

# St. Benedict's Anglican Inquirer's Class<sup>1</sup>

*For New Members, Confirmands, and For Christian Renewal*

**Dates:** May 26, June 4, 11, 19

**Texts:** 1928 Book of Common Prayer, The Holy Bible

**Instructor:** The Rev. Michael D. Vinson

**Summary:** A basic introduction to historic and biblical faith and practice. To enjoy in a fresh way the intent of Holy Scripture, the value of the Book of Common Prayer, and the joy of the Christian life as a baptized disciple of Jesus Christ and lived in the Anglican way.

**Week One:** The Book of Common Prayer and Confessing the Christian Faith

**Week Two:** Embracing Creedal Faith in the Midst of Pluralism

**Week Three:** Loving God and His Commandments

**Week Four:** The Church and Her Sacraments

**Weeks 5, 6, & 7** are optional for confirmands but attendance highly encouraged

## What is Catechism?

The ecclesiastical word *Catechismus* is derived from the Greek κατήχησις, and literally means 'an instruction' by word of mouth of such a kind as to draw out a reply or echo. In the earliest age of the Church, the word was used for that kind of instruction which was given to the catechumens or candidates for Baptism [Luke 1:4]; and from this usage, it has come to mean also, in later ages, the instruction which is given to candidates for Confirmation. A similar kind of instruction among the Jews is indicated by the only incident which is recorded of our Lord's childhood when after three days' disappearance He was found by His Mother and Joseph "sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions." [Luke 2:46.]

## What is the sacrament of Confirmation?<sup>2</sup>

From the earliest ages of the Christian Church, and in every part of it all over the whole world, until modern times, the rite of Confirmation has been considered essential to the full perfection of Christian life in those who have attained to years when they can discern fully between right and wrong. Nor have any Christians been ordinarily

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted with gratitude from the Rev. John P. Boonzaaijer's *Inquirer's Class* outline (2/24/18)

<sup>2</sup> The following is taken from *Blunt's Annotated Book of Common Prayer*

permitted by the Church to partake of the Holy Communion until after they had been confirmed. The rite appears to have been administered at first by an Apostle or Bishop laying his hands on the head of the baptized person, but at a very early period, the rite of unction was added. The Apostles St. Peter and St. John went down to Samaria to lay their hands on those who had been baptized by their Deacon Philip [Acts 8:14–17]; “and they received the Holy Ghost,” some new and special Gift being bestowed upon them by the Holy Ghost through that outward sign. In the same manner St. Paul laid his hands on the Ephesian disciples of St. John the Baptist as soon as they had been “baptized in the Name of the Lord Jesus.” [Acts 19:5.] In the latter case, and probably also in the former, the Gift bestowed was accompanied by other gifts of miraculous powers; but these were clearly a special addition to the ordinary gift, and thus it was for the confirmation of previous Baptism that the Apostles administered the rite by the imposition of their hands. The anxious care of St. Paul for the administration of it to the Ephesians appears also to have a parallel in that which he expressed to the Roman Christians when he wrote to them, “I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established.” [Rom. 1:11.] The familiar name by which this rite is known in the Western Church appears first in the writings of St. Ambrose: “Ye have received the spiritual seal... God the Father hath signed you, Christ our Lord hath confirmed you, and, as ye are taught by the apostolic lection, hath given you the pledge of the Spirit in your hearts.” [Ambros. *de Myst.* vii. 42.] By the time of St. Gregory the name seems to have been commonly established, although it still continued to be called “signaculum” and “chrisma.”

In the early Church, when Baptism was publicly administered at special seasons, and in the presence of the Bishop, the baptized were confirmed immediately on leaving the font. In his Treatise concerning Baptism, Tertullian says, “After this, having come out from the bath, we are anointed thoroughly with a blessed unction.... Next, to this, the hand is laid upon us, calling upon, and inviting the Holy Spirit, through the blessing.” [Tert. *de Bapt.* vii. viii.] St. Cyprian writes, in his famous seventieth Epistle, “Anointed also must be of necessity he who is baptized, that having received the chrism, that is, unction, he may be the anointed of God, and have within him the grace of Christ.” [Ep. lxx. 3.] Again, expounding the passage in the Acts respecting the Confirmation of the Samaritans by St. Peter and St. John, he says, “Which now also is done among us, those baptized in the Church being brought to the Bishops of the Church, and by our prayer, and laying on of hands, they receive the Holy Ghost, and are perfected with the seal of the Lord.” [Ep. lxxiii. 8.] Some passages in which St. Cyril speaks of the use of the chrism after Baptism will be found in the Introduction to the Baptismal Offices: he also says to those about to be baptized, “In the days of Moses, the Spirit was given by the

