

DIOCESAN REPORT 19—ELY

A report given by our chairman to the diocesan synod in 1987, and accompanied by a brief outline of liturgical changes illustrated with a slide-show, kindled some enthusiasm for our work. It led to invitations to parishes and deanery synods to talk about liturgy and about introducing new liturgies.

The chairman's report had criticized the insensitive use of liturgies (using 1662 as if it were Rite A and *vice versa*.) It was obvious that the eucharist for the diocesan synod was both the clearest example of everything he had condemned and also potentially an opportunity for giving a better example.

With the agreement of the Bishop and the Cathedral the Liturgical Committee was entrusted with the task of producing something better. Rite A and Rite B are now used alternatively with appropriate music, as this best represents the practice at the main eucharist in the majority of parishes in the diocese. Occasionally there are mutterings that our choice of modern hymns includes things 'not in keeping with the dignity of a cathedral'. However, in general our attempt to introduce examples of modern material appropriate to parish churches and even to family services is appreciated. In this way we have kept liturgy on the agenda of every diocesan synod for over three years.

During the period our name has changed from 'Bishop's Liturgical Advisory Committee' to 'Diocesan Liturgical Committee' with the intention that parishes should see us as a resource. There have been a few references to the Committee by parishes when re-ordering their churches.

On one occasion we were shown plans of a proposed new Cremation Chapel. These received a considerable amount of detailed criticism, mainly about practical details of which the architect had obviously been unaware. Unfortunately the plans were shown too late for any changes to be made in the design, and the architect was not present.

Workshops have been run in conjunction with the launch of new liturgical texts. The introduction of *Lent, Holy Week, Easter* brought a group mainly of clergy together in Churchill College Chapel. A workshop day on planning family services included *Patterns for Worship* and was attended by groups of lay people with their clergy from several parishes.

Our work has inevitably included plans for revising services of Institution and Induction. One rural dean requesting changes pointed out recently that the present one includes an 'illegal' Lord's Prayer. The planning for these revisions was useful in the preparation of the service for the enthronement of Bishop Stephen Sykes.

Recently we have begun to publicize our activities and other liturgical news by including information in the newsletter produced by the Education Advisers in the Diocese.

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News of Liturgy

Editor: Colin Buchanan

Issue no. 206

February 1992

Editorial

The February sessions of General Synod covered only two days, and had little of liturgical note on the programme. However, the official record of 'Questions' includes the following (the answer was given by the Archbishop of York on behalf of the House of Bishops):

4. Reverend Frank White (Durham) to ask the Chairman of the House of Bishops:
 - Q. (a) Following the motion from Coventry Diocesan Synod concerning the provision of a Eucharistic Prayer for use with children, can the Synod be advised about the likely date of suitable material being brought forward for approval?
 - (b) Has the Liturgical Commission considered the possibility of combining the approval of such a Eucharistic Prayer with the procedures which will be put in place when the *Patterns for Worship* 'Rite C' comes before Synod?
5. Reverend Peter Broadbent (London) to ask the Chairman of the House of Bishops:
 - Q. When will the revised report on *Patterns for Worship* be published and made available to members of General Synod, and what decision, if any, has been made by the House of Bishops with regard to the procedure and timescale for the authorization of the 'non core' material contained within that report?
6. Q. When can the Synod expect to receive from the House of Bishops proposals for eucharistic prayers suitable for use in the Church of England at services with children present?

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- A. I have been asked to reply and with permission I will answer both Mr. Broadbent's questions and Mr. White's question together.

When the House of Bishops met in January it took note of the November request for eucharistic prayers suitable for use when children are present and also had before it proposals from the Liturgical Commission for beginning the process of liturgical authorization for some parts of *Patterns for Worship* including the draft eucharistic prayers.

After careful discussion, the House has asked the Commission to further revise its proposals and to bring them back to the House before any Synodical process is commenced. The House has encouraged the Liturgical Commission to include work on eucharistic prayers suitable for use when children are present within that revision of the *Patterns for Worship* material.

