

**Church of Ireland  
Liturgical Advisory Committee**



*The Book of Common Prayer*  
(2004)

# Commentaries

**Michael Kennedy**

*The Book of Common Prayer*  
(2004)

# Commentaries

Michael Kennedy



2011



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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

*A more detailed table of contents  
may be found at the beginning  
of each of the five commentaries*

**Foreword** by Canon Brian Mayne

**Introduction to the Commentaries**

## ***COMMENTARY ONE***

### **MORNING AND EVENING PRAYER AND THE LITANY**

Part 1	General Introductory Notes	5
2	Morning and Evening Prayer One [Traditional Rite]	7
3	Morning and Evening Prayer Two [Modern Rite]	19
4	The Canticles	32
5	Additional Orders of Service	48
6	The Litany	51
	Appendices	54

## ***COMMENTARY TWO***

### **THE EUCHARIST**

Part 1	Celebration of the Eucharist, general principles	5
2A	Celebration of the Eucharist, commentary and guidelines: Holy Communion One [Traditional Rite]	17
2B	Celebration of the Eucharist, commentary and guidelines: Holy Communion Two [Modern Language Rites]	37
	Additional Notes	66
	Appendices	66
Part 3	Sermons on Eucharistic Doctrine	89

## ***COMMENTARY THREE***

### **CHRISTIAN INITIATION**

Part 1	Historical Development	4
2	Current Rites in the Church of Ireland	
	Christian Initiation One [Traditional Rites]	13
	Christian Initiation Two [Modern Rites]	32
3	The Theology of Initiation	54

## ***COMMENTARY FOUR***

### **PASTORAL MINISTRY**

<b>MARRIAGE</b>	<b>2</b>
Part 1 Marriage One [Traditional Rite]	2
Part 2 Marriage Two [Modern Rite]	12
3 Related Rites	26
Appendix	31
<b>MINISTRY TO THOSE WHO ARE SICK</b>	<b>34</b>
Private Communion	48
Holy Communion by Extension	49
<b>FUNERAL SERVICES</b>	<b>53</b>
Funeral Services: the canonical position	53
Funeral Services One: “The Order for the Burial of the Dead”	55
Funeral Services Two: “The Funeral Service”	62
Related Rites	72
<b>Appendix on the Liturgical Use of Oil</b>	<b>74</b>

## ***COMMENTARY FIVE***

### **THE ORDINAL**

Ordination Services One [Traditional Rites]	5
Ordination Services Two [Modern Rites]	26
The Institution Services 2007	47
Notes on some issues	51

## FOREWORD

It gives me great pleasure as editor of the 2004 edition of the *Book of Common Prayer* to write this foreword to an encyclopaedic commentary on that book.

The Reverend Michael Kennedy is probably unique among liturgical scholars. Not only has he earned a doctorate setting forth the theology behind the work of revision that became the *Alternative Prayer Book*. He has also been a member of the Church's Liturgical Advisory Committee since 1986 having a hand in the continuing revision that led to the publication of the revised *Book of Common Prayer* in 2004. As rector of country parishes in Armagh diocese, he has had hands-on experience of translating texts into worship Sunday by Sunday. As senior honorary clerical vicar of St Patrick's Cathedral, Armagh, over the years he has led services such as Choral Evensong and weekday celebrations of Holy Communion as well as helping to order special services in that place. As a canon of St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin, through several sermons, he has distilled his knowledge and understanding to a wider audience.

Above all the material in this commentary has been produced for the benefit of those training to become leaders of worship; for he has been for the past four decades been teaching those preparing for the lay ministry of readers and in post-ordination classes, urging the best practice of liturgy to clergy in their first years of ministry in Armagh diocese. His notes have been also used as resource material in the approved course for candidates for the non-stipendiary or auxiliary ministry course.

They say that the proof of the pudding is in the eating and I can testify that those whom I have been helping to become readers in Down and Dromore diocese have, in the responses I have read, clearly benefited from copies of Dr Kennedy's notes that he so willingly made available to me.

This commentary is an amazing piece of work and I can confidently say that nothing comparable has ever been produced for a Church of Ireland liturgy in the past. Nothing so detailed since some of the major commentaries on the 1662 edition of the *Book of Common Prayer* published in England in the nineteenth century. Certainly there is nowhere I know that covers the discoveries and insights of the twentieth century as fully as this.

No dry as dust commentary either – Canon Kennedy has strong views on many issues – not all of which I share! That is indeed one of the beauties of this work. Those who consult it will find authoritative answers to many questions, and some views on the way liturgy ought to be performed, which will make them think. Whether or not they accept the opinions is not what is at stake: all who read will find reasoned arguments.

I heartily commend this commentary and pray that users will be helped in taking part in the primary work of the Church which is the worship of Almighty God.

**Brian Mayne**  
**Downpatrick, St Patrick's Day 2011**

**COMMENTARIES**  
ON  
**THE 2004 EDITION**  
OF  
**THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER OF THE CHURCH OF**  
**IRELAND**

These Commentaries represent many years of teaching and working alongside ordinands, people involved in post-ordination studies, and diocesan lay readers in training. Their origin was the perceived absence of relevant up to date information on the authorized services of the Church of Ireland and of guidance as to how best to use them. They began as course notes used in the training of Readers in the Diocese of Armagh and for post-ordination study with the deacons and first-year priests. As modern liturgical revision has developed and changed so the notes have grown into the present set of commentaries and been adapted as required. The replacement of the *Alternative Prayer Book* (1984) and *Alternative Occasional Services* (1993) by the 2004 edition of the Prayer Book has necessitated a complete re-write and the opportunity has been taken to revise the parts dealing with the traditional rites as well as the modern versions. The aim has been to produce material on every authorized order of service in the Church of Ireland (not all of which are contained in the Prayer Book itself). As liturgy is something of a "moving target" (for example some parts of the marriage rites in the new Prayer Book have already been rendered obsolete by changes in secular law) it seems appropriate for these Commentaries to appear in a format which allows for further modifications as required and one also wishes them to be generally accessible, so it seems that publication on-line (though not necessarily exclusively) is the best option available. Indeed the particular advantage of electronic publishing is the convenience of the format for possible future updates and the incorporation of new perceptions and insights.

An earlier version of these Commentaries was used and recommended in the Church of Ireland Theological College by the then liturgy tutor, Dr Billy Marshall. Comments and criticisms from readers and users are welcome and will be taken into consideration when any future updates are being planned.

I would like to thank the General Synod's Literature Committee and its Hon. Secretary Dr Raymond Refauseé for their co-operation with this venture and am very grateful indeed for all the guidance given by Dr Susan Hood in preparing this material for publication. Any faults and flaws remaining are entirely my own.

The encouragement and support given by the members of the Liturgical Advisory Committee (to which I have belonged since 1986) are very much appreciated.

I am most grateful to Canon Brian Mayne, editor of the 2004 edition of the *Book of Common Prayer* and a long-term member of the Liturgical Advisory Committee, for very kindly writing the foreword to this publication.

**Michael C. Kennedy**  
**Armagh, St Patrick's Day, 2011**

**THE STUDY OF LITURGY:  
MORNING AND EVENING PRAYER  
AND THE LITANY  
IN THE  
BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER**

**2004**

**COMMENTARY  
BY  
THE REVD CANON M. C. KENNEDY, M.A., B.D., Ph.D.**



## CONTENTS

<b>PART 1 (Morning and Evening Prayer, some general introductory notes)</b>	<b>5</b>
(1) Vesture	5
(2) Obligation to use Morning Prayer.	6
(3) Where Morning and Evening Prayer are said.	6
<b>PART 2 Morning and Evening Prayer One [Traditional Rite]</b>	<b>7</b>
A note on titles	7
The derivation of Morning and Evening Prayer	7
The structure of Morning and Evening Prayer	7
Opening Hymn	8
Sentences of Scripture	8
Exhortation	9
Confession	9
Absolution	9
The Lord's Prayer	9
Versicles and Responses	9
(AT Morning Prayer)	10
Venite	10
Easter Anthems	10
A Lesson	10
Psalm(s)	10
A Lesson	11
Canticle	11
New Testament Lesson	12
Canticle	12
(AT Evening Prayer)	12
The Apostles' Creed	13
The Salutation	14
Lesser Litany and Lord's Prayer	13
The Suffrages or Preces	14
The Collect of the Day	14
The Second and Third Collects	15
The Anthem or Hymn	15
A Sermon	15
The State Prayers and some General Prayers	15
Occasional Prayers	16
The Litany One (note)	16
The Ministration of Publick Baptism of Infants – Holy Baptism One	16
Conclusion	16
Notes on processions, posture, Morning or Evening Prayer and Holy Communion and the shortening of services.	16-18

<b>PART 3 Morning and Evening Prayer Two [Modern Rite]</b>	<b>19</b>
The Gathering of God's People	19
Greeting	19
Sentence(s)	20
Preface	20
Confession	20
Absolution	21
Proclaiming and Receiving the Word	21
(At Morning Prayer)	21
Versicles and Responses	21
First Canticle	21
First Reading	21
Psalm	22
Second Reading	25
Second Canticle	25
Third Reading	25
Third Canticle	26
(At Evening Prayer)	27
The Apostles' Creed.	29
The Prayers of the People	29
Salutation and Lesser Litany	29
The Lord's Prayer	29
Suffrages	29
The Collects	30
Collect of the Day	30
Collects at Morning Prayer	30
Collects at Evening Prayer	30
After the Collects	30
The Litany Two (Note)	32
Going out as God's People	32
<b>PART 4 The Canticles</b>	<b>32</b>
Venite (Canticles 1 & 2)	34
Jubilate (Canticles 3 & 4)	35
The Easter Anthems (Canticles 5 & 6)	35
Benedictus (Canticles 7 & 8)	36
Benedicite (Canticles 9 & 10)	36
Te Deum (Canticles 11 & 12)	38
Magnificat (Canticles 13 & 14)	39
Nunc Dimittis (Canticles 15 & 16)	40
Great and Wonderful (Canticle 17)	41
Urbs Fortitudinis (Canticle 18)	41
Saviour of the World (Canticle 19)	42
Bless the Lord (Canticle 20)	42
Glory and Honour (Canticle 21)	42
The Song of Christ's Glory (Canticle 22)	43
The Song of Isaiah (Canticle 23)	43



# Part 1

## Morning and Evening Prayer

### some general introductory notes

#### [1] Vesture.

The rules governing the vesture of ministers are to be found in Chapter Nine of the Church Constitution ("The Canons"), Canon 12 "Ecclesiastical apparel". The ordained minister (deacon or priest) at Morning or Evening Prayer should wear a black cassock with cincture, belt, or woollen girdle, a long white surplice, and a black scarf, together with the hood suitable to his or her academic standing. However, it may be noted that, strictly speaking, the use of the cassock is optional.

The use of robes links the worship of the church here and now to that of past generations; and help to maintain the traditional Anglican "ethos". Their graceful and flowing lines are particularly appropriate to liturgical prayer and praise, and add dignity to offering of worship. Wearing one's robes shows respect for the office one holds, for the church one belongs to and is one means (among many) by which the Lord is honoured.

The **cassock** may be either double-breasted (folded across) or single-breasted (buttons down the middle), the former being more customary in the Church of Ireland as well as quicker to put on. It is held at the waist by a cincture, which is a sort of cloth belt, an ordinary belt, or a girdle, which is a sort of woollen rope with tassels at the ends. Normally black cassocks are worn, but there are some variations for example among the canons of certain cathedrals. It is customary for bishops to wear purple.

[The cassock originated in the *vestis talaris* or ankle-length garment retained by the clergy when, under barbarian influence in the sixth century, shorter garments became usual for secular use. It was already ordered by the Council of Braga (572) and this was confirmed in subsequent legislation. It is in essence an everyday garment, and may be worn whenever appropriate. See, *the Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 3rd edition, 1997, p.296. Hereafter ODCC].

The **surplice** should preferably be fully-gathered at the neck, and of a good length, and should always be clean and without creases. A high quality artificial material is less inclined to crease and is easier to keep clean than a linen one.

[The word "surplice" comes from the Latin *superpellicium*, "over a fur garment". It was originally a loose choir vestment, an adaptation of the alb, because it was better suited for wear over the fur coats customary in northern countries, hence its name. From the twelfth century it came to be the distinctive garment of the lower clergy and to be used by priests outside Mass. At first a tunic reaching to the feet it became progressively shortened until the attenuated form known as the "cotta", with lace, evolved in the Roman Catholic Church. Essentially the alb, the rochet (worn by bishops), the surplice, and the cotta are the one and same garment, or perhaps, more accurately, variants of the same garment. See *ODCC, op. cit.* pp1560-1].

The canon permits any minister to wear a plain black gown while preaching (instead of the surplice). This would entail removing the surplice and putting on the gown at the time of the sermon. This particular regulation reflects early nineteenth century practice which has long since been superseded.

The black scarf should be broad, without "pinking" at the ends, and preferably not pre-gathered at the neck. It is folded at the neck before being put on.

Members of Cathedral Chapters (the "canons") customarily display the insignia of their

Cathedrals on their scarves at both ends (or, in the case of St. Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin, on one side only, over the heart). Military chaplains also customarily display an approved design.

The use of hoods by clergy goes back to medieval times, and, post-Reformation, was prescribed by the canons of 1603. It is, therefore, part of an Anglican clergyman's liturgical apparel, his "canonicals" as they are sometimes called; and the right to wear a hood pertaining to one's university degree or other academic qualification is recognized in the current canon 12:2(c). A Diocesan Reader wears black cassock, surplice, hood, and the customary blue scarf subject to local regulation by the bishop of the diocese. A Parish Reader does not, in most dioceses wear the blue scarf, but may (in the Diocese of Armagh) wear the Parish Reader's medallion. It is regrettable that in some dioceses Parish Readers do not wear robes at all, in this way detracting from the significance of their ministry. The relevant canon does not recognize different kinds of "Readers", the difference between "Diocesan" and "Parish" Readers lying in the nature and extent of their training, and the terms of their licence. See *The Constitution of the Church of Ireland*, 2003, Chapter Nine, Canon 35.

It is obligatory to wear one's robes at all times of the public ministrations of the regular services of the Church in the Church building.

It is appropriate to put on one's cassock immediately on arrival and to wear it throughout one's time in church.

**[2] Obligation to use Morning and Evening Prayer.**

Canon Three, under the heading "Divine Service to be celebrated on Sundays and Holy Days" states, "On every Sunday and Holy-day appointed by the Church, unless dispensed with by the ordinary, incumbents and curates shall celebrate Morning and Evening Prayer or the Holy Communion or other service prescribed for the day at convenient and usual times, and in such place in every church or other suitable building provided for the purpose as the ordinary shall think proper." In practice, in some unions or grouped parishes this means that one of the three services, Morning or Evening Prayer or Holy Communion is celebrated. In the General Directions for Public Worship (1) page 75 it is stated that "The Holy Communion is the central act of worship of the Church. Morning and Evening Prayer are other regular services of public worship. One of the forms of Service of the Word may replace Morning or Evening Prayer at the discretion of the minister." The wording appears to suggest that whilst on any particular occasion A Service of the Word may be used, this should not displace Morning and Evening Prayer from their role as "regular" services of public worship.

**[3] Where Morning and Evening Prayer are said.** Normally at the Reading Desk/Prayer Desk, which is customarily situated on the south side of the Church facing north. If there are two desks the Rector customarily sits on the south side and the Curate Assistant or Reader on the north (left-hand) side. Unless the Desk is actually orientated towards the congregation it is not customary to turn and face them except when addressing them directly as in the opening sentence, the exhortation, the "Praise ye the Lord", the lessons, the announcements, and the blessing at the end. The practice of having the clergy and choir stalls facing each other in a north-south orientation is a copying of Cathedral practice where the psalms are sung antiphonally (a verse from one side being "answered" by a verse from the other). The stalls in traditional College Chapels (for example in Trinity College Dublin) are arranged in this manner for the whole congregation, and there are a few examples of this in parish churches, for example Collon in County Louth.

## PART 2

### MORNING AND EVENING PRAYER, ONE [Traditional Rite]

#### A note on titles

Morning and Evening Prayer are alternatively known as **Mat(t)ins** and **Evensong** (see 1926 BCP p. xxx). These "services of the Word (together with **Compline**) make up the traditional Anglican Daily Office (from the Latin "officium" meaning "duty"). Considered as a whole the Office is sometimes called the Divine Office, or the Liturgy of the Hours (referring to the traditional "Hours" of prayer). The word "Liturgy" in turn is from the Greek *leitourgia* meaning originally "public service" hence ritual, cultic, or (metaphorically speaking) other service to God.

#### The derivation of Morning and Evening Prayer

Essentially these represent a conflation and simplification of the sevenfold "Daily Office" of pre-Reformation times, as follows:

Mattins	)	
Lauds	)	MORNING PRAYER
[Prime]	)	
Terce	)	
Sext	)	
None	)	
Vespers	)	EVENING PRAYER
Compline	)	

This derivation explains the order of the Canticles, since the Te Deum was the principal canticle at Mattins, while the Benedictus marked the climax of Lauds, the Magnificat marked the climax of Vespers, and the Nunc Dimittis occurred in Compline.

#### The structure of Morning and Evening Prayer

The central feature of the Anglican Office, historically, is the reading of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, preceded by psalmody, and responded to in praise (the Canticles). The disclosure of God's revelation leads to an affirmation of faith (the Creed) and paves the way for prayer (Lesser Litany, Lord's Prayer, Suffrages, Collects, Occasional Prayers) concluding with the Grace. The second Lord's Prayer is the keystone of the rite, summing up all that has preceded it and leading to all that follows it. While there is a canonical obligation to preach one sermon in every Church every Sunday, unless excused by the ordinary (Canon 7) the sermon is not strictly speaking, a necessary, still less an integral part of the Office. The psalmody is preceded by a call to worship (the Venite or the Easter Anthems) in the morning, following the petition to "open our lips" in the initial versicles and responses. The Sentence, Exhortation, Confession, Absolution and first Lord's Prayer are best thought of as preparatory to the Office itself. Only the "anthem or hymn" mentioned after the third collect is, strictly speaking, an integral part of the Anglican Office. In Morning and Evening Prayer One this classic arrangement has been modified in two ways. First, to provide for the use of the Revised Common Lectionary, when three lessons are read, the first (usually but not invariably from the Old Testament) may be inserted after the Invitatory (Venite or Easter Anthems) and before the psalm or psalms. Second, an explicit mention of a Sermon is made after the Anthem or Hymn or after the Prayers that follow.

The most essential parts of the Office are printed in bold print below.

[Hymn]  
Sentence

Exhortation or "Let us humbly confess..."

Confession

Absolution

Lord's Prayer

**Versicles and Responses**

**Canticle Venite** (morning only) or Easter Anthems

**A Lesson** (from the Old Testament if three lessons are used)

**Psalmody**

**A Lesson** (from the Old Testament. If three lessons are used the Lesson is from the New Testament)

**Canticle (Te Deum, Benedicite** or Urbs Fortitudinis in the morning, **Magnificat** in evening or Cantate Domino)

**A Lesson** (from the New Testament. If three lessons are used this is always a Gospel reading).

**Canticle (Benedictus**, or Jubilate Deo in the morning, **Nunc Dimittis** in the evening or Deus Misereatur)

**Apostles' Creed**

**Lesser Litany, Lord's Prayer, Suffrages**

**Collect of the Day**

**Second and Third Collects**

Anthem or hymn

[Sermon]

Occasional **Prayers** from the order of service and/or from p145ff in the BCP or elsewhere, or **The Litany**

A Prayer of St. Chrysostom

**The Grace**

[Hymn]

[Sermon]

[Hymn]

[Blessing]

["Vestry" prayers before or after the rite are not part of the rite itself]

In the 1926 Book of Common Prayer the Orders for Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer were separate (pp1-12, 13-21). In the 2004 edition there is a single Order (pp84-100) with separate sections (pp84-92, 93-94) for the variations between morning and evening.

**Opening hymn**

The use of hymns is governed by Canon 6 which states that it is lawful to use "in the course of or before or after any public office of the Church" any form of hymn in any prescribed or authorized book, or that has been authorized by the bishop or ordinary, or that contains no substantial variation from the practice of, nor contrary to the doctrine of the Church, as the minister may consider to be required by current circumstances." It may be noted that there is no obligation to have a hymn at this point. Another possibility is to have a hymn after the Venite and before the psalm. There is also ancient precedent for having a hymn before the principal canticle (Benedictus at Morning Prayer, Magnificat at Evening Prayer) when it is known as the "Office Hymn" because its theme and character relate very specifically to the order of service for the particular occasion. The only specific mention of a hymn in the Morning and Evening Prayer One, however, is after the third collect where the rubric reads, "Here may follow an Anthem or Hymn".

**Sentences of Scripture**

Most of the sentences are penitential in character and relate to the confession of sins with which the Order begins. However there are seasonal sentences for Christmas, Easter, Ascension, and Whitsuntide, which are always to be used on those occasions. Although the

wording is a little ambiguous it would also appear to be lawful to use the sentences on pp78-82 with Morning and Evening Prayer One.

### **Exhortation**

This deals with the purpose of the act of worship - thanksgiving, praise of God, hearing (the Word), petition, and confession (which comes at the beginning of the service). If the Exhortation is shortened (as the rubric permits), this must be done intelligently. One possibility is,

Dearly beloved...I pray and beseech you, as many as are here present, to accompany me with a pure heart, and humble voice, unto the throne of the heavenly grace, saying after me:

Or one may omit the Exhortation altogether, saying instead,

"Let us humbly confess our sins unto Almighty God."

### **Confession**

This is a "general" confession in that it is said by all and insofar as it is in general terms. Provision for "particular" confessions is made on p198 and 446 of the BCP (in Exhortation One in Holy Communion One and in the section "Penitence and Reconciliation" in the Ministry to those who are Sick, p. 446).

### **Absolution**

This is said only by a minister in priest's orders. In the absence of a priest a Deacon or Reader says a prayer for forgiveness, suitable examples being the Collect of the Twenty-first Sunday after Trinity (BCP p.296), or the absolution from Compline BCP p.160, changing "you" and "your" to "us" and "our", or the prayer For Pardon in "Some Prayers and Thanksgivings" p152, as follows,

O God, whose nature and property is ever to have mercy and to forgive; Receive our humble petitions; and, though we be tied and bound with the chain of our sins, yet let the pitifulness of thy great mercy loose us; for the honour of Jesus Christ, our Mediator and Advocate. **Amen.**

There is a sense in which the absolution in Morning and Evening Prayer One, although so described, falls short of actually communicating the remission of sins. It is more a statement of general principle leading to an exhortation to ask God for true repentance and belief as the precondition for being pardoned and absolved. However, by reserving this statement to "the priest alone" the pronouncement is invested with exceptional authority.

It may be noticed that in Morning and Evening Prayer One the first Lord's Prayer follows at this point, and this brings in a petition to "forgive us our trespasses".

### **The Lord's Prayer**

This marks the original beginning of Morning Prayer (in the first Prayer Book, of 1549) and is, in spite of what is said above, strictly speaking, redundant. There has grown up an entirely mistaken habit of keeping in the first Lord's Prayer and leaving out the second. As the second is integral to the Order it should not be omitted except when Morning Prayer is joined to some other Office (e.g. Holy Communion). If either Lord's Prayer is to be omitted on any other occasion it should be the first one.

**Versicles and Responses** These Versicles and the Doxology have been used from the sixth century at least as a commencement of Nocturns (Mattins) in the West. They are taken from Pss 51:15 and 70:1. Ps 51:15 occurs in the early part of the Greek Morning Office. The tradition was that "O Lord, open thou our lips" was used at the commencement of the whole series of services for the day, while "O God, make speed to save us" was used at the beginning of each of the "Hours". "Praise ye the Lord" made its appearance in the 1549 Order; and the Response "The Lord's name be praised" was inserted in 1662.



Because these Versicles and Responses mark the true beginning to the service, whether said or sung they should be treated with due solemnity. In a sung service their true significance is more readily apparent.

### **At Morning Prayer** (pp87-92)

#### **Venite**

The use of Psalm 95 as the first psalm to be said in the day has a very long history. It is mentioned by Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria (c.296-373) as used in this way in the Church at Constantinople. In the West, when there were seven or eight daily services, Psalm 95 started off the whole cycle of psalms. The first part is a call to worship, the second part a warning of the consequences of failing to heed God's Word. The function of the Gloria Patri ("Glory be to the Father..." etc) is to give an explicitly Christian orientation and content to this and other hymns of praise of the Old Covenant.

#### **Easter Anthems**

These, consisting of verses from 1 Cor 5 and 1 Cor 15 are sung instead of the Venite during the Octave of Easter (Easter Day and seven days after, including the following Sunday). Given that the Easter Season (fifty days) has been restored in this Prayer Book (p.19), it is anomalous that the Easter Anthems are still appointed for the octave only, and it is appropriate for them to be used throughout the season.

#### **A Lesson**

Where three lessons are used (from the Revised Common Lectionary - see readings for the "Principal Service" BCP pp27-62) the first comes before the psalm(s). Although it says in the rubric that this is from the Old Testament, this is not necessarily always the case, as readings from Acts may be used at this point during the Easter season.

#### **Psalm(s)**

Historically, the psalms are constitutive of the substance of the Office and not a mere preliminary to it, and their regular and frequent use establishes the principle of the ongoing praise of God in the liturgy. In the Revised Common Lectionary the psalm is chosen so as to relate in some way to the first reading. The psalms may be said or sung. If they are read it is permitted to read them "verse about" or, better, still, in "alternate half-verses" (the minister reading the first half of each verse, and, in accordance with the "parallelism" of thought which is a feature of Hebrew poetry, the congregation responding with the second half). Another way of using the psalms is for the congregation on opposite sides of the Church to alternate "verse about", although this is unusual except in Cathedrals, where traditionally the verses are sung alternately from one side of the choir to the other (hence the arrangement of seats facing each other - also to be found in College Chapels and in monasteries). It is probably better to read well rather than sing badly, although Anglican chant is one of the great glories of our particular spiritual tradition. In the early Church the "Cathedral" Office, presided over by the bishop, consisted mainly of certain fixed psalms and intercessions. However, the early monks developed a tradition of recitation of the entire psalter, and this came to be part of the "Monastic" Office together with Scripture reading. Eventually these two traditions were conflated and developed into the complex medieval form from which the Anglican Office was derived. In the 1926 Prayer Book Mattins and Evensong preserved in their weekday form the "Monastic" practice of recitation of the entire Psalter. The Office of Compline (BCP pp154-157) maintains the tradition of having a limited number of "fixed" psalms appropriate to the particular occasion.

The version of the psalter printed in the Prayer Book is that from the Church of England's "Common Worship", itself a derivative of a translation that originated in the Episcopal Church of America and widely used in the Anglican Communion (for example in the publication *Celebrating Common Prayer*). In the current version there are many echoes of the

historic "Coverdale" translation.

The traditional version of the psalms in the 1926 Book of Common Prayer (Coverdale with much "invisible mending") is still available. A rubric on p.593 of the new book (missing from the first printing) states,

Psalters. The Psalter contained in the *Book of Common Prayer* (1926) remains authorized for use in public worship as an alternative to this Psalter.

The 1926 psalter is available on the internet (on the Church of Ireland site) and in the Church of Ireland module of Visual Liturgy 4. It is intended that this will be available in both "pointed" and "non-pointed" editions.

### **A Lesson**

If two lessons are read, this one is from the Old Testament. If there are three readings, it will be from the New Testament, from an Epistle, Revelation, or the Acts of the Apostles. The readings at Morning and Evening Prayer follow the same sequence as those at Holy Communion, namely Old Testament, Epistle, and Gospel. If Morning Prayer is not the principal service of the day (for example if the Revised Common Lectionary lessons are read at Holy Communion) then the readings for the Third Service are suitable (see Note 3 on p.25). It should be noticed that the provision on pp27f supersedes previous lectionaries, those for Morning and Evening Prayer in the 1926 Book of Common Prayer and in the Alternative Prayer Book no longer having any authority.

The following versions of Scripture are fully recognized for public use in the Church of Ireland - the "Authorized" or King James Version, the Revised Version of 1881/1885, the American Standard Revised Version, the Revised Standard Version of 1946/52 with later amendments, the New Revised Standard Version, the Jerusalem Bible, the New Jerusalem Bible, the New English Bible, the Revised English Bible, and the New International Bible, the New International Version (inclusive language edition), and Today's English Version.

A Note on p.26 of the BCP allows readings to be extended. Although the opposite possibility is not mentioned, it may, for reasons of time (for example when several services have to be conducted one after another at short intervals) be necessary to abbreviate. If this is the case this needs to be done in a careful and intelligent manner.

Some liberty to the preacher is permitted by the same Note, as follows,

On Sundays between the Epiphany and Ash Wednesday and between Trinity Sunday and Advent Sunday, while the authorized lectionary provision remains the norm, the minister may occasionally depart from the lectionary provision for sufficient pastoral reasons or for preaching and teaching purposes.

No less than thirty different sets of readings for up to six Sundays in these two periods are suggested in an Appendix to the Church of England publication, *The Promise of His Glory*, Mowbray, 1991, pp404-412. The titles include "God and the World: Genesis 1:11"; "Jacob"; "Women in the Messianic Line"; "David", "Isaiah", "Amos", "Daniel", "Romans 1", "Revelation 1".

As the readings are proclamations of God's Word, the greatest care and attention must be given to them. The reading of the Old and New Testament lessons lies at the very heart of Morning and Evening Prayer.

**Canticle** - Te Deum, or Benedicite, or Urbs Fortitudinis. Priority should be given to the Te Deum, whose use in the Office is attested in the Rule of St. Caesarius of Arles (c.470-542) and in the Rule of St. Benedict (c.480-c.550). Traditionally it was used on Sundays and festivals, except in the penitential seasons. In 1549 it was to be used throughout the year except during Lent, when the Benedicite was substituted. From 1552 the Benedicite, taken from the Greek addition to the third chapter of Daniel has been appointed as an alternative to the Te Deum at the discretion of the minister. The Urbs Fortitudinis, from Isaiah 26, was

introduced into the Church of Ireland in the BCP revision of 1926. This was a most unfortunate development, since it has tended to displace the Te Deum and the Benedicite; and it is better omitted, except perhaps during the penitential seasons of Advent and Lent. The use of Psalm 148 Laudate Dominum (another option) has little to be said for it at this point.

For a commentary on the canticles, particularly useful for preaching purposes see Very Revd Dr. J.C. Combe *Treasures Old and New* (published privately). The word "canticle" comes from the Latin canticulum meaning a "little song". Most of the canticles come from the Bible or Apocrypha, although some originated in the life of the early Church (for example the Te Deum). The canticles used in the BCP are only a small selection from those available in the liturgical tradition of the Church.

### **New Testament lesson**

As for Old Testament lesson (see above). Lay members of the congregation may be invited to read the lessons, but it is imperative that they read well and with a full understanding of what they are reading.

In general, two extremes need to be avoided in public reading of the Scriptures. One needs to avoid a monotone which fails to convey the message. Equally, one needs to avoid a reading so "dramatic" that it calls attention to the reader rather than to the message. Clarity of diction, variation of pace and emphasis as appropriate, and a proper "flow" are all characteristics of good lesson reading. Idiosyncrasies, such as "bunching" words together or pronouncing them in an odd way, are to be avoided. There is a general obligation to speak throughout in a distinct and audible voice and so place oneself that the people may conveniently hear what is said (Canon Eight).

### **Canticle**

Benedictus, or Jubilate Deo. Traditionally, the singing of the Benedictus was the climax of the morning act of worship, and this was attended with due ceremony. The Benedictus, as a "Gospel Canticle", should take priority over the Jubilate, whose use here should be occasional at best. It would appear that the Jubilate was introduced as an alternative in 1552 to avoid the repetition which might be caused by the occurrence of Benedictus in the Lesson or Gospel of the day.

## **At Evening Prayer (pp93-4)**

This very largely follows Morning Prayer, although the "mood" is different, and this should be emphasized through the choice of suitable hymns. It may be noted,

(a) There is nothing corresponding to the Venite or the Easter Anthems. The service proceeds straight from the versicles and responses to the psalm(s). Unless Evening Prayer is the principal service on the Sunday there will be two readings, not three, and the lectionary for the Second Service will be used.

(b) Priority should be given to the "Gospel Canticles", Magnificat (after the first lesson) and Nunc Dimittis (after the second lesson). There is no necessity for the alternatives (Psalm 98 and Psalm 67) ever to be used, except where the scripture readings include the passages from which the canticles are taken.

(c) The first lesson and Magnificat should not be omitted without good reason. The custom, in some churches, of leaving these out cannot be defended. If it is desired to shorten the service (see below), there are other ways of economizing on time apart from reducing the reading of God's Word (in the Old Testament). Reference to the outline above will show that the two readings and the response made to them are part of the essential structure of the service. The Magnificat is, historically, the climax of the Evening Office, which, in a real sense, is incomplete without it.

(d) At Evening Prayer the second collect, for peace, is from the Gelasian Sacramentary and

was used at Vespers of the BVM, while the third collect, for aid against all perils, also from the Gelasian Sacramentary, was used in the Sarum Office at Compline (cf. BCP p334). The prayer "For Grace and Protection" should be used sparingly, if at all, since "Lighten our darkness" is distinctive and characteristic of Evening Prayer in the Anglican liturgical tradition (although also found at Compline).

(e) Said or sung. A "sung" service, that is a service in which the versicles and responses, suffrages, and collects are sung (as well as psalm, canticles and hymns and usually an anthem) is, liturgically speaking, the "norm" rather than the exception. Choral Evensong is one of the great glories of Anglican Christianity and is not confined to Cathedrals or to parish churches with highly-trained choirs, and Mattins may be choral as well. A "said" service is in some ways a "second-best", even when it is what happens as a general rule as in most parishes in the Church of Ireland. However, it is not good liturgical practice to sing everything in the service. The penitential introduction should be said, as should also the Creed, and the occasional prayers. "Festal Evensong" is a particularly solemn way of celebrating the liturgy of Evening Prayer. Directions for its use (which would need some modification to conform to the canons of the Church of Ireland) may be found in the classic work by Percy Dearmer *The Parson's Handbook*, revised and rewritten by Cyril E. Pocknee, CUP, 1965, pp87ff.

### **The Apostles' Creed**

The biblical revelation which has been proclaimed in the readings and responded to in the canticles is here reaffirmed in the words of the Baptismal "symbol". The use of this Creed in the daily office goes back at least to the 9th century AD. It was traditionally said at Prime and during Compline (see BCP p.159), and it appears to have been prefixed to Mattins. Having the Creed as an integral part of Morning and Evening Prayer is a distinct Anglican tradition, which came in with the Prayer Book of 1549.

Two customs relating to the use of the Creed are worthy of mention. First, that of bowing the head at the words "and in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord". This reflects an old tradition, based on Scripture (Phil. 2:10.11) of honouring the Name of Jesus in the liturgy. At a time when there are some who do not appear to acknowledge His divinity the continued relevance of this gesture is obvious. An old canon (the 18th of 1603, founded on the 52nd of Queen Elizabeth's Injunctions issued in 1559) ordered,

And likewise, when in time of Divine Service the Lord Jesus shall be mentioned, due and lowly reverence shall be done by all persons present as hath been accustomed, testifying by these outward ceremonies and gestures their ... due acknowledgement that the Lord Jesus Christ, the true and eternal Son of God, is the only Saviour of the world, in Whom all the mercies, graces, and promises of God to mankind, for this life, and the life to come, are fully and wholly comprised.

The custom, found in some churches of "turning East for the Creed" (churches traditionally being built facing East and indicating the symbolism of Christ as the Sun of Righteousness) reflects an old practice of clergy and people alike looking one way through the prayers and Creeds, that is, towards the altar. It is a liturgical courtesy, where this custom exists, to conform to it.

Herbert Thorndike (1598-1672) said,

In some churches the desk for the Prayer Book looks towards the Chancel; and for reading of Lessons we are directed to look towards the people. As the Jews in their prayers looked towards the Mercy-seat or principal part of the Temple (Ps 28:2), so Christians looked towards the Altar or chief part of the Church, whereof their Mercy-seat was but a type. Christ in His prayer directs us to Heaven, though God be everywhere; for Heaven is His throne, and we look toward that part of the church which most resembles it.

### **The salutation**

."The Lord be with you", etc. This performs the function of uniting the officiating minister and people in the solemn prayers which follow. A Scriptural analogue of this mutual blessing may be found in Ruth 2:4; 2 Thess 3:16; Ps 129:8; 2 Tim 4:22; Ps 118:26.

### **Lesser Litany and Lord's Prayer.**

These are not to be omitted except, traditionally, when Morning Prayer is followed immediately by the Holy Communion or another office. The Lord's Prayer is the keystone in the liturgical arch of Morning (and Evening) Prayer. It sums up all that has preceded it, and leads to what follows.

The Lesser Litany is derived from the Greek Kyrie eleison, "Lord, have mercy", repeated three, six, or many times, and addressed to the Second Person of the Holy Trinity. In Rome in the sixth century the practice is attested of adding Christe eleison, "Christ, have mercy". BCP practice, which is threefold, is a simplification of the ninefold Kyrie eleison (3 times), Christe eleison (3 times), Kyrie eleison (3 times) found in the pre-Reformation Office. It reflects an awareness of our unworthiness to call upon God as "Our Father" because of our manifold sins.

The use of the Lord's Prayer without the doxology "For thine is the glory" etc. reflects pre-Reformation practice. It appears likely from the biblical MSS that Our Lord taught his disciples the Lord's Prayer without the doxology, but that this would have been added according to the norms of liturgical practice in the Synagogue. (See Mt 6:9-13; Luke 11:1-4. For the Greek text of Mt. without the doxology see especially Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Vaticanus. The Lucan MS tradition makes no mention of the doxology).

### **The Suffrages or *Preces***

A "suffrage" is a request for a favour, *Preces* is simply the plural of the Latin *prex*, a "prayer". This is a further set of "versicles and responses" such as those which appear at the beginning of the service. The medieval Office abounded in such forms or which the ones used in Prayer Book Morning and Evening Prayer are a minute selection. Other sets of versicles and responses in the traditional rites of the Church include those in the Order for Confirmation (BCP p.354), in the form for the Solemnization of Matrimony (BCP p.411), and in Compline (BCP p160). They serve as a way of involving minister and people in "common" prayer (that is prayer-in-common). These particular suffrages come (with some alterations) from the *Preces Feriales* inserted among the *Preces et Memoriae Communes* of the Salisbury Portiforium. They are said or sung standing - a reminder of the ancient posture for Christian prayer witnessed to by the "Orans", figures in wall-paintings in the catacombs.

**The Collect of the Day.** A "Collect" (Lat. *oratio*, also *collecta*) is a short form of prayer, constructed (with variations) from an invocation, a petition, and a pleading of Christ's name or an ascription of glory to God; and is one of the most characteristic items in the Western liturgy (*see the entry in ODCC, op. cit. pp375-6*). Early collects were always directed to the Father; but since the Middle Ages collects addressed to the Son have been regularly admitted to the liturgy. The word "collect" indicates the "collecting" of the petitions of the several members of the congregation into a single prayer. Many of the Prayer Book Collects come from classic Latin originals, although some were composed by Cranmer and are original to the Book of Common Prayer (The Collect of Advent 1, from the Gregorian Sacramentary [7th-9th centuries], is a good example of the former, while that of The Fifth Sunday before Advent, Bible Sunday, is one of Cranmer's compositions). Cranmer's literary style, both when working from the Latin and when composing his own prayers, is exceptionally felicitous. It may be noted that in the Prayer Book scheme the Collect of the Day serves for use both at the Office and for Holy Communion (BCP p241ff). At certain times of the year an additional collect is used (Advent and Lent, pp241, 259). A subsidiary or seasonal collect always comes

after the collect of the day.

It is customary to say “collect of” rather than “collect for” in relation to an occasion or day.

### **The second and third collects.**

These are fixed, and invariable. At Morning Prayer the second collect, for peace, is from the Gelasian Sacramentary (8th century) and was used in the pre-Reformation Sarum rite at Lauds of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The third collect, for grace, was used at Prime and Sundays and Saints Days.

It may be noted that until 1662 the Order for Mattins and Evensong ended at the third collect, and that in a sense this remains the true end of the Office, just as “O Lord open thou our lips” may be considered the true beginning.

### **The anthem or hymn.**

The word "anthem" is a derivation of “antiphon”, used originally of a hymn sung alternately by two choirs; but in current use it refers to sacred vocal music set to Scriptural words. Rubrical direction to have the anthem at this point (originally it said, "in Quires and places where they sing") dates from 1662, the alternative "or hymn" being a Church of Ireland addition in 1878.

### **A Sermon**

Traditionally the sermon is not regarded as an integral part of the Office, which is complete without it, and so it was “tacked on” to the Office, preceded and followed by hymns, and a blessing was added to round off the service as a whole. Permission to have it at this point or after the prayers makes it possible to bring it formally within the order of service. However, if it is not to be after the prayers it would be far more intelligible to have it before the Apostles Creed as in Morning and Evening Prayer Two. It may be noted that the rubric is permissive ("may") so that neither of the two positions here are, strictly speaking, obligatory. Canon 7, "The Duty of Preaching" prescribes that "Every incumbent shall provide that one sermon at least be preached on every Sunday in every church, or other building licensed for the purpose, in which Divine Services is performed within his cure, unless he be excused therefrom by the ordinary. The preacher shall endeavour with care and sincerity to minister the word of truth according to holy scripture and agreeable to the Articles of Religion and the Book of Common Prayer, to the glory of God and the edification of the people.

### **The State Prayers and some general Prayers.**

It is not considered necessary nowadays to use the State prayers every Sunday; but when they are used, the separate provision for Northern Ireland (“N.I.”) and the Republic of Ireland (“R.I.”) should be noted. The "Prayer for the Clergy and People" and that "For all sorts and Conditions of Men" should be used occasionally, but not every Sunday. It is not clear why it should be considered necessary to use "A Prayer of St. Chrysostom" every time the Office is used. This is more prescriptive than the provision in the 1926 Prayer Book. The General Thanksgiving is a classic Anglican Prayer composed in 1661 by Bishop E. Reynolds of Norwich and revised by Bishop R. Sanderson. It is called “general” to distinguish it from the particular thanksgivings that used to follow it in the book, and, traditionally, it has been known by heart. This version no longer allows (as did that in earlier editions of the Prayer Book) for mention of particular thanksgivings. The 1926 book added, after "all men",

*[\*particularly to those who desire now to offer up their praises and thanksgivings for thy late mercies vouchsafed unto them;]*

*\*This is to be said when any desire to return praise for special mercies vouchsafed to them.*

Essentially the canonical provision for the wide choice of "Occasional" Prayers (see below) has made the provision of a limited number of fixed and invariable prayers redundant, although it was felt useful to have a selection of these conveniently grouped within the order itself. This section concludes with the Grace. This is also an ending. Whatever further material may follow it (hymns, sermon, blessing etc) is, strictly speaking, extraneous to the

Office, which is complete in itself without it.

### **Occasional Prayers**

These are prayers for the particular occasion, may be used instead of the State Prayers at this point, concluding with the Grace. Official provision includes "A Book of Occasional Prayers - suitable for use in Public Worship". More general provision may be found in the use of various collections of published prayers, for example "Parish Prayers" by Frank Colquhoun, and Milner-White "Daily Prayer", which are used under Canon Six, which says that it is lawful to use "in the course of or before or after any public office of the Church, any form of prayer included in any book of prayers prescribed or authorized, any prayer ... authorized by the bishop or ordinary, and any prayer ... not containing substantial variations from the practice of, nor contrary to the doctrine of the Church, as the minister may consider to be required by current circumstances." All such variations in the official order must be reverent and seemly and must not involve substantial alteration in what has been prescribed by lawful authority. The resources contained within the Book of Common Prayer itself should not be overlooked. In addition to the "Prayers and Thanksgivings" to be found on pp145-53 of the BCP there are the Weekday Intercessions and Thanksgivings (which may be used perfectly well on a Sunday), and the form of prayer in **A Late Evening Office** which are by no means tied to the evening, and are as suitable for use with the traditional as well as the modern version of the office. The 1926 Prayer Book also has many prayers (for example those used at the Consecration of a Church may suitably be used at the New Year) which are appropriate in Morning or Evening Prayer 1 and conform to Canon Six above. The General Supplication from the First Alternative Form of Evening Prayer in the 1926 *Book of Common Prayer* (pp329-30) and the form of Thanksgivings from the same Order (pp326-7) are also suitable for use.

**The Litany One** (BCP pp170-173) may be used at this point, and should be said regularly.

### **The ministration of public baptism of Infants - Holy Baptism One**

This takes place at this point when this occurs in the course of Morning Prayer, unless one wishes to follow the still older tradition of having it after the second reading.

### **Conclusion**

As mentioned above, strictly speaking the Grace marks the ending of the BCP service as we now have it and everything else is redundant. The reception (and presentation) of the alms during the final hymn is customary rather than prescribed. Extravagant gestures with the alms dish are quite unnecessary and give a false impression of the importance of the collection of money as part of the act of worship. If there is a blessing after the final hymn this does not have to be the form used at Holy Communion. It is NOT necessary to have a so-called "Recessional" hymn after the blessing, and on most occasions it is undesirable to do so. Strictly speaking there is no such thing as a "Recessional" since one is proceeding, whether into the Church or out of it (see below). As a general principle it is liturgically unhelpful to prefix beginnings to beginnings or add endings to endings. "Vestry Prayers" should be said or sung in the Vestry not in the Nave. They are the prayers of preparation and dismissal of the clergy and their assistants (with or without the choir).

### **Processions**

The rule here is an ascending order of seniority. The most junior clergy proceed in or out first, the most senior (e.g. Rector, Bishop) last. However, if the bishop is accompanied by his domestic chaplains, they follow him. A canon or dignitary does not take precedence over a rector in the latter's own church. In a Cathedral Vicars Choral/Minor Canons process first (preceded by the choir), then the Canons, and finally the Dean. It is incorrect for a rector to "lead in" a visiting preacher or to escort him to the pulpit when it is time for the sermon.

In a procession Readers (Parish Readers or Diocesan Readers) precede the clergy. They should not under any circumstances walk into the church or out of it after them.

For the particularities of processions where the celebration of the eucharist is concerned see the Commentary on the Eucharist.

Processions are, in the first instance, merely an orderly method of getting in and out of the Church or proceeding from one part of it to another. It is not necessary for choir and clergy, as a general rule, to process in by the longest possible route or to take the longest way out.

The procession out of the church at the end of a service should not be called a "recessional". People are "pro-ceeding" whether into or out of the church. The correct term is "processional", with "final" as an alternative.

### **Posture**

The traditional Anglican "rule" for members of the congregation when the traditional services are used is "stand to praise, kneel to pray, sit to listen". It may, however, be noted that this rule does not, in its entirety apply to the clergy. The priest "stands" to pronounce the absolution, and for the suffrages, as well as for the exhortation (when he says it) and when he reads the lessons; and also for the blessing (if it is given at the end of the service). For the modern services see below.

### **Morning or Evening Prayer and Holy Communion**

The original schema of Cranmer's Prayer Books (1549, 1552) was that of a form of Sunday worship consisting of Morning Prayer, Litany, and Holy Communion followed (after an interval) by Evening Prayer. In practice, owing to the absence of communicants the Holy Communion had to terminate after the Prayer for the Church Militant. Over a period of time the constituent services became separated, and ultimately Mattins came to be said on its own, Holy Communion being only rarely celebrated.

It would appear that a movement towards more frequent communions (among both Tractarians and Evangelicals) resulted from the Nineteenth Century onwards in Holy Communion once again being added to Morning Prayer (without the Litany) but with observance of an opportunity to withdraw (introduced into the rubrics of the Church of Ireland in 1878). This did facilitate more regular celebrations of communion, but at the cost of making the Holy Communion something for the extra-devout and not for most members of the congregation.

In practice a hybrid service evolved along the lines,

#### **Morning Prayer**

Sentence

Exhortation or "Let us humbly confess"

Absolution

Lord's Prayer

Versicles and Responses

Venite

Psalm

First lesson

Te Deum

Salutation

Suffrages

Second Collect

Third Collect

[Hymn]

#### **Holy Communion**

Lord's Prayer

Collect for Purity

Commandments or Summary of the Law



Collect  
Epistle  
Gospel  
Creed  
[Hymn]  
Sermon  
[Hymn]  
  
Offertory  
Prayer for the Church Militant  
[Withdrawal of most of the congregation]  
Shorter Exhortation  
Confession  
Absolution  
Comfortable Words  
Sursum Corda  
"Let us give thanks...  
"It is meet and right...  
Sanctus  
Prayer of Humble Access  
Prayer of Consecration  
Communion  
Lord's Prayer  
Post Communion prayers  
Gloria in Excelsis  
Blessing

It will be seen what a cumbersome and liturgically incoherent rite this turned out to be, with much redundancy (no less than three Lord's Prayers), wide separation of pieces of similar material (the Old Testament reading being part of Mattins, and the Epistle and Gospel part of Holy Communion) and the non-communicants in effect attending two incomplete services. The corporate character of the Holy Communion was in this context almost effaced. Whilst the provision of Communion was, of course, beneficial to those attending, the great majority of church members were in effect trained to look on the Holy Communion as something to be walked out from, in this way negating sound teaching on the importance of being regular and frequent communicants. It was from this unsatisfactory state of affairs that the movement known as Irish Parish and People sought to deliver the Church in the 1950s; and the movement bore fruit in that many of the original members of the Liturgical Advisory Committee (set up in 1962) had been active participants in Irish Parish and People. It is a matter for regret that such an unsatisfactory liturgical arrangement persisted in a few parishes up to the introduction of the 2004 edition of the *Book of Common Prayer*.

### **Shortening of services**

The provision for weekday services is dealt with below. On Sundays, the alternative to the exhortation may be used, and if one of the Lord's Prayers is to be omitted it should be the first one rather than the second. If any further shortening is considered desirable it is probably better to reduce the number of hymns than to interfere with the essential structure of the service. The occasional prayers may be kept to a minimum and the sermon does not have to be excessively long.

## PART 3

### MORNING AND EVENING PRAYER TWO [MODERN RITE]

This is called in the title to the Office in the 2004 edition of the Book of Common Prayer, "An Order for Morning and Evening Prayer daily throughout the year". As with **Morning and Evening Prayer One** this is a single order of service with variations for the morning and evening. As the modern language version of the morning and evening rites this succeeds and replaces the order in the Alternative Prayer Book 1984 (pp27-38), whilst owing much to that earlier form.

The structure is derived from that used for Holy Communion Two but without the specifically sacramental section. Although this makes reasonable sense for Sunday services it is less appropriate for weekday use (at which the headings do not appear), since the emphasis traditionally has been on the daily office as a continual offering of praise and prayer and the entrance and dismissal are functional and do not need to be emphasized.

The principal headings are,

**The Gathering of God's People**  
**Proclaiming and Receiving the Word**  
**The Prayers of the People**  
**Going out as God's People**

#### (1) **The Gathering of God's People**

Unlike the traditional language order and that in the Alternative Prayer Book (1984) it is assumed that normally what occurs before anything else is the **Greeting**. A processional hymn, if there is one, comes after the Greeting and the Sentence(s) of Scripture. The Greeting may be said, and the sentences read from the back of the Church.

#### **Greeting**

The standard Greeting is "The Lord be with you", with the Response "and also with you". However, on Easter Day the Greeting is "Christ is risen" with the response "The Lord is risen indeed. Alleluia!"

It may be seen that, apart from the Easter Greeting, there are no longer any seasonal greetings as in the Alternative Prayer Book p29, where there were also greetings for Christmas and Epiphany, Ascension, and Pentecost.

There appears to be an inconsistency in the 2004 edition of the Prayer Book in that in Holy Communion Two there is an alternative to "The Lord be with you", namely "Grace, mercy and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all." Also, in the Holy Communion service the Easter Greeting is for use from Easter Day until Pentecost. In other words it is a seasonal greeting for the great Fifty Days and not just of Easter Day only. To avoid having one form of greeting at the Eucharist and another at Morning or Evening Prayer during Easter it is appropriate for the Easter Greeting to be used throughout the season. Canon 5:2 states that,

The minister may at his discretion make and use variations which are not of substantial importance in any form of service prescribed in the Book of Common Prayer or elsewhere.

See also Canon 5:3 and Canon 5:4.

#### **Sentence(s) of Scripture**

These may be found on pp78-82. It is stated that they may be used at Morning Prayer or Evening Prayer or at Holy Communion Two as indicated in those services. The sentences are of the following character - General, Seasonal and for Ordinary time, Occasional, and Penitential. It is in order to use more than one on any particular occasion. Although there is no rubric, as in the Alternative Prayer Book p.23 to indicate that other sentences from Holy

Scripture may be used, this would appear to be understood.

There is an old tradition, going back to the Jewish roots of Christianity that a "day" begins at what we call 6 p.m., and this has given rise to celebrations on the eve of Sundays and festivals. This means that where appropriate material proper to the Sunday or festival may be used on the previous evening. This would not be taken as applying to "commemorations" such as those on pp22-3.

### **Preface**

The use of this is not obligatory, but it has value in setting forth the purpose of the Office - worship (and praise and thanksgiving), confession of sins, hearing God's word, intercession, and petition. The Preface should probably be used on most Sundays of the year and on festivals. However, during the penitential seasons it makes liturgical sense to omit it and to go to "Let us confess our sins to God our Father".

Some minor changes have been made in the Preface, "to receive forgiveness" instead of "to be forgiven", "to hear his holy word proclaimed", for "to hear and receive his holy word". Any theological shift is marginal. It is not clear that there has been a stylistic improvement. If there are to be any informal words explaining the theme of the service, as permitted by the rubric, these should be brief and not interrupt the flow of the service. In general the service should be interrupted as little as possible, and guidance for the congregation, for example about page numbers, should be given as unobtrusively as possible.

### **The Confession**

The observance of silence is obligatory before the Confession and should be sufficiently long to be significant for the members of the congregation. It is intended as a short pause for self-examination (see the comparable rubric in the *Alternative Prayer Book*, 1984, p.30).

Some changes have been made in the Confession. "Fellow-men" has been replaced by "neighbour" so as to be more inclusive, and the words "by what we have done and by what we have failed to do" have been added after "our own deliberate fault" in the version in the *Alternative Prayer Book* p.30.

### **The Absolution**

This is pronounced by the priest who is conducting the service (even if this is in the presence of the bishop) or by the senior priest present when the service is being conducted by a deacon or lay reader. If no priest is present the deacon or reader says the prayer which is given as an alternative. The correct posture for pronouncing the absolution is *standing*. The prayer is said, *kneeling*.

Unlike the absolution in Morning and Evening Prayer One, this may be taken as intending to *communicate* God's forgiveness and not simply to indicate its availability. The expression "to pronounce absolution" in Ordination Services Two (p.565) is used in the sense in which a judge pronounces a sentence. It is what is known as a "performative word" which accomplishes that which it represents. The context is that provided by the Gospel Reading at the ordination of a priest, John 20:19-23, which includes the words,

If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.

In *Ordination Services One* (p.537) the words said at the laying on of hands are,

Receive the Holy Ghost for the office and work of a Priest in the Church of God, now committed unto thee by the imposition of our hands. Whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven; and whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained. And by thou a faithful dispenser of the Word of God, and of his holy Sacraments; in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

## **(2) Proclaiming and Receiving the Word.**

This title appropriately describes the activity which follows but makes it difficult to refer to. The "Ministry of the Word" (APB p.31) remains useful as a way of indicating the next part of the service.

### **AT MORNING PRAYER**

As in Morning and Evening Prayer One, the distinctive material belonging to Morning Prayer follows on pp103-8 and then that belonging to Evening Prayer follows on pp109-11. The joint material resumes on p.112.

#### **Versicles and Responses**

As the initial words "O Lord, open our lips" suggest, this is the true beginning of the service, the penitential introduction having been prefixed to the original Office. In the form of the Anglican office contained in the publication *Celebrating Common Prayer*, Mowbray, 1992, Morning Prayer on each day of the week begins,

O Lord, open our lips;

**And our mouth shall proclaim your praise.**

This is also the pattern recommended in the Church of England's *Daily Prayer* in the Common Worship series.

#### **First Canticle**

In the morning this is **Venite**, or **Jubilate**, or the **Easter Anthems**. The Venite was prescribed in the Rule of St. Benedict (sixth century) at the "vigil" (i.e. the night service which became commonly known as Nocturns and Mattins), from where it found its way into the Roman and Sarum Breviaries, and in 1549 it was set in its familiar place at the beginning of Mattins in the BCP. The 2004 edition of the Prayer Book continues this ancient tradition. The Venite (Psalm 95) consists of two parts, an invitation to worship and a warning about the consequences of failing to heed God's Word. The latter is theologically significant, and should not be omitted without good reason. The Jubilate (Psalm 100), including, as it does, the words "Come into his gates with thanksgiving" is clearly more appropriately situated here at the beginning of the service than after the second lesson as in Morning Prayer One. The Easter Anthems are sung throughout Eastertide (the great Fifty Days) not just during the Easter Octave (eight days inclusive) as in the rubric in the Morning Prayer One.

An anomaly (arising from the process of authorization) is that the Venite and the Jubilate, as printed here, are from the Liturgical Psalter (in the Alternative Prayer Book 1984), not from the Common Worship Psalter (see psalm 95, p.702, and psalm 100, p.706). However, the rubric on p.105 states that "These and other canticles may be used in other versions and forms, e.g. from the Church Hymnal".

#### **First Reading**

This is generally, although not invariably, from the Old Testament (during Eastertide there is a tradition of using Acts in place of the Old Testament Reading). It is assumed in the layout of this order that three readings will normally be used, following the provisions of the Revised Common Lectionary. As the psalm in some way relates to the first reading and is intended as a response to it, the psalm should come after it when the RCL is used. See **Appendix B** for more information about the RCL and related lectionaries. Any version of Scripture authorized by the House of Bishops may be used for the readings.

As noted above for Morning Prayer One the following versions of Scripture are fully recognized for public use in the Church of Ireland - the "Authorized" or King James Version, the Revised Version of 1881/1885, the American Standard Revised Version, the Revised Standard Version of 1946/52 with later amendments, the New Revised Standard Version, the Jerusalem Bible, the New Jerusalem Bible, the New English Bible, the Revised English

Bible, and the New International Bible, the New International Version (inclusive language edition), and Today's English Version.

A Note on p.26 of the BCP allows readings to be extended. Although the opposite possibility is not mentioned, it may, for reasons of time (for example when several services have to be conducted one after another at short intervals) be necessary to abbreviate. If this is the case this needs to be done in a careful and intelligent manner.

Some liberty to the preacher is permitted by the same Note, as follows,

On Sundays between the Epiphany and Ash Wednesday and between Trinity Sunday and Advent Sunday, while the authorized lectionary provision remains the norm, the minister may occasionally depart from the lectionary provision for sufficient pastoral reasons or for preaching and teaching purposes.

No less than thirty different sets of readings for up to six Sundays in these two periods are suggested in an Appendix to the Church of England publication, *The Promise of His Glory*, Mowbray, 1991, pp404-412. The titles include "God and the World: Genesis 1:11; "Jacob"; "Women in the Messianic Line"; "David", "Isaiah", "Amos", "Daniel", "Romans 1", "Revelation 1".

As the readings are proclamations of God's Word, the greatest care and attention must be given to them. The reading of the Old and New Testament lessons lies at the very heart of Morning and Evening Prayer.

The mode of announcement should be noticed, "A reading from ... chapter ... beginning at verse ..." As in the *Alternative Prayer Book* (1984) the order is book, chapter, verse.

It is not necessary to say anything after the reading, such as "Here ends the reading" or "This is the Word of the Lord" with its response. On the contrary silence may be appropriate to allow the reading to "sink in" and is explicitly provided for here, and after the second and third readings.

If the lectionary for a Third Service is used (for example if Morning Prayer is said before the principal service of Holy Communion or where there is a tradition of two principal morning services for which separate lectionaries are desired) the Old Testament reading comes after the psalm, and the New Testament reading comes after the Second Canticle.

In the evening the canticle "Hail Gladdening Light" may be sung. This is an ancient hymn of the Eastern Church (*Phos Hilaron*) sung during the Evening Office at the lighting of the lamps and is the central item in that office. It is also to be found in the 1926 edition of the *Book of Common Prayer* the First Alternative Form of Evening Prayer (p.326) in another version. The Easter Anthems are prescribed for the evening in Eastertide.

### **Psalm**

Historically, the psalms are constitutive of the substance of the Office and not a mere preliminary to it, and their regular and frequent use establishes the principle of the ongoing praise of God in the liturgy. In the Revised Common Lectionary the psalm is chosen so as to relate in some way to the first reading. The psalms may be said or sung. If they are read it is permitted to read them "verse about" or, better, still, in "alternate half-verses" (the minister reading the first half of each verse, and, in accordance with the "parallelism" of thought which is a feature of Hebrew poetry, the congregation responding with the second half). Another way of using the psalms is for the congregation on opposite sides of the Church to alternate "verse about", although this is unusual except in Cathedrals\*, where traditionally the verses are sung alternately from one side of the choir to the other (hence the arrangement of seats facing each other - also to be found in College Chapels and in monasteries). It is probably better to read well rather than sing badly, although Anglican chant is one of the great glories of our particular spiritual tradition. In the early Church the "Cathedral" Office,

presided over by the bishop, consisted mainly of certain fixed psalms and intercessions. However, the early monks developed a tradition of recitation of the entire psalter, and this came to be part of the "Monastic" Office together with Scripture reading. Eventually these two traditions were conflated and developed into the complex medieval form from which the Anglican Office was derived. In the 1926 Prayer Book Mattins and Evensong preserved in their weekday form the "Monastic" practice of recitation of the entire Psalter. The Office of Compline (BCP pp154-157) maintains the tradition of having a limited number of "fixed" psalms appropriate to the particular occasion.

\*The two sides of the choir in cathedrals are traditionally known as "Decani" and "Cantoris" ("Of the Dean" – the north side, and "Of the Singer" – the south side").

The version of the psalter printed in the Prayer Book is that from the Church of England's *Common Worship*, itself a derivative of a translation that originated in the Episcopal Church of America and widely used in the Anglican Communion (for example in the publication *Celebrating Common Prayer*). In the current version there are many echoes of the historic "Coverdale" translation.

The choice of a modern version of the psalter to lay before Synod was one of the hardest decisions facing the Liturgical Advisory Committee. Since 1984 the *Liturgical Psalter* prepared by Professor David Frost on the basis of work by distinguished biblical scholars, had been in use in the Church of Ireland as well as the Church of England; but in spite of its considerable merits this had never proved popular. The Australian Church opted for an updated and "inclusive language" version for its *An Australian Prayer Book, 1995*. The Church of the Province of New Zealand had produced a translation of its own, which had been much criticised for toning down references to ancient Israel. The version used by the American Episcopal Church (prepared by a team which included the poet W.H. Auden among its original contributors) had become widely known, especially through the publication *Celebrating Common Prayer*. Its rhythmical character made it particularly appropriate for recitation. The Liturgical Advisory Committee originally proposed that there should be two versions of the psalter in the 2004 Prayer Book, that from the 1926 Book of Common Prayer (itself a discreet Church of England revision of the Coverdale psalms in the 1662 Prayer Book) and a modern psalter, for which it was felt the most likely candidate was that in *Celebrating Common Prayer*. However, the Church of England's Liturgical Commission undertook a project to bring it more into line with the traditional BCP psalter, and, after some trial and error produced a version which is modern but has links with the best of the Anglican liturgical tradition. The criteria for its work were that it should:

- pay close attention both to the received Hebrew text of the psalms and to scholarly discussions about their original form;
- pay close attention to the use of the psalms in the Christian tradition;
- be sympathetic to the liturgical uses of the psalter within the traditions of the Church;
- have a quality of language which would enable the psalms to be said or sung with ease;
- be memorable and resonate with known psalter traditions in the Church of England;
- be more generally inclusive of men and women than psalters currently in use in Church of England services;
- be couched in language accessible to a wide range of worshippers.

The Revd Canon Jane Sinclair, a member of the Church of England's Liturgical Commission has described the process in some detail in the *Companion to Common Worship*, ed. Paul Bradshaw, SPCK 2001, Chapter 10, "The Psalter". In addition to the information given above, she identifies the following distinguishing features of the CW psalter:

- It echoes known psalter tradition, preserving well-known phrases because of their

- familiarity;
- It uses a variety of English vocabulary to bring out the richness of meaning contained in certain Hebrew concepts;
- In general it uses language inclusive of male and female in a varied and sensitive manner.

Unlike the *Liturgical Psalter* it does not bracket difficult verses, although this leaves the traditional problem of apparently sub-Christian sentiments such as the desire for revenge in Psalm 137:7-9.

The traditional version of the psalms in the 1926 Book of Common Prayer (Coverdale with much "invisible mending") is still available. A rubric on p.593 of the new book (missing from the first printing) states,

Psalters. The Psalter contained in the Book of Common Prayer (1926) remains authorized for use in public worship as an alternative to this Psalter.

The 1926 psalter is available on the internet (on the Church of Ireland site) and in the Church of Ireland module of Visual Liturgy 4. It is intended that this will be available in both "pointed" and "non-pointed" editions.

It was found that the inclusive of two psalters in the new Prayer Book would make the book too bulky and heavy. Since the Liturgical Advisory Committee had previously given an undertaking to Synod to include both a traditional and a modern version the matter was brought to Synod, which voted, by a large majority to include the Common Worship Version only whilst continuing indefinitely to authorize the 1926 psalter.

The use of the Gloria (called "Gloria Patri" [Glory to the Father] to distinguish it from the Gloria in Excelsis) is to make of the reading of the psalms (from the Old Testament) a distinctively Christian offering, and the same consideration applies to the canticles except where this is not needed (e.g. the Te Deum and the Gloria in Excelsis). It is customary, when singing longer portions of psalms, to sing the Gloria at the end of each section. Another ancient custom is to have "Psalm Prayers", that is prayers after each of the psalms which express the message of the psalms in the light of the New Testament. This is provided for in the Book of Alternative Services of the Anglican Church of Canada (1985), and there is an even better set in the "Lutheran Book of Worship" (1983). For example, the Psalm Prayer after the 23rd Psalm in the latter publication is,

Lord Jesus Christ, shepherd of your Church, you give us new birth in the waters of baptism; you anoint us with oil, and call us to salvation at your table. Dispel the terrors of death and the darkness of error. Lead your people along safe paths, that they may rest securely in you and dwell in the house of the Lord now and forever, for your name's sake. Amen.

A fine set of Psalm Prayers is also to be found in the *Common Worship: Daily Prayer* - part of the *Common Worship* series of the Church of England, Church House Publishing, 2005. For example, the prayer following Psalm 148 is,

O glorious God, the whole of creation proclaims your marvellous work: increase in us a capacity to wonder and delight in it, that heaven's praise may echo in our hearts and our lives be spent as good stewards of the earth; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The use of such prayers would be lawful in the Church of Ireland under Chapter Nine of the Church Constitution, Canon 6(d).

Historically, the psalms are an essential aspect of the **substance** of the Office not merely a preliminary part of it, so any tendency to minimize their use must be avoided. It should also be remembered that as they are from the Bible they are part of God's Word, and so are highly significant for Christian believers.

## Second Reading

This is normally from an Epistle (or Acts or Revelation). It may be noted that the Order makes no provision for omissions when the time factor (for example in a group of parishes where services follow one another in rapid succession) demands it. One possibility is for the Third Reading to follow immediately after the Second and for both readings to be followed by a Canticle. Or if it is decided to have only two readings, the Second (either from an Epistle or from a Gospel) comes here, followed by a Canticle. However, the norm, for the principal Sunday service, is to be taken, as in the layout of this order, as three readings.

## Second Canticle

The **Te Deum** is traditional at Mattins, and should be the normal choice, whether used in full, or part 1, or part 2, or both these parts. It is particularly appropriate for festivals, and there are fine musical settings to the traditional form of words (Canticle 12, p.126). It is an early Christian hymn, whose first mention is in the "Rule" of Caesarius, Bishop of Arles (470-542). Some scholars think it may have been composed by Nicetas, Bishop of Remesiana in Dacia (370-420). The Very Revd J.C. Combe, former Dean of Kilmore, in his little book on the Canticles *Treasures Old and New* says it has been described as "a creed taking wings and soaring heavenwards", and also as "the shrine round which the Church has hung her joys for centuries". Shakespeare refers to it as a song of triumph in his "Henry V", and in his "Henry VIII" as being used at the Coronation of Anne Boleyn. The concluding part of it does not appear to have been part of the original "Te Deum", consisting, as it does, almost entirely of material drawn from the psalms. It appears that responses of this kind (*capitella*), were used between a psalm or canticle and its collect. It seems this particular set came to be attached permanently to the Te Deum. (See P. Bradshaw, Ed., *Companion to Common Worship Vol 1*, SPCK, 2001, Chapter 11, p.253.).

Unlike the *Alternative Prayer Book* (1984) which specified which canticles might be used at this point in modern language Morning Prayer the BCP (2004) allows any of the canticles (pp117-35) except the Benedictus (which comes later as the climax to the morning office). Care and attention needs to be given to the choice of alternatives to the Te Deum. The Venite, Jubilate, and the Easter Anthems are, in Morning and Evening Prayer Two, "invitatories" - canticles to be used at the beginning of the rite. The Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis are, traditionally, evening canticles, as is also Ecce Nunc and the Song of the Light. The Urbs Fortitudinis (from Isaiah 26) has had a rather unfortunate history in the Church of Ireland since its introduction in 1926. Perhaps because it is short, it, and the Jubilate have tended to displace the (liturgically far more significant) Te Deum and Benedictus. In the BCP 2004 it should be used sparingly, if it has to be used at all. Suitable alternatives to the Te Deum where these are needed are the Benedicite, Saviour of the World, Glory and Honour, and the Song of Christ's Glory. The **Benedicite** (Song of the Three) which is from the Apocrypha, represents the song of the three young men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego who praised God while they were miraculously in the midst of the "burning fiery furnace" (Daniel Ch.3). It has been used in Christian liturgical worship from early times. According to Rufinus (c.345-410) "the whole Church throughout the world" sang it. It is still used in the Eastern Orthodox Church at Lauds (orthros) daily and in the Divine Office of the Roman Catholic Church (1974) on Sundays and Festivals. It is particularly suitable on the Second Sunday before Lent (where the emphasis in the readings is on the Creation), and at the Harvest Thanksgiving; and there is a tradition within Anglicanism of using it during Lent. An attractive hymn based on this canticle, written by the Rt. Revd. E.F. Darling and set to the tune "Kum Ba Yah" appeared in *Irish Church Praise* (no 126) and proved popular with congregations. In the Church Hymnal it is no 682. **Saviour of the World** (*Salvator Mundi*) has been traced back to a twelfth century manuscript. It appeared in the English Congregational Service Book, and has passed from there into several Anglican selections including *Common Worship*, and the BCP 2004. It is particularly suitable for the penitential



seasons of Advent and Lent. **Glory and Honour** consists of three songs from the Revelation merged together. **The Song of Christ's Glory**, from Philippians Ch 2, is particularly appropriate in Advent and during the Christmas season, during Lent and at Ascension. It is regrettable that the **Gloria in Excelsis** has not been included among the canticles on pp117f and now appears only within the context of the Holy Communion (pp190, 203-4). It originated as a morning hymn in the Greek Church, and, inspired as it clearly is by the angels' song at Bethlehem (Luke 2:14) is particularly appropriate during the Christmas season. **Great and Wonderful** is a blending together of two different songs from the Book of Revelation. The first is the victory anthem (Ch 15) of those martyred for the faith. The second is the paean of the countless multitude of the redeemed (Ch 7).

The provision of additional canticles is a significant features of the 2004 edition of the Book of Common Prayer (as it was of the Alternative Prayer Book). It may, however, be noted, that these remain just a selection from the many biblical canticles that are part of the liturgical heritage of the whole Church. Further canticles, lawful for use under Canon 6(d), may be found in *Celebrating Common Prayer, New Patterns for Worship*, Church House Publishing, 2002, pp124f, in *Lent, Holy Week, Easter*, in *The Promise of His Glory* and in *Enriching the Church's Year*. A resource book consolidating much of the material contained in the last three of these was published by Church House Publishing in 2006 under the title *Common Worship: Times and Seasons*, and, although it is orientated towards the eucharist rather than the office nonetheless contains much useful material.

In the evening there is a choice of two Canticles, **Magnificat** and **Bless the Lord**. The Magnificat as a "Gospel Canticle" traditionally has priority, and its use marks the climax of the Evening Office. As the Song of the Blessed Virgin Mary (St. Luke 1:46-55) it has had a special place in the devotional life of the Church from early times, and its use honours the *theotokos* ("God-bearer") and is a reminder of the great truth of the Incarnation. The alternative, which like the Benedicite is from the "Song of the Three" in the Apocrypha, should be used sparingly.

Some of the greatest music in our Anglican choral heritage takes the form of "settings" of the Magnificat and the Nunc Dimittis.

### **Third Reading**

This reading is from one of the four Gospels, in accordance with the appropriate "year" in the Revised Common Lectionary.

### **Third Canticle**

The **Benedictus** (The Song of Zechariah, Luke 1:68-79) as a "Gospel Canticle" traditionally has priority over any alternatives, and its use marks the climax of the Morning Office. In the Roman *Liturgy of the Hours*, and also in the Anglican *Celebrating Common Prayer* a special place is reserved for it, and the wide range of canticles used in both those office books is fitting in elsewhere. A similar arrangement is to be found in the Church of England's *Common Worship: Daily Prayer*, Church House Publishing 2005. See also, the manner in which the canticle is given a special place in **Daily Prayer: Weekdays**, Morning Prayer, BCP 2004, p.136.

In the *Alternative Prayer Book* (1984) the Benedictus was placed between the Old and New Testament Readings since it was thought that its contents (referring as it does to John the Baptist) made it particularly suitable as a kind of "hinge" between the Old and New Testaments. However, this necessitated a "swapping" of the Benedictus and the Te Deum, and produced a certain overlap between the credal type material of the latter and the actual creed which followed it.

It may be noted that only the New Testament canticles from pp117-135 are permitted instead of the Benedictus, as it would seem inappropriate for readings from the Gospels to be

followed by canticles from the Old Testament.

### AT EVENING PRAYER

In the evening the alternatives are the **Nunc Dimittis, Glory and Honour**, and **The Song of Christ's Glory**. The Nunc Dimittis is the traditional response to the Second Reading at Evensong and should normally be used here. Its use is attested in the (fourth century) *Apostolic Constitutions*, and it appears in a special collection of canticles following the psalms in the (fifth century) biblical manuscript Codex Alexandrinus ("A"). It was used at Vespers in the Eastern Church and at Compline in the Western spiritual tradition, and has been prescribed at Evensong in Prayer Books from the 1549 BCP onwards, where, together with the great musical settings used with it and the Magnificat it is one of the great glories of Anglican worship. Glory and Honour, which consists of three songs from Revelation merged together should be used sparingly. The Song of Christ's Glory, from Philippians Chapter 2, is particularly appropriate in Advent and at Christmas, during Lent and at Ascension.

The rubric after the Second Reading on p.111 should not be overlooked. 'If the service is the Principal Service of the day the order of readings and canticles at Morning Prayer is followed with canticles appropriate to the evening.' This will result in the structure at the relevant portions of Evening Prayer,

- Versicles and Responses
- A Song of the Light (or alternatives)
- First Reading
- Psalm(s)
- Second Reading
- Magnificat (or alternatives)
- Third Reading
- Nunc Dimittis (or alternatives)

For more detailed information on the canticles, see **Part 4** below.

### **The Sermon**

The rubric permits the sermon to be preached here "or at some other place in the service" (for example in its traditional place at the end of the service). Its position here makes it possible to integrate the reading and the preaching of God's Word and is to be commended. The word "sermon" is both legally and theologically correct here and it should not be trivialized by calling it an "address". The preacher is not there to offer his or her personal opinions on the text (although the preacher's perspective is in its own way important) but to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The choice of a hymn here as permitted by the rubric needs to be carefully made so that, if used, it serves as a bridge between the reading and preaching of the Word and the affirmation of faith through the recitation of the Apostles' Creed.

### **The Apostles' Creed**

The rationale of its position here is that after hearing the Word of God read, and responding to it in praise (canticles) the worshippers reaffirm their faith in the words of the Baptismal Creed. The emphasis "I believe..." is on personal faith here, just as the emphasis in the Nicene Creed ("We believe...") is on the Church's corporate confession of belief. It will be noticed that the three paragraphs focus attention in turn on the three Persons of the Holy Trinity.

It seems regrettable, in this connection, that this version of the Creed should, quite unnecessarily substitute "God's" for "his" in the line, "I believe in Jesus Christ..." If this is in order to indicate that God is beyond the division of gender, it is not clear that having a neuter "God" is an improvement on one to whom a masculine pronoun refers. It is also questionable

whether changes of such a kind should be made in the Apostles' Creed that have no basis in the Latin and Greek prototypes.<sup>1</sup> The Church of England has not gone down this route in *Common Worship* so the Church of Ireland is out of step at this point with its sister Church. There is a further danger that the alteration, if taken in isolation, may appear to give succour to an adoptionist Christology, since it seems to attach the word "God" exclusively to the Father. To avoid this error it will be important carefully to relate what this version of the Apostles' Creed says to the emphatic assertion of the divinity of Christ and of the Holy Spirit in the Nicene Creed. It may be helpful to indicate that the Greek word *kurios*, "Lord" is used in the Greek Old Testament (in the Septuagint) as the equivalent of the Hebrew *adonai* and with the sense of the "Lord God".<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>It seems that the earliest version of the old Roman Creed, which is the basis of our Apostles' Creed, was written in Greek, since the early Church at Rome was Greek speaking. However, fourth century versions of what we can specifically identify as the "Apostles' Creed" are in Latin. The Greek here is *autou* "of him", "his", and the Latin is *eius*, which means the same thing.

<sup>2</sup>Out of motives of reverence those who held the biblical faith (of the Old Testament) refused to take the name of God, represented by the word YHWH (and probably originally pronounced Yahweh) on their lips. Instead, they said the word *adonai* "Lord" wherever YHWH occurred; and when vowel points were invented those belonging to the word *adonai* were attached in MSS to the word YHWH. Depending on context *adonai* can mean as little as "sir" or as much as "Lord God", the equivalent of the inexpressible YHWH, which is the sense here.

However, in general, this version of the Apostles' Creed, prepared by the English Language Liturgical Consultation may be regarded as significant improvement on that used in the *Alternative Prayer Book* (1984) and the work of ELLC's predecessor, the International Consultation on English Texts. For a full explanation of the translation see the publication *Praying Together*, The Canterbury Press, Norwich, 2000.

As mentioned above, in relation to Morning Prayer One two customs relating to the use of the Creed are worthy of mention. First, that of bowing the head at the words "and in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord". This reflects an old tradition, based on Scripture (Phil. 2:10.11) of honouring the Name of Jesus in the liturgy. At a time when there are some who do not appear to acknowledge His divinity the continued relevance of this gesture is obvious. An old canon (the 18th of 1603, founded on the 52nd of Queen Elizabeth's Injunctions issued in 1559) ordered,

And likewise, when in time of Divine Service the Lord Jesus shall be mentioned, due and lowly reverence shall be done by all persons present as hath been accustomed, testifying by these outward ceremonies and gestures their ... due acknowledgement that the Lord Jesus Christ, the true and eternal Son of God, is the only Saviour of the world, in Whom all the mercies, graces, and promises of God to mankind, for this life, and the life to come, are fully and wholly comprised.

The custom, found in some churches of "turning East for the Creed" (churches traditionally being built facing East and indicating the symbolism of Christ as the "Sun of Righteousness") reflects an old practice of clergy and people alike looking one way through the prayers and Creeds, that is, towards the altar. It is a liturgical courtesy, where this custom exists, to conform to it.

Herbert Thorndike (1598-1672) said,

In some churches the desk for the Prayer Book looks towards the Chancel; and for reading of Lessons we are directed to look towards the people. As the Jews in their prayers looked towards the Mercy-seat or principal part of the Temple (Ps 28:2), so Christians looked towards the Altar or chief part of the Church, whereof their Mercy-seat was but a type. Christ in His prayer directs us to Heaven, though God be everywhere; for Heaven is His throne, and we look toward that part of the church which most resembles it.

### **(3) The Prayers of the People**

#### **Salutation & Lesser Litany**

The function of the greeting and response, whenever it occurs in the liturgy, is to unite minister and people in the act of prayer which follows. The Lesser Litany (a variant of the ancient Kyrie Eleison) is an acknowledgement of our unworthiness and an invocation of the Lord's mercy upon us as we embark on prayer.

#### **The Lord's Prayer**

The Lord's Prayer and the lesser Litany which precedes it are obligatory in this order. It has never been appropriate to omit them except when Morning Prayer and the Holy Communion (or some other order containing the Lord's Prayer) have been conjoined. The Lord's Prayer is the keystone in the structure of the Morning and Evening Office, serving to sum up all that has gone before and leading to all that follows. Either the modern or the traditional form may be used. There were some difficulties in agreeing on a suitable modern form as there are considerable problems in translating the original Greek. For example the word translated "daily" is almost impossible to turn into English. A noted biblical scholar once suggested, "Give us Tomorrow's Bread Today", referring to the great "Tomorrow", meaning the end of time, and Bread meaning the spiritual sustenance of Christ who is the Bread of Life. The line "lead us not into temptation" is probably more accurately translated as "Do not bring us to the time of trial". The version used here is identical to that adopted by the Church of England, and represents a conservative approach, using modern English ("you" and "your" language rather than "thee" and "thou") but not departing radically from received use. The doxology, "For the kingdom..." etc. is used in all the modern rites of the Book of Common Prayer. It may be noted that the traditional form itself has been slightly modernized by the use of "who" instead of "which" and "on" instead of "in".

#### **Suffrages or *Preces***

The suffrages, described here as "versicles and responses", are, like all forms of responsory prayer, a way of involving minister and people together in prayer. Essentially the versicles (i.e. "little verses") are scriptural texts, usually from the psalms, and so are the Responses. These ones are optional, which opens up several possibilities. An alternative set of responses might be used (for example, the psalm litanies on p527ff in *Celebrating Common Prayer*). Or, the intercessions (possibly in a Litany form) could take place here so that the collects come at the end of the rite and are followed immediately by the Conclusion (Going out as God's People). Or, they may simply be omitted, although, as a traditional component of the Anglican office there ought to be some specific reason for shortening the service in this way. If the suffrages are being sung, traditional words may be used with traditional musical settings.

#### **The Collects**

Normally there are three collects at Morning or Evening Prayer: The Collect of the day, and two of the morning or evening collects. However, there is an old custom of using a seasonal collect in addition to the Collect of the day throughout Advent and Lent (the collects, respectively of the First Sunday in Advent and of Ash Wednesday). When a saint's day falls on a Sunday it is customary for the relevant collect to be said after the Collect of the day. When a saint's day falls on a weekday it normally takes priority, but the collect of the previous Sunday may follow it. Note that correct usage is to say "Collect of the Day" (not for the Day).

A Collect is a single-sentence prayer of a traditional kind, which, properly speaking, includes the following elements -

- Address to God;
- Some qualifying expressions referring to God's attributes or acts;
- Supplication;

Ascription or some reference to the mediating work of Christ.

For an example see the Collects of the First and Second Sundays after Christmas (Collect Two, pp247-8).

It is permissible to add the traditional ascription to any collect ending "Christ our Lord", namely, "who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever." This is done as a matter of course in the Collects of the Day in the Church of England's **Common Worship**.

### **The Collect of the Day**

The Collects in the 2004 edition of the Book of Common Prayer are derived from various sources. Collect One prayers are from the 1926 *Book of Common Prayer*. Collect Two prayers are derived from the work of an interprovincial consultation of representatives of the Church of England, the Church of Ireland, the Episcopal Church of Scotland, and the Church in Wales, supplemented and modified as required. The post-communion prayers (which are also of the collect type) are, for the most part, from the same source. The collects in the Alternative Prayer Book were to some extent the weak point in that book, although some of the best ones found a place in the BCP 2004.

### **The Collects at Morning Prayer**

One or more of these morning collects is said (or sung), customarily two. Of the four provided the first two are more traditional. The wording of the third prayer reflects the Latin original *praevenire*, which gave rise to "Prevent us, O Lord" meaning, "Go before us". An alternative to this is to use the version from the Alternative Prayer Book, "Direct us, O Lord..." The fourth collect modifies the rather clumsy APB construction "We pray you..." so as to read, "We humbly pray..."

### **The Collects at Evening Prayer**

As above. The Collect "Lighten our darkness..." has strong associations with Evening Prayer and should not lightly be disregarded. The rhythm has been spoilt by saying "O Lord, we pray" instead of "we beseech you, O Lord" as in the APB. The latter is much more suitable when the office is sung, particularly when plainsong is used with the full set of inflections,

Lighten our darkness, we beseech you, O Lord,  
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.**

### **After the Collects**

The traditional order followed here is hymn or anthem, occasional prayers or the Litany, hymn, sermon, hymn, blessing. What is preferred in this order is that the sermon should occur after the Third Cantic; although the rubric permits it to come at some other point in the service, for example, before or after the occasional prayers. It is appropriate for the final hymn to be sung prior to the dismissal or blessing. The receiving of the alms during the final hymn is traditional but not prescribed. No extravagant gesture with the alms dish is necessary or desirable. A deacon or a Reader does not say a blessing but offers a suitable prayer instead. With regard to the blessing, this is customarily given with the right hand raised. The ancient Celtic Church followed the Eastern custom of extending the first, second, and fourth fingers (with the thumb and third finger closed over each other) and this is sometimes followed in the Church of Ireland. This contrasted with the Roman use of extending the thumb, fore and middle fingers and having the third and fourth fingers bent over.

Occasional Prayers, that is, prayers for the particular occasion, are used after the collects, or a litany. General regulations governing the choice and use of Occasional Prayers may be found in Chapter Nine of the Church Constitution, Canon Six,

The use of prayers and hymns not included in the Book of Common Prayer. It shall be lawful to use in the course of or before or after any public office of the Church

- (a) any form of prayer included in any book of prayers prescribed or authorized.,
- (b) any form of hymn in any prescribed or authorized book,
- (c) any prayer or hymn authorized by the bishop or ordinary,
- (d) any prayer or hymn not containing substantial variations from the practice of, nor contrary to the doctrine of the Church, as the minister may consider to be required by current circumstances; but the provisions of Canon 5(3) and (4) shall apply to all such prayers and hymns.

See also,

Canon 5(3) All variations in forms of service and all forms of service used or made under the provisions of this canon shall be reverent and seemly and shall be neither contrary to nor indicative of any departure from the doctrine of the Church.

Canon 5(4) If any question is raised concerning any such variation, or as to whether it is "of substantial importance", the same shall be referred to the bishop..."

Official provision includes "A Book of Occasional Prayers - suitable for use in Public Worship". These are in traditional language, but there is no reason why prayers in the modern language rite must invariably be in "you" and "your" form. The resources contained within the Book of Common Prayer itself should not be overlooked. In addition to the "Prayers and Thanksgivings" to be found on pp145-53 of the BCP there are the Weekday Intercessions and Thanksgivings (which may be used perfectly well on a Sunday), and the form of prayer in *A Late Evening Office* which are by no means tied to the evening, and are as suitable for use with the traditional as well as the modern version of the office. The 1926 Prayer Book also has many prayers (for example those used at the Consecration of a Church may suitably be used at the New Year) which are appropriate in Morning or Evening Prayer 1 and conform to Canon Six above. The General Supplication from the First Alternative Form of Evening Prayer in the 1926 Book (pp329-30) and the form of Thanksgivings from the same Order (pp326-7) are also suitable for use. The Church of England's *Common Worship: Times and Seasons* mentioned above contains much useful material but in general is more suited to the intercessions at Holy Communion than at Morning or Evening Prayer. Great care should be taken over the selection of prayers at this point. When using collect-type prayers it is not necessary to have them in a "string". The most ancient use of the collect form was,

BIDDING TO PRAYER ("Let us pray...")

SILENT PRAYER (in effect the substance of the praying)

THE COLLECT ("collecting" or gathering up the prayers of the people)

An example of this may be found in the Prayers of Intercession on Good Friday in *Common Worship: Times and Seasons*. The section relating to the nations of the world reads,

Let us pray for the nations of the world and their leaders:  
for Elizabeth our Queen and the Parliaments of this land,  
for those who administer the law and all who serve in public office,  
for all who strive for justice and reconciliation,  
that by God's help the world may live in peace and freedom.

*Silence is kept.*

Lord, near us.

**Lord, graciously hear us.**

Most gracious God and Father,  
is whose will is our peace,  
turn our hearts and the hearts of all to yourself,

that by the power of your Spirit  
the peace which is founded on justice  
may be established throughout the world;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

For further information on the use of occasional prayers see Appendix F.

**The Litany Two** - "The Litany in contemporary language", (BCP pp175-178), may be used at this point, and should be said or sung regularly.

#### **(4) Going out as God's People**

The "going out" is a counterpart to the "gathering" which enables the service to begin. Five forms of conclusion/dismissal are given including the Grace with the alternative of an "appropriate blessing". The use of a blessing at the end of Morning and Evening Prayer has become so engrained in Church of Ireland experience that it is hard to convince people that it is not essential to the Office. In many ways it is better to finish with one of the other conclusions and to reserve the blessing for the eucharist (or at least restrict it to special occasions).

### **Part 4: The Canticles**

The canticles form a separate section in the book since they may be used at both the Office and at Holy Communion. Although traditional language canticles are printed in Morning and Evening Prayer One and modern language canticles are printed in Morning and Evening Prayer Two, there is no reason why the reverse may not happen. It is in order for the traditional canticles to be sung in the context of a modern language rite as appropriate or vice versa.

With regard to the versions used, the traditional language canticles are as in the 1926 Book of Common Prayer. Those from the psalter are from the psalter used in the 1926 book (a moderate revision of the Coverdale psalms in the 1549-1662 editions of the Prayer Book). The Gospel canticles, Benedictus, Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis are as in Coverdale and previous editions of the Prayer Book, and this also applies to the Gloria in Excelsis (printed only in Holy Communion One). The modern language versions vary in their provenance. Those which are also psalms, namely the Venite, the Jubilate, Ecce Nunc, and Deus Misereatur are from the Liturgical Psalter (the version prepared by Dr. David Frost on the basis of translations by a distinguished team of biblical scholars and incorporated into both the Church of England's *Alternative Service Book* 1980 and the Church of Ireland's *Alternative Prayer Book* 1984). The Gospel canticles are from versions prepared by the English Language Liturgical Consultation. It was decided not to use the alternative ELLC translations which addressed God in these as "you", retaining instead the use of the third person. One canticle, "Great and Wonderful" is basically from the Revised Standard Version of the Bible, another, The Song of Wisdom, from the New Revised Standard Version. Others are original compositions.

The word "canticle" comes from the Latin *canticulum* meaning a "little song". From early Christian times passages from the Old and New Testaments and the Apocrypha have been sung as part of the morning and evening offices together with early Christian hymns such as the Te Deum, the Gloria in Excelsis, and the Song of the Light. Some psalms do double-duty as canticles. The twenty that appear here represent a selection from those available. There are over sixty in the publication *Celebrating Common Prayer*, and it is greatly to be regretted that the opportunity was not taken to include a much wider range in the Book of Common Prayer 2004. It is also unfortunate that the Gloria in Excelsis does not appear in this section as it did in the comparable part of the Alternative Prayer Book 1984. The Gloria is not tied exclusively to Holy Communion as is sometimes thought, but originated in the Greek

morning office (where it is still found), and also was also used in a similar context in the Celtic Church. However, the addition of The Song of Isaiah, The Song of Wisdom, and Ecce Nunc, is to be welcomed.

Certain canticles, as well as the Lord's Prayer, the Apostles' and Nicene Creed and other texts, are in versions produced in their current form by the English Language Liturgical Consultation (ELLC). This is an international and ecumenical body which superseded the earlier International Consultation on English Texts (ICET) whose versions were used for certain canticles in the Church of England's *Alternative Service Book* (1980) and in the Church of Ireland's *Alternative Prayer Book* (1984). The aim has been to have ecumenically agreed texts in use in the main English speaking churches. Adaptation of the ICET texts has been based on certain principles,

- Only necessary changes are made.
- Sensitivity is shown to the need for inclusive language.
- It has been borne in mind that these texts are for use in the liturgical assembly. The ease with which they can be said, heard, and sung is an essential element of the revision.
- The language is contemporary and suited the character of the previous (ICET) texts.

The canticles concerned in the Book of Common Prayer 2004 are the Gloria in Excelsis, the Te Deum, the Benedictus (in two versions, one referring to God as "you" the other as "he"), the Magnificat (in two versions), and the Nunc Dimittis.

The relevant report is *Praying Together- a Revision of "Prayers We Have in Common"* (ICET, 1975), *Agreed Liturgical Texts*, prepared by the English Language Liturgical Consultation 1988; the Canterbury Press, Norwich, 1990.

It is highly regrettable that not only has the Roman Catholic Church never accepted any of these ecumenically prepared texts, but, following a change of policy by the Vatican, its distinguished representatives felt compelled to resign from the English Language Liturgical Consultation. The outstanding work by the International Commission on English in the Liturgy (ICEL), which was represented on ELLC has been almost completely frustrated within the Roman Catholic Church itself through changes in personnel and the terms of reference of the Commission, the current approach being that of an excessively literal rendering into English of Latin texts.

A significant rubric appears on p105 where it says, "These and other canticles may be used in other versions and forms e.g. from the Church Hymnal." Canticles in the form of hymns form a significant section in the hymnal (no's 682-712) and these form a useful resource, including the well-loved "Tell out my soul" (712), Bishop Darling's attractive "All created things" to the tune of "Kum ba yah" (682), and another version of the Benedicite, suited to use in the Easter season "Surrexit Christus" from the Taizé community (711). However, there is a question as to whether it is desirable to have five, six, or even seven hymn-type items at Morning or Evening Prayer (Some churches already have as many as five hymns; and the addition of two hymn-type canticles would make up seven in this genre). Such a use could be considered monotonous as well as a departure from historic and well-loved Anglican practice. Hymn-type canticles have their place; but they should be used sparingly.

The *Gloria Patri* (BCP p.117) Sometimes known as the "lesser doxology" this is added to most of the canticles in traditional or modern form,

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit;  
as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit;  
as it was in the beginning, is now, and shall be for ever. Amen.



The word "Spirit" was substituted for "Ghost" in the 2004 edition of the *Book of Common Prayer*; but "Ghost" may still be used when traditional musical settings are involved.

"World without end" is an English version of the Greek *eis tous aiônous tôn aiônôn* which means "into the ages of ages" indicating eternity, the world to come.

The Latin underlying our traditional text is

*Gloria Patri, et Filio, et Spiritui Sancto: sicut erat in principio, et nunc, et semper, et in saecula saeculorum. Amen.*

*In saecula saeculorum* means "in the age of ages", also indicating eternity, the world to come.

The force of the second half of the verse is to indicate the eternity of the three Persons of the Holy Trinity. The Arian heresy which says of the Son "there was when he was not" is firmly excluded.

The Gloria has been used at the end of psalms since the fourth century AD, and it is found quite early in metrical form at the end of hymns in the Office. The form was not originally fixed, and the first line sometimes occurred as "Glory to the Father, through the Son, in the Holy Spirit". As this was susceptible of an unorthodox interpretation (for example by the Arians, who denied the full divinity of the Son and the Holy Spirit) the present form became a test of right faith and the other version ceased to be used by Catholic Christians.

The function of the Gloria is to make the praise explicitly Christian where canticles are pre-Christian, viz. the Venite (Psalm 95); the Jubilate (Psalm 100); the traditional version of the Benedicite (non-canonical, the Song of the Three), the Urbs Fortitudinis (from Isaiah 26); the Song of Isaiah (from Isaiah 12); The Song of Wisdom, (non-canonical, from Wisdom 7); Ecce Nunc (Psalm 134); Cantate Domino (Psalm 98); and Deus Misereatur (Psalm 67). Where the canticles are from the New Testament, they are made explicitly Trinitarian by the same means, namely, the Easter Anthems (Verses from 1 Cor. and Romans), the Benedictus (Luke 1: 68-79), the Magnificat (Luke 1: 46-55); the Nunc Dimittis (Luke 1:2:29-32); Great and Wonderful (Verses from Rev 15 and Rev 5); Glory and Honour (verses from Rev 4 and Rev 5) and the Song of Christ's Glory. Certain canticles have their own special Trinitarian terminations, namely, the modern language version of the Benedicite and Bless the Lord (non-canonical, the Song of the Three). Certain canticles from the Christian era are not deemed to require any such termination, namely the Te Deum and the Gloria in Excelsis (early Christian hymns) and Saviour of the World (possibly a nineteenth century composition but with some verses from the medieval period).

### **The Venite** (Canticles 1 & 2)

The use of this canticle (psalm 95) as a call to worship may go back to one of the great festivals of Judaism in the post-exilic period (see below). Its use for this purpose in Christian worship is mentioned by St Augustine (354-430 AD); and it was prescribed by the Rule of St. Benedict (6th c.) for the "vigil" service (which ultimately became Mattins) and found its way from there into the Roman, Sarum, and other breviaries. Because of its role it became known as the "Invitatory" psalm, and this gave a name also to the antiphons that were used with it in the pre-Reformation liturgy. In the 1974 Divine Office of the Roman Catholic Church it occurs in the "Introduction to the Divine Office" and is normally used daily following the versicle and response "O Lord, open our lips", "And we shall praise your name" before Morning Prayer or the Office of Readings, whichever comes first, in this way introducing the day's prayer and praise. In 1549 Cranmer put it in at the beginning of Morning Prayer in the Book of Common Prayer. In Morning and Evening Prayer One it comes at Mattins immediately after the versicles and responses, except during the Easter Octave (when the Easter Anthems are used). It may be omitted on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. In Morning and Evening Prayer Two the Jubilate is an alternative to the Venite, and the Easter Anthems are used "in Eastertide", in other words throughout the "Great Fifty Days" of the

Easter Season. Verses 1-7 or 1-11 may be used. However, as the concluding portion contains a divine warning about the consequences of not heeding the voice of God this is something that needs to be heard and reflected upon, and should regularly be used, especially during the penitential seasons of Advent and Lent.

In his authoritative commentary *The Psalms*, SCM, 1962, Arthur Weiser (Professor of Old Testament at the University of Tübingen) had this to say,

The Mishnah regarded the psalm as a New Year psalm; that view probably originated in an ancient tradition. The song is that portion of a liturgy of the autumn festival in which Yahweh is revealed as the Creator and Lord of the universe (vv.4f.), enters upon his reign as King (v.3) and renews the covenant he made with his people by pledging them anew to keep the commandments he ordained in that covenant (vv.7f.). We shall have to think of the psalm as having been recited before the festival congregation entered the sanctuary (vv.2,6). In its first part (vv.1-7a) it contains a hymn preparing the congregation for their impending encounter with God, the Creator and Lord of the covenant; the second part (vv.7b-11) comprises a warning from God, calling upon them to obey him and ending in a grave, almost threatening prospect. [For detailed comments on the passage see *op. cit.* pp. 625-7]

Versified alternatives to the Prayer Book versions may be found in the Church Hymnal, no's 687 "Come, let us praise the Lord"; 689 "Come, sing praises to the Lord above"; and 690, "Come, worship God who is worthy of honour".

#### **Jubilate** (Canticles 3 & 4)

The Jubilate is also Psalm 100. A. Weiser in *The Psalms* (*op. cit.*), pointed to its similarity to Psalm 95, and says,

It is evident ... that it was sung at the entry into the Temple, perhaps antiphonally by the choir as a hymn, and that it has probably been part of the liturgy of the divine service at which God's 'name' and his 'grace and faithfulness' were made known to the congregation who now extol them... These facts point to the festival cult of the covenant community. The keynote of the psalm is the joy in God which is the motive power of faith and lifts up human hearts.

Prior to the Reformation the Jubilate was the second of the fixed psalms at Lauds. Cranmer introduced it as an alternative to the Benedictus, to provide for the occasions when the latter occurred in the readings of the day. In Morning and Evening Prayer One it occurs as a simple alternative to the Benedictus. However, as an invitation to worship this is not a particularly suitable place for it; and its general substitution for the Benedictus detracts from the role of the latter as the climax of the morning office. In Morning and Evening Prayer Two it is much better placed (as in the *Alternative Prayer Book 1984*) as an alternative to the Venite, which is also permitted in the 1974 Divine Office of the Roman Catholic Church. However, given the significance of the warning in the second half of the Venite, the use of Venite should be normative.

Versified alternatives to the forms in the Prayer Book may be found in the Church Hymnal, no's 683 "All People that on earth do dwell" - to the tune of the "Old Hundredth" and 701 "Jubilate, ev'rybody".

#### **The Easter Anthems** (Canticles 5 & 6)

The Easter Anthems consist of verses from 1st Corinthians and Romans with a bearing upon the celebration of the Easter message. Drawing upon a devotion used before the celebration of the eucharist from the Sarum rite<sup>1</sup>, Cranmer in 1549 had prescribed the following before Mattins on Easter Day,

Christ rising again from the dead now dieth not. Death from henceforth hath no power upon him. For in that he died, he died but once to put away sin: but in that he liveth, he

liveth unto God. And so likewise, count yourselves dead unto sin: but living unto God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Alleluia. Alleluia.

Christ is risen again: the first fruits of them that sleep: for seeing that by man came death: by man also cometh the resurrection of the dead. For as by Adam all men do die, so by Christ all men shall be restored to life. Alleluia.

*The priest.* Show forth to all nations the glory of God.

*The answer:* And among all people his wonderful works.

Let us pray

O God, who for our redemption didst give thine only begotten son to the death of the cross: and by his glorious resurrection hast delivered us from the power of our enemy: Grant us so to die daily from sin, that we may evermore live with him in the joy of his resurrection; through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

<sup>1</sup>This order, according to Jasper and Bradshaw, *A Companion to the Alternative Service Book*, SPCK, 1986, p.101, in the Sarum rite had accompanied a process before Mass on Easter Day which went to the sepulchre, collected the host, and placed it on the high altar: the cross was then carried to a side altar and venerated.

In 1552 the alleluias, the versicle and response and collect were omitted, and the two anthems were appointed to be used instead of the Venite on Easter Day. In 1662 1 Cor 5:7-8 was prefixed to the other anthems and the Gloria Patri was added. In the 1926 revision in the Church of Ireland the Easter Anthems were moved from before the Collect of Easter Day to follow the Venite and they were appointed to be used during the Easter Octave. The Alternative Prayer Book (1984) directed their use "in Eastertide", and this remains the position in the Book of Common Prayer 2004, Eastertide being understood as the season of Fifty Days.

An alternative version to that in the Book of Common Prayer may be found in the Church Hymnal 703 "Now lives the Lamb of God".

### **The Benedictus** (Canticles 7 & 8)

This is one of the three "Gospel Canticles" from St Luke's Gospel, the other two being the Magnificat and the Nunc Dimittis. It is subtitled "The Song of Zechariah" being the words uttered by Zechariah to celebrate the birth of his son, John the Baptist, the forerunner of Jesus. Expressing as it does the fulfillment of the Messianic hope and standing, theologically, at the "hinge" between the Old and New Testaments it is of immense theological significance. It is grouped with the psalms in Codex Alexandrinus; and is mentioned as being used liturgically in 6th and 7th century documents. In the Eastern Church it is frequently used as a morning hymn; and in the West it is found as the opening hymn at Lauds: in the Ambrosian use, in the Bangor Antiphony, and on certain feasts in the Mozarabic rite also. In the rule of St Benedict (6th c) it formed instead the climax of Lauds and this became the position in liturgical use in the Western Church generally. This continues to be the case in the Divine Office in the Roman Catholic Church (1974), and in such Anglican publications as *Celebrating Common Prayer*, and in *Common Worship: Daily Prayer* of the Church of England. In Morning and Evening Prayer One, following Cranmer's use schema it comes after the New Testament Reading (if there are three Readings it comes after the Gospel). The Jubilate, which is given as an alternative, was originally placed here only for those occasions when St Luke 1:68-79 occurred as a New Testament Reading. It is very much to be regretted that the Jubilate (perhaps because it is short) became the canticle generally used at this point in the service in place of the Benedictus. As the Gospel Cantic, the Benedictus should take priority. Traditionally, in solemn celebrations, the celebrant wears a cope, and lights and incense are used. Lights are currently permitted by the canon law of the Church of Ireland, and a bishop may wear a cope (see chapter nine of the Church Constitution, 2003). Directions for a solemn celebration may be found in C.E. Pocknee's revision of *The Parson's Handbook* (13th edition, OUP, 1965) pp87,88. The celebrant stands or sits on the south side of the

sanctuary (or in his stall in the choir). During the singing of the Benedictus he stands on the pavement of the sanctuary facing the altar with the taperers (light-bearers) on either side.

In the Sarum Breviary the Benedictus was preceded by a metrical Office Hymn proper to the service and the season. Cranmer retained them in his first scheme for a revised Latin Office, but left them out in 1549, possibly because, master of prose that he was, he was indifferent as a translator of poetry; and they did not appear in subsequent hymnbooks. However, an Office Hymn may be used before the Benedictus in the *Book of Common Prayer 2004* under General Directions for Public Worship, 6, BCP p.75. An alternative position for an Office Hymn at Evensong is immediately before the psalm(s).

According to *The Oxford Bible Commentary*, ed. John Barton and John Muddiman, OUP, 2001, (based on the NRSV text),

Zechariah's song is essentially a witness to God's action in his Messiah, and the preparatory role of John is emphasized. Like the song of Mary, it comments upon the scene in which it is set only to transcend it and to view the actions of which it is a part in the light of the whole event of Jesus on which Luke looks back. It serves to sum up the significance of Jesus within the setting of God's actions in Israel. vv.68-75 proclaim these as the fulfillment of God's promises to Israel. Through Jesus and the events surrounding him, God comes to establish his presence with his people and to confirm his covenantal promises. He has "visited and redeemed his people" and has raised up a "horn of salvation". "Horn" is a symbol of strength. Ps 132:17 talks of a horn sprouting up for David, and the song sees this fulfilled in Jesus who is presented as the consummation of God's promises to Abraham, the ancestor of the whole Jewish people and the receiver of God's unconditional commitment to her. As "prophet of the Most High" John becomes the preparer for him who is Son. He will "go before the Lord" who here is really both God and Jesus. Through "bringing forgiveness of their sins" to the people, he will prepare them to receive what is essentially God's redemption in Jesus who is "the dawn from on high" who will bring "light", "life", and "peace". So, in the narrative proper, John will be pictured, both through his baptism and his firm religious and ethical teaching, as preparing the way for Jesus' proclamation of the visitation of God in himself and in redemption.

Other versions of the Benedictus appear in the Church Hymnal as "Blessed be the God of Israel", (No. 685) and "O bless the God of Israel" (No.706). A modified form of the modern language version, also from the English Language Liturgical Consultation (ELLC) in which God is addressed as "you" rather than referred to as "he" may be found in *Celebrating Common Prayer*, and is suitable for use in Morning and Evening Prayer Two.

### **Benedicite** (Canticles 9 & 10)

Subtitled "The Song of the Three" this canticle found in non-canonical additions to the Book of Daniel in the Old Testament in the Septuagint (early Greek translation of the Hebrew OT), and included in the Apocrypha, represents the song of praise of the three young men thrown into the burning fiery furnace by King Nebuchadnezzar and miraculously preserved. According to Marion J. Hatchett, in his monumental *Commentary on the American Prayer Book*, Seabury Press, 1981, the Benedicite is a continuation of the Benedictus es, Domine (Bless the Lord, Canticle 20). Together they form an expanded paraphrase of Psalm 148. The first portion summons all the hosts of heaven and all the physical elements of earth to praise God; the second summons the earth and all its creatures, including humanity; the last portion summons the people of the covenant, living and departed. He regards it as probably the work of an Alexandrian Jew. Several of the early Church Fathers speak of the Benedicite as being used in the services of the Church. It was used as one of the psalms at the morning office in the time of St. Athanasius (4th c). St John Chrysostom explicitly refers to it as "that admirable and marvellous song, which from that day to this hath been sung everywhere

throughout the world, and shall yet be sung in future generations". Rufinus speaks of it as having been sung by holy confessors and martyrs. It is found as a canticle in Codex Alexandrinus (5th c). In the Greek Church it is sung at the morning office (*orthros*) daily. Traditional western use (continued in the Roman Catholic Divine Office, 1974) is to use it on Sundays and festivals. In the 1549 Book of Common Prayer Cranmer included it for use as an alternative to the Te Deum during Lent, a tradition which is still observed in some places, although the restriction to Lent was removed in 1552 and has never returned. In Morning and Evening Prayer One in the BCP 2004 it may be used as an alternative to the Te Deum, other alternatives being the Urbs Fortitudinis and Laudate Dominum (Ps 148). It is highly regrettable that the Urbs Fortitudinis, perhaps because it is short, has displaced both it and the Te Deum in many churches. Not only do its associations lend it particular significance in times of trial but its character of praise illustrates the manner in which even the inanimate creation honours its creature simply by being. The traditional version (Canticle 10) includes the reference not only to the people of God giving him praise but also the original "three", Ananias, Azarias, and Misael. In Morning and Evening Prayer Two the Benedicite is not specifically mentioned, but is appropriate as an alternative to the Te Deum. The modern version (Canticle 11) reads well, but regrettably tones down the reference to the "spirits and souls of the righteous" and removes the names of the "three".

A simplified version of the Benedicite appears in the Church Hymnal as "All created things" (Hymn 682) written by Bishop Darling and set to the tune "Kum ba yah". Another alternative version is that in Hymn 711 Surrexit Christus.

### **Te Deum** (Canticles 11, 12)

This is one of a group of early Christian hymns which have found their way into the liturgy. Its origins are unknown; and according to Jasper and Bradshaw, *A Companion to the Alternative Service Book 1980*, SPCK, 1986, p.109, all that can be said is that it is a Western Latin composition, probably of the fourth century, although it may draw on much older material, the 7th to 9th verses being paralleled in the treatise "On the Mortality" of St. Cyprian (d.258), who said, "There is the glorious company of the Apostles; there is the fellowship of the prophets exulting; there is the innumerable multitude of martyrs, crowned after their victory of strife and passion." The earliest text appears in the late seventh century *Bangor Antiphonary* (an important source for our rather meagre knowledge of Celtic liturgy), although the use of it at Mattins was prescribed by St. Caesarius of Arles and by St. Benedict (both in the sixth century). Some scholars attribute it to Nicetas, bishop of Remesia in Dacia (c.392-414); all discount the medieval legend that it was composed extemporaneously by Ambrose and Augustine at Augustine's baptism. Although its associations are with the divine office, a view taken by Ernst Kähler has been widely accepted to the effect that the Te Deum was originally the Preface, Sanctus, and Post Sanctus of a Mass for the Easter Vigil, and that certain elements of credal formulae were added later (op. cit. p.110). It is pointed out that the canticle originally ended at "glory everlasting" v.13. It was customary for a "capitellum", consisting of a verse, usually from a psalm, to be recited as an antiphon or a prayer in the form of a versicle or response or the end of a hymn. It seems that the capitella at the end of the Te Deum (part 3) combined those of Te Deum (v.14), and Gloria in Excelsis (vv15-16) and that the remaining verses were added later. Cranmer took over its use from Mattins and prescribed it for daily use after the first reading. In Morning and Evening Prayer One it occurs after the lesson that follows the psalm at Mattins, with the Benedicite, the Urbs Fortitudinis, and Laudate Dominum as alternatives. In Morning and Evening Prayer Two it has been restored to its historic position (compare the *Alternative Prayer Book 1984* where it came immediately before the creed), and it may be used in full or part 1 or part 2, or both these parts. The traditional version has been the subject of many special musical settings. The modern language version is that prepared by the ecumenical English Language Liturgical Consultation and is carefully explained in the publication, *Praying Together*, Canterbury

Press, Norwich, 2000. An attempt in the version used in the Alternative Prayer Book, 1984 to reproduce the force of the Latin, "You are God, we praise you: you are the Lord and we acclaim you" has been abandoned in favour of more natural English usage. A very free English translation replaces the rather harsh, "you did not abhor the Virgin's womb." Alternative versions to the two given in the Prayer Book may be found in the Church Hymnal, "God we praise you!" (no. 696), and "Holy God, we praise thy name" (no.700).

The first part of the Te Deum is in praise of God the Trinity. Praise by God's creation, earthly and heavenly, reaches its climax in the Sanctus; and this is followed with praise by the Church living and departed, reaching its climax in an affirmation of faith in the Holy Trinity. The second part is in praise of God the Son. The third part, comprising the capitella, is composed of verses from the psalms.

The Te Deum is one of the great acts of worship of the Christian Church. It is particularly suitable for use at the great festivals; but should also, normally, take priority over the alternatives in Sunday worship. It may be used at the end of Solemn Evensong and makes a spectacular conclusion to that office.

The Te Deum (Part 2) may be said or sung after the readings at a funeral service as an alternative to the Creed in Funeral Services Two (BCP p.485).

### **The Magnificat** (Canticles 13, 14).

The Magnificat is one of the three Gospel canticles from St Luke's Gospel, (the others being the Benedictus and the Nunc Dimittis). This "Song of the Virgin Mary" is given a biblical setting in Mary's visit to her cousin Elizabeth (St. Luke 1:46-55). Modeled on the Song of Hannah (1 Sam 2:10) it is a mosaic of Old Testament phrases. Although used in the Morning Office in the East and in the Gallican churches, it was St. Benedict who gave it its position as the Gospel Canticle at Vespers, and it has retained its position there ever since, constituting the climax of the evening office. Cranmer retained the Magnificat at Evensong in the 1549 Prayer Book, but permitted the Cantate Domino (Ps 98) as an alternative in 1552. This remains the position in Morning and Evening Prayer One. In Morning and Evening Prayer Two the Magnificat is printed in the modern version, but any of the New Testament canticles in the Canticles section are permitted as an alternative. However, as a Gospel canticle the Magnificat should have priority. It is given a special place, together with its antiphons in the *Divine Office* of the Roman Catholic Church, 1974 and also in such Anglican publications as *Celebrating Common Prayer* and the Church of England's *Common Worship: Daily Prayer*. Traditionally, in solemn celebrations, the celebrant wears a cope, and lights and incense are used. Lights are currently permitted by the canon law of the Church of Ireland, and a bishop may wear a cope (see chapter nine of the Church Constitution, 2003). For a solemn celebration (otherwise known as "Festal Evensong") directions may be found in C.E. Pocknee's revision of *The Parson's Handbook* (13th edition, OUP, 1965) pp87,88. The celebrant stands or sits on the south side of the sanctuary (or in his stall in the choir). During the singing of the Benedictus he stands on the pavement of the sanctuary facing the altar with the taperers (light-bearers) on either side. Settings of the Magnificat are part of the musical heritage of Anglicanism especially as this is preserved in our great Cathedrals. The modern version (Canticle 14) is that prepared by the English Language Liturgical Consultation, and is fully explained in the publication *Praying Together*, Canterbury Press, Norwich, 2000. Another version, also prepared by ELLC which addresses God in the second person rather than referring to him in the third person may be found in *Celebrating Common Prayer*. Other alternative versions of the Magnificat to those in the Book of Common Prayer 2004 are "Mary sang a song" (no. 704), and "Tell out, my soul" (no. 712).

In the Sarum Breviary the Magnificat was preceded by a metrical Office Hymn proper to the service and the season. Cranmer retained them in his first scheme for a revised Latin Office, but left them out in 1549, possibly because, master of prose that he was, he was indifferent as

a translator of poetry; and they did not appear in subsequent hymnbooks. However, an Office Hymn is used before the Magnificat in some places, for example Armagh Cathedral, and is lawful under General Directions for Public Worship, 6, BCP p.75. Another position for an Office Hymn at Evensong is immediately before the psalm(s).

