

CONFIRMATION MANUAL FOR CHURCHES

2011

DIOCESE OF EVO

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DAILY TIME TABLE

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NOTE

1. 20 weeks needed for normal teaching
2. 12 Weeks for crash Program.

FOREWARD

In our Presidential charge at the first session of the first Synod, we directed the Diocesan Chaplain of the Sunday school and Discipleship Ministry was “charged to work with the Archdeaconry and Deanery Chaplains to propose to us a Diocesan Preparatory Manual for Confirmation Classes”. This manual is the outcome of that charge. This is in keeping with our commitment to evolving an effective teaching ministry in our Diocese with a view to raising quality disciples with solid biblical and ecclesiastical foundation who could no longer be easily swayed by every wind of doctrine out there.

Thoroughly and carefully packaged, it builds upon the earlier published Discipleship Manual for Churches. It is therefore expected that those who are taken through this current publication are only the ones who have been certified to have completed the Discipleship Manual.

Accordingly, all Pastors and churches are directed to make sure the entire content is dully followed in preparing candidates in their churches before they are presented to us for confirmation. Similarly, confirmation examinations in our Churches should henceforth be based on this Manual. And with the publication of this manual, and with the cooperation of Pastors, it is hoped that the inconsistencies, irregularity and lack of harmony, which have characterised preparation of candidates for confirmations have been permanently put to rest. May God bless His Church in the Diocese of Evo.

+Innocent, Evo.

EDITORIAL

At the first session of the first Synod, His Lordship directed the Sunday School/Discipleship Ministry to propose to him a Preparatory Manual for Confirmation Classes. It was an overwhelming challenge. But we were determined not to disappoint His Lordship and the Church of God. We set out to articulate what should be the content of this manual and to begin collation of materials. And by the special grace of God, what you are holding in your hand is the manifestation of that effort.

In doing what we did, we tried the best we could to furnish the Diocese with what is scholarly, articulate, robust, credible, simple, easy to transmit and understand. We also were mindful of the need to base whatever preparation we are putting together on solid spiritual and biblical footing without which all our efforts will at best produce only very religious people who are knowledgeable in Churchmanship and ecclesiastical vocabulary but with no root in Christ. This is why this Manual is packaged as a kind of continuation of the Discipleship Manual for Churches that was published early this year. The implication of this is that only those who have thoroughly completed the said manual are ready to commence with the present one. Moreover, this is in keeping with the directive of the Bishop that no candidate should be admitted to confirmation class who have not first been certificated from the Discipleship class.

Structured into eight chapters, it offers every detail which the young Anglican ought to know as necessary foundation to enduring faith and Anglican churchmanship.

Finally, we send this out with much prayer that the good LORD will *use* it as *the little stone in the hand of David to slay Goliath* in every life it is intended to mould and shape. All enquiry or critique should be directed to the editor on the stated address below. Enjoy it!

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND THE HISTORY OF THE ANGLICAN CHURCH

The word “Church’ stems from the Greek word *Ekklesia* which means ‘the called out ones’ or ‘the ones called out of the crowd’, or ‘the chosen one’. The word was also rendered “church’ in reference to a local congregation of Christians and not a building. However, the word *Kyriake Oikia*’ means the “Lord’s house or Christian place of worship’. The church in its true meaning and usage therefore, is the Assembly of God’s people who are in Christ through baptism and those who have faith in Him. The Head, Founder and Owner of the Church is Jesus Christ who died and rose for the redemption of mankind. The word ‘Anglican’ is from an ancient Latin word ‘ecclesia anglicana’ which means the English Church/Church of England. That means a church which has its form and root in England. Those who belong to this body are identified as Anglicans.

THE HISTORY OF ANGLICAN CHURCH

The roots of the Anglican Church go back as far as the 2nd century, but the church traces its current structure and status back to the reign of King Henry VIII, who ruled from 1509 to 1547. The events that led to the formation of the state Anglican Church are a curious mix of ecclesiastical, political, and personal rivalries. Henry petitioned Pope Clement VII for a divorce from

Catherine of Aragon, but was denied. When Protestant Thomas Cranmer became Archbishop of Canterbury, Henry saw his chance to bypass the Pope's authority and get what he wanted. In 1531, Henry manipulated the English clergy into accepting him as head of the church in England. In 1532, Henry forced the national convocation to agree in *The Submission of the Clergy* that they would not promulgate any papal bull in England without the king's consent. In 1534, Henry led Parliament to pass a series of laws depriving the Roman Catholic Church of any authority in England. *The Act of Supremacy* declared the king to be "the supreme head of the church in England," thus giving Henry the same legal authority over the English church that the Pope exercised over the Roman Catholic Church.

Though the English church didn't assert total independence from Rome until Henry VIII's reign, there had been aspects of independence throughout its history. The Celtic branch, founded by Saint Patrick in Ireland in 432, borrowed certain practices from the ancient Druids, and never was fully under papal authority. The Saxon branch, founded by Saint Augustine in 597, was under papal direction, but not without resistance. The various tribes of England had never fully submitted to Roman occupation, and when the Roman Legion was withdrawn, the Saxon church continued on an independent course. These two branches spread across the land, often clashing over territory and authority, until King Oswey of Northumbria called the Synod of Whitby in 664. This synod merged the two churches nominally under the Roman Catholic Church and laid the groundwork for Henry's acts nearly 900 years later.

The doctrine of the Anglican Church is an interesting mix of Catholicism and Protestant Reformation theology. The Apostle's Creed and Nicene Creed are authoritative declarations of belief for the Anglican Church and are typically recited in worship services. Interestingly, the church does not require individuals to agree with or accept all the statements of those creeds but encourages its members to join in the process of discovery. The 39 Articles, developed in the reign of Elizabeth I, laid out the Protestant doctrine and practice of the Anglican Church, but were deliberately written to be so vague that they were open to various interpretations by Protestants and Catholics. Like the Catholic Church, the celebration of the Eucharist is central to the worship service, along with the communal offering of prayer and praise through the recitation of the liturgy. Like other liturgical churches, there is a danger of allowing the form of religious ceremony (Isaiah 29:13) to replace the personal application of faith (Psalm 51:16-17). This was a key point of contention by the Puritans and others who ultimately left the Anglican Church. Thomas Shepherd, who was expelled from the Anglican Church in 1630 for non-conformity, was a spiritual giant who was concerned that people distinguish between the work of grace in genuine conversion and the religious pretense that was common within the church. (Shepherd was one of the pivotal men in the founding of Harvard College and became a mentor of Jonathan Edwards, who was mightily used of God in the Great Awakening.)

The Anglican Communion has 80 million members worldwide in 38 different

church organizations, including the Episcopal Church. The Archbishop of Canterbury is the recognized spiritual head of the church, though each church organization is self-governing under its own archbishop. In addition to those churches, the Continuing Anglican Communion, established in 1977, is composed of churches which share the historic Anglican faith, but reject the changes in the Episcopal Book of Common Prayer, as well as the ordination of women and gays/lesbians to the clergy, and have thus severed their ties with the main church.

CHAPTER TWO: ANGLICANISM, SEASONS, COLOURS AND VESTMENTS

1. ANGLICANISM

From the above historical background of the church, it may be appropriate to attempt a working definition of Anglicanism for the purpose of this manual.

According to Professor Richard Bankhana, in his contribution in New Dictionary of Theology, Anglicanism is the name given to 'a pattern of Christianity which arose in England, Wales and Ireland under the influence of the 16th century reformation, and was afterwards carried by immigrants and missionaries to the English or British possessions abroad, and to some extent beyond them.

In oxford dictionary, Anglicanism properly applies to the system of doctrine and practice upheld by those Christian who are in religious communion with the sea of Canterbury. It is used especially in a somewhat more restricted sense, of that system in so far as it emphasises its claims to possess a religious outlook distinguishable from that of other Christian communion both catholic and protestants.

The original home of Anglicanism was in England, although it later spread both in places which were formerly parts of British Empire and outside places of British colonial powers. The Anglican Church set its foot on the Nigeria soil in 1842 through the Church Missionary Society (CMS) led by Rev Henry Townsend.

CHURCH SEASON: This is one aspect of Anglicanism that we cannot ignore. Anglican Church seasons and festivals are no doubt occasions during which some of the service orders and Season are fully utilized. On the whole, thirteen seasons for observance can be identified in the Anglican Church as the following examples will reveal. Each season has liturgical colours appropriate to it as well as the Lectionary meant for that season as can be confirmed from the Book of Common Prayers (BCP) and or the yearly published Anglican Church year Calendar.

1. **Advent Season:** The Advent of Christ is regarded as the beginning of the Anglican Church year or season. It falls about the end of November and lasts to some days before the Christmas. At Advent: Anglicans celebrate Christ's Second-coming as He came to visit them in great humility and that He shall come again in His glorious majesty to judge both the living and the dead. The season calls for repentant hearts in readiness to receive Christ as He appears. There are four Advent Sundays; and the appropriate colour is violet/purple.

ii. **Christmas Eve & Christmas Day** (December 24 and 25): The birth of Christ is celebrated for Christ's incarnation when the only begotten son of God took upon himself human nature and was born of a pure virgin. There are two Christmas seasons – Sundays (maximum), and the appropriate colour is white.

iii. **Circumcision of Christ** (January 1) This is also celebrated because of Christ's obedience to the law of circumcision because of man.

iv. **Epiphany** (January 6): This is the next season after Christ's circumcision. On this occasion, Anglicans celebrate Christ's manifestation to the Nations of the world, especially to the "Gentiles". There are a maximum of six Epiphany Sundays with Green as the colour (apart from Epiphany Day proper and first Sunday after Epiphany day which is white).

v. **Septuagesima Sunday** (3rd Sunday Before Lent): This is a preparatory Sunday that ushers in lent. Usually, it is seventy days before Lent. Green is the colour.

vi. **Sexagesima Sunday** (2nd Sunday before Lent): This is equally a preparatory Sunday before Lent. Usually, it is sixty days before Lent Green is also the colour.

vii. **Quinquagesima Sunday** (Last Sunday to Lent): This is the final preparatory Sunday (fifty days) to lent. Green is the colour.

viii. **Ash Wednesday:** This is the beginning of Lent Season. It is celebrated to mark the self denial of Christ of Himself because of man's sake. The season requires self denials and personal sacrifices. There are five Sundays in lent and the appropriate colour is purple/violet.

ix. **Palm Sunday** (Last Sunday to Easter Sunday): This is celebrated as Christ triumphant entry into Jerusalem and the beginning of the Holy week – and Good Friday. Here, Christ's passion and crucifixion for man's redemption is commemorated. The colour for Palm Sunday and Good Friday is Red, while

other days of the Holy week are Red or purple (except for Maundy Thursday of the Holy week which is white).

x. **Easter Eve and Easter day proper:** This is one of the greatest seasons in the Anglican calendar. Anglicans celebrate it because on it Christ has overcome death and opened for Christians the gates of everlasting life. Altogether, there are five Easter Sundays, the fifth being the Rogation Sunday. The colour for Easter is White. From the Easter Day to the first Sunday after Easter is celebrated (with Holy Communion if possible) day by day.

xi. **Ascension Day:** This is next season after Easter. It falls 40 days after Easter Day. All faithful Anglicans celebrate because of the fact that Jesus lives and reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit. White is the colour.

xii. **Pentecost Day and Whit Sunday:** The descent or receipt of the Holy Spirit is celebrated on this occasion. There is just an interval of one Sunday between the last Sunday in Easter (known as Sunday after Ascension) and the Pentecost Day/whit Sunday. Red is the colour for the day. The Monday and Tuesday after Pentecost Sunday is also celebrated with Holy communion service and Red is the colour.

xiii. **Trinity Sunday:** The Trinity season is the longest season in the Anglican Church year. It has twenty six Sunday apart from the Trinity Sunday itself. On Trinity Sunday, Anglicans celebrate the co-Eternal, co-Equal, co-substantial Blessed Trinity (God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit). Anglicans celebrate their faith in daily life, their need of God's grace, necessity of thinking, doing always "Such things as be rightful that the Church may be devoutly given to serve God in good works". Apart from Trinity Sunday itself in which white is used, all other Sundays after Trinity Day is Green.

2. LITURGICAL COLOURS AND SACRED/CLERICAL VESTMENTS.

COLOURS

A number of colours otherwise known as Liturgical colours are used at different seasons in the Anglican Church year as we have already noted above. Such colours feature differently in clerical vestments. They are also used to cover Liturgical objects as well as used in Chancel decorations; especially Holy Communion accessories. These include Holy communion table otherwise called the Lord's table, Lectern, Reading Desk, the Pulpit, Baptismal font etc. Colours recognized by the Anglican Communion are seven altogether, (white or gold, Red, Purple/Violet, Green, Black, Blue and Yellow), although in practice, some

Anglican provinces prefer to emphasize the use of some colours more than others. For instance, while the Church of Nigeria features more often four colours (White or gold, Red, Purple/Violet, and Green), the church of Ireland emphasizes White and Red.

i. **White:** This colour is often used for the church great festivals associated with Christ's work of redemption and certain other days. Specifically it is used on Christmas Day, Easter Day, St. John the Divine feast days as well as on Trinity Sunday. It is at times said to be a multi-purpose colour in the sense that it can be worn in any other occasion and season when there are no appropriate colour since it is associated with Christ redemptive work. White is said to be a symbol of innocence, purity, Joy and Glory.

ii. **Red:** This colour is used on Whit Sunday (Pentecost Day) and St. John's Day. It is said to be an emblem of martyrdom for the gospel.

iii. **Green:** This is worn between Epiphany and Septuagesima Sunday and between Trinity Sunday and Advent Sunday. It can also be worn on week days along with Blue (excluding on saints days). It is an emblem of liveliness.

iv. **Violet/Purple:** This is worn during Lent, Advent and seasons of fasting. It is also worn at burials, especially when the Eucharist is required. It is said to be an emblem of sadness and it can also be worn on week days along with Yellow (excluding Saint Days).

v. **Black:** This is worn on Good Fridays and at funeral services. It is said to be an emblem of Mourning.