laying on of hands, and Peter also gives the Spirit by the laying on of hands. And on thee also, who art about to be baptized, shall His grace come.” [*Catech. Lect. xvi. 26.*]

In later days Baptism and Confirmation were separated, the latter being administered, as now, by the Bishop, in periodical visits to the greater churches; but the form of the rite has varied very little since the days of St. Gregory. Bede narrates of St. Cuthbert [a.d. 686] that he used to go round his diocese bountifully distributing counsels of salvation, “as well as laying his hands on the lately baptized, that they might receive the grace of the Holy Ghost.” [*Life of St. Cuthbert, xxix.*]; and from a period very little later a Pontifical has come down to us which belonged to Egbert, Archbishop of York, and which contains the form of Confirmation, as it was then used; probably the same that was used by St. Cuthbert. A translation of it is here given, as it forms a link between the primitive Office of St. Gregory and that of the Mediæval Church, from which our own is directly derived.

### **What does Confirmation Effect?<sup>3</sup>**

The outward sign of Confirmation is the same as that of Ordination, the laying on of hands by a Bishop; and this fact suggests that there is some analogy between the two rites. Confirmation is, indeed, a kind of lesser Ordination, by which the baptized person receives the gift of the Holy Ghost for the work of adult Christian life: and hence it is the means of grace by which that “priesthood of the laity” is conferred, to which St. Peter refers when he writes, “Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people.” [1 Pet. 2:9.] It is also the means of grace by which the Christian, whose sins were all forgiven in Baptism, receives a further measure of strength, enabling him to stand against the temptations which assail maturer life. Thus, although Baptism is a perfect Sacrament, conveying forgiveness of sin, and giving a new nature through the union which it effects between the baptized and Christ, yet Confirmation is the complement of Baptism, in that it [1] renews and strengthens the Christian life than given, and [2] carries the baptized person on to “perfection,” so that he becomes competent to take part in the highest of Christian ordinances. And thus, as grace for the work of the ministry is given by the laying on of hands in Ordination,—the ordained person being placed in a different relation towards God from that which he before occupied,—so by the laying on of hands in Confirmation the relation of the confirmed person towards God is also changed, and he becomes competent to undertake spiritual work, both as to duties and privileges, for which he was not previously qualified.

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

The value of this holy ordinance as a means of grace, and its relation to Baptism, are plainly and beautifully set forth in these words, taken from a book of Homilies written before the Reformation:

*In Baptism he was born again spiritually to live, in Confirmation, he is made bold to fight. There he received remission of sin, here he receiveth increase of grace. There the Spirit of God did make him a new man, here the same Spirit doth defend him in his dangerous conflict. There he was washed and made clean, here he is nourished and made strong. In Baptism he was chosen to be God's son, and an inheritor of His heavenly kingdom: in Confirmation God shall give him His Holy Spirit to be his Mentor, to instruct him and perfect him, that he lose not by his folly that inheritance which he is called unto. In Baptism he was called and chosen to be one of God's soldiers, and had his white coat of innocency delivered unto him, and also his badge, which was the red cross, the instrument of His Passion, set upon his forehead and other parts of his body: in Confirmation he is encouraged to fight, and take the armour of God put upon him, which be able to bear off the fiery darts of the devil, and to defend him from all harm, if he will use them in his battle, and not put himself in danger of his enemies by entering the field without them.*

*From St. Cyril of Jerusalem's 'Protocatechesis' circa 350AD*

*Have thy feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace, that even if the devil may bite, he may not hurt thee.*

*Have faith indwelling, steadfast hope, a strong sandal, that thou mayest pass the enemy and enter into the presence of thy Lord.*

*Prepare thine own heart for the reception of doctrine, for fellowship in holy mysteries. Pray more frequently, that God may make thee worthy of the heavenly and immortal mysteries.*