I Howard Marshall, in *The Gospel of Luke - A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Paternoster, 1978) p.77 summarizes the passage (Luke 1:39-56) as follows,

In obedience to the implicit command from Gabriel Mary goes to visit Elizabeth and stays until the birth of her child, thus seeing the fulfillment of the promised sign. Further confirmation of the angel's promise is given by Elizabeth herself under the inspiration of the Spirit, and even the child in her womb indicates its joy. Here is the beginning of John's witness to Jesus. Mary's response to this is expressed in the first of the "hymns" in this story, known as the Magnificat. She gives thanks to God for the mercy which he has shown to her personally, and which corresponds with his practice of helping and vindicating the poor and needy, while at the same time bringing their proud, rich oppressors to nought; all this corresponds further with the covenant which he made with the ancestors of the Jewish race to show them mercy for evermore. In this way the birth of the Messiah is seen to fit into the general pattern of God's purpose with regard to Israel, and indeed to be the decisive act in that history. Throughout the section there rings out the note of joy at the beginning of the fulfillment of God's promises. [*For a detailed examination of the passage, based on the Greek text, see op. cit. pp77-85. See also Raymond E. Brown, The Birth of the Messiah, Doubleday, 1979, pp355-365*]

#### **Nunc Dimittis** (Canticles 15,16)

The Nunc Dimittis is one of the three Gospel Canticles from St. Luke's Gospel, the others being the Benedictus and the Magnificat. It originated as the Song of Simeon (St. Luke 2:29-32) in which the aged Simeon gives thanks for having seen the Messiah, in the person of the infant Jesus, prior to his own death. It has formed part of the evening office of the Church since the fourth century, first appearing in the Apostolic Constitutions. In the Eastern rite it is said at Vespers. In the west it made its way into Compline in the form used by the secular clergy by the eighth century, where it has remained (BCP, 2004, p.158, see also A Late Evening Office, pp162-3). When Cranmer conflated Vespers and Compline into his Order for Evening Prayer the Nunc Dimittis became the canticle sung after the second reading, and this has become an enduring feature of Anglican Evensong, especially in its choral variety (where, along with the Magnificat, musical settings have been written for it by many great composers). It is appropriately used at the conclusion of the eucharist on The Presentation of Christ. See *The Promise of His Glory* Mowbray, 1991, pp280-1, and as part of the Candlemas Procession after the eucharist in *Times and Seasons* pp203-4. It is given as a response to the scripture reading in Funeral Services Two when the body is brought to church on the eve of a funeral; and it is customary in many places for it to be read by the minister as the funeral cortege processes out of the church at the end of a funeral service.

D.G. Miller, in his commentary *Saint Luke* in the series "Laymen's Bible Commentaries", SCM, 1959, pp37-8 interprets the passage in which the Nunc Dimittis occurs,

Luke shows the vital connection between the Old Testament and the New by giving us the story of Simeon and Anna and their part in the dedication of Jesus. they represent the best of the Old Israel, "righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel (vv.25, 37-8). their hopes, piety and prayers were directed towards the future, when God would bring the "consolation" and "redemption" promised by the prophets in the Messianic Age (Is. 40:1-2). Quickened by the Holy Spirit, Simeon saw in the baby Jesus the Child of his hopes. Taking him in his arms, he broke out in praise to God in what has come to be called the "Nunc Dimittis" - the two first words in the Latin version (vv. 29-35). After blessing God for the personal gift of seeing the Messiah, he spoke prophetically of his

mission. The wonder of Jesus' parents at Simeon's words lay in the fact that they went beyond those of the angel (1:32-33), in mentioning his mission to the Gentiles (v32; see Is 42:6, 49:6). the mission was spoken of as "a light," not so much a light for pagan minds, but, in the sense already seen (1:79), the light which would guide people out of the darkness of death's shadow into the way of God's forgiveness (See Is 49:6, where light is equated with salvation).

The most startling thing about Simeon's words is that they introduce for the first time the note of sorrow into the story of Jesus' birth (vv34-35). All the songs hitherto have spoken only of joy. Here is sadness. God's saving action always produces a crisis, a division, depending on the human response. All Israel looked for political deliverance. Only the Remnant sought spiritual deliverance. It was plain, therefore, that One who came to be a "revelation to the Gentiles" (v.32) rather than to conquer them, would be rejected. Many would "fall" over him. He would be "a sign that is spoken against" (v.34). The real motives hidden in human hearts would "be revealed, for they would have to decide either for him or against him. the outcome would be suffering which would pierce Mary's soul like a sword (v.35). Thus early the shadow of the Cross falls upon the story.

The prophetess, Anna, added her word to that of Simeon, speaking of Jesus "to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem" (v.38). This group was small, and the fulfillment of their hopes lay yet more than thirty years away, in a Cross and a Resurrection. But with all the truly faithful in the Old Testament, they "died in faith, not having received what was promised, but having seen it and greet it from afar." (Heb. 11:13).

An alternative to the versions found in the *Book of Common Prayer* is in the Church Hymnal no. 691 "Faithful vigil ended."

#### **Great and Wonderful** (Canticle 17)

This canticle, first known as *Magna et Mirabilia*, is based on two passages in Revelation, 15:3-4 and 5:13b. It is the Song of the Martyrs in the presence of God, and has links with the Song of Moses in Exodus 15. It has been suggested that this was an early Christian hymn which the author of Revelation has incorporated into his book. See Jasper and Bradshaw, op. cit. p.108. It may be found in the *Divine Office*, 1974 of the Roman Catholic Church (but without the final verse). It was adopted by the ecumenical Joint Liturgical Group and incorporated into their 1968 Daily Office book. It is Canticle 54 in *Celebrating Common Prayer* under the title "A Song of Moses and the Lamb" and is also in *Common Worship: Daily Prayer*. In the 2004 edition of the Book of Common Prayer, it is one of two canticles from Revelation, the other being Canticle 21 "Glory and honour". It is suitable for use as an alternative canticle in Morning or Evening Prayer Two, and also as the Gradual in Holy Communion Two.

An alternative to the version found in the BCP is in the Church Hymnal no. 697 "Great and wonderful your deeds".

#### **Urbs Fortitudinis** (Canticle 18)

Use of the *Urbs Fortitudinis* (Isaiah 26:1-4,7,8) has been a distinctive feature of Church of Ireland worship since 1926, although it is also to be found in the Roman Catholic *Divine Office* of 1974. Otto Kaiser, in his commentary on Isaiah 13-39, SCM, 1974, calls it "The Chorus of the Redeemed" and says it is a prophetic song, which anticipates the fall of the world power and the beginning of the time of salvation and at the same time keeps the present situation in mind and intensifies trust in the Lord. It is regrettable that, probably because it is short, it has been widely used to the exclusion of the (much more significant) Benedictus in the traditional rite of Morning Prayer; and this should not be the case. It is suitable as an occasional alternative to the Benedictus and Benedicite in Morning and Evening Prayer One, and for very occasional use only as an alternative to the Te Deum in



Morning and Evening Prayer Two. As it is an Old Testament canticle it is not among those listed as permitted alternatives to the Benedictus at Morning Prayer in the latter rite or to the Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis at Evening Prayer.

**Saviour of the World** (Canticle 19)

There is some uncertainty about the origins of this canticle. Jasper and Bradshaw, op. cit. pp115-16 say that it is a series of biblical variations, taken from both Old and New Testaments, on the antiphon, "O Saviour of the world, who by thy Cross and precious Blood hast redeemed us, save us and help us, we humbly beseech thee, O Lord", which appeared in the Order for the Visitation of the Sick in the Sarum Manual, and then in the 1549, 1552, and 1662 Prayer Books (and also in the Irish Prayer Books of 1878 and 1926). Texts which appear to have been used include Psalm 80:2; Isaiah 58:6; 63:9; Acts 21:13; 1 Peter 1:18-19, 1 John 3:2, and Revelation 21:5. It first appeared in the Congregational Hymnal of 1860 and appears to have been written by the editor of the book, Dr. Henry Allon. From there it was taken over into various Free Church Hymnals, and was included in the Daily Office produced by the Joint Liturgical Group in 1968. Subsequently it has been incorporated into a number of Anglican Prayer Books including the BCP 2004.

Thomas Tallis set the original antiphon to music in his *Cantiones Sacrae* in 1575 to the Latin text,

*Salvator mundi, salve nos qui per crucem et sanguinem redemisti nos,  
auxiliare nobis, te deprecamur, Deus noster.*

**Bless the Lord** (Canticle 20) The Song of the Three.

This canticle, like the Benedicite, comes from the non-canonical Song of the Three (an early addition to the Book of Daniel). In the Eastern Church it is part of the Morning Office (Orthros), and in the West it is appointed for use at Lauds in the Mozarabic Office. It was approved for use in the Scottish and American Prayer Books of the 1920s, and appeared in the Joint Liturgical Group's Daily Office of 1968. From there it has passed in several modern revisions including the Church of England's *Common Worship* in both *Services and Prayers* and *Daily Prayer*. It appears in *Celebrating Common Prayer* under its present title. It is also to be found in the *Divine Office* of the Roman Catholic Church in a different translation.

Alternative versions are those in the Church Hymnal no's 686 "Bless the Lord" and 688 "Come, bless the Lord".

**Glory and Honour** (Canticle 21)

This New Testament canticle consists of verses from Revelation chapters 4 and 5. A prototype of this canticle, but with a slightly different, though overlapping choice of verses, appeared in the 1926 edition of the Book of Common Prayer in the First Alternative form of Evening Prayer. Owing to the confused layout of that order it was little used, together with the canticles to be found in it, although it contained some excellent material. A draft revision of the Roman breviary included it and it was adopted by the Joint Liturgical Group in their Daily Office of 1968. Subsequently it appeared in the Roman Catholic *Divine Office* of 1974. A version of it is included in *Celebrating Common Prayer* where it appears as Canticle 52 under the title "A Song of Praise". It is included in the Church of England's *Common Worship* in both *Services and Prayers* and *Daily Prayer*.

The canticle comes from passage in Revelation where they appear as hymns sung to the One seated on the Throne and to the Lamb in the vision of heaven. It is suggested in Jasper and Bradshaw, op. cit., p.130 that these are early Christian hymns which the author of Revelation incorporated into his book. They correspond to the acclamations at the enthronement of a king, and have affinities with the acclamations found in Gloria in Excelsis and Te Deum.

An alternative version to that in the BCP may be found in the Church Hymnal no 694 "Glory, honour, endless praises".

### **The Song of Christ's Glory** (Canticle 22)

This canticle, from Philippians 2:6-11 is believed by some scholars to be an early Christian hymn incorporated into the Letter to the Church at Phillipi. However, G.B. Caird, in his authoritative commentary *Paul's letters from prison* (OUP 1976) argues that as it stands it represents Pauline theology, with a very high view of the person of Christ. It was first suggested as a psalm in Christopher Wansey's *A New Testament Psalter* in 1963. It was approved for use in the Province of South Africa in 1975, and passed from there into other Anglican churches, including the Church of England, the Church of Ireland, and the Anglican Church of Australia. It is found in *Celebrating Common Prayer*, and is included among the canticles in the Roman Catholic *Divine Office*, 1974. It is particularly suitable for use at Christmas, during Passiontide (it is the appointed Epistle on Palm Sunday) and at the Ascension.

E.F. Palmer, commenting on this passage in the *Lectionary Commentary* ed. R.E. Van Harn, Eerdmans, Vol. 2, 2001, p355 says,

This is the greatest single christological paragraph in all of Paul's writings. Paul wanted to show how Christ modeled mutual care for one another by his own way of humiliation on our behalf. But Paul's illustration, his Christ model for encouraging the Philippians, expanded into a song of majestic praise to celebrate Christ's profound humility. The result is that the apostle has given the world the greatest hymn to the humiliation and exaltation of Jesus Christ that can be found anywhere in the New Testament. What began as an illustration became a profound and astounding song of wonder at the personal and costly love of God.

### **The Song of Isaiah** (Canticle 23)

This canticle, from Isaiah 12:1-6 and the one that follows "The Song of Wisdom" owes its inclusion specifically to its having been appointed in the Revised Common Lectionary as an alternative to the psalm on certain occasions. It appears in *Celebrating Common Prayer* under the title of "A Song of Deliverance" and it is included among the canticles in the Roman Catholic *Divine Office* 1974. Otto Kaiser in his authoritative commentary *Isaiah 1-12*, SCM, 1972, says,

The unknown editor to whom we owe the preservation of the words of the prophet Isaiah seeks to assure the congregation of the second temple, sorely tried by the troubles of their own time, that the prophecies of the coming empire of the king of peace, of which they have heard, will certainly be fulfilled. In that day, the coming of which God alone knows, they will experience the grace of God in such overwhelming fullness, that as in the Exodus from Egypt they will sing their hymn of thanksgiving from a full heart, and in a song of praise glorify the name of their God before the whole world. Through the power of hope, the congregation are to endure their present trials, and even now praise their redeemer in anticipation of the consummation.

This version of Isaiah 12:1-6 has been set to music by Mrs Alison Cadden.

### **The Song of Wisdom** (Canticle 24)

This passage, from the non-canonical Book of Wisdom, is significant for the manner in which Wisdom is personified as "she" and "her". Since "Wisdom" is "the image of God's goodness" this secures a place for the use of feminine language in relation to the divine mystery when it is used liturgically. Several canticles in *Celebrating Common Prayer*, including "A Song of Christ's goodness" by the great medieval theologian St. Anselm, which begins "Jesus, as a mother you gather your people to you"; and three others by St Juliana of Norwich express the same insight, while conforming strictly to Christian orthodoxy.

**Gather your little ones to you, O God,  
as a hen gathers her brood to protect them.**

Jesus, as a mother you gather your people to you,  
you are gentle with us as a mother with her children.

Often you weep over our sins and our pride,  
tenderly you draw us from hatred and judgement.

You comfort us in sorrow and bind up our wounds,  
in sickness you nurse us  
and with pure milk you feed us.

Jesus, by your dying,  
we are born to new life;  
by your anguish and labour  
we come forth in joy.

Despair turns to hope through your sweet goodness;  
through your gentleness, we find comfort in fear.

Your warmth gives life to the dead,  
your touch makes sinners righteous.

Lord Jesus in your mercy, heal us;  
in your love and tenderness, remake us.

In your compassion, bring grace and forgiveness,  
for the beauty of heaven, may your love prepare us.

**Gather your little ones to you, O God,  
as a hen gathers her brood to protect them.**

**Ecce Nunc** (Canticle 25)

Arthur Weiser in *The Psalms*, SCM, 1962 says of this psalm (134),

This short liturgy, which concludes the Book of Pilgrim Songs, is mostly regarded, because of v.1b, as being related to a vigil service in the Jerusalem Temple, either during a festal night at the autumnal feast (cf. Is 30:29) or as part of the regular nightly duties of the Temple personnel (1 Chron. 9:33). It is not possible to infer directly from the psalm that it was itself recited during such a vigil service. It is equally possible that vv. 1 and 2 were addressed by the pilgrims to the Temple officials who would spend the night there. In that case v.3 would represent the blessing which is pronounced on the pilgrims as they depart from Zion and is meant to accompany them on their journey, a view which at the same time would also make it clear why this psalm has been placed at the end of the Pilgrim songs.

Whatever the case the psalm is clearly suited to the night office, and for that reason it is appointed for use in A Late Evening Office (BCP p.162). The opening verses may in this context be understood as referring to the evening worshippers encouraging one another to "bless the Lord" - offer their worship - and to seek the Lord's blessing upon themselves. The traditional (1926) version of the psalms has "Lift up your hands in the sanctuary", which makes it particularly appropriate to the use in church of the Office of Compline (p.157) where it is one of the traditional four psalms, most effectively sung to plainsong. It is also well suited to Evening Prayer, when this is held at night, where in Morning and Evening Prayer 2 it is appointed as an alternative to A Song of the Light as an Opening Canticle or Invitatory.

**Cantate Domino** (Canticle 26).

This is the traditional language version of Psalm 98, appointed as an alternative to the Magnificat in Morning and Evening Prayer One. This is regarded by scholars as an "enthronement" psalm, celebrating the Lord's enthronement as Saviour, King, and Judge.

Although this is a beautiful psalm there is normally no need to use it in place of the Magnificat.

An alternative version may be found as no. 710 in the Church Hymnal "Sing to God new songs of worship" to a tune from Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, the "Ode to Joy".

#### **Deus Misereatur** (Canticle 27)

This is the traditional language version of Psalm 67, appointed as an alternative to the Nunc Dimittis in Morning and Evening Prayer One. It appears to have been used as a harvest thanksgiving in ancient Israel, perhaps at the Feast of Tabernacles. Although this is a beautiful psalm there is normally no need to use it in place of the Nunc Dimittis.

#### **A Song of the Light** (Canticle 28).

This is one of the most beautiful and ancient hymns of the early Christian Church, dating probably from the third century, and sung at the lighting of the lamps at the evening office and known in the Greek Church as Phos Hilaron, "joyful light". It connects the thought of the light of evening with that of Christ, the Light. St Basil of Caesarea (d.373 A.D.) said that the singing of this hymn was one of the traditions of the Church. It exists in a number of versions, that included in the Book of Common Prayer 2004 being a translation by the Tractarian poet John Keble, set to two alternative tunes in the Church Hymnal (no 699). A version set to Anglican chant "O cheering Light" was included in the first Alternative Form of Evening Prayer in the 1926 Prayer Book. Another version is that by R.S. Bridges "O gladsome light, O grace" (Hymn 707), and is also found as "Light of the world" (Hymn 702) as translated by Paul Gibson. In its current position in Evening Prayer Two it serves the same introductory function as the Venite does in Morning Prayer. An optional ceremony is for candles to be lit while it is being sung.

#### **Canticles omitted from this section (1) Laudate Dominum**

Laudate Dominum is Psalm 148 and is appointed as one of three alternatives to the Te Deum in Morning Prayer One. It appears to have been left out by accident. although a modern language version is included in the *Common Worship* psalms in the Book of Common Prayer (p.764). It has been described as a psalm of universal praise, containing, as it does a series of calls to praise addressed to both animate and inanimate creatures. It is not to be confused with Psalm 117, of which a metrical version from Taizé appears in the Church Hymnal (no. 359).

#### **Canticles omitted from this section (2) Gloria in Excelsis**

It is regrettable that the Gloria in Excelsis (Holy Communion One, p. 190, Holy Communion Two, p.203) has been omitted from this section. It appears to have been overlooked that this canticle is not tied exclusively to the Eucharist but originated as a canticle at Greek Mattins (*Orthros*) in the fourth century, being found in an appendix to the psalter in Codex Alexandrinus under the heading of "Morning Hymn" and in the Apostolic Constitutions under the heading of "Morning Prayer". Further evidence of its use at Mattins (and later apparently in the evening in some places) is found in such sources as the Rule of Caesarius of Arles (c.500). The (7th century) Bangor Antiphony directs its use at Vespers (Evening Prayer) and at Mattins. Its use in the office was recognized in the Alternative Prayer Book (1984) when it was appointed as an alternative to the Te Deum after the second reading. Its use at Holy Communion will be discussed in the part of this present commentary dealing with the Eucharist.

### **MORNING AND EVENING PRAYER AND HOLY COMMUNION**

This is a legitimate option provided that it is not presented in the manner of the older form of combination found in the 1926 Prayer Book. It is regrettable that no guidelines appear in the Book of Common Prayer 2004, such as were to be found in the Alternative Prayer Book, 1984, p.19. However, the most straightforward way of doing this would seem to be the following,

## MORNING PRAYER

The Gathering of God's People  
Proclaiming and Receiving the Word  
The Prayers of the People (with some occasional prayers)

## HOLY COMMUNION

[The Peace]  
Celebrating at the Lord's Table  
Going out as God's People.

No provision should be made with this form for withdrawal of members of the congregation prior to the Communion.

### **Daily Prayer: Weekdays**

The subtitle of both Morning and Evening Prayer One and Morning and Evening Prayer Two is "daily throughout the year", and that is a reminder that the Office is intended for daily use. It was directed in the passage following the Preface in the 1552, "Concerning the Services of the Church",

And all priests and deacons are to say daily the Morning and Evening Prayer either privately or openly, not being let by sickness or some other urgent cause. And the curate that ministereth in every Parish-Church or Chapel, being at home, and not being otherwise reasonably hindered, shall say the same in the Parish-Church or Chapel where he ministereth, and shall cause a Bell to be tolled thereunto a convenient time before he begin, that the people may come to hear God's Word and to pray with him.

This requirement was removed in the 1878 revision in the Church of Ireland, perhaps because it was not being adhered to. However, the spiritual value of the Daily Office remains very great, and some forms of it (for example those found in *Celebrating Common Prayer*) are used by a number of clergy and lay people. This was an unofficial book produced in 1992 by some members of the Church of England's Liturgical Commission with representatives of the Order of Franciscans and commended by the then Archbishop of Canterbury. Official provision in the Church of England has since taken the form of *Common Worship: Daily Prayer*, 2005. This book is well suited to the use of the Daily Office in the Church of Ireland. The Book of Common Prayer 2004 supplies simplified rites derived from its own Morning and Evening Prayer Two in the form of outline services on pp136-7. Both morning and evening services follow the sequence,

### PREPARATION THE WORD OF GOD PRAYER

In Morning Prayer the Preparation consists of a Sentence of Scripture followed by Versicles and Responses; while Evening Prayer begins with the Penitence followed by the Versicles and Responses. The Word of God in both begins with a psalm; and this is followed by a canticle which may also be used (preferably) between the readings. Twelve canticles cover the days of the week, morning and evening. One or more readings (the second from the New Testament) are prescribed. The Gospel canticle, restored to its proper place, follows, Benedictus in the morning, Magnificat in the evening, although it is also possible to use the Magnificat and the Nunc Dimittis in the manner that is customary in the Anglican office. The Apostles' Creed is provided for, optionally, in the morning. The Lesser Litany precedes Weekday Intercessions and Thanksgivings, of which a full set is provided for the days of the week. Then comes the Collect of the Day, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ending. It is not entirely clear why the tradition of putting the Lesser Litany immediately before the Lord's Prayer has been departed from. The sequence in the main form of the office indicates that we

acknowledge our unworthiness before taking the words "Our Father..." on to our lips. Nor does there seem to be any obvious connection between the Lesser Litany and the Intercessions and Thanksgivings. However, there is no reason why the Lesser Litany cannot be moved to its proper position before the Lord's Prayer if it is to be used at all. The use of the Weekday Intercessions and Thanksgivings is not obligatory. The Litany style intercessions in *Celebrating Common Prayer* and in *Common Worship: Daily Prayer* are highly suitable.

A very basic form: "Daily Prayer: A Simple Structure" is provided on p.138 for personal or family devotion. This is also to be found at the front of the pew edition of the Book of Common Prayer 2004. This layout is,

#### PREPARATION

- A sentence of Scripture
- A Prayer of Penitence (which may take the form of the Penitential Kyries used at Holy Communion Two)
- Praise (the Gloria in Excelsis or the Sanctus from Holy Communion Two)

#### THE WORD OF GOD

- A Psalm
- A Bible Reading
- A Canticle.

#### PRAYERS

- Intercessions and Thanksgivings
- The Collect of the Day or another Collect
- The Lord's Prayer
- An Ending.

This provides a very accessible way of structuring daily prayer, not least for busy lay people.

It may be noticed that the *Book of Common Prayer 2004* does not provide a weekday lectionary since it was felt that lectionaries tend to change more often than prayer-books. However, a daily lectionary may be found in the *Church of Ireland Directory* and this is also available on the Church of Ireland Website.

Canon Brian Mayne, a long-standing member of the Liturgical Advisory Committee (currently a consultant) and formerly the editor of the 2004 Prayer Book, has produced a number of booklets incorporating forms of liturgical daily prayer in accordance with the provisions of the 2004 Prayer Book, with the generic title *As we believe, so we pray*. One of these is based on the Apostles' Creed, others are seasonal, for example, for use in Lent and Easter.

The Daily Office in a sung form is maintained in a number of Cathedrals and Collegiate Churches. Choral Evensong is one the great glories of the Anglican tradition and is sung daily (except for Saturdays) throughout the year in St. Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin and on some days of the week in Christ Church. St Patrick's appears to be the only cathedral in the British Isles which (during term time when the members of the boys' and girls' choirs are attending the Choir School) maintains Choral Mattins daily (in a slightly simplified form) as well as Choral Evensong. When Morning and Evening Prayer One are used for choral services it is customary on weekdays to commence with the Versicles and Responses. The traditional (1926) version of the psalms is particularly well suited to Anglican chant, the disappearance of which would be a grievous impoverishment of our choral tradition. The 1926 psalter remains fully authorized in the Church of Ireland.

### **Some Prayers and Thanksgivings**

Both the 1926 edition of the Book of Common Prayer and the Alternative Prayer Book (1984) contained selections of prayers and thanksgivings. Careful thought was given as to whether this should be the case in the Book of Common Prayer 2004 given the widespread availability of extensive collections of prayer material of all kinds. However, it was felt that this would still be a useful resource. The prayers and thanksgivings on pp145-153 represents a selection of the prayers felt to be most helpful from those in the earlier books, covering prayers about the world, pastoral prayers, seasonal prayers, the church's ministry, the church, general and concluding prayers, and thanksgivings. It is regrettable that one of the greatest of all such prayers, the General Thanksgiving, is not reproduced here but only in Morning and Evening Prayer One (where it may be overlooked by those who use Morning and Evening Prayer Two). The General Thanksgiving (the work of Bishop Reynolds of Norwich and included in the Book of Common Prayer from 1662 onwards) is one of the prayers which ought to be known by heart by all members of the Church of Ireland.

With regard to the Occasional Prayers, the APB itself contained some resources - Collects and Prayers for Various Occasions (pp87-92) including some "Concluding Prayers"; "Weekday Intercessions and Thanksgivings" (pp95-102) which may be used quite meaningfully on Sundays; the Litany, (pp79-85); or the Litany-form entitled "Prayer" in the Late Evening Office (pp75,76). As mentioned above it is also permitted to use suitable Collects from pp319~707 as Occasional Prayers.

Numerous intercessory prayers, some of them collects, others in Litany form are to be found in the publications "Patterns for Worship", "The Promise of His Glory", "Lent, Holy Week and Easter", "Enriching the Christian Year", and "Celebrating Common Prayer". Much of the forgoing material is to be found gathered together in the superb Church of England publication, "Times and Seasons" (Church House Publishing, 2006). Many books of prayers are also available including the modern language publications by Frank Colquhoun. The collection by David Silk *Prayers for use in the Alternative Services* (Mowbray) may be found useful. Prayers in the Church of Ireland's long out of print but still helpful "Book of Occasional Prayers" may be modernised to suit use with Morning and Evening Prayer Two. It is also quite possible to use traditional-language prayers, at the discretion of the minister. Prayers of adoration and thanksgiving, and meditative reflections are also suitable at this point, and there is no reason, if the officiant is so gifted, why prayers of his or her own composition may not be used.

## **Part 5 Additional Forms of Service**

### **An Order for Compline**

This is the traditional late evening office (whose name comes from the Latin *completorium* - it marks the completion of the day) . It was incorporated by St Benedict into his rule in the sixth century A.D. The four psalms appointed here have a long history of use in this office; and the hymn and the Nunc Dimittis were at an early stage added to the original core of the service. It was added to the 1926 edition of the Book of Common Prayer in 1933 as the second of two Alternative Forms of Evening Prayer.. It may be sung to plainsong, and is best used in its integrity. The structure of the rite is,

Invocation of divine grace

Scripture sentence

Versicles and Responses

One or more of the following psalms: 4, 31:1-6, 91, 134.

One of the short passages provided or some other appropriate passage of Scripture.

[Sermon or Address - optional]

Versicle and Response  
Hymn "Before the ending of the day" with or without the seasonal variations  
of verse 3 from the Church Hymnal.  
Versicle and Response

Antiphon  
Nunc Dimittis  
Antiphon

Apostles' Creed  
Lesser Litany  
Lord's Prayer  
Versicles and Responses  
Confession  
Absolution  
Versicles and Responses  
One or more of the Collects  
Versicles and Responses  
Blessing

The Office, or that part of it following the Apostles' Creed is recommended for evening worship in the home.

### **A Late Evening Office**

The Late Evening Office (BCP pp162-4) may be regarded as an alternative to the traditional "Compline". This form comes from the Taizé community.

The Order is as follows:-

- \*1 Blessing/Invocation of God leading to Trisagion
- \*2 Psalm 134 or another suitable psalm.
- \*3 A Reading from the New Testament.
- \*4 Meditation
- \*5 The Song of Simeon (Nunc Dimittis) and/or a Hymn
- \*6 Prayer (Litany form)
- \*7 Silent or Open prayer
- \*8 An appropriate collect.
- \*9 The Lord's Prayer
- \*10 Common Collect
- \*11 Blessing.

### **Commentary**

\*1 The "blessing" of God is a concept central to Jewish prayer and has passed over to and been revived in Christian use.

The invocation "Glory to you..." is of the Holy Spirit.

The *Trisagion* "Holy God, holy and strong..." is a characteristic feature of Orthodox worship. According to the Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church it is solemnly chanted in all Eastern liturgies before the lections, except at certain great feasts, and is recited at most other services, for example burials and during the procession of the shroud on Good Friday. It occurred also in the Gallican liturgy, and in the Roman Rite is sung as part of the Reproaches on Good Friday. The earliest datable occurrence of the word is in the Acts of the Council of Chalcedon (451). It occurs in the section "The Proclamation of the Cross" in "Lent, Holy Week, Easter".

\*2 Psalm 134 is traditional at the late night Office (see Compline, BCP pp154-69).

\*3 The New Testament reading may be from the lectionary or any suitable reading selected



by the minister.

\*4 The period of meditation may be directed or inward and individual.

\*5 The Nunc Dimittis is traditional at the late evening Office (see Compline, BCP p.158).

\*6 The Taizé Office Book contains many fine Litany forms. See "Praise in all our Days - Common Prayer at Taizé", published by Mowbray, which gives the Morning and Evening Offices.

\*7 Open or silent prayer. In small groups "open" prayer may be especially appropriate. Prayers in this context should be short and to the point.

\*8 The Lord's Prayer may be said in either form, and should be said in full (with the doxology).

\*9 Common Collect. "Common" in the sense of being appropriate whenever this Office is used.

\*10 Since the blessing is in "us" form it may be said by a deacon or reader.

### **Service of the Word**

The origins of this order lie in the growing popularity of "Family Services". It was felt that guidelines were desirable, and, as a result a booklet was produced for experimental use containing basic structures for all such services together with examples of working out that structure, and a selection of resource material which might be used to work out other forms based on the structure.

On the basis of experience of the use of this order a definitive structure was worked out which is incorporated into the Book of Common Prayer 2004 on pages 165-8. Worked out examples may at some time in the future be incorporated into a Church of Ireland Book of Resources. Much admirable material (as well as helpful suggestions for use) may be found in the Church of England's *New Patterns for Worship*, Church House Publishing, 2002. Other resource material may be found in the Church of England's volumes *Common Worship: Times and Seasons* and *Common Worship: Festivals*. Some complete orders are to be found in Canon Brian Mayne's *Celebrating the Word – Complete Services of the Word for use with Common Worship and the Church of Ireland Book of Common Prayer*, Canterbury Press 2004. Also very helpful is David Graham's *The Word for all Seasons – Services of the Word for Every Sunday of the Year and Major Holy Days*, Canterbury Press 2002 (with free disc). This may need adaptation for any particular occasion, but using the disc it is possible to get an order of service (without the hymns, canticle etc) onto a single side of A4, horizontally.

The Service of the Word is for use on occasions when the prescribed services of Morning and Evening Prayer or Holy Communion may not meet the needs of a particular congregation. Guidelines are provided in the form of "Notes" in the Prayer Book pp166-8.

THE STRUCTURE has four sections:

1. THE PREPARATION, of which the Greeting, Penitence, an Acclamation, and the Collect are obligatory and within which there are also certain optional elements.
2. THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD, in which the essentials are readings from Holy Scripture, a psalm and/or a Scripture Song, and the Sermon.
3. THE RESPONSE, within which there must be an affirmation of faith and prayers, concluding with the Lord's Prayer.
4. THE DISMISSAL. A dismissal prayer is mandatory.

It is probably inadvisable to include too many of the options in any particular act of worship. However, the essentials listed above must be included whenever "A Service of the Word" is used.

## Part 6: The Litany

Litanies are an ancient form of prayer which permit the maximum possible congregational participation by means of the responses that are provided. Their use has been traced back to Antioch in the fourth century A.D., and seems to have passed by way of Asia Minor to Constantinople and then the rest of the East. In 398 St John Chrysostom introduced the use of processions at which the litanies were sung to counteract the effect of similar Arian processions. The processional use of litanies is also found in the West where they are associated especially with the blessing of the crops. The use of litanies on the three days before Ascension Thursday was introduced by Archbishop Mamertus of Vienne in Gaul in the fifth century. Before the Reformation the Litany of the Saints (as in the modern Roman Catholic Church) consisted mainly of the invocation of a large number of saints by name. When Cranmer produced his Litany in 1544 (the first part of the Book of Common Prayer to be brought into use) these invocations were reduced to three and, from the Prayer Book of 1549 onwards omitted altogether. A particular feature of Cranmer's Litany is the grouping of petitions together followed by the appropriate response. The sources of the traditional language Litany are mainly the pre-Reformation "Sarum" rite, and Luther's Litany of 1529. The modern language version, as introduced in the *Alternative Prayer Book*, 1984, was partly based on that in the Church of England's *Alternative Service Book*, 1980. There are a number of Litany forms in the 2004 edition of the Book of Common Prayer. However, because of their importance, the Litany One with its alternative the Litany Two may be referred to as "the" Litany. The word "litany" itself comes from the Greek *litaneia* meaning "supplication".

### The Litany One

The traditional Prayer Book Litany was the first reformed service to be produced by Archbishop Cranmer, in 1544. Significant alterations were made in 1549, 1552, 1559 and 1662, and in the Church of Ireland revisions of 1878 and 1926. The sources of the Litany are mainly the pre-Reformation "Sarum" rite, and Luther's Litany of 1529.

There are no rubrics about governing the use of Litany One. However, the first three of those from The Litany Two may be regarded as appropriate. These recommend the Litany for use on Sundays, Wednesdays and Fridays (the latter being ancient fast-days), particularly in the seasons of Advent and Lent and on Rogation Days (the Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday before Ascension Thursday). It may be used on its own (in which case it may be preceded by a psalm, canticle or hymn and one of the readings of the day. When it is used with Morning or Evening Prayer One it takes the place of the Prayers (pp97-100). It may precede the Holy Communion. In the classic Anglican tradition (as widely practiced for example in the seventeenth century), the principal Sunday service consisted of Morning Prayer followed by the Litany followed by the Holy Communion (at least up to the Prayer for the Church Militant, with the whole of the Communion being celebrated at least on major festivals). The Litany forms an integral part of the Ordination Services One.

The Litany may be said or sung in procession (as for the blessing of the crops in Rogationtide), or it may be led by a clergyman or Reader either from the Reading-desk or from a Litany-desk (a small movable prayer-desk placed either at the "crossing" or sometimes down the Nave in the midst of the congregation).

The Litany One consists of the following parts:-

(1) **The Invocations**, that is, invocations of the Holy Trinity. Invocations of the saints, which formed a major part of the medieval rite, were drastically reduced in 1544, and omitted altogether from 1549.

(2) **The Deprecations**, or supplications for deliverance, for example, "From all evil and mischief..." etc.

(3) **The Obsecrations**, or appeals for deliverance by virtue of events in Christ's redemptive life, for example, "By the mystery of thy holy Incarnation ..."

(4) **Intercessions** These form a large part of our BCP Litany. Many of these are drawn from Luther's Litany of 1529.

(5) **Conclusion.** A portion of the Litany following the Lord's Prayer and preceding "A Prayer of St. Chrysostom" to be found in earlier versions of the Prayer Book has been omitted from Litany One. It was felt that the negativity of this section, originally intended for use in time of war, is no longer appropriate. Given the widespread neglect of the Litany in recent years, the version in the 2004 Prayer Book is felt to be more "user-friendly". It is unlikely that any problem would arise for any preferring the use to full version, to be found on pp26-7 of the 1926 Prayer Book. The supplementary material is reproduced in an Appendix to this Commentary.

### **The Litany Two**

The Litany in contemporary language (BCP pp175-8) is an improved version of that in the *Alternative Prayer Book* (1984). It is recommended for use (although not obligatory) on Sundays, Wednesdays and Fridays, particularly in the seasons of Advent and Lent and on Rogation Days, and is also one of the two forms of litany used in the Ordination Services Two. As the Litany is an integral part of our Anglican liturgical heritage it is most regrettable if it is not used regularly.

It may be used on its own as a separate service or as the Prayers of the People in Morning or Evening Prayer after the Apostles' Creed when it should conclude with the Collect of the Day and the Lord's Prayer. In the latter mode the section comprising the Salutation, the Lesser Litany, Lord's Prayer, Suffrages, and Collects is first omitted. When it is used as a separate service it may be preceded by a psalm, canticle or hymn and one of the readings of the day and it concludes with the Lord's Prayer. No other material than that specified should be used at the beginning or ending of this rite, which would be spoilt if "overloaded".

The Litany may be used in whole or in part. Sections 1 (Invocation)s and 5 (Ending) should always be said. The minister or lay reader may introduce particular intercessions in any of the suffrages, but this must be done with care and sensitivity to avoid upsetting the flow of prayer.

The structure or 'shape', of the Litany Two is as follows.-

(1) **Invocations** The reference to "miserable sinners" in the Litany One has been omitted as open to misunderstanding (the word "miserable" originally meant "pitiable"). However, unlike the comparable form in the Church of England's *Common Worship* the functions of the Persons of the Holy Trinity in creation, redemption, and the bestowal of life, are specified.

(2) **Deprecations**, or supplications for deliverance. Prayer is made for deliverance from various form of evil whether external "fire, storm and flood" etc., or from within, for example, "pride, hypocrisy and conceit". "Dying unprepared" is thought better than "sudden death" and is closer to the Latin original underlying some parts of the Litany via the Litany One. The *Alternative Prayer Book* (1984) omitted "schism" from the list of sins prayed about, and in a timely move a petition against "the evil of schism" appears in the Litany Two.

(3) **Obsecrations**, or appeals for deliverance by virtue of events in Christ's redemptive life. Unlike the BCP these include the period of his earthly ministry "in word and work", and a distinction is made between the events of the passion, culminating in death and burial, and the events of Easter, Ascension, and Pentecost.

(4) **Intercessions**, subdivided "For the Church", "For the State", "For all People according to their needs". The words "Elizabeth our Queen" are inserted in the prayer for "our rulers" when the service is used in Northern Ireland. "our President ..." is put in when the service is

used in the Irish Republic. Some people have questioned the appropriateness of prayer for the European Union, on the grounds that this is not a "state". However, the actual wording does not go beyond what both the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland are committed to through their accession to the Union.

(5) **Conclusion** This includes a prayer for forgiveness and for grace and a modern form of the ancient devotion *Agnus Dei* ("Lamb of God"), and the Lord's Prayer (this to be used only when the Litany is a separate service).

The grouping of several suffrages under one response is a distinctive feature of Anglican use, introduced by Cranmer (as found in the **Litany One**) and continued in the **Litany Two**.

The traditional musical setting by Tallis can easily be adjusted when this Litany is to be sung. The Litany is suitable for recitation during a procession as in Rogationtide. In some churches a Litany desk is provided and placed at the crossing (although it is also found in the nave), so that the person conducting it faces east, kneeling. A Litany desk ought to be small and unobtrusive. A chair is not placed at it, since it exists to provide the officiant with a kneeler and a place on which the book is laid.

The Litany may be said or sung. The setting by Tallis is well known and may be adapted for use with Litany Two. Mr Theo Saunders, FRCO, Organist and Master of the Choristers at Armagh Cathedral has written two fine settings for Litany Two.

#### **The use of Litany Two on Ash Wednesday**

The 2004 edition of the Book of Common Prayer provides a modern language Service for Ash Wednesday: The Beginning of Lent. This comprises,

The Gathering of God's People (with a special preface)

Proclaiming and Receiving the Word

The Liturgy of Penitence

[Celebrating at the Lord's Table]

[Going out as God's People]

The Liturgy of Penitence consists of,

The Commandments

Litany Two

Confession

Prayer for forgiveness or the Absolution

[If there is no communion, the Lord's Prayer and a concluding prayer]

There is, however, a problematic rubric on p341 which states,

If the Holy Communion is not to follow, one of the form of Intercession (pp237-239) or the Weekday Intercessions for Friday (page 143) is used.

This, however, overlooks the function of the Litany which, when used in full, is a completely comprehensive form of intercession in itself, and is inconsistent with the precedent contained in the rubrics to the Litany Two which indicates that when used with Morning Prayer the Litany takes the place of the Prayers of the People.

Either the Litany should be used in full (and other forms of intercession should not appear) or the Litany (following the precedent set in the Church of England's *Lent, Holy Week, Easter* for use on Ash Wednesday) should be reduced to sections 1-3, 5.

## Part Seven: Appendices

### APPENDIX A

#### Supplementary liturgical material produced in the Church of England.

(1) *Lent, Holy Week, Easter - Services and Prayers*. This supplementary liturgical book, commended by the House of Bishops of the General Synod of the Church of England, is published by Church House Publishing, Cambridge University Press and SPCK. It contains orders of services for Lent, Palm Sunday and Holy Week, Maundy Thursday and Good Friday, and for Easter. The Passion Narratives are reproduced in both continuous and in dramatic form, and there are some supplementary texts and a lectionary. Much of the material is capable of adaptation for Church of Ireland use.

(2) *The Promise of His Glory - Services and Prayers for the season from All Saints to Candlemas*. This is a further book in the same format, commended by the Church of England's House of Bishops and published jointly by Church House Publishing and Mowbray. It contains an Order for a "Service of Light", and Orders and material for All Saints' Tide, Advent (including an Advent Carol Service), Christmas, Epiphanytide, and Candlemas, together with Canticles and Responses, Prayers, and a suggested Calendar and Lectionaries.

(3) *Enriching the Christian Year*. This consists of material for the remainder of the Year and covering some ground left out in the previous two collections. It is compiled by Michael Perham and others, and has a foreword from the Chairman of the Church of England Liturgical Commission. Material for a great variety of occasions, usually including an "Invitation to Confession, Penitential Kyrie, Intercessions, an Acclamation, Simple and Solemn Blessings, Proper provision for the Eucharist, material for Daily Prayer, Canticles, patterns of thematic readings with psalms and canticles and an Ending.

(4) *Celebrating Common Prayer*. This is a version of The Daily Office of the Society of Saint Francis (an Anglican Order), and is the fruit of collaboration between the Church of England Liturgical Commission and the Society of Saint Francis. It is published by Mowbray and has a foreword by the Archbishop of Canterbury. This is intended to provide the resources and guidelines for the use of the Daily Office by clergy and laity alike, and the Office can be used in very simple or more complex ways. Although it is not authorized in the Church of Ireland it has a lot of material in it that could be used quite lawfully as part of the APB Office (for example litanies of intercession and superb collects that could be used as occasional prayers). The psalter, from the American Prayer Book is that which has been approved by the General Synod for inclusion in the Prayer Book of 2004 rather than the Frost-Macintosh ("Liturgical") psalter used in the ASB and APB. It also says in the general Notes, "The sentences, psalms, canticles, readings and prayers may be read in any authorized version. This is a book that gives admission to a great treasury of devotion of the universal Church of all ages, at the same time preserving traditional Anglican emphases and ethos (such as, for example the systematic reading of the Old and New Testament Scriptures at the Morning and Evening Offices).

(5) *Common Worship: Daily Prayer* Church House Publishing 2005. This the definitive edition of the daily office for use in the Church of England. It has been brought into line with the provisions of the Church of England's *Common Worship* but is based to a large extent upon *Celebrating Common Prayer*. Its contents include the Calendar; Prayer During the Day in both Ordinary and Seasonal Time; Forms of Penitence; Morning and Evening Prayer for both Ordinary and Seasonal Time with The Acclamation of Christ at the Dawning of the Day, and the Blessing of Light, together with additional material; Night Prayer (Compline); Prayers, including Biddings, Responses, a Cycle of Intercession, Some Forms of Intercession the Church of England's modern language Litany, and Other Prayers; Collects and Suggested

Canticles and Refrains, and Canticles. The version of the psalms is the same as that to be found in the Church of Ireland's *Book of Common Prayer 2004*. It is impossible to do justice to this splendid Office Book in a few sentences. It will serve the needs of both clergy and laity who wish to use a substantial form of Morning and Evening Prayer on a daily basis for a very long time to come. No lectionary has been incorporated into the book as experience shows that lectionaries tend to have a shorter "life" than the orders of service to which they related. All members of the clergy and Readers in the Church of Ireland ought to have a copy of the daily lectionary (which is also to be found in the Church of Ireland Directory).

(6) *New Patterns for Worship*, Church House Publishing, 2002 succeeds the earlier *Patterns for Worship* and contains a wide range of material suitable for A Service of the Word.

(7) *Common Worship: Times and Seasons* and *Common Worship: Festivals* are intended to supplement the liturgical core material contained in the Church of England's *Common Worship* in the manner previously accomplished by the publications 1-3, above. "Times and Seasons" contains resource material, for use at the Holy Communion and at Services of the Word, for the full cycle of seasons of the liturgical year (Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Passiontide and Holy Week, the Easter Liturgy, Easter, Trinity to All Saints, All Saints to Advent, the Agricultural Year and Embertide), together with a number of fully worked-out forms of service for Principal Services and other celebrations within each season. In addition, resources and services for the landmark festivals of the Agricultural Year are provided. "Festivals" contains sets of resources for twenty nine Festivals including the Annunciation and collects for Lesser Festivals. The section "Common of the Saints" provides resources for festivals of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Apostles and Evangelists, Martyrs, Teachers of the Faith and Spiritual Writers, Bishops and other Pastors, Members of Religious Communities, Missionaries, and Any Saint: Holy Men and Women. Much of the material is suitable for adaptation to Church of Ireland needs.

## APPENDIX B THE REVISED COMMON LECTIONARY

The Revised Common Lectionary was approved by the House of Bishops for trial use in the Church of Ireland from Advent 1 1995; and it and the related Lectionaries for a Second and Third service have now been incorporated into the 2004 edition of the Book of Common Prayer. These constitute the principal lectionary provision for Sundays in the Church of Ireland, although the selection of Epistles and Gospels from the 1926 Prayer Book may still be used.

The Revised Common Lectionary (1992) was produced by the Consultation on Common Texts, an international body with a membership drawn from the Roman Catholic, Anglican, Presbyterian, Methodist, Lutheran, and other churches. It is based on the Roman Lectionary for Mass of 1969 which devised a three-year scheme of readings for Sundays, festivals, and other special occasions, modified in a manner which makes it suitable for ecumenical use. Included with it are courses of readings for a Second Service and for a Third Service prepared by the Church of England Liturgical Commission to supplement the RCL provision. This augmented version of the RCL was produced by an Interprovincial Consultation representing the Church of England, the Church of Ireland, the Church in Wales and the Scottish Episcopal Church. It was intended that this augmented version of the RCL be accepted and authorized for permanent use by all four Anglican Churches in the British Isles. The modern language collects and postcommunion prayers in the new prayer Book (pp241-336) were also prepared by the Interprovincial Consultation but have been slightly modified for Church of Ireland use.

The two key principles of the Revised Common Lectionary are (1) the spreading of the Sunday readings over three years instead of having a two-year cycle as in the previous ASB/APB "thematic" lectionary, and (2) the concept of a continuous reading (*lectio continua*) as far as is consistent with the retention of the seasons and special events of the Church's Year. The effect is that of providing a much larger selection of readings for the principal service on Sundays and of substituting for the "themes" of the ASB/APB a scheme of reading in which the passages relate not so much to each other as to what has gone before on the previous Sunday and will follow on the Sunday to come.

### THE LECTIONARY FOR THE PRINCIPAL SERVICE (RCL)

#### (1) The Old Testament Reading.

During the first "half" of the Church's year (Advent 1 to Trinity Sunday) this relates closely to the Gospel. From the First Sunday after Trinity to Proper 29 (the Sunday between 20th-26th November which focuses on the thought of Christ the King) there are two alternatives,

- (a) A series of paired readings in which the Old Testament and Gospel are closely related;
- (b) A series of semi-continuous readings which focus attention on some of the great narratives of the Old Testament.

During the Easter season the RCL provides for the replacement of the Old Testament reading by passages from Acts. However, Old Testament readings are provided as alternatives.

NB that where readings from the Apocrypha are provided alternative readings from the canonical Scriptures have also been supplied. The position of the Church of Ireland on the Apocrypha is to be found in Article 6:

And the other Books ... the Church doth read **for example of life and instruction of manners**; but yet doth it not apply them to **establish any doctrine**.

## (2) **The Psalm**

The psalm is intended as a response to the first reading and a meditation on it, and should therefore be included. It may be noticed that this represents a rather restrictive view of the role of psalmody in the liturgy. Paul Bradshaw in his essay "From Word to Action: The Changing Role of Psalmody in Early Christian" pp21-37 in *Like a Two-edged Sword - the Word of God in Liturgy and History*, ed. Martin Dudley, the Canterbury Press, Norwich 1995, identifies six usages namely Psalm as prophecy, Psalms as the summary of scripture, Psalm as hymns, Psalms as praise, Psalms as penance, and Psalms as intercession. If the lesson to which the psalm relates is not read then it might be appropriate to omit the psalm and to have a canticle instead (between the Epistle and Gospel).

## (3) **The Epistle**

The Epistle is not directly related to the Old Testament reading or to the Gospel. It is, however, appropriate to the season or special occasion. During the Sundays of the year that are not tied directly to special seasons (i.e. those described as "Proper 11" etc.) readings are taken sequentially from particular letters.

## (4) **The Gospel**

The three year cycle enables there to be concentration on a particular synoptic gospel each year in the biblical order, Matthew (2001-2), Mark (2002-3), Luke (2003-4) and so on. John is used during the major seasons, the so-called "festal" days of the year.

The Gospels for the Sundays of Lent relate to the Easter proclamation and are to be understood as having to do with the joy of Easter rather than Lenten penitence. This ties in with the ancient perception of every Sunday being a little Easter. In the 2004 edition of the Book of Common Prayer, Passiontide begins in the traditional way on the Fifth Sunday in Lent, but the Sixth Sunday, Palm Sunday, makes provision for both the Entry into Jerusalem and the Passion to be commemorated, pp 37, 264-5 (see also the arrangement in *Lent, Holy Week, Easter*).

It will be noticed that the Revised Common Lectionary has been devised primarily as a **Eucharistic** lectionary. This creates certain problems for its use with the Office. The difficulty of fitting in three readings is overcome by putting the Old Testament reading after the Venite and before the Psalm at Morning Prayer, with the two New Testament readings after the Psalm and after the second canticle respectively. This has the advantage of preserving the principle of the Psalm being a response to or commentary upon the Old Testament reading. On the other hand this does seem a rather limited concept of the use of psalms. In the Office the psalms have traditionally been seen as being in a real sense of the essence of the Office and not as a mere response to something even more fundamental. The maintenance of this tradition may be seen in the contemporary Roman Office in which the pattern at Morning Prayer is Psalm-Canticle-Psalm (all to do with the praise which is of the essence of the Office) and at Evening Prayer Psalm-Psalm-Canticle (with more of an emphasis upon thanksgiving). In both cases the Gospel Canticle (Benedictus in the Morning, Magnificat in the Evening) comes later, after the Reading and Short Responsory, as the climax to the Office. Where pressures of time exist, it is probably better to omit one of the canticles rather than one of the readings. A possible pattern in such a case would be,

First Canticle

Old Testament Reading

Psalm

Second and Third Readings

Canticle (from the section entitled Second Canticle or that entitled Third Canticle.).

It is sometimes possible to abbreviate lessons without losing the essential content; and suggestions for abbreviating the psalms were made at the back of the booklet entitled *Lectionaries for Trial Use in the Church of Ireland*, authorized by the House of Bishops,



1995.

## **LECTIONARIES FOR A SECOND SERVICE AND A THIRD SERVICE**

Additional provision is made for an Evening Service in the form of A **Lectionary for a Second Service**, which follows the principle of a three-year cycle but is the work of the Church of England Liturgical Commission. And, to accommodate churches which may have more than one morning service there is also A **Lectionary for a Third Service**. The readings for the Second Service are for the most part substantial. If the Second Service is Holy Communion (for example an early Communion or an Evening Communion) there must always be a reading of the Gospel.

## **COLLECTS AND POSTCOMMUNION PRAYERS**

Since the choice of collects in the Alternative Prayer Book with its “thematic” approach was no longer appropriate when the Revised Common Lectionary was introduced, a set of modern language "Collects and Postcommunion Prayers" prepared by an interprovincial consultation (drawn from the Church of England, the Church of Ireland, the Episcopal Church in Scotland, and the Church in Wales) and slightly modified, has been incorporated into the section "The Collects" of the Book of Common Prayer 2004, p.241 following, the traditional language collects having been carefully arranged to conform. The collects are not directly linked to the readings but are broadly suitable to the season or occasion. These were drawn from a wide variety of sources including the Book of Common Prayer of the Church of Ireland (1926, 1933), the APB, a number of Prayer Books in the Anglican Communion including those in use in America, Canada, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, and Wales, *Celebrating Common Prayer*, and collections of liturgical material such as *The Promise of His Glory* and *Lent, Holy Week, Easter*.

In general, the practice of providing just one collect per service has been observed, although it may be noted that when the traditional services are used, the collect of the First Sunday in Advent is said after the collect of the day until Christmas Eve and there is a similar provision for the use every day in Lent of the Collect of Ash Wednesday. There seems no good reason why this should not also apply when the modern language services are being used, not only in Advent and Lent but when a saint's day falls on a Sunday. If the saint's day is the primary observance its collect should come first and may be followed by the collect of the day. If the Sunday readings are to be used the saint's day collect may come after that of the relevant Sunday. There is a long history of the use of more than one collect at a particular liturgical observance.

Some may regret that the readings for Bible Sunday have been moved to the last Sunday in October together with the relevant collect. However, a note on p.70 states that Bible Sunday may be observed on the last Sunday in October or other convenient Sunday and this would appear to allow it to be retained in its historic position on the Second Sunday in Advent.

Having an extended festive season from Christmas Day, 25th December, to the Presentation of Christ, 2nd February, is a new development. The Roman Catholic Church seems more realistic in beginning its Ordinary Time in the week after the Sunday following the Epiphany.

## APPENDIX C CALENDAR

The **Calendar**, sometimes known as the “The Christian Year” has to do with the observance of seasons and days. In the 2004 edition of the *Book of Common Prayer* the following principles are prescribed.

All Sundays celebrate the paschal mystery of the death and resurrection of Christ. Nevertheless they also reflect the character of the seasons in which they are set.

The Christian Year begins with the penitential season of **Advent**, consisting of the four Sundays and weekdays preceding Christmas Day. Liturgical colour: purple/violet.

Advent leads up to **Christmas Day** 25 December, the festival of Our Lord’s birth, and a Principal Holy Day. This is followed by the Christmas Season, extending from Christmas Day for twelve days until the eve of the Epiphany. Liturgical colour - white or gold.

Christmas is followed by **The Epiphany** 6 January a Principal Holy Day, the festival of the manifestation of Christ. This is followed by the Epiphany season, extending from the Epiphany to the Presentation of Christ. Liturgical colour - white or gold.

Christmas and Epiphany are closely linked and may be considered a cycle of observances focused on the incarnation (the coming of Christ “in the flesh” and his manifestation to the world). But see the comment in the previous appendix.

The penitential season of **Lent** begins with **Ash Wednesday**, designated a Day of Special Observance, and extends to Easter Eve. Within Lent the last two weeks are commonly called **Passiontide**. Liturgical colour - purple/violet, which may be changed to red for Passiontide.

The final week of Lent is known as **Holy Week** consisting of **Palm Sunday**, the Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday of Holy Week, **Maundy Thursday** (a Principal Holy Day), which commemorates the institution of the Holy Communion by Our Lord and Saviour at the Last Supper, and **Good Friday**, the day of Our Lord’s death (a Principal Holy Day), and the morning and afternoon of **Easter Eve** (A Day of Special Observance). Good Friday, Easter Eve and Easter Day belong together, and are sometimes called the **Triduum** (three days).

The greatest of all festivals is **Easter**, the festival of Our Lord’s resurrection, which begins on **Easter Eve** (reckoned as beginning the Sunday) achieves its climax on **Easter Sunday** itself (A Principal Holy Day, the most important in the entire year) and continues for the great **Fifty Days** until the Day of Pentecost. Liturgical colour - white or gold.

Passiontide-Easter-Ascension-Pentecost may be regarded as a cycle of observances focusing upon the death and resurrection of Christ, his ascension, and the gift of the Holy Spirit. The Easter season is particularly appropriate for baptisms, which in the early Church took place on Easter Day, which was observed by a Vigil (on Easter Eve), Baptism (with Confirmation) and the Communion of the faithful (including the first Communion of the newly baptized).

**The Ascension Day** occurs within the great Fifty Days of Easter, and is a Principal Holy Day. Liturgical colour: white or gold.

**The Day of Pentecost** (sometimes called Whit Sunday). This is a Principal Holy Day which commemorates the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Together with Christmas Day and Easter Day it is one of the three principal festivals of the Christian Church. Liturgical colour: Red.

**Trinity Sunday** This comes on the Sunday after the Day of Pentecost and celebrates God as He is in Himself - Three in One and One in Three - the mysterious and wonderful truth of the Holy Trinity. This is a Principal Holy Day. Liturgical colour: White or gold.

There is two other Principal Holy Days, the **Presentation of Christ** 2 February, which recalls the Lord’s being brought to the Temple as an infant with the aged Simeon’s **Nunc Dimittis**

“Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace” and **All Saints Day** 1 November, which may be observed on the Sunday between 30 October and 5 November and celebrates the communion and fellowship of all believers “in Christ”.

There are two periods of **Ordinary Time** - these are not included in the seasons, the first from the day after the **Presentation of Christ** to Shrove Tuesday (the day before Ash Wednesday) and the second from the day after the **Day of Pentecost** to the Eve of Advent Sunday.

Certain Days are designated as **Days of Discipline and Self-Denial** - Ash Wednesday, the other weekdays of Lent, All Fridays in the year except Christmas Day, The Epiphany, the Fridays following Christmas Day and festivals outside the season of Lent.

In addition there are **Festivals** (most of which are also **Saint’s Days**) which fall on certain days of the year, although if they clash with certain other observances there are rules for transfer to other suitable days. For example, **The Naming and Circumcision of Jesus**, 1 January, **The Conversion of Saint Paul** 25 January, **Saint Patrick** 17 March, **The Annunciation of our Lord** 25 March, **The Transfiguration of our Lord** 6 August, **Saint Michael and all Angels** 29 September, **Saint John the Evangelist**, 27 December. It is appropriate to have a celebration of Holy Communion on each of the thirty-two festivals. In this version of the calendar the **festivals** consist, apart from the days dedicated to Our Lord, of commemoration of biblical and national saints.

There is also provision for **Commemorations** of persons associated with dioceses of the Church in Ireland - some as church founders, some as reformers and re-builders, some who went as missionaries to carry the Gospel to other lands. A short booklet published by Canon Brian Mayne provides notes on these historical figures and appropriate collects and other prayers.

In general the provision for saints' days and commemorations is meagre in the Book of Common Prayer 2004 compared to that in other Anglican Churches in the British Isles as may be seen from the publication, *Exciting Holiness - Collects and Readings for the Festivals and Lesser Festivals of the Calendars of The Church of England, The Church of Ireland, the Scottish Episcopal Church, and The Church in Wales*, Canterbury Press, Norwich, second edition, 2003

There are also **Ember Days**, which are days of prayer for those ordained or preparing for ordination, and **Rogation Days**, which have to do with the blessing of the crops.

**APPENDIX D**  
**MORNING AND EVENING PRAYER AND THE LITANY**  
**IN THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER 2004**  
**A SUMMARY OF THE CHANGES IN BOTH THE**  
**TRADITIONAL AND MODERN LANGUAGE RITES.**

On 6th June 2004 the previous (1926) *Book of Common Prayer* was withdrawn together with the *Alternative Prayer Book* (1984) and *Alternative Occasional Services* (1993) and these were replaced by the 2004 edition of the Book of Common Prayer inclusive of both traditional and modern forms of service. The following is a summary of the main features.

**(1) Morning and Evening Prayer, traditional version.**

- The rubrics (directions) have been made more “user friendly”
- Some additional headings (for example, at the beginning “Sentences of Scripture”) have been put in.
- The text has in general been left unaltered except for some generally agreed alterations. “Spirit” has been substituted for “Ghost”, although it will still be permissible when using a traditional musical setting to use the words that it was written for. The Lord’s Prayer reads “Our Father who...” instead of “Our Father which...”
- Allowance has been made for the use of three lessons, if desired, to conform with the provisions of the Revised Common Lectionary.
- It is permitted to preach the sermon either after the anthem or hymn that follows the third collect or after the remaining or occasional prayers.
- The number of prayers after the third collect has been reduced, and a prayer for the President and all in authority has been added. The General Thanksgiving has been inserted before A Prayer of St. Chrysostom.

**(2) Litany, traditional version.**

- This has been shortened by leaving out everything between the Lord’s Prayer and A Prayer of St. Chrysostom.

**(3) Morning and Evening Prayer, modern version.**

- The service is now organized under five headings,  
The Gathering of God’s People  
Proclaiming and Receiving the Word of God  
The Prayers of the People  
Going out as God’s People
- The seasonal greetings are removed except for that of Easter, and the standard greeting is “The Lord be with you” etc. rather than Phil.1:2 “Grace to you...”
- The APB Preface has been slightly modified.
- The Confession has been made more inclusive by substituting “neighbour” for “fellow-men”.
- To allow for three readings the first reading comes before the Psalm.
- The Te Deum comes after the second reading and the Benedictus after the third reading. This restores the traditional BCP order and gives the Benedictus a more prominent place as the climax of Morning Prayer.
- The Sermon is preached after the Benedictus and before the Apostles’ Creed rather than coming before or after the occasional prayers.
- The second set of versicles and responses after the Lord’s Prayer in the APB is omitted.
- There is provision for a hymn after the sentences of scripture and after the sermon as

well as following the collects, and also following the occasional prayers.

- There is mention of “a” rather than “the” Litany in place of the occasional prayers.
- The blessing concludes the service except when it is conducted by a reader or deacon.

**(4) The Litany, modern version.**

- The use of the Litany is recommended not only on Sundays, Wednesdays, and Fridays but particularly in the seasons of Advent and Lent and on Rogations Days.
- The Litany may be used in Morning or Evening Prayer after the Apostles’ Creed as The Prayers of God’s People when it should conclude with the Collect of the Day and the Lord’s Prayer.
- A petition for deliverance from “the evil of schism” has been added to the “false doctrine” etc. section.
- A petition to “Bless the European Union, and draw us closer to one another in justice and freedom” has been inserted between the sections dealing with “our country” and “those who administer the law”.
- A petition has been inserted after that referring to the sick, and this reads, “Remember the poor who long to hear good news: give us the will to strengthen them through acts of generous love.”

**APPENDIX E**  
**Supplement to Litany One**

The traditional "supplement" to the Litany (following the Lord's Prayer and preceding "A Prayer of St. Chrysostom" and the "Grace") was as follows (BCP 1926, pp26-7)

*Priest.* O Lord, deal not with us after our sins;

*Answer.* Neither reward us according to our iniquities.

Let us pray.

O God, merciful Father, that despiseth not the sighing of a contrite heart, nor the desire of such as be sorrowful; Mercifully assist our prayers that we make before thee in all our troubles and adversities, whensoever they oppress us; and graciously hear us, that those evils, which the craft and subtilty of the devil or man worketh against us, be brought to nought; and by the providence of thy goodness they may be dispersed; that we thy servants, being hurt by no persecutions, may evermore give thanks unto thee in thy holy Church; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

*O Lord, arise, help us, and deliver us for thy Name's sake.*

O God, we have heard with our ears, and our fathers have declared unto us, the noble works that thou didst in their days, and in the old time before them.

*O Lord, arise, help us, and deliver us for thine honour.*

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son: and to the Holy Ghost;

*Answer.* As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.

From our enemies defend us, O Christ.

*Graciously look upon our afflictions.*

Pitifully behold the sorrows of our hearts.

*Mercifully forgive the sins of thy people.*

Favourably with mercy hear our prayers.

*O Son of David, have mercy upon us.*

Both now and ever vouchsafe to hear us, O Christ.

*Graciously hear us, O Christ; graciously hear us, O Lord Christ.*

*Priest.* O Lord, let thy mercy be shewed upon us;

*Answer.* As we do put our trust in thee.

Let us pray.

We humbly beseech thee, O Father, mercifully to look upon our infirmities; and for the glory of thy Name turn from us all those evils that we most righteously have deserved; and grant, that in all our troubles we may put our whole trust and confidence in thy mercy, and evermore serve thee in holiness and pureness of living, to thy honour and glory; through our only Mediator and Advocate, Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

**APPENDIX F**  
**THE USE OF OCCASIONAL PRAYERS**  
**IN THE 2004 EDITION OF THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER**

The term "occasional prayers" refers, in the first instance, to the prayers, suitable to the occasion, selected at the discretion of the clergyperson or reader leading them, that come after the third collect at Morning and Evening Prayer (Mattins and Evensong). Prior to the revision of Canon Law in 1974, prayers at this point were only those actually provided within the orders of service or included among the prayers and thanksgivings specifically supplied for the purpose within the book. It was stated in Canon 5 "It shall be unlawful to use in any public office of the Church any psalm, hymn, or prayer other than those prescribed in the office itself, or ordered or permitted by the ordinary or other lawful authority of the Church ... But there may be used at the discretion of the minister, subject to the control of the ordinary ... a prayer ... at the beginning or end of a sermon; or an occasional prayer at any other part of the service directed by the ordinary." It will be seen that this was quite remarkably restrictive, inhibiting the clergyperson or reader from using even suitable prayers from elsewhere within the book. The "Prayers and Thanksgivings" on pages 27 - 35 in the 1926 Prayer Book, were to be used "as occasion may serve, in Morning or Evening Prayer, or in the Litany, before the Prayer of St. Chrysostom; and in the Communion Office after the Collect of the Day".

The appearance of an official *Book of Occasional Prayers* in the 1960s giving a very wide selection of prayers was a significant step forward. However, this appeared just before the question of the language of liturgy was seriously engaged with, and became less relevant once modern prayers in the "you" and "your" mode began to become available. The book is unfortunately long out of print but I am hoping to reproduce it in due course in PDF.

In 1974, as part of the revision of Canon Law, the Select Committee of the Canons proposed a new canon, designed to address the issue and to take account of the fact that many clergy were already using some of the selections of prayers that were becoming available in the Church. This was passed by Synod as Canon 6, and is still in force. It reads,

**The use of prayers and hymns not included in the Book of Common Prayer**

It shall be lawful to use in the course of or before or after any public office of the Church (a) any form of prayer included in any book of prayers prescribed or authorized, (b) any form of hymn in any prescribed or authorised book, (c) any prayer or hymn authorised by the bishop or ordinary,

(d) any prayer or hymn not containing substantial variations from the practice of, nor contrary to the doctrine of, the Church, as the officiating member of the clergy may consider to be required by current circumstances; but the provisions of Canon 5(3) and (4) shall apply to all such prayers and hymns.

Canons three and four read,

(3) All variations in forms of service and all forms of service used or made under the provisions of this canon shall be reverent and seemly and shall be neither contrary to nor indicative of any departure from the doctrine of the Church.

(4) If any question is raised concerning any such variation, or as to whether it is "of substantial importance", the same shall be referred to the bishop, who may give such pastoral guidance, advice or directions as is thought fit, but without prejudice to the right of any person to initiate proceedings in any ecclesiastical tribunal.

Commenting on the proposed Canon 5, the Select Committee said,

Formerly Canon 5; a restatement, in positive terms, of the former canon, but sanctioning the use of prayers and hymns other than those in authorized books. Rightly or wrongly, various books of occasional prayers are to be found in use in many churches, and the clergy have in certain circumstances, felt themselves obliged to modify "authorised prayers" or to improvise, and have desired to try out new hymns.

The canon indicates that the Church takes very seriously the question of what prayers (and hymns) are used, and is concerned that these conform to Church of Ireland practice and to the teaching of the Church. These are a reminder that due care and attention are given to the selection or readings, which are under the authority of the rectory of the parish. However, it will be seen that the range of choice is now very wide indeed, and may be held to include suitable prayers found elsewhere in the Book of Common Prayer than in the particular orders being used, and also prayers which are either chosen from published collections or even those composed by the person leading the prayers. It may be noted, under the terms of this legislation, prayers in the 1926 Book of Common Prayer which are not included in the 2004 edition, may lawfully continue to be used, independently of whether the particular orders in which they occur have been or have not been superceded by the provisions of the new Prayer Book.

Examples of suitable prayers from the 1926 Book, not contained in the 2004 edition, are those for the consecration of a church, some of which, referring to future activities within the church are suitable for use in the New Year (BCP 1926, pp313-4); and those in the First Alternative Form of Evening Prayer (pp326-7, 328-9, 329-30).

In Morning and Evening Prayer One the occasional prayers come under the generic heading "Prayers" (BCP p.97), and there is a rubric "The prayers always conclude with A Prayer of Saint Chrysostom and the Grace". It may be noted that only the latter are obligatory, the rubric in the 1926 book, "Then these Prayers following shall be said, except when the Litany is read" not appearing in the 2004 edition. "A Prayer for the chief Governors in Ireland (BCP 1926, p.10) N.I., no longer appears, as the office of chief Governor has been abolished, nor does A Prayer for the Queen and Commonwealth", N.I., nor "A Prayer for the Parliaments in Ireland", R.I., (pp10.11) but a prayer for the Houses of the Oireachtas has been inserted (BCP 2004, p.98). A Prayer for the Clergy and People, and that for all sorts and conditions of men, are both included; and the General Thanksgiving, which appeared in the 1926 book as the first of the Thanksgivings, has been moved here within the order of service. Although it is in this way made more accessible, the mistaken impression may be given that the General Thanksgivings (one of the great prayers of the Prayer Book) is only to be when Morning or Evening Prayer One is used. This is a prayer which should be known by heart to all members of the Church. In Morning and Evening Prayer One the sermon may come before or after the Occasional Prayers.

In Morning and Evening Prayer Two the Occasional Prayers are treated as a continuation of The Prayers of the People. A hymn or anthem may be sung after the third collect, and then, "Prayers and thanksgivings, or a litany, may be said." These are followed by the section Going Out as God's People when a variety of conclusions may be used as on p.116, or there may be an appropriate blessing.

Given the degree of liberty permitted by Canon Six, there was a discussion on the Liturgical Advisory Committee as to whether it was necessary to have a special section of Prayers and Thanksgivings. However, given that Readers and even members of the clergy may occasionally have to conduct services, or at least take part in them without time to prepare, and also that this book is intend as a resource book for lay members of the church in their own personal devotions, it was felt appropriate to have the prayers on pp 145-53 as a selection from the 1926 Book of Common Prayer and the Alternative Prayer Book (1984).



These cover the topics of the World, Pastoral prayers, Seasonal prayers, the Church's Ministry, the Church, General and Concluding Prayers, and Thanksgivings. These prayers may be used with Morning and Evening Prayer One, and also Morning and Evening Prayer Two, and it is not necessary to use only prayers in traditional style with One and those in modern style with Two. If necessary "Thee's" and "Thou's" can be changed into "You's" and "Your's" and vice versa, although the Thanksgiving for the Church (p.153) appears in both formats.

A wide range of hooks of occasional prayers in both traditional and modern form are available, and every clergyperson or Reader should built up a library of these, the contents of which should be used selectively. The collections of prayers edited and published by Frank Colquhoun have been found particularly helpful.

Forms of intercession, found elsewhere in the BCP 2004 may appropriately be used at Morning and Evening Prayer. The weekday intercessions and thanksgivings on pp 139-44 are suitable when it is desired to have prayers derived from the themes of these Monday to Saturday prayers: Creation in Christ: Creation and Providence; the Incarnate Life of Christ: Revelation and Human Knowledge; the Cross of Christ: Reconciliation and Human Relationships; The Resurrection of Christ: the Household of Faith, the Church; The Priestly Ministry of Christ: All that meets Human Need; Consummation in Christ: The Fulfilment of the Divine Purpose. The form of prayer in A Late Evening Office, is not tied to the evening, and this and other Litany forms, including The Litany One and The Litany Two are well suited to use with Morning and Evening Prayer One and Morning and Evening Prayer Two.

Various forms of prayers of intercession and thanksgiving are also used in A Service of the Word. Under the heading of "The Prayers" within the section called The Response it is suggested that there be Intercessions and Thanksgiving, Penitence (if not used earlier in the order of service), a general collect, and the Lord's Prayer. Much useful material may be found in the Church of England publication *New Patterns for Worship* Church House Publishing, 2002. A lot of resource material has become available in another C of E publication, *Common Worship: Times and Seasons*, (Church House Publishing, 2006) and is recommended for use in the Church of Ireland by the House of Bishops. It gathers together material contained currently in several books. Suitable prayers are also to be found in the office book, *Common Worship: Daily Prayer* (Church House Publishing, 2005. Specifically for the Service of the Word, the publication *The Word for all Seasons* by David Graham, (Canterbury Press, 2002) provides Orders of Service for every Sunday of the year and major festivals (using the Revised Common Lectionary) including useful forms of intercessions. A disk supplied with the book makes it easy to reproduce each particular service on a single sheet and to adapt the contents for the use of particular congregations. In addition, there is much useful material in *Celebrating the Word – Complete Services of The Word for use with Common Worship and the Church of Ireland Book of Common Prayer*, compiled and edited by Brian Mayne, Canterbury Press, Norwich, 2004.

In **Holy Communion One** there is little place for variety, the form of the Prayer for the Church Militant being prescribed, although biddings may suitably be prefixed to this form, and there is also a choice of post-communion prayers on pp194-6.

In **Holy Communion Two** the Prayers of the People are in the form of general guidelines, allowing resource material from a variety of sources to be brought in and used. It is stated that the Intercessions will normally include prayer for: the universal Church of God, the nations of the world, the local community, those in need, and remembrance of, and thanksgiving for the faithful departed. When appropriate, the prayers may be more focused on one or two themes. Prayers may be read by a deacon or lay person, or may be in silence with biddings, or may be in the form of open prayer, where members of the congregation contribution. Suitable versicles and responses are provided.

Three norms of Intercession are provided on pp237-239, the first two derived from the forms in the *Alternative Prayer Book* (1984) and the third being new to the Church of Ireland. Forms One and Two provide for additional petitions; and Form Three provides for people to add their own petitions.

The Church of England's resource book, *Times and Seasons* (published in 2006) provides a wide range of suitable forms, derived from experience with the publications *Lent, Holy Week, Easter, The Promise of His Glory*, and *Enriching the Christian Year*.

In **Christian Initiation One** it appears to be presupposed that the prayers will normally be said by the officiating clergy person. This applies to the Baptism of Infants, and in Confirmation.

In **Christian Initiation Two** there are prayers which may be said at the Prayers of the People at Holy Baptism (where there is no celebration of the Holy Communion) although other suitable prayers may be used instead. No particular prayers are provided for use at Confirmation when there is no celebration of Communion, but suitable ones may be found in *Alternative Occasional Services* (1993) pp20,21.

In **Marriage One**, while the officiating minister says the prayer "O God of Abraham..." there is no direction as to the prayers which follow in the order; and those from *Marriage Services Two* (which specifically allow them to be conducted by someone other than the minister) may be used instead.

In **Marriage Two** there are two forms of "The Prayers", the first being a litany, and the second a series of prayers of which one or more are used.

A selection of prayers is provided in the form of **Ministry to those who are sick** pp450-53; and there are Prayers of Intercession in *A Celebration of Wholeness and Healing* pp459-60.

In **Funeral Services One** only two prayers are provided for use in church, but suitable occasional prayers may be used under the canon; and three prayers after the committal are provided.

In **Funeral Services Two** there is a wide selection of prayers on pp491-96, and also in *The Funeral Service for a Child* pp510-13.

Great care must be taken over the selection and use of occasional prayers. These should normally be prepared carefully in advance. Ex tempore ("free") prayer is permitted at certain points, but needs to be handled discreetly and with restraint. Where the gift of composition exists, prayers produced by the officiating minister or Reader, may appropriately be used.

**THE STUDY OF LITURGY:  
THE EUCHARIST  
IN THE  
BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER  
2004**

**COMMENTARY  
BY  
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**TOGETHER WITH SERMONS  
ON EUCHARISTIC DOCTRINE  
PREACHED IN TWO CATHEDRALS**

## CONTENTS

<b>Part 1 (Celebration of the Eucharist, general principles)</b>	<b>5</b>
Constitution and Canons	5
General Directions for Public Worship	15
<b>PART TWO (Celebration of the Eucharist, commentary and guidelines)</b>	
<b>A. Traditional Rite, Holy Communion One</b>	<b>17</b>
(1) Preparation	17
(2) The Service - from the Lord's Prayer to the Collect	19
(3) The Service - The Ministry of the Word	21
(4) The Service - Offertory and the Prayer for the Church Militant	22
(5) The Service - Long Exhortations to Comfortable Words	25
(6) The Service - Sursum Corda, Preface and Sanctus	25
(7) The Service - Prayer of Humble Access and Prayer of Consecration	27
(8) The Service - Communion of priest and people	29
(9) The Service - Lord's Prayer and Post-Communion Prayers	30
(10) The Service - Gloria in Excelsis and the Blessing	31
(11) The Service - Disposal of the elements and the ablutions	31
(12) The Service - Procession to Vestry and Vestry Prayers	32
The Exhortations	33
The Declaration on Kneeling	34
Notes authorized by the General Synod for Holy Communion One	35
<b>Part Three (Celebration of the Eucharist, commentary and guidelines)</b>	
<b>B. Modern Language Rites, Holy Communion Two</b>	<b>37</b>
(1) Preparation	37
(2) Comparison with traditional rite	37
(3) Commentary on the Order of Service	38
The Structure of the Service	39
<b>The Gathering of God's People</b>	39
The Greeting	39
The Collect for Purity	39
Penitence:	40
The Commandments	40
The Confession and the Kyries	40
Gloria in Excelsis	41
The Collect of the Day	42
<b>Proclaiming and Receiving the Word</b>	<b>42</b>
The First Reading	44
The Psalm	44
The Epistle	44
The Gradual	45
The Gospel	45
Sermon	45
The Nicene Creed	45

<b>The Prayers of the People</b>	<b>47</b>
[Penitence]	48
The Peace	49
<b>Celebrating at the Lord's Table</b>	<b>49</b>
At the Preparation of the Table	49
The Taking of the Bread and Wine	50
The Great Thanksgiving	51
<b>Prayer 1</b>	<b>52</b>
The Opening Dialogue	52
Pre-Sanctus	53
Sanctus	53
The Post-Sanctus	54
The Words of Institution	55
Anamnesis	55
Epiclesis	56
Doxology	56
<b>Prayer 2</b>	<b>56</b>
<i>Invitation</i>	57
<i>Statement of motives, recounting in thanksgiving</i> <i>the great deeds of God</i>	57
Pre-Sanctus	57
Seasonal Additions	58
The Sanctus	58
<i>Petitions</i>	58
Post-Sanctus	58
The Words of Institution	58
Anamnesis	59
Acclamations	59
Epiclesis	59
<i>Doxology with Amen.</i>	59
<b>Prayer 3</b>	<b>59</b>
Address to the Father	60
Address to the Son, including Words of Institution	61
Address to the Holy Spirit,	61
Address to the Holy Trinity	61
The threefold Amen	62
The Lord's Prayer	62
The Breaking of the Bread	63
The Communion	63
Invitation	63
Administration	63
Communion Anthem	64
The Great Silence	64
<b>Going out as God's People</b>	<b>64</b>
Communion by Extension	65
Prayer after Communion	65
Dismissal	66
The Blessing	66
Words of Dismissal	66

Additional Notes on the Celebration	<b>66</b>
Blessing children at the rail	66
Concelebration	66
A Note on Supplementary Consecration	66
Appendix 1: Proper Offertory Sentences	68
Appendix 2: Intercessions at the Eucharist	70
Appendix 3: Liturgical Vesture	72
Appendix 4: The Revised Common Lectionary	73
Appendix 5: Assisting at Holy Communion	75
Appendix 6: Holy Communion by Extension	79
Appendix 7. Eucharistic Prayer when a significant number of children is present.	86
 <b>Sermons on Eucharistic Doctrine (preached in two cathedrals)</b>	 <b>89</b>
Eucharistic Titles (Prologue)	89
A. Four sermons on the biblical words, “Remembrance”, “Communion”, “Proclamation” and “Thanksgiving”	90
B. Presence and Sacrifice (from several sermons)	98
Harvest	
Food and Drink	
The Heavenly Altar	
C. Priest and Victim	
D. The Eucharist and Time	104
E. Admission to Communion (two sermons)	105
The Command (Epilogue)	109

# PART 1

## Celebration of the Eucharist, general principles

### Constitution and Canons

Certain general guidelines may be found in the Church Constitution, Chapter Nine (the Canons), and in the rubrics of the traditional and modern versions of the Holy Communion service in the *Book of Common Prayer 2004* pp180-239. These are entitled, respectively, “The Administration of the Lord’s Supper or Holy Communion”, and “The Celebration of the Holy Communion, also called the Lord’s Supper or the Eucharist”. The Canons (together with brief contents) are given below. The rubrics and other directions are dealt with as they arise in Part Two below under the heading "Celebration of the Eucharist, practical aspects".

Members of the Clergy and Readers should have a copy of the **Constitution of the Church of Ireland 2003**, edited by Brenda M.H. Sheil, LL.B., M.A., published by the General Synod of the Church of Ireland. This is in loose-leafed form, and amendments to bring it up to date may be obtained from Church of Ireland House. Instructions relevant to the celebration of the Holy Communion may be found in Chapter IX, "The Canons", especially Part 1, "Divine Service: General", Part II "Holy Communion", and Part VI, "General".

### Constitution Chapter IX (The Canons) Part 1, General

#### **Canon 3. Divine Service to be celebrated on Sundays and Holy-days.**

On every Sunday and Holy-day appointed by the Church, unless dispensed with by the ordinary, incumbents and curates shall celebrate Morning and Evening Prayer or the Holy Communion or other service prescribed for the day at convenient and usual times, and in such place in every church or other suitable building provided for the purpose as the ordinary shall think proper.

The use of these orders, therefore, is obligatory, not permissive, and that includes the celebration of the Holy Communion. A measure of discretion, however, is introduced by the first Note in the BCP p.16, "Service of the Word is for use on occasions when the prescribed services of Morning or Evening Prayer or Holy Communion may not meet the needs of a particular congregation", but the canon takes priority over a direction for a particular service and does not permit a general disregard for Morning and Evening Prayer or the Holy Communion. For the frequency of the Holy Communion see below, Part II, Canon 13 "The Celebration of the Holy Communion" . It is clear, however, that in many churches it is not practicable to have all three of the prescribed services every Sunday (for example in large rural parochial groups) and so the ordinary has the power to dispense with one or more of them. It may be noted that the obligation under this canon extends to "holy days" as well as Sundays. Information about Holy Days (including Saints' Days) may be found in the Calendar of the *Book of Common Prayer 2004* on pages 18-23. In this Calendar there are several categories of special days: "Principal Holy Days", "Days of Special Observance", and "Days of Discipline and Self-Denial", and “Festivals” and, in addition, “Ember Days” and “Commemorations”.

#### **Canon 4. The Book of Common Prayer.**

All ministers shall use and observe the orders rites and ceremonies prescribed in the Book of Common Prayer as well in reading the holy scriptures and saying of prayers as in administration of the sacraments without either diminishing or adding anything in the matter or form thereof, save as hereinafter provided.

The matter and form of the services, including Holy Communion, is *prescribed*, by the Church, and is not at the discretion of the minister, although variations (not of a substantial nature) are permitted under Canon 5 (below). Many variations *within* the orders of service, including Holy Communion, are, however, permitted by the rubrics, especially in the modern rites. The words "save as hereinafter provided" permit the use of services other than those in the Book of Common Prayer.

**Canon 5. The prescribed form of Divine Service to be used in Churches.**

(1) The services contained in the Book of Common Prayer and Administration of the Sacraments, or such services as may be otherwise prescribed or authorized, and no other, shall be used in churches; provided that there may be used in any cathedral or church,

(a) at any hour on any Sunday or weekday an additional form of service, provided that such form of service and the mode in which it is used is for the time being approved by the ordinary, and

(b) upon any special occasion approved by the ordinary a special form of service approved by the ordinary:

Provided that, save with the leave of the ordinary, neither such additional form of service nor special form of service shall be in substitution for any of the services so prescribed.

The "ordinary" is the person having liturgical authority - normally the bishop. In the case of St. Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin, the immediate ordinary is the Dean. The expression, "such services as may be otherwise prescribed or authorized", gave a legal basis to the use of the *Alternative Prayer Book* and *Alternative Occasional Services* 1993 (AOS) until these were superseded by the forms now incorporated into *The Book of Common Prayer* 2004. The provision for "additional" and "special" forms not only provides for customary special services such as Christmas Carols, but also allows for liturgical creativity at a local level insofar as it is approved by the bishop. Paragraphs (a) and (b) safeguard the bishop's traditional *jus liturgicum*, his power to authorize various liturgical forms appropriate to diocesan or to local needs. It is also possible, under this canon for the House of Bishops to issue forms of service which may be used in the Church.

(2) The minister may at his discretion make and use variations which are not of substantial importance in any form of service prescribed in the Book of Common Prayer or elsewhere.

For example, prior to the appearance of *The Book of Common Prayer* 2004 this provision would have covered the substitution of the word "Spirit" for "Ghost" in a traditional form of service or the use of "Our Father who..." for "Our Father which". There is a problem in that there appears to be no authoritative definition of what the word "substantial" means here. Precedents (from the legislative process leading to the production of the *Alternative Prayer Book* and other rites) are not consistent. However, the recommendation of "Inclusive Language Emendations" to the *Alternative Prayer Book* 1984 by the House of Bishops, which might be made "in accordance with Canon 5 at the discretion of the minister, subject to the approval of the Bishop" allowed *significant variations* (when taken together) which were not of such a character as to affect the essence of the rites, and this may be taken as a base line for interpreting the words "not of substantial importance". It may be noted that the emendations referred to have been superseded by the provisions of the modern rites in the *Book of Common Prayer* 2004.



(3) All variations in forms of service and all forms of service used or made under the provisions of this canon shall be reverent and seemly and shall be neither contrary to nor indicative of any departure from the doctrine of the Church.

This is intended to prevent doctrinally unsound or inherently unsuitable alterations being made to the prescribed forms of worship. Variations are best made, when they are to be made at all, upon the basis of a thorough knowledge of liturgical first principles and the doctrinal tradition of the Church.

(4) If any question is raised concerning any such variation, or as to whether it is "of substantial importance", the same shall be referred to the bishop in order that he may give such pastoral guidance, advice or directions as he may think fit, but without prejudice to the right of any person to initiate proceedings in any ecclesiastical tribunal.

There has to be some normal manner of settling any questions arising out of the liberty permitted by the canon, and this enables such matters to be referred to the bishop without inhibiting the fundamental right (established elsewhere in the Constitution) of recourse to the ecclesiastical courts.

**Canon 6. The use of prayers and hymns not included in the Book of Common Prayer.**

It shall be lawful to use in the course of or before or after any public office of the Church,

- (a) any form of prayer included in any book of prayers prescribed or authorized;
- (b) any form of hymn in any prescribed or authorized book;
- (c) any prayer or hymn authorized by the bishop or ordinary;
- (d) any prayer or hymn not containing substantial variations from the practice of, nor contrary to the doctrine of the Church, as the minister may consider to be required by current circumstances; but the provisions of Canon 5(3) and (4) shall apply to all such prayers and hymns.

Examples of these would include (a) the use of the Church's official *Book of Occasional Prayers*; (b) the supplemental hymn book *Irish Church Praise* (1990); (c) prayers for such occasions as Diocesan Synods put forth by individual bishops; (d) the use of prayers from such private collections as Colquhoun and Raymond Chapman and also such publications as Prayers from official service-books in other parts of the Anglican Communion (for instance the Church of England's *Common Worship*, 2000 and what preceded it the *Alternative Service Book*, 1980) would come into this same category. Explicit mention is made of *Patterns for Worship*<sup>1</sup> (Church House Publishing 2002) and *Common Worship: Times and Seasons*<sup>2</sup> (Church House Publishing, 2006) - in relation to the Service of the Word on p.166. It would appear that the words "in the course of" would cover the inclusion of an Office Hymn before the Magnificat at Evensong and the singing of a hymn during Communion in the traditional form of service.

<sup>1</sup>*Patterns for Worship* has, at the time of writing, been superseded by *New Patterns for Worship*.

<sup>2</sup>A companion volume: *Common Worship: Festivals* was published in 2008.

**Canon 7 The duty of preaching.**

Every incumbent shall provide that one sermon at least be preached on every Sunday in every church, or other building licensed for the purpose, in which Divine Service is performed within his cure, unless he be excused therefrom by the ordinary.

Anglican Christianity gives equal value to the Word and Sacrament, hence the stress here on regularity in preaching. Properly speaking the sermon or homily is an integral part of the celebration of the Holy Communion, although there are clearly circumstances (an "early" said service or a weekday celebration) where this may not be practicable.

**Canon 8. Speaking in a distinct and audible voice.**

Every minister at all times of his public ministration of the service of the Church shall speak in a distinct and audible voice, and so place himself that the people may conveniently hear what is said.

Excessively slow reading is a fault, as is also any tendency to "patter" the liturgy. Very loud reading should also be avoided. Within the limits of what is prescribed in this Canon variations of pace, volume, tone and pitch and emphasis should be appropriate to the nature of the liturgical material being read. The liturgy should never be monotonous.

Amplification equipment needs to be provided and adjusted by qualified acoustic engineers not general electricians, and correctly used. Ideally it should amplify the voice in such a manner that hearers are hardly aware the equipment is actually in use.

**Canon 12. Ecclesiastical apparel.**

(1) Every archbishop and bishop at all times of his public ministration of the services of the Church shall use the customary ecclesiastical apparel of his order.

The "customary apparel" includes choir dress of cassock, rochet and chimere, academical hood and black scarf, ring, and pectoral cross. At sacramental rites a stole may be worn in place of the scarf and hood, and the chimere is better not used. Cope and mitre may be regarded as part of the "customary" ecclesiastical apparel, and are now used by some bishops.

This raises the question of whether there is any logical reason why a cope should not be worn by other clergy, including dignitaries and canons, on solemn occasions. Copes were prescribed in the English canons of 1604 for use by the bishop or principal minister at the eucharist in cathedrals and collegiate churches.

(2) Every presbyter and deacon at all times of his public ministration of the regular services of the Church in a Church Building,

(a) may wear a cassock,

(b) shall wear a plain white surplice with sleeves and the customary black scarf or a stole, and

(c) may wear bands, and the hood pertaining to his university degree or other academic qualification; provided that any minister shall be at liberty to wear a plain black gown while preaching.

(a) This reflects a period when surplices were exceedingly long and actually came down to the ankles. Modern surplices, even when full and long, should be worn with cassocks.

(b) The surplice should be long and full (gathered at the neck); and if it is of an artificial material, a high quality product should be obtained. Although the scarf and hood are traditionally part of an Anglican clergyman's "canonicals", and may be worn at all services, modern practice is to use these at the Office (Morning and Evening Prayer and Compline and the Late Evening Office) and to use a stole (of the appropriate colour) at Baptisms and at Holy Communion, and at other sacramental rites (for example, confirmation). A stole and hood are never worn together. It is customary to have stoles in the five liturgical colours,

**White** - Major festivals such as Christmas and Easter, weddings, ordinations, and certain saints' days and holy days (e.g. The Naming of Jesus, The Annunciation). It is suitable for funerals during the great 50 days of Easter when the message of the resurrection is to the fore.

**Purple** - Penitential seasons (Advent and Lent) and for the Ministry of Absolution. It is widely used for funerals.

**Red** - Saints' days other than those for which white is recommended, Passiontide, Pentecost (Whit Sunday), and days on which it is particularly appropriate to invoke the Holy Spirit. Red may be used at ordinations, although white is preferable.

**Green** - Ordinary Sundays and weekdays.

**Black** - This is largely disused, but may be worn on any occasion. Traditionally black vestments were used at funerals.

It would appear that the modern "cassock-alb", which is a combined cassock-and-surplice, falls within the terms of the Canon and is lawful. This being the case there seems no logical reason for an ordinary standard alb to be excluded.

It may be noticed that the right to wear a stole with cassock and surplice or alternatively a scarf and hood is an absolute right under the canon and is not dependent upon the permission of any other person. This is specifically written into the rites of ordination. In "Notes for the whole Ordinal, [7]" under the heading "Vesture" it is stated that deacons and priests are vested with a scarf or stole according to individual choice, and bishops in their episcopal habit. (BCP p.552).

For the comparable regulations of the Church of England see Appendix 3

(3) If any question shall arise touching the suitability of any vestment or ornament worn by any minister during the public ministration of the services of the Church, the same shall be decided by the ordinary, subject to an appeal to the Court of the General Synod.

It is clearly desirable that any difficulties of this kind should be settled locally without resort to legal proceedings; and so the bishop has full authority, subject to appeal.

(4) The Church does not attach any doctrinal significance to the diversities of apparel permitted by this Canon, and the apparel worn by the minister in accordance with the provisions of this Canon is not to be understood as implying any doctrines other than those contained in the formularies of the Church.

This does not state that there is no theological significance whatever in the use of ecclesiastical apparel, only that such significance is not to be read into the diversity of use permitted. The black scarf is the distinctive mark of the ordained minister (as distinguished from the lay Reader or choir member). This should normally be plain; but it is lawful to display certain ecclesiastical symbols, for example those indicating military chaplaincies and those which identify membership of cathedral chapters. Since bishops are not usually members of cathedrals as corporate bodies (although there are some exceptions, for example the Archbishop of Dublin, who is ex-officio Prebendary of Cualaun in St. Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin) they should wear such insignia only at the invitation of the Dean and Chapter. Such an invitation is a reasonable courtesy to one whose *cathedra*, (his Chair or Throne) gives the Cathedral its significance. A scarf is always worn "up-and-down". It is never worn sash-wise. A deacon and a priest wear their scarf in exactly the same way. This is particularly important at ordinations where "deacons or priests are vested with a scarf or stole according to individual choice" [The Ordinal, *Book of Common Prayer 2004* p552 Note 7.] By way of contrast, the stole worn sash-wise over the left shoulder indicates the deacon, and when worn up-and-down indicates the priest (or bishop). It is lawful for the stole to carry specifically Christian symbols such as the Cross, the Alpha-and-Omega, and the Chi-Rho. It is not appropriate, or customary, for the stole to indicate particular offices held in the Church.

The value of this particular declaration is that, in principle, it enables matters of what is worn in church to be disengaged from theological controversies which are no longer relevant, having to a large extent been resolved in Agreed Statements of the relevant inter-church bodies. To help resolve any remaining differences mutual respect and, where necessary, self-restraint is helpful in practice.

It should be noted that the regulations given above apply only to public ministration of the regular services of the Church in a Church Building. At a special service in a hall, or perhaps on such an occasion as a parish mission when the proceedings are relatively informal, then it is not necessary to robe fully. A cassock only might be sufficient. In the case of a sick communion in a person's home (or in hospital) it is appropriate to use cassock, surplice and stole to add dignity to the occasion and to make a visual link with the normal Church service, even if this is not, strictly-speaking, obligatory.

It is regrettable that some members of the clergy, without any authority, have dispensed with their robes when conducting the regular services in a church building. It may be pointed out,

- That there is theological significance in the use of robes, although not in the diversity of robes permitted by the canons. The office of bishop is indicated by the use of cassock, rochet, chimere, and scarf, or cassock, rochet and stole; or by the use of cope and mitre. The office of priest is indicated by the use of cassock, surplice, black scarf and hood; or cassock surplice and stole, or cassock alb and stole. The office of deacon is indicated by the use of cassock, surplice and stole worn over the left shoulder (when wearing a black scarf and hood the deacon is indistinguishable from the priest). The office of Diocesan Reader is indicated by the use of cassock, surplice, and blue scarf. The office of Parish Reader is variously indicated according to local (diocesan) use. In the Diocese of Armagh the Parish Reader wears cassock, surplice, and medallion with blue ribbon. It is unfortunate that in some dioceses the Parish Reader's ministry is devalued by the use of lay clothes.
- The use of long flowing garments add a dignity to the liturgical act of worship missing from much modern clothing which is convenient but lacking in solemnity. At best, ecclesiastical robes are not only dignified but beautiful; and beauty whether of music, art, movement, or clothing, is a means of giving glory to God.
- There is a certain anonymity conferred by the traditional vesture which helps as a reminder that the bishop, priest, or deacon is there by virtue of his or her office and not because of the personal characteristics of Dr X or Mr. or Mrs or Miss Y.
- The use of traditional garments gives a sense of historical continuity to the act of worship. The Anglican "canonicals" - cassock, surplice, scarf and hood - links those wearing it with a tradition of worship going back to the Reformation. The traditional eucharistic vestments, including the alb and stole go back much further, to the period of Late Antiquity. Symbolism is important and the use of robes is a reminder that the orders of ministry go back, ultimately, to the early church (the Preface to the traditional ordinal claims to the time of the apostles).
- The feeling for "special clothes" for special occasions is universal and deep-rooted. Even churches which started out with versions of contemporary clothes have tended to retain these when fashions have moved on, presumably not only because of a natural conservatism among some members of the clergy but arising from this instinct.

## **Church Constitution IX, Part II, Holy Communion.**

### **Canon 13. The celebration of the Holy Communion.**

(1) In every church or chapel where the sacraments are to be administered, the Holy Communion shall be ministered at least once a month unless the ordinary shall otherwise order, and also on such of the days for which proper prefaces are provided in the communion service, as the ordinary shall direct.

This represents a minimum rather than the ideal use. The days for which proper prefaces are provided are (in the traditional rite) Christmas Day, Easter Day, Ascension Day, Whitsunday, and the Feast of Trinity (with seven days following in the case of Christmas Day and Easter Day) The position in relation to the modern rites is less simple since there the proper prefaces are assigned to seasons (for example, Advent, Lent, Easter) as well as days. However, "at least once a month and on major festivals" is a good rule of thumb. A celebration of Holy Communion is particularly appropriate on the "Principal Holy Days" listed on p18, 19 of the *Book of Common Prayer* 2004, with the exception of Good Friday where there is an old tradition of never having an actual celebration; on the festivals listed on pp20-21; and on some of the "Days of Special Observance" listed on p.20. A Harvest Eucharist is appropriate as one of the harvest observances in a parish since, regarding the bread and wine as the "firstfruits of creation", (a concept which goes back at least to St. Irenaeus in the second century) every Communion is a little harvest service. Collects for Special Occasions are provided the Prayer Book on p328-336, and readings to match them (under the heading "Other Occasions") on pp69-70. Ideally the Holy Communion should be celebrated every Sunday, "The Lord's service in the Lord's house on the Lord's day". In a parochial group it may be possible to arrange the celebrations so that there is one somewhere in the group each Sunday. This enables the priest to make his or her own communion each Sunday, and facilitates any parishioners who may wish to do likewise.

(2) In the administration of the Holy Communion, such order or orders of service as may be prescribed shall be used and observed.

At the time of writing these consist of the traditional order in the Book of Common Prayer - Holy Communion One, the modern language Order with three eucharistic prayers - Holy Communion Two, and the order in the Ministry to those who are Sick (BCP pp441-5) together with a eucharistic Prayer for use when children are present, issued in 2010 by the House of Bishops for seven years' trial use. It should be noted that this paragraph does not say "only". The House of Bishops approved in principle the use of the ecumenical "Glenstal" liturgy in 1986, and so this part of the canon may not be quite so restrictive as at first appears.

(3) The minister shall so stand that the people may conveniently hear him and observe the manual acts, and shall not stand with his back to the people at any time when he is offering up public prayer.

Prior to the 1974 revision of the canons there was a requirement for the priest to stand at the "north" (left-hand) end of the Communion Table when saying the Prayer of Consecration. This is no longer a canonical requirement either for the traditional or modern rites. The rubrics of both permit a "westward" celebration, that is, facing the people.

While a "westward" celebration is increasingly the norm, in the Anglican world generally, attention should be given to aesthetic and architectural considerations before bringing the Communion Table out from the wall. The concept behind the "westward" position is that of the People of God being gathered around the Table, and this is hardly fulfilled if a distant priest stands by himself or herself behind the Table. Moving out the Table in a sanctuary not designed for it may reduce the space in front (for the administration of communion)

unacceptably. On the other hand it is sometimes possible to have a movable nave altar for congregational celebrations, and the problems mentioned above may not exist in buildings which have a large sanctuary to begin with. In certain places (for example the Lady Chapel in Armagh Cathedral) it is literally impossible to celebrate without the celebrant having his back to some people. Perhaps it is time to recognize that objection to the eastward position (which may in some churches be the most convenient) reflects theological arguments that were deeply felt from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries but are no longer relevant through developments in a common understanding of what the eucharist is.

(4) The elevation of the paten or chalice beyond what is necessary for taking the save into the hands of the minister, and the ringing of bells during the time of the service, shall not be permitted.

The first half of this regulation prohibits what is technically called "the elevation of the host", a medieval practice following the Words of Institution. However, it does not forbid the much older (and liturgically better grounded) gesture of the "little elevation"- a slight raising of the bread and cup during the doxology at the end of the Eucharistic Canon. Sanctus bells, rung at the consecration, are not allowed in the Church of Ireland. Here and elsewhere in the regulations relating to Holy Communion we see remnants of the restrictive legislation that was a feature of the Church of Ireland approach to worship from the 1870s to the 1960s and 70s but has since been much modified or repealed. It should now be possible to view all matters relating to the performance of the liturgy in relation to ecumenically agreed norms and also the needs of particular congregations in particular circumstances worshipping in particular places of worship.

(5) The bread to be used in the service shall be such as is usually eaten, of the best quality that can conveniently be procured; and the use of wafer bread is prohibited except in cases of illness where it may be desirable to administer the Holy Communion by means of intinction, subject to any conditions which the ordinary may prescribe.

The bread is prepared by cutting off the edges of slices of an ordinary pan loaf, and then marking it in squares to allow about twenty-five pieces per slice. The pieces to be given to the communicants should not be excessively small, nor should they be actually divided until the appropriate point in the service. To diminish the incidence of crumbs the bread may be compressed with a rolling-pin or by a special apparatus for the purpose. It is advisable to make sure to have more bread available than appears likely to be required so as to allow for an unexpected number of communicants (for example, visitors to the Church). The regulation about wafer bread (generally used throughout the Anglican Communion) represents a compromise between those who wished (in 1974) to maintain an absolute prohibition and those who pointed out the practical utility of wafer bread. The use of wafer bread is convenient in that there are no crumbs, and it can be stored as it does not deteriorate when kept dry. As it is unleavened it is close in character to the special "matzo" bread that would have been used at the Last Supper (Luke 22:1; 15,19) For purposes of intinction (where the bread is dipped into the wine and then administered), special thick wafers rather than those normally used are appropriate. The advantage of everyday bread is to underline the connection between the eucharist and daily life. The use of special bread (wafers) links the eucharistic celebration to the Passover at which the Lord's Supper was instituted by Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. It hardly seems appropriate for there to continue to be a regulation inhibiting the celebrant from using the form of bread closest in character to that used by Jesus himself at the Last Supper.

### **Canon 14 Administration of the Holy Communion in places other than churches.**

The Holy Communion may be administered in any private house or other suitable place,

- (a) Where any person, due to illness or other sufficient causes, is unable to come to the church and desires to partake of the sacrament;
- (b) In any other circumstance, to be approved by the bishop.

The first part of this canon covers the normal case of "private communions" for the sick and housebound. Such Communion should be administered at the very least at Christmas and Easter. There will be some people in most parishes who would appreciate Communion more often, perhaps quarterly or even once a month. The service is not used in full, but contains the essential elements of the Eucharistic celebration. See *The Book of Common Prayer 2004* pp440-49 and the Commentary in this series on Pastoral Ministry which includes a section on ministry to the to those who are sick.

The second part of the canon provides for celebrations in the open air and also for "house" celebrations for special groups.

### **Canon 15 The Communion Table.**

The Communion Table shall be a movable table of wood or other suitable material, and may have such covering as the ordinary shall approve. For the administration of the Holy Communion it shall be covered as required by the rubric.

The emphasis on "a movable table of wood" reflects the view of the Reformers that there is an inherent distinction between an "altar" of stone and a "table" of wood. This view was mistaken in that, in the early Church, the words "altar" and "table" were interchangeable and both wooden and stone altars/tables were in use. There is sound precedent for the use of the word "altar" in the Church of Ireland (it was used in the form of Consecration of Churches of 1666, drawn up by Bishop Jeremy Taylor), and there are some surviving stone altars from the pre-disestablishment era (for example that by Cottingham in the Lady Chapel of St. Patrick's Cathedral, Armagh). The Caroline Divines used both the words "table" and "altar".

The Table is appropriately vested with a "frontal" which may be changed according to the season or occasion following the guidelines for liturgical colours given above, with a "runner" for the top. At Holy Communion the table must be covered by a white cloth (General Directions for Worship: 14. "At the Holy Communion")

### **Canon 16 Exclusion from the Communion of the Church.**

[This deals with the very rare circumstances in which a person may be refused communion. Refusal of communion is a very serious matter and could have adverse legal consequences for the person refusing. The offence should probably be one that is cognizable in a court of law, and even there, extreme caution is indicated]

### **Constitution Chapter IX, Part VI, General**

[Note that the former Canon 38, limiting the use of "lighted lamps or candles" except when necessary for the purpose of giving light, was repealed in 1984. Since then it has been lawful to have lighted candles on the Communion Table during Holy Communion or carried before the celebrant in the procession into the Church. Because of the deletion of this canon subsequent canons were renumbered]

### **Canon 38. Changes in the structure and furnishings of churches.**

No change shall be made in the structure, ornaments, furnishings or monuments of any church (whether by introduction, alteration or removal), unless with the consent

of the incumbent and select vestry, and until an accurate description or design of the proposed change shall have been approved of by the ordinary: provided always that any person aggrieved by any such proposed change, or by the refusal of the ordinary, incumbent or the select vestry to consent or approve thereof, shall have a right of appeal under Canon 42 [Canon 43 deals with willful breach of any Canon]

This covers any alterations that might be made to the sanctuary and its fittings and furnishings. The procedure laid down should be scrupulously followed. Great care should be taken to respect the architectural characteristics of a particular church when changes are to be made.

### **39. Crosses on or behind the Communion Table.**

A cross may be placed on the Communion Table, or on the covering thereof, or may be erected or depicted on the wall or other structure behind the Communion Table, in any of the churches or other places of worship of the Church of Ireland: provided that approval by faculty is obtained with the consent of the incumbent and a majority of the select vestry, or the dean and a majority of the chapter and of the cathedral board, as the case may be.

This canon, passed in 1964, replaced an earlier one prohibiting the cross on or behind the Communion Table. For an account of the proceedings see *The Revision of Canon 36 - a Personal Account* by William Shaw Milner, J.P., a copy of which may be found in the library of the Representative Church Body.

If there is a cross on the Table and it is intended to have a "westward" celebration, the cross should be removed to a suitable place (for example, on the reredos shelf if there is one) so that the cross does not obscure the visual relationship between celebrant and congregation.

### **Canon 40. Use of incense forbidden**

No incense of any substitution therefore or imitation thereof shall at any time be used in any church or chapel or other place in which the public services of the Church are celebrated.

This is another remnant of the restrictive legislation of the 1870s, and reflects controversies over "ritualism" that are no longer relevant to today's Church. Given that incense is depicted as a feature of the heavenly places in Revelation 8:3-4 it seems a little incongruous that its use is actually prohibited in the Church of Ireland.

### **Canon 41. Processions**

(1) Processions are permitted at the opening and close of any service, unless forbidden by the ordinary, and in the course of such services at such times as may be prescribed by the ordinary or are necessarily required by the rubrics.

(2) It shall be lawful to carry a cross in any procession at the opening or close of any service.

(3) [About the Primatial Cross of the Archbishop of Armagh and the Primatial Cross of the Archbishop of Dublin].

(4) It shall be lawful with the consent of the incumbent, to carry a flag, banner or picture in any procession at the opening or close of a service, unless forbidden by the ordinary.

This canon replaced an earlier one forbidding the carrying of any cross, banner or picture through any church or churchyard in an religious service or ceremonial, and which also severely restricted permission to process. It

(1) makes it possible to have a Gospel procession at the Holy Communion.



(2) makes it possible to have a processional cross carried before the celebrant with or without lights.

(4) makes the carrying of, for example, Mothers Union banners, legal at the beginning or end of a service.

**Removal of prohibitions** It may also be noted that the 1974 revision of canons removed all restrictions on the use of the sign of the cross and on bowing to the Lord's Table. The prohibition on having a cross on or behind the Communion Table had been removed earlier (see above).

NB. The use of the words "he", "him" etc. in these notes is to be understood inclusively since women are admitted to all forms of ministry in the Church of Ireland.

### **General Directions for Public Worship**

1. **The Holy Communion** is the central act of worship of the Church. Morning and Evening Prayer are other regular services of public worship. One of the forms of Service of the Word may replace Morning or Evening Prayer at the discretion of the Minister. It is the privilege and duty of members of the Church to join in public worship on the Lord's Day as the weekly commemoration of Christ's Resurrection, and on the principal holy days. Holy Communion is to be celebrated on the principal holy days as set out in the Calendar and regularly on Sundays and festivals for which provision is made in this book.

This direction is based on Note 1 of "Concerning the Services of the Church" in the *Alternative Prayer Book* (1984) p.18. In its modified form the priority of Holy Communion over the "other" regular services, Morning and Evening Prayer, is clearly indicated, and there is a specific direction for the celebration of Communion not only on the principal holy days and regularly on Sundays but also on the festivals appointed in the book.

#### **14. At the Holy Communion**

(a) Members of the Church should partake of the Lord's Supper regularly and frequently after careful preparation.

(b) The priest who presides at the Holy Communion must be episcopally ordained. The Gospel should be read, where possible, by a deacon. The bishop of the diocese may permit lay persons approved by him to assist the priest in the administration of the bread and wine.

(c) Holy Communion shall not be celebrated unless there is at least one person present to communicate together with the priest.

(d) At the time of the celebration of the Holy Communion the communion table is to be covered by a white cloth.

(e) The bread to be used shall be the best and purest bread that can be obtained. Care is to be taken that the wine is fit for use. Any of the consecrated bread and wine remaining after the administration of the communion is to be reverently consumed.

(f) After the communion the vessels shall be carefully and thoroughly cleansed with water.

With regard to this Direction (a) members of the Church can only partake in the manner prescribed if the Holy Communion is celebrated "regularly and frequently". This suggests that there ought to be a celebration of Communion somewhere at some time every Sunday, if possible, in a parish or parochial union or group. The rector, other members of the clergy, and Readers will set the example of being themselves weekly communicants. (b) In the traditional language rite (below pp180ff) the celebrant is described as the "priest". In the modern language rite (below pp201ff) he is described at the beginning of the rite and before the canon as "the bishop or priest who presides" and elsewhere as the "presiding minister". Insistence

upon the celebrant being episcopally ordained does not imply a negative judgement on the ministry of those churches which do not have bishops, but indicates a firm rule absolutely necessary to preserve the historic character of that of the Church of Ireland, which is committed in the Preamble and Declaration to maintaining the threefold ministry “inviolable” (BCP p.776, 1:2). This rubric also by implication rules out the possibility of lay celebration, which is not an option in the public services of the Church of Ireland. The role of the deacon is underlined. It is regrettable that in some parishes the deacon reads the epistle while the rector as priest/celebrant reserves the Gospel to himself. The range of the deacon’s activities is explored in Andrew Burnham, *The Deacon at the Eucharist*, The Church Union, 1992. Mention of a licensed reader in relation to the Gospel (APB, “Concerning the Services of the Church” 9a) has disappeared. It is preferable for an ordained person, ideally, a deacon, to perform this function. The ability of lay persons to administer the bread as well as the cup with the approval of the bishop is made explicit. (c) This is intended to safeguard the corporate character of the eucharist. (d) The “white cloth” mentioned here corresponds to the “fair linen cloth” mentioned in the 1926 Book of Common Prayer (see below). Communion linen should be kept spotlessly clean and correctly folded and ironed. There is no excuse whatsoever for linen to be used that is soiled or crumpled or is frayed or has holes in it, and it is regrettable that here and there linen is to be seen that neither clergy nor lay members of the Church would have in their own homes. For the care of communion linen see the back page of these Course Notes. (e) The bread used must be fresh and wholesome, and the wine must be the fermented juice of the grape (it must not be mere grape juice) and must not be either contaminated or sour. Wafer bread is officially permitted only under the restrictive regulations to be found in the canons. It may be noted that good quality wafers (slightly thicker than normal) are the nearest form of bread to that which would have been used at the Last Supper, assuming (with the Synoptic Gospels) that this was the Passover - the Feast of Unleavened Bread. The regulation about consumption does not exclude “extended communion” so that the bread and wine, consecrated at the service, may be brought to the sick who are unable to attend, and, at the time of writing a form for this was provided under the experimental services legislation.

## Part 2

### Celebration of the Eucharist, commentary and guidelines

#### **(A) Traditional Rite, Holy Communion One, entitled “The Order for the Administration of the Lord’s Supper or Holy Communion”.**

In the course of the history of the Prayer Book there have been a number of shifts in the title of the service, reflecting various emphases.

In the 1549 Prayer Book the title was “The Supper of the Lord and the Holy Communion, commonly called the Mass”. In 1552 this was altered to “The Order for the Administration of the Lord’s Supper or Holy Communion”. This remained the title in subsequent editions of the Prayer Book including the definitive 1662 and the Irish revisions of 1878 and 1926 and is maintained here. For the title in the *Alternative Prayer Book* (1984) and its successor rites in Holy Communion Two of the *Book of Common Prayer 2004* see below p.34.

The title “Lord’s Supper” indicates the connection with the “Last Supper” and is scriptural (1 Cor. 11:20, *kuriakon deipnon*) It underlines the “meal” aspect and recalls the origins of the eucharist in the observance of the Passover by the Lord and his disciples (Mt 26:17). The title “Holy Communion” is also derived from Scripture (1 Cor 10:16, *koinônia tou sômatos tou Christou*).

#### **(1) Preparation**

The Celebrant should be at the Church in good time both to allow for the preparation of the Table if he (or she) has to do this himself and to have time for spiritual recollection. If there is a deacon it is his function to "prepare the table". Otherwise this may be done by a curate or auxiliary minister in priest's orders who is going to act as a liturgical assistant or by a Diocesan or Parish Reader. In some churches the sexton puts out the vessels. If this is so he or she should be taught how to do this correctly. It is appropriate for clergy and Readers to put on their cassocks immediately and to wear them for any liturgically-related activity in the church including the putting out of the vessels (before the service) and while putting the vessels away (when the service is over). The wearing of the cassock in Church adds to the dignity of the occasion and helps to create an atmosphere of reverence before the service begins. Also, if there are to be several services in a row in a parochial group it may be convenient to wear the cassock throughout. As this was originally part of the everyday dress of clergy it may be worn at any time - at the discretion of the priest or deacon. It is appropriate for those who will be ministering to kneel at the Communion Rail for private prayer a little time before the service begins.

The Communion Table/Altar should have a "runner" on it and there may be a "frontal". Frontals may have a "general" character, or (if there is more than one) may change according to the occasion and the season of the Church's Year. These may follow the colour scheme already outlined (see p.4. above). It may be noted that there is excellent precedent in liturgical history for red as a standard colour (this was the use of Sarum in the medieval period) although green is more usual. The sequence of colours is in any case a matter of convention rather than church law. A “Laudian” frontal comes out on to the floor at the corners, and is only practical in churches with a large sanctuary and plenty of room.

It is obligatory for the communion table to be covered by a “white cloth” at the time of the celebration of the Holy Communion. (see BCP p.77). In older editions of the Book of Common Prayer this was referred to as a “fair white linen cloth”. When properly made, it should come down to within a few inches of the floor on either side. It may be marked with four crosses in the corners (corresponding to the corners of the top of the Table) and with a

cross or other Christian insignia at the center. It should be spotlessly clean and well-ironed. When not in use it should be covered with a dust cloth if it is left on the Table in between services. When removing it from the Table the ends are brought in to the middle (and this may be done again) but it should not be creased. To prevent ceasing some churches use a roller for storage purposes.

