

**FWM Appendix 7: Rites for the Catechumenate (Authorized by the Council of General Synod in March 2019 for Trial Use and Evaluation, where permitted by the Ordinary)**



## Welcoming Inquirers or Families as Hearers

**Further Explanatory Notes:** The *Acts of Apostles* portrays a pattern in which evangelizing is something more than ‘inviting people to church.’ Invariably, new people are drawn into the community of Christ’s followers only after they have been met on their own ground. If we have met people on their own terms, this rite of Welcome constitutes the crossing of a threshold in the relationship. Thus the Welcoming of Inquirers or Families to be Hearers assumes that there has already been an informal (ie, non-liturgical) relationship with the Inquirer. Those who are ready to pursue their quest within the life of the Church and in the light of the gospel may then be encouraged to become hearers, and be welcomed on their journey using this rite or an adaptation of it.

The rite of Welcome may be used at any time in the year within a principal Sunday service. Although any number of Inquirers may be welcomed on one occasion, no attempt should be made to fit their welcome into some preconceived seasonal schedule. The spirit of the gospel entails beginning with the agenda of those we seek to serve, rather than our own agenda. They may be welcomed as hearers whenever they are ready, rather than waiting for some pre-conceived occasion that fits the church’s agenda.

## Presentation

*The one being welcomed may be brought by the sponsor to the entrance of the gathering, rather than being seated before the service.<sup>i</sup> After the opening greeting, the presider goes out to greet them. Members of the gathering accompany the presider, or all turn toward the place of welcome. The presider expresses the delight of the Church in receiving those who are drawn to the story of Jesus and the life of faith and encourages the members of the congregation to remember their own journey in faith.*

*The presider then invites the sponsor to introduce the Inquirer. The introduction includes these words,*

**I present *N* (or *N* the son/daughter of *N* and *N*)  
who wishes (or who wish their child) to follow the way of Christ.**

*The presider asks of the Inquirer, or of the parents who speak on behalf of a young child,*

What do you seek (for your child)?<sup>ii</sup>

*Answer* (The Inquirer, or one of the parents, makes a response that has been prepared in conversation with the sponsor during the time of inquiry.)

*Presider* What do you ask of this community?

*Answer* (Again, the response will be something prepared in conversation with the sponsor during the time of inquiry.)

*The presider replies as follows, or in some similar words, adapting the reply to the answer given.*

God gives the light of life  
to everyone who comes into the world,  
so that those who seek may truly find,  
and may live in God's joy for ever.  
You have followed that light;  
you have come to seek the face of the Lord.  
Are you ready to share with us  
in the Church's worship of God  
and service to the poor,  
and in seeking to know the way of Christ?<sup>iii</sup>

*Answer* **I am.**

*OR, if there are only parents presenting a child, the presider replies as follows, adapting the reply to the answer given.*

God gives the light of life  
to everyone who comes into the world,  
so that those who seek may truly find,  
and may live in God's joy for ever.  
You have followed that light,  
which has drawn you (back)  
into the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.  
Will you re-examine the covenant made in your baptism  
and seek the help of God and the support of this community  
in embracing that covenant?

*Answer* **I will.**

*Question* Are you ready to seek God's face  
by sharing with us and with your child  
in the Church's worship of God  
and service to the poor,  
and in seeking to know the way of Christ?

*Answer* **I am.**

*To the sponsor and congregation the presider says,*

Dear friends in Christ,  
will you care for *N* (and *his/her* family),

and support *him/her/them*  
by prayer and by example?<sup>iv</sup>  
**We will.**

*People*

*Presider* Will you help *him/her/them* to grow  
in the knowledge and love of God  
and of God's Son, Jesus Christ our Lord?  
**We will.**

*People*

*Presider* Will you share with *him/her/them*,  
as God gives you opportunity,  
your own experience of life in Christ?<sup>v</sup>  
**We will.**

*People*

## Thanksgiving and Signing

*The presider prays for the Inquirer (or the child), saying,*

God of steadfast love,  
on behalf of this our friend *N* (OR on behalf of the family of *N*)  
we offer thanks and praise to you  
for the experience of your guiding presence  
which has brought *him/her/them* to this day.  
Help us to serve *him/her/them* faithfully  
with the kindness you have shown us,  
and to accept with joy  
all the gifts of grace *he/she/they* bring(s).  
Together may we offer ourselves in your service,  
seeking your kingdom  
and the honour of your holy name;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**<sup>vi</sup>

*The sponsor marks each part of the body with the sign of the cross while the presider says,*

† *N*, receive the cross of Christ on your forehead,  
as a sign of his great love for you.