The question of a separate edition of the 'non core' parts of *Patterns for Worship* is one which I will bring to the House at its next meeting.

This is a somewhat different scenario from that painted last month on behalf of the Commission by Jane Sinclair. She was anticipating that the edited eucharistic material from *Patterns* would be sent to Synod members in time for the July Group of Sessions, in order to start the authorization process. Indeed, I sat in the House of Bishops as it took this unexpected decision to refer the material back, knowing that at *exactly* that moment the presses were turning printing Jane Sinclair's letter. Nothing could be leaked until the minutes of the House of Bishops were available in any case.

I cannot enter into the reasoning of the House of Bishops, and certainly no hints of reasons for referring back are revealed. But I can offer readers an estimate (it is no more) of the schedule now obtaining:

- November 1989: *Patterns* first published
- February 1990: *Patterns* debated in General Synod
- 1991: House of Bishops asks the Liturgical Commission to edit the material for synodical process
- January 1992: House of Bishops returns the edited material to the Commission for re-editing
- January 1993: House of Bishops receives re-edited text from Commission
- July 1993: 'General Consideration' debate in General Synod and referral to Revision Committee
- September 1993 to April 1994: With Revision Committee
- July 1994: Revision Committee Stage, and re-committal to the Committee for further revision
- February 1995: Further Revision Committee Stage and Provisional Approval
- June 1995: With House of Bishops
- July 1995: Final Approval
- October 1995: *Next* General Synod elected
- December 1995: Printed copies
- Epiphany 1996: Beginning of authorization for five-year use till 31 December 2000
- April 1996: *Next* Liturgical Commission appointed
- Summer 1996: New Liturgical Commission, having gone to work frenetically, approaches House of Bishops with questionnaires designed to monitor grass-roots opinion of Rite C, with a view to getting definitive text into use beyond 2000. House of Bishops welcomes avidly, endorses the view that six months of authorized use for Rite C is ample basis for a responsible evaluation by users, and wholeheartedly commends the advocated procedure.
- Spring 1997: Questionnaires are distributed to 30,000 communicants to be returned by 1 June.

DIOCESAN REPORT 18—BRISTOL

The Committee came into being before the publication of the ASB, to advise and assist the bishop. We are appointed by him on the basis of our liturgical knowledge, experience and interest. Currently, we are five in number, having with great regret lost, through ill-health, our only lay-woman. We now have four parish priests and one lecturer in liturgy from a theological college. Our present label is the Bishop's Worship Advisory Committee (acronymically *Beeswax*). We have no diocesan budget, but we draw diocesan expenses *ad hoc*, and have access to two mailings each year. As I suspect is the case in many dioceses, our activities are viewed by some clergy and laity as irrelevant, mischievous, or a diabolical attempt to thwart the freedom of the Spirit. Sometimes, however, when people have experienced the help we aim to offer, they find it useful and beneficial.

At the moment, we are preparing the fruits of past labours for incorporation into a loose-leaf Diocesan Book of Services: the Inauguration of a Reader's Ministry in a parish (or other situation), the Blessing of a Household, the Licensing of a Rural Dean, a Service of Penitence and Renewal at the end of a Marriage, an Order of Re-dedication to Service within the Church, Liturgical Material which may be used at a Dedication of Church Bells, and the Blessing of Oils on Maundy Thursday. Other material may be added to this later, e.g. a service for the funeral of a foetus, notes about Baptism and Confirmation with the Eucharist, and about the Eucharist when many children are present.

Like many other dioceses, we have spent considerable time revising our service of Inauguration of a New Ministry. The old one, prepared by this Committee, came into use in 1981. Since 1990 the revised version has been held in limbo by divided opinion about it in the Bishop's Council. We are working on material for use at the Consecration of a Church. This will not be a complete service, but some guidelines and material in two categories—(a) what is required, and (b) what may also be found useful. Increasingly we find that buildings in new areas need to be dedicated when they are first built, and are later consecrated with a rather less public rite than the earlier ceremony.