[For the care of communion vessels and linen see the Guidelines from the House of Bishops reproduced in Appendix 7]

For the communion there should be a "corporal", a large linen square with a cross in the middle, at the center of the Table (and if it is intended to consecrate at the north end there should be a second corporal there). The front edge of the corporal should come to the edge of the Table. It may be noted that it is incorrect for part of the corporal to be draped down over the front of the Table.

The paten (plate) is placed over the chalice (cup), unless the design of the paten makes this impossible. A stiff square "pall" covers the chalice. A purificator (linen handkerchief for wiping the chalice) may be placed under the paten across the mouth of the chalice or may be carried (together with spare purificators) in the "burse". If there is a "burse" and coloured "veil" the veil covers the vessels and is neatly draped down in front of them in such a way that the cross in front of the veil is displayed and the corners are straight.

The "burse" (= "purse") is a kind of pocket containing the linen "veil" (see below) and spare purificators. It is placed on top of the vessels over the coloured veil, flat, with the "hinge" towards the front. There should be a burse and veil in the appropriate colour for each season or occasion in the church's year. The linen "veil" is a square cloth, smaller than the corporal which will be used to cover the vessels after the communion of the people up to the blessing.

If there is no coloured burse and veil the linen veil is set nearly (folded) to the left of the vessels next to the corporal and the purificator (also folded) is put neatly to the right. Purificators may take the form of paper handkerchiefs, but linen should be used at least on special occasions.

On the credence table is placed the bread box (sometimes called the "canister") containing the bread prepared for the service (but not yet divided) and the flagon with a sufficient amount of wine and at least one glass cruet filled with water (there may be another filled with wine) for the ablutions at the end of the service. The credence table should be covered with a linen cloth. If there is no credence table, the bread box, flagon, and cruet(s) should be placed at the south (right-hand) end of the altar, at the back, and to avoid spills on the fair linen cloth may be placed on a spare corporal.

The celebrant and assistant(s) put on the rest of their robes in the vestry. The celebrant wears cassock, surplice and stole (or black scarf). A hood is never worn with a stole, but may be worn with a scarf. It is a convention in churches where stoles are used not to wear a hood at any sacramental service. A deacon wears a stole sash-wise over the left shoulder. If he is wearing a black scarf this should always be worn up-and-down.

A period of quiet reflection is appropriate in the vestry before the service. A vestry prayer should be said. A traditional form of preparatory devotion takes the following form:-

Celebrant: +In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.

(Antiphon) V/ I will go unto the altar of God.

R/ Even unto the God of my joy and gladness.

Psalm 43 (traditional version) is said in alternate verses with the Gloria.

(Antiphon) V/ I will go unto the altar of God.

R/ Even unto the God of my joy and gladness.

To which may be added the prayer,

Cleanse us, O God, and purify our hearts that we may be cleansed from all our sins, and worship Thee in Spirit and in truth, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## **(2) The Service - from the Lord's Prayer to the Collect**

In preparing this order for the *Book of Common Prayer 2004*, it was decided to leave the text intact, apart from certain minimal agreed alterations, but the rubrics have been updated.

The first rubric in the 1926 BCP has been omitted as long obsolete.

So many as intend to be partakers of the Holy Communion shall signify their names to the Curate, at least some time the day before.

The second rubric, referring to refusal of communion to any person who is living in “open and notorious sin” has been omitted, the subject-matter being covered by Canon 16 **Exclusion from the Communion of the Church.**

The third rubric, which enjoined the use of the “fair white linen cloth”, regulated the position of the Lord's Table and the position of the celebrant (who was to stand at the “north”, that is the left-hand end), has been removed. This means that in the Book of Common Prayer 2004 it is lawful to celebrate “westward” (facing the people) when the traditional service is used as well as when the modern-language rite is celebrated. A “north end” celebration is presupposed below, and appropriate adjustments of place and posture need to be made for a “westward” celebration.

The position of the celebrant is regulated by Canon 13 (3) which is dealt with above. The other matters covered by this rubric are dealt with in the second of the “Notes for Holy Communion in Traditional Language” to be found at the end of this order,

The Table, at the Communion-time having a fair white linen cloth upon it, shall stand in the Body of the Church, or in the Chancel.

The 1552 Prayer Book envisaged the Communion Table being placed lengthwise in the body of the Church or in the chancel with the priest at the “north” side which would have been a “long” side not an “end”. An illustration of such an arrangement may be found in D. MacCulloch, *Thomas Cranmer - A Life*, Yale University Press 1996, p.508 (Hailes Church, Gloucestershire). Under Archbishop Laud in the seventeenth century, Communion Tables were returned to the sanctuary and fenced off with communion rails.

The fourth rubric indicating that the service is to be said in a distinct and audible voice has been removed, but the subject-matter is covered by Canon 8 (see above).

A new rubric has been put in,

The priest stands at the Lord's Table. The people kneel.

Note that the priest *stands to celebrate*. The requirement for him to kneel at any point has been removed from the Prayer Book 2004 and it is not necessary for him to do this. He should face the people when addressing them (for example for the Commandments), and should otherwise face southwards when at the north end.

If the service is to be sung, the notation for the celebrant may be found in the *Cathedral Prayer Book*, edited by Stainer and Russell, and published by Novello and Co. This has long been out of print, but may sometimes be obtained secondhand. A complete order with appropriate music for a Holy Communion One celebration, produced by Mr Theo Saunders, is in use in St Patrick's Cathedral Armagh at the time of writing. It is not necessary even in a

solemn Sung Eucharist to sing everything. The Collect, The Nicene Creed (to some such setting as Merbecke), and from the Comfortable Words to the Amen after the Prayer of Consecration, together with the Lord's Prayer and the Gloria in Excelsis (to a setting), and the blessing, would seem to be quite sufficient.

[A note on the use of the words "priest" and "minister". The word "priest" is used for those parts of the service which are to be said by the celebrant, who must be in priest's orders. The word "minister" is used for those parts of the service which may be said by a deacon or priest. If the bishop is present he must say the absolution and blessing, and it is appropriate that he should preside over the whole rite. It is particularly appropriate for a deacon to read the Gospel, and he should not be denied the opportunity to do this. It is mistaken for a bishop or priest to reserve the Gospel to himself when a deacon is present]

In the procession the rule is that the most senior person comes last, and for the purpose of holy communion this is the celebrant, who may be preceded by his assistant (if there is one) who also, appropriately, may walk in on his right.

If the bishop is present he should normally be the celebrant. If he has a chaplain the chaplain walks behind the bishop and is given a position in the sanctuary which enables him to assist the bishop, for example by holding his pastoral staff or (for example when the bishop is giving the blessing) the book.

#### **The Lord's Prayer**

This is said by the celebrant alone, except for the "Amen", usually in a lowered (but still "distinct and audible") voice. The use of the Lord's Prayer at this point is a remnant of an old form of the priest's personal preparation for the service.

#### **The Collect for Purity**

This is said slightly more loudly, but in a devotional tone, and the congregation give their assent by saying "Amen".

Some guidance about the use of the hands by the celebrant may be helpful at this point. There are no "rules" as such, but the following are the conventions and may be regarded as standard liturgical practice. When the celebrant prays on behalf of the people, as here, he does this with hands parted, closing them at the words "through Christ our Lord". When he prays together with the people (as later in the Confession) he does this with hands joined. Some reminders of this are given in the commentary which follows, but it must be stressed that there is no obligation in the matter. Some may prefer to have the book in their hands or to adopt some other posture with which they feel more comfortable. However, it should be said that the celebrant should never be slovenly in his attitude, and should never pray with one or both hands in his pocket. With regard to general deportment, except when required by the liturgical process itself, he should stand still, and not move about or draw attention to himself by strange movements (for example up-and-down on his toes or swaying about from side to side). Without being rigid about it, he should know how to stay still. When movement is required the convention is to walk as far as possible in straight lines although not attempting "military" precision. A useful rule about "turning" is that all turning at the holy table should be towards the centre, but all turning at the centre should be through the South.

A refinement in the use of the hands when extended is for the palms to face the people when the people are being greeted (for example at the Peace) but slightly upwards for prayer.

#### **The Commandments**

Present-day custom is to use the **Summary of the Law** on most occasions, and the full **Ten Commandments** occasionally (for example during the penitential seasons of Advent and Lent). The Priest, traditionally, turns to the people to rehearse the commandments. It is

appropriate for him to come to the centre of the holy table to do so; and, unless he has memorized the commandments, he will carry the book. The book should be a proper Desk edition, as it detracts from the dignity of the service for the celebrant to use a little congregational book, such as the old 1926 Book of Common Prayer (and perhaps have to peer at the small print). Following the congregational response (which may be sung), he returns to say the Collect of the Day.

[It may be noted that the two **Collects for the Queen** have been removed as redundant it being considered sufficient that she is prayed for specifically in the **Prayer for the Church Militant** later in the service. In the 1926 book one or other of these prayers was said in Northern Ireland. There was no corresponding provision for what became in 1949 the Republic of Ireland]

### **Collect of the Day**

Collects from the 1926 Book of Common Prayer for use in the traditional rite have been chosen, like their modern counterparts, to fit in with the use of the Revised Common Lectionary. The arrangement of traditional language collects for the Prayer Book 2004 was approved by statute of the General Synod in May 2001 and was fully authorized from that date. The collects may also be found in *The Calendar and Collects - according to the use of the Church of Ireland*, Columba Press, 2001.

Note that the Collect is "of" *not* "for" the Day. In Advent the Collect of The First Sunday of Advent is used after the Collect of the Day throughout the season (BCP p.241), and the Ash Wednesday Collect may be used after the Collect of the Day until Easter Eve (BCP p.259). The Collect appointed for every Sunday or for any Holy-day that has a Vigil or Eve, is traditionally said at the Evening Service next before.

The Collect is said (or sung) with hands extended (up to the concluding words when they are joined).

### **(3) The Service - The Ministry of the Word**

A most significant change is the provision for a Lesson (usually, although not invariably, from the Old Testament) and a Psalm to precede the Epistle and Gospel. This enables the full set of readings from the Revised Common Lectionary to be used in the traditional order. As the psalm, in the RCL, is designed as a response to the first reading, it comes here.

If it is desired to use the readings from the 1926 Book of Common Prayer instead of those from the RCL this is permitted. However, since the choice of readings in the 1926 Holy Communion service is somewhat arbitrary it would be better to follow either the RCL or the alternative readings provided with it.

### **The Epistle**

In the 1926 Order the word "Epistle" was used loosely and this reading occasionally included a passage from Acts or even the Old Testament. With the Revised Common Lectionary it is used more correctly. If the epistle is being read in the sanctuary, traditionally it is read from the south side, from the lowest step, if there is one. However, it may also be read from the lectern. If the celebrant is being assisted by two members of the clergy these may be termed "Epistoller" and "Gospeller".

It is permitted, under Canon 6, to use a hymn between the Epistle and Gospel.

### **The Gospel**

The reading of the Gospel is the climax to the Ministry of the Word, and so is carried out with special solemnity. All stand and make the appropriate responses, which are (properly speaking) *sung* rather than *said*. The Gospel is read from the north side (in front of the altar)

on the top step if there is one. Reading the Gospel is a distinctive ministry of the deacon, and he should always be permitted to do this. The Gospel may also be read from a lectern or from the chancel step or other prominent place; and it is appropriate for the deacon to take the Book of the Gospels from the south side of the altar and carry this solemnly to the place where it is to be read. In a "high" celebration he may be preceded by taperers carrying lights; and it is appropriate for an assistant (for example a Reader) to precede him, and, at the reading stand facing him below the step, or if necessary a little to one side, and hold the book, open, against his chest. There is a "real" presence of Christ in His Word as in the sacrament, and it is appropriate that this should be recognized.

[The custom of the "south" and "north" sides, respectively, for the epistle and Gospel reflects early Church custom where the epistle was read facing "south" - the evangelized and mainly Christian region which needed further instruction in the faith, and the Gospel was read facing "north" - the unevangelised area needing to hear the Good News]

### **The Nicene Creed**

This is the Church's corporate confession of faith, and may be sung (as for example to the traditional setting by Merbecke). It is not unlawful for the celebrant who is leading the recitation to stand in front of the altar facing East, as this is not a "prayer" in the sense indicated in Canon 13 (3). The celebrant (and also the whole congregation) should acknowledge the deity of Christ by making the customary act of obeisance (bowing the head) at the words "And in one Lord Jesus Christ".

The custom, in some churches, of "turning East" for the Creed is to be found only within Anglicanism. However, it reflects the baptismal tradition of the early Christian Church of turning "West" (symbolically the place of darkness and sin) and renouncing Satan, and then turning "East" (symbolically the place of light and truth) and acknowledging Christ who is the "Sun of Righteousness". As Churches traditionally are built facing "East" this involves a turn towards the Communion Table, which is itself traditionally bowed to, at least at the beginning and end of the service. An analogy is the custom of bowing to the throne in the House of Lords in acknowledgment of the Queen's sovereignty.

**Notices** are given out after the Creed. They should not be excessively lengthy, and it is probably best, if there are a number of items to have these photocopied and made available in the pews.

### **The Sermon**

This comes at this point (usually preceded and followed by a hymn). This is a less logical arrangement than that in the modern rite where God's Word is read and preached and then reaffirmed in the Creed. It should normally expound the message contained in one or more of the authorized readings which have formed part of the Ministry of the Word.

#### **(4) The Service - the Offertory and the Prayer for the Church Militant.**

### **The Offertory**

One or more of the sentences printed on pp192-194 is said. It is not necessary invariably to use "To go good, and to distribute..." Additional seasonal offertory sentences are appointed for certain occasions (e.g. Christmas, Easter) and these should be used as appropriate.

An offertory hymn is normally sung at this point, and it is appropriate for this to be specifically a communion hymn (for example from the selection 396-452 in the new Church Hymnal).

The collection is made at this point. Only "alms for the poor" is mentioned in this rubric (which is derived from that in the 1926 Order) and the "other devotions of the people" appear



to have been overlooked. The 1926 rubric directed that “the Deacons, Churchwardens, or other fit persons appointed for that purpose” should “receive the alms for the Poor, and other devotions of the people; and reverently bring them to the Priest” who should “humbly present and place them upon the holy Table.”

An assistant deacon or priest or a reader may accept the collection from the churchwardens (and sidespersons) and convey it to the celebrant. Extravagant gestures (for example raising the alms disk high in the air) should be avoided. The churchwardens (and sidespersons) should remain at the entrance to the sanctuary until the collection is presented, and should respond to the celebrant’s bow of dismissal by bowing slightly in return. The person receiving the alms dish should not extend his hands for the alms dish until he has stopped walking.

It is preferable for the alms dish not to remain on the altar after the offertory, but to be removed to the credence table if there is room for it there.

The bread and wine are brought to the celebrant to be “placed upon the table” (or if there is no assistant he brings them from the credence table himself). The bread should be in a bread box; and it is advisable to have enough to allow for unexpectedly large numbers. It should be marked in squares (and may be compressed by a special apparatus to avoid crumbs) but should not be pre-divided. It is not advisable to have excessively small pieces (a slice of bread with the crust cut off conveniently produces twenty-five pieces). The wine should be in a flagon and should be pour from it. *Under no circumstances* should a bottle of wine be placed inside the flagon. The bread and wine are brought to the Holy Table *successively* (not together). If there is no credence table, the bread box and flagon (together with the cruets of wine and water, if used) should be placed at the back of the Communion Table on the south side. It is not good practice to have a clutter of vessels in the center, and it should be borne in mind that, traditionally, all the elements on the corporal are deemed to be consecrated when the Prayer of Consecration has been said over them.

The rubric in the 1926 Order of service (following the Prayer Book of 1662 which restored the direction, originally to be found in the 1549 Order, but omitted in 1552) indicated that at this point the priest “shall then place upon the Table so much Bread and Wine as he shall think sufficient, if this have not been already done.” The direction in the 2004 Order “Bread and wine are placed upon the table” removes the option of doing this earlier.

The priest must make a rough estimate of the amount of bread and wine required for the likely number of communicants. It is best to overestimate rather than underestimate, in this way avoiding the necessity of supplementary consecration (which should be quite exceptional).

The celebrant, in preparing the bread and wine first removes the burse and takes out the linen veil (placing it neatly to the left of the corporal) and the purificator(s) (placing them neatly to the right of the corporal). The burse is laid flat in a convenient place. The coloured Veil is also removed and, slightly folded, is laid lengthwise in a convenient place (for example towards the back of the Table behind the purificators). At all times the arrangement of vessels, linens etc. should be neat and tidy - an efficient and reverent celebrant should not give the impression that things are just strewn about anywhere.

It is not unlawful, if desired, to have a "mixed" chalice, that is, for a little water to be added to the wine that is poured into the chalice. This may be done from the water cruet directly into the chalice after the bread has been put on the paten and the wine in the cup. This derives ultimately from the custom within Judaism of mixing water with wine for use at meals, especially festivals; and it was, and is, the invariable practice at the Passover. The custom

was taken over into the Christian Church and is attested by Justin Martyr and Irenaeus in the 2nd century AD, Clement of Alexandria and Cyprian in the 3rd century, and by many others; and it was the normal use in the Church (the only exception being the Armenians, at least from the 7th century). In the 1949 Prayer Book it was prescribed by the following rubric, "putting the wine into the chalice...putting thereto a little pure and clean water." The rubric was omitted in 1552. A prohibition of the custom, contained in the post-disestablishment canons, was removed in 1974.

The word "offertory" is to be taken as referring to the bread and wine as well as to the money, so this part of the service is called the "offertory" even when no collection of money is made (or when there is a "retiring" collection).

**The Prayer for the Church Militant** This can be made more specific to the occasion by prefixing it with biddings e.g., "Let us pray for..." and indeed thanksgivings, "Let us give thanks for ..." If there is no collection the words "alms and" are emitted. Modern usage retains the words "and oblations" as referring to the bread and wine; but it is permissible to omit these also, if desired, when there is no collection (originally "alms" and "oblations" probably referred to two different kinds of money collection). In the Republic of Ireland the paragraph entitled "R.I." is used. In Northern Ireland the paragraph entitled "N.I." is used. The word "impartially" has been substituted for the easily misunderstood "indifferently".

It will be noticed that there is a certain unreality in praying for "all Christian Kings, Princes, and Governors" since the whole phrase recalls the existence of "Christendom" presided over by various monarchies, most of which have disappeared. And even the alternative used in the Republic of Ireland, for "all Christian rulers" means that the non-Christian world leaders are not prayed for. Judicious use of biddings, as suggested above, may alleviate this problem to some extent.

The "Curates" who are prayed for are those having the Cure of Souls - Rectors, together with their "Curates Assistant" (to use the proper term).

The thankful remembrance of the departed, "And we also bless thy holy Name for all thy servants..." was added in 1662, following the example of the Scottish liturgy of 1637. It takes the place of a section found in the original prayer for "the whole state of Christ's Church" in the 1549 liturgy that was deleted in the 1552 revision,

And here we do give unto thee most high praise, and hearty thanks, for the wonderful grace and virtue, declared in all thy saints, from the beginning of the world: And chiefly in the glorious and most blessed virgin Mary, mother of thy son Jesu Christ our Lord and God, and in the holy Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles and Martyrs, whose examples (O Lord) and steadfastness in thy faith, and keeping thy holy commandments, grant us to follow. We commend unto thy mercy (O Lord) all other thy servants, which are departed hence from us, with the sign of faith, and now do rest in the sleep of peace: Grant unto them, we beseech thee, thy mercy, and everlasting peace, and that, at the day of the general resurrection, we and all they which be of the mystical body of thy son, may altogether be set on his right hand, and hear that his most joyful voice: Come unto me, O ye that be blessed of my father, and possess the kingdom, which is prepared for you from the beginning of the world: Grant this, O father, for Jesus Christ's sake, our only mediator and advocate.

A "Note" authorized by the General Synod in relation to Holy Communion One states,

Any who do not intend to communicate may be given opportunity to withdraw either during a hymn at the Offertory or after the Prayer for the whole state of Christ's Church Militant here in earth.

The wording appears to make this optional, but the traditional reference to “those who do not intend to communicate having had opportunity to withdraw” remains prior to the Third Exhortation. It is, however, highly preferable for the entire congregation to remain in the church until the end of the service and at least to join in spiritually. Children may be brought to the communion rail for a blessing while their parents partake.

#### **(5) The Service - Long Exhortations to Comfortable Words**

The **Long Exhortations** have been removed to the end of the service, and will be dealt with below.

The **Short Exhortation** (BCP p.185),

“Ye that do truly and earnestly...” This is sometimes known as the Invitation. The germ of this "Invitation" is to be found in an Exhortation in the Medieval Church. In its present form it is first found in the Order for Communion of 1548. It was no doubt originally intended as an actual invitation, to those who were about to communicate, to leave the body of the congregation and pass into the chancel. A famous illustration which forms the frontispiece to the second edition of C. Wheatly, *A Rational Illustration of the Book of Common Prayer*, as late as 1714 shows the communicants conveniently placed in the chancel, having left their seats at some point in the service. The priest is depicted as standing at the north end, while above him there is a representation of Christ as High Priest making intercession at the celestial altar.

#### **The Confession**

The people kneel. It is no longer necessary for the Celebrant to do so. If he does it is unnecessary for him to kneel up against the Table at the north end (and his movements should not be impeded by the placing of a kneeler there). He may kneel, facing southwards a little bit out from the Table. The Assistant (if there is one) may kneel in the corresponding position at the south end. If the Assistant is situated at a kneeler up against the south end of the Table he should never put his elbows on the Table.

The Confession is based upon the form in Hermann’s Consultation, published in 1548 and drawn upon for the Order of Communion of that date.

#### **The Absolution**

Said from the center of the Table, facing the people. If the bishop is present he says the Absolution. Normally the bishop, when present, should be the Celebrant, but if he is not but is still "presiding" (from his throne) he says the absolution and the blessing. The priest or bishop saying the absolution must stand to do so.

The Absolution is based on that in the Sarum rite, with characteristic Cranmerian additions [the words from Sarum are given in italics below]

*Almighty God, our heavenly Father, who of his great mercy hath promised forgiveness of sins to all them that with hearty repentance and true faith turn unto him; have mercy upon you; pardon and deliver you from all your sins; confirm and strengthen you in all goodness; and bring you to everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

#### **The Comfortable Words**

The use of these scriptural texts derives from Hermann’s preliminary discourse on the Lord's Supper and from his Consultation. Judging from Hermann’s comment "the penitent may desire to hear of the minister, the comfortable words of remission of sins" their role here would appear to be to reinforce the message of the absolution.

The Comfortable Words are always said in full in the BCP rite.

## (6) The Service - Sursum Corda, Preface and Sanctus

It is at this point that the historic Eucharistic "canon," begins, although the arrangement in the Book of Common Prayer in the 1552-1662 tradition has been highly nontraditional (another "stream" of Anglican liturgy, for example that of the 1928 American Prayer Book and the 1954 South African Prayer Book, follows a rather different order derived from the 1549 Prayer Book through the Scottish rites of 1637 and 1764). The nontraditional sequence is indicated especially by the interpolation of the Prayer of Humble Access between the Sanctus and what from 1662 has been called again "The Prayer of Consecration", and by the removal of all that followed the Words of Institution (historically the anamnesis, the oblation, intercession and the doxology), although some portions of this in a radically modified form, survive in the post-communion. A comparison between the 1549 and 1552 Orders indicates the far-reaching character of the alterations. For a positive evaluation of the 1552-1662 tradition see Stephen Neill, "The Holy Communion in the Anglican Church", pp49-66 (esp. pp51-52) in *The Holy Communion - A Symposium*, Ed. F. Martin, SCM, 1947; also the same writer in his *Anglicanism*, fourth ed. Mowbray, Chapter III. On the other hand Dr Amand de Mendieta (a distinguished former Benedictine monk who became an Anglican and wrote a book about his spiritual journey) said, of the 1662 rite, "I found it sufficiently satisfactory - to weigh my words - in spite of its lacunas and silences, not to speak of the regrettable mutilation of the great Eucharistic prayer or Canon" (E.A. de Mendieta, *Rome and Canterbury - a Biblical and Free Catholicism*, London, 1962 p.99).

**Sursum Corda** - "Lift up your hearts" etc.

This is the traditional dialogue between priest and people that commences the Eucharistic canon. Together with the reply, this use, which historically is universal, is attested as early as St. Hippolytus of Rome (c.215) and St. Cyprian (252) in the West, and as St. Cyril of Jerusalem (c.350) in the East.

The second part of the dialogue ("Let us give thanks...") is equally ancient, and is witnessed to not only by those mentioned above, but also by St. John Chrysostom (c.347-407), St. Augustine of Hippo (354-430), and St. Caesarius of Arles (c.470-542). Dom Gregory Dix in his *The Shape of the Liturgy* (p.52) thought it reflected the form for grace after meals within Judaism, and so was a specific link with the Last Supper and other fellowship meals between Our Lord and the disciples.

Because the Sursum Corda marks a fresh stage in the liturgical celebration there should be a noticeable change of mood and emphasis at this point. At the words "Lift up your hearts" the Celebrant stretches out both arms wide and retains this position for "Let us give thanks unto our Lord God". He should not, however, wave his hands up and down at the words "Lift up..." He should be facing the people for this dialogue. The Celebrant's words should be known by heart at this point, so it should not be necessary for him to hold the book in his hands. "It is very meet, right... " etc is said or sung with the hands apart, and if the celebration is at the "north end" he returns for this. It is very important to remember to insert the appropriate "Proper Preface" (of Christmas, Easter etc). The word "proper" here has the sense of "variable", "appropriate to the particular occasion", as distinct from the "ordinary" parts of the service, which are fixed. The word "Preface" here comes from the Latin *praefatio*, meaning an "introduction" or "prologue" and heralds the praise which reaches its climax in the Sanctus. Historically, the title varies. In the Roman (also the Sarum) liturgy it was termed *Praefatio*, in the Mozarabic *Illatio* (= offering), in the Gothic *Immolatio*.

## **Sanctus.**

At the words "Therefore with Angels and Archangels" the hands of the Celebrant are joined. The congregation joins in when the words "Holy, Holy, Holy" (said or sung) are reached and not before.

The inspiration for the Sanctus is clearly Scriptural (Isaiah 6:3; Revelation 4:8). Although it was not part of the Eucharistic liturgy at the earliest period (for example it is not found in Hippolytus *Apostolic Tradition* c.215 or later), it is attested in the East from the late fourth century (by St. Gregory of Nyssa and St. John Chrysostom and also St. Cyril of Jerusalem) and appears to have made its way into the Western liturgy, mainly in the fifth and sixth centuries, and ultimately became universal. The conclusion "Glory be to thee, O Lord most high" is peculiar to the Prayer Book. The ancient custom (found in the Sarum rite, and followed in the 1549 liturgy) was to append to it the Scriptural words, "Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest" (Luke 19:38). This is known as the *Benedictus qui venit*.

## **(7) The Service - Prayer of Humble Access and Prayer of Consecration**

### **The Prayer of Humble Access**

This was, historically, said by the celebrant alone, in the traditional rite, but has been made congregational in this version. It should be subdued in tone after the exaltation of the Sanctus. It is not necessary for the priest to kneel to say this, but if he does it is not necessary to kneel up against the Table.

This prayer appeared for the first time in the Order for Communion of 1548 when it occurred between the Consecration and Communion. This position was retained in 1549, but abandoned in 1552 (although it was to be found again in the Scottish liturgy of 1637). Originally it read, "Grant us therefore (gracious Lord) so to eat the flesh thy dear son Jesus Christ, and to drink his blood, in these holy mysteries..." The curious "linkage" between the body being cleansed by the body of Christ, and the soul through His blood derives from a medieval speculation expounded by St. Thomas Aquinas (c. 1225-1274).

Echoes of no less than fifteen verses or short passages of Scripture have been detected in the text of the Prayer.

### **The Prayer of Consecration**

A "Note", authorized by the General Synod in relation to Holy Communion One says,

Before commencing the Prayer of Consecration the Priest shall arrange the Bread and Wine (so) that the Bread may be broken in the view of the people.

The requirement in the 1926 (and earlier) Prayer-Books that the priest should stand at the north side of the Table to say the Prayer of Consecration has been removed. He may, if convenient, stand behind the altar facing the people. If he does so, his assistant may stand with him, to his right.

The pall is removed from the chalice; and if the linen veil has been covering the bread set out on the paten at the Offertory, this is removed. Both are set neatly (separately) to the left of the corporal, with the pall on the "inside". If the elements are to be consecrated at the actual north end, then the paten and chalice are removed there and set upon a second corporal. Clumsy arrangements, such as having a book rest between the celebrant and the vessels, should be avoided. The vessels should not be waved about in the air. It is, however, probably better to leave them in the center, and for the celebrant to stand to the north (left) of them with the book slightly to the south (right) of them at an angle which makes it convenient for him to read. [If the "westward" position is adopted then the action is entirely in the centre facing the people.]. The prayer should be said (or sung) solemnly, but without unnecessary slowness

and ponderousness. The rubrics relating to the manual acts (BCP p.188) are to be strictly followed. Only the right hand is laid on the bread and the cup. The breaking of the bread here is symbolical - a single break is sufficient. The whole congregation should say "Amen".

In the 1549 liturgy there was no separate Prayer of Consecration, but rather an immensely long prayer after the introductory dialogue, preface, and sanctus, consisting of what would later be called the "Prayer for the Church", continuing with what later became the Prayer of Consecration, and concluding with an anamnesis (memorial before God), Prayer of Oblation, and doxology. The anamnesis (corresponding to the *unde et memores* in the Sarum rite) read,

Wherefore O Lord and heavenly Father, according to the Institution of thy dearly beloved Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ, we thy humble servants do celebrate, and make here before thy divine Majesty, with these thy holy gifts, the memorial which thy son hath willed us to make: having in remembrance his blessed passion, mighty resurrection, and glorious ascension, rendering unto thee most hearty thanks, for the innumerable benefits procured unto us by the same...

The conclusion of the prayer, with the climax of the oblation followed by the doxology reads,

Yet we beseech thee to accept this our bounden duty and service, and commend these our prayers and supplications, by the ministry of thy holy Angels, to be brought up into thy holy Tabernacle before the sight of thy divine majesty, not weighing our merits, but pardoning our offences, through Christ our Lord, by whom, and with whom, in the unity of the holy Ghost, all honour and glory, be unto thee, O Father almighty, world without end. Amen.

In the 1552 liturgy the prayer became separate, but there were no directions about the bread and wine before it begins. The prayer itself had no title, there were no manual acts, and there was no "Amen". It seems likely that Cranmer had some concept of this prayer, the communion of the people, the Lord's prayer, and the prayer of oblation having some sort of a unity (probably the leaving out of the "anamnesis" indicates that he thought of the "memorial" as being performed by each person for themselves when making their communion - the corporate dimension was lost).

In the 1662 liturgy proposals for a restoration of the traditional "canon", put forward by Cosin and Wren in "The Durham Book", were not adopted. However, significant changes, of considerable theological significance, were made in the existing 1552/1604 rite. A rubric was prescribed (since modified in the Church of Ireland from 1878 with an explicit mention of the "north side" of the Table), which read,

When the Priest, standing before the Table hath so ordered the bread and wine, that he may with the more readiness and decency break the Bread before the people, and take the Cup into his hands; he shall say the Prayer of Consecration as followeth...

The concept of "consecration" is here made explicit, and reinforced by the prescription of the "manual acts" (of taking the paten, breaking the bread, and laying the hand upon the bread; of taking the cup, and laying his hand upon every vessel in which there is any wine to be consecrated). The addition of the word "Amen" expressed the view, found in the Caroline Divines, that by this the people give their assent to the consecration, and so in some sense are involved in it, although consecration is a definitely "priestly" act.

The "Western" tradition that the consecration of the elements is effected by the recitation of the Words of Institution is here reaffirmed. The Eastern Church has traditionally laid more stress on the epiclesis or invocation of the Holy Spirit.

It may be noticed that by treating, for example, the breaking of the bread as a symbolic act it was overlooked that this is essentially a necessary preliminary to communion, and in fact has

to be performed in full somewhere between the consecration and the communion of the people (normally after the communion of the priest).

[A note on the "north end". In the 1549 rite the priest "turned to the Altar", that is, stood in the traditional position at the center of the Table with his back to the people for the Consecration. In 1552 the Table was to stand in the body of the church or in the chancel lengthwise and the priest stood at the "north side", which was the "long" side on the left. When in the 1630s Archbishop Laud ordered the Table to be replaced in its traditional position against the East wall, this, in effect became the "north end". This use is no longer required, a "westward" celebration, facing the people, being preferable [See the note on the relevant canon (13:3), above, p.7.]

### **(8) The Service - Communion of priest and people**

The Celebrant must communicate - otherwise it is not a valid communion. It may be noted that the rubric is prescriptive "The ministers receive Communion". If assisting ministers have already made their communion (at an earlier service) they do not normally communicate again. However, if the second service they attend is of a special character, such as a confirmation or an ordination they may well wish to receive as an indication of spiritual fellowship with those being confirmed or ordained.

The Celebrant communicates *standing*, in front of the center of the Table (not at the north end), receiving the Bread first, and then the Cup. Under no circumstances should he kneel if he is behind the Table for a "Westward" celebration.

After the Celebrant has made his own communion he communicates his Assistant (priest, deacon, or Reader). When the Assistant has been communicated he or she is given the Cup together with a purificator.

With regard to lay assistance, Canon 35 **Readers** 2(b) states that

Subject to any regulations made by the bishop it shall be lawful for a reader...

if specially authorized, and in accordance with the rubric to the office of Holy Communion, to administer the cup.

In a Note, authorized by the General Synod with reference to Holy Communion One it states,

The bishop may authorize lay persons to assist in the administration of the Holy Communion.

This rubric does not limit lay assistance to licensed readers and it does not appear to prohibit lay administration of the bread as well as the cup.

The matter is clarified by the General Directions for Public Worship (14b), p.77 where it says,

The bishop of the diocese may permit lay persons approved by him to assist the priest in the administration of the bread and wine.

The Celebrant and Assistant turn to the people holding the paten and the chalice as a sign that they are ready to give them communion. The Celebrant then turns back to the Table while the people are coming up and breaks the Bread into small (but not excessively small) squares. The bread should not have been predivided.

It is sufficient to say one half of the Words of Administration to one communicant and the second half to the next communicant. It is not good practice to say the full words to each individual, as this hinders the flow of communicants to the Lord's Table, and also detracts from the personal nature of this ministry. Nor is it appropriate to say only part of the words of administration (the first or second half) and not the other. Administration in the Church of

Ireland is normally from north to south (the other way round is customary in most parts of the Anglican Communion), although more complex arrangements may be needed in large churches with three or four clergy or Readers administering to considerable numbers of people. The Words of Administration should be learned off by heart. The Cup should be wiped after each communicant, it being customary in the Church of Ireland to give it into the hand. It is not advisable to attempt to use two Cups at once.

If there is insufficient bread or wine, the rubric at the top of p189 should be followed carefully to provide what is needed,

If the consecrated Bread or Wine be all spent before all have communicated the Priest is to consecrate more, according to the Form prescribed above: beginning at Our Saviour Christ in the same night etc., for the blessing of the bread: and Likewise after supper, etc., for the blessing of the Cup.

When the communion has been administered the Celebrant returns to the Lord's Table, places upon it what remains of the consecrated elements, and covers them neatly with the linen veil, which goes over the pall. The Cup must be carefully wiped before this is done. It is a sign of a slovenly Celebrant if a "ring" is left on the pall.

It is not correct, liturgically, in the traditional rite, to do the "ablutions" at this point, Bishop Stephen Neill having described this as a "liturgical solecism". In the traditional form, consecration, communion and thanksgiving/self-offering are to be regarded as indissolubly linked even if separated in time.

**A note on the Words of Administration** In the 1549 rite the words were,

The body of our Lord Jesus Christ which was given for thee, preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life.

The blood of our Lord Jesus Christ which was shed for thee, preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life.

These words were derived from the Sarum rite except for "which was given for thee"/"which was shed for thee" which came from Hermann of Cologne.

During Communion, following the Sarum use, it was directed that "the clerks shall sing",

O Lamb of God that takest away the sins of the world: have mercy upon us O Lamb of God that takest away the sins of the world: have mercy upon us. O Lamb of God that takest away the sins of the world: grant us thy peace (Agnus Dei).

In 1552 the Agnus Dei during Communion disappeared, and a new form of Words of Administration appeared,

Take and eat this, in remembrance that Christ died for thee, and feed on him in thy heart, by faith, with thanksgiving.

Drink this in remembrance that Christ's blood was shed for thee, and be thankful.

In 1559 the two forms were combined and have remained conjoined in further revisions - 1604, 1662, 1878, 1926, and Holy Communion One in the *Book of Common Prayer* 2004. Taken together they may be regarded as a helpful summary of eucharistic teaching.

#### (9) **The Service - Lord's Prayer and Post-Communion Prayers**

**The Lord's Prayer** This is not to be omitted, and is said by Celebrant and people together (the Celebrant with hands joined).

The position of the Lord's Prayer after Communion is peculiar to the Prayer Book. The traditional use was immediately after the Prayer of Consecration, and this was still the case in



the 1549 rite. In 1552 and most rites derived from it, the transfer was made, perhaps with the rationale that it is especially appropriate to call on God as "Our Father" after the renewal of the worshipper's relationship with Him through Jesus Christ in the act of communion. However, this involved loss of the historical association between the Bread of Life and the "daily bread" spoken of in the Lord's Prayer. BCP Orders in the 1549 tradition (such as the Scottish, South African and American) situated the "Our Father" either at the end of the intercessions or in its historic position after the Consecration and before the Communion.

**Post-Communion Prayers** Either or both of these are said by the Celebrant with hands parted. These prayers are known as the Prayer of Oblation and the Prayer of Thanksgiving. As they bring out different aspects of the theology of the BCP rite it is mistaken to use one invariably and never the other. Both prayers contain echoes of a large number of Scriptural phrases. The Prayer of Thanksgiving seems to have been influenced to some extent from a prayer in Hermann's Consultation.

#### (10) **The Service - Gloria in Excelsis and the Blessing**

**Gloria in Excelsis** This is said (or preferably sung) by all, standing, although there is no longer any rubrical direction to this effect.

The Gloria in Excelsis, known among Eastern Christians as the "Greater Doxology" and the "Angelic Hymn" is a canticle composed upon the model of the canonical psalms. It appears to have been used at the morning office in the fourth century AD and is still part of the Byzantine "Orthros". An early text of it is found in the great Uncial MS of the New Testament "Alexandrinus" (from the fifth century), where it appears with the psalms.

In the West it was introduced into the Eucharistic liturgy at Rome for the Christmas celebration in the sixth century (the echo of the angelic song in the opening words providing the association - the canticle as a whole is like a catena of Scriptural imagery and phraseology), then into the service for Sundays and the feasts of martyrs if a bishop was presiding, and finally into the normal Sunday celebration no matter who the celebrant was. It occurred at the beginning of the liturgy and, up to the Reformation, continued to be used on more solemn occasions, being omitted in the penitential seasons of Advent and Lent. The traditional rite is unique in its prescribing its use at all celebrations.

In 1549 it was in its historic position at the beginning of the liturgy. Then in 1552 Cranmer "by a supreme act of liturgical genius" (according to Bishop Stephen Neill) transferred it to the end, ensuring a uniquely splendid conclusion to the act of worship. No doubt a factor influencing this change of position was that, through the insertion of the Ten Commandments, there was no place for it at the beginning of the service, and so a new position had to be found. A third "Thou that takest away the sins of the world", was added in 1552, perhaps to compensate for the deletion of the threefold Agnus Dei which up to then had been part of the celebration. There is good precedent for variation and expansion of the wording to suit particular occasions as there are several examples of this from the medieval period.

**A Postcommunion Prayer** may be said, a selection of which is printed after the Offertory Sentences (BCP 2004, pp194-6). These may also be said before the Blessing. There is nothing to prevent other suitable post-communions being used.

#### **The Blessing**

This is said by the bishop, if present. In general, if the bishop is present he should be the celebrant.

The blessing, which in this form is peculiar to the Anglican rite, seems intended to take the place of that anciently given after the Lord's Prayer and the Fraction of the bread, and before the Agnus Dei. The first half is derived from Phil 4:7.

#### (11) **The Service - Disposal of the elements and the ablutions**

##### **Disposal of the elements**

What remains of the elements must under no circumstances be treated in the same way as the unconsecrated bread and wine (which may simply be disposed of). The bread is eaten; and any remaining wine consumed by the celebrant, if necessary assisted by other clergy and (if need be) by other communicants. The relevant rubric, on p.77, states,

Any of the consecrated bread and wine remaining after the administration of the communion is to be reverently consumed.

Historically, a rubric appeared in the 1552 Prayer Book which stated, "And if any of the bread or wine remain, the curate shall have it to his own use." This may have included the consecrated elements since some of the Reformers appear to have believed that consecration did not make any real difference. It was in order firmly to exclude such a view (and practice) that a new rubric was drawn up in 1662,

And if any of the bread and wine remain unconsecrated, the Curate shall have it to his own use: but if any remain of that which was consecrated, it shall not be carried out of the Church, but the Priest, and such other of the communicants as he shall then call unto him, shall, immediately after the blessing, reverently eat and drink the same.

In the 1926 BCP (C of I), the rubric reads,

And if any remain of the Bread and Wine which was consecrated, it shall not be carried out of the Church, but the Priest, and such other of the Communicants as he shall then call unto him, shall, immediately after the Blessing, reverently eat and drink the same.

This provision is reaffirmed in a Note authorized by the General Synod in relation to Holy Communion One. As the prohibition may relate to the abuse excluded in 1662 this does not necessarily conflict with the wording of the General Directions on Public Worship, 14e At the Holy Communion (see above) which, like its prototype in the *Alternative Prayer Book*, 1984 is open to the practice of "extended communion" for those absent through sickness which goes back at least to the first half of the second century as may be seen in Justin Martyr's first Apologia (see below, p.40).

For a full treatment, including the interpretation of the rubric see W. Lockton, *The Treatment of the Remains at the Eucharist after Holy Communion and the Time of the Ablutions*, CUP, 1920.

##### **Ablutions**

Normally, "ablutions" are performed after the blessing (perhaps during the singing of a final hymn). The simplest form is for water from the water cruet to be poured successively onto the Paten and into the Cup after the consecrated Bread and Wine have been consumed. The water that has been poured onto the Paten is transferred to the Cup and is consumed by the celebrant as is the water that is then poured into the Cup. The pouring (only a small quantity is used) may be performed by the Assistant.

A more elaborate (and traditional) form of the ablutions involves the cruet of wine as well as the cruet of water. Two systems are in use:-

(1) Wine in Cup, followed by water and wine in Cup, followed by water on Paten;

(2) Water on Paten, followed by water and wine in Cup, followed by Water in Cup. This latter system is preferred by the writer, but is less common than the first system.

[An historical note. The ceremonial cleansing of the vessels, which would have continued to be practiced in connection with the 1549 rite, lapsed from 1552 onwards until revived in the nineteenth century when higher standards of reverence for the consecrated elements tended to prevail. The custom was declared lawful under the rubrics of the 1662 Prayer Book in the Lincoln judgment in the Church of England in 1890]

## (12) **The Service - Procession to Vestry and Vestry Prayers**

### **Procession to Vestry**

After the ablutions (perhaps during the closing verses of the final hymn or "processional" - which should not be called a "recessional" since one is *proceeding* whether into or out of the Church) the Celebrant and Assistant process to the Vestry. The customary order, junior first, most senior (in this case the liturgical Celebrant) last, is observed. The Celebrant may carry the vessels. When he finishes the ablutions he puts the paten on top of the chalice and places the pall on the paten. The coloured veil (sometimes known as the "chalice veil") is draped over the vessels. Used purificators will have been placed in the chalice. Other linens go into the burse which is placed on top of the chalice veil with its "opening" away from the Celebrant. To carry the vessels he holds the stem of the chalice with his left hand (under the veil) and steadies the vessels etc. with his right hand. The vessels are carried chest high to the vestry, with the "hinge" away from the celebrant. Alternatively, the vessels may be left on the Holy Table until after the service, or may be placed on the credence table.

### **Vestry Prayers**

A traditional post-communion vestry prayer is,

O God who in this wonderful sacrament has left us a memorial of thy cross and passion; grant us so to venerate these sacred mysteries of thy body and blood that we may evermore perceive within ourselves the fruit of our redemption; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

This may be followed by the traditional salutation, "The Lord be with you" and its response "And with thy spirit", and perhaps "Bless the Lord" with the response, "Thanks be to God".

The vessels should be placed reverently on a suitable table in the Vestry. For additional reasons of hygiene they should be washed again in boiling water before being put away. Any wine remaining in the flagon should be put back into the bottle and tightly corked, and the flagon should be thoroughly cleansed. The bread box should be emptied of unconsecrated bread, washed, and also put away.

NB that real wine is used, that is the fermented juice of the grape, red wine being particularly appropriate because of its symbolic import. Unfermented grape juice is possibly not invalid, (according to the medieval canonist Durandus) but is preferably avoided. Apart from the propriety of following as closely as possible the use of wine as enjoined at the Last Supper, the alcohol in genuine wine is an important safeguard against infection.

### **The Exhortations**

The traditional Prayer Book Exhortations are printed at the end of the rite, and, if used, are inserted before the Invitation.

In the first Exhortation Holy Communion is described as "the most comfortable Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ", and thanksgiving is enjoined to "Almighty God our heavenly Father for that he hath given his Son our Saviour Jesus Christ, not only to die for us, but also to be our spiritual food and sustenance in that holy Sacrament" which is also considered to be

a “holy mystery”. To ensure a worthy approach self-examination is prescribed, and the ministry of absolution is provided,

And because it is requisite, that no man should come to the Holy Communion, but with a full trust in God’s mercy, and with a quiet conscience: therefore if there be any of you, who by this means [examination of life and conduct by the rule of God’s commandments] cannot quiet his own conscience herein, but requireth further comfort or counsel, let him come to me, or to some other discreet and learned Minister of God’s Word, and open his grief; that by the ministry of God’s holy Word, he may receive the benefit of absolution, together with spiritual counsel and advice, to the quieting of his conscience, and avoiding of all scruple and doubtfulness.

The second Exhortation considers the Holy Communion under the heading of a feast to which guests are invited, and is intended to encourage those who are negligent to come to the Lord’s Table.

The third Exhortation, which refers to the “holy mysteries” reminds hearers of the danger of unworthy participation.

**The Declaration on Kneeling**, otherwise known as the “Black Rubric”.

This declaration was first found in the 1552 Prayer Book where it was inserted at the last moment without the authority of parliament. It was omitted in 1559. Since the 1552 Book was never authorized for use in the Church of Ireland it was not used in the C of I until 1662 when a modified version was introduced in which the words “real and essential” were omitted and replaced by “corporal” in this way suggesting that its purpose was rather to guard against transubstantiation and popular medieval ideas of eucharistic doctrine than to deny altogether Christ’s presence in the holy communion. The expression “Black Rubric” dates only from the nineteenth century when the practice of printing the Book of Common Prayer with the rubrics in red was introduced and the fact that the Declaration was really not a rubric at all was marked by printing it in black.

In the New Testament the word “body” of Christ is used in three different (although related) ways - of his *natural*, flesh-and-blood “body” which he had on earth (Luke 24:3), his *sacramental* “body” (Luke 22:19) and his *mystical* “body”, the Church (Ephesians 4:12). Confusion between the “natural” and “sacramental” gave rise to the dilemma addressed (however imperfectly) by this rubric.

In 1552 this rubric read,

Although no order can be so perfectly devised, but it may be of some, either for their ignorance and infirmity, or else of malice and obstinacy, misconstrued, depraved, and interpreted in a wrong part: and yet because brotherly charity willeth, that so much as conveniently may be, offences should be taken away: therefore we willing to do the same. Whereas it is ordained in the Book of Common Prayer, in the administration of the Lord’s Supper, that the communicants kneeling should receive the holy communion: which thing being well meant, for a signification of the humble and grateful acknowledging of the benefits of Christ, given unto the worthy receiver, and to avoid the profanation and disorder, which about the holy communion else ensure: lest yet the same kneeling might be thought or taken otherwise, we do declare that it is not meant thereby, that any adoration is done, or ought to be done, either unto the sacramental bread or wine there bodily received, or any real and essential presence there being of Christ’s natural flesh and blood. For as concerning the sacramental bread and wine, they remain still in their very natural substances, and therefore may not be adored, for that were idolatry to be abhorred of all faithful Christians. And as concerning the natural body and blood of our Saviour Christ, they are in heaven and

not here. For it is against the truth of Christ's true natural body, to be in more places than in one, at one time.

This was altered in 1662 to the form in this order,

Whereas it is ordained in this Office for the Administration of the Lord's Supper, that the communicants should receive the same kneeling; (which order is well meant, for a signification of our humble and grateful acknowledgment of the benefits of Christ therein given to all worthy receivers, and for the avoiding of such profanation and disorder in the Holy Communion as might otherwise ensue;) yet, lest the same kneeling should be any persons, either out of ignorance and infirmity, or out of malice and obstinacy, be misconstrued and depraved; It is here declared, that thereby no adoration is intended, or ought to be done, either unto the sacramental bread or wine there bodily received, or unto any corporal presence of Christ's natural flesh and blood. For the sacramental bread and wine remain still in their very natural substances, and therefore may not be adored; (for that were idolatry, to be abhorred of all faithful Christians;) and the natural body and blood of our Saviour Christ are in heaven, and not here; it being against the truth of Christ's natural body to be at one time in more places than one.

James Ussher (Archbishop of Armagh 1625-1656) in a famous sermon preached before the House of Commons in 1620 dealt with the question of "how far the real presence of the body of Christ in the Sacrament is allowed or disallowed by us". In the outward part of this "mystical action" (*Sacramentum*) he there states, the presence of the Body and Blood of Christ is "relative and symbolical"; in the inward (*Rem Sacramenti*) "real and substantial". But the Sacraments are no "bare signs": they are more than signs "even pledges and assurances of the interest which we have in the heavenly things represented by them". The elements are not changed in substance: "but in respect of the sacred use whereunto they are consecrated, such a change is now made that now they differ as much from common bread and wine, as heaven from earth." They also exhibit the heavenly things they signify, being divinely appointed "means of conveying the same unto us, and putting us in actual possession thereof". We receive not only "the benefits that flow from Christ, but the very Body and Blood of Christ, that is, Christ Himself crucified...We must have the Son before we have life". And, therefore, we must "as truly be made partakers of Him as we are of our ordinary food, if we will live by Him. As there is a giving of Him on God's part, *for unto us a Son is given*, so there must be a receiving of Him on our part, *for as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God.*"

Bishop Henry Leslie, in dealing with opposition to kneeling at Communion in the diocese of Down and Dromore commented (1636),

Our kneeling is directed to God alone, who vouchsafes to communicate himself unto us in these elements; yet out of that gesture directed to God reverence ariseth to the elements. For as Athanasius says, "If the Jews did well to adore the Lord where the Ark and Cherubims were, shall we refuse to adore Christ where his body is present: shall we say, ...Keep thee from the Sacrament if thou wilt be worshipped?"

John Bramhall (Bishop of Derry 1634-61, Archbishop of Armagh 1661-63) distinguished between the doctrine of transubstantiation and "a true Real Presence, which no genuine son of the Church of England did ever deny". He said,

We deny not a venerable respect unto the consecrate Elements, not only as love-tokens sent us by our best Friend, but as the instruments ordained by our Saviour to convey to us the Merits of the Passion".

Dr Andrew Sall, the ex-Jesuit, who was received into the Church of Ireland in 1674, cites the Anglican formularies and Bishop Cosin's *Historia Transubstantionis Papalis* to show that Anglicans "believe and profess that Christ our Saviour is really and substantially present in the blessed Sacrament of the Eucharist, and his body and blood really and substantially received in it by the faithful". Our difference with the Church of Rome "is only regarding the *mode* of his presence". Protestants adore and reverence the "person of our Saviour, God and Man really present"; but to give the accidents the worship of *latria* "cannot with any colour of reason be excused from a formal idolatry".

### **Notes authorized by the General Synod for Holy Communion One**

Comments on some of these have already been made above, The remaining Notes are,

The Holy Communion is the central act of worship in the Church of Ireland. It is the duty and privilege of members of the Church to communicate regularly and frequently after careful preparation.

This presupposes the regular and frequent *celebration* of Holy Communion as enjoined by Canon 13 (1) see above, p.11.

On occasions sanctioned by the Ordinary, this Office may begin with the Collect of the Day.

Such an abbreviation might be suitable for weekday celebrations of the traditional rite.

Holy Communion shall not be celebrated unless there is at least one person to communicate together with the priest.

The purpose of this is to safeguard the corporate aspect of the eucharist.

This rubric has a history. In 1549 it read, "There shall be no celebration of the Lord's Supper except there be some to communicate with the priest". In 1552 this was altered to "And there shall be no celebration of the Lord's Supper, except there be a good number to communicate with the priest, according to his discretion." And a further rubric was added, "And if there be not above twenty persons in the Parish, of discretion to receive the Communion: yet there shall be no Communion, except four, or three at the last communicate with the priest." These rubrics were reiterated in 1662 except that the first one was reworded, "except there be a convenient number to communicate with the Priest..." In the Church of Ireland from 1878 the rubric read, "And there shall be no celebration of the Lord's Supper, except there be three (or two at the least) of the people to communicate with the Priest." In the Alternative Prayer Book (1984) it stated in "Concerning the Services of the Church" 9b "Holy Communion shall not be celebrated unless there is at least one person present to communicate together with the priest."

The ultimate origins of this rubric are to be found in the desire of the Reformers to end the practise of non-communicating attendance. To this end the rubric was designed to ensure that there would be no celebration at all unless there were at least some to communicate with the priest. The effect of this in practice was to make it impossible to celebrate Holy Communion regularly since the people, being unused to frequent communion, did not attend and so the communion could not be held. By the eighteenth century some churches had communion only four times a year (including Christmas and Easter) until the combined effects of the Evangelical Revival and of the Oxford Movement led to more frequent celebrations.

If the Minister shall have knowledge or reasonable ground to believe that any person who is living in open and notorious sin intends to come to Holy Communion, so that scandal would thereby arise, the Minister shall privately admonish that person not to presume to come to the Lord's Table till the cause of offence shall have been

removed; and in every such case the Minister shall have regard to the relevant Canons.

The relevant Canons are 16:(1)-(4). Great care would need to be taken to avoid infringement upon the law of the land in applying these canons. See above, p.13.

## Part 2

### Celebration of the Eucharist, commentary and guidelines

**[B] Modern Language Rites, entitled, “The Celebration of the Holy Communion also called The Lord’s Supper or The Eucharist”.**

In the course of the history of the Prayer Book there have been a number of shifts in the title of the service, reflecting various emphases.

In the 1549 Prayer Book the title was “The Supper of the Lord and the Holy Communion, commonly called the Mass”. In 1552 this was altered to “The Order for the Administration of the Lord’s Supper or Holy Communion” This remained the title in subsequent editions of the Prayer Book including the definitive 1662 and the Irish revisions of 1878 and 1926, and is that given to the traditional rite in the Book of Common Prayer 2004 (see above p.). The title of the modern language rites inverts the order, putting “Holy Communion” as the most commonly used title first, and adding “The Eucharist” as a second alternative.

The title “Holy Communion” is derived from Scripture (1 Cor 10:16, *koinônia tou sômatos tou Christou*), the very rich word *koinônia* being variously rendered as “sharing”, “participation” and “communion” (union with). The title “Lord’s Supper” indicates the connection with the “Last Supper” and is scriptural (1 Cor. 11:20, *kuriakon deipnon*) It underlines the “meal” aspect and recalls the origins of the holy communion in the observance of the Passover by the Lord and his disciples (Mt 26:17). The word “eucharist”, meaning “thanksgiving” is derived from the Lord’s “giving of thanks” at the Last Supper (Luke 22:19) and is widely used in an ecumenical context.

(1) **Preparation** As for Rite One Eucharist (see Part Two, above).

A widely used prayer of preparation is,

Cleanse us, O Lord, and keep us undefiled, that we may be numbered among those blessed ones who having washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb stand before your throne and serve you day and night in your heavenly Temple; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

(2) **Comparison with traditional rite**

- Use of modern English.
- Clear overall structure with five main divisions.
- Provision of introductory greeting and/or sentences.
- Corporate use of Collect for Purity. Provision for an alternative “suitable opening prayer”.
- Penitential rite to be used either following the collect for purity or after the intercession. Penitential Kyries may be used and may take the place of the confession and absolution.
- Commandments incorporated into the Penitence
- Special form of Ten Commandments with option of traditional form.
- Comfortable Words optional..
- Shorter form of confession and absolution.
- Transfer of Gloria in Excelsis to the beginning, with optional omission in Advent and Lent.
- Collects and Post-Communions related to the Revised Common Lectionary



- Extensive Ministry of the Word, entitled “Proclaiming and Receiving the Word”, with three readings, basically the same as for the traditional rite but with explicit mention of the gradual - Lesson (normally from the Old Testament), Psalm, Epistle, Gradual and Gospel followed by Sermon. The use of the Revised Common Lectionary and related lectionaries is presupposed.
- Incorporation of sermon within Ministry of the Word.
- Special version of Nicene Creed, partly from ELLC - “English Language Liturgical Consultation” (optional on weekdays and saints’ days)
- A range of options for the Prayers of the People with provision for extempore prayer
- Prayer of Humble Access at conclusion of act of Penitence where this occurs after the Intercessions.
- Provision of the Peace with the possibility of exchanging this manually.
- Three forms of the Great Thanksgiving, all (particularly the third) with an emphasis on interaction between celebrant and people.
- Restoration of a significant "Shape" of the Ministry of the Sacrament, entitled “Celebrating at the Lord’s Table” centred on the Great Thanksgiving and the Communion.
- Restoration of the unity of the Eucharistic Prayer
- Wider choice of proper prefaces for first Eucharistic Prayer. Provision of seasonal additions with the second Eucharistic Prayer.
- Explicit permission for the Benedictus qui venit after the Sanctus in the first Eucharistic Prayer.
- Simplification of Manual Acts.
- Provision for congregational participation in all three forms of the Eucharistic Prayer.
- Restoration of missing portion of the Eucharistic Prayer (after the Words of Institution) comprising anamnesis, epiclesis, doxology, and Amen in the first and second forms. A special way of achieving the same purpose in the third form.
- Lord's Prayer moved to end of Prayer of Consecration.
- Restoration of the Fraction (Breaking of Bread)
- Provision of various forms of words of administration, together with "Amen"
- Provision of the Agnus Dei to be sung after the Breaking of the Bread or during the Communion and permission for other hymns or anthems at this point.
- Provision of the Great Silence after Communion..
- A variety of Post-Communion prayers leading to a corporate act of self-offering.
- Seasonal blessings.
- Dismissal.
- Greater liturgical "flexibility" with the possibility of the use of a wide range of resource material within the eucharist.

### (3) **Commentary on the Order of Service**

**Position of Celebrant** Although it is permissible for the first part of the service to be conducted at the Reading Desk in a different part of the church, this is, in general, undesirable, since to split the service between Reading Desk and Communion Table suggests a division between Word and Sacrament (which are in fact a unity). Moreover, it is desirable

that there should be a single celebrant of the entire rite, even if certain parts of both the Ministry of the Word and the Ministry of the Sacrament (as also the Intercession) are delegated to others.

**Orientation of Celebrant** It is desirable for the celebrant to face the people from behind the Table (westwards) if this can be arranged. Failing this he may celebrate at the "north end", or even face the people in front of the Table (standing towards the north). It may be questioned whether the prohibition of the "eastward" position, reflecting old controversies over the eucharistic presence and sacrifice retains any theological validity. In some churches (for example in the Lady Chapel of Armagh Cathedral) the layout is such that it is actually impossible to celebrate without having one's back to some people, and this does not present any noticeable problems.

In some churches there may be room for a small lectern/desk to be placed in close proximity to the Table (or at least in a visual relationship with it).

The document prepared by the Liturgical Advisory Committee and approved by the General Synod in 2010 on *The Use of Liturgical Space* is relevant to these considerations.

**Posture of Celebrant** The celebrant should stand throughout the service. There is no need for him to kneel, and it is particularly important for him not to kneel behind the Lord's Table (as this looks incongruous). However, he may sit for the Old Testament Reading and the Epistle. He should face the people when addressing the people.

### **The Structure of the Service**

The main parts of the service are entitled:

**The Gathering of God's People**

**Proclaiming and Receiving the Word**

**The Prayers of the People**

**Celebrating at the Lord's Table**

**Going out as God's People.**

These were the titles suggested by the working group on "The Structure of the Eucharist" at the Inter-Anglican Liturgical Consultation meeting in Dublin 1995. See David R. Holeton (ed), *Renewing the Anglican Eucharist - Findings of the Fifth International Anglican Liturgical Consultation*, Dublin, Eire, 1995, Grove Books, 1996.

### **The Gathering of God's People**

#### **The Greeting**

The Greeting "The Lord be with you" together with its response has been copied from the APB. "Grace to you and peace..." in the APB has been changed to "Grace, mercy and peace..." and may be regarded as the standard opening. The special greetings for Christmas and Epiphany, Easter, Ascension and Pentecost have been removed except for Easter owing to the difficulty of priming the congregation to respond to them. The Easter Greeting, when it is used, should be used throughout the Great Fifty Days (from Easter Day until Pentecost). It needs to be remembered that Easter is a season and not just a particular day.

The Greeting may be followed by a sentence of scripture and the presiding minister may introduce the liturgy of the day. Any such introduction should be brief and to the point. Those for saints' days in the publication "Exciting Holiness" may be regarded as models of what is appropriate.

The Sentences are to be found on pp78-80, and are both General and Seasonal in character. More than one may be used. "Other sentences" are permitted, and particular sentences appropriate to each Sunday or other occasion may be used.

The term "presiding minister" is used in this rite to indicate the "bishop or priest who presides", and the latter expression is used twice, at the beginning of the rite and before the Eucharistic Prayer to indicate that a person in episcopal or priest's orders is meant. In particular printings out of the order of service it would seem reasonable to use "bishop" or "priest" as appropriate. Care has been taken to preserve the word "priest" as the norm for the second order of ministry in the modern form of the ordinal as in the traditional form.

The bishop or priest who presides should do so by at the very least saying the Greeting, pronouncing the Absolution, saying the Collect, reciting the Eucharistic Prayer, performing the Breaking of the Bread (although he may be helped by the deacon or other assistant if there are many communicants) and giving the Blessing.

### **The Collect for Purity**

This is the traditional opening prayer although a suitable alternative may be used.

In the traditional rite the Collect for Purity is said by the priest alone, but in this order it is said by priest and people as a congregational act of preparation at the beginning of the Eucharistic celebration. The celebrant joins his hands for this and other prayers said with the people.

The use of the Collect for Purity as an integral part of the rite is a distinctive feature of the Anglican service. In the Sarum liturgy it formed part of the priest's personal preparation. It appears in the Leofric MS and also in the Sacramentary of Alcuin, and is attributed to St. Gregory, Abbot of Canterbury c.780. The Latin original underlying "all desires known" was *omnis voluntas loquitur* - "to whom every wish is eloquent".

### **Penitence**

The prayers of penitence may take place at this point or after the Intercessions. The logic behind the latter position (as used in the Alternative Prayer Book) was that it is through the reading and preaching of God's Word that one becomes more fully aware of the need for penitence. It also appears suitable to express penitence before approaching the Lord's Table (as for example in the Service for Ash Wednesdays (BCP p338f). However they do serve fittingly as an introduction to the whole act of worship, and their omission from the central portion of the service enables the Intercessions to be seen in their full significance.

**The Commandments**, in a form derived from that in the APB, containing both prohibitions (from the Old Testament) and positive injunctions (from the New Testament) from pp202-3 may be read (and should be read during the penitential seasons of Advent and Lent) Alternatively the Beatitudes may be read (pp223-4) or The Summary of the Law (p202). The use of the latter at the beginning of the rite is traditional in the Book of Common Prayer service. It may be noted that the use of none of these is mandatory.

**The Confession** is introduced "with appropriate words" of which an example given is "God so loved the world..." as in the APB \*16. It would be possible to use some or all of the Comfortable Words at this point. However a wide range of introductions to Confession may be found in the Church of England's *Common Worship* pp300-29. The Absolution must be pronounced by the presiding minister. The "Silence" is significant and should not be omitted.

As an alternative to the foregoing the Penitential Kyries may be used. Suitable penitential sentences may be read (a wide selection suitable for seasonal or occasional use may be found on pp224-36) in threefold form followed by

ord, have mercy  
**Lord, have mercy**  
 Christ, have mercy  
**Christ, have mercy**  
 Lord, have mercy  
**Lord, have mercy**

The *Kyrie eleison* (“Lord, have mercy”) originated as a response of the people to the petitions made by the deacon (this is attested in the fourth century *Apostolic Constitutions*). It is also mentioned in Egeria’s *Peregrinatio* as a response in a litany used at Vespers in Jerusalem. It appears to have been introduced into the West in the fifth century also as a response to a litany taking the place of the general intercession. Pope Gregory the Great (590-604) omitted the invocations but prescribed the Kyrie to be sung, and it appears that the “Christe eleison” formed part of a local tradition at Rome which became part of the traditional use. The ninefold Kyries are first found in Ordo - Romanus IV of the 8th-9th centuries. Elaborate musical settings for these we ultimately devised. They were to be found in the 1549 liturgy. In 1552 and subsequent BCP rites there is a form of the Kyrie - "Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law" after each of the commandments, with a variant after the tenth (summing up the series), "Lord, have mercy upon us, and write all these thy laws in our hearts, we beseech thee."

The traditional ninefold Kyries may take one of the following forms,

Lord, have mercy (upon us)	Kyrie eleison
<b>Lord, have mercy (upon us)</b>	<b>Kyrie eleison</b>
Lord, have mercy (upon us)	Kyrie eleison.
<b>Christ, have mercy (upon us)</b>	<b>Christe eleison</b>
Christ, have mercy (upon us)	Christe eleison
<b>Christ, have mercy (upon us)</b>	<b>Christe eleison</b>
Lord, have mercy (upon us)	Kyrie eleison
<b>Lord, have mercy (upon us)</b>	<b>Kyrie eleison</b>
Lord, have mercy (upon us)	Kyrie eleison

**Gloria in Excelsis** This is said (or preferably sung) by priest and people together. It is permitted to omit it during the penitential seasons of Advent and Lent and on weekdays which are not holy days. The version printed here is that of the International Consultation on English Texts (ICET), with one amendment; and the translation is explained in *Prayers we have in Common* (1975). All the ICET texts were reviewed in a more recent publication by the English Language Liturgical Consultation (ELLC) in *Praying Together*, The Canterbury Press, Norwich, 1988, which also explains the text. The only amendment suggested by ELLC was in the second line, “and peace to God’s people on earth”, and this has been adopted in the 2004 edition of the Prayer Book for use in Holy Communion Two.

Hymns based on this canticle “Glory to God in highest heav’n” and “Glory in the highest to the God of heaven!” may be found in the *Church Hymnal*, Fifth Edition, 2000, no’s 692, 693.

The placing of the Gloria in Excelsis at the beginning of the service brings Church of Ireland liturgy into line with both ancient and (almost universal) modern use, and continues the use of Holy Communion 1972 and the form of the eucharist in the Alternative Prayer Book (1984).

For a brief account of its history and use in the Anglican liturgical tradition see pp27, 28 above. At the Reformation continental Reformers, including Luther and Hermann, continued to use it at the beginning of the rite, while Zwingli placed it between the Epistle and Gospel.

### **The Collect of the Day**

It is not correct to say "collect for..." It is the collect *of* the Third Sunday of Epiphany or The First Sunday in Lent or whatever. The Collect is said with hands extended (up to the concluding words "through Jesus Christ our Lord" etc., when they are joined). During Advent and Lent it is appropriate for the Collect of the Season to be said after the Collect of the Day.

Since the choice of collects in the *Alternative Prayer Book* with its "thematic" approach was no longer appropriate when the Revised Common Lectionary is used, a set of *Collects and Postcommunion Prayers* prepared by an interprovincial consultation (drawn from the Church of England, the Church of Ireland, the Episcopal Church in Scotland, and the Church in Wales) was issued for trial use, and, as slightly modified, was approved for use by the General Synod 2001 and incorporated into the Book of Common Prayer 2004. These prayers are not directly linked to the readings but are broadly suitable to the season or occasion. They have been drawn from a wide variety of sources including the Book of Common Prayer of the Church of Ireland (1926, with additions from amendments to this in 1933 and 1962), the *Alternative Prayer Book*, a number of Prayer Books in the Anglican Communion (among them those in use in England, America, Canada, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, and Wales) collections of liturgical material such as *The Promise of His Glory*, and *Lent, Holy Week, Easter*, and some original compositions by individuals.

The original purpose of the collect was to "collect" the petitions of the several members of the congregation into a single prayer; a modern example of this being found in the Good Friday intercessions in *Lent, Holy Week, Easter* (pp212-16). The *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* defines the Collect as "The short form of prayer, constructed (with many varieties of detail) from (1) an invocation, (2) a petition, and (3) a pleading of Christ's name or an ascription of glory to God." According to the same source the writings of Pope Leo 1 show that such prayers were familiar in the middle of the fifth century. They are fully developed in the earliest Latin Sacramentaries (Leonine, Gelasian, and Gregorian). They also secured an established place in the daily offices as well as in the Eucharist. Early collects were always directed to the Father; but since the Middle Ages collects addressed to the Son have been regularly admitted to the liturgy. The Latin term is *oratio*, and also (as explained above) *collecta*.

Similarly styled prayers were also historically to be found at the Offertory (called "Secrets", probably because they were said silently), and after communion. Modern examples of such prayers (that at the offertory being called "Prayer over the Gifts") may be found in *The Book of Alternative Services of the Anglican Church of Canada*, 1985. The Post-Communions to be found on pp241-336 are prayers of the same kind.

The original sequence of bidding, silent prayer, and collect is restored in the rubric directing that the presiding minister introduces the Collect, allowing a short space for silence, and the people respond with their **Amen**.

It is appropriate for the congregation to stand from the Greeting to the Collect (inclusive).

## Proclaiming and Receiving the Word

In the *Alternative Prayer Book* 1984 part of the service was known as the Ministry of the Word and that is still a useful way of referring to it.

The basic pattern of the Eucharist as consisting of Word and Sacrament can be clearly seen in Justin Martyr's *First Apology* (c.150), in which he describes the Holy Communion as celebrated on an ordinary Sunday (67:3-5)

And on the day called Sunday an assembly is held in one place of all who live in town or country; and the records of the apostles or writings of the prophets are read for as long as time allows. Then, when the reader has finished, the president in a discourse admonishes and exhorts (us) to imitate these good things. Then we all stand up together and offer prayers; and as we said before, when we have finished praying, bread and wine and water are brought up, and the president likewise offers prayers and thanksgivings to the best of his ability, and the people assent, saying the Amen; and there is a distribution, and everyone participates in (the elements) over which thanks have been given; and they are sent through the deacons to those who are absent.

At an early stage it became a binding custom throughout the Church that the final and climactic reading at the Eucharist should be from the gospel, which sheds its light on the other New Testament readings that preceded it. These other New Testament readings in turn came after "the law of Moses and the prophets and the psalms", since they are the "fulfilment" of these. The sermon or homily, for its part, says in effect: "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing". [See the Chapter "Liturgy of the Word" in A.G. Martimort Ed. *The Eucharist*, 1986, pp59f].

The number of readings has varied from time to time, as many as five readings before the Gospel being attested (among the West Syrians). Books II and VIII of the (fourth century) *Apostolic Constitutions* mention four: Law, Prophets, Epistles, and Acts. Other churches, Eastern and Western had two and the Byzantines one. In the West the tradition varied, with evidence of readings from the Old and New Testament as well as the Gospels in the Mozarabic and Gallican liturgies, but only an Epistle and Gospel in the writings of St. Augustine (although he probably counted the Responsorial Psalm as a reading as well), and at Rome.

The *Book of Common Prayer* inherited Epistles and Gospels from the medieval Church, although sometimes Old Testament passages and readings from the Acts of the Apostles were included under the heading of "The Epistle". Modern liturgical revision has restored the Old Testament reading, producing a set of three readings, including the Gospel, for Sundays and Holy Days with psalmody after the Old Testament. The readings at Holy Communion are those from the Revised Common Lectionary or from the (related) Lectionary for a Second Service. [see Appendix 4 below for fuller information].

It is presupposed that normally, at the principal Sunday service all three readings should be read, together with a psalm. If this creates difficulties in terms of the length of the service, it is sometimes possible to shorten them. The original set of readings used in the Roman lectionary (upon which the RCL is based) may serve as a rough guide as to how this may be done. A way of consolidating and shortening the proper psalm was provided at the back of the publication *Lectionaries for Trial Use*, containing the lectionaries authorized by the House of Bishops in 1995.

Comparison between the lectionary provision in the *Book of Common Prayer* 2004 and that in the *Alternative Prayer Book* (1984):

- The APB lectionary was “thematic”, not only on particular occasions such as Christmas and Easter. Every Sunday had its own particular emphasis indicated by the principal or “control” reading (marked with an asterisk) and indicated by the sub-title (for example that for Lent 3 “The King and the Kingdom: Suffering”. The Revised Common Lectionary, together with its companion lectionaries for a Second Service and a Third Service is not thematic in this sense, although appropriate readings are chosen for the Easter and Christmas cycles and other special occasions. In “Ordinary” time, outside particular seasons there is a semi-continuous reading of the Synoptic Gospels with a “year” of Matthew, followed by a “year” of Mark, followed by a “year” of Luke. In “Ordinary” time the Epistles are read, as far as possible sequentially.
- The APB lectionary was based on a two-year course, which was found in practice to give an insufficient range of biblical readings. The readings in the Revised Common Lectionary are in a three year cycle, and the lectionaries for the Second and Third services conform to this.

### **The First Reading**

This is normally from the Old Testament. During the first “half” of the Church’s year (Advent 1 to Trinity Sunday) this relates closely to the Gospel. From Trinity 1 to Proper 29 (the Sunday between 20th and 26th November which focuses on the thought of Christ the King) there are two alternatives,

- (a) A series of paired readings in which the Old Testament and Gospel are closely related;
- (b) A series of semi continuous readings which focus attention on some of the great narratives of the Old Testament.

However, there is a tradition that during the Easter Season readings from Acts are substituted (mentioned by Augustine in the fifth century, and found in the Roman lectionary, in the Ambrosian and Hispanic rites in the West and also in the majority of churches in the East). This is provided for during the great Fifty Days with an alternative reading from the Old Testament. In the latter case the Acts reading is to be used as the Second Reading at Holy Communion.

The Old Testament reading may be read by a lay person from the congregation. The readings should normally be from the lectern. Great care should be taken to ensure that Scripture readings are read audibly, reverently, and with understanding.

### **The Psalm**

This should not be omitted without good reason. The psalm is said or sung either between the Old Testament reading and Epistle, where it serves as reflection and response to the relevant passage in the OT or, as the Gradual, between the Epistle and Gospel. If there are only two readings it occurs between them. If the psalm is being read, it is appropriate to read it in half verses, the first half of each verse being said by the reader, the second half being said by the congregation. Historically the psalm was sung “responsorially”, with the verses being rendered by a soloist and the congregation responding with an antiphon (a verse drawn from the psalm itself sung at the beginning and end and at intervals throughout). St. Augustine spoke of “The psalm which we have just heard sung and to which we have responded in song.” He often made the psalm the subject of his homily, putting it on the same level as the reading from Paul and the Gospel. In a Cathedral-type service the psalm is sung “antiphonally”, that is verse-about from one side of the choir to the other, which is the basic reason why the stalls in the choir face each other.

It is traditional to omit the Gloria from the psalm at the eucharist. An Alleluia before the Gospel serves to bring out the doxological aspect.

On Easter Day the Easter Anthems may be substituted for the Psalm.

### **The Epistle**

This may be read by a lay person from the congregation. It is appropriate that this reading too should be from the lectern.

If the readings are to be read by the clergy from the sanctuary the traditional custom should be followed by which the Epistle is read from the south side (from the lowest step, if there is one), and the Gospel from the north side (from the second step).

### **The Gradual**

The name comes from the Latin "gradus", a step, deriving from the tradition of the psalm being sung by a cantor from the steps of the ambo (the ambo being the pulpit-like structure from which the Gospel was read).

### **Canticle, psalm, hymn, anthem or acclamation**

It would be quite in order to have the Benedictus or Te Deum at this point.

### **The Gospel**

The reading of the Gospel is the climax of the Ministry of the Word. It is not necessary to read it from the pulpit (unless there is a combined pulpit/lectern), but special solemnity is appropriate. According to the geography of the building it may be read from the north side of the Holy Table or from the lectern or from the chancel step. A "Gospel Procession", in which the Book of the Gospels is taken from the altar and carried in procession to the place it is to be read from is appropriate where this is acceptable to the people. The Gospel procession may be accompanied by lights. The responses "Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ" and "Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ" should, if possible, be sung.

The reading of the Gospel is traditionally the privilege and responsibility of the deacon. For this reason it is most inappropriate, when a deacon is present, for anyone else to perform this function. In the absence of a deacon the Gospel may be read by any person in holy orders, or by a licensed lay reader. The principle of "subsidiarity" should, in general, be observed, no person from a "higher" order usurping the function of a person from a "lower" order who is ready and able to perform the office. At a solemn celebration the Gospel may be sung.

The tradition of standing while the Gospel is read is a way of honouring the words of Christ himself which are heard in the reading. As there is a "real presence" of Christ in his Word as there is also in the Sacrament it is appropriate for this to be liturgically acknowledged.

### **Sermon**

The word "sermon" is the legally and theologically correct term and "address" should not be substituted for it unless something entirely informal is to be delivered.

The sermon should normally be related to and based upon the readings of the day or one or more of them. It is desirable to have a brief (even two-minute) homily or address even at an early morning or weekday celebration of Holy Communion, although this requires careful preparation. The rationale of modern Eucharistic provision at this point is that God's Word is read and preached and then we make our (corporate) response to it in the words of the Nicene Creed.

### **The Nicene Creed**

This is appointed to be said "at least on Sundays and the greater festivals". It is not necessary to have it on weekdays (even if these are holy days). Much creedal material is to be found elsewhere, in the Ministry of the Sacrament in all three eucharistic prayers, but especially the first and second, where, there is a rehearsal of the mighty acts of God in Christ; and this makes the Creed, strictly speaking, redundant. When the Creed is used the custom of bowing



one's head at the words "we believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ" in acknowledgement of His divinity should be observed.

The version of the Nicene Creed used here is based on that produced by the English Language Liturgical Consultation (ELLC), but with some modifications, and is a translation of the Creed said to have been adopted by the Council of Constantinople in 381 A.D. It is not the original Creed of Nicaea (325) but reflects and upholds its teaching. Its use in Eucharistic worship apparently began at Antioch under Peter the Fuller (476-88) and gradually spread through East and West, although it was not adopted at Rome until 1014. It has been widely accepted in modern times as a proposed basis of Christian unity, for example in the Lambeth Quadrilateral (1888).

The plural form "We believe", reflecting the Greek original, was restored in the Alternative Prayer Book, 1984, and is continued here, making this a confession of the Church's *corporate* faith as contrasted with the use of the Apostles' Creed with its *personal* profession "I believe" at baptism and confirmation (and in the Divine Office).

The phrase "seen and unseen" refers to "all that is" in the previous line, and applies to "heaven and earth" in line 3. It reminds us of the all-embracing nature of the created order.

The words "eternally begotten" safeguards the truth, taught by St. Athanasius, that "the Son must exist eternally alongside the Father". The explanation of this is that his generation is an eternal process.

"God from God", is the nearest the translators got to the Greek, which uses the preposition *ek* meaning "out of".

The expression "of one Being" is the closest the translators could come to the Greek philosophical term *homo-ousios* and is preferable to "substance", which tends to have materialistic connotations. The word is used here to safeguard the unity of the Godhead and was a key term in the debate against Arianism (an fourth century heresy which denied the full deity of Christ, which has been revived in some modernist writings recently)

With reference to the words "became incarnate of" the word "incarnate" means "in the flesh"; and this phrase is worded so as to safeguard the truth that Christ was both conceived and born of the Virgin Mary.

With regard to the affirmation "and was made man" the English Language Liturgical Consultation considered this phrase carefully in their review of on agreed liturgical texts in the mid-1990s, and said that they faced great difficulty in rendering the Greek *enanthropesanta*, which means, literally, "inhumaned". It does not, they say, represent a further stage in time beyond the incarnation, but spells out clearly the meaning of the incarnation. They suggested "became truly human", although they recognised that some would prefer to keep "and became man" as showing the particularity of the incarnation in the male person, Jesus. The Consultation rejects this as misrepresenting what the Creed affirms at this point. Neither the Greek *anthropos* nor the Latin *homo* carry male overtones as "man" in contemporary English normally does. However the General Synod, after some debate, preferred "and was made man" as affirming the humanity of Christ, but understood in an inclusive manner.

In the case of "suffered death" the Consultation said that the Greek *pathonta* carries the notions of both suffering and death, and so was appropriate here.

In respect of "in accordance with the Scriptures" the Consultation said that the Greek *kata tas graphas* (1 Cor 15:4) "in accordance with" was felt to be closer to the "sense than" "according to". The latter might suggest that Scripture says one thing, while other authorities say

something different. The Scriptures referred to are the Old Testament, as in the appeals to Scripture in, for example, Acts 2:25-28; 13:34-35.

With regard to "is seated" this was preferred to "sits", to emphasise the permanence of Christ's position of honour.

The expression "the Lord, the giver of life" consist of two distinct phrases, both applying to the Holy Spirit. They avoid the possible misunderstanding of the older version, "The Lord and giver", which might be taken to mean "The Lord of life" and "the giver of life".

The addition to the original Creed "and the Son" is the famous (or notorious) "filioque" clause, which has been a major cause of dissension between the Eastern and Western Churches. This clause was added to the Creed in Toledo in 589, and was not accepted at Rome until after 1000. It has no ecumenical authority and has never been accepted by the Orthodox or other Eastern churches. Although it can be defended, theologically, the Lambeth Conference of 1988 recommended that "in future liturgical revisions the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed be printed without the Filioque clause" (Resolution 16:5d). However, the traditional western version has been retained in the 2004 edition of the Prayer Book.

With regard to "We believe in one holy..." the original Greek makes clear that the Creed expresses belief "in" the Church, as well as in God and in Christ. The Church as the "body" of Christ is, quite properly, the object of faith. The word "holy" was omitted in the earlier Book of Common Prayer version of the Creed. It has been restored here because it is part of the original.

### **The Prayers of the People**

These intercessions may be delegated to assistant ministers or to lay members of the congregation. They must be carefully prepared; and if any of the set forms are used (pp237-9) any additions must conform to the style and approach of the fixed part of the text. All three forms are addressed to God the Father and so any interpolations must form part of the prayer. It is, therefore, inappropriate to include exhortations to the congregation, even "let us pray for..."

Dealing first with the Forms of Intercession provided:

The First Form of the Intercessions is derived from the General supplication in the First Alternative Form of Evening Prayer in the 1926 edition of the *Book of Common Prayer*, which was in turn related to a prototype litany in the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom. Some changes from the version in the *Alternative Prayer Book* (1984) have been made.

The Second Form derives from that in the *Alternative Prayer Book* (1984) with new paragraphing beginning with a series of addresses: "Lord of your people; Lord of creation; Lord of our relationships; Lord of all healing; and Lord of eternity" and with improved wording. It is appropriate to intersperse between the paragraphs the traditional, "Lord in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**"

The third form, which is interactive, is new to the Church of Ireland. In the context of a small intimate congregation the possibility of the people adding their own petitions is attractive. The concluding paragraph might well be said by all. Alternatively, the ending on p.206: **Merciful Father, accept these our prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen** might be substituted for "Gracious God..."

When using these prayers it is appropriate to incorporate material from the *Anglican Cycle of Prayer* as well as local Diocesan Cycles into the intercessions. If it is desired to remember the departed more specifically in the final section they may be named in some such form as, "For

John and Mary and for the memory of all that has been true and good in their lives. May they rest in peace, and may light perpetual shine on them. We rejoicing..." [For further consideration of prayer for the departed and the position of different schools of thought within the Anglican tradition see the *Commentary on the Pastoral Offices: Burial Rites* in this series]

Helpful adaptations of the first two forms of intercession from the Alternative Prayer Book and suitable for use here are those drawn up by the Revd Clive Wylie are reproduced (by kind permission) Appendix Two (see below pp72-3 ).

It is appropriate for a deacon to lead the intercessions, or, in the absence of a deacon, for these to be led by another clerical assistant, or Reader, or lay persons from the congregation. Form Two lends itself to a division among a number of persons, the initial words (down to "ask in faith") being led by the deacon.

However, The Prayers of the People have been designed to be as adaptable as possible, and those planning the service are not restricted to the three fixed forms on pp237-9 or any variants on them. This is a point at which the large amount of resource material in such publications as *New Patterns for Worship* and *Times and Seasons* may be drawn upon and used. A norm is provided by reference to the following topics for prayer,

**the universal Church of God**

**the nations of the world**

**the local community**

**those in need**

**remembrance of and thanksgiving for the departed**

That these are not intended to be restrictive is shown by the rubric which says that when appropriate, the prayers may be more focused on one or two themes and permission for them to take the form of biddings with silence or even open prayer, where members of the congregation contribute. The latter arrangement probably works best when numbers are small and those concerned are in close proximity.

Sample versicles and responses to be used after each section are provided. Other forms may be used as appropriate. "Lord hear us", with the response "Lord graciously hear us" is regarded by many as stylistically infelicitous.

A collective way of "rounding off" the prayers, derived from the second form in the Alternative Prayer Book (1984) is provided, although "other suitable words" may be used.

An alternative way of finishing is to say the Lord's Prayer. However, this means leaving it out from its traditional position before communion where the reference to "daily bread" can be given a eucharistic significance.

### **[Penitence]**

The question of where to have the Penitence in the eucharistic rite has been much discussed. In the *Alternative Prayer Book* (1984), following the Church of England's *Alternative Service Book* (1980) it was put in after the Intercessions and before the Peace. Not only was this felt to be appropriate as part of one's preparation for communion, but there was also the consideration that worshippers only could realize their full need for repentance after God's Word had been read and preached. It is for this reason that the 2004 edition of the Prayer Book permits the Penitence not only at the beginning of the service (in between the Collect for Purity and the Gloria in Excelsis) but, alternatively, before or after the

Intercessions. However, the practical difficulty of enabling people to follow the liturgy means these options are best confined to occasions when a full order of service is made out. It may be noted that the Service for Ash Wednesday (BCP p.338f) follows this sequence. The rubric about the Prayer of Humble Access is to prevent this (with its obvious reference to actually making one's communion) from being moved mistakenly to the front of the rite when the Penitence is used there. It is still lawful and appropriate to use it here even when the Penitence comes at the start of the service, particularly during penitential seasons. Another possible position (as in the 1548 Order for Communion and the eucharist in the 1549 Prayer Book) is immediately before Communion.

Having the Penitence at the beginning of the service means that the Intercessions are more readily made into a significant section in their own right. They are not to be understood as a mere preliminary to the section of Penitence.

### **The Peace**

This is introduced by the Presiding Minister. Three forms are provided here, but other suitable words (for seasons and special occasions) are to be found under "Seasonal Variations" from pp224-36 and in various resource books including the Church of England's *Times and Seasons*.

At the words "The Peace of the Lord be always with you", it is appropriate for the celebrant to spread his arms wide.

Customs vary with regard to the "sign of peace" which is, however, normally a handshake (sometimes a handclasp with both hands). It may be inadvisable to insist on a physical expression of the Peace in very traditional (and inhibited) congregations: on the other hand it can be very effective with small intimate groups.

The rationale of having the Peace in this position rather than immediately before communion (as in the Roman Catholic rites) is "First make peace with your brother (or sister) and then offer your gift".

### **Celebrating at the Lord's Table**

This title is a good indication of what happens at this part of the rite which is equal in importance to "Proclaiming and Receiving the Word". Alternative titles, useful for reference are "The Ministry of the Word" and "The Ministry of the Sacrament" (APB pp45, 53). The balance between Word and Sacrament, with pulpit and communion table being given equal prominence, is characteristic of the Anglican tradition.

[The order of the rubrics and titles seems slightly odd at this point. One would have expected the three rubrics to follow the sub-title "At the Preparation of the Table".]

### **At the Preparation of the Table**

It is stated that the table may be prepared by a deacon or lay people (for example, by "servers"). If the paten and chalice have not already been placed on the table (before the service begins) the table may be prepared by these being brought, the corporal being taken from the burse and spread at the centre, the burse is placed (flat, not upright) at the back of the altar to the north, and the coloured veil partly folded to the south. The paten is placed in front of the chalice on the corporal; and the linen veil (which has been removed from the burse) is on the left of the corporal, with the pall, and with the purificator(s) on the right. Sufficient bread is placed on the paten, and sufficient wine is poured into the chalice (from which the pall has been removed). Alternatively, the Presiding Minister (celebrant, whether priest or bishop) arranges the chalice and paten which have been on the altar since the beginning of the service, and the bread and wine are brought to him (successively, in the

bread box and the flagon) by the deacon or Reader or other lay assistant(s). A little water may then be poured into the chalice, following the custom which still obtains at the Passover (at which the wine used is slightly diluted by water).

It is liturgically uncouth to keep a bottle of wine inside the flagon and take it out to pour the wine into the chalice. The flagon is itself the receptacle for the wine.

In some churches the bread and wine are placed on a table at the back of the church prior to the service and are brought up during the offertory hymn by lay persons. This represents the bringing of the life and work of the congregation to the Lord to be received and blessed by him. This still remains a valid concept although a warning by Archbishop Michael Ramsey against a “shallow Pelagianism” needs to be borne in mind. Some prayers are provided for use after the collection has been taken up and the bread and wine placed on the holy table. The provision of this selection does not exclude other suitable prayers being used. “How can I repay the Lord” is perhaps better used as an offertory sentence before the Preparation of the Table begins. “Lord, yours is the greatness” is perhaps best used congregationally (as in the *Alternative Prayer Book* p.53). It is important for any prayer used at the offertory not to anticipate what is said in the eucharistic prayers itself. This is the main problem with the variants of the Roman prayer “Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation” whether the key word is “offer” (Roman use), “bring” (*Alternative Service Book* 1980) or “set before” (*Common Worship*).

While the table is being prepared the collection is taken up and is received (usually in an alms dish) by the deacon or other assistant and given to the celebrant who presents it at the altar. Extravagant gestures should be avoided such as a dramatic “hoisting” of the alms dish. It is appropriate for the alms dish to be taken by the assistant and placed (if there is room) on the credence table, leaving the altar uncluttered. If it has to be placed on the holy table it is put unobtrusively and without fuss on the south side.

If an offertory hymn is sung it is appropriate for this to be specifically a Communion hymn (from no's 396-452 in the *Church Hymnal*, Fifth Edition, although some of these are more suitable for other parts of the rite, for example “Going out as God’s People”)

There is no necessity, when using either Holy Communion One or Holy Communion Two in the 2004 edition of the *Book of Common Prayer*, to stand at the “north end” of the Holy Table. It is permissible to celebrate “westward”, that is facing the people across the table, or if the table cannot conveniently be brought out from the wall, even facing the people at the north side (towards the north end) in front of the Table. If the latter position is adopted it may be possible to rest the book on the communion rail (if it is made of wood, flat, and close to the celebrant), or in a Church with a lot of space a small lectern may be placed within the sanctuary. Or the book may be held for the celebrant by an assistant. If this is done here or elsewhere in the service, the assistant faces the celebrant (preferably on a lower step) with both hands under the book and resting the top of the book against the chest.

### **The Taking of the Bread and Wine**

The concept of a “fourfold” shape of the eucharistic action was put forward by Gregory Dix in his seminal *The Shape of the Liturgy* Dacre Press, 1945. In his view this essential structure, based on the Lord’s actions at the Last Supper, underlay the great variety of rites derived from those of the early Christian Church, and it consisted of,

#### **The Taking of the Bread and Wine**

#### **The Blessing of the Bread and Wine (or giving thanks over them)**

#### **The Breaking of the Bread**

## **The Giving of the Bread and Wine**

Dix's identification of the "Taking" with the Offertory was questioned, and most rites distinguish between the Offertory (with this title in the *Alternative Prayer Book* - in the BCP 2004 this section is called "At the Preparation of the Table") and the "Taking". Moreover, it was pointed out that the first and the third actions were preliminary to the second and fourth, and that that the "thanking" and the "giving" were the two that mattered most. In Holy Communion 1972 there had been four distinct headings. These were modified, under the general heading of "The Ministry of the Sacrament" to two in the *Alternative Prayer Book*, 1984:

### **The Taking of the Bread and Wine**

**and the Giving of Thanks.**

### **The Breaking of the Bread**

**and the Giving of the Bread and Wine.**

In the 2004 edition of The Book of Common Prayer there are again four headings, as follows:

### **The Taking of the Bread and Wine**

### **The Great Thanksgiving**

### **The Breaking of the Bread**

### **The Communion.**

It is to be regretted that the connections of thought, evident in the headings in the *Alternative Prayer Book* are less in evidence, and also that the word "Giving" has disappeared. Although "Great Thanksgiving" underlines the importance of the Prayer of Thanksgiving and Consecration it is a pity that the careful use of biblical expressions in the APB at this point has been modified.

The question of what actually constitutes the "taking" is not as simple as it seems. It appears that the custom at the Passover is traditionally that the bread and the wine are held a hand's breadth above the table while the respective thanksgivings are said. However, due to the length of eucharistic prayers this is not very practicable in the Christian context, and so the "taking" becomes either a preliminary taking of the bread and wine into the hands (as in the 2004 Prayer Book) and/or a "taking" of the bread and wine into the hands, successively, during the recitation of the Words of Institution (for example, the Alternative Order in the APB). Essentially the "taking" is a gesture of identification of that which is being "consecrated by thanksgiving" (to use the term popularized by the Prayer Book Subcommittee of the Lambeth Conference of 1958). However, if there is more than one chalice or paten it is not necessary for all the vessels to be identified in this way. The tradition is that whatever is on the corporal is deemed to be included in the eucharistic consecration.

The (optional) words said at the "taking" of the bread and wine indicate the paschal mystery which lies at the heart of the eucharistic celebration.

### **The Great Thanksgiving**

Three Eucharistic Prayers are provided. **Prayer 1** is of the Church of Ireland's own composition, being a modification of the main form of the prayer in the Ministry of the Sacrament in the *Alternative Prayer Book* of 1984, which was itself largely identical to that in the trial service "Holy Communion 1972". It lends itself particularly to seasonal modification through the use of a wide variety of Proper Prefaces. **Prayer 2** is from *An Australian Prayer Book* (1978), and is characterised by a careful adherence to the sequence of a Jewish *berekah*

of prayer of blessing and by a very full rehearsal of the mighty acts of God in Christ for us and for our salvation. **Prayer 3** is a radical modification of the Church of England's "Prayer H" (*Common Worship* pp204-5) and, unusually, addresses each Person of the Holy Trinity in turn and then "Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, Blessed Trinity", and is also highly interactive as between priest and people.

### **Prayer 1**

One of the major achievements of liturgical revision is the restoration of the unity of the eucharistic prayer, which in this form comprises the following:

*The Opening Dialogue*, Salutation, Sursum Corda, and Gratias Agamus.

*The Pre-Sanctus*, including (where appropriate) the Proper Preface.

*The Sanctus*

*The Post-Sanctus* leading to

*The Words of Institution* (sometimes known as the "Institution Narrative,')

*The Anamnesis* ("remembrance"),

*Epiclesis* ("invocation") and

*Doxology* (word of praise, literally "word of glory").

*Amen*

The function of the Eucharistic Prayer is to express the meaning of the rite as a whole. For this reason it is not necessary, as has sometimes been supposed, to separate off particular parts of the significance of the Eucharist and to express these exclusively elsewhere, although this is still done with the concept of self-offering in the congregational prayer after communion, probably reflecting at this point the influence of the traditional rite, Holy Communion One (see page 189). However, it is legitimate to develop certain aspects of eucharistic understanding as appropriate to particular occasions as is done in the variable post-communions provided for Holy Communion Two (pp241-336).

### **The Opening Dialogue**

This opening dialogue, consisting of three versicles and responses at the beginning of the Eucharistic Prayer, are found in the *Apostolic Tradition* of Hippolytus (c215 or later) the earliest complete text of a Eucharistic Prayer so far discovered. This exchange is also found in St. Cyprian (252) and in Cyril of Jerusalem (c.350) and is part of the Eucharistic heritage of the universal Church.

#### **(a) Salutation**

Either "The Lord is here" with its response or "The Lord be with you" with its response. The latter is more traditional - see Holy Communion One, where the response is "and with thy spirit", "The Lord is here" having come in with the Church of England form Series 3 (1973). The salutation is said, facing the people, at the centre of the sanctuary and the celebrant parts his hands as he says it.

#### **(b) Sursum Corda** "Lift up your hearts".

This is said with the hands extended, as is also the other ancient exhortation, *Gratias agamus* "Let us give thanks to the Lord our God".

#### **(c) Gratias agamus.**

The second part of the dialogue ("Let us give thanks...") is very ancient, and is witnessed to not only by those mentioned above, but also by St. John Chrysostom (c.347-407), St.

Augustine of Hippo (354-430), and St. Caesarius of Arles (c.470-542). Dom Gregory Dix in his *The Shape of the Liturgy* (p.52) thought it reflected the form for grace after meals within Judaism, and so was a specific link with the Last Supper and other fellowship meals between Our Lord and the disciples.

### **Pre-Sanctus**

This section serves here as a link between the exhortation to “give thanks to the Lord our God” and the angelic song the Sanctus. On occasions when a Proper Preface is not used, it is brief (compare with the relevant part of **Prayer 2**) and uses words clearly reflecting the tradition embodied in Holy Communion One (p.186).

With regard to the Proper Preface, the word “Proper” is used for the appropriate and relevant variable parts of the liturgy, in this case the “Preface”. The word “Preface” comes from the Latin *praefatio* meaning “introduction”, and appears to carry the sense here of the beginning of a “proclamation”, reflecting a liturgical tradition of having a rehearsal of the mighty acts of God in Christ at this point in the Eucharist. Taking the two words together, the “Proper Preface” gives the particular grounds for expressing our praise and thanksgiving to God on the particular occasion of the celebration. A wide range of Proper Prefaces suitable for use with **Prayer 1** is provided among the “Seasonal Variations” on pp224-36 of the 2004 edition of the Book of Common Prayer.

Additional proper prefaces, suitable for use with **Prayer 1** may be found in the Church of England’s publication *Common Worship: Times and Seasons* and also in the earlier *Enriching the Christian Year*.

At the Preface the hands of the celebrant remain extended until the words “And so with all your people”, when they are joined, and they remain joined until the end of the Sanctus.

### **Sanctus**

This ancient hymn of adoration, derived from Isaiah 6:3 and Rev 4:8 has a long history in the Eucharistic liturgy although it does not appear to have been part of the early anaphora (for example it is not to be found in the *Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus* c.215, or later). Robert Cabié in *The Eucharist* ed. A.G. Martimort pp94,95 suggests that this was probably because the Christian prayer of thanksgiving originated in the Jewish liturgy for meals, which did not have the Sanctus. The Sanctus was used instead in the liturgy of the synagogue, when the Shema Israel in the morning office was preceded by a blessing (Yotser) for light and creation, in the course of which the Sanctus was recited. It may have been from this latter source that the composers of the anaphoras took it. It is attested in the East as early as the third quarter of the fourth century, while in Egypt the prayer of Serapion was built around it. When the Latin Fathers of this same period commented on the passage in Isaiah, they made no reference to its liturgical use. On the other hand, a short treatise on the Holy Spirit that was written in northern Italy around 400 says that the entire congregation joins the priest in singing this acclamation during Mass “in all the eastern Churches and in some western Churches”. Was Rome among the latter? Perhaps, since in this period of anti-Arian conflict the text of Isaiah was given a Trinitarian interpretation. Thus in 484 a profession of faith by African bishops says: “... adoring and glorifying the Most Holy Trinity, as we do during the mysteries when we say Holy...” In Gaul the song of the Seraphim was first introduced in festal Masses, and the Council of Vaison in 529 prescribed its use in every Mass. Nevertheless, as late as the fifth and sixth centuries, even in the East, there were anaphoras that omitted it.

At an early stage an acclamation taken from the gospel was added to the passage from Isaiah, except in the Egyptian and Ethiopian liturgies: “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest [heavens]” (Mt 21:9, see Ps 117;26 LXX Vg). This addition,



known as the “Benedictus qui venit” was retained in a slightly altered form in the 1549 BCP liturgy, but omitted in 1552. Most modern Anglican liturgies have restored it, at least as an option. In the *Alternative Prayer Book*, 1984 it appeared as a Communion Anthem (APB pp56, 62). *Irish Church Praise* included it as an option for use with the Sanctus (Hymn 134), and this same version appeared in the Fifth Edition of the *Church Hymnal*, 2000 (Hymn 714). It may be added not only where it explicitly appears (as in **Prayer 1**), but, as required, in **Prayer 2** (where it is equally suitable) or even **Prayer 3** (which, however, appears complete without it - it is not included in the Church of England’s Prayer H, which was the underlying model).

The Sanctus is said or (preferably) sung by celebrant and people.

**The Post-Sanctus** (From "Blessed are you, Father... ).

This is said with hands extended, up to the words "until he comes again", when they are joined.

This highly significant passage reflects the recovery of the biblical concept that consecration is effected by thanksgiving (1 Tim, 4:4,5). The Eucharistic Prayer (as its name suggests - "Eucharist" comes from *eucharisteo* to give thanks and derives from the Lord's "giving of thanks" at the Last Supper" - Luke 22:19) is, properly speaking, a prayer of thanksgiving, and this is recognised in **Prayers 1-3**. Thanks is given, following ancient precedent, for creation as well as redemption.

The once-for-all character of the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ on Calvary is firmly asserted: and the sacramental celebration of this is seen (as in Holy Communion One) as a "perpetual memory”.

This section has been modified from the version in the *Alternative Prayer Book*, 1984, as follows

Blessed are you, Father,  
the creator and sustainer of all things;  
you made man in your own image,  
and more wonderfully restored him  
when you freed him from the slavery of sin;  
for in your love and mercy  
you gave your only Son Jesus Christ to  
become man  
and suffer death on the cross to redeem us;  
he made there...

Blessed are you, Father,  
the creator and sustainer of all things;  
you made us in your own image,  
male and female you created us;  
even when we turned away from you,  
you never ceased to care for us,  
but in your love and mercy you freed us from  
the slavery of sin,  
giving your only begotten Son to become man  
and suffer death on the cross to redeem us;  
he made there...

Inclusive language emendations from the 1984 text comprise "us" for "man” in the third, fourth and fifth lines. However the word "man" is retained in the phrase "to become man" so as to avoid any suggestion that the doctrine of the incarnation is being altered.

The phrase “and more wonderfully restored him" in the APB text reflected the language of an ancient prayer currently found on as Collect Two of the First Sunday of Christmas (BCP p.247), which reads,

Almighty God, who wonderfully created us in your own image and yet more wonderfully restored us in your Son Jesus Christ: Grant that, as he came to share our human nature, so we may be partakers of his divine glory; who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

The contrast between the "wonderfully" and the "more wonderfully" seemed somehow to have got lost in the process of composition of this prayer in the *Alternative Prayer Book*; and

it was decided to go for a different approach. The echo of Genesis 1:27 is underlined by the addition of “male and female you created us”. Liberation from the slavery of sin is set more firmly in the context of God’s ceaseless care for those whom he brought into being. The unique status of Jesus Christ as God’s only Son is strengthened by the insertion of the word “begotten”.

### **The Words of Institution**

The Dominical Words (which are at the heart of the consecration) are said solemnly but not excessively slowly. Manual acts are not prescribed here, a “taking” having already occurred before the prayer and the “breaking” being prescribed immediately before the communion. If some indicative acts are desired during the Institution Narrative the following are appropriate: The priest takes the paten into his hands (or if wafers are used, he takes the priest’s wafer into his hands) prior to “On the night that he was betrayed...” He takes the chalice into his hands prior to “In the same way, after supper...” The manual acts are to be regarded as an indicative gesture, but are not to be deemed as essential to the consecration (they do not appear at all in the ASB, although this does not preclude celebrants in the Church of England from using them).

The sign of the cross may be made over the bread and the cup at the words “with this bread and this cup” (or the hands of the priest may be extended, palms up, towards the elements on the corporal).

Traditionally, in Western theology, the Words of Institution were regarded as the means by which the consecration was effected; and this concept is perpetuated, for example in the Holy Communion One provision for supplementary consecration (BCP p.189).

In the Eastern Church the consecration was regarded as having been accomplished by the *epiclesis* (invocation) of the Holy Spirit, although this did not exclude a role for the Words of Institution.

As mentioned above, the concept of "consecration by thanksgiving" which is biblical, has come to the fore in modern liturgical theology, and was commended by the Lambeth 1958 Sub-Committee on Prayer Book Revision (Report 2:85).

These various approaches are not necessarily mutually exclusive. However, the emphasis in Holy Communion Two appears to be on the latter idea, although the Words of Institution serve as a focal point of the consecration. The invocation of the Holy Spirit in **Prayers 1 and 2** is a "Communion" *epiclesis* and not a "Consecration" *epiclesis* - it is not intended to have a consecratory effect. For **Prayer 3** see below.

### **Anamnesis**

The **anamnesis** is the "memory" paragraph (from the Greek of Luke 22:19, 1 Cor 11: 24, 25 - *anamnesis* = "remembrance"). It is the point at which the liturgy expresses what is understood by the dominical command to "do this in remembrance of me", and so is theologically highly significant. For more information see the writer's B.D. thesis *The meaning and role of the anamnesis in the Anglican liturgical tradition* (TCD, 1979); and for an exploration of the theology of the APB Eucharist in its two forms see his Ph.D. thesis *The theological implications of recent liturgical revision in the Church of Ireland* (O.U., 1987) especially Chapter Five [3](2) & annotation. This is still relevant to a consideration of the theology of Holy Communion Two in the 2004 edition of the Book of Common Prayer.

The basic understanding of Holy Communion reflected in **Prayer 1** is the same as that expressed in the Revised Catechism which was approved by the House of Bishops for use in the Church of Ireland for a period of experimental use and is currently issued for use in a pastoral context..

### Q.50 What is Holy Communion?

Holy Communion is the Sacrament in which, according to Christ's command, we make continual remembrance of him, his passion, death, and resurrection, until his coming again, and in which we thankfully receive the benefits of his sacrifice.

It is, therefore, called the Eucharist, the Church's sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, and also the Lord's supper, the meal of fellowship which unites us to Christ and to the whole Church.

It may be seen that Holy Communion is seen here as a liturgical act in which we remember before God in thanksgiving and petition the once-for-all sacrifice of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

There are no Acclamations between the Words of Institution and the anamnesis in **Prayer 1**. Instead, the prayer is made more interactive by making the essential part of the anamnesis itself congregational: **we remember his passion and death, we celebrate his resurrection and ascension, and we look for the coming of his kingdom.**

### **Epiclesis**

The Epiclesis is a prayer for the communicants (a "communion" epiclesis) that as they partake, through the power of the Holy Spirit, they may be made one and may be enabled to partake of the Lord's body and blood so that he may dwell in them and they in him. The underlying teaching is, once again, similar to that in the Revised Catechism,

### Q.51 What is the outward and visible sign in Holy Communion?

The outward and visible sign in Holy Communion is bread and wine given and received as the Lord commanded.

### Q.52 What is the inward and spiritual gift in Holy Communion?

The inward and spiritual gift in Holy Communion is the Body and Blood of Christ, truly and indeed given by him and received by the faithful.

### Q.53 What is meant by receiving the Body and Blood of Christ?

Receiving the Body and Blood of Christ means receiving the life of Christ himself, who was crucified and rose again, and is now alive for evermore.

### **Doxology**

The Doxology is the traditional conclusion to the Eucharistic Prayer. Following Western practice it is Trinitarian but stresses the Son's mediatorial role. The "little elevation" of the bread and the cup at this point follows ancient tradition (it is mentioned in *Ordo Romanus Primus* c.700 A.D.) and is not unlawful (see above p.8). The concluding part of this has been set in bold print to make the prayer as a whole more interactive (see under "anamnesis" above).

### **Amen**

The Amen signifies the assent of the whole congregation to the whole liturgical act of commemoration and is an essential part of the people's liturgy. Restoration of this, the great Amen, was a significant achievement of the 1662 revision of the Book of Common Prayer Holy Communion and is found in all modern (as in all ancient) liturgies. It is first mentioned, historically, in Justin Martyr's *First Apology* (c. 150) where it says,

When (the President) has finished the prayers and the thanksgiving, all the people present give their assent by saying, "Amen". Amen is Hebrew for "So be it".

The prayer from the anamnesis to the doxology is said by the celebrant with the hands parted. During the doxology the bread and the cup are raised either successively or together. If a priest's wafer is used this is held over the cup as both are raised.

### **Prayer 2**

A feature of modern liturgical revision is the provision of alternative forms of the Eucharistic Prayer. For example in *The Book of Alternative Services of the Anglican Church of Canada* 1985 there are six such alternatives. Eucharistic theology is so rich that no one prayer can do justice to all that the Eucharist means. **Prayer 2** is from *An Australian Prayer Book*, 1978 pp145-152, and appeared in the *Alternative Prayer Book* 1984 as part of a complete alternative "Order". In the 2004 edition of the Book of Common Prayer it is designed to fit into the common order of Holy Communion Two. It is regrettable that it has not hitherto been more widely used in the Church of Ireland, for it has a number of outstanding features. Theologically, if the key scriptural word in Prayer 1 is **remember** ("we remember his passion and death" in the carefully crafted wording of the anamnesis with the triple use of verbs, "remember", "celebrate", "look for") here the key scriptural word, echoing 1 Cor 11:26, is **proclaim** ("we proclaim his perfect sacrifice made once for all upon the cross"). See below p.56.

The rehearsal of the mighty acts of God in Christ is given particularly full expression in the Pre-Sanctus, especially when this is used with the seasonal additions provided (see below p.55).

The Eucharistic **Prayer 2** follows very closely the form of the Jewish *berakah* or prayer of adoration, blessing God, such as would have been used by Jesus at the Last Supper when he "gave thanks"/"blessed" (see Mark 14:22, Luke 22:17). The *berakah* prayer commonly had four parts: an invitation, a statement of motives, recounting in thanksgiving the great deeds of God; petitions; and a hymn or doxology. These can be clearly seen in the sequence of thought in the prayer.

The structure of the prayer may be analysed as follows:

#### *Invitation:*

- (1) Greeting
- (2) Sursum Corda
- (3) Gratias agamus

#### *Statement of motives, recounting in thanksgiving the great deeds of God:*

- (1) Pre-Sanctus, expanded by
- (2) Seasonal additions, leading to
- (3) Sanctus

#### *Petitions*

- (1) Post-Sanctus
- (2) The Institution Narrative ("Words of Institution")
- (3) Anamnesis
- (4) Acclamations
- (5) Epiclesis

#### *Hymn or Doxology*

- (1) Doxology with Amen.

It may be noted that the whole prayer is eucharistic and doxological, setting of “glory and honour, thanks and praise” at the beginning, and “songs of never-ending praise” leading to “**blessing and honour and glory and power**” at the end.

*Invitation.* For the “Invitation”, see under “Opening Dialogue” in **Prayer 1** (above).

*Statement of motives, recounting in thanksgivings, the great deeds of God*

(1) **Pre-Sanctus** The very lengthy preface is trinitarian in pattern with a very rich and full Christology, enriched by indented seasonal additions in an appropriate manner. The whole sequence constitutes a rehearsal of the mighty acts of God in Christ, giving proper attention to the respective work and coinherence of the three persons of the Holy Trinity. The proper prefaces printed on pp224f are not used with this order as they do not “fit”. This section remains as in *An Australian Prayer Book*, 1978. A more recent revision of the Australian Prayer Book shortens the prayer considerably and provides a complete “pre-Sanctus” for each of the seasons, in this way economising in words but missing the scope and majesty of the prayer as a whole.

(2) **Seasonal Additions** The prayer was printed in the Australian Prayer Book of 1978 in two versions, one with and the other without the seasonal additions, but only the version without was printed in the *Alternative Prayer Book*, 1984. As these constitute a theologically significant way of focussing attention on various aspects of the christological mystery their inclusion in the 2004 addition of the *Book of Common Prayer* enriches **Prayer 2** for the Church of Ireland.

The hands of the celebrant are joined from “Therefore with angels and archangels...” until the end of the Sanctus.

(3) **The Sanctus** As with **Prayer 1** the words of the Benedictus qui venit may be appended to the Sanctus, “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the Highest”.

There is no provision for any change of posture by the communicants after the Sanctus. Members of the congregation may either kneel or (preferably) stand throughout the Eucharistic Prayer. The celebrant stands throughout as do his assistants. The celebrant stands to celebrate and stands to communicate. He should not kneel at any point in the eucharistic celebration when *Holy Communion Two* is used.

*Petitions*

(1) **Post-Sanctus** Said either with hands extended or with palms outstretched towards the elements at the words “these gifts of your creation, this bread and this wine”. For stylistic reasons the word “in” should not be overemphasized.

This section could be termed “petition for communion”, and its theology seems close to that of the similar petition in Holy Communion One, although it remedies the defect of the absence in the Prayer of Consecration in that rite of any reference to the Holy Spirit. The reference to “these gifts of your creation” tie in with the teaching of St. Irenaeus (second century) who saw the eucharist as having to do with the “first-fruits” of the created order. The word “fellowship” recalls the untranslatable word *koinonia* in 1 Corinthians 10:16 which is variously rendered as “sharing”, “fellowship”, and “communion” (see the words used at the Breaking of the Bread, p.218) and refers to the special quality of our common life as Christians. The word “obedience” indicates the command to “do this” as recorded in the Institution Narrative which follows, “remembrance” carries all the rich significance of the Greek word *anamnesis* probably representing an underlying word with the root z k r in Hebrew, *lezikkaron* - for the remembrance of - a liturgical act of remembrance by which that

which is remembered becomes a present reality for those who perform the act so that "they are as if there".

(2) **The Words of Institution** The wording is slightly different here from that in **Prayer 1**. It might well have been sensible to have standardized it for the first two eucharistic prayers, the third following a rather different line of approach. As with **Prayer 1**, no rubrics for manual acts are included at this point. However, those in the *Alternative Prayer Book*, 1984, are still appropriate. Prior to the words "who on the night he was betrayed..." the rubric read, "He takes the bread into his hands and says" and prior to the words "After supper, he took the cup..." the rubric read, "He takes the cup into his hands and says." Properly, there should be a paragraph break after "his body and blood" and "do this in remembrance of me". If there are several patens and chalices following ancient practice all that is on the corporal may be deemed to be included within the scope of the consecration.

(3) **Anamnesis** This paragraph, beginning "Father, with this bread and this cup..." is critical to the understanding of the rite since the function of the anamnesis is to attempt to put into words what the church understands is the significance of "doing this in remembrance of him". Because the meaning of the eucharist is so profound the anamnesis in each eucharistic prayer may focus attention on a particular aspect of this significance. If the key word in **Prayer 1** is "remember", as in "we remember his passion and death" (cf. Luke 22:19), the key word in **Prayer 2** is the equally biblical "proclaim" as in "we proclaim his perfect sacrifice" (cf 1 Cor. 11:26).

(4) **Acclamations** "Christ has died" etc. The purpose of these is to make the prayer more interactive as between celebrant and congregation. In the 2004 edition of the Book of Common Prayer they have been moved from their previous position after the Words of Institution so that the congregation affirms in this way what has just been said by the Presiding Minister. It is regrettable that widely-used alternatives are not included, although the present wording has the merit of simplicity. They are appropriately sung rather than said.

(5) **Epiclesis** The word "epiclesis" literally means "calling upon", and is used of the invocation of the Holy Spirit upon the worshippers (a "communion" epiclesis) or upon the elements (a "consecratory" epiclesis). Here the use is very general, asking that the worshippers may be renewed by the Holy Spirit, united in the body of Christ (the Church), and brought with all God's people (living and departed) into the joy of the eternal kingdom. Given that the petition is within the context of the eucharistic prayer it would appear to be implied that the "renewal" is linked with participation (it having already been indicated, above, that the "eating and drinking" is "in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit").