† Receive the cross on your ears,  
that you may hear the Gospel of Christ.

† Receive the cross on your lips,  
that you may respond to the word of God.

† Receive the cross on your eyes,  
that your way may be illumined by the light of Christ.

† Receive the cross on your hands,  
that the mercy of God may be known in all your work.

† Receive the cross on your feet,  
that you may follow where Christ leads the way.

† Receive the cross on your shoulders,  
that you may bear the gentle yoke of Christ.

† Receive the cross on your heart,  
that Christ may dwell in you by faith.<sup>vii</sup>

*The congregation may repeat a sung or spoken refrain after each signing.*

## Calling to be a Hearer<sup>viii</sup>

*Then the presider says to him/her/them,*

God's word is like bread to our hearts;  
we cannot live without it.  
God's word is like rain  
that comes down upon the earth;  
it brings forth fruit in our lives.  
Come now and share with us  
in hearing the word of the Lord.

*The sponsor accompanies the hearer who takes a place among the people. A suitable hymn may be sung during this procession.<sup>ix</sup> The service continues with the Collect of the Day and the Proclamation of the Word.*

## Handing on the Gospel

*After the reading of the Gospel, or before the Calling to be a Hearer, the hearer may be presented with a copy of the Bible by the sponsor.<sup>x</sup> The sponsor, or another minister, says,*

*N,* receive the good news; take hold on eternal life.  
May you always find in Jesus Christ a true friend.

*Petitions for hearers may be included regularly in the Prayers of the People: that they may be confirmed in their desire to seek God, that the wounds of sin may be healed in them, that their vision may be enlarged to encompass all the joys of God's kingdom, and that the community may be faithful in its care for them.*

# Calling Hearers as Candidates for Baptism

## Introduction to ‘Calling’

**Further Explanatory Notes:** Hearers who have tested and confirmed their desire to enter the Baptismal Covenant, and whose calling is attested by their sponsors and catechists, may be formally called to be baptismal candidates in this manner.

Unlike the rite of Welcome, this rite is framed in the plural; now hearers enter the time of the Church, rather than being dealt with on their own individual timetables. All who are ready, therefore, will be chosen together. Of course, all the current hearers will not necessarily be presented, since a rite of passage should not be automatic.

Pastoral preparation for this rite needs to include opportunities for hearers (or their parents) to clarify with their sponsors the meaning for their own lives of the Baptismal Covenant. This rite marks the climax of catechumenal formation, challenging both candidate and community to mutual commitment, and to trust in the great promise and to face the high challenge symbolized by the Baptismal Covenant. It thus marks the beginning of a period of preparation for baptism, as distinct from the preceding period of preparation for the Christian life in general.

For adult candidates, this rite would normally occur on the first Sunday of Lent in making ready for baptism at Easter. For a Pentecost baptism, this rite might most appropriately occur on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Easter; for All Saints’, on a Sunday near the beginning of September; and for The Baptism of the Lord, on the First Sunday of Advent.

The rite of Calling should be used within a principal Sunday service, before the Prayers of the People. It takes a section of the Presentation and Examination from the Baptismal rite and makes of it a separate event.

*On the First Sunday of Lent, immediately before the Prayers of the People, the presider begins:*

Dear friends in Christ,  
every year at the time of the Christian Passover,  
we celebrate our redemption  
through the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.  
Among us stand hearers who hope to share for the first time  
in this great celebration through the sacrament of Holy Baptism.  
Lent is the time for their final preparation;  
they will need the help of God's Spirit  
who purifies and enlightens us;  
they will need our care and encouragement  
as we accompany them in this journey of faith.<sup>xi</sup>

*OR at other times of the year,*

Dear friends in Christ,  
among us stand hearers who hope to share with us  
in our celebration of *Pentecost /The Baptism of the Lord /All Saints'*  
through the sacrament of Holy Baptism.  
This is the time for their final preparation;  
they will need the help of God's Spirit  
who purifies and enlightens us;  
they will need our care and encouragement  
as we accompany them in this journey of faith.

