

The Conduct of the Service by Piepkorn and McClean

Preface to the 2006 Edition

It has been nearly three years since our last reprint of Piepkorn and McClean. That second run sold out as quickly as the first and we realized immediately that we simply had to get more serious. But we were in the throes of other projects and parish work, and along the way Rev. Frese followed Piepkorn into the US Army chaplaincy and moved overseas. Yet by the grace of God, late as it is, this work is finally done.

Once again, we have not changed or “corrected” either Piepkorn or McClean. A revision of these works, like unto McClean’s relationship to Piepkorn, would be quite useful. But part of understanding the liturgy is understanding its development. Careful readers of the Orders for Holy Communion in the Missouri Synod’s 1981 Lutheran Worship and the 2006 Lutheran Service Book will see Piepkorn’s influence. Those who can read between the lines and see the slow awakening we have undergone will also understand better why implementing higher ceremony and deliberate reverence, or even weekly Eucharist, can be a painful process. Reading Piepkorn and McClean teaches patience even as it teaches rites, rubrics, and ceremony. For every journey is informed by how it began. Our journey is not yet ended. Our learning is not yet complete. These books still have something to teach us, and part of that lesson is that we are on a journey and can never sit back and accept the status quo. Thus I find everything I wrote in the 2003 Preface to still be true.

What we have done with this edition is to try and make a better book. We have completely reformatted the text and placed it into a more convenient size and layout. We have cleaned up the diagrams and added some pictures.

Mr. Steve Blakey, the owner of BB Design and long-time elder at Redeemer, donated a great deal of time and expertise this round. Volunteer proof-readers, Michael Grooms, Sam Powell, Charles Lehmann, and Deacon David Muehlenbruch also helped, as did Heidi Mueller and Adriane Dorr. Once again Fr. Charles McClean has generously granted us permission to reprint his work, but retains the copyright.

It is our prayer that the knowledge and piety contained in these pages would be used by God for the edification of His people.

The Feast of St. Lucy, Virgin, Martyr
Anno + Domini 2006

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Preface to the 2003 Edition

Legend has it that the Rev'd Dr. Arthur Carl Piepkorn found "how-to" books slightly distasteful. He was, above all, a theologian. He preferred to talk about what the Liturgy was confessing and the witness of heaven as opposed to describing the terrestrial reality of how the Celebrant held his hands. Yet to this day students and pastors are looking for these mundane descriptions. Within the Anglican Communion one can find such descriptions in Lamburn's Ritual Notes and within the Roman Communion, a Pre-Vatican II description of Ceremony is still available in Fortescue's monumental work, *The Ceremonies of the Roman Rite*. But to where do the Lutheran heirs of the Common Service and Luther's Latin Mass go? A specifically Lutheran treatment and description is still hard to find.

Most of Piepkorn's students had little experience with the ceremony, reverence, and decor that flowed from him so naturally. They recognized in his liturgical actions something of the Church that they wanted to imitate. Fortunately for us they continued to press him, until finally he relented and produced *The Conduct of the Service*, revised in 1965. It was printed by the Concordia Seminary print shop in St. Louis and sold in the seminary bookstore. He wrote it for his students, at their insistence. He never promoted it. And thus, it never enjoyed widespread dissemination and was quickly lost to the Church. Over the years it has been much sought after and much photocopied, but the copies that still exist are mostly torn and dog-eared.

When he finally acquiesced to their demands, his training and preference for systematics showed itself. He came at the description of ceremonies in a unique and systematic way. He went after the rules. The rules he used are the rubrics prescribed in *The Lutheran Hymnal* of 1941 and in the companion volume for that Hymnal, *The Lutheran Liturgy*. We have reproduced the latter in an appendix for easy reference. Incidentally, those rubrics have never been replaced by the LCMS. Unless they are explicitly contradicted, replaced, or restated in new Rites provided by the Commission on Worship, they are STILL the guide for the conduct of the Services in our churches. Where they have been updated and revised, Piepkorn's descriptions and explanations tend to make even more sense. Thus, this is the best work up to our day on the practical execution of liturgy in the LCMS.

With that in mind we are making this volume available to the Church again in this durable format with additional features that were not in the original. We have not changed a single word, mind you, but we did expand the paragraph numbers, add page numbers, a table of contents, and an index. We have done this in order to make it a more useful reference tool, and, though Piepkorn may have cringed at the thought, a handier "how-to" book. Like his students then, we still desire to learn from him and his piety.

The other part of this volume is the Rev'd Father Charles McClean's update and revision of Piepkorn's work entitled *The Conduct of the Services* (1972). McClean's reworking of Piepkorn is useful in several respects. Piepkorn only explained the Church's

main Service, that of Holy Communion (TLH page 15). McClean expands that by adding commentary, explanation, and description for the Orders of Matins and Vespers. He also added explanations and descriptions for variables within the main Service, including varying configurations of assistants and servers and how they might be utilized in the Chancel, as well as how to make use of a free-standing altar. What students and pastors have loved most about McClean's revision over the years, and which is included here as well, are the helpful diagrams and illustrations.

Neither did we change a word of McClean's work. We did, however, expand his table of contents. We also eliminated two appendices from the original. They explained the conduct of the services in Worship Supplement 1969 and those services have mostly fallen out of use.

It is our prayer that these words would again serve the Church and help unclutter Her Services from things that hinder and distract God's people from His gifts.

The Feast of the Resurrection
Anno + Domini 2003

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