*Cease not day nor night; but when sleep is banished from thine eyes, then let thy mind be free for prayer.*

*And if thou find any shameful thought rise up in thy mind, turn to meditation upon Judgment to remind thee of Salvation.*

*Give thy mind wholly to study, that it may forget base things.*

*Guard thine own soul, that thou be not ensnared, to the end that abiding in hope thou mayest become an heir of everlasting salvation.*

*May the peace of Christ  
be with you.*



*The Rev. Michael D. Vinson*

## WEEK 1

### **The Book of Common Prayer, its Outline and Use**

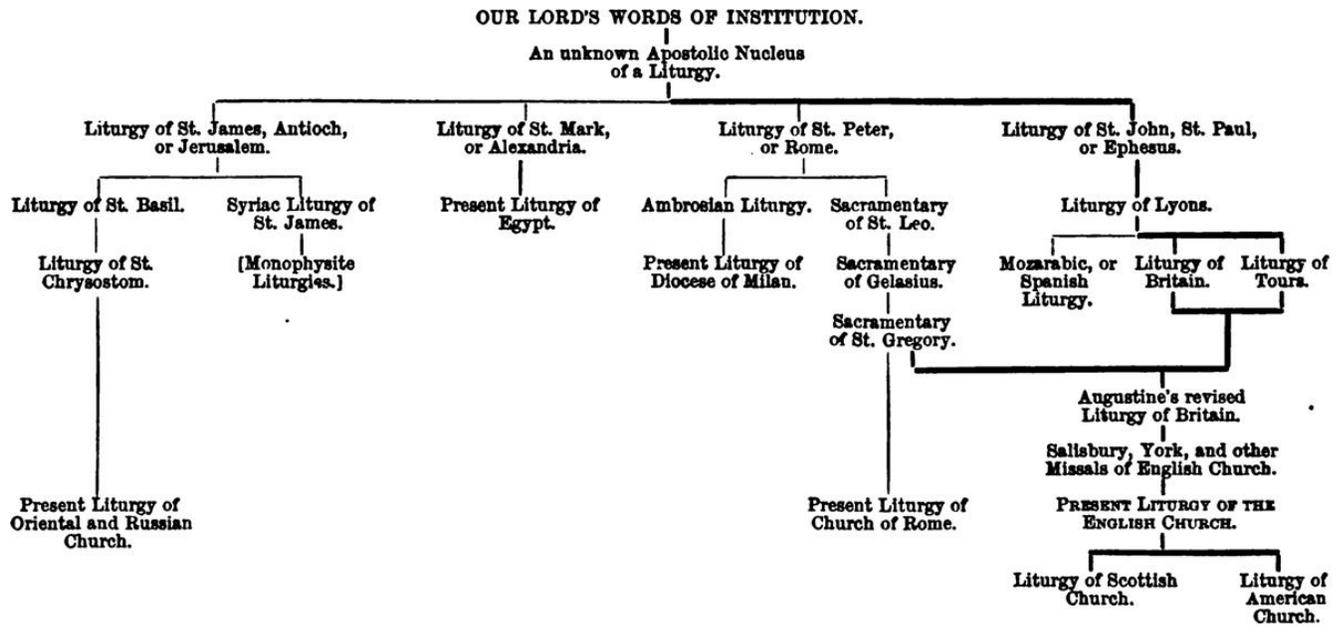
*The Catechetical lectures are given to those who are to be enlightened in baptism or confirmation and also to believers who are already baptized for edification.*

#### **1. Origins of the American Prayer Book**

- a. Rooted in the worship of Israel: Tabernacle and Temple
- b. Apostolic continuity in the early church, Temple and Synagogue
  - i. As Christ commanded, the Apostles began and perpetuated the celebrating of the Holy Communion. They instituted the “breaking of bread” as Christ had “broken bread” for them. Under instruction from the Apostles, the first Christians “continually devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer” (Acts 2:42).
  - ii. (Acts 4: 24-25) “And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is: (Ps 146:6) Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ” (Ps 2:1-2).
  - iii. (1 Cor 11:23-24) “For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks (εὐχαριστήσας), he broke it, and said, "This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me."
- c. Origin of Primitive Liturgies<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Blunt *Annotated Book of Common Prayer*, p 346.