*The presider continues:*

For some time now  
*N* and *N* (and/or the parents of *N* and *N*)  
have shared with us in hearing the word of the Lord;  
they have sought to know the way of Christ  
(*themselves*, and for their *children*).  
Now, let us testify concerning them (and/or their *children*)  
that they are truly called and rightly chosen  
for Holy Baptism.<sup>xii</sup>

## Presentation

*The hearers who are to be presented are brought by their sponsors to stand facing the congregation.*

### Adults and Older Children:

*Those able to answer for themselves are presented by their sponsors as follows:*

*Sponsor* I commend *N* as a candidate for Holy Baptism.<sup>xiii</sup>

*The presider asks each candidate when presented,*

Do you desire to be baptized?

*Candidate* **I do.**<sup>xiv</sup>

*Presider* For some time now you have been testing and confirming this desire to enter the baptismal covenant. Are you ready to answer the call of Christ?<sup>xv</sup>

*Candidate* **I am.**

*Here each candidate may speak about how the Spirit has led him/her to this moment, that the whole congregation may be encouraged in its Lenten preparation to renew its commitment to Christ. Sponsors may also speak about the candidate*

*they present, or when all have been presented, the presider may ask the sponsors,*

Do you believe that the time has come for *these* our *friends* to take the gentle yoke of Christ within the covenant of Holy Baptism?<sup>xvi</sup>

*Sponsor* **I do, as God is my witness.**

### **Infants and Younger Children:**

*Then those unable to answer for themselves are presented individually by their sponsors as follows:*

*Sponsor* I commend *N* as a candidate for Holy Baptism.

*The presider asks the parent(s),*

For some time now you have been confirming your own baptismal commitment as you prepare to bring your child into the baptismal covenant. Are you ready to answer again the call of Christ?

*Answer* **I am.**

*The presider asks the sponsor to testify on behalf of the parents,*

Do you believe that the time has come for *this family* to confirm their Christian commitment so that their child may enter the covenant of Holy Baptism?

*Sponsor* **I do, as God is my witness.**

*When all have been presented, the presider asks the parents and sponsors,*

Will you be responsible for seeing that the child you present is nurtured in the faith and life of the Christian community?<sup>xvii</sup>

*Answer* **I will, with God's help.**

*Presider* Will you by your prayers and witness help this child to grow into the full stature of Christ?

*Answer* **I will, with God's help.**

### **All Candidates:**

*The people stand. The presider may then ask the sponsors and the congregation,*

Will you accompany *these* our *friends* through the coming days of spiritual preparation?<sup>xviii</sup>

*People* **We will.**

*Presider* Will you watch and pray with them as they pass over from death to life through the waters of baptism?<sup>xix</sup>

*People* **We will.**

### **Calling to Baptism and Enrollment of Names**

*The presider then turns to the candidates and, taking each one by the hand, says,*

*N*, God has chosen you  
for baptism into our Lord Jesus Christ.  
Be assured that God is faithful  
to those who are called.<sup>xx</sup>

*The presider then says,*

Let the names of these candidates now be entered in the book,  
in joyful anticipation of their baptism  
at the *Paschal Vigil* (or *Pentecost/The Baptism of the Lord/All Saints*).

*Here each sponsor may enter in the Baptismal Register (or in a specially designated book) the name of the candidate they*

*have presented, reading the name aloud.*<sup>xxi</sup>

*The candidates may remain together before the congregation; and the presider invites the congregation to pray, in these or similar words:*

Let us pray for these persons  
whom God has called, and for ourselves,  
that together we may come to share  
the joys of Easter.<sup>xxii</sup>

*If the baptism is to be celebrated at some time other than Easter, the following invitation may be used instead:*

Let us pray for these persons  
whom God has called, and for ourselves,  
that together we may come to share  
the new life God has promised.

