

**GENERAL SYNOD 2007**

**LITURGICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**Proposed by Revd Canon Michael Kennedy**

**EMBARGOED UNTIL DELIVERY**

**CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY**

It gives me great pleasure to propose the Report of the Liturgical Advisory Committee which I have never done before in twenty one years on the Committee. I suppose I am now considered to have got "my feet under the table" and since the Report is coming on late on a Thursday afternoon it is supposed that even I cannot make anything too controversial out of it!

The terms of reference of the Liturgical Advisory Committee are as relevant today as when they were drawn up and approved by the General Synod in 1962:

- (a) To formulate and suggest to the General Synod such liturgical proposals relating to Public Worship, as may seem to be desirable to the Advisory Committee from time to time;
- (b) To consider and report on, if requested to do so by the General Synod, such other liturgical proposals relating to Public Worship as may be brought before the said body from time to time;
- (c) To foster the study of the Book of Common Prayer and of the Public Worship of the Church by preparing Articles relating to these subjects and offering them for publication;
- (d) To report to the General Synod annually.

The continuity of the work of the Committee is indicated by the continuing input from one of our Consultants, the immensely learned Canon Edgar Turner who was a founder member in 1962 and has been involved ever since. I would like to put on record our immense appreciation of all that he has done for liturgical renewal during that immense period of time and also pay tribute to one who is stepping down from being an elected member but who we look forward to having as a consultant - I am referring to the editor of the 2004 edition of the Book of Common Prayer and former honorary secretary of the committee, Canon Brian Mayne. In the history of the Liturgical Advisory Committee only the late Dean Gilbert Mayes has had a comparable record of assiduous attention to the detailed work of revision of the liturgy. In Canon Mayne's case we are fortunate to have the benefit of his immense

knowledge of the lectionary and of the many hours he puts in behind the scenes to make the fruits of his labours available to us in an accessible form of readings.

The Report itself gives some idea of the scope of the current work of the committee which is unremitting and ongoing. At a time when the theological education of the laity is being thought through as part of a renewed concept of ministry I would like to draw attention especially to the lay course mentioned under the heading of "Liturgical Education and Formation". We are having some problems with its name, which was to have been "fathom" as in "fathoming out" something, but it seems someone else has a copyright hold on this, and whether "fathomer" will do instead has still to be decided. Many of the ideas that are coming to the forefront in the recent ministry review are anticipated in this course with its interaction of experience of church, the church's year, the liturgy of the church, especially the Holy Communion, biblical teaching, and doctrine. May I suggest to those involved in the Commission on Ministry that they take on board what will appear, hopefully, in pilot form for use from the first Sunday in Advent 2007 and if all goes well will be generally available for use in the Church from the beginning of Advent 2008.

As part of the ongoing programme of providing Resource Material for use in the Church, a form for "Holy Communion by Extension - for those unable to be present at the public celebration" has been drawn up by the Liturgical Advisory Committee and approved by the House of Bishops and authorized for experimental use for a period of seven years from 28th February 2007. It is intended, in accordance with the relevant legislation, for this to be brought before the Synod at the end of that period with a view to its being approved by resolution and bill. The intention is to provide a form which will enable particular people who cannot, through reasonable cause, for example sickness, attend their customary place of worship, to have the closest possible link with the actual celebration of the Holy Communion in the Church by receiving the bread and wine consecrated at the service. This is a very ancient practice and is in fact mentioned in the very first account of a Holy Communion service (apart from that in the very problematic document the Didache) outside the pages of the New Testament. In Justin Martyr's first apologia. This dates from around 150 A.D. and in it we read,

When the president has given thanks and all the people have assented, those who are called deacons with us give to those present a portion of the eucharistic bread and wine and water, and carry it away to those who are absent.

We do hope that whether particular parishes wish to make use of this provision or not the matter will be examined on its merits and that what is proposed will be accepted at least in principle across the full range of ecclesiastical tradition within the Church of Ireland.

The bill brought before this year's Synod to finalize provision for a new form of "The Institution of An Incumbent" brings the Institution Service more fully into line with the thinking underlying the Order Two services in the Prayer Book of 2004. It will be noticed that there is a link in the opening section "The Gathering of God's People" with that in the ordinal and that the Ember Day readings are to be used. Several alternatives have been written into the service, including the option to have the legal declarations made either before the service or during it. Two forms of the commission are provided the first of which is a variant on the "perambulation" of the church which has been familiar in most places for many years. It is worth remembering that although those of us who have been to many institution services may have a feeling of *déjà vue* when it is used, it necessarily only occurs occasionally in any particular parish and may be very highly appreciated. It is noticeable that comments from members of other Christian Churches are generally highly favourable. A different approach is seen in the Second Form during which symbols of the teaching, pastoral and sacramental ministry of an incumbent are brought forward. In both cases the Holy Communion may be celebrated and directions are given for this.

The work of the Liturgical Advisory Committee is ongoing and we look to the future with confidence.