

- (d) Some contact has been made with other Diocesan Liturgical Committees. e.g. Chelmsford in connection with All-Age Worship.

The Future of the Committee

The Committee's Chairman, Alan Amos, will be moving to Rochester some time after Easter 1994 as part of the plans for the development of the new South-East Institute for Theological Education. He has therefore resigned from the Committee as from Easter, 1994, as it would not be feasible to continue as Chairman or a member. In the light of this the Bishop has requested all members of the Committee to stand down as from 25 March. He will then appoint a new Committee.

The Committee has made the following suggestions:

1. The new Committee might be known as the 'Diocesan Worship Committee' as it was felt that the old name sent the wrong message to people.
2. It might be better if the new Committee was linked with the Board of Ministry rather than the Board of Mission.
3. The brief of the Committee would have to be carefully considered in the light of Diocesan financial policies. e.g. if Study Days are to be self-supporting financially, only popular subjects could be considered.
4. The Committee noted that many groups tended to write their own liturgy, e.g. Archbishop's Teaching Missions, Soul of Europe Day etc. Clergy write directly to the Bishop when needing permission for liturgical experiments. The brief of the Committee might need to be reviewed in the light of these factors.

Plans for 1994

1. A Study Day has already been held on 5 March 1994 on *In Tune with Heaven* at All Saints, Maidstone, led by Michael Fleming.
2. Plans were already in place for a Study Day to be led by Susan Sayers on 'All-Age Worship in the Eucharist' on 8 October 1994 at Archbishop's School before the Committee was asked to stand down, so it is hoped to continue with this event.
3. A Study evening to launch 'Service of the Word' was planned for May, 1994, and a major Study Day on 'Music and Liturgy' was planned for May, 1995. The Committee felt that it was better for the new Committee to decide whether these should be held.

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News of Liturgy

Editor: Colin Buchanan

Issue No. 234

June 1994

Editorial

I have had the great pleasure to spend the inside of a week as the guest of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, where I have been representing the General Synod of the Church of England. Whilst there is always a danger that the 'news' in the title of this journal may resolve itself into simply COB's own travelogue (and it will do that if no-one else contributes alternative experiences), yet at intervals my comings and goings do coincide with where there is some genuine action—and I venture humbly to suggest that was the case at the General Assembly. I restrain myself from reporting on the Assembly as such, but confine myself to the agenda of worship.

The background to all else which follows is that, for all its successive liturgical books, the Kirk is *au fond* a non-liturgical church; it is still vaguely in reaction against Charles I and his attempted imposition of required forms on the church, and is arguably still (as in 1689) distinguishing itself from the book-ridden Piskies by a reaction against liturgical forms. At the risk of being over-simplistic I should say that I detected two qualifiers to this theme: firstly that there are ministers (and perhaps congregations) who consider the reaction has been unreasonable and excessive, and it is this strand in the Church of Scotland which has worked for the provision of liturgical forms—most notably in the recent successive versions of the *Book of Common Order* of 1940 and of 1979. These are, it should be emphasized, ministerial books: the idea of the people having such a book in their hands and responding from it being very remote indeed. And the second qualifier relates to the rise in evangelicalism in recent years in the Church of Scotland—but it appears that on the whole the evangelicalism concerned is impatient (like good Covenanters) of 'praying upon the book'.

I arrived in time for the communion service on the Monday morning. It has to be said that it was not liturgically constructed, and in its sacramental section it had a random eucharistic dialogue in the midst of material (including a reading from the road to Emmaus) which was distinctly not a eucharistic prayer. The Moderator (Dr. James Simpson, Minister of Dornoch cathedral) at one point told us that the action (or was it the elements?) did not just represent Christ—it re-presented him. Of course there was much that is characteristic of the Kirk—great silver chalices on the one hand, and slices of bread passed by hand along the row on the other. We also had a chance to use the traditional Lord's Prayer of Scotland, with the (accurate but surprising) lines 'Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors'. The other mornings had a simple structure of (unaccompanied but forcefully precented) metrical psalm, reading of scripture, and ministerial prayer, largely worshipful, relevant and, as they say, affective.

