



Liturgical Thought

EXPLANATION AND GUIDE TO THE LUTHERAN LITURGY¹

Why does the pastor / celebrant hold the Host aloft during the Pax Domini?

Facing the congregation (Here at Redford we have a **“free standing”** altar behind which I stand during the celebration of the Sacrament of the Altar. In other locations the altar is against the wall in the direction of **“liturgical east”** and requires the celebrant to turn to face the congregation.) during the **“Pax Domini”** (the **“Peace of the LORD”**) and holding the consecrated wine in the chalice in his left hand and the consecrated host in his right hand, the celebrant makes the Sign of the Cross with the host and chants, **“The peace of the LORD be with you always.”** These words reflect the words the risen **Christ gave to His disciples** when He first appeared to them in the locked room after His death and resurrection (St. John 20:19-20).

With these words our **LORD** put away their sins (even their sin of unbelief) granting them forgiveness, even as He demonstrated in His suffering and death by crucifixion and His triumphant resurrection. When these words are repeated and the elements are held aloft, the celebrant is making a clear connection between these words and the eternal peace won for us in His bodily death and the shedding of His Blood—the very same Body and Blood given in this blessed and holy Sacrament.

✠✠✠ Soli Deo Gloria ✠✠✠

¹ Much of this series on the Liturgy of the Church is found in *Why? A Layman's Guide to the Liturgy*, by Rev. Burnell F. Eckardt Jr., Repristination Press, (Malone, TX.), and first published in *Gottesdienst, The Journal of Lutheran Liturgy*, in a series by the same name between the years 1985-2005. Used by permission.