### **Prayer over the Candidates**

*The candidates kneel, and each sponsor may place a hand upon the shoulder of the one being sponsored; infants and younger children may be held in arms.*

*The presider, with hands stretched out over the candidates, says,*

God of love and power,  
your purpose is to bring all creation  
within your saving embrace.  
Unite to your Son *these* whom you have chosen,  
and bring *them* through the water of Baptism  
to the banquet of salvation.  
May *they* share with all your people  
the perfect freedom of your service  
as *they bear* witness to your grace;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

*The candidates then return to their places.*

### **The Prayers of the People**

*A deacon, or other appointed person leads the Prayers of the People. During this period of preparation, candidates will be named each Lord's Day in the Prayers of the People. One or more of the following petitions may be adapted for use in the prayers:*

We pray for *N* and *N* who are preparing for Baptism:

- A that in coming to a knowledge of the power of sin,  
they may truly repent and be truly healed;
- B that they may be protected from all worldly illusions  
and given courage to accept the challenge of the Christian way;
- C that being delivered from all fear,  
their lives may be enriched with love for others;
- D that being established in God's love,  
they may know their worth and become good stewards of the gift of life.

*The following collect may be used to conclude the prayers on the day candidates are enrolled:*

Gracious God,  
grant that all who are baptized into the death of Jesus Christ  
may be delivered from every evil,

commit their lives to you,  
and share in the eternal priesthood of Christ our Lord;  
for to him, to you, and to the Holy Spirit  
belong all glory and blessing,  
now and for ever. **Amen.**

*The service continues with the Confession and Absolution, or the Peace.*

## Holy Baptism

### Introduction to Baptism

**Further Explanatory Notes:** “Baptism is the sign of new life in Christ. Baptism unites Christ with his people. That union is both individual and corporate. Christians are, it is true, baptized one by one, but to be a Christian is to be part of a new creation which rises from the dark waters of Christ’s death into the dawn of his risen life. Christians are not just baptized individuals; they are a new humanity.” (*BAS*, p 146)

The catechumenate provides a period of mentoring in the way of Christ and the opportunity for hearers to weigh the meaning of the baptismal covenant in order that they and the community of faith together may discern a readiness to enter this new humanity. The following adaptation of the *BAS* rite of Holy Baptism is intended for celebration with those who have already been publicly called to be baptismal candidates on an earlier occasion, using the rite of Calling.

“The celebration of...Holy Baptism requires careful preparation by both the community and the candidates. The service should take place when a congregation gathers for the principal Sunday eucharist, ideally on days that are particularly appropriate for baptism — Easter (especially at the Vigil), Pentecost, All Saints, the Baptism of the Lord — and when the bishop is present.” (*BAS*, p 146)

Pastoral preparation for the rite of Baptism needs to include opportunities for candidates to discern what it will mean for them to renounce evil and turn to Christ as Saviour and Lord. They need to be encouraged to discover all that God has in store for them in the gift of baptism. Traditionally the focus for this discernment process has been the Prayers for Deliverance within the liturgy on the Sundays of Lent following the Sunday of their calling to baptism (see *Prayers of Deliverance for Baptismal Candidates*). Whether or not such public acts of prayer take place, it is important that candidates be provided an opportunity to discern and name the evils that inhibit us from answering God’s call and rob us of the freedom of God’s service.

It is also desirable for candidates and sponsors to keep a vigil of prayer, or make a retreat (of which the Great Vigil of Easter may be the climax). This is a time for recalling, in the spirit of thanksgiving and expectancy, their journey thus far in the catechumenate within the larger journey of the people of God.

**Enriching the celebration.** Nothing that follows is intended to compromise the *BAS* form of the rite. The Presentation (*BAS* p 153) is not to be omitted; rather, it is moved to an earlier occasion as part of the rite of Calling in order to strengthen the role of the community in the celebration. The following adaptation does, however, suggest ways to enrich the rite, developing the implicit drama of the rite in two ways. It suggests using movement to articulate the relation between the Examination of the Candidates (the Act of Repentance, *BAS* p 154) and the Celebration of Baptism (*BAS* p 156 ff). And it suggests expanding the gift-giving ceremony that follows the baptismal act (*BAS* p 160).

The fuller significance of this sacrament can be explored with the newly baptized in the weeks following.