On the Friday morning came the report of the Panel on Worship. The convenor of this is the well-known John Bell of Wild Goose fame. The report was fourteen pages long, and, to a Sassenach observer, deliberately,

loaded to concentrate attention in places of secondary importance. The Introduction ranged over a series of hints and guidelines for the conduct of worship ('To hand an organist a hymn list at the last moment is to inhibit the exercise of the ministry of leading music'). But that which got under the Assembly's skin was this:

'The issue of ministerial dress is not a matter of law within our Church. But the question of appropriateness should be honestly and comprehensively considered. Those who for personal reasons wish to refrain from wearing robes or a cassock have to reckon with how this is perceived by the congregation. It might feel slighted that the person who has been ordained to perform liturgical function wishes at such moments *just to be like one of them*. By the same criterion, there is nothing to prevent a British Rail ticket conductor coming through the train with a cotton pinnie and a black handbag for tickets and change. But few would feel comfortable with that. This is not to ask for prescribed apparel, but rather to raise the issue as something which has wider resonances than those which echo within the minister's own conscience.' (*Reports to the General Assembly 1994*, p.290).

This really touched them on the raw—minister after minister came out fighting from his or her corner to protest that the disrobed state was reverent, and, at the very least, a witness to the priesthood of all believers. The response was so strong I began to suspect that the Panel on Worship had deliberately trailed this coat in a provocative way to get the punters to jump on it and let more far-reaching things go through unchallenged.

They certainly had far-reaching things. A third of the Report was given to reporting back on a project they had been assigned two years ago—a 'pilot scheme regarding the re-metricization [have you met that word before?] of that Psalter' (p.291). It is not that the Psalter has lost its metrical character and needs to get it back: it is that the existing metrical psalter lacks 'poetic integrity'—largely due to a rigorous retention of the actual words of the Psalms in the AV or other venerated versions. The interim report ranged over a variety of styles in modern metrical psalters, drawing upon work on both sides of the Atlantic, and the Panel has also sent 'Psalm Sampler Packs' all over Scotland to get reactions from congregations in relation to different styles.

The Panel has also been examining the possibility of a replacement for the Kirk's existing hymn-book, *Church Hymnody: Third Edition*. There was a lot of hoo-hah about whether it was needed, whether it could be afforded, and whether it would come with the right doctrine and right culture. The Assembly was reassured that no binding decisions would be taken without these major criteria coming back before them, and they were urged on by John Bell, who quoted from an existing 'Paraphrase' thus:

'The father saw him from afar
and all his bowels moved.'

In the midst of all this distraction we nearly missed the star of the whole show. The Panel had a coy few lines on 'Publications', of which four were an apology for the late appearance of a slim booklet for daily prayers, called *Pray Now*, and six were a brief mention that '*Common Order* is now available'. That was where the action truly was—the Assembly had commissioned the work about seven years ago, the Panel had worked on quietly, they had finished the job, agreed the contents, polished the text, and had then got it published in a very superior format. I was entertained

5. members of diocesan liturgical committees who can raise the profits of the D.L.C. in the diocese;
6. people to work in cathedrals;
7. academic liturgical researchers;
8. people to promote the work of the Commission in other organizations—as for example the need to raise awareness of liturgical revision in catholic circles;
9. administrators—the Commission suffers from being poorly resourced in this respect, not having a full-time field officer, for example.

Offers of help to the Bishop of Salisbury . . .

Charles Read

DIOCESAN REPORT 16: CANTERBURY—REPORT 1993

A steady programme of work was undertaken in 1993.

1. All Age Worship

The Committee continued to produce material for use in All-Age Worship. A useful partnership has been formed with the Board of Education and as a result, material from the Committee is now sent out in Spotlight as well as in the Diocesan mailing. Material has also been sent to all Readers and they have been most appreciative of this.

2. Eucharistic Worship

The Committee has considered two forms of Eucharistic worship sent in by individual members of the clergy.

3. Service of Institution and Induction

The Committee has reconsidered the current form in use in the diocese.

