

THE STUDY OF LITURGY: CHRISTIAN INITIATION
A COMMENTARY
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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"¹, ["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,

¹The 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. Sermon. 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

1662/1926 At the Font	1549 At the door of the Church
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]	At the Font
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>The Order for Confirmation, or laying on of hands upon those that are baptized and come to years of discretion.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Preface: "To the end that." 2. The Ratification of Baptismal Vows: "Do you will you," etc. in threefold form (1662 single) 3. The Suffrages: "Our help is" 4. Prayer for Spiritual Gifts and Graces: "Almighty and ever-living God, who hast vouchsafed." 5a Imposition of hands. 5b Prayer: "Defend, O Lord." 6. The Mutual Salutation: "The Lord be." 7* The Lord's Prayer 8. The Collect: "Almighty and everliving God, who makest." 9. Prayer for sanctification and protection: "O Almighty Lord." 10. Benediction 	<p>Confirmation, wherein is contained a Catechism for children.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rubrics commencing, "To the end that."* <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> 3. The Suffrages: "Our help is" 6. The Mutual Salutation: "The Lord be." 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."** 8 The Collect 10 The Benediction.

* 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 Churching 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.