God! Today we are martyrs in heaven. Thanks be to God!"

<sup>115</sup> Young, *In Procession before the World*, 4.

gathered his relics plan to use them in liturgy to remember his martyrdom and for the training and preparation of future martyrs. Of this, she says “Here, we have a reference to a liturgical act of remembrance, which has the threefold function of commemorating the saint, remembering other victims of persecution, and preparing the faithful for martyrdom.”<sup>116</sup> Vos’s observation supports Dooley’s reminder to us that *acta*, even of the Scillitan martyrs who had lived hearing other *acta* read, are crafted to form future Christians. The historical accuracy of the *Acts of the Scillitan Martyrs* is unknown, but it does serve its intended purpose—teaching the Christians who read and hear it how to be noble martyrs themselves, should the opportunity present itself.

Elizabeth Castelli draws our attention to the fact that this human connection to God through other humans, even if they are exceptionally holy martyrs, is important because it stands against the idea that death is an ending or that death is meaningless. Through the martyrs, a life of suffering, even one that ends in a bloody and gruesome death, denies chaos and nihilism their powers and claims a strength and power for the living, through the deaths of their loved ones.<sup>117</sup> The structuring of the *acta* puts martyrs to their best use in the community, reinforcing their deaths as victories for the Christian community, not defeat at the hands of oppressors, and draws the focus of Christians mourning their friends

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<sup>116</sup> Nienke Vos, ‘Communion of Saints: The Function of Liturgical Scenes in Hagiographic Texts’, in *Sanctifying Texts, Transforming Rituals: Encounters in Liturgical Studies*, ed. Paul van Geest, Marcel Poorthuis, and Els Rose (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 42.

<sup>117</sup> Castelli, *Martyrdom and Memory*, 32.

and family from the grave to the promise of resurrection and eternity in heaven. Martyrs reinforce the belief in and understanding of Christian eschatology. They are living icons of the death and resurrection of Christ, accessible through their relics and festivals to the living. They are “the other Christs.”<sup>118</sup>

### Martyrdom Today

Martyrdom has not disappeared from the experience of Christians. As noted earlier, it continued to be a risk for missionaries and those Christians who live as minorities in regions where the empowered majority may be hostile to their faith. In parts of the world where religious conflict is a persistent reality, martyrdom is a real and present possibility. Perhaps the most memorable recent martyrdom took place in 2015 when a group of ISIL<sup>119</sup> terrorists kidnapped a group of 21 Coptic Christians and, after several days of communication, martyred them on a beach in Libya. This was explicitly a martyrdom of Christians; each one was given the opportunity to apostatize and, as they refused, each one was beheaded. The executioners recorded the event and released a video of it to the press.<sup>120</sup>

In the time since the execution, the martyrs have been officially canonized by the Coptic Church with names published for prayer and veneration,<sup>121</sup> and a new church is

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<sup>118</sup> Moss, *The Other Christs*.

<sup>119</sup> Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant.

<sup>120</sup> ‘ISIL Video Shows Christian Egyptians Beheaded in Libya’, News, Al Jazeera, 16 February 2015, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2015/02/isil-video-execution-egyptian-christian-hostages-libya-150215193050277.html>.

<sup>121</sup> ‘Updated List of the Names of the New Martyrs of Libya’, Coptic Orthodox Diocese of Los Angeles, 2015, <https://lacopts.org/news/updated-list-of-the-names-of-the-new-martyrs-of-libya/>.

scheduled to be built in Egypt dedicated to them, complete with the translation of their relics to the new site.<sup>122</sup> While this may be the best-known recent martyrdom of Christians, it is far from the most recent. Coptic Christians continue to face persecution in Egypt and new martyrs are regularly born. The Coptic Church continues to maintain the historical theological stance on martyrdom—that it is simultaneously a tragedy and a glorious victory—but debate around the experience of martyrdom is intensifying. Explaining that paradox to a twenty-first century community who have enjoyed comparative peace and freedom in recent memory is exceptionally difficult.<sup>123</sup>

Secular society has also adopted the idea of martyrdom for various uses. Today, when someone is killed because of their relationship to any particular cause, religious or not, the news media regularly refers to them as a martyr. The imagery associated with Christian martyrdom, particularly that of Jesus Christ, is also regularly adopted for use as an illustration, even if the person killed has no Christian affiliation. When a murdered person is a Christian, the line between martyrdom as understood by the Church and martyrdom as understood by secular society can become quite hazy.

For an example of this, we can consider the coverage of the murder of Matthew Shepard. When Shepard was killed in Laramie, Wyoming, in 1998 in a violent homophobic

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<sup>122</sup> Courtney Grogan, 'Coptic Orthodox to Dedicate Church to New Martyrs of Libya', Catholic News Agency, accessed 9 July 2018, <https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/coptic-orthodox-to-dedicate-church-to-new-martyrs-of-libya-78447/>.

<sup>123</sup> Jacob Wirtschafter, 'Unrelenting Killing of Coptic Christians Intensifies Debate Over Martyrdom', *Sojourners* (blog), 13 October 2017, <https://sojo.net/articles/unrelenting-killing-coptic-christians-intensifies-debate-over-martyrdom>.

incident, he was widely described as a martyr for gay rights. *Vanity Fair* published a retrospective article about the event in 2014 titled “The Crucifixion of Matthew Shepard.”<sup>124</sup> Shepard was tortured, beaten and left tied to a fence to die of his injuries, but was not crucified. The article comments on the many memorial services held for Shepard and how almost every one of them included a comparison to the death of Christ; Shepard’s death was counted as among the *imitatio Christi*. While Shepard was a Christian—a baptized member and, into his teenage years, a server at St Mark’s Episcopal Church, Laramie—he was not killed for his faith. Nor did he die as a result of performing acts of Christian charity. Despite what the various churches planned and said in their memorial services, or what the author of the *Vanity Fair* article may be hoping to portray with their narrative, Shepard is not a martyr. In the same way that not every Christian soldier killed in war is a martyr, neither is Shepard. At least, not by the Christian definition of martyrdom.<sup>125</sup>

### **How Do I Know a Martyr When I See One?**

In the same way that there is no unified, perfectly consistent view of Christ, there is not—arguably cannot be—a unified, perfectly consistent view of martyrs, who are examples of the ideal *imitatio Christi*. However, in the same way that Christ is readily identifiable in the

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<sup>124</sup> “The Crucifixion of Matthew Shepard”, Magazine, *Vanity Fair* - The Hive, 8 January 2014, <https://www.vanityfair.com/news/1999/13/matthew-shepard-199903>.

<sup>125</sup> This statement is in no way a lessening of the injustice or the horror of Shepard’s murder. Rather, it is set as an example of how quickly the multiple contexts in which a term like martyrdom is used can confuse the theological tradition with popular usage. This is particularly difficult when the two overlap, as in the case of Matthew Shepard.

writing, stories, and tradition of Christians, martyrs should be identifiable through some common characteristics which serve as connecting threads through the history and practices articulated in this chapter.

The first and most important criterion for identifying a martyr is the quality of their death. Martyrs are Christians who are killed because of their faith in Jesus Christ. Whether because their religion is illegal, as in the earliest centuries CE in the Roman Empire, or whether their faith is the subject of hatred by another group, such as the Coptic Christians martyred by ISIL in 2015 mentioned earlier, martyrs are killed for their faith. The potential, much less common, variation on this is Christians who die while performing acts of charity motivated by their faith, such as St Damien of Moloka'i or Jonathan Daniels.

The second defining characteristic of martyrs is their immediate translation to heaven following their deaths. There is no period of waiting for the judgement of the second coming, nor do they repose quietly, but are awake, alive, and live in resurrected glory. Their judgement is complete and they live among the heavenly host of angels and other saints, around the throne of God.

The third characteristic of martyrs is their activity in their heavenly estate. Martyrs are described as praising God, along with the other citizens of heaven, but also intercede for Christians yet living on earth. The prayers of the faithful are heard by martyrs and repeated in the heavenly chorus of divine praise. Occasionally martyrs are credited with

miracles performed for living Christians as a result of prayers for intercession, though this is not a uniform response.

The fourth characteristic of martyrs is not actually proper to the martyr themselves, but to their importance to other Christians. Martyrs are icons of the death of Christ and, as such, serve as examples to other Christians. It is important, therefore, when we recall martyrs that we recall them as examples to be followed. Their witness must produce action on the part of others, such as the spontaneous conversions mentioned in so many *acta*, or there is no truth to Tertullian's oft-quoted statement in his *Apologeticus*: "We multiply whenever we are mown down by you; the blood of Christians is seed."<sup>126</sup>

## Conclusions

This chapter has established who and what a martyr is through an examination of the history of theology, practices, and records about them. It has also discussed different kinds of martyrs and the relationship between martyrs and saints who are not martyrs within the hagiographical tradition. The importance of martyrdom and its impact on Christian identity, formation, and practice has also been established, along with fundamental characteristics that may be used to identify martyrs within a diversity of circumstances, stories, and records.

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<sup>126</sup> Tertullian and Minucius Felix, *Apologeticus; De Spectaculis*, trans. T. R. Glover and Gerald H. Rendall, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984), 226–27.

With a foundation of the importance of martyrdom, its importance to Christian life, and its identifying characteristics laid out, we will next turn to an examination of the theory, history, and practices of liturgical formation of Christians before placing these two ideas—the martyrial tradition and liturgical formation—in conversation with one another in the context of the Anglican Church of Canada’s eucharistic liturgies.



## Chapter 2: Liturgical Formation

“The liturgy...forms its participants on the deepest levels.”<sup>127</sup> Aidan Kavanagh’s statement, now nearly thirty years ago, is no less true for its age. The liturgies of the church form their participants, and deliberately so. Gordon Lathrop, in discussing the relationship between liturgy and Christian formation, describes the assembly as that gathering of people who come together to be drawn into God and who are the ongoing, self-created catechesis of the Church.<sup>128</sup> This habit of gathering to worship and be formed has also been described as a human impulse that cannot be avoided. James K. A. Smith describes worship as a practice that forms humanity at a fundamental level. Smith also notes that “worship” might be used to refer to rituals sacred or secular, Christian or not, but that the tendency of humans toward worship and the formative power of those practices does not change based on their object.<sup>129</sup>

The terms “liturgy” and “worship” bear a few moments of explanation. Benjamin Gordon-Taylor helpfully outlines the ongoing debate about the relationship between and definitions of these two words. The erroneous assumption that they are synonymous has led to many associating “worship” with reformed Christian traditions and “liturgy” with Roman Catholic and orthodox traditions. Anglicans, almost inevitably, use both terms,

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<sup>127</sup> Aidan Kavanagh, ‘Seeing Liturgically’, in *Time and Community*, ed. J. Neil Alexander (Washington, DC: The Pastoral Press, 1990), 274.

<sup>128</sup> Gordon W. Lathrop, *Holy Things: A Liturgical Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 125.

<sup>129</sup> James K. A. Smith, *Imagining the Kingdom: How Worship Works*, Cultural Liturgies 2 (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), 3.

often to denote particular strands of ecclesiology within their own tradition.<sup>130</sup> Louis Weil points out that, in its original usage, “worship” meant respect shown in honour of a person. Today that usage is almost entirely gone and instead the word is understood to refer almost exclusively to ritual acts in a religious context—ritual acts which are an effort to respond in some way to God.<sup>131</sup> “To put the distinction at its simplest, liturgy is the means whereby worship is offered to God by the Church. Liturgy is consequent on the offering of worship and serves its needs.”<sup>132</sup>

This chapter will establish the power and importance of liturgical formation. It will do so through an introduction of what liturgical formation is, followed by an historical overview of trends in liturgical formation over the past two millennia. Next, it will examine the ways in which liturgical participation shapes the beliefs, theology, understanding, and habits of its participants. Finally, it will discuss the consequences of participation in liturgies which are, in one way or another, inadequate in their formation of participants.

Liturgy is the construction of an event where all come to be equal, each participant sharing a need to be formed by God. The assembly is where Christians come together, deliberately and intentionally, to interact with the holy and to be formed by that interaction. Encountering God is fundamental to Christian life; God is active, present, and

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<sup>130</sup> Benjamin Gordon-Taylor, ‘Liturgy’, in *The Study of Liturgy and Worship*, ed. Juliette Day and Benjamin Gordon-Taylor, Alcuin Guides (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 2013), 13–14.

<sup>131</sup> Louis Weil, ‘Worship’, in *The Study of Liturgy and Worship*, ed. Juliette Day and Benjamin Gordon-Taylor, Alcuin Guides (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 2013), 3–4.