4. Diocesan Prayer Card

In response to Bishop Richard's talk on the Lay Office to the Committee in June, 1993, a Diocesan Prayer Card has been drawn up and will shortly be ready for use by individuals at home.

5. Future Developments in Liturgy

A study has been made of *The Worship of the Church as it approaches the Third Millennium*. As a result of this the Committee has begun work on Funeral Rites

6. Workshops

- (a) In June 1993, Mrs. Clare Amos led a highly successful study day on the Iona Liturgy.
- (b) In September, 1993 a study evening was held on *Celebrating Common Prayer*

7. Links

- (a) All members now receive *News of Liturgy*.
- (b) The Committee is now associated with PRAXIS.
- (c) The Secretary of the Committee attended the annual meeting for Diocesan Liturgical Committees in October, 1993 and a report has been circulated to members of the Committee.

YOUNGER LITURGISTS

On 9 May, the Liturgical Commission invited a group of 'younger liturgists' (i.e. under 40) to a consultation at the Art Workers' Guild in London. The day was organized by Michael Perham and grew out of the fact that the Commission has a lot of work before it at the moment and needs to involve other people in doing some of this work.

About 28 younger liturgists were there, along with four members of the Liturgical Commission: David Stancliffe (Chairman and Bishop of Salisbury), Trevor Lloyd, Michael Perham and Jane Sinclair. Michael began by outlining what the Commission was doing currently and the type of help it expected to need. We then split up into four groups to discuss this agenda and suggest other items which we would have placed on it. Other group exercises later in the day included discussing how concerns about creation and conservation may be expressed in the liturgy without sounding like a passing fad, and attempting to write a post-communion collect for a particular season.

There was a broad range of people in attendance, with people there who had a background in cathedral ministry as well as those who were working in large charismatic churches. If anything, there was a lack of representation from UPA's. Michael Perham acknowledged that there had been a flowering of evangelical interest in liturgy and that evangelicals had made significant contributions to liturgical revision in the Church of England. Nine of the younger liturgists there were members of the Group for the Renewal of Worship, as were two of the Commission members present. Acknowledgement was also made that this flowering of evangelical endeavour was largely due to the efforts of Colin Buchanan, especially through GROW. Some Commission members were in touch with the Affirming Catholicism group to see if there could not be a similar revival of catholic interest in liturgical revision.

I think most of those present felt that this was a very worthwhile day. Some of us may be recruited to work with Commission sub-groups on particular areas such as weddings and the Commission is now in touch with a large number of the next generation of liturgical researchers and revisors.

It seemed to me that Michael Perham's list of the kind of people whom the Commission need to help them could apply to liturgists of all sorts, younger or not, and so I reproduce it here.

Michael Perham suggested that the Commission needs nine categories of people to help:

1. those who can think theologically about liturgical issues;
2. those who have inter-disciplinary skills, especially with regard to music and architecture;
3. those who can write liturgical texts;
4. people to teach liturgy in theological colleges and to speak at conferences and courses;

to meals by the secretary of the Panel, Charles Robertson, and presented with a review copy, and, corruptible to the last, I have duly given it a rave review below in exchange for such kind hospitality. In the debate, it got hardly a mention from the floor—just one eagle-eyed contributor who observed that the pronoun used for baptismal candidates was 'she', whereas that used for the dead at funerals was 'he'! Was the Panel expecting all births to be female and all deaths to be male? I ventured to intervene from the floor myself at one point. I gave a good puff to *Common Order*, but also mentioned that I was astonished to find the role of the minister described in the debate as that of 'offering worship on behalf of the people'. I said I hoped to hear that the congregations were actually composed of worshippers, but refrained from saying that 'worship offered on behalf of the people' sounds remarkably like *not* believing in the priesthood of all believers.