#### *Doxology with Amen.*

It is customary, in the conclusion of the eucharistic prayer, to indicate the mediatorial work of Christ and also the relationship of the three persons of the Holy Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and for this to lead into a final word of praise (doxology) to which the people respond by saying or singing "Amen." The doxology here is congregational in character and may be sung by all present. It is also in the form of a "blessing" of God, rounding off the character of this particular prayer in a manner which recalls the Jewish *berechah* or prayer of blessing. While this is being said or sung the bread and wine may be raised in the "little elevation" (not to be confused with the medieval "elevation of the host" which took place at the conclusion of each section of the Words of Institution) . Since this is the prayer of the Church and not merely of the Presiding Minister, the "Amen" is highly significant. St. Jerome said (in the fourth century) that it was like thunder in the Church.

### Prayer 3

Prayer 3 is highly unusual in being addressed to each person of the Holy Trinity in turn - normally a eucharistic prayer is addressed to the Father but with appropriate emphasis on the work of the Son and that of the Holy Spirit the prayer as a whole concluding with the Trinitarian doxology (see **Prayer 1** and **Prayer 2**). It is also highly interactive, even more so than **Prayer 1** and **Prayer 2** being constructed as an ongoing dialogue between priest and people. Another very unusual feature is that the Sanctus comes at the end of the prayer and, together with the concluding words with the threefold Amen constitutes the doxology. Although there is a kind of movement of thought in **Prayer 1** and **Prayer 2** that proceeds from the Father to the Son to the Holy Spirit, in **Prayer 3** the Trinitarian concept is highlighted, not only in the manner in which each person of the Trinity is addressed in turn, as mentioned above, but also in the way in which the whole concluding paragraph is addressed to "Father, Son, and Holy Spirit - Blessed Trinity".

The prayer had its origin in the complicated process by which the Church of England moved on, eucharistically, from the provision in the *Alternative Service Book 1980* to *Common Worship 2000* a process described by Bishop Colin Buchanan in his *Common Worship, Eucharistic Prayer H: (in Order One) An Unauthorized Account* in *Ushaw Library Bulletin* and *Liturgical Review*, no 13, September 2000. He explains the history of the developing interaction between celebrant and people from the time of the publication of the Liturgy of the Church of South India (1950) onwards including various unofficial proposals. The matter was taken up by the Church of England's Revision Committee which reported in 1999 that there had been a "wide range of comment on the need for increased congregational participation on what is otherwise perceived as a 'presidential monologue'." The Committee realized that the concern for congregational participation had three aspects; there was a significant number of people for whom any congregational intervention other than the opening dialogue and the Sanctus was unwelcome; there were those asking for regular intervention by congregational acclamation (as a repeated memorable phrase so that there was no need for texts to be closely followed); and there were those who wished to see significant sections of the prayer, even whole paragraphs, presented for corporate recitation so that the congregational speaking would 'carry forward' the sense and content of the prayer. The Committee was opposed to making radical changes in the prayers already prepared for the Church of England but was willing to provide a wholly new prayer in the desired form, and this emerged as what is now Prayer H in the Church of England's *Common Worship*. The Church of Ireland's Liturgical Advisory Committee used Prayer H as its starting point and then improved it out of all recognition, turning a rather uninspired text into one of the great prayers of the 2004 edition of the Book of Common Prayer. Not only was the prayer verbally enhanced but the principle of addressing the three persons of the Holy Trinity in turn altered its ethos and the expression of worship of the whole Blessed Trinity provided a particularly felicitous way in to the Sanctus, placed at the end of the prayer. The words added after the Sanctus gave the prayer a particularly powerful termination in a threefold Amen. The Liturgical Advisory Committee also took care not to overdo the interactive element, turning a draft version of "You came to meet us in your Son...where we might feast with you" back into a presidential section.

If the key biblical word at the heart of eucharistic prayer 1 is **remember** (see above p.57), and that of eucharistic prayer 2 is **proclaim** one can make a case that in eucharistic prayer the key phrase is **thanks and praise**. Both words are biblical, "thanks" from the Greek word *eucharisteo* meaning "to give thanks", used in the four versions of the institution narrative: Matthew (26:27) Mark (14:23) Luke (22:19) and 1 Cor (11:23), "praise" from the Greek

word *eulogeo* used in the reference to the Lord's Supper in 1 Cor 10:16 meaning "bless" or "praise".

The plan of the prayer is,

**The Opening Dialogue**, Salutation, Sursum Corda, and Gratias Agamus.

**Address to the Father**, what God in Christ has done for us.

**Address to the Son**, Words of Institution with responses, followed by Acclamations.

**Address to the Holy Spirit**, what the effect is.

**Address to the Holy Trinity**, leading to the Sanctus.

**The Threefold Amen.**

*The Opening Dialogue*

(1) Salutation

(2) Sursum Corda

(3) Gratias Agamus

See above, as for **Prayer 1** and **Prayer 2**

*Address to the Father*

**Prayer 3** is brief compared to **Prayer 1** and **Prayer 2** and there is no provision for seasonal variation - there are neither Proper Prefaces nor Seasonal Additions. However, the material contained in it is rich in biblical allusion. For example, there is a clear hint at the parable of the Prodigal Son in this section (which is about the father's love - the real theme of the parable itself). The reference to the "table" links the Lord's Supper which we celebrate to the eschatological banquet at the end of time. The phrase "he opened wide his arms upon the cross" is not only vivid in itself but also recalls the early eucharistic prayer attributed to Hippolytus (c.215 A.D.). It is also helpful to have "love" mentioned as the motivation of the perfect sacrifice.

*Address to the Son*, Words of Institution, with responses, leading to acclamations.

This part of the prayer incorporates the Institution Narrative (with appropriate responses) and what in other rites we would call the acclamations. The responses affirm the Johannine truths about Jesus as the bread of life (6:35) and the true vine (15:1). The acclamations are the nearest thing in this eucharistic prayer to the anamnesis in **Prayer 1** and **Prayer 2**. By celebrating the eucharist in this manner we praise the Lord Jesus Christ to whom we are able to say, "**Dying, you destroyed our death, rising, you restored our life; Lord Jesus, come in glory.**" There are echoes here of the scriptural truths contained in the Easter Anthems (BCP pp120,121, drawing on 1 Cor 5:7,8; Romans 6:9-11; 1 Cor 15:20-22).

*Address to the Holy Spirit*, and the effect of this.

It is not possible to categorize this in a limiting sense as a "communion" or a "consecratory" epiclesis (see above). The Holy Spirit is invoked upon the worshippers so that the bread and wine may be to them the body and blood of our Saviour Jesus Christ, in other words that they may have the same nature and significance as the bread and wine at the Last Supper had for the first disciples of Jesus (Matthew 26:26-28; Mark 14:22-24; Luke 22:14-20; 1 Cor 11:23-26). In the context of the celebration of the Passover the words of Jesus may be taken as statements of theological significance with ontological implications. In other words what the elements *are*, following consecration, is determined by the meaning they have for the



worshippers, the function they perform, and the purpose they serve. They are, for the worshippers, therefore, what they are designated, the "body" and "blood" of Jesus, after the manner of a sacrament.

*Address to the Holy Trinity*, leading to the Sanctus.

The word "person" as in "One God, Three Persons" does not mean an individual, otherwise the Christian religion would be guilty of tritheism. Rather it is intended to indicate that the one God proclaimed in the scriptures and of whom the Nicene Creed speaks exists eternally in three modes of Being, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Having addressed each person of the Trinity separately, **Prayer 3** then indicates their indivisibility in words of worship addressed to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, Blessed Trinity, by the worshippers along with "the whole Church throughout the world". The offering of worship is described as "this sacrifice of thanks and praise", referring in particular to the eucharistic prayer itself as it comes to what is to be understood as both its termination and climax.

With regard to the Sanctus, see above as for **Prayer 1** and **Prayer 2**. Its position in **Prayer 3** reflects the view of the liturgical scholars E.C. Ratcliff and A. Couratin that this was a likely feature of second century eucharists.

*The threefold Amen*

The "gift beyond words" is not specified, but may be taken to be the Lord Jesus Christ himself of which the sacrament is the effectual sign.

The threefold Amen is intended to be particularly emphatic, whether said or sung, and sets the seal of the priest and people on the prayer which has been (interactively) offered.

No manual acts are specified. As in **Prayer 1** and **Prayer 2** it is appropriate to take the bread and wine (respectively) in the hands for the two paragraphs of the institution narrative. A gesture of indication (the sign of the cross over the elements, or hands outstretched towards them, or the right hand extended towards them) would seem appropriate with "may this bread and wine be to us..."

The hands should be open for the prayer as a whole and then closed for "for ever praising you and saying..."

The bread and the cup are appropriately raised during the final sentence "Thanks be to you, our God..."

### **The Lord's Prayer**

At this point the common text of Holy Communion Two resumes. This contrasts with the *Alternative Prayer Book* 1984 where there were two separate Orders for Communion

The use of the Lord's Prayer before Communion is attested from the late fourth century onwards, for example in St. John Chrysostom, St. Cyril of Jerusalem, and St. Ambrose. Early Western custom (in the Ambrosian, Mozarabic, African and Roman rites) favoured a position between the fraction (breaking of the bread) and communion. However, Eastern custom preferred a position between the Eucharistic Prayer and the fraction. Gregory the Great (590-604) is now regarded as being responsible for changing its position in the Roman rite to conform to Eastern practice, and this tradition gradually became universal.

In Holy Communion Two the Lord's Prayer is said before Communion if it has not been said at the conclusion of the Intercessions. Having it here, as printed, underlines its suitability as preparation for communion, since the "daily" (*epiousion*) bread may be taken, in this context, to refer to the sacrament, and also has an eschatological significance as in J. Jeremias's translation, "Give us Today the Bread of the Morrow" or "Give us Tomorrow's Bread

Today". There is no provision in Holy Communion Two to have the Lord's Prayer after Communion as in Holy Communion One, as this is a peculiarity of Prayer Books of the 1552-1662 tradition. The Scottish Liturgies of 1637, 1764, and 1929 all had it after the Prayer of Consecration and before the Fraction; and so did the American Liturgy of 1929 and the South African Liturgy of 1954 (all usages of the versions of the Book of Common Prayer in the Provinces concerned). This is a change from "The Ministry of the Sacrament: Alternative Order" in the *Alternative Prayer Book* 1984 which permitted the Lord's Prayer in the 1552-1662 position.

The Lord's Prayer (which is said by the Presiding Minister) may be in the modern or in the (modified) traditional form. The introductory words differ so as to furnish a clue as to which is being used on any particular occasion.

### **The Breaking of the Bread**

This is not simply a symbolic "breaking", but is a practical separation of the bread into squares for the Communion. As far as possible all the bread should be broken at this point for the purpose of distribution; and, to facilitate this it is indicated that the presiding minister may be assisted by the deacon (or, presumably, one fulfilling the deacon's role in the absence of the deacon). But the action also has theological significance as indicated by the quotation from 1 Cor 10:16,17 by which this action is accompanied. The earliest title for the Holy Communion appears to have been "The breaking of bread" (Acts 2:42).

### **The Communion**

#### **Invitation**

The 2004 edition of the Book of Common Prayer provides three options. The first is derived from the Words of Administration in Holy Communion One and is the same as that in the *Alternative Prayer Book*, 1984 with the exception of the addition of the words "with faith" to "Draw near.." The second, "The gifts of God for the people of God", is derived from the liturgy of the Eastern Orthodox church and is also found in the Church of England's *Common Worship*, the term "the gifts" clearly referring to the sacrament. The third combines a reference to Jesus as the Lamb of God who has taken away the sins of the world with a reference to the feast upon the sacrifice - "Happy are those who are called to his supper". The response "Lord I am not worthy to receive you" is derived from the words of the centurion to Jesus and recalls the miracle of healing performed on the occasion of their meeting. The reference to healing recalls what is also in the traditional Words of Administration that Holy Communion is for the benefit of "body and soul" and brings wholeness to those who receive in faith.

#### **Administration**

It is traditionally regarded as essential to the validity of the sacrament for the celebrant invariably to communicate. This he normally does first. The assistant (if there is one) then receives, preferably standing, and then is given the chalice (and a purificator). If several people are administering communion it is in order for lay persons (including licenced lay readers) authorized by the bishop to administer the bread as well as the cup as need arises (General Directions for Public Worship, 14(b), BCP p.77. See above, p.11). Where there are very large numbers of communicants and administration in the sanctuary alone is likely to take an inordinately long time it is in order to have distribution points elsewhere in the Church, at which the paten and chalice are held by clergy and authorized assistants, standing, and there is no reason why the people may not receive from them, standing. In such case it is probably better for the people to walk first to the person holding the bread and then to the person with the cup rather than for those distributing communion to move around.

Three forms of Words of Administration are provided in the 2004 edition of the Book of Common Prayer. The first is a slightly modernised version of that in Holy Communion One. It is probably better not to use this with the first form of the invitation which uses essentially the same form of words. It is customary to say the first half of the words (e.g. "The body of our Lord Jesus Christ...") to one communicant and the second half (e.g. "Take and eat this...") to the next. Bishop Stephen Neill maintained that the two, taken together, constituted a perfect summary of eucharistic theology, and this would appear to be the case at least so far as the act of communion is concerned.

The second form (from the *Alternative Prayer Book* 1984) is shorter and indicates the purpose of receiving the Lord's sacramental body and blood - to "keep" the communicant in the eternal life entered upon when he or she began their spiritual journey at baptism.

The third form focuses attention on the nature of the sacramental gift in words derived both from scripture and from the first form of the administration, "The body of Christ given for you". "The blood of Christ shed for you".

The Words of Administration should be spoken quietly, and each communicant should say "Amen" after the words are spoken and before receiving (the wording of the rubric is confusing at this point). When a small intimate group of communicants is involved it is appropriate to communicate people by name, "John, the body of Christ keep you in eternal life", "Mary, the blood of Christ keep you in eternal life". The chalice must be wiped after each communicant and at the end of the communion. A "ring" should not appear on the underside of the pall when it is replaced.

It is customary, in the Church of Ireland, for the celebrant to begin to administer from the north end of the rail and to move southwards. Elsewhere in the Anglican Communion administration is normally from the south.

When all have communicated the pall is put on the chalice, and both vessels are covered with the linen veil until the ablutions. If, however, the ablutions are to be performed immediately after communion this is unnecessary.

### **Communion Anthem**

The Agnus Dei, "Lamb of God" has been used at Communion since the seventh century A.D., having originally been introduced as a *confractorium* - an anthem sung during the Fraction where large numbers were involved. Originally "Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world, have mercy on us" was sung for as long as the breaking of the bread continued. Two forms, the second being the more traditional, are given here. The rubric, strangely, permits it to be sung "after" the Breaking of the Bread, possibly to allow for the text from 1 Cor 10 to be said; but there is no reason why it may not commence while the Fraction continues.

Other hymns or anthems may be sung or the organ played quietly during the communion of the people.

### **The Great Silence**

A rubric in the *Alternative Prayer Book* 1984 said, "A period of silence may be kept", but this was largely disregarded. However, the working group on the Structure of the Eucharist at the Fifth International Anglican Liturgical Consultation (1995) listed silence after communion in category 1 (indispensable); and in Holy Communion Two it has been made an integral part of the structure of the service and a significant period section of it. The presiding minister and other ministers should *sit down* and, together with the people, observe absolute silence for reflection for a significant period. Attention should also be paid to General Directions for Worship 9 (BCP p76) where it says, "The Great Silence is prescribed in Holy Communion

Two. Periods of silence may be kept as indicated and at any other point in services at the discretion of the presiding minister." In Holy Communion Two silence is also indicated after the invitation to confession (BCP p.202), and is suitable after the readings. Silence is also indicated as an option within the Prayers of the People ("Prayers...may be in silence with biddings").

### **Going out as God's People**

A hymn may be sung here or before the Dismissal. It is desirable that the Dismissal should be the final part of the service as there is an incongruity in telling people to "go" and then keeping them back for another hymn. If there is to be a processional hymn at least the "Go in peace..." should not be said until choir and clergy have proceeded to the back of the Church.

For the same reason the consumption of the elements that remain should take place after communion (preferably during the hymn) and the ablutions may be performed at the same time. The relevant rubric in "General Directions for Public Worship", 14e is not time-specific, "Any of the consecrated bread and wine remaining after the administration of the communion is to be reverently consumed".

### **[Communion by Extension**

At the time of writing the House of Bishops has (following the example of the Church of England) made provision for Holy Communion to be brought from the celebration of the sacrament in church to parishioners at home or in hospital who are unable to be present in church. This is not intended to detract from the normal custom of private celebrations for those who are sick or bedridden. However, it enables a specific link to be made with the worshipping community of which the person is a part and it may be administered by a lay person who has appropriate permission from the bishop. The complete form and the explanatory comments that go with it may be found in Appendix 6 (below p.79).

With regard to the **Ablutions**, a minimal form is for water to be poured on the paten and then into the chalice. A more elaborate arrangement is for cruets of both wine and water to be available, and brought to the celebrant by the assistant. Either of the following procedures is suitable,

- (1) Wine into chalice, wine and water into chalice, water onto paten.
- (2) Water onto paten, wine and water into chalice, water into chalice.

The practice of doing the ablutions underlines the sacred character of the sacramental species and their remains and distinguishes them absolutely from bread and wine which have not been consecrated.

### **Prayer after Communion**

The 2004 edition of the Book of Common Prayer (pp241-336) provides a set of Post-Communion prayers for use with Holy Communion Two. These, for the most part refer back specifically to the eucharistic gifts, although there are some exceptions. A wide range of supplementary material may be found in the Church of England's *Common Worship: Times and Seasons*.

Alternatively, the prayer "Father of all...", composed by Dr David Frost, may be used, and is particularly suitable during the Easter season. The prayer not only makes mention of the paschal mystery but there is also an echo of the Parable of the Prodigal Son.

The fixed and invariable prayer, "Almighty God, we thank you for feeding us..." has a triple focus:

Thanksgiving for Communion,  
Self-Offering,  
The Mission of the Church.

At one level it represents a survival of an attitude more in keeping with the rationale of Holy Communion One which allows self-offering only after Communion, whereas the eucharistic prayer itself is in principle sufficiently comprehensive to permit all aspects of eucharistic theology to be expressed, however briefly, within it. But this prayer has proved popular since its introduction and its final sentence leads naturally into the Dismissal.

### **Dismissal**

#### **The Blessing**

A seasonal blessing is used if there is one ( BCP pp224-36). Solemn blessings for great occasions are provided in the Church of England's publications *Enriching the Christian Year* and *Times and Seasons*.

#### **Words of Dismissal**

These are invariable, except for the Easter Season. A deacon, if he or she is present may say these words, or a person fulfilling this role in the absence of a deacon.

### **Additional Notes on the Celebration**

#### **(1) Blessing children at the rail.**

In many churches it is now customary to bless children who are brought to the communion rail with their parents at the time of communion. No official form is prescribed for this. It is suggested that this should be reasonably substantial, for instance, "The Lord bless you and keep you in eternal life" rather than, merely, "The Lord bless you", and that the right hand of the celebrant be laid on the child's head for an appreciable period of time. Any appearance of "patting" the child's head should be avoided - the act of blessing is not trivial.

It is only necessary to bless the child once. There is no need for the person administering the chalice to repeat the action of blessing performed while the bread is being administered.

#### **(2) Concelebration.**

No rubrical provision is made for this. It is suggested that if it is desired for several priests present to be associated with the celebrant in the consecratory act this could be done in one of the following ways (assuming a "westward" celebration):-

At the Offertory the concelebrating clergy take their positions on either side of the principal celebrant (in a semi-circle if there is a large number, but being careful not to obscure the view of the congregation). During the Eucharistic Prayer the concelebrants stand with hands raised in a gesture of prayerful identification with the act of consecration but without vocal participation.

At the Offertory the concelebrating clergy take their positions as above, and join in vocally (preferably reciting from memory) from "Blessed are you, Father ..." in **Prayer 1** and "Merciful Father..." in **Prayer 2**. Hands should be joined for "who on the night..." and "After supper..." and extended again for "Therefore Father ..." in **Prayer 1** and "Father, with this bread and this cup..." in **Prayer 2**. In **Prayer 3** the concelebrants should say whatever is said by the Presiding Minister from "Father, Lord of all creation" to the end of the prayer. The concelebrants should speak in a low voice.

More elaborate ways of concelebrating are also possible.

### (3) **Supplementary Consecration**

Directions for use "When the Consecrated Elements are insufficient" are to be found on p.240.

These provide:

If either or both of the consecrated elements are insufficient, the priest adds further bread or wine, silently, or using the following words:

Father, having given thanks over the bread and the cup  
according to the institution of your Son Jesus Christ,  
who said, Take, eat, this is my body.

and/or

Drink this, this is my blood.

We pray that this bread/wine also may be to us his body/blood,  
to be received in remembrance of him.

These directions are significant in that the concept of "consecration" is clearly affirmed through thanksgiving over the elements with the use of the dominical words. The words "may be to us" have a long history and are not to be taken as implying a reductionist theology. In the Roman liturgy the form appears *ut nobis corpus et sanguis fiat dilectissimi Filii tui Domini nostri Jesu Christi* (that they may become to us the Body and Blood of your most beloved Son Our Lord Jesus Christ). Nor is there any theological difference between supplementary consecration using the words or when it is performed in silence. In both cases the concept is defined by the words which are printed. There is precedent from the early church for additional consecration in silence, the principle being that the thanksgiving which has already been said is being extended to the additional bread and wine. The addition of further bread and wine is performed by the Presiding Minister who should do this in a manner reflecting the solemnity of the act.

**APPENDIX 1**  
**PROPER OFFERTORY SENTENCES**

**Advent**

Rejoice, rejoice, daughter of Zion: see, your King is coming to you. Zech. 9:9.

**Christmas**

You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ: he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that through his poverty you might become rich. 2 Cor. 8:9

**Epiphany**

Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven. Mt 5:16.

**Lent**

I implore you by God's mercy to offer yourselves to him, a living, holy and acceptable sacrifice. Ram. 12:1

**Passiontide**

Live in love, as Christ loved you, and gave himself up for you, a perfect offering and sacrifice to God. Eph. 5:2

**Easter**

Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. 1 Cor 15:20.

**Rogation Days**

The one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the one who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. 2 Cor 9:6,7.

**Ascension**

We see Jesus, who for a short while was made lower than the angels, crowned now with glory and honour. Heb. 2:9.

**Pentecost**

God has put his seal on us and given us the pledge of his Spirit in our hearts. 2 Cor 1:22.

**Trinity**

Now to the eternal King, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. 1 Tim. 1:17

**Saints' Days**

All your works shall give thanks to you, O Lord, and all your faithful shall bless you. Ps 145:10.

### **Embertide and Missionary Offerings**

But how are they to call on one in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in one of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim him? And how are they to proclaim him unless they are sent? Rom. 10:14

The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few; pray therefore the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest. Luke 10:2

### **Charitable Offerings**

Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me. Matthew 25:40

So then, as we have an opportunity, let us work for the good of all, and especially for those of the family of faith. Gal 6:10

How does God's love abide in anyone who has the world's goods and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses help? 1 John 3:17.



## APPENDIX 2

### INTERCESSIONS AT THE EUCHARIST

The following forms were devised by Revd Clive Wylie, and are used with permission,

#### **The First Form**

As we celebrate the Holy Eucharist to the glory of God, and in thanksgiving for his mercies, let us pray for his Church in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs,

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, you promised through your Son Jesus Christ to hear the prayers of those who ask in faith;

Through Christ our Mediator, who has opened for us a new and living way into your presence;

We pray for your church in all the world... for this diocese and for...our bishop, for...

Grant that we and all who confess your name, may be united in your truth, live together in your love, and reveal your glory in the world.

(May we all attain to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, who fills all in all.)

Lord, in your mercy

**hear our prayer.**

Through Christ our King, to whom all authority in heaven and on earth has been given;

We pray for the nations of the world... for this country and for (N.I.) Elizabeth our Queen, (R.I.) our President, for all in authority and for the communities in which we live and work;

Guide the people of this land and of all the nations in the ways of justice and of peace, that we may honour one another and serve the common good.

(Grant that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that He is Lord, to your praise and glory)

Lord, in your mercy

**hear our prayer.**

Through Christ our great High Priest, who ever presents to you the world in all its need;

We pray for the sick ... the poor ... and those in trouble...(and for ...)

Save and comfort all who suffer, that they may hold to you through good and ill, and trust in your unfailing love.

(Bless and heal, fulfilling the promise of our crucified and victorious Lord to be with us always, to the very close of the age)

Lord, in your mercy

**hear our prayer.**

Through Christ the firstfruits of your new creation, who has gone to prepare a place for us at your right hand;

We bless your holy name for all your servants who have died in the peace of Christ, (for... both those who have confessed the faith and those whose faith is known to you alone), may they rest in peace, and may perpetual light shine upon them.

We rejoice in the faithful witness of your people in every age, and pray that we may share with them the joys of your eternal kingdom.

**Merciful Father, accept these our prayers for the sake of your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.**

## **The Second Form**

In the power of the Spirit and in union with Christ, let us pray to the Father.

Govern and direct your holy Church, O Lord our God; fill it with love and truth; and grant it that unity which is your will.

Enlighten your ministers with knowledge and understanding, that by their teaching and their lives they may proclaim your word.

Give your people grace to hear and receive your word, and bring forth the fruit of the Spirit.

Bring into the way of truth all who have erred and are deceived.

Strengthen those who stand; comfort and help the faint-hearted; raise up the fallen; and finally beat down Satan under our feet.

Guide the leaders of the nations into the ways of peace and justice.

Guard and strengthen your servant Elizabeth our Queen, that she may put her trust in you, and seek your honour and glory.

Endue the High Court of Parliament and all Ministers of the Crown with wisdom and understanding.

Bless those who administer the law, that they may uphold justice, honesty, and truth.

Give us the will to use the resources of the earth to your glory, and for the good of all.

Bless and keep all your people.

Help and comfort the lonely, the bereaved, and the oppressed.

Keep in safety those who travel, and all who are in danger.

Heal the sick in body and mind, and provide for the homeless, the hungry, and the destitute.

Show your pity on prisoners and refugees, and all who are in trouble.

Forgive our enemies, persecutors, and slanderers, and turn their hearts.

Hear us as we remember those who have died in the peace of Christ, both those who have confessed the faith and those whose faith is known to you alone, and grant us with them a share in your eternal kingdom.

Father, you hear those who pray in the name of your Son: grant that what we have asked in faith we may obtain according to your will; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

*In Holy Communion Two in the 2004 edition of the Book of Common Prayer the form of the Intercessions is left to local discretion although certain guidelines are provided to which the suggestions above conform. Three official forms are to be found on pp237-9*

## APPENDIX 3

### LITURGICAL VESTURE

The liturgical canons of the Church of Ireland had their last substantial revision in 1974. At that time permission was given for a stole to be worn in place of the scarf and hood. An ill-judged attempt to gain permission for the use of the chasuble (taken in isolation) was at a later stage defeated in Synod.

The comparable Church of England regulations are in some ways more comprehensive than those of the Church of Ireland and explicitly permit the use of the traditional eucharistic vestments. Given that the most significant of these, the stole, is permitted, there can be no logical reason for not allowing the full set.

The Church of England Canon B8 states,

1. At Morning and Evening Prayer the minister shall wear a cassock, a surplice, and a scarf: and for the Occasional Offices a cassock and a surplice with scarf or stole.
2. At the Holy Communion the celebrant, as also the gospeller and the epistoler, if any, shall wear with the cassock either a surplice with scarf or stole, or a surplice or alb with stole and cope, or an alb with the customary vestments.
3. On any appropriate occasion a cope may be worn at the discretion of the minister.
4. When a scarf is worn, the minister may also wear the hood of his degree.

## APPENDIX 4

### THE REVISED COMMON LECTIONARY

After a period of experimental use (from 1995) the General Synod passed legislation authorizing the Revised Common Lectionary (and two related lectionaries) for use in the Book of Common Prayer 2004. Apart from the permitted use of the old BCP Epistles and Gospels where the traditional rite is used, this has taken the place of previous lectionaries including the "thematic" lectionary in the Alternative Prayer Book.

The Revised Common Lectionary (1992) was produced by the Consultation on Common Texts, an international body with a membership drawn from the Roman Catholic, Anglican, Presbyterian, Methodist, Lutheran, and other churches. It is based on the Roman Lectionary for Mass of 1969 which devised a three-year scheme of readings for Sundays, festivals, and other special occasions, modified in a manner which makes it suitable for ecumenical use. Included with it are courses of readings for a Second Service and for a Third Service prepared by the Church of England Liturgical Commission to supplement the RCL provision. This augmented version of the RCL was produced by an Interprovincial Consultation representing the Church of England, the Church of Ireland, the Church in Wales and the Scottish Episcopal Church.

The two key principles of the Revised Common Lectionary are (1) the spreading of the Sunday readings over three years instead of having a two-year cycle as in the current ASB/APB "thematic" lectionary, and (2) the concept of a continuous reading (lectio continua) as far as is consistent with the retention of the seasons and special events of the Church's Year. The effect is that of providing a much larger selection of readings for the principal service on Sundays and of substituting for the "themes" of the ASB/APB a scheme of reading in which the passages relate not so much to each other as to what has gone before on the previous Sunday and will follow on the Sunday to come.

#### THE LECTIONARY FOR THE PRINCIPAL SERVICE (RCL)

##### (1) THE OLD TESTAMENT READING

During the first "half" of the Church's year (Advent 1 to Trinity Sunday) this relates closely to the Gospel. From Trinity 1 to Proper 29 (the Sunday between 20th-26th November which focuses on the thought of Christ the King) there are two alternatives,

- (a) A series of paired readings in which the Old Testament and Gospel are closely related;
- (b) A series of semicontinuous readings which focus attention on some of the great narratives of the Old Testament.

During the Easter season the RCL provides for the replacement of the Old Testament reading by passages from Acts. However, Old Testament readings are provided as alternatives.

Note that where readings from the Apocrypha are provided alternative readings from the canonical Scriptures have also been supplied. The position of the Church of Ireland on the Apocrypha is to be found in Article 6,

And the other Books ... the Church doth read **for example of life and instruction of manners**; but yet doth it not apply them **to establish any doctrine**.

##### (2) THE PSALM

The psalm is intended as a response to the first reading and a meditation on it, and should therefore be included. It may be noticed that this represents a rather restrictive view of the role of psalmody in the liturgy. Paul Bradshaw in his essay "From Word to Action: The

Changing Role of Psalmody in Early Christian" pp21-37 in *Like a Two-edged Sword - the Word of God in Liturgy and History*, ed. Martin Dudley, the Canterbury Press, Norwich 1995, identifies six usages namely Psalms as prophecy, Psalms as the summary of scripture, Psalms as hymns, Psalms as praise, Psalms as penance, and Psalm as intercession. If the lesson to which the psalm relates is not read then it might be appropriate to omit the psalm and to have a canticle instead (between the Epistle and Gospel). A comprehensive and scholarly exposition of the spirituality of the psalms from a Christian perspective may be found in Margaret M. Daly-Denton, *Psalm-Shaped Prayerfulness – A Guide to the Christian Reception of the Psalms*, the Columba Press, 2010 with a foreword by Wilfrid J. Harrington OP.

### (3) THE EPISTLE

The Epistle is not directly related to the Old Testament reading or to the Gospel. It is, however, appropriate to the season or special occasion. During the Sundays of the year that are not tied directly to special seasons (i.e. those described as "Proper 11" etc.) readings are taken sequentially from particular letters.

### (4) THE GOSPEL

The three-year cycle enables there to be concentration on a particular synoptic gospel each year in the biblical order, Matthew, Mark, and Luke. John is used during the major seasons, the so-called "festal" days of the year.

The Gospels for the Sundays of Lent relate to the Easter proclamation and are to be understood as having to do with the joy of Easter rather than Lenten penitence. This ties in with the ancient perception of every Sunday being a little Easter. On the Sunday before Easter, which is both Palm Sunday and Passion Sunday (compare APB pp438, 442) there is provision both for the Entry into Jerusalem and the Passion to be commemorated (see the arrangement in *Lent, Holy Week, Easter*).

## **COLLECTS AND POSTCOMMUNION PRAYERS**

Since the choice of collects in the Alternative Prayer Book with its "thematic" approach is no longer appropriate when the Revised Common Lectionary is used, a set of *Collects and Postcommunion Prayers* prepared by an interprovincial consultation (drawn from the Church of England, the Church of Ireland, the Episcopal Church in Scotland, and the Church in Wales) was produced for use with the new lectionary. These are not directly linked to the readings but are broadly suitable to the season or occasion. These have been drawn from a wide variety of sources including the Book of Common Prayer of the Church of Ireland (1926, 1933), the APB, a number of Prayer Books in the Anglican Communion including those in use in America, Canada, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, and Wales, *Celebrating Common Prayer*, and collections of liturgical material such as *The Promise of His Glory* and *Lent, Holy Week, Easter*. For the 2004 edition of the Book of Common Prayer they have been correlated with the traditional language collects so that there is consistency when the RCL is used, whether with the traditional language rites or the modern rites.

## APPENDIX 5

### ASSISTING AT HOLY COMMUNION

**Definition:** "Assisting at Holy Communion" includes here specific functions of Deacons, Diocesan and Parish Readers, and other forms of assistance (for example "serving") that may in principle be performed by lay persons in general. It is recognised that there is a wide variety of legitimate custom (which may vary according to the tradition of the parish and the layout of the church). The liturgical assistant *par excellence* is the **deacon**, and where there is a deacon in the parish he or she should be given their proper ministry as a matter of course, the reading of the Gospel and the administration of the cup being the most important functions.

[1] PREPARATION FOR THE SERVICE. The Assistant (clerical or lay) should arrive in good time; and unless there is some local arrangement, for example with the sexton, he (or she) may help by preparing the sanctuary for the celebration. If the Church is equipped with **frontals** the appropriate one should be put on the Communion Table (Holy Table or Altar). Every church should at least have a **runner**, preferably in the colour appropriate to the occasion or season; over this is placed the "**fair linen cloth**", (see Guidelines from the House of Bishops, below), which, when properly made comes down to within a few inches of the floor at either end of the altar. This is, in effect, the "tablecloth" for the Lord's Supper. It must always be clean and should be uncreased. In the centre is placed a large linen square called the **corporal**, the name deriving from the Latin *corpus* "body" (because the sacramental body is placed on it during the celebration). It is not desirable for this to be partly draped over the front of the altar. On the centre of this is placed the chalice (cup) with the **paten** (plate) on top of it. If the paten is not made in such a way that it fits on top of the chalice it may be placed in front of it. Over the top of the chalice is placed a linen square called the **pall**. In many places it is the custom to place the linen **purificator** (handkerchief for wiping the chalice) folded lengthwise and laid across the mouth of the chalice between the chalice and the paten. However this is not really necessary, and it is just as convenient to keep it in the **burse** (see below), if there is one, or to put it to the right of the corporal, if there is not. If there is a **burse** and **veil**, that is a coloured square pocket ("burse" = "purse") and a coloured veil, the veil is placed over chalice and paten, and is given a "shape" by the pall. The **burse**, which holds another square piece of linen known as the **linen veil** (used to cover the vessels between the end of the communion and the blessing) and several additional purificators (sometimes paper purificators are used) is placed on top of the **chalice veil** with its opening towards the back of the altar. There is normally a small side table known as the **credence** on the right-hand side of the sanctuary. On this is placed the **flagon** with a considerable amount of wine (more than is likely to be actually needed for the celebration, to be on the safe side), a bread box, usually made of silver, and two cruets, containing wine and water respectively. If there is only one cruet it contains water. The credence should be covered with a linen cloth of its own on which these vessels sit.

The books for use at the celebration should also be put out. If the altar is free-standing the Book of Common Prayer should be placed on the "south" side to the celebrant's left, with the book open at the appropriate place for the commencement of the service, and with ribbons in those other parts of the service which will have to be found during the celebration (for example, psalm, proper preface, collect and post-communion). Unless there is to be a processional hymn (in which case the celebrant may wish to carry his hymn-book), a full music hymn-book should be placed on the altar. If the altar is not free-standing and there cannot be a "westward" celebration (facing the people) the celebrant's book will be placed at the north end facing south, perhaps on a bookrest. If the assistant is to be at the south end of the Holy Table his Prayer Book should be ready there together with a hymn-book. The

assistant should note that when he is at the south end he should *never, ever* place his elbows on the Communion Table. Hymns numbers and that of the psalm should be put up on the hymn-board(s) if this has not already been done.

Prior to the commencement of the service, the assistant should help preserve an atmosphere of quiet and reverence in the vestry. If Psalm 43 is used as an act of preparation it may be read antiphonally between the celebrant and assistant.

[2] ENTRANCE PROCESSION The celebrant comes last even if it is the curate who is celebrating and the rector of the parish who is assisting. However, it is in order for two clergy to walk in side by side, the celebrant on the left and the assistant on the right. It is, in particular, the deacon's privilege to be to the right of the celebrant throughout the rite, and at the entrance he should be there rather than in front of any visiting clergy. A licensed Reader walks in front of the clergy. It is customary, when the sanctuary step is reached for the assistant to stand to one side and allow the celebrant to enter first. There may be a slight bow from the celebrant, to which the assistant responds.

If it is customary to bow to the altar this is done on first entering the sanctuary and at the end of the celebration. It is not necessary to bow when crossing from one side of the sanctuary to the other during the service.

[3] THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD. On Sundays and festivals this may involve three readings, although if the 1926 Epistles and Gospels are used there is not normally provision for the Old Testament. A licensed Reader (Parish or Diocesan) may read the Old Testament and Epistle, and may also read the Gospel if there is no deacon. If a deacon is present it is his or her special privilege to read the Gospel, and this function should not be usurped by the celebrant (whether or not he happens to be the rector of the parish). Conventionally the Epistle in Holy Communion One is read from the south side, from the lowest step, if there is one, and the Gospel from the north side on a higher step, and there seems no reason why this can not be done when Holy Communion Two is used. Where there are three readings the Old Testament and Epistle may be read from the south side, but it is also highly appropriate for the Old Testament and Epistle to be read from the lectern, and the Gospel (depending on the geography of the Church) from the lectern, from the chancel step, or perhaps even from the pulpit. A "Gospel procession" may be appropriate in some churches. Essentially everything that is done at this part of the service should be of such a character as to underline the dignity and importance of the Bible as God's Word to us.

[4] THE INTERCESSIONS In Holy Communion One the Prayer for the Church Militant is traditionally said by the celebrant, but the word "Minister" may allow this to be done by a deacon or even by a lay minister such as a Reader. In Holy Communion Two it is clearly stated that the Intercessions may be read by a deacon or lay person, or may be in silence with biddings, or may be in the form of open prayer, where members of the congregation contribute." Depending on the geography of the particular church they may be led from the prayer-desk, from the lectern, from a position in the sanctuary, or from any other appropriate place. When adding petitions, it is important to retain the *prayer* form. Since intercessions are addressed to God the Father it is inappropriate to say (to the congregation) "let us pray for..." although it is in order to use the form "we pray for..." Collect forms should not be interpolated into these prayers. Samples of appropriate forms of intercession may be found on pp237-9 of the Prayer Book. Other suitable prayer forms may be found in such collections as *The Promise of His Glory, Lent, Holy Week, Easter, Enriching the Church's Year, and Patterns for Worship*, and in *Common Worship: Times and Seasons*.

[5] THE CONFESSION It is appropriate for this to be led by the assistant in both Holy Communion One and Holy Communion Two.

[6] THE PREPARATION OF THE TABLE In Holy Communion One this precedes the Prayer for the Church Militant. In the Holy Communion Two it takes place after the Peace and before the Great Thanksgiving. The taking up of the collection at this point is much less important than the preparation of the bread and wine (which is of the essence of this part of the service, sometimes called the "Offertory" - BCP p.183, cf. APB, 1984, p.53). The assistant may "serve" by bringing the bread and wine from the credence to the Holy Table. These should be brought *separately*. The bread box should be opened (and if its lid is detachable it should be taken off) and it is brought by the assistant to the celebrant who takes as much bread as he thinks will be needed for the purpose of communion and place this on the paten. Then the assistant brings over the flagon (or if there is a very small number of communicants the cruet of wine instead). Some celebrants prefer the assistant to pour and indicate when this is to stop by slightly raising the cup. Others prefer to take the flagon into their own hands. It is in accordance with ancient custom (and biblical precedent at the Passover) to add a little water to the wine, which is what is meant by references to the "mixed" chalice. It is customary for the celebrant to bow slightly to the assistant at the conclusion of the preparation of the bread and wine.

However, as explicitly mentioned in Holy Communion Two (BCP p.208) and not prohibited in Holy Communion One (BCP p.183) the table may be prepared by a deacon or lay people. One possibility is for the chalice and paten not to be on the altar at all, but for these to be brought from the credence table. Where there is a deacon it is appropriate for him or her to be fully involved.

[7] THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE CUP The cup may be administered by an assistant priest, a deacon (if a deacon is present this is specifically part of his or her ministry), a licenced lay reader or any named lay persons who have been approved by the bishop to perform this function. Although the relevant canon only mentions the cup, the General Directions for Public Worship (BCP p.77, 14b) allow lay persons to administer both bread and cup. It would, in all circumstances, be appropriate for the bishop or priest who presides to administer the bread. In informal "house" celebrations it may be helpful for communicants to administer to one another. The celebrant normally communicates himself first (no celebration of Holy Communion is valid unless the priest communicates), and then gives communion to the assistant. The assistant should not receive communion, awkwardly at the north end, reaching over the top of the altar, but should come out and either stand or kneel (preferably stand) as convenient. The assistant receives the cup and stands with the celebrant facing the people. Administration from north to south is customary in the Church of Ireland, although the opposite appears to be the case in most parts of the Anglican world. With Holy Communion One it is customary to use the first half of the words of administration to one communicant "The blood of Christ ..." and the second half to the next "Drink this..." The saying of the words to people in "railleurs" or anything else that hinders the flow of the administration is liturgically unsatisfactory and should be strongly discouraged. In Holy Communion Two either the modernised traditional form (with the word "you" etc) is used or else one or other of the shortened forms. With Holy Communion Two it is expected that each communicant responds "Amen". The chalice should be held in the right hand and steadied with the left hand under the base, and should be wiped after each communicant has received (the purificator being held in the left hand). It is not at all a satisfactory practice to try to administer two cups at once. In large churches where there are large numbers of communicants communion may be administered from distribution points with both communicants and those administering to them remaining standing. At the General Synod



service (for example as held in Armagh Cathedral in May 2004) this enables many hundreds of people to be communicated in quite a short time.

[8] THE ABLUTIONS These may be performed immediately after all have communicated or after the blessing. There are various ways of doing this. The assistant brings over the cruet(s) when the celebrant finishes consuming what remains of the consecrated elements. Traditionally, a little wine is poured into the chalice, then water and a little wine, and then finally a small amount of water is poured on to the paten. However, an alternative, and perhaps better way is to put water on the paten, wine and water in the chalice, and then water in the chalice. If only one cruet is used, just water is poured, in whichever order the celebrant prefers. The assistant should ascertain when the ablutions are to be performed and how prior to the service.

If the altar is freestanding and the celebrant faces the people during the service, he may come round to the front for the ablutions if he wishes, or these may be done at the credence. If there is a deacon he or she may be encouraged to perform the ablutions either at the holy table or at the credence.

#### [9] THE DISMISSAL

The blessing is pronounced by the presiding bishop or priest. However, it is appropriate for a deacon or reader to say the final words "Go in peace..." etc.

## APPENDIX 6

### HOLY COMMUNION BY EXTENSION (FOR THOSE UNABLE TO BE PRESENT AT THE PUBLIC CELEBRATION)

Approved by The House of Bishops and authorized in the Church of Ireland as from 28 February 2007 for a period of seven years.

While this rite is primarily intended for use with those who are sick, it may on occasion be used with individuals who for a reasonable cause cannot be present at a public celebration of the Holy Communion.

When a member of the community cannot be present at the parish Holy Communion but wishes to receive the Sacrament, it is desirable that the priest, deacon or appropriately trained authorized representative of the community bring the consecrated elements to that person immediately upon completion of the celebration in the church. The continuity between communion and community celebration is thus made clear.

If, however, a person is unable to attend a public celebration for an extended period of time, it is appropriate that the Holy Communion be celebrated with them, members of their family, the parish community, and friends, if possible. In these cases it would be appropriate to involve others in the readings and prayers, using the proper of the day and other appropriate material.

This service may be conducted by a priest, a deacon or lay person authorized by the diocesan bishop.

This form is intended for use with those who for reasonable cause cannot be present at a public celebration of the Holy Communion.

#### THE GREETING

The minister says

The Lord be with you

**and also with you.**

These or similar words may be used:

Brother/sister in Christ,  
God calls us to faithful service  
by the proclamation of the word,  
and sustains us with the sacrament  
of the body and blood of Christ.

Let us now call upon God in prayer  
hear his word proclaimed,  
and receive this holy food from the Lord's table.

THE COLLECT  
of the day or a similar prayer.

#### Proclaiming and Receiving the Word

A passage from the Gospel appropriate to the day or occasion, or one of the following passages is read:

God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish, but may have eternal life. John 3.16

Jesus said, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty." John 6.35

Jesus said, "I am the living bread that came down from heaven; whoever eats of this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh. For my flesh is true food and my blood is true drink. Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them." John 6.51, 55-56

Jesus said, "Abide in me, as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. My father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and become my disciples.

As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love." John 15.4-5a, 8-9

PENITENCE

### **Invitation to confession**

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins, and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 1 John 1: 8,9

**Almighty God, our heavenly Father,  
we have sinned in thought and word and deed,  
and in what we have left undone.  
We are truly sorry, and we humbly repent.  
For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ,  
have mercy on us and forgive us,  
that we may walk in newness of life  
to the glory of your name. Amen.**

Almighty God,  
who forgives all who truly repent,  
have mercy on you,  
pardon and deliver you from all your sins,  
confirm and strengthen you in all goodness,  
and keep you in eternal life;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

A deacon or lay person using the preceding form substitutes *us* for *you* and *our* for *your*.

The Prayer of Humble Access may be said:

**We do not presume to come to this your table,  
merciful Lord,  
trusting in our own righteousness  
but in your manifold and great mercies.  
We are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under your table.  
But you are the same Lord,  
whose nature is always to have mercy.  
Grant us, therefore, gracious Lord,  
so to eat the flesh of your dear Son Jesus Christ,  
and to drink his blood,  
that our sinful bodies may be made clean by his body,  
and our souls washed through his most precious blood,  
and that we may evermore dwell in him and he in us. Amen.**

THE LORD'S PRAYER

As our Saviour Christ has taught us, so we pray

**Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.**

**Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those who sin against us.**

**Lead us not into temptation  
but deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours  
now and for ever. Amen.**

or

As our Saviour Christ has taught us, we are bold to say

**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 minister says

The Church of God, of which we are members,  
has taken bread and wine  
and given thanks over them  
according to our Lord's command.  
I now bring these holy gifts  
that you may share in the communion of his body and blood.  
**We being many are one body  
for we all share in the one bread.**

The minister who gives the bread and wine says

The body of Christ given for you.  
The blood of Christ shed for you.

And the communicant replies **Amen.**

Silence is kept.

It may be appropriate to pray for the needs of those present.  
The following thanksgiving or another suitable prayer is said:

**Almighty God,  
we thank you for feeding us  
with the spiritual food  
of the body and blood of your Son Jesus Christ.  
Through him we offer you our souls and bodies  
to be a living sacrifice.  
Send us out in the power of your Spirit  
to live and work to your praise and glory. Amen.**

THE BLESSING

A priest may say a blessing such as:

The peace of God,  
which passes all understanding,  
keep your hearts and minds  
in the knowledge and love of God,  
and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord;  
  
and the blessing of God almighty,  
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,  
be upon you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

When a priest is not present all may say together:

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,  
be with us all evermore. **Amen.** 2 Corinthians 13: 14

Any of the consecrated bread and wine remaining after the administration of the communion is to be reverently consumed.

**Guidelines for Clergy and for Lay Eucharistic Ministers**

The provision for Holy Communion by Extension allows people who are unable to attend the parish celebration (either Sunday or weekday), to feel part of the greater community of believers who have gathered at the Lord's Table together. The communion should be administered only by the clergy or by authorized lay Eucharistic ministers.

Any lay person administering the Sacrament by extension shall be authorized by the diocesan bishop to carry out this ministry and shall have undertaken training. The precise nature of the training would be decided by the diocesan bishop in conjunction with the parochial clergy, but it would need to include discussion regarding the nature and understanding of the Sacrament of Holy Communion as the Church of Ireland has received it, without detracting from the mystery of the Sacrament and the diversity of devotional opinion which the faithful may hold. Practical training in the administration of the Sacrament would also be necessary.

In addition, the pastoral implications arising from Holy Communion which has been brought from the parish Eucharist, (as opposed to a 'private' celebration with the priest and person)

will need to be addressed. Due preparation of the wider community must ensure that this ministry is understood to be an extension of worship and not a social visit.

### **When the Sacrament should be brought from the Parish Celebration**

It is most appropriate that the Sacrament be administered as soon as is practically possible after the celebration of the Eucharist in the church. The time lapsed between the service in the church and the reception in the home/hospital is to be made as short as possible, so that the connection between the celebration and the administration of the Sacrament is clear. The presiding minister may wish to send out lay Eucharistic ministers to administer Holy Communion by extension during the course of the liturgy. The most appropriate point for this would be immediately after the Great Silence. In such cases the communicant in the home may have a sense of sharing in the same service as the community worshipping in the church.

Arrangements shall be made with the parishioner(s) before-hand so that they may prepare themselves in advance to receive communion, preferably by reading to themselves some of the liturgy actually being used in the church. The exact time of communion by extension should, as far as possible, be consistent week by week or month by month.

Persons who should receive this ministry

- 1 Those who are ill, at home.
- 2 Those who are in hospital. This would include patients unable to attend a service in a hospital chapel but who would desire to receive communion in the ward immediately after such a service.
3. Those who are housebound or confined to nursing or residential care.

The desire of a communicant to have a 'full' celebration of the Eucharist should always be respected.

### **General guidelines**

At the actual celebration of the Eucharist, only sufficient of the consecrated elements as is necessary for communion by extension should remain; otherwise, what is left should be consumed as normal. This will demand some planning before-hand by the presiding minister.

At the time of bringing the Sacrament by extension, the elements should be carried in a dignified and reverent manner, for example in a private communion set or a bread box/pyx and a small flagon which should be placed in a small cloth bag or pouch.

At the time of the communion, the elements should be placed on a corporal, on an appropriate surface (i.e. a small table). It may be appropriate also (where custom allows), to place a small cross and/or candle in view of the person(s) to receive communion.

At the conclusion of the rite, the Eucharistic minister must consume all the remaining consecrated elements and cleanse the vessels with water.

Only the rite of Holy Communion by Extension provided by the Church of Ireland should be used.

Necessary vessels and materials for Holy Communion by Extension

- 1 Bread box ]
- 2 Small flagon for consecrated wine ] from a
- 3 Small flagon for water ] private communion set
- 4 Small chalice & paten ]
- 5 Corporal & purificator
- 6 Small Cross & candle (where appropriate)
- 7 Bible
- 8 Prayer Book(s) or Holy Communion by Extension card(s)
- 9 stole (where customary for the priest or deacon)

**APPENDIX SEVEN**  
**A EUCHARISTIC PRAYER**

**WHICH MAY BE USED WHEN A SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF CHILDREN IS PRESENT**

*This eucharistic prayer contains echoes of the tradition of teaching within the family at the Passover. Therefore it is appropriate that the questions be asked by a child and the answers given by someone senior in their discipleship.*

The Lord is here.

**His Spirit is with us.**

*or*

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 our thanks and praise.**

Q. WHY DO WE GIVE OUR THANKS AND PRAISE?

A. **GOD IS LOVE AND HE DOES WONDERFUL THINGS.**

Lord of all life,  
you created the universe  
where all things reflect your glory.  
You give us this great and beautiful earth  
to discover and to cherish.

*One of the following or another short preface may be used.*

You give us the starry sky above,  
the sun and the moon  
and everything that gives us light.

*or*

You give us the fish in the sea,  
the birds of the air, all the animals  
and every plant and tree.

*or*

You give us love that lasts for ever  
in your Son Jesus Christ,  
and in him you bring us close to you.

*or*

*In times of sadness*

You give us your love,  
and, even when we are unhappy,  
you wipe away our tears  
and fill us with your peace.

*or*

*In times of celebration*



You give us happy times  
and things to celebrate;  
In these we see your kingdom  
and taste a feast for all to share.

You made us all  
to love and to serve you;  
and so we join with the angels  
to sing your praise:  
**Holy, holy, holy Lord  
God of power and might,  
heaven and earth are full of your glory.  
Hosanna in the highest!**

**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.  
Hosanna in the highest!**

We thank you, loving Father,  
because you sent Jesus, your Son,  
to be born and to live among us.  
He gave his life for us on the cross  
and shows us the way to live.

Q. WHY DO WE SHARE THIS BREAD AND WINE?  
A. **THEY SHOW THE LOVE OF JESUS FOR US.**

On the night before he died  
Jesus took bread.  
He gave thanks, broke it,  
and shared it with his disciples.  
This is my body, he said,  
given for you.  
Do this to remember me.

After they had eaten,  
he took the cup of wine,  
gave thanks, and shared it with his disciples.  
This is my blood, he said,  
poured out for you and for all people  
to save them from their sins.  
Do this to remember me.

Father, send your Holy Spirit,  
that this bread and this wine  
may be to us the body and blood  
of your only Son our Saviour Jesus Christ,  
and change us more and more  
to be like him.

**Make us joyful as we celebrate  
his death for us on the cross  
and his rising from the dead;  
and share these gifts  
which strengthen us to follow him.**

Q. HOW DO WE FOLLOW JESUS CHRIST?

A. **BY LOVING GOD AND OUR NEIGHBOUR.**

Help us to love all people  
and to work together for that day  
when all the needs of the world are met,  
suffering is ended,  
and the whole of creation  
is gathered into your loving arms.

**With all your saints  
we give you glory  
through Jesus Christ,  
in the strength of the Spirit  
for ever and ever. Amen.**

*In a letter send out to the clergy of the Church of Ireland on 17<sup>th</sup> March 2011 by the Revd Gerald Field, Hon. Secretary of the Liturgical Advisory Committee the following points were made:*

*This eucharistic prayer is the culmination of a lengthy process by the Liturgical Advisory Committee, in response to a request to provide a prayer that can be used where children comprise a significant part of the congregation. The House of Bishops had approved the use of the prayer for a period of seven years.*

*In considering examples from across the Anglican Communion, the Committee felt such a prayer worked best where a child (or children) was involved in the offering of the prayer. Consequently, the rubric in italics explained the reasoning behind the form used [above], and a suggested way of offering the prayer. As always local custom and liturgical space would determine where best to position those involved, such that they would complement the worship offered to God by all present, rather than be a distraction.*

*The Committee was also very clear in its understanding that this prayer was not intended to be used regularly Sunday by Sunday as a “fourth” prayer under the heading of **The Great Thanksgiving** in Holy Communion Two. It had been prepared for use only where “a significant number of children is present”.*

*In offering this prayer for use in congregations of the Church of Ireland the LAC hoped that it would enable children more readily to engaged with this element of the Eucharistic Celebration in a way that was both inclusive and made the prayer more easily understood. It the prayer was used any feedback that might be offered would be valued.*

**EUCCHARISTIC DOCTRINE**  
**FROM SERMONS ON THE EUCHARIST PREACHED IN TWO**  
**CATHEDRALS (ARMAGH AND ST PATRICK'S DUBLIN)**  
**[EDITED AND ABBREVIATED]**

**EUCCHARISTIC TITLES [PROLOGUE]**

"What's in a name?" we say. But names are important, because they signify the underlying reality of what is named. And so, I am going to speak this morning about the titles or names we give to the Holy Communion, particularly those to be found at the beginning of the Holy Communion service. Each of these titles or names is biblical. Each of them teaches us something about the nature of the service as it is understood in the Church of Ireland, as part of the Church universal. Each of them has something to say to us as we take part in the Holy Communion this morning.

Now where do we find these titles or names? Well, let us look at the top of p.201 of the 2004 edition of the Prayer Book, and we will find "The celebration of *The Holy Communion* also called *The Lord's Supper* or *The Eucharist*." Let us take each of these terms in turn and look at their scriptural roots and see what they have to teach us about the nature of this service, which means so much to us.

"Communion" means "union with" and it is an attempt to render a virtually untranslatable word in the Greek Testament. That word is the Greek *koinonia* and one gets the gist of it if one speaks about "sharing" or "participation". And so, in the authorized version of the Bible in 1 Corinthians 10:16 it says, "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ". The New International Version has "participation" at this point, and the Revised Standard Version, the new RSV and the Jerusalem Bible all have "sharing". What this means is that the Holy Communion service has to do with something which brings us into union with Christ and also unites us one to another. We are sharing, we are participating in the sacrament of his body and blood, we are the beneficiaries of his once for all sacrifice by which we are reconciled to God and also to our fellow worshippers.

The service in which we are participating is also called *The Lord's Supper*. It is a fellowship-meal and recalls the fellowship our Lord Jesus Christ had with his disciples during the course of his earthly ministry. Especially, and above all, it recalls the Passover he shared with the Twelve in the Upper Room on the night before he died. When we use the term "Lord's Supper" it inevitably recalls for us the thought of the "Last Supper". In the vestry of the little suburban church I grew up in, All Saints' Blackrock, in the Diocese of Dublin, over the case where the linens were kept there was a print of Leonardo da Vinci's famous picture of the Last Supper. Always, when my rector, that saint of God Harry Dobbs came into the vestry and said the vestry prayer after the Communion service he faced that picture, and it made in a way a connection between what had just happened in the church and what had taken place in the Upper Room when the Lord took bread, gave thanks over it and gave it to his disciples saying "Take, eat, this is my body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of me. And, in the same way, after supper he took the cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them saying, Drink this, all of you, for this is my blood of the new covenant which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me".

So Holy Communion means sharing in the effectual signs of the mystery of what God has done for us in Christ on Calvary's cross and in the power of the Holy Spirit. It also means taking part in a sacred feast that links what we are doing here and now with what the Lord

Jesus Christ did with his disciples in the Upper before he died. It has also to do with *thanksgiving*. And that is what the word *Eucharist* signifies, it comes from the Greek word *eucharisteo* meaning "to give thanks". For some reason Church of Ireland people seem to fight shy of this word, but I think it's a lovely word, and it is certainly scriptural for did not the Lord "give thanks" over the bread and wine at the Last Supper? This giving thanks was a "grace" before and after the meal, but it was more than a "grace" in that there was at the Passover commemoration of all that God had done for his people from the Exodus onwards and thanks was given for this; and thanksgiving led on to supplication that the Lord would continue to meet the needs of the people and to answer their prayers. In a similar way today when we have Holy Communion, at the heart of the service is the great prayer of thanksgiving and consecration or Eucharistic Prayer as it is known. In this prayer we recall what God has done for us in creation, and in salvation, and we look for the consummation of his whole purpose for humanity at the end of time. At the heart of this is our recollection, of all that he has done for us in and through our Lord Jesus Christ, for "we remember his passion and death", "we celebrate his resurrection and ascension", and "we look for the coming of his kingdom". The prayer as a whole is focused upon the Institution Narrative, as it is called, or the Words of Institution, reminding us of what Jesus said and did when he founded the Holy Communion in the first place.

"What's in a name"? I hope I have said enough this morning to indicate the importance of the names for the Holy Communion, of which those in the Book of Common Prayer are only a sample, many other terms being used, for example, in the Bible the "breaking of bread", and in the Eastern Orthodox Church "The Liturgy" and "The Holy Mysteries". Because the Holy Communion is so great an ordinance one name alone does not suffice, but each name throws some light on its significance, for us here in this Cathedral Church this morning and throughout the whole of Christendom.

## **A. EXTRACTS FROM FOUR SERMONS ON THE BIBLICAL WORDS "REMEMBRANCE" "COMMUNION", "PROCLAMATION" AND "THANKSGIVING"**

### **1. REMEMBRANCE**

St. Luke's Gospel 22:19 "Do this in remembrance of me..."

"Remembrance". This word occurs in just two of the four biblical accounts of the founding of the Holy Communion by Jesus at the Last Supper. We find it in St. Luke's Gospel, and also in 1 Corinthians. It is not in either Matthew or Mark. May I just remind you what St. Luke says. I am assuming here that despite some textual problems, the whole of what I am reading to you is part of the authentic Gospel, as Luke wrote it:

And when the hour came, he sat at table, and the apostles with him. And he said to them, "I have earnestly desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer; for I tell you I shall not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God." And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he said, "Take this, and divide it among yourselves; for I tell you that from now on I shall not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes". And he took the bread and when he had given thanks he broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." And likewise the cup after supper, saying, "This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood."

From this passage we learn several things. First, that the Holy Communion was instituted at the Lord's Last Supper with his disciples before He died, and that this was the Passover. Second, that Jesus himself did not eat the Supper, but rather made a vow of abstinence not to receive it until God's purpose for Him and in Him should be fulfilled. So whatever He gave

to the disciples or communicated to them during the meal was a gift from Him to them - it was not something which He himself shared in. And we also learn that He assumed that whatever He did during this particular Passover would go on, bearing the special significance that He was giving to His own symbolic acts. "This is my Body." "This cup is the new covenant in my Blood." "Do this in remembrance of me." Now what precisely were the disciples to "do", and what did it mean to do it "in remembrance of" Him? This is a more difficult question to answer than appears on the surface from those apparently simple words in St. Luke's Gospel. For the Passover was an immensely long and complicated ceremony, including questions, blessings, a rehearsal of history, and the consumption of a Lamb. Were the disciples to "do" all this in remembrance of Jesus? Were they to include the washing of the hands, the bitter herbs, the salt water, the fruit, and the Lamb itself which had been offered in sacrifice at the Temple in Jerusalem? Or were there certain essential things to be retained whilst others could be discarded? How often were the disciples to "do" this - once a year, annually, just as the Passover itself was and is performed to this day? Or more often, perhaps whenever the disciples met to have fellowship together and to "break bread"?

The answer seems to have been that the disciples retained as essential only those elements of the Passover which had been given special significance by Jesus - and ultimately discarded the rest - although for some time the "breaking of bread" or what we would call "Holy Communion" occurred within the context of a common meal. Only gradually were the vital actions with the bread and wine separated from this meal of fellowship and developed into a liturgy, a service; and that liturgy, that service, was based on what Jesus had done when he took the bread, the unleavened bread that was used at every Passover and gave it a new meaning, which referred it to Him, and when he took the cup of wine, one of the four cups that would have been used at every Passover and gave it a new meaning which referred it to Him. When the Jews took the unleavened bread it reminded them of the time when they had been slaves in Egypt. When they had left that country they left in such haste, and they were so anxious to get away from Pharaoh they did not put leaven in their bread, and there was no time for the bread to rise. Ever afterwards, when they ate the unleavened Bread at Passover, they felt as if they were still there, they were reliving those times, they were going through that same experience which their ancestors had gone through, of deliverance from slavery and of the journey through the desert and on to the Promised Land. "This is the Bread of Affliction", they were told, "Which our forefathers ate in the land of Egypt: all who are hungry, let them come in and eat: all who are needy, let them come in and share with us the Passover: Now we are here: next year may we be in the land of Israel! Now we are slaves: next year may we be free men." This is what the unleavened bread of the Passover still means to Jews; and the very words I have read, the form of which developed over the centuries, reflects their bitter experience of continued exile over a long period, from *Eretz Yisrael*, the land of Israel. However, the Lord Jesus Christ gave to that unleavened bread on the night before He died, a new meaning, a new significance that would be remembered by His followers. Just as others then interpreted the various parts of the rite so that they came to understand these more deeply as symbols representing significant truths, so did Jesus for His followers in a decisive, in a unique manner. "This is my body which is given for you" He said, "do this in remembrance of me." This stands for me. This stands for me giving myself for you. This stands for me giving myself to you. Do this to remember me. Whether the bread used in the Christian Eucharist is unleavened or not is of comparatively little significance, and different parts of the Church have different traditions in the kind of the bread they use. What matters now is that it effectually represents Christ. And this remarkable new meaning was in a sense reinforced when after Supper Jesus took the Cup, the third Cup of wine over which thanks was given to God the Creator and Sustainer of the universe who was also the Saviour of Israel. "This cup", He said, "which is poured out for you is the new

covenant in my blood." The cup of wine was to signify his blood poured out in sacrifice for the sins of all humanity. It would stand for the new relationship, the new agreement, the new testament or covenant made between God and man through Jesus Christ and his once-for-all sacrifice. It was to be a permanent reminder of the life of Jesus given for us, shared with us.

And so, just as the Old Testament believer came to the annual celebration of the Passover and in a sense re-lived the experience of deliverance from slavery in Egypt, so the disciple of Christ comes to the Lord's Table to commemorate a still greater deliverance. Through Jesus Christ we have been delivered from the slavery of sin. When we come to the Lord's Table, when we "do" what Our Saviour Christ has commanded us, when we take the bread and give thanks over it, and it is shared among the communicants, so we "remember" Him and His sacrifice. We remember the death of Jesus in such a manner that we "re-live" it and it becomes a living reality for us. We "recall" it so powerfully that it is as if we were there in the Upper Room when He spoke of his forthcoming sacrifice, and at the foot of the Cross when He made it. When we come to Communion, when we celebrate the memorial of His Passion, "we are as if there." We become, as it were, witnesses of that great act of self-giving, that "one oblation of himself once offered" which the Prayer Book rite speaks of. And by making our communion, through faith in Christ we become in a sense participants in that great once-for-all offering.

Did you ever think why it was that the early Christians dispensed with the Passover Lamb when they had their Communion services, as we would now call them, when they ate the Lord's Supper? Partly, of course, it must have had something to do with the fact that from the beginning they "remembered" the death of Jesus whenever they met together for their meal of fellowship - and so they could not have had the Passover Lamb which was tied to ceremonies that occurred just once a year, annually. And in any case after the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in A.D. 70 sacrifices ceased and the Lamb could no longer be eaten. But there is a more fundamental reason, namely that there was no need any more for believers to have a lamb offered in sacrifice and then eaten at home by the worshippers. For the Lord Jesus Christ was their Passover, He was for Christian believers the Passover Lamb. He had been slain for them, once for all and once only when He gave his life for them on Calvary; and those who "remembered" Him at Communion received Him in their hearts by faith with thanksgiving through the sacrament of His Body broken, and His Blood outpoured. And this is what still happens when we as church members celebrate the Holy Communion, and do what He commanded us "in remembrance of Him." This act of "remembrance", so-called, is a dynamic act that recalls us to Calvary and enables us to receive all the benefits of Christ's sacrifice. To "remember" Jesus, then, is to experience his presence and to know that He died for us. So "do this in remembrance of Him".

## **2. COMMUNION**

1 Cor 10:16,17 "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the same loaf."

This is the reading in the Revised Standard Version. What do other versions say? The Authorized/King James and the Revised both have "communion". "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a communion in the blood of Christ" etc., and this is also the rendering of the Jerusalem Bible. And the New English Bible speaks of a "means of sharing" the body and blood of Christ. All of this goes back to a word used in the Greek original, which like certain other New Testaments words is really so rich and varied in its associations as to be virtually untranslatable. *koinonia*, the Greek original does not have an exact equivalent in any other languages, it is rather one of those words that acquires a special significance in

Christian usage, rather like *abba*, Father, or *agape*, love. But we will not go far wrong if we think of it in terms of participation, and sharing, and of communion, "union with". It also carries implications of fellowship, even of partnership.

The word *koinonia* appears no less than nineteen times in the Greek New Testament. But what we are concerned with today is its meaning according to its use in the tenth chapter of 1 Corinthians. Let us examine this for a few minutes and see what light this throws on our understanding of the communion service.

It is, perhaps, fortunate, that among the early churches founded as a result of the missionary journeys recorded in the Acts of the Apostles there was one which seems to have had more than its fair share of troubles and difficulties. Because the Church in the city of Corinth in Greece, although it is described as "not lacking in any spiritual gift" was not lacking in misunderstandings either. It was necessary for the sacred writer to put together a lengthy letter, probably written from Ephesus, and to send this to the Church at Corinth to clarify the disputed matters. And that is how 1st Corinthians originated. It was a letter explaining all sorts of things, and in an incidental kind of way, as part of the canon of Scripture it now throws light for us on the way in which the first followers of Jesus understood his words and his deeds.

One of the questions at issue in the Church at Corinth was that of meat that had been offered in sacrifice to the pagan gods. Were Christians allowed to eat this or not? If they bought meat in the market-place from pagan butchers were they to enquire had it first been sacrificed as part of a non-Christian religious ceremony? If a non-Christian neighbour invited them to dinner, were they to eat meat if they knew for sure that it had been offered in worship to a non-Christian deity? This issue may seem to be an incredibly remote one to those who are living in the twentieth century -very nearly the twenty-first century. But we have to remember that to share in the meat offered in sacrifice was in effect to be united to the god who had been worshipped in that sacrifice. And so for Christians even the most apparently innocuous social occasions could quite easily involve them in the sin of idolatry.

And so, in this passage we get a reminder of what to the sacred writer was the true significance of participation in the Lord's Supper. There is no mention of meat here, for, as I explained last Sunday, for the earliest Christians, as indeed for all believers, the Lord Jesus Christ is Himself the Paschal Lamb. But he explains instead the true meaning, following our Lord's own teaching, of the bread and the cup. "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the same loaf." Those who receive Communion are having fellowship with Jesus Christ. This meal, this sharing, this participation, unites us with Him. It makes us one with Him. And it unites us one with another.

Now, if this is so, if participation in communion unites those who take part in it with the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, who was crucified, who offered His life as a sacrifice, whose blood was shed for us, whose body hung on the cross for us, if, sacramentally, we share in that which was offered, how can believers have fellowship even by implication with demons and false gods? "You cannot" it says, "drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons. Shall we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than he?"

Perhaps now we can begin to see the relevance and importance of this passage both to our understanding of the Lord's Supper and to our practice of Christian living. May I underline the very emphatic language used in Scripture. The bread and wine that are used at

Communion are no mere tokens. They are effectual signs, that is, they truly represent and communicate, they convey that which they stand for. And what they stand for is no less than the life of Jesus, given for us, offered for us. We do well to remember this when we come to the Lord's Table and receive the sacrament of His Body and His Blood. We are sharing in His Body, sharing in His Blood. And we are doing so in a manner which involves us in the closest possible relationship with one another. We are saying, "We belong to You, Lord, and to You, Lord, only." And we are saying that we belong to one another. Anything which in practice is a contradiction of this is a violation of the sacrament.

And this brings me to the other point mentioned, our practice of Christian living. The relationship established with Jesus Christ through the Cup of blessing and the Bread that we break is an exclusive one - and it admits us to a certain fellowship with other believers which is also special. So there is no room for any other relationships or practices which are in any sense incompatible with our sharing in Christ's sacrifice. For "the cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ?" That is what we are here for - to have communion and fellowship with Christ Jesus. That relationship must remain unsullied, undefiled.

### 3. PROCLAMATION

1 Cor 11:26 "For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes."

How fortunate it was that the Church in Corinth, probably around about the spring of 55 A.D., got itself into such a muddle that somebody had to write to the local congregation and explain what it should believe, how it should organize its affairs, and the manner in which it should worship! To this apparent accident, and the preservation of the letter, we owe the only clear references to the Lord's Supper in the New Testament outside the Gospels and Acts.

A previous sermon focused attention upon the meaning of the Lord's Supper as participation, sharing, communion, fellowship, in the sacramental Body and Blood of Jesus, arising out of a discussion in this very same letter. Now in the eleventh chapter we come to a passage in which Paul the Apostle, the founder of the Church at Corinth, recalls his friends to a true understanding of what they are doing when they come together for their time of fellowship, which at this time still involved an actual meal. The problem seems to have been that their attention was so taken up with what they were eating and drinking that they were in some danger of forgetting why they were doing all this and in whose memory this meal was being held. Scenes of disorder, described at the beginning of the chapter, go some distance to explain the reason why the essential ingredients of the Eucharist or Holy Communion were eventually separated from the more general table-fellowship and became a liturgy or service on their own. For it appears that it was the custom for each person to bring his or her own food, just like a modern picnic, and relations between some of the participants were so bad that those who were poor and did not have enough food to eat with them simply went hungry. Others were so greedy that they sat down immediately and ate all their rations without waiting for the rest or sharing in the fellowship. And, worst of all, there were some who may have actually got drunk. It was to such kind of folk, not to devout communicants that those very severe words of the apostle are addressed later on in the chapter when he says whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup in an "unworthy manner" will be guilty of profanation of the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ. There is no doubt that he was quite horrified that such a thing should happen, just as we would be. "What!", he says, "Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I commend you in this? No, I will not."



And then, in the most solemn words, he reminds them of their heritage. "For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, 'This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.' In the same way also the cup, after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.' For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes."

We should note first his stress on the authenticity of what he is saying. He is not passing on to them, he is not reminding them, of something that came to him just by hearsay, rather he "received it from the Lord." The words used in the Greek here, *paralambano* and *paradidomi* are technical terms used for the careful and accurate transmission of a tradition. He is not saying that he received this directly by revelation from Jesus. Rather, he received it from those who could verify what had actually happened on the night before Jesus died. We need to remember that in his letter to the Galatians he recalls how on one occasion he had gone up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and had remained with him fifteen days, and this was not the only time he met Peter. According to Acts he went up to Jerusalem on more than one occasion and took part in discussions with the original church leaders. It is, I would suggest, quite inconceivable that he would have been mistaken in such a matter. He got the details of the Supper and the command of Jesus about it from those who knew what they were talking about. He was well acquainted with at least one of those who had actually been there. And so as we examine this passage we may be confident that we are standing upon the absolute bedrock of scriptural historicity and truth.

We may note, second, the emphasis upon the once-for-all sacrifice of Jesus. The very words, "on the night when he was betrayed" immediately relate the founding of the Holy Communion to that night of tragedy when one of the Lord's closest followers turned against him and set in motion the sequence of events which was to culminate on the morrow in His suffering and death. The bread and the wine are effectually to represent Christ's sacrifice. "Body" and "blood" are in this context terms related to the offering of sacrifice. In the sacrificial system "body" and "blood" are separated when the victim is slain for the purpose of offering. The bread and wine of the Eucharist, consecrated separately as Christ's "body" and "blood" stand for His death. His body is "for us" that is, it has been offered on our behalf. The cup stands for the new covenant, the new agreement or relationship, made possible only through the shedding of the blood of Jesus, which was also "for us".

We may note, third, the command of Jesus, "Do this in remembrance of me." We have already thought about this to some extent a few weeks ago when I preached on the word remembrance. What we need to consider this morning is that this word is used in a very strong sense. It does not mean just thinking of something or somebody who lived in the past. The Greek word used here *anamnesis* has the sense of a liturgical act which in a real way has the effect of making present that which is being commemorated. When we "remember" Jesus He, who died and has risen, becomes present to us. And his once-for-all sacrifice is no longer merely an historical event but a great act of deliverance whose power and efficacy is undiminished and will remain utterly sufficient even for all eternity. How do we "remember" Jesus? How do we commemorate his once-for-all sacrifice upon Calvary's cross so that we are "as if there"? Well, as I have already suggested, by performing the liturgical act which Our Lord Jesus Christ commanded us to continue. Whenever in Christ's name we take the bread, give thanks over it, break it, and consume it we are performing that act of commemoration which enables the death of Jesus to be effectually remembered. Whenever we take the cup, give thanks over it, and drink what is in it, we ratify the new covenant. But there is more to it even than that. "For as often..." it says in this vitally important passage,

"For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes." A ritual act does not speak of itself, it needs words, interpretation. And so the solemn Passover, within which the Holy Communion was first celebrated, contains a rehearsal of God's mighty acts of deliverance. To this day when the Jews keep this, one of their greatest of holy days, the youngest person present asks, "Why is this night different from all other nights?" And this is a signal for the retelling of the whole story of the Exodus. In a similar way when we celebrate the Holy Communion we not only perform the ceremony, but we interpret it, we proclaim what God in Christ has done for us. We tell the whole world about it, or at least those who are prepared to come and listen.

The word translated here as "proclaim" (the AV has "shew") is a tremendous word, *kataggello*, and it has the sense not just of announcing something but of an announcement or proclamation made with authority. In classical Greek it is used of proclaiming war or announcing a festival. In the papyri contemporary with the New Testament it is used of a widow making an official pronouncement regarding the appointment of a representative to look after her interests in consequence of her husband's death. It is used of the announcement of an emperor's accession to the throne. Always the word carries with it weight and authority.

It is a word that is associated particularly with preaching in the New Testament, for the disciples proclaimed with authority the truth about Jesus. They proclaimed the word of God. They proclaimed Christ. They proclaimed through Jesus the resurrection of the dead. They proclaim the Messiahship of Jesus. They proclaimed that the way was open to the God whom people had ever sought but never found. They proclaimed a Gospel. And at the heart of that Gospel is the death of Christ, which is shewn forth, announced, heralded, whenever the Eucharist is celebrated. "For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death, until he comes."

#### **4. THANKSGIVING (MAUNDY THURSDAY)**

St. Mark 14:23 "And when He had given thanks..."

On the Thursday of Holy Week, Maundy Thursday, we think especially of the night before Jesus died, the night on which the Last Supper was held, the night when the Holy Communion was instituted and the command was given, "This do in remembrance of me". "Remembrance" was the theme of our first address; "Communion" of our second, and "Proclamation" of our third on Sunday night last. This morning we are going to think about "Thanksgiving", remembering that our Lord "gave thanks" at the Last Supper. One of the titles for the Holy Communion is the "Eucharist", which is simply the Greek word meaning "thanksgiving", and, when we use it this reminds us that thanksgiving lies at the heart of what we do when we come together to have communion.

This is something that was well brought out in the earliest description of the Holy Communion that we know of outside the pages of the New Testament. It comes from the pen of a second century writer known as Justin Martyr. Justin, who is writing to the Emperor to commend the Christian religion, explains what happens when members of the Church meet weekly for worship, and this is what he says,

"And on the day which is called the day of the sun (Sunday) there is an assembly of all who live in the towns or in the country; and the memoirs of the Apostles or the writings of the prophets are read, as long as time permits. Then the reader ceases, and the president speaks, admonishing us and exhorting us to imitate these excellent examples. Then we arise all together and offer prayers; and, when we have concluded our prayer, bread is brought and wine and water, and the president in like manner offers up prayers and thanksgivings with all his might; and the people assent with Amen; and there is the distribution and partaking by all

of the Eucharistic elements; and to them that are not present they are sent by the hand of the deacons. And they that are prosperous and wish to do so give what they will, each after his choice..."

Well, that is only an extract. Elsewhere he describes the ceremony of baptism; and referring again to the Holy Communion he mentions the exchange of the Peace; and he tells us a little bit more about the prayer offered up by the president, what we would call the "celebrant".

And he takes (the bread and the cup of wine and water) and offers up praise and glory to the Father of all things, through the name of his Son and of the Holy Spirit, and gives thanks at length that we are deemed worthy of these things at his hand.

Describing the Church's faith in the Holy Communion, he has this to say,

This food is called with us the Eucharist, and of it none is allowed to partake but he that believes that our teachings are true, and has been washed with the washing for the remission of sins and unto regeneration, and who so lives as Christ directed. For we do not receive them as ordinary food or ordinary drink; but as by the word of God, Jesus Christ our Saviour took flesh and blood for our salvation, so also, we are taught, the food blessed by the prayer of the word which we received from him, by which, through its transformation, our blood and flesh are nourished, this food is the flesh and blood of Jesus who was made flesh. For the apostles in the memoirs made by them, which are called Gospels, have thus narrated that the command was given; that Jesus took bread, gave thanks, and said, "This do in remembrance of me; this is my body." And he took the cup likewise and said, "This is my blood", and gave it to them alone...

There is much that we around nineteen centuries later can identify with in this description. We too come together to Church on Sundays (and occasionally on other days as well), and the first part of our service of Holy Communion consists of the reading and preaching of God's Word. We call this the "Ministry of the Word" and it reaches a climax when the Gospel is read. We follow this with prayer too, called the "intercessions" or "prayers of the church". And then, at the offertory, the bread and wine to be used for communion are prepared for their purpose, a little water is added to the wine, and the celebrant, that is the person in priest's order who presides over the celebration says the great prayer of thanksgiving and consecration by means of which the bread and wine are set apart for their special meaning and purpose. We too receive these, not as ordinary bread and wine but as having the significance of Christ's Body and Blood, representing the life of Christ himself who died and is risen.

I was rereading, in preparation for this address, the prayers that are said within Judaism today when the Passover is celebrated. No doubt they have been elaborated in various ways since biblical times, but they probably give us the gist of what would have been said in the time of Jesus. And it is quite clear that the thanksgiving over the bread and the cup are an outpouring of thanksgiving for all that God has done for his people. In a similar way, in the Christian Church the Eucharistic Prayer, as it is called gives thanks for a whole series of events from the creation onwards although it is centered upon the cross of Calvary. And just as in the Passover the thanksgiving that is offered for all that God has done in the past turns into petition for their present needs, so in this, the greatest of prayers in the Christian liturgy we go from thanksgiving to supplication and end with what is known as doxology, the giving of glory to God the Father, through Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord, and in the power of the Holy Spirit.

There is, then, a sense in which the Holy Communion is a great service of thanksgiving, in which we remember all that God has done for us in Christ and give thanks for it. And that is certainly what we do in a particular way when we actually make our communion. For are we not urged to "Draw near and receive the body of our Lord Jesus Christ which he gave for you, and his blood which he shed for you. Remember that he died for you, and feed on him in your hearts by faith with thanksgiving"?

## **B. PRESENCE AND SACRIFICE (FROM SEVERAL SERMONS)**

### **1. HARVEST**

There is something particularly appropriate in thanking God for the harvest in the context of a celebration of the Holy Communion. This was clearly perceived in the early Church where there was the custom, at communion, not only of consecrating the bread and wine, which were of the essence of the rite, but also of blessing the offerings of the faithful, including, for example, oil, and cheese and olives. It is very much in the same spirit that we bring to the Church at harvest time whatever we deem appropriate - in my own country parishes one is likely to see apples, grapes, wheat and so on, and of course flowers which are always arranged beautifully.

One of the early fathers who was particularly interested in the relationship between the Holy Communion and the Harvest was a man called Irenaeus. He lived between 130 and 200 A.D. and was Bishop of Lyons. Whether or not he met a martyr's death is uncertain. He wrote a careful and full explanation of the faith and order of the church and the significance of its liturgy. He thought deeply about the eucharist and considered that the bread and wine which are brought before God and over which thanksgiving is offered represent a fulfilment of the biblical principle of bringing the first-fruits of the harvest before Him to show that they are recognized as His gift. And so he says,

Again, giving directions to His disciples to offer to God the first-fruits of His own created things - not as if He stood in need of them, but that they might be themselves neither unfruitful nor ungrateful - Jesus Himself took that created thing, bread, and gave thanks, and said, 'This is my Body.' And the cup likewise, which is part of that creation to which we belong, He confessed to be His blood, and taught the new oblation of the new covenant; which the Church, receiving from the apostles, offers to God throughout all the world, to Him who gives us as the means of subsistence the first-fruits of His own gifts in the New Testament.

It may be seen from this that if we follow Irenaeus, every celebration of the Holy Communion is like a mini-harvest. How appropriate it is then, that on the occasion of the Harvest Thanksgiving the Holy Eucharist should be offered.

But, if the thanksgiving which we offer for the fruits of the earth is significant as representing our recognition of God as the creator and the giver of all good things, even more significant must be the thanksgiving said over the bread and wine at the Eucharist. The very word "Eucharist" itself comes from a Greek word meaning "thanksgiving" and this shows how central this concept is to our understanding of what happens at the Holy Communion. It has a consecratory effect, for does it not say in 1 Timothy 4:4 that "everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is receiving with thanksgiving; for then it is consecrated by the word of God and prayer"? That which is consecrated at the Holy Communion is received not as bread and wine only, but as the sacrament of the Lord's Body and Blood.

Not long ago, I was trying to tease out in an inter-church context how we in our Church of Ireland tradition understand the manner in which the bread and wine at Communion are

deemed to become the Lord's Body and Blood. I pointed out, in an article for Search magazine, that one can determine what something *is* by referring to its physical characteristics - size, shape, texture, colour, taste and so on; the significance it has for those who behold or use it; its role or function; and the purpose it serves. It would, I suppose be common ground that there is no change whatsoever in the observable physical properties of the elements at the Eucharist; but there *is* a change in the significance they have for worshippers, they do have a new role, and they do serve a new purpose. In that sense they *are* different, so that, following consecration they are to be regarded as Christ's sacramental Body and Blood. And so, when we come to Communion, by our use of the first-fruits of the created order we are acknowledging our dependence on God the creator, and by receiving bread and wine that by virtue of their consecration have been given their special sacramental significance we receive spiritual nourishment as by faith and with thanksgiving we feed on Christ.

## **(2) FOOD AND DRINK**

John 6:53 The words of Jesus, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood you have no life in you; he who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day."

One of the great mysteries about St. John's Gospel is that, although it devotes no less than five chapters to the Last Supper there is no mention of the Holy Communion in it. This stands in sharp contrast to the tradition in Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and also found in 1st Corinthians in which the founding of the Holy Communion is the principal thing recorded. And yet, here we have the Lord's discourse on himself as the bread of life, following closely upon the Johannine version of the Feeding of the Five Thousand in which we find language extremely reminiscent of the Eucharist about "eating the flesh" and "drinking the blood". The significance of all this has been debated for centuries and presumably will go on being discussed. One possible explanation is that we have here words attributed to Jesus which are to some extent derived from the early Christian church's experience of participating in the Holy Communion. By linking these to the story of the Feeding of the Five Thousand St. John is setting them in a broader context so that they refer not only to the significance of taking part in the Lord's Supper (as we still do in church) but to the life of faith which is one in which, spiritually speaking, we feed on Christ. The language used is quite stark, "eating flesh" and "drinking blood", and there are those who find the whole concept deeply revolting. Well, it would be if the words were to be taken literally. But what this passage seems to be about is the way in which in and through Jesus Christ there is an immediacy about the presence of God in our lives. As the hymn puts it "*Here, O my Lord, I see thee face to face; here faith can touch and handle things unseen; here would I grasp with firmer hand thy grace; and all my weariness upon thee lean. Here would I feed upon the Bread of God; here drink with thee the royal Wine of heaven; here would I lay aside each earthly load; here taste afresh the calm of sin forgiven.*" A God who is distant and remote would be no good to us. We need a God who comes close to us and whose presence we can recognize. In the Person of His Son Jesus Christ, "The Word became flesh", God became incarnate, and dwelt in the midst of his people. Although we can no longer see him, following his ascension, he is still present with us in the Person of His Son, in a general way through faith since it is only when we respond to him in trust and love that we can experience his presence, and, more specifically when we come to the Lord's Table and receive the bread and wine which, by virtue of their consecration are his sacramental body and blood.

The nature of the eucharistic presence is something which, sadly, has been a cause of division among Christians. Perhaps we should try to realize that we are dealing here with what is a

mystery in the proper sense, meaning a truth so profound that we can never fully express it. But yet we do have to use words, as Jesus himself did when he tried to convey what his presence meant to the circle of his original disciples, and, in the discourse which we have been reading, does this in terms of a spiritual feeding using the imagery of eating and drinking as when he says “For my flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.” We need to remember that “flesh and blood” indicate a person and in using this very stark language Jesus is indicating his real presence. Theologians have taken up this language in their attempt to express what the Holy Communion signifies in the life of the Church. One such theologian was a man called Thomas Aquinas who lived about seven hundred years ago. He was a person of deep devotion who put some of this thought into great hymns of which there are several in our hymn-book. We do not necessarily have to agree with every word of his theology to see how he goes to the very heart of the matter, drawing on the words of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. *Adoro te devote* it says in the original Latin of one of those hymns “I adore you with devotion”, *latens Deitas*, “hidden Deity”, and in our English translation we have it, “Thee we adore”.

Thee we adore, O hidden Saviour, thee,  
who in thy sacrament dost deign to be;  
both flesh and spirit at thy presence fail,  
yet here thy presence we devoutly hail.

What we see outwardly is the eucharistic bread, real bread. What this bread signifies in the eucharistic context, namely the body of Christ, is inwardly represented, so that the Christ who is hidden from our eyes is nonetheless really present to those who have faith.

O blest memorial of our dying Lord,  
who living Bread to men doth here afford!  
O may our souls for ever feed on thee,  
and thou, O Christ, for ever precious be.

“Do this” said Jesus, “in remembrance of me”, and by means of this remembrance I will be present with you, and, by faith, with thanksgiving you will be able to feed on me.

Fountain of goodness, Jesu, Lord and God,  
cleans us, unclean, with thy most cleansing Blood;  
increase our faith and love, that we may know  
the hope and peace which from thy presence flow.

The Lord who is present with us is the One who brings us remission of our sins and inward peace. He is the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world.

And then, in the last verse there is that wonderful thought that the Christ whom we now see only behind a veil, so to speak, will one day be encountered face to face. Just as the physical presence of Jesus was withdrawn when he ascended into heaven so one day there will no longer be any need of the sacrament for what it stands for will be fully accessible. And so we read,

O Christ, whom now beneath a veil we see,  
may what we thirst for soon our portion be,  
to gaze on thee unveiled, and see thy face,  
the vision of thy glory and thy grace. **Amen.**

### (3) THE HEAVENLY ALTAR

Psalm 50:14 "Let thanksgiving be your sacrifice to God, and fulfil the vows that you make to the Most High."

At the beginning of Charles Wheatly's *A Rational Illustration of the Book of Common Prayer of the Church of England*, published in 1722, there is a famous frontispiece. It shows an eighteenth century congregation, wigs and all, kneeling on the floor of the chancel in response to the invitation to "draw near". In the sanctuary stands a clergyman in scarf, surplice, and academic hood and on the Holy Table are two patens with bread on them, two chalices, two flagons and a book. He is evidently saying the Prayer of Consecration as he is laying his hand on the Bread. But above him in a cloud surrounded by angels, stands the figure of Christ, a priest after the order of Melchizedek, our great High Priest, with his hands raised in supplication, and in front of Him, the heavenly altar. This is a clear expression of a concept found among the Caroline Divines and their successors to the effect that what the Church does on earth mirrors what is going on eternally in heaven. This was not in any way intended to take away from the biblical truth that what the Lord accomplished upon the cross of Calvary was done once for all. But it takes up the equally biblical idea that the risen and ascended Lord ever lives to intercede for us and this can only be upon the basis of his once for all sacrifice.

What is at stake here is the doctrine of the *Eucharistic Sacrifice*, the view that at every celebration of the Holy Communion there is, in some sense a sacrifice. This was much emphasized by classical Anglicans in the seventeenth century. Interest in it was revived by the Oxford Movement in the nineteenth century. And it features significantly in modern liturgical reflection and especially in inter-church conversations especially those between the Anglican and Roman Catholic communions.

John Bramhall, later Archbishop of Armagh from 1661-1663, at the Restoration - we still use his Chair at ordinations and consecrations in the Cathedral in Armagh - once had this to say,

We acknowledge an Eucharistical Sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving; a commemorative Sacrifice or memorial of the Sacrifice of the Cross; a representative Sacrifice, or a representation of the Passion of Christ before the eyes of His Heavenly Father; an impetrative Sacrifice or an impetration of the fruit and benefit of His Passion by way of real prayer; and lastly, an applicative Sacrifice, or an application of His Merits unto our souls.

One could explain this by saying that when we perform the liturgical act in response to the command of Jesus we are by means of this remembering before the Father the once for all sacrifice of the Son. This we do in thanksgiving and supplication, giving thanks for what God in Christ had done for us and asking for the benefits which come from this unique offering. Such a concept draws together thoughts of praise and thanksgiving, commemoration, representation, supplication, and indeed, application.

Another bishop, Jeremy Taylor, who preached at what was arguably the greatest service ever held in St. Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin, namely the consecration of twelve bishops in 1661 (when episcopacy was restored to the Church of Ireland after the Commonwealth) held a rich doctrine of the Eucharistic Sacrifice. Specifically on the heavenly altar, in his book, *The Worthy Communicant* he had this to say,

The church being the image of heaven, the priest the minister of Christ; the holy table being the copy of the celestial altar, and the eternal sacrifice of the lamb slain from the beginning of the world being the same; it bleeds no more after the finishing of it

on the cross, but it is wonderfully represented in heaven, and graciously represented here; by Christ's action there, by his commandment here.

## **Here**

There is a sense in which past, present, and future meet in the Eucharistic celebration, the future being represented by the consideration that as often as we do this we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. And, in turn, past, present, and future are brought into a new relationship with eternity.

## **C. PRIEST AND VICTIM**

Hebrews 9:11,12. "But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) he entered once for all into the Holy Place, taking not the blood of goats and calves but his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption."

I am old enough to have been in the first great St. Patrick's Day pilgrimage to Saul and Downpatrick pioneered by that very far-sighted and courageous bishop, Frederick Julian Mitchell, of blessed memory. We stayed at Murlough House, and on St. Patrick's Day worshipped first at Saul, where St. Patrick had his first Church, and then went to Downpatrick for a great service of thanksgiving, packed with people from every corner of Ireland including those who came in the "Kerry bus".

I have never forgotten the very simple Communion service according to the Prayer Book in the little memorial Church at Saul, built as it is with rough stones and with the Celtic tower beside it. As we went to the Communion rail the choir, situated at the back of the Church, sang softly that lovely hymn from the Bangor Antiphony (no 222 in the Church Hymnal) "Draw nigh and take the Body of the Lord, and drink by faith the blood for you outpoured." This hymn is a great affirmation, as well as an irresistible invitation, and speaks of both the Real Presence of Christ and of that once for all sacrifice of which the Eucharist is the effectual sign in which Christ is both the Priest and Victim. "Saved by his Body" it says, "hallowed by his Blood, with souls refreshed we render thanks to God." "Salvation's Giver, Christ the only Son, by his dear Cross and Blood the victory won." "Offered was he for greatest and for least, Himself the Victim and himself the Priest." And so on. This is one of the many great hymns of the early Church translated by the Victorian priest of the Church of England, J.M. Neale.

The thought of Christ as both Priest and Victim, which is derived from the language of Hebrews, is embedded in eucharistic reflection. It was not new when it appeared in the Bangor Antiphony from which that hymn has been drawn. It is found, for example, quite explicitly in a hymn on the crucifixion from the third century Christian writer, St. Ephrem of Syria, and it ties together the thought of the cross of Christ, the Upper Room, and the Christian eucharist.

Blessed are you, O Upper Room, so small  
In comparison to the entirety of creation,  
Yet what took place in you  
Now fills all creation - which is even too small for it.  
Blessed is your abode, for in it was broken  
That bread which issues from the blessed Wheat Sheaf,  
And in you was trodden out  
The Cluster of Grapes that came from Mary  
To become the Cup of Salvation.



Blessed are you, O Upper Room,  
No one has ever seen  
Nor ever shall see, what you beheld;  
Our Lord became at once  
True Altar, Priest, Bread, and Cup of Salvation.  
In his own person he could fulfil all these roles,  
None other was capable of this:  
Whole Offering and Lamb, Sacrifice and Sacrificer,  
Priest and the One destined to be consumed.

One of the greatest of all Christian theologians, Augustine, who lived in the fourth and fifth centuries A.D. had this to say,

Wherefore the true mediator, being in the form of a servant, made mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus, taking sacrifices with his Father, as God, yet in the servile form chose rather to be one than to take any, lest some hereby should gather that one might sacrifice unto creatures. By this is He the priest, offering, and offerer.

There is an explicit reference to Christ as the great high priest in Holy Communion Two in the Prayer Book of 2004. For example in the second eucharistic prayer, in a passage referring to the work of Christ, it says,

In obedience to your will your Son our Saviour offered himself as a perfect sacrifice, and died on the cross for our redemption. Through him you have freed us from the slavery of sin and reconciled us to yourself, our God and Father.

He is our great high priest whom you raised from death and exalted to your right hand on high where he ever lives to intercede for us

When the new Church Hymnal appeared, one scanned with interest the section in which the eucharistic hymns occur. One of the great hymns for use at the Lord's Table is that which begins, "Alleluia, sing to Jesus", and one notes with interest that a verse which was missing from the 1960 edition has now been restored. It affirms explicitly the teaching derived from Hebrews, found in the teaching of the early Church, and expressed in various liturgies, including, at least implicitly, our own Alternative Prayer Book and forms a climax to a fine song of praise.

Alleluia! King eternal,  
thee the Lord of lords we own;  
alleluia! Born of Mary,  
earth thy footstool, heaven thy throne;  
thou within the veil hast entered,  
robed in flesh our great high priest;  
here proclaimed as priest and victim  
in the eucharistic feast.

For "when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) he entered once for all into the Holy Place, taking not the blood of goats and calves but his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption."

## D. THE EUCHARIST AND TIME

1 Cor 11:26 "As often as you eat this bread and drink this cup..."

I wonder have you ever noticed the curious way in which at the Holy Communion we seem to be looking, so to speak, in two different directions at once? In the Prayer of Consecration in Holy Communion One we say, referring to Jesus, that he instituted, and in his holy Gospel commanded us to continue, a perpetual memory of that his precious death, until his coming again." Keeping a "perpetual memory" involves looking back to the foundation of the Holy Communion at the Passover observed by Jesus and his disciples in the Upper Room on the night before He died. Doing this "until his coming again", on the other hand, looks forward, looks forward to the ultimate future, to the consummation of everything, to the end of time. And what comes between past and future? Obviously the present - and the three tenses, past, present and future come together in the various modern forms of the eucharistic prayer. Expressing how the Church understands its fulfilment of the dominical command to "do this in remembrance of me" we say, for example, in the Prayer One "Therefore, Father, with this bread and this cup we do as Christ your Son commanded: we remember his passion and death, we celebrate his resurrection and ascension, and we look for the coming his kingdom. The word "remember" or "recall" refers to the past, "celebrate" relates to the present, and "look for" anticipates in expectancy the fulfilment of our deepest desires and longings when God's kingdom comes and his will shall be done on earth as it is in heaven.

So there is a sense in which the Holy Communion looks back, and there is also a sense in which it looks forward, and there is also a sense in which what we are doing in the present brings it all together in one single act of commemoration and anticipation. As it says in our text from 1 Corinthians 11:26, "For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup" (something we do in the present) "we proclaim the Lord's death" (something that happened in the past) "until he comes" (in the ultimate future).

All of this would appear to be very true to the spirit of what must have happened at the Last Supper, assuming that it was, as the Synoptic Gospels say, the observance of the Passover. It is not entirely clear how much of the Passover ceremony as it is currently observed goes back as far as New Testament times; but it is, of course far more ancient than that in its essentials, and it is likely that the prayers of the Passover authentically represent the basic ideas that were there in the celebration right from the beginning, and with which Our Lord and his disciples would have been thoroughly familiar. At the heart of the ceremony lies memory, especially in the recitation of what is known as the *Haggadah*. Following ancient tradition, the youngest present asks four questions, beginning with "Wherein is this night different from all other nights?" And the answer given is, "We were Pharaoh's bondmen in Egypt: and the Lord our God brought us out therefrom with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm." The Passover is concerned especially with the commemoration of that mighty act of deliverance by which the Children of Israel were brought out from slavery in Egypt and ultimately were enabled to enter the Promised Land. But there is also a looking to the future, a particularly poignant emphasis during those long centuries when the Jews were excluded from their own homeland and expressed the longing "Next year in Jerusalem."! And the psalms of praise, the *Hallel*, sung at the end of the celebration are traditionally understood as looking to the future, to the day of redemption which ends all enslavement for ever, to the Messianic redemption.

And so, in our Christian Eucharist, we are on solid ground indeed in our looking to the past in thanksgiving for the once for all act of grace by which Our Lord Jesus Christ, on Calvary's cross delivered us and all humanity from sin and death. If the deliverance of the Children of Israel from slavery in Egypt was a great and wonderful act of God, this only anticipates that still greater act by which salvation has become available to every human being. At the same

time we know that what we, as Christians experience of God's grace here and now is but a foretaste of what the Lord has ultimately in store for us the fulfilment represented by the concept of the coming of the Kingdom, and so there is a valid and proper looking forward, to the ultimate arrival "when He comes". And in the meantime the past can in a manner of speaking be brought into the present, and the future can be anticipated in what we are able to do right here. For it is "as often as we eat this bread and drink the cup that we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes."

#### **E. ADMISSION TO COMMUNION [1]**

Acts 2:42 "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, the breaking of bread, and the prayers."

It must, first, be said, in all fairness that it is in order for churches to make rules about admission to communion, even if these need to be reviewed from time to time. A rubric in the Order for Confirmation in Christian Initiation One states,

And there shall none be admitted to the Holy Communion, until such time as he be confirmed, or be ready and desirous to be confirmed.

Every Church of Ireland clergyman knows that neither this nor the previous form of it has been enforced for a long time and that unconfirmed people who have come from other Protestant traditions and have married members of the Church of Ireland have long been admitted to communion without any questions being asked. Adult confirmation is offered in the Church, but it is not made a precondition of admission to communion. And in recent years, as a result of improvements in inter-church relations it has become commonplace for members of different churches not only to attend one another's celebrations of communion, but also to receive communion. Away back in 1969 the General Synod of the Church of Ireland allowed for this development by adopting the recommendations contained in two resolutions contained in the Report of the Lambeth Conference of 1968:-

##### **Admission of Non-Anglicans to Holy Communion.**

The Conference recommends that, in order to meet special pastoral needs of God's people, under the direction of the bishop, Christians duly baptized in the name of the Holy Trinity and qualified to receive Holy Communion in their own churches may be welcomed at the Lord's table in the Anglican Communion.

##### **Anglicans Communicating in other than Anglican Churches**

The Conference recommends that, while it is the general practice of the Church that Anglican communicants receive the Holy Communion at the hands of ordained Ministers of their own Church or of Churches in communion therewith, nevertheless under the general direction of the bishop, to meet special pastoral need, such communicants be free to attend the Eucharist in other Churches holding the apostolic faith as contained in the Scriptures and summarized in the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds, and as conscience dictates to receive the sacrament, when they know they are welcome to do so.

Those resolutions, passed so many years ago, provide the basis upon which the practice has evolved when members or other churches are likely to be present, of specifically inviting them, if they desire to do so to communicate at the Church of Ireland's eucharistic celebration and it also underlines the fact that members of the Church of Ireland, who communicate on occasions in other churches are not being disloyal to the Church of Ireland in doing so.

Within the context of the recent discussion it is, I believe, important for us to emphasize the soundness of our own eucharistic teaching and practice, which conforms to holy scripture.

In the teaching of the Church of Ireland sacraments are "effectual signs of grace" which not only represent but also convey that which they signify. There are two parts to a sacrament, the "outward and visible sign" and the "inward and spiritual grace given unto us as a means whereby we receive the same, and a pledge to assure us thereof." Older members of the congregation will no doubt remember those words from the Book of Common Prayer catechism. In the Holy Communion the outward and visible sign is bread and wine as used as part of the Passover ritual at the Last Supper. The significance this has is that given to it by Jesus himself, namely that of the "Body and Blood of Christ, which are verily and indeed (in other words, *really and truly*) taken and received by the faithful in the Lord's Supper." The manner of reception is not carnal or gross but "heavenly and spiritual", and the means by which the gift is received is faith. In the Revised Catechism, authorized by the House of Bishops for use in the Church of Ireland there is an additional question and answer intended to clarify what is meant by "receiving the Body and Blood of Christ". Receiving the Body and Blood of Christ means receiving the life of Christ himself, who was crucified and rose again, and is now alive for evermore. Insofar as those who receive in faith are receiving the life of Christ himself there is clearly a "real presence" of Christ in the midst of His people in the eucharist, of which the effectual sign is the sacrament. The benefits of reception are defined as the strengthening of our union with Christ and his Church, the forgiveness of our sins, and the nourishing of ourselves for eternal life.

With regard to the relationship between the Holy Communion and Calvary, the Church of Ireland, in line with biblical and reformed teaching, is concerned to emphasize the "once for all" character of what was accomplished by Jesus, who "made there" (that is, on the cross) "by his one oblation of himself once offered, a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice oblation and satisfaction, for the sins of the whole world". What happened, once for all, on Calvary's cross, cannot be supplemented and certainly not repeated. However, following the command of Jesus to "do this in remembrance of me", which, in the biblical context meant a liturgical act of memorial, we do by means of our celebration of the eucharist remember before God in thanksgiving and supplication the sacrifice once made. As the Revised Catechism puts it, "Holy Communion is the sacrament in which, according to Christ's command, we make continual remembrance of him, his passion, death, and resurrection, until his coming again, and in which we thankfully receive the benefits of his sacrifice. It is, therefore, called the Eucharist, the Church's sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, and also the Lord's Supper, the meal of fellowship which unites us to Christ and to the whole Church."

#### **E. ADMISSION TO COMMUNION [2]**

1 Cor 10:17 "Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread."

It is hard for these words not to sound ironical at a time when divisions between the churches as to the terms of admission to communion have come to the fore once again. I have hesitated before trying to say something about this today because words don't seem to be very effective in bridging this divide. One almost gets the impression of churches inhabiting parallel universes instead of sharing in the life of the one Body. And there is, in the end, only one church, as we affirm every time we say the Nicene Creed when without any ambiguity we say "We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church".

This is, however, a divided Church, and there are serious theological differences in spite of all the efforts of ecumenists (and I count myself one).

I think the very first thing I would like to say in relation to the present impasse is that the theological differences must be taken seriously. There is, I think, a rather frivolous attitude

which says (and I notice this particularly coming down to the Irish Republic from Northern Ireland). "Oh, we are all one now. Nobody cares what anyone is." Now clearly that is in some ways an improvement on the ecclesiastical cold war that characterized inter-church relations prior to Vatican 2 and that I remember only too well growing up in the 1940s and 1950s in Dublin. But I feel that the differences between the churches were (and are) about real issues and that ecumenical progress comes about through facing these issues and working through them, and not through pretending that they are not there, or, if they are, they do not matter.

Eucharistic doctrine is, of course, a key area, and attention continues to be focussed on the related issues of the eucharistic *presence* and *sacrifice*. Historic formularies of the different churches reflect the difficulties although the Church of Ireland by resolution of Synod has carefully distanced itself from controversial language in the articles of religion which could cause hurt and offence to other Christians. Part of the problem is that we don't always define carefully enough what we actually mean. For example, when we speak of the "body" of Christ as in "This is my body", do we not need to remember that the term, depending on its context has several distinct, though related meanings in the New Testament? There was Our Lord's physical, flesh and bones body that he had on earth and which hung on the cross. There was Our Lord's mystical body, the Church. And there was Our Lord's sacramental body at the Last Supper and in the Eucharist. I suspect many of the problems in eucharistic theology come from confusion between these terms.

With regard to the *eucharistic sacrifice*, that the eucharist is a sacrifice appears to have been the tradition and teaching of the church from the earliest days and to be implied in the language used by Our Lord at the Last Supper. But the relationship between the once for all sacrifice of Christ on Calvary's cross and the repeated celebrations of the eucharist is a difficult one. If it is true that there is a certain *identity* between the eucharist and Calvary in that there is the same Priest (namely Christ himself) and the same Victim (namely Christ himself) at both of them, there is also a *difference* since, however strong our concept of memorial is there is clearly a distinction between an original event and our "remembrance" of it. But the Christian religion is full of these paradoxes, as when we affirm that the Lord Jesus Christ is both God and Man and when we say that there is one God in Three Persons. What we need is a balanced approach and there is good precedent for this in both our traditions. I find a good working definition of what happens in the eucharist is that we perform it as a "remembering before God in thanksgiving and supplication the once for all sacrifice of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit". The "before God" implies that what we are doing is in some sense sacrificial.

Another vexed issue relates to the *theology of orders*, a four centuries-old disagreement which has produced arguments that have at times been complex and abstruse. On the one hand it has been asserted that Anglican clergy cannot be real priests since ordinals from 1550 onwards<sup>1</sup> eliminated any reference to the power of offering sacrifice, and there is therefore a defect not only in the form necessary for a valid ordination but also in the intention to produce real priests. On the other hand it has been pointed out that the Preface to the Prayer Book Ordinal declares it to be the intention to continue the historic orders of bishops, priests and deacons in the Church. I wish more attention had been paid to what the Ordinal is rather than what it isn't. I think I will nail my colours to the mast here and say that it is quite evident that the concept of ministry contained in the Book of Common Prayer ordinal is *biblical*; and I simply cannot see how a form of ordination which conforms to scripture can be regarded as incapable of communicating the grace of orders according to the mind and purpose of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

All of this, I think, puts the question of admission to communion in proper perspective. If a church with a scriptural and hence necessarily valid ministry celebrates a eucharist which expresses and conveys a biblical view of presence and sacrifice and invites fellow Christians to come (if they wish) to the Lord's Table, it is hard to believe that in so doing it is committing an offence. For, as it says in scripture, "Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread."

<sup>1</sup>It may, however, be noted, that in the Ordination Services Two, in the 2004 edition of the Book of Common Prayer, p.570, there is a reference in the alternative ordination prayer to priests as those who, together with the people "offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable in your sight, and celebrate the sacraments of the new covenant".

## THE COMMAND [EPILOGUE]

Luke 22:19 "This do in remembrance of me. This do..."

Was ever another command so obeyed? For century after century, spreading slowly to every continent and country and among every race on earth, this action has been done, in every conceivable human circumstance, for every conceivable human need from infancy and before it to extreme old age and after it, from the pinnacles of earthly greatness to the refuge of fugitives in the caves and dens of the earth. Men have found no better thing than this to do for kings at their crowning and for criminals going to the scaffold; for armies in triumph or for a bride and bridegroom in a little country church; for the proclamation of a dogma or for a good crop of wheat; for the wisdom of Parliament of a mighty nation or for a sick old woman afraid to die; for a schoolboy sitting an examination or for Columbus setting out to discover America; for the famine of whole provinces or for the soul of a dead lover; in thankfulness because my father did not die of pneumonia; for a village headman much tempted to return to fetish because the yams had failed; because the Turk was at the gates of Vienna; for the repentance of Margaret; for the settlement of a strike; for son for a barren woman; for Captain so-and-so, wounded and prisoner of war; while the lions roared in the nearby amphitheater; on the beach at Dunkirk; while the hiss of scythes in the thick June grass came faint through the windows of the church; tremulously, by an old monk on the fiftieth anniversary of his vows; furtively, by an exiled bishop who had hewn timber all day in a prison camp near Murmansk; gorgeously, for the canonization of St. Joan of Arc - one could fill many pages with the reasons why people have done this, and not tell a hundredth part of them. And best of all, week by week and month by month, on a hundred thousand successive Sundays, faithfully, unflinchingly, across all the parishes of Christendom, the pastors have done this just to make the *plebs sancta Dei* - the holy common people of God.

[From Gregory Dix *The Shape of the Liturgy*, Dacre Press 1945]







**THE STUDY OF LITURGY: CHRISTIAN INITIATION**  
**A COMMENTARY**  
**PREPARED BY**  
**REVD CANON M. C. KENNEDY, M. A., B. D., Ph. D.,**

## CONTENTS

### PART ONE: HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

The New Testament	4
The Early and Medieval Church	5
Reformation and Post-Reformation	7
Modern (Church of Ireland)	9

### PART TWO: CURRENT RITES IN THE CHURCH OF IRELAND

The Canonical Position	12
Christian Initiation One: Baptism	
The Ministration of Public Baptism of Infants <i>Holy Baptism One</i>	13
*The Ministration of Private Baptism of Children	20
*The Order for Publick Reception of Children Privately Baptized.	21
*The Ministration of Baptism to such as are of Riper Years.	23
The Order for Confirmation	25
The Structure of the traditional Prayer Book rites (comparison)	28
*The Churching of Women	30

*\*Indicates orders of service which are not printed in the 2004 edition of the Book of Common Prayer but remain fully authorized.*

Christian Initiation Two:	
Holy Baptism	32
Holy Baptism in the context of Morning or Evening Prayer or A Service of the Word.	39
The Order for Receiving into the Congregation of those privately baptized.	41
Confirmation	41
Holy Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Communion - The Structure of the Service	45
A Note on Confirmation and Admission to Communion	46
The Renewal of Baptismal Vows	47
Thanksgiving after Birth or after Adoption	48
Directions and Notes for Rites One and Two	49

### PART 3: THE THEOLOGY OF INITIATION

Articles of Religion	54
A Catechism <i>The Church Catechism (1878) BCP pp766-770</i>	55
Revised Catechism	56

The Book of Common Prayer (2004),	
<i>Christian Initiation One:</i>	
The Ministration of Public Baptism of Infants &	
The Ministration of Baptism to such as are of riper years.	58
The Order for Confirmation.	59
The Book of Common Prayer (2004),	
<i>Christian Initiation Two:</i>	
Holy Baptism	60
Holy Baptism in the context of Morning or Evening Prayer or	61
A Service of the Word.	
The Order for Receiving into the Congregation of those privately	61
baptized.	
Confirmation	61
Readings and Psalms for Christian Initiation	61
Conclusion.	61

## Part One: Historical Development

### Definition

By "Christian Initiation" is meant here the totality of the process by which a person becomes a Christian. This includes (1) the **sacramental** aspect - the rites that are performed by the Church and their effects; (2) the **subjective** aspect - the repentance and faith of the individual who is brought to Christ; and (3) the **objective** aspect - the work of God's grace in the person including the bestowal of the gift of the Holy Spirit to fulfill his or her role in the life of the Church.

### [1] Christian Initiation in the New Testament

This included the sacramental act of baptism in the name of Christ or of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, accompanied or followed, at least on some occasions, by prayer and the laying on of hands; repentance and a declaration of faith in Christ; and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

#### (1:1) The sacramental act of baptism

Our Lord could be said to have "instituted" baptism by the example of his own submission to the baptism of John. That this was a crucial event may be seen in the prominence given to it in the Gospels - Mark actually commences with it. See Mt. 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-22. It is presupposed in John (1:29-34). Moreover St. Matthew records a specific command by Jesus to practice baptism "in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (28:16-20), although some biblical critics would regard this as a reflection of church tradition. The importance of the practice may be seen in the numerous references to baptism in the Acts of the Apostles and in the Epistles. See for example Acts 2:38,41; 8:12; 8:37,38; 9:18; 10:47,48; 16:33; 19:5,6; also Romans 6:3-11; 1 Cor. 1:13-17; Gal. 3:27; Col. 2:12; Titus 3:5. The significance of John 3:5 should not be overlooked. The rite of baptism embodies and expresses both the "subjective" and "objective" aspects of initiation, and so in a sense may be said to "accomplish" initiation. For baptism as an expression of repentance and faith see especially Acts 2:38,41; Acts 16:33. For a certain "instrumentality" in the act of baptism so that it may be considered a "means of grace" see Acts 8:16; 19:5; Matt. 28:19 where the Greek construction "into the name of..." suggests that the person baptized is "made over" to Christ by virtue of that act and appropriated by him. See also Rom. 6:34; Gal. 3:37; Col. 2:12.

#### (1:2) The laying on of hands with prayer

There is also precedent in the New Testament for the laying on of hands with prayer as an accompaniment or supplement to the act of baptism. The narratives in Acts 8:14-17 and Acts 19:1-7 seem to deal with special circumstances. However, the significance of the rite is evident - the communication of the gift of the Holy Spirit where this had (for whatever reason) not already been conveyed. On the basis of Hebrews 6:2 it would appear that the laying on of hands was regarded in some circles at least as a normal part of the initiation. It would be going beyond the evidence however, to assume that this was universally practised (there are, for example, many places in Acts where it is *not* mentioned) or that it was a necessary precondition of the bestowal of the Holy Spirit (which was given through Peter's *preaching*, prior to the act of baptism, and for which it provided the basis, Acts 10:44).