FURTHER REFLECTIONS ON LITURGICAL COLOURS/NOMENCLATURE:

ORDINARY TIME: When referring to the liturgical year the term "ordinary" does not mean "usual or average." Ordinary here means "not seasonal." Ordinary Time is that part of the Liturgical Year that lies outside the seasons of Lent-Easter and Advent-Christmas.

The Colours you will see on the altar and on the priest's vestments during Ordinary Time is Green. A sign of Hope or Triumph of life over death, like re-growth in springtime.

The Symbol for Ordinary Time is called a "Chi Rho". It is comprised of the first two letters of the Greek word for Messiah - Christos - the letter Chi looks like the letter "X", and the letter Rho looks like the letter "P". This abbreviation became a symbol representing Jesus Christ.

In Ordinary Time, the church celebrates the mystery of Christ not in one specific aspect but in all its aspects. The readings during Ordinary Time help to instruct us on how to live out our Christian faith in our daily lives. The Feast of Christ the King is the last Sunday of Ordinary Time and of the Liturgical Year.

ADVENT SEASON

Colour: Since Advent is a time of expectation and preparation, the colours Violet or Purple are used in the vestments and decorations. Purple is a colour that was reserved for use by royalty, and so it is used in Advent to symbolize the coming of Christ our King, as celebrated at Christmas and as we prepare for the coming of God's Kingdom.

The Third Sunday of Advent is known as *Gaudete* Sunday. *Gaudete* is the Latin word for rejoice. The vestments worn on this day may be the colour Rose or purple to symbolize the hope for the coming of Jesus.

The Symbol for Advent is the Advent Wreath. It represents a custom that Christians have followed for centuries. The circle of the wreath recalls all the years the people waited for the Messiah. The four candles on the wreath remind us that there are four weeks in Advent. Each week one additional candle is lighted, so by the end of Advent all four are lit. The candles remind us that we are preparing for Jesus, the Light of the World.

Three of the candles are Purple, the liturgical colour for Advent. The candle lit for the third week of Advent is Rose or Pink coloured, to signify the hope for the coming of Jesus.

Advent begins the liturgical year four Sundays before December 25 and ends at the Christmas Vigil Mass. There are two themes to this season, both reflected by the term "advent" which means "coming". But it must be noted that not all these symbols are in use today, especially within the Evangelical Stream of Anglicanism.

First, this season is a period to prepare for the celebration of Christmas.

Second, it is a time to reflect and prepare for Christ's second coming at the end of time.

Christmas Season Colour: The colour of the vestments for this season is White or Gold to show our Joy. It also represents innocence and holiness. In some cases Silver is used instead of White.

A Symbol for Christmas is the Manger. A trough used to feed animals served as the first crib for the baby Jesus. The star proclaimed the coming of the King to the Wise Men who followed it so they could pay homage to Jesus. The Star can also be a symbol of Christmas.

Christmas is our celebration of the birth of Jesus. Jesus is the Word of God who became one of us, the promised Messiah. The Christmas season celebrates the early manifestations of Jesus, from his birth to the beginning of his public ministry. The central figures in the drama of the birth of Christ are Mary, Joseph and John the Baptist.

The Christmas Season begins at the Vigil Mass on Christmas Eve and ends on the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord, the Sunday after January 6.

LENTEN SEASON

Colour: The colour used during Lent is Violet or Purple, which symbolizes the efforts for penance and reflection.

The Symbol for Lent is the Cross. It symbolizes Jesus' Victory over death and the hope of our salvation. It reminds us that we are called by Jesus to love God, our neighbors, and ourselves, and that we should improve those things that help us do this and change those things that get in the way.

Lent is the time of preparation for Easter, the greatest Feast of the Church. During Lent, we are asked to focus on changing our lives through prayer, penance and love. In doing this, we try to become more like Christ in His love for God and others by His dying and rising to new life. The Lenten Season begins on Ash Wednesday and ends on Thursday of Holy Week up to the beginning of the Mass of the Lord's Supper. From the time of the early Church, the forty days of Lent are counted from the First Sunday of Lent until Holy Thursday.

The Term "Lent" comes from a Middle English word that means Springtime. Like the season of Spring, Lent is a time of renewal.

EASTER SEASON

Colour: The colour used during the Easter season is White, signifying the joy of Christ's resurrection. The last day of the Easter season is Pentecost Sunday, on which we celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit. On this day Red is the liturgical colour, representing the Fire of the Holy Spirit. On Good Friday, Black can also be used as a symbol of death.

A Symbol for Easter is the Paschal Candle and water which represent the light and new life of Christ's resurrection and the water of our baptism and rebirth.

The Easter Season flows from the Easter Vigil and concludes fifty days later on Pentecost Sunday. It is a joyous season in which we celebrate Christ's resurrection and ascension, as well as the coming of the Holy Spirit and the beginning of the Church. This is a time of rejoicing, when Alleluia should be sung with heartfelt emotion.

Every Sunday during the year the Church celebrates the resurrection of Jesus. However, St. Athanasius regarded the fifty days of the Easter Season as "the Great Sunday".

Reflecting this view, the Sundays of the Easter season are not called Sundays after Easter, but Sundays of Easter. For example, the Sunday that follows Easter is the Second Sunday of Easter.

SACRED OR CLERICAL VESTMENTS

Dressing no doubt is the most distinguishing marks of a person, group of persons and professional bodies such as the Anglican Clergy. Anglican clergy or clerics have their own approved dressing or vestment pattern generally referred to as clerical out-fits or Clerical Vestments. Below are some of them as used in the Church of Nigeria:

- i. **SURPLICE:** It is a shortened alb with wide sleeves, worn by all clerics when performing certain function including laymen such as choir boys. It is an emblem of the purity and Holiness of life that should distinguish clerics.
- ii. **CASSOCKS:** This is long close-fitting garment worn by clerics and others engaged in church functions. The approved colours into which cassocks could be made in the Anglican Church are Black, White and Red/Purple. (Red/Purple is for the Bishops exclusively). The cassock with 39 red buttons reminds the Anglican priest that he is a defender of the 39 Articles of the Anglican faith. But it must be stressed that the original Anglican Church priestly cassock through the Church of Nigeria (the Anglican mother church) is the black cassock, probably because of their cold weather as black is a known conserver of heat. To date, the black is still perceived in most Anglican circles in Nigeria as the traditional wear, more so as it is generally friendly with our dusty and sweat-prevalent environment.

iii. **CHASUBLE:** This is a vestment which the priest puts on over other vestments when he is going to celebrate the Eucharist. It is the figure of the yoke of the Lord.

iv. **THE ALB:** This is tunic which envelopes the priest's whole body. It is an emblem of innocence

v. **THE GIRDLE AND CINCTURE:** These serve to keep the Alb in place about the waist of the priest. It serves to remind the priest of the cord with which the Lord Jesus Christ was bound during his passion.

vi. **STOLE:** This is worn round the neck and reaching down to the knees. It is ornamented with three crosses, one in the middle and one at each of its extremes. It is the sign of priestly power.

vii. **MANIPLE:** This is of the same material as the stole and worn on the left arm. It has three crosses like the stole. It is a sign of sorrow and is an emblem of the service which the priest has vowed to God.

viii. **BIRETTA:** This is a square cap with three corners rising from the crown and generally with a tassel attached where these corners meet. It is mainly worn by the Archdeacons.

ix. **THE COPE:** This is cloak which imparts a certain solemnity to processions in the Anglican Church. It is commonly worn by Bishops and Archdeacons during processions.

x. **CROSIER:** This is the pastoral staff of a Bishop. It is hooked at one end like a shepherd's crook. It is a symbol of eldership in the Anglican Communion, represented by the Bishops alone.

xi. **MITRE:** This is the ceremonial head dress worn by the Bishop, etc, symbolizing his apostolic authority. It can lie flat when not in use and takes the form of a tall divided cap with two ribbons hanging at the back; often richly jeweled and embroidered.

CHAPTER THREE: HOLY COMMUNION AND HOLY COMMUNION ACCESSORIES

Holy Communion Service is regarded as the highest form of service in the Anglican Church. This is because through partaking in it, Anglican faithful remember Christ's passion and death and express their gratitude to Him for accepting to die on the Cross in order to save mankind. This informs the saying by the celebrant at the Anglican Holy Communion service (in the old order) as he delivers the elements (in both hands) to the communicants thus, **For the body**- Take and eat this in remembrance that Christ died for thee and feed on him in thy heart by faith with thanksgiving.

For the Blood- "Drink this in remembrance that Christ blood was shared for thee, and be thankful". As we could notice, the operative term in both cases is "Thanksgiving". That is, Christ enjoined that it should be taken as often as possible connoting that an Anglican Christian who takes it more regularly is expressing regular gratitude to Christ in view of what he wrought for the Christian on the Cross of Calvary.

On the whole the basic prerequisite for the celebration of Anglican Holy Communion and their symbolism include the following:

- i. **The Lord's Table or Holy Table**- The table must have a fair white linen cloth upon it. This symbolizes the example of Christ on the night he was betrayed when he instituted the Holy Communion.
- ii. **The Bread or Wafer** (unleavened bread) symbolizes the body of Christ.
- iii. **The wine** symbolizes Christ's Blood. The bread and wine are known as Elements (Holy Communion Elements). But immediately after consecration, they become the "Body" and "Blood" of Christ respectively.

A fair linen cloth is used in covering the consecrated Elements after every one has communicated. Some churches do use corporals, palls, veil purificators and Burse for the same purpose.

- iv. **A cup Cups (Chalice)**- This is the cup from where the "Blood of Christ" is administered to the people.
- v. **Paten**- This is the saucer or plate from where the "body of Christ" is served the communicant.

vi. **Flagon**- This is the jug or the container of the consecrated wine for the Holy Communion. From Flagon the Blood of Christ is poured into the chalice and served the people.

vii. **Purificator**- This is small linen or napkin used to wipe the vessel (chalice) as the “Blood of Christ” is served or for the cleansing or purifying of both paten and the Chalice after the Holy Communion i.e., or during the Ablution.

viii. **Credence**- This is a side table which is kept in the South end of the chancel on which the Flagon of wine and Platter or Ciborium of bread are placed before the service so that they may be convenient when required during the offertory.

ix. **Cruet**- This is a water container placed on the credence form where it is used by the priest celebrating and during ritual Ablution.

x. Others include a **Bible and a service or prayer Book** otherwise called Alter service book and a lectern to place it. **A reading desk and a Pulpit** for brief homily and reading of the word of God are necessary requirement in serving the Lord’s Supper to the people.

CHAPTER FOUR: CATECHISM

Catechism is a body of teaching that explains the basics of our faith. It is a summary of principles of the Christian religion. It summarily set out the Christian beliefs, traditionally, in a question and answer format for ease of reference and understanding. Usually, each statement introduces one to a deeper and wider Christian doctrine. It is expected that baptized infants who are growing up and adults are made to learn them before confirmation.

The primary use of this catechism is to provide a brief summary of the Church's teaching for an inquiring stranger who picks up a Prayer Book.

It may also be used to form a simple service; since the matter is arranged under headings, it is suitable for selective use, and the leader may introduce prayers and hymns as needed.

THE CATECHISM OF THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER (1662) *IN MODERN LANGUAGE*

One of the oldest traditions of the Christian Church is the **catechumenate**. In the early church, people who wanted to become Christians were taught the core beliefs of the church over an extended period of time — as many as three years — before being allowed to take Holy Communion with the rest of Christ's people. This tradition eventually lapsed, but the Reformers of the sixteenth century brought it back, and in each of the great Reformation traditions there is a Catechism or Confession which young people, or those new to the church, were expected to learn and recite. (This usually happened as part of the rite of Confirmation, which is an *episcopal rite*, that is, one presided over by a bishop.) One of the briefest, yet most beautiful and meaningful, of these great catechisms is that of the Anglican Church.

HUMAN NATURE

1. What are we by nature?

We are part of God's creation, made in the image of God.

2. What does it mean to be created in the image of God?

It means that we are free to make choices: to love, to create, to reason, and to live in harmony with creation and with God.

3. **Why then do we live apart from God and out of harmony with creation?**

From the beginning, humans have misused their freedom and made wrong choices.

4. **Why do we not use our freedom as we should?**

Because we rebel against God, and we put ourselves in the place of God.

5. **What help is there for us?**

Our help is in God.

6. **How did God first help us?**

God first helped us by revealing himself and his will, through nature and history, through many seers and saints, and especially through the prophets of Israel.

7. **How do we become aware of God?**

By God's initiative in our thinking and understanding. By experiencing and reflecting on the wonder and mystery of creation, birth and death, love, guilt and the need to find meaning and worth beyond ourselves.

8. **Where do we learn about God**

Christians learn about God in the Bible, in the teaching of the Church summed up in the Apostles Creed and through sharing in the living community of Faith.

9. **What do we learn about God?**

God is eternal, Maker of the earth, pain-bearer, life Giver, Source of all that is and shall be; Father of us all. We learn that God is One, yet revealed as Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit – the Holy Trinity.