We have done some preliminary work for the expression of a re-affirmation of faith by those who have already been baptized. In conjunction with the Children's Committee of the Diocesan Board of Education, a booklet called *Eucharistic Worship with Children* has been published. This provides a form of Parish Eucharist (Rite A) for a family service, hints about Rite A variations when large numbers of children are present, comments on Eucharistic Prayers, some helpful examples from family Eucharists for particular occasions which we have gathered from our diocese, suggestions for the Eucharist with Baptism/Confirmation, and a list of resources for people to consult. That was for us an example of fruitful co-operation with another diocesan committee. Suggestions for cross-reference, where suitable, with our Diocesan Advisory Committee were not taken up.

On 21 May this year, we have arranged a day Conference on developments in the conduct of funerals and cremations, with Dr. Douglas Davies of the Cremation Research Project as speaker. In the Autumn, we hope to mount another, on what ways of Common Prayer, or what forms of a daily office, may be suitable for clergy and laity.

Philip Hughes (Secretary),
The Vicarage, Ashton Keynes, Swindon, Wilts SN6 6PP

the liturgical year. Perhaps more like the equivalent of a commentary on *Promise* then? No again! This goes one level deeper still and comments on the themes and biblical texts themselves rather than on the texts or rubrics of the liturgy. As such it would make a useful resource for the preacher, and I'm certain that it will be used in this way. But its real aim is more than this: it is *'to help our brothers and sisters in faith to fully participate in the most active and conscious way possible'* (p.17). It is presumably meant to be useful to the 'ordinary' Christian as well as the preacher, though one may doubt how many would buy seven volumes of mild theology-speak (for such is the prevailing style).

However, for those initiated into theology-speak (whether RC or not) you could do much worse than consult this book on, for instance, Advent, John the Baptist, The Holy Family, and so on.

The book begins with a fascinating 19-page essay on 'The Sacrament of the Liturgical Year' which is really about a Christian view of time (the Liturgical year is essentially Paschal and is all *kairos*—God's now-time).

There follow useful historical introductions (including long quotes from the Fathers!) and a commentary on the biblical passages and set prayers for each year, relating them to the elements which remain constant each year.

As well as the Sunday material there is also comment on the Monday to Saturday provision in the Missal, the Lectionary and the Liturgy of the Hours.

My favourite part though was an essay called, 'Of People, Places and Things,' which proved to be sixteen fascinating pages of reflection and factual information about such things as the Manger, Shepherds, Angels, Magi and even the Ass and the Cow!

A marvellous resource—my only gripe is that you have to search the text to find out what the readings *are!*

Mark Earey

Chelmsford Diocesan Liturgical Committee, *Ideas for Worship II: Some Ideas for All-Age Worship—Epiphany * Candlemas * Lent* (obtainable for 75p., including postage, from the Rev. Brenda Wallace, the Vicarage, 5 St. John's Road, Stansted, Essex CM24 8JP)

This is a simple 20-page booklet, full of ideas for oral, visual and tactual material to engross and educate both adults and children. It is perhaps a little churchy despite its own efforts to be contemporary—but that may simply be because the three seasons or festivals being observed have generally had little evangelical or charismatic critique or input into them. It is, I suppose, a matter of taste whether or not you follow 'The old tradition of "kicking the Alleluia out of church" for Lent . . . by writing Alleluia on an old football and letting youngsters literally kick it out of the church at the end of the service on the Sunday before Ash Wednesday' (p.15). I wondered if we were supposed to kick it back in at some early point in the Easter Vigil . . .

COB

- Summer 1997: Liturgical Commission pores over computerized response to questionnaires.
- Autumn 1997: Liturgical Commission reports come-back to House of Bishops and humbly requests to be asked to revise Rite C in the light of demand. House of Bishops enthusiastically agrees.
- Summer 1998: Liturgical Commission brings re-drafts of Rite C to House of Bishops. House of Bishops agrees them at sight and asks that synodical process should start.
- November 1998: 'General Consideration' Stage in General Synod.