#### (1:3) Infant baptism.

With regard to *infant baptism* there is no unequivocal evidence for this in the New Testament. However, there are a number of references to families (households) being baptized and it seems reasonable to assume that some of these included children. See Acts 11:14; 16:15,33; 18:8; 1 Cor. 1:16. The Hebrew concept of "corporate personality" (see Joshua 7 for an Old Testament example) meant that the decision of the head of the household would be regarded as sufficient for all its members. Insofar as there is an analogy with circumcision (see the juxtaposition in Col. 2:11,12) this would tend to favour infant baptism, as all Jewish male children were circumcised on the eighth day and thereby admitted to the (old) covenant. Explicit evidence for infant baptism (and communion) is not found, however, until the late second and early third centuries. It is widely attested (although it was not, by any means, universally practiced) in the fourth century A. D.

(2) Much emphasis is laid in the New Testament on the role of *repentance and faith* in the process of becoming a Christian. There is a sense in which the Church may be said to have begun with St. Peter's confession of faith (Matt. 16:13-19). St. Peter's own preaching on the Day of Pentecost was aimed at producing

repentance and faith in Jesus (Acts 2:14-40). The baptism of the Ethiopian eunuch was consequential to his being brought to commitment and faith by Philip (Acts 8:26-39). To the question of the Philippian gaoler to Paul and Silas after the earthquake, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" the answer was, "Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved you and your household" (Acts 16:30,31). In the Pauline epistles it is taught that our standing with God depends not on keeping God's Torah or Law, important although the Law is, but on having faith. We are "justified" by grace through faith. See especially Rom. 3:21-26, Gal. 2:15,16.

### (3) **The gift of the Holy Spirit.**

The Lord himself was endowed by the Holy Spirit in a special way at his baptism by John, and this marked the commencement of his public ministry (Matt. 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-22). According to Luke the apostles were warned by Jesus not to leave Jerusalem after his Ascension until they received the "promise of the Father", the baptism of (or with) the Holy Spirit. They would need this "power" in order to witness (Acts 1:4-6, 8). The promise was fulfilled in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit when they were all together in one place on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4). Possession of the Spirit became the characteristic mark of Christians (Acts 2:38; 10:44-48; 11:17; 2 Cor. 1:21,22). The very name "Christian" means "anointed one" - anointed, that is, with the Holy Spirit, just as "Christ" means "The Anointed One", the Messiah. Christians are anointed with the same Holy Spirit who anointed Jesus at his baptism. Where the outpouring of the Spirit was not evident in the lives of converts this had to be remedied (Acts 8:14-17). St. Paul states clearly that "anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him" (Rom. 8:9). He also says "to each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good" (1 Cor. 12:7), so that the Holy Spirit is not an individual possession but enables those who believe to fulfill their particular roles within the common life of the Church which is the "Body" of Christ (Eph. 4:1-16). There are both "gifts" of the Spirit (1 Cor. 12:4-11), and "fruit" of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22). The communication of the Holy Spirit is closely associated with baptism (1 Cor. 12:12,13).

### **A note on Mark 10:13-16**

This passage (Jesus receiving and blessing the little children) is sometimes cited to uphold and justify infant baptism (see the Book of Common Prayer p.347). Probably no reference to baptism was originally intended. However, it is made clear that "of such" (like these children) "is the kingdom of God". And this would indirectly support the baptism of infants, for, through baptism, we are "washed", and "sanctified", and "justified" in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God and so enter into his kingdom (1 Cor. 6:9-11).

## **[2] Christian Initiation in the Early and Medieval Church**

Apart from the brief instructions given in the (undated) early Christian document known as the *Didache* ("Teaching"), which may come from the latter part of the first century A.D., the earliest description of a baptism outside the New Testament is that to be found in the *First Apology of Justin Martyr* at Rome c. 150. From this we learn that those who are brought to be "regenerated" and "illuminated" are "washed" in a ceremony which continues with intercessory prayer and concludes with a celebration of the "Eucharist" (Holy Communion). A more elaborate ceremony is described c.215 by Hippolytus in the *Apostolic Tradition*, written at Rome. The evidence he supplies is similar (though not identical) to that found in other early Christian writers in the West, notably the North African writers Cyprian (d.258) and Tertullian (c.160 - c.225). He supplies a sample text, which has to be treated with some caution because bishops (who presided over ceremonies of initiation) were still at liberty to compose their own prayers although following a recognized outline, and it was not until the fourth century that we begin to find fixed authorized written services, and even then there remained a wide range of variation. Points of interest from Hippolytus' liturgy include the following. He mentions the *catechumens*, that is those who were under instruction for baptism. These had to be sponsored by believers who could testify to their fitness, they had to renounce practices contrary to the Gospel, and they had to continue under instruction for three years, during which time they were not allowed to exchange the Peace or pray with the Church. Instead, they were dismissed before the main part of the weekly service of Holy Communion began. Immediately before baptism there was an intensive period of preparation, including repeated exorcisms of evil spirits. The actual baptism took place at dawn, infants first, then men, then women. There was an anointing before and after the baptism, which included a renunciation of evil immediately before the immersion, and a threefold creedal interrogation corresponding to the three-

fold dipping of the person in the water. Following the act of baptism, the bishop laid his hands on the candidates with prayer, anointed them, and signed them on the foreheads. Holy Communion followed from what we would call the "Offertory", the newly-baptized being given not only the bread and wine but milk mixed with honey. It should be noted that in the early Church whenever children were admitted to baptism they appear to have been admitted to Holy Communion as well. It is also noteworthy that there was one single rite of admission. There was, at this stage, no question of "baptism" in infancy followed by "confirmation" at years of discretion. Originally what we today call "baptism", "confirmation", and "first communion", were all part of a single ceremony. It is important to note that all the elements of initiation discussed in the previous section, dealing with the New Testament, find liturgical expression in this rite. The act of baptism itself, accompanied not only by the laying on of hands with prayer but also by anointing (both before and after the act of baptism and then by the bishop after the hand-laying) is central. The significance of this sacramental act is emphasized by the long and careful preparation of the candidates and the rigorous standards of life and conduct required of them prior to their admission. Repentance and faith are represented by the renunciation of Satan and the response to the threefold credal questioning, "I believe in this way", "I believe", "I believe". The point at which the Holy Spirit was deemed to be bestowed is not clear in Hippolytus. Tertullian associated it especially with the laying on of hands, and so to some extent did Cyprian. In the third and fourth centuries in Syria (as evidenced by the document *Didascalia apostolorum* and the writings of St. Ephraem Syrus), it appears that there was no laying on of hands. Instead there was a pre-baptismal anointing, the gift of the Holy Spirit being spoken of sometimes in connection with the anointing, sometimes with the baptism itself, and sometimes even in connection with the first Communion! Probably what tended to happen was that subordinate ceremonies tended to attract to themselves part of the significance of the act of baptism. This did not matter particularly so long as the rites of initiation retained their unity, in which case the subordinate ceremonies could be thought of as representing part of the total significance of the baptismal mystery. But theological problems (which are still unresolved) arose when the constituent parts - what we now call "baptism", "confirmation", and "first communion" - became separated one from another.

The basic pattern given above continued, and indeed received further elaboration and development in the fourth and fifth centuries. Important sources for this period are (in the West) St. Ambrose of Milan's *De Sacramentis* and *De Mysteriis*, and (in the East) St. Cyril of Jerusalem's *Procatechesis* and the *Mystagogical Catecheses*. These arose from courses of instruction given before and after baptism (a ceremony which usually took place at Easter), and were associated with what has been termed the *Disciplina Arcani*. This meant that certain aspects of the Christian faith and life (for example the Lord's Prayer and the Creed) and its sacramental teaching were regarded as mysteries to be communicated only as part of the process of initiation.

From the fifth century onwards there was an increasing divergence between the practices of the Church in the East and in the West. Where the majority of the population was already Christian there was less need for adult baptism and so most baptisms were of infants. Due to the large size of dioceses (especially in the West) it was not always possible for the bishop to preside. What happened in the East was that presbyters (priests) were permitted to administer what we would call "confirmation" by anointing with oil blessed by the bishop. This preserved the unity of the rite, and so to this day in the Eastern Orthodox Church infants are baptized, anointed, and given their first communion while they are still babes in arms. In the West the teaching of *St. Augustine of Hippo* (354-430) that baptism was a necessary remedy for original sin meant that there was a tendency to baptize as soon as possible after birth (encouraging *clinical baptism* if there was any danger of death rather than waiting for the normal ceremony the following Easter). As presbyters (priests) were forbidden to lay on hands/anoint this was postponed either until the child could be brought to the Cathedral (the bishop's church) or until the bishop was in the vicinity. The effect of this was to introduce a distinction between baptism and "confirmation" (so-called from the fifth century) and, as infants continued to be admitted to communion at their baptism, a separation of confirmation from first communion. The result was that over a long period there was a disintegration of the primitive pattern of initiation. A combination of the universality of infant baptism and the continued use of the Latin tongue where it had ceased to be (or had never been) the language spoken by the people produced a situation in which the catechumenate, with its "scrutinies" of the candidates, became a purely formal series of ceremonies. Such exercises as the delivery of the Creed and its "Redditio" (return) ceased to be meaningful when performed on behalf of uncomprehending infants rather than by adult converts for themselves and their families as in the earlier period. As the

Middle Ages progressed the interval between baptism and confirmation became increasingly long. The practice of infant communion eventually died out, and the view prevailed that children should not be given communion until they were of an age to commit actual sin. Two theological developments should be noted. First, there was the view first found in a sermon by Bishop Faustus of Riez in the fifth century that confirmation was for the spiritual "strengthening" of the candidates, a view which ultimately found its way into the Book of Common Prayer but is neither biblical or patristic. Second, an increasing emphasis on the doctrine of the "Real Presence" at Holy Communion (transubstantiation was defined at the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215) led to a fear of irreverence towards the sacramental species. This helped towards the discouraging of infant communion, as outlined above, and also led to the withholding of the cup from the laity. Also significant was the development of a strict cause-and-effect view of the operation of the sacraments (*ex opere operato*) found in, for example, *St. Thomas Aquinas* (c.1225-1274). The administration of the rite became all-important. Repentance and faith together with the gift of the Holy Spirit, which had been so important in the biblical conception tended to become, respectively, a formal part of the ceremony and an assumed consequence of its having been administered.

[NB. The view taken of the *Apostolic Tradition* above is dependent on the critical edition by G. J. Cuming, *Hippolytus - A Text for Students*, Grove Books, 1976, which accepts the identification of this early church order with the "Apostolic Tradition" of Hippolytus and assumes it is possible to get back to an authentic text from the medley of MSS witnessing to the complex history of the document and its many recensions. Some scholars, including Paul Bradshaw in *The Search for the Origins of Christian Worship*, SPCK, 1992 pp89-92, take a more skeptical view. The historical problems arising from the study of early liturgical texts is further emphasized in the second edition, SPCK, 2002]

### [3] **Christian Initiation: Reformation and Post-Reformation**

The traditional rites of initiation that are currently authorized in the Church of Ireland include the following: "The Ministration of Publick Baptism of Infants to be used in the Church", \*"The Ministration of Private Baptism of Children in Houses", \*"The Ministration of Baptism to such as are of Riper Years and able to answer for themselves"<sup>1</sup>, ["A Catechism, that is to say an instruction to be learned of every person, before he is brought to be confirmed by the Bishop"], "The Order for Confirmation, or laying on of Hands upon those that are Baptized and come to Years of Discretion". This represents in its most developed form, as received and modified by the Church of Ireland, a tradition that goes back to the Reformation in England (and Ireland) in the sixteenth century. In drawing up the original form of these rites (the first Book of Common Prayer was produced in 1549 and was then revised in a more "Protestant" direction in 1552 - there were subsequent revisions in 1559, 1604, and 1662, that of 1662 being the most important, and further revisions in the Church of Ireland following disestablishment in 1878 and 1926 with some modifications of the latter). Archbishop Cranmer the chief architect of the book and his colleagues adhered to the following principles: (1) Their starting-point was the existing ritual, the "Sarum" use of the medieval Church in England, but they were happy to draw on other sources including Luther and the proposals of Archbishop Hermann of Cologne. Also, between 1549 and 1552 the continental reformer Martin Bucer who was in England at the time wrote a critique of the first Prayer Book known as the Censura, and this had some influence on further revision. (2) All services were put into a "language understood of the people", at least so far as the use of English was concerned. In Ireland the Book of Common Prayer did not appear in Irish until 1608 and the full Bible had to wait until 1681. (3) Rites were to be simplified and stripped of anything that seemed to be contrary to reformed teaching. (4) There was a significant emphasis on comprehension and edification, seen for example in the requirement in the Order for Confirmation that it must only be administered to those who could say the Creed, the Lord's Prayer and the Ten Commandments "and be further instructed in the Church Catechism set forth for that purpose". They seem to have believed that there had existed in the early Christian era some sort of ceremony in which the children of Christian parents, baptized in infancy, made a personal profession of faith when they reached maturity: and they attempted to "restore" this by prefixing the Catechism (newly drawn up) to the traditional service with its prayer and laying on of hands (but without unction) by the bishop. In the 1662 revision the Catechism became separate from the Confirmation service, and a formal ratification of the baptismal vows became the first part of the Confirmation; and this section,

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<sup>1</sup>The orders marked with an asterisk remain authorized but are not included in the Prayer Book itself. The Order for Public Reception of Children privately baptized has been superseded by the provision within the book and is no longer authorized.



with its implied profession of personal belief, was further expanded and improved by the Church of Ireland's revisers.

A full commentary on the Prayer Book services may be found in Part Two of this present study. However, for convenience a summary of the rationale of the rites follows:-

### (3:1) **Baptism of Infants**

The service begins with a question as to whether the infant has already been baptized or not. The Preface indicates humanity's sinful state, all men being "conceived and born in sin", and points to the need for re-birth by "water and the Spirit" and membership of the Church of Christ. The Collect, which comes from Sarum, requests spiritual regeneration for the infant. An alternative collect (from Luther) has a typological theme. There is only one Scripture reading, that of Christ blessing the young children (Mark 10:13-16). An Exhortation expounds this passage as justifying infant baptism. A further prayer (from Archbishop Hermann) asks that God the Father will give his Holy Spirit to the infant "that he may be born again and be made an heir of everlasting salvation". A further Exhortation, this time to the godparents, leads into a four-fold questioning and response. On behalf of the child the godparents renounce evil, make a creedal confession of faith, express a desire for baptism, and promise to obey God's holy will and commandments. The Exhortation comes partly from Hermann, and the interrogation is based on that in the Sarum rite. The petitions that follow are from the Mozarabic rite (ancient Spanish). In the prayer before the baptism, "Almighty, everliving God..." the words "sanctify this water to the mystical washing away of sin" were added in the Prayer Book revision of 1662. Corresponding words at an earlier point in the rite in the 1549 Prayer Book had been omitted in 1552. The child is named, and water is poured upon it and the baptismal formula is used. The child is "received" into the Congregation of Christ's flock and signed on the forehead. It is affirmed that the child is "regenerate (born again) and grafted into the body of Christ's Church"; and there follows the Lord's Prayer with the doxology and a prayer of thanksgiving "that it hath pleased thee to regenerate this Infant with thy Holy Spirit, to receive *him* for thine own Child by adoption, and to incorporate *him* into thy holy Church". A further exhortation to the godparents urges them to teach the child the meaning of the baptismal vows and to bring him up as a Christian. And they are to take care that he is brought to the bishop to be confirmed by him so soon as he can say the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments and be further instructed in the Church Catechism. A rubric explaining the use of the sign of the cross is appended.

It will be seen that the "shape" of this service is by no means clear and that it is "wordy" in composition. Certain phrases, for example the reference to being "conceived and born in sin" are liable to misinterpretation. Comparison with the medieval rites that preceded it reveals notable omissions, for example of any reference to a (hypothetical) catechumenate, and of certain theologically significant features such as the traditional exorcism. The blessing of the baptismal water was omitted by Cranmer in 1552 and only restored to the rite in 1662. From a "Reformed" perspective what is noticeable is the meagreness of provision for scripture-reading and the absence of any provision for a sermon or homily. Instead, there is an excessive reliance upon Exhortations (a feature of the sixteenth century Reformation that may also be seen in the Book of Common Prayer in the Order for Holy Communion pp145-147). An important theological feature of the service is its emphasis on baptismal regeneration (see further Part Three of this study), which is referred to also in the Prayer Book Catechism and in the Thirty-nine Articles (No 27). For a reference to the legitimacy of diverse interpretations of this see the Preface to the 1878 Prayer Book (BCP p.vi).

### (3:2) **Private Baptism of Children in Houses**

This is strongly discouraged. Where it is needed the Lord's Prayer and other prayers of the baptismal service are to be used. The pouring of water with the baptismal formula and the prayer "We yield thee hearty thanks..." are prescribed.

### (3:3) **Adult Baptism**

This Order was introduced into the Prayer Book at the 1662 revision. Notice must be given to the bishop before it is used. The candidates are to prepare themselves by prayer and fasting. Godparents are required. The preface "Dearly beloved..." is slightly augmented, the Gospel is John 3:1-8, and this is followed by a special Exhortation referring to not only this but various other passages of Scripture relating to baptism; and the pre-interrogation Exhortation is modified suitably. The candidates make the baptismal vows on their

own behalf. After the post-baptismal prayer of thanksgiving there are special exhortations to the godparents and the newly baptized. There is provision here also for conditional baptism. A rubric states that it is expedient for every Person thus baptized to be confirmed by the bishop and receive Holy Communion so soon after his Baptism as conveniently may be. But there is no provision for Baptism, Confirmation, and First Communion as a single integrated rite.

### **(3:4) Catechism**

Originally this was prefixed to the Confirmation service and the questions and answers provided a way for children to publicly ratify and confess their baptismal promises. In 1604 the questions and answers to do with the sacraments were added (except for the question and answer about the manner of taking and receiving the Body and Blood of Christ in the Lord's Supper - this was put into the Irish Prayer Book in 1878). In 1662 the Catechism was separated from Confirmation, and a brief statement renewing the "solemn promise and vow" of baptism was inserted at the beginning of the latter (after the Preface).

### **(3:5) Confirmation**

As this stands in the 2004 edition of the Prayer Book (pp353-6) it has a twofold structure. There is the renewing of the baptismal vows then the laying on of hands with prayer by the bishop. Candidates "confirm" their vows and then "are confirmed" by the bishop. The service begins with the Preface (insisting that none shall be confirmed unless they can say the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments and be further instructed in the Church Catechism). The bishop may address the candidates. The candidates are asked if they "renew and confirm" the solemn promise and vow of their baptism; and there follows the threefold interrogation of the baptismal service which may be summed up in the words "Renounce", "Believe", and "Obey". Appropriate versicles and responses lead into the Prayer for the Sevenfold Gifts of the Holy Spirit, which is ultimately derived from the Messianic passage in Isaiah 11:2. The wording is referred to by St. Ambrose in his *De Mysteriis* (Fourth Century), and the prayer is first found in full in connection with Christian Initiation in the *Gelasian Sacramentary* (Seventh Century). The Gelasian Sacramentary has "*immitte in eos*" - "send forth into them", the BCP has "Strengthen them with..." The Confirmation Prayer (said by the bishop during the laying on of hands). "Defend, O Lord..." dates from 1552. A further episcopal address may follow the act of confirming, and the service concludes with the Lord's Prayer, two collects and a blessing. A rubric states that "there shall none be admitted to the Holy Communion, until such time as he be confirmed, or be ready and desirous to be confirmed". A remarkable omission in this rite is any provision for the reading of Holy Scripture.

### **The relationship between Baptism and Confirmation**

This has been much discussed by Anglican theologians during the past century, and agreement is not yet in sight. Part of the problem is the disintegration of the rite so that one has to ask what effects are to be attributed to baptism and what effects are to be attributed to confirmation. Some writers (Puller and Mason, and more recently Thornton, Kirk, and Dm Gregory Dix, supported by the Church of England's abortive 1928 Prayer Book) have maintained that Confirmation is essential to Christian Initiation as it conveys the "gift" or "gifts" of the Holy Spirit. Others (Bright, Wirgman, and Darwell Stone, and more recently A.M. Ramsey, G.W.H. Lampe, and E.C. Whitaker) have claimed that the Holy Spirit is given in baptism and that Confirmation is essentially a supplementary rite. Various official Church of England reports have varied in emphasis but have tended towards the latter position, the "Ely" report of 1971 in particular. Whatever the outcome of this ongoing debate, which has been taken up by the Inter-Anglican Liturgical Consultation, it will be seen that in the traditional orders of service the rite of Confirmation has both "subjective" and "objective" aspects and that both of these need to be given due attention.

### **[4] Christian Initiation – Modern (in the Church of Ireland)**

Dissatisfaction with the Prayer Book Order for Holy Baptism led to proposals in the 1940s and early 1950s to provide either an alternative or a revised Order. The General Synod did not, however, accept these; and a suggestion to amend the Confirmation service did not bear fruit at that time. On the other hand, there was an increased interest in liturgical renewal in the 1950s (an important part being played by an association known as "Irish Parish and People", the offshoot of a Church of England group working to implement the principles of the Liturgical Movement in an Anglican context). In 1958 the Lambeth Conference set up a special sub-

committee under Archbishop G. O. Simms (Dublin) to consider the principles of Prayer Book revision, and, as a result of its deliberations guidelines were issued. In 1962 the Church of Ireland's Liturgical Advisory Committee was set up, whose function was to prepare proposals for liturgical revision and submit them to the General Synod. A draft revision of the Baptism service appeared in 1965. In 1969 a radically new form was produced as part of a Red Book containing a number of trial services, and this, slightly modified, was ultimately passed by Synod and incorporated into the Alternative Prayer Book of 1984. This was the remarkably popular "An Order for the Baptism of Children". Much thought was devoted to the revision of the Order for Confirmation; but it was only in 1987 that a new order was finally passed by Synod. An Order for Baptism, Confirmation and First Communion of those able to answer for themselves was authorized in 1988 and it, together with other initiatory material was incorporated into the publication *Alternative Occasional Services* in 1993. These rites were superseded by the very different provision made in the 2004 edition of the *Book of Common Prayer*. For a detailed commentary see Part Two of this study. What follows below is a summary of the orders contained in Christian Initiation Two.

#### (4:1) **Holy Baptism.**

It is highly significant that there is no Order for the Baptism of Infants, although elements particularly relevant to this (drawn from the order in the Alternative Prayer Book) are incorporated into the main stand-alone form and into the particular provisions for Holy Baptism in the context of Morning or Evening Prayer or a Service of the Word. It was strongly felt by the Liturgical Advisory Committee that there should be a single order for Holy Baptism regardless of whether children or adults were being baptized. Following a Pastoral Introduction the main headings show the kind of sequence that characterizes rite two services in the 2004 edition of the Book of Common Prayer: The Gathering of God's People, Proclaiming and Receiving the Word, The Presentation, The Decision and The Baptism, and, where there is to be Holy Communion, Celebrating at the Lord's Table and Going Out as God's People. The Gathering of God's People includes an introduction explaining the rationale of baptism, and there are seasonal variants for this and for other parts of the order of service (the Collect, Post-Communion and Blessing). The readings are normally those appointed in the Table of Readings, but special baptismal readings are also provided. In the Presentation there is a significant role for the sponsors (who are employed for both infants and adults. In the former case they speak on behalf of those unable to answer for themselves). The Decision is particularly emphatic both in its rejection of evil and in its affirmation of submission to Christ. The act of baptism is preceded by one of two versions of the blessing or sanctification of the water through a prayer of thanksgiving and there is an affirmation of faith through the saying of the Apostles' Creed by all present. A proper preface is provided for eucharistic prayer one and there is provision for suitable post-communions prayers and blessings. There is a special form of the dismissal during which each of the newly baptized may be given a lighted candle.

#### (4:2) **Holy Baptism in the context of Morning or Evening Prayer or a Service of the Word**

The order described above may be described as standard, whether it is used by itself or is combined (as is much to be desired) with Holy Communion. However, it is also recognized that it may be pastorally appropriate to administer in the context of Morning or Evening Prayer or at family worship when a Service of the Word is used. Essentially this order was devised to show how this might be done. In drawing up this adaptation the opportunity was taken to restore from the APB rite an explanation of the basis on which Holy Baptism is administered to infants, and the post-baptismal prayers from that office are also reproduced here as well as appearing as options in the standard form.

#### (4:3) **Confirmation**

The *Order for Confirmation* comprises The Gathering of God's People, Proclaiming and Receiving the Word, The Decision, The Profession of Faith, The Confirmation, The Commission, and, when there is Holy Communion, The Prayers of the People, Celebrating at the Lord's Table, and Going Out as God's People. In the Gathering the initial Greeting is followed by a Preface or Introduction in which it is explained that in the Confirmation service are two distinct, yet related acts of confirming - by the candidates in their profession of faith and by the bishop with the laying on of hands and prayer. The readings should normally be as appointed in the Table of Readings. But special readings relating to initiation in general and including some for Confirmation in particular are also provided. The questions and answers in the Decision and The Profession of Faith are identical to those at baptism. The part of the order entitled "Confirmation" relates entirely

to the laying on of hands with prayer, including the traditional petition for (an increase in) the sevenfold gifts of the Spirit, and the act of confirmation begins “Confirm ..... O Lord...” The Commission consists of questions and answers relating to participation in the life and worship of the Church and living out the Christian life.

Although the laying on of hands for confirmation is not repeatable since it relates to the “once for all” of baptism, this order of service may, with the use of a different prayer over the candidate be used for “reaffirmation”.

#### **(4:4) Holy Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Communion**

This highly significant, even normative structure for a full form of sacramental initiation is given only in outline form in the sequence The Gathering of God’s People, Proclaiming and Receiving the Word, The Presentation, The Baptism, Confirmation, Celebrating at the Lord’s Table, and Going out as God’s People. and there is a note that this may be adapted at the bishop’s discretion to meet particular circumstances. Although the opportunities for a bishop to preside over the complete process are likely to be rare there is a sense in which this order may be regarded as a norm, integrating Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Communion in a total act of initiation.

#### **(4:5) The Renewal of Baptismal Vows**

In addition to the provision for “reaffirmation” through the laying on of hands by the bishop at a Confirmation (see above), the baptismal vows may be renewed as appropriate, the form being provided for use at Easter, Pentecost, the Baptism of our Lord, on Ash Wednesday, at the close of a mission or on other suitable occasions. This order may be used at Morning or Evening Prayer or Holy Communion. Two forms are provided, one of which directly echoes the wording in Baptism Two, the other of which is closer to the provision in the (superseded) *Alternative Occasional Services*, 1993. The form of question and answer from The Commission in Confirmation Two follows and the order concludes with prayer.

#### **(4:6) Thanksgiving after the Birth of a Child/Thanksgiving after Adoption**

This order (adapted from a previous version in *Alternative Occasional Services* 1993) is the ultimate successor to the order for the Churching of Women. There is, however, no trace of any suggestion of purification or cleansing, either intended or implied. It is, quite simply, a form of thanksgiving, in the case of the birth of a child for the safety of the mother in giving birth to the child and for the life of the new-born baby. In the case of adoption, it is suitable for use in the home. In each case there is a specific form of thanksgiving for the parents to say. Psalm verses are followed by suggested readings and there are suitable prayers concluding with the Lord’s Prayer, verses of Scripture and a blessing to be pronounced by a priest.

## Part Two: Current Rites in the Church of Ireland

In this part current rites of the Church of Ireland are examined under the headings of the canonical position, Christian Initiation One and Christian Initiation Two.

### [1] The Canonical Position

#### Canon 26. Holy Baptism

(1) "Due notice shall be given to the minister before a child is brought to the church to be baptized." This provides an opportunity for baptismal preparation of the sponsors (parents and godparents). There should normally be a pastoral visit at a time when both parents are available. "Going through" the service (which even regular churchgoers may not be very familiar with) gives the minister a chance to explain the nature of the baptismal vows and to speak to the sponsors about the nature of Christian commitment.

(2) "If the minister shall refuse or unduly delay to baptize any such child, the parents or guardians may apply to the bishop who shall, after consultation with the minister, give such directions as he shall think fit." The obligation upon the minister to baptize any children within his cure is not absolute; but he or she must have good reason for refusing to baptize and must be prepared to justify any such unusual action to the bishop, whose directions on the matter must be obeyed.

(3) "The minister shall instruct the parents or guardians of a child to be admitted to Holy Baptism that the same responsibilities rest on them as are in the service of Holy Baptism required of godparents." In Note 3 on page 352 of the Prayer Book it says, "It is desirable that parents be sponsors for their own children." Also relevant is the general Note 1: "The Minister of every parish shall teach the people the meaning of Baptism and the responsibilities of those who bring children to be baptized."

(4) "Sponsors and godparents must be baptized Christians and persons of discreet age, and at least two shall be members of the Church of Ireland or of a Church in communion therewith." The parents will normally both be members of the Church of Ireland, which covers this if they act for their own child. However, in the case of an inter-church marriage it will be necessary to secure the services of a godparent who is a church member. All sponsors should be believing Christians; and if members of another communion should not hold views that are inimical to the teaching of the Church of Ireland (for example disbelief in the efficacy of the sacraments). The term "discreet age" is not explicated, but since confirmation in the Book of Common Prayer takes place at the "years of discretion", this perhaps provides a clue.

#### Canon 27. Teaching the Young

(1) "Every minister shall take care that the children and young persons within his cure are instructed in the doctrine, sacraments and discipline of Christ, as the Lord has commanded and as they are set forth in the holy scriptures, in the Book of Common Prayer and in the Church Catechism. To this end he or some godly and competent persons shall on Sundays or other convenient times carefully instruct and teach them in the same." This provides the canonical basis for Sunday Schools. It is to be noted that the faith of the Church of Ireland must be taught and that general nondenominational courses are not sufficient. The Church Catechism (1878) is printed in the Prayer Book on pp766-770 and the Revised Catechism remains available although its authorization under the experimental services legislation has now lapsed. It was approved for use under that legislation by the House of Bishops.

(2) "All parents and guardians shall take care that their children receive such instruction." This, however, should not be regarded as a substitute for church attendance as it has been in the past. The widely adopted option of running church and Sunday School at the same time and the children going out (after the third collect at Morning Prayer) or coming in (at the Offertory during the communion) is worthy of serious consideration. The acid test of the value of Sunday School is the extent to which the worshipping community is built up.

#### Canon 28. Confirmation

(1) "Every minister who has cure of souls shall encourage those whom he shall think suitable to be confirmed and shall use his best endeavour to instruct them in the Christian faith and life as set forth in the holy

scriptures, Book of Common Prayer and the Church Catechism contained therein." The limitation is significant - "those whom he shall think suitable". There is no obligation to present for confirmation any who show no evidence of allegiance to the doctrine and discipline of the Church, for example those who do not attend Sunday School and Church and show no disposition to begin to do so. But this in no way takes away from the minister the responsibility to communicate the Gospel to all his parishioners and to bring them to conformity with Christ.

(2) "The bishop shall minister in person (or cause to be ministered by some other bishop lawfully deputed in his place) the rite of confirmation throughout his diocese, laying his hands upon children and other persons who have been baptized and instructed in the Christian Faith". This enables the bishop to have a role in the totality of initiation, but it does not restrict him to confirmations. There is no reason, for example, why he should not from time to time preside over the liturgy of baptism on the occasion of his visit to a parish; and the order for Holy Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Communion, provided in outline form in the Book of Common Prayer 2004 (p. 397) presupposes that, properly speaking, he should preside over the total liturgy of initiation integrated under his presidency. However, it may be that in other communions confirmation is not necessarily conferred by a bishop. In the Roman and Orthodox churches a priest may confer confirmation with oil blessed by the bishop, while in the Lutheran churches the priest is normally the minister of confirmation.

(3) "The minister shall present to the bishop only such as have been baptized and are come to years of discretion, and can say the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments, and can also render an account of their faith according to the said catechism". In the early Church (as in Eastern Christianity today) infants were not only baptized but received the laying on of hands/anointing with prayer and first communion as well. However, since one of the two main aspects of confirmation in the Anglican tradition is the renewal of the baptismal vows (with a full understanding of their significance) it may be seen why confirmation is at present administered only to those who "are come to years of discretion". It may be noted that in certain circumstances (for example in the confirmation of the mentally handicapped) the requirements about the Creed and the Catechism may be incapable of fulfilment and may have to be disregarded. The provision made for godparents or sponsors in Confirmation Two is particularly appropriate in such circumstances.

## [2] Christian Initiation One

### 2:1 The Ministration of Public Baptism of Infants to be used in the Church

**Title** The word "Publick", omitted in 1552, was restored in 1662, and the words "Of infants" were added - since at that same revision an adult baptism service was included for the first time in the Prayer Book.

Infant baptism is not explicitly to be found in the New Testament although it may be implied in the references to "households" for example in Acts 16:31, 1 Cor. 1:16. It seems to be suggested by the declaration in Justin Martyr (d.156) that "many, both men and women, who have been Christ's disciples *from childhood*, remain pure at the age of sixty or seventy years..." (Apol. 1, 15:6). Irenaeus (c.130-c200) said, with reference to Christ, "He came to save all through means of Himself - all...who through Him are born again to God - infants, and children, and boys, and youths, and old men" (*Adversus Haereses*, 2:22). Cyprian (d.258), writing to Fidus (Ep. 64) said, "We all judge that the mercy and grace of God is to be denied to none born of man", and the Epistle is written to contradict the opinion of Fidus, that infants ought not to be baptized until they are eight days old, Cyprian declaring that no infant can be too young to be baptized. Origen (c.185-c.254) referred to infant baptism. on several occasions, "therefore children also are baptized" (Homilies on Luke 14: on 2:22a); baptism is given "according to the custom of the Church, to infants also" (op. cit. 8:3 on 12:2); "For this reason, moreover, the Church received from the apostles the tradition of baptizing infants too" (Commentary on Romans 5:9 on 6:5-7). Augustine (354-430) spoke of "infants baptized in Christ", and said, "in babes born and not yet baptized, let Adam be acknowledged; in babes born and baptized, and thereby born again, let Christ be acknowledged". "Infants too are carried to the Church; for if they cannot run thither on their feet, they run with the feet of others, that they may be healed..." (Aug. Serm. 174 and 176, see also Ben., 124 and 126). The Gregorian Sacramentary (sixth century?) refers to the baptism of "infants".

## RUBRICS

A feature of the 2004 edition of the Book of Common Prayer is the simplification, modification, and, where necessary, the elimination of rubrics that have lost their relevance. The following rubrics (BCP 1926 p.247) have all been removed but are given and explained here because of their historical significance:

The Curates of every Parish shall often admonish the people, that they defer not the Baptism of their children longer than the fourth or fifth week next after their birth, unless upon a great and reasonable cause.

This rubric echoed a warning that appeared in successive editions of the Prayer Book in the ministration of Private Baptism. In the 1662 order this required the people not to defer the Baptism of their children longer than the first or second Sunday next after their birth or other holiday falling between. As this regulation (in the 1926 Book specifying the "fourth or fifth week") is not to be found in the 2004 edition it is no longer a general requirement for baptism, and so has largely lost its force. The customary age nowadays seems to be about six to eight weeks. The anxiety for early baptism may be traced back to Augustine, who, regarding baptism as a remedy for original sin, thought it important to administer it before any actual sin could be committed (and before the child might die and not have received a sacrament necessary to salvation).

The people are to be admonished that it is most convenient that Baptism should be administered at some Publick Service of the Church: as well for that the congregation there may testify the receiving of them that be newly baptized into the number of Christ's Church; as also because in the Baptism of Infants every man present may be put in remembrance of his own profession made to God in his Baptism. For which cause also it is expedient that Baptism be ministered in the vulgar tongue.

This rubric was derived from that in the 1549 Prayer Book but had been much altered. The original version ran as follows (parts omitted, or altered since then are in italics):

*It appeareth by ancient writers, that the Sacrament of Baptism in the old time was not commonly ministered but at two times in the year, at Easter and Whitsuntide, at which times it was openly ministered in the presence of all the congregation: which custom (now being grown out of use) although it cannot for many considerations be well restored again, yet it is thought good to follow the same as near as conveniently may be: Wherefore the people are to be admonished that it is most convenient that Baptism should not be ministered but upon Sundays and other holy days, when the most number of the people may come together. As well for that the congregation there present may testify the receiving of them, that be newly baptized, into the number of Christ's Church, as also because in the Baptism of Infants every man present may be put in remembrance of his own profession made to God in his Baptism. For which cause also, it is expedient that Baptism be ministered in the English tongue. Nevertheless (if necessity so require) children ought at all times to be Baptized, either at the Church or else at home.*

The part preceding "The people are to be admonished..." was omitted in 1662. The reference to "Sundays and other holy days" was retained in the Irish Prayer Book of 1878 but omitted in 1926, the more general "at some Public Service of the Church" being substituted. This was unfortunate as it retained neither the significance of Sunday as the Lord's Day nor of other Holy Days as occasions when the administration of one of the two Sacraments of the Gospel is particularly appropriate. The last sentence was modified in 1552, "Nevertheless (if necessity so required) children may at all times be baptized at home". In the 1662 revision it was desired to discourage private baptisms, and so the sentence was changed again to "Nevertheless (if necessity so require) children may be baptized *upon any other day*". The sentence was omitted in the 1926 Irish revision.

The basic principle is clearly sound, and baptisms should continue to be administered, if possible, at some Public Service of the Church. This should be the norm, even if, in large parishes, it is sometimes necessary to have baptisms at a special time.

And note, that there shall be for every Male Child to be baptized two Godfathers and one Godmother; and for every Female, one Godfather and two Godmothers.

This rubric dates from the 1662 revision, and had largely fallen into disuse. Its place has been taken by Canon 25.4 referred to above.

Parents may be sponsors for their own children. When three sponsors cannot be found, two shall suffice; and if two cannot be found, one shall suffice. Sponsors must be persons of discreet age, and members of the Church of Ireland, or of a Church in communion therewith.

This rubric was peculiar to the Church of Ireland, the first sentence appearing in the 1878 revision and the second having been added in 1926. It is desirable that the parents in all cases act as sponsors since they have the principal real responsibility for the child's moral and spiritual well-being. This is clearly recognized in the relevant canon (26:3, *see above*) and by Note 3, "It is desirable that parents be sponsors for their own children." The regulation about membership of the Church of Ireland is covered by the same canon.

When there are children to be baptized, the Parents should give due notice to the Curate. And the Godfathers and Godmothers, and the people with the Children, must be ready at the Font, at Morning or Evening Prayer, immediately after the Third Collect, or at such other times as the Ordinary shall approve; provided that no parent shall be precluded from having his child baptized in the Publick Service, if he so desire.

Prayer books from 1549 onwards had specified notice to be given overnight or before Morning Prayer (quite inadequate for the purpose of baptismal preparation). The present "due notice" was introduced in the Irish Prayer Book of 1926. In all prayer books from 1549 to 1662 baptisms were to take place immediately after the second lesson at Morning or Evening Prayer. The 1878 Irish revision added "or else after the Third Collect", and made this normative, allowing, however, "such other times as the Ordinary shall approve". The "Curate" here meant the incumbent of the parish, the one having the "cure of souls".

It is regrettable that a direction introduced in 1662 was omitted in 1926 to the effect that when the priest comes to the font it is "then to be filled with pure water". No guidance is given to this effect in Baptism One, contrasting with the clear direction, "water is poured into the font" in Baptism Two. A baptismal ewer is suitable for the purpose.

\*When Baptism is administered at Morning or Evening Prayer, then all the Prayers after the Third Collect may be omitted.

This rubric came in with the 1926 revision when the option of having the baptism after the second lesson (unless approved by the bishop) disappeared. According to a rubric (BCP 1926 pp9) the Lesser Litany and Lord's Prayer might also be omitted from Morning or Evening Prayer since the Lord's Prayer is said as part of the order for Baptism.

## THE ORDER OF SERVICE

### [1] The Question

The actual words of this question were substituted for the rubrical direction "The Priest shall ask whether the children be baptized or no" in 1662. The question is one of importance, as, in the words of Hooker, "iteration of Baptism once given hath been always thought a manifest contempt of that ancient apostolic aphorism, 'One Lord, one Faith, one Baptism', baptism not only one inasmuch as it hath every where the same substance, and offereth unto all men the same grace, but one also for that it ought not to be received by any one man above once" [Ecc. Polit. V. lxii.4]. However, a more serious problem today is that of a person baptized in infancy wishing to be baptized again as an adult. As there is "one baptism for the remission of sins" (Nicene Creed) this is not possible, and any "re-baptism" is null and void.

### [2] The Preface

This indicates the necessity and expresses the purpose of baptism. Because of the universality of man's fallen condition and the need to be born "of water and of the Spirit" to enter God's kingdom, the congregation must pray for "that which by nature (this Child) cannot have", so that he may be baptized with water and the Holy Ghost, received into Christ's holy Church, and be made a living member of it. The phrase "conceived and born in sin" has commonly given rise to the misconception that there is something inher-



ently sinful about the physical process by which a person is conceived and born and that (as St. Augustine indeed mistakenly taught) Original Sin is somehow physically transmitted. In fact this phrase (echoing Ps. 51:5) is intended simply to convey the scriptural truth of the universality of sin because of the Fall of Man.

The contents of the Preface seem to have been derived partly from Archbishop Hermann's *Consultation*, but also appear to show an awareness of that in the ancient Baptismal Office in the Gallican (French) Church,

Very dear Brethren, let us, in the venerable office of the present mystery, humbly pray our Almighty Creator and Restorer, who designed to repair, through grace, the glories of our nature, lost through sin, that He will transfuse efficacy into these waters and by the presence of the Majesty of the Trinity, give power to effect the most holy regeneration; that He will break in pieces the head of the dragon upon these waters; that the debtors being buried with Christ by Baptism, the likeness of death may so take place here, that the perishing may be saved, and death may only be felt in the destruction here on earth through. Jesus Christ.

### [3] The Collect

Either the prayer "Almighty and immortal God..." or "Almighty and everlasting God, who of thy great mercy didst save Noah and his family..." The first of these, which comes from the pre-Reformation *Sarum* rite, has as its central petition, "that he, coming to thy Holy Baptism may receive remission of his sins by spiritual regeneration", "regeneration" being another word for "rebirth". "The everlasting benediction of thy heavenly washing" is sought for the child in the final petition. The second prayer, which derives from ancient sources via *Luther* (and Hermann's *Consultation*) is typological in its linking of baptism to the crossing of the Red Sea by the children of Israel in their deliverance from the hand of Pharaoh. It is the source of the wording of the petition in the pre-baptismal prayer (p.249) to "sanctify (this) water to the mystical washing away of sins", introduced into that prayer in 1662. The petition is to "wash him and sanctify him with the Holy Ghost; that he ... may be received into the ark of Christ's Church.. .and finally may come to the land of everlasting life..."

In versions of the BCP from 1549-1662 and in the Irish Book of 1878 the "Flood" prayer came first, and both were obligatory. In the original version of the "Flood" prayer the type of the deluge was used in two senses; first, indicating water as a means of destroying evil; and secondly, as a means of salvation. The first sense was eliminated from the prayer in 1552, as was also the similar passage which spoke of the destruction of Pharaoh: and in its present form the idea of "saving by water" is more strongly expressed than it was previously by "whom ...thou didst save in the ark". But the original twofold sense is to be found in the Gelasian office for Baptism - "Who, washing away the sins of the world by water, didst in the very outpourings of the deluge, stamp a figure of regeneration; so that through the mystery of one and the same element, there was both an end put to sins, and a source of excellence". The Baptism of the world by the deluge to the cleansing away of its iniquity, and the regenerating it for a new life, is a favourite idea with the ancient fathers.

In the Prayer Book of 1549 the signing with the Cross which now follows the act of Baptism, took place here, the words used being "N" (the child having been named by the sponsors), "Receive the sign of the holy cross, both in thy forehead and in thy breast, in token that thou shalt not be ashamed..."

The prayer "Almighty and immortal God" was associated with the Exorcism in the 1549 Prayer Book Prayer Book. The latter was left out, perhaps in deference to the criticism of Bucer who thought that it pointed to an actual possession of all unbaptised persons, similar to the cases of possession recorded in the Gospel. However, it reflected a tradition going back to the early Church of repeated exorcisms as part of the preparation for baptism (catechumenate).

### [4] The Gospel

The Gospel is Mark 10:13f, Jesus and the little children, chosen for its presumed relevance to the baptism of infants (see the Exhortation, *below*). Although this passage was probably not originally to do with Christian initiation, it does demonstrate the role of children as a symbolic representation of those who are fit for the kingdom, and also it shows that in the mind of Our Lord children are capable of receiving a blessing (and by

implication, "the everlasting benediction [blessing] of thy heavenly washing" as referred to in the first prayer, *above*).

In Sarum the reading was from the parallel passage in Matt. 1.9:13-15. The use of Mark here follows Hermann's *Consultation*.

**[5] Exhortation**

A brief exhortation based on the Gospel, aimed to persuade hearers that Christ who received and blessed the little children will "likewise favourably receive this present Infant; that he will embrace him with the arms of his mercy; that he will give unto him the blessing of eternal life, and make him partaker of his everlasting kingdom..." This short homily was first inserted in 1549 and was evidently founded on that in the Cologne book. In its original form [1549] it ended "and say the prayer which the Lord himself taught. And in declaration of our faith, let us also recite the articles contained in our Creed". The Lord's Prayer and the Creed were then said (according to the ancient custom) by "the Minister, godfathers, godmothers, and people present", before the prayer which now immediately follows the Exhortation. This recitation of the Lord's Prayer and Creed was made by all, on their own behalf, and was quite independent of the interrogatory Creed which is recited by the Priest, and replied to by the sponsors on behalf of the child to be baptized.

**[6] A prayer of minister and people**

The key petition of this is, "Give thy Holy Spirit to this Infant, that he may be born again, and be made an heir of everlasting salvation..." The prayer is from Hermann's *Consultation*. It is not clear why this became something to be said by priest and people together. Originally it was a collect said by the priest alone.

Here in 1549 was concluded the "introductory office" which was gone through at the church door. Then followed the ceremony of introducing the children into the church, with the words, "The Lord vouchsafe to receive you into his holy household, and to keep and govern you always in the same, that you may have everlasting life. Amen." The formula of introduction, which concluded the Sarum Office for making a catechumen had been, "Enter into the temple of God: that thou mayest have eternal life, and mayest live for ever."

**[7] Address to the godparents,**

This encourages them to make the baptismal vows on behalf of the child. They are reminded of their prayers that the Lord would,

- (a) receive the child;
- (b) release him of his sins;
- (c) sanctify him with the Holy Ghost;
- (d) give him everlasting life; and of Christ's promise to grant these petitions, and the certainty of His performing what He has promised.

**[8] The baptismal covenant**

The baptismal covenant comprises the vows made in response to the questions which have given rise to the title "The Interrogatories" for this part of the service. The three promises consist of the vow of renunciation, the vow of belief, and the vow of obedience and may be summed up in the words **Renounce**, **Believe** and **Obey**. The candidate also assents to baptism, the traditional formula from Sarum having been,

Then the priest asks the name of the child, saying: "What do you ask?" And they respond: "Baptism". Then the priest says, "Do you wish to be baptized? And they respond "I wish".

With regard to the vow of renunciation this is referred to by Tertullian in the 3rd century, "We do in the Church testify, under the hand of a chief minister, that we renounce the devil and his pomp and his angels". St. Basil [de Sp. S. 27] speaks of the same renunciation as one of the unwritten traditions and customs of the Church. St. Cyril of Jerusalem gives the form as, "I renounce thee, Satan, and all thy works, and all thy pomp, and all thy service"; and he says that while the renunciation was being uttered the catechumen stood facing the West, as "the region of sensible darkness", and stretched out the arm as though actually speaking to the Evil one.. In the Sarum rite there was a threefold renunciation which was been coalesced into one in the BCP tradition from 1552 onwards.

With regard to the *vow of belief*, this reflects biblical tradition that before a person could be baptized he or she must come to faith (Acts 16:31-33). The interrogation in Acts 8:37, although not very fully attested, probably reflects early church practice. The Apostles' Creed seems to have originated as the profession of faith made at baptism in the West. Following Sarum the Creed was presented in the form of a threefold question in 1549 (corresponding to belief in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost) and the answer, given three times, was "I believe".

With regard to the *vow of obedience* this is not represented in the ancient offices of Baptism in the sacramentaries nor in the Prayer Book tradition before 1662. It is found in Sanderson's *Liturgy in the times of rebellion* and in Bishop Cosin's draft revision and was introduced into the 1662 Order.

An important addition in response to criticism of questions addressed directly to the infant and answered by the Godparents was to include the words "in the name of this child".

#### [9] **The Four Petitions**

The four petitions for the child were derived ultimately from the *Mozarabic* (Spanish) rite through a translation and adaptation to be found in the 1549 Prayer Book, shortened and simplified from 1552 onwards. The *first* is a petition for the new birth, founded on Rom. 6:4 and Col. 2:12. The *second* is for the death of carnal affections, and for spiritual life (Rom. v:11). The *third* is for victory over the devil, the world, and the flesh. The *fourth* is a petition that not only this child but "whosoever is here dedicated to thee by our office and ministry, may also be endued with heavenly virtues and everlastingly rewarded..." The first two of these originally belonged to a form of prayer to be used when the water in the font was to be changed once a month at least. In the 1549 rite the priest was to say,

O most merciful God, our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hast ordained the element of water for the regeneration of thy faithful people, upon whom being baptized in the river of Jordan, the Holy Ghost came down in the likeness of a dove: Send down we beseech thee the same thy Holy Spirit to assist us, and to be present at this our invocation off thy holy name: Sanctify +this fountain of baptism, thou that art the sanctifier of all things, that by the power of thy word all those that shall be baptized therein, may be spiritually regenerated, and made the children of everlasting adoption. **Amen.**

There followed the first two of the petitions in our Prayer Book, and then several more,

Grant to all them which at this fountain forsake the devil and all his works: that they may have power and strength to have victory and to triumph against him, the world and the flesh. Amen.

Whosoever shall confess thee, O Lord: recognize him also in thy kingdom. Amen.

Grant that all sin and vice here may be so extinct: that they never have power to reign in thy servants.

Grant that whosoever here shall begin to be of thy flock: may evermore continue in the same. Amen.

Grant that all they which for thy sake in this life do deny and forsake themselves: may win and purchase thee (O Lord) which are everlasting treasure. Amen.

#### [10] **The Blessing of the Water**

This is one of the most ancient and fundamental parts of the rite and corresponds to some extent to the prayer of consecration in the Holy Communion. Tertullian, in the third century A.D. (*De Baptism.* 4) said that "all waters, from the ancient privilege of their origin, obtain, after prayer to God, the sacrament of sanctification". St. Cyprian, writing to Januarius in 255 A.D. said, "The water must first be cleansed and sanctified by the priest, that it may be able, by Baptism therein, to wash away the sins of the baptized" (Ep. 70). St. Cyril of Jerusalem taught his candidates for baptism in similar words: "Regard not the sacred laver as simple water, regard rather the spiritual grace given with the water ... plain water, after the invocation of the Holy Ghost, and of Christ, and of the Father, gains a sanctifying power". (*Catech. Lect.* 3:3) St. Ambrose in *De Sacramentis* wrote, "When the priest first comes to the baptistery, he exorcizes the creature of water, and afterwards makes an invocation and offers a prayer, that the font may be sanctified for the presence of the Eternal Trinity". The prayer "Almighty everliving God, whose most dearly beloved Son Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of our sins..." is derived from the Sarum *Benedictio Fontis* (Blessing of the Font) which in turn comes from the early sacramentaries. In 1552 the blessing of the water was omitted, but it was restored in

1662 by the addition of the words "sanctify this water to the mystical washing away of sin". The wording of the prayer evolved as follows,

1549 And grant that all thy servants which shall be Baptized in this water, prepared for the ministration of thy holy Sacrament [previously, once a month or so as noted above] may receive the fulness of thy grace.

1552 And grant that all thy servants which shall be baptized in this water, may receive the fulness of thy grace.

1662 \*Sanctify this water to the mystical washing away of sin; and grant that this Child, now to be baptized therein, may receive the fulness of thy grace.

\*To "sanctify" in this context means to *set apart* for a sacred purpose, and has abundant precedent in the Old Testament where the root QDSH, used of both people and inanimate objects, has the sense of "separate", "set apart", e.g. Gen. 40:10; Neh. 3:1; 2 Chron. 2:16,20; 2 Chron. 30:24; similarly the Greek verb *hagiazō* and its derivations in the New Testament, Mt 23:17,19; 1 Thess. 5:23; Heb. 8:2. In traditional and liturgical use the word "bless" is used as a weak synonym for this although the Heb. root BRK is used of mainly of persons and similarly the Greek *eulogio* [but see 1 Cor. 10:16 "The cup of blessing *which we bless...*"]

### [11] **The Naming**

The rubric directs the priest to take the child into his hands, and this has been interpreted as a representation of Christ still embracing children with the arms of His mercy. Although baptism is not primarily a "naming" ceremony (the name will normally have already been "registered" before the child is brought to church) yet there is still considerable significance in using the name at this point, as is clearly indicated by the question and answer in the Church Catechism (BCP p.260), Q. "Who gave you this Name?" A. "My Godfathers and Godmothers in my Baptism; wherein I was made a member of Christ., the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven" [See also the *Revised Catechism* \*\*1-3). The custom of giving a *new* personal name when entering into new relationships is of the remotest antiquity. The Jews gave a personal name at circumcision on the eighth day (Luke 1:59). A Greek or Roman slave, on obtaining his freedom, received new name as a token of entering on a new life. The Greeks gave the child his name on the seventh day after birth, and made the occasion one of festivity; and the Romans had a ceremonial bathing of their children when giving them names - males on the eighth and females on the ninth day; and from early times it was customary to give infants a new name at baptism, and adults also sometimes assumed one then. This name now given is the Christian name, as distinguished from the family name, and indicates the personality of each individual admitted into the Church of Christ, and should remind every believer of their position, privileges, and duties.

[12] **The act of Baptism** The rubrics preserve the option of *immersion* in the water, with *pouring* as an alternative. It is important to note that "sprinkling" is **not** envisaged and should not be practiced. The pouring is most conveniently done from a silver baptismal "shell". Although a single affusion is valid, it is highly appropriate to follow ancient custom and to pour three times (once for each person in the Holy Trinity). Immersion was specified in the 1549 Prayer Book and in the *Sarum* rite that underlay it,

the priest shall take the child in his hands, and ask the name: and naming the child shall dip it in the water thrice. First dipping the right side: second the left side: the third time dipping the face toward the font: so it be discreetly and warily done...

And if the child be weak, it shall suffice to pour water upon it...

Two ancient customs were preserved in the 1549 Prayer Book but omitted from 1552 onwards, the putting on of the white vesture (chrysom) and anointing with oil (chrism). The putting on of the white vesture reflected early Church custom and is to be seen as an illustration of the New Testament theme of "putting on" (being clothed with) Christ (Gal. 3:27). The white robe represented innocence. The use of chrism ultimately derived from the very concept of a Christian as one anointed with the Holy Spirit as Christ had been at His baptism by John (Luke 8:22//), the word "Christos" meaning "the anointed one".

At the vesting the minister said,

Take this white vesture for a token of the innocency which by God's grace in this holy sacrament of baptism, is given unto thee: and for a sign whereby thou art admonished, so long as thou livest, to give thyself to innocency of living, that after this transitory life, thou mayest be partaker of the life everlasting. Amen.

At the anointing the priest said,

Almighty God the Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath regenerate [sic] thee by water and the Holy Ghost, and hath given unto thee remission of all thy sins: he vouchsafe [sic] to anoint thee with the unction of his Holy Spirit, and bring thee to the inheritance of everlasting life. Amen.

**[13] The Reception**

The words "we receive this child into the congregation of Christ's flock" are an explication of part of the significance of baptism, which is the sacramental act by which the child is made a member of the Body of Christ. The "receiving" is therefore not something separate from or additional to baptism itself. Nor does the sign of the cross (important as it is as a symbol of our Christian profession) add anything to the substance of the sacrament. It is understood here as a "token" that hereafter the child "shall not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified..." [See below for information on the rubric about the sign].

**[14] The Declaration**

The Declaration begins "Seeing now, dearly beloved brethren, that this child is regenerate" (born again) and grafted into the body of Christ's Church [the 1552 Order had the rather weaker 'congregation']..." This is an unequivocal assertion of the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, the key word being "now".

**[15] The Lord's Prayer** the family prayer of all Christians, includes the doxology because this is a thanksgiving. Its use after the administration is paralleled in the Prayer Book Eucharist.

**[16] The Post-Baptismal Prayer**

This asserts that it has pleased God "to regenerate [cause to be born again] this Infant with thy Holy Spirit, to receive him for thine own Child by adoption, and to incorporate him into thy holy Church". The child is to live for Christ now, and may finally with the "residue" [the rest or remainder] of the Church inherit the kingdom. The prayer has been slightly simplified from the version in the 1552-1662 BCP (continued in 1878 but altered in 1926). After the words "being buried with Christ. in his death, it read, "may crucify the old man; and utterly abolish the whole body of sin, and that as he is made partaker of the death of thy sin, he way also be partaker of his resurrection..." The use of the word "congregation (1.552) was once again altered to "church" in 1662.

**[17] Address to sponsors**

This is addressed to the Godparents and is intended to remind them of their duties. They are to ensure that the infant be taught "what a solemn vow, promise, and profession" he has here made by them; and that he be "virtuously brought up to lead a godly and a Christian life"; remembering always, "that Baptism doth represent unto us our profession; which is to follow the example of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to be made like unto him..." Also, they are to "take care that this child be brought to the Bishop to be confirmed by him, so soon as he can say the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments, and be further instructed in the Church Catechism set forth for that purpose". This suggests a "high" but perhaps rather unrealistic view of the responsibility of the godparents. However, as noted above Canon 26:3 indicates that he same responsibilities rest on the parents as are required of the Godparents in the service of Holy Baptism, and the parents themselves are often among the sponsors.

**[18] Post-Baptismal rubric**

The first part of the rubric asserts that "It is certain by God's Word, that children which are baptized, dying before they commit actual sin, are undoubtedly saved". The second part defends the custom of making the sign of the cross on the forehead of the child at baptism as "an ancient and laudable custom of the Church" However, it is "not thereby intended to add any new rite to the Sacrament, as a part of it, or necessary to it; or that using that sign is off any virtue or efficacy of itself; but only to remind all Christians of the death and

cross of Christ... " The rubric refers to the 30th of the English canons (drawn up in 1604), which defended the custom vigorously against Puritan criticism and rebutted objections. This English canon was printed at the end of the Irish canons up to the 1974 revision hence the reference in this rubric. It may be noticed that the pre-1974 Irish canon prohibiting the sign of the cross except where prescribed by the rubric, was abolished in the 1974 revision and no longer applies.

## **2:2 The Ministration of Private Baptism of Children in Houses**

This order does not appear in the 2004 edition of the Book of Common Prayer, but, as it has neither been abolished or superseded, it remains in force. It had an integral relationship to that which follows it, *The Order for Receiving into the Congregation Children which have been Privately Baptized*, and, prior to the 1926 Irish revision there was just a single order. Together with the Order for Reception it was largely drawn from the Sarum Manual and Hermann's *Consultation*, and through the latter from earlier Lutheran Baptismal offices.

The Curates of every Parish shall warn the people, that without great cause and necessity they procure not their children to be baptized in their houses. But when need shall compel them so to do, then Baptism shall be administered on this fashion:

"Great cause and necessity" - for example, danger of death. A fashionable desire, such as was once widespread, to have the baby baptized at home (often using a Christening bowl belonging to the family) was not to be regarded as a sufficient reason for home baptism, which is not only an individual or personal matter but has an essentially ecclesiological aspect. The Sarum rubrics admitted the possibility of lay baptism in an emergency, and the same understanding is implied in the rubrics of the 1549 rite which stated,

And also they shall warn them that without great cause and necessity, they baptize not children at home in their houses. And *when great need shall compel them so to do, then they minister it on this fashion...*

In the "Millenary Petition" presented by the Puritans to James I, this permission given for lay baptism in case of extreme necessity was one of the many objections urged against the Prayer Book. After the Hampton Court Conference (1604) the rubric was changed, and a "lawful minister" only permitted to baptize.

First, let the Minister of the Parish (or, in his absence, any other lawful Minister that can be procured) with them that are present call upon God, and say the Lord's Prayer, and so many of the other Prayers appointed to be said before the Form of Publick Baptism, as the time and present exigence will suffer. And then, the Child being named by some one that is present, the Minister shall pour water upon it, saying these words:

N. I baptize thee in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

The wording of this rubric dates from 1662. Although emergency lay baptism was no longer countenanced it was not declared to be invalid. The current position is indicated by Note 5 in the Book of Common Prayer p.368,

**Emergency Baptism** In case or urgent necessity it is sufficient to name the candidate and pour water on the person's head, saying

...I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. Suitable prayers and the Lord's Prayer should be said.

## **Thanksgiving after baptism**

This is based upon the prayer at the end of the order of the Baptism of Infants, and dates from 1662. A slight distinction is made in the prayer between being made partaker of the death of Christ now and being also a partaker of the resurrection.

And let them not doubt, but that the Child so baptized is lawfully and sufficiently baptized, and ought not to be baptized again.

All that is essential is contained in the pouring of water and the naming with the baptismal formula, even the preliminary Lord's Prayer and other prayers from the order for the baptism of infants and the prayer of thanksgiving not being necessary to the validity of the act.

## **2:3 THE ORDER FOR RECEIVING INTO THE CONGREGATION CHILDREN WHICH HAVE BEEN PRIVATELY BAPTIZED.\***

Like the Ministration of Private Baptism of Children in Houses this order does not appear in the 2004 edition of the Book of Common Prayer, but, as it has neither been abolished or superseded, it remains in force.

This order begins with the explanatory rubric:

If a Child which hath been privately baptized do afterward live, it is expedient that it be brought into the Church, and be received into the Congregation. If the Minister who receiveth it have not himself baptized the child, he shall examine and try whether the child be lawfully baptized or no... In which case, if those that bring any Child to the Church do answer that the same Child is already baptized, then shall he examine them further, saying...

Essential to the validity of a sacrament are the proper "matter" (that which is done) and "form" (that which is said), and, although it is not mentioned here, the right "intention" to do what the church does. A stage baptism would not be a real baptism since the intention to baptize would not be present. The "matter" of Holy Baptism is immersion in water or the pouring of water, and the "form" is the formula in which the person is baptized "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost". Hence the searching enquiries insisted on at the beginning of this rite,

By whom was this Child baptized?

Who was present when this Child was baptized?

Because some things essential to this Sacrament may happen to be omitted through fear or haste, in such times of extremity; therefore I demand further of you,

Was this Child baptized with water?

With what words was this Child baptized?

And if the Minister have himself baptized the Child, or shall find, by the answers of such as bring the Child, that all things essential were done; then shall not he christen the Child again, but shall receive him as one of the flock of true Christian people, saying thus,

I certify you, that in this case all that is essential hath been done, concerning the baptizing of this Child; who being born in original sin, and in the wrath of God, hath, *by the laver of regeneration*, been in Baptism received into the number of the children of God, and heirs of everlasting life: for our Lord Jesus Christ doth not deny his grace and mercy unto such infants, but most lovingly doth call them unto him, as the holy Gospel doth witness to our comfort on this wise.

The doctrine of baptismal regeneration is strongly affirmed in the words in italics.

The use of this order ensures that baptism is not treated as a merely private act. Although the act of baptism makes the child regenerate and a member of the universal Church it is still appropriate for him to be publicly received into the congregation.

The remainder of the rite consists of the Baptism of Infants service except for the section containing the act of baptism itself (BCP p.249 from "O merciful God..." to "N. I baptize thee in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen").

### **Conditional Baptism**

A very important rubric at the end of this Order deals with the procedure to be followed if there is any doubt as to whether or not the child has actually been baptized,

But if they which bring the Infant to the Church do make such uncertain answers to the Priest's questions, as that it cannot appear that the Child was baptized with Water, in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost (which are essential parts of Baptism), then let the Priest baptize it in the Form before appointed for Publick Baptism of Infants; saving that, at the dipping of the Child in the Font, he shall use this form of words:

If thou art not already baptized, N., I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

Conditional baptism is found at least as early as the eighth century A.D), being found in the statutes of St. Boniface, Archbishop of Metz about A.D. 745. The provision in the BCP is based mainly on Sarum and on the Saxon (German) source *Agenda das ist kirchenordnunga* with improvements in 1662.

The Sarum provision read,

N. If you are baptized I do not baptize you: but if you have not been baptized, I baptize you: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit., Amen.

As there is "**one** baptism for the forgiveness of sins" (Nicene Creed) conditional baptism should be administered only where there is genuine uncertainty about one or more of the essentials of baptism.

#### **2:4 The Ministration of Baptism to such as are of Riper Years and are able to answer for themselves**

This order does not appear in the 2004 edition of the Book of Common Prayer, but, as it has neither been abolished or superseded, it remains in force. This office was added to the Book of Common Prayer in 1662. It is mentioned in the Preface to the 1662 Book (BCP 13) composed by Bishop Sanderson, who said that although it was not so necessary when the former Book was compiled, "yet by the growth of Anabaptism, through the licentiousness of the late times crept in amongst us, is now become necessary, and may be always useful for the baptizing of Natives in our plantations, and others converted to the Faith". The "late times" were those of the Commonwealth when the Anglican faith was proscribed. It was suggested, apparently, by Bishop Cosin and prepared by a Committee of Convocation, with the Bishop of St. Asaph (Griffith) playing a leading role.

Distinctive features of this Order (as compared with the Public Baptism of Infants) are as follows,

##### **[1] The rubrics**

Timely notice must be given to the Bishop of the Diocese so that due care may be taken to examine the candidates "whether they be sufficiently instructed in the principles of the Christian Religion; and that they may be exhorted to prepare themselves with prayers and fasting for the receiving of this holy Sacrament". It should be used on a Sunday or Holy-day when the people are assembled. "Godfathers and Godmothers" are required as for Infant Baptism. Enquiry must be made to determine whether the candidates have already been baptized or not.

Recognition is therefore given to the role of the Bishop as the chief Minister of the Word and Sacraments and Pastor in relation to the totality of initiation, to intellectual and spiritual preparation (including fasting, which is specified) and to the public use of the office as a means of admission to the Church. The role of the godparents is of witnesses in whose presence the candidates make the promises.

##### **[2] The Preface**

The following words, which take for granted the existence of actual sin, as well as original sin, in adults, was added to the first address, "(and that which is born of the flesh is flesh), and they that are in the flesh cannot please God, but live in sin, committing many actual transgressions".

##### **[3] The Reading**

Instead of St. Mark 10:13, which tells of Christ's invitation to children, the Gospel is taken from St. John 3, where Christ speaks to Nicodemus on the necessity of a new birth by water and the Spirit.

##### **[4] The Address after the Gospel**

This dwells on,

- (a) the necessity of baptism, and quotes John 3:5; Acts 2:38;
- (b) the benefits received in baptism, and quotes Mark 16:16; 1 Peter 3:21, and asserts that
- (c) God will give remission of sins, the Holy Ghost, and eternal life to those receiving the sacrament rightly (that **is**, with repentance and faith).



**[5] Address before the baptismal vow**

This differs from that to the sponsors in the baptism of infants in that it is addressed to the candidates, and asks their "promises in the presence of these your witnesses and this whole congregation".

**[6] Interrogatories**

The questions are answered by the candidates for themselves.

**[7] The act of baptism**

The priest is to take the person to be baptized by the right hand, and "dip him in the water, or pour water upon him". It may be noticed that here as in the Baptism of Infants the preferred option is that of immersion.

**[8] Address to the sponsors**

This reminds them of the promises just made in their presence, and dwells on their duty (a) "to put them in mind what a solemn vow, promise, and profession" they had made before them as "their chosen witnesses", and (b) to induce them to use all diligence to be rightly instructed in God's Holy Word.

**[9] Address to the newly baptized**

This recognizes that they have by virtue of their baptism "put on Christ" and exhorts them in words taken from the comparable address in the Infant Baptism service to walk worthily of their Christian calling.

The concluding rubrics cover conditional baptism, confirmation and first communion, the baptism of children who have not attained the years of discretion, and the use of this Order in private.

The provision for conditional baptism is similar to that in the Order for Receiving into the Congregation Children which have been privately baptized.

The direction about confirmation and first communion links these with the act of baptism, although it is not envisaged that there should be a single service integrating all three. The wording of the 1662 order was slightly modified in the Irish revision of 1878 (and this is followed in the 1926 book),

It is expedient that every Person, thus baptized, should be confirmed by the Bishop, and receive the Holy Communion "that so he may be admitted to the Holy Communion), so soon after his Baptism as conveniently way be."

The alteration seems designed to ensure that first communion actually takes place.

The direction for the baptism of persons not baptized in their infancy before they come to years of discretion to answer for themselves is to use the infant baptism service and to substitute "child" or "person" for "infant".

Adults are only to be privately baptized "upon great and urgent cause". It is clearly undesirable that the church should not be assembled for the admission of a new adult member.

**2:5 The Order for Confirmation, or Laying on of Hands upon those that are baptized and come to years of discretion**

The service in its present form dates from 1662, and was drawn up by Bishop Cosin. Prior to 1662 there was no ratification of the baptismal vows, as such. However, before the laying on of hands by the bishop took place there was an examination of the candidates based on the catechism, which was included within the order, and this, it appears, was regarded as the means by which children, having come to the years of discretion, and having learned what their godfathers and godmothers promised for them in baptism, might then themselves with their own mouth, and with their own consent, openly before the church ratify and confirm [1549 "ratify and confess"] the same: and also promise that by the grace of God, they would evermore endeavour themselves faithfully to observe and keep such things, as they by their own mouth and confession had assented to. The idea of introducing a catechism into the Confirmation service seems to have been taken from Archbishop Hermann's *Consultation*.

In 1549 and 1552 the title was "Confirmation, wherein is contained a catechism for children". In 1662 the Catechism was separated from the Order for Confirmation, but the close relationship between the two is indicated both by the title and by the rubrics at the end of the Catechism. The title is "A Catechism, that is to

say an instruction to be learned of every person, before he be brought to be confirmed by the bishop". And the rubrics read,

The Curate of every Parish shall diligently, at such times as he shall think convenient, instruct and examine the children of his Parish in this Catechism; and upon Sundays and Holy-days, after the Second Lesson at Evening Prayer, or at such other time as may be convenient, he may, with the approval of the Ordinary, openly in the Church instruct and examine so many of such children as he shall think fit in some part of the Catechism.

[This is the version used from 1878 in the Church of Ireland. In 1662 it read, "The Curate of every Parish, shall diligently upon Sundays and Holydays, after the second Lesson at Evening Prayer, openly in the Church instruct, and examine so many of his children sent unto him as he shall think convenient in some part of this Catechism". In 1549 and 1552 the instruction was to be given half an hour before Evensong].

And all Fathers, Mothers, Masters, and Mistresses, shall cause their Children, Servants, and Apprentices to come to such instruction at the time appointed.

So soon as children are come to a competent age, and can say in their mother tongue the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments, and are further instructed in this Catechism, they shall be brought to the Bishop to be confirmed by him.

And whensoever the Bishop shall give knowledge for children to be brought unto him for their Confirmation, the Curate of every Parish shall either bring, or send in writing, with his hand subscribed thereunto, the names of all such persons within his Parish, as he shall think fit to be presented to the Bishop to be confirmed. and, if the Bishop approve of them, he shall confirm them in manner following.

## THE ORDER FOR CONFIRMATION

### [1] **Preface**

This is based upon the rubrics preceding the service in 1549 and 1552. This is the only part of the service which may be delegated to a priest by the bishop. It contains a characteristic stress of the Reformation upon comprehension and edification, affirming, as it does, that "none hereafter shall be confirmed, but such as can say the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments; and have been further instructed in the Church Catechism set forth for that purpose."

### [2] **Bishop's first address**

No bishop's address was provided until the 1878 Irish revision, when it appeared in the form of a rubric "The Bishop may address the Candidates during the Service at his discretion". The arrangement; in the 1926 book permitting two addresses, one before and one after the Confirmation, is unique.

### [3] **Renewal of the baptismal vows**

In the 1662 Prayer Book (followed by the Irish revision of 1878) the renewal of the baptismal vows took the form of a single question and answer, adapted from Hermann's *Consultation*,

Do you here in the presence of God, and of this Congregation, renew the solemn promise and vow, that was made in your Name at your Baptism; ratifying and confirming the same in your own persons, and acknowledging your selves bound to believe and to do all those things which your Godfathers and Godmothers then undertook for you? **I do.**

In the Church of Ireland's 1926 Order (following proposals drawn up by Bishop Cosin at the time of the 1662 revision but not adopted) the threefold question and answer from the Baptism service is inserted, preceded by a simplified version of the question and answer, given above,

Do you here, in the presence of God and of this Congregation, renew and confirm the solemn promise and vow of your Baptism? **I do.**

The effect of this is to produce a service with a balance between the "active" concept of Confirmation "renewing and confirming" the solemn promise and vow of one's baptism, and the "passive" sense, "being confirmed" through the laying on of hands with prayer by the bishop.

Confirmation in the sacramental sense begins with the rubric "Then shall the Congregation stand..."

#### [4] **The Versicles and Responses**

The Office of Confirmation historically began with the first four of these versicles and responses. The latter two, "Lord hear our prayers: and let our cry come unto thee" appear to have been added for the first time in 1552 when "The Lord be with you" etc. was placed after the act of confirmation instead of before the collect which preceded it. They are, however, found in very general use in ancient offices.

#### [5] **The Prayer of Invocation**

This prayer, invoking the sevenfold gifts of the Holy Spirit has a long history in confirmation, being found in the Gelasian and Gregorian Sacramentaries and also in St. Ambrose *De Sacramentis* and his *De Mysteriis*. In the latter it is said,

Wherefore, recollect that you have received the spiritual seal, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and strength, the spirit of knowledge and godliness, the spirit of holy fear [Isa. 1.1:2f], and preserve what you have received. God the Father has sealed you. Christ the Lord has confirmed you, and has given the earnest of the Spirit in your heart [2 Cor. 1:21f], as you have learned from the Apostolic lesson.

In the Book of Common Prayer rite there is no suggestion that the Holy Spirit is being bestowed by this ceremony. Rather there is a reference back to regeneration by water and the Holy Spirit at baptism, and a prayer that the candidates may be *strengthened* by the Holy Spirit.

The Puritans objected to this prayer, in 1661, in the following words,

This supposeth that all the children who were brought to be confirmed have the Spirit of Christ, and the forgiveness of their sins; whereas a great number of children at that age, having committed many sins since their baptism, do show no evidence of serious repentance, or of any special saving grace; and therefore this confirmation (if administered to such) would be a perilous and gross abuse".

The Bishops replied,

It supposeth, and that truly, that all children were at their baptism regenerate by water and the Holy Ghost, and had given unto them the forgiveness of all their sins; and it is charitably presumed that notwithstanding the frailties and slips of their childhood, they have not totally lost what was in baptism conferred upon them; and therefore adds, 'Strengthen them, we beseech Thee, O Lord, with the Holy Ghost the Comforter, and daily increase in them Thy manifold gifts of grace', etc. None that lives in open sin ought to be confirmed.

#### [6] **The act of Confirmation**

The original form of the act of Confirmation - in 1549 - was as follows,

*Minister* Sign them, O Lord, and mark them to be Thine for ever by the virtue of Thy holy cross and passion. Confirm and strengthen them with the inward unction of Thy Holy Ghost mercifully unto everlasting life. Amen.

[Then the Bishop shall cross them in the forehead, and lay his hand upon their head, saying],

*N.* I sign thee with the sign of the cross, and lay my hand upon thee, in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

[And thus shall he do to every child, one after another; and when he hath laid his hand upon every child, then shall he say,

The peace of the Lord abide with you. *Answer* And with thy spirit.

It would seem therefore that if the use of unction was dropped in 1549, the consignation with the cross was retained. In 1552 the rubric and words with which the latter was given were omitted, and a precatory benediction founded on the preceding collect was adopted as an accompaniment to the laying on of the bishop's hands. But it seems likely that the sign of the cross was still used since its use is defended as if it were a well-known custom in a sermon by Edward Boughen, chaplain to Howson, Bishop of Oxford, preached at

the bishop's first visitation in 1619. He said, "The cross, therefore upon this or the like consideration is enjoined to be used in Confirmation in the Book of Common Prayer set forth and allowed in Edward VI's reign. And I find it not at any time revoked: but it is left, as it seems, to the bishop's discretion to use or not to use the cross in confirmation".

It will be observed that it was the custom (according to ancient practice) for the bishop to confirm the children by name, until 1552. This custom gave rise to a power on the part of the bishop to change the baptismal name for another if he saw fit. It would appear that this continued to be the case, and there is evidence of a Bishop of Lincoln doing this as late as 1707.

#### [7] **The bishop's second address**

This, like the first address is at the bishop's discretion. The late Archbishop John Allen Fitzgerald Gregg used the first address to expound the idea "You come to *confirm*" and the second to expound the idea "You come to *be confirmed*."

#### [8] **The prayers**

The Lord's Prayer was first inserted in the Confirmation service in 1662, when the versicle and response "The Lord be with you. And with thy spirit", which had been removed from the service altogether in 1552, was replaced in its present position, instead of with the other versicles. The Pax Tibi ("Peace be with you...") was removed in 1552 and not restored.

The collect which follows the Lord's Prayer has some likeness to that which occupied the same place in the ancient office, but its words are taken in part from a long collect which preceded the act of confirmation in Archbishop Hermann's Cologne Book.

The second collect was inserted in 1662, probably with the intention of placing at the end of the service a prayer for the general congregation, the preceding one being for the newly confirmed. The latter part of the ancient Benediction was retained but the fifth and sixth verses of the 128th psalm which preceded it were not continued in use. The ancient benedictions in this place were sometimes very long: and were, in reality, a psalm pronounced in a form of a benediction.

#### [9] **The final rubrics**

When confirmation is ministered only to those baptized in riper years, the Preface shall be omitted.

And there shall none be admitted to the Holy Communion, until such time as he be confirmed, or be ready and desirous to be confirmed.

This latter rubric restores the essence of the text of that in the 1662 Book of Common Prayer, replacing a version used since 1878 in the Church of Ireland which read,

Every person ought to present himself for Confirmation (unless prevented by some urgent reason) before he partakes of the Lord's Supper.

The reversion to the 1662 text was made after the failure of the General Synod (by a single vote in the House of Laity) to omit the rubric altogether. The issue at stake was the admission of infants to Holy Communion (practised in the early Church for much the same reasons as infant baptism and still the custom in Eastern Orthodoxy).

In practice, whilst confirmation is the normal prerequisite for admission to Holy Communion for those baptized in the Church of Ireland, in the case of adults who have come into the church it is offered and made available (through adult confirmation services) but not insisted on as a precondition.

It is clear that there are anomalies here which have not at the time of writing been fully addressed.

**THE STRUCTURE OF THE TRADITIONAL PRAYER BOOK RITES**  
**TABLE 1: INFANT BAPTISM 1662/1926/BAPTISM ONE COMPARED**  
**WITH THE ORDER OF 1549**

<b>1662/1926</b> <b>At the Font</b>	<b>1549</b> <b>At the door of the Church</b>
1. Preliminary question.	1. Preliminary question (part of rubric).
2. Exhortation, "Dearly beloved, forasmuch as," etc.	2. Exhortation.
3. The first of the two collects, "Almighty and everlasting God," etc.	3. The first of the two collects Asking the Name of the Child.
4. The Second of the Two Collects, "Almighty and immortal God," etc.	[cf.11] Making a Cross upon the Child's forehead and breast.
5. The Gospel and the Address.	The Signing Formula
6. Thanksgiving and Prayer. "Almighty and everlasting God," etc.	4. The Second of the Two Collects. The Exorcism of the Unclean Spirit. Suffrages
7. Address to Sponsors. "Dearly beloved, ye have," etc.	5. The Gospel and the Address
8. Interrogatories	14. The Lord's Prayer. The Creed.
9. The Four Prayers for grace**	6. Thanksgiving and Prayer Taking of the child by the right hand and bringing him into the Church towards the Font.
10. Prayer for the Sanctification of the Water. "Almighty everliving God," etc.**	
11. Naming and Baptizing of the Child [Once Dipping or Affusion]	<b>At the Font</b>
12. Reception of the Child into the Church and signing it with the Cross	7. Formula of Reception.
13. Address to the people. "Seeing now," etc.	8. Interrogatories.
14. The Lord's Prayer	11. Naming and Baptizing of the Child. [Thrice Dipping or Affusion].
15. The Prayer for the Child. "We yield thee," etc.	Laying on of hands on the Child by the Sponsors.
16. Exhortation to the Sponsors "forasmuch as,"	Putting upon him the Chrisom, and repeating Formula in connection with it.
17. Charge to the Sponsors	Anointing of the Child's head. Formula of Anointing.
	16. Exhortation to the Sponsors

\* In the form of Consecration of the Font 1549, at the end of the Office for private Baptism.

\*\* The indented parts are peculiar to 1549.

[The source of this Table is *The Tutorial Prayer Book - for the Teacher, the Student, and the General Reader*, eds, Charles Neil and J.M. Willoughby, London, the Harrison Trust, 1912, p.378, slightly updated]

**THE STRUCTURE OF THE TRADITIONAL PRAYER BOOK RITES**  
**TABLE 2: COMPARISON OF CONFIRMATION ONE (2004)**  
**WITH THAT OF 1549.**

2004 (1926/1662)	1549
<p><b>The Order for Confirmation, or laying on of hands upon those that are baptized and come to years of discretion.</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Preface: "To the end that."</li> <li>2. The Ratification of Baptismal Vows: "Do you will you," etc. in threefold form (1662 single)</li> <li>3. The Suffrages: "Our help is"</li> <li>4. Prayer for Spiritual Gifts and Graces: "Almighty and ever-living God, who hast vouchsafed."</li> <li>5a Imposition of hands.</li> <li>5b Prayer: "Defend, O Lord."</li> <li>6. The Mutual Salutation: "The Lord be."</li> <li>7* The Lord's Prayer</li> <li>8. The Collect: "Almighty and everliving God, who makest."</li> <li>9. Prayer for sanctification and protection: "O Almighty Lord."</li> <li>10. Benediction</li> </ol>	<p><b>Confirmation, wherein is contained a Catechism for children.</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Rubrics commencing, "To the end that."*</li> <li style="padding-left: 2em;"><u>A Catechism</u> That is to say <u>An Instruction to be learned of every child, before he be brought to be confirmed of the Bishop.</u> The Catechism, ending with The Bishop examining the Candidates. <u>Confirmation</u></li> <li>3. The Suffrages: "Our help is"</li> <li>6. The Mutual Salutation: "The Lord be."</li> <li>4. Prayer for Spiritual Gifts and Graces: "Almighty and everliving." The Prayer that God may sign: "Sign them (O Lord)." The Act and Formula: (a) of signing on the forehead with the sign of the cross. 5a (b) Of imposition of hands. 5b Versicles: "The Peace of the Lord abide with you."**</li> <li>8 The Collect</li> <li>10 The Benediction.</li> </ol>

\* From these rubrics, "The Preface" - "To the end that," was abridged.

\*\* This was said by the Bishop, not to each child severally, but to all after he had laid his hands on "every child one after another."

[The source of this Table is *The Tutorial Prayer Book - for the Teacher, the Student and the General Reader*, eds, Charles Neil and J.M. Willoughby, London, the Harrison Trust, 1912, p.430, adapted]

## **2:6 The Thanksgiving of women after child-birth commonly called The Church of Women.**

This order does not appear in the 2004 edition of the Book of Common Prayer, but, as it has neither been abolished or superseded, it remains in force. The title in Sarum was *Ordo ad Purificandum Mulierum Post Partum ante Ostium Ecclesiae* - The Order for the Purification of Women after childbirth before the church door. In 1549 this became The Order for the Purification of Women. In 1552 the title was altered to The Thanksgiving of Women after Childbirth, commonly called the Churching of Women, and this was retained in 1662 and passed into the Irish Prayer Books of 1878 and 1926. The concept of "Purification", derived from scriptural antetypes (Luke 2:22ff //Lev. 12:2-6) no longer appeared, since it was at no time in the text of the service, but it lingered on in popular understanding. The rite is ancient, being mentioned in a letter of St. Augustine of Canterbury to St. Gregory the Great (A.D. 601).

The rite appeared after the Burial of the Dead in Prayer Books up to and including the Irish Prayer Book of 1878, and was moved into its present more logical position following the Solemnization of Matrimony in 1926.

In his classic commentary *A Rational Illustration of the Book of Common Prayer of the Church of England*, Charles Wheatley (1686-1724) had this to say,

As to the original of this custom, it is not to be doubted, but that as many other Christian usages received their rise from other parts of the Jewish economy, so did this from the rite of Purification, which is enjoined so particularly in the twelfth chapter of Leviticus. Not that we observe it by virtue of that precept, which we grant to have been ceremonial, and so not now of any force; but because we apprehend some moral duty to have been implied in it by way of analogy, which must be obligatory upon all, even when the ceremony is ceased. The uncleanness of the woman, the set number of days she is to abstain from the tabernacle, and the sacrifices she was to offer when she first came abroad, are rites wholly abolished, and what we nowadays regard: but then the open and solemn acknowledgement of God's goodness in delivering the mother, and increasing the number of mankind, is a duty that will oblige to the end of the world. And therefore though the mother be now no longer obliged to offer the material sacrifices of the law, yet she is nevertheless bound to offer the evangelical sacrifice of praise. She is still publicly to acknowledge the blessing vouchsafed her, and to profess her sense of the fresh obligation it lays her under to obedience...

The structure of the rite is,

Preface

Psalm (116 or 127)

Lesser Litany

Lord's Prayer

Versicles and Responses

Collect

Blessing.

It may be noticed that no mention of the husband is made in this rite except in Psalm 127.

### **Commentary**

The woman is instructed to come into the church "at the usual time after her delivery", but this is not defined. In medieval times the rite took place "before the door" with the attendant symbolism of readmission to the church, but from 1549 the rite has taken place within the church. 1549 referred to the "choir door" as the place where it was to occur, the direction in 1552 being "nigh unto the Table". A churching stool or form was provided in some places. She is to come "decently apparelled", a reference to the woman wearing a white veil, an ancient custom which was enforced by law in the reign of James I and was still widely observed in the late seventeenth century. Bishop Wren's orders and injunctions for the diocese of Norwich, in 1636, enjoin, "That women to be churched come and kneel at a side near the communion table without the

rail, being veiled according to the custom, and not covered with a hat; or otherwise not to be churched..." The Irish Prayer Books of 1878 and 1926 follow 1662 in directing woman to kneel down "in such place and at such time, as hath been accustomed, or as the Ordinary shall direct."

The Preface indicates the purpose of the rite in words which reflect the real dangers of child-birth in the pre-modern age,

Forasmuch as it hath pleased Almighty God of his goodness to give you safe deliverance, and to preserve you in the great danger of Child-birth; you shall therefore give hearty thanks unto God, and say,

Psalm 121 was prescribed in 1549 and 1552, and this was altered to Psalm 116 in 1662 (with Psalm 127 as an alternative).

The versicles and responses come from Sarum.

The prayer is based on a collect in Sarum. The element of thanksgiving "we give thee humble thanks for that thou hast vouchsafed..." was added in 1662.

The blessing was added in the Irish Prayer Book of 1878 and retained in 1926.

The concluding rubric prescribes "accustomed offerings" and also mentions the Eucharist, "and if there be a Communion, it is convenient that she receive the Holy Communion". The churching of women therefore, has properly a eucharistic context.



### [3] Christian Initiation Two.

#### 3:1. HOLY BAPTISM

It is theologically significant that there is essentially only one modern form of Holy Baptism in the Book of Common Prayer, 2004. There is no separate order for the Baptism of Children as there was in the Alternative Prayer Book (pp755f). Instead, provision is made within the Order for Holy Baptism for both adults and children, and the service may be adapted for use with Holy Communion, for use with Morning and Evening Prayer and the Service of the Word (see below p.000) and for use as a freestanding rite. The order is based on a trial use form (incorporating confirmation as required, entitled "Holy Baptism 1998")

#### PASTORAL INTRODUCTION

The order is preceded by a Pastoral Introduction, a slightly modified version of that in the Church of England's Common Worship, designed to be read by those present before the service begins. Baptism is considered to mark the beginning of a journey with God which continues for the rest of our lives. It is a joyful moment for those most concerned who are supported by the wider community of the local church and friends. It is intended that we should be reminded of our own baptism and on the progress we have made on the same journey now being embarked on by the new member of the Church.

The service paints many vivid pictures of what happens on the Christian way, represented by, for example, the sign of the cross, reminding us of Christ's death, our symbolic "drowning" in the water of baptism standing for our death to sin and rising to new life, the significance of water as a sign also of new life and our being "born again". A lighted candle, if used, depicts the light of Christ conquering the darkness of evil.

[In the Church of England's version John 10:10 is added, "Jesus said, 'I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.' "]

#### THE STRUCTURE OF THE RITE

##### The Gathering of God's People

The Greeting

Preface (general or seasonal)

Kyries

Gloria in Excelsis or other suitable hymn of praise.

The Collect of the Day or a seasonal baptismal collect.

##### Proclaiming and Receiving the Word

Readings and Psalm (either of the day or from the seasonal selections)

Gospel

Sermon

##### The Presentation

Presentation of the Candidates.

The Decision

Signing with the cross (either here or below)

##### The Baptism

Prayer over the water.

Profession of faith

Baptism

Signing with the cross (if not already performed)

The Welcome and Peace

*Either*

The Prayers of the People

The Lord's Prayer

The Dismissal

*Or*

Celebrating at the Lord's Table

The Taking of the Bread and wine

The Great Thanksgiving.

The Lords' Prayer

The Breaking of the Bread

The Communion

The Great Silence

Going out as God's People

Prayer after Communion.

Dismissal

Blessing

Giving of a lighted candle (optional)

Words of dismissal.

## **BACKGROUND**

From 1969 to 2004 the modern form of the Baptism of Children (to be found in the Alternative Prayer Book, 1984 p.753ff) was very widely used and popular in the Church. It was supplemented by the rarely used but theologically significant, and in some sense normative order in Alternative Occasional Services, 1993, entitled "Baptism, Confirmation, and First Communion of those able to answer for themselves." For an exposition of these see the earlier edition of these Course Notes. The Baptism of Children rite was coherent and scriptural, and had a number of good points including (1) the manner in which the duties of parents and godparents were set forth; (2) the clarity and simplicity of the parents' and godparents' response; (3) the unambiguous and direct language of the blessing of the baptismal water; (4) the interrogative form of the confession of faith indicative of a return to the earliest form of the Apostles' Creed, and (4) the clear affirmation, in the post-baptismal prayers of the church's belief in baptismal regeneration, combined with the recognition that baptism marked the start of a process, and (5) a particularly fine prayer blessing the home of the child.

However, this order also had certain limitations, which may be summarized as follows,

- (1) The Order was convenient for use within Morning or Evening Prayer (or even within Holy Communion) but it was a little inadequate as a "stand-alone" service, let alone one that might serve by itself as the principal Sunday service.
- (2) The Ministry of the Word was very limited, consisting of only three passages (of which two were to be used on any one occasion). There was no provision for the use of the Old Testament, nor for the use of a psalm.
- (3) There was no reference to the Old Testament in the Blessing of the Water, and the great theme of water in the Bible was muted in this rite.
- (4) Congregational involvement was very limited, being essentially confined to the receiving of the child after the baptism and the Lord's Prayer.

(5) Only a single set of prayers was provided.

When the Liturgical Advisory Committee presented its proposals to the General Synod of 1997 it referred to "a" Service of Holy Baptism leaving open the possibility of a fresh approach drawing on the experience of use of an experimental order to be presented on the following year entitled Baptism 1998 and also taking into consideration proposals for the Church of England's new Prayer Book entitled "Common Worship". The resultant office in the form of "Services of Initiation" was passed by Synod in 2002, although provision of a version for use within Morning and Evening Prayer or the Service of the Word was not made until the following year.

## **COMMENTARY**

In the General Directions for Public Worship (pp75-77), \*10 states "Holy Baptism is normally administered at the principal service on a Sunday or holy day. Baptism should be preceded by appropriate preparation." Clearly, the practicality of the direction to have baptism at the principal service depends on the number of baptisms, and in large parishes it may be necessary, from time to time, to have a special administration of baptism at a time other than that of the main Sunday service. If this is the case it should, as far as possible be a complete service with a congregation. However, the ideal, clearly, is to have baptism when the whole church is gathered together, and this will normally be on Sunday morning, preferably when the Holy Communion is to be celebrated.

It may be seen that the order in its complete form includes Holy Communion, although directions are given as to how to conclude it if Holy Communion is not to follow. The service begins (as does the Eucharist itself) with "The Gathering of God's People".

## **THE GATHERING OF GOD'S PEOPLE**

### **The Greeting**

"Grace, mercy and peace" is one of the two standard greetings in the modern form of the eucharist. "The Lord be with you" and the response may be used instead under the provision for "other suitable words". During the Great Fifty Days from Easter Day to Pentecost the Easter Greeting is used.

### **The Introduction or Preface**

This sets forth, in general terms, the significance of baptism as a sign and seal of spiritual rebirth. Alternative forms of the Introduction for particular seasons: Epiphany-The Baptism of the Lord - Trinity Sunday; Easter Day to the Day of Pentecost; All Saints-tide are given under "Seasonal Variations and Readings" on pp392 to 396. The appropriate seasonal form should be used as appropriate since each one links baptism as administered on a particular occasion to various aspects of the mystery of what God has done for us in Christ. For example, at Easter the thought is that of dying to sin and rising to newness of life in Christ. In All Saints-tide the emphasis is upon the journey of faith in which we have no abiding city for we have promise of the heavenly Jerusalem where the whole creation is brought to a new birth in the Holy Spirit. At Epiphany, the Baptism of the Lord, and Trinity Sunday the significance of our Lord's own Baptism is underlined, together with the disclosure of the Holy Trinity when the Father spoke from heaven, the Spirit descended as a dove and Jesus was anointed with power from on high.

### **Penitential Kyries**

The penitential aspect of our approach to God in this act of worship is expressed in the form of the Kyries specifically provided although the seasonal Kyries on pp224-236 may be used instead as appropriate. "Other suitable words" may be used, for example the forms of Penitence, other than the Kyries, to be found in Holy Communion Two on pp202-03.

It may be noted that a form of absolution immediately after the Kyries was omitted by a Synodical amendment. As the Kyries are not, strictly speaking, a "confession" (in spite of the words of the introductory sentence "Let us affirm our trust in God's mercy, and confess that we need forgiveness") it was considered inappropriate to have a form of absolution here in the standard text. However, the Prayer Book is not entirely consistent about this (cf The order for Confirmation, p.383; A Celebration of Wholeness and Healing, pp461-462).

**Gloria in Excelsis** or another suitable hymn of praise.

The Gloria in Excelsis is a normal part of the liturgy when the Holy Communion is celebrated, although there is some inconsistency about this in the Prayer Book of 2004. The rubric in the modern version of the Eucharist is probably the best guide,

This canticle may be omitted in Advent and Lent and on weekdays which are not holy days. Other versions of this canticle may be used, or when appropriate another suitable hymn of praise.

### **The Collect**

Either the Collect of the Day or a Baptismal Collect from pages 392-4 is used. If the emphasis is on the baptism, a baptismal collect is appropriate, but if the emphasis (in both collect and readings) is on the normal sequence of Sunday readings and prayers then the Collect of the Day is best used. An alternative approach would be to use both, with the one expressing the predominant thought coming first. There is a long history in the church of using more than one collect (and this was the tradition preserved in earlier editions of the Book of Common Prayer including that of 1926, and also in the Alternative Prayer Book 1984).

As no baptismal collect for general (as distinct from seasonal) use appears here that from the Church of England's "Common Worship" may be found appropriate,

Heavenly Father,  
by the power of your Holy Spirit  
you give to your faithful people new life in the water of baptism.  
Guide and strengthen us by the same Spirit,  
that we who are born again may serve you in faith and love,  
and grow into the full stature of your Son, Jesus Christ,  
who is alive and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
now and for ever. **Amen.**

## PROCLAIMING AND RECEIVING THE WORD

### **The Ministry of the Word**

In contrast to the Baptism of Children service in the Alternative Prayer Book there is provision for a full Ministry of the Word. The rubric would appear to reflect a further inconsistency in the Book of Common Prayer 2004 since nowhere else but in Baptism and Confirmation are the readings of the day so clearly preferred to those appropriate to the occasion. For example the readings in marriage, ministry to the sick, and at funeral services are those suited to the occasion, and, as a result of amendments put forward by the House of Bishops, at Ordinations proper readings are given priority although readings of the day may be used. No guidance is given here about when the use of specifically initiatory material is to be used. Although much of the material is seasonal in character, there are also four sets of "general" readings provided, which suggests, if these are to be used at all, that there must be occasions when it is suitable for them to take the place of the readings of the day. It is clear, however, that on certain days (for example Palm Sunday, Easter Day, Pentecost) the readings of the day have an absolute priority because of their significance. It is stated in the Calendar, p.18. with respect to Principal Holy Days that "the liturgical provision for the above days may not be displaced by any other observance".

The value of the specifically baptismal readings is that they assist in understanding the different facets of the baptismal mystery as set forth in the Scriptures and provide a basis for preaching about it. However, if baptisms are very frequent there would be some danger of disturbance of the sequence of the ordinary readings (from the Revised Common Lectionary and related lectionaries) and in such circumstances these are to be preferred.

### **The Sermon**

The Sermon should expound either to the readings of the day (if these are used) with some indication of any possible connection with baptism (for example on the First Sunday after the Epiphany the subtitle is "The Baptism of Christ" and the readings relate to this) or some aspect of the baptismal mystery as given in the baptismal readings (if these are used instead). Note 1 to Baptism One [the Notes apply to both the traditional

and modern rites of initiation] states "The Minister of every parish shall teach the people the meaning of Baptism..."

## THE PRESENTATION

It is questionable whether this (and The Decision which follows it) should be headed as a major subdivision of the rite. It might have been better to have followed the Church of England in having a Liturgy of the Word leading to a Liturgy of Baptism, with the Presentation of the Candidates, the Decision, the Signing with the Cross, the Prayer over the Water, the Profession of Faith, the Baptism etc. having subheadings.

The rubric requires the presiding minister (normally a bishop or priest) to invite the candidates and their sponsors to stand in view of the congregation. This may best be done at the front of the Church. Following the decision there may be a hymn and priest and those concerned may then process to the baptistery. The absence of "naming" except in the (limited) sense that the sponsors mention the name of the person puts this order out of kilter with both the traditional and the revised versions of the Church Catechism, and so it may be helpful to say "Name this child" in the case of an infant and then proceed "We welcome ... who comes to be baptized. I invite his/her sponsors to present him/her now", leading to the answer "We present ... to be baptized." Although baptism is more than a "naming" ceremony yet there is considerable significance in the person being "named" for the first time specifically in a Christian context, so that their "forename" becomes their "Christian" name - the name they will be known them by in the fellowship of Christ's Church, the name which, in a manner of speaking, Christ himself knows them by.

It is preferable for the candidate (an infant will, of course be carried), and sponsors to stand before the priest at the crossing or before the sanctuary and not in a front pew.

### **The Decision**

The rubric "At this point testimony may be given by one or more of the candidates" indicates that a person or persons who is able to speak for themselves may give a brief account of their coming to faith. This should not be excessively long or involved. It should not be thought of as necessarily tied to any particular form of churchmanship since we should all be able to give a reason for the faith that is in us. On the other hand it is important not to put the person or persons under pressure to do something which may not be part of their ecclesial culture and which might be difficult for someone who is either nervous or inarticulate.

### **The signing with the cross.**

This signing (which is not confined to baptism) is an indication of not being ashamed (or afraid) to confess the faith of Christ crucified. If blessed oil is used, the priest dips his or her thumb it before tracing the sign of the cross on the forehead of the person being baptized and saying the words.

The signing here is treated as a preliminary to the act of baptism (it forms no part of the act of baptism itself and is in no way necessary to the validity of the act), but may also, as in the traditional rite (and as it was in the baptismal liturgy in the Alternative Prayer Book) take place after the baptism.

A rubric to the effect that the priest might invite parents, godparents and sponsors to sign the candidate(s) with the cross was deleted by an amendment of Synod, but remains meaningful where desired as an unofficial ceremony.

### **The Baptism**

If the presiding minister and the candidates are not already at the font they now proceed to the baptistery. Water is poured into the font. This is appropriately done from a baptismal ewer, and there should be a significant amount of water. The abundance of water is symbolic of the abundance of new life which the water represents.

The prayer over the water corresponds to the eucharistic prayer at holy communion, although the water is not normally retained but is poured away after the baptism takes place. However, one may accommodate particular requests such as that from families who have brought back water from the Holy Land and wish their children to be baptized in Jordan water - in which case the water, or as much of it as possible, is kept. There is a tradition in the Church of consecrating water for the whole year's baptisms, but no provision is made for this in the current order.

After the opening versicles and responses two alternative forms of the blessing/sanctification of the baptismal water are provided. The first, of Australian provenance, is interactive in character, involving the whole congregation. The second is a tightly-knit prayer from the American Episcopal Church in three paragraphs dealing with the theme of water in the Bible, the significance of the water of baptism and the sanctification of the water so that those who are baptized in it may be cleansed from sin and born again. The rather stronger word "sanctify" (rather than "bless" as in the *Alternative Prayer Book*) is used in both these forms.

It is interesting to note that the American Prayer caused great controversy when the baptismal rite was being prepared for the *Alternative Prayer Book*, so much so that agreement could not be reached at Synod and it was found necessary to go back to the 1969 rite for the Baptism of Children. The adult baptism service which followed in *Alternative Occasional Services* in 1993 conformed to the general line of approach. However, as pointed out at the time, by using only the second part of this prayer the wording from "we thank you, Father, for the water of baptism" was deprived of its essential biblical context and explanation and this may have given rise to some of the misunderstandings that then occurred. As it stands it is thoroughly scriptural and constitutes a fine expression of the sacramental teaching of the Church of Ireland (as of the American Episcopal Church).

This is followed by a profession of faith in which interrogative (as in the *Alternative Prayer Book* baptism) and affirmative aspects are combined. The entire congregation is addressed (not just the candidates and sponsors) and responds in the standard form of the Apostles' Creed as found in Rite Two services.

The emphasis on congregational participation in this rite underlines the status of those present as worshippers rather than spectators; and it is essential that they be encouraged to say the responses clearly and meaningfully. As far as possible what is done should be visible to the whole congregation, the presentation being performed at the front of the nave (with the people standing immediately before the priest, and not in the pews), and, at the act of baptism, with the priest standing in the baptistery so as not to block the view of the baptismal action, the concluding part of the rite, in which the child is received, being performed facing the people, whether at the front of the church or at the baptistery. As the layout of churches varies so much it is difficult to be prescriptive, but if the baptism is thought of as involving the whole congregation and, through them, the entire people of God and the liturgy is ordered accordingly that will help bring out the corporate aspect of the baptismal rite.

One may regret that the fully interrogative form, which recalled the origins of the Apostles' Creed in the baptismal questioning has not been preserved, as it was in the baptismal rites in the *Alternative Prayer Book* and *Alternative Occasional Services*. It also seems a pity that the word "confess" (which recalled "confessions" of faith such as those of St. Patrick and St. Augustine and also the role of "confessors" - who risked their lives for Christ) has disappeared and been replaced by the rather less historically significant "profess".

The act of baptism is by "dipping" (which in principle includes immersion) or by pouring, but not by "sprinkling" as this tends to trivialize the sacrament. The water is appropriately poured using a baptismal "shell". Although a single affusion is valid, it is more appropriate to pour three times since the baptism is in the name of the three Persons of the Holy Trinity.

If the signing has not already been performed it is done here. Traditionally it was a preliminary to the act of baptism and so formed a preparatory part of the rite. However, in the traditional BCP rite it came immediately after the baptism. Symbolically it is a reminder of the importance of professing faith in Christ crucified. However, in popular thought it was sometimes mistakenly imagined to be part of the essence of baptism, a tendency perhaps encouraged by such hymns as 207 (in the 1960 hymnal) which began,

In token that thou shall not fear  
Christ crucified to own,  
we print the cross upon thy brow,  
and mark thee his alone.

The priest makes the sign of the cross with his thumb. As mentioned above it is appropriate, if oil is used, for him to dip his thumb in the chrism before making the sign of the cross.

The priest and those who have been baptized may return to the font, either before the signing, or before the reception. If it is decided to give a lighted candle at this point it is probably better to do the signing and this together.

The reception is a corporate act of the congregation and this is best performed in front of the Church facing the people. There is considerable significance in the terms used in the welcoming of the newly baptized as a "member" (limb) of the "body of Christ" (the Church), as a child (indicating the unique relationship of every believer to God) of the one heavenly Father, and as an inheritor (not merely an heir, but one "who has by virtue of baptism in some already received the inheritance) of the "kingdom of God" - the subject of much of Our Lord's teaching especially in the parables.

If Holy Communion does not follow the service continues with the Prayers of the People ending with the Lord's Prayer and the Dismissal. It may be noted that the use of the Prayers is not prohibited when the communion is celebrated, and as in the APB rite it may well be desirable to use the first set, beginning, "Father we thank you that...has now been born again of water and the Holy Spirit". This prayer is theologically significant in its emphatic assertion of baptismal regeneration (as in the traditional rite). It is important to stress that making the use of this prayer optional does not make the doctrine it embodies optional. The inclusion of the prayer indicates that this is and will continue to be church teaching. The sentence referring to confirmation in the future should only be omitted if the service is to include confirmation.

It is highly desirable that the baptismal liturgy should reach its climax in holy communion, and it is appropriate that the whole congregation should communicate: communion should not be limited to the immediate family as all the people are, in principle, there as participants. In the case of an adult who has just been baptized he or she should be given communion immediately after the clergy receive. In the case of a child it is appropriate for the parents to bring the child up for a blessing when they themselves make their communion.

The Holy Communion follows the customary order, using one of the eucharistic prayers provided in the book. Propers include the words used at the Peace "We are the body of Christ...", and in the case of the first eucharistic prayer, the proper preface,

Because by water and the Holy Spirit  
you have made us a holy people in Jesus Christ our Lord,  
raised us to new life in him  
and renewed in us the image of your glory.

If it is desired to have a seasonal addition in the second eucharistic prayer it would be possible to omit the word "because" and insert "By water and the Holy Spirit..." after "called to serve you for ever." Proper Prefaces are not used with the third eucharistic prayer.

There is also a specific Prayer after Communion, although the appropriate seasonal Post-Communion may be used.

The Dismissal consists of the Blessing, an optional passage on the theme of light (at which a lighted candle may be given to each of the newly baptized) followed by "Go in peace..." and the appropriate response.

The blessing may be seasonal (for example that of Easter), or another suitable blessing (a solemn baptismal blessing would be particularly appropriate) or that of the Transfiguration,

The God of all grace,  
who called you to his eternal glory in Christ Jesus,  
establish, strengthen, and settle you in the faith...

Giving the light after the blessing will involve either bringing the newly-baptized (and in the case of a child, its sponsors) forward or bringing the light to them. It is intended as a significant piece of symbolism as the one who has just been baptized is going forth into God's world "walking in the light". However, some may prefer to link the symbolism more closely to the act of baptism by having it and the signing immediately after the person is baptized.

The Prayers that may be used at the Prayers of the People have already been referred to above. Apart from the two prayers that come from the Alternative Prayer Book, there is also a prayer for all who are baptized into Christ, a prayer at the baptism of a child, and a prayer for godparents.

### **3:2 Holy Baptism in the context of Morning or Evening Prayer or a Service of the Word.**

In the course of preparing legislation for the General Synod it became apparent that some special provision would have to be made for the administration of Holy Baptism in the context of Morning or Evening Prayer or A Service of the Word. The opportunity was taken to restore from the Order for the Baptism of Children in the *Alternative Prayer Book* (1984) the following optional addition to the Preface/Introduction:

Holy Baptism is administered to infants  
on the understanding that they will be brought up in the fellowship of  
Christ's Church;  
that they will be taught the Christian faith;  
and that, when they have publicly confessed this faith,  
they will be confirmed by the bishop and admitted to the Holy Communion.

This valuable reminder of the basis on which the church baptizes infants is also suitable for use with the "parent" rite on pp357f.

The rubric regulating the use of Holy Baptism in Morning or Evening Prayer states:

When Holy Baptism takes place during Morning or Evening Prayer, the sermon follows the Third Canticle, and the Baptismal Rite follows the sermon. The rest of Morning or Evening Prayer is omitted.

This yields the following structure (hymns inserted as appropriate):

#### **MORNING OR EVENING PRAYER**

##### The Gathering of God's People

Greeting  
Sentences of Scripture  
[Preface – better omitted]  
Confession  
Absolution

##### Proclaiming and Receiving the Word

Versicles and Responses  
First Canticle  
First Reading  
Psalm  
Second Reading  
Second Canticle  
Third Reading  
Third Canticle  
Sermon

#### **HOLY BAPTISM**

Baptismal Preface (with optional addition)



The Presentation  
 The Decision  
 The Baptism  
 Prayers of the People  
 Going out as God's People.

If this is found excessively lengthy one possibility would be to omit the Second Canticle and to have the Second and Third Readings one after another.

If there are likely to be people present who are not familiar with the Prayer Book there is much to be said for printing out the combined order of service in booklet form.

No guidance is given for combining Holy Baptism with A Service of the Word. The following is a possible order:

Greeting  
 Scripture Sentence(s)  
 [Hymn]  
 Baptismal Preface  
 Penitence (in the form of Penitential Kyries)  
 The Collect  
 Canticle (for example, Venite or Jubilate)  
 Scripture Readings:  
     Old Testament (or Epistle)  
     Psalm  
     Gospel  
     Canticle  
 Sermon/Address  
 [Hymn]  
 The Presentation  
 The Decision  
 [Hymn]  
 The Baptism  
 Prayers  
 Lord's Prayer  
 [Hymn]  
 Concluding Prayer  
 Blessing.

Printing the service out in full will, as with Morning and Evening Prayer make it much easier to follow for those who are strangers to the liturgies of the church and even, perhaps, for regular worshippers.

### **3:3 Receiving into the Congregation of those privately baptized.**

The purpose of this is not to encourage baptism in people's homes but rather to provide for the public reception of those baptized in emergency.

The initial rubric emphasizes the importance of recording in the parish register such emergency baptisms. Considerable problems arose in the past where such baptisms were not recorded, even pension rights being affected.

In the case of a person approaching confirmation, if their baptism was not recorded they would have to be re-baptized, although this could be done in a conditional form, and a similar consideration would apply to someone seeking to be ordained.

The order of reception consists of everything but the sanctification of water and the act of baptism itself.

No form appears for the administration of the reception within the context of Morning or Evening Prayer or the Service of the Word; but it would appear to be consonant with the principles underlying this order for similar adjustments to be made.

This order consists of,

The Gathering of God's People

The Collect

Proclaiming and Receiving God's Word (the Ministry of the Word)

The Presentation (including the Decision)

The Thanksgiving (but without the baptismal water)

The Profession of Faith

The Signing if not already performed

The Reception

The Peace

If Holy Communion does not follow the service continues with The Prayers of the People, ending with the Lord's Prayer and the Dismissal.

Otherwise Holy Communion continues with

Celebrating at the Lord's Table

Going out as God's People.

### **3:4 Confirmation**

The sacramental rite of Confirmation begins with "The Gathering of God's People", comprising the Greeting, a Preface, Penitential Sentences followed by the Absolution, the Gloria in Excelsis (optional), and the Collect.

With regard to the Preface, this is said by the bishop only (in contrast to the order for Confirmation in Alternative Occasional Services). The reason for this seems to be that there is a reference, in the first person, to what the bishop will do.

The two aspects of Confirmation are given equal weight in that,

At the heart of this Confirmation service are two distinct, yet related, acts of confirming. First the candidates will profess their faith in Christ, confirming their desire to serve God throughout their lives, to turn to Christ and to renounce all evil.

Then, as bishop, I will lay my hand on them, praying that God's Spirit will confirm, strengthen and guide them as they strive, each day of their lives, to live up to the solemn commitment they will make today.

The role of the congregation is emphasized as it is also in the rite of Baptism.

It is our privilege and joy as the people of God to hear the candidates' response to God's call and to renew our own baptismal commitment to our Lord Jesus Christ. It will be our responsibility to encourage the newly confirmed in their discipleship, so that the Christian family may be built up, recognizing the diverse gifts of all its members.

The rite is personalized by prayer for each of the candidates by name.

As the Penitential Kyries are not a confession it is inappropriate for them to be followed by the Absolution, and this should, if possible, be avoided. It may be noted that the eucharist avoids such a construction. The Penitential Kyries may be in the general form used here or, if appropriate seasonal forms may be used, for example those for Easter, Pentecost.

The Gloria was omitted from the AOS confirmation, presumably to keep the length of the service to a minimum. However, it is appropriate that it be printed as an option, and there is the alternative of some other hymn of praise. Neither the Gloria nor an alternative hymn are obligatory.

The Collect may be of the Day, or a seasonal Collect (from among the selection appointed for baptism), or the general Collect provided.

The second part of the rite is the "Proclaiming and Receiving the Word". It is not clear why the readings from the Old and New Testaments should normally be as appointed in the Lectionary as there is a need for readings with a bearing upon Christian initiation to be read and preached upon on the occasion of Confirmation. However, readings, both General and Seasonal relating to Christian Initiation are provided on p396 of the Prayer Book, most of them more obviously related to baptism, but there are two sets specifically for confirmation services. However, a much broader selection was included in the 1987 Confirmation Service (later incorporated into Alternative Occasional Services 1993).

It is appropriate to have at least two readings (the first either from the Old Testament or an Epistle and the second, which is obligatory, the Gospel). The Sermon is normally preached by the bishop.

As in the rite of Baptism, silence may follow the sermon. Alternatively, there could be periods of silence after the readings. It is desirable in principle to allow pauses at appropriate points for quiet reflection; and in spite of rubrical permission in the APB and related rites this was, up to the time of publication of the Book of Common Prayer 2004 only rarely availed of. The appropriate use of silence is something which requires self-discipline on the part of the clergy and training of the laity. It is important for the officiating clergy to be completely still during periods of silence and there is much to be said for them to sit at such times.

[The appropriate posture when seated is to sit upright with the legs together (not crossed) and the hands palm down on the legs above the knees.]

### **The Presentation**

This corresponds to the presentation at baptism, here described as a presentation "to the congregation". However, it is also a presentation to the bishop for confirmation, and the choreography should be such as to indicate these two aspects. In practice all it need involve is a standing up in front of the congregation by the candidates who should face the bishop.

A rubric indicates that where appropriate the candidates are presented by their godparents or sponsors. However, care needs to be taken lest some candidates feel "left out" because their godparents or sponsors are not able to be present. An alternative would be for the rector and churchwardens, standing in a suitable place, to present the candidates, or the rector and others who have assisted in preparing the candidates, or the rector alone (in which case the answer would be "I do"). The bishop's question and the answer that goes with it is optional; and where it is not used the presentation consists of the candidates standing up, either in their pews or (preferably) if the numbers are not large and there is room to do so, before the chancel step.

The question to the clergy who have been responsible for pastoral care of the candidates is framed to cover not only their work of preparation of the candidates but that of any lay assistants and indeed of Sunday-

School teachers and others who have been involved since childhood, hence the careful wording, “**I believe they have.**”

Testimony is appropriate only in the case of adult converts to the Christian faith, and needs to be disciplined in both length and content. In no way should this overshadow the sermon already preached by the bishop or the sacramental act which follows.

### **The Decision**

The words of the Decision are identical to those used at baptism and conclude similarly with a congregational affirmation of support.

As the general Synod has authorized a simplified form of the Decision (in the order for Baptism in the context of Morning or Evening Prayer or the service of the Word) it would seem possible to permit this in the context of the Confirmation (which ratifies that Decision), in the (modified) form,

In baptism, God calls us from darkness into his marvellous light. To follow Christ means dying to sin and rising to new life with him.

Therefore I ask,

Do you turn to Christ?

**I do.**

Do you then renounce the devil and all his works?

**I do, by God’s help.**

Will you obey and serve Christ?

**I will, by God’s help.**

### **Profession of Faith**

The rubric directs the bishop to ask “Do you (...) believe and accept the Christian faith into which you are baptized?” The inclusion of the Christian name at this point emphasizes the personal nature of the commitment that is being made. Personal names are used at three points in the rite: within the Preface, at the Profession of Faith, and at the laying on of hands with prayer.