<sup>132</sup> Gordon-Taylor, ‘Liturgy’, 14.

there is an expectation in Christian liturgy, and from there in Christian life, that the Christian will experience God directly.<sup>133</sup> Though Christians expect responses from God to their individual prayer, the fullness of Christian faith is experienced as an assembly, a congregation.<sup>134</sup> All come as strangers to be drawn into God, not to command God to appear. Nor is the assembly about examining and rehearsing difference in one another, as clarified by the Epistle of James (2.1-5). The Christian assembly is a place where all share a quality as strangers or of otherness, because the assembly belongs to God.<sup>135</sup>

But even with this radical equality in otherness compared to God, the members of the assembly do not arrive without ideas, notions, or pre-existing shapes of their own. The liturgy is constantly shaping its participants, but liturgical participation and formation are always a combination of action and reflection, learning and unlearning, being formed and re-formed. An individual's context affects these components profoundly.<sup>136</sup> An individual's context along with the subtle—or unsubtle—differences in official, public, and private interpretations of the theology that is being engaged in the liturgy means that while formation in liturgy is constant, it is never complete.<sup>137</sup> Not in this life, at any rate.

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<sup>133</sup> Jana Marguerite Bennett, 'What Faith Formation Means in the Age of "Nones"', *Liturgy* 30, no. 3 (3 July 2015): 51, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0458063X.2015.1019269>.

<sup>134</sup> Bennett, 52.

<sup>135</sup> Lathrop, *Holy Things*, 120.

<sup>136</sup> Lizette Larson-Miller, 'Presidential Address, Societas Liturgica Congress XXV', *Studia Liturgica* 46, no. 1-2 (2016): 3.

<sup>137</sup> For more on the different spheres of theological interpretation, see Lawrence Hoffman, 'How Ritual Means: Ritual Circumcision in Rabbinic Culture and Today', *Studia Liturgica* 23 (1993): 78-97.

Patrick Prétot points out that liturgical formation is more than the “transmission of an intellectual knowledge about the liturgy.” He admits that this is what most probably think of when they hear the term, but while an historical survey of the idea reveals that liturgical formation certainly includes “knowledge about” liturgy, it also includes “knowing how to be,” “knowing how to do,” and the critically important element of “knowing how to live.” Ideally, liturgical formation provides those being formed with a synthesis of these different manners of knowing.<sup>138</sup>

### **An Historical Overview**

Prétot’s recent work is very helpful in sketching a survey of the history of liturgical formation. In the era of the primitive church,<sup>139</sup> the proclamation of gospels and the letters of Paul were central to the life of the Christian assembly. These scriptures themselves are not a manual for liturgical formation, of course, but these early communities were concerned about structuring the ritual around their proclamation. This concern necessitated reforming normative cultural practices around religious assembly, ensuring that Christian assembly would be as effective as possible in helping their members “live as authentic disciples of Jesus.”<sup>140</sup>

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<sup>138</sup> Patrick Prétot, ‘Benchmarks for a History of Liturgical Formation’, *Studia Liturgica* 46, no. 1–2 (2016): 18.

<sup>139</sup> Also called the pre-Constantinian church, generally understood as the first through third centuries.

<sup>140</sup> Prétot, ‘Benchmarks for a History of Liturgical Formation’, 23.

This concern for the effect of the assembly's speech and action on the lives of its members is apparent in the letters of Paul. He writes to the church in Corinth and criticises them for assemblies that spend more time focused on division in the community than they do unity around the eucharistic celebration. He goes so far as to suggest that the assemblies in Corinth "did more harm than good." (1 Cor. 11.17) Prétot explains that Paul's criticism of the Corinthian church is not "about" the eucharist but reflects a deep care of the authenticity of the assembly's practices, which ought to foster true Christian living.<sup>141</sup>

In the fourth through sixth centuries, we can see the development of important tools for liturgical formation, especially the formalization of the catechumenate and the liturgical year. These two tools express a deep concern on the part of Christians for liturgical formation and are deeply intertwined with one another. Prétot suggests, with reference to the work of Paul Gavrilyuk and François Cassingena-Trévédý,<sup>142</sup> that the proximity of catechesis and liturgy in this period points to a practice of catechesis through liturgical formation.<sup>143</sup> In this era, the liturgical assembly is the primary site of the formation of Christians, which is to say, again, not education about the liturgy, but formation for life as a Christian.

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<sup>141</sup> Prétot, 24.

<sup>142</sup> In particular, Prétot calls our attention to Paul L. Gavrilyuk, *Histoire du catéchuménat dans l'Église ancienne*, Initiations aux Pères de l'Église no. 12, Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 2007; and François Cassingena-Trévédý, *Les Pères de l'Église et la liturgie : un esprit, une expérience : de Constantin à Justinien*, Théologie à l'Université no. 5, Paris: Desclées de Brouwer, 2009.

<sup>143</sup> Prétot, 'Benchmarks for a History of Liturgical Formation', 26.

In the Middle Ages, the gradual appearance of a specialised “guild” of theologians has a profound effect on liturgical formation. In previous eras the liturgical assembly was the site of Christian formation, done with the whole community, and conducted as a primarily pastoral act. When a specialised group of theologians appear, who do theology outside of the liturgical assembly, the ownership of the process of liturgical formation “become[s] the prerogative first of the masters of the monastic cloisters, then of the masters of the university quadrangles.”<sup>144</sup>

Another notable effect of a group of dedicated theologians taking control of liturgical formation is the increasingly complex approaches given to it. Confined to the literate and learned in monasteries and universities, liturgical formation comes to refer to the transmission of very particular knowledge about liturgical rites and their meaning. This transmission is, of course, primarily intended for clerics whose main occupation in the Middle Ages is the celebration of the mass and religious offices. A small group— theologians—working on material for another small group—clerics—with plenty of overlap between these two small groups produces some lengthy, truly rarefied texts with highly complicated explanations and hermeneutics.<sup>145</sup>

As an example, we can take nearly any of the parts of Guido of Monte Rochen’s *Handbook for Curates* and examine what he understands as the most important

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<sup>144</sup> Prétot, 29.

<sup>145</sup> Prétot, 30.

information to communicate. On baptism, the explanation of what baptism is manifests as a single sentence, very much concerned about material components and form of language used in the rite: “Baptism is the exterior washing of the body done with the prescribed, that is, fixed, formula of words, so that this material washing which is done on the outside of the body is a sign of the spiritual washing which God does inside on the mind.”<sup>146</sup> Much ink is then spilled on the details of the material of baptism: whether the water is clean or dirty, hot or cold, or whether lye may be used as a substitute if water is not available. Perhaps most interesting is the question of whether, if no water is readily available, a child at risk of death is better to be thrown into a deep well with baptismal formula shouted after them than left to die without benefit of baptism.<sup>147</sup>

In this era, we see the genesis of the accusation often leveled at the field of liturgical study and its practitioners today: it is about a particular understanding of the rites, drawing on a symbolic understanding based on complex allegorical models, accessible to only those few who have been admitted to the “guild” and who thereby possess special knowledge and power within the Christian community.

This treatment of liturgical formation as the transfer of specialized knowledge continued into the modern era. With the invention and spread of the printing press, the tradition moved from a largely oral one to a printed one and, as literacy rates increased,

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<sup>146</sup> Guido of Monte Rochen, *Handbook for Curates: A Late Medieval Manual on Pastoral Ministry*, trans. Anne T. Thayer (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2011), 15.

<sup>147</sup> Guido of Monte Rochen, 15–18.

liturgical formation became available to anyone with the education, resources, and time to purchase and read the documents published on the subject. However, liturgical formation remained almost completely an explanation of rituals and ceremonies; the translation of texts and discussion of their historical origin was central to this. Suggestions of liturgy as a source of formation for Christian living were few and far between.<sup>148</sup>

In the sixteenth century, the Council of Trent decided that liturgical authority ought to be centralized in Rome and established the Roman Congregation of Rites. This choice, an attempt to impose unity on liturgy which, until this time, had many regional variations, adds an element of discipline to the nature of liturgical formation. Liturgical texts are produced by a central authority and issued with rubrics ensuring that not only the words, but the gestures, poses, and actions of the ceremonies, are as similar as possible throughout the Roman Catholic Church. This discipline in the conduct of the liturgy is similar to the locus of formation in the liturgy in the early years of the church. Here, however, the desired formation is not of a community for the living of a Christian life, but rather a uniformity of practice which formed a spirituality centred on “a personal search for interiority.”<sup>149</sup> This search for interiority would, of necessity, have had very different formations for clergy, educated and directed in the explanation of the rites, and for the

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<sup>148</sup> Prétot, ‘Benchmarks for a History of Liturgical Formation’, 36.

<sup>149</sup> Prétot, 36.



laity, left largely to pray on their own through a liturgy conducted in a language they did not speak or understand.

For most of the modern era Roman Catholics attended mass as distinct from participating in mass. This is an important change in verb, representing a marked shift in the Roman Catholic Church's intention for the congregation during mass. Prior to Vatican II, the congregation was expected to pray during mass, but the vast majority of the liturgy was conducted by the presider, in Latin, with little reference to the congregation. The Liturgical Movement of the twentieth century was a collection of scholars who, among themselves and across the wider Church, prompted an examination of liturgical theology. Their persistent question was not "How do we do what we do," but "Why do we do what we do as Christian assemblies?"<sup>150</sup> One of the most obvious outcomes of their research into the practices of early Christians, was the desire of the Church to reclaim the communal dynamic of congregational participation in the liturgy.

Their voice was heard and, in stark contrast to the medieval and early modern role of the congregation, Vatican II produced *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, promulgated by Pope Paul VI in 1963:

Mother Church earnestly desires that all the faithful should be led to that fully conscious, and active participation in liturgical celebrations which is demanded by the very nature of the liturgy. Such participation by the Christian people as 'a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a redeemed

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<sup>150</sup> Alexander Schmemmann, *Introduction to Liturgical Theology*, trans. Asheleigh E. Moorhouse, Second Revised, Library of Orthodox Theology 4 (Crestwood: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1966), 13.

people' (1 Pet. 2:9; cf. 2:4-5), is their right and duty by reason of their baptism.<sup>151</sup>

In this pivotal statement we see the return from liturgical formation as an explanation of ritual and ceremony largely intended for the clergy celebrating to liturgy as the primary point of formation for Christian life, as was the case for the first six centuries of the Church.<sup>152</sup>

Don Saliers points to the “restoration and renewal” of the prayers of the people in the Roman Catholic liturgy as an example of forming thought and practice through liturgical participation. It is also a key reformation born from the work of the Liturgical Movement, moving the centre of formation for Christian living back into the liturgy. Saliers points out that the placement of the prayers of the people back into the liturgy, spoken or sung by a deacon or laic, rather than the medieval form of intentions and prayers spoken by the priest alone, demonstrates that they, as laity, can pray for themselves and others. Not only can they pray of themselves, but their prayer requires no special mediation through the clergy.<sup>153</sup> Laity can pray on their own and their prayers are heard by God just as effectively and clearly as when a priest relays them.<sup>154</sup>

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<sup>151</sup> Pope Paul VI, *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy Sacrosanctum Concilium*, Vatican II, 1963, 14.

<sup>152</sup> Prétot, ‘Benchmarks for a History of Liturgical Formation’, 37.

<sup>153</sup> Even when the prayers of the people are led by a deacon, the theology being communicated is of the deacon as a bridge between the needs of the world and the mission of the church; the deacon gathers the prayers of the congregation and voices them in the liturgy because the deacon is the coordinator of the ministries which most often intersect with the needs of the world. The deacon leads prayers as the logical locus for intercessory needs in the community, not as a cleric closer to God than the laity.

<sup>154</sup> Don E. Saliers, *The Soul in Paraphrase: Prayer and the Religious Affections* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1980), 98.

The approach of the Middle Ages to liturgical formation as preparation for participation on the part of leadership was focused on just one of Prétot's helpful categories of knowing to the exclusion of the others. Recent scholarship on liturgical formation has highlighted that while education for liturgical participation is an important part of this formation, it is most successful when part of an holistic approach to liturgical formation which includes participation—learning by doing—rather than being reduced to explanation only.<sup>155</sup> In reflecting on these twentieth-century liturgical reforms, Alexander Schmemmann describes them as “a return from the pietistic and individualistic understanding of worship once more conceived as the eternal self-revelation of the Church.”<sup>156</sup>

#### Liturgical Formation and Reformation in the Anglican Church of Canada

The Liturgical Movement may have been most evident and produced the most drastic changes in, but was not limited to, the Roman Catholic Church. Movements drawing on its scholarship in other liturgical churches, most notably Anglican and Lutheran, produced similar revisions of their own liturgies in the last half of the twentieth century.<sup>157</sup> In the Anglican Church of Canada the influence of the Liturgical Movement is most evident in the production of the *Book of Alternative Services*,<sup>158</sup> the liturgies of which present a focus

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<sup>155</sup> Fred P. Edie, 'Liturgy and Faith Formation: Reimagining a Partnership for the Sake of Youth', *Liturgy* 29, no. 1 (January 2014): 40, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0458063X.2014.846739>.

<sup>156</sup> Schmemmann, *Introduction to Liturgical Theology*, 14.