After this readers can do their own homework. The chances of getting a tested revision of Rite C into authorized use by 1 January 2001 would seem pretty slender. I wonder what timetable the Commission had in view when they came to the House of Bishops, and I wonder what timetable they have in view now.

Colin Buchanan

THE REST OF GENERAL SYNOD

The February sessions were the shortest on record (save for the special one-day debate on the unity issues in May 1972). Synod met for two days only, and there was little of liturgical relevance (save the point revealed above in the Editorial). There was of course a sponsored hockey match in which some very macho bishops defeated some fairly lively members of the Mothers' Union 2-0—and there was a Radio 4 'fringe' debate on dis-establishment which was broadcast the following Sunday, and saw the overwhelming defeat of the antidisestablishmentarians (save in the purely cosmetic point of counting the votes of those present). There was a (reasonably relaxed) debate on receiving the report of the diocesan voting statistics on this ordination of women—but all the heat on that issue is building up to November. (There is no doubt that a kind of cloud hangs over everything until then—see the prayer on page 8 below).

There was a tabled question about why Accession material did not appear in the ASB. The Bishop of Winchester replied that there had been no demand for this in the 1970s when the ASB was being compiled. In the form of a supplementary question I slipped in the information that this material is in effect part of the 'State Prayers'. It is in the 1662 Book by sheer Royal Prerogative, and there could be no modern texts for the Accession purposes except by Her Majesty's strict command. This has not yet been received. Under the Worship and Doctrine Measure the Synod has no power to authorize such prayers, nor has any bishop or local incumbent power to provide them by individual say-so. I failed, under the pressure of the moment, to dwell sufficiently upon Her Majesty's supreme governorship of the Church of England, but clearly the question came from someone who was, out of ignorance, about to undermine the Queen's Prerogative in the name of loyalty to the Crown.

AUSTRALIAN WOMEN ON (OR OVER?) THE BRINK

The ordination of eleven women deacons to become presbyters advertised to take in Goulburn cathedral by Bishop Owen Dowling, the Bishop of Canberra/Goulburn on 2 February did not take place. The facts seem to be as follows:

- (a) Attempts to get a General Synod Canon to provide for such ordination of women had failed.
- (b) Attempts to get an authoritative ruling from the Appellate Tribunal as to whether diocesan synods could make Diocesan Canons had not produced a clear answer.
- (c) The diocese of Canberra/Goulburn had then taken such unilateral diocesan action.
- (d) A request for an injunction from the civil courts in New South Wales to inhibit Bishop Dowling from ordaining women as presbyters had been rejected, and the ordination retreat of six men plus the eleven women began on the evening of 30 January.
- (e) On 31 January, the New South Wales Court of Appeal ruled on an appeal by the plaintiffs in the civil case, and reversed the decision of the earlier court, thus clamping an injunction on Bishop Dowling not to proceed.
- (f) After scenes of grief at some ordinations on 2 February, the Primate, Archbishop Keith Rayner of Melbourne, issued a Pastoral Letter calling upon all dioceses to defer further action until General Synod meets again in July this year. He further requested that there should be no more recourse to civil courts, and pledged himself to work for a 75% majority in each house at General Synod (as required by the constitution) as that would permit each diocese to make its own rules in this matter without further delay from outside.

Meanwhile, almost exactly coincidentally with the above events, Archbishop Peter Carnley of Perth instituted a woman who had been ordained presbyter in New Zealand to an incumbency in the Perth diocese. This would seem to pre-judge the whole issue, and, presumably, invites the opposition to seek a court order declaring the institution null and void. If the matter is allowed to stand unchallenged it invites Australian women to seek New Zealand ordination.

PRAXIS

Praxis reports a series of London meetings in November, on music for *Promise*, on Christmas in different social contexts, and on Worship and Spirit; each of these appears to have been helpful to those who came, and to have opened up new vistas.

We apologize for not having given notice of the meeting on 29 February on 'Forming New Believers', but hope to report it next month.