The profession of faith, as in the rite of baptism, combines the interrogative and declaratory uses of the Creed and involves the whole congregation as well as the candidates for confirmation.

The bishop and candidates are directed to “gather” at the place of confirmation. Much depends upon the geography of the particular church, but if there is a chancel step, this is the normal place for the administration of confirmation. If the confirmation is to be administered, seated, a chair should be put out for the bishop. If the bishop is to stand, then one option is for the laying on of hands to take place at the sanctuary rail and for the bishop to move along the row, as at holy communion.

Following the versicles and responses, the confirmation prayer is said by the bishop. This is identical to the prayer used in the 1987 Order of Service. It is, perhaps, regrettable, that the reference to “fear” in the sense of “holy fear” has been watered down to “the spirit of reverence”. One may compare this with the traditional order on p354.

As in the 1987 Order, the words used to accompany the laying on of hands begin with “Confirm”, appropriate at a “Confirmation” service, rather than the traditional “Defend”. The individual “Amen” indicates the assent of the candidate to the prayer.

The post-confirmation prayer (identical to that in the 1987 Order) echoes the thought of that in the traditional rite. The “example of the apostles” would appear to refer to the events of Acts 8:14-17 and Acts 19:1-7 which were once thought to refer to confirmation but more probably indicate particular ministries in untypical circumstances. However Hebrews 6:1-2 seems to include the laying on of hands as one of the charac-

teristic practices of initiation, suggesting a rather more widespread use. In any event there is clearly precedent here for the laying on of hands with prayer as a means of communicating a spiritual gift.

### **Commission**

In the 1987 Order (which was later incorporated into Alternative Occasional Services 1993) a question was added to the Renewal of Baptismal Vows,

Will you then seek God's help to keep this faith  
through prayer, the reading of the Scriptures  
and regular sharing in the Holy Communion?

A similar concept underlies the first of four questions relating to the putting into practice of the faith personally professed in this rite. The wording is from Acts 2:42

Those who are baptized are called to worship and serve God.  
Will you continue in the apostles' teaching and fellowship,  
in the breaking of the bread, and in the prayers?

The "breaking of bread" is a reference to table-fellowship and is generally taken to indicate participation in the Lord's Supper.

The next paragraph insists on the necessity of continuing to resist evil (it is not just a once-for-all act) and of repenting whenever one falls into sin as all people do. The word "repent" in New Testament use includes the idea of "change of mind", "change of attitude", while in the Old Testament the thought is that of turning around and facing in a different direction.

Will you persevere in resisting evil,  
and whenever you fall into sin, repent and return to the Lord?

The obligation to pass on the Good News is then stressed,

Will you proclaim by word and example  
the good news of God in Christ?

Since service of others in love is of the essence of the Christian life, a further commitment is required,

Will you seek and serve Christ in all people,  
loving your neighbour as yourself?

The response to each of these questions is "**With the help of God, I will**".

### **The Peace**

The Peace follows, with the following (optional) proper,

God has made us one in Christ.  
He has set his seal upon us  
and, as a pledge of what is to come,  
has given the Spirit to dwell in our hearts.

It is directed that if holy communion does not follow the service continues with suitable prayers, ending with the Lord's Prayer and the Dismissal. Suitable prayers include those in the (now disused) 1987 order (slightly adapted),

Heavenly Father,  
whose blessed Son was revealed  
that he might destroy the works of the devil  
and make us the children of God  
and heirs of eternal life:  
Grant that we, having this hope,  
may purify ourselves even as he is pure,  
that when he shall appear in power and great glory  
we may be made like him

in his eternal and glorious kingdom;  
 where he is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
 one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Almighty Father,  
 we thank you for our fellowship  
 in the household of faith  
 with all who have been baptized in your name.  
 Keep us faithful to our baptism,  
 and so make us ready for that day  
 when the whole creation shall be made perfect  
 in your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

Almighty God,  
 grant that we may use the gifts of the Holy Spirit  
 to bear witness to Christ  
 by lives built on faith and love.  
 Make us ready to live by his Gospel  
 and eager to do his will,  
 that we may share with all your Church  
 in the joys of eternal life;  
 through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Lord, make us instruments of your peace.  
 Where there is hatred let us sow love;  
 where there is injury let there be pardon;  
 where there is doubt, faith;  
 where there is despair, hope;  
 where there is darkness, light;  
 where there is sadness, joy.  
 O Divine Master, grant that we may not so much  
 seek to be consoled as to console,  
 to be understood as to understand,  
 to be loved as to live.  
 For it is in giving that we receive,  
 it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,  
 and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. **Amen.**

### **3:5 Holy Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Communion**

A culmination of a long process of revision of rites of initiation was reached through the inclusion in *Alternative Occasional Services 1993* of an order entitled, "Baptism, Confirmation and First Communion of those able to answer for themselves". Although it was recognized that the opportunities for having a full form of a liturgy of initiation presided over by the bishop would be rare it was thought that this represented a kind of norm. Earlier proposals for Christian Initiation produced by the Liturgical Advisory Committee in 1981 and incorporating such an order were not successful (for reasons to do with the wording of the prayer over the water) and the result was that the *Alternative Prayer Book* of 1984 included only a service for the Baptism of Children, even Confirmation not appearing until it was issued as a "separate" in 1987. The AOS provision consolidated what had already been provided and advanced beyond it in the provision of a comprehensive rite of adult initiation. However, a fresh approach resulted in trial forms, entitled "Holy Baptism" in 1998 and ultimately the provision made in the *Alternative Prayer Book* and in *Alternative Occasional Services* was completely superseded by the set of rites of initiation in the 2004 edition of the *Book of Common Prayer* under the heading "Christian Initiation Two". Space was at a premium, the Liturgical Advisory Committee being determined not to copy the Church of England in its multitude of large heavy books, and it may be that it was for this reason that in the 2004 *Prayer Book* the rite entitled "Holy Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Communion" appears only as the structure of a service and is not printed out in full. Producing a

complete text for a particular occasion would not be a difficult task, but the danger is that the sense in which this order represents a liturgical and theological norm may not be fully recognized. The value of the rite is that it integrates what otherwise can so easily become three separate “services” of initiation - baptism, confirmation and holy communion of the newly-confirmed - separated in time and place. In the early Church, for example in the liturgy attributed to St Hippolytus in the third century, the bishop presided and although “confirmation” did not exist as a separate rite, prayer with the laying on of hands by the bishop took place between the act of baptism and the celebration of the holy communion in which the newly-baptized took place. In the case of adult converts to the Christian religion who are unbaptized there is much to be said for having in each diocese the use of this order which will enable them to be baptized, confirmed, and admitted to the holy communion at the one and same time, ideally at Easter which from ancient times was the principal time when people were admitted into the fellowship of Christ’s church.

All of the ingredients of this rite, under the headings, The Gathering of God’s People, Proclaiming and Receiving the Word, The Presentation, The Baptism, Confirmation, Celebrating at the Lord’s Table, and Going Out as God’s People, have been dealt with separately, above. What may, reasonably, be said, is that the fully integrated rite may be considered greater than the “sum of its parts” and that this is what the Church of the third and fourth centuries A.D. would have meant by “baptism” as one can see in expositions by such significant figures as St Cyril of Jerusalem (in the East) and St Ambrose (in the West). There are, however, some difficult issues. The Inter-Anglican Liturgical Consultation committed itself to the view that “sacramental initiation is complete in baptism” and attempted to reduce confirmation to a pastoral rite. But it clearly has some if not all of the attributes of a sacrament, and is termed in the Revised Catechism one of the “sacramental ministries of grace”. Given its relationship with baptism and its liturgical character it is not clear that it is helpful to deny its sacramentality even if it is not, in an absolute sense, necessary to the process of becoming a Christian. There is New Testament precedent for the laying on of hands with prayer in connection with initiation even if the clearest examples (in Acts 8 and Acts 19) may refer to particular and special circumstances (the failure of the Samaritan Christians to exhibit any manifestation of the Spirit at their baptism and the ignorance of those who had received only the baptism of John of the role of the Spirit in initiation). Another important, and at the time of writing unresolved issue is the admission of those baptized in infancy to holy communion on the basis of their baptism. This is discussed in the next section.

This is essentially the bishop’s liturgy and so there is a rubric which specifically spells out that the structure of the service may be adapted at the bishop’s discretion to meet particular circumstances.

[For the Church of England’s version of a similar service see “The Eucharist with Baptism and Confirmation together with Affirmation of Baptismal Faith and Reception into the Communion of the Church of England”, in *Common Worship, Initiation Services*, Church House Publishing 1998]

### **Note on the relationship between Confirmation and Admission to Holy Communion**

The adult baptism service, as noted above, establishes a norm for adult converts of baptism, confirmation, and first communion together forming an integrated and single act of Christian initiation. In the case of children the question has increasingly come to the fore whether or not confirmation should continue to be treated as a necessary precondition for admission to communion. Developments in this regard in other parts of the Anglican Communion have been carefully documented by Ruth Meyers Ed., in *Children at the Table - The Communion of all the Baptized in Anglicanism Today*, The Church Hymnal Corporation, New York, 1995. Other relevant studies are David Holeton, *Infant Communion - Then and Now*, Grove Liturgical Study no 27, Grove Books, 1981; C.O. Buchanan, Ed., *Nurturing Children in Communion*, Grove Liturgical Study No 44, Grove Books 1985 (including the findings of the first Inter-Anglican Liturgical Consultation “Children and Communion” held in Boston 1985); and David Holeton Ed; *Christian Initiation in the Anglican Communion: The Toronto Statement “Walk in Newness of Life”*, the Findings of the Fourth International Anglican Liturgical Consultation, Toronto 1991; *The Truth Shall Make You Free*, the Lambeth Conference 1988, Resolution 69 of the Conference “Admission to Communion”; *Mission in a Broken World - Report of ACC-8*, The Anglican Consultation Council, 1990, Resolution 8. In 1991 the General Synod passed a resolution, as follows:-

That the Synod, in response to Resolution No. 8 of ACC-8, appoint a Select Committee to consider the theological and pastoral issues involved in the admission of those baptized but unconfirmed to Holy Communion...

The Select Committee continued to meet until 1998 but was unable to reach agreement on the issue and it did not prove possible to produce a resolution that could command the support of the General Synod. The issue remains unresolved at the time of writing.

### **3:6 The Renewal of Baptismal Vows**

A form for the Renewal of Baptismal Vows appears in the 2004 Prayer Book on pp398-401, and this order is essentially an adaptation of the earlier rite to allow for subsequent changes in the baptismal office.

According to the Notes this is a form which may be used at Easter, Pentecost, the Baptism of the Lord, on Ash Wednesday, at the close of a mission or on other suitable occasions. Since Easter was historically the occasion of baptisms, this order is particularly appropriate on Easter Eve and during the Easter Season (the great "Fifty Days"). The beginning of the secular New Year would be another suitable time; and it is an order that could be used with individuals who have come to make a decision of faith or who have returned to faith. If those concerned have already been baptized and confirmed the Renewal of Vows (which is not a once-for-all ceremony and can be performed at any time) may be helpful in giving the newfound faith formal expression.

The Notes also state that the renewal of baptismal vows may be made at Morning or Evening Prayer, or at Holy Communion after the sermon, and the creed may be omitted (because there are creedal forms within the rite). The prayers of intercession and of penitence may be omitted. This means that in the Holy Communion service this rite follows the sermon and immediately after it there is the Peace. At Morning or Evening Prayer it takes the place of the Occasional Prayers.

The Preface to the rite follows one of two alternatives, the priority given to that used At Easter indicating the particular connection with the thought of new our life in Christ crucified and risen. The second form, for use on other occasions links in a more general way with the biblical concept of having died with Christ and being buried with him, so that we might rise with him to a new life within the family of the Church.

#### **The First Form**

The first form of the rite follows the wording of the Decision in the baptismal rite. There is no mention of the permitted alternative (to be found in the form of Holy Baptism in the context of Morning or Evening Prayer or the Service of the Word), from the Decision in the Alternative Prayer Book; but there seems no reason why, if this is preferred, it may not be used. The use of the Creed follows that in the baptismal rite combining elements of interrogation and affirmation.

#### **The Second Form**

The second form of the rite includes a simplified creedal interrogation not actually used in the authorized rites of baptism but permitted with the Service of the Word.

The service continues with further questions and answers from the rite of Confirmation (p.389) to do with the continuance of the Christian life, beginning with a quotation from the Acts of the Apostles, believed to be a summary of the apostolic way of life.

Will you continue in the apostles' teaching and fellowship,  
in the breaking of bread, and in the prayers?

The "breaking of bread" is a reference to table-fellowship and is generally taken to indicate participation in the Lord's Supper.

The next paragraph insists on the necessity of continuing to resist evil (it is not just a once-for-all act) and of repenting whenever one falls into sin as all people do. The word "repent" in New Testament use includes the idea of "change of mind", "change of attitude", while in the Old Testament the thought is that of turning around and facing in a different direction.



Will you persevere in resisting evil,  
and, whenever you fall into sin, repent and return to the Lord?

The obligation to pass on the Good News is then stressed,

Will you proclaim by word and example  
the good news of God in Christ?

Since service of others in love is of the essence of the Christian life, a further commitment is required,

Will you seek and serve Christ in all people,  
loving your neighbour as yourself?

Finally, and of great contemporary relevance, acknowledgement of the lordship of Christ over all the earth is affirmed by those renewing their vows,

Will you acknowledge Christ's authority over human society,  
by prayer for the world and its leaders,  
by defending the weak, and by seeking peace and justice?

The response to each of these questions is, **With the help of God, I will.**

The order concludes with a collect and the words,

May Christ dwell in your hearts through faith,  
that you may be rooted and grounded in love  
and bring for the fruits of the Spirit. **Amen.**

It would be appropriate to leave out the "Amen" and conclude with the blessing,  
And the blessing of God Almighty...

### **3:7 Thanksgiving after the birth of a child**

#### **Thanksgiving after adoption.**

This order is intended as a replacement for the Churaching of Women (see above, under Christian Initiation One). The emphasis is on the thanksgiving of both parents for the safety of the mother in giving birth to the child and for the life of the new-born baby. A single order is provided for birth and adoption but with suitable variation, the prayer "after the birth" giving thanks "for the life of this child, for a safe delivery, and for the privilege of parenthood" and that "after adoption" being "for the life of this child, for his/her adoption into our family, and for the privilege of parenthood". When used after the birth of a child it is deemed most appropriate to be held in hospital or in the home. The rubric emphasizes that it is in no way a substitute for the sacrament of baptism, indicating that no support is being given to the concept of having a "thanksgiving" service after birth and postponing or even ignoring altogether the sacrament of the new birth. The thanksgiving after adoption may be used in the home, or, if the child has already been baptized, the suggestion is made that it provides an opportunity for receiving him or her into the life of the parish and may be used at Holy Communion or at Morning or Evening Prayer. It must not be used before the official Adoption Order has been made.

The prayer of thanksgiving (said by both parents) is followed by a prayer in which the minister asks God to bless the parents that they may cherish their child and be wise and understanding to help *him* as *he* grows. Suitable psalm verses are followed by suggested readings and a choice of prayers. If the child has not been baptized the prayer is made, "that in faith *he* may be received by baptism into the family of (the) Church and become an inheritor of (the) kingdom". The Lord's Prayer is followed by scriptural verses from St Luke's Gospel (the Magnificat) and Revelation, and the service concludes with a blessing.

In many cases the prayers that are offered in the hospital ward are informal and it may not be practical to have an actual order of service. However, this service provides resources that might be drawn upon even in an informal ministrations. A prayer for the baptismal service (p.369) which may also be found suitable is,

Almighty God,  
bless the home of this *child*

and give such grace and wisdom to all who have the care of *him*,  
that by their word and good example  
they may teach *him* to know and love you;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

#### **[4]: Directions and Notes relation to Christian Initiation.**

The liturgical canons relating to Christian Initiation in the Church of Ireland are dealt with above at the beginning of Part Two. There are also three places in the 2004 edition of the Book of Common Prayer where directions about baptism are given: the General Directions for Public Worship (pp75-6), the Notes at the end of Holy Baptism One (p352) and the Notes at the end of Holy Baptism Two (p.368). Reference is made to these in the text but, for the sake of convenience, they are collated here with some explanatory comments:

#### **General Directions for Public Worship 10,**

Holy Baptism is normally administered at the principal service on a Sunday or holy day. Baptism should be preceded by appropriate preparation.

This emphasizes the significance of Baptism as one of the two sacraments that Christ has ordained in his Church (Church Catechism p.769) described as “generally necessary to salvation” the other being Holy Communion or the “Supper of the Lord” (ibid). It is essentially a public act of admission to fellowship of the Church rather than a simply private and personal event and so is fittingly administered at the principal service of the day, be this Morning or Evening Prayer, Holy Communion, or Service of the Word. Holy Baptism Two provides explicitly for it to take place in conjunction with (and in the context of) a celebration of the Holy Communion.

“Preparation for baptism” recalls the ancient catechumenate in which, in the early church, a prolonged period of instruction (which included prayer and exorcisms) preceded admission to the Church through baptism, characteristically performed in a ceremony commencing on Easter Eve and concluding on Easter Day and incorporating what we would call Holy Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Communion (see p397 for this pattern in the Prayer Book). Preparing people for baptism (personally, in the case of adults, their parents and godparents in the case of infants) is a significant aspect of the pastoral/liturgical work of a person in holy orders.

**Holy Baptism One, Notes**, p.352 [Notes 1-4 and 6 are applicable to baptisms in general, whether Rite One or Rite Two. No 5 has a particular applicability to Holy Baptism One]

*1. The Minister of every parish shall teach the people the meaning of Baptism and the responsibilities of those who bring children to be baptized.*

This covers a rather wider area than the reference in the General Directions (above) to preparation for baptism since it relates to a general understanding of the significance of baptism among all the members of a congregation. One of the ways in which this understanding may be promoted is through preaching on the subject within the context of the baptismal liturgy. Where Holy Baptism Two is used a wide variety of lections with a bearing on Christian Initiation is provided (p.396) and sermons can be based on these.

It is helpful for preparation for baptism to include going through the relevant order of service with those particularly concerned (parents and godparents) and explaining it with particular reference to their own responsibilities. In Holy Baptism Two there is reference to the responsibilities of the parents and godparents of those unable to answer for themselves on p.361 and the significance of these can be underlined through exposition of the various means listed through which they undertake to encourage the person or persons presented for baptism in the life and faith of the Christian Community:

Prayer for the person. We pray for our children (and they learn to pray for us)

Example - learning through seeing what others do and doing what they do - including practicing their faith and worshipping together as a family in Church.

Teaching - answering questions that will naturally arise when children ask about God and Christ and heaven and church.

Love - affirmation and acceptance a sign of God's unconditional love for all his creation.

Caring for the one brought for baptism. This involves care for the whole person, body, mind and spirit, spiritual nurture being as important for their well-being as physical care and mental stimulus and development.

The Decision is also highly significant, not only for those who are able to answer for themselves but also for the sponsors of other candidates, consisting as it does of a threefold rejection of evil followed by a threefold affirmation of allegiance to Christ. The wording of the responses is emphatic: "I reject...I renounce...I repent" followed by "I turn to Christ...I submit to Christ...I come to Christ".

It should also be noted that some words from the Baptism of Children in the Alternative Prayer Book (1984) explaining the understanding presupposed in infant baptism have been (optionally) added when Holy Baptism is administered in the context of Morning or Evening Prayer or a Service of the Word (BCP p.371). These words are so significant for an understanding of the responsibility of the parents and godparents that it would seem reasonable to add them after the Preface in the main order for Holy Baptism Two:

Holy Baptism is administered to infants  
on the understanding that they will be brought up in the fellowship of  
Christ's Church;  
that they will be taught the Christian faith;  
and that, when they have publicly confessed this faith,  
they will be confirmed by the bishop and admitted to the Holy Communion.

With regard to the Profession of faith, the juxtaposition of this to the act of baptism underlines the New Testament emphasis which makes faith in Christ the basis for proceeding to baptism. The question of the Philipian gaoler, "Men, what must I do to be saved?" evokes the reply, "Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved, you and your household". Following the exposition of the "word of the Lord" to him and to those who were in his house, "he was baptized at once, with all his family" (Acts 16: 30-33). The reply of Philip to the question of the Ethiopian eunuch, "See here is water! What is to prevent my being baptized" may have limited textual support: "If you believe with all your heart, you may." And he replied, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God", but it would certainly appear to represent the view of the early Church as to the appropriate and necessary precondition for baptism, which, in the narrative follows immediately, "And he commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him" (Acts 8:36-38).

It is regretted above that the word "profess" is used here rather than the richer "confess" with its association with the class of "confessors" of the faith and particular "confessions" such as those of St Augustine and St Patrick. But the essential point is that faith is expressed immediately prior to the act of baptism. The wording "believe and trust" is tautologous since the wording of the Apostles' Creed is *credo in Deum* implying a trustful attitude rather than *credo in Deo* - merely agreeing that there is a God. However it does, for those convey the concept of a personal relationship with the God in whom the baptizand professes to believe.

2. *When there are children to be baptized, the parents shall give due notice to the Minister of the Parish, who shall thereupon appoint the time for the Baptism.*

This implies an onus both upon the parents - who are to give due notice to the minister that they intend to have their baby baptized and upon the minister, who is obliged to perform the baptism but at the same time has discretion as to when this shall happen - preferably at the principal service on a Sunday or holy day as clearly expressed in General Directions 10 (above). Except in very unusual circumstances the baptism should take place in Church.

3. Sponsors and godparents must be baptized Christians and persons of discreet age, and at least two shall be members of the Church of Ireland or of a Church in communion therewith (Canon 25.4). It is desirable that parents be sponsors for their own children.

It would clearly be undesirable for commitments to be made on behalf of a child by any who feel unable (for example through lack of faith) to make such a commitment for themselves. However, difficulties can arise

where inter-church baptisms are taking place, and it might be considered reasonable, in an ecumenical situation, for undertakings to be given by those who share faith in Christ with an understanding of the significance of the sacrament. A particularly important ecumenical relationship is that with the Methodist Church where a covenant exists even if not full communion at present. More difficult is the by no means unusual situation of an interfaith marriage. Provided that two baptized and believing people are found to act as sponsors it would not seem unreasonable to ask the interfaith partner to stand with his or her husband or wife and to seek some appropriate way of expressing their and their relatives' sympathy even if not full identification with the act of faith that is represented in the act of baptism.

*4. It is desirable that members of the parish be present to support, by their faith and prayer, those who are to be baptized and received into the fellowship of the Church.*

Baptism admits to the fellowship of the Church as is implied in both forms of the thanksgiving over the water in Holy Baptism Two. In the first form it says, "And now we give you thanks that you have called *names/these your servants* to new birth in your Church through the waters of baptism. In the second form it says, "Therefore in joyful obedience to your Son, we baptize into his fellowship those who come to him in faith". In the reception which takes place immediately after the act of baptism it is said in Holy Baptism One,

We receive this Child into the Congregation of Christ's flock...

Seeing now...that this Child is regenerate, and *grafted into the body of Christ's Church.*

We yield thee hearty thanks, most merciful Father, that it hath pleased thee to regenerate *this Infant* with thy Holy Spirit, to receive *him* for thine own Child by adoption, and *to incorporate him into thy holy Church.*

Similarly at the comparable point in Holy Baptism Two it is said,

God has called you into his Church.

**We therefore receive and welcome you  
as a member with us of the body of Christ,  
as a child of the one heavenly Father,  
and as an inheritor of the kingdom of God.**

The concept of the Church as the "mystical" body of Christ is fundamental to New Testament revelation, for example in Romans 12: 4 "For as in one body we have many members, and all the members do not have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ." And in Ephesians 4:4-6 it says, "There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all, who is above all and through all and in all". This corporate dimension of belonging to Christ through baptism is underlined in the words said at the Peace where Holy Baptism Two leads on to Holy Communion,

We are the body of Christ.

By one spirit we were all baptized into one body.

Let us then pursue all that makes for peace  
and builds up our common life together.

*5. When this order of Baptism is used with one of the prescribed services in any church, the Minister may dispense with such parts of that service as the Ordinary shall permit.*

This appears to be mainly relevant to Holy Baptism One since there are specific ways of relating Holy Baptism Two to Holy Communion, to Morning and Evening Prayer and to the Service of the Word as prescribed in Christian Initiation Two. A rubric (now deleted) from The Ministration of Publick Baptism of Infants in the 1926 Prayer Book gives the following guidance:

When Baptism is administered at Morning or Evening Prayer, then all the Prayers after the third collect may be omitted.

Also relevant is the rubric that appeared in the 1926 Prayer Book before the Lesser Litany.

When this office is used in conjunction with any other service in the Book of Common Prayer, the minister may omit the Lord's Prayer and the three Versicles preceding it.

A combination of Morning Prayer One and Holy Baptism One, then, would omit the Lesser Litany and the Lord's Prayer (the latter would be said within the baptismal liturgy) and the Order for Holy Baptism would take the place of the Occasional Prayers.

Although it was certainly not intended the existence of the rubric about the Lesser Litany and Lord's Prayer had a baleful effect on Mattins and Evensong since the custom grew up of leaving them out at regular services at this point. It did not seem to occur to those conducting the services that it was the first Lord's Prayer (following the absolution) that was redundant while the second one was the keystone of the entire rite.

*6 The font should be so situated that Baptism may be administered in an orderly fashion.*

This rubric presupposes the number of churches where there is a cramped and inadequate baptistery. Even some modern churches have fonts in awkwardly placed positions where it is difficult if not impossible for those concerned to gather around them for the baptism. This raises the larger question of the proper use of liturgical space which, at the time of writing, was the subject of study by the Liturgical Advisory Committee with a view to the issuing of guidelines that might be formally approved by the General Synod.

### **Holy Baptism Two - Notes**

These Notes, on page 368, appear to presuppose those already given and deal with other appropriate issues. No's 2 - 5 would seem to be as relevant to Holy Baptism One as to Holy Baptism Two, raising the question of why there are two sets of Notes at all, the answer to which probably lies in the piecemeal process by which legislation was passed to approve of what were ultimately to be the contents of the 2004 edition of the Book of Common Prayer.

*1. The presiding minister of another person may give each of the newly baptized a lighted candle. This may happen during the Dismissal before the words "God has delivered us".*

The inhibition in the 1878 canons against the use of lighted lamps or candles (except where necessary "for the purpose of giving light") was repealed a number of years ago. The symbolic value of candles - "a living light for the living Lord" is now widely recognized. It may be noted that use of candles at the dismissal is optional as is also the use of the words provided on p.367. If the signing with the cross occurs immediately after the act of baptism as permitted by the rubric it may be convenient to give the candle with the relevant words also at this point.

*2. Where italicized plural pronouns are used in this service these should be altered if necessary to the appropriate single pronoun.*

The use of the plural was to avoid the use of *he/him* etc.

*3. The Administration of Baptism. A threefold administration of water, whether by dipping or pouring, is a very ancient practice of the Church. A single administration is also lawful and valid.*

A generous amount of water is appropriate and may be administered by the use of a shallow silver shell designed for the purpose. There is no provision for sprinkling. Baptisms are meant to be wet.

### **4. Conditional Baptism**

*It is not always certain that a person has been baptized, perhaps because of records being inadequately kept perhaps because the formula of "Father, Son and Holy Spirit" may not have been used. Unitarian baptism would be regarded as invalid. In the case of uncertainty (as distinct from knowing that a valid baptism had not in fact occurred) the conditional form is used, "...if you have not already been baptized..."*

### **5. Emergency Baptism.**

*In the case of urgent necessity (for example if a new-born baby seems likely to die) the bare essentials of baptism will suffice - naming, pouring water on the head and saying, "...I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen." If a priest is at hand (for example a hospital chaplain or the person's own clergyman) then the ordained person should act. However, in an emergency a lay person can validly baptize although in the event of the person recovering they should subsequently be brought to*

church and the form for Receiving into the Congregation (or its Baptism One prototype) should be used. Some prayers and the Lord's Prayer are appropriate after emergency baptism.

## Part Three: Christian Initiation: The Teaching of the Church of Ireland, with particular reference to the concept of sacramental efficacy

### 1. Articles of Religion.

#### (1) Article 25 - Of the Sacraments

Sacraments ordained of Christ be not only badges or token of Christian men's profession, but rather they be certain sure witnesses and *effectual signs of grace (efficacia signa gratiae)* and God's good will towards us, by the which he *doth work invisibly in us*, and doth not only quicken, but also strengthen and confirm our faith in him.

There are two Sacraments ordained by Christ our Lord in the Gospel, that is to say, Baptism, and the Supper of the Lord.

The Sacraments were not ordained of Christ to be gazed upon, or to be carried about, but that we should duly use them. And in such only as worthily receive the same they have a wholesome effect or operation: but they that receive them unworthily, purchase to themselves damnation, as Saint Paul saith.

This article establishes the concept of *sacramental causality*. Against any attempt to minimize the significance of the sacraments and to reduce them to mere tokens of the faith of those who use them it is insisted that they are "effectual signs", in other words they not only express but also convey that which they represent, when they are "duly" used and "worthily received". The Latin text gives *rite* for "duly" meaning with right matter and form and a duly authorized minister, and *digne* for "worthily" meaning with right inward disposition.

#### (2) Article 26 Of the Unworthiness of the Ministers, which hinders not the Effect of the Sacrament.

Although in the visible Church the evil be ever mingled with the good, and sometimes the evil have chief authority in the Ministration of the Word and Sacraments, yet forasmuch as they do not the same in their own name, but in Christ's, and do minister by His commission and authority, we may use their Ministry, both in hearing the Word of God, and in the receiving of the sacraments. Neither is the effect of Christ's ordinance taken away by their wickedness, nor the grace of God's gifts diminished from such as by faith and rightly do receive the Sacraments ministered unto them; which be effectual, because of Christ's institution and promise, although they be ministered by evil men...

This safeguards the objectivity of sacramental grace, the effect of the sacraments not being governed by the personal character of the minister. This is not to suggest that the Church is in any way indifferent to the moral and spiritual state of its ministers, as the concluding paragraph of the article makes clear.

The word "rightly" again corresponds to the Latin *rite*, i.e. with right matter and form and a duly authorized minister. "Matter" means the prescribed sacramental element, e.g. water in baptism, bread and wine at holy communion, "form" means the appropriate words to accompany the liturgical action with the element.

#### (3) Article 27 Of Baptism

Baptism is not only a sign of profession, and mark of difference, whereby Christian men are discerned from other that be not christened, but is also a *sign of Regeneration or new birth*, whereby, as *by an instrument*, they that receive Baptism rightly are *grafted into the Church*; the promises of forgiveness of sin, and of our adoption to be the sons of God by the Holy ghost, are visibly signed and sealed; faith is confirmed, and grace increased by virtue of prayer unto God.

Specifically in relation to the act of baptism the concept of efficacy is once again stressed. Baptism is not a mere badge of membership, but is actually a means of regeneration or new birth. The word "instrument" is used in the sense represented by (for example) a "deed of conveyance" which transfers ownership from one person to another. Those who are baptized are deemed to belong to Christ and to have become members of the Church (which is His Body) and to have begun their life in Him (hence the use of the metaphor of *regeneration*). It will be noted that this article clearly teaches the doctrine of *baptismal regeneration*.

The importance of a right disposition, that of *repentance* and *faith* (see the Church Catechism below) is however indicated by the use of the word "rightly" here to which the corresponding Latin is the general and quite strong word *recte*.

## 2. The Church Catechism BCP pp769, 770.

*Question* How many Sacraments hath Christ ordained in his Church?

*Answer* Two only, as generally necessary to salvation; that is to say, Baptism, and the Supper of the Lord.

Partly this was intended to distinguish between the two Sacraments "ordained of Christ our lord in the Gospel" and the five "commonly called Sacraments" (Article 25). But it will be seen that a very high doctrine of the "two" is implied, since the word "generally" as used in the sixteenth century meant *universally*. Both baptism and holy communion are regarded as "necessary to salvation".

Clearly this raises the problem of Christian bodies (such as the Salvation Army and the Society of Friends) which do not have sacraments. Nowadays we would not take the view that adherents of such bodies are in any way lacking in "salvation" -- full spiritual health. But the catechism rightly identifies baptism and holy communion as the means instituted by Christ for entry into and for the maintenance of the Christian life and intended by Him to be observed universally.

*Question* What meanest thou by this word *Sacrament*?

*Answer* I mean an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace given unto us, ordained by Christ himself, as *a means whereby we receive the same*, and a pledge to assure us thereof.

The view that the sacraments are effectual signs of grace (see on the Articles, above) is echoed by the teaching here that they are to be considered *means of grace*. The relationship between the outward and visible and the inward and spiritual is such that when rightly received the sacraments convey to us that which they represent.

*Question* How many parts are there in a Sacrament?

*Answer* Two; the outward visible sign, and the inward spiritual grace. This safeguards against two opposite errors - dissociation of the outward and visible sign from the inward spiritual grace as in the view that regeneration has nothing to do with baptism, and confusion of the two as in the doctrine of transubstantiation (see Article 28 *Of the Lord's Supper* - "overthroweth the nature of a sacrament"). Effectual sign and the reality represented *belong together*.

*Question* What is the outward visible sign or form in Baptism?

*Answer* Water, wherein the person is baptized *In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*. Only Trinitarian baptism is recognized. Unitarian baptism would not be regarded as valid. The water should be *poured* not sprinkled to preserve the significance of the sacramental sign. It is permitted to have one pouring or three, but the latter best represents the Church's adherence to its belief in the Holy Trinity.

*Question* What is the inward and spiritual grace?

*Answer* A death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness; for being by nature born in sin, and the children of wrath, we are *hereby* made the children of grace.

It may be seen here that a real effect is posited. The link between the administration of baptism and the inward significance is specifically indicated by the word "hereby".

*Question* What is required of persons to be baptized?

*Answer* Repentance, whereby they forsake sin; and Faith, whereby they steadfastly believe the promises of God made to them in that sacrament.

Baptism in the New Testament is always upon the basis of faith. Repentance which means "change of mind", "change of attitude" as well as sorrow for sin is a necessary part of the process by which a person turns away from evil and comes to profess faith in Christ.

*Question* Why then are Infants baptized, when by reason of their tender age they cannot perform them?



*Answer* Because they promise them both, by their Sureties; which promise, when they come to age, themselves are bound to perform.

"Sureties" are godparents. This particular question and answer presupposes that in a Christian society infant baptism is to be regarded as the norm. This does not, in any way take away from the necessity of real repentance and faith (which is to be professed on the child's behalf at baptism and ratified by himself or herself at confirmation).

### 3. The Revised Catechism

[The Revised Catechism was produced for the Church of England in 1962, and, as suitably modified for Church of Ireland use, was authorized by the House of Bishops for experimental use from 1971. Following the expiry of the period of experimental use in 1986 the House of Bishops subsequently approved it for use in the Church of Ireland. A commentary on it, entitled "The Faith of an Anglican" by the late Dr Gilbert Wilson, Bishop of Kilmore, was published by Collins for worldwide distribution. Currently it has no specific authorization but is issued for pastoral use with an explanatory note by the General Synod Board of Education].

The following questions and answers are found under the heading of "The Gospel Sacraments and other Ministries of Grace":

39. *What do you mean by a sacrament?*

By a sacrament I mean the use of material things as signs and pledges of God's grace, and as a means by which we receive his gifts.

It will be noticed that as in the definition in the Prayer Book catechism a sacrament has a double significance - as a *representation* of something and as a *means of communication* of that which it represents. It is not a bare sign but a means of grace, and it is effective.

40. *What are the two parts of a sacrament.?* The two parts of a sacrament are the *outward and visible sign* and the *inward and spiritual grace*.

This is entirely in line with Prayer Book teaching and with traditional Anglican theology. "Salvation" in the BCP catechism as in the expression "generally necessary to salvation" has been interpreted as "fullness of life".

42. *What other sacramental ministries of grace are provided in the Church?*

Other sacramental ministries of grace are confirmation, ordination, holy matrimony, the ministry of absolution, and the ministry of healing.

The distinction between "sacraments" and "sacramental ministries of grace" preserves the special status of the two "sacraments of the Gospel", baptism and holy communion, ordained by Christ. The five lesser "commonly called sacraments" (Article 25) receive a positive evaluation. It will be noticed that "ministry of absolution" is substituted for "penance", and "ministry of healing" for "extreme unction", replacing medieval misunderstandings of the Gospel with scriptural concepts.

43. *What is Baptism?*

Baptism is the sacrament in which, through the action of the Holy Spirit, we are "christened" or made Christ's.

It will be seen that the concept here is very similar to that in the traditional adult baptism service in the BCP (see above) where it, is said to the newly-baptised that "you ... now by Baptize: (have) put on Christ..." The crucial role of the Holy Spirit in making people Christians is recognized.

44. *What is the outward and visible sign in Baptism?*

The outward and visible sign in Baptism is water in which the person is baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

See above, under the BCP catechism.

45. *What is the inward and spiritual gift in Baptism?*

The inward and spiritual gift in Baptism is union with Christ in his death and resurrection, the forgiveness of sins, and a new birth into God's family, the Church.

There is no reference here to the contrast between "children of grace" and "children of wrath" (BCP catechism). The scriptural teaching in the Revised Catechism corresponds to the theology of the Christian Initiation Two rite for Holy Baptism.

How many sacraments has Christ, in the Gospel, appointed for his Church? Christ in the Gospel has appointed two sacraments for his Church, as needed by all for *fullness of life*, Baptism and Holy Communion.

46. *What is required of persons to be baptized?*

It is required that persons to be baptized should turn from sin believe the Christian Faith, and give themselves to Christ to be his servants.

"Turning" from sin is equivalent to "repentance" in the BCP catechism. Faith involves belief in the whole Christian Gospel and personal discipleship of Jesus.

47. *Why then are infants baptized?*

Though infants are not yet old enough to make promises for themselves, yet they are baptized because others can make the promises for them and claim their adoption as children of God.

The promises made at baptism on behalf of the child are ratified and confirmed in person at Confirmation. The renewal of baptismal vows is not, however, limited to confirmation, but may take place at Easter, Pentecost, the Baptism of our Lord, on Ash Wednesday, at the close of a mission or other suitable occasion. See below.

*What is Confirmation?*

Confirmation is the ministry by which, through prayer with the laying on of hands by the Bishop, the Holy Spirit is received to complete what he began in Baptism, and to give strength for the Christian life.

Biblical precedent for the communication of the Holy Spirit through prayer and the laying on of hands may be found in Acts 8:14-17; 19:1-7. However, these appear to have been exceptional incidents; and the gift of the Holy Spirit is more normatively associated with *baptism itself* (Acts 2:38). Any such ceremony as anointing or laying on hands should be regarded as expressing part of the total significance of *baptism* as the definitive initiatory act. Following early Christian tradition a rite of baptism, confirmation and first communion of those able to answer for themselves is provided as a single integrated liturgical act in the 2004 Prayer Book (p397). In the early Church the children of believers would also, it appears, have been baptized, received the laying on of hands and/or anointing, and been given communion along with their parents in a single act of initiation.

The concept of being given "strength" for the Christian life ties in with the approach of the traditional rite Confirmation in which the petition is "Strengthen them, we beseech thee, O Lord, with the Holy Ghost the Comforter..." The Rite Two Confirmation Prayer has "Confirm.. .O Lord with your heavenly grace..."

49. *What is required of persons to be confirmed?*

It is required that persons to be confirmed should have been baptized, be sufficiently instructed in the Christian faith, be penitent for their sins, and be ready to confess Jesus Christ as Saviour and obey him as Lord.

The element of personal faith is more fully articulated in the Rite 2 than in the Rite 1 Confirmation service, the renewal of baptismal vows replicating the very explicit "Decision" and "Profession of Faith" from the Rite 2 Holy Baptism.

#### 4. The Book of Common Prayer (2004), Christian Initiation One.

##### The Ministration of Public Baptism of Infants: Holy Baptism One

Of five traditional rites to be found in the Book of Common Prayer (1926) only two are to be found in the 2004 Prayer Book - "The Ministration of Public Baptism of Infants": Holy Baptism One and "The Order for Confirmation": Confirmation One. "The Ministration of Private Baptism of Children", "The Order for Public Reception of Children privately baptized", and "The Ministration of Baptism so such as are of Riper Years" are not included. However, the latter are also significant as witnesses to the church's historic understanding of baptism and so are referred to briefly below.

In the order for the public baptism of infants the Preface cites the scriptural requirement that "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven". This is understood as a reference to baptism, and the congregation is exhorted to pray that God the Father will "grant to this child that thing which by nature he cannot have; that he may be baptized with water and the Holy Ghost, and received into Christ's holy Church, and be made a lively member of the same".

Clearly an *efficacious* rite is anticipated which will involve regeneration and membership of Christ's body, the Church. This is made more explicit in the prayer which follows, "We call upon thee for *this infant*, that he, coming to thy Holy Baptism, may *receive remission of his sins by spiritual regeneration*". The reference to "remission" ties in with the affirmation in the Nicene Creed of "one baptism for the remission (forgiveness) of sins". The prayer is that the child being baptized may enjoy (here and now) "the everlasting benediction of thy heavenly washing", and (in the long term) "may come to the eternal kingdom which thou hast promised by Christ our Lord".

The alternative "flood" prayer takes up what have traditionally been regarded as anticipations or "types" of baptism from the Old Testament, namely Noah and the ark, and the crossing of the Red Sea. The baptism of Jesus himself is regarded as establishing a norm or pattern for Christian baptism and a high doctrine is implied in the words that "in the river Jordan didst *sanctify water to the mystical washing away of sin*".

The Gospel reading, from Mark 10:13f (Jesus and the little children) is taken as providing grounds for the baptism of children, children being both welcome to Jesus and capable of receiving a spiritual blessing. A prayer said by minister and people asks for the particular blessing of baptism, "Give thy Holy Spirit to this *infant* that *he may be born again*, and be made an heir of everlasting salvation" and the following exhortation refers to the Lord's promise in his Gospel to grant all the things that have been prayed for, "which promise he, for his part, will most surely keep and perform". It is not, apparently, envisaged that what is prayed for might **not** occur as a result of the baptism.

A concept of sacramental efficacy is implied in the petition to "sanctify this water to the mystical washing away of sin" (an echo of the "flood" prayer), "sanctify" being a strong word with the significance of "make holy". "Mystical" means here "by means of this mystery". In the Book of Common Prayer both baptism and holy communion are regarded as "mysteries" - rites of deep meaning, inexhaustible significance (see BCP p.190 for the holy communion).

The meaning of baptism as membership of the Church is underlined by the words of the reception - "we receive this child into the Congregation of Christ's flock" (that is, the whole Church not any particular part of it nor any denominational tradition). What has been accomplished, sacramentally, is unambiguously expressed in the declaration, immediately after the baptism, together with the consignation, "*that this child is regenerate, and grafted into the body of Christ's Church*", and the prayer which comes after the Lord's Prayer expresses the same idea, "We yield thee hearty thanks, most merciful Father, that it hath pleased thee to regenerate this Infant with thy Holy Spirit to receive him for thine own child by adoption, and to incorporate him into thy holy Church."

The term "regenerate" is the exact equivalent of rebirth - being "born again".

Having explored, liturgically, the deeper significance of baptism, it is recognized that baptism is a sign of Christian allegiance, it "doth represent unto us our profession: which is, to follow the example of our Saviour Christ, and to be made like unto him... "

The form for the Baptism of Adults (BCP, 1926 edition pp255-259) was similar in its theological approach. The Johannine concept of being born of "water and the Holy Spirit" is, however, underlined by the choice of John 3:ff for the scripture reading.

There is an emphasis on personal faith as in the Exhortation, where it says, "Doubt ye not therefore, but earnestly believe, that (God) will favourably receive *these present Persons, truly repenting, and coming unto him by faith*; that he will grant them remission of their sins, and bestow upon them the Holy Ghost; that he will give them the blessing of eternal life, and make them partakers of his everlasting kingdom".

Baptismal regeneration was also emphasized in the order for the "baptism to such as are of riper years" (adults). After the reception (following the baptism) there are the words "Seeing now, dearly beloved brethren, that these Persons are *regenerate*, and grafted into the body of Christ's Church..." After the Lord's Prayer a prayer of thanksgiving includes the words, "Give thy Holy Spirit to these Persons; that, *being now born again*, and made heirs of everlasting salvation..." In the exhortation to the newly baptized the priest refers to them as "you, who have *now by baptism put on Christ*..."

The link between baptism, confirmation, and holy communion is emphasized in the third last rubric in the adult baptism service (BCP, 1926 edition p.259),

It is expedient that every Person, thus baptized, should be confirmed by the Bishop, and receive the Holy Communion, so soon after his Baptism as conveniently may be.

### **The Order for Confirmation: Confirmation One**

The subtitle is "Laying on of hands upon those that are baptized and come to years of discretion".

The Preface defines as preconditions for Confirmation that candidates must be such as can say the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments; "and have been further instructed in the Church Catechism set forth for that purpose". The Confirmation itself is preceded by the *ratification of baptismal vows* by the candidates.

The prayer said over the candidates immediately prior to the act of confirmation recognizes that which God had already accomplished for them in the act of baptism. "Almighty and everliving God, who hast vouchsafed to *regenerate these thy servants by Water and the Holy Ghost, and has given unto them forgiveness of all their sins*..." The purpose of the laying on of hands with prayer is to "strengthen them, with the Holy Ghost the Comforter, and daily increase in them thy manifold gifts of grace" (the sevenfold gifts of the Holy Spirit from Isaiah 11:1-2).

[It is important to note that confirmation does not "bestow" the Holy Spirit, who is given in baptism. Rather the prayer is that the candidates are to be "strengthened" by the Holy Spirit.]

The confirmation prayer itself speaks of the child (or "servant") daily *increasing* in the Holy Spirit. The post-confirmation prayer asks that the Holy Spirit will ever be with those who have been confirmed, the ultimate purpose being that "in the end they may obtain everlasting life", a recurring theme in the rites of baptism and confirmation.

The link with first communion appears almost as an afterthought in the concluding rubric,

And there shall none be admitted to the holy Communion, until such time as he be confirmed, or be ready and desirous to be confirmed.

This rubric is a reversion to the wording in the 1662 prayer-book from that in the Irish Prayer Books of 1878 and 1926

Every person ought to present himself for Confirmation (unless prevented by some urgent reason) before he partakes of the Lord's Supper.

[This change was a compromise resulting from Synod's failure - by a single lay vote - to remove the rubric altogether. The reason for it was that the 1662 wording allows a little more room for early admission to Holy Communion where desired]

## Christian Initiation Two

*Holy Baptism*, BCP pp357-370.

This may be regarded as the standard rite for normal parish ministry although a strong case may be made for the order for "Holy Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Communion", found in the form of the structure of a service, as the true norm of Christian Initiation.

### Pastoral Introduction

This helpful general introduction speaks of baptism as marking the beginning of a lifelong journey with God. It explains the significance of various signs such as that of the cross, and a light. Of the primary symbol of *water* associated with biblical concept of dying and rising with Christ it says that it is also a "sign of new life; we are born again by water and the Spirit through faith in Jesus Christ.". It is, therefore an effectual sign of regeneration (rebirth).

The Preface (which follows the greeting) in its standard form reiterates the Johannine theme:

Our Lord Jesus Christ has told us  
that to enter the kingdom of heaven  
we must be born again of water and the Spirit,  
and has given us baptism as the sign and seal of this new birth.  
Here we are washed by the Holy Spirit and made clean.  
Here we are clothed with Christ,  
dying to sin that we may live his risen life.  
As children of God, we have a new dignity  
and God calls us to fulness of life.

A similar concept is found in the seasonal preface for Easter Day to Pentecost,

In baptism we die to sin and rise to newness of life in Christ.  
Here we find rebirth in the spirit,  
and set our minds on his heavenly gifts.

The seasonal collect of Epiphany, the Baptism of our Lord and Trinity Sunday prays,

May we who are reborn in him  
be transformed by the renewal of our lives.

And the seasonal collect of Easter Day to the Day of Pentecost says,

Guide and strengthen us by the same spirit,  
that we who are born again  
may serve you in faith and love,  
and grow into the full stature of your Son Jesus Christ.

The post-communion for Epiphany etc. asks,

May we who are reborn in him  
be transformed by the renewal of our lives...

And that of Easter Day to the Day of Pentecost prays

May all who are washed in the waters of rebirth  
rise to newness of life  
and find the promised presence of your abundant grace.

In the first form of the prayer over the water it says,

And now we give you thanks that you have called ...  
to new birth in your Church through the waters of baptism.  
Pour out your Holy Spirit in blessing and sanctify this water  
so that those who are baptized in it may be made one with Christ in his

death and resurrection.

May they die to sin, rise to newness of life and continue for ever in Jesus Christ our Lord...

In the second form of the prayer over the water it says,

We thank you, Father for the water of baptism.  
 In it we are buried with Christ in his death.  
 By it we share in his resurrection.  
 Through it we are reborn by the Holy Spirit.  
 Now sanctify this water that, by the power of your Holy Spirit,  
*they* may be cleansed from sin and born again...

At Holy Communion the proper prayer that may be used in Eucharistic Prayer 1 says,

Because by water and the Holy Spirit  
 you have made us a holy people in Jesus Christ our Lord...

The theme of spiritual rebirth is found in the first of the prayers that may be used at the Prayers of the People (in a form that was a fixed form of the rite in the Alternative Prayer Book, 1984),

Father, we thank you that...has now been born again of water and the Holy Spirit, and has become your own child by adoption and a member of your Church.

*Holy Baptism in the context of Morning or Evening Prayer or A Service of the Word*

This is similar to the form above except that there is no mention of Holy Communion. The prayer "Father, we thank you" is printed as the first option among the Prayers of the People.

*The Order for Receiving into the Congregation of those privately baptized*

The first form of the Prayer over the water is said as a Thanksgiving and includes the words,

And now we give you thanks that you called...to new birth in your Church through the waters of baptism.

*Confirmation*

As an alternative to the Collect of the Day the following is said:

Heavenly Father,  
 by water and the Holy Spirit  
 you give your faithful people new life:  
 Guide and strengthen us by that same Spirit  
 that we who are born again  
 may serve you in faith and love,  
 and grow into the full stature of your Son Jesus Christ...

The Confirmation Prayer includes the words,

We give you thanks and praise for the gift of your Holy Spirit  
 by whom your servants have been born again  
 and made your children.

*Readings and Psalms for Christian Initiation*

Included among the general readings is John 3:1-8 which is the Gospel reading in the (c) series and includes both references to rebirth in St John's Gospel (3:3 and 3:5). Exponents of this passage often miss the significance of 3:5 which refers to "water and the Spirit".

## **Conclusion**

The 1878 BCP Preface (BCP p.9) refers to the "liberty of expounding these Formularies [relating to Baptism] hitherto allowed by the general practice of the Church". A certain diversity of theological opinion re-

lating to initiation is therefore recognized by the Church of Ireland. The basic doctrine of the Church has remained constant, there being an evident continuity between the successive editions of the Book of Common Prayer and between the Rite One and Rite Two services in the 2004 edition. The Thirty-nine Articles, Prayer Book Catechism, the Revised Catechism (formally approved by the House of Bishops when it was covered by the experimental services legislation), traditional and modern rites of initiation all need to be taken together as they are mutually interpretative, and all are referred to the teaching of Holy Scripture as the ultimate source of our understanding on the principle that "The Church to teach; the Bible to prove". A concept that is fundamental to all the source material in relation to initiation (and specifically to baptism) is that of the "effectual sign", a term also used in relation to the Holy Communion. There are many facets to the church's understanding of baptism (only some of which are covered in this survey), among them that of the doctrine of baptismal regeneration which is expressed and taught in all the above.

**THE STUDY OF LITURGY  
PASTORAL MINISTRY: MARRIAGE, MINISTRY  
TO THOSE WHO  
ARE SICK, AND BURIAL**

**COMMENTARY ON THE  
BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER 2004**

**PREPARED BY  
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## CONTENTS

<b>MARRIAGE</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Marriage One</b>	3
<b>Marriage Two</b>	12
The Thanksgiving of Women after Childbirth	26
Thanksgiving after the birth of a child/thanksgiving after adoption	28
A form of prayers and dedication after a civil marriage	29
Appendix A: The Remarriage of Divorced Persons in Church	31
<b>MINISTRY TO THOSE WHO ARE SICK</b>	<b>34</b>
Private Communion	48
Holy Communion by Extension	49
<b>FUNERAL SERVICES</b>	<b>52</b>
Funeral Services: The canonical position	52
Funeral Services One: The Order for the Burial of the Dead.	54
Funeral Services Two, entitled "The Funeral Service"	61
When the body is brought to the church on the eve of a funeral	71
A form for use at the burial of ashes after cremation	72
A funeral service for a child	72
A form for use in the home, funeral home or mortuary prior to the Service in Church	72
<b>APPENDIX</b>	
Guidelines on the Liturgical Use of Oil	74
[These guidelines were drawn up by the Liturgical Advisory Committee and issued to the clergy in March 2011. They relate in the first instance to healing, hence their inclusion in this part of the Commentaries, but also to Baptism, Confirmation, and Ordination]	

# MARRIAGE

## MARRIAGE ONE

### The Form of Solemnization of Matrimony

The Church's involvement in Christian marriage from the earliest days is indicated by the following citations from the second to the tenth centuries:-

*Ignatius of Antioch* (c. 107 A.D.) "It is fitting for those who purpose matrimony to accomplish their union with the sanction of the Bishop; that their marriage may be in the Lord, and not merely in the flesh. Let all things be done to the honour of God". [Letter to Polycarp V].

*Tertullian* (c.160 - c.225 A.D.) "How can we find words to describe the happiness of that marriage in which the Church joins together, which the Oblation confirms, the benediction seals, the angels proclaim when sealed, and the Father ratifies!" [Tertull. ad Ux. ii.7,8].

*Fourth Council of Carthage* (398 A.D.). In the thirteenth canon it is enjoined that the bride and bridegroom shall be presented by their parents and friends to a priest for benediction.

*Basil the Great* (c.330-79 A.D.) St. Basil calls marriage a yoke which *dia tes eulogias*, by means of the benediction, unites in one those who were two [Hexaem. vii.].

*Ambrose* (c.339-97 A.D.). St. Ambrose calls marriage a sacrament, as does also St. Augustine in many places of his treatise "on the good of marriage"; and the former again says, "As marriage must be sanctified by the priest's sanction and blessing, how can that be called a marriage where there is no agreement of faith?" [Ambrose, Ep. xix].

*King Edmund* (946 A.D.). Among his laws respecting espousals is one which provides that "the priest shall be at the marriage, and shall celebrate the union according to custom with God's blessing, and with all solemnity."

The church in effect took over the heathen marriage rites of pagan Rome and christianized them, replacing the sacrifices to the gods by the nuptial eucharist. The close correspondence of details may be seen in the following analysis,

### *Heathen (Roman) Marriage Rite*

(1) Sponsalia (Betrothal): (a) Presents (arrhae), i.e. "earnest" money; (b) The Kiss; (c) the giving of the Ring; (d) the joining of hands.

(2) Confarreatio (Wedding proper): (e) (Blood) sacrifices to the gods; (f) Veiling (velum, "flammeum"); (g) Crowning with flowers; (h) Prayers; (i) Partaking of the sacrificial cake. Procession, ceremonies at bridegroom's house, coena nuptialis (marriage supper).

*Christian Marriage Rite* (as described by Pope Nicholas I to the Bulgarians in 866):-

(d) Sponsalia (espousals); (c) Subarrhatio (giving of the ring by the man to the woman); (a) Conveyance of dowry by attested documents; (e), (h), (i) Nuptial Eucharist (with Communion of the bridal couple); (f) Solemn Benediction, the veil being held over them; (g) "crowning" as they leave the Church.

The early Roman Sacramentaries (Leonine, Gelasian, Gregorian) provide for the Nuptial Eucharist the usual Collects, a special Preface, and a Benediction (after the Consecration).

The traditional language Marriage Service - Marriage One ("The Form of Solemnization of Matrimony") is derived from the 1549 Order, as amended (in the Church of England) in 1552 and 1662, and (in the Church of Ireland) in 1878, 1926, 2004 and 2009. Its ultimate sources include the medieval (Sarum and York) rites, Hermann of Cologne, and Luther.

For a brief history of Christian marriage see *A Companion to Common Worship*, Vol. 2, Alcuin Club Collections 81, SPCK, 2006, ed. Paul Bradshaw, Chapter Nine pp 180-184 . This covers Jewish precedents, the early Christian centuries, later eastern practice, the medieval west, the Reformation, and the Church of England.

## COMMENTARY

**(1) The Banns of Marriage** The calling of the Banns of Marriage or (as an alternative) the issuing of a marriage licence (or special licence) has been abolished, the legal side of the marriage having become the responsibility of the Registrar in both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. Legislation to bring the contents of the 2004 edition of the Book of Common Prayer into line with the secular law was passed by the General Synod in May 2009 and will be reflected in future printings of the Prayer Book. It is illegal to perform the marriage ceremony without the necessary legal procedure having been followed.

There are now no restrictions as to the seasons of the year when marriages may be celebrated. Historically, it was not customary to solemnize marriages from Advent Sunday to the Octave of the Epiphany, from Septuagesima to the Octave of Easter, and from Rogation Sunday to Trinity Sunday. A prohibition of the celebration of marriages during Lent is found as early as the Council of Laodicea (c.365 A.D., the fifty-second canon).

**(2) Entrance** A rubric in the pre-2004 Order referred to the persons to be married coming into the body of the Church, the man on the right hand, the woman on the left and this remains customary. This part of the service takes place at the chancel step. This is a public service, which takes place "in the face of this congregation". There must be at least two witnesses as well as the officiating clergy person.

It is customary for the groom to arrive first (with the best man) and to be seated in good time at the front of the church on the south side. When the bride comes into the church (with her bridesmaids and the person who is giving her away) the groom and the best man come forward and stand before the priest and are joined there by the bride and those who accompany her.

**(3) Preface** The significance of the marriage service should be carefully explained to the couple as part of their preparation for marriage. This should include an exposition of the Christian doctrine of matrimony as set forth in the Preface, and of the binding character of the marriage vows. Points that may be brought out in expounding the Preface include:-

"We are gathered together here in the sight of God, and in the face of this congregation..." A wedding in a Registry Office is as legally binding as one in a church and is recognized by the Church as a valid ceremony. But the distinction between a church wedding and one in a Registry Office lies in the latter being a purely civil ceremony - there is no recognition of God whatever. In a church wedding the responsibility to God for the keeping of the marriage vows is fully acknowledged by the couple.

"...an honourable estate, instituted of God in the time of man's innocency..." Marriage was part of God's plan and purpose from the beginning, as may be seen in the Genesis narrative where the creation of Eve comes before the Fall (Genesis 2:18-25). It is essentially wholesome and good.

"...signifying unto us the mystical union that is betwixt Christ and his Church..." The biblical basis for this concept may be found in Eph. 5:23, "For the husband is the head of the wife just as Christ is the head of the church, the body of which he is the Saviour", and Rev. 21:2 "And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a

bride adorned for her husband." It is well summed up in Samuel Stone's hymn, "The Church's one foundation" where it says,

From heaven he came and sought her to  
be his holy Bride;  
with his own blood he bought her,  
and for her life he died.

"...which holy estate Christ adorned and beautified with his presence, and first miracle that he wrought, in Cana of Galilee..." The reference is to John 2:1-11, the first miracle recorded in St. John's Gospel being the changing of the water into wine at the wedding feast. The young couple involved had the unique privilege of having the Lord present "in the flesh" at their wedding. However, the Lord is truly present in a spiritual way at every Christen wedding since "where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them." (Matt. 18:20).

"and is commended in holy Scripture to be honourable among all men..." This would appear to be a reference to the teaching of Jesus, "From the beginning of creation, 'God made them male and female. For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.' So they are no longer two, but one flesh." (Mark 10:8).

"...and therefore is not by any to be enterprised, nor taken in hand, unadvisedly, lightly, or wantonly". The extremely serious nature of the commitment is made clear. It must be made "reverently, discreetly, advisedly, soberly, and in the fear of God." The positive view of marriage in the Church of Ireland rite is emphasized through the omission of words found in the 1662 Order, "to satisfy men's carnal lusts and appetites, like brute beasts that have no understanding..."

"...and in the fear of God". "Fear" in this context signifies reverential awe as in Psalm 19:9 "The fear of the Lord is clean and endures for ever; the judgements of the Lord are true and righteous altogether."

[The causes for which matrimony was ordained]

"First, for the increase of mankind, according to the will of God..." This refers back to the biblical "be fruitful and multiply" of Genesis 1:28, and includes the physical aspect of marriage, understood in a positive way.

"...and for the due ordering of families and households..." This is more than ever necessary in a disordered world in which so many young people get into trouble. In particular, children need to be brought up as Christian believers - "in the fear and nurture of the Lord, and to the praise of his holy name." So marriage is not just a matter relating to the couple getting married, but is, normally, to do with the creation of a new family, which must be Christian in quality.

"Secondly, for the hallowing (that is the making holy) of the union betwixt man and woman, and for the avoidance of sin." Some may feel that the final phrase is negative in tone. However, this wording in the Church of Ireland version of the traditional rite represents a considerable modification of that in the 1662 Prayer Book, which read, "Secondly, it was ordained for a remedy against sin, and to avoid fornication; that such persons as have not the gift of continency, might marry, and keep themselves undefiled members of Christ's body."

"Thirdly, for the mutual society, help, and comfort that the one ought to have of the other, both in prosperity and adversity." This is the "being together" aspect of marriage. If it is true that "troubles shared are troubles halved" it is also true that joys are multiplied when there is

someone to share them with. If marriages are to remain stable couples need to make sure that they spend time together.

"...if any man can shew any just cause..." This provision no longer has any effect since the legal aspect of marriage is the responsibility of the Registrar. The entire sentence has been deleted from the rite by an act of the General Synod, 2009.

A rubric indicating that in the case of more than one couple getting married the questions and vows are to be repeated for each couple no longer appears in the Order of Service but it may be taken that this remains the procedure to be followed..

The use of the word "priest" is significant in that there is no provision in the Book of Common Prayer service for a marriage to be solemnized by a deacon, and it is not clear whether this is legal. However, theologically speaking, the ministers of the marriage are the bride and groom. The role of the priest as officiant at the wedding is particularly significant in relation to the nuptial blessing (cf Ordination Services Two p.565 where the "job specification" of the priest is explicitly stated to be blessing God's people in the Lord's name).

#### **(4) The Charge.**

The charge places a moral imperative on the couple to disclose anything which might constitute a legal obstacle (impediment) to the marriage and render it invalid.

The General Synod of May 2009 added the following rubric to bring the order of service into line with current law in the Republic of Ireland:

*[RI] Unless the declarations of no civil impediment have already been made by the couple prior to the marriage in the presence of the Registered Solemniser and the two witnesses the man and the woman each make the required declaration now*

*I solemnly declare that I do not know of any civil impediment to my proposed marriage  
with...*

It may be noted that the regulations relating to the remarriage of divorced persons is provided for by means of a new Canon (replacing the former Canon 31) and by regulations approved by the General Synod of 1996 (see Appendix A, below).

#### **(5) The historic "shape" of the rite**

Historically, the rite of marriage consisted of two parts,

- The betrothal ("espousals")
- The marriage proper.

Originally the "espousals" were distinct from the marriage ceremony and represented a formal and religious recognition of what is now termed an engagement; and it took place months, even years, before the marriage itself. The custom survived in parts of Europe, at least up to the beginning of the twentieth century. The ceremonies were,

- (1) The verbal expression of free consent (in effect, the vows)
- (2) The presentation of gifts *arrae* or *sponsalia* (representing the marriage settlement);
- (3) Giving and receiving of a ring;
- (4) A kiss;
- (5) Joining of hands;
- (6) Settling a dowry in writing.

The marriage service was essentially a service of blessing, and, as indicated above, included the celebration of the eucharist (witnessed to by Tertullian in the third century A.D.).

**(6) The Questions** (traditionally known as the "Espousals").

Although this ceremony may appear to be a mere formality, since it is very improbable that persons will appear before the clergyman for the purpose of being married unless they have previously come to a decision and agreement on the subject, yet mutual consent is absolutely essential to the validity of the marriage and it is vital for this to be acknowledged and expressed prior to the vows being exchanged. The man is asked about his willingness to "love, comfort, honour, and keep" his wife. The woman is asked about her willingness to "obey and serve, love, honour and keep" her husband. One may note the positive doctrine of matrimony, which is called a "holy estate", its exclusive content, "forsaking all other", with the only limitation to the commitment implied in the words "as long as you both shall live". Marriage is for life: it is not for eternity.

"Who giveth..." No answer is provided (since the response is properly the minister's receiving the woman at her father's or friend's hands) but it is customary for the bride's father to say, "I do".

The ceremony of "giving away", historically speaking reflected views of woman's dependent status (on her father, then, through the church, on her husband) within the order of creation which are at odds with the concepts of partnership generally held today. However, there is a "letting go" involved which may reflect changing relationships and some brides prefer to have a "giving away" even where it is no longer officially included as in Marriage Two (see below).

**(7) The Promises** (The Marriage Vows). The comprehensive nature of the commitment is here fully expressed. There does not seem to be any difference in meaning between "plighting" and "giving" one's troth, which is an old-fashioned way of saying, "I pledge you my word or my honour", in other words "I make my solemn promise". The word "troth" has the significance of fidelity or allegiance.

The Sarum original of the women's promise included the words, "to be bonere and buxum in bedde and at te borde tyll deth us departhe if holy chyrche it wol ordeyne". ["bonnaire"= gentle, "boughsome" = obedient]

The reference in the rubric to "the accustomed duty" being laid on the book is obsolete - but it is a reminder that the officiating clergyman is entitled to a fee for his services.

**(8) The Giving of the Ring(s)**

In 1549 the man gave "a ring, and other tokens of spousage, as gold and silver". The gold and silver were removed in 1552, and the ring alone represents the ancient bride-price. Nowadays the ring (which is the circle with no ending) represents the permanence of the marriage bond; and it is a widespread custom to have two rings, the bride's and the groom's. If this is the case the ceremony with the ring is repeated, and the wording of the prayer following is modified so as to read, "...whereof these Rings given and received are tokens and pledges". "With my body I thee worship" means "I will render you service and show you honour" (cf Gen. 24:53, 67). "Worship", from "worth-ship" signifies the acknowledgement of worth, and is still found in secular use in such expressions as "your worship" in relation to a magistrate and "his worship the mayor".

Down to the end of the sixteenth century it was customary for the bride to wear the ring on her right hand; since then it has been worn on the left hand. The use of gold, which is usually free from alloy, is a symbol of purity.

In the Sarum Manual an elaborate form was provided for the blessing of the ring, during which it was sprinkled with holy water, and signed with the sign of the cross. The man was

instructed to place the ring on the thumb of the bride, saying, 'In the Name of the Father'; then upon the second finger, saying, 'and of the Son'; and then upon the third finger, saying 'and of the Holy Spirit'; and then upon the fourth finger, saying, 'Amen.' ('And there let him leave the ring').

**(9) The Prayer for Blessing** 1549, altered 1552. Compiled from two prayers in the Sarum Manual used in the blessing of the ring.

'O Eternal God, Creator,' etc. In 1549 after the words 'as Isaac and Rebecca' there was the following clause in parenthesis: ('after bracelets and jewels of gold given of the one to the other for tokens of their matrimony'). Isaac and Rebecca are chosen as the Old Testament types of constancy, their history being free from any trace of polygamy.

**(10) Joining of hands** The words here are a slight misinterpretation of the original in the Greek New Testament (Mk 10:9//) which refers to the relationship, "That which..."

This ceremony comes from Hermann's Consultation and does not appear in any pre-Reformation manuals. However, the words were part of the Gospel reading in the *Missa sponsalium*.

**(11) The Declaration.** This declaration of the completed union is also taken from Archbishop Hermann's Cologne book, and constitutes a proclamation to the church of what has already been effected by previous parts of the rite.

**(12) The Nuptial Blessing** appears almost as an afterthought "And the minister adds this blessing". However, the invocation of God's blessing upon the union is of the essence of the marriage rite, the bestowal of a blessing being a fundamental part of the ministry of a priest (BCP "The Ordination of Priests p.565). The concept of blessing reappears in the prayer "O God of Abraham" later in the rite (see below).

The Declaration followed by the Blessing completes the actual marriage ceremony. Everything else in the service consists of readings and prayers arising out of the marriage, unless the Holy Communion is celebrated. The distinction between the two parts of the service is underlined by the movement from the Chancel Step to the Sanctuary Step during the recitation of the Psalm.

**(13) The Procession to the altar** The rubric says, "The minister goes to the Lord's Table." This originally said "Then shall they go into the quire," and Cosin wished so to restore it, with the alteration "they all." The idea seems to have been that the Clergy, the Choir, the bride and bridegroom, and the bridal party are to go from the body of the church in procession to the chancel, singing the processional psalm 128 - *Beati omnes*. It is customary now for the procession to consist of the bride and groom following the officiating priest. They may be accompanied by the best man and bridesmaid(s) if desired.

**(14) The Psalm** Either Psalm 128 or 67 may be used.

**(15) The Prayers.** These consist of Lesser Litany, Lord's Prayer, Versicles & Responses, the prayers "O God of Abraham...", "O Merciful Lord...", "O God, who by thy mighty power...", and "Almighty God, who at the first beginning..." It may be noticed that only the first and last of these are obligatory. The second and third may be omitted, and it is in accordance with the canons to substitute other suitable prayers at the discretion of the officiating minister. Specifically, those from pp424-427 (Marriage Two) may be preferred.

The concluding prayers have undergone little change in the course of translation from the ancient Latin office.

*The Lesser Litany* 1549, from the Sarum Manual.

*The Lord's Prayer* 1549, from the Sarum Manual. The absence of the Doxology denotes that the prayers which follow are of the nature of supplication, not of thanksgiving. Until 1662 only the last clause, 'But deliver us from evil,' was said by the people.

*The Versicles and Responses.* 1549, from Psalm 86:2; 20:1,2; 61:3; 102:1.

*Prayer for Divine Blessing.* 1549, slightly altered 1552, from the Sarum Manual. "O God of Abraham..."

1549 "And as thou didst send thy angel Raphael to Thobie and Sara, the daughter of Raguel", etc.

1552. For this clause was substituted, "And as thou didst send thy blessing upon Abraham and Sarah," etc.

*Prayer for Fruitfulness.* 1549, altered 1552, from Sarum Manual. "O Merciful Lord, and heavenly Father..."

1549 "That they may see the childer's ('children's,' 1552) children, unto the third and fourth generation, unto thy praise and honour."

1662 "That they may see their children christianly and virtuously brought up, to thy praise and honour."

*Prayer for Holy Married Life.* 1549, altered 1662.

1549 After the words "this woman may be loving and amiable" the prayer ran "to her husband as Rachael, wise as Rebecca, faithful and obedient as Sarah."

1662 Altered to "faithful and obedient to her husband".

*who has consecrated the state of matrimony.* Among the exceptions offered against the Prayer Book by Baxter and his colleagues in 1661 was the following: "Seeing the institution of Marriage was before the Fall, and so before the promise of Christ, as also for that the said passage in this collect seems to countenance the opinion of making matrimony a sacrament, we desire that clause may be altered or omitted." To this the Committee of Convocation replied: "Though the institution of marriage was before the Fall, yet it may be now, and is, consecrated by God to such an excellent mystery as the representation of the spiritual marriage between Christ and His Church (Eph. 5:23)."

*Benedictory prayer for Grace.* 1549. Sarum Manual, from two consecutive forms. Before 1552 the words "sanctify and bless you" were printed "sanctify and + bless you".

## **(16) Scripture Reading**

Prior to 2004 a collection of scripture readings consisting of extracts from Ephesians, 1 Peter and Colossians appeared here for use "if there was no sermon declaring the duties of Man and Wife". These were rarely, if ever, used. To ensure that scripture is read when this office is used the current rubric says, "Unless there is to be a celebration of Holy Communion" (for which an Epistle and Gospel are provided, see below) "a reading from Holy Scripture follows". It may be felt that a single passage of scripture is inadequate and that this is not a particularly appropriate place for it. A better place would be after the psalm.

The Scriptural Address 1549. AV.. 1662

Eph 5:25-33a; Col. 3:19; 1 Pet. 3:7; Eph. 5:22-24; Col. 3:18; 1 Peter 3:1-6.

## **(17) The Sermon**

This is optional "If there is a sermon it is preached here". A sermon in the form of a short (three to five minutes) address on the significance of Christian marriage, based on the Scripture reading is highly desirable and would be better placed after the psalm (and reading). The selection of readings in Marriage Two (p.418) is helpful.



1549 Then shall be said, after the Gospel, a sermon, wherein ordinarily (so oft as there is any marriage) the office of man and wife shall be declared, according to holy scripture. Or if there be no sermon, the Minister shall read this that followeth.

1552 Then shall begin the Communion. And after the Gospel, shall be said a Sermon, etc.

1662/1926 After which, if there be no Sermon declaring the duties of Man and Wife, the Minister may read as followeth.

2004 Unless there be a celebration of the Holy Communion a reading from Holy Scripture follows. If there is a sermon it is preached here.

**(18) The anthem or hymn**

If there are two hymns to be sung, it is appropriate for the first one to be placed at the beginning of the service and the second here. A solo may be sung during the signing of the Register and what is called in Northern Ireland "The Schedule".

**(19) Conclusion** (without Holy Communion)

An additional prayer, not in the 1926 Order is found here:

O eternal God, we humbly beseech thee favourably to behold these thy servants ... and ... now joined in wedlock according to thy holy ordinance; and grant that they, seeking first thy kingdom and righteousness, may obtain the manifold blessings of thy grace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

This is followed by the prayer "O almighty Lord, and everlasting God" and the Grace.

**(20) The rubric about communion**

1549 The new married persons (the same day of their marriage) must receive the holy Communion.

1662/1926 It is convenient that the new married persons should receive Communion at the time of their Marriage, or at the first opportunity after their Marriage.

[2004 substitutes "appropriate" for "convenient"].

In the old manuals the Mass of the Holy Trinity concluded the Office, and there is no reason to suppose that it was ever omitted. The modification of the requirement to receive communion according to the Prayer Book Rite was a response to Puritan objections. However, the word "convenient" had here the sense of "fitting" or "appropriate" as is explicitly recognized in the 2004 service and it may well be considered that the Order is incomplete without it. "To end the public solemnity of marriage with receiving the blessed Sacrament, is a custom so religious and so holy, that if the Church of England be blameable in this respect, it is not for suffering it to be so much, but rather for not providing that it may be more put in use." Hooker, *Ecclesiastical Polity*, Bk.5, 73:8.

**(21) Holy Communion at the Time of a Marriage.** The provision of a Collect, Epistle and Gospel was a distinct feature of the 1926 Prayer Book and was not found in the previous Prayer Books from which the 1926 Book was derived. The readings here are those from the 1926 book but, as a further rubric indicates, the readings from the list on page 418 (Marriage Two) may be preferred.

The rubric indicating the procedure to be followed if there is an allegation or declaration of an impediment to the marriage is no longer relevant following the taking over of the legal process by the State and was deleted from the order of service by the General Synod of 2009. The legality of the marriage is secured by the addition of the following rubric,

*A couple must produce a Schedule of Marriage (NI) or a Marriage Registration Form (RI) to the officiating priest before a marriage can take place.*

It is helpful for the Schedule/Registration Form to be produced at the rehearsal at day or two before the wedding so that there is no danger of it being forgotten on the day of the wedding.

## **MARRIAGE TWO**

### **THE MARRIAGE SERVICE**

A revised marriage service was authorized for use by the General Synod in 1987 and incorporated into *Alternative Occasional Services* - a companion volume to the *Alternative Prayer Book* in 1993. Its contents were to a considerable extent drawn from the modern language order found in the Church of England's *Alternative Service Book 1980*, pp283-304. The current "Marriage Two" order draws on the Church of Ireland's 1987 order and has some similarities with (but is not identical to) that in the Church of England's *Common Worship: Pastoral Services*, Church House Publishing, 2000 and offers an alternative to the more traditional Marriage One.

#### **Differences from the Marriage One Service**

1. A more positive view of the nature of matrimony, with an emphasis on love and the joy of bodily union as well as the union of hearts and lives.
2. A difference order of priorities in the reasons for the existence of matrimony;
3. There is a more logical arrangement of the service in that the Ministry of the Word, entitled, "Proclaiming and Receiving the Word" together with the sermon preceded by the collect comes at the beginning of this order, immediately after the Introduction. This means that the significance of Christian marriage as scripturally understood can be read and expounded before the marriage actually takes place. However, as in the 1987-93 order it is still possible to have this after the marriage (in this case following the Affirmation by the People).
4. There is a comprehensive selection of readings from the Holy Scriptures allowing for an Old Testament Reading, Psalm, Epistle and Gospels.
5. Equality between the man and women in the form of the Consent and Vows. The word "obey" included as an option in the 1987/1993 rite has been removed.
6. There is no longer any provision for the "giving away" of the bride - which was included as an option in the 1987/1993 rite.
7. A prayer over the ring is included.
8. There is provision for what is now the general custom of having two rings, although the option of one only remains.
9. An Affirmation by the people included (a change from the 1987/1993 rite).
10. A comprehensive selection of prayers which may be led by members of the congregation (A rubric in Marriage One allows them to be used in that service).
11. The use of modern English throughout, including the Common Worship psalter.
12. Better provision for Holy Communion with the marriage rite using Holy Communion Two (or, as an option, Holy Communion One).

#### **NOTES**

These notes appear at the end of Marriage Two and apply to both rites. The material relating to allegation of an impediment, to banns, and to marriage by licence no longer applies since the alterations made in the marriage law in both jurisdictions.

1. As much notice as possible should be given to the minister of the parish to allow sufficient time for adequate pastoral preparation before marriage.

Ideally, the pastoral relationship is such that the officiating minister already knows at least one of the parties well. Formal preparation is difficult to arrange but both parties should be encouraged to come and see the officiant to discuss all the arrangements and begin the planning process. This provides an opportunity to go through the order of service from

beginning to end and explain not only the practical options but the Christian understanding of marriage embodied in the order of service, not least in the introduction, the consent, the vows, and the prayers. It is helpful if the officiant can keep in touch in the period between the initial contact and the actual wedding - which given need to plan the reception well in advance can often be as much as a year.

2. All readings in Proclaiming and Receiving the Word must be from Holy Scripture. These may be used where printed in the service or after the Affirmation by the People. At Holy Communion there are at least two readings, of which the Gospel must be one.

The requirement that all readings in this section must be from Holy Scripture is to prevent non-authorized and possibly inappropriate material being used. As mentioned above, it is highly preferable for this section to come at the beginning of the service so that God's Word may be read and preached in a manner relevant to the wedding before it actually takes place. It is not only at Holy Communion that it is highly desirable for there to be more than one reading and a psalm. The normal order should be deemed to be Old Testament, Psalm, and Gospel, or Epistle, Psalm and Gospel. Not more than one reading should be chosen from each of the three sections: Old Testament, Epistle and Gospel.

3 Hymns or canticles may be sung at suitable points during the service. Normally there is a hymn at the beginning (after the Entry) and at the end (before the Lord's Prayer and the Blessing) and a solo at the signing of the register, but other arrangements are possible including instrumental music at key points (which does not have to be confined to the Bridal March and the Wedding March) and solos or duets especially where some members of the congregation may be unfamiliar with hymn-singing.

4. The minister and the couple should together choose the readings, hymns, music and the prayers to be used in the service. If a Bible or New Testament is to be presented to the bride and bridegroom it is appropriate that this should be done before the readings.

Theologically speaking the ministers of the marriage are the couple themselves and this gives them a special role in the ordering of the service. It may well be that they may need guidance as to what may or may not be suitable and appropriate, particularly in the areas of music and hymns. But, as far as possible the officiant should help them to make choices which reflect what they want to say about their understanding of what will be their marriage. With regard to the Scripture readings it may be helpful for them to be encouraged to read through the recommended passages in their own time and then make their choice - it will be helpful if these could be presented to them in a printed out form, although they may wish to look through their own bibles. Similarly the couple should be encouraged to think about the meaning of the prayers and choose those which resonate with their own outlook and expectation. There are two choices to be made - whether to use the First (Litany) form, which is fixed or the Second (separate prayers) form and, if the latter is decided upon, which two or three prayers best express what they want to say about their marriage.

5. If Holy Communion is celebrated at the marriage, its reception should not be restricted to the bridal party. The congregation are not present as spectators but should understand their role as that of participants and this makes the affirmation a significant moment. Even more so, receiving Holy Communion along with the officiating priest, the bride and groom and the bridal party indicates that the links are not only social and relational but spiritual as well.

Having said this it is highly likely, if the Holy Communion is celebrated, that there will be some present who will be non-communicants, perhaps because their particular church allegiance makes this impossible, or because they have lapsed or their form of church membership is one in which the sacrament is not emphasized or because they feel awkward

and embarrassed with a form of eucharistic liturgy they are not familiar with or may not feel they are welcome at. Some indication that members of other Christian churches are welcome to communicate on the basis of our common baptism may be helpful but sensitivity also needs to be shown towards those who have difficulties or reservations. One partial solution is for those who would like to show their solidarity with the couple but do not feel able to communicate to be encouraged to come forward for a blessing, showing by crossing their arms that they do not wish to receive the elements. Some assistance in the administration may be helpful if there is likely to be a large number of communicants.

### **The Structure of the Service**

This comprises

The Entry

Greeting

The Collect

Proclaiming and Receiving the Word

Readings

The Sermon

The Marriage

The Consent

The Vows

Giving and Receiving of a Ring

The Declaration

The Blessing

Affirmation by the People

The Acclamations

The Prayers

First Form

or

Second Form

The Peace

[If there is Holy Communion]

Celebrating at the Lord's Table (or from the Sursum Corda in HC One)

At the Preparation of the Table

The Taking of the Bread and Wine

The Great Thanksgiving (with proper preface, as appropriate)

The Lord's Prayer

The Breaking of the Bread

The Communion

The Great Silence  
Going out as God's People  
Prayer after Communion  
Dismissal.  
[If there is no communion]  
The Lord's Prayer  
The Blessing

## COMMENTARY

### The Entry

A "greeting", from Ps 118:26, 136:1, specifically of the bridal or marriage party may take place prior to the "Greeting" of the congregation. This may take place in the porch or at the back of the Church. It is desirable for the officiating minister to proceed to the front of the Church prior to the commencement of the entrance of the bride.. He should not "lead in" the bride as it is her procession, not his.

The Bridal March is not the only appropriate music for the bride to enter by. However, care should be taken to ensure the suitability of any alternative and this also applies to the use of a hymn.

The first part of the marriage service takes place at the chancel step, if there is one, although this is not mandatory.

### Greeting

The Greeting proper consists of the Dominus Vobiscum ("The Lord be with you" with its response) and an optional sentence "God is love..." from 1 John 4:16. The sentence establishes the primacy of the thought of "love" which recurs time and again in this order - in the Introduction, the Consent and the Marriage Vows and the Prayers as well as in the Readings from Holy Scripture.

### The Introduction

This comprises the Preface, outlining the Christian doctrine of marriage and the Collect.

With regard to the Preface comparison with Marriage One shows a rather different order of priorities in the understanding of matrimony.

#### *Marriage One*

Increase of mankind  
and due ordering of families  
Hallowing of the union.  
Mutual society, help and comfort

#### *Marriage Two*

Unity in love.  
Comfort and help  
Joy of bodily union.  
Blessing through children  
New life in the community.

### **The Collect**

The role of the Collect is to gather up - “collect” the prayers of the people and may be introduced by a suitable bidding. This collect is to be taken as relating to the rite as a whole, but is nonspecific to marriage. In the Church of England’s *Common Worship* the Collect comes after the Declarations (inclusive of the Consent) and takes the form:

God our Father,  
from the beginning  
you have blessed creation with abundant life.  
Pour out your blessings upon N and N,  
that they may be joined in mutual love and companionship, in  
holiness and commitment to each other.  
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ your Son,  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

### **Proclaiming and Receiving the Word**

#### **Readings**

The rubric specifies “one or more readings from the Holy Scriptures”, although in the Notes at the end of the order of service it is stated that at Holy Communion there are at least two readings, of which the Gospel must be one. There is much to be said for the format at all marriage services of at least Old Testament, Psalm and Gospel *or* Epistle, Psalm and Gospel. There should not be two readings from any one section.

In choosing the readings (together with the officiating minister) it is helpful for the couple to be encouraged to go through them all in their own time and to pick those which seem to them best to represent what expresses what they wish to say about their own marriage. If they are unfamiliar with the scriptures it may be helpful to provide them with a set of fully printed out readings. The message of the various passages may be summarized as follows:

Genesis 1:26-28, 31a God created man in his own image; male and female he created them.

Song of Solomon 2:10-13; 8:6,7 “Many waters cannot quench love”

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 “For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven”.

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 “Two are better than one”

Jeremiah 31:31-34 “I will put my law within them, and I will write it upon their hearts”.

...

Psalm 67 “God be gracious to us and bless us”

Psalm 121 “The Lord shall keep watch over your going out and your coming in”. Psalm

127 “Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it build labour in vain” Psalm 128

“Blessed are all those who fear the Lord, and walk in his ways”

...

Romans 12:5-7, 13 “We, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.

1 Corinthians 13: St. Paul's hymn to love. So faith, hope, love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

Ephesians 3:14-21 that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have power to comprehend with all the saints ... and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Ephesians 4:1-6 "Forbearing one another in love."

Ephesians 5:21-33 "Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ".

Philippians 4:4-9 "Rejoice in the Lord always".

Colossians 3:12-17. Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness, and patience, forbearing one another ... And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts...

1 John 3:18-24 "Let us not love in word or speech but in deed and in truth."

1 John 4:7-12. "Beloved, let us love one another; for love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God."

...

Matthew 5:1-10 The Beatitudes

Matthew 7:21, 24-27 Building one's house on the rock. Mark

10: 6-9, 13-16 "God made them male and female" John 2:1-

11 The wedding feast at Cana of Galilee.

John 15:1-8 "Abide in me and I in you".

John 15: 9-17 "Abide in my love".

These readings for the most part correspond to those in the Church of England's *Common Worship: Pastoral Services* pp137-147, although with some omissions and alterations. The Romans 12 reading in *Common Worship* is superior: 12: 1, 2, 9-13. "I appeal to you ... to present your bodies as a living sacrifice. Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good. Never flag in zeal, be aglow with the Spirit, serve the Lord". This was the also reading in the 1987/AOS order of service. Among the psalms 128 is traditional, with its emphasis on the gift of children, and in Sarum (followed by the BCP up to and including the 1926 edition) accompanied the procession from the body of the Church to the altar. Cranmer provided Psalm 67 (which does not refer to children) as an alternative, to which 121 was added in 1987/AOS and appears here along with 127.

### **The Sermon**

The Sermon was optional in the 1987/AOS rite but here is to be regarded as an integral part of the rite. It should be brief and positive and to the point and normally should be based on one or other of the scripture readings chosen by the bride and groom. It is convenient that seats should be provided for the bridal party during the Ministry of the Word (including the readings



## The Marriage

The “requirement by law” to ask for a declaration of an impediment has been modified owing to changes in the marriage law in both the United Kingdom and in the Republic of Ireland and the wording of the marriage service at the relevant points has been amended by an act of the General Synod (2009). The service as amended is what must be used by the officiating minister. The two paragraphs in the *Book of Common Prayer* 2004 under the heading “The Marriage” have been deleted and the following substituted:

The minister may say to the couple:

God, the judge of all  
knows the secrets of our hearts;  
therefore if either of you knows any reason  
why you may not lawfully marry  
you must declare it now.

[RI] Unless the declarations of no civil impediment have already been made by the couple prior to the marriage in the presence of the Registered Solemniser and the two witnesses the bride and bridegroom each make the required declaration now.

I solemnly declare that I do not know of any civil impediment to my proposed marriage with...

### The Consent

The questions and answers here are designed to ascertain the readiness of the man and woman to make the actual marriage vows. The word “comfort” has the sense of “strengthen”, “fortify”. The form of the questions is identical for the bride and groom, unlike Marriage One where the option of a question to the woman with the word “obey” is still an option. The Church of England, in *Common Worship: Pastoral Services* both at this point and at the vows permits the bride’s part, if preferred, to come before the bridegroom’s.

### The Vows

The “giving away” of the bride no longer appears, since it seems to reflect ideas of ownership and control. On the other hand some may see the words as expression the “letting go” which is an aspect of a changed relationship. If the “giving away” is desired the words from Marriage One (with “giveth” instead of “gives”) are suitable. The Church of England, in *Common Worship: Pastoral Services* provides an optional alternative and may ask the parents of bride and bridegroom in the following or similar words:

N and N have declared their intention towards each other. As  
their parents,  
will you now entrust your son and daughter to one another as  
they come to be married?

**We will.**

The making of vows and the taking of the other’s right hand by each party are traditional elements of a legal form of conveyance: the contracting parties are named, the legal term “to have and to hold” is used, the limits are stated - “from this day forward ... till death us do part” - and the whole contract is subject to ecclesiastical law - “according to God’s holy law,<sup>1</sup> although the latter expression may refer to biblical revelation.

The form of the vows is the same for the man and the woman. In contrast to the 1987/AOS order where “obey” remained as an option (in brackets), the word does not appear in this form of the marriage service.

The bridegroom and bride face each other to make their vows; and they are not required to say the words “after the minister” as in Marriage One. This is an indication that the ministers of the marriage are, theologically speaking, the couple themselves. The priest and congregation are there as witnesses and in support of the couple, the role of the priest being to conduct the service and to bless the man and woman in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. However, if it is desired to say the words after the priest this may still be done, the alternative being to provide a printed out form held so that the bridegroom and then the bride may conveniently read them out.

### **Giving and Receiving of a Ring.**

1. One or two finicky objections at the time the 1987/AOS order was being prepared led to the omission of the words "by your blessing" from before "may this ring". There seems no reason why the minister, at his own discretion, may not replace them under Canon 6 (d) so that there is a blessing upon the use of the ring,

Heavenly Father, by your blessing  
may *this ring* be to ... and ...  
a symbol of unending love and  
faithfulness to remind them of the vow and  
covenant which they have made this day.

The use of the ring in marriage needs to be seen in the context of the general Christian use of rings, which includes,

- (1) **Early Christian rings.** In the third and fourth centuries, rings with Christian emblems seem to have been often worn in ordinary life.
- (2) **Episcopal rings.** Rings are first mentioned as an official part of a bishop's insignia of office in the early seventh century, and their use became general in the ninth and tenth centuries. They were emblematic of the bishop's betrothal to his church. Use in the Western church only they are worn on the third finger of the right hand.
- (3) **Nun's rings.** In many women's orders, for example the Benedictine and Cistercian, a ring is conferred at solemn profession.
- (4) **Wedding rings.** The ancient Roman custom was for the man to give a ring to the woman as a sign of betrothal; and by the ninth century this action was duplicated by the giving of a ring at the time of marriage. The giving of this second ring with the formula 'With this ring I thee wed' could be regarded as a sealing of the wedding contract. Down to the end of the sixteenth century the bride wore the ring on her right hand; since then it has been worn on the left hand. The custom of wearing it on the third finger is explained by the practice of pronouncing the Trinitarian formula over the thumb and first two fingers, so that the third was reached at the 'Amen' which sealed the marriage rite.
- (5) **The 'Fisherman's Ring'** This is a gold seal-ring which the cardinal camerlengo places on the finger of a new Pope. Engraved on it is St. Peter in a boat fishing (cf. Lk 5:10), with the Pope's name round it.
- (6) **The 'Coronation Ring'** in England placed by the Archbishop of Canterbury on the fourth finger of the Sovereign's right hand as 'the ensign of Kingly Dignity and of Defence of the Catholic Faith'.

The words used at the exchange of each ring begins with a statement of fact: "I give you this ring as a sign of our marriage" and then goes on to express a totality of commitment, including self-giving and sharing; and this is done in the name of the Triune God whose very Being is an expression of self-giving and eternal love.

### **The Declaration**

The word "ring" should be changed to "rings" where there are two (as is now normally the case).

The Declaration summarizes the liturgical steps that have been taken in words which emphasize the role of the couple as ministers of the marriage "in the presence of God and before this congregation",

Giving consent

Making vows

Joining hands and giving and receiving a ring (rings)

On the basis of this the pronouncement is made in the name of God that they are husband and wife. The strong word "pronounce" is used rather than the *Common Worship's* "proclaim".

"What God has joined together..." is a better translation than "those whom" as in the Marriage One. The underlying concept is of a bond being created rather than the joining of persons together. The joining of hands, which comes *after* the Declaration rather than *before* it as in Marriage One is a sign of this new reality.

### **The Blessing**

The blessing of the couple is highly significant and may be considered to constitute, in a sense, the *raison d'être* of the marriage service. It is regrettable that in this order and in the previous 1987/AOS service it is not made more of. Prior to a form of blessing similar to that in Marriage Two the following optional prayer occurs in the Church of England's *Common Worship: Pastoral Services*:

Blessed are you, O Lord our God,  
for you have created joy and gladness,  
pleasure and delight, love, peace and fellowship.  
Pour out the abundance of your blessing  
upon N and N in their new life together.  
Let their love for each other be a seal upon their hearts  
and a crown upon their heads.  
Bless them in their work and in their companionship;  
awake and asleep,  
in joy and in sorrow,  
in life and in death.  
Finally, in your mercy, bring them to that banquet where  
your saints feast for ever in your heavenly home. We ask  
this through Jesus Christ your Son, our Lord, who lives  
and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now  
and for ever. **Amen.**

Henry Everett, in Vol. 2 of *A Companion to Common Worship* says of this nuptial blessing that it is a new composition, cast in the Jewish *berakah* prayer form, with a substantial borrowing from the TEC rite (which it modifies to some extent). It follows TEC in using

imagery of love as a seal on the heart from Song of Solomon 8:7 and as a crown on the head from Isaiah 61:10. Mention of the crown recalls Orthodox rites.

There is an additional clause in the *Common Worship* blessing itself: “that you may please him both in body and soul...” Although the use of the prayer and the blessing highlights the significance of this act it is hard to avoid the impression that in *CW* the blessing itself is being duplicated and this is not fully satisfactory. Alternative forms of the blessing are to be found in the Supplementary texts in *CW (Pastoral Services p.152f)*, of varied length some of which are in responsorial form. The final section, he says, improves on ECUSA by using “banquet” rather than “table” and makes a pleasing eucharistic and eschatological connection.

There is nothing in *CW*, however, corresponding to the (optional) prayer said together by the newly-married couple after the blessing in Marriage Two, “O God our Father, we thank you for uniting our lives...”

For a thorough review of the history of the marriage rite with particular emphasis upon the blessing itself, see Kenneth Stevenson, *Nuptial Blessing - A Study of Christian Marriage Rites*, Alcuin Club/SPCK, 1982.

### **Affirmation by the People**

This feature underlines the presence of the family and friends as more than spectators. They are supporters and encouragers of the marriage.

### **The Acclamations**

In the Church of England’s *Common Worship: Pastoral Services* these acclamations are appointed for optional use after any of the alternative blessings or on their own. This would seem a more logical place than its current situation in Marriage Two after the Affirmation by the People. The same point was made in an earlier edition of these course notes in relation to the 1987/AOS rite.

### **Registration of the Marriage**

It is stated that the registration may take place at this point in the church or at the end of the service (when it may take place either in the church or in the vestry). Much depends on local tradition and on the geography of the building. If the registration is to take place in the church the schedule (N.I.) and the church marriage register should be placed on a suitable table with a chair for the bride at a convenient place, and the register should be filled in as far as possible. The signing should take place quietly and efficiently and with the minimum of disturbance and fuss. Photographers should be kept from intruding on the ceremony (they can take a photograph of the couple at the table at their leisure after the service and the congregation may have to be discreetly encouraged to keep silent and not to hold conversations whilst the signing is taking place. If there is instrumental music or a solo they can be invited to remain quietly seated and listen. If the signing is to take place in the vestry after the service there are fewer constraints and, usually, more time, but it needs to be done with a due awareness of its significance. The schedule (N.I.) should be given to a responsible person with a warning that it is a legal requirement for it to be returned to the Registrar within three days.

The rubric “a psalm or hymn may be sung” can be interpreted liberally, but the officiating minister does have a responsibility to ensure that anything played or sung at a wedding is suited to the occasion.

## **THE PRAYERS**

It is assumed that there has been a procession from the chancel step to the sanctuary step which, if the registration has not taken place at this point could occur during the hymn.

In choosing prayers the couple have to make a decision whether to ask for the first form which is essentially fixed and is a Litany, or the second form, which consists of a number of separate prayers from which a selection or perhaps two or three may be picked. What is provided here (including a prayer which may be said by the couple) is more than adequate but if additional prayers need to be looked at there is a comprehensive selection in *Common Worship: Pastoral Services* pp 112-13, 156-168.

### **The Peace**

It is not clear why the Peace is included if there is to be no communion. It would seem sufficient to have a final hymn followed by the Lord's Prayer and either the Grace or a Trinitarian blessing of the congregation. However, if there is to be communion it is highly appropriate to have the Peace together with the sentence from John 13:14. Holy Communion begins at Celebrating at the Lord's Table (on page 208) or if Holy Communion One is to be used at the Sursum Corda. A proper preface is provided for use with Eucharistic Prayer One in Holy Communion Two. At the Communion the newly-married should receive immediately after the presiding minister together with others most closely involved and then the guests in general. Seats should be provided for the newly-married to sit together after they have received (the place where they have been seated during the Ministry of the Word may suit). The service should conclude with the Trinitarian blessing.

There seems no reason why the extended preface to be found in *Common Worship: Pastoral Services* p.130 can not be used with Eucharistic Prayer One taking the place of everything from "Father, almighty and everliving God" to "for ever praising you and saying",

All glory, honour, thanks and praise  
be given to you, creator of heaven and earth.  
When you made us in your image,  
creating us male and female,  
you gave us the gift of marriage.  
When sin marred that image  
you healed our brokenness,  
giving your Son to die for us.  
Therefore we raise our voices,  
with all who have served you in every age, to  
proclaim the glory of your name:

### **The Lord's Prayer and the Blessing**

If there is Holy Communion the Lord's Prayer comes in its customary place and similarly the blessing of the congregation. If there is no communion it follows here and the service concludes with either the Grace or a blessing of the congregation, "God the Holy Trinity...".

### **Amended Rubrics**

To bring the order of service into line with the provisions of secular law in both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland the contents of pp429-30 were deleted by an act of the General Synod in May 2009. The following rubric was inserted,

*A couple must produce a Schedule of Marriage (NI) or a Marriage Registration Form (RI) to the officiating priest before a marriage can take place.*

It is helpful if these are produced at the rehearsal a day or two before the wedding to avoid any possibility of the Schedule/Marriage Registration Form being forgotten.

## **Some Practical Aspects**

### **(1) The legal requirements**

The whole legal side of the marriage arrangements has been taken over by the state in both jurisdictions. In Northern Ireland the officiating minister has to sign a form stating his willingness to conduct the wedding and this must be arranged. It is prudent to arrange for the "schedule" (N.I.) which allows the marriage to occur to be delivered to the officiating minister at the rehearsal and avoiding any possibility of its being forgotten on the day of the wedding.

### **(2) Rehearsal**

It is probably advisable to arrange this at the time that the date of the wedding is fixed - usually on an evening a day or two before the wedding itself. This takes place in the Church and involves a "dry run" through the wedding with an opportunity for questions about details. This should not last longer than half an hour.

### **(3) Punctuality**

Some brides arrive very late. This may be through no fault of their own (there have been cases where taxis have failed to turn up!) but it may also happen through carelessness, and there is even, very occasionally, an element of "showing off". The best approach is probably to represent to them tactfully at the rehearsal stage that arriving as near as possible to the stated time is a courtesy to one's guests. The same consideration applies to the grooms, although it is more unusual for them to be behind time. It may be suggested that they not only arrive well before the stated time, but that they have their photography finished and be seated with the best man in their seat at the front right-hand side about ten minutes before the wedding is due to begin.

### **(4) Orders of Service.**

Most couples have these printed. To encourage participation by the congregation not only the two hymns should be printed but the psalm and other congregational parts (such as the versicles and responses in the Marriage One Order and the Acclamations in the Marriage Two) should be reproduced. As copies of these will be need by the bride and groom, best man, bridesmaids, and (for convenience) the officiating clergy, one should ask that the ushers leave a sufficient number of copies on the altar to be handed out during the service as required. The bride and groom customarily share one copy.

Some clergy keep the whole service on disk and insert the variable parts (including hymns, readings, etc.) for the particular marriage. There is much to be said for printing out the entire service in booklet form (a printer can put on an attractive cover if the couple are not able to do this themselves) and enabling the congregation to follow it all including the readings. Where this is done care needs to be taken not to infringe regulations about copyright.

### **(5) Photographers/videos**

Policy among clergy varies considerably. If there is to be a video of the wedding the operator(s) should be placed as discreetly and inconspicuously as possible to one side and should not be allowed to wander about during the service. This also applies to photographers. A picture from the gallery (if there is one) is probably not too obtrusive, but at all costs one would wish to avoid someone walking around the chancel and leaning over to take shots of the putting on the ring etc. Most photographers are courteous and cooperative, but one meets the occasional "rogue" member of the profession who will take advantage of the goodwill of the clergy.

**(6) Before the service.**

It may be convenient for the officiating minister to wait in the Vestry. If so, one of the ushers should be asked to let him or her know when the bride has arrived. The minister should then go to a convenient place at the front of the Church (reading desk if at the chancel step, seat at north side of altar if in the sanctuary of a small church) to wait for the bride's entry. Some system of communication with the organist is desirable to let him or her know when to begin the bridal march. If there is an inner door into the church, opening this fully (both sides of a double door) by an usher is a useful signal that the bride is ready to come in. The groom and the best man will have been instructed to come forward when the bridal march (or its equivalent) begins. If need be, this can be encouraged by a nod of the head. As mentioned above the clergy should not "lead in" the bride.

**(7) Disposition of wedding party.**

Groom stands to right of bride, both of them at the center of the step, best man (& groom's man) to the right of the groom. Bride's father, having brought the bride to the step goes out to the end of the row leaving room for bridesmaid(s). Whether some bridesmaids, flower girls etc. stand in a row with the bride and groom or behind them depends on the layout of the Church and on personal preference. The principal bridesmaid should take charge of the bouquet during the service. The bride's father (or whoever is "giving away" the bride) remains at the front until he has performed his function, and then retires to sit on the north side of the Nave.

**(8) Directions by Officiating Minister.**

At each stage of the service the officiating minister may give quiet directions to kneel, stand, repeat the words etc. so that the bride and groom may know what is required of them. It is advisable to practice the taking of the partner's hand (as in a handshake) and kneeling (some non-Anglicans may not know how to kneel upright and may sit on their heels if not otherwise directed!)

**(9) Combination of the Marriage Service with Holy Communion.**

As this will produce a service that is too long for the bridal party to remain standing, seats should be provided in a convenient place. The bride and groom make their communion immediately after the celebrant (and any assistants) and are followed by the best man, bridesmaids and other members of the bridal party.

**(10) Posture/Deportment etc.**

At each stage in the service the officiant may indicate quietly to the couple to stand, kneel, or sit. If one of the parties to the marriage is a member of a non-episcopal Church and is unfamiliar with kneeling he or she should be rehearsed to do it properly and with dignity (i.e. upright and not "squatting" on the heel). The officiant should set an example of dignity, for example, walking slowly (and not "cutting corners") and knowing how to stand still.

**(11) Liturgical Colour.** The appropriate liturgical colour is white; and the priest should wear a white stole together with cassock and surplice (unless a scarf and hood are preferred). A cassock-alb would be appropriate if the Holy Communion is to be celebrated. A problem arises whenever a wedding takes place at anything other than a festive season. Probably the Church should retain purple for frontals, pulpit falls, book markers etc. during the penitential seasons of Advent and Lent, arrangements for the "green" period of the year being at the discretion of the officiant.

**(12) Participation by clergy/ministers of other denominations not in communion with the Church of Ireland.**

This is governed by Canon 10.

**10. Visiting ministers of Churches not in communion with the Church of Ireland.**

A minister or accredited preacher of such Christian denominations not in full communion with the Church as may from time to time be specified by the House of Bishops may, in such circumstances as may from time to time be prescribed by the House, and with the permission of the ordinary, which permission shall be without prejudice to the normal maintenance of the recognized rules of church order,

- (a) deliver an address in any church or cathedral at any service,
- (b) read the service of Morning or Evening Prayer or any other service (other than the Holy Communion authorized under Canon 5 (1) (or such parts thereof as the ordinary may decide) either jointly with, or in the absence of, a minister of the Church of Ireland or a reader authorized by the bishop.

The ordinary shall satisfy himself, before giving such permission, that the Participation of such visiting minister is acceptable to the incumbent and the churchwardens (if any) of any church concerned, and that it is not contrary to any provision of the civil law.

The permission of the ordinary is nowadays presumed for the assistance of members of mainline churches such as the Presbyterian or Methodist (or wherever this is acceptable, Roman Catholic), but in any case of doubt the bishop or other ordinary should be consulted. The final words of the canon are very important since the marriage service must be performed "according to the rites and ceremonies of the Church of Ireland". These would seem to imply that the essential parts of the service (from the **Consent** to the **Blessing**) must be performed by a Church of Ireland clergyman (or woman) and that the marriage might not be deemed valid if these parts were to be performed by the minister of any other denomination in a Church of Ireland Church. The parts of the service that are normally shared are the Preface, a Scripture reading and/or the Prayers.

**(13) Filling in the register.**

This must be done carefully and in full. It is in order for the register to be filled in prior to the wedding except for the signatures of the officiating clergyman and the bride and bridegroom and their two witnesses. The church register is no longer the official record of the wedding, which is contained in the schedule returned to the Registrar but it contains the church's own information about the wedding.



## **The Thanksgiving of Women after Child-Birth Commonly called The Churching of Women**

This rite does not appear in the 2004 edition of the Book of Common Prayer, but has not been repealed and so remains an authorized service of the Church of Ireland. The text may be found in the 1926 edition of the Prayer Book.

The title in Sarum was *Ordo ad Purificandum Mulierum Post Partum ante Ostium Ecclesiae* - The Order for the Purification of Women after childbirth before the church door. In 1549 this became *The Order for the Purification of Women*. In 1552 the title was altered to *The Thanksgiving of Women after Childbirth, commonly called the Churching of Women*, and this was retained in 1662 and passed into the Irish Prayer Books of 1878 and 1926. The concept of "Purification", derived from scriptural antitypes (Luke 2:22ff //Lev. 12:2-6) no longer appeared, since it was at no time in the text of the service, but it lingered on in popular understanding. The rite is ancient, being mentioned in a letter of St. Augustine of Canterbury to St. Gregory the Great (A.D. 601).

The rite appeared after the Burial of the Dead in Prayer Books up to and including the Irish Prayer Book of 1878, and was moved into its present more logical position following the Solemnization of Matrimony in 1926.

In his classic commentary *A Rational Illustration of the Book of Common Prayer of the Church of England*, Charles Wheatley (1686-1724) had this to say,

As to the original of this custom, it is not to be doubted, but that as many other Christian usages received their rise from other parts of the Jewish economy, so did this from the rite of Purification, which is enjoined so particularly in the twelfth chapter of Leviticus. Not that we observe it by virtue of that precept, which we grant to have been ceremonial, and so not now of any force; but because we apprehend some moral duty to have been implied in it by way of analogy, which must be obligatory upon all, even when the ceremony is ceased. The uncleanness of the woman, the set number of days she is to abstain from the tabernacle, and the sacrifices she was to offer when she first came abroad, are rites wholly abolished, and what we now regard: but then the open and solemn acknowledgement of God's goodness in delivering the mother, and increasing the number of mankind, is a duty that will oblige to the end of the world. And therefore though the mother be now no longer obliged to offer the material sacrifices of the law, yet she is nevertheless bound to offer the evangelical sacrifice of praise. She is still publicly to acknowledge the blessing vouchsafed her, and to profess her sense of the fresh obligation it lays her under to obedience...

The structure of the rite is,

- Preface
- Psalm (116 or 127)
- Lesser
- Litany
- Lord's
- Prayer
- Versicles and Responses
- Collect

Blessing.

It may be noticed that no mention of the husband is made in this rite except in Psalm 127.

### **Commentary**

The woman is instructed to come into the church "at the usual time after her delivery", but this is not defined. In medieval times the rite took place "before the door" with the attendant symbolism of readmission to the church, but from 1549 the rite has taken place within the church. 1549 referred to the "choir door" as the place where it was to occur, the direction in 1552 being "nigh unto the Table". A churching stool or form was provided in some places. She is to come "decently apparelled", a reference to the woman wearing a white veil, an ancient custom which was enforced by law in the reign of James 1 and was still widely observed in the late seventeenth century. Bishop Wren's orders and injunctions for the diocese of Norwich, in 1636, enjoin, "That women to be churched come and kneel at a side near the communion table without the rail, being veiled according to the custom, and not covered with a hat; or otherwise not to be churched..." The Irish Prayer Books of 1878 and 1926 follow 1662 in directing woman to kneel down "in such place and at such time, as hath been accustomed, or as the Ordinary shall direct."

The Preface indicates the purpose of the rite in words which reflect the real dangers of childbirth in the pre-modern age,

Forasmuch as it hath pleased Almighty God of his goodness to give you safe deliverance, and to preserve you in the great danger of Child-birth; you shall therefore give hearty thanks unto God, and say,

Psalm 121 was prescribed in 1549 and 1552, and this was altered to Psalm 116 in 1662 (with Psalm 127 as an alternative).

The versicles and responses come from Sarum.

The prayer is based on a collect in Sarum. The element of thanksgiving "we give thee humble thanks for that thou hast vouchsafed..." was added in 1662.

The blessing was added in the Irish Prayer Book of 1878 and retained in 1926.

The concluding rubric prescribes "accustomed offerings" and also mentions the Eucharist, "and if there be a Communion, it is convenient that she receive the Holy Communion". The churching of women therefore, has properly a eucharistic context.

## THANKSGIVING AFTER THE BIRTH OF A CHILD THANKSGIVING AFTER ADOPTION.

This order is intended as a replacement for the Churching of Women (but see above on the status of the 1926 order of service). The emphasis is on the thanksgiving of both parents for the safety of the mother in giving birth to the child and for the life of the newborn baby. A single order is provided for birth and adoption but with suitable variation, the prayer “after the birth” giving thanks “for the life of this child, for a safe delivery, and for the privilege of parenthood” and that “after adoption” being “for the life of this child, for his/her adoption into our family, and for the privilege of parenthood”. When used after the birth of a child it is deemed most appropriate to be held in hospital or in the home. The rubric emphasizes that it is in no way a substitute for the sacrament of baptism, indicating that no support is being given to the concept of having a “thanksgiving” service after birth and postponing or even ignoring altogether the sacrament of the new birth. The thanksgiving after adoption may be used in the home, or, if the child has already been baptized, the suggestion is made that it provides an opportunity for receiving him or her into the life of the parish and may be used at Holy Communion or at Morning or Evening Prayer. It must not be used before the official Adoption Order has been made.

The prayer of thanksgiving (said by both parents) is followed by a prayer in which the minister asks God to bless the parents that they may cherish their child and be wise and understanding to help *him* as *he* grows. Suitable psalm verses are followed by suggested readings and a choice of prayers. If the child has not been baptized the prayer is made, “that in faith *he* may be received by baptism into the family of (the) Church and become an inheritor of (the) kingdom”. The Lord’s Prayer is followed by scriptural verses from St Luke’s Gospel (the Magnificat) and Revelation, and the service concludes with a blessing.

In many cases the prayers that are offered in the hospital ward are informal and it may not be practical to have an actual order of service. However, this service provides resources that might be drawn upon even in an informal ministrations. A prayer for the baptismal service (p.369) which may also be found suitable is,

Almighty God,  
bless the home of this *child*  
and give such grace and wisdom to all who have the care of *him*,  
that by their word and good example  
they may teach *him* to know and love you;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

[NB the notes on these two orders of service are reproduced from the Commentary on Christian Initiation]

## **A FORM OF PRAYER AND DEDICATION AFTER A CIVIL MARRIAGE**

The provision of legislation to permit the remarriage of divorced persons in church has reduced the use of this order, which for a long time was the only option for people in this category. However, there still is a need for an order for those whose marriages or remarriages have been of a civil character and who wish to add an explicitly Christian dimension to their union.

The married couple enter the church together since they are man and wife. The order of service commences with the greeting.

### **Introduction**

The sentences comprise 1 John 4:6 “God is love” as in the marriage service and Ps 127:1 “Unless the Lord builds the house”

The Introduction (which is drawn from *Common Worship: Pastoral Offices* but adapted for the Church of Ireland) is a mixture of that from the marriage service - which may be used in an abbreviated form or in full - together with a preliminary paragraph and a conclusion which are specific to the occasion.

.... and .... you stand in the presence of God as husband and wife to dedicate to him your life together, that he may consecrate your marriage and empower you to keep the covenant and promise you have solemnly declared.

You now wish to affirm your desire to live together as followers of Christ, and you have come to him, the fountain of grace, that strengthened by the prayers of the Church, you may be enabled to fulfil your marriage vows in love and faithfulness.

### **The Collect**

The Collect is that of the marriage service.

### **Proclaiming and Receiving the Word**

This takes the same format as the corresponding section in the marriage service including the provision of two readings, of which the final one is the Gospel if there is Holy Communion. A Sermon is included.

### **The Dedication**

This comprises an exposition of the Church’s understanding of marriage to which the husband and wife are asked to assent, followed by questions derived from the marriage service - in the form of “will you continue to” addressed first to the husband and then to the wife. The husband and wife may then be asked to join their wedding-ring hands and the symbolism of the rings is expressed. The congregation are asked to affirm their continuing to support the couple in their marriage and the husband and wife say together a prayer of dedication:

Heavenly Father,  
we offer you our souls and bodies,  
our thoughts and words and deeds,  
our love for one another.  
Unite our wills in your will,  
that we may grow together  
in love and peace  
all the days of our life;

through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

A prayer for perseverance follows followed by the Aaronic blessing.

**Prayers**

The prayers are those from the marriage service without the final one (said by the couple together).

From the Peace to the conclusion of the rite the Holy Communion service is identical to that used in the marriage rite. If there is no celebration of the Holy Communion the service concludes with the Lord's Prayer and the Grace.

Notes to the text indicate that the service is used at the discretion of the minister and it is defined as one in which the couple, already married, wish to dedicate to God their life together. Because it is not a marriage service, no entry is made in the register of marriages and in the course of the service no ring is given or received. All readings must be from Holy Scripture. The minister and the couple together choose the readings, hymns, music and prayers to be used. If there is Holy Communion all communicants should be free to receive.

In *Common Worship: Pastoral Services* it is suggested that at the entrance of the couple Husband and wife should enter the church together without ceremony and sit together at the front of the church. Other prayers may be used, especially when they form part of the particular Christian tradition of the husband or wife. When the service is not led by a priest the Grace is used instead of the blessing. *Common Worship* insists on Prayers of Penitence at the beginning of the rite.

## **A p p e n d i x A**

### **The Remarriage of Divorced Persons in Church**

Canon 31. The Solemnization of marriages.

1. The Church of Ireland affirms, according to our Lord's teaching that marriage is in its purpose a union permanent and lifelong, for better or worse, till death do them part, of one man with one woman, to the exclusion of all others on either side, for the procreation and nurture of children, for the hallowing and right direction of the natural instincts and affections, and for the mutual society, help and comfort which the one ought to have of the other, both in prosperity and adversity.

2. No clergyman shall agree to solemnize a marriage between parties who are within the degrees expressed in the table set forth in the Book of Common Prayer or any table which may be prescribed.

3. [a] When any clergyman is approached with a view to solemnizing a marriage between parties either of whom has been party to a ceremony of marriage with another person still living he shall, if he is unwilling to perform the ceremony, so inform the parties immediately.

a No clergyman shall agree to solemnize a marriage between parties either of whom has been a party to a ceremony of marriage with another person still living unless he has first sought from the bishop his opinion as to the advisability of solemnizing the marriage of the couple concerned.

b The clergyman shall consider and take into account the opinion of the bishop in exercising the discretion, vested in him by law, as to whether or not he should solemnize the marriage concerned.

4. It shall be the duty of the clergyman to make available to the bishop, in such a form as may be prescribed by regulation, all the information, in so far as he shall obtain it, which shall the bishop shall require to enable him to form an opinion.