GOD THE FATHER

10. **What do we learn about God as creator from the revelation to Israel?**

We learn that there is one God, the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth, of all that is seen and unseen.

11. What does this mean in our understanding of the Universe?

It means that the universe is good, that it is the work of a single loving God who creates, sustains and directs it.

12. What does this mean about our place in the Universe?

It means that the world belongs to its Creator; and that we are called to enjoy it and care for it in accordance with God's purposes.

13. What does this mean about human life?

It means that all people are worthy of respect and honour, because all are created in the image of God, and all can respond to the love of God.

14. How was this revelation handed down to us?

This revelation was handed down to us through a community created by a covenant with God.

THE OLD COVENANT

15. What is meant by a covenant with God?

A covenant is a relationship initiated by God, to which a body of people responds in faith.

16. What is the Old Covenant?

The old Covenant is the one given by God to the people of Israel.

17. What did God promise them?

God promised that they would be his people to bring all the nations of the world to him.

18. What response did God require from the chosen people?

God required the chosen people to be faithful; to do justice, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with their God.

19. Where is this old Covenant to be found?

The covenant with the Hebrew people is to be found in the books which we call the Old Testament.

20. Where in the Old Testament is God's will for us shown most clearly?

God's will for us is shown most clearly in the Ten Commandments.

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

21. **What are the Ten Commandments?**

The Ten Commandments are the laws given to Moses for the people of Israel.

22. **Recite the Ten Commandments.**

1. You shall have no other gods before me.
2. You shall not make for yourself a graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth.
3. You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.
4. Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.
5. Honour your father and your mother.
6. You shall not kill.
7. You shall not commit adultery.
8. You shall not steal.
9. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour.
10. You shall not covet.

23. **What do we learn from these commandments?**

We learn two things: our duty to God, and our duty to our neighbours.

24. **What is our duty to God?** Our duty is:

1. To believe and trust in God;
2. To love and obey God and to bring others to know him;
3. To put nothing in the place of God;
4. To show God respect in thought, word, and deed;
5. And to set aside regular times for worship, prayer and the study of God's word.

25. **What is our duty to our neighbours?** Our duty to our neighbours is:

1. To love, honour, and help our parents and family; to honour those in authority, and to meet the just demands;
2. to show respect for the life God has given us; to work and pray for peace; to bear no malice, prejudice or hatred in our hearts; and to be kind to all the creatures of God;
3. To use all our bodily desires as God intended;

4. To be honest and fair in our dealings; to seek justice, freedom, and the necessities of life for all people; and to use our talents and possessions as ones who must answer for them to God;
 5. To speak the truth, and not to mislead others by our silence;
 6. To resist temptations to envy, greed, and jealousy; to rejoice in other people's gifts and graces; and to do our duty for the love of God, who has called us into fellowship with Him.
26. **What is the purpose of the Ten Commandments?**
The Ten Commandments were given to define our relationship with God and our neighbours.
27. **Since we do not fully obey them, are they useful at all?**
Since we do not fully obey them, we see more clearly our sin and our need for redemption.

SIN AND REDEMPTION

28. **What is sin?**
Sin is the seeking of our own will instead of the will of God, thus distorting our relationship with God, with other people, and with all creation.
29. **How does sin have power over us?**
Sin has power over us because we lose our liberty when our relationship with God is distorted.
30. **What is redemption?**
Redemption is the act of God which sets us free from the power of evil, sin, and death.
31. **How did God prepare us for redemption?**
God sent the prophets to call us back to Himself, to show us our need for redemption, and to announce the coming of the Messiah.
32. **What is meant by Messiah?**
The Messiah is one who is sent by God to free us from the power of sin, so that with the help of God we may live in harmony with God, within ourselves, with our neighbours, and with all creation.

33. Who do we believe is the messiah?

The messiah, or Christ, is Jesus of Nazareth, the only Son of God.

GOD THE SON

34. What do we mean when we say that Jesus is the only Son of God?

We mean that Jesus is the only perfect image of the father, and shows us the nature of God.

35. What is the nature of God revealed in Jesus?

God is love.

36. What do we mean when we say that Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit and became incarnate from the virgin Mary?

We mean that by God's own act, his divine Son received our human nature from the Virgin Mary, His mother.

37. Why did he take human nature?

The divine Son became human, so that in him human beings might be adopted as children of God, and be made heirs of God's kingdom.

38. What is the great importance of Jesus' suffering and death?

By his obedience, even to suffering and death, Jesus made the offering which we could not make; in Him we are freed from the power of sin and reconciled to God.

39. What is the significance of Jesus' resurrection?

By his resurrection, Jesus overcame death and opened for us the way of eternal life.

40. What do we mean when we say that he descended to the dead?

We mean that he went to the place of the dead and offered them the benefits of redemption also.

41. What do we mean when we say that he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the father?

We mean that Jesus took our human nature into heaven where he now reigns with the father and intercedes for us.

42. How can we share in his victory over sin, suffering and death?

We share in his victory when we are baptised into the New Covenant and become living members of Christ.

THE NEW COVENANT

43. What is the New Covenant?

The New Covenant is the relationship with God given by Jesus Christ, the messiah, to the apostles; and, through them, to all who believe in him.

44. What did the messiah promise in the New Covenant?

Christ promised to bring us into the kingdom of God and give us life in all its fullness.

45. What response did Christ require?

Christ commanded us to believe in him and to keep his commandments.

46. What are the commandments taught by Christ?

Christ taught us the Summary of the Law and gave us the New Commandment.

47. What is the Summary of the Law?

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and the great commandment. And the second is like it: You shall love your neighbour as yourself.

48. What is the New Commandment?

The new Commandment is that we love one another as Christ loved us.

49. Where may we find what Christians believe about Christ?

What Christians believe about Christ is found in the Scriptures and summed up in the creeds.

THE CREEDS

50. What are the creeds?

The creeds are statements of our basic beliefs about God.

51. How many creeds does this church use in its worship?

This church uses two creeds: The Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed.

52. What is the Apostles' Creed?

The Apostles' Creed is the ancient creed of baptism; it is used in the church's daily worship to recall our baptismal covenant.

53. Recite the Apostles' Creed.

I believe in God, the Father Almighty
Creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord.
He was conceived by the Holy Spirit
and born of the Virgin Mary.
He suffered under Pontius Pilate
was crucified, died and was buried.
He descended to the dead.
On the third day He rose again.
He ascended into Heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit
the Holy Catholic Church
the communion of saints
the forgiveness of sins
the resurrection of the body
and the life everlasting. Amen.

54. What is the Nicene Creed?

The Nicene Creed is the creed of the universal church and is used at the Eucharist.

55. What, then, is the Athanasian Creed?

The Athanasian Creed is an ancient document proclaiming the nature of the Incarnation and of God as Trinity.

56. What do we mean by speaking as God as Trinity?

We mean that we believe in God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, three Persons and yet one God.

GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT

57. Who is the Holy Spirit?

The Holy Spirit is the Third Person of the Trinity, God at work in the world and in the church even now.

58. How is the Holy Spirit revealed in the Old Covenant?

The Holy Spirit is revealed in the Old Covenant as the giver of life, the One who spoke through the prophets.

59. How is the Holy Spirit revealed in the New Covenant?

The Holy Spirit is revealed as the Lord who leads us into all truth and enables us to grow in the likeness of Christ.

60. How do we recognise the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives?

We recognise the presence of the Holy Spirit when we confess Jesus Christ as Lord and are brought into love and harmony with God, with ourselves, with our neighbours, and with all creation.

61. How do we recognise the truths taught by the Holy Spirit?

We recognise truths to be taught by the Holy Spirit when they are in accord with the Scriptures.

THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

62. What are the holy Scriptures?

The Holy Scriptures, commonly called the Bible, are the books of the Old and New Testaments; other books, called the Apocrypha, are often included in some Bibles.

63. What is the Old Testament?

The Old Testament consists of books written by the people of the Old Covenant, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, to show God at work in nature and history.

64. What is the New Testament?

The New Testament consists of books written by the people of the new Covenant, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, to set forth the life and teachings of Jesus and to proclaim the good news of the kingdom for all people.

65. What is the Apocrypha?

The Apocrypha is a collection of additional books written by the people of the Old Covenant, and used in the Christian Church.

66. Why do we call the Holy Scriptures the word of God?

We call them the word of God because God inspired their human authors and because God still speaks to us through the Bible.

67. How do we understand the meaning of the Bible?

We understand the meaning of the Bible by the help of the Holy Spirit, who guides the Church in the true interpretation of the Scriptures.

THE CHURCH

68. What is the Church?

The Church is the community of the New Covenant.

69. How is the Church described in the Bible?

The Church is described as the Body of Christ of which He is the head and of which all baptised persons are members. It is called the people of God, the new Israel, a Holy nation, a Royal Priesthood, and the Pillar and Ground of truth.

70. How is the Church described in the creeds?

The Church is described as one, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic.

71. Why is the Church described as one?

The Church is one, because it is one Body, under one head, our Lord Jesus Christ.

72. Why is the Church described as Holy?

The church is holy, because the Holy Spirit dwells in it, consecrates its members, and guides them to do God's work.

73. Why is the Church described as catholic?

The Church is catholic, because it proclaims the whole faith to all people, to the end of time.

74. Why is the Church described as apostolic?

The Church is apostolic, because it continues in the teaching and fellowship of the apostles and is sent to carry out Christ's mission to all people.

THE ANGLICAN CHURCH

75. What is the Anglican Communion?

It is a world-wide fellowship of self-governing, self-supporting and self-propagating Churches holding fast the doctrine and ministry of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church and in full communion with one another and the See of Canterbury. It initially grew from the historic faith of the English speaking peoples but is now present in many different cultures and languages.

76. What is the Church of Nigeria?

The Church of Nigeria is a self-governing, self-supporting and self-propagating Church in the Anglican Communion. It proclaims and holds fast the doctrine and ministry of the one, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church.

77. What is the mission of the Church?

The mission of the Church is to restore all people to unity with God and with each other in Christ.

78. How does the Church pursue its mission?

The Church pursues its mission as it prays and worships, proclaims the gospel, and promotes justice, peace and love.

79. Through whom does the Church carry out its mission?

The Church carries out its mission through the ministry of all its members.

80. How does the Anglican Church regard other Christians?

Anglicans see other Christians as brothers and sisters in Christ and pray and work for the unity which is Christ's will for the Church.

THE MINISTRY

81. Who are the ministers of the Church?

The ministers of the Church are lay persons, Bishops, Priests and Deacons.

82. What is the ministry of the Laity?

The ministry of lay persons is to represent Christ and his Church; to bear witness to him wherever they may be; and according to the gifts given to them, to carry on Christ's work of reconciliation in the world; and to take their place in the life, worship, and governance of the Church.

83. What is the ministry of a Bishop?

The ministry of a Bishop is to represent Christ and his Church, particularly as Apostle, Chief Priest and Pastor of a Diocese; to guard the faith, unity, and discipline of the whole Church; to proclaim the word of God; to act in Christ's name for reconciliation of the world and the building up of the Church; and to ordain others to continue Christ's ministry.

84. What is the ministry of a Priest?

The ministry of a priest is to represent Christ and his Church, particularly as pastor to the people; to share with the Bishop in overseeing of the Church; to proclaim the gospel; to administer the sacrament; and to bless and declare pardon in the name of God.

85. What is the ministry of a Deacon?

The ministry of a deacon is to represent Christ and his Church, particularly as a servant of those in need; and to assist bishops and priests in the proclamation of the gospel and the administration of the sacraments.

86. What is the duty of all Christians?

The duty of all Christians is to follow Christ; to come together week by week for corporate worship; and to work, pray, and give for the spread of the kingdom of God.

To this end our life-styles as a Christians should include these responses to God's love for us to:

1. Come to God in personal prayer every day

2. Read the bible daily
3. Receive Holy Communion frequently and in expectant faith
4. Follow the example of Jesus in daily life
5. Speak about Jesus openly, as the Lord whom you know
6. Work for justice and reconciliation
7. Uphold Christian standards in marriage
8. Bring up children to love and serve the Lord
9. Give money for God's work and to consider the claims of tithing
10. Give personal service to the Church and to your neighbour
11. Let your life be marked with self-denial and simplicity

STEWARDSHIP

87. What is Christian Stewardship?

Christian stewardship is the way in which Christians exercise their duty to administer what God has entrusted to them and to serve him gladly in his Church.

88. What has God entrusted to human beings to administer?

God has entrusted to human beings material possessions, time and talents and made us stewards of his creation.

PRAYER AND WORSHIP

89. What is prayer?

Prayer is responding to God, by thought and by deeds, with or without words.

90. What is Christian prayer?

Christian prayer is response to God the Father, through Jesus Christ, in the power of the Holy Spirit.

91. What prayer did Christ teach us?

Our Lord gave us the example of prayer known as the Lord's Prayer.

92. Recite the Lord's Prayer.

Our Father in heaven hallowed be your Name your kingdom come your work be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are your, now and forever. Amen.

93. What are the principal kinds of prayer?

The principle kinds of prayer are adoration, praise, thanksgiving, penitence, oblation, intercession, petition, meditation and contemplation.

94. What is adoration?

Adoration is the lifting up of the heart and mind to God, asking nothing but to enjoy God's presence.

95. Why do we praise God?

We praise God, not to obtain anything, but because God's Being draws praise from us.

96. For what do we offer thanksgiving?

Thanksgiving is offered to God for all the blessings of this life, for our redemption, and for whatever draws us closer to God.