Book Reviews

Clifford Owen *Baptise every baby?* (MARC, 1990, 287pp., £3.99)

This book, written by the General Secretary of MORIB, the Movement for the Reform of Infant Baptism, is subtitled 'The story of one vicar's struggle to treat baptism as if it mattered'. In one sense it is a very fair description of what lies between the covers. In another sense it is not.

Firstly the good news. Clifford Owen has written a very readable account of his life and ministry. In particular he has described his approach to baptism over the years and his attempts to enforce a policy which has required regular participation in worship before the baptism. He is refreshingly honest and certainly not afraid to reveal the uncomfortable moments and to ask himself searching questions about what happened. As a result there is a great deal to challenge those of us who are involved in the ministry of infant baptism, which of course means more than just clergy. The author recognizes that any attempt to revise the Church of England's practice will be a long and slow process and his book has left me admiring his courage! He clearly sees how practice and belief may be very different, both locally and nationally, in this area of the church's life.

But I do have reservations. All the vicars I know believe baptism matters, whatever policy they adopt. Readers may feel that this book implies that those who practise what the author calls 'indiscriminate baptism' are not taking the matter seriously. I don't think Clifford Owen actually believes that, but the use of the phrase may seem to imply it.

I would also contend that many, perhaps most, of the parents who bring children to baptism believe it is important, and here lies my main difficulty with Clifford Owen's approach. My suspicion is, and it can be no more than that, that many parents find the process so daunting that they may not be able to articulate what they believe and as a result can give completely the wrong impression to all concerned. Of course the careful preparation rightly advocated by Clifford Owen is a vital step forward, but I have doubts about the practice of sending long letters to all enquirers, bearing in mind that some people spend very little of their lives reading anything. I would suggest that more listening and less proclaiming initially may bring the results the author seeks, though the process is very slow.

Many of us are hoping for a more positive approach to infant baptism. MORIB could play a vital part in this but I suspect they may be classed as 'another collection of hardliners'. That would be unfair but they may have to work hard to avoid the description. This book will help in some ways but I wonder if it will convince many who have doubts about any form of selection in baptism.

David Cutts

Days of the Lord Vol. 1 (Advent, Christmas, Epiphany) (The Liturgical Press, Minnesota, 1991, 346pp., £15.50)

The title might lead you to think that this transformation from the French original (1988) is a Roman Catholic version of *Promise* . . . However, this would be quite wrong! It is, rather, the first in a 7-volume commentary on

This month's booklet . . .

is Spirituality Series no. 40, *Living with Affluence*, by Richard Higginson—and there is also Evangelism Series no. 17, *Getting Started in Evangelism*, by David Sanderson.

. . . and next month's

is Pastoral series no. 49, *Child Sex Abuse: A problem for the Churches*, by Peter Gibbs.

. . . but whatever happened to

Joint Liturgical Studies? The Series continues this year but in a slightly reduced form. The Alcuin Club has returned to publishing a larger monograph each year and that is scheduled for March, and there is no Joint Liturgical Study that month. The Joint Studies will continue later in the year, though the expectation is that it will be with a double-size one in September, rather than one in June and one in September. Watch this space.

WORSHIP AUDITS

There may be a number of DLCs who are at present engaged in the process of producing a Worship Audit for use in their diocese. It has been suggested that it would be helpful for all concerned if DLCs were able to 'pool' their efforts, so as to prevent possible duplication in efforts.

Therefore would those DLCs who are in a position to offer a completed or draft audit for others' consideration please let *NOL* know as soon as possible? A list could then be published in *NOL* enabling cross-fertilization!

ORDINATION OF WOMEN: PRAYER FOR GOD'S GUIDANCE

The attached prayer has been produced by the Dean and Chapter of Westminster Abbey. It is their intention that it is said every day in the Abbey between the beginning of March and the Final Approval debate on the draft legislation.

The Dean has sent copies of the prayer to those bodies which represent different points of view on the ordination of women to the priesthood. Already, the Cost of Conscience, Association for Apostolic Ministry and the Movement for the Ordination of Women have said that they are happy to see prayer used in the months ahead.

The Dean and Chapter offer the prayer to you for wider use, if you so wish, throughout the Church.