5. The bishop shall be entitled to seek and take into account such pastoral or other advice from such persons and in such manner as may think fit. He shall at least consult, and take into account, the advice of the incumbent of the parishes to which either of the parties to the proposed remarriage belongs, and also the incumbent of the parish in which it is proposed to conduct the ceremony of remarriage. The advice of such person or persons shall be confidential to the bishop.

6. The bishop shall as soon as practicable communicate his opinion to the clergyman. In cases where a decree of nullity has been granted on grounds acceptable to the Church of Ireland, he shall declare that the applicant is ipso facto free to marry in church. In other cases, in which he shall give a favourable judgement, he shall prescribe that the clergyman conduct a private service of preparation for remarriage in church with the parties involved (in such a form as may be provided by regulation) before the solemnization of matrimony may take place.

[Statute Chapter 1 of the General Synod of 1996, *Journal of the General Synod of 1996* pp cxxxvii, cxxxviii]

## R E G U L A T I O N S

approved by the General Synod 1996 as required by Canon 31

A. It shall be the duty of every clergyman to whom application is made for a marriage to be solemnized to ascertain the marital status and history of both parties desiring to be married.

B. Nothing in the following Regulations is intended to deprive any clergyman of his freedom to decline to solemnize any marriage for reasons of conscience. In such cases the clergyman shall refer the couple to the archdeacon.

C. Where either of the parties to the intended marriage or the previous marriage is the parent, child, grandchild, brother, sister, nephew or niece of the clergyman who has been approached or of the spouse of that clergyman, he shall inform the bishop of the approach and of the relationship. The bishop shall appoint another clergyman, who is willing to act, to carry out in place of the clergyman who has been approached the duty prescribed in Section 4 of Canon 31.

D. In every case where either of the parties has participated in a ceremony of marriage with a person who is still living, the clergyman shall enquire about the following:

### (1) **Marital Status:**

He shall first enquire as to whether they are legally free to marry by virtue of either a civil annulment or a civil divorce. In the case of divorce he shall require the couple to consult the Registrar General of the jurisdiction in which they intend to be married as to their legal capacity to marry. Save in exceptional circumstances an application after a second divorce shall not be considered.

### (1) **Further Information**

He shall enquire about

- (a) evidence in the parties of an appreciation of the Church of Ireland teaching about the nature of marriage and its lifelong intent;
- (b) the present connection of the applicant(s) with the Church of Ireland;
- (c) the grounds on which the annulment or divorce was granted;
- (d) evidence that adequate and proper provision has been made for any previous partner and for children, if any;
- (e) whether due efforts towards reconciliation were made before separation proceedings began;
- (f) whether the applicants have a firm intention to sustain their proposed union with the help of God and the Church.

### E. **Procedure**

Having ascertained the information listed above, the clergyman shall refer the matter to the bishop. In so doing he shall state whether or not he supports the application, with his reasons, and whether he is satisfied with the couple's understanding of, and commitment to, the Church's teaching on marriage. He shall further state whether he is willing to perform the ceremony himself.

*The Service of Preparation for Remarriage in Church* shall be held in the church in the presence of both parties. It may be extended, or form part of another service (such as

Holy Communion), or, on the advice of the bishop, be amended in such manner as to make it appropriate to particular circumstances.

**The Service of Preparation for Remarriage in Church** consists of

**INTRODUCTION**

Sentence

Questions and commitments

**THE COLLECT**

**THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD**

Psalm or Te Deum, part 3

Epistle or Gospel (the latter obligatory if here is Holy Communion)

**PENITENCE**

Sentence

Short exhortation

Confession

Absolution

**PRAYERS**

One or more of the three prayers  
given may be said

Lord's Prayer (optional)

The Grace (optional)



## **MINISTRY TO THOSE WHO ARE SICK**

### **The Canonical Position**

Canon 30, “Ministers to visit the people in their cures” says,

(1) The minister or curate shall visit from time to time all those in his cure for such exercise of his ministry as may be found fitting and convenient.

(2) When the minister or curate shall hear that any persons in his cure are dangerously sick, he shall visit them (even though they have not previously resorted to the church) to instruct and comfort them in their distress according to the order of the Book of Common Prayer or otherwise as he shall think suitable.

In practice the pastoral role of the rector or curate assistant in relation to those who are sick is much more extensive than these bare canonical requirements imply. Parishioners should be encouraged to let the clergy know about any sickness in the parish; and those who are in hospital must be visited, if possible.<sup>1</sup> Those who are chronically ill and the elderly should be offered communion, at the very least twice in the year (at Christmas and Easter), perhaps four times if this is practicable; and there may be some who will appreciate the opportunity for a monthly communion.

Notification of clergy by hospital chaplains has been made much more difficult in some cases through the application of EC rules about confidentiality. This makes it all the more important for parishioners to tell the clergy about any relatives who are in hospital.

The canon refers to ministry according to the Book of Common Prayer or “otherwise as he shall think suitable”, giving a wide discretion to the officiating minister who should, however, pay due attention to what is liturgically provided and specifically authorized by authority of the General Synod.

### **The status of "Ministry to those who are sick"**

This part of the 2004 Prayer Book replaces “The Order for the Visitation of the Sick” Prayer Book of 1926 and also the provision in Alternative Occasional Services 1993, itself based on an experimental order of 1985. Some material from the Visitation from the Sick, although formally replaced, is still of value and may be used under Canon 5(d):

It shall be lawful to use in the course of or before or after any public office of the Church

(d) any prayer or hymn not containing substantial variations from the practice of, nor contrary to the doctrine of the Church as the minister may consider to be required by current circumstances; but the provisions of Canon 5(3) and (4) shall apply to all such prayers and hymns

Canon 5(3) and (4) states

All variations in forms of service and all forms of service used or made under the provisions of this canon shall be reverent and seemly and shall be neither contrary to nor indicative of any departure from the doctrine of the Church.

If any question is raised concerning any such variation, or as to whether it is “of substantial importance”, the same shall be referred to the bishop in order that he may give such pastoral guidance, advice or directions as he may think fit, but with prejudice to the right of any person to initiate proceedings in any ecclesiastical tribunal.

### **The theological understanding of ministry to those who are sick**

The restoration of the Church's Ministry of Healing in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries together with the role of healing ministry in Charismatic Renewal in the latter part of this period, has had a considerable influence upon the manner in which such ministry is approached and this is reflected in the liturgical provision in the 2004 edition of the Book of Common Prayer. However, even before these developments came to be widely influential some rethinking of the theology embedded in the earliest editions of the Prayer Book was already evident. The Order for the Visitation of the Sick in the 1926 book placed considerably less emphasis upon suffering as a visitation from God<sup>1</sup> although sickness was still seen as a means by which He "corrects" his children.

<sup>1</sup>Exhortation, 1549, 1552, 1662, "Wherefore, whatsoever your sickness is, know you certainly, that it is God's visitation" <sup>2</sup>Exhortation, 1926, "Our heavenly Father, in his love for all men uses sickness as a gracious means whereby to *correct* his children."

A positive approach is seen throughout the provision in the 2004 Prayer Book. For example, the pre-Sanctus in the Eucharistic Prayer (p.443-4) lays stress on the goodness of God in creation and redemption,

We give you thanks, our God and Father,  
for you have created us and you sustain us.  
Through your only Son Jesus Christ  
you have revealed your love and your care for all your people; you  
are ready to forgive and to save in time of need; so we proclaim  
your glory...

In the provision for the Laying on of Hands on p.447 it is made clear that the purpose for this is for healing, both in the rubric and in the accompanying prayer, and the example of the healing ministry of Christ is explicitly referred to,

In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ  
who laid his hands on the sick  
that they might be healed,  
I lay my hands upon you...  
May almighty God,  
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit  
make you whole in body, mind and spirit,  
give you light and peace,  
and keep you in eternal life. **Amen.**

Similarly in the form on p.448 for Anointing with Oil, the form of consecration says, "sanctify this oil for the healing of the sick" and prays that those who received this ministry may, "by the power of the Holy Spirit be made whole". The scripture passage chosen is that from the Epistle of James which refers to the elders of the church praying over the sick person, anointing him with oil in the Name of the Lord; "and the prayer of faith will save the sick man, and the Lord will raise him up, and if he has committed any sins he will be forgiven."

And the minister says that in continuing this ministry with the laying on of hands and anointing the prayer will be that the Lord "will grant healing and restoration and forgiveness according to his loving and gracious will.

That it is the whole person that is being ministered to is emphasized in the concluding prayer in this section where it says, "As you are outwardly anointed with this oil so may our heavenly Father grant you the inward anointing of the Holy Spirit; of his great mercy release you from suffering, and restore you to wholeness and strength..."

All of the section of Prayers on pp450-453 are positive in tone, including as they do the invocation of Christ in a verse from St Patrick's breastplate and such familiar prayers as "God be in my head...".

The headings in the selection of Readings gives the flavour of their content,

Penitence, Prayer, Thanksgiving, God's Promises, God's Love, the Beatitudes, the Comforter, the True Vine.

The section on Preparation for Death is also positive as in the prayer to Christ "Set your passion, cross and death between your judgement and us as we entrust ... to you. We pray you to free us all from the pains of death and from the wounds of sin; that death may be the gate to life and to unending fellowship with you...

An alternative approach to healing ministry in the magnificent service, "A Celebration of Wholeness and Healing" also emphasizes the positive dimension of healing ministry. For example, in the Prayers of Intercession it says,

Lord, grant your healing grace to all  
who are sick, injured or disabled, that  
they may be made whole.

At the Laying on of Hands and Anointing it refers to Christ as the anointed Son who brings healing to those in weakness and distress:

He broke the power of evil and set us free from sin and death  
that we might become partakers of his glory. His  
apostles anointed the sick in your name bringing  
wholeness and joy to a broken world. By your  
grace renewed each day  
you continue the gifts of healing in your Church  
that your people may praise your name for ever.

At the laying on of hands the following or other suitable words are used:

In the name of God and trusting in his might alone  
receive Christ's healing touch to make you whole.

May Christ bring you wholeness of body, mind and spirit,  
deliver you from every evil,  
and give you his peace. **Amen.**

## COMMENTARY

The first part of the liturgical provision for "Ministry to those who are sick"<sup>1</sup> is an improved version of the 1985 experimental order "Ministry to the Sick" as finalized in 1992 and incorporated into *Alternative Occasional Services* the following year. The remaining part, "A Celebration of Wholeness and Healing" is derived from a service of the same title in the Church of England order *Common Worship: Pastoral Services* pp 13ff but adapted for Church of Ireland use (for example in the eucharistic prayer). In *Common Worship* it is described as "especially suitable for a diocesan or deanery occasion" and it is certainly suitable for diocesan healing services such as those held quarterly in the Diocese of Armagh. However, it is also suitable for healing services in church at parish level.

<sup>1</sup>The title "Ministry to those who are sick" resulted from an amendment put down at the General Synod by Canon John McKegney who felt that "Ministry to the Sick" was too abrupt and negative in character.

The 1985 form suffered from a certain lack of clarity as to whether it was a collection of resources or an actual order of service. If the latter it would have been very difficult to

follow. The contents in the 2004 Prayer Book from pp441-453 are best looked on as resource material to be drawn upon as required by particular pastoral situations. Other material authorized from time to time may be added to what is provided here, especially the form for extended communion approved by the House of Bishops for seven years under the experimental services legislation.

## NOTES

The Notes are very important as setting forth the basic principles embodied in the forms contained in “Ministry to those who are sick” as well as indicating norms and requirements of pastoral practice.

*1. MEANS OF GRACE. The Lord has provided means of grace by which he touches his people with his healing love and power. These include the Scriptures, prayer, Holy Communion, the laying on of hands and anointing with oil. In administering these means of grace, the church works alongside the medical profession in continuing Christ’s healing ministry.*

There is nothing magical or automatic about the means of grace which encompass a wide variety of manners in which the Lord ministers to his people in the totality of their being, body, mind and spirit. The church’s ministry of healing is far removed from what is sometimes called “faith healing” which exalts the individual healer and has been known to blame people for a supposed lack of faith when they are not healed in some immediate and obvious manner. Nor is it supposed that this ministry is in any sense in opposition to the work of doctors, surgeons, psychiatrists and other medical specialists. On the contrary a presupposition of the church’s ministry of healing is that ultimately all healing comes from the one Source. A successful surgical intervention may be an answer to prayer as may be a sense of peace and assurance following the laying on of hands and anointing with oil. Above all, this ministry should be seen as a normal part of church life. “Private” communions with the elderly and infirm should normally include prayer and the laying on of hands for healing by the person’s own clergyman. Although there are undoubtedly “gifts” of healing which may be exercised by lay people as well as those in the ordained ministry these should not be allowed to take the place of or overshadow healing ministry as a component of pastoral care in the parish.

*2. HOLY COMMUNION. Christians unable to receive Communion in their local church because of illness or disability are encouraged to ask for the sacrament.*

This is particularly the case with the chronically ill and housebound and those who are aged and infirm. Healing ministry should be included as a matter of course since all those concerned will have disabilities of one kind or another.

*In case of need Holy Communion may be celebrated in hospital or at home. The full forms of either Holy Communion One or Two may be used or the shorter form provided on pages 442- 445.*

Advanced arrangements need to be made to administer communion in hospital. In some hospitals there is a chapel which mobile patients may be able to attend. In such case other patients may be communicate by “extended communion”, but this needs to be explained carefully to those concerned.

Most patients would probably be slightly confused if simply handed the Prayer Book. Either an official printed-out form may be used or the officiating minister may prepare his own, including suitable variations for seasons or particular circumstances.

*Communion is normally received in both kinds separately, but may be by intinction or in either kind. (See Canon 13[5])*

Canon 13:5 reads,

The bread to be used in the service shall be such as is usually eaten, of the best quality that can conveniently be procured; and the use of wafer bread is prohibited except in cases of illness where it may be desirable to administer the Holy Communion by means of intinction, subject to any conditions which the ordinary may prescribe.

The canon is an illogical compromise between those who disliked wafer bread and those who pointed out its practical necessity, for example in the case of infectious illness when the normal use of the common cup is not safe. Thick wafers need to be used, not the flimsy kind that dissolve as soon as they are put in the mouth or into the chalice. The Notes also envisage a situation where a person is incapable of receiving solids but is able to take a small sip of wine. According to the doctrine of concomitance the whole Christ is received under either species or both although the normal practice of the Church in accordance with its institution at the Last Supper is to communicate in both kinds, and this is specifically referred to in Article 30:

The Cup of the Lord is not to be denied to the Lay-people: for both the parts of the Lord's Sacrament, by Christ's ordinance and commandment, ought to be ministered to all Christian men alike.

The canon reluctantly permitting the use of wafer-bread in certain circumstances was approved by the General Synod in 1974 and replaced one which read,

In the administration of the Lord's Supper the elevation of the paten or cup beyond what is necessary for taking the same into the hands of the officiating minister, the use of wine mixed with water, or of wafer bread, and all acts, words, ornaments, and ceremonies other than those that are prescribed by the Order in the Book of Common Prayer, are hereby declared to be unlawful, and are prohibited...

The Select Committee was embarrassed by the realization that it was and is the custom for the wine to be mixed with water at the Passover and that the Church of Ireland had apparently prohibited what Our Lord would have done at the Last Supper, so that restriction was removed. They did not appear to realize that the same consideration applied to wafer bread, which, being unleavened was the kind of bread used at the Last Supper, nor that thick wafer bread (according to research by the late Alan Stracey, a convert to Christianity from Orthodox Judaism) was as near as one was likely to get to the bread used by Jesus himself. This is assuming that the Synoptic Gospels are correct in describing the Last Supper as a Passover, the Johannine dating putting it (possibly to depict Jesus as dying at the same time as the Passover lambs were being slaughtered - on the day before). If the use of ordinary daily bread links the eucharist to everyday life the use of unleavened (wafer) bread links it more specifically to the events of the Last Supper and its institution by Christ himself.

Much of the restrictive legislation of the 1870s was modified or removed in the Canon Law revision of 1974 but some remnants remain.

*PREPARATION Careful devotional preparation before the service is recommended to every communicant. The form provided may be used.*

The form provided seems particularly intended for hospital patients and may need to be modified for use with private communicants in a parish. Some verses from the psalms might have been helpful and also a recommended scripture reading or readings. As the form provided is not mandatory alternatives may be drawn up and used.

*SPIRITUAL COMMUNION Those who are incapable of receiving the sacrament are to be assured that, although not receiving the elements in the mouth, they are by faith partakers of the body and blood of Christ and of the benefits he conveys to us by them.*

Theologically speaking, the sacramental bread and wine are effectual signs of the real presence of Christ - that is they not only stand for but embody and convey that which they represent. But the mutual indwelling of Christ in the believer and the believer in Christ continues to exist spiritually even where the sacrament cannot physically be administered and this is a real communion.

*When Holy Communion is administered at hospital or at home some Ministry of the Word should be included. Holy Communion unites Word and Sacrament and there is a real presence of Christ in both.*

3. *SPIRITUAL GUIDANCE AND COUNSEL. Those with a troubled conscience who may require spiritual guidance and counsel should consult the minister and seek the benefit of absolution through the ministry of God's holy Word.* In a few instances people may have a spiritual director to whom they can bring their problems and difficulties. In most cases this is not so and they may have to rely on the wisdom and discretion of their own clergyperson - who must remain totally discreet about anything disclosed to them in confidence, especially within the seal of the confessional. In the case of possible child abuse they must be warned that the priest may have a duty in law to pass on information to the authorities which may have a bearing on the wellbeing of children.

In general, it is important that people be made aware that the Ministry of Absolution is available in the Church of Ireland, our church's attitude to sacramental confession being, "All may, some should, none must". Those with doubts about the matter may be referred to the wording of the Ordinal in the Ordination of Priests:

#### **Ordination Services One**

Receive the Holy Ghost for the office and work of a Priest in the Church of God, now committed unto thee by the imposition of our hands. *Whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven; and whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained.* And be thou a faithful dispenser of the Word of God, and of his holy Sacraments; In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

#### **Ordination Services Two**

Pour out your Holy Spirit upon your servant .... for the office and work of a priest in your Church.

Give to this your servant grace and power  
to fulfil the ministry to which *he or she* is called, to  
proclaim the gospel of your salvation;  
to minister the sacraments of the new covenant;  
to watch over and care for your people;  
*to pronounce absolution; and to bless them in your name.*

To "pronounce absolution" is, technically speaking a *performative* word which accomplishes that which it speaks of (as in a judge "pronouncing" judgement) and is the exact equivalent of "absolve".

The first of the long exhortations in Holy Communion One (which was the work of Cranmer) has this to say in its concluding paragraph:

And because it is requisite, that no man should come to the Holy Communion, but with a full trust in God's mercy, and with a quiet conscience; therefore if there be any of you, who by this means cannot quiet his own conscience herein, but requireth further comfort or counsel, let him come to me, or to some other discreet and learned Minister of God's Word, and open his grief; that by the ministry of God's holy Word, he may receive the benefit of absolution, together with spiritual counsel and advice, to the quieting of his conscience, and avoiding of all scruple and doubtfulness.

A form of this ministry is to be found in "Ministry to those who are sick" (p.446 and see below for comment).

4. *The experience of illness can bring a fuller realization of dependence on God. The courage, endurance and comfort which God gives can lead to a more mature Christian life.* There is no hint here of a doctrine that God deliberately "sends" sickness as punishment. Rather there is an indication that by grace even this negative experience can have beneficial results in the Christian life.

5. *In these orders the minister may substitute such singular forms for the plural when ministering to an individual as may be appropriate in the circumstances.* And, vice versa, singulars may be turned into plurals. This is, in any case an understood principle in modern liturgies.

### **Preparation for Communion**

This is said to be for "private personal use before the service", and clearly would be of use in a hospital context. But this is only one possible model and lacks any scripture reading or passage to encourage reflection on the meaning of the Holy Communion.

### **Holy Communion One or Holy Communion Two**

What is provided on pp442-445 may be described as incomplete orders of service. For example there is no printed out version of Holy Communion One. However, the outline of Holy Communion Two is satisfactory enough except that it would be helpful for communicants if the whole service, as it is to be used, in including the reading(s) and whatever option is chosen for the place at which to practice the laying on of hands and/or anointing, were to be printed out in full whether in booklet form or on A4 double columns or whatever. One very good feature is the special version of the Great Thanksgiving in which both pre-Sanctus and post-Sanctus are modified for this ministry (and may also be suitable where any small group is having Holy Communion together). It may be noted, however, that it is non-specific with regard to ministry to the sick and one may wish to compare and contrast it with the provision of *Common Worship: Pastoral Services* in which the Church of England's Prayer E is suggested (pp57-58). It is also regrettable that no mention is made of seasonal material which may well be suitable, for example if Holy Communion is administered at Christmas and Easter.

### **Penitence and Reconciliation**

This discreet form may be used for sacramental confession as indicated above. The "especially..." may lead into a confession to God of quite specific and troubling sins as encouraged by the person in priest's orders and leading to the absolution. Only a priest may pronounce the absolution and a deacon is limited to ministry such as the use of the Comfortable Words and a suitable prayer (or prayers). It may be noticed that the particular prayer of confession is optional not obligatory.

### **The Laying on of Hands**

The form that appears here is optional, not mandatory but has much to be said for it. An alternative is,

Receive Christ's healing power,  
and be renewed in body, mind, and spirit.

I lay my hands on you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
that he may uphold you with his grace,  
and that you may know the healing power of his love.

May the healing power of the Lord Jesus Christ,  
which is the same today as it was yesterday and shall be for ever,  
deliver you from all that hinders you from enjoying his peace and  
wholeness, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the  
Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

The concluding rubric indicates that in addition to the positions already mentioned for the laying on of hands, namely, before or after communion, it may take place during prayer, absolution, or blessing. It would seem that the significance of the laying on of hands would shift according to its position since its association with absolution or blessing would highlight these rather than healing (as presupposed above).

### **Anointing with Oil**

That this is a biblical ministry is indicated by the passage from the Epistle of James. Its use has been comparatively infrequent in the Church of Ireland until fairly recently. However, there is a question and answer which refers to it in the Revised Catechism, formerly approved by the House of Bishops for experimental use from 1971 and currently reissued by the Board of Education as a resource for those providing confirmation training or adult education, under the heading "A Catechism - Board of Education of the General Synod of the Church of Ireland."

#### 59. What is the sacramental ministry of *Healing*?

The sacramental ministry of healing is the ministry by which God's grace is given for the healing of spirit, mind and body, in response to faith and prayer, by the laying on of hands, or by anointing with oil.

The form on pp448-9 is derived from that in the booklet *The Ministry to the Sick* (Collins) approved by the House of Bishops and authorized for use under the experimental services legislation in chapter 1 Section 26(3) of the Church Constitution in 1991. It comprises,

- A form to be used if oil is to be consecrated by a bishop or priest,  
Heavenly Father, giver of life and salvation,  
sanctify this oil for the healing of the sick.  
Grant that those who in faith and repentance  
receive this ministry  
may, by the power of the Holy Spirit, be made whole;  
through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.
- An introduction referring to the example of the Lord Jesus in going about preaching the Gospel and healing the sick and to command to the disciples to lay hands on the sick that they might be healed. It cites the passage from St James Ch 5 which explicitly commends the use of anointing with oil as part of this ministry in which the prayer of faith "will save



the sick man, and the Lord will raise him up, and if he has committed any sins he will be forgiven.

- The present intention is made explicit by reference to the continuation of this ministry in laying hands on a specific person (or persons) anointing *him* with oil, praying that the Lord will grant healing and restoration and forgiveness according to his loving purpose and will.
- The anointing follows the laying on of hands and the priest, having dipped his thumb in the oil, anoints the person on the forehead, saying,

In the faith of Jesus Christ,  
we lay our hands upon you and anoint you,  
in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

- Provision is made for others present to lay on hands and anoint the sick person, saying only,

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

- A concluding prayer,

As you are outwardly anointed with this oil so  
may our heavenly Father grant you the  
inward anointing of the Holy Spirit;  
of his great mercy release you from suffering,  
and restore you to wholeness and strength, May  
he deliver you from all evil, preserve you  
in all goodness,  
and keep you in eternal life;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

A very thorough examination of the history of the liturgical use of oil for the healing of the sick, in Christian initiation (baptism and confirmation) and in ordination rites may be found in *The Oil of Gladness - Anointing in the Christian Tradition* edited by Martin Dudley and Geoffrey Rowell and published by SPCK in 1993. It was reissued in 2008. Regrettably it has not been updated to contain any examination of the provision in the *Common Worship* documents of the Church of England specifically that in *Common Worship: Times and Seasons* in which there is a form for the consecration of oils at the Maundy Thursday liturgy by the bishop for the use of the priests of his diocese. However, as an historical survey which covers the general principle of the sacramental use of material things and takes us from anointing in ancient Mesopotamia through the use of oil in ancient Greece and Rome through the Old and New Testaments and the early and medieval churches and that in Anglicanism and the Churches of the Reformation up to the end of the twentieth century. Particularly relevant here are chapter 11 by Norman Autton “The Sacrament of Anointing Administered in Hospital” and chapter 12 by Maureen Palmer “The Oil of Gladness for Wholeness: Hospice Ministry”.

### **Prayers**

The main focus of this set of prayers is that most of them are in the first person singular and to be used by the sufferer. They are relatively weak in forms to be used by the person ministering and he or she may have to look elsewhere for suitable material. Ex tempore prayer has its place but so does the use of liturgical prayers which may be familiar to the person being prayed with and may help link them to the worshipping community at a time when they are feeling ill and alone.

### **Preparation for Death**

Among the “terms of reference” for priests at their ordination is the declaration, “They are to minister to the sick and to prepare the dying for their death.”

The order here provides a form of commendation which may be led by the priest or by any other Christian person, if possible with the family and friends of the dying person. All or part of the order may be used. It comprises,

Sentences of Scripture

A Reading - either one of those suggested here or from the psalms and New Testament readings on the previous page

The Prayer of Commendation, which may be accompanied by making the sign of the cross on the forehead of the dying person, recalling his or her baptism into Christ.

The Nunc Dimittis

The Lord’s Prayer

The Blessing (when a priest is present)

The Grace.

A much fuller provision may be found in the Church of England’s *Common Worship: Pastoral Services*, “Ministry at the Time of Death” pp216-233. This suggests the structure:

*The minister and the dying person are alone for*

Preparation

Reconciliation

*Others may join the minister and the dying person for*

Opening Prayer

The Word of God

Prayers

Laying on of Hands and Anointing

Holy Communion

Commendation

Prayer when someone has just died.

A Note prefixed to the Order of Service says,

Where possible the minister prepares the dying person in private, using the Preparation and Reconciliation sections. The person should be helped to be aware that the time of death is approaching. Family and friends should join the minister and the dying person at the Opening Prayer if they can be present, and it is appropriate that they should receive Holy Communion with the dying person. The different sections of the service may happen at different times, and the last communion may be received on another occasion, and more than once, as pastoral necessity dictates.

The selection of Scripture Sentences in the Preparation is far more comprehensive than that in 2004 edition of the Book of Common Prayer.

The Reconciliation includes some expression of penitence (alternative forms are suggested) and the laying on of hands on the dying person. A form of absolution for use if the minister is a priest and a prayer if the minister is a deacon or lay person.

The Word of God section not only suggests suitable scriptural readings but also encourages an act of faith or commitment of a very simple nature such as

Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom

Lord, I believe, help my unbelief

Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.

Under the heading of Prayers a short form of the litany or some of the prayers with dying people already provided may be used, or the minister may pray using his or her own words.

With regard to the Laying on of Hands or Anointing forms similar to those in the C of I service are provided.

Under Holy Communion it says that if it is possible the dying person may receive communion. Unless the bread and wine have already been consecrated, an authorized Eucharistic Prayer is used. The Agnus Dei may be used for the giving of communion. After the words of distribution the following may be added,

May the Lord Jesus protect you  
and lead you to eternal life.

The Commendation is similar to the Church of Ireland provision, including “Go forth upon your journey from this world...” However, the Kontakion (not included in the C of I order) appears:

**Give rest, O Christ, to your servant with the saints:  
where sorrow and pain are no more,  
neither sighing, but life everlasting.**

You only are immortal, the creator and maker of all:  
and we are mortal, formed from the dust of the earth,  
and unto earth shall we return.

For so you ordained when you created me, saying:  
“Dust you are and to dust you shall return.”

All of us go down to the dust,  
yet weeping at the grace we make our song;  
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

**Give rest, O Christ, to your servant with the saints:  
where sorrow and pain are no more,  
neither sighing, but life everlasting.**

It is helpful that the traditional as well as the modern form of the Nunc Dimittis is provided. A

*Song of St Anselm* appears to be used at or just after death.

Jesus, like a mother you gather your people to you; you  
are gentle with us as a mother with her children.

Often you weep over our sins and our pride, tenderly  
you draw us from hatred and judgement.

You comfort us in sorrow and bind up our wounds,  
in sickness you nurse us, and with pure milk you feed us.

Jesus, by your dying we are born to new life;  
by your anguish and labour we come forth in joy.

Despair turns to hope through your sweet goodness;  
through your gentleness we find comfort in fear.

Your warmth gives life to the dead,  
your touch makes sinners righteous.

Lord Jesus, in your mercy heal us;  
in your love and tenderness remake us.

In your compassion bring grace and forgiveness, for  
the beauty of heaven may your love prepare us.

There are two alternative forms of blessing, one of them identical to that in the 2004 Prayer Book, “God grant you to share in the inheritance of the saints in glory...” the other not included in the Church of Ireland book:

May the eternal God  
bless and keep us,  
guard our bodies, save  
our souls  
and bring us safe to the heavenly country,  
our eternal home,  
where Father, Son, and Holy Spirit reign,  
one God for ever and ever. **Amen.**

A specific form is provided of Prayer when someone has just died. The minister, a family member or a friend may use some or all of the words.

In this moment of sorrow the Lord is in our midst  
and consoles us with his word:

No eye has seen nor ear heard, nor the human heart conceived,  
what God has prepared for those who love him.

Blessed are the sorrowful; they shall be comforted.

Into your hands, O Lord,  
we humbly entrust our *brother/sister N*.  
In this life you embraced *him/her* with your tender love,  
and opened to *him/her* the gate of heaven.  
The old order has passed away,  
as you welcome *him/her* into paradise,  
where there will be no sorrow, no weeping nor pain,  
but the fullness of peace and joy  
with your Son and the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Heavenly Father,  
into whose hands Jesus Christ  
commended his spirit at the last hour:  
into those same hands we now commend your servant *N*,  
that death may be for *him/her*  
the gate to life and to eternal fellowship with you;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Remember, O Lord,  
this your servant,  
who has gone before us with the sign of faith

and now rests in the sleep of peace.

According to your promises,  
grant to *him/her* and to all who rest in Christ,  
refreshment, light and peace;  
through the same Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Most merciful God,  
whose wisdom is beyond our understanding,  
surround the family of *N* with your love,  
that they may not be overwhelmed by their loss,  
but have confidence in your goodness, and  
strength to meet the days to come. We ask this  
through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Some further **Notes to Ministry at the Time of Death** are also relevant to Church of Ireland ministry.

Where the minister is not a bishop or priest

- anointing is omitted;
- Holy Communion may be given but not celebrated;
- the usual alterations are made at the blessing. The laying

on of hands may be done by more than one person.

Wherever possible, care should be taken to use versions of texts familiar to the dying person.

### **A Celebration of Wholeness and Healing**

A very important contribution to the ministry of healing is the alternative order “A Celebration of Wholeness and Healing” to be found on pp457-464 of the Prayer Book. This, with some adaptation is derived from the order with the same name in *Common Worship: Pastoral Services* pp13-25. It is described in *Pastoral Services* as “especially suitable for a diocesan or deanery service” but these words do not appear in the 2004 Prayer Book, and the writer is aware of a successful use of the order on a regular basis in a parochial context. However, having used it at a Diocesan healing service the writer can affirm its great value in such a setting.

Some of the preliminary notes (relevant to all healing services) in *Pastoral Services* are helpful here:

- Those who come for prayer with Laying on of Hands and/or Anointing should make careful preparation. They may receive the Laying on of Hands on behalf of others who are not present as well as for themselves.
- Where prayer is offered for those who will minister to others, this should be seen as prayer for the grace and discernment of the Holy Spirit, as well as prayer for healing. All who minister to others in need should have careful regard for the duty of confidentiality which this privilege brings. As part of their preparation, those who minister need to be ready to recognize where specialist skills may be required.
- If a need for a more particular ministry of exorcism or deliverance is perceived, then the bishop’s instructions should be followed and his authorized advisor consulted.

This last point is of very great importance as the deliverance ministry, mishandled, can be injurious, even dangerous both to the person being ministered to and to those who are performing the ministry. At present one is not aware of the existence of an authorized advisor

skilled in this ministry in any diocese of the Church of Ireland. In case of necessity, through the bishop, it might be highly advisable to bring in assistance from the Church of England or from another reputable source.

The Structure of the office, as set out on page 457 of the Prayer Book treats the celebration of the Holy Communion as optional. However, the Eucharist, with its emphasis upon “body and soul”, the whole person, is particularly suitable for this ministry and the service as a whole is eucharistic in form and may even be regarded as to some extent incomplete if the Holy Communion is not celebrated. The shape of the service as a whole is:

The Gathering of God’s People

Proclaiming and Receiving the Word

Prayer and Penitence

Laying on of Hands and Anointing

Celebrating at the Lord’s Table

Going Out as God’s People.

### **The Gathering of God’s People**

This consists of an extended greeting and the collect, which links the heavenly Father’s anointing of his Son with the Holy Spirit and with Power to the anointing of the Church with the same Holy Spirit, and those who share in Christ’s suffering and victory may bear witness to the gospel of salvation (the concept of salvation embracing the whole person, body, mind and spirit).

### **Proclaiming and Receiving the Word**

The full form of this comprises first reading, psalm, second reading and the Gospel Reading together with the Sermon.

### **Prayer and Penitence**

An extended and very beautiful section of Prayers of Intercession is provided in Litany form and this is followed by Prayers of Penitence which may take the form of penitential kyries or confession and absolution

### **Laying on of Hands and Anointing.**

The use of oil (which may be brought to the priest to be consecrated) is not obligatory, but the lengthy prayer of blessing loses much of the force of its references to the anointed Son and to the anointing of the sick in apostolic times if an actual anointing is not envisaged. The consecration of the oil is accomplished by the words,

By the power of your Spirit may your blessing rest on those who are anointed with this oil in your name; may they be made whole in body, mind and spirit

The forms used for the actual laying on of hands and the anointing may be used “or other suitable words”.

The Lord’s Prayer is used at the end of this section only if there is no Holy Communion. If the Eucharist is celebrated it comes in the customary place after the Great Thanksgiving.

### **Celebrating at the Lord’s Table**

The prayer on p443 (an adapted form of Eucharistic Prayer One suitable for the healing ministry) is recommended as suitable.

## **Going Out as God's People**

Following a dialogue of priest and people, the Peace and the Dismissal are said. A sign of peace may be exchanged. However, since the outline on p.457 includes the Peace under **Celebrating at the Lord's Table** it should be used here only if there is no Holy Communion. And the blessing is to be used if the Holy Communion is celebrated.

## **Private Communion**

An important part of the total ministry in parishes to those who are sick is the bringing of communion to those who are aged or disabled and unable over a long period, to attend church. This normally takes the form of a celebration of Holy Communion, at the very least at the major festivals of Christmas and Easter, preferably more often. An abbreviated form will normally be used, in an accessible format such as a booklet or on a card. With seasonal adjustments (for example, omission of the Gloria in the penitential seasons of Advent and Lent) a typical format might comprise:

Greeting and scripture sentence(s)

Collect for Purity

Confession and Absolution or Penitential Kyries

Gloria in Excelsis

Collect

[Old Testament Reading or Epistle]

[Psalm]

Gospel

The Peace

The Taking of the Bread and Wine

The Great Thanksgiving

Lord's Prayer

Breaking of the Bread

Communion

The Laying on of Hands for healing

Prayer for family and friends and parish

Post-Communion Prayer

Blessing

## **Holy Communion by Extension**

An alternative is to use the form known as “Holy Communion by Extension” for those unable to be present at the public celebration, according to the use of the Church of Ireland, 2007. This was approved by the House of Bishops under the trial services legislation (Church Constitution Ch 1, section 26:3) and authorized in the Church of Ireland as from 28th February 2007 for a period of seven years.

The general principle involved is set forth in the notes prefixed to the order of service:

While this rite is primarily intended for use with those who are sick, it may on occasion be used with individuals who for a reasonable cause cannot be present at a public celebration of the Holy Communion

When a member of the community cannot be present at the parish Holy Communion but wishes to receive the Sacrament, it is desirable that the priest, deacon or appropriately trained authorized representative of the community bring the consecrated elements to that person immediately upon completion of the celebration in the church. The continuity between communion and community celebration is thus made clear.

If, however, a person is unable to attend a public celebration for an extended period of time, it is appropriate that the Holy Communion be celebrated with them, members of their family, the parish community, and friends, if possible. In these cases it would be appropriate to involve others in the readings and prayers, using the proper of the day and other appropriate material.

### **The Greeting**

This comprises the Dominus vobiscum and the following or similar words:

*Brother/sister* in Christ,  
God calls us to faithful service  
by the proclamation of the word,  
and sustains us with the sacrament  
of the body and blood of Christ.  
Let us now call upon God in prayer  
hear his word proclaimed,  
and receive this holy food from the Lord’s table.

### **The Collect**

This is the collect of the day or a similar prayer.

### **Proclaiming and Receiving the Word**

A passage from the Gospel appropriate to the day or occasion or one of a set of passages provided is read.

### **Penitence**

This includes invitation to confession, absolution (if a priest is present) or prayer for forgiveness (if there is not a priest), and the option of the Prayer of Humble Access.

### **The Lord’s Prayer**

This may be in the traditional or modern form.

An invitation to communion consists of the following words,

The Church of God, of which we are members,  
has taken bread and wine



and given thanks over them  
according to our Lord's command.  
I now bring these holy gifts  
that you may share in the communion of his body and blood.  
**We being many are one body  
for we all share in the one bread.**

Communion is given with the words,

The body of Christ given for you. **Amen.**

The blood of Christ shed for you. **Amen.**

Silence is kept.

### **Prayer after Communion**

It is noted that it may be appropriate to pray for the needs of those present.

The post-communion prayer "Almighty God, we thank you..." is said or another suitable prayer.

### **The Blessing**

The blessing is said if there is a priest present. Otherwise the grace is said.

Any of the consecrated bread and wine remaining after the administration of the communion is to be reverently consumed

Some important guidelines are included:

## **HOLY COMMUNION BY EXTENSION**

### **Guidelines for Clergy and for Lay Eucharistic Ministers**

The provision for Holy Communion by Extension allows people who are unable to attend the parish celebration (either Sunday or weekday), to feel part of the greater community of believers who have gathered at the Lord's Table together. The communion should be administered only by the clergy or by authorized lay Eucharistic ministers.

Any lay person administering the Sacrament by extension shall be authorized by the diocesan bishop to carry out this ministry and shall have undertaken training. The precise nature of the training would be decided by the diocesan bishop in conjunction with the parochial clergy, but it would need to include discussion regarding the nature and understanding of the Sacrament of Holy Communion as the Church of Ireland has received it, without detracting from the mystery of the Sacrament and the diversity of devotional opinion which the faithful may hold. Practical training in the administration of the Sacrament would also be necessary.

In addition, the pastoral implications arising from Holy Communion which has been brought from the parish Eucharist, (as opposed to a 'private' celebration with the priest and person) will need to be addressed. Due preparation of the wider community must ensure that this ministry is understood to be an extension of worship and not a social visit.

### **When the Sacrament should be brought from the Parish Celebration**

It is most appropriate that the Sacrament be administered as soon as is practically possible after the celebration of the Eucharist in the church. The time lapsed between the service in the church and the reception in the home/hospital is to be made as short as possible, so that the connection between the celebration and the administration of the Sacrament is clear. The presiding minister may wish to send out lay Eucharistic ministers to administer Holy Communion by extension during the course of the liturgy. The most appropriate point for this

would be immediately after the Great Silence. In such cases the communicant in the home may have a sense of sharing in the same service as the community worshipping in the church. Arrangements shall be made with the parishioner(s) before-hand so that they may prepare themselves in advance to receive communion, preferably by reading to themselves some of the liturgy actually being used in the church. The exact time of communion by extension should, as far as possible, be consistent week by week or month by month.

*Persons who should receive this ministry*

- Those who are ill, at home.
- Those who are in hospital. This would include patients unable to attend a service in a hospital chapel but who would desire to receive communion in the ward immediately after such a service.
- Those who are housebound or confined to nursing or residential care.

The desire of a communicant to have a 'full' celebration of the Eucharist should always be respected.

*General guidelines*

At the actual celebration of the Eucharist, only sufficient of the consecrated elements as is necessary for communion by extension should remain; otherwise, what is left should be consumed as normal. This will demand some planning before-hand by the presiding minister.

At the time of bringing the Sacrament by extension, the elements should be carried in a dignified and reverent manner, for example in a private communion set or a bread box and a small flagon which should be placed in a small cloth bag or pouch.

At the time of the communion, the elements should be placed on a corporal, on an appropriate surface (i.e. a small table). It may be appropriate also (where custom allows), to place a small cross and/or candle in view of the person(s) to receive communion.

At the conclusion of the rite, the Eucharistic minister must consume all the remaining consecrated elements and cleanse the vessels with water.

Only the Rite of *Holy Communion by Extension* provided by the Church of Ireland should be used.

*Necessary vessels and materials for Holy Communion by Extension*

- Bread box\*
- Small flagon for consecrated wine\*
- Small flagon for water\*
- Small chalice & paten\*
- Corporal & purificator
- Small Cross & candle (where appropriate)
- Bible
- Prayer Book(s) or *Holy Communion by Extension* card(s)
- stole (where customary for the priest or deacon) \*

*From a private communion set.*

## **FUNERAL SERVICES**

### **Funeral Services: The canonical position**

The obligations of the rector of a parish are clearly set forth in Canon 32 The burial of the dead,

(1) Subject to the provisions of this Canon no minister shall, where reasonable notice has been given to him, refuse to read the burial service in the prescribed form at

(a) the burial within his cure of any person who may have died within it,

(b) the burial of any person whose family may possess a burial place within the church or churchyard of his parish, and whose remains have been brought there for interment.

(c) the burial within a reasonable distance outside his cure of a person who died within his cure and is believed by the minister to have been at his death a member of the Church,

or

(d) the burial within his cure of a deceased person who died outside his cure but whose remains have been brought there for interment and who is believed by the minister to have been at his death a member of the Church.

(2) A minister may however in his own discretion refuse to read the burial service in full where the deceased died unbaptised or had committed suicide or had committed some grievous or notorious sin and not repented of it or had been excluded from Holy Communion under Canon 16 and had not been readmitted thereto.

(3) If the minister refuse to to read the full service pursuant to clause (2) hereof he shall read at the burial such parts of the prescribed service or such approved prayers and such psalms or portions of Scripture as to him shall seem fit, or he shall use such alternative or modified form of service as may have been prescribed for the case. Save where the burial is of an unbaptised infant the minister shall also, where it is reasonably practicable to do so, consult with the ordinary before the burial; and where this is not reasonably practicable he shall report the matter to the ordinary thereafter.

It may be seen from the above that there is a general obligation to bury those residing within the cure - that is within the geographical boundaries of the parish. While in practice this will almost always mean members of the Church of Ireland, a rector is, in principle, obliged to bury members of any or no church (subject to the limitations implied in section 3) with an address within the parish when duly requested so to do.

It is not quite clear what are the full implications of (1)b. Strictly speaking those who have "claimed" graves do not own them, but merely have a registered claim to be buried in the designated plots. The only people who actually "possess" a burial place within the church or churchyard are those with family vaults. However, it is best to assume that the obligation extends to apply to any with burial rights in the church or churchyard.

It is best to give people the "benefit of the doubt" as to what constitutes a "reasonable distance" under (1)c. Usually there will be consultation with the Rector of the Church where the interment is to take place, and the service will be shared. It is a customary courtesy when a service is shared for the rector of the deceased person to be invited to perform the committal.

With regard to the circumstances covered by (2) and (3), pastoral considerations should normally prevail over legal rights of the incumbent. Refusal to use the burial service in case of a suicide could add to the hurt of the relatives. Careful choice of readings and prayers, however, could be pastorally helpful. The case of the death of a still-born child or a newly-born child is considered below under "The Funeral Service for a Child".

On occasion, members of the Christian community, or representatives of it, may be called upon to provide a funeral liturgy for a person who did not profess faith in Christ. This might be someone of another faith community, or a non-believer. A loose-leafed folder *Occasional Celebrations*, published by the Anglican Book Centre, 600 Jarvis Street, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, M4Y 2J6 provides liturgical material for such an eventuality under the heading, "Liturgies Relating to Death and Burial."

#### **A note on Churchyards and Burial rights**

The law on churchyards and burial rights is complex and needs to be understood not only by the incumbent but by any clergyperson who is liable to be called upon to conduct funerals. A convenient guide is the *Irish Churchwardens Handbook*, A.P.C.K. Dublin 1979 by the Revd James B Leslie as revised and expanded by the Very Revd (later Rt Revd) W.G. Wilson. Parts of this book need further revision in the light of changes in the constitution since 1979 but chapter five - "Churchyards and Burial Rights" and chapter six "The Maintenance of Graveyards" are still highly relevant.

## **Funeral Services One: The Order for the Burial of the Dead.**

This is the traditional language order which is derived from the rite of the same title in previous editions of the Prayer Book. Changes from the 1926 edition relate mainly to the rubrics. These and some other developments from the time of the Reformation onwards are indicated below.

Burial rites in rural areas commonly involve three ceremonies - at the house, in the Church, and at the graveside. If, however, the body is brought to the Church prior to the burial, there is a service of reception attended often by just a few relatives, and this takes the place of the service in the house on the day of burial. In town parishes and in the city, there may be no service in the Church, that in the house acting in place of it together with the ceremony at the graveside. Where the place of interment is distant from the Church it is the custom in some areas for only the relatives and close friends to be present for the actual burial. Where the body is to be cremated, it may be brought from the house (with or without a short service) to the crematorium, where there is a service whose total length is normally restricted to thirty minutes, and a suitable form of the committal is used.

### **At the house**

The 2004 edition of the Book of Common Prayer contains A Form for Use in the Home, Funeral Home or Mortuary - Prior to the Service in Church, but this is designed for use with the modern language liturgy - Funeral Services Two. There is no equivalent for the traditional "Funeral Services One". Essentially what is done in the house is at the discretion of the officiating minister and there is much to be said for keeping it simple, and it may consist of a psalm, a reading, and some suitable prayers. If the body is to be "lifted" at a certain time, for example 2 p.m. the service should begin at around 1.45 p.m. or 1.50 p.m. and be completed before 2 p.m.

No provision is made in the Book of Common Prayer for a service of reception in Church (where the body is to lie until the funeral, perhaps on the next day,) although forms were put forth by authority of the House of Bishops many years ago. A suitable outline might include,  
Sentences (on the way into the Church)

Psalm

Scripture reading

Prayers (The Litany One up to "day of judgement"

followed by two or three collect-type prayers would be appropriate).

The Lord's Prayer

Ascription or the Grace.

Care should be taken not to use material which will occur again at the burial.

### **In the church**

[What was previously the first rubric prohibited the use of the office for any that died unbaptized or excommunicate, or those who have committed suicide. Unbaptized infants of tender age, the offspring of Christian parents, who have not been withheld from baptism wilfully or who were persons known to have been prepared for and desirous of baptism, were entitled to have the sentences read, one of the psalms and lessons or a portion of them, the four sentences at the grave, and the Lord's Prayer and the benediction at the close of the office. This was clearly an obsolete rubric reflecting a rigour of approach unlikely to be found pastorally helpful in present day circumstances. The question of the burial of a person who has committed suicide is regulated now by canon, and is dealt with above. In the 1662 Prayer Book this rubric consisted of a single sentence. A second rubric dealing with the reading of sentences has been modified to produce the current form]

The clergyperson (and any assistant minister or ministers) should be fully robed when meeting the cortege, and remain so while conducting the service in church and performing the committal. Discarding robes prior to the committal introduces an inappropriate casualness into the most solemn part of the funeral rite and its apparent lack of respect can cause offence to mourners who value the Church's liturgical tradition. Appropriate robes are cassock, surplice and stole or, alternatively, cassock, surplice and scarf. With regard to the liturgical colour, white - the colour of the resurrection - is especially appropriate during the Great Fifty Days of Easter, and purple for the remainder of the year. Alternatively, a black stole may be worn although this is now less common.

### **Sentences**

Three sentences are provided for use while the minister is processing in front of the cortege from the entrance to the church and these may be supplemented by those from page 490 (or indeed other suitable sentences, as required).

The first of these processional sentences (which may be sung rather than said) has been traced to the ancient *Inhumatio Defuncti*, and was also a Compline Antiphon "in agenda Mortuorum" in the *Gregorian Antiphonary*. The second was used in the *Vigiliae Mortuorum* or *Dirge* of the Sarum rite. In Merbecke's Common Prayer Noted, they are arranged as Responses and Versicles. The Sarum use was,

Antiphon Ego sum resurrectio et vita: qui credit in me, etiamsi mortuus fuerit, vivet: et omnis qui vivit et credit in me, non morietur in aeternum.

Respond Credo quod Redemptor meus vivit: et in novissimo die de terra surrecturus sum: Et in carne mea videbo Deum Salvatorem meum.

Versicle Quem visurus sum ego ipse et non alius: et oculi mei conspecturi sunt. Et in carne mea videbo Deum Salvatorem meum.

A nineteenth century adaptation of Merbecke for SATB may be found in *A Cathedral Prayer Book* produced by Stainer and Russell.

It may be noticed that the sentence from Job has been shortened by the omission of "though after my skin worms destroy this body" and the second half seems to come from a modern translation.

A hymn is usually sung at the beginning of the service. Care should be taken to ensure that any hymns sung at a funeral are appropriate to the occasion, and are sufficiently well-known for the people to be able to participate.

### **The Psalm**

The psalm may be read by the minister (if the people do not have books) or read by him and the people in half verses (the minister reading to the colon and people the second half of each verse) if there are enough books to go round or if the order of service has been printed out in booklet form. If there is a choir it is appropriate that the psalm be sung. The version here is that from the 1926 Prayer Book which remains (permanently) authorized in the Church of Ireland.

In Sarum a number of psalms were appointed, although it may be doubted whether all of them were used at every burial. These were 114, 25, 118, 42, 132, 139, 148, 149, 150, together with the seven penitential psalms. In the 1549 Prayer Book psalms 116, 139, 146 were appointed to be said in church either before or after the burial of the corpse. At the communion office psalm 42 was used as the introit. From 1552-1662 no psalms appeared at all, nor did the introit appear in the Latin Office for the celebration of the Holy Communion at funerals. In 1662 psalms 32 and 90 were inserted, and the Church of Ireland's office adds

psalms 23 and 103 (which accounts for the order in which these appear). Versified forms of the psalms from the Church Hymn (2000) may be used.

### **The Ministry of the Word**

Only two readings are provided in written out form, from 1 Cor 15:20ff and 1 Thess 4:13ff, the latter a feature of the Irish Prayer Book. These were the only readings in the 1926 Prayer Book, but a rubric in the current edition allows other readings from the list on p484 to be used. A way of abbreviating the 1 Cor 15 reading is indicated by the brackets in the text printed in the Prayer Book.

Previous editions of the Book of Common Prayer service do not provide for an address, This has been remedied by the addition of a rubric, "If there is a Sermon it is preached here." A sermon at a funeral should not be simply a eulogy of the deceased (although a "personal" part is certainly appropriate and particular virtues may be mentioned) but should also expound Scriptural teaching, preferably that already introduced by the reading. The address should be short, ten minutes or so.

In the 1662 Prayer Book no provision was made for prayer in church after the reading. The two prayers in the Irish Prayer Book are helpful, but of themselves are inadequate for this part of the service. On the other hand the portion of the service at the graveside is probably overweighted with prayer although the current rubric permits the prayers after the Committal to be said in the church before the coffin leaves. The best way to order this is to begin the prayers in the Church with the lesser Litany and Lord's Prayer and to continue with a selection of prayers from various sources including one or more of those provided. The Grace should not be said at the conclusion of the office in church if it is to be used after the committal. The service in Church normally concludes with a hymn. If there is a third hymn it may come before or after the sermon.

In the 1549 Prayer Book the lesson was followed by the lesser Litany and the Lord's Prayer, by versicles and responses and by a collect, all closely modelled on the Sarum original, as follows,

Lord have mercy upon us.

Christ have mercy upon us.

Lord have mercy upon us.

Our father which art in heaven...

And lead us not into temptation

Answer, But deliver us from evil. Amen.

Priest, Enter not into judgement with thy servant.

Answer, For in thy sight no living creature shall be justified.

Priest, From the gates of hell,

Answer, Deliver their souls, O Lord.

Priest, I believe to see the goodness of the Lord.

Answer, In the land of the living.

Priest, O Lord, graciously hear my prayer.

Answer, And let my cry come unto thee.

Let us pray.

O Lord, with whom do live the spirits of them that be dead: and in whom the souls of them that be elected, after they be delivered from the burden of the flesh, be in joy and felicity: Grant unto this thy servant, that the sins which he committed in this world be not imputed unto him, but that he, escaping the gates of hell, and pains of eternal darkness, may ever

dwell in the region of light, with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the place where is no weeping, sorrow, nor heaviness: and when that dreadful day of the general resurrection shall come, make him to rise also with the just and righteous, and receive this body again to glory, then made pure and incorruptible: set him on the right hand of thy son Jesus Christ, among thy holy and elect, that then he may hear with them these most sweet and comfortable words: come to me ye blessed of my father, possess the kingdom which hath been prepared for you from the beginning of the world: Grant this we beseech thee, O merciful Father, through Jesus Christ our mediator and redeemer. Amen.

The collect was substantially modified in 1552 to eliminate prayer for the departed; and it was deftly verbally amended in 1662 (when it became one of the prayers said after the interment). It was shortened in the Irish Prayer Book and altered,

1662 "We give thee hearty thanks for that it hath pleased thee to deliver this our brother out of the miseries of this sinful world."

1926 "We bless thy holy Name for all thy servants departed this life in thy faith and fear."

As the officiating minister proceeds in front of the coffin down the church he or she may wish to read the *Nunc Dimittis* aloud. Alternatively, it may be sung by the choir.

### **At the graveside**

The concluding ceremony comprises the antiphons "Man that is born of a woman", the committal, the sentence, (the prayers after the committal) and the grace.

#### The Committal

"Man that is born of a woman" used to be said while the corpse was made ready to be laid into the earth. The current rubric permits the officiating minister to wait until the coffin has been lowered into the ground. Echoes of around fifteen scripture passages have been found in this anthem, sequence or prose, the first part of which occurred in Sarum in the *Dirge* and the remainder in the Lenten antiphon to the *Nunc Dimittis*. The rubric in 1662 directed, "The priest shall say, or the priest and clerks shall sing:"

In Sarum the 114th psalm "When Israel came out of Egypt" was sung during the procession to the grave; and if the procession was long in going, the 25th psalm also, "Unto Thee, O God, will I lift up my soul". The antiphon to the Psalm was, "May the angels carry thee to Paradise: may the martyrs receive thee into their assembly, and bring thee unto the City of the heavenly Jerusalem."

With regard to the rubric before the act of committal, "While the earth is cast upon the body by some standing by the minister says", historically the earth was cast by the priest himself, and so the rubric directed in 1549; but was ordered to be performed by "some standing by" in 1552. It has been suggested that the reason for this is to suggest what shall be the state of condition of every one, one day. He that casts earth upon the dead body today may have earth cast upon his own body tomorrow. However, the original intention of the office appears to have been, that the Priest should cast in the three symbolical handfuls of earth, saying the words of the commendation, and that then the anthem should be sung while the grave was being filled up by some standing by. Today, the casting of the earth is often performed by the undertaker; but it is better done by the officiating minister (the matter is left open in *Funerals Services Two*).

While performing the interment the clergyman should stand at the head of the grave.

In the 1549 the wording of the committal was,



I commend thy soul to God the Father Almighty, and thy body to the ground; earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust; in sure and certain hope of resurrection to eternal life, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

From 1552 this was changed to the familiar,

Forasmuch as it hath pleased Almighty God ... in sure and certain hope of (the) resurrection to eternal life through our Lord Jesus Christ...

The word "mortal" has been put in where "vile" used to be - "who shall change our mortal body" After the word "brother" or "sister" one may wish to use the person's Christian name.

The Anthem "I heard the voice" is from Rev. 14:13. In Sarum it was found in the Vigils of the dead as an antiphon to the Magnificat, and was also apparently read for the Epistle, in the daily Mass for the dead.

### **Prayers after the Committal**

If the Prayers after the Committal have taken place in the church the lesser Litany and Lord's Prayer are omitted.

The Collect may be made more "inclusive" by substituting "those" for "men" in the phrase "men without hope".

The Collect was used in the 1549 Prayer Book for the celebration of the Holy Communion at burials. It originally read,

We meekly beseech thee, (O Father,) to raise us from the death of sin unto the life of righteousness; that, when we shall depart this life, we may sleep in him, as our hope is this our *brother* doth; and at the general Resurrection in the last day, both we, and this our brother departed, receiving again our bodies, and rising again in thy most gracious favour, may, with all thine elect saints, obtain eternal joy. Grant this..."

A prayer found used after the burial in 1549 has contributed some phrases to the current form of the collect,

We commend into thy hands of mercy (most merciful Father) the soul of this our brother departed, N. And his body we commit to the earth, beseeching thine infinite goodness, to give us grace to live in thy fear and love, and to die in thy favour: that when the judgement shall come which thou hast committed to thy wellbeloved Son, both this our brother, and *we, may be found acceptable in thy sight and receive that blessing which thy well-beloved Son shall then pronounce to all that love and fear thee, saying: Come ye blessed children of my Father: Receive the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world. Grant this, merciful Father, for the honour of Jesus Christ our only Saviour, Mediator, and Advocate.*

The service concludes with the Grace (added in 1662 under the influence of Bishop Cosin, who, however, suggested the form, "The blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, be amongst you, and remain with you always").

A form is provided to hallow the grave if the burial ground is not consecrated.

A further rubric which gave some instructions where ashes were to be buried after cremation has been omitted in this edition.

Immediately after the burial the custom in many places is for the grave to be covered with a frame on top of which the wreaths are laid, and for it to be filled in only after the mourners have gone. It is customary for the officiating minister to speak quietly to each of the bereaved and to shake hands with them before the rest of the congregation do so. If there is to be a reception in a hall nearby the family should proceed there immediately after the officiating

minister has spoken to them and may stand where those entering the hall may express their sympathy and support.

Details of the burial should be entered in the register immediately after the service.

**A note on The Order for the Burial of the Dead in the 1549 Prayer Book.**

A number of references have been made to the 1549 Prayer book. This, the first edition of the Prayer Book is particularly significant for the Church of Ireland in that this was the version introduced in Ireland on Easter Sunday 1551. The 1552 edition was never authorized in the Church of Ireland although the substance of it came in with the modified version introduced in the reign of Elizabeth 1 (1558-1603). This profoundly beautiful rite had the following structure or shape:

**Sentences**

Committal, consisting of "Man that is born of a woman" etc., "commendation of the soul of the departed to God the Father and of the body to the ground", "I heard a voice", and prayers of commendation and of intercession for the departed.

Office, consisting of the following,

Psalms 116, 146, 139.

Reading from 1 Cor 15

Lesser Litany, Lord's Prayer, Suffrages

Prayer for the departed "O Lord, with whom do live the spirits of them that be dead.."

Provision is made for a celebration of the holy communion when there is a burial of the dead, including psalm 42, and a particular collect, epistle (1 Thess 4) and Gospel (from John 6). The collect read,

O merciful God the Father of our Lord Jesu Christ, who is the resurrection and the life: in whom whosoever believeth shall live though he die: and whosoever liveth and believeth in him, shall not die eternally: who also hath taught us (by his holy Apostle Paul) not to be sorry as men without hope for them that sleep in him: We meekly beseech thee (O Father) to raise us from the death of sin unto the life of righteousness, that when we shall depart this life, we may sleep in him (as our hope is this our brother doth), and at the general resurrection in the last day, both we and this our brother departed, receiving again our bodies, and rising again in thy most gracious favour: may with all thine elect saints, obtain eternal joy. Grant this, O Lord God, by the means of our advocate Jesus Christ: which with thee and the Holy Ghost, liveth and reigneth one God for ever. **Amen.**

The provision made in the 1549 Prayer Book for the celebration of the Holy Communion when there was "a burial of the dead"; but this was omitted in 1552. However, the Latin office of 1560 (which was fully authoritative) contained provision for it, including an epistle and Gospel.

**An Order for The Burial of Children** may be found in the BCP on pp 476-9. The words "who have been baptized" were removed in 2004. This order comprises,

**In the church**

Sentences

Psalm 23

Reading (1 Thess. 4:13f or Rev. 21:3f) or other readings if preferred.

Sermon (optional)

Prayers, "Grant, O Lord, to all who are bereaved".

Appropriate prayers adapted from those on pp510-13 may be added

**At the graveside**

"Man that is born of a woman"

Committal (with reference to "This dear child here departed").

Scripture sentence (Rev 14:4,5)

Lesser Litany

Lord's Prayer

Special collects (either or both of which may be used).

O Lord Jesu Christ, who didst take little children into thine arms and bless them; Open thou our eyes, we beseech thee, that we may perceive that thou hast taken this child into the arms of thy love, and blessed him with the blessings of thy gracious favour; who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end.  
Amen.

[The second collect is a prayer for the parents]

The Grace.

## **Funeral Services Two, entitled "The Funeral Service"**

An experimental form of the burial office in modern English drawn up by the Liturgical Advisory Committee was issued by the House of Bishops in 1977. On the basis of further reflection the General Synod approved a revised edition of this entitled, "Funeral Services" in 1987 and this was later incorporated into *Alternative Occasional Services 1993*, a companion volume to the *Alternative Prayer Book 1984*, which remained fully authorized until it was superseded by *Funeral Services Two* in the 2004 edition of the Book of Common Prayer. In comparing this order with Funeral Services One (the traditional Prayer book version) the following differences may be noted,

1. The use of modern English, including the *Common Worship* psalter
2. A wider choice of Scripture sentences.
3. The inclusion of a preface setting forth the Church's understanding of its own funeral rites.
4. A more comprehensive Ministry of the Word (under the heading "Proclaiming and Receiving the Word", including a wide range of psalms, a comprehensive choice of readings, provision for the normative use of a sermon and an affirmation of faith).
5. A comprehensive selection of prayers, with a suitable ending.
6. A Farewell in Christ
7. A wider choice of material in the Committal.
8. Suitable provision for a Funeral Service with Holy Communion.
9. Liturgical provision for when the Body is brought to church on the eve of a funeral.
10. Provision for a form for use at the Burial of Ashes after Cremation.
11. Provision of a modern form of the Funeral Service for a Child.
12. Provision of a form for use in the home, funeral home or mortuary prior to the service in church.
13. A more positive theology stressing the message of the resurrection and of the communion of saints.

As far back as 1965 the Church of England Liturgical Commission in their report entitled, "The Burial of the Dead" examined the question, "What ought we to be doing at a burial service?" and suggested as a response,

- (a) to secure the reverent disposal of the corpse;
- (b) to commend the deceased to the care of our heavenly Father;
- (c) to proclaim the glory of our risen life in Christ here and hereafter;
- (d) to remind us of the certainty of our own coming death and judgement;
- (e) to make plain the eternal unity of Christian people, living and departed, in the risen and ascended Christ.
- (f) to offer some consolation to the mourners.

These considerations have remained constant in the Church of England revisions (found in the *Alternative Service Book*, 1980, and *Common Worship: Pastoral Services*, 2000) and in their Church of Ireland counterparts, especially the *Funeral Services*, 1987 (AOS 1993), and the current order in the 2004 edition of the *Book of Common Prayer*. It may be seen that in many ways the Church of Ireland rites have followed those of the Church of England although they have also diverged from them in some respects. The concern to include all the principal services in a single Prayer Book with both traditional and modern forms constrained the Church of Ireland in its pastoral provision, any shortfall being catered for over a period of time by the identification of resource material. There is no attempt in the Prayer Book itself to provide for every conceivable set of circumstances. Where supplementary material from

*Common Worship: Pastoral Services* is appropriate for Church of Ireland use this is mentioned in these notes.

## **Notes**

Some general notes are prefixed to the Funeral Service.

### **1. Sentences**

*Sentences of scripture may be used at the entry, after the Introduction, where they lead into prayer, or at other suitable points.*

The sentences are printed after the section entitled, “Receiving the Coffin at the Door” which seems to imply that they are to be used in the Church. However, it is customary in most places to meet the coffin at the Church gate and for sentences to be read in procession to and into the church. The three sentences to be found on p.482 would not be adequate for this purpose and they may need to be supplemented by the selection on p.490 or by other suitable sentences. It may also be helpful for sentences to be said not only at the Committal itself as in the rubric on p.488 but in procession from the Church to the churchyard where this is attached to the Church.

### **2. Psalms and Readings**

*Psalms and readings should normally be drawn from those set out on page 484. A psalm should normally be included, except that a scriptural song may take its place. There must always be one reading from scripture. At Holy Communion there should be two readings, one of which is a gospel reading.*

The list of page 484 has some odd features which seem to presuppose that the normal use will be only one reading. In addition, having commenced with two readings from the epistles, it lists three passages from the Old Testament and four from the epistles and Revelation as “alternative readings”. These “alternative readings” need to be referred back to if a New Testament reading other than from the Gospels is to be read. The Gospel readings are referred to as if it is comparatively unimportant for the Gospels to be read from unless there is Holy Communion. It is very hard to see why the normal arrangement of readings (as for example in Holy Communion Two) is not followed, and why a norm of at least two readings (the psalm appearing after the first reading) is not insisted upon. Given the enormous length of some funerals from the time of ministry in the house to the reception after the interment it shows a strange order of priorities to economize on the reading of God’s Word. However, the priority apparently given to the Romans 8 and 1 Corinthians 15 passages is commendable, even if clumsily presented and expressed.

“Scriptural songs” include versified psalms such as “The Lord’s my shepherd” and “The King of love my shepherd is”.

### **3. The Sermon**

There should be a relevant exposition of the Scriptures read. An appropriate place for any “tribute” to the deceased is before the Penitential Kyries.

There is clearly value in indicating that a funeral address should not be merely a eulogy of the deceased. Nor should it consist of a detailed life history of the person who has died. It has been said that the purpose of the sermon at a funeral is “to proclaim the Gospel in the context of the death of this particular person”, *Common Worship: Pastoral Services*, p.291.

A widespread custom of having a friend or relative of the deceased pay a tribute to them must not be allowed to take the place of the sermon. However, this is often incoherently expressed, or contains inappropriate sentiments or is delivered by a grief-stricken person who breaks down in the course of delivering it, and is not necessarily to be encouraged. It also creates a

either a dichotomy between this and the sermon or alternatively an overlap, both of which are equally undesirable. It is best, if possible, to have one address given by the person's own pastor containing both a personal appreciation (with an emphasis upon what is significant from a Christian perspective) and an exposition of the Gospel applying the message of one or more of the readings to the particular circumstances of the bereaved. As part of the pastoral preparation for the funeral it is usually possible to glean from the relatives not only essential information but also their perspective on their loss and this can be worked into the funeral sermon. A discussion on the words they would use to describe the person who has died or would associate with them can be helpful, and notes can sometimes be made out by more articulate relatives which can be drawn on by the preacher, sometimes even verbatim but put into the broader context of the sermon as a whole.

A funeral sermon should not be excessively long and needs to be disciplined in both its content and delivery. The preacher should not abuse his position of having a "captive audience". He or she should be truthful in what is said but leave matters of judgement entirely to God. As part of the pastoral relationship he or she should already normally know the person who has died well, although all members of the clergy from time to time have to bury people (for example when covering for a clerical neighbour) whom they did not know at all. In the latter case they should gather as much information as possible before preparing their sermon but should not pretend to know the person better than those sitting in front of them.

#### **4. Hymns** *Hymns may be sung at suitable places in the service.*

Where there are two hymns one is suitably sung after the prayer "God of all consolation", and the second one after the prayers. A third hymn can be put in before or after the Sermon.

Care should be taken in the selection of hymns, that the sentiments contained in them are Christian and this also applies to non-scriptural passages which mourners may wish to be read either by one or more of them or by the clergy person. The Scott Holland passage about death being merely a passage from one room to another should never be used. In its original context it was intended by Scott Holland as an example of a sub-Christian attitude to death which falls far short of biblical revelation.

#### **5. The Committal**

*The Committal, though printed as the final section of the service, is used at the point at which it is needed: when the body is buried in a cemetery or churchyard, at the end of the service in church when cremation is not to follow immediately or at a crematorium when the interment of ashes is not to follow immediately.*

The committal involves both a "taking leave" of the person and the reverent disposal of the remains and is the final specifically Christian act in the burial process. This is not to say that the person is to be dismissed from the minds of worshippers - apart from the grief of the mourners and the ministry they will continue to require there are specific acts of liturgical ministry that are still possible, ranging according to theological acceptability from a "memorial" service to a requiem eucharist. A note in the Church of England's *Common Worship: Pastoral Services* p.292 covers an additional possibility,

*When the body or the ashes are to be deposited in a vault, mausoleum or brick grave, these words may be used at the committal:*

We have entrusted our *brother/sister N* to God's mercy, *and now we commit his/her* body to its resting place.

## **The essential structure of the service**

This is given as:

### **The Funeral Service**

Gathering in God's Name  
Prayers of Penitence  
The Collect  
Proclaiming and Receiving the Word  
The Prayers  
The Farewell  
The Committal  
The Dismissal

### **The Funeral Service with Holy Communion**

*After the Prayers*

The Peace  
The Great Thanksgiving  
The Breaking of the Bread  
The Communion

*The Farewell, the Committal and the Dismissal follow*

Apart from its value in indicating the essential "shape" of the funeral rite, it is also possible to discern here a liturgical and theological "norm" however rarely implemented, in which the celebration of the eucharist is an integral part. The relationship between the church on earth and the church in heaven is more fully expressed when the eucharist is celebrated and those present are able to be participants in a manner that is less significant when it is omitted.

## **COMMENTARY**

### **Gathering in God's Name**

#### Receiving the Coffin at the Door

This preliminary ceremony marks a transition from the journey to the church to the funeral liturgy. It is optional. Some helpful notes are included in the Church of England's *Common Worship: Pastoral Services*, p.292 where it says,

- A candle may stand beside the coffin and may be carried in front of the coffin when it is brought into the church.
- The coffin may be sprinkled with water on entry. This may occur at the Commendation, or at the Committal.
- A pall may be placed over the coffin in church by family, friends or other members of the congregation.
- Before or at the start of the service or after the opening prayer and hymn, with the minister's agreement, suitable symbols of the life and faith of the departed person may be placed on or near the coffin.

Forms are provided for the ceremonies described:

### **Sprinkling the coffin with water**

With this water we call to mind *N's* baptism.

As Christ went through the deep waters of death for us, **so may he bring us to the fullness of resurrection life with *N* and all the redeemed.**

or the prayer, "Grant, Lord, that we who are baptized..."

**Covering the coffin with a pall**

We are already God's children,  
but what we shall be has not yet been revealed.  
Yet we know that when Christ appears we shall be like him, for  
we shall see him as he is.

or

On Mount Zion the Lord will remove the pall of sorrow  
hanging over all nations.  
He will destroy death for ever.  
He will wipe away the tears from every face.

**Placing a Bible on the coffin**

Lord Jesus Christ,  
your living and imperishable word brings us to new birth.  
Your eternal promises to us and to *N* are proclaimed in the Bible.

**Placing a cross on the coffin**

Lord Jesus Christ,  
for love of *N* and each one of us  
you bore our sins on the cross.

**Sentences of Scripture**

The positioning of the three sentences seems to presuppose that these will necessarily be said in church. However, it is customary to meet the coffin at the church gate and to proceed in front of it as it is borne into the church saying scripture sentences. These or other scripture sentences are suitable for the purpose. *Common Worship: Pastoral Services* (p.259) has a more logical arrangement of putting the sentences before the reception of the coffin at the door.

Additional sentences are provided on p.490. It would, however, have been more convenient for the officiant if all the sentences had been printed together as in *Alternative Occasional Services 1993* p.75 and in *Common Worship: Pastoral Services* p.259. Apart from those provided the minister may, at his or her discretion, add further sentences considered appropriate to the occasion.

**Greeting**

Strictly, this part of the rite would more accurately be described as "Greeting and Introduction" since it includes an (optional) introduction and introductory prayer. A hymn may be sung at this point.

If there is to be what *Common Worship: Pastoral Services* describes as "a brief tribute" it comes here before the Penitential Kyries (see above).

**Penitential Kyries**

Since these do not constitute a "confession", the form which follows invoking God's forgiveness is precatory rather than declaratory.

**The Collect**



The use described here - invitation to pray, silence, and the collect - is the classic sequence for the use of the collect which, as its name suggests, “collects” the prayer of the people which has been offered in the silence and expresses this as a summary in words.

### **Proclaiming and Receiving the Word**

The manner in which this section is presented has been criticized above. Essentially what is needed is a minimum of two scripture readings with a psalm in between them,

*Either*

Old Testament

Psalm

Gospel *or*

Epistle

Psalm

Gospel

### **The Sermon**

At one time it was unusual for a sermon to be preached at a funeral in most Church of Ireland churches. It is currently the norm, and the exposition and application of the Word is to be regarded as an integral part of funeral ministry.

### **The Apostles' Creed**

The affirmation of faith in the words of the baptismal Creed is a response to the reading and preaching of God’s Word. In it the entire congregation makes explicit its commitment to the basic biblical teaching summarized in the Creed.

The Te Deum, Pt 2, has a creedal content, speaking as it does of Christ who is the “King of glory, the eternal Son” who became incarnate of the Virgin Mary and through his death and resurrection conquered sin and death and opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers. The plea to bring us with all the saints to glory everlasting is particularly relevant at a funeral service.

The Apostles’ Creed, which is the baptismal creed of the Western Church, is a personal affirmation of faith, hence the first person singular, “I believe...” If Holy Communion is celebrated the Nicene Creed is used instead with the emphasis upon the corporate nature of the Church’s faith, “We believe...”

### **The Prayers**

The prayers are not fixed in form although the book provides both a suitable sequence and the resource of a selection of prayers. The sequence consists of

Thanksgiving for the life of the departed.

Prayer for those who mourn

Prayer for readiness to live in the light of eternity.

A concluding prayer is provided which refers to our common faith with particular reference to the third and final section of the Apostles’ Creed. However, this prayer can only be described as “concluding” in a rather qualified way because it is anticipated that the Lord’s Prayer may be said at this point and that another final prayer may be added before the Farewell in Christ. This is less satisfactory than the arrangement in Alternative Occasional

Prayers, 1993, where the prayers begin with the Salutation, “The Lord be with you” and the response, the Lesser Litany and the Lord’s Prayer and continue with particular prayers leading to prayers that can be described as generally “concluding”. This would seem to be a much more satisfactory sequence. A selection of prayers appears on pp491-496. It has to be said that the full range of Anglican spirituality is not represented here since except as perhaps implied in the inclusive language of some of the prayers and the sole explicit formulation of “May God in his infinite love and mercy” on p.486, prayer for the departed is conspicuously lacking even as an option. This may be regarded as a theological impoverishment when compared with what is normative in other Anglican Prayer Books. This is not solely a matter of “churchmanship”. A very sympathetic approach to prayer for the departed may be found in some Evangelical writers, for example Christopher Cocksworth in “*Prayer and the Departed*”, Grove Worship Series 142, Grove Books 1997. The very difficult issue of the “unquiet dead” is tackled in a most courageous fashion by two Evangelical writers in *Requiem Healing - a Christian Understanding of the Dead* by Michael Mitton and Russ Parker, Daybreak, 1991. As indicated in the above, in the commentary on Funeral Services One, prayer for the departed was retained in a biblical format in the 1549 Prayer Book, although later omitted in 1552 and its successors. There is a denunciation of prayer for the departed (part of an attack on the concept of purgatory) in the Second Book of Homilies, “An Homily on Prayer”. However, the text of an early version of one of the Articles of Religion originally prohibiting the practice was altered so that it is not excluded by the “Thirty-nine” (unless it is of such a kind as to suggest “the Romish doctrine of purgatory” - which is prohibited). Modern Church of England service books, including the *Alternative Service Book, 1980* and *Common Worship: Pastoral Services* include it as a matter of course but always among a range of options leaving the matter to the conscience of the individual. There is no reason why, under the provisions of Canon 6 (d) such a form of prayer may not be used in the Church of Ireland. James Usher (1581-1656), Archbishop of Armagh and one of the great luminaries of the Church showed from the fathers and ancient liturgies that the Church made prayer and offering for the dead long before “the discovery of this new found creek of purgatory”, which he had already demonstrated to be an addition to the Catholic faith. He showed to his own satisfaction that the ancient Irish offered the Eucharist for the dead as “a sacrifice of thanksgiving for their salvation rather than of propitiation for their sins, and that none of their prayers or oblations had “any necessary relation to belief in purgatory”. Bishop Jeremy Taylor, explicitly defended the practice as found in the writings of the early Church fathers and said that the Anglican Church “did never condemn by any express article, but left it in the middle, and by her practice declares her faith of the resurrection of the dead, and her interest in the communion of saints, and that the saints departed are a portion of the catholic Church. With Andrewes and Cosin, Bishop Bedell applied to the dead as well as the living the petition in the Anglican Communion Service, that “we and all thy whole Church may obtain remission of our sins.” Herbert Thorndike (1598-1672) said that “the practice of the Church in interceding for them [i.e. for the Departed] at the Celebration of the Eucharist is so general and so ancient, that it cannot be thought to have come in upon imposture, but that the same aspersion will seem to take hold of the common Christianity.”

From this perspective there is a serious omission from the very fine series of prayers on p491 of the Prayer Book. An entire paragraph - the second of the series (which originated in *Common Worship: Pastoral Services* and may be found on p.264) has been left out. It reads,

You promised eternal life to those who believe.  
Remember for good this your servant *N* as we  
also remember *him/her*.  
Bring all who rest in Christ

into the fullness of your kingdom  
where sins have been forgiven and  
death is no more.

Lord in your mercy  
**hear our prayer.**

The scriptural character of this prayer - with its strong use of the highly biblical word “remember” and its hint at the supplication of the Penitent Thief, “Jesus, remember me” - makes this particularly suitable as does also its admirable balance between the state of the departed in Paradise (in Jewish thought an intermediate state visualised as a walled garden of peace and repose) and the ultimate fulfilment of all things in Christ makes it appropriate at the time of a funeral service. In the catacombs the departed are pictured as being with Christ in a place of refreshment, light and peace.

Another omission is in the prayer which begins “Eternal Lord God, you hold all souls in life..” (BCP 494) which reads,

Eternal God, you hold all souls in life:  
May the bright beams of your light and heavenly comfort  
shine on your whole Church...

This appears to have been altered from the version in the Church of England’s *Alternative Service Book* 1980 p.335 where the full text is,

Eternal Lord God, you hold all souls in life:  
shed forth, we pray, upon your whole Church *in  
paradise and on earth* the bright beams of your  
light and heavenly comfort...

[The crucial omission is in italics]

Other helpful prayers of this kind are to be found in the *Alternative Service Book* 1980 and elsewhere in *Common Worship: Pastoral Services*.

*The Alternative Service Book 1980*

Merciful Father and Lord of all life, we praise you that we [altered from orig. “men”] are made in your image and reflect your truth and light. We thank you for the gift of your *son N*, for the love and mercy *he* received from you and showed among us. Above all we rejoice at your gracious promise to all your servants, living and departed: that we shall rise again at the coming of Christ. And we ask that in due time we may share with our *brother* that clearer vision, when we shall see your face in the same Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

O God, the maker and redeemer of all humankind: [altered from orig. “mankind”] grant us, with your servant *N* and all the faithful departed, the sure benefits of your Son’s saving passion and glorious resurrection; that in the last day, when you gather up all things in Christ, we may with them enjoy the fullness of your promises, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Hear, Lord, the prayers of your people, as we remember before you *N our brother*: and grant that we who confess your name on earth may with *him* be made perfect in the kingdom of your glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Remember, O Lord, this your servant, who has gone before us with the sign of faith, and now rests in the sleep of peace. According to your promises, grant to *him* and to all who rest in Christ, refreshment, light, and peace; through the same Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Father of all, by whose mercy and grace your saints remain in everlasting light and peace: we remember with thanksgiving those whom we love but see no longer; and we pray that in them your perfect will may be fulfilled; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

*Common Worship: Pastoral Services*

The Litanies and Responsive prayers in pp366-372 include such prayers as,

Lord Jesus, gentle shepherd who brings rest to our soul,  
give peace to *N* for ever.

For those who have fallen asleep in the hope of rising again,  
that they may see God face to face.

Lord, we commend all those who have died to your unfailing love,  
that in them your will may be fulfilled;  
and we pray that we may share with them in your eternal kingdom;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Among the prayers of Entrusting and Commending on pp373-377 is a version of the Russian Kontakion.

**Give rest, O Christ, to your servant with the saints:  
where sorrow and pain are no more,  
neither sighing, but life everlasting.**

You only are immortal, the creator and maker of all:  
and we are mortal, formed from the dust of the earth,  
and unto earth shall we return.

For so you ordained when you created me, saying:  
“Dust you are and to dust you shall return.”

All of us go down to the dust,  
yet weeping at the grave, we make our song:  
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

**Give rest, O Christ, to your servant with the saints:  
where sorrow and pain are no more,  
neither sighing, but life everlasting.**

Prayer for the departed is part of the practice of the universal church and has existed from the earliest period. It is provided, as a matter of course, in many Anglican Prayer Books and authorized orders of service, for example, in Scotland and Wales as well as England, in the Episcopal Church (USA), in the Anglican Church of Canada, in the Province of New Zealand and in the Province of South Africa.

There are many excellent prayers in the 2004 Prayer Book pp491-497. The thanksgivings to be found on p.496 are taken and adapted from the First Alternative Form of Evening Prayer in the 1926 Book of Common Prayer, p.326.

The “Prayer for the hallowing of a grave” on p.497 is suitable when a person is being buried in unconsecrated ground.

### **The Farewell in Christ**

This form gives expression to the important aspect of “taking leave” of the person who has died and “letting go” which is an essential part of the grieving process. How it is handled (for example with the relatives around the coffin or with the minister standing on his or her own) depends partly on the physical space and partly on local tradition. The versicle and response leads into a time of silence and is followed by the Easter Anthems and a prayer of leave-taking. It is, however, highly regrettable that the Nunc Dimittis is not provided as an

alternative to the Easter Anthems which would seem to be out of place, for example, in the penitential seasons of Advent and Lent, whereas the Nunc Dimittis is always suitable. In some churches the Nunc Dimittis is said or sung as the funeral cortege proceeds down the nave.

The prayer of leave-taking has its own distinct merits, but it is regrettable that there is no provision for a more explicit prayer of commendation as an alternative, such as the form in the *Alternative Service Book* 1980, p.315:

Let us commend our *brother N* to the mercy of God our Maker and Redeemer.

Heavenly Father, by your mighty power you gave us life, and in your love you have given us new life in Christ Jesus. We entrust *N* to your merciful keeping, in the faith of Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who died and rose again to save us, and is now alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit in glory for ever. **Amen.**

*Common Worship: Pastoral Services* has the original form of the prayer in Funeral Services Two with,

we entrust *N* to your mercy

Funeral Services Two has

we now leave your servant ... in your gracious keeping.

Several other forms may be found in *Common Worship: Pastoral Services* under the heading "Prayers of Entrusting and Commending" pp.373-5.

It is interesting that the inhibitions which have affected the 2004 Prayer Book in relation to both prayer for the departed and commendation do not seem to be reflected in the *Methodist Worship Book* 1999, which has both. For example (p.469),

Father of all, we pray for those whom we love, but see no longer. Grant them your peace; let light perpetual shine upon them; and in your loving wisdom and almighty power work in them the good purpose of your perfect will; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The commendation on p.468 reads,

Into your keeping, O merciful God,

Not everyone will identify with the move from the restrained style of the *Alternative Service Book* 1980 to the more flowery language of *Common Worship: Pastoral Services*. The 2004 Prayer is nearer to the former than the latter as is also the *Methodist Worship Book* which has a quite exceptional felicity in its choice of words.

### **The Committal**

The rubric "Sentences of Scripture may be used" is a reminder that there is usually a procession to the graveside (from the Church, or if a distant graveyard is being used, from the entrance to the grave). Some of the sentences not previously utilized are suitable.

The 1 Peter 1:3 text goes well with "The Lord is full of compassion" etc., from Psalm 10:8, 13-17 but does not fit with the wholly different approach of "Man that is born of a woman". Gordon Giles in Chapter 10 of *A Companion to Common Worship*, Vol. 2 ed. Paul Bradshaw, and published as Alcuin Club Collections, ascribes the anthem "Man that is born of a woman" to a monk at St Gall, Notker, who died c.912. It found its way into the Sarum Rite, being used as the antiphons for the *Nunc Dimittis* at Compline in mid Lent.. It is to be found in Funeral Services One and has been taken over in the 2004 Prayer Book in a modern inclusive form. The opening verse comes from Job 14:1-2. The reference to "Lord most holy, Lord most mighty" is derived from a response that used to be part of the text, and which is reminiscent

of the *Trisagion* still used in litanies. According to Giles the final lines have come to us via a Lutheran addition which Miles Coverdale translated, finding their way into the 1549 Prayer Book.

The Act of Committal is derived from the form in *Funeral Services 1987* (later incorporated into *Alternative Occasional Services 1993*) and is more comprehensive than its Church of England counterpart. Nervousness about commendation seems to be the reason for the cautious wording “in your keeping are all those who have departed in Christ”. The latter part of the prayer clearly has its ultimate origin in the form in *Funeral Services One*. If it is desired to make the sign of the cross over the coffin it is appropriate to do this at the words “in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ”...

### **The Lord's Prayer**

It is desirable to say the Lord's Prayer prefaced by the Lesser Litany before the prayers in the main part of the service (as in the 1987-1993), although the only place assigned to it there is at the conclusion of the prayers and with the curious restriction “if the committal is not to follow as part of the same service in the same place, the Lord's Prayer is said now”. The rubric shows all the hallmarks of liturgical fussiness and of some kind of “notion”.

### **The Dismissal**

The prayer “God be in my head” is both traditional and beautiful, but one wonders is this really the appropriate place for it? Ministry in the home would seem to be a more appropriate circumstance.

Of the three endings provided the psalm 16:11 sentence seems a little weak for the conclusion of the funeral liturgy, the blessing is admirable, and the grace is a little bit bare on its own. A strong ending can be provided by prefacing the eschatological prayer “May God in his infinite love and mercy...” to the grace, as follows:

May God in his infinite love and mercy bring  
the whole church, living and departed in the  
Lord Jesus, to a joyful resurrection and the  
fulfilment of his eternal kingdom: And the  
grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the  
love of God, and the fellowship  
of the Holy Spirit be with us all evermore. **Amen.**

This sets the conclusion of the funeral liturgy in the wide context of the eternal purpose of God and the redemption of humanity rather than in limiting consideration to the merely personal as in “God be in my head” etc., admirable though this is for the individual.

### **When the body is brought to Church on the eve of a funeral**

Customs vary widely in current practice in the Church of Ireland. In some places the reception of the body is attended by a large number of people who will not necessarily be present at the funeral, so it is a significant event. In other places the reception of the body will be attended only by two or three family members. And in others the custom is still for the body to be kept at home and for a service to take place there prior to the funeral.

This variety of usage gives rise to the rubric, *This form may also be adapted for use in the home before the funeral service.*

The form used at the door is the same as that used in the burial office except that here it is mandatory.

Sentences of scripture are read as the minister precedes the coffin into the church.

Although a hymn is provided for, this presupposes a reasonable attendance of people who are willing and able to sing.

It is surprising that no alternative is provided to Psalm 139. The *Alternative Service Book* 1980 supplied verses from Psalm 27 as well as verses from Psalm 139.

A reading from scripture is mandated. The Romans 8 reading was recommended in the *ASB* although for no apparent reason it preceded the psalm.

The Nunc Dimittis would seem much better suited to the end of the actual funeral (where it does not appear at all in Funeral Services Two) than to this order, and it is regrettable that the traditional version is not printed as an alternative.

The selection of prayers is helpful but incomplete, the additional prayers in the *ASB* pp334-5 being a more adequate resource. The modern version of “Lighten our darkness” has lost its classic rhythm, and reads better if it is in the form,

Lighten our darkness, we beseech you, O Lord,  
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.**

One option not considered here is the use of the Litany (Two) parts 1-3 followed by prayers of simplicity and dignity as in the *ASB* (op. cit).

#### **A Form for use at the Burial of Ashes after Cremation**

This order consists of sentences, prayer, a reading, the act of committal with a further prayer, the Lord’s Prayer and the Grace. The one outstanding feature of this order is the prayer following the act of interment which is worthy of a wider use and could be used as one of the prayers at the reception of the body or in the funeral service itself. Unlike many of the more recent compositions this prayer has a good structure, a strong rhythm, and a positive content. It deserves to be better known.

The Bishops’ guidelines on the committal of ashes on land or at sea were not at hand when these Notes were being prepared.

#### **Funeral service for a child**

This provides liturgically for one of the most difficult acts of ministry that any deacon or priest may be called upon to perform. There is an excellent selection of sentences, a brief and helpful introduction following the greeting, and an initial prayer acknowledging the special grief involved in the loss of a child. The use of the collect is correctly explained and the prayer itself is appropriate. The provision for readings is set forth more rationally than that for the standard burial service, and the choice of psalmody is suitable (23 or 84:1-14). Following the sermon and the Apostles’ Creed or its alternatives the prayers occur, the Litany form on p.510 being drawn from *Common Worship: Pastoral Services*, the other prayers being well-chosen and highly appropriate. That on page 502, already commented on, might well be substituted for the shorter form under the heading “The Communion of Saints”.

#### **A Form for use in the Home, Funeral Home or Mortuary prior to the Service in Church**

It is not obligatory to use any particular form in the home, but this order provides some resources for so doing. It is not clear that the prayers on pp515-6 will “wear” well in actual use, something less prolix being more highly desirable. However, the prayer about the weeping of Jesus at the tomb of Lazarus is succinct and helpful, the plural “consolations” being more commonly used when this prayer appears.

At the conclusion of the service, following the Lord's Prayer, it may be helpful to say,

Receive into your safekeeping, O Lord,  
ourselves and those whom we love, and  
teach us, in life and death,  
to put our trust in you,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The "leaving" in God's gracious keeping on p.515 would appear to be likely to anticipate, to some extent, the leave-taking in the act of committal following the service in church leading to a duplication or overlap.



## **GUIDELINES ON THE LITURGICAL USE OF OIL**

**circulated to the clergy of the Church of Ireland**

**drawn up by the Liturgical Advisory Committee**

**March 2011**

*In what follows the intention is not to indicate that the use of oil is in any way being promoted other perhaps than in the context of healing; the intention is simply to ensure that when it is used optionally this is done in a manner that is appropriate and liturgically informed. These guidelines are mainly concerned with public and liturgical worship rather than with what is done more informally*

*There are, traditionally, three oils used at worship.*

*One, the oil of catechumens, has been associated with the making of the sign of the cross on the heads of those to be baptized.*

*Another, the oil of chrism, has been used after baptism as a sign of our incorporation through that sacrament into the prophetic, royal and priestly life of Jesus himself. The third, the oil for the anointing of the sick, is a biblical sign both of healing and forgiveness. Where any or all of these are used, these guidelines may be found to be helpful*

God often chooses the everyday things of life to use as symbols of his grace for all people. By them he makes his presence felt in the world. Oil reminds us of God's endless generosity to us, and the eternal nature of his love. The richness of this symbol of blessing is associated in the New Testament with Jesus Christ, the anointed one, and with the anointing of Christians in the Holy Spirit. As with all symbolic actions, the liturgical use of oil if carried out at all must be performed strongly and abundantly so that the nature of God's action is made known more clearly. It is customary that the oil of chrism – olive oil perfumed with balsam - is always blessed by a bishop. A resource for a chrism Eucharist, where all three oils are often prayerfully prepared, as well as for receiving oils into a parish, is provided in *Common Worship: Times and Seasons*. (p 278) These oils are a reminder of the priestly and royal character of the ministry of *all* the baptised (1 Peter 2.9) and hence the provision for all the people of God to receive anointing as part of the prayer for personal renewal at the Pentecost Eucharist has much to commend it (*Times and Seasons*, p. 493).

**HEALING** – The use of oil in the ministry of healing and laying on of hands is rooted in the most ancient practices of the church. When Jesus sent out the Twelve to share in his mission, they anointed the sick with oil (Mark 6.13) and it was the practice of the first Christians (James 5.14). The 2004 *Book of Common Prayer* provides a framework for anointing with oil (p. 448/9). The sensitive use of this ministry is greatly to be encouraged. The oil used at this service, which should be pure olive oil, may be consecrated – if this has not previously been done for example at the chrism Eucharist – by the bishop or priest who presides. The prayer for sanctifying the oil provided in the Prayer Book can provide a focus of prayerful thanksgiving before the actual anointing.

**BAPTISM** - If (and it is very much an option) the candidate is to be anointed before the act of baptism takes place, pure olive oil should be used, reflecting the practice of athletes preparing for a contest (the oil of catechumens). It is appropriately used at the time of the making of the sign of the cross on the forehead of the candidate.

If anointing takes place after the act of baptism, the oil of chrism should be used as a sign of the

richness of the Holy Spirit (which is referred to in terms of anointing in the New Testament – 1 John 2. 20-27 and II Corinthians 1. 21-22), to echo the scriptural anointing of kings (1 Samuel 16.13), our royal priesthood (1 Peter 2.9) and the seal of the saints (Revelation 7.3). Its relationship with the name 'Christ', the anointed one, is a reminder that each baptism is related to the baptism of Jesus. Anointing with oil should however not obscure the central act of baptism being the dipping of the candidates in water or the pouring of water over them in the name of the Trinity. The anointing is an option which may be helpful to make the meaning of baptism clear –but it adds nothing to the baptism itself. Thus a helpful place to do it may be after the congregation have received and welcomed the new member; the anointing then becomes a further demonstration of the meaning of incorporation into the royal priesthood of the church.

**CONFIRMATION** - If oil is to be used at services of Confirmation (an option the use of which is entirely at the discretion of the bishop with sensitivity to the local situation), it should again be the oil of chrism, used to indicate the sealing of the Holy Spirit and the strengthening of the candidate for service. Here too it should not detract from the central action of prayer with the laying on of hands. The anointing might take place after the Confirmation and before the Commission, but never in such a way as to imply that without it either baptism or confirmation is in any way incomplete.

**ORDINATION** – The Berkeley Consultation on Ordination Liturgy, which was held by the International Anglican Liturgical Consultation and which considerably informed the contents of the revised ordinal in the Irish Prayer Book of 2004, was inclined to the view that anointing at ordination needed very careful consideration and could bring an element of confusion to the rite. Indeed there is a danger that anointing in this context could create an unhelpful sense of separation between the ordained and the other Christians whose ministry derives from their baptism. If a bishop agrees with an ordinand that anointing around the time of ordination may have some particular value, it is suggested that this be done in a devotional context perhaps separate from the ordination service itself. In such a situation, the bishop might consider anointing either the head or the palms of the hands of those to be ordained as priests with chrism. However, these guidelines should not be seen as recommending this practice, or indeed a further anointing of the head of a person being ordained to the episcopate.

It may also be appropriate to consider the use of oil at the Celebration of a New Ministry, as opposed to an actual ordination.

**THE STUDY OF LITURGY: THE ORDINAL  
BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER**

**2004**

**COMMENTARY PREPARED BY**

**REVD CANON M.C. KENNEDY, M.A., B.D. Ph.D.**

## CONTENTS

<b>ORDINATION SERVICES ONE</b>	5
Historical Information	
Sources	
The Canonical Position	
Commentary	
The Title	
The Preface	
<b><i>THE FORM AND MANNER OF MAKING OF DEACONS</i></b>	11
The Sermon	
The Presentation	
The Litany	
[Holy Communion]	
The Epistle	
The Collect	
The Examination	
The Act of Ordination	
The Gospel	
Deacon's participation in the liturgy	
Post-Communion	
<b>THE FORM AND MANNER OF ORDERING OF PRIESTS</b>	15
Sermon	
The Presentation	
The Litany	
[Holy Communion]	
The Epistle	
The Gospel	
The Charge	
The Examination	
Silent Prayer (of the People)	
Veni Creator Spiritus	
Pre-Ordination Prayer	
The Laying on of hands	
The Formula of Ordination	
Notes on the Ordination Formula	
The Delivery of the Bible	
Resumption of Communion	
Post-communion collects	
Additional directions	
<b>THE FORM OF ORDAINING OR CONSECRATING         OF AN ARCHBISHOP OR BISHOP</b>	21
The Communion	
The Collect	
The Epistle	
The Gospel	
The Presentation	
Certification and Declaration	
Exhortation to pray	

The Litany  
Interrogation  
The Episcopal Habit  
Veni Creator Spiritus  
Pre-ordination prayer  
The Act of Ordination  
Giving of the Bible with Exhortation  
Porrectio instrumentorum  
The Communion  
Post-Communion

## **ORDINATION SERVICES TWO**

26

Some information

The Notes

The threefold ministry  
Consecration of Bishops  
Ordination of Priests and Deacons  
The Declarations  
Forms of Service  
Readings  
Vesture  
The Presentation

The Structure of the Rites

Commentary

The Gathering of God's People  
The Greeting  
Responsorial Sentences  
Preface/Introduction  
The Presentation  
The Collect  
Proclaiming and Receiving the Word  
DEACONS  
PRIESTS  
BISHOP

The Sermon

The Nicene Creed

The Rite of Ordination

The Presentation (Part Two, bishops only)

The Declarations

The functions of deacons  
The functions of priests  
The functions of bishops

The Interrogation

Deacons  
Priests  
Bishops

The People's Assent

The Prayers (including the Litany, Silent Prayer by the People  
and the Veni Creator Spiritus for priests and bishops)

The Ordination Prayer with the Laying on of hands

[A note on the practicalities]  
The Vesting  
The Giving of the Bible  
Presentation to the People  
The Peace  
Celebrating at the Lord's Table  
    At the Preparation of the Table  
    The Great Thanksgiving  
    Communion  
    Going out as God's People.

**THE INSTITUTION SERVICE 2007**

47

The Gathering of God's People  
Proclaiming and Receiving the Word  
The Institution  
The Commission  
    First Form  
    Second Form

**NOTES ON SOME ISSUES**

51

1. Sequential or Direct Ordination
2. The theological significance of the ordained ministry
3. "Lay celebration"

# ORDINATION SERVICES ONE

## Historical information

The Prayer Book of 1549 contained no Ordinal. The first Anglican Ordinal was published separately in 1550. It was bound in to the (revised) Prayer Book of 1552. This practice has continued to the present day, although reference to the title page of "The Book of Common Prayer" (2004) will show that the Ordinal is still notionally distinct from the Prayer Book itself. A similar view is implied in the Preamble and Declaration prefixed to the Church Constitution \*2, BCP p.776-7.

Some alterations to the 1550 Ordinal were made in 1552; and there was a significant revision in 1662. Essentially, it is the 1662 Ordinal that appears in the Book of Common Prayer 2004 as "Ordination Services One" (and which in practice may be considered part of it) incorporating 'modifications appropriate to the altered situation of the Church of Ireland as a disestablished Church following the passing of the Irish Church Act of 1869 and reflecting further changes in the church's ministry' - including the authorization of the admission of women as deacons in 1984 and as priests and bishops in 1990. This rite remains fully authorised and, together with Ordination Services Two constitutes a liturgical expression of the doctrine of ministry held by the Church of Ireland. In practice its use has been superseded since at the time of writing Ordination Services Two are used exclusively in every diocese. The latter may be regarded as representing current thought.

## Sources

The sources of the material in Ordination Services One are chiefly the pre-Reformation (Sarum) rites and Bucer's *De Ordinatione Legitima* with some phrases from Luther, as reordered by Archbishop Thomas Cranmer, who also made his own personal creative contribution to the 1550/1552 rite. This was not entirely a solitary effort on Cranmer's part, since he had the assistance of a committee of leading churchmen to assist him in drawing up the original orders, and was influenced to some extent by criticism and advice. Improvements in the 1662 service came from various contributors including Bishops Cosin, Wren, and Sanderson.

## The Canonical Position

The Canons governing **Ordination** are to be found in Part III of Chapter Nine of the Church Constitution, no's 17-25.

### **17. The form of ordering of bishops, priests and deacons**

That form of ordination which is prescribed in the Book of Common Prayer or elsewhere for the ordering of bishops, priests and deacons, and no other, shall be used.

This ensures that only a properly authorised form of service is used for the admission of candidates for holy orders. This is theologically significant since it is vital to establish that all ministers of the Church are validly ordained. The legal status of the minister is also important, for example, at a wedding, where in both the Republic of Ireland and in Northern Ireland marriages performed in Church of Ireland churches must be performed by Church of Ireland clergy if they are to be recognised by the State.

The wording is such as to allow for the use of a form of ordination other than that in the Book of Common Prayer. This covered the use of the form in Alternative Occasional Services (1993), although this has now been superseded and the current provision, as indicated above, is to be found in the Prayer Book of 2004.

The most historically correct legal designation of an Anglican deacon or priest is "clerk (*clericus*)

in holy orders".

### **18. Four solemn times appointed for the making of ministers**

In accordance with the ancient customs of the Church whereby certain times were allotted in which alone holy orders might be given or conferred, it is hereby decreed that no deacon or presbyter shall be made or ordained but only upon the Sundays immediately following those days which are commonly called ember days, except as otherwise allowed in the preface to the Ordinal. And this shall be done in the time of Divine Service, in the presence of the archdeacon or his deputy, and of at least two presbyters. And no person shall be made a deacon and a presbyter on the same day.

The Ember Days are the Wednesday, Friday and Saturday after the First Sunday in Lent, the Feast of Pentecost, September 14th and December 13th. The Preface (BCP p.288) allows admittance to the diaconate "at the times appointed in the Canon, or else, on urgent occasion, upon some other Sunday or Holy-day". Because of university terms it is, regrettably, unusual for ordinations to take place at the traditional times, a Sunday in June being customary in most dioceses.

Ordinations are public events and are set within the context of the Eucharist. The Archdeacon presents the candidate deacons and priests. The presbyters are not only witnesses of the ordination but, when priests are being ordained, are also participants since they join in the laying on of hands on the candidates (who are being admitted into the corporate body of the presbyterate).

Nor are the congregation mere spectators of the act of ordination, but are involved in the liturgy as a whole, especially through receiving communion. A very unsatisfactory custom whereby only the officiating clergy, candidates and close family made their communion seems now to have disappeared.

### **19 Letters dimissory**

No bishops shall admit into holy orders any person coming from outside his diocese, unless that person brings letters dimissory from the bishop from whose diocese he comes.

This was an important safeguard in the days when little might be known of an ordinand coming from outside the diocese in which he was to be ordained. It remains significant as an indication that there is no automatic right of transfer, and that moving from one diocese to another requires the permission of the bishop whose diocese one is leaving as well as an appointment from the diocese in which one hopes to serve. This consideration also applies to those already ordained, although it is highly unusual for a bishop to refuse permission to a clergyperson wishing to accept an incumbency or curacy in another diocese.

Certain dioceses in the Church of Ireland tended at one time to work on a "closed shop" basis, preference being given to applicants from within; but a shortage of clergy has tended to foster greater mobility throughout the Church. It is, in general, preferable that appointments be made on the basis of merit.

### **20. Conditions of admission of such as are to be ordained**

Any person seeking to be admitted into holy orders shall first exhibit to the bishop of the diocese in which he seeks to be ordained a certificate that he holds a nomination to some curacy or ecclesiastical preferment then vacant or shortly to become vacant in that diocese, or to some church therein where he may attend the cure of souls and execute his ministry: Provided that the bishop may also admit into holy orders

- (a) any person, for general assistance or for missionary purposes in his diocese,
- (b) any person, for missionary purposes in foreign parts, and
- (c) any person, for general assistance in his diocese, who will continue to earn his living in a lay occupation or who will have some other source of income sufficient



for his needs, pursuant to any rules in that behalf made by the House of Bishops and approved by the General Synod.

This canon underlines the principle that ordination is related to and is expected to lead to ministry in a specific location. It is also intended to ensure that the person being ordained has the means to support themselves in their ministry. However, there is a certain amount of flexibility in the arrangements.

Under 20(a) "general assistance" would allow for the appointment of a diocesan curate, while "missionary purposes" would allow for the admission to holy orders of a deputation secretary of a missionary society.

20(b) allows the ordination of a person who is preparing to serve abroad with a missionary society such as CMS, Crosslinks, USPG or CMJ prior to their leaving for the mission field. However, under present-day conditions it might well be more suitable in most cases for the person to be ordained abroad under the auspices of the local Church.

20(c) provides a canonical basis for the non stipendiary ministry.

## **21. Qualifications of such as are to be ordained**

A bishop will not admit any person into holy orders unless

- (1) he has been baptized and confirmed;
- (2) (a) desiring to be a deacon, he is twenty three years old, unless he has a faculty from the archbishop;  
(b) desiring to be a priest, he is twenty four years old;
- (3) (a) he has taken a degree in some university in Ireland or at some recognized university elsewhere, or  
(b) he has attended a course, of training approved by the House of Bishops, and  
(c) he is able to yield an account of his faith according to the Articles of Religion received by the Church, and to confirm the same by sufficient testimonies out of the holy scriptures;
- (4) he shall produce letters of testimony of his conduct and character from the college where he has studied or from three or four senior ministers, and certificates of conduct from other persons of standing who shall have known him for the preceding three years at least.

21(1) ensures that all members of the clergy are (sacramentally speaking) fully incorporated into the life of the Church prior to ordination. A convert minister of a denomination in which there is no confirmation would have to be confirmed as well as ordained if he or she wished to practice their ministry in the Church of Ireland. It would appear that presbyteral confirmation as administered, for example, in the Presbyterian Church, would not suffice, although confirmation by a presbyter, using oil consecrated by the bishop, such as occurs within the Roman Catholic Church, would be regarded as acceptable for the purpose. A special case might arise in the case of those Lutheran Churches with which a relationship of mutual recognition has been established through the Porvoo declaration, since these are episcopal churches although confirmation is normally administered by presbyters.

2(a) the minimum age for a deacon is also laid down in the Preface (see below). A faculty modifying this requirement must be obtained from the archbishop of the Province.

2(b) There is no provision for permitting the ordination of a priest under the age of twenty-four.

3(a)(b) fall short of the actual requirements in practice of one who is to be admitted to the sacred ministry since the canon, as it stands, seems to suggest that either a university degree (in any subject) or a course of training approved by the House of Bishops will suffice. Currently a Master of Theology degree is required in the Church of Ireland irrespective of what previous academic qualifications are held by the candidate.

However 3(c) may be taken as implying the necessity of study of the Anglican tradition and its Scriptural basis.

(4) reinforces the emphasis on suitability of character, which is also one of the concerns of the Selection Conference that recommends candidates for training.

## **22. Ordination of Women**

Men and women alike may be ordained to the holy order of deacons, of priests, or of bishops, without any distinction or discrimination on grounds of sex, and men and women so ordained shall alike be referred to and known as deacons, priests, or bishops.

In 1976 the General Synod passed a resolution favouring the admission of women to the priesthood, "subject to the enactment of the necessary legislation". In 1980 draft legislation failed by a small margin to get the two-thirds majority required in the House of Clergy. In 1984 women were admitted to the diaconate; and in 1990 legislation, the main part of which consisted of this canon, was passed admitting them to the orders of priests and bishops. No provision was made for dissidents apart from a declaration by the bishops respecting their consciences and stating that they would not be disadvantaged in their ministry, a statement which was "received" but not "affirmed" in 1991 by the General Synod. The equality of women and men in the Church's ministry, is, therefore, absolute. All references to the candidate deacon, priest, or bishop in the ordinal as "he" are to be understood inclusively.

## **23. The examination of such as are to be ordained**

Before any person shall be admitted into holy orders, he shall be carefully examined by the bishop, and by the archdeacon (or in his absence by one appointed in his place). If the bishop shall think fit, he shall be further examined by one or more other clergymen appointed by him for that purpose: Provided that if the bishop is prevented from acting, it shall be sufficient that such person be examined by the said clergymen.

The significance of a "deacons' exam" or a "priests' exam" is much reduced since the establishment of certain minimum standards assessed at university or theological college level; and in some dioceses such exams have been done away with. However, the "examination" referred to in the canon seems to have been intended to assess the totality of the person's fitness for ordination; and it still remains essential for the bishop to be fully satisfied that the candidate is worthy in all respects to be ordained. The Archdeacon, under the bishop, has a special responsibility in this regard (see Commentary, below). The bishop's examining chaplains retain a certain role in post-ordination training.

## **24 Suspension of Bishops contravening Canons 20 to**

**23** [Makes provision for this unlikely event]

## **25. To prevent simoniacal contracts**

Every archbishop or bishop, before ordaining any person to holy orders, or installing, instituting or collating any person to any ecclesiastical dignity or cure of souls, shall require every such person to make and subscribe the following declaration against simony:

I have not made, by myself or by any other person on my behalf, any payment, contract, or promise of any kind whatsoever (save that I will faithfully perform my duty) touching or concerning the obtaining of nor will I at any time hereafter perform

or satisfy, in whole or in part, any such (*the sacred order of* , *the chaplaincy of the curacy of* or *the benefice of* , *each to be specially stated by each declarant*); nor will I at any time hereafter perform or satisfy, in whole or in part, any such payment, contract, or promise made by any other person with or without my knowledge or consent.

"Simony" is the payment of money to obtain ecclesiastical preferment. It may be noted that the word "promise" does not necessarily apply to money only. For example it would appear to be unlawful for nominators to request an applicant to agree to a particular liturgical or pastoral policy as a precondition for appointment, although it would be entirely in order for opinions to be expressed.

Two other canons are also relevant to the ordained ministry,

### **33. The manner of life of ministers**

A minister shall not give himself to such occupations, habits or recreations as do not befit his sacred calling, or may be detrimental to the duties of his office, or tend to be a just cause of offence to others. He shall be diligent in daily prayer and intercession, in the examination of his conscience, and in the study of the holy scriptures and such other studies as pertain to his ministerial duties, and to frame and fashion his life and that of his family according to the doctrine of Christ, and to make himself and them, as far as in him lies, wholesome examples and patterns to the flock of Christ.

The first sentence underlines the importance of the whole manner of life of the minister being suitable to his or her high calling. The duty (not option) of study of the holy scriptures and such other studies as pertain to ministerial duty is enjoined. The minister is expected not only to set a wholesome example in his or her own person, but the witness of the Christian life of the minister's family is indicated.

### **34. The occupations of ministers**

(1) No minister who holds any ecclesiastical position shall engage in trade or any other occupation unsuitable to his sacred calling, or in such manner as to affect adversely the performance of that person's duties.

(2) If any question shall be raised as to whether any such engagement is unsuitable to his sacred calling or detrimental to the performance of his duties, the matter shall be referred to the ordinary for his decision and for necessary instructions to the minister, and any such instructions shall be obeyed.

(3) [Deals with the question of an appeal]

Some regulation to ensure that a person in holy orders does not engage in an occupation unsuitable to their sacred calling or in such manner as to affect adversely the performance of their duty would seem appropriate. However, it is not clear why "trade" should be singled out. A non-stipendiary minister may well be involved in their secular occupation with some form of trade, and it is hard to see why this should be regarded as inherently unsatisfactory. It would appear that this canon is in need of further revision.

Further relevant material in the Church Constitution is to be found under the heading of "Qualifications of Ministers" in Chapter IV, Part V.

### **Commentary**

(1) **Title** (BCP p.518) "The form and manner of making, ordaining, and consecrating of bishops, priests, and deacons, according to the order of the Church of Ireland". In the Ordination Services One deacons are "made", priests are "ordained", and bishops are "ordained" or "consecrated". The emphasis on the threefold ministry contrasts with that of other Protestant churches, for example the

Presbyterians and Methodists, where there is just one order of ministry. Bishops, priests and deacons are regarded as the three orders of ministers in the (universal) Church: the manner of "making, ordaining, and consecrating" them is that of the Church of Ireland, which is regarded as part of the universal Church.

(2) **Preface** (BCP p.51 8). This is a very important declaration of intent. It is claimed that "it is evident unto all men diligently reading holy Scripture and ancient authors, that from the Apostles' time there have been these Orders of ministers in Christ's Church; Bishops, Priests and Deacons". No-one took this ministry upon himself, but only executed any of the offices named if he were first called, tried and examined and was known to have such qualities "as are requisite to the same"; and also, "by public Prayer, with Imposition of Hands, was approved and admitted to it by lawful authority". And "to the intent that" these Orders might be continued and reverently used and esteemed in the Church of Ireland; no one might be accounted or taken to be a lawful Bishop, Priest, or Deacon in the Church of Ireland, or suffered to execute any of the said functions, "except he be called, tried, examined, and admitted thereunto, according to the Form hereafter following, or hath had formerly Episcopal Consecration or Ordination". Minimum ages are established as twenty-three for a deacon (unless a faculty has been obtained), twenty-four for a priest, and thirty for a bishop. The person's character must be virtuous, he must be learned in the Latin tongue and be sufficiently instructed in holy Scripture, and otherwise competently learned. He is to be ordained on a Sunday following the Ember Days or upon some other Sunday or Holy-day "in the face of the Church", using the prescribed forms.

The Preface thus sets its face against self-appointed ministers such as have been found in some of the sects from Reformation times onwards. It commits the Church to maintaining the historical threefold ministry which it believes go back to the Apostles' time. The latter point is reinforced by the statement in the Preamble and Declaration prefixed to the Church Constitution (BCP 776, 1:2), "The Church of Ireland ... will maintain inviolate the Three Orders of Bishops, Priests or Presbyters, and Deacons in the sacred Ministry".

The initial statement about the origins of the threefold ministry is not without its historical difficulty. Although the term "bishop" (Gk *episcopos*) is to be found in the New Testament (Acts 20:28, Phil 1:1, 1 Tim 3:2; Titus 1:7) with the meaning of "overseer", and the term "elder" (Gk. *presbuteros*, "priest" for short) with the meaning of "senior" (Acts 14:23; 16:4; 20:17; 21:18), and also the term "deacon" (Phil 1:1; 1. Tim 2:8; 3:12), it would appear that the "bishops" and "presbyters" were originally different names for the same sort of officers (compare Acts 20:17 with Acts 20:28). Moreover there are lists of ministers in the New Testament which do not mention either these or "deacons" (for example Ephesians 4:11 which speaks of "apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers"). The first mention of a transmission of apostolic authority from one generation to another seems to be that in I Clement (a letter from the Church at Rome to the Church at Corinth c. A.D. 96) in which it is said, "They (the apostles), having received complete foreknowledge ... appointed the aforesaid ("bishops" and "deacons") and after a time *made provision that on their death* other approved men should succeed to their ministry ". The first explicit mention of the threefold ministry of "bishops", "priests" and "deacons" is that in the epistles of St Ignatius of Antioch written by him to various churches on his way to martyrdom in Rome c. 112 A.D. In his *Epistle to the Smyrnaeans* (\*8) he said, "All of you follow the *bishop* as Jesus Christ followed the Father, and follow the *presbytery* as the Apostles; and respect the *deacons* as the commandment of God". It is not clear, however, that monarchical episcopacy was universal in the time of St. Ignatius. It is probably significant that in his letter to the Church at Rome he makes no mention of a single "bishop".