97. What is penitence?

In penitence, we confess our sins and make restitution where possible, with intention to mend our lives.

98. What is prayer of oblation?

Oblation is an offering of ourselves, our lives and labours, in union with Christ, for the purposes of God.

99. What are intercession and petition?

Intercession brings before God the needs of others; in petition we present our own needs, that God's will may be done.

100. What is corporate worship?

In corporate worship, we unite ourselves with others to acknowledge the holiness of God, to hear God's word, to offer prayer, and to celebrate the sacraments.

101. **What is meditation?**

Meditation is a form of prayer in which we reflect on a portion of Scripture, or some truth or experience, and ponder it in our hearts.

102. **What is contemplation?**

Contemplation is a form of prayer in which we keep our hearts and minds still and attentive to God, allowing Him to work in us as he will.

FASTING

103. **What is fasting?**

Fasting is a voluntary act of denying oneself food for a certain length of time.

104. **Why do Christians fast?**

Fasting is a means of self-denial, repentance, intercession and identification with the needy, and a way of listening to what God has to tell his people.

105. **Why is fasting often associated with prayer?**

Our Lord's example and other scriptural sources teach us that this form of self-discipline is an aid to prayer.

106. **What is abstinence?**

Abstinence is a voluntary act of lessening the quantity of food one eats or denying oneself other pleasures.

107. **When do Christians fast?**

Ash Wednesday and Good Friday are Fast Days, when the amount of food eaten is reduced.

Days of Self-denial: the weekdays of Lent. Other Fridays of the year (except Christmas Day, the Fridays following Christmas, Easter and Ascension Day, and also public holidays falling on a Friday) are also Fast days.

On these days remembrance is made of the suffering and death of our Lord.

They may be observed in one or more of these ways:

1. By giving more time to prayer, Bible study, or spiritual reading;
2. By eating less or simpler food;
3. By giving up some pleasure or luxury, and using the money saved to help other people.

Many Christians keep a fast at other times in response to a call from their Bishop or Priests he has appointed. Christians also fast at other times, such as before receiving Holy Communion or on Fridays or as they may wish as an act of spiritual discipline.

THE SACRAMENTS

108. What are the sacraments?

The sacraments are outward and visible signs of inward and spiritual grace, given by Christ as sure and certain means by which we receive that grace.

109. What is grace?

Grace is God's favour towards us, unearned and undeserving; by grace God forgives our sins, enlightens our minds, stirs our hearts, and strengthens our wills.

110. What are the two great sacraments of the gospel?

The two great sacraments given by Christ to his Church are Baptism and the Holy Eucharist.

BAPTISM

111. What is Baptism?

Baptism is the sacrament by which God adopts us as his children and makes us members of Christ's body, the Church, and inheritors of the kingdom of God.

112. What is the outward and visible sign in baptism?

The outward and visible sign in baptism is water, in which a person is baptised in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

113. **What is the inward and spiritual grace in baptism?**

The inward and spiritual grace in baptism is union with Christ in his death and resurrection, birth into God's family the Church, forgiveness of sins, and new life in the Holy Spirit.

114. **What is required of us at baptism?**

It is required that we renounce Satan, repent of our sins, and accept Jesus as our Lord and Saviour.

115. **Why then are infants baptised?**

Infants are baptised so that they can share citizenship in the Covenant, membership in Christ, and redemption by God.

116. **How are the promises for infants made and carried out?**

Promises are made for them by their parents and sponsors, who guarantee that the infants will be brought up within the Church, to know Christ and be able to follow him.

THE HOLY EUCHARIST

117. **What is the Holy Eucharist?**

The Holy Eucharist is the sacrament commanded by Christ for the continual remembrance of his life, death, and resurrection, until his coming again.

118. **Why is the Eucharist called a sacrifice?**

Because the Eucharist, the Church's sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, is the way by which the sacrifice of Christ is made present, and in which he unites us to his one offering of himself.

119. **By what other names is this service known?**

The Holy Eucharist is called the lord's Supper, and Holy Communion; it is also known as the Divine Liturgy, the Mass, and the Great Offering.

120. **What is the outward and visible sign in the Eucharist?**

The outward and visible sign in the Eucharist is bread and wine, given and received according to Christ's command.

121. **What is the inward and spiritual grace given in the Eucharist?**

The inward and spiritual grace given in the Holy Communion is the body and blood of Christ given to his people, and received by faith.

122. **What are the benefits we receive in the Lord's Supper?**

The benefits we receive are forgiveness of our sins, the strengthening of our union with Christ and one another, and the foretaste of the heavenly banquet which is our nourishment in eternal life.

123. **What is required of us when we come to the Eucharist?**

It is required that we should examine our lives, repent of our sins, and be in love and charity with all people.

OTHER SACRAMENTAL RITES

124. **What other sacramental rites evolved in the Church under the guidance of the Holy Spirit?**

Other sacramental rites which evolved in the Church include Confirmation, ordination, Christian Marriage, Confession and Absolution, and the Anointing of the Sick.

125. **How do they differ from the two sacraments of the Gospel?**

Although they are means of grace, they are not necessary for all persons in the same way that Baptism and the Eucharist are.

126. **What is Confirmation?**

Confirmation is the rite in which we express a mature commitment to Christ, and receive strength from the Holy Spirit through prayer and the laying on of hands by a bishop.

127. **What is required of those to be confirmed?**

It is required of those to be confirmed that they have been baptised, are sufficiently instructed in the Christian faith, are penitent for their sins, and are ready to affirm their confession of Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord.

128. **What is ordination?**

Ordination is the rite in which God gives authority and the grace of the Holy Spirit to those being made bishops, priests and deacons, through prayer and the laying on of hands by a bishop.

129. **What is Christian Marriage?**

Christian Marriage, sometimes called Holy matrimony, is a lifelong union into which the woman and the man enter when they make their vows before God and the Church and receive the grace of God to help them fulfil their vows.

130. **What is Confession and Absolution?**

Confession and Absolution, sometimes called the Reconciliation of a Penitent, or Penance, is the rite in which those who repent of their sins may confess them to God in the presence of a priest, and receive the assurance of pardon and the grace of absolution.

131. **What is the Anointing of the Sick?**

The Anointing of the Sick, sometimes called Unction, is the anointing of the sick with oil. By this God's grace is given for the healing of spirit, mind and body.

132. **Is God's activity limited to these rites?**

God does not limit himself to these rites; they are patterns of countless ways by which God uses material things to reach out to us.

133. **How are the sacraments related to our Christian hope?**

Sacraments sustain are present hope and anticipate its future fulfilment.

ANGELS

134. **What is an angel?**

An angel is a spiritual creature and part of God's great unseen world.

135. **Why are angels important to us?**

Beyond being messengers of God they are guardians to human beings against danger and temptation, and they watch over children. They remind us that we are part of a great spiritual world that is bound up with our material world.

136. **Is belief in angels scriptural?**

Yes. Mention of angels is found frequently in both the Old and New Testaments. The Bible refers to cherubim, seraphim, archangels and guardian angels. Angels played a significant role in the life and teaching of Jesus Christ.

137. **Are all angels good?**

All angels were created good by God but some rebelled against him and became his enemies. These are called demons and their leader is Satan or the devil.

138. **Have demons power to harm Christians?**

The power of God is always stronger than the power of demons. Those who trust in God and call on Jesus as Lord and Saviour have the victory.

139. **What is the Church called to do for people who are afflicted or possessed by evil spirits?**

In the power of Jesus the Church can put to flight all forces that enslave people, so that peace and health can be fully established in people and places. The individual Christian is called to trust at all times in the protection of the blood of Jesus.

THE CHRISTIAN HOPE

140. **What is the Christian hope?**

The Christian hope is to live in newness and fullness of life, and to await the coming of Christ in glory, and the completion of God's purpose for the world.

141. **What do we mean by the coming of Christ in glory?**

By the coming of Christ in glory, we mean that Christ will come, not in weakness but in power, and will make all things new.

142. **What do we mean by heaven and hell?**

By heaven, we mean eternal life in our enjoyment of God; by hell, we mean eternal death in our rejection of God.

143. **Why do we remember the dead in prayer?**

We remember them, because we still hold them in our love and because we trust that in God's presence those who have chosen to serve him will grow in his love, until they see him as he is.

144. **What do we mean by the last judgement?**

We believe that Christ will come in glory and judge the living and the dead.

145. **What do we mean by the resurrection of the body?**

We mean that God will raise us from death in the fullness of our being, that we may live with Christ in the communion of saints.

146. **What is the communion of saints?**

The communion of saints is the who family of God, the living and the dead, those whom we love and those whom we hurt, bound together in Christ by sacrament, prayer and praise.

147. **What do we mean by everlasting life?**

By everlasting life, we mean a new existence, in which we are united with all the people of God, in the joy of fully knowing God and each other.

148. **What, then, is our assurance as Christians?**

Our assurance as Christians is that nothing, not even death, shall separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen

CHAPTER FIVE: CONFIRMATION

To confirm is to make strong to strengthen, and to ratify a position that someone has taken earlier. Confirmation is one of the Christian doctrines practiced in the Anglican Communion. It is the stage that shows that one has attained maturity in the faith. It is a means by which those who have been baptized and are of age, are empowered through the laying on of hands by the Bishop. It is to enable them receive the strengthening by the Holy Spirit, to fulfil the vows they made at baptism. It is a time for personal ratification of the vows which individuals made at baptism and in the case of case of infants, god parents made on their behalf. It is an opportunity to assume personal responsibility for baptismal vows. It enables one to have a firm standing in the Christian faith. It is also called the service of laying on of hands or empowerment.

WHY THE LAYING ON OF HANDS?

Anglicans know very well that one cannot function properly as a Christian without the power and anointing of the Holy Spirit. *“Not by might, nor by power, but by my [Holy] Spirit, says the Lord of hosts”* (Zech. 4:6b). The laying on of hands therefore is to invoke the Spirit of God to rest mightily on the confirmed candidate for him to be able to live a fulfilled Christian life.

Many years ago, Anglicans don't take this into cognizance. They just gather people, teach them the Catechism and once they can answer the questions, they are qualified for confirmation. Nothing is said about living the Christian way. After the confirmation, people go on living the same way they were living. Nothing is said about being born again. They were actually told that once you are baptized and confirmed, you are born again – whereas there is abundant evidence that these are not. Today, there is a clearer understanding in the Church. Emphasis is not on rehearsing the Catechism but on following the footsteps of Christ (discipleship). It is for this reason that only those who have undergone the Discipleship system of the Diocese are admitted to confirmation class.

It should be noted that in those days, it was the same laying on of hands by the Bishop on the candidates. However, what makes the difference is the state of mind of the candidate. The candidate was taught in those days only to learn and rehearse the catechism; today he is prepared on how to be a true disciple. Knowledge of the Catechism alone does not and cannot give one eternal life (2 Cor. 3:6).

BIBLICAL BASIS

Is it truly in the Bible that one receives the Holy Spirit when hands are laid on him?

The New Liturgy of Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) has the following to say about this:

“Dearly beloved in the Lord in ministering confirmation the [Anglican] Church follows the examples of the Apostles of Christ. For in the eight chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, we read thus:

They therefore that are scattered abroad went about preaching the word. And Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and proclaimed unto them the Christ. When they believed Philip’s preaching of Good Tidings concerning the kingdom of God and the Name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized both men and women. Now when the Apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John, who, when they were come down prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit: for as yet He was fallen upon none of them, only they had been baptized into the Name of the Lord Jesus. They laid their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

“The scripture here teaches us that a special gift of the Holy Spirit is bestowed through the laying on of hands with prayers...” (NBCP, p. 318).

Our liturgy used that scripture to confirm that the doctrine of confirmation (laying on of hands) is rooted in the scriptures. It also confirms that the gift of the Holy Spirit is obtained through the laying on of hands. There are many other scriptures to confirm this. After Paul’s conversion, he was filled with the Holy Spirit through the laying on of Ananias’ hands:

*And Ananias went his way and entered his house; and
Laying his hands on him he said, “Brother Saul ...
be filled with the Holy Spirit” (Acts 9:18).*

Similarly, the apostles in Ephesus were filled with the Holy Spirit through the laying on of Paul’s hands:

*And [Paul] said to them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit
When you believed?” ... And when Paul had laid hands on*

*Them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke
With tongues and prophesied (Acts 19:26).*

Moreover, Timothy received the gifts of the Holy Spirit when hands were laid on him:

*“Do not neglect the gift you have, which was given you...
When the council of elders laid their hands upon you”
(1 Tim. 4:14).*

Confirmation is therefore the Church’s way of practicing the biblical principle of laying on of hands of the Apostles, who in the view of the Church are the Bishops today. Nevertheless, it is still up to the candidate to prepare his mind and believe that just as the Holy Spirit rested on the men of old when hands were laid on them, the same can happen to him. This preparation also starts with the seriousness we attach to the issue of Discipleship and the Confirmation class sessions.

HISTORICAL BASIS OF CONFIRMATION

When Jesus ascended to the father, he sent his apostles out into the world to preach the good news of God’s saving love. Over the years many people became Jesus friends through the Apostle’s teachings. Churches sprang up throughout the Roman Empire. As more and more people came to receive Jesus as their Lord and Saviour, these churches tended to identify with one of the Apostles, mainly Paul. In the book of Acts we have a record of the Churches set up by Paul the apostle, many of the books of the New Testament are letters written to those Churches by Paul. The spread continued and the Church flourished as early as 170AD.