A prayer to be said for God's guidance in the decision facing General Synod about the ordination of women as priests in the Church of England Guide, O God, the Church of England through this time of decision concerning the ordination of women to the priesthood;

grant that convictions strongly held
may be voiced and heard with charity;
give wisdom to members of the General Synod;
and when the decision is made
surround with your love
those of our brothers and sisters to whom it causes pain.
Give to your whole Church the Spirit of truth and peace,
that celebrating your gifts in each other
we may serve you in humility and joy.
We ask this for the sake of our great High Priest,
your Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.

BAPTISM SERVICES USING PATTERNS FOR WORSHIP

For the past ten years virtually all baptisms in the parish had taken place during the morning service. During that time the numbers had risen from around thirty per year to almost 60. There has been a rise in the number of births, but the main reason for the increase could be the welcome families receive, and the fact that a baptism during the main Sunday service is now becoming accepted as the norm. It means that there is a baptism service about once a month. The actual Sunday is chosen to fit in with the requirements of families and church festivals.

Members of the P.C.C. suggested using a new order of service. Their reasons included:

1. We had used a booklet with the Rite A Eucharist in the front and the baptism in the back for a number of years. They thought a single order, combining both services, might be easier to follow.
2. After some good experiences of using material from *Patterns for Worship* for Family Services they thought we might be able to find simpler wording and new ideas there. However one teenage P.C.C. member who had just returned from the 'Shockwaves' young adult forum was very sceptical about this, and said that most of the language of *Patterns* was far too complicated for what we wanted.
3. We had started using a simpler Family Service on the first Sunday of each month, the result that, in order to avoid using two books, we had stopped having baptisms at this service. However it was felt that this service was likely to be the most attractive to newcomers.

The deanery had purchased a set of copies of *Patterns for Worship* for use by any parish planning a new liturgy, and this made the task of the group much easier. We began by looking at the sample baptism service. The immediate criticisms were

1. No paragraph numbering. After every section where the service was not used, like a hymn or a sermon, the congregation need to be told where to find the next section and numbers help.
2. Too many words said by the president are left out. We had used an order for the eucharist with only the congregational responses of the eucharistic prayers printed and these had proved unpopular. Newcomers got lost when sections were missing, and then put the service book down before their next response was needed. Previous experience had shown that the prayer for blessing the water at a baptism needed to be included.
3. At every point where the congregation respond, we felt it vital to have the actual words said by the priest which call for this response printed in full. Otherwise people do not respond well. Thus 'We confess our sins' on page 99 needs to be replaced by the words 'the president says.' The most difficult response is that of the parents and god-parents, 'I am willing', which needs to have what they are agreeing to printed in front of them. Lay people go through the baptism service with parents before the event, and they obviously want to show parents what the promises are.
4. We looked for simple direct language, and unfortunately the first prayer, the confession, seemed to bear out all the criticisms that came

from the Young Adult Forum. Saying sorry was so wrapped up in a host of other ideas that it seemed lost. We accepted that the regular congregation might grow to like the prayer, but our need was to create a liturgy for those who came for this one special occasion. We could not assume that the extended families and godparents would necessarily even have the opportunity to come again. Yet if they could say to the parents afterwards 'We liked your church' the parents might be more likely to come back.

The features we liked best were the prayers for the children and their families, and the fact that intercessions are included. We had always omitted the creed and the intercessions when there was a baptism, but felt that, even though it made the service longer, we should now include them. Now, particularly because we started using this service at the time of the Gulf War, we feel that including intercessions was the right decision. It is also pastorally important to include names of the sick and departed every Sunday.

Our decision to include all the words of the Eucharistic Prayer meant that it was important to make the right choice, and for experimental use we intended to have one from *Patterns for Worship*. Our Family Service already incorporated prayer B, and we had used others on single occasions. The prayer is sung, and the Sunday School are always in church from the Peace onwards.

