



Nathan P. Chase, Ph.D. (March 19, 1990-March 1, 2025)

Nathan Chase was baptized and formed in the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod, and at a young age became interested in its liturgical reform, particularly early twentieth-century developments and the work of Arthur Carl Piepkorn. After his formation at Jesuit College Preparatory School in Dallas and Boston College, he came into full communion with the Roman Catholic Church. He continued to be very interested in liturgical renewal, as well as ecumenical relationships.

I met Nathan when he enrolled in St John's Seminary · School of Theology in 2011. My first impressions were of his enthusiasm for his work, his pastoral sensitivity and depth, and his devastatingly comprehensive knowledge of anaphoral history – including a historiographic and methodological analysis of how that history had been made. His interest in the methods of liturgical studies animated all his publications and united his various interests in the field, which, in addition to the history of the Eucharist, included church orders and early Egyptian liturgy; the non-Roman Western Rites, especially the Hispano-Mozarabic Rite; Christian art and architecture; chrism and Christian initiation; time and space; inculturation; contemporary liturgical renewal and ecumenical dialogue; the role of the [senses](#) in liturgy; and many, many other things.

After two degrees at St John's, Nathan got an advanced Master's degree at KU Leuven in Belgium, and then came to Notre Dame to work with Maxwell Johnson, who he loved and revered. Though he worked on a number of different projects at Notre Dame, including the Baptisteries of the Ancient World grant and catalogue with Robin Jensen and Nathan Dennis, he wrote his dissertation work, as he had always intended, on the Barcelona Papyrus and its implications for anaphoral history (published as a monograph with Brill in 2023). He finished his Ph.D. in 2020 and was hired at Aquinas Institute in St. Louis, where he has served as an assistant professor in sacramental and liturgical theology ever since.

Nathan was passionate about liturgical renewal and its foundation in the history of Christian practice. He was interested in the pastoral implications of liturgical studies, for example in his work at the [PrayTell blog](#). He loved to [travel](#) and cared about seeing the on-the-ground places where liturgical history had been made. He was also a dedicated and generous collaborator who developed heartfelt friendships and co-authored and -edited numerous projects. For him the friendships and the scholarly work were intertwined: though extraordinarily productive as a scholar, he was even more remarkable in his personal generosity, always remembering that we are persons first, scholars second.

Nathan was always a man of deep faith, and that faith carried him through the struggles of over a year of treatment for leukemia. His colleagues at Aquinas Institute, as well as throughout the world,

were also deeply supportive, and he treasured the love he received. He understood the hope and disappointment, the physical and emotional pain associated with the disease and with his long term confinement, as a participation in Christ's Paschal Mystery. He rarely complained and was a deep support to me personally and his other friends and family, even as he stretched himself to accept help – always a challenge for him. He continued to do what he loved throughout his treatment, with several books and articles still forthcoming. He remotely introduced Teresa Berger's Berakah address at the North American Academy of Liturgy 2025, a vulnerable moment as he was visibly ill. He was asked to contribute the junior scholar's perspective for the 2026 100th Anniversary edition of *Worship* and finished it, knowing he might be running out of time. His passion project in his last months was the production of an Open Access Exultet Scroll modeled on the medieval Exultet rolls but intended for contemporary church use for the proclamation of the Easter Vigil. This project, one of his last, shows the deep intersection of his love for liturgical history and of the church.

In his last day Nathan consoled his friends and family with his deep hope in Christ and his love for his family, friends and professional colleagues, and indeed the whole of creation. He left lucidly and willingly to go to God and spoke his profound hopes for the theological discipline, and especially for early liturgical history, which was so dear to him. He was only 34, but he left us eight books (three monographs, five co-authored or co-edited books, three of which are forthcoming), 27 peer-reviewed journal articles (including several interdisciplinary co-authored works), the Sensory Liturgy open access experimental pedagogical project, wisdom, and precious memories. He will be very deeply missed.

I thank all of you who have already written me with condolences. Your support is greatly appreciated. Please feel free to pass this note on to Nathan's friends or to post it publicly, adapted as desired.

Kimberly Hope Belcher