<sup>157</sup> For a sample of such changes in the Anglican Communion see Colin Buchanan, ed., *Modern Anglican Liturgies 1958-1968* (London: Oxford University Press, 1968).

<sup>158</sup> Anglican Church of Canada, *The Book of Alternative Services*.

on œcumenical relationships, vernacular English language, and a renewal of congregational participation. It is also self-consciously presented as another reform in a series of reforms, “continuous with the Church of the sixteenth century, but different.”<sup>159</sup>

The committee which produced the book makes clear that reformation of liturgy is to be expected by virtue of the liturgy’s connection with the gospel:

The spirit of reformation is neither anarchic nor destructive, but is rooted in the conviction that in times of great insecurity and change the centre cannot be held by a blind preservation of the forms in which tradition has been received, but only through diligent and passionate search for fresh expressions and evocations of the tradition. The wonder is not that so many twentieth century Christians are open to change but that the experiments of the Reformation era appeared to be treated as definitive for nearly four centuries. The gospel always has a reforming, reinterpreting edge to it, and the gospel is always the proper subject of the liturgy.<sup>160</sup>

While not explicitly related to liturgical formation by the committee, the very idea of the liturgy as being an holistic event which is interrelated with the gospel and the lives of its participants, requiring regular and ongoing revision and reformation is a part of this larger movement of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. It speaks clearly to the influence of the Liturgical Movement and the desire in the Anglican Church of Canada to

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<sup>159</sup> Anglican Church of Canada, 9.

<sup>160</sup> Anglican Church of Canada, 8–9.

place the primary point of focus for the formation of Christians in their liturgical celebrations.

### How Liturgy Forms

*Lex orandi, lex credendi*<sup>161</sup> is “an ongoing dialectic in the life of the Church in which the prayer of the faithful informs the systematic development of the faith of the Church and that faith, in turn, corrects the *lex orandi*.”<sup>162</sup> The way in which we pray or, more broadly, the way in which we worship, shapes the way we think and what we believe about the object of our worship. Worship, properly, engages participants and forms them, shaping the assembly into a corporate expression of their shared life as the body of Christ, this reality revealed and realized by and through their formative participation.<sup>163</sup> Nienke Vos describes the way in which individuals become a part of a larger story through their liturgical participation and formation:

[This is] what happens in the liturgy: as believers come into contact with the story of salvation, it is possible for them to relate their own person biography to this larger narrative framework, thereby generating meaning in their own lives. As they reflect upon the Christian story as a whole, a specific form of self-understanding may occur through the lens of salvation history.<sup>164</sup>

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<sup>161</sup> “The law of prayer is the law of belief.” Translation my own.

<sup>162</sup> David Holeton, ‘The Formative Character of Liturgy’, in *A Kingdom of Priests: Liturgical Formation of the People of God*, ed. Thomas Talley, Alcuin/GROW Liturgical Study 5 (Nottingham: Grove Books Limited, 1988), 8.

<sup>163</sup> Schmemmann, *Introduction to Liturgical Theology*, 30.

<sup>164</sup> Vos, ‘Communion of Saints’, 51.

Gordon Lathrop draws attention to the fact that while one may assume that liturgy is formative for an individual participant, it is also formative of the participatory community as a whole. “Christians traditionally have believed that the read and preached biblical word and the enacted sacramental symbols as the core events of the Sunday meeting, provide...a public matrix of social meaning.”<sup>165</sup> So important is this participation for the formation of a community’s identity, that Don Saliers describes churches which suffer from a lack of participation in the symbolic action of the liturgy as dying of “spiritual anorexia.”<sup>166</sup>

Fred P. Edie provides an example of this “spiritual anorexia” in his discussion on liturgy and faith formation focused particularly on the young members of faith communities. He outlines a trend in some communities of the twentieth century to disavow “churchy liturgical practice as off-putting to potential converts,”<sup>167</sup> particularly where children and teenagers were concerned. The gatherings to which these potential converts were invited involved games, skits, music, and conversation, but absent were hymns, creeds, prayer, sacraments, reading from scripture, or any exhortation to leave the gathering and do anything as a consequence of having been there. One cannot be told to go into the world and “be church” when one has not been to church, much less joined the

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<sup>165</sup> Lathrop, *Holy Things*, 3.

<sup>166</sup> Don E. Saliers, *Worship and Spirituality*, Spirituality & the Christian Life (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1984), 43.

<sup>167</sup> Edie, ‘Liturgy and Faith Formation’, 36.

church and become a part of it. When these young people were old enough to be integrated into the traditional congregational worship of adults, Sunday morning became unintelligible. “Ultimately, losing touch with congregational worship meant losing crucial resources for faith formation.”<sup>168</sup>

What was missing for those young people, now expected to function as adults in an explicitly liturgical setting, was the formation through liturgical habit of what Don Saliers calls “affections” of praise, thanksgiving, gratitude, love, and other Christian traits.<sup>169</sup> Jana Marguerite Bennett, in her discussion on faith formation in a society with a growing number of people who claim no faith affiliation, articulates the importance of forming people, particularly children in her discussion, in a liturgical context even when they are not in a liturgy proper. She uses the example of Maria Montessori’s writing on religion-based classrooms in her *Catechesis of the Good Shepherd*. Children are allowed to explore learning about the world guided by their own desires. In a religious classroom, there might be elements of the liturgy—a child-sized altar, paten, chalice, etc.—for children to set up, play with, and explore from the earliest ages. As they progress through years of schooling they will take up discussion and reflection on the prayers and texts of the liturgy. These children are continually participating and being taught in the environment of their liturgy even when they are not attending Sunday morning worship. Liturgical formation takes

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<sup>168</sup> Edie, 37.

<sup>169</sup> Saliers, *The Soul in Paraphrase*.

place through repeated experience and that experience of the liturgical environment becomes habitual. This expansion of the liturgical environment outside of Sunday morning might include habits such as reading, study, and discussion of scripture; grace at meals; offices of prayer in which the family shares; the blessing of children by parents. The way in which they pray—and now learn—has become the way in which they believe.<sup>170</sup>

In contrast to the children in Edie's example, the children in Bennett's writing, who have experienced the *Catechesis of the Good Shepherd* as their faith formation and education, are aware of church, familiar with the liturgical environment, and prepared to participate when fully integrated with the adult congregation. For them, liturgy is not a new idea, it has been formed as a part of their habit in life. This idea of habit being a significant part of what characterizes a person, indeed the basis of *lex orandi, lex credendi*, is more recently being borne out by research in neuroscience and psychology. "Repeated thoughts, feelings, and behaviors strengthen synaptic connections between neurons in the brain, automating them in the process. Habits free the conscious mind for other tasks."<sup>171</sup> With the foregoing in mind, it seems that faith formation happens as much through repeated actions and statements, as in the liturgy, as it does through presentation of ideas as intellectual propositions to be discussed and considered in the manner of conventional Western schooling.

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<sup>170</sup> Bennett, 'What Faith Formation Means in the Age of "Nones"', 54.

<sup>171</sup> Edie, 'Liturgy and Faith Formation', 37.



James K. A. Smith has recently written a three-volume collection called *Cultural Liturgies* where he, as a philosopher, explores liturgy and its function within the Reformed tradition. Interest in liturgy, indeed the use of the word to describe any of the activity within the Reformed tradition, is a relatively recent phenomenon.<sup>172</sup> For Smith, liturgy is no less formative than for theologians from traditions with a longer history of liturgical examination and discussion, but he describes its formative capacity as working through an appeal to imagination and the embodiment of practice. He says it makes purely intellectual religious formation seem naïve, because humans do not think their way to action. Rather, humans are led, prompted, pushed, and shown to action through their experience.<sup>173</sup>

To illustrate this claim, Smith uses the example of a farm boy from the prairies who joins the military. He does not do so because of intellectual assent to the idea that giving up his agrarian life, going to another country, and potentially being killed or killing others is the most sensible, reasonable, rational, or logical course of action. He has not been argued into his recruitment. Rather, through participation in liturgical ritual, in this case the secular liturgies of the civic and military spheres, and through his aesthetic sensibilities, the boy has been formed in such a way that he can imagine the ideals of military service to which he assents before he can intellectually apprehend all that military service entails.<sup>174</sup>

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<sup>172</sup> For more on the development of liturgical study in the Reformed tradition see Hans Boersma, *Heavenly Participation: The Weaving of a Sacramental Tapestry* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2011).

<sup>173</sup> Smith, *Imagining the Kingdom*, 20–21.

<sup>174</sup> Smith, 19.

While Smith's context in the Reformed tradition is different than many of the other theologians cited in this chapter, particularly due to differing theologies of sacramentality, he still argues powerfully that liturgy is formative for its participants.<sup>175</sup> The shape of that formation will be different in a Roman Catholic liturgy, such as a celebration of the eucharist; a Reformed liturgy composed largely of prayer and preaching; and a secular civic liturgy, such as the memorialization of war dead on Remembrance Day in Canada. Different though the shape of these liturgies may be, their participants are formed nonetheless. "Liturgies are formative because—and just to the extent that—they tap into our imaginative core. As compressed narratives and tactile poems, the formative power of liturgies (whether secular or sacred) is bound up with their aesthetic force...Over time, we are formed as a people who desire a certain *telos* because we have been immersed in liturgies that have captured our imagination by aesthetic means."<sup>176</sup>

Susan Ashbrook Harvey discusses ethical formation through liturgical participation in the vigil liturgies of ancient Syriac Christianity, particularly regarding physical participation and, even more particularly, with regard to hymns and homilies.<sup>177</sup>

She says:

The context in which hymns and homilies were received—the ritual event of the liturgy itself—contributed substantially to their affective impact. What was sung in the

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<sup>175</sup> A fulsome discussion of the differences between the liturgical, sacramental, and ecclesial theologies of Anglicanism and the Reformed tradition is, unfortunately, well beyond the scope of this thesis.

<sup>176</sup> Smith, *Imagining the Kingdom*, 137.

<sup>177</sup> Homilies, in ancient Syriac Christianity, were composed in verse and often chanted or sung.

vigil service, or received in liturgical exposition, was enhanced profoundly by the process of patterned actions, sequenced presentation, sensory engagement, and collective encounter that liturgy included. Holy instruction was reinforced by the bodily disciplines of liturgical participation.<sup>178</sup>

In short, the ritual, participatory character of the liturgy contributed to the ethical formation of the congregation in no lesser way than explicative discussion or presentation. This claim, from the earliest years of Christian life, supports Smith's ideas. In discussing Christian education, he denies the suggestion that one must know something prior to loving it and, therefore, prior to worshiping it. Smith claims that Christian education should not be about providing propositional intellectual content about what people ought to love and worship, but rather that people must be encouraged to imagine what they ought to love, knowing the object of their love first aesthetically rather than propositionally. Through love and imagination, they will be drawn to know the object of their love intellectually and propositionally.<sup>179</sup> In capturing the imagination and aesthetic sensibilities of participants, liturgy can draw them into love of the object of liturgical worship. Ideally the object of Christian worship is God. However, Smith is quick to point out that this is not necessarily always the case.<sup>180</sup>

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<sup>178</sup> Susan Ashbrook Harvey, 'Liturgy and Ethics in Ancient Syriac Christianity: Two Paradigms', *Studies in Christian Ethics* 26, no. 3 (2013): 301.

<sup>179</sup> Smith, *Imagining the Kingdom*, 125.

<sup>180</sup> Smith, 27.

Gordon Lathrop, in an argument not dissimilar to that of Smith, argues that liturgical formation “must speak directly to participants and engage their experience without explanation.”<sup>181</sup> The imagination and physical senses must be apprehended for formation to be fully effective. Lathrop identifies the use of juxtaposition of seemingly impossible and contradictory things as a primary means of generating meaning in liturgy because the tension that such juxtapositions create demands a response.<sup>182</sup> He cites, as an example, the baptismal font. A vessel filled with water that both kills and gives new, eternal life demands a response from all who see the object and know its use. It especially demands a response from those who observe and participate in baptismal rites. The response-demanding tension created by juxtaposing key facets of Christian life in the liturgy is absolutely essential to proper Christian formation.<sup>183</sup>

Alexander Schmemmann also comments on the importance to Christian life of experiential, participatory learning and formation in liturgy:

From the establishment and interpretation of the basic structures of worship to an explanation of every possible element, and then to an orderly theological synthesis of all their data...into the language of theology, to make the liturgical experience of the Church again one of the life-giving sources of the knowledge of God. What is needed more than anything else is an entrance into the life of worship, into life in the rhythm of worship. What is needed

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<sup>181</sup> Lathrop, *Holy Things*, 121.

<sup>182</sup> Lathrop, 33.