These factors, we felt, put some constraint on what we might choose. A and C could not be sung. Even though in these prayers there was more that children and newcomers might be able to join in with, we felt it important to try to keep to the usual sung pattern. The music we use is an important part of the way we make the worship our own, and we did not feel this should be discarded. Small children know where they are in the service by the sung parts which remain the same each week.

The obvious choice seemed to be prayer D with a preface appropriate to baptism. We turned eagerly to page 204 only to discover a set of quotations from St. Paul that would completely mystify the average congregation at our baptism services.

The great bonus was to discover the prayer on page 205 to use for blessing the water at the baptism. Unfortunately it still left the problem of finding a simple appropriate Eucharistic Prayer. A suggested solution was to use prayer C with the traditional responses instead of those given. The structure of the prayer makes this easy. We had previously used this prayer, as printed, for a large service at which people from many churches came together. Here the fact that the prayer *had* to be said was actually an advantage as the majority of people would not have known our music.

The service has now been in use for over a year and has been very much appreciated by visitors. On two occasions visiting clergy have used the service, and they remarked that they found it easy to guide baptism families through the liturgy. The fact that we are now able to use this service on occasions when there is a 'Family Service' means that there is greater flexibility in the choosing of dates for baptisms, and that the baptism families see plenty of other children in church. For the congregation the fact that several people were involved in a process that they had initiated has been a great help. It is appreciated that we did our best with the material available—but we are still being asked for improvements in detail.

Tom Ambrose

COB's LITURGICAL DIARY

The end of January marked the anniversary of my Institution as incumbent of a parish. Whilst I have assumed that readers would not want too much parish-pump liturgy, I am slipping in a couple of experiences to bring my 'Liturgical Diary' back into play.

January 1991: (26) Institution—in which I have had a consumer's chance to negotiate variations in the Rochester diocesan form (which dates from David Say); in the welcomes I have the chance to respond to greetings from the Deaf Centre by signing, and also to respond to the local MP by distancing myself slightly from his political affiliation . . . (27) On my first Sunday evening, I walk into the vestry at 6.10 p.m. and find four people praying together for a couple who have had a child die with a cot-death only an hour before—and this was the first I knew of it. The fun-liturgist devised as part of my welcome is scrapped on the spot, and readings, prayers, songs and sermon are all hastily re-chosen in ten minutes. At the end of the service, I stand at the back to say good-night, and *not an eyelid of a muscle moves among nearly 200 people for seven minutes*, until finally I gently give them permission to stir.

November 1991: (3) A very three-dimensional rite arose this way. During a Summer houseparty a couple got converted, whilst I was overseas. Soon after my return, there was need of some deliverance ministry. At the end of this the man said 'Could we have our new child baptized?'. On enquiry I discovered that the couple were not themselves baptized, and I advised (in the light of the deliverance) that we ought to proceed quickly with baptizing them. My colleague then nudged me in the ribs and in effect hissed 'Remember they are not married'. So I looked them in the eye and said 'I cannot well marry you unbaptized, nor well baptize you unmarried but cohabiting—so suppose we did it all at once.' The couple separated and started calling the banns next Sunday. 3 November was the third Sunday, and the banns were completed that morning. In the afternoon came the composite rite:

- 4.30 Welcome, hymn, and Rite A as far as the collect
- 4.40 Testimony, scripture reading, song, and sermon
- 5.05 Baptismal rite including presentation of candidates by adult sponsors, dunking of both parents (St. Mark's has a thorough-going baptismal tank) and pouring water on the infant.
- 5.20 After welcome, adults depart to don wedding clothes, and congregation sings songs and choruses
- 5.40 Groom is in place, bride enters to hymn, and marriage rite begins—couple are duly married by around 5.50—and prayers, signing of registers, and procession of families follow.
- 6.20 Congregational singing (while some changing over takes place—un-churched family members tend to depart, while some of evening congregation arrive).
- 6.30 Rite A resumes with notices and prayers and on to Peace and eucharist proper.
- 7.15 Blessing is followed by coffee and wedding-cake for whole congregation in church, then those who wish adjourn to wedding supper in the church hall (provided by members of the congregation).