The first historical record we have of the Christian Church in England was the martyrdom of St Alban in 304 A.D.

From the earliest days of the Christian church, men and women have met for prayers, (Acts 2: 42, 12: 5). By 140 AD services of worship had begun to take on regular forms. The service forms or “uses” as they were called (written in

Latin), varied from region to region. The service of the Diocese of Salisbury known as the “*Sarum use*” was the most popular. It consisted of a number of separate books. In existence also were “pontifical” books for confirmation.

Traditionally, Confirmation was a part of the ceremony of Christian initiation in the Church of Nigeria. It only became a separate rite when Bishops, were no longer able to preside at all baptisms.

Anglicans who choose to be confirmed make a further commitment to the Christian journey that began with their baptism. It marks their decision to live a responsible and committed Christian life.

Through the laying of hands and prayers, the Bishop asks God to send his Holy Spirit to give them the strength to live as Disciples of Christ.

In the church of Nigeria, there is no set age for confirmation, although it has been traditional for people to be confirmed in their early teens. However, anyone who is old enough to answer responsibly for himself/herself and has received appropriate preparation can be confirmed. However, in many Dioceses, the Bishop has set a minimum age for confirmation.

Biblically and historically, therefore, Confirmation means more to an Anglican. It's an indication that one has become an empowered member of the Church, and therefore indispensable for obvious reasons:

1. It is the only means through which one can receive the Bishop's laying on of hands, for the empowerment of the Holy Spirit. Although there may be other occasions in which hands are laid on someone, this one is especially for the release of the Holy Spirit and takes place once in one's lifetime in the life of the Church, even though it does not replace regular in filling of the Spirit (Eph.5:18).
2. The preparatory class enables one to go through teachings on Discipleship, thereby acquainting him on how to live the Christian life. This is why the teaching has to be thorough and not in a haste. Those

who are in haste are free to drop on the way. Pastors must also attach seriousness to this teaching.

3. Confirmation in the Anglican Church qualifies one to partake from the Lord's Table. Jesus said, "*I am the bread of life... Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the son of man and drink His blood, you have no life in you*" (John 6:48, 53). A true Christian should be eager to grow on to this stage where he is qualified to take the Holy Communion, knowing that that is a means of receiving life. The Holy Communion is not for everybody in the Church. In order to hallow the Lord's body and blood, it is administered only to the spiritually qualified. The confirmation classes afford one the opportunity for training to maturity, especially in the basic tenets of our faith.
4. Confirmation qualifies one to be a sponsor at baptism. At this stage, it is expected that the Christian has acquired all it takes to disciple another. Imagine the joy of having someone as your spiritual son or daughter!
5. Confirmation qualifies one to occupy certain positions in the Church, like being a member of the Parochial Church Council (PCC), etc. This is not just because he is of age, but because he has been trained spiritually and is therefore adjudged to be suitable for leadership role.

BASIC PREPARATION BY INDIVIDUAL CANDIDATES

The Anglican church is Orthodox and *Christocentric*, i.e., (Christ-centered), she does not build her doctrine on mere human knowledge neither does she base her teachings on culture. On the contrary, her teachings are rooted in scriptures, and the valid teachings of the early Apostles which were adequately propagated by the early Church Fathers.

Before anyone present himself for admission to the Confirmation class, the following preparations are necessary.

BEFORE THE CLASS:

1. **BAPTISM:** the confirmation candidate is expected to have been baptized either as an infant or adult. Key to this baptism is the

personal acknowledgement of the Lordship of Jesus Christ. And such baptism must be according to the prescribed manner (see *additional notes on baptism on pages 73-78 of the Adult Sunday school manual for 2010*).

2. **AGE:** The age requirement differs from Diocese to Diocese. But the Diocese of Niger Delta North from where Evo was created pegged the age that baptized infants must attain before confirmation at 14, while the adult stays for at least a year after baptism before being confirmed, except in special cases as may be determined by the Priest. It should also be made clear that confirmation class should begin once one is already baptised, and not when a confirmation date is announced as is often the case. This means therefore that confirmation is better imbibed early, right from when the candidates are still in the children classes. It is recommended that classes should commence at least one year before the children are admitted into adult Church to commence the discipleship class sessions (see the Discipleship Manual for Churches, 2011). However, in some instances, the Bishop can exercise his prerogative to administer the blessing of Confirmation as he may deem fit.
3. **MORAL REQUIREMENT:** Before a candidate is formerly allowed for confirmation; he/she must attain a certain level of moral uprightness. It is counterproductive for proven thieves, sexually immoral persons or those who engages in illicit or perverted relationships, and witches/wizards, to be admitted to confirmation (1 Tim 5: 22). It is important for candidates for confirmation to attend screening exercises carried out by spirit filled persons.

It is mandatory for confirmation candidates to uphold the marital standard of the Church for example, unmarried ones must not

have illicit sexual partners and they must promise to marry in accordance with the Church rule. Married ones must have only one spouse and such marriages must have also been properly conducted in the church. Women that are married to polygamous men are allowed for confirmation, provided such marriage relationship started when she had not known the Lord, and that must be before baptism.

The word 'married' should not be understood to mean those co-habiting. Rather, it implies those whose bride price had been duly paid and the Church wedding / blessing obtained. Polygamous men may not be allowed to confirm, nor take Holy Communion. Married women can only be confirmed if their bride price has been duly paid. A man who has paid the wife's bride price can only be confirmed when the marriage has been blessed in the church.

INSIDE THE CLASS

Attendance to confirmation class is very important. To be qualified, candidates must have been present at least 75% of the total number of sessions the class had. Those excepted are usually with special consideration. The candidate is expected to conduct himself in a holy manner. Unnecessary jesting, joking should not allowed. The class is not also to be used for gossiping and back biting, each person is to be holy in all conduct and communication. Participation and attentiveness are also very crucial.

AFTER THE CLASS

The manner of life expected of a candidate for confirmation is that of purity. He is expected to be seen as a light, a reflection of Christ in the home, school, Church and the society at large. He should be identifiable anywhere as a Christian, (one who has had personal encounter with Christ).

PRE-REQUISITE STUDIES

Usually, the Catechism is basic. But here in the Diocese of Evo, it is mandatory for all intending candidates to have completed the Discipleship Classes where they must have been exposed to all the studies in the *Discipleship Manual for Churches* and certificated. And such certificate must be tendered as evidence before admission to the confirmation class.

THE CONFIRMATION SERVICE

The confirmation services date and venue are usually the prerogative of the Bishop. Successful candidates are expected to have been seated not less than 45 minutes to one hour. This is to allow for time to tie up any outstanding loose ends. Usually, candidates are expected to be decent in appearance and conduct. The dressing code is usually white for both males and females, with black shoes. The seating arrangement should be such that allows for easy movement and presentation to the Bishop. Usually, one of the Priests should do this, and it should follow the pattern of arrangement put in place at the service rehearsal, usually a day before the Confirmation Service.

THE ORDER OF SERVICE.

These will take different sections

- a. the ministry of the word and sermon
- b. presentation of the candidate to the Bishop
- c. the laying on of hands on all the candidates by the bishop and prayer
- d. The Holy communion

All candidates for confirmation will be presented to the bishop by the Archdeacon/ Chaplain; at this the bishop asks certain questions with responses from the candidates as it is stated in the confirmation booklet. The candidates, after the prayers, are required to move to the altar rail, kneel before

the bishop in twos, and the confirmation prayers are said by the bishop who lays hands on them.

b. ATTITUDE AFTER

The whole essence of confirmation is for a believer in Christ who has been baptized to be strengthened by the Holy Spirit as the Bishop lays his hands. This is a spiritual experience which empowers a Christian for adequate and fruitful service for the Lord. Therefore, it must be seen as a solemn assembly, a time to consecrate ones' life to God, it must be undertaken with all seriousness, with soberness of mind and in truth of God.

C. YOUR FIRST HOLY COMMUNION

The climax of the confirmation service is the administration of the Holy Communion on the confirmed; this gives him/her the first opportunity ever to partake in the Lord's Supper.

The confirmed will kneel in a row at the altar rails, with their right hand palm, open on top of their left hand palm, where the elements of bread will be served by the bishop or his assistant, with a sentence. It is a solemn moment for the confirmed. This is very significant and it should be treated as a memorial bearing in mind that the exercise is in memorial of the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour. In some cases however, this first communion is not administered on the same day as the confirmation day, in which case the parish Priest may do so on behalf of the Bishop at another service on another day.

CHAPTER SIX: CHECK LIST OF EXPECTATION / REQUIREMENT

The candidate for confirmation is expected to have the following

- a. must have had personal encounter with the Lord Jesus Christ, born again
- b. must have been baptized in the church order
- c. morally upright and good standing in the society
- d. must have reached the age of accountability, must be aware and conscious of what he/she is doing (not a baby or infant)
- e. Must participate and attend the confirmation class with at least 70% record
- f. Must have a copy of the Holy bible and hymn book
- g. Must appear during the confirmation service in white gown and head tie for ladies and white shirt and trousers for men. You are also expected to wear black shoes.

THE CONFIRMATION CLASS TEACHER

Usually it is the priest who prepares the candidates for confirmation. He is also the one that will recommend those that are qualified for confirmation to the Archdeacon who in turn shall present them to the Bishop at the confirmation service.

It is important for the teacher to show seriousness in the classes by been regular. He should not give the impression that the classes are not important or will hold only on days he is free and not tired. By his commitment to the days and time of the classes, the candidates themselves will show more seriousness.

He should be a teacher and instructor in righteousness, he must guide against any form of question mark on his teaching and classes.

Finally, punctuality is very essential. It is not usually compromised at confirmation classes.

ASSESSMENT

The confirmation assessment could either be an oral or written test administered to the candidates to ensure their preparation. The assessment or tests are at different levels, both in class by the priest and by the Archdeacon who verifies the extent of preparation by candidates in regards to their certificates and knowledge.

Questions such as “what have you learned so far”? Or “what is the importance of confirmation?”, etc, should be asked. Questions should also be asked on various aspect of Christ, the bible and the church. The objective type question can be very helpful, and indeed preferable for a number of good reasons. For instance, it is easier to score.

Final assessment usually comes on the confirmation day by the bishop, and anyone who fails final *test* may still be denied confirmation. Small matters like inappropriate dressing can deny one confirmation, even on the confirmation day!

OTHER IMPORTANT ISSUES

1. **SPIRITUALITY:** This should usually be in the form of short *talks* or exhortation that kick-start the classes. It is as the class teacher may be inspired, provided it add value to the candidates’ discipleship process.

2. **CHURCHMANSHIP:**

In Anglicanism ‘Churchmanship’ is church membership culture characteristic of a particular liturgical tradition.

Anglican churchmanship is of diverse nature, and this diversity in worship is a reflection of different historical setting which informed the emergences of different Anglican traditions. Different individuals, Groups, Parishes, Dioceses and Provinces may identify with one or the other or some mixture of the many variants.

The beauty of Anglican churchmanship lies in its inclusiveness that is rooted in the Book of Common Prayer.

Inclusiveness has been said to be the hall marks of Anglicanism. What does it imply? By this we mean that on some issues Anglicanism stands firm and those who disagree have to get out. The issue of accepting the bible as the norm, the standard, the yardstick of belief, preaching, teaching, spiritual and moral living belongs to their class. All issues of salvation.

But on many points which are “not requisite for salvation’ a wide divergence of teaching and practice are tolerated. Mode of worship ceremonies, manual acts, use of symbols of worship, robes etc belong to this class. There are 4 main types of churchmanship that emerged after the reformation in the Anglican Communion. These include the Anglo-Catholic or high churchmanship, Evangelical or low churchmanship, the Charismatic churchmanship, and Liberal tradition. We shall briefly outline them here:

- a. Anglo-catholic tradition: this is the traditional stream of Anglicanism that holds to the tenets of traditional Anglican Catholic belief as derived from the Roman Curia in terms of the strict adherence to the Prayer Book liturgical offices and rituals, use of vestments and the doctrine of apostolic succession and of the three Orders of bishops, priests and deacons. The classical emphasis here is Scriptural tradition understood as the way the Bible spoke to the Church in the ages past. The Eucharist is a more important and regular place than Matins or Evensong.
- b. Evangelical tradition: This is rooted in the fruits of the theological reforms of the eighteenth century Oxford Movement. The Evangelical tradition aligned with the teaching of scripture by being its plain text and defending the same. Thus preference is given to the reading of the scriptures, the sermon and the intercessory prayers. Emphasis is on

salvation by grace through faith. The classical emphasis is on the supremacy of Scripture over tradition and reason.

- c. Charismatic tradition: This tradition encourages the exercise of spiritual gifts in the context of public or corporate worship, especially speaking in tongues, which is believed to be the evidence of baptism of the Holy Spirit. This stream is derived from the classical emphasis on religious experience of the convert.
- d. Liberal tradition: This encourages individual to think freely about the Christian faith. This tradition has resulted into conflict between the evangelicals and others. Efforts have always been made to counter the effect of the liberal thinkers. It is the thought of the liberal tradition to water down the integrity of scripture and look for a way to corrupt the authentic faith. This is not too different from heretical teaching of the early centuries of the Christian faith. This is the result of the classical pillar of reason, beyond the Scripture and tradition.

The recent debate about same sex marriage is a product of the liberal traditional thinkers. In conclusion churchmanship in Anglican Communion is of a profound importance and must be taken seriously.

BEING 'BORN AGAIN'

There are many view points about what being born again is. Many understand New Year resolutions (things they claim they will not do again) as been born again. Some others think it is when they stop doing certain bad habits that they are born again.