Colin Buchanan

GENERAL SYNOD JULY 1994

General Synod meets at York from 8 to 12 July. The agenda includes a whole series of liturgical or semi-liturgical items. The House of Bishops is bringing forward the two reports from the Liturgical Commission mentioned last month—*One Book or a Series of Volumes?* and *Language and the Worship of the Church*. It will also promote the debate on eucharistic material which, like the extended material last Autumn, is *not* proposed in order to begin the synodical journey to authorization, but only in order to ask the Synod if this is the sort of material it would like to see (A change in standing orders is, we hear, proposed—and that would enable the House of Bishops to consider the July debate at its October meeting, and then feed the text into the November session of General Synod (because the length of time needed for advance notification will have been reduced). The latest round of initiation material also exists (including the NIFCAT report, but that will not figure on the agenda yet. The July NOL may have difficulty reporting the debate, but will include a good survey of the material itself.

A triad of side-items raise liturgical questions. Firstly, the report *Breaking New Ground* (GS 1099) comes from the working party on church planting. As it deals with congregations in the process of formation, it inevitably touches upon their worship. Then the House of Bishops Occasional Paper, *Apostolicity and Succession* (GS Misc 432), deals with issues of episcopacy and sacraments. And we shall have another debate on the famous *Filioque*.

But perhaps most interest will be raised by the Private Member's Motion which, in the name of Tim Royle, want from bottom to top of the 'PMM' list in four days last November:

'That this Synod, recognising the desire of the Church for an effective shared Ministry, request the House of Bishops to report on what, if any, theological grounds exist for reserving the Presidency of the Eucharist to Bishops and Presbyters.'

Perhaps it will get such a statement from the House of Bishops. Perhaps.

Health Warning—Non-liturgical business

Oh yes, and my own motion on 'Direct State Control' (i.e. on lifting it) has also got a timed place in the business. Do ask your synodical representative to vote for it. (And my book, *Cut the Connection: Disestablishment and the Church of England*, is published by DLT four days before Synod meets. Make sure you order your copy.

THE NEW LITURGICAL CANONS

We published last month the new Canon B9. Canon B10 ('Of Morning and Evening Prayer in Cathedral Churches') is unchanged. It is six lines long and is quite unremarkable, save for the provision that 'clergy present in choir' shall be 'duly habited'. We are left to speculate what habit is due.

There is a totally new B11, and it swallows up the old B11 and also B11A. It runs as follows:

B11 OF MORNING AND EVENING PRAYER IN PARISH CHURCHES

1. Morning and Evening Prayer shall be said or sung in every parish church at least on all Sundays and other principal Feast Days, and also on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. Each service shall be said or sung distinctly, reverently, and in an audible voice. Readers, such other lay persons as may be authorised by the bishop of the diocese, or some other suitable person, may, at the invitation of the minister of the parish or, where the cure is vacant or the minister is incapacitated, at the invitation of the churchwardens say or sing Morning and Evening Prayer (save for the Absolution).
2. On all other days the minister of the parish, together with other ministers licensed to serve in the parish shall make such provision for Morning and Evening Prayer to be said or sung either in the parish church or, after consultation with the parochial church council, elsewhere as may best serve to sustain the corporate spiritual life of the parish and the pattern of life enjoined upon ministers by Canon C 26. Public notice shall be given in the parish, by tolling the bell or other appropriate means, of the time and place where the prayers are to be said or sung.
3. The reading of Morning and Evening Prayer in any parish church as required by this Canon may only be dispensed with in accordance with the provisions of Canon B14A.

Commentary

This was one of the revisions for which I endeavoured to offer an alternative. However, to gather the issues concerned, it is important to recognize that the clergy are required by a different Canon (C26) to say Morning and Evening Prayer daily. This Canon is not attempting to duplicate that, but is providing for the *public* reading of those services in order to allow others to join with the clergy, or at least to know the services are being said. Whether this has any resemblance to reality in a good proportion of Anglican parishes would be a matter for speculation—or inspection. It looks as though this was another departure by the Synod into providing for unreality.

One anomalous footprint of history remains in the phrase at end of para. 1 'shall say or sing Morning and Evening Prayer (save for the Absolution)'. It is not the case that lay persons are not to say the Absolution at Morning and Evening Prayer; the rubrics of the rites say that they *are* to say it, but in a slightly different form from that issued for presbyters (i.e. in the 'you' form). So this bit of the Canon is doubly dead letter.

