Through a study of the Roman Missal and the Book of Common Prayer, we see the liturgical contrasts between the Catholic and Anglican faiths, brought by the Reformation in 16th and 17th century Europe.

The Roman Missal and the Book of Common Prayer

A Missal is a liturgical book that is used in Catholic worship services. The version of the missal found in this study is the 1540 version produced by the Roman Catholic Church in Milan, Italy. This missal was published in Latin. The publication date of this book came after the division between the Church of England in 1534. Similarly, as found in the Book of Common Prayer, this missal also contains a schedule of Catholic masses that were to be conducted during various stages of the year. It was used in church services by the members of the clergy, as they were primarily the only people that studied and understood Latin. The Catholic clergy also performed the version of plainchant interspersed throughout the book. Also found within the wooden binding is a handwritten note in Latin.

The Book of Common Prayer is a prayer book used in Anglican worship services. The original book, which was published in 1549 in the reign of Edward VI, was a product of the English Reformation following the break from Rome. The version cited in this study is the 1640 version published by Robert Washington Oats. The prayer book contains the words of structured liturgical services of worship. The introductory section of the book include the orders for baptism and confirmation, matrimony, visitation of the sick, and funeral services. The section titled “the prayers” lays out a month by month schedule for daily Morning and Evening Prayer. Each day is divided into lessons which would include a Psalm, and a reading from the Old Testament, Apocalypse, and or the New Testament which were included in the Book of Common Prayer. Rounded in this book, with the Book of Common Prayer, are the 1612 Geneva Bible, as well as a section of psalms.

Plainchant in the worship services

The music of Mass, as found in both of these texts, was originally named Gregorian Chant, after Roman Catholic Pope Gregory I in 540-604. Its proper name is Plainchant or Plain-song, stemming from the Latin term, cantus planus. Chanting was not meant to comfort and reassure the listener and participant; it was highly demanding and physically challenging on the monks at that time. Chants were not seen as a musical performance for the congregation. It was an outreach to the Almighty for grace, forgiveness, hope, and help. They were sung memorized from the heart, and mostly out of the book of Psalms. When the Church of England broke off from the Roman Catholic church, they took a similar structure to their church worship, but changed most of the liturgy.

• Figures in written music, called NEUMES, were named after the Greek word neuma, meaning gesture or sign. Four lines were in place with lines “F” and “C” often noted with letters or colors. Some scripts placed letter-cliffs aside every staff line.

This was started by Guido of Arezzo around 1030AD. The first known book printed this way was in Rome 1071.

• Neumes do not indicate pitch precisely, nor do they communicate measurable rhythmic values.” This is why psalms and prayers were able to be spoken and chant together.

This musical notation has three degrees of pitch in the medieval plainsong:

1. Neumatic - Small Phrases of notes (between 2-15) accompany each syllable
2. Melismatic - The melody expands into a layered phrase on a single syllable
3. Syllabic - each syllable has a corresponding note

During the near 100 year gap between these two books there is an obvious evolution of music and its notation. The five staff lines and neume shape, as found in the Book of Common Prayer, are some of these differences. Written in the Middle Ages, the book is the schedule of when songs would be sung throughout the day and during mass. (see image 3) A psalm, scripture, or greeting was sung by a Priest or congregation alone or in unison.

The Mass

became more important to witness the process of creation. Writing the elevation and worshiping through prayer was often believed to make you a more devout Christian.

For those worshipping in the Church of England, Mass was more focused on lessons from the New and Old Testament that would be read to them in an important part of their service was the Morning and Evening Prayer that occurred daily. The Protestant Mass also consisted of what is called the Divine Office which included Plain Chants throughout the service.

The Holiday Calendar

The Book of Common Prayer contains a schedule of all Protestant Holy Days in their order. During this time of reformation, holidays, created disputes among reformers as they each shared opinion about the godliness of their worship. Many accused them as being purely superstitious, not holy. In some areas, law enforcement was put in place to maintain observation of these holidays. Others believed punishment for disobedience came from a heavenly manifestation.