<sup>183</sup> Lathrop, 127.

is not so much the intellectual apprehension of worship as its apprehension through experience and prayer.<sup>184</sup>

Liturgy provides tools and a framework for Christians to engage life in an integrated manner. Participation in the liturgy forms Christians and that formation influences the way in which they engage with the world. Good liturgy, which facilitates this equipping of Christians for integrated engagement of life, is important. Not for its own sake or because good liturgy has some inherent nobility that must be respected, but because bad liturgy stifles the possibility of a community being drawn out of themselves into the experience of God, where this equipping takes place most effectively.<sup>185</sup> Bad liturgy wallpapers over the presence of God with shallow, self-focused, individualistic theology, directing its participants inward, rather than drawing them into the experience of God. This sort of formation, at best, equips Christian to engage with themselves in a vacuum and, at worst, leads them into destructive, self-created isolation.

Assemblies who gather to participate in liturgy always bring questions. These questions are often the responses to the tension of juxtaposition identified by Lathrop. Answering these questions well is a key part of good liturgy and good liturgical formation. Assemblies today, in the twenty-first century, bring as many—or more—new questions than our faith has traditional answers for. Mary Collins identifies that the Church is working on providing helpful answers in its liturgies; answers which move beyond

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<sup>184</sup> Schmemmann, *Introduction to Liturgical Theology*, 23.

<sup>185</sup> Holeton, 'The Formative Character of Liturgy', 8.

synthetic statements and seeking to develop answers which are integrative of “Christological, pneumatological, trinitarian, anthropological, ecclesiological, [and] eschatological components which might speak effectively to these fresh, new questions offered by its participants.”<sup>186</sup> This work is vital because good liturgical formation is central to good Christian practice.

What, then, is the consequence of inadequate liturgical formation?

### **An Inadequacy of Liturgical Formation**

As Lathrop, Schmemmann, and Smith have articulated at length, participation in liturgy is formative. Whether that liturgy is sacred or secular, whether it contains orthodox theology or heresy, whether it instills gratitude, compassion, and love, or selfishness, conceit, and radical individualism, participation in liturgy forms habits which carry over into the rest of life.

Mary Collins writes about the importance of language in the liturgy: “Language serves to name, to handle, and to define experience.”<sup>187</sup> In her book *Worship: Renewal to Practice*, Collins discusses in detail the contradiction in Roman Catholic ordination rites being celebrated in the wake of Vatican II. As mentioned in the historical overview earlier in this chapter, the spirit of the council desires an inclusive liturgy which allows the fully conscious, active participation of the assembly. That assembly, as a whole, is described as

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<sup>186</sup> Mary Collins, *Worship: Renewal to Practice* (Washington, DC: The Pastoral Press, 1987), 115.

<sup>187</sup> Collins, 166.

“a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a redeemed people [whose participation] is their right and duty by reason of their baptism.”<sup>188</sup> In this respect, clergy and laity are equal in their value and right while participating in the liturgy.

Collins’ objection stems from the fact that the ordination rites still refer to ordination as an “elevation,” raising the clergy to a position of honour, dignity, or right above that of the laity. In a post-conciliar church where clergy and laity have differing liturgical roles but are not superior nor inferior to one another, this language in the ordinal liturgy is deeply concerning. “Public ritual language sets out for all who participate in the rites the relationships which are known and affirmed in the group.”<sup>189</sup> In this instance, the voice of the Roman church makes one statement while its liturgies form its members in the opposite direction.

David Holeton draws our attention to the effect that poor communication of sound ideas can have. He states clearly that he does not believe that bad liturgy is always intentional, but that unintended ideas communicated in it are no less damaging than those put forth on purpose. He cites as an example the rite of baptizing infants from the Church of England’s *Book of Common Prayer* of 1662:

Dearly beloved, forasmuch as all men are conceived and born in sin, and that our Saviour Christ saith, none can enter into the kingdom of God, except he be regenerate and born anew of Water and of the Holy Ghost: I beseech you to call upon God the Father, through our Lord Jesus Christ, that of

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<sup>188</sup> Pope Paul VI, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 14.

<sup>189</sup> Collins, *Worship*, 137.

his bounteous mercy he will grant to this Child that thing which by nature he cannot have; that he may be baptized with Water and the Holy Ghost, and received into Christ's holy Church, and be made a lively member of the same.<sup>190</sup>

This preface to baptism intends to suggest that baptism is necessary because of a broken and sinful world but, because of its peculiar phrasing—“all men are conceived and born in sin”—it is heard by many to suggest that, rather than a global circumstance into which one is born, it is the act of conception and birth which instills sin into the infant being baptized. Regardless of the authors’ intention for this text, sin is not heard described as an ancestral, global reality, but rather as a particular state which has been imputed in which the candidate has been living by fault of having been conceived and born at all. Liturgical texts are participated in by the assembly and they form theological ideas and attitudes. With this in mind, they must be composed and employed with great care, lest formation of an undesirable shape take place.<sup>191</sup>

In his writing about inadequacies in liturgical formation, J. Neil Alexander points to liturgies in which the eucharist is referred to almost exclusively in the past tense. The emphasis is placed on the historicity of the eucharist’s institution and early Christian practice around eucharistic liturgies. This, Alexander contends, is often responded to by a congregation with a lack of desire or interest in participating in eucharistic rites. The

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<sup>190</sup> The Church of England, ‘Public Baptism of Infants’, *The Book of Common Prayer* (1662), accessed 26 June 2018, <https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/worship-texts-and-resources/book-common-prayer/public-baptism-infants>.

<sup>191</sup> Holeton, ‘The Formative Character of Liturgy’, 9.



historical basis for the practice has been overemphasized at the expense of adequately representing the present consequences of the past event and the very real and present effect of the sacrament in the lives of those who partake of it, or of adequately representing the eschatological fulfillment of the eucharistic feast.<sup>192</sup> An inadequate eucharistic liturgy has formed an inadequate relationship between those who participate in it and the sacrament which is central to their faith.

Lizette Larson-Miller, speaking on catechesis, is emphatic about the need for catechesis of all members of a Christian community, not only those preparing for baptism or other sacraments. She reminds us that we know that not all baptized individuals have been catechized adequately—or, in some cases, catechized at all! She calls to mind the example of the kiss of peace in eucharistic liturgies. This act is intended to represent the recognition of Christ in one another, a physical display of communal reconciliation, and the transformation of individuals into a single community—the body of Christ—gathered around the altar. Instead, in the eucharistic liturgies of many parishes, where communion is a foretaste of heaven, the kiss of peace is a foretaste of the post-mass coffee hour. Many parishioners move past the people seated next to them, strangers or known, to speak to their friends and share news. Inadequate formation around this part of the eucharistic liturgy has rendered it an interruption to the liturgical intention, rather than a key moment

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<sup>192</sup> J. Neil Alexander, 'In Time and Community: Individualism and the Body of Christ', in *Time and Community*, ed. J. Neil Alexander (Washington, DC: The Pastoral Press, 1990), 299–300.

of preparation for reception of a sacrament. For Larson-Miller, catechesis—explicit education for Christian life—and liturgical formation are means of shaping Christian behaviour that cannot be divorced:

I think formative and transformative liturgical practice needs to be set in an overall intention to be a catechumenal church. Restoring and engaging the catechumenate is certainly part of this—but before, during, and after this an ecclesiological model with the integrity of church as sacrament and the dynamism of mystagogical liminality needs developing.<sup>193</sup>

Larson-Miller’s concerns, shared in an address in 2015, are not new. Alexander Schmemmann, writing in the mid-1960s, describes a “liturgical crisis” in the church.<sup>194</sup> He describes a community whose membership understand the Church as a function of worship, rather than worship as a function of the Church. Even with characteristic Orthodox attention to the details of historical liturgy and a reticence to reform their ceremonies and rites, the origin of worship perceived incorrectly is problematic. “Christian worship, by its nature, structure, and content, is the revelation and realization by the Church of her own real nature. And this nature is the new life in Christ—union in Christ with God the Holy Spirit, knowledge of the Truth, unity, love, grace, peace, salvation.”<sup>195</sup>

In line with all of the foregoing concerns, Gordon Lathrop reminds us that when the meaning of preached biblical word and enacted sacramental symbols is forgotten or

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<sup>193</sup> Larson-Miller, ‘Presidential Address, *Societas Liturgica Congress XXV*’, 6.

<sup>194</sup> Schmemmann, *Introduction to Liturgical Theology*, 28.

<sup>195</sup> Schmemmann, 29.

disregarded, Christians stop behaving like Christians.<sup>196</sup> When worship turns to a focus on the self, on exclusivity, and to a private choice rather than a public necessity, it becomes very difficult to identify Christians by their behaviour as consistent with their stated beliefs. This is not dissimilar to Collins's concerns about the contradiction between the Roman church's stated liturgical theology and its practiced liturgical theology in ordination rites. The identification of Christian life with values described in scripture and sacramental life becomes exceptionally difficult when Christian worship focuses on things other than these two points, precisely because Christian worship forms the thoughts, beliefs, and actions of its participants. If worship is about the self and a determination of who is "in" and who is "out," daily life between Sunday meetings will reflect these values rather than the hospitality, forgiveness, compassion, love, and gratitude that are the theoretically key tenets of a Christian life.

Inadequate liturgical formation is dangerous, not as a matter of canonical one-upmanship as some may suspect, but for the damage that it can cause to the lives of faith of all of those who participate in it.

## **Conclusions**

This chapter has established the formative character of liturgical participation and the importance of that experience in the lives of participants. It has provided an introduction to liturgical formation; discussed an historical overview of practices in liturgical formation

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<sup>196</sup> Lathrop, *Holy Things*, 4.

over Christian history; the ways in which liturgical participation shapes beliefs, theology, understanding, and habits of participants; some forms and consequences of inadequate liturgical formation. This chapter has also touched on the importance of liturgical formation's appeal to imagination and enchantment as means of forming habits and ways of thought, in addition to the presentation of intellectual propositions about faith to which one assents and consciously interacts with. Very notable is the recent spreading and recognition of this importance of enchantment and imagination to Christian traditions which have historically been disinterested in the idea, such as Evangelical and Reformed churches.<sup>197</sup>

Bearing in mind the discussions about the danger of inadequate liturgical formation, particularly the arguments from Collins and Holeyton, it becomes clear that *lex orandi, lex credendi* cannot stand alone as a principle of liturgical theology or liturgical formation if the liturgy itself cannot bear the weight of the faith. It is one thing to have confusion caused by tension between theology as written and theology as prayed in the liturgy, such as Collins brings up. It is another thing entirely to have a lack of written theology and a liturgy which includes confused, inconsistent articulations of particular

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<sup>197</sup> For more on this recent shift in the approach of these traditions to liturgy, imagination, and enchantment, see Hans Boersma, *Heavenly Participation: The Weaving of a Sacramental Tapestry* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2011). For a broader discussion of the importance of imagination and enchantment in worship, see David Brown, *God and Enchantment of Place: Reclaiming Human Experience* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

aspects of the faith. This latter case seems much more dangerous as it produces a liturgy which encourages prayer but cannot instil belief.

With the importance of liturgical formation established, and some of the consequences of inadequate formation brought to light, we will next place these ideas in conversation with the Anglican Church of Canada's liturgical formation concerning martyrdom and martyrial theology.

### **Chapter 3: Martyrs and the Eucharistic Liturgies of the Anglican Church of Canada**

Having established the broad tradition of the Church where martyrs are concerned and discussed in detail the power and importance of liturgical formation, we come now to our particular focus of examination: liturgical formation about things martyrrial in the Anglican Church of Canada (ACC). More specifically, liturgical formation about martyrs in the eucharistic liturgies of the ACC and how that formation does, or does not, aid liturgical participants in understanding, internalizing, and adopting the characteristics of martyrdom as outlined in the first chapter.

We will conduct this examination first with a discussion of the sources of doctrine in the ACC, its authorized liturgical texts, and specifically its theology of martyrs and the communion of saints. Secondly, we will examine in detail the liturgical texts of the ACC which concern martyrs in both its *Book of Common Prayer* and the *Book of Alternative Services* and its supplement *For All the Saints*. Following these examinations we will articulate the questions and conclusions that arise from the examination in light of the principles established in the previous chapters.

#### **The Anglican Church of Canada**

The ACC, in describing what it believes, states “The Anglican Church of Canada does not define its doctrine in a single confession. Our beliefs are articulated in our liturgies, as well

as in these selected statements.”<sup>198</sup> The list of selected statements includes the Nicene Creed, Apostles’ Creed, and Athanasian Creed. The *Five Marks of Mission* are described as shaping the work of General Synod. The rest of the documents—Solemn Declaration (1893); Lambeth Quadrilateral (1888); 39 Articles of Religion—are listed in the same section, but described with uniformly past-tense terminology without suggestion of how, or if, they have current concrete implementations in the ACC. It is clear from this statement on belief that the primary—and most current—source of doctrine in the ACC is the corpus of liturgical texts and the three historic creeds. It is worth briefly mentioning that this stance of allowing liturgical texts to be the record of primary theology is not unusual and many liturgical scholars would argue that it has been the norm for most of Christian history.<sup>199</sup>

This chapter considers only the liturgical texts of the eucharistic liturgies of the ACC because this is the central liturgy in the life of the church. In the liturgical renewal of the late twentieth century the divine office became understood in the ACC as the church’s daily routine of prayer,<sup>200</sup> while the eucharist formed the principal act of worship of a community, especially Sunday. For many Anglicans in Canada it is this Sunday morning eucharist which will form the overwhelming preponderance of their liturgical formation.

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<sup>198</sup> Anglican Church of Canada, ‘Our Beliefs’, Anglican Church of Canada - About Us, accessed 1 June 2018, <https://www.anglican.ca/about/beliefs/>.

<sup>199</sup> For more on the history of liturgical books, see Eric Palazzo, *A History of Liturgical Books: From the Beginning to the Thirteenth Century*, trans. Madeleine Beaumont (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1998). For more on liturgy as primary theology, see Aidan Kavanagh, *On Liturgical Theology: The Hale Memorial Lectures of Seabury-Western Theological Seminary, 1981* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1984).

<sup>200</sup> Anglican Church of Canada, *The Book of Alternative Services*, 36–39.

There are currently three documents which comprise the vast majority of the ACC's liturgical texts: *The Book of Common Prayer*<sup>201</sup> (BCP) of 1959 (which included minor edits in 1962), *The Book of Alternative Services*<sup>202</sup> (BAS) of 1985, and *For All the Saints: Prayers and Readings for Saints' Days*<sup>203</sup> (FAS) a supplement to the BAS, published in 1994. It is important to note that only texts properly authorized for the purpose may be used to conduct liturgies of the Anglican Church of Canada.

This authorization may proceed from the ACC General Synod, if it is to be for the entire national church, or from a local diocesan bishop if a text is to be used only at the diocesan scale. Local leaders of Anglican liturgies are not free to change most of the structure or text of the worship based on their own judgement. There are portions of each liturgy, particularly those in the BAS, which are optional. The homily, when one is present, is customarily written by the preacher and will therefore vary from congregation to congregation. The bulk of the text, however, is provided by the church for use in its congregations.

This tradition stems from the Act of Uniformity of 1549 in England which established one Book of Common Prayer as the only legal text for worship in the kingdom.

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<sup>201</sup> Anglican Church of Canada, *The Book of Common Prayer and Administration of the Sacraments and Other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church, According to the Use of the Anglican Church of Canada, Together with the Psalter, as It Is Appointed to Be Said or Sung in Churches, and the Form and Manner of Making, Ordaining and Consecrating of Bishops, Priests and Deacons* (Toronto: Anglican Book Centre, 1962).

<sup>202</sup> Anglican Church of Canada, *The Book of Alternative Services*.

<sup>203</sup> Anglican Church of Canada, *For All the Saints: Prayers and Readings for Saints' Days According to the Calendar of the Book of Alternative Services of the Anglican Church of Canada*, ed. Stephen Reynolds (Toronto: Anglican Book Centre, 1994).



Unity in liturgical text, though a concept considerably broadened since 1549, remains an important feature of Anglicanism.<sup>204</sup> As such, Canon XIV of the General Synod of the ACC established the BCP as “the authorized Book of Common Prayer for the Anglican Church of Canada.”<sup>205</sup> Following a mandate issued in 1971, in 1983 the Doctrine and Worship Committee of the ACC presented a draft BAS to General Synod. At this 1983 meeting, permission was given to publish the BAS for use when ready, provided it included certain revisions and edits. The BAS was finally published in 1985.<sup>206</sup>

### What Is a Saint For?

The ACC is a daughter of the Church of England, an ecclesial body which was part of the Roman Catholic Church until the sixteenth century. Upon separation from Rome some changes, influenced by the various continental Protestant Reformations, were made to the liturgical tradition of the Church of England. At the same time, the Church of England maintained other traditions such as the historic creeds of the Church, a hierarchical structure based on an episcopacy in apostolic succession, and doctrines including that of the communion of saints. Indeed, it would be impossible to sincerely profess the historic

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<sup>204</sup> A complete discussion of the history and development of authorized liturgical texts in Anglicanism is far beyond the scope of this thesis. For more on this subject in broad terms, see Bryan D. Spinks, *The Rise and Fall of the Incomparable Liturgy: The Book of Common Prayer, 1559-1906*, Alcuin Club Collections 92 (London: S.P.C.K., 2017); for a discussion of the BCP in a particularly Canadian context, see William R. Blott, *Blessing and Glory and Thanksgiving: The Growth of a Canadian Liturgy* (Toronto: Liturgy Canada, 1998).

<sup>205</sup> Anglican Church of Canada, ‘Canon XIV: The Book of Common Prayer’, accessed 12 July 2018, [https://www.anglican.ca/wp-content/uploads/214\\_canon\\_XIV.pdf](https://www.anglican.ca/wp-content/uploads/214_canon_XIV.pdf).

<sup>206</sup> Anglican Church of Canada, *The Book of Alternative Services*, 8.

creeds of the Church if one did not maintain the doctrine of the communion of saints. Because of this combination of theological, liturgical, and ecclesial influences, Anglicanism is sometimes referred to as “Catholic and Reformed.”<sup>207</sup>

Along with the maintenance of the doctrine of the communion of saints comes the sanctoral calendar of the church and its many festivals. We discussed in some detail in the first chapter how and why Christians have commemorated martyrs, and later other saints. To briefly recapitulate, we can turn to Robert Bartlett, who enumerates the seven reasons given by William of Auxerre, a French theologian of the twelfth and thirteen centuries, for why saints are commemorated in the liturgies of the Church:

1. “Because they celebrate feasts for us; for there is joy in heaven amongst the angels of God and the holy souls over one sinner who repents” (an adaptation of Luke 15.10).
2. “Their feast is ours; whence the Apostle says, ‘all things are ours, and we are Christ’s’” (an adaptation of 1 Corinthians 3.22-23).
3. “So that we should have them as intercessors.”
4. “So that we should imitate them.”
5. “To support hope, for if mortal men, similar to us, can be raised so high by their merits, we can too.”

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<sup>207</sup> Anglican Church of Canada, ‘A Brief History’, Anglican Church of Canada - About Us, accessed 12 July 2018, <http://www.anglican.ca/about/history/>.

6. “So that seeing their beauty and purity, a man may be ashamed of his sins and despise earthly things.”
7. “The chief and best cause is that in them we honour God alone.”<sup>208</sup>

William of Auxerre’s summary matches closely the theological rationale and practice behind the commemoration of martyrs as discussed in the first chapter. We can see in both early traditions and in Auxerre’s list, that the martyrs represent not only helpful stories and useful examples from the Church’s past, but also make up a present and active congregation within the Church with whom we interact. They celebrate feasts for us and we share in those feasts, they intercede for us and we see the effects of their intercession. Martyrs and the whole communion of saints are key to Anglican ecclesiology.

Since the religious reformations of the sixteenth century, there has been a variety of opinion among Anglicans on the activities of saints. Just what do they get up to in the life after this one? One of the most controversial points of this variance of opinion is whether or not saints can and will pray for those of us yet among the living and, even if they did, whether that prayer would have any effect. Some Anglicans prefer that saints and martyrs simply be historical examples of exceptional lives of faith, without any ongoing function or effect. Others believe strongly in the intercessory powers of the saints and this forms a key piece of their ecclesiological identity.

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<sup>208</sup> Bartlett, *Why Can the Dead Do Such Great Things?*, 113.

The ACC's discourse on eschatology and the communion of saints is not particularly robust. Given the strong influence of the œcumenical liturgical movement and its own preference for the sources and theology of the early church—perhaps extending through the first millennium—on the liturgical texts of the ACC today, and the common understanding in that period of saintly intercession, I am comfortable assuming that there is an understanding of some intercessory or, at the very least, non-specific participatory activity on the part of saints and martyrs in the ACC tradition. The idea of saintly intercession is not distantly related to the Anglican tradition of praying for the dead. If we are comfortable with prayer for the dead—as many of the litanies provided in ACC liturgical texts state—then why would we not also be comfortable asking the “very special dead” to pray for us? The intercessory expectation of saints is not that our prayers will cause them to directly intervene in our lives in a divine way—this power lies with God alone—but rather, we pray to the saints and ask them to remember us and our needs in their own prayers, just as we do with our yet-living brothers and sisters next to us in the liturgy. Mutual intercessory prayer is one of the natural aspects of Christian relationship.

Given the lack of a robust corpus of literature or ongoing discussion on the subject, while I am aware that the stance articulated in this thesis may not be a comfortable one for all members of the ACC, it is a stance that fits within ACC hagiography and ecclesiology as currently articulated in liturgies and other texts.<sup>209</sup> If the stance is uncomfortable it will,

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<sup>209</sup> Discussed in more detail in the following section on *For All the Saints*.

hopefully, prompt some of the discussion on hagiography and the communion of saints which is currently lacking from our larger theological discourse.

There is sometimes confusion around the liturgical language used when describing the liturgical commemoration of martyrs. “Commemoration” or “memorial” are forms of observance in liturgical jargon, as well as general terms for when a person or persons are brought to particular focus in a liturgy. This can be confusing enough, but these terms can also sound, particularly to those without a fluency in liturgical jargon, as though the mention of martyrs in the liturgy is reference to an event from the past, long gone and without current effect or consequence. As Robert Taft reminds us, nothing could be further from the truth:

In memorial we do not take a mythic trip into the past, nor do we drag the past into the present by repeating the primordial event in mythic drama. For the events we are dealing with are not myths but history.<sup>210</sup>

The martyrs are Christian history, and Christian history bears consequences in the present with which we must reckon. In the case of martyrs, it is primarily the characteristics described in the first chapter with which we engage, both as current congregations of the Church and with a view to our eschatological future: The remembrance of a Christlike death, their current place in heaven, their praise of God and intercession on our behalf, and their lives as examples to which we might aspire.

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<sup>210</sup> Taft, *Beyond East and West*, 16–17.

The ACC goes to significant lengths to nuance these characteristics of martyrs, not in the BCP or BAS, but in FAS. In the introduction to this book the rationale for remembering saints is laid out in careful detail. The commemoration of saints involves communion with the saints. This is not mere historical remembrance, but a real and active participation in their lives. Thus far, this seems in line with broader understandings of how the living faithful and saints interact. “[In the liturgy] the faithful experience a special case of synchronicity as heaven and earth seem to merge for a moment. The community of believers joins the choir of ‘angels and archangels’: in this way, a kind of liturgical ‘now’ is created, which for a while suspends the regular structure of diachronic time.”<sup>211</sup>

It is the life of saints after their earthly deaths where the ACC stakes out a claim, attributing it to the entire Anglican communion, which makes very careful, nuanced argument on the subject: “The Anglican communion does not commend saints to our remembrance because of their present state or status beyond the grave. It is for the sake of their evident righteousness while they lived in our midst that we give thanks to God for them, call them ‘saints,’ and pray for grace to follow their examples.”<sup>212</sup>

The introduction describes a surety that the spirits of the saints are with God in heaven, but that their earthly bodies remain here, awaiting the promise of resurrection at the last day.<sup>213</sup> However, the introduction also goes on to say “Our memorials and

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<sup>211</sup> Vos, ‘Communion of Saints’, 50.

<sup>212</sup> Anglican Church of Canada, *For All the Saints*, 18.

<sup>213</sup> Anglican Church of Canada, 18.

commemorations are not only an exercise in Christian history; they are also acts of companionship with those extraordinary friends of God whose spirits rejoice while their bodies rest in hope (Ps 16.9). The communion of saints is also communion with the saints.”<sup>214</sup> Perhaps this is an effort to articulate a theology of the communion of saints similar to the quote from Nienke Vos above, describing a “special case of synchronicity.”

As we will see in the analysis of liturgical texts for martyrial commemorations, the inheritance of a particular Western tradition as discussed in the first chapter and these ideas about saints articulated in FAS are often at odds. This does not make for an easy task for the authors of liturgical texts. Following on the principles of liturgical formation outlined in the second chapter, the liturgical texts appointed for use in the commemoration of martyrs should make reference to each of these points if the faithful participating in the liturgy are to leave with an adequate formation regarding martyrs and the communion of saints. In the case of the ACC and the introduction to FAS, it seems reasonable to allow for either a reference to the current work of the martyr—praise and intercession—and/or to their presence in the communion that we share.

### **Martyrial Propers in the ACC**

As mentioned earlier, the ACC has an official prayer book in the BCP, an alternative sacramentary in the BAS, and a supplement to the BAS of propers for holy days in FAS. The BCP and BAS/FAS represent different theological outlooks from significantly different

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<sup>214</sup> Anglican Church of Canada, 18–19.

historical periods. The BCP, though published in 1959 with some revision in 1962, still holds to much of the content of the 1662 Church of England *Book of Common Prayer*. The BAS/FAS are very much products of the œcumenical liturgical movement of the twentieth century and reflect this in their language and the theology that they represent. For these reasons, it seems most appropriate to examine the martyrial propers in the BCP and the BAS/FAS separately from one another.

In each case I have examined the readings and prayers set for each day and compared them to the criteria established in the first chapter regarding historic characteristics of martyrs and their relationship to the larger Church: a death which imitates that of Christ; a translation to heaven and the rewards which await martyrs there; martyrial activity of praise and intercession in heaven and/or reference to the presence of the martyrs in our shared communion; the role of martyrs as exemplars of Christian faith lived who are worthy of our commemoration and serve as models for us. In this chapter I present summative information about the proper prayers and readings; full listings of the analysis are presented in the tables on pages 102 and 103. I have attempted to include the broadest, most generous possible interpretation of the readings and prayers when determining whether or not they make reference to the four key characteristics outlined above.



The Book of Common Prayer

The BCP includes only one set of proper prayers and readings which are specifically designated for use on days of observance of martyrs.<sup>215</sup> There are two collects, of which either may be used, an epistle reading, and a gospel reading. There are also psalm portions designated for an introit and for reading between the lections, though the inclusion of these are at the discretion of the presider. This constitutes a full set of propers in a BCP eucharistic liturgy.

It is interesting to note that there are only three sets of proper prayers in the BCP which are explicitly martyrial: St Stephen the Martyr,<sup>216</sup> The Innocents (better known today as The Holy Innocents),<sup>217</sup> and the proper prayers common to all martyrs.<sup>218</sup> There is a fourth day, the feast of Ss Philip and James, which includes the subtitle “with Saint James the brother of the Lord, martyr.”<sup>219</sup> However, neither the readings nor the prayers appointed to the day, including the Collect of the Brethren of the Lord, make reference to James’ martyrdom.

The apostles and evangelists each have days of observance in the BCP and are traditionally numbered among the martyrs of the church, but the character of their proper prayers is very much that of apostolic work and example; any mention of their martyrdom

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<sup>215</sup> Anglican Church of Canada, *The Book of Common Prayer*, 310.

<sup>216</sup> Anglican Church of Canada, 108.

<sup>217</sup> Anglican Church of Canada, 111.

<sup>218</sup> Anglican Church of Canada, 310.

<sup>219</sup> Anglican Church of Canada, 274.

seems to be by comment on their particular legend, rather than a desire to present them in martyrial capacity. The feast of Ss Peter and Paul receives commemoration on both its appointed day, 29 June, and with alternate collect and readings throughout its octave. It is the only day considered in this thesis which includes observation of an octave.<sup>220</sup>

St John the Baptist has both his nativity and beheading marked in the calendar of the BCP. The proper prayers for the latter include some martyrial language, for obvious reasons. However, in both his nativity and beheading, St John the Baptist is invoked primarily in his role as the patron saint of Canada, including an optional second collect on these days for the nation.<sup>221</sup> (It is interesting to note that this patronage is entirely unmentioned in either the BAS or FAS.)

The historic grouping of St Stephen, St John, and the Holy Innocents on 26, 27, and 28 December, respectively, is maintained in the BCP calendar. This particular collection of martyrial festivals follows immediately after Christmas and deliberately so. The birth of Jesus Christ, the one of whom all martyrs are icons, is celebrated on 25 December. These three feasts each then represent one of three historic ways to martyrdom: St Stephen, in will and deed; St John, in will without deed; The Holy Innocents, in deed without will. There is evidence of this placement of martyrial feasts immediately adjacent to Christmas from as early as the first century in Rome.<sup>222</sup> In the BCP, however, St John is presented in his role

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<sup>220</sup> Anglican Church of Canada, 283–86.

<sup>221</sup> Anglican Church of Canada, 278.

<sup>222</sup> Bradshaw and Johnson, *The Origins of Feasts, Fasts and Seasons in Early Christianity*, 195.

as an evangelist, rather than a martyr, undoing one third of this historic Christological/martyriological connection in the calendar.<sup>223</sup>

Of the 18 feasts in the BCP calendar which might be classified as martyrs, seven include reference to a martyrial death; five include reference to the martyr's place in heaven; only one makes reference to the Church's benefit by their works now;<sup>224</sup> and seven make reference to the martyr's example to other Christians. It should be noted that while there are a number of days in the BCP calendar traditionally recognized by the Church as martyrs and which I have counted among these 18 opportunities, the authors of these liturgical texts were very clearly more interested in their roles as apostles and evangelists than as martyrs: Ss Andrew, Thomas, John, Matthias, Mark, Philip and James, Barnabas, Peter and Paul, James, Bartholomew, Matthew Luke, Simon and Jude, John the Baptist.

Of the three days which are explicitly marked out as martyrial days, all three make reference to a martyrial death and to their place in heaven. None of the three refer to the Church's benefit through their current works and only St Stephen and the common prayers for martyrs make reference to them as examples to the Church today. It would be exceptionally difficult to cast The Innocents, infant children martyred for fear that they might be the newborn Christ, as examples to be emulated.

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<sup>223</sup> Anglican Church of Canada, *The Book of Common Prayer*, 110.

<sup>224</sup> This is in the collect for the octave of the Ss. Peter and Paul on p. 285 of the BCP. The text reads "Grant unto thy Church that, as in the beginning it was enlightened by their teaching, so it may continue in the same unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ..." It is possible to interpret this as the Church benefiting from the ongoing teaching of Peter and Paul through their praise and intercession for us in heaven, though I am not convinced that this is what the authors of the BCP had in mind.

Of the eighteen opportunities in the BCP for liturgical formation about martyrs and martyrdom, none of them present all four of the criteria established in the first chapter and only six—just one third—present even two of the four criteria.

### *The Book of Alternative Services and For All the Saints*

The BAS and FAS include proper prayers and readings for 26 martyrial occasions. Two of these, in the BAS, are sets of common prayers for any martyrial day in the calendar. There is a list of readings for martyrial days from which to choose as the resident liturgical authority sees fit.<sup>225</sup> A comparison of these common readings with the fixed readings supplied in FAS for particular days shows that the former list served as the basis from which the latter readings would eventually be chosen. The use of common prayers and readings for recurring occasions is a long-standing one and would have been of great benefit in the ACC prior to the publication of FAS. It may still have use today in parishes where a tradition exists for commemoration of martyrs who are not a part of the national church's shared calendar.

The BAS and FAS make clear distinction between martyrs, apostles, and other categories of saints. The BCP ambiguity of whether St James ought to be best remembered as apostle or martyr is gone here. When examining the appointed prayers and readings for these days it is very important to note that the BAS supplies a variety of eucharistic prayers from which a presider may choose. The BAS supplies a preface for martyrs to be used in

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<sup>225</sup> Anglican Church of Canada, *For All the Saints*, 432–34, 440–41.

the eucharistic prayer, but of the prayers available in the BAS, only Eucharistic Prayer 3<sup>226</sup> is crafted in such a way as to accept the embolism of a preface. If the presider elects to use prayers 1, 2, 4, 5, or 6, this particular preface will not be heard in the liturgy. This is important as the preface for martyrs contains a significant dose of martyrial theology:

Blessed are you, gracious God, creator of heaven and earth; you are glorified in the assembly of your saints. All your martyrs bless you and praise you, confessing before the powers of this world the great name of your only Son. Therefore we join our voices with theirs, and with all who have served you in every age, to proclaim the glory of your name.<sup>227</sup>

Eucharistic Prayer 1 does not accommodate a proper preface, but does include a reference to the activity of all of the saints, presumably including martyrs, in its fixed preface: “Therefore, with [the prophets], and with all your saints who have served you in every age, we give thanks and raise our voices to proclaim the glory of your name.”<sup>228</sup> Similarly, Eucharistic Prayer 4 has only a fixed preface but includes a specific reference to the activity of martyrs in the liturgy.: “Therefore we praise you, joining with the heavenly chorus, with prophets, apostles, and martyrs, and with those in every generation who have looked to you in hope, to proclaim with them your glory, in their unending hymn.”<sup>229</sup> All three of these prefaces list the primary activity of the martyrs in heaven as singing the

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<sup>226</sup> Anglican Church of Canada, 198.

<sup>227</sup> Anglican Church of Canada, *The Book of Alternative Services*, 225.

<sup>228</sup> Anglican Church of Canada, 193.

<sup>229</sup> Anglican Church of Canada, 202.

praises of God and participating in the ongoing worship of the Church. This falls neatly in line with historic understandings of the role and activity of martyrs in heaven, as discussed in the first chapter.<sup>230</sup>

FAS also offers biographical information for each day in its calendar. However, the instruction for inclusion of this information is that it is optional, either offered before the liturgy proper begins, or in place of the homily. The effort to provide historically accurate biographical information, rather than theological commentary, is stressed in the instructions for its use. Because of the optional usage of the biographical material and its emphasis on archaeology rather than theology, it has not been considered in the analysis of proper prayers and readings presented later in this chapter.

Where propers for particular days are concerned, there are some interesting choices in the composition of prayers which are worth noting. For St Agnes, while the reading from Esther contains a supplication that God would turn mourning into rejoicing and the reading from Matthew includes a warning that the followers of Jesus will be hated for his name, Agnes's actual death is not mentioned in the prayers. She is twice named as a martyr and once as a holy servant; if one was unsure about the meaning of "martyr," there is broad room for incorrect assumption.<sup>231</sup>

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<sup>230</sup> It is worth noting that Eucharistic Prayer 6, which includes a particular intercessory component not found in the other eucharistic prayers, allows the optional insertion of acknowledgement of our prayer being joined with those of the saints—specifically named, if desired—in heaven. However, the optional nature of this section, left to the discretion of the presider, means this reference to the communion of saints is not reliably present in usages of Eucharistic Prayer 6.

<sup>231</sup> Anglican Church of Canada, *For All the Saints*, 61.

The propers for Justin, known commonly as Justin Martyr, other than naming him “blessed martyr Justin” in the Prayer after Communion, make no mention of any of the characteristics of a martyr outlined here.<sup>232</sup>

The propers for St Stephen, also known as Stephen the Protomartyr, include the reading from Acts detailing his death. Other than this, there is no use of the word “martyr,” nor any mention of the other characteristics of a martyr established in the first chapter. This is troubling given Stephen’s historic day on 26 December, placing him as one of the exemplars of martyrdom, following Christ in the sanctoral cycle. However, this historic trinity of martyrs was also effectively removed from the calendar in the BAS. Stephen, John, and Holy Innocents were all supplied with alternative days of observance in the BAS calendar: 3 August, 6 May, and 11 January, respectively. These alternative dates are clearly designated in both the BAS<sup>233</sup> and FAS<sup>234</sup> as the preferred dates, with the historic grouping in December a secondary option. There is no rationale offered in the BAS or FAS for this rearrangement of dates.

Of the 26 sets of martyrial propers offered in the BAS and FAS, 21 make reference to a martyr’s death. All 26 make reference to the martyr’s place in heaven, but only if Eucharistic Prayer 3 is used with its martyrial preface; if a different prayer is used only 13 make this reference. Only five of the martyrial propers make reference either to the martyr’s

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<sup>232</sup> Anglican Church of Canada, 183.

<sup>233</sup> Anglican Church of Canada, *The Book of Alternative Services*, 33.

<sup>234</sup> Anglican Church of Canada, *For All the Saints*, 36.

work in heaven or to our shared presence and communion with them, while 23 of them make reference to martyrs as examples to be emulated by living Christians.<sup>235</sup>

### Martyrs Who Are Not Martyrs in the Anglican Church of Canada

In the first chapter we discussed the various categories of saints who are not martyrs.

However, in the ACC calendar as laid out in BAS and FAS, there are a pair of men who are historically understood to be martyrs who are not commemorated as martyrs, rather as saints without a more specific category: Thomas Becket and William Laud.

William Laud was a seventeenth-century archbishop of Canterbury who was executed for the reforms he sought to bring about in the Church of England. Core to these reforms were discipline in the church and a sense of dignity in its liturgies. He believed strongly that beauty was key to the human experience of holiness and the divine. This ran strongly counter to the Puritan movement, present in England at the time, and won him much ire from his political opponents. He was unrelenting in his convictions about proper worship and approach to the praise of God and, for his troubles, was eventually arrested, tried, and executed.<sup>236</sup>

A Christian, murdered for his belief about the truth of God and orthodoxy—in its literal sense of “right worship”—would seem to fit the historic definition of a martyr, but the ACC did not reckon Laud as such in the printing of FAS.<sup>237</sup> Interestingly, when the

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<sup>235</sup> Details of this analysis are listed in the tables on pages 102 and 103.

<sup>236</sup> Anglican Church of Canada, *For All the Saints*, 44.

<sup>237</sup> Anglican Church of Canada, 45.



ACC published its online lectionary in 2018, William Laud was listed as a martyr. No other change to his proper prayers or readings was suggested, other than the use of the preface for martyrs with Eucharistic Prayer 3 and the liturgical colour of red, proper to martyrs, rather than the white of other saints.<sup>238</sup>

Thomas Becket was a twelfth-century archbishop of Canterbury who was murdered in the cathedral—at the altar in the midst of celebrating the mass, according to legend—for resisting the will of King Henry II. Henry hoped to rein in the power of the Church in England, but Becket refused to capitulate and defended the rights of the Church. As the story goes, in a drunken rant one day, Henry cried out “Who will rid me of this meddling priest?” Four of his barons opted to answer his question with action and rode to Canterbury, confronted Becket and, when he refused to heed them, killed him. As Becket collapsed, he said “I accept death for the Name of Jesus and his Church.”<sup>239</sup> Becket’s fame as a martyr spread across Europe quickly and pilgrims visit Canterbury to be present at the site of his martyrdom to this very day.

Again, like William Laud, a Christian, killed for his belief about the truth of Jesus Christ and his Church would seem to fit the definition of a martyr. However, Becket is not

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<sup>238</sup> Anglican Church of Canada, ‘William Laud’, Online Lectionary, 10 January 2018, <https://lectionary.anglican.ca/>.

<sup>239</sup> Anglican Church of Canada, *For All the Saints*, 382.

listed as one in the Canadian corpus of liturgical texts, nor has he, as of 29 December 2017, received a revision in the ACC online lectionary as Laud has.<sup>240</sup>

Interestingly, though not listed as a martyr, Thomas Becket's proper prayers and readings include mention of his death and, by it, his worthiness as an example of Christian life. William Laud's proper prayers and readings do not mention any of the martyrial characteristics, save the preface for martyrs if Eucharistic Prayer 3 is to be used on his day.

Why these two men were excluded from martyrial status in the ACC is unclear. Perhaps it is because the calendrical revisionists felt them to be more properly political martyrs than martyrs of faith. Or perhaps it is because there is a theological unease about naming Christians murdered by other Christians as martyrs. Whatever the reason in the first place, it appears Laud's status has been reconsidered by the ACC. Perhaps Thomas Becket's will be similarly changed one day.

## **Conclusions**

To present martyrdom in the liturgy is no easy task. We discussed in detail earlier the difficulty that martyrdom represented for the early church and the difficulties that it represents for congregations now. In spite of its complications and the difficulty it presents, martyrs and martyrdom were key to early Christian ideas about identity, ecclesiology,

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<sup>240</sup> Anglican Church of Canada, 'Thomas Beckett', Online Lectionary, 29 December 2017, <https://lectionary.anglican.ca/>.

soteriology, and communions, both eucharistic and of the saints. Martyrs represented the ideal Christian life in their deaths and were examples to all others.

The ACC understands itself as being in succession to the early church that grappled with these ideas and as the inheritor of these foundational martyriological ideas. One consequence of this is that the ACC must find ways to present this faith in its liturgies for the formation of its congregations. There is an historic understanding among Christians that there is a cost to discipleship that extends well beyond donations of time, talent, and treasure; to pledge one's life in baptism is to pledge one's whole life in all circumstances, including the possibility of and willingness to die for one's faith. Presenting martyrs and martyrdom, especially as examples to follow in one way or another, is uncomfortable and difficult; it is the "inescapable but repugnant" keystone of Christian life.<sup>241</sup> It is present as early in Christian life as the baptismal rite. In the blessing of the water, there is the explicit desire that those baptized in it be united to Christ in all ways, especially his death and resurrection: "Now sanctify this water, that your servants who are washed in it may be made one with Christ in his death and resurrection, to be cleansed and delivered from all sin."<sup>242</sup> Surely the martyrs are the finest exemplars of perfect unity to the death of Christ.

On the topic of martyrs and martyrdom, the BCP maintains an internal consistency. Each of the three days which it reckons as martyrial in nature contains

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<sup>241</sup> Moss, *The Other Christs*, 21.

<sup>242</sup> Anglican Church of Canada, *The Book of Alternative Services*, 157.

reference to the death and place in heaven of the martyr. The Innocents are not held up as an example, as discussed above, but the other two days are. Never is any mention made of the activity of martyrs in heaven, nor of their communion or presence with the worshipping church, but this absence of a key martyrial characteristic is consistent throughout the BCP, suggesting that its absence is intentional on the part of the authors.

The BAS/FAS includes far more martyrial occasions than the BCP and, perhaps as a result of greater opportunity, there are more inconsistencies to be noted. Most of the martyrial propers in the BAS/FAS include reference to a martyr's death and nearly all of them make reference to the martyr as an example worthy of emulation; only Stephen, Justin, and the Holy Innocents are missing from this latter category. As in the BCP, the lack of mention of the Holy Innocents as examples to be followed is not surprising; the absence of Stephen and Justin as examples of Christian life, however, do not have a clear explanation. If one assumes the use of Eucharistic Prayer 3 and the preface for martyrs, or eucharistic prayer 1 or 4 with their fixed prefaces, then every set of propers includes reference to the martyr's place in heaven; if another prayer is chosen this becomes a less prominent characteristic.

Finally, some, though far from all, of the proper prayers and readings make reference to the martyr's activity in heaven or their sharing in our communion or presence in our worship. It seems particularly strange that, after going to such lengths in the praenotanda on the nuances of Anglican hagiography in FAS to establish the ways in which

saints are and are not present and what they do and do not do, that so few of the martyrial properes would actually make use of these foundational statements. What is the source of anxiety about the characteristic of martyrs that would most concretely place us, today, in some sort of real contact with them? Do Canadian Anglicans of this era no longer desire John Baldovin's concrete bridge<sup>243</sup> between ourselves and the worship of heaven? Is it perhaps that the very possibility of this sort of contact, once comforting and empowering to Christians, is now frightening or unsettling and causes this piece of the martyrial puzzle to be left out so often?

Adding to this inconsistency are the cases of Laud and Becket, described in the publications as saints, Laud latterly as a martyr only in the online lectionary. Both are commonly known and understood as martyrs. In the case of Becket, the proper prayers and readings contain just as much reference to martyrial characteristics as many of the properly-identified martyrs in the calendar, despite his being classified as a saint, not a martyr. Is the inconsistency regarding these two men related to their unique status in the BAS/FAS calendar as the only martyrs who were martyred by other Christians? Perhaps there is a discomfort with the idea that Christians would murder their brothers and sisters in Christ over issues of doctrine; does this circumstance, not uncommon during the religious reformations of the sixteenth century, necessitate a fourth category or colour of martyr? Or are Christians murdered for their faith by other Christians who disagree not

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<sup>243</sup> Baldovin, 'On Feasting the Saints', 338.

martyrs, but another circumstance entirely? Or are Laud and Becket's classifications editorial oversights? The recent online change to Laud's classification might be evidence of this. Or is there some other motive for reassigning Laud and Becket's place in the hagiographical ranks?

The beliefs of the ACC are best expressed in its liturgies.<sup>244</sup> The liturgical texts regarding martyrs and martyrdom do not entirely reconcile with the non-liturgical statements offered on the subject. While the ACC's liturgical formation on the subject of martyrdom is not absent, there are some remarkable inconsistencies. These inconsistencies become more puzzling as they are investigated, given the theological rationales presented for what would seem to be a consistent doctrine of sainthood, if not martyrs and martyrdom more specifically. It is clear that much thought and work were put into crafting the detailed and nuanced theology of sainthood in the introduction to FAS, particularly regarding where saints are and what they get up to. Unfortunately, the greater portion of this work seems not to be shared with congregations in their liturgical participation; the prayers and readings appointed for various days contain almost none of this theology. This disconnected inconsistency between the doctrinal statements about saints, including martyrs, and what is presented in the text is concerning and calls to mind Mary Collins's thoughts from the second chapter on the importance of language in liturgy and the consequences of inadequate liturgical formation. How are Anglicans in twenty-first

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<sup>244</sup> Anglican Church of Canada, 'Our Beliefs'.

century Canada to use martyrs as examples in their own lives—one of the characteristics of martyrs that is almost entirely consistent in ACC liturgies—with an inadequate understanding of who and what they are or why they are important?

Rowan Williams suggests that the test of any church's innovations is whether or not they stand up to measurement against the commitments which make sense of martyrdom.<sup>245</sup> Martyrdom may not explicitly be one of the central points around which the ACC's theological thinking, liturgy, or living turns, but it is one of the cornerstones of the theological foundations on which the ACC is built. If the ACC's beliefs are best articulated in its liturgies, it seems evident that martyrs, the theology which surrounds them, their example to us, and especially our shared communion with them, are points of discomfort and anxiety. If Williams is right and martyrdom is a "lived exposition of taking Christ seriously as the one through whom the definition of God's people has been changed,"<sup>246</sup> then what does such discomfort and anxiety say about us today?

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<sup>245</sup> Williams, *Why Study the Past? The Quest for the Historical Church*, 57.

<sup>246</sup> Williams, 53.

Table 1: *Martyrial Days in The Book of Common Prayer*

Day	Introit	Epistle	Psalm	Gospel	Death	Heaven	Works	Example
Of a Martyr	Ps. 119. 161-168	1 Peter 4.12	116.11-14	Matthew 16.24	Y	Y	N	Y
St Andrew	Ps. 92.1-4	Romans 10.8	92.12-15	Matthew 4.18	N	N	N	Y
St Thomas	Ps. 139.1-11	Ephesians 2.19	30.1-5	John 20.24	N	N	N	N
St Stephen	Ps. 119.17-24	Acts 7.55	119.161-168	Matthew 23.24	Y	Y	N	Y
St John	Ps. 92.1-4	1 John 1.1	92.12-15	John 21.19	N	N	N	N
Holy Innocents	Ps. 8 1-2	Revelation 14.1	124.5-7	Matthew 2.13	Y	Y	N	N
St Matthias	Ps 16.1-7	Acts 1.15	80.8-11	John 15.1	N	N	N	N
St Mark	Ps. 45.1-4	Ephesians 4.11	119.161-168	Mark 13.1	N	N	N	N
Ss Philip and James (and James, martyr)	Ps. 33.1-6	James 1.1	89.5-8	John 14.1	N	N	N	Y
St Barnabas	Ps. 112	Acts 11.22	145.8-13	John 15.12	N	N	N	N
Ss Peter and Paul	Ps. 87 or 18.1-7	1 Peter 1.1	31.1-4 or 80.14-15	Matthew 16.13	N	N	N	N
Ss Peter and Paul - Octave	Ps. 87 or 18.1-7	1 Corinthians 3.18	31.1-4 or 80.14-15	John 21.15	Y	N	Y*	Y
St James	Ps. 15	Acts 11.27	149.1-6	Mark 10.32	Y	Y	N	Y
St Bartholomew	Ps. 116.11-18	Acts 1.10	97.10-12	Luke 22.24	N	N	N	N
St Matthew	Ps. 119.65-72	2 Corinthians 4.1	119.89-96	Matthew 9.9	N	N	N	N
St Luke	Ps. 45-1-4	2 Timothy 4.5	37.31-32	Luke 24.44	Y	Y	N	N
Ss Simon and Jude (and Jude)	Ps. 87	Revelation 21.10 or Jude 1	45.16-17	John 14.21	N	N	N	N
Beheading of St John the Baptist	Ps. 46-18	Isaiah 40.1	Ps. 119-161-168	Luke 1.57	Y	N	N	Y

\*The collect for the octave of the Ss Peter and Paul reads “Grant unto thy Church that, as in the beginning it was enlightened by their teaching, so it may continue in the same unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ...” It is possible to interpret this as the Church benefiting from the ongoing teaching of Peter and Paul through their praise and intercession for us in heaven, though I am not convinced that this is what the authors of the BCP had in mind.



Table 2: *Martyrial Days in The Book of Alternative Services and For All the Saints*

Pub.	Day	Epistle	Psalm	Gospel	Death	Heaven	Wrk/Prs	Example
BAS	Common of a Martyr 1	variable	variable	variable	Y	Y	N	Y
BAS	Common of a Martyr 2	variable	variable	variable	Y	Y	Y	Y
FAS	Cyprian	Philippians 3.7-11	116.10-17	John 10.11-16	Y	Y*	N	Y
FAS	John Patteson and Comps.	Isaiah 42.1-4, 6-7	69.31-38	John 12.24-26	Y	Y*	N	Y
FAS	Laurence	Colossians 1.24-29	69.31-36	Mark 8.34-38	Y	Y*	N	Y
FAS	Agnes	Esther 13.8-14, 17	116.1-8	Matthew 10.17-22	N	Y*	N	Y
FAS	Polycarp	2 Maccabees 6.18-28, 31	116.10-17	Matthew 20.20-23	Y	Y	N	Y
FAS	Vincent	Colossians 1.24-29	31.1-5	Luke 12.4-12	Y	Y*	N	Y
FAS	Martyrs of Japan	Colossians 1.24-29	69.5-18	Mark 8.34-38	Y	Y	N	Y
FAS	Perpetua and Comps.	2 Esdras 16.68-75 or Heb. 10.32-39	124	Matthew 24.9-14	Y	Y	Y	Y
FAS	George	Ephesians 6.10-20	18.1-7	Mark 8.34-38	N	Y	N	Y
FAS	Justin	1 Corinthians 1.18-25	31.1-5	John 12.44-50	N	Y*	N	N
FAS	Bernard Mizeki	Baruch 4.21-24	116.1-8	Luke 12.4-12	Y	Y	Y	Y
FAS	Martyrs of New Guinea	Revelation 7.13-17	116.1-8	Luke 12.4-12	Y	Y	Y	Y
FAS	Ignatius of Antioch	Romans 8.35-39	116.1-8	John 12.23-26	Y	Y*	N	Y
FAS	Janani Luwum and Mm. of Uganda	Hebrews 10.32-39	116.10-17	Matthew 24.9-14	Y	Y	Y	Y
FAS	Alban	Wisdom 3.1-9	63.1-8	Matthew 10.40-42	Y	Y	N	Y
FAS	Edmund	2 Kings 23.21-25, 29-30a	80.8-18	Matthew 10.34-39	Y	Y	N	Y
FAS	Boniface	Acts 20.17-28	94.12-19	Matthew 28.16-20	N	Y	N	Y
FAS	James Hannington and Comps.	1 Peter 3.14-18, 22	124	Matthew 10.16-22	Y	Y*	N	Y
FAS	Jean Brébeuf, Isaac Jogues, & Comps.	Romans 8.28-39	116.10-16	Luke 12.8-12	Y	Y*	N	Y
FAS	Martyrs of Lyons	2 Maccabees 7.1-14	61.1-5	Matthew 16.24-27	Y	Y	N	Y
FAS	Holy Innocents	Jeremiah 31.15-17 or Rev. 21.1-7	124	Matthew 2.13-18	Y	Y*	N	N
FAS	Kolbe and Bonhoeffer	1 Peter 4.12-14, 16-19	119.105-112	Jn 15.12-19, 26-27	Y	Y*	N	Y
FAS	Martyrs of the 20th Century	1 Peter 4.12-19	69.31-36	Mark 10.34-39	N	Y*	N	Y
FAS	Stephen	(Jr. 26.1-9, 12-15) Acts 6.8-7.2A, 51c-60	31.1-7, 16	Matthew 23.34-39	Y	Y*	N	N
FAS	William Laud <sup>†</sup>	2 Chronicles 24.18-22	73.23-29	Matthew 10.34-39	N	Y	N	N
FAS	Thomas Becket <sup>‡</sup>	2 Chronicles 24.17-22	69.7-14, 19-22	Matthew 10.34-39	Y	N	N	Y

\*Location in heaven is only mentioned in martyrial preface for EP 3 or fixed prefaces for EP1 or 4

<sup>†</sup>William Laud not marked as martyr in FAS, despite meeting criteria and being recognized in other churches. Recent online lectionary of the ACC has adjusted this.

<sup>‡</sup>Thomas Becket not marked as martyr in FAS, despite long history of being recognized as such in other churches.

## Conclusions

Martyrdom is a complicated subject in the twenty-first century. Especially in the West, where safety, freedom of religious practice, and a long history of Christian dominance has removed much of the immediate danger of martyrdom for most Christians. For the Anglican Church of Canada, where it is increasingly difficult to convince people to commit to even entering the building,<sup>247</sup> how is a conversation about willingness to die for one's faith supposed to proceed?

Equally complicated and delicate is the composition of liturgical texts. There is an immense amount of theology and history to be communicated in a real, present act of worship. The liturgy is never a classroom. But, as discussed in the second chapter, liturgy is always formative of those participating in it. It must also represent accurately that which is being liturgically celebrated. "Liturgical catechesis must always be based on the actualization of the mystery commemorated and celebrated. It must insist incessantly on the fact that to celebrate a mystery is not to celebrate a past but rather a "today" for a tomorrow."<sup>248</sup> We, as a church, should be mindful, when composing liturgical texts, of the tradition that has gone before and how the text being written reflects it—or does not reflect it. Whether reflecting or turning from tradition, liturgical texts must be composed with the

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<sup>247</sup> Michael Valpy, 'Anglican Church Facing the Threat of Extinction', Newspaper, The Globe and Mail, 28 April 2018, <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/british-columbia/anglican-church-facing-the-threat-of-extinction/article4352186/>.

<sup>248</sup> Adrien Nocent, 'Liturgical Catechesis of the Christian Year', *Worship* 51, no. 6 (1977): 497.

greatest intentionality. Rowan Williams, on discussing innovation in the church, says that the question for each proposed innovation in the life of the Church, presumably including liturgical texts, should be, “Is this something without which we could not, in the long run, make sense of the commitments that make sense of martyrdom?”<sup>249</sup>

And this is why the prayers and readings surrounding the commemoration of martyrs are so important. These figures are central to the identity, sacramentality, ecclesiology, and lives of early Christians. They make up, if not cornerstones, then foundational pillars of the tradition of the Western church. It is critical that our liturgical formation about martyrs and martyrdom be as clear, consistent, and fulsome as possible. As Robert Taft reminds us: “This is what we do in liturgy. We make anamnesis, memorial, of this dynamic saving power in our lives, to make it penetrate ever more into the depths of our being, for the building up of the Body of Christ.”<sup>250</sup>

Martyrs meet Gordon Lathrop’s criteria about juxtaposition as effective liturgical formation only when they are presented in their fullness. There needs to be a Christlike life which ends in death—often gory and painful—which is the result of faith, and which continues in the glorious rewards of heaven. Martyrs must also be actively praising God and interceding for living Christians or, in the case of the ACC’s careful nuance, present with us in our worship and sharing our communion. They must also serve as examples of

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<sup>249</sup> Williams, *Why Study the Past? The Quest for the Historical Church*, 57.

<sup>250</sup> Taft, *Beyond East and West*, 23–24.

Christlike lives. If fewer than this set of four core characteristics are presented, martyrdom is understood as less than what it truly is and, as a result, is less effective as an example of Christian life or as a formative experience. The tension that martyrs present is a perfect example of Lathrop's ideal formation: a gory death and a glorious reward in heaven; departure from one's family and friends and the opportunity to perpetually pray for and with them; a life that is wholly human and yet serves as an icon of Christ.<sup>251</sup> Unfortunately, it is an opportunity for formation that is often not realized to its greatest potential.

The ACC's formation as it regards martyrs and martyrdom in eucharistic liturgies is inconsistent. The reality of two official sacramentaries, each with their own historical context and theology means this is a much larger reality throughout the ACC. Particularly in the case of FAS, the inconsistency between the liturgical texts and the *praenotanda* which explains and informs them is troubling. This thesis is not an exercise in canon law, nor an effort to determine whether a liturgical text or its *praenotanda* is the determinative doctrinal statement in the ACC. Rather, it is an effort to identify a critical area of theology and Christian life, the liturgical formation about which could be improved.

I have undertaken this effort by first establishing the importance of martyrs and martyrdom in Christian faith, thought, teaching, and life through an examination of the history, development, and current uses of martyrdom, as well as characteristics common to martyrs. I then established the importance and power of liturgical formation through an

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<sup>251</sup> Lathrop, *Holy Things*, 33.

examination of the ways in which it shapes the beliefs, theology, understanding, and habits of liturgical participants. Finally, I compared the liturgical texts of the eucharistic liturgies of the ACC to the characteristics of martyrs established earlier, in light of the principles of liturgical formation examined in the second chapter.

Based on the established criteria, the liturgical formation of the ACC regarding martyrs and martyrdom is inconsistent. In the case of BAS/FAS it is inconsistent in how martyrs are presented in the liturgy and with regard to the statements made in the *praenotanda*. The BCP and BAS/FAS, both authorized liturgical texts in the ACC, also have inconsistencies when compared to one another.

It is possible that the seemingly conflicted attitude towards martyrs and martyrdom in the liturgical texts of the ACC has something to do with the paradoxes that martyrs represent. Dead but present; mourning but rejoicing; murdered but victorious. One aspect of this paradox, particularly in its liturgical manifestation, is well-articulated by Nienke Vos, in her effort to explain the temporal conflation which takes place in the liturgy:

As past, present, and future are conflated, the saint's actual presence may be experienced in the "eternal now" of the liturgical and/or narrational experience. Because the saint participates in the eternal communion of saints, which is celebrated in the liturgy and presupposed when holy stories are narrated, the act of remembrance, aiming at the re-enactment of holy action, implies the saint's sacred presence, temporarily suspending the physical absence of the deceased holy man or woman.<sup>252</sup>

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<sup>252</sup> Vos, 'Communion of Saints', 35.

Perhaps the martyrs, even recent ones, are too distant from the ACC and their paradoxical states make them seem ineffectual. What benefit could remembering a Christian murdered for his or her beliefs so distantly—whether the distance is geographical or chronological—have in my life? Perhaps that crude summary from Robin Darling Young is still true, but has turned around: too few of the investors in the ACC see martyrdom as presenting a healthy return.

Perhaps it is not that Anglicans in twenty-first century Canada believe martyrs to be too distant, too removed, too exotic, or too ineffectual to have much place in their lives or to be remembered often. Rather, perhaps there is a corporate remembrance of the past; of martyr festivals in shrines; of miraculous healings; of the burning of pagan temples; of brothers and sisters who were executed and took their places in the chorus of heaven to pray for us to great effect. And perhaps it is the memory of that intimacy, the meeting of heaven and earth, and the power present in those relationships that causes the distance. In an age of North American hyper-individualization, perhaps the idea of a concrete bridge between here and heaven, between me and God, is no longer desirable, but rather something to be kept at a safe arm's length.

As we saw earlier in the description of St Polycarp's martyrdom, eucharistic imagery is closely tied to the deaths of martyrs from the earliest records. The martyrs function as "other Christs" and while it is Christ's death and resurrection that are at the core of the eucharistic celebration, the martyrs may, once again, provide a concrete bridge.

If it is truly the desire of Christians participating in the eucharist and the sacrament of communion to share in the body and blood of Christ, then the inclusion of sound martyrial theology and commemoration in those eucharistic liturgies only makes sense.

The martyrs are Christians whose participation in the body and blood of Christ is so thorough, so complete, that even their bodily deaths serve as icons—momentary windows—on to the ongoing consequences of the death and resurrection of Christ. Max Johnson points out the unavoidable connection between the eucharist and martyrdom: As martyrs are burned, they smell of baking eucharistic bread, and as their bodies dry out in the flame, they pray that they might drink the blood of Christ for refreshment.<sup>253</sup> The martyr's offering of their body as witness to their faith is the logical and reasonable consequence of their baptismal covenant and living out a sacramental life as a member of the body of Christ. While this may seem a distant and exotic connection for many contemporary Christians, it is true that regardless of the particularities of its form, all those baptized into Christ are called to a transformation of life. This transformation is a reorientation of mindset and priorities which recognizes and displays the centrality of Christ in the life of the Christian. While this may not require execution for their faith, their lives should display the same ideals and principles which lead martyrs to embrace death over apostasy.

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<sup>253</sup> Johnson, 'Martyrs and the Mass: The Interpolation of the Narrative of Institution into the Anaphora', 6–9.

Given this profound and intimate connection between martyrdom, the ideals and potential cost of a Christian life, the doctrine of the incarnation, and the eucharist, what does the inconsistent treatment of martyrs in the eucharistic liturgies of the ACC say about its own understanding of ecclesiology and sacramentality? For that matter, what does it say about how Christians who are members of the ACC are to live their own lives? They have been baptized into the same body of Christ and share in the same sacramental banquet as the martyrs. Does the ACC have “other Christs” of its own? Does it want them?



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## Curriculum Vitae

<b>Name</b>	Andrew Rampton
<b>Education</b>	2017 - Master of Divinity Huron University College at the University of Western Ontario  2014 – BA (History) University of Manitoba
<b>Awards</b>	2017-18 – Province of Ontario Graduate Scholarship (MA)  2017 – The Dr. Jay Koyle Scholarship (Liturgical Theology) Faculty of Theology, Huron University College  2016 – The Dr. Jay Koyle Scholarship (Liturgical Theology) Faculty of Theology, Huron University College  2015 – The John Morden Scholarship Faculty of Theology, Huron University College  2014-17 – Dean’s Honour List Faculty of Theology, Huron University College  2012-14 – Dean’s Honour List Faculty of Arts (History), University of Manitoba  2013 – Lord Selkirk Association of Rupert’s Land Memorial Scholarship (Canadian History), University of Manitoba
<b>Presentations</b>	2017 – “Embodied Revelation: The Beauty of God in Congregational Singing” Faculty of Theology Annual Conference, Huron University College  2017 – “Digital Tools for Liturgical Life” Intl Anglican Liturgical Consultation, Regional Meeting, Leuven
<b>Panels</b>	2017 – “Bivocational Liturgists: Past, Present, and Future” Intl Anglican Liturgical Consultation, Regional Meeting, Leuven
<b>Publications</b>	2018 – “The Deacon’s Role in the Eucharist” Rupert’s Land News, March edition