Nicodemus in his encounter with Jesus Christ did not also understand the word and its implication until Jesus explained to him (John 3:1-21).

Becoming born again usually involves:

- Eyes getting opened to the truth of the gospel
- Turning from darkness to light
- Turning from the power of Satan unto God
- Receiving forgiveness of sin
- An inner peace usually resulting from the fact of sins forgiven
- An inexplicable joy of fellowshiping with the Father
- All who experience such seek the fellowship of believers sanctified by faiths of Jesus Christ.
- There is usually confession of sins upon realization of one's sinfulness and Jesus is received as LORD of one's life for the above to take place.

Being born again therefore leads to a new life of peace and joy with God.

ASSURANCE OF SALVATION

Salvation is a supernatural and miraculous act of God which occurs the moment one receives Jesus as his/her Lord and Saviour, confessing and forsaking his or her sins. It is a spiritual experience begun by faith and it progresses by faith.

Because Salvation is a spiritual experience, the way one person experiences it may be different from another. However, the reality of salvation is not subjective, it is an objective fact. Feelings do not add to or subtract from the reality when it occurs.

More importantly, assurance is not based on emotion or temporal criteria rather on internal witness within a person. The discipleship manual explained this very well.

Finally Romans 5: 1 says "being justified by faith we have peace with God. This peace rejoices even in tribulation and upholds our hope. Usually, it is not difficult to identify such people because their peace with God is also peace with

their fellowmen. They are people who follow peace with men and worship and praise God in situations of extreme trial.

HEAVEN / HELL

Heaven is the home of all righteous people. We cannot really accurately describe heaven because apart from what is said about it in the Bible, we know next to nothing about it. But much of what we know about it can be found in the book of Revelation 21:1-2, 9-27. But even if we don't know much about it, we know that it is the dwelling place of our Lord Jesus Christ, and His statement in Luke 12:32 and John 14:1-3 should be enough for every sincere seeker!

HELL

This place of torment is reserved for all those who would not receive Jesus as Saviour and Lord. Jesus parable about the rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16:19-31 contains all everyone needs to be warned well ahead.

CHAPTER SEVEN: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT CONFIRMATION

In these pages we hope we've answered all the questions you may have. Please talk to your local parish priest for any more information on confirmation.

Q. What is the right age for Confirmation

There is no right age for a person to be confirmed. Anyone may be confirmed who has been baptized, if they are old enough to answer responsibly for themselves. In many Dioceses, however, the Bishop has set a minimum age for Confirmation. If this is the case your parish priest will be able to tell you what the minimum age is. As a general rule anyone who is over 10 years old and can answer for themselves could be ready for confirmation but the right time for you might be at any age. Here in the Diocese of Evo, however, the minimum age is Fourteen or as may be determined by the Bishop.

Q. How can I tell if I am ready for confirmation?

A. Young people mature in their faith in different ways and at different ages. It is important that you come to Confirmation with firm personal conviction that it is right for you at this point in your life. You should pray about this and ask others in your church to pray for you. You should talk to your vicar and even if you are unsure about being confirmed you may wish to participate in the confirmation course to explore your faith further as you think about it.

Q. Can I receive communion without being confirmed?

The answer is yes in some national Churches but in the Church of Nigeria it belongs to the discretion of the Diocesan Bishop or his Parish priest to determine the occasion, such as on Maundy Thursday, in the Service of Ash Wednesday or any other solemnity, when the Communion will be administered to all baptised persons.

Q. I was baptized as a child, why do I need to be confirmed?

If you were baptized as a child, in confirmation, you are confirming the promises your parents made on your behalf at your baptism about your commitment to a journey of faith. In confirming this faith you are becoming a member of the local and worldwide Christian family. In turn the Church

will promise to support and pray for you. In confirmation we recall the promises made at baptism, we are thanking God for his gift of life and publicly acknowledging his love. We are acknowledging that we all need to turn away from selfishness and evil and to accept God's offer of a new start.

Q. I'm not a regular churchgoer. Can I still be confirmed?

A. Confirmation is about becoming a committed member of the local and worldwide Christian family. If you would like to make this commitment we recommend you visit your local church and discuss this with your local vicar. Details of your local church may be found at www.achurchnearyou.com

Q. Why Does the Church of Nigeria baptize babies and children rather than adults as in some other denominations?

The Church of Nigeria baptizes children and adults. Usually adults seeking baptism are encouraged to explore a combined baptism and confirmation.

There are four reasons why the Church of Nigeria, unlike some other Christian traditions, has retained the practice of infant baptism.

- First, infant baptism is a practice that goes back to the very earliest days of the Church and is therefore something that the Church of Nigeria does not feel free to discard.
- Secondly, the Church of Nigeria believes that God's merciful love, what Christians call God's 'grace', always precedes our human response and enables it. Personal confession of faith following on from and responding to the grace of God received in infant baptism is consistent with this fact.
- Thirdly, we read in the gospels that Christ welcomed and blessed those infants that were brought to Him (Mark 10:13-15) and the Church of Nigeria believes that infant baptism is a way He continues to do this today.
- Fourthly, the Bible as a whole tells us that the children of believers are themselves part of God's family and therefore The Church of Nigeria feels that it is right that they should have the sign of belonging to the family just as Jewish boys in the Old Testament had the sign of circumcision (Genesis 17:9-14, Acts 2:39, 16:31, 1 Corinthians 7:14).

Q. What happens after confirmation?

A. If you were prepared for confirmation with other candidates, your group may wish to continue journeying in faith together after Confirmation.

You might consider the course *Get a Life* amongst others as a resource for this. If you were prepared as an individual you might ask your vicar or whoever prepared you about house groups at your church or you may wish to explore Spiritual Direction.

Q. What if I wasn't baptized as a child?

If you were not baptized as a child and want to make a commitment of faith, you might consider adult baptism or you can with the approval of the Diocesan Bishop, be baptized and confirmed in the same service or baptized shortly before your confirmation. You should discuss this with your vicar.

Q. What does it cost?

A. A confirmation service is free, though there may be a small charge for a certificate and approved *accustom duty*. Ask your parish priest.

Q. What happens during confirmation classes?

A. The purpose of confirmation preparation is to ensure that those who are confirmed have a proper understanding of what it means to live as a disciple of Christ within the life of the Church of Nigeria. In The Book of Common Prayer it is envisaged that this preparation will take the form of learning by heart the Apostles Creed, the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer, and The Book of Common Prayer Catechism.

Today preparation focuses less on learning by rote and more on enabling young people to live a life of committed discipleship in a world of multimedia and globalised culture. Sessions encourage candidates to grow in their Christian faith through prayer, reflection, studying the Bible, participating actively in the life of the church and demonstrating their faith in their communities.

Q. Do I have to wait for a group of people wanting to be confirmed?

A. An individual church or group of churches will sometimes have a large group of young people wishing to be confirmed and sometimes a much smaller group of even one or two. This should not be a bar to preparing these young people for confirmation.

Q. Can I be baptized or confirmed again?

You can only be baptized or confirmed once in the Church of Nigeria, but there are ways of renewing your Christian commitment publicly as an adult. One of these is the Affirmation of Baptismal Faith - your priest will be able to advise you.

Q. What if I was baptized or confirmed in another denomination?

Those who have been confirmed in a church whose ministerial orders are recognized and accepted by the Church of Nigeria and in which confirmation is performed by a bishop, or by a priest acting on the bishop's behalf and using chrism blessed by the bishop, do not need to be confirmed. They are simply received into the Church of Nigeria instead and may also be admitted into the Eucharist thereafter with the approval of the Bishop.

This is a simpler service than communion which may be led by the Bishop or the parish priest, saying

You are here to be received into the communion of the Church of Nigeria.

Do you acknowledge the Church of Nigeria as part of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church?

I do.

Do you accept the teaching, discipline and authority of the Church of Nigeria?

I do.

Will you take part with us in worship and mission?

I will.

The president takes the hand of each person to be received, saying

(Name), we recognize you as a member of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church; and we receive you into the communion of the Church of Nigeria in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

However the standard practice is that Christians from churches in which confirmation is not performed by a bishop need to be confirmed by a bishop if they wish formally to be admitted into the Church of Nigeria.

Q. Do I need to be confirmed to work for the Church of Nigeria?

The Canons lay down that those who wish to exercise certain leadership roles in the Church of Nigeria, including ordained ministers, readers and licensed lay workers need to be confirmed as a sign of their commitment to living as Disciples of Christ as the Church of Nigeria understands it

Q. What's the Form Content of the confirmation rite according to the new church of Nigeria Book of Common Prayer Service?

A. The Book of Common Prayer confirmation rite is brief. It consists of:

- A declaration by the candidates that they renew the 'solemn promise and vow' made on their behalf at their baptisms. A prayer by the people led by the bishop asking that God will strengthen those who are confirmed with the Holy Spirit and that they will be given the sevenfold gifts of God's grace mentioned in Isaiah 11:2.
- The laying on of hands by the bishop with the words: 'Defend. O Lord this thy child [or this thy servant] with thy heavenly grace, that he may continue thine for ever; and daily increase in thy Holy Spirit, more and more, until he come unto thy everlasting kingdom.'
- Prayers led by the bishop which ask that God's Fatherly hand will be over the candidates, that His Holy Spirit will ever be with them and that they will be led by God to attain everlasting life.

Although the basic elements of the rite remain the same, The Common Worship Confirmation rite is longer and contains a number of additional elements:

It begins with the bishop asking the candidates to state whether they are ready to be baptized or have been baptized already and whether they are willing to affirm their faith in Jesus Christ. At this point candidates may be

invited to give their testimony - a brief statement about how God has brought them to this point in their lives.

The bishop then asks the candidates to repeat the renunciation of the devil and all that is evil and the declaration of turning to Christ from the baptism service.

If there are any candidates who have not been baptized they are next baptized by the bishop. After this has taken place all the candidates join with the bishop and the rest of the congregation in reciting the Apostles' Creed as an expression of the Christian faith into which they were baptized and which they are now affirming for themselves. They may then be signed or sprinkled with water as a reminder of their baptism and of their need to remain faithful to the commitment to God that their baptism involved.

Using words based on Isaiah 11:2, the bishop leads the people in praying for the Holy Spirit to rest upon those being confirmed and following this confirmation prayer the bishop addresses each candidate by name and says:

'[Name] God has called you by name and made you his own.'

The bishop then lays his hand on the head of each candidate, saying

'Confirm, O Lord, your servant [Name] with your Holy Spirit.'

Each candidate replies *Amen*.

When all have been confirmed in this way, the bishop invites the congregation to join with him in praying:

'Defend, O Lord, these your servants with your heavenly grace, that they may continue yours for ever, and daily increase in your Holy Spirit more and more until they come to your everlasting kingdom. Amen.'

The bishop may then use words of commissioning in which the candidates are able to express their determination, with the help of God, to live a life of Christian discipleship and the candidates may also be anointed with oil as an additional sign of their anointing by the Holy Spirit.

The texts of the Confirmation service may be consulted in the new Book of Common Prayer.

Q. What is the Affirmation of Baptismal Faith?

There is a new rite contained in the Common Worship initiation services called the Affirmation of Baptismal Faith. It is intended for people who have been baptized and confirmed and who want a formal way of marking either that they have returned to the practice of the Christian faith or that their faith has become meaningful to them in a new way.

Affirmation of Baptismal Faith is preceded by preparation. If it takes place in the context of a confirmation service it is presided over by the bishop. When this is not the case a parish priest may preside. The affirmation consists of the following elements:

- A declaration that those involved have been baptized and wish to renew their faith.
- The renunciation of the devil and all that is evil and declaration of turning to Christ from the baptism service.
- An affirmation of faith using the words of the Apostles' Creed.
- A threefold declaration of commitment to God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit:

'I answer the call of God my Creator.

I trust in Christ Jesus as my Saviour.

I seek new life from the Holy Spirit.

A prayer by the bishop or the parish priest:

'God of mercy and love,

In baptism you welcome the sinner

and restore the dead to life.

You create a clean heart in those who repent,

and give your Holy Spirit to those who ask.

Grant that these your servants may grow

into the fullness of the stature of Christ.

Equip them with the gifts of your Holy Spirit,
and fill them with faith in Jesus Christ
and with love for your people,
in the service of your kingdom. Amen'

The laying on of hands by the bishop or the parish priest with the words:

'N, may God renew his life within you
that you may confess his name this day and forever.'
and each candidate replying 'Amen.'

CHAPTER EIGHT: ARTICLES OF RELIGION

I. Of Faith in the Holy Trinity.

There is but one living and true God, everlasting, without body, parts, or passions; of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness; the Maker, and Preserver of all things both visible and invisible. And in unity of this Godhead there be three Persons, of one substance, power, and eternity; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

II. Of the Word or Son of God, which was made very Man.

The Son, which is the Word of the Father, begotten from everlasting of the Father, the very and eternal God, and of one substance with the Father, took Man's nature in the womb of the blessed Virgin, of her substance: so that two whole and perfect Natures, that is to say, the Godhead and Manhood, were joined together in one Person, never to be divided, whereof is one Christ, very God, and very Man; who truly suffered, was crucified, dead, and buried, to reconcile his Father to us, and to be a sacrifice, not only for original guilt, but also for actual sins of men

III. Of the going down of Christ into Hell.

As Christ died for us, and was buried, so also is it to be believed, that he went down into Hell.

IV. Of the Resurrection of Christ.

Christ did truly rise again from death, and took again his body, with flesh, bones, and all things appertaining to the perfection of Man's nature; wherewith he ascended into Heaven, and there sits, until he return to judge all Men at the last day.