- i. Apostolic Liturgy (unknown).
  - ii. Liturgy of St. John (Eastern flavor).
  - iii. Mozarabic & Gregorian Intersection.
  - iv. The Salisbury Rite.
- d. 1549 Prayer Book 1549 (revised 1551, 1662).
- i. First published in 1549 in the reign of Edward VI, a product of the English Reformation following the break with Rome. The work of 1549 was the first prayer book to include the complete forms of service for daily and Sunday worship in English.
- e. 1789 American Prayer Book (revised 1829).
- i. The Prayer Book of 1789 was the first for the U. S. Episcopal Church and served the Church for over 100 years until the revision of 1892. This book owed much to its predecessor, the English 1662 Book of Common Prayer, and, at least for the major services, is very similar to it.
  - ii. Epiclesis re-introduced by the encouragement of the Scottish church which also ordained the first American Bishops in TEC.
- f. 1928 Book of Common Prayer.

- g. 1979 Book of Common Prayer.
- h. 2019 ACNA Book of Common Prayer.

## **2. The Book of Common Prayer, Its Outline and Use**

*BCP is comprised of three books: The Offices, the Psalter, and the Ordinal*

- a. Table and Rules
- b. Setting the Date for Easter
- c. The Psalms
- d. Feasts, Fasts, and Precedence
  - i. The Christian Year is the Apostle's Creed "in slow motion"
- e. The Daily Office (Ps 92:2)
- f. The Holy Communion
- g. Offices for the Christian Life "from cradle to grave" (BCP 271)
  - i. Baptism (read *Holy Baptism* p 271)
    - 1. What is promised at Baptism
      - a. By God?
      - b. By sponsor/person?
      - c. Christian duty
    - 2. What is promised regarding learning the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, and the Articles of Faith, and matters of wisdom?
      - a. Our goal is to study these foundational tenets of the Christian faith as the means of cultivating virtue.
  - ii. The Offices of Instruction
    - 1. Notice its place in the Offices from pp. 271-342

2. The Offices of Instruction are designed to prepare the Baptized for Confirmation and then to continue instruction to the faithful
3. We never grow out of the catechumenate but are life-long learners, or disciples of Christ and the Apostolic faith
4. The Order for Confirmation
  - a. What does Confirmation effect? (read p 297)
5. The Solemnization of Holy Matrimony
6. The Thanksgiving after Childbirth, the Churching of Women
7. The Visitation of the Sick
8. The Communion of the Sick
9. The Burial of the Dead

iii. The Psalter

1. Use by appointment for the day, or read monthly
2. Gloria Patri
  - a. The 'Little Doxology' similar to the 'Great Doxology' (Lk 2:14).
  - b. Manifests the Trinitarian reality of God.
  - c. God's glory (*doxa*) speaks to his brilliance and radiant beauty.
  - d. When we pray this we direct our praise and adoration towards God as Trinity. This requires taking our eyes of our own glory and rightly places praise and worship on God who is our origin and destination.
  - e. This reorients us to reality amidst a world of false and meaningless realities.

- f. 'As it was in the beginning is now and ever shall be' speaks to the eternity and unchanging nature of the Triune God, 'he is no shifting shadow' (Js 1:17).
- g. 'World without end' means forever and ever.

iv. The Ordinal

1. The Ancient Order of the Episcopacy (read p 529)

- a. The Making of Deacons
- b. The Ordering of Priests
- c. The Consecration of Bishops

v. A Catechism (p 577)

vi. Family Prayer

- 1. Long Form
- 2. Short Form

**Questions**

- ⊕ Why are Anglicans called 'Payer Book Catholics'?
- ⊕ What is the purpose of the Creed?
- ⊕ What part of the Bible or of the history of Israel does the PB remind you?
- ⊕ How should the BCP be used?
- ⊕ Is the BCP designed to replace the Bible? Why or why not?
- ⊕ Is the BCP designed to replace personal or extemporary prayer and devotion?

**Assignment**

- ⊕ Begin memorizing the first section of the Catechism through the teaching of the Apostles' Creed up to the question introducing the Ten Commandments
- ⊕ Read the first chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians