

THE GOTH EUCCHARIST

Every worshipper is invited to receive communion. There is absolutely no requirement to receive and blessings will be given if preferred. The atmosphere of the service is an intimate one, the congregation are seated in a semi circle around the altar. Gothic dress is encouraged on the part of the congregation. The priest wears a cassock alb and cope, changing into a chasuble after the peace. The altar is fully dressed. Any servers are dressed in cassocks. The service takes place entirely by candlelight with secular music played on arrival (normally by CD) There is no, or very minimal, electric lighting Incense is burnt in a brazier on the altar.

The paschal candle is placed in the centre of the congregation. There are five other candles near the paschal candle.

It is lit, by the celebrant:

‘In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made. In him was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.’

Opening Sentences:

‘If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your right hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast. If I say “Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me.” even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you. Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts, See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.’ (Psalm 139 vv.9-12,23-24.)

We gather tonight in the presence of God, to honour his Name, to listen to his Word and to remember his sacrifice.

A Secular track is played on CD.

**God of all care and compassion
you take us through deep waters
but never abandon us in the storm;
we walk in the dark
but you never leave us without your light.
Be with us in the night of our anxiety
and in the day of our assertions
that we may keep faith with each other
as you forever keep your faith with us,
through Jesus Christ, Our Lord. Amen.**

The First Reading

The first candle is lit, by a member of the congregation:

May light shine in the darkness for all who suffer from depression and despair, for the unwanted and the unloved, and for those whom we find it hard to love.

The Second Reading (normally this is a secular reading)

The second candle is lit, by a member of the congregation

May light shine in the darkness for all those have lost their way in life, where confusion has conquered confidence, the harshness of reality has diminished hope, for those whose lives are surrounded by uncertainty, for the anxious and the abused, those who struggle to go on with life, hoping that their prayer for happiness will be heard.

The Gospel Reading

The Homily

The Affirmation of Faith

**We believe in God above us,
Maker and Sustainer of life,
Of sun and moon,
Of water and earth.
Of male and female.
We believe in God beside us,
Jesus Christ, the word made flesh,**

**born of a woman's womb,
servant of the poor.
He came to draw all humanity to himself,
The troubled, the terrified,
The doubtful and the disillusioned.
He was tortured and nailed to a tree.
A man of sorrows, he died forsaken.
He descended into the earth to the place of death.
On the third day he rose from the tomb.
He ascended into heaven to be forever with us.
And His Kingdom will come on earth.
We believe in God within us,
The Holy Spirit of Pentecostal fire,
The life-giving breath of the church,
the Spirit of Healing and Forgiveness
and the Source of the Resurrection and everlasting life. Amen.**

The Intercessions concluding with The Lord's Prayer

As our Saviour taught us, so we pray:

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever.
Amen.**

The third candle is lit, by a member of the congregation:

May light shine in the darkness for the world. For those whose sufferings are beyond our understanding. The child in Africa who will die tonight from starvation, The homeless stranger who is lost in the richest city, The woman in the Middle East who dares not show her face, The family in Asia for whom the new day is a day of exploitation, the tribe in Australasia who have been forgotten.

The Confession and Absolution

The Lord God does not judge as mortals judge. Mortals judge by appearances but the Lord God judges by the heart.

Lord God, You have searched me and known me. Strip from me the cloak of darkness with which I cover my life, Cleanse me from the stains of my sins.

From my apathy and my arrogance, my deceit and my delusions, my petulance and my prejudices, from the sickness which poisons my love for you and your world. Forgive me Father, grant to me the courage I need to receive your forgiveness and renew my life.

May the grace of The Father, The Son, and the Spirit rest upon you, pardon and deliver you from all our sins and restore within you the image of His glory. Amen.

The Peace

**We are God's children, We are made in His image,
We are brothers and sisters together in the Lord Jesus Christ.
We are one together through the power of the Holy Spirit.
We live to love each other, to care and be compassionate to all.
In this common strength we share God's peace.**

The peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be always with you.
And also with you.

We exchange the peace with either a handshake, a kiss or an embrace. The altar is prepared.

Hear us, O Christ, and breathe your Spirit upon us. Strengthen us by this sacrament, vibrant with your life, healing, renewing and making us whole, so we may come before your throne, to give ourselves to your service.

The fourth candle is lit, by a member of the congregation;

May light shine in the darkness for the dead and for those for whom this night will be their last, for all who ache with the pain of grieving, for those for whom grief is a raping of the soul, who cry in despair at the passing of one who was much beloved.

One of the following Eucharistic Prayers are used:

(A)

The Spirit of the Lord is Here
The Spirit of the Lord is with us

Open your Hearts to His Grace
We open them to our Lord.

Let us offer ourselves to the Lord our God.
It is right to fall on our knees before Him.

You took our pain upon yourself on the cross. You laid down your own life so we might live. You embraced our anger and abandonment with the words 'My God, My God, why have you forsaken me' And Through this suffering you opened a new world of wonder, a life we can barely conceive, a life for which we long, A life that is everlasting. You opened the door of heaven, the prospect of paradise, where we find our final home. And so, alongside the angels and the archangels and all who are one with you we honour you with awe and wonder saying:

Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Glory be to you, O Lord most High. Blessed is he that comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the Highest.

We present before you, Lord God Almighty this bread and wine, remembering the last hours of the life of your only Son. Before his torture and his execution he embraced us as his own. With those with whom he spent his last hours on earth, in the presence of his disciples, he secured for us our salvation.

Before he was betrayed, denied and abandoned he displayed the extent of his love, his desire to draw all people to himself. He broke bread as his life was about to be broken and said 'This is my body, do this, in remembrance of me.' He poured wine and washed away our sins, saying. 'This is my blood, which is shed for you and for many so you receive my Father's forgiveness and receive the fullness of life. Drink this in remembrance of me. At one with the Christ, whose crucifixion we commemorate tonight, whose promise of eternal life and happiness we long for. We declare again his overcoming of death, his ascension into Heaven and his promise to come again at the end of all creation. Great is the Mystery of Faith,

Christ has died, Christ is Risen, Christ will come Again.

Heavenly Father, pour upon us the power of your Spirit, As we eat this bread and drink this wine in your presence, may we be at one with your son, our Risen Lord and Master, Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

(B)

The Lord be with you
and also with you.

Lift up your hearts.
We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give thanks and praise.

You were born in Bethlehem, from the moment of your birth you became a victim. Throughout your childhood you watched the cruelty of the world, taking flight to fight for your own life. You were baptised in the River Jordan as God's true Son, upon whom His favour rests. As a man you championed the cause of the poor and the persecuted, You gave hope when all hope had gone, life when loss seemed overwhelming, and embraced the darkest night of our despair. The world treated you with hate, but you healed it through your humility. You were the suffering servant, the lamb to the slaughter, the innocent victim, the scapegoat of those you came to save. You are the Creator, who paid the ultimate price for your people. Confusing and confounding our expectations you rose from the grave and gave us the promise of eternal life, where all iniquity and injustice will be banished, where suffering and servility will be stripped away, where we will be truly happy, at peace and at one with you. In the company of the heavenly host, joining our voices with the angels we praise you God, saying;

Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Glory be to you, O Lord most High. Blessed is he that comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the Highest.

You spurned the rich and the powerful and drew alongside those whom society had rejected. You were the friend of sinners and, for their sins, you were sacrificed. You became a common criminal, flogged and forsaken misrepresented and misunderstood. You were killed on a cross. You knew this would happen but you gave no resistance. You passed over our own inner pains, and prophesied your passing. You shared bread and wine with your friends. Breaking the bread; You said: 'This is my body, receive it in remembrance of me'. In the same way, after the last supper, You poured wine and said 'This is my blood, receive it in remembrance of me.' In the Garden of Gethsemane your heart was broken, but you did not abandon us. Those around you fled as you were murdered before the masses.
Great is the mystery of Faith

**Christ was crucified.
Redemption was restored
The Lord lives again.**

Pour upon us Father your grace, so that through the strength of your Spirit, we may enter into this sacrifice and share with the world, the transforming power of your love. Amen.

Invitation to Communion

**Lord Jesus Christ, the spirit of timeless wisdom,
Your kindness melts my hard, cold soul.
Handsome lover, selfless giver,
Your beauty fills my dull, sad eyes.
I am yours, you made me.
I am your, you called me,
I am yours, you saved me,
I am yours, you loved me,
Hold me to you so I am never lost.**

**Give me death, give me life,
Give me sickness, give me health,**

**Give me honour, give me shame,
Give me weakness, give me strength.
I will have whatever you give,
That I might be with you.**
(After Teresa of Avila)

*The Distribution, during which a secular track is played on CD.
The Evening Collect One of these prayers is said.*

Lighten our darkness, Lord we pray, and in your great mercy defend us from all perils and dangers of this night, for the love of your only Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

Be present, O merciful God, and protect us through the silent hours of this night, so that we who are wearied by the changes and chances of this fleeting world, may repose upon thy eternal changelessness; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

**Father of all,
we give you thanks and praise,
that when we were still far off
you met us in your Son and brought us home.
Dying and living, he declared your love,
gave us grace, and opened the gate of glory.
May we who share Christ's body live his risen life;
we who drink his cup bring life to others;
we whom the Spirit lights give light to the world.
Keep us firm in the hope you have set before us,
so we and all your children shall be free,
and the whole earth live to praise your name;
through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

The fifth candle is lit, by the celebrant, for the future.

May this light burn for a better life, a life we commit ourselves to, a life in which the glamour of evil is renounced, a life in which we give ourselves to God's service, a life of love.

The Blessing

Go, and know that the Lord goes with you; Let him lead you each day into the quiet place of your heart, where He will speak with you; know that He loves you and watches over you – that He listens to you in gentle

understanding, that He is with you always, wherever you are and however you may feel, and may the Blessing of God, the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit, be with you, strengthening you in God's service. Amen.

A secular piece of music is played.

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