Correspondence

Dear Colin,

It is a long time since I have written to *News of Liturgy*, but am prompted now to do so by the juxtaposition of reports in this month's edition (233) of your journal.

On page 3 you reported the new text of Canon B9: 'All persons present at the time of divine service shall audibly make answers . . . appointed to be said or sung by all present.'

On page 4 you gave a brief report on the consecration of the Bishop of Buckingham though it must be admitted that the report was somewhat biased in its recording to favour mention of the consecration of the first Bishop of Ebbsfleet.

I attended the service, as a clergyman of the Archdeaconry of Buckingham, and wonder how the Canon B9 ought to be interpreted. The great 'Amen' at the end of the Eucharistic Prayer was sung to an elaborate choral setting by the choir then present. Others present, not being in possession of the music were faced with a choice of remaining silent, surely not right? or saying 'Amen', surely not intended? or trying to sing with the choir, surely not practical?

And some of us old-fashioned souls were taught we really should join in that 'Amen'.

I wondered, too, about the courtesy of some clergy who, in response to the question 'is it your will that these persons should be ordained?' replied 'John only', then stood for the laying on of hands on the Bishop of Ebbsfleet but sat while hands were laid on the other two men.

You also mentioned the defection of Graham Leonard to the Holy Roman Church. I wondered what is the status of sacraments administered by Anglican priests and bishops who, to gain admission to that church, allege the invalidity of their Anglican orders? And should they repay stipends paid to them by the Church of England as, presumably, money gained under false pretences?

Yours sincerely,
Peter Faulkner, Slough

[There were *two* Johns made bishop that day, so a reply of 'John only' would still have let two out of three through. The other John was a prominent member of MOW—COB]

Dear Colin,

NOL Spurious Tittle-Tattle

I don't know which dioceses have been daft enough to offer training days on how *exactly* to preside at the eucharist. A good number of women, with differing needs and expectations, took part in two training days in Manchester (for adjacent dioceses as well); we tried to identify the principles, gifts and skills which shape presiding, with videos to critique. A helpful day, said most, given that we may be watched more closely than the men, at least initially; and if men haven't had such opportunities, *tant pis*.

All good wishes,
Michael Ainsworth
Manchester Diocesan Worship Committee

PRAXIS DAY ON WORSHIP AND COMPUTERS 21-5-94

Tim Anderson (*Workmaster's* master) and Paul Roberts (Trinity Bristol) were the main speakers. As the hastily recruited chairman I found three main areas of interest.

1. **The Windows version of *Worshipmaster*.** Tim's demonstration was accompanied by gasps and applause (nearly). It is *very good*, beginning with a framework for a service, and allowing you to select items into it. It is simple to change texts, and to add new ones. It *does* ask you a question if you try to leave out material you have previously marked as being mandatory. It will have the ASB, and is altogether more user-friendly, as well as doing what a liturgist wants (first define your structure!). It is worth saying that the DOS version is being upgraded to have a service outline as its starting point (and will have the ASB), but the Windows version is streets ahead. Tim said it would be available 'by the Summer'.

2. **Internet.** Connected to a phone line, and linked to a 'host' computer, you can talk to computers all over the world, sending and receiving 'e-mail' (the host computer saves your messages like an answerphone, as long as you pay it money). Two things were of relevance:

Firstly, there is a worldwide 'Anglican' interest group, with various others (like 'Episcopal' and 'Liturgy'). These are mailing lists: send material to them and it will go to everyone on the list. 'Episcopal' has a daily office, which is either morning, midday, evening or night depending on the time zone of the receiver!

Second, Internet allows you to access the files of any computer on the network, all over the world. Thus you can transfer things from one computer to another, like free or shareware software, or the American Book of Common Prayer. This is in Public Domain (i.e. free), unlike Church of England liturgical texts, which are guarded by the CBF. In America the BCP was made Public Domain as a service to the church and an aid to mission. All present thought this was a good idea . . .