One example was in 1589 when an ale wife, making no exception of days, would need brew upon St Mark’s day, but lo, the marvelous days, would be a day set aside by the Church of Rome. The Christmas calendar consisted of over 100 Holy Days dedicated to the Saints and religious celebrations. In 1536, King Henry VIII decisively cut down the number of Holy Days to prevent men from becoming slothful and idle. Holy Days, Festivals, Feasts and Fasts were scheduled throughout the year, avoiding the days of labor necessary for the livelihoods of the community. July 1 through September 29 was strictly untouched by Holiday celebration because of the harvest.

Many holidays came from pagan holidays, which was of great concern to the Reformers. Most of the days they split from the church of Rome. The Christian calendar consisted of over 100 Holy Days dedicated to the Saints and religious celebrations. In 1536, King Henry VIII decisively cut down the number of Holy Days to prevent men from becoming slothful and idle. Holy Days, Festivals, Feasts and Fasts were scheduled throughout the year, avoiding the days of labor necessary for the livelihoods of the community. July 1 through September 29 was strictly untouched by Holiday celebration because of the harvest.

The official calendar began 27 holy days:

• Christmas (sung: The Angel's song) (December 25)
• Epiphany (January 6, Twelfth day)
• Baptism of Our Lord Jesus Christ (January 1)
• Epiphany of Our Lord Jesus Christ (January 6)
• Epiphany of the Blessed Virgin (February 3, Candlemas)
• St Matthew the Apostle (February 24)
• Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin (March 25, Lady Day)
• St Mark the Evangelist (April 25)
• St Philip and James the Apostle (May 1, May Day)
• Ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ (May 30th)
• Nativity of St John the Baptist (June 24, Midsummer day)
• St Peter the Apostle (June 29)
• St James the Apostle (July 25)
• St Bartholomew the Apostle (August 24)
• St Matthew the Apostle (September 21)
• St Michael the Archangel (September 29, Michaelmas)
• St Luke the Evangelist (October 18)
• SS Simon and Jude the Apostles (October 28)
• All Saints (November 1)
• St Andrew the Apostle (November 30)
• St Thomas the Apostle (December 21)
• Nativity of our Lord (December 25)
• St Stephen the Martyr (December 26)
• St John the Evangelist (December 27)
• Holy Innocents (December 28, Chilidren's Day)

Access to Holy Texts

In the Early Modern Period, few people had access to a bible. Only select men with clerical authority were given access to the Latin text of the Roman Missal. Books were very expensive, restricting its availability; a complete bible could cost over a month of wages for a typical artisan. Education was also expensive, and only offered to the elite, meaning primarily wealthy people could read and write. In the Anglican church, the Bible was seen as the ultimate source of truth, where all Christians could have access to its words. In the Catholic Church, oral and visual modes of communication were implemented: including preaching, confession, music, images, and rites. Catholic lay members used the bible as a way to retain information that had already been learned through other sources.

People and Worship

For the people of this time, worship was a daily and common occurrence to represent how devout one was. Everyone in the community was involved in Mass which occurred several times throughout the day. Now, often a person’s attendance at Mass showed how devout one was. Some community members even went to Mass several times a day. Those that were involved with the Mass and daily worship were those of wealth, power, influence, and standing. This could be an “individual, family, or large group” such as the gilds. Individuals with these qualities could influence what prayers were said, how many candles were lit the type and amount of artwork, and who could get buried in the church/parish.

Conclusion

Through a study of the Roman Missal and the Book of Common Prayer, we see the liturgical contrasts brought by the Reformation in 16th and 17th century Europe. This time brought change in who had access to these holy books of scripture. The Catholic clergy continued to preach in Latin, while the Anglican Church worshipped in the vernacular of the lay membership. The Christian calendar had made its way into the daily routines of all participants in the church. This thesis contains evidence of how this reformation influenced ceremonial worship, singing, prayer, and holidays in the Anglican and Catholic faiths.