V. Of the Holy Ghost.

The Holy Ghost, proceeding from the Father and the Son, is of one substance, majesty, and glory, with the Father and the Son, very and eternal God.

VI. Of the Sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures for Salvation.

Holy Scripture contains all things necessary to salvation: so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of the Faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation. In the name of the Holy Scripture we do understand those canonical Books of the Old and New Testament, of whose authority was never any doubt in the Church.

Of the Names and Number of the Canonical Books.

Genesis, The First Book of Samuel, The Book of Esther, Exodus, The Second Book of Samuel, The Book of Job, Leviticus, The First Book of Kings, The Psalms, Numbers, The Second Book of Kings, The Proverbs, Deuteronomy, The First Book of Chronicles, Ecclesiastes or Preacher, Joshua, The Second Book of Chronicles, Cantica, or Songs of Solomon, Judges, The First Book of Esdras, Four Prophets the greater, Ruth, The Second Book of Esdras, Twelve Prophets the less.

And the other Books (as Hierome says) the Church doth read for example of life and instruction of manners; but yet doth it not apply them to establish any doctrine; such are these following:

The Third Book of Esdras, The rest of the Book of Esther, The Fourth Book of Esdras, The Book of Wisdom, The Book of Tobias, Jesus the Son of Sirach, The Book of Judith, Baruch the Prophet, The Song of the Three Children, The Prayer of Manasses, The Story of Susanna, The First Book of Maccabees, Of Bel and the Dragon, The Second Book of Maccabees.

All the Books of the New Testament, as they are commonly received, we do receive, and account them Canonical.

VII. Of the Old Testament.

The Old Testament is not contrary to the New: for both in the Old and New Testament everlasting life is offered to Mankind by Christ, who is the only

Mediator between God and Man, being both God and Man. Wherefore they are not to be heard, which feign that the old Fathers did look only for transitory promises. Although the Law given from God by Moses, as touching Ceremonies and Rites, do not bind Christian men, nor the Civil precepts thereof ought of necessity to be received in any commonwealth; yet notwithstanding, no Christian man whatsoever is free from the obedience of the Commandments which are called Moral.

VIII. Of the Creeds.

The Nicene Creed, and that which is commonly called the Apostles' Creed, ought thoroughly to be received and believed: for they may be proved by most certain warrants of Holy Scripture.

The original Article given Royal assent in 1571 and reaffirmed in 1662, was entitled "Of the Three Creeds; and began as follows, "The Three Creeds, Nicene Creed, Athanasius's Creed, and that which is commonly called the Apostles' Creed ..."

IX. Of Original or Birth-Sin.

Original sin stands not in the following of Adam, (as the Pelagians do vainly talk;) but it is the fault and corruption of the Nature of every man, that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam; whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil, so that the flesh lusts always contrary to the Spirit; and therefore in every person born into this world, it deserves God's wrath and damnation. And this infection of nature doth remain, yea in them that are regenerated; whereby the lust of the flesh, called in Greek, *πῶνᾱ σαρκῶς*, (which some do expound the wisdom, some sensuality, some the affection, some the desire, of the flesh), is not subject to the Law of God. And although there is no condemnation for them that believe and are baptized; yet the Apostle did confess, that concupiscence and lust hath of itself the nature of sin.

X. Of Free-Will.

The condition of Man after the fall of Adam is such, that he cannot turn and prepare himself, by his own natural strength and good works, to faith; and calling upon God. Wherefore we have no power to do good works pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good will, and working with us, when we have that good will.

XI. Of the Justification of Man.

We are accounted righteous before God, only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ by Faith, and not for our own works or deservings. Wherefore, that we are justified by Faith only, is a most wholesome Doctrine, and very full of comfort, as more largely is expressed in the Homily of Justification.

XII. Of Good Works.

Albeit that Good Works, which are the fruits of Faith, and follow after Justification, cannot put away our sins, and endure the severity of God's judgment; yet are they pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ, and do spring out necessarily of a true and lively Faith insomuch that by them a lively Faith may be as evidently known as a tree discerned by the fruit.

XIII. Of Works before Justification.

Works done before the grace of Christ, and the Inspiration of his Spirit, are not pleasant to God, forasmuch as they spring not of faith in Jesus Christ; neither do they make men meet to receive grace, or (as the School-authors say) deserve grace of congruity: yea rather, for that they are not done as God hath willed and commanded them to be done, we doubt not but they have the nature of sin.

XIV. Of Works of Supererogation.

Voluntary Works besides, over and above, God's Commandments, which they call Works of Supererogation, cannot be taught without arrogancy and impiety: for by them men do declare, that they do not only render unto God as much as they are bound to do, but that they do more for his sake, than of bounden duty

is required: whereas Christ says plainly When you have done all that are commanded to you, say, We are unprofitable servants.

XV. Of Christ alone without Sin.

Christ in the truth of our nature was made like unto us in all things, sin only except, from which he was clearly void, both in his flesh, and in his spirit. He came to be the Lamb without spot, who, by sacrifice of himself once made, should take away the sins of the world; and sin (as Saint John saith) was not in him. But all we the rest, although baptized and born again in Christ, yet offend in many things; and if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

XVI. Of Sin after Baptism.

Not every deadly sin willingly committed after Baptism is sin against the Holy Ghost, and unpardonable. Wherefore the grant of repentance is not to be denied to such as fall into sin after Baptism. After we have received the Holy Ghost, we may depart from grace given, and fall into sin, and by the grace of God we may arise again, and amend our lives. And therefore they are to be condemned, which say, they can no more sin as long as they live here, or deny the place of forgiveness to such as truly repent.

XVII. Of Predestination and Election.

Predestination to Life is the everlasting purpose of God, whereby (before the foundations of the world were laid) he hath constantly decreed by his counsel secret to us, to deliver from curse and damnation those whom he hath chosen in Christ out of mankind, and to bring them by Christ to everlasting salvation, as vessels made to honour. Wherefore, they which be endued with so excellent a benefit of God, be called according to God's purpose by his Spirit working in due season: they through Grace obey the calling: they be justified freely: they be made sons of God by adoption: they be made like the image of his only-begotten Son Jesus Christ: they walk religiously in good works, and at length, by God's mercy, they attain to everlasting felicity.

As the godly consideration of Predestination, and our Election in Christ, is full of sweet, pleasant, and unspeakable comfort to godly persons, and such as feel in themselves the working of the Spirit of Christ, mortifying the works of the

flesh, and their earthly members, and drawing up their mind to high and heavenly things, as well because it doth greatly establish and confirm their faith of eternal Salvation to be enjoyed through Christ as because it doth fervently kindle their love towards God: So, for curious and carnal persons, lacking the Spirit of Christ, to have continually before their eyes the sentence of God's Predestination, is a most dangerous downfall, whereby the Devil doth thrust them either into desperation, or into wretchedness of most unclean living, no less perilous than desperation.

Furthermore, we must receive God's promises in such wise, as they be generally set forth to us in Holy Scripture: and, in our doings, that Will of God is to be followed, which we have expressly declared unto us in the Word of God.

XVIII. Of obtaining eternal Salvation only by the Name of Christ.

They also are to be had accursed that presume to say, That every man shall be saved by the Law or Sect which he professeth, so that he be diligent to frame his life according to that Law, and the light of Nature. For Holy Scripture doth set out unto us only the Name of Jesus Christ, whereby men must be saved.

XIX. Of the Church.

The visible Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men, in which the pure Word of God is preached, and the Sacraments be duly ministered according to Christ's ordinance, in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same.

As the Church of Jerusalem, Alexandria, and Antioch, have erred, so also the Church of Rome hath erred, not only in their living and manner of Ceremonies, but also in matters of Faith.

XX. Of the Authority of the Church.

The Church hath power to decree Rites or Ceremonies, and authority in Controversies of Faith: and yet it is not lawful for the Church to ordain any

thing that is contrary to God's Word written, neither may it so expound one place of Scripture, that it be repugnant to another. Wherefore, although the Church be a witness and a keeper of Holy Writ, yet, as it ought not to decree any thing against the same, so besides the same ought it not to enforce any thing to be believed for necessity of Salvation.

XXI. Of the Authority of General Councils.

[The Twenty-first of the former Articles is omitted; because it is partly of a local and civil nature, and is provided for, as to the remaining parts of it, in other Articles.]

The original 1571, 1662 text of this Article, omitted in the version of 1801, reads as follows: "General Councils may not be gathered together without the commandment and will of Princes. And when they be gathered together, (forasmuch as they be an assembly of men, whereof all be not governed with the Spirit and Word of God,) they may err, and sometimes have erred, even in things pertaining unto God. Wherefore things ordained by them as necessary to salvation have neither strength nor authority, unless it may be declared that they be taken out of holy Scripture."

XXII. Of Purgatory.

The Romish Doctrine concerning Purgatory, Pardons, Worshipping and Adoration, as well of Images as of Relics, and also Invocation of Saints, is a fond thing, vainly invented, and grounded upon no warranty of Scripture, but rather repugnant to the Word of God.

XXIII. Of Ministering in the Congregation.

It is not lawful for any man to take upon him the office of public preaching, or ministering the Sacraments in the Congregation, before he be lawfully called, and sent to execute the same. And those we ought to judge lawfully called and sent, which be chosen and called to this work by men who have public authority given unto them in the Congregation, to call and send Ministers into the Lord's vineyard.

XXIV. Of Speaking in the Congregation in such a Tongue as the people understands.

It is a thing plainly repugnant to the Word of God, and the custom of the Primitive Church to have public Prayer in the Church, or to minister the Sacraments, in a tongue not understood by the people.

XXV. Of the Sacraments.

Sacraments ordained of Christ be not only badges or tokens of Christian men's profession, but rather they be certain sure witnesses, and effectual signs of grace, 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 of Christ our Lord in the Gospel, that is to say, Baptism, and the Supper of the Lord.

Those five commonly called Sacraments, that is to say, Confirmation, Penance, Orders, Matrimony, and Extreme Unction, are not to be counted for Sacraments of the Gospel, being such as have grown partly of the corrupt following of the Apostles, partly are states of life allowed in the Scriptures, but yet have not like nature of Sacraments with Baptism, and the Lord's Supper, for that they have not any visible sign or ceremony ordained of God.

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 says.

XXVI. Of the Unworthiness of the Ministers, which hinders not the effect of the Sacraments.

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 receiving 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.

Nevertheless, it appertains to the discipline of the Church, that inquiry be made of evil Ministers, and that they be accused by those that have knowledge of their offences; and finally, being found guilty, by just judgment be deposed.

XXVII. Of Baptism.

Baptism is not only a sign of profession, and mark of difference, whereby Christian men are discerned from others that be not christened, but it 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 the 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.

The Baptism of young Children is in any wise to be retained in the Church, as most agreeable with the institution of Christ.

XXVIII. Of the Lord's Supper.

The Supper of the Lord is not only a sign of the love that Christians ought to have among themselves one to another, but rather it is a Sacrament of our Redemption by Christ's death: insomuch that to such as rightly, worthily, and with faith, receive the same, the Bread which we break is a partaking of the Body of Christ; and likewise the Cup of Blessing is a partaking of the Blood of Christ.

Transubstantiation (or the change of the substance of Bread and Wine) in the Supper of the Lord, cannot be proved by Holy Writ; but is repugnant to the plain words of Scripture, overthrowes the nature of a Sacrament, and hath given occasion to many superstitions.

The Body of Christ is given, taken, and eaten, in the Supper, only after an heavenly and spiritual manner. And the mean whereby the Body of Christ is received and eaten in the Supper, is Faith.

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was not by Christ's ordinance reserved, carried about, lifted up, or worshipped.

XXIX. Of the Wicked, which eat not the Body of Christ in the use of the Lord's Supper.

The Wicked, and such as be void of a lively faith, although they do carnally and visibly press with their teeth (as Saint Augustine says) the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ; yet in no wise are they partakers of Christ: but rather, to their condemnation, do eat and drink the sign or Sacrament of so great a thing.

XXX. Of both Kinds.

The Cup of the Lord is not to be denied to the Lay-people: for both the parts of the Lord's Sacrament, by Christ's ordinance and commandment, ought to be ministered to all Christian men alike.

XXXI. Of the one Oblation of Christ finished upon the Cross.

The Offering of Christ once made is that perfect redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction, for all the sins of the whole world, both original and actual; and there is none other satisfaction for sin, but that alone. Wherefore the sacrifices of Masses, in the which it was commonly said, that the Priest did offer Christ for the quick and the dead, to have remission of pain or guilt, were blasphemous fables, and dangerous deceits.

XXXII. Of the Marriage of Priests.

Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, are not commanded by God's Law, either to vow the estate of single life, or to abstain from marriage: therefore it is lawful for them, as for all other Christian men, to marry at their own discretion, as they shall judge the same to serve better to godliness.

XXXIII. Of excommunicate Persons, how they are to be avoided.

That person which by open denunciation of the Church is rightly cut off from the unity of the Church, and excommunicated, ought to be taken of the whole

multitude of the faithful, as an Heathen and Publican, until he be openly reconciled by penance, and received into the Church by a Judge that hath authority thereunto.

XXXIV. Of the Traditions of the Church.

It is not necessary that Traditions and Ceremonies be in all places one, or utterly like; for at all times they have been divers, and may be changed according to the diversity of countries, times, and men's manners, so that nothing be ordained against God's Word. Whosoever, through his private judgment, willingly and purposely, doth openly break the Traditions and Ceremonies of the Church, which be not repugnant to the Word of God, and be ordained and approved by common authority, ought to be rebuked openly, (that others may fear to do the like,) as he that offends against the common order of the Church, and hurts the authority of the Magistrate, and wounds the consciences of the weak brethren.