(More Internet information from Simon Kershaw: 24 Whitecross, St. Ives, Huntingdon, PE17 4DR. Send a self-addressed A4 envelope. Or e-mail simon.kershaw@smallworld.co.uk)

3. **Philosophical Issues.** Paul Roberts began and ended the day with some thoughts on culture and mission. In a non-book, image-centred, multi-media culture, can we afford not to use the presentational possibilities computers afford us? Similarly, the global exchange of information now available through computers (Internet is an anarchy, not run by anyone) is a root attack on centralization. Computers give access to huge resources, with the ability to customize them for local use, in a way not possible before. Perhaps we are heading towards a time like the pre-print days, where there were local groups of rites, rather than one central authorized one.

This was a good day. Thanks to PRAXIS (a good thing!).

Jeremy Fletcher

Book Review

Common Order (or *Book of Common Order of the Church of Scotland*—as on title page) (St. Andrew Press, Edinburgh, 1994, pp.xx/700 hardback, 20).

This is a most handsome book for the minister to use—with an occasional hope in it that, by duplication of selective extraction it may also lead to overt active congregational participation (see my editorial on pages 1-3 above).

The Book is divided into sixteen main sections, of which the second and third take nearly two-thirds of the Book. These are:

II THE ORDER OF PUBLIC WORSHIP

Under this head there are five orders for Morning Services and five for Evening Services.

III THE SACRAMENTS AND ORDINANCES OF THE CHURCH

Here there are orders for baptism and confirmation, five orders for holy communion, three orders for marriage (plus some extras), a range of orders for funerals (relating to differing pastoral situations), and a collection of rites for ordaining elders, laying foundation stones, healing etc.

The further sections (IV-XV) include selections of prayers, 'a daily service, benedictions and lectionary provision.

I cannot do full justice to it all in one go, and hope to come back to some of the rites on another occasion. But, as a typical Anglican, I have turned to the communion as a kind of litmus test of the liturgical character of the Book. The standard features, as set out in the 'First order', are a structure not unlike the 'ecumenical consensus' we have in Rite A, and a eucharistic prayer which is truly eucharistic. The Scottish distinctives are as follows: There is a great weight on the liturgical entry into the sacramental part of the rite: there is an invitation to the people, an 'offering' (presumably money), a 'Great Entrances' (of money and elements), an unveiling of the elements (with 'offertory-type' prayers), a reading of the narrative of institution, and finally a 'Taking' (with a repeat of the narrative). Only then do we have the eucharistic prayer (without narrative, and with a considerable choice of texts)—and after that and the Lord's Prayer there is *another* use of the narrative to cover the breaking of the bread. After communion comes the Peace!

It is certain that no one who takes a eucharistic prayer seriously could think that consecration here is effected by the narrative—it ushers in the whole meal, the taking, and the breaking; but it does not come in the eucharistic prayer. What the prayer does have in most instances is an explicit epiclesis invoking the Spirit on both elements and congregation, and it also has a tendency to include self-oblation within the prayer. Wonderfully the fourth order is '*For use at a service when children communicate*', a provision which both reflects the Kirk's readiness to communicate young children, and also contrasts with the Roman Catholic provision (aped thus far by the C/E) '*For use when children are present*'. It is possible truly to write for communicants—it is virtually impossible to write a eucharistic prayer for the benefit and participation of non-participants! It

is characterized by simplicity—perhaps even denuded simplicity:

We are here
Because Jesus has invited us.
When Jesus was on earth,
he often enjoyed
meals with his friends.

There are no general notes or directions, but there is an index. The whole is beautifully laid out with plenty of variation of typeface, plenty of white space on each page, lining out for drawing breath, and ribbons of four different colours for marking one's place. But it is *not*—or not yet—a 'pew book'. Curiously enough, it was also not an Assembly Book—the General Assembly, which is jealous of its own rights in most areas, cheerfully allowed its (really quite small) Panel on Worship to draft and publish this Book, and it becomes the Church of Scotland's Book thereby. It remains an open question as to whether the Assembly at large—or the Kirk at large—would ever be as precisely liturgical as the work these few enthusiasts have produced in their name!

This month's publication . . .