The intention expressed in the Preface to the Ordinal to continue "these Orders" is significant - in the context of the ongoing Anglican-Roman Catholic discussion about Anglican Orders. Pope Leo XIII in an encyclical letter *Apostolicae Curae* of 1896 alleged various defects in the Prayer Book

Ordinal sufficient to make it incapable of transmitting the grace of holy orders. Among these was that of lack of "intention" to ordain priests in the sense in which their function is understood in the Roman Catholic Church. However, the historic ministry which the Anglican churches are committed to maintain is understood in the Ordination Services One in a Scriptural sense and this is all that is required to ensure authenticity. So far as the intention of the ordaining bishop is concerned (or that of the ordinand) it does not seem necessary to go beyond the teaching of St. Thomas Aquinas (c. 1225-74) who said that all that was needed for the validity of a sacramental act was that the minister should "intend to do what the Church does". A defect of "form" was also alleged in the encyclical, and this will be discussed below in connection with changes made in 1662 to the wording of the ordination formulae.

It will be noticed that episcopal ordination is insisted upon for the exercise of ministry. The wording here was strengthened at the Restoration (in the 1662 revision) explicitly to exclude non-episcopally ordained persons. However, it must be said that this is a *domestic* rule of the Anglican Churches (as well as of the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Communion) and does not necessarily imply an unfavourable judgement on the validity or efficacy of the ministries of non-episcopal bodies. It may be noted that under certain circumstances some non-sacramental functions may be carried out in a Church of Ireland Church by visiting ministers of other (including non-episcopal) Churches - see Chapter Nine of the Church Constitution, Canon 10,

**Canon 10 Visiting ministers of Churches not in communion with the Church of Ireland.**

A minister or accredited preacher of such Christian denominations not in full communion with the Church as may from time to time be specified by the House of Bishops may, in such circumstances as may from time to time be prescribed by the House, and with the permission of the ordinary, which permission shall be without prejudice to the normal maintenance of the recognised rules of church order,

(a) deliver an address in any church or cathedral at any service,

(b) read the service of Morning or Evening Prayer or any other service (other than the Holy Communion) authorised under Canon 5 (1) (or such parts thereof as the ordinary may decide) either jointly with, or in the absence of, a minister of the Church of Ireland or a reader authorised by the bishop.

The ordinary shall satisfy himself, before giving such permission, that the participation of such visiting minister is acceptable to the incumbent and the churchwardens (if any) of any church concerned, and that it is not contrary to any provision of the civil law.

**THE FORM AND MANNER OF MAKING OF DEACONS**

**(3) Sermon**

The sermon at the beginning of the rite is a peculiar feature of the ordination of deacons and priests in the Book of Common Prayer. The function of the sermon is described as "declaring the Duty and Office of such as come to be admitted Deacons; how necessary that Order is in the Church of Christ; and also, how the people ought to esteem them in their Office".

For the deacon's duties one may refer to the bishop's declaration incorporated into the Examination on pp291, 292,

It appertaineth to the Office of a Deacon, in the Church where he shall be appointed to serve, to assist the Priest in Divine Service, and specially when he administereth the Holy Communion, and to help him in the distribution thereof, and to read holy Scriptures and Homilies in the Church; and to instruct the youth in the Catechism; in the absence of the Priest to baptize infants; and to preach, if he be admitted thereto by the Bishop. And furthermore, it is his Office, where provision is so made, to search for the sick, poor, and

impotent people of the Parish, to intimate their estates, names, and places where they dwell, unto the Curate, that by his exhortation they may be relieved with the alms of the Parishioners, or others.

The deacon therefore has a liturgical role of assisting the priest, especially at Holy Communion, and with a particular emphasis on the reading of Scripture. He has a teaching role, particularly in catechizing, and he has a pastoral role, chiefly in relation to the sick.

Clearly this is a rather dated view of the role of the deacon, and it needs to be compared and contrasted with the definition to be found in the Book of Common Prayer (2004) pp555, 560. The reference to the Homilies relates to the Reformation era when many clergy were not trained to preach, and only those specially licensed by the bishop were permitted to do so. The permission to baptize only "in the absence of the priest" was intended to emphasize that this was essentially a part of the priestly ministry and was only to be performed by the deacon in case of necessity. The division of labour in pastoral work seems a little odd in that the deacon seems to have been expected to do the actual visitation and the role of the "Curate" (Incumbent of the parish) was to exhort the people to give alms for the relief of the needy. However, this does at least indicate that social concern was an essential ingredient of the ministry of the Church at least so far as the needs of individuals was concerned. The emphasis on charitable service ties in with the role of the deacon in the early Church when deacons were often "permanent" and did not necessarily become priests and with the supposed origin of the office of the deacon in Acts 5:2ff. Deacons, described as such in the New Testament, seem to have had a servant's role, as their name, derived from the Gk. *diakoneo* "to serve", clearly suggests.

#### **(4) Presentation**

The ordinand is presented to the Bishop by the Archdeacon (or, in his absence, one appointed in his stead). This is part of his ancient office, as confirmed by the Church Constitution Chapter 2 \*41, "It belongs to the office of an archdeacon to examine, or assist in examining, such persons as are to be promoted to holy orders, or to be instituted into ecclesiastical benefices, and to present persons, examined and approved, unto the bishop for imposition of hands and canonical institution".

The emphasis on the quality of those to be admitted to the diaconate is significant,

Take heed that the Persons, whom ye present unto us, be apt and meet, for their learning and godly conversation, to exercise their ministry duly, to the honour of God, and the edifying of his Church.

In Anglican Christianity there has always been an ideal of a "learned" ministry, which, in the Reformed tradition is equipped for teaching and preaching. There is also a strong emphasis on the moral fitness of ordinands. The Bishop's warning at the beginning of the service takes up the concern of the Preface that a candidate deacon must be "a man of virtuous conversation, and without crime", and should also be "learned in the Latin tongue, and sufficiently instructed in holy Scripture and otherwise competently learned". To ensure that the candidate is suitably qualified not only is the Archdeacon required to declare this but the people are given an opportunity to declare any impediment or notable crime.

#### **(5) The Litany**

This is preceded by a rubric directing the bishop to commend the candidates to the prayers of the people. The Litany enables all present to fulfil this request. A special petition is inserted "That it may please thee to bless these thy servants, now to be admitted to the Order of Deacons, and to pour thy grace upon them: that they may duly execute their Office, to the edifying of thy Church, and the glory of thy holy Name". The Litany concludes at its true ending, the extraneous material (See BCP 1926 pp26, 27) being omitted as also in the standard version (in BCP 2004 pp 170-4).

## [The Holy Communion]

- (6) **Epistle** There is a choice of epistle, that from 1 Tim 3:8 referring to the character and behaviour of deacons, that from Acts 6:2ff dealing with the presumed origin of the office in the choice of the seven.
- (7) **Collect** This not only begins the Communion Office but in a real sense sums up the prayer of the people that has been offered in the Litany. It recognises the diversity of Orders in the Church, and refers to the choice of Stephen the first martyr and "others" (the "seven" of Acts 6:3) to be the first deacons, and prays for those called to this Office and Administration that God may "replenish them so with the truth of thy doctrine, and adorn them with innocency of life, that, both by word and good example, they may faithfully serve thee in this Office, to the glory of thy Name, and the edification of thy Church". The Collect is an original composition and first appeared in the 1550 Ordinal.

[The Ordination follows. It may be noticed that deacons are made between the Epistle and Gospel in the Prayer Book service, priests are ordained after the Gospel and before the Nicene Creed, whilst bishops are consecrated after the Nicene Creed and sermon]

## (8) The Examination

The Bishop sits on his chair, near to the Holy Table. In the early Church (and also in bible times, see Mt 5:1) one who had authority as a pastor/teacher sat rather than stood. In Ordination Services One the bishop also sits to perform the act of ordination (in Ordination Services Two he stands).

Q.1 The sober tone of the entire examination is indicated by the initial question, "Do you trust that you are inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon you this Office and Ministration...?" Believing oneself to be called to ministry is a matter of faith ("trust") not absolute certainty. All the candidate is required to affirm is "I trust so".

Q.2. Equally significantly the next question asks simply whether the candidate "thinks" that he or she is "truly called to this Office and Ministration, according to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the due order of this Church". The candidate is affirming that they think it is the Lord's will for them to be made a deacon, and that the diaconate is part of the "due order" of the Church of Ireland.

Q.3. This in its requirement that the candidate "unfeignedly" (without pretence) believes all the Canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testament seems to reflect a pre-critical approach to the Bible. It is best to interpret this in the light of Article Six which speaks "Of the Sufficiency of the holy Scriptures for Salvation". The candidate deacon may be understood as affirming his or her commitment to the saving truths which are to be found only in the Scriptures.

Q.4. The emphasis on reading God's Word ties in with the deacon's traditional role as the liturgical (keeper and) reader of the Bible. A deacon especially is the one appointed to read the Gospel, and it is mistaken and wrong for a priest/celebrant regularly to do so when there is a deacon present to fulfil his or her office.

Q.5. This describes the office of a deacon at length. See *above*, p.10. Since fulfilment of this ministry requires the grace of God the response is, "I will do so, by the help of God". This part of the examination may be regarded as the equivalent of the charge in the Ordination of Priests.

Q.6. The concept of the minister of Christ as an example to the flock, which remains highly relevant in today's Church, is underlined in this searching question, in which the family life of the (married) person in holy orders is regarded as ideally establishing a pattern of Christian living.

Q.7. The obedience promised to the "Ordinary" (normally the bishop - in St. Patrick's Cathedral Dublin the immediate Ordinary is the Dean) and other clergy whom the deacon is to serve under (for example the incumbent of the parish where the deacon is licensed) is both external and

inward. It is not, however, unconditional, since it refers to the "lawful and honest commands" mentioned in the Declaration made prior to every act of ordination and when a person is admitted to an incumbency (BCP 1926 p.310 \*5),

I will render all due reverence and canonical obedience to M., Archbishop (or Bishop) of X, and his successors, Archbishops (or Bishops) of X, in all lawful and honest commands. Authority in the Church of Ireland is constitutional in that it refers to matters which accord with the laws and customs and traditions of the Church.

#### (9) **The act of ordination.**

The "matter" (that is the *thing done*) is the laying on of hands by the bishop. The "form" (that is the *thing said*) is the declaratory formula which accompanies the laying on of hands. Declaratory formulae came in during medieval times, the more ancient practice (revived in modern ordinals) being that of supplication - the "ordination prayer".

It may be noticed that there is no mention of the laying on of hands within the formula itself, and this contrasts with the wording for the ordination of priests and for the consecration of a bishop.

The hierarchical nature of the ministry is indicated by the posture of the candidate who kneels before the bishop. Only the bishop lays his hands on the candidate deacon, a custom reflecting early Church tradition in accordance with which the deacons were, in a special way, assistants to the bishop.

It is customary at this point to vest the deacon, who up to this point has worn cassock and surplice, with his or her stole (or black scarf). The stole is worn by a deacon over the left shoulder and is fastened under the right arm. A scarf should be worn "up-and-down" by a deacon as by a priest. A scarf should *never* be worn sash-wise.

The wording of the Sarum (Salisbury) rite, which served as standard liturgical practice prior to the Reformation was,

*Accipe Spiritum Sanctum ... [at the laying on of hands]  
In nomine Sanctae Trinitatis, accipe stolam immortalitatis: imple ministerium tuum,  
potens est enim Deus ut augeat tibi gratiam, qui vivit et regnat...*

[Receive the Holy Spirit...

In the name of the Holy Trinity, accept the stole of immortality: fulfil your ministry, for God is powerful and will increase to you grace, who lives and reigns...]

The delivery of the New Testament together with the accompanying words indicates the special responsibility of the deacon to read the Gospel (and to preach if licensed, to do so by the bishop). The deacon should be given every opportunity to exercise his or her ministry by reading the Gospel at celebrations of the Holy Communion.

The wording of Sarum at this point was,

*In nomine sanctae trinitatis accipe potestatem legendi evangelium in ecclesia dei tam pro vivis quam pro defunctis in nomine domini. Amen.*

[In the name of the Holy Trinity accept the power of reading the Gospel in the Church of God as for the living so for the dead in the name of the Lord. Amen]

This custom is attested in the Pontificals of Archbishop Egbert of York: of the eighth century, of Jumieges of the ninth century, and of Rouen of the same date. Ivo of Chartres says, "Deacons receive the text of the Gospels from the Bishop, whereby they understand that they ought to be preachers of the Gospel".

#### (10) **The Gospel.**

The Order for Communion resumes at the Gospel which is read by the newly ordained deacon,



fulfilling his or her ministry. If more than one deacon has been ordained one of them is chosen to read the Gospel.

**(11) Deacon's participation in the liturgy.**

Not only is it customary for the newly-ordained deacon to read the Gospel, it is appropriate that he or she should continue to exercise their new ministry for the remainder of the liturgical celebration. Suitable functions are,

- (1) **Preparing the Gifts.** Depending on circumstances this could include putting the fair linen cloth on the altar if this has not already been done, placing the corporal; unveiling the chalice and paten; putting the chalice veil and purificator(s) to the left and right-hand side of the corporal respectively; bringing the bread from the credence and putting it on the paten; pouring the wine from the flagon into the chalice(s). It is also appropriate for the deacons to receive the alms of the people.
- (2) **Administering the chalice(s).** The newly-ordained deacon(s) must communicate, and should receive communion immediately after the celebrant and other sacred ministers in the sanctuary.
- (3) **Performing the ablutions** either immediately after the administration or after the blessing. Putting the corporal and chalice veil back into the burse and covering the vessels with the burse and coloured veil. Removing the (covered) vessels to the credence table.

**(12) Post-communion**

The first of the two post-communion prayers as printed presupposes that the diaconate is no more than a steppingstone to the priesthood, and admission to the latter appears in the light of promotion. The deacons are to "so well behave themselves in this inferior Office, that they may be found worthy to be called unto the higher ministries" of the Church. However, in the early Church deacons often remained in their office for life, and certain churches (including the Episcopal Church in America) have revived the "permanent diaconate".

The prayer was amended in 1984, as part of the legislation to admit women to the diaconate, but not to the priesthood or episcopate; all the words after "conscience" were deleted and the following substituted,

may continue stable and strong in this ministry; through thy Son our Saviour Jesus Christ, to whom be glory and honour, world without end. Amen.

As noted above women were admitted as priests (and bishops) by legislation passed by the General Synod in 1990.

**THE FORM AND MANNER OF ORDERING OF PRIESTS**

**(15) Sermon**

The sermon at the beginning of the rite is a peculiar feature of the ordination of deacons and priests in the Book of Common Prayer. The function of the sermon is described as "declaring the Duty and Office of such as come to be admitted Priests; how necessary that Order is in the Church of Christ; and also, how the people ought to esteem them in their Office."

For the priest's duties there is no "job description" as such in the BCP rite. However, certain passages give a clue as to the BCP understanding of the role of a priest,

- (1) **The Charge** (BCP p.296). "And now again we exhort you, in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you have in remembrance, into how high a dignity, and to how weighty an Office and Charge ye are called: that is to say, to be Messengers, Watchmen, and Stewards of the Lord; to teach and to premonish, to feed and provide for the Lord's family; to seek for Christ's sheep that are dispersed abroad, and for his children who are in the midst of this naughty world, that they may be saved through

Christ for ever."

(2) **The Examination** (BCP p.297). "Will you then give your faithful diligence always so to minister the Doctrine and Sacraments, and the Discipline of Christ, as the Lord hath commanded, and as this Church hath received the same, according to the Commandments of God; so that you may teach the people committed to your Cure and Charge with all diligence to keep and observe the same?"

(3) **The formula of ordination** (BCP p.298) "Whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven; and whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained. And be thou a faithful dispenser of the Word of God, and of his holy Sacraments..."

(4) **The formula at the delivery of the Bible** "Take thou authority to preach the Word of God, and to minister the holy Sacraments in the Congregation, where thou shalt be lawfully appointed thereunto".

#### (16) **Decently habited**

The ordinands appear as deacons, in cassock and surplice, with their stoles worn over their left shoulder and fastened under their right arm. If a scarf is worn it is worn "up-and-down" (a scarf should never be worn sash-wise). After the act of ordination the stoles are worn "up-and-down".

#### (17) **The Presentation**

The ordinand is presented to the bishop by the archdeacon (or, in his absence, one appointed in his stead). This is part of his ancient office, as confirmed by the Church Constitution Chapter 2 \*41, "It belongs to the office of an archdeacon to examine, or assist in examining, such persons as are to be promoted to holy orders, or to be instituted into ecclesiastical benefices, and to present persons, examined and approved, unto the bishop for imposition of hands and canonical institution".

[The archdeacon, as the name implies, was originally merely the chief of the deacons who assisted diocesan bishops in their work. He was in deacon's orders and gradually acquired what was almost a right of succession to the episcopal throne.

The transition from this to the present position of archdeacons in the Western Church was accomplished by the ninth century, but the steps by which it came about are not clear. His right of presentation of a candidate for priest's orders is mentioned in a Pontifical of Corbey of the twelfth century. Since 1662 in the Church of England an archdeacon must be in priest's orders, and this would probably hold good as precedent for the Church of Ireland, although no such qualification is laid down in the Church Constitution. The Eastern Church has "archpriests" as well as "archdeacons".]

"Reverend Father in God" (for an Archbishop, "Most Reverend Father in God") was replaced by "Bishop" in 1990 under the legislation permitting women to be admitted to priesthood and episcopate. It is still appropriate, however, except in the case of a woman bishop.

For the quality of those to be admitted to the priesthood see above under deacons (p.9).

#### (18) **The Litany**

This is preceded by a rubric directing the bishop to commend the candidates to the prayers of the people. The Litany enables all present to fulfil this request. The Litany should be sung (the wording "sing or say" clearly indicates a preference for singing), and there is much to be said for the ordination to be within the context of a Sung Eucharist. Ideally, at least the following parts should be sung - the Collect, the Veni Creator Spiritus, Sursum Corda through to the end of the Prayer of Consecration, the Post-Communion, the Gloria and the Blessing. The form of the Litany is identical to that for the making of deacons except that the word "priests" is substituted for "deacons" in the special petition.

## [THE HOLY COMMUNION]

### (19) **The Collect**

This not only begins the Communion Office but in a real sense sums up the prayer of the people that has been offered in the Litany. It recognises the diversity of Orders in the Church, and makes a general prayer that God may "mercifully behold these thy servants now called to the Office of Priesthood", and, as with the deacons, that He may "replenish them so with the truth of thy doctrine and adorn them with innocency of life, that, both by word and good example, they may faithfully serve thee in this office, to the glory of thy Name, and the edification of thy Church". This Collect is an original composition and first appeared in the 1550 ordinal, although it was only moved to its present position before the Epistle in 1662.

This Collect corresponds to the Consecration of the Pontificals, the term *Consummatio Presbyteri* being found in one or two orders.

### (20) **Epistle**

Ephesians 4:7f This underlines the diversity of the gifts of ministry and lists some of the biblical offices - apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers, whose work is "for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying (building up) of the body of Christ" until all come to unity, knowledge of God, and perfection. The NRSV omits the comma after "saints" and translates, "to equip the saints for the work of ministry".

### (21) **The Gospel**

Either Matthew 9:36f, the missionary charter, "pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest" or John 10:1f, the Good Shepherd, indicating the *pastoral* role under Christ which is crucial to the Anglican concept of ministry.

(22) **The Charge** This was influenced by Bucer's document *de Ordinatione legitima*. It also contains numerous scriptural echoes. The structure of the Charge is as follows:

#### 1. **The Dignity of the Priesthood**

From "You have heard..." to "saved through Christ for ever".

#### 2. **Points for Reflection**

(1) The Treasure committed to their Charge.

(2) The Consequent Call to Diligence.

From "Have always therefore..." to "viciousness in life".

#### 3. **Qualifications for the Work**

(1) Prayer for the Holy Spirit

(2) Study of the Scriptures.

From "Forasmuch then as..." to "all worldly cares and studies".

#### 4. **Reminder of the need for self-consecration**

From "We have good hope..." to "for the people to follow"

#### 5. **Preface to the Church's Challenge**

From "And now..." to "touching the same".

There is nothing corresponding to this Charge in the rites for the Consecration of Bishops.

### (23) **The Examination**

The bishop remains seated in his Chair, near to the Holy Table. In the early Church (and also in Bible times, see Mt 5:1) one who had authority as a pastor/teacher sat rather than stood. In Ordination Services One the bishop also sits to perform the act of ordination (in Ordination Services Two he stands).

Q.1. The word "think" is significant, "do you **think** in your heart that you be truly called.." Absolute certainty is not required as the candidate may well have all sorts of doubts and hesitations and even feelings of unworthiness. It is made clear to which Order the person is being admitted - "to the Order and Ministry of Priesthood".

Q.2. This echoes the language of Article Six "Of the sufficiency of the holy Scriptures for Salvation". The careful wording elicits an affirmation by the candidate of persuasion that the holy Scriptures contain sufficiently all doctrine required of necessity for eternal salvation through faith in Jesus Christ, a resolution to instruct the people committed to his or her charge out of the same Scriptures and not to teach anything as required of necessity for eternal salvation, but that which the candidate may be persuaded may be concluded and proved by Scripture. While those who are admitted to the diaconate make a simple affirmation of faith in the canonical Scriptures it is clear that the priesthood involves interpretation of the Scriptures and teaching in accordance with what may be found in them.

Article Six (BCP p.337) says in part,

Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation: so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of the Faith, or be thought requisite necessary to salvation.

Q.3. This refers to ministration of the "Doctrine and Sacraments and the Discipline of Christ" - three aspects of the pastoral ministry - with the aim of teaching people to live in obedience to God's commandments. The emphasis on "discipline" along with doctrine and sacraments is characteristic of Reformed teaching, and is found especially in Calvinism.

Q.4. This refers to driving away all erroneous and strange notions contrary to God's Word, and the use, to this end, of both public and private "monitions" (= "admonitions" - warnings, exhortations, reminders) to both sick and whole in the Cure. The growth of cults in today's world, and the widespread sectarianism encountered by most Church of Ireland clergy underline the relevance of this question and answer.

Q.5. No less than **four** questions in this series use the word "diligent". There has to be unremitting application to prayers, to the reading of the Holy Scriptures, and to "such studies as help to the knowledge of the same". At the time these questions were framed (and, in the Church of Ireland, up to 1878) there was a formal requirement to read Morning and Evening Prayer daily. The provision of the orders for Morning and Evening Prayer "daily throughout the year" in the Book of Common Prayer suggests that this discipline, although no longer obligatory, is to be taken as normative. A distinct Anglican spirituality will be based on the use of the Divine Office, and this, in turn, will provide a foundation for constant prayer "in the Spirit" (Ephesians 6:18).

Q.6. This relates to the example to be set by the priest and his or her family, in the Church. The qualifier "as much as in you lieth" is important.

Q.7. This involves an undertaking to set forward "quietness, peace and love among all Christian people, especially among those committed to one's charge". The Declaration (BOP p.346) draws on this ordination promise or vow, and applies the wording to the relationship between the Church of Ireland and other churches,

The Church of Ireland ... will set forward, so far as in it lieth, quietness, peace, and love

among all Christian people.

Q.8. The wording of this promise, to obey the Ordinary (usually the bishop) and other superiors differs slightly from the corresponding deacon's promise, in that there is a reference to "chief Ministers" rather than "ministers", and, to the reference to their "godly admonitions" is added "submitting yourselves to their godly judgements". "Chief ministers" in this context may be taken to include Deans in their Cathedrals, Archdeacons in their archdeaconries, Rectors in their parishes (in relation to their Curates Assistant). With regard to the bishop, St. Augustine said,

*Episcopo tuo noli resistere, et quod facit ipso, sine ullo scrupulo vel disceptatione sectare*

[Do not resist the bishop, and whatever he does, without any scruple or discussion, follow!] *Ep. xxxvi. ad Casul. tom. ii.c.81.F*

Obedience is not unconditional, since it refers to the "lawful and honest commands" mentioned in the Declaration made prior to every act of ordination and when a person is admitted to an incumbency (BCP 1926 p.306, §5),

I will render all due reverence and canonical obedience to M, Archbishop (or Bishop) of X, and his successors, Archbishops (or Bishops) of X, in all lawful and honest commands.

Authority in the Church of Ireland is *constitutional* in that it relates to matters which accord with the laws and customs and traditions of the Church.

This section concludes with a collect said by the bishop in which he prays that grace will be given to the candidates to keep their promises.

#### (24) **Silent Prayer** (of the People).

This is a very ancient feature, being found in what may be the earliest surviving text of an ordination, the *Apostolic Tradition*, attributed to Hippolytus and conventionally dated to c.215 A.D. although it shows signs of being a composite document parts of which may come from a much later period.

#### (25) **Veni Creator Spiritus**

This is the hymn "Come Holy Ghost, our souls inspire", composed in the ninth century A.D., probably by Rabanus Maurus, and used here in Bishop Cosin's version. It is traditional at ordinations, and in Ordination Services One is sung responsorially at the ordination of priests (and the consecration of bishops), preferably to plainsong.

#### (26) **Pre-ordination Prayer**

It is not clear what the role of this prayer is, since it is essentially a prayer for the worshippers and for those whom the candidate priests will minister to, at a point in the service where should expect to find an ordination prayer proper. The first part of this prayer derives from the pre-Reformation *Sarum Pontifical*. The prayer first appeared in the BCP Ordinal in 1550, and was slightly amended in 1662.

#### (27) **The laying on of hands**

This is performed by the bishop and the priests present. Although, sacramentally speaking, the participation by the priests adds nothing to the act of ordination, it is nonetheless highly significant as a sign of the ancient relationship of solidarity between bishop and presbytery. In a deacon's ordination the laying on of hands is by the bishop alone. On the other hand, when a bishop is consecrated, at least two other bishops (and in practice all bishops who are present) join in the act. The laying on of hands is the essential "matter" or *things done* of ordination.

#### (28) **The formula of ordination**

In the ancient Church (and in modern revised ordinals) the laying on of hands is accompanied by an *ordination prayer*. In Ordination Services One there are declaratory formulae (based on medieval models) appropriate to the order being conferred. In the 1662 revision the formulae were

made more explicit, naming for the first time the order concerned. This was to stress the distinction of orders (as against the Puritan view that basically there was only one order, and that presbyters and bishops were essentially the same). The words in italics are those added to the Ordering of Priests in 1662, *Receive the Holy Ghost, for the Office and Work of a Priest in the Church of God, now committed unto thee by the imposition of our hands.* Whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven; and whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained. And be thou a faithful dispenser of the Word of God, and of his holy Sacraments; In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen

### **Notes on the Ordination Formula**

(1) The person is ordained to the Office and Work of a Priest in the *Church of God*, that is, the universal Church, not just of the Church of Ireland.

(2) The sentence "Whose sins thou dost forgive..." comes from the risen Lord's commissioning of his disciples in John 20:22 along with the words "Receive the Holy Ghost". These words are found in medieval rites of ordination, for example in a book belonging to the Cathedral of Mayence, of the thirteenth century, and in a Pontifical of Rouen of the fourteenth century.

(3) The ministry is that of the Word and Sacraments. Traditionally Anglicanism has paid equal attention to both of these; and this has been represented architecturally in the balance between pulpit and altar in Anglican Churches.

(4) The wording of the ordination formula is general and comprehensive. The much narrower definition to be found in the pre-Reformation rites and omitted by the Reformers was,

*Accipe potestatem offerre sacrificium deo missaque celebrate tam pro vivis quam pro defunctis. In nomine domine iesu christi...*

[Receive power to offer sacrifice to God and to celebrate mass both for the living and the dead. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ...] These words were said at the *porrectio instrumentorum* (see next section, below).

The *form* (that is the essential "thing said") at least as used from 1550-1662 was alleged to be inadequate in the papal encyclical of Pope Leo XIII *Apostolicae Curae* in 1896 on the grounds that there was not a "precise signification of the order of priesthood, or its grace or power". This assumes that such a "precise signification" is necessary to the validity of an act of ordination. Anglican theologians would regard the addition of the words "for the office and work of a priest" in 1662 as an *improvement* of a rite that was perfectly adequate prior to the revision for the essential purpose of the transmission of valid orders. In any case that this rite was for the purpose of the "ordering of priests" was quite clear from 1550 onwards from the title and from a number of references within the order of service itself (in the presentation, in the collect, in the examination, and in some of the rubrics).

### **(29) The delivery of the Bible.**

A complete bible is given at the ordering of priests. It may be noticed that authority is given not only to preach the Word of God but also "to minister the holy Sacraments in the Congregation". In the 1550 Ordinal the ministering of the sacraments was represented symbolically by the delivery of chalice and bread (in addition to the Bible) to the newly-ordained priest. This was a continuation of medieval practice, the *traditio instrumentorum* or *porrectio instrumentorum*. This ceremony was dropped in 1552, but is to be found as an optional extra in some modern Anglican rites including the Church of England's Common Worship. There it takes place before the Peace so that the vessels may be used in the Liturgy of the Eucharist that follows.

[In the Middle Ages some theologians mistakenly regarded the *traditio instrumentorum* as the essential "matter" of ordination. The traditional Book of Common Prayer ordinal as embodied in Ordination Services One marks a shift back towards the biblical and patristic principle of the laying on of hands with prayer, although the declaratory formulae, which were medieval in character, were retained and used as part of the act of ordination. Modern liturgical revision has restored the ordination prayer in the proper sense. The *porrectio* or *traditio instrumentorum* can be seen for what it is - a meaningful additional ceremony in no way essential to the validity of the rite].

### **(30) Resumption of Communion**

Holy Communion continues from the Nicene Creed. The newly-ordained remain in the place where they have been ordained until their reception of communion, which is an integral part of the total rite. Nowadays it is recognised that the entire congregation should receive communion, and a liturgically corrupt practice of giving communion only to the officiating clergy and the newly-ordained and their families no longer occurs in the Church of Ireland.

### **(31) Post-communion collects**

These are special to the occasion, although one of them is the well-known "Prevent us, O Lord..."

### **(32) Additional directions**

These cover the arrangements that have to be made when deacons and priests are ordained on the one occasion.

## **THE FORM OF ORDAINING OR CONSECRATING OF AN ARCHBISHOP OR BISHOP**

This order must be performed on a Sunday or Holy-Day, as directed in the 1662 Ordinal, but not in the Ordinals of 1550 or 1552. In the early Church, as witnessed to by directions of Leo the Great and by Alcuin, the custom was to ordain bishops on Sundays only. Later this was extended to the festivals of the Apostles (bishops being regarded as their successors) and then to holy days in general.

A significant change was made to the title in 1662, which previously had read "The Form of Consecrating of an Archbishop or Bishop". The reference to *ordination* here and in the Preface to the Ordinal was intended to make clear that bishops are a distinct order.

It is customary in the Church of Ireland for a bishop who is to serve in a northern diocese to be consecrated in St. Patrick's Cathedral, Armagh, as the Metropolitan Cathedral of the United Provinces of Armagh and Tuam (comprising Armagh, Clogher, Derry and Raphoe, Down and Dromore, Connor, Kilmore, Elphin and Ardagh, Tuam, Killala and Achonry), and for a bishop who is to serve in a southern diocese to be consecrated in Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin, as the Metropolitan Cathedral of the united Provinces of Dublin and Cashel. Installation and enthronement subsequently takes place in the new bishop's cathedral church (or in each of his cathedrals if he is to be bishop of a united diocese). An Archbishop of Armagh is always already in episcopal orders since he is chosen from among the existing bishops. An Archbishop of Dublin is consecrated in Christ Church Cathedral.

[Early Church tradition, witnessed to by St. Cyprian in the third century and St. Augustine in the fifth century, was for the newly-elected bishop to be consecrated in the Church which he had been chosen to serve in]

### **(33) The Communion**

All acts of ordination are set within the context of the celebration of the Holy Communion as the supreme act of Christian worship. Unlike the forms for the making of deacons or the ordering of priests the sermon does not occur at the beginning, but (as in traditional Prayer Book celebrations) after the Gospel and the Nicene Creed. The liturgy begins therefore with the Lord's Prayer and the

Collect for Purity, followed by the Summary of the Law.

The liturgy is celebrated and the rite of episcopal ordination administered by the Archbishop of the Province assisted by at least two other bishops. In the unavoidable absence of the archbishop another bishop may be appointed to preside.

**(34) The Collect**

No collect is to be found in the form for the consecration of a bishop in 1550 or 1552 (it is not clear whether the collect of the day was used or whether the service began with a reading). However, the original form of this collect is found in the 1549 Prayer Book as a collect for St. Peter's Day. It read,

Almighty God, which by thy son Jesus Christ hast given to thy Apostle Saint Peter many excellent gifts, and commandest him earnestly to feed thy flock; make, we beseech thee, all bishops and pastors diligently to preach thy holy word and the people obediently to follow the same, that they may receive the crown of everlasting glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

In 1662 this was altered to,

Almighty God, who by thy Son Jesus Christ didst give to thy Apostles many excellent gifts, and didst charge them to feed thy flock; Give grace, we beseech thee, to all Bishops, the Pastors of thy Church, that they may diligently preach thy Word, and duly administer the godly discipline thereof; and grant to the people, that they may obediently follow the same; that all may receive the crown of everlasting glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

This is a good example of the manner in which Cranmer's "incomparable prose" was significantly improved by the 1662 revisers, to produce classic "BCP" forms.

**(35) The Epistle.** From 1550 this has been 1 Tim. 3:1f, with Acts 20:17f as an alternative from 1662. The 1 Timothy reading is attested in a wide variety of medieval MSS. In the BCP the epistle is read by one of the assisting bishops.

**(36) The Gospel** From 1550 this has been John 21:15f, with John 20:19f and Matt. 28:18f as alternatives from 1662. It is followed by the **Nicene Creed** and **the Sermon**.

**(37) The Presentation** The bishop-elect (vested with his rochet) is presented to the Archbishop of the province by two bishops. The words "Most Reverend Father in God" were deleted in 1990 and the word "Archbishop" substituted as part of the legislation to admit women to the episcopate.

The bishop-elect is described as "godly" and "well-learned" indicating two areas in which he or she is expected to excel - spirituality and scholarship (including the capacity to think theologically).

**(38) Certification and Declaration** The certificate of the Bench of Bishops of the election and fitness of the person to be consecrated is read. There follows the declaration of obedience to the Archbishop.

In the Name of God, Amen. I, N, chosen Bishop of the Church and See of N, do solemnly profess and promise all due reverence and obedience to the Archbishop of N, and to his successors.

This declaration is based on that of Sarum, which spoke of *debitam et canonicam obedientiam reverentiam et subiectionem* - "due and canonical obedience, reverence and subjection". This declaration is not made in the case of an Archbishop.

**(39) Exhortation to pray**

**(40) The Litany**, with a special petition,



That it may please him to bless this our *Brother* elected, and to send thy grace upon him; that he may duly execute the Office whereunto he is called, to the edifying of thy Church, and to the honour, praise, and glory of thy Name.

This is followed by a prayer for the bishop-elect. The prayer from Sarum at this point referred to the bishop as the one called *ad summi sacerdotii ministerium* - "to the ministry of high priest", a thought that is to be found in relation to the bishop's office as early as St. Cyprian (d.258).

**(41) Interrogation,**

This is conducted by the Archbishop, seated on his Chair. The Preface is derived to some extent from Sarum, the interrogation itself partly from Sarum, and partly from Martin Bucer.

[An examination was appointed by the Fourth Council of Carthage (525 A.D.) and by the Second Council of Nicaea (787 A.D.), and is described in *Ordo Romanus Primus* (at the beginning of the eighth century)]

Q.1.This relates to the sense of vocation, "are you persuaded that you be truly called to this ministration?" As with deacons and priests certainty is not required, although conviction is, "I am so persuaded".

Q.2.This relates to the bishop-elect's understanding of the holy Scriptures as containing sufficiently all doctrine required of necessity for eternal salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. As might be expected with a bishop, there is an emphasis upon the teaching office,

Are you determined out of the same holy Scriptures to instruct the people committed to your charge; and to teach or maintain nothing as required of necessity to eternal salvation, but that which you shall be persuaded may be concluded and proved by the same?

The emphatic response is from Sarum, "I am so persuaded, and determined, by God's grace".

Q.3.This relates to perseverance in the study of the Scriptures and prayer for a right understanding so that the bishop-elect may be able, through the Scriptures to "teach and exhort with wholesome doctrine, and to withstand and convince the gainsayers".

Q.4.This develops the thought of the bishop as one who maintains right teaching and drives away "all erroneous and strange doctrine contrary to God's Word".

Q.5.This is a searching question about the bishop-elect's own manner of life and the example of good works he must set to others.

Q.6. This takes up the theme of "quietness, peace, and love" and applies it to the work of the bishop in his diocese, referring to those who are "unquiet, disobedient, and criminous" so that he might "correct and punish" according to such authority as he will have by God's Word and as he should be committed by the Ordinance of this Church.

The word "Church" at the end of the sentence was originally "realm", and was altered in 1878 to reflect the changed conditions resulting from disestablishment. The entire question reflects a state of society in which bishops as officers of State as well as officers of the Church exercised authority. A bishop, through his Diocesan Court, still does have disciplinary power, mainly over the clergy.

Q.7. This question, relating to the need for faithfulness in ordaining others, was introduced in 1662 and reflects the disturbed state of the Church at the Restoration.

Q.8.This relates to the bishop's practical charity towards the needy, a significant item prior to disestablishment when episcopal emoluments were such as to make charitable giving an integral part of his ministry in the diocese.

The interrogation concludes with the same prayer used in the ordering of priests in which it is asked that strength and power shall be given to perform the undertakings that have been given.

**(42) The Episcopal Habit,**

The remainder of the episcopal habit is put on (usually in a side chapel or Chapter Room or vestry), consisting of (scarlet) chimere and stole.

[The chimere is an ecclesiastical garment that is also used academically as part of Convocation dress or habit. Doctors of the superior faculties wore red chimeres whereas Masters of Arts and Bachelors of Divinity wore black. From the sixteenth century black was worn even by doctors. Anglican bishops took to wearing black chimeres, although they seem to have retained red in Convocation or when Convocation was sitting. More recently the use of scarlet has become general, although nowadays few bishops hold higher doctorates. There is no authority for the custom of wearing scarlet on normal occasions but reverting to black for funerals.]

**(43) Veni Creator Spiritus,**

Traditionally this is sung antiphonally. This hymn to the Holy Spirit was probably composed in the Frankish Empire in the ninth century and has been attributed to Rabanus Maurus. It was used as the Vespers Hymn of Whitsuntide from the tenth century, and from the twelfth century came to be substituted during the Octave of the feast for the usual hymn of Terce. As well as being inherently suitable to the Feast of Pentecost it is widely used for other occasions, most notably the ordination of priests and the consecration of bishops and also at the consecration of churches. The version used here is that of Bishop John Cosin, included since 1662 to replace the earlier version in the 1550 Rite. Other versions of the *Veni Creator* are due to J. Dryden, R. Mant, F. W. Faber, and E. Caswall.

**(44) Pre-ordination prayer**

This prayer acknowledges the spiritual gifts bestowed by the ascended Christ for ministry and asks that the bishop-elect may be given grace to use the grace (of episcopal orders) aright. The sources of the prayer are Ephesians 4:8-12 and Sarum.

**(45) The Act of Ordination**

The archbishop and bishops present (of whom there must be at least two in addition to the archbishop) lay their hands on the head of the bishop-elect. The Archbishop says,

*Receive the Holy Ghost, for the Office and Work of a Bishop in the Church of God, now committed unto thee by the imposition of our hands, In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen. And remember that thou stir up the grace of God which is given thee, by this imposition of our hands: for God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and love, and soberness.*

[Sections in italics date from 1662. The prayer originally began "Take..." The sources are John 20:22; 2 Timothy 1:6, and the 1662 revision]

**(46) Giving of the Bible with Exhortation**

The words of the Exhortation are derived partly from 1 Timothy 4:16; Ezek 34:3,4, 16; 1 Peter 5:4, and partly from Sarum.

**(47) Porrectio instrumentorum**

The custom of handing to the new bishop the symbols of his office - pastoral staff, pectoral cross, and ring, has been restored in practice although it is not formally provided for. Following tradition going back to Sarum and retained in the 1550 Ordinal (but removed in 1552) the pastoral staff is given at the words "Be to the flock of Christ a shepherd, not a wolf..." The pectoral cross is given at the words, "Be so merciful..." The ring is given at the reference to "the never-fading crown of glory".

**(48) The Communion**

The celebration of Holy Communion continues presided over by the Archbishop. The newly consecrated bishop (with the other bishops) and the whole congregation communicates.

**(49) Post Communion**

This includes a special prayer for the newly-consecrated bishop.

## ORDINATION SERVICES TWO

The 1992 Act of the General Synod authorizing a revised Ordinal, alternative to that in the Book of Common Prayer, marked an important stage in the process of Liturgical Revision which had begun through the setting up of the Liturgical Advisory Committee in 1962. Insofar as the theologically most significant aspects of liturgy are those relating to Initiation (Baptism and Confirmation), Eucharist, and Ministry (Ordination) and that these are interdependent, it could not be said that the first stage of revision was in any way complete until this had happened. Revision of the Ordinal began in 1982, and received an impetus from a request by the House of Bishops that this should proceed and that the Church of England's new ordinal in the *Alternative Service Book* (1980) was to be taken as a general guide. *The Ordinal* (1992) was essentially the Church of England's rites in the *Alternative Service Book* as adapted (and to some extent improved) for Church of Ireland use. The ASB Ordinal in turn had been influenced by the new ordination rites of the (united) Church of South India (1958), and was to a large extent based upon the Anglican-Methodist Ordinal of 1968 (produced in connection with an unsuccessful attempt to bring about unity between the Church of England and the Methodist Church). It may be taken to have been the fruit of wide ecumenical consultation, and was described by a leading Roman Catholic theologian Fr B. Leeming as "immune from the objections which Catholics found in the 1552 Ordinal".

The 1992 Ordinal (as incorporated into *Alternative Occasional Services* 1993) in practice superseded the traditional Prayer Book rites (now Ordination Services One). However, in preparing modern language rites for the *Book of Common Prayer* 2004 careful consideration had to be given to developments in the theology and practice of ordination which came to the fore from the mid - 1990s onwards. Particularly important, from this point of view, was the ongoing work of the International Anglican Liturgical Consultation (on which the Church of Ireland's Liturgical Advisory Committee was represented). Especially significant in this regard were two documents, *Anglican Orders and Ordinations: Essays and Reports from the Interim Conference at Jarvenpaa, Finland, of the IALC - 4-9 August 1997* and *Anglican Ordination Rites - The Berkeley Statement: To Equip the Saints. Findings of the Sixth International Anglican Liturgical Consultation, Berkeley, California, 2001*. Contact with the Church of England's Liturgical Commission was also important, including drafts of the Common Worship Ordinal. Ordination Services Two may be said to be a new Ordinal incorporating many of the new insights of the period since *Alternative Occasional Services* appeared whilst consolidating the gains associated with the Church of Ireland's 1992 Ordinal.

The main differences between Ordination Services One and Two may be summarized as follows:

(1) In the traditional Prayer Book Ordinal (OS-1) deacons are "made", priests "ordained", and bishops "ordained or consecrated". In Ordination Services Two (OS-2), as in *Alternative Occasional Services* (AOS) the term "ordination" is extended to deacons, though still keeping "consecration" for bishops as an alternative.

(2) The modern rites are brought into line with the (Preamble and) Declaration which refers to "Priests or Presbyters" (*Book of Common Prayer* 2004 p.776). The title in the OS-2 p.563 is "The Ordination of Priests, also called Presbyters". Historically, the word "priest" is a contraction of "presbyter", which in turn reflects the Greek *presbuteros*, "elder" (Acts 14:23; 20:17).

(3) In the traditional Prayer Book Ordinal (OS-1) the structure of the service for each of the three Orders differs. In the 2004 Order (OS-2) the structure of the services is similar. The ordinations are to take place after the Nicene Creed in the Service of Holy Communion, and system of having the sermon at the beginning of the rites for deacons and priests has disappeared. There is a simple and logical sequence for each Order, the following being the basic shape or format:

**The Gathering of God's People** (including a preface modified by the mention of the particular order being conferred)

**Proclaiming and Receiving the Word**

**The Rite of Ordination**

**Prayers** (including an authorized Litany)

**The Ordination Prayer** (one of two) with the **Laying on of hands**

**Celebrating at the Lord's Table**

**Going out as God's People**

[For a more detailed analysis of the structure underlying all three rites, see below p. 29]

(4) The declaratory formulae of ordination in the traditional Prayer Book (OS-1), derived from medieval models ("Take thou authority...", "Receive the Holy Spirit...") are replaced, following ancient practice, by impetratory forms (that is by forms of supplicatory prayer within which the laying on of hands takes place).

(5) There is a much greater explicitness than in the Book of Common Prayer with regard to the distinctive functions of each of the three Orders of Ministry - Deacons, Priests, and Bishops.

### **The Notes**

The Notes which appear at the beginning of OS-2 are described as "Notes for the whole Ordinal" and so apply equally to OS-1

#### **1. The threefold ministry.**

The Church of Ireland maintains the historic threefold ministry of bishops, priests and deacons. Its ministers are ordained by bishops according to authorized forms of service with prayer and the laying on of hands (see the Preamble and Declaration to the Constitution of the Church of Ireland, the Preface to the Ordinal (1662), and the Constitution itself).

The phrase "Preamble and Declaration to the Constitution of the Church of Ireland" is mistaken. It is a reference to the Preamble and Declaration *prefixed* to the Constitution of the Church of Ireland referred to with legal exactness in various documents as the "Declaration prefixed to the Statutes of the Church of Ireland, passed at the General Convention, in the year of our Lord One Thousand Eight Hundred and Seventy" (the Preamble being an integral part of the document). The document, drawn up at the time of Disestablishment and reproduced in the 2004 Prayer Book on pp776-7 is vitally important as an indication of the basic principles adhered to by the Church of Ireland. All members of the clergy have to affirm their approval and agreement to this document at their ordination and when entering upon office as curates assistant and rectors of parishes. For the present purpose the relevant part states,

In the Preamble and Declaration (BCP p.776) it states,

The Church of Ireland ... will maintain inviolate the three orders of Bishops, Priests or Presbyters, and Deacons in the Sacred Ministry".

In the Preface to the 1662 Ordinal (BCP p.518, see above) it states,

It is evident unto all men diligently reading holy Scripture and ancient Authors, that from the Apostles' time there have been these Orders of Ministers in Christ's Church; Bishops, Priests and Deacons... And therefore, *to the intent that these Orders may be continued*, and reverently used and esteemed, in the Church of Ireland; no man shall be accounted or taken to be a lawful

Bishop, Priest, or Deacon in the Church of Ireland or suffered to execute any of the said functions, except he be called, tried, examined, and admitted thereunto, according to the Form hereafter following, or hath had formerly Episcopal Consecration or Ordination.

The Constitution Chapter 9, Part 3 (Canon 17) states,

That form of ordination which is prescribed in the Book of Common Prayer or elsewhere for the ordering of bishops, priests and deacons, and no other, shall be used.

## 2. **Consecration of Bishops**

Bishops must be consecrated by at least three other bishops, joining together in the act of laying on of hands, of whom one shall be the archbishop of the province or a bishop acting as deputy. Two assisting bishops should accompany the archbishop throughout. Such consecration should take place on a Sunday or Holy Day.

A consecration may appropriately take place in the metropolitan cathedral or in a cathedral of the vacant see. In the latter case it is appropriate that, once consecrated, the new bishop receives the pastoral staff, is placed in the episcopal seat and subsequently presides at the eucharist.

The regulation about consecration by a minimum of three other bishops is derived, ultimately, from the canons of the Council of Nicaea (A.D. 325). Canon 4 of Nicaea said,

It is most proper that a bishop should be constituted by all the bishops of the province: but, if this be difficult on account of some urgent necessity, or the length of the way, that at all events three should meet together at the same place, those who are absent also giving their suffrages and their consent in writing, and then the ordination be performed. The confirming, however, of what is done in each province belongs to the Metropolitan of it.

It may be seen that the original purpose of this was to express the solidarity of the episcopate and the corporate nature of the Church. Only later was the presence of three bishops regarded as a guarantee of the validity of the episcopal consecration (covering any technical defects in the orders of any of the bishops and thus preserving the apostolic succession). Because of the special role of the Metropolitan, bishops are normally consecrated in his Cathedral. Bishops for the Province of Armagh are normally, though not invariably, consecrated in Armagh, those for the Province of Dublin in Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin. In the event of the consecration taking place in a cathedral of a vacant see what is now the installation and the enthronement would be incorporated into the ceremony. Consecration on a Holy Day provides a special association and anniversary for the bishop being consecrated.

## 3. **Ordination of Priests and Deacons**

Priests (or presbyters) share with the bishop in laying hands on the heads of those ordained to the order of priest. The bishop alone lays hands on the heads of those ordained to the order of deacon.

The ultimate reason for this seems to be that the new priest is being admitted the college of priests, while the deacon from ancient times has been regarded as a personal assistant of the bishop.

## 4. **The Declarations**

The declarations as required by the Constitution of the Church of Ireland are taken prior to the service of ordination of deacons and priests.

In Chapter IV of the Constitution, Section 67 it is stated,

All persons admitted to Holy Orders of deacons or priests, or licensed as curates assistant, or instituted to the office of vicar, or instituted to a cure of souls in the Church of Ireland, shall make and subscribe before such ordination, licence, or institution, in the presence of the bishop or of his commissary, the declaration in the roll contained in the schedule hereunto annexed,

and none other.

This Declaration for Subscription reads,  
I, A.B., do hereby solemnly declare that -

- (1) I approve and agree to the Declaration prefixed to the statutes of the Church of Ireland passed at the General Convention in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and seventy.
- (2) I assent to the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion, and to the Book of Common Prayer and of the Ordering of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons. I believe the doctrine of the Church of Ireland, as therein set forth, to be agreeable to the Word of God; and in public prayer and administration of the sacraments I will use the form in the said Book prescribed, and none other, except so far as shall be allowed by the lawful authority of the Church.
- (3) I have not made, by myself or by any other person on my behalf, any payment, contract, or promise of any kind whatsoever (save that I will faithfully perform my duty) touching or concerning the obtaining of [the sacred order of the chaplaincy of the curacy of the office of vicar within the benefice of, or the benefice of each to be specially stated by each declarant]: nor will I at any time hereafter perform or satisfy, in whole or in part, any such payment, contract, or promise made by any other person with or without my knowledge or consent.
- (4) I declare that I do not hold office as an incumbent, rector, vicar, or licensed curate elsewhere than in Ireland, and that I do not hold any other ecclesiastical office which I have not made known to the Archbishop (or Bishop) of
- (5) I will render all due reverence and canonical obedience to  
Archbishop (or Bishop) of \_\_\_\_\_ and his successors, Archbishops (or  
Bishops) of \_\_\_\_\_, in all lawful and honest commands.
- (6) I promise to submit myself to the authority of the Church of Ireland, and to the laws and tribunals thereof.

### Notes on the above

- (1) The [Preamble and] Declaration are to be found prefixed to the Church Constitution (First Schedule) and are also printed in the Book of Common Prayer 2004 pp776-7. They set forth basic principles drawn up by the General Convention of the Church of Ireland in 1870 between the passing of the Irish Church Act (1869) and its coming into effect (1st January 1871). Although in theory the Preamble and Declaration could be modified by the General Synod in practice they constitute the most basic and "irreformable" part of the Constitution.
- (2) The "assent" given to the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion is of a *general* character. Commenting on the change in the form of subscription made in 1865 (giving us the current wording), F. J. Bicknell comments in his *Thirty-nine Articles*, 3rd Ed. revised, p.21,  
The change of language in the form of subscription was deliberate. We are asked to affirm today, not that the Articles are all agreeable to the Word of God, but that the doctrine of the Church ... as set forth in the Articles is agreeable to the Word of God. That is, we are not called to assent to every phrase or detail of the Articles but only to their general sense.
- (3) This is directed against the offence of *simony* the purchase or sale of ecclesiastical preferment. The word is derived from the name of Simon Magus (Acts 8:9ff). It may be noted, however, that this declaration relates to any promises made towards the obtaining of an ecclesiastical position. For example, it would be a breach of this declaration for a person being interviewed by parochial nominators to give an undertaking that, if appointed, he or she would either use or not use any particular form of service authorised in the Church of Ireland.
- (4) This is intended to prevent a person simultaneously holding posts, for example in Ireland and England and being paid for both positions. A deacon or priest entering the service of the Church of

Ireland from another part of the Anglican Communion must therefore resign prior to their being licensed or instituted.

(5) "All due reverence" - the respect due to the office of the bishop, and "canonical obedience" - that is obedience in matters required by the laws of the Church of Ireland - "in all lawful and honest commands". The good faith of the bishop must normally be assumed.

It is important to note that in the Church of Ireland the authority of the diocesan bishop is strictly a constitutional authority, and this applies to the collective authority of the House of Bishops as well. In relation to the regulation of public worship it says in the volume *Ecclesiastical Law* in Halsbury's Laws of England (Third Edition), p.82

A clergyman is bound by the oath of canonical obedience to obey all such commands as the bishop by law is authorised to impose, but the bishop has no power personally to compel the incumbent to adopt one of two alternatives both equally legal...

The precedent for the latter part of this statement dates from 1792, and being pre-Disestablishment forms part of ecclesiastical case-law relevant still to the Church of Ireland.

(6) Every Church of Ireland clergyman or woman is bound to recognise both the legal and moral authority of the Church. For ecclesiastical tribunals, offences, sentences, faculties, registries, see Chapter VIII of the Church Constitution. The Court of the General Synod has the final say in legal matters within the Church, and has "original jurisdiction" in any charge involving a question of doctrine or ritual or the deposition from holy orders of any clergyman.

#### 5. **Form of Service**

Questions concerning the form of service to be used, and other matters concerning the conduct of the service, are to be determined by the bishop who presides at it, in accordance with the rubrics of the service and having regard to tradition and local custom.

This safeguards the bishop's authority in relation to what is, like confirmation, essentially an episcopal service.

It is regrettable that the sentence stating "it is appropriate that the newly-ordained should be invited by the bishop to exercise their new ministry in the course of the service" (AOS p.97) has been deleted from this section. However, the principle, whether explicitly stated or not, is still valid.

#### 6. **Readings**

The Readings will normally be those indicated in the service. On occasion the readings of the day may be used or readings may be selected from those provided in the Table of Readings page 70.

The readings indicated in the service have been chosen because of their particular appropriateness. It may be noticed, for example, that although the words "Whosoever sins you forgive" etc. are no longer part of a formula of ordination for priests they are included in the Gospel reading (BCP p.564) where they are of considerable theological importance in relation to the ministry of absolution. Readings of the day may be particularly appropriate when an ordination occurs on a holy day (mandatory for the consecration of a bishop). The list of readings on p.70 includes those for Bible Sunday, Ember Days (when it is appropriate for ordinations to occur), the Guidance of the Holy Spirit, Peace, Mission, and Unity, those provided, or readings of the day. On certain days of the year the liturgical provision may not be displaced by any other observance (BCP p.18).

This would mean that an ordination occurring on, for example, The Presentation of Christ, The Ascension Day, The Day of Pentecost, or Trinity Sunday must have the propers (including the readings) only of those days.

#### 7. **Vesture**



The ordinand may be vested in the vesture of the order before the service begins, or at the appropriate point after the laying on of hands. Deacons and priests are vested with a scarf or stole according to individual choice, and bishops in their episcopal habit (see Canon 12).

Canon 12, **Ecclesiastical apparel**, reads,

(1.) Every archbishop and bishop at all times of his public ministrations of the services of the Church shall use the customary ecclesiastical apparel of his order.

This would normally be taken as including purple cassock and rochet (the white garment - rochet, surplice, and alb are all essentially the same vestment), scarf and hood or stole. However, there seems no reason under this canon why an archbishop or bishop should not wear a cope and mitre, which is certainly "customary" throughout the Anglican world.

(2) Every presbyter and deacon at all times of his public administration of the regular services of the Church in a church building

(a) may wear a cassock,

(b) shall wear a plain white surplice with sleeves and the customary black scarf or a stole, and

(c) may wear bands, and the hood pertaining to his university degree or other academic qualification:

Provided that any minister shall be at liberty to wear a plain black gown while preaching.

No minister shall wear any other ecclesiastical vestment or ornament.

It may be noted that the right of the individual priest or deacon to choose whether to wear a scarf or a stole is absolute, and this is confirmed by Note 7 to the Ordinal (1992). This choice is not subject to the permission of bishop - or rector - either at the ordination or at any other time. The distinction between a scarf and stole should also be observed. A scarf should never be worn sash-wise by a deacon. It is *always* worn up-and-down. Only a stole is worn over the left shoulder.

## 8. **The Presentation**

Before the service, the ordinand is appropriately seated with those who will present *him/her* to the bishop; while, after the presentation, it is appropriate that all those being ordained should be seated together.

This reflects a renewed emphasis on the concept of "a particular ministry within a specific Christian community". Paul Bradshaw writing on "Ordination as God's Action through the Church" in *Anglican Orders and Ordinations* Alcuin/Grow 1997 pp9-10 says, "The early Church knew nothing of the idea of ordinations at large", and one could not be ordained 'absolutely' as a bishop, presbyter or deacon in the universal Church, but had to be appointed to a specific, vacant ministerial role within an individual Christian community. The Berkeley Statement *To Equip the Saints*, Grove Books 2002, p.11 suggests,

Regardless of how the candidates enter the building, they should be seated with those with whom they are closely linked, such as their family, those who have nurtured them in the community of faith, those who will present them for ordination, or those among whom they will serve.

While this is provided for in Note 8 it will be noticed that OS-2 does not go with a further suggestion in the Berkeley Statement, 'Care should be taken to ensure that the ordinands continue to sit with this supportive group until they are called forward for the Questions'.

On the contrary, the candidates (assuming there is more than one) give one another mutual support following the Presentation.

## **THE STRUCTURE OF THE RITES**

A brief indication of the fundamental "shape" of the rite is given above. A more detailed analysis follows.

The structure of all three rites (for the ordination of deacons, priests, and bishops) is essentially the same,

### **The Gathering of God's People**

Hymn, canticle or psalm  
Greeting  
Baptismal versicles and responses  
Preface Presentation  
Affirmation (by Archdeacon (Deacons and Priests)  
Question and Answer  
Collect

### **Proclaiming and Receiving the Word**

The First Reading  
The Psalm  
The Second Reading  
[Canticle, hymn, or anthem]  
The Gospel Reading The Sermon  
The Nicene Creed

### **The Rite of Ordination.**

The Presentation (Bishops only)  
The "Declarations":  
Duties of the office to which the ordinand is being admitted  
Charge (in the case of priests)  
Declarations relating to the faith and commitment of the ordinand, in Question and Answer form.  
Affirmation by the People.  
Prayers:  
An Ordination Litany  
Silence  
Veni Creator (priests and bishops only). An appropriate hymn of invocation of the Holy Spirit for deacons.  
The Ordination Prayer with the Laying on of Hands (one of two forms, the second interactive)  
Vesting (if not already done)  
Giving of the Bible  
Welcome/Greeting of new deacons, priests or bishop  
The Peace

## **Celebrating at the Lord's Table**

Greeting  
Sursum Corda  
Gratias agamus  
Eucharistic Prayer (with Proper Preface for Prayer One)  
The Lord's Prayer  
The Breaking of the Bread  
The Communion  
  
The Great Silence

## **Going Out as God's People**

[Hymn]  
Post-communion prayers  
Blessing  
Dismissal  
Exhortation (Priests, Bishops)  
Departure with Bible (and Pastoral Staff - Bishops only),  
accompanied by representative persons.

## **COMMENTARY:**

### **The Gathering of God's People**

The Ordination is set within the context of a celebration of the Holy Communion, and there is an integral relationship between the two, the Eucharist not being a kind of "add-on" to something which would be complete without it. The bishop presides over the entire rite, in this way maintaining the unity of the Word and Sacrament and their common relationship to the act of ordination. It may be noted that neither the Collect for Purity nor the Gloria in Excelsis are to be found as part of the Preparation. Although the Collect for Purity is, historically speaking, a distinctive feature of the Anglican Communion office (derived from the priest's private prayer before the Eucharistic celebration in the Sarum rite) it is not essential. The Gloria in Excelsis was originally a canticle used at Mattins in the Greek Church, and has been in use in celebrations of the Eucharist on at least festive occasions in the West from the sixth century onwards (although the spread of its use appears to have been gradual). There is no liturgical necessity for its invariable use as in the BCP; and it is properly omitted here. If it were considered desirable to have it, it could be used instead of a hymn during the entry of the ministers or in its customary place prior to the collect.

It is appropriate for the first part of the service to take place at the chancel step. Depending on the layout of the Cathedral the actual ordination may take place there or at the sanctuary step. It is desirable for the act of ordination to be fully visible to the congregation (who are there as participants not merely as spectators).

### **The Greeting**

This comprises "The Lord be with you" and its response without an alternative. The Church of England's *Common Worship* has

Blessed be God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit  
**Blessed be his kingdom, now and for ever. Amen.**

*Common Worship* also has an alternative Greeting for the Easter to Pentecost season. There seems no reason why that to be found on p.201 may not be used in this order.

Christ is risen!  
**The Lord is risen indeed. Alleluia!**

## **Responsorial Sentences**

These are significant as representing the baptismal ecclesiology emphasized in some recent writings on ordination. The call to particular ministry is to be understood within the context of common membership of the church to which all belong by virtue of baptism and within which there is an "every-member" ministry.

## **Preface/Introduction**

This is in two parts, the first a direct quotation from Romans 12:5, 6 from the Revised English Bible (chosen as the version which most effectively and euphoniously conveyed the meaning) indicating the universality of the gifts of God's grace within the one Body of Christ. The second part is a careful affirmation of the order of ministry which is to be conferred and the means of its bestowal (through prayer and the laying on of hands). There is an emphatic reaffirmation that through the Church's practice of ordination the threefold ministry of bishops, priests or presbyters and deacons is being maintained. The preface, which corresponds to that in Ordination Services One [BCP p.518] but differs in that it is read publicly as part of the order of service, reflects the commitment of the Church of Ireland as expressed in the Preamble and Declaration [BCP p.776] to "maintain inviolate the three orders of bishops, priests or presbyters, and deacons in the sacred ministry".

This statement, which was drawn up with great care, may be compared with the similar passage for the ordination of deacons in the Church of England's *Common Worship*,

God calls his people to follow Christ, and forms us into a royal priesthood, a holy nation, to declare the wonderful deeds of him who has called us out of darkness into his marvelous light.

The Church is the Body of Christ, the people of God and the dwelling-place of the Holy Spirit. In baptism the whole Church is summoned to witness to God's love and to work for the coming of his kingdom.

To serve this royal priesthood, God has given a variety of ministries. Deacons are ordained so that the people of God may be better equipped to make Christ known. Theirs is a life of visible self-giving. Christ is the pattern of their calling and their commission; as he washed the feet of his disciples, so they must wash the feet of others.

## **The Presentation**

In specifying that the presentation is to be performed by "sponsors" it seems to have been overlooked that the Archdeacon of the Diocese has an ancient right, written into canon law, to present ordinands to the bishop. To reduce this to a bare statement by the Archdeacon "They are satisfied", relating to those responsible for their selection and training, is inadequate. One possible solution is for the Archdeacon to be accompanied by other representative persons and to speak either with them or on their behalf. Given the importance of the local congregation as an embodiment and representation of the church universal it is desirable that some mention be made of where the ordinands are to serve, in such a form in each case as "Bishop..., we present ... to be ordained deacon. *He/she* is to serve in the parish of X."

With regard to the choice of sponsors, the Berkeley statement says (*Anglican Ordination Rites* p.13)

The particular process through which candidates have come to ordination ought to determine who will present them. For example, in some cases they may be presented by those who have discerned and nurtured the individual's call to - and preparation for - ordained ministry, in others it may be representatives of the local church among whom the new ministry is to be exercised. While the role played by family and friends may rightly be recognized at some point within an ordination service, the presenters should represent the wider community of the baptized rather than the personal choice of the candidates.

In the *Book of Common Prayer* 2004 the candidate says for himself or herself, "I believe that God has

called me" which is more direct and personal than the Church of England's question and answer,

Do they believe them to be duly called to serve God in this ministry?

**They do.**

### **The Collect**

This sets the ministry of those who are to be ordained within the context of the ministry of all the faithful (who are also prayed for). This collect is of a general character, and does not have quite the same significance as the collect in the Ordination Services One, which, prior to the additions and modifications made in 1662, served as an important indication of the difference between the three orders of ministers in the Church.

The prayer was produced by the Revision Committee of the Church of England's General Synod, and is an adaptation of the second ASB prayer for Good Friday, itself drawn from the *Gelasian Sacramentary*.

The Collect may be introduced by the use of such words (from *Common Worship*) as,

Let us pray for N and N, and for the ministry of the whole people of God

A period of silent prayer would be appropriate after the collect is introduced and before it is said.

On a principal holy day or festival the Collect of the Day may be used - preferably in addition to rather as a substitute for the collect given above with its emphasis upon setting the particular ministry to which the person is to be admitted within the context of an "every-member" ministry in the whole Church.

### **Proclaiming and Receiving the Word**

The Ministry of the Word is more comprehensive than that in the traditional Prayer Book rite (Ordination Services 1), which merely provides for an Epistle and Gospel. Here, there is the full liturgical apparatus of Old Testament Reading, Psalm, Epistle, (Canticle or Anthem or Hymn), Gospel, and Sermon. These readings have been chosen to indicate appropriate aspects of the various ministries. For an explanation of the rather more comprehensive selection of readings provided in the Church of England's *Common Worship* Ordinal see Paul Bradshaw, Ed., *A Companion to Common Worship*, SPCK, Vol 2, Alcuin Club Collections 81, 2006, p231-2.

Preference is given to the readings indicated in the order of service. This means that attention is given to passages with a bearing on ministry rather than to a general exposition of passages which may or may not be particularly relevant to the ordination. This is in contrast to the emphasis in the Berkeley Statement "To Equip the Saints" in which it is stated that "the ecclesial nature of ordination may be underscored if the eucharistic readings of the day are used, when they are appropriate, rather than those that focus more narrowly on the particular order being conferred." Given how rare it is for most members of the church to have an opportunity to attend an ordination it seems reasonable to draw attention to readings that help people to understand the nature of the ministry to which candidates are being admitted

### **DEACONS**

The **Old Testament reading** is Isaiah 6:1-8 - Isaiah's vision of God in the Temple - appropriate at the commencement of ministry.

The **Psalm** is 119:33-38, "Teach me O Lord the way of your statutes", also appropriate in the "learning" situation of beginning one's ministry.

The **Epistle** is Romans 12:1-12, drawn from the Anglican-Methodist ordinal, which speaks of personal consecration and also of mutual service in the Body of Christ - the deacon's ministry being above all that of commitment and service.

The **Gospel** is Mark 10:35-45. This sets before the ordinand the ultimate pattern of service, which is that of Jesus, "For the Son of man also came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many".

[The special role of the deacon, liturgically speaking, is to read the Gospel, and this is witnessed to by St. Jerome (c.342-420) and St. Augustine (354-430). This being the case it has been the custom for a newly-ordained deacon to read the Gospel immediately after the act of ordination. However, to have retained this custom in a modern rite would have involved a considerable restructuring of one service: and this would have undermined the uniformity of structure which has been a feature of revised versions of the Ordinal, being found, among others, in that of the United Church of South India, the Anglican-Methodist Ordinal and the new Roman Pontifical as well as in the Church of Ireland's Alternative Occasional Services (1993). However, if a deacon is present it would be appropriate for him or her to read the Gospel and to perform other diaconal duties. In the Notes attached to the *Common Worship* Ordinal the following are suggested as appropriate functions for the "deacon of the rite",

- to carry the Book of the Gospels into the assembly,
- to read the Gospel,
- to sing or say the Ordination Litany
- to prepare the table and the gifts,
- to assist with the Breaking of the Bread and the distribution,
- to supervise the ablutions,
- to dismiss the assembly.

## PRIESTS

The **Old Testament reading** is Isaiah 61:1-3a "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me..." an eschatological passage quoted by Jesus with reference to his own ministry in Luke 4:14-30.

The **Psalm** is 145:1-7,21. "I will exalt you O God my King" - in which the psalmist declares his intention of singing God's praises and declaring his mighty deeds".

The **Epistle** is 2 Corinthians 5:1.4-21 - the ministry of reconciliation which lies at the heart of priesthood, as of the Christian life in general.

The **Gospel** is John 20:19-23. This contains the significant words to be found in the act of ordination in the Book of Common Prayer, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained". In the BCP Ordinal this was used as one of the Gospels at the Consecration of a Bishop.

## BISHOP

The **Old Testament reading** is Numbers 27:15-20,22,23 - the commissioning of Joshua as the successor to Moses with full authority as leader through prayer and the laying on of hands.

The **Psalm** is 119:165-174. The Law of God is celebrated.

The **Epistle** is 2 Corinthians 4:1-10. A reminder that "we have this treasure in earthen vessels, to show that the transcendent power belongs to God and not to us".

The **Gospel** is John 21:15-17, addressed to Peter the Shepherd, and so, symbolically, to all bishops. "Feed my sheep", the words of the Risen Christ. This was appointed as one of the readings in the traditional Prayer Book consecration of bishops in Ordination Services One, and was also in the Anglican-Methodist ordinal.

It may be noticed that of the passages chosen in the traditional Prayer Book Ordinal only two are appointed here - John 20:19-23 (but applied here to priests rather than bishops) and John 21:15-17. Ephesians 4:7ff is not appointed as a reading but is central to the thought of the ordination prayer for priests and for bishops.

## **The Sermon**

No limitation as to content is made. However, the rule in Ordination Services One (for deacons' and priests' ordinations) gives an idea of the lines along which addresses at ordinations may reasonably proceed, "declaring the Duty and Office of such as come to be admitted Deacons/Priests, how necessary that Order is in the Church of Christ; and also, how the people ought to esteem them in their Office". It is hard to see the relevance in the recommendation in the Berkeley Statement, "The sermon should be an exposition of the word of God which has been read, in relation to the ministry of the whole church, and not be an address solely to candidates, which belongs rather to a "(set) Exhortation given by the bishop elsewhere in the rite". Setting the ordination within the context of the every-member ministry of the whole Church is one thing; ignoring the particularity of the occasion is another. Nor is it clear that nothing useful can be said about the ministry of bishops, priests or presbyters and deacons which is not contained in the exhortations.

## **The Nicene Creed**

The "standard" order of modern Eucharistic liturgies has been followed, the principle being that God's Word is read and expounded and this in turn leads to a reaffirmation of faith. The significance of the use of the Nicene Creed in the ordinal is that it allows all concerned to identify their faith with that of the universal Church into whose ministry the ordinands are being admitted. The baptismal link is indicated by the introductory expression, "Mindful of our baptism... Contrary to the recommendation in the Berkeley document the Creed in Ordination Services Two is the Nicene Creed not the Apostles' Creed. The latter is a Creed of the Western Church only, whereas the Nicene Creed is truly universal. The corporate emphasis "We believe..." (the original wording of the Nicene Creed) stresses that this is the confession of faith of the whole Church. The "I believe..." of the Apostles' Creed is more individualistic and less suitable for this reason. The Nicene Creed is also the form of the Creed normally used at the Eucharist. There is a Eucharistic ecclesiology waiting to be more fully explored to complement the Baptismal ecclesiology exclusively recommended in the Berkeley statement and supporting documents.

## **The Rite of Ordination**

Although what is termed "The Rite of Ordination" begins here it may be noticed that in contrast to the Ordinal in Alternative Occasional Services (1993) there has been an anticipation of part of the rite in the presentation of the candidates to the bishop within The Gathering of God's People and so far from this unit being self-contained there are also parts of the rite that appear in the post-communion, especially part of the priests' charge which in AOS appeared as a single unit.

Introducing the Church of England's counterpart to this part of the service Paul Bradshaw says (in *A Companion to Common Worship*, Vol 2, op. cit pp232-3),

Now that the ordinands have been introduced to the congregation, and the assembly has heard and pondered on the word of God, the ordination proper begins. The way an ordination is celebrated can sometimes make it look as if the bishop is setting some persons apart from the community of faith and transmitting to them a distinct "power". But an ordination is the act of the whole community presided over by the bishop. First, therefore, the ordinands must make before the people certain declarations about their faith and intentions so that the people may be able to give their consent to the ordination. Then the whole assembly will offer their prayers to God for the needs of the Church and the world, including petition for the ordinands, before the president [bishop] acting in the name of the Church, says the ordination prayer accompanied by the laying on of hands.

## **The Presentation, Part Two. [Bishops only]**

The rite of the Ordination or Consecration of a Bishop has a double presentation, first, at the beginning of the service as of one who is believed to be called and ready to be ordained bishop in the Church of

God and, at the commencement of the Rite of Ordination when the authority for the ordination is read and the bishop-elect makes the Declaration of Canonical Obedience. It is reasonable to question whether this is as intelligible as the form in *Alternative Occasional Services* (1993) where the one follows immediately after the other (AOS p.122). This separation of two events which clearly belong together is an aspect of distributing parts of the process of ordination between the beginning, middle and end of the service. It may be noticed that the *Common Worship* ordinal avoids the problem by having the whole Presentation prior to the Collect.

## **The Declarations**

The Declarations comprise (in the case of each order) a statement of the functions that belong to the order, and a series of questions and answers designed to elicit a public commitment to the work of the ministry as this is understood by the Church of Ireland. The functions are described as follows,

### **DEACONS**

Deacons in the Church of God serve in the name of Christ, and so remind the whole Church that serving others is at the heart of all ministry.

Deacons have a special responsibility to ensure that those in need are cared for with compassion and humility. They are to strengthen the faithful, search out the careless and the indifferent, and minister to the sick, the needy, the poor and those in trouble. When called upon to do so, they may baptize, preach and give instruction in the faith. Deacons assist the bishop and priest under whom they serve. When the people are gathered for worship, deacons are authorized to read the Gospel, lead the people in intercession, and distribute the bread and wine of Holy Communion.

The specific functions of the deacon are often overlooked not least because of the long-established practice of treating the diaconate as a steppingstone to the priesthood (usually after one year). The revival of a permanent diaconate in some parts of the Anglican Communion indicates the special character of the deacon's office as servanthood. Some scholars, on the basis of the practice of the pre-Nicene Church advocate direct ordination to the particular order required - diaconate, priesthood, episcopate. Others, recognizing that where sequential ordination occurs each order is inclusive of the one already conferred see an advantage of a priest's or bishop's ministry being inclusive of that servanthood which belongs to the deacon. Although it is customary (and unexceptional) in the Church of Ireland for an assisting priest at the eucharist to vest as such, there does not seem to be any reason why he or she may not dress as a deacon when fulfilling the role of a deacon and so underlining this fact. A contrary view may be found in the introduction to *Equipping the Saints - Ordination in Anglicanism Today, Papers from the Sixth International Anglican Liturgical Consultation*, Eds R. L. Dowling and D. R. Holeton, p.11.

NB It is probably better for the deacon not to baptize except when it is impossible for a priest to perform this action. Although even lay baptism is fully valid, baptism as one of the two "Gospel sacraments" is best performed by one who has been admitted to the full ministry of the Word and Sacraments.

[In Ordination Services One the role of a deacon is spelt out within the interrogation. Here, it is more logically expressed *before* the questions].

### **PRIESTS**

Priests (or presbyters) in the Church of God are called to work with the bishop and with other priests as servants and shepherds among the people to whom they are sent.

They are to proclaim the Word of the Lord, to call those who hear to repentance, and in Christ's name to pronounce absolution and declare the forgiveness of sins. They are to baptize



and to catechize.

They are to preside at the celebration of the Holy Communion.

They are to lead God's people in prayer and worship, to intercede for them, to bless them in the name of the Lord, and to teach and encourage them by word and example. They are to minister to the sick and to prepare the dying for their death.

They must always set the Good Shepherd before them as the pattern of their calling, caring for the people committed to their charge, and joining with them in a common witness, that the world may come to know God's glory and love.

[There follows a significant part of the Charge, a distinctive feature of the traditional Prayer Book Rite of the Ordination of Priests (Ordination Services One) based on Bucer's *De Ordinatione legitima*. Although the integrity of the Charge has been undermined by a portion of it having been placed at the conclusion of the service, it remains largely that of the traditional Prayer Book although lightened in tone and drawing on the modified version appearing in the Anglican-Methodist Ordinal and with some recent alterations. A further problem with the Charge in the Book of Common Prayer is that, due to an error a significant portion, approved by the General Synod, was omitted and had to be included in an Errata slip. For this reason the full text is reproduced below]

In the name of our Lord we ask you to remember the greatness of the trust now to be committed to your charge. You are to be messengers, watchers and stewards of the Lord; you are to teach and to admonish, to feed and provide for the Lord's family, to search for God's children in the wilderness of the world's temptations and to guide them through its confusions, so that they may be saved through Christ for ever.

Your ministry will be one of joy as well as of responsibility, of happiness as well as of diligence. Yet remember in your heart that if it should come about that the Church, or any of its members, is hurt or hindered by reason of your neglect, your fault will be great and God's judgement will follow. So pray constantly for his mercy and for the grace you will need to fulfil your call.

We trust that, supported by the prayers and encouragement of the household of faith, you long ago began to weigh and ponder all these things, and that you are fully determined, by the grace of God, to give yourselves wholly to his service. We trust that you will devote to him your best powers of mind and spirit, so that, as you daily follow the rule and teaching of our Lord, with the heavenly assistance of his Holy Spirit, you may grow into his likeness, and lead into holiness the lives of all with whom you have to do.

[This Charge may be compared with the comparable passage in the Church of England's *Common Worship* service which, in effect, continues and enlarges upon the "job description". No part of the English Charge appears at the end of the service].

## BISHOPS

Bishops are called to lead in serving and caring for the people of God and to work with them in the oversight of the Church. As chief pastors they share with their fellow bishops a special responsibility to maintain and further the unity of the Church, to uphold its discipline, to guard its faith and to promote its mission throughout the world. It is their duty to watch over and pray for all those committed to their charge, and to teach and govern them after the example of the apostles, speaking in the name of God and interpreting the gospel of Christ. They are to know their people and be known by them. They are to ordain and to send new ministers, guiding those who serve with them and enabling them to fulfil their ministry. They are to baptize and confirm, to preside at the Holy Communion, and to lead the offering of prayer and praise. They are to be

merciful, but with firmness, and to minister discipline, but with mercy. They are to have special care for the sick and for the outcast and needy; and to those who turn to God they are to declare the forgiveness of sins.

[There is no "Charge" or outline of duties in the Order for the Consecration of Bishops in Ordination Services One, although something of what was expected of them may be gathered from the interrogation. This statement of the bishop's duties is based on that in the Anglican-Methodist Ordinal of 1968].

The ministry of the ordained person is representative - of Christ and the Church. The Church is characterized by servanthood, following the example of the One who came "not to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many". The Church is a royal priesthood, a kingdom of priests reflective of the priesthood of Christ the "great high priest" - who is the mediator between God and man - so that every Christian may be a means of grace to others. The Church, under the authority of Christ who is the "Good Shepherd" exercises pastoral care and supervision through mutual concern for the well-being of all its members. The threefold ordering of deacons, priests or presbyters and bishops in the Church may be considered as a signification of these three aspects of ministry although not in an exclusive manner. All of this is derived from and subordinate to the unique position of the One who is Prophet, Priest/Redeemer, and King/Pastor.

## **(2) The Interrogation**

Certain questions are of such a fundamental character that they are the same for all three orders of ministry. These relate, first, to acceptance of the holy Scriptures as revealing all things necessary for eternal salvation, belief and acceptance of the doctrine of the Christian faith as the Church of Ireland has received it relating to the Scriptures as containing all things necessary for salvation, adherence to the doctrine of the Church of Ireland and willingness to expound and teach this doctrine. Candidates for all three orders promise to strive to fashion their own life and family relationships according to the way of Christ. They also commit themselves (in words derived from the Preamble and Declaration, BCP p.777) to promoting unity, peace and love among all Christian people, and especially among those among whom they will serve. Other promises relate specifically to the particular order of ministry which is being conferred, as follows,

### **DEACONS**

The deacon accepts the discipline of the Church of Ireland and promises to give due respect to those set over him or her. There is a question about being diligent in prayer, in reading holy Scripture, and in all studies that deepen faith and fit the person concerned to uphold the truth of the Gospel. The deacon is also asked about being faithful in visiting the sick, in caring for the poor and needy, and in helping the oppressed. And he or she is asked to undertake, in the strength of the Holy Spirit, continually to stir up the gift of God that is in them to make Christ known to all people.

### **PRIESTS**

As with the deacon the priest accepts the discipline of the Church of Ireland and promises due respect to those set over him or her and makes the same commitment to spirituality and being a student of the faith. The priest also makes the same promise about pastoral care and concern, and also promises to stir up the gift of God within him or her.

An additional question and answer relates to the encouragement of God's people to be good stewards of their gifts that every member may be equipped for the work of ministering, and that the Body of Christ be built up in love.

## BISHOPS

The bishop-elect makes the same promise as the deacon or priest about pastoral care and concern and makes the same commitment to spirituality and being a student of the faith.

Questions specific to the bishop cover a commitment to guard the faith, unity and discipline of the Church; being faithful in ordaining deacons and priests and in commissioning readers and sustaining them in their ministry; and encouraging all baptized people in their gifts and ministries and giving them support by his or her prayers. A final question asks the bishop elect about being a faithful witness to Christ to those among whom he or she will live and leading his or her people to obey our Saviour's command to make disciples of all nations.

[A rather different set of questions and answers for the bishop is contained in the Church of England's *Common Worship* ordinal with essentially the same import]

### **The People's Assent**

Paul Bradshaw points out (*A Companion to Common Worship*, Vol 2, op. cit. p.234) that the practice of seeking the consent of the laity has been traditional at ordinations since the earliest times and is one of the ways in which expression is given to the concept of ordination as the action of the whole Church and not just of the bishop or archbishop who presides. In earlier rites (AOS and its primary source the ordinal in the Church of England's Alternative Service Book 1980) this came immediately after the presentation, but he thinks it is more appropriate for it to be done here, when the congregation has had opportunity to hear the responses of the ordinands. As against this, the earlier tradition maintained a more coherent structure or shape - which has been made more complicated in this rite. The AOS Ordinal attracted some criticism on the grounds that no provision was made for any objection to the ordination. This has been rectified for deacons and priests but not for a bishop. No provision of this kind has been made in the *Common Worship* ordinal.

### **The Prayers**

The function of prayer in the ordinal is not that of the (arch)bishop alone. Rather, there is the responsorial prayer of a Litany, with particular suffrages for the candidate deacons, priests and bishops-elect; the silent prayer of the people; and, in the case of priests and bishops the invocation of the Holy Spirit in the words of the hymn *Veni Creator* (156), "Come, Holy Ghost, our souls inspire..." (an alternative hymn of invocation is sung at the ordination of deacons) all leading up to the climax of the ordination prayer itself (which makes some further provision for the involvement of the people) Having a hymn of invocation to the Holy Spirit at the ordination of a deacon (although a different one from *Veni Creator*) is a departure from long-standing tradition and it remains to be seen whether there is any significant advantage in this.

With regard to the Ordination Litany two forms are provided in the Book of Common Prayer 2004 (pp585-590). The first is a version of the Litany Two on ppl75-8 in the Prayer Book sections 1-3, the latter with particular petitions as follows,

Bless your *servants* now to be made *deacons/priests/bishop*  
that *they* may faithfully serve your Church  
and reveal your glory in the world,  
**hear us good Lord.**

Seconds 4-5 (petitions for the state and for all people according to their needs) are omitted. A concluding prayer is added after the Agnus Dei. The words "and from the evil of schism" have been accidentally omitted after "your word and commandment" and should be included. The use of the Litany at ordinations has a long history - it is found in the *Gregorian Sacramentary*, dating to at least the eight/ninth century. At the Reformation the 1544 Litany was adapted and incorporated into the 1550 and 1552 ordinals, and has remained in the Book of Common Prayer ever since, appearing after

the presentation in the rites for deacons and priests, and before the examination in the rite for bishops. In the 1926 Church of Ireland revision the Supplication in time of War was omitted (in the current form of Litany One it does not appear at all). The Litany is neither in the Ordinal of the Church of South India (1962) nor in the (derived) Anglican-Methodist Ordinal of 1968. However it was included in the Church of England's ASB (1980), and subsequently in the Church of Ireland's *Alternative Occasional Services* (1993). This modern version of "the" Litany is the first option in Ordination Services Two.

The Litany is, properly, sung. Three versions currently are in use in Armagh Cathedral, one based on the Tallis setting, another a fresh composition by the organist Theo Saunders, and the third a plainsong setting adapted from a medieval model.

The alternative form focuses more specifically on the theme of ministry. It is lacking in the memorable rhythms of the historic Litany.

The Litany is followed by silent prayer by the people for the ordinands in all three rites. This goes back at least to the *Apostolic Tradition* (attributed to Hippolytus and conventionally dated as 215 A.D. although there are many unanswered questions about the history of this document, its attribution and its date or dates). It appears that there was a laying on of hands during the silence, at least at the ordination of a bishop. A further imposition of hands occurred during the saying of the ordination prayer itself. In medieval times there continued to be a tradition of silent prayer with the laying on of hands for all three orders. At the Reformation Martin Bucer suggested that ordination should be preceded by silent prayer but he omitted the laying on of hands. Following this Cranmer prescribed silent prayer prior to the *Veni Creator* in the ordinal of 1550, but this was for priests only, a practice followed in the traditional Prayer Book (Ordination Services One p.535). It is found, for all three orders, in the *Book of Common Worship* of the (united) Church of South India (1962), and passed from this, via the *Anglican-Methodist Ordinal* (1968) into the ASB (1980) and from there into the Ordinal in the AOS and is now a feature of the Ordinal in the *Book of Common Prayer* 2004. In the Prayer Book of the American Episcopal Church (1979) and in the *Book of Alternative Services* of the Anglican Church of Canada the silence follows the *Veni Creator*.

As explained above this is followed in the case of the ordination of priests or the consecration of a bishop by the *Veni Creator*, which, however, is not sung for a deacon. The *Veni Creator* is attributed to Rabanus Maurus, Abbot of Fulda and Archbishop of Mainz (c.776-856). It was used in the medieval Office at Pentecost and was also to be found in the Missal as part of the priest's private preparation for Mass, and has been used at ordinations since the eleventh century. Cranmer incorporated it into the 1550 Ordinal for bishops and priests. Since 1662 Bishop Cosin's translation has generally been used, although it exists also in versions by Dryden and Bridges.

### **The Ordination Prayer with the Laying on of Hands**

The initial rubric deals with a practical point. The Ordinal in *Alternative Occasional Services* (1993) left it open to the bishop (or archbishop) as to whether he sat or stood for the laying on of hands. Ordination Services Two makes it mandatory for him to stand.

For all three orders the principle is firmly established that ordination is through prayer together with the laying on of hands rather than by means of declaratory formulae as in the traditional Prayer Book rite (Ordination Services One). The prototypes of the ordination prayers are to be found in the Ordinal of the Book of Common Worship of the (united) Church of South India (1962) as mediated through the draft Anglican-Methodist Ordinal (1968) and adapted by the Church of England for the *Alternative Services Book* (1980). These have now been revised and updated for the *Book of Common Prayer* 2004 and for the Church of England's Common Worship Ordinal. The particular administration of the laying on of hands within each of the prayers is characteristic, and is also to be found in the ordination rites of the Episcopal Church of America (1979) and Canada (1986). The ordination prayers for the

three orders have a similar shape, the deep structure of which (like the eucharistic prayer in the Holy Communion) is praise and thanksgiving leading to supplication, the "hinge" being the petition for the particular ministry being conferred. In the first part of the prayer God is praised and glorified - in the deacons' service for sending his Son to take the form of a servant; in the (first) priests' for giving us Jesus Christ, the image of the Father's eternal and invisible glory, the firstborn of all creation, and head of the Church, in the (second) priests' and the bishops' for giving Him to be the Apostle and High Priest of our faith, and for sending ministers to build up his Church and share in its ministry. Then follows the formula of ordination said over each candidate as hands are laid upon him or her,

Pour out your Holy Spirit upon your servant...  
for the office and work of a priest in your Church.

The use of the words "whom we ordain in your name" used immediately before the formula indicates that this is what the Revised Catechism calls "a sacramental ministry of grace" which accomplishes that which it represents. Although it has been pointed out by Dr Paul Bradshaw and others that in the early church the person was apparently "made" a deacon, priest, or bishop by virtue of their appointment and that the laying on of hands was for the purpose of praying for them to be given "the gifts and graces necessary to the effective exercise" of the office, it was considered, in drawing up this office that the sacramental tradition which became universal in both East and West by which the order concerned was conveyed not only through selection, but through the laying on of hands with prayer was not only a legitimate development but one to which the Church of Ireland wished to continue to adhere. Without wishing to return to the concept of "ordination by formula" (which would make the ordination prayer as a whole redundant, in theory at least) there seemed no reason why there could not be a focal point within the process which leads to a person being deemed a deacon, priest or presbyter, or bishop of the Church. To explain this by analogy one may remark, in the light of a current emphasis on a "baptismal ecclesiology", that prior to the words "I baptize you in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit" the person is not baptized. After the words have been said the person *has been* baptized, although this is not to ignore vital components in the totality of becoming a Christian such as coming to faith and the gift of the Holy Spirit. In a similar way it must be possible to identify whether a person has or has not been ordained and this can hardly practically be decided only on the basis of their acceptance for the ordained ministry. The Preface to Ordination Services Two (considered above) has been carefully drawn up so as to indicate that the "Gathering" is for the purpose of admitting to the order of deacons, priests or bishops those whom it is believed God has chosen for this particular ministry and that it is by prayer with the laying on of hands that the church seeks the bestowal of the Holy Spirit for that office and work.

In the final part of each prayer there is supplication that those newly ordained may be given "grace and power" to fulfil the ministry to which they are called. In the deacons' prayer, service and teaching are emphasized. At the ordination of priests the focus of attention is on the proclamation of the gospel and the administration of the sacraments, pastoral care for the people, and the ministries of absolution and blessing. When a bishop is consecrated the stress is upon the bishop's role as leader, guardian of the faith, liturgical president, ruler of the household and ambassador for Christ.

The words "grace and power" are significant. Both are biblical words with a special relevance to ministry. For example, Ephesians 4:7ff says, "But grace was given to each of us according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore it is said, 'When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men'... and his gifts were that, some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ..." For "power" see the risen Christ's words to his disciples, "You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you; and you shall be my witnesses..." (Acts 1:8). The word "power" comes in Morning and Evening Prayer One in the absolution, "He hath given power, and commandment, to his ministers..." (BCP p.86).

The difference between "absolve" (Common Worship Ordinal) and "pronounce absolution" (BCP 2004) is verbal since we are dealing with a "performative" use of words. Absolution is conveyed by the declaration that the sinner is forgiven. See Luke 5:20 "Man, your sins are forgiven".

In each case there is an alternative ordination prayer the chief characteristic of which is that it is interactive with congregational responses throughout. This is a feature which is familiar to many worshippers through the use of the third eucharistic prayer which actually goes further in involving the people in the essential wording rather than in responses which, though valuable, are peripheral to the prayer itself. The provision of an introductory form of versicles and responses in all six ordination prayers (two for each order) and the series of responses through the prayers of the alternative or second set indicates that ordination is in some sense an act of the whole community. This is not intended to detract from the presiding role of the bishop or archbishop, assisted by priests or bishops as the case may be.

As outlined above the tradition is that deacons are ordained by the bishop alone. This may be a reflection of the special relationship between bishop and deacons in the early Church. Priests or presbyters are ordained by the bishop but priests also share in the laying on of hands and this may be taken as an indication of the entry of the person ordained into the "college" of priests to whom the bishop delegates the ministry of the Word and Sacraments in his diocese. From the time of the Council of Nicaea it has been a rule of the church that at least three bishops must share in the laying on of hands at the consecration of a bishop. This, it would appear, was not for the purpose of preventing any technical "defect" from invalidating the orders of the new bishop - such a concept would have been foreign to the thought of the early Fathers. Rather, it seems to have been a matter of ensuring recognition by the wider church community.

**[A note on the practicalities** It is appropriate for the ordaining bishop to stretch out his hands towards the candidates for the first part of the prayer, an alternative posture being the normal posture for liturgical prayer on behalf of others - hands parted and raised. A chaplain should hold the book to leave the hands free. The candidates kneel but the bishop stands. When ordaining several deacons he may, if he wishes, walk along the row and lay on hands on each with the appropriate formula. In the case of priests or bishops this is less easy because of the presence of those assisting in the laying on of hands]

### **The Vesting**

There is an option of the ordinands (deacon, priest or presbyter, or bishop) coming in to the church vested according to the order which is to be bestowed upon them. However, it is widely felt to be appropriate for them to be vested immediately after the act of ordination as a sign of the order which has just been conferred upon them. In the case of newly-ordained deacons they are vested according to individual choice with a scarf or stole. If a scarf is worn it should be black and worn up-and-down. There is no authority for a liturgical scarf to be worn sash-wise. A stole is worn sash-wise over the left shoulder. When priests are ordained the scarf should be worn normally and it does not need to be adjusted. It is customary for the stole to be adjusted from being worn over the left shoulder to being worn up-and-down. A bishop-elect wears a rochet over his (purple) cassock and, after the act of ordination is, traditionally, vested in his chimere and may wear a stole, or, alternatively, a scarf and hood. However, it is questionable whether a bishop should wear a chimere at a sacramental rite, and, if he is not it would seem appropriate for him to wear a stole as well as the rochet from the beginning of the rite.

[There is no authority for the custom of bishops wearing black chimeres at funerals and memorial services or during the penitential seasons of Advent and Lent and red chimeres on other occasions. Chimeres are a derivative of academical dress, black being properly the colour for B.D.'s and M.A.'s and red the colour for doctors of divinity. Bishops took to wearing black in the sixteenth century in

spite of their doctorates) except at Convocation. The use of red was revived in the twentieth century. A reasonable pattern, if any distinction is to be made, would be to use black as standard choir dress and red on solemn occasions. But, properly speaking the use of black or red has no liturgical significance.]

No directions are given as to when the pectoral cross and the ring are given in the ordination of bishops, although this could be done under the heading of "the episcopal habit" (rubric p.582). The tradition with Ordination Services One is explained on p.22 above, and an adapted form of this was used in St Patrick's Cathedral Armagh when the ordinal from *Alternative Occasional Services* (1993) was used. The pastoral staff is given at the end of the rite in Ordination Services Two.

In some Anglican rites of ordination, symbols of the priest's office (chalice and paten) or the bishop's office (pastoral staff) may be presented after the Giving of the Bible. This *porrectio instrumentorum* was an integral part of the rite in the Middle Ages and was mistakenly thought by some to be the "matter" of ordination. Such ceremonies are more correctly understood as meaningful but not sacramentally necessary signs of the significance of the office being bestowed. Only the giving of the pastoral staff to the bishop appears in the Book of Common Prayer 2004 and that at the end of the rite (see below).

### **The Giving of the Bible**

Following the vesting a Bible is given to the newly ordained deacons, priests or presbyters, or bishops. The old custom of giving a New Testament to deacons and a full Bible to priests and bishops has been discontinued. For a deacon the Bible is "a sign of the authority which God has given you this day to proclaim his word to his people". For a priest it is "a sign of the authority which God has given you this day to preach the Word and to minister his holy sacraments". A bishop is told to "receive this Book; here are words of eternal life. Take them for your guide and declare them to the world."

### **Presentation to the People**

The newly ordained deacons, priests or bishop(s) are presented to the people by the ordaining bishop (or archbishop) and those concerned may be welcomed/greeted. The form in which the greeting occurs (applause, particular representative people coming up to do it) is a matter for local decision and is discretionary.

### **The Peace**

In all three cases the introductory words are the "new commandment". A sign of peace (for example a handshake) is recommended.

## **Celebrating at the Lord's Table**

### **At the Preparation of the Table**

It is appropriate for the newly-ordained deacons to prepare the Table at the Offertory and to bring the bread and wine to the bishop.

### **The Great Thanksgiving**

It is suitable for the newly-ordained priests to stand with the bishop and to concelebrate the eucharistic prayer. This may be done in silence (with the hands raised in prayer as appropriate) or by quietly joining in the eucharistic prayer either from "Father, almighty and everliving God..." or from "Blessed are you, Father" (when eucharistic prayer one is used. Appropriate adjustments need to be made for eucharistic prayers two and three). A newly-consecrated bishop might be asked to co-consecrate with the archbishop, or to join, silently or vocally, with all the other bishops present in concelebration standing with the archbishop around the altar. The normal conventions are followed: when speaking on behalf of the people the hands of the Presiding Minister and concelebrants are parted and raised. When speaking with the people the hands are joined.

Proper prefaces suitable for the particular order which has been conferred are appointed for use with eucharistic prayer one and may be adapted as seasonal additions for eucharistic prayer two where they

come after "called to serve you for ever". There are no seasonal variations in eucharistic prayer three.

### **Communion**

At the communion the newly-ordained receive communion immediately after the celebrant. It is appropriate for the newly-ordained deacons to assist in the administration of the chalice\* and for the newly-ordained priests to assist in the administration of the paten and chalice. The whole body of the faithful should be encouraged to receive communion.

\*Historically there is a close connection between the deacons' ministry and the Cup. However, deacons may administer both the bread and the cup.

It is appropriate for the deacons to assist in the consumption of any sacramental bread and wine that remain and also to assist with the ablutions.

### **Going Out as God's People**

Special provision is made for the part of the liturgy after the Great Silence. In the case of each order there is a special post-communion prayer before "Almighty God, we thank you..." In the case of priests part of the historic "charge" is read after the blessing and before the dismissal. In the case of bishops the pastoral staff is given and an appropriate "charge" is given.

The blessing refers not only to those ordained but to all those present that God will stir up in them the gifts of his grace and sustain each one of them in their ministry.

The dismissal is appropriately said by a deacon. According to the theological principle of "subsidiarity" where possible appropriate parts of the liturgy are delegated to those whose task it is to perform them. It is not desirable for a "higher" order to displace one that is "lower".

Deacons and priests carry the Bible as they depart. Newly-ordained bishops carry both the Bible and the Pastoral Staff. In the case of deacons and priests they are accompanied by representatives of the parish and diocese. In the case of bishops they are accompanied by representatives of the diocese.



# **The Institution Service**

## **The Institution of an Incumbent**

This order, passed by the General Synod in 2007 takes the place of an alternative order for this purpose passed by the General Synod in 1990 and incorporated in *Alternative Occasional Services* 1993. The basic form of the current order is structured as follows:

### **The Gathering of God's People Proclaiming and Receiving the Word The Institution The Commission**

First Form  
or  
Second Form

### **The Prayers of the People Going out as God's People**

When there is Holy Communion this follows the Peace (which concludes the Commission), beginning at Celebrating at the Lord's Table in Holy Communion Two or at the Sursum Corda ("Lift up your hearts") in Holy Communion One:

### **The Gathering of God's People Proclaiming and Receiving the Word The Institution The Commission**

First Form  
or  
Second Form

### **Celebrating at the Lord's Table (or Holy Communion Two from "Lift up your hearts") Going out as God's People**

In principle it is desirable that the institution takes place within the context of the eucharist, and this is presupposed by the eucharistic shape of the rite as a whole. However, in practice this may present problems where a high proportion of those attending may be members of other Christian traditions who are either not in communion with the Church of Ireland or are not accustomed to the eucharist, and where such considerations apply the basic form of the order is used. Holy Communion Two is given first (with Holy Communion One as an alternative) because this order for the Institution of an Incumbent is a modern language service with echoes of Ordination Services Two and its structure or shape is designed with Holy Communion Two in mind.

### **The Gathering of God's People**

This section, down to the end of the quotation from Romans 12:5,6, is identical to that in Ordination Services Two and sets the ministry of the new incumbent within the context of what has been called "Common Life in the Body of Christ" with a particular reference to the baptismal calling of all Christians.

After appropriate words of welcome and introduction by the bishop (which should not be excessively long) the archdeacon exercises his traditional right of presentation. The silence to allow prayer for the candidate is not a mere preliminary but facilitates the substance of praying which is summed up in the Collect. The Collect is that of Ordination Services Two (adapted) which refers to the vocation and ministry of (all) faithful people in the church before proceeding to ask God to give to this particular

servant "the needful gifts of grace" for his particular role and ministry.

When appropriate the collect of the day may be used. For example, on a saint's day the collect of the saint being commemorated is added to the general collect provided.

### **Proclaiming and Receiving the Word**

The Ember Day readings from page 70 of the Book of Common Prayer or the readings of the Day are used. The Ember Day readings are helpful as having a bearing upon ministry. The readings of the Day anchor the event within the ongoing liturgical life of the Church.

The Ember Day readings are:

#### **OLD TESTAMENT**

Jeremiah 1:4-9 or Numbers 11:16-17, 24-29 or Numbers 27:15-23

#### **PSALM**

104:23-32 *or* 107:1-9 *or* 121

#### **EPISTLE**

Phillippians 4:4-7 *or* 2 Thessalonians 3:6-13 *or* 1 John 5:12-15.

#### **GOSPEL**

Matthew 6:1-15 *or* Mark 11:22-24 *or* Luke 11:5-13

It says in the BCP that any combination of the above may be used. In other words particular Old Testament Readings are not tied to particular psalms, epistles, or Gospels. However, there should not be two Old Testament Readings or two Epistles or whatever and the psalmody should not be omitted. As in the BCP p.204 a canticle, psalm, hymn, anthem or acclamation may be sung between the Epistle and Gospel as a Gradual and this may be held to cover an alleluia. The following arrangement is appropriate:

#### **OLD TESTAMENT**

#### **PSALM**

#### **EPISTLE**

#### **ACCLAMATION OR ALLELUIA OR HYMN**

#### **GOSPEL**

If there is a deacon present he or she should read the Gospel. A book of Gospels may be taken from the altar and carried in procession to the head of the nave to be read there to the people. The customary doxologies are said or sung.

The Sermon is preached after the Gospel. This should include an exposition of some part of the Scriptures being read and should also relate to the ministry on which the new incumbent is about to embark.

### **The Institution**

After the registrar (or the registrar's deputy) has read the certificate of nomination the Declarations are made and signed it is certified that this has been done and witnessed by the churchwardens.

In favour of the declarations actually being made at this point is that this enables people to hear the affirmation of loyalty to the faith and order of the Church of Ireland and the promise of canonical obedience which is part of this. However, the Notes at the conclusion of the service ensure that if this

is not done the text should be included on the service sheet.

Following the legal preliminaries the *Act of Institution* is read by the bishop and it is handed to the rector using words which indicate the shared pastoral responsibility of bishop and incumbent:

... , the care of God's people in this parish is entrusted to you and to me within the body of Christ. Accept the responsibilities and privileges of this ministry as a priest in this diocese, in communion with the bishop.

The Church of Ireland upholds the ancient principle of one bishop one diocese and has never accepted the idea that individuals or groups who dissent from aspects of the faith and order of the church are entitled to the ministry of a bishop of their own.

In addressing the new incumbent the bishop emphasizes the solemn promises of his or her ordination to care for all alike. The manner of life of the rector must be such as to proclaim the Gospel.

The new incumbent is blessed by the bishop for his or her ministry in word and sacrament to their people.

The people in turn are given the opportunity to affirm their support for the new rector, praying for him or her as the rector will pray for them. The rector is welcomed in the "name of the Lord" and it is indicate that applause is appropriate.

### **The Commission**

The particular office and ministry of the new rector is set within the context of the calling to all church members within the parish to be the Body of Christ, living and serving together, and witnessing to the love of Christ. A text from Ephesians 4:1-3 emphasizes the message. The entire congregation responds to the question, "Will you follow in this way?" with the answer "**By the help of God, we will.**"

In **The First Form** the bishop and the rector go to the door, the font, a prayer desk, the lectern or pulpit and the Lords' Table. At each place there is a relevant scripture sentence and a congregational response followed by an exhortation to the rector. This is derived from a similar kind of procedure in the 1990 service and its predecessor and can be a highly effective way of highlighting, in a symbolical manner, various aspects of the rector's liturgical ministry in the parish.

The **Second Form** represents a new departure in which various symbols of the teaching, pastoral and sacramental ministry of an incumbent are brought forward and presented to him, including a Bible (for reading and preaching), a container of water (for baptism), a Book of Common Prayer (for one who leads public prayer and encourages in a life of personal devotion), bread and wine (for communion). Other symbols for optional use at the discretion of the bishop include oil (for healing and reconciliation), a key (for access to the church - open to all people), and a towel (for the washing of feet). There is provision for further symbols, pertinent to the ministry to be added.

There is a certain artificiality in the symbolism of this second form unless the container of water is kept for an actual baptism and the bread and wine used either at communion at the time of the institution or at a celebration while the bread remains fresh.

The placing of the rector in the accustomed prayer desk or stall (in both forms) has no accompanying words, and it is regrettable that the significance of this as his special place from which he conducts the Divine Office has not been highlighted, an amendment to this effect not having been approved by the General Synod. There is, however, nothing preventing suitable words being said with the permission of the bishop.

The conclusion of both forms is marked by the rector kneeling alone before the bishop who says,

The care of God's people in this parish has been committed to you.

May the Lord pour out his Holy Spirit on you and equip you to fulfil the sacred duties with which you have been entrusted.

The rector alone replies **Amen** signifying his assent to this and the subsequent prayers by the bishop. After a period of silence the rector prays aloud to be strengthened and sustained in the ministry to which he has been called.

The Peace follows using a text which emphasizes the one Body and Spirit. All present exchange a sign of peace. It is stated that it is appropriate that representatives of the parish, other churches in the local area and the wider local community have an opportunity to greet the rector.

If there is to be no celebration of the Holy Communion the intercessions ("Prayers of the People") follow, led by the rector, with a particular emphasis upon the ministry of the local church.

The concluding part of the service ("Going out as God's People") includes a blessing adapted from that in Ordination Services Two.

As indicated above there is provision for the Holy Communion to be celebrated. A proper preface is provided (and is easily adapted for use in Eucharistic Prayer Two).

When there is a celebration of the eucharist the new incumbent assists the bishop in the administration of communion.

NOTES to the service enjoin the celebration of the Holy Communion at the principal service in each church in which the new rector officiates on the Sunday following his institution, provide for a deputy to institute in the absence of the bishop and adjustments to be made accordingly to the wording, and the service to be adapted for use at the licensing of a bishop's curate, vicar or chaplain. Practical directions are given for both forms of the Commission.

## NOTES ON SOME ISSUES IN THE ORDINAL

### 1. Sequential or Direct ordination.

In the traditional Book of Common Prayer Ordinal (Ordinal Services One in the 2004 edition of the Prayer Book) it states that admission to the three orders of ministry is *sequential* - a person being ordained first being made a deacon, then ordained priest or presbyter, and finally, if so called, being ordained and consecrated a bishop. Each order comprehends the one beneath it so that a priest is still a deacon, and a bishop is still a priest and is also a deacon. This has sometimes been represented by a person in priest's orders wearing a deacon's vestments at the eucharist when exercising a deacon's role, although he or she remains fully entitled to vest as a priest and this is, in fact, the normal practice. The "inclusion" of one order within another does something to mitigate the effect of a person normally remaining a deacon for a period of only one year before proceeding to their priest's ordination. The expectation that deacons will normally become priests was expressed in a post-communion prayer in the traditional ordinal which no longer appears which asks that they "may so well behave themselves in this inferior office, that they may be found worthy to be called to the higher ministries in thy church".

There is, however, evidence from the early church to the effect that ordination was sometimes *direct* in that a lay person was made a priest or a bishop without having been a deacon or even a bishop straight from the ranks of the laity. Moreover, deacons were generally "permanent" in that there was no expectation that they would necessarily become priests. This raises two issues in today's church, (1) whether the sequence of deacon, priest, bishop needs to be the invariable practice and (2) whether a permanent diaconate might not emphasize the ministry of service which belongs particularly to the deacon.

Examples of direct ordination include that of Bishop Cyprian in the third century A.D. (who does not appear to have been a deacon prior to his ordination to the presbyterate followed a short time afterwards by his being made a bishop). St Ambrose of Milan (in the fourth century) was a layman when he was elected and then consecrated bishop. The expression used to describe this phenomenon was *per saltum* meaning "by a leap".

The disadvantage of such a system, which led, gradually, to its suppression was the danger of promoting inexperienced, untrained, and even unsuitable people to the highest offices. It would also exclude the benefit of inclusion of one order within another as indicated above, so that a priest or bishop by virtue of their having first being made a deacon is reminded by that fact that their ministry is essentially one of service.

It has often been observed that the ministry of a deacon is, liturgically speaking, similar to that of an unordained lay reader, and there have been suggestions that readers should be admitted to the order of deacon - alternatively that deacons should be abolished. The essential difference lies in the permanence of holy orders - a reader would cease to be such if his or her licence were revoked. Given the importance of the church's service in the world, there would be much to be said for some deacons remaining such and devoting their ministry mainly to this kind of outreach.

It is important that deacons be permitted actually to exercise their specific ministry, particularly that of reading the Gospel. It is not appropriate, in the normal course of events, for a priest or bishop to do this when a deacon is present.

## 2. The theological significance of the ordained ministry.

There is a sense in which this is a "representative" ministry - representative, that is of Christ and the whole Church. Each of the three orders of ministry - of bishops, priests and of deacons, is an effectual sign of an aspect of ministry which is both uniquely of Christ and is also entrusted by him to his church.

The deacon (as the name *diakonos* suggests) exercises a *servant* ministry, following Christ who, in a unique sense, is the one who came "not to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many". The whole Church is a servant church, and since it has an every-member ministry all share in Christ's servanthood, of which the diaconal ministry is a specific sign.

The priest or presbyter (from the word *presbuteros* or elder) exercises a *pastoral* ministry, following Christ who in a unique way "went about doing good and healing all manner of sickness among the people". This ministry of caring, which includes the preaching of the word and the administration of the sacraments is committed to the whole Church and of this the presbyterate is a specific sign.

The bishop (from the word *episcopus*, overseer) exercises a ministry of *oversight*, following Christ who as the good shepherd looks after and guides his people. The close relationship between the role of the presbyter and the bishop is indicated by the interchangeability of the terms in the New Testament, the emergence of the episcopate as a separate order apparently dating from the sub-apostolic period. This ministry of oversight is entrusted to the whole church and of this the episcopate is a specific sign.

There is a certain amount of discussion as to whether the second rank of the ministry is "presbyteral" or "sacerdotal" with the later expression tending to be used in a pejorative manner. That this need not be the case is indicated in what was then the authoritative Latin version of the Book of Common Prayer of 1560 (at the beginning of the reign of Elizabeth 1) in which the words *sacerdos* (from which "sacerdotal" comes) and *minister* are used interchangeably. Conversely, the term *presbyter* is used in the documents of the Second Vatican Council. As indicated above the English word "priest" it is a derivative of the Greek *presbuteros*, an "elder" which is found in the New Testament of the circle of senior people in charge of a local church and used, apparently interchangeably with *episcopus* "overseer" prior to the evolution of moniscopacy. It is also the word used to translate the word *hiereus* meaning priest in the liturgical sense and which is related to the collective *hierateuma* "priesthood". Zechariah, father of John the Baptist, was a priest in this sense and learned of his impending fatherhood while offering incense in the Temple at Jerusalem which was also frequented by Jesus and his disciples and served as a meeting place for Christians in the earliest days of the Church. The Epistle to the Hebrews stresses the manner in which the sacrificial system of Judaism has been superseded for Christians by the once for all sacrifice of Jesus on Calvary's cross, he being both high priest and victim at the one and same time. Presumably for this reason the words *hiereus* and *hierateuma* are used in the New Testament of Christ and of his whole church (which is a "royal priesthood") but not of particular Christian ministers. However, the term came to be used of the second order of ministry in the Church and would appear to be legitimate provided (1) it is used in the sense of those who represent both Christ and the whole Church in their specific role of ministers of the Word and Sacrament (2) their liturgical role is in no way understood to conflict with the "once for all" of the ministry and work of Christ. The once for all offering is all-sufficient and is incapable of being added to. The legitimate sense in which both biblically, and as represented within the

Anglican tradition, the celebration of the eucharist may be said to involve an offering has been explored elsewhere in these Course Notes (see the section on Eucharistic Doctrine in the section on the Eucharist) but may be summarized here as involving a "remembering before God in thanksgiving and intercession of the once for all sacrifice of Christ on Calvary" accomplished through obedience to the commandment to "do this" in remembrance of him. The Greek expression *eis anamnesin*, reflecting an underlying Hebrew *l'zikkaron* or its Aramaic equivalent has strongly sacrificial connotations in the Old Testament tradition and this implies that in the limited and subordinate sense given above there is, properly speaking, a eucharistic offering. It is "this our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving".

### **3. "Lay celebration"**

A certain amount has been heard in recent years of a demand for "lay" celebration. That this is not inherently impossible is indicated by the widespread agreement that on the proverbial "desert island" where there is no priest the highly temporary Christian community could provide for its own sacramental ministry by the choice of one or more among its members to exercise such ministry. More practically and realistically it may be noted that in the Methodist church it has long been possible in certain circumstances for lay celebrations to take place. However difficulties arise where what is envisaged is apparently not an altogether exceptional event or even a dire emergency but a regular ministry within the church, and this raises the question of why, if people are to exercise a complete ministry of the Word and Sacrament, they are not appropriately commissioned to do so. It is appropriate that those who are to exercise such a ministry which is also pastoral in character should be called, trained, and commissioned to do so, the mode of such commissioning being the sacramental act of the laying on of hands with prayer to ordain them as priests. In the New Testament no specific office of liturgical presidency is mentioned but it would appear that from very early times the matter was regarded as of sufficient importance for it to be carried out only by the most senior persons within the local Christian community. For example, in the Letter of St Ignatius of Antioch in the early second century this is the role of the bishop. The permission of visiting "prophets" to say the eucharistic prayer (as we would put it) as found in the Didache does not seem to have long survived.

An alternative option is that of "extended communion" currently authorized in the Church of Ireland on a trial basis which is described in detail in the Commentary on the Eucharist.



**O**VER THE YEARS there has been what might be termed a ‘minor industry’ in the production of commentaries on the *Book of Common Prayer*. Although containing much interesting material most of these are very dated, long out of print and, as a result, inaccessible to most people. Even quite recent published material on Anglican liturgy (with some exceptions, including Bishop Harold Miller's *The Desire of our Soul*) tends to relate mainly to the Church of England and other member churches of the Anglican Communion and not to be of direct relevance to the Church of Ireland.

This set of Commentaries, covering the five main areas of Anglican liturgy: Morning and Evening Prayer and the Litany; the Eucharist; Christian Initiation (including Baptism and Confirmation); Pastoral Ministry (mainly Marriage, Ministry to the Sick and Burial), and the Ordinal (services of Ordination), is a comprehensive exposition of all the authorized services in the Church of Ireland in the 2004 edition of the *Book of Common Prayer* and even several others which are still in existence but not included in the book. It is hoped that this will be found helpful not only to members of the clergy and readers, but also to others who are interested in Church of Ireland liturgy. It includes information on the rationale of the services and on their history and also some guidelines as to appropriate use. Originally designed for post-ordination training of deacons and first-year priests and of readers, they are not tied to any particular form of churchmanship although the author's opinions are probably fairly evident. It is hoped that reference to the Commentaries will help to deepen understanding of the Church of Ireland's liturgical heritage.

There are clear advantages in publication in electronic form, namely the ability to make widely available wide-ranging material running to some 200,000 words which can be downloaded and printed off at the discretion of users, in whole or in part, and also the ability to revise and update it in the light of comments and criticisms and as a response to the ongoing development of liturgy itself (sometimes described as a ‘moving target’). It is offered as a resource to the clergy and laity of the Church of Ireland and to other interested people who may access it at home or abroad.

The Revd Canon Michael Kennedy is a native of Dublin but has spent his entire ministry in Northern Ireland. He was educated at Avoca School and the High School, Dublin, and at Trinity College with degrees from Trinity (M.A. and B.D.) and from the Open University where he gained his doctorate for a thesis on ‘The theological implications of recent liturgical revision in the Church of Ireland’ (1987). He has been Rector of the parochial group of Lisnadill and Kildarton since 1966, and is also Prebendary of Yagoe in St Patrick's Cathedral Dublin and the Senior Clerical Vicar Choral in St Patrick's Cathedral, Armagh. He has been an Examining Chaplain to the Archbishop of Armagh since 1973, Warden of Readers in the Diocese of Armagh since 1974, and a member of the General Synod's Liturgical Advisory Committee since 1986. He is married to Jean, has two grown-up children, Simon and Lise, and four grandchildren.