Every particular or national Church hath authority to ordain, change, and abolish, Ceremonies or Rites of the Church ordained only by man's authority, so that all things be done to edifying.

XXXV. Of the Homilies.

The Second Book of Homilies, the several titles whereof we have joined under this Article, doth contain a godly and wholesome Doctrine, and necessary for these times, as doth the former Book of Homilies, which were set forth in the time of Edward the Sixth; and therefore we judge them to be read in Churches by the Ministers, diligently and distinctly, that they may be understood by the people.

Of the Names of the Homilies.

1 Of the right Use of the Church.

2 Against Peril of Idolatry.

3 Of repairing and keeping clean of Churches.

4 Of good Works: first of Fasting.

5 Against Gluttony and Drunkenness.

6 Against Excess of Apparel.

7 Of Prayer.

8 Of the Place and Time of Prayer.

9 That Common Prayers and Sacraments ought to be ministered in a known tongue.

10 Of the reverend Estimation of God's Word.

11 Of Alms-doing.

12 Of the Nativity of Christ.

13 Of the Passion of Christ.

14 Of the Resurrection of Christ.

15 Of the worthy receiving of the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ.

16 Of the Gifts of the Holy Ghost.

17 For the Rogation-days.

18 Of the State of Matrimony.

19 Of Repentance.

20 Against Idleness.

21 Against Rebellion.

[This Article is received in this Church, so far as it declares the Books of Homilies to be an explication of Christian doctrine, and instructive in piety and morals. But all references to the constitution and laws of Nigeria are considered as inapplicable to the circumstances of this Church; which also suspends the order for the reading of said Homilies in churches, until a revision of them may be conveniently made, for the clearing of them, as well from obsolete words and phrases, as from the local references.]

XXXVI. Of Consecration of Bishops and Ministers.

The Book of Consecration of Bishops, and Ordering of Priests and Deacons, as set forth by the General Convention of this Church in 1792, doth contain all things necessary to such Consecration and Ordering; neither hath it any thing that, of itself, is superstitious and ungodly. And, therefore, whosoever are consecrated or ordered according to said Form, we decree all such to be rightly, orderly, and lawfully consecrated and ordered.

The original 1571, 1662 text of this Article reads as follows: "The Book of Consecration of Archbishops and Bishops, and Ordering of Priests and Deacons, lately set forth in the time of Edward the Sixth, and confirmed at the same time by authority of Parliament, doth contain all things necessary to such Consecration and Ordering: neither hath it any thing, that of itself is superstitious and ungodly. And therefore whosoever are consecrated or ordered according to the Rites of that Book, since the second year of the forenamed King Edward unto this time, or hereafter shall be consecrated or ordered according to the same Rites; we decree all such to be rightly, orderly, and lawfully consecrated and ordered."

XXXVII. Of the Power of the Civil Magistrates.

The Power of the Civil Magistrate extends to all men, as well Clergy as Laity, in all things temporal; but hath no authority in things purely spiritual. And we

hold it to be the duty of all men who are professors of the Gospel, to pay respectful obedience to the Civil Authority, regularly and legitimately constituted.

The original 1571, 1662 text of this Article reads as follows: "The King's Majesty hath the chief power in this Realm of Nigeria, and other his Dominions, unto whom the chief Government of all Estates of this Realm, whether they be Ecclesiastical or Civil, in all causes doth appertain, and is not, nor ought to be, subject to any foreign Jurisdiction. Where we attribute to the King's Majesty the chief government, by which Titles we understand the minds of some slanderous folks to be offended; we give not our Princes the ministering either of God's Word, or of the Sacraments, the which thing the Injunctions also lately set forth by Elizabeth our Queen do most plainly testify; but that only prerogative, which we see to have been given always to all godly Princes in holy Scriptures by God himself; that is, that they should rule all estates and degrees committed to their charge by God, whether they be Ecclesiastical or Temporal, and restrain with the civil sword the stubborn and evil-doers.

The Bishop of Rome hath no jurisdiction in this Realm of Nigeria.

The Laws of the Realm may punish Christian men with death, for heinous and grievous offences.

It is lawful for Christian men, at the commandment of the Magistrate, to wear weapons, and serve in the wars."

XXXVIII. Of Christian Men's Goods, which are not common.

The Riches and Goods of Christians are not common, as touching the right, title, and possession of the same; as certain Anabaptists do falsely boast. Notwithstanding, every man ought, of such things as he possesses, liberally to give alms to the poor, according to his ability.

XXXIX. Of a Christian Man's Oath.

As we confess that vain and rash Swearing is forbidden Christian men by our Lord Jesus Christ, and James his Apostle, so we judge, that Christian Religion doth not prohibit, but that a man may swear when the Magistrate requireth, in a cause of faith and charity, so it be done according to the Prophet's teaching in justice, judgment, and truth.

Some have argued why the 39 Articles of Religion should not be retained. But shall Anglicanism Abandon Its Confession of Faith Today?

At the General Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in October, 1925, at New Orleans, a resolution was moved and passed under Anglo-Catholic leadership providing that the Articles of Religion be omitted from the Prayer Book. By divine Providence, the resolution failed to be upheld at the subsequent Convention held in the fall of 1928, when the "new" Prayer Book was introduced.

What were the reasons for the action of the Convention in 1925? Every concerned churchman has the right and duty to know the history and theology of his Church; inasmuch as the suppression of the Thirty-Nine Articles involves the faith and therefore, the very life of the Church. Yet, few laymen or clergy are aware of this historic manoeuvre to do away with the Articles on the part of the Anglo-Catholics and liberals. Is there still a need to defend the value and use of the Articles today? Is there still a "plot" to remove them from the faith and practice of Anglicanism world-wide? What is the future fate of the Articles in relation to present Anglican thinking and Prayer Book revision?

The Articles of Religion were framed during the Reformation. They are clearly based upon Holy Writ; they include only those doctrines which are to be found in the Scriptures, and reject those which are not. The Articles define the distinctive doctrines of the English Church and condemn those of the Roman or Papal Church, which were known from centuries of experience to be sources of oppression, extortion, and immoral conduct. They were adopted and set forth in their present form in 1801 by the then Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States as its confession of faith; they have never been revoked or amended and have always been printed in the Book of Common Prayer.

The historic position of the Articles is beyond dispute; yet, the Articles are not merely of historical value -- they are the official statement of what the Church believes. They are the Magna Carta of its faith, its doctrinal constitution. Only until recently, clergy were required to subscribe to the Articles at the time of ordination. The Articles defended the laity against arbitrary clergy who would foist on their congregations illicit or forbidden teachings. Ignore them, hide them, or abolish them, and the Church is left without an adequate rule and guide: every clergyman could do as he pleases and teach according to personal whim. Such license causes strife and ultimate disintegration.

The Articles clearly teach that the Bible, not the clergy, is the source of both doctrine and authority in the Church. Doctrine and usages based only upon

the approval of the General Councils, though representing the entire Church Catholic, are declared to have "neither strength nor authority", and Article XIX expressly repudiates ancient Churches themselves as sources of sound doctrine and usage. (BCP p. 561)

These declarations lead to a momentous conclusion: for Anglicans the source of faith is the Bible and Bible alone. It is not the writings of the medieval Churchmen; not the acts of the General Councils; not the "ancient" Catholic Church, as the Anglo-Catholics mistakenly content, but the Holy Scriptures solely and exclusively.

The historic faith of the Anglican Communion is presently under attack from many sides. Secular humanism, communism, sexual immorality, and heretical teachings of all sorts seem to find a tolerant audience amongst some portion of Anglican believers. Prayer Book revision, higher criticism, and inclusive language lectionaries have been promoted in nearly every Church in the world-wide Anglican Communion. The ordination of women (to the diaconate, presbyterate, and even to the episcopate) is receiving common acceptance. Should this situation be "tolerated" much less promoted? what remedy do we have to combat such ills besetting the Anglican ethos?

Conservative Anglo-Catholics would have us believe that their form of non-papal Catholicism would save Anglicanism from its present ills and provide a bulwark against future departures from the Faith. They blame what they style "liberal Protestantism" for the demise of the historic Church and blast any form of "fundamentalism" as the enemy of reason and true religion.

The Anglo-Catholic churchman dreams of some ideal (but historically nonexistent) church that fulfils the ephemeral goal of a "bridge" Church--a via media--between Rome and Canterbury. They would be willing to retain some of the "trappings" of true Anglicanism, but would repudiate any reformational character in their idealized theology. Some do more than dream: some have taken their dreams and put them into action by attempting to rewrite history and to alter or eliminate the Protestant foundations of Anglicanism as found in the Articles of Religion.

On the one hand, the Anglo-Catholics (better called Anglo-Romanist - but certainly not High Churchmen) pretend that their opposition to the Articles is based upon their obsolescence; that they have fallen out of use. We know, however, that the teachings of the Articles on the Trinity, the Person of Christ, the Sacraments, the ministry, and so on are not "out of date". For Orthodox

believers they cannot be out of date: they are believed by the great mass of orthodox, biblical Christians everywhere.

The real reason why the Anglo-Catholics wish to suppress the Articles is exactly and precisely because they are not out of date or obsolete. They do stand solidly athwart the path of these aggressors, who for this very reason are trying to thrust them aside. They denounce and condemn the very doctrines and innovations which this party is trying to foist upon the Church. Remember that it was the Anglo-Catholics who first called for toleration of higher criticism of the Bible; the first to call for changes in the liturgy and the Prayer Book; the first to ordain women; the first to ordain practicing homosexuals; the first to promote Marxism and "social justice" causes; and the first to involve the Anglican Communion in the hopeless moral of the World and National Council of Churches, as well as ecumenism.

The Articles are no more obsolete than they were framed nearly four centuries ago. Strangely, Anglo-Catholics have given them a new vitality, have made them a living need in the Church today. They are once more, as in the sixteenth century, a defence and bulwark of the Primitive and Protestant faith against the errors of Romanism.

In order to lull the suspicions of the laity, until it is too late to save the Protestant faith of the Anglican Churches, some Anglo-Catholics assert that only nonessential doctrines are involved in the controversy: that those who seek to defend the Articles are being contentious over trifles, risking Christian charity by "knot picking". If this is so, why do they labour so zealously to do away with the Articles, and force their own doctrines upon gullible churchmen. Why do they cause strife and heart burning in so many parishes which were formerly at peace in their churchmanship? Why do they imperil the unity of the Church by insisting upon innovations? Why do they violate their own ordination vows, in order to teach what they say is trivial and unimportant?

The truth is that the questions at issue are no trivial controversies between hair splitting theologians. In order to understand the motives which impel Anglo-Catholics to suppress the Articles and the Protestantism of our faith, we must first know what their theology and purposes are. They aim to abolish the historic teachings of the Protestant Episcopal Church, and to substitute certain beliefs of the Roman and Papal Church.

Anglo-Catholicism teaches, as does Roman Catholicism, that there are seven sacraments; that purgatory is an "intermediate" state of the dead; and the sacrifice of Our Lord on the Cross is "renewed" in the sacrament of the Lord's

Supper; that baptism regenerates a soul "ex opere operatio"; that a priest is an "icon" of Christ and has power to forgive sins in "Confession".

Even those who style themselves "conservatives" in the Anglo-Roman camp cannot agree upon the truth. Some ordain women to the diaconate, but not to the priesthood. Some ordain women in lower orders, but refuse them the episcopate. Some use modern revisions of the Prayer Book; some use only the historic BCP; some use both. Some condone homosexuality; some do not. Some believe in the plenary inspiration of the Scripture; some do not. In short, they are a "mixed" group, both eclectic and syncretic in their theology and practice.

The real issue is no trivial controversy or narrow-minded intolerance: the real issue is as broad as the difference between despotism and liberty, between progress and reaction, between an advance to higher and nobler conceptions of religion and reversion to those which are whimsical and barbarous. The true son of the Church aims to keep his Church loyal to the plain teachings of Christ. The Anglo-Catholic aims to drag it back to the crassly paganized Christianity of the Middle Ages, with its magic, fetishism, and idolatry.

The Articles of Religion are no guaranteed remedy for the evils which so beset the twentieth century Church, nor are they an immutable answer to the ills of the declining Anglican Communion. Yet, they stand through the test of history and controversy in Anglicanism as the bastion of Biblical truth which cannot be denied by sincere churchmen. They were written by men: they are not infallible. But they have never been supplanted, even in the nearly seventy years of church history since General Convention first sought to officially remove them.

Perhaps what the Anglo-Catholics failed to accomplish in 1925 will yet come to pass in your lifetime. The liberals will do away with the Articles as a confessional statement and the conservatives will join with Rome. If this does take place, the Christian world will be the less for it and that which was once one of the noblest expressions of Biblical Christianity will have passed into oblivion. May God defend us and prevent such a victory of the Anti-Christ! May our children and our children's children live to enjoy the precious Protestant heritage of our Anglican faith!

CONCLUSION

We have taken time to look at a wide range of issues in our discussion of the subject of this manual, that is, Confirmation. We have seen what it means, why

we practice it, both from the biblical and historical point of view, and what we believe is requisite knowledge for all prospective confirmees. Nevertheless, like every new thing, there are bound to be some shortcomings. This is the reason we shall welcome all constructive criticisms as such will enable us come up with revised editions, if it is considered necessary.

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