. . . is Alcuin/GROW Joint Liturgical Study no. 28, *Anglican Liturgical Inculturation in Africa*, edited by David Gitari, the Bishop of Kirinyaga in the Church of the Province of Kenya. Readers of NOL may recall that last July we circulated the 'Kanamai Statement' as part of our July issue. This year David Gitari has edited together the two opening papers of the Consultation—one by Elisha Mbonigaba of Mukono in Uganda, and one by COB—together with the Kanamai Statement itself, and a first response from Nigeria, the major Province of Africa not represented at the Consultation.

. . . and next month's

is Worship Series no. 129, *Moravian Worship*, by Phillip Tovey and Fred Linyard.

ADMISSION TO COMMUNION IN THE MAR THOMA CHURCH

The Mar Thoma Church retains the traditional Eastern anointing after infant baptism, which counts in the West as 'confirmation' (though it has no resemblance to Anglican confirmation). But since the nineteenth century Reformation, the Mar Thoma Church has delayed admission to communion to the age of 13 or 14. We now have in translation the text used for making the teenagers 'communicants'.

DEDICATION SERVICE FOR THE FIRST COMMUNICANTS

(The first communicants come forward and stand in line while a dedicational hymn is being sung. The Congregation remains seated)

Priest:

Dearly beloved members of the Congregation, we are assembled here to praise God as these first communicants openly confess that they are partakers in the saving grace of God. Let us all pray that they may experience God's abundant power and grace. We welcome them today to the full fellowship of Church, the Body of Christ, though the sacrament of the Holy Qurbana.

(To the Communicants)

Now, our dearly beloved children in the Lord, you are called upon to renew the pledge taken on behalf of you by your parents and God-parents at the time of your Baptism. Please repeat that pledge after me, now.

1. I Renounce Satan
I believe in CHRIST
2. **I Renounce Satan
I believe in CHRIST**

3. Renouncing Satan, I fully believe in CHRIST

3. Renouncing Satan, I fully believe in CHRIST

Lord God—you accepted me to the membership of the Church—the community of the new covenant, through Baptism. I praise and thank you now for the great privilege of partaking in the Holy Qurbana.

I confess in your presence and in the presence of all assembled here—that I have sinned against you and others—in thought, word and deed. I commit myself in your hands—trusting in your inestimable mercy. I earnestly desire whole-heartedly to love you—and faithfully follow you.

I decide now—diligently to learn the word of God—and regularly to participate in the Holy Qurbana. Depending on the Grace of God—I would continue to strive for the establishment of peace and justice among all people and to uphold the value and worth of all.

Priest:

You, who are called to be light of the world, be strong by the Spirit with power from on high. Renounce the transient and deceitful lusts of fallen humanity and turn away from them. Hold forth the word of God. May you enjoy the life through faith in the Christ Jesus. May God strengthen you to be steadfast in your pledge. May you experience a life of peace on earth and heavenly joy in God's presence in the world to come—Amen.

Prayer (The first communicants kneel in a line)

Lord, fill these your children with your Holy Spirit. Strengthen them for your service. Nurture them with Heavenly graces. Protect them always under your loving care. Bring them up in the knowledge and obedience of your word. May they serve you in this world and enjoy the inheritance of all the saints in the world to come—Amen.

The Bishop lays his hands on the heads of the First Communicants. They are given Bibles and candles. They stand with Bibles and lighted candles facing the congregation. The congregation stands, repeats the following after the Priest.

May God Almighty bless you and strengthen you to grow and bear fruit by the power of the Holy Spirit that is already given to you—Amen.

The Congregation:

We the members of this Parish—joyfully welcome you—to the fellowship of the Church—We promise you our prayers and help. May the Lord help us—to serve God in the unity of the Spirit. May God keep us all from falling. May God in his power and love—enable us to stand pure and spotless, with all the saints in his presence in his eternal Kingdom.

(The Communicants turn facing the altar)

Benediction: Priest:

Dearly Beloved, go into the world in peace. May the God of peace be with you. May his Holy Spirit guide you. May the grace and blessings of the Triune God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with us all, now and forever—Amen.

(The communicants can stay back for the prayer of Confession and to participate first in the Holy Qurbana)