*The order for Holy Baptism is found in the Book of Alternative Services, p 151.*

*When the Presentation (BAS, p 153) has already been made on an earlier occasion, the presider says these or similar words,*

Sisters and brothers in Christ,  
at the beginning of Lent,  
(*or* at the beginning of Advent, *or* [on specified occasion],)  
*N* and *N* responded to God's call  
and were enrolled as candidates for Holy Baptism.  
Now the hour has come for *these* our *friends* (*or these little ones*)  
to follow Christ through the dark waters of his death  
into the dawn of his risen life.  
As we witness this great work of the Spirit,  
I call upon you to remember your own baptism  
and to welcome *these persons*  
into the household of God.<sup>xxiii</sup>

*The service continues with the Examination of the Candidates (the Act of Repentance), beginning from the top of p 154.*

*The following two enrichments of the rite are also commended:*

*It is appropriate to locate the Examination of the Candidates (the Act of Repentance, p 154) at a place other than the font. The candidates and their sponsors may stand at one of the entrances to the worship area with the Paschal Candle in front of them; they may turn to face out toward the 'darkness' as they respond to the first three questions, and then turn toward the 'light' as they respond to the question, "Do you turn to Jesus Christ...?" Following this Act of Repentance, they may be led in procession by the Paschal Candle to the font, either during the Prayers for the Candidates or the singing of a hymn.<sup>xxiv</sup>*

*Instead of during the Calling rite, after the Thanksgiving over the Water each candidate may speak about how the Spirit has led him/her to this moment, that the whole congregation may be encouraged to renew its commitment to Christ. Then the presider invites the congregation to join the candidates in affirming the Baptismal Covenant, saying, "Let us join with those who are committing..." (BAS, p 158).*

*After the baptism, the signing, and the prayer, "Heavenly Father, we thank you..." an expanded ceremony of gifts may follow:*

## The Robing, the Giving of the Light, and Other Gifts<sup>xxv</sup>

*The newly baptized may be presented with gifts by their sponsors:*

*After albs or other white clothes have been presented to all, one of the ministers says,*

Receive the robe of righteousness  
to show that you have put on Christ.

*All* **Be clothed in Christ's love,  
that you may stand without fear or shame  
on the day of his coming.**<sup>xxvi</sup>

*After the light from the Paschal Candle has been presented to all, one of the ministers says,*

Receive the light of Christ,  
to show that you have passed  
from darkness to light.

*All* **Let your light so shine before others  
that they may see your good works  
and glorify your Father in heaven.**<sup>xxvii</sup>

*After crosses have been hung around the necks of all, one of the ministers says,*

Receive the sign of the cross  
to show that you are dead to sin  
and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

*All* **Do not be ashamed of this Gospel,  
but take up your cross daily and follow Christ.**<sup>xxviii</sup>

*After a taste of milk and honey has been offered to all, one of the ministers says,*

Receive the riches of your homecoming  
to a land of milk and honey.

*All* **Taste and see that the Lord is good.  
Happy are they who trust in God.**<sup>xxix</sup>

*Other symbolic gifts may be presented at this time.<sup>xxx</sup> A hymn or anthem may be sung while the new Christians withdraw to put on the new clothing. When they rejoin the congregation, bells may be rung.*

# Prayers of Deliverance for Baptismal Candidates

## Introduction

**Further Explanatory Notes:** During the season of Lent our attention is focused on Jesus' final contest with the powers of evil, which culminates in the story of the Passion, and is now played out again in the life of every would-be disciple. The presence of candidates for baptism further strengthens this focus as we pray for them.

In addition, the following prayers for deliverance may be used with candidates who are adults or older children.

By way of pastoral preparation for these acts of purification and enlightenment, candidates can be assisted in recognizing and identifying those elements of the Lenten gospel stories which illumine their own personal experience and history. This can be an opportunity for those who know themselves chosen by God to discern the ways of God in their lives and grow in their perception of the power of sin and their desire for salvation, seeking the freedom which God alone can give. The following public acts of prayer may then serve as communal affirmation of this inward journey.

These prayers for deliverance are appointed for the second, third, fourth, and fifth Sundays of Lent when there are candidates who have already been called to baptism on the first Sunday of Lent. (For baptism at other festival moments in the year, prayers similar to the following may be composed for baptismal candidates, based on the models provided here, and arising out the Sunday gospel readings.)

*After the Prayers of the People (and the Confession and Absolution if they are included here) the candidates and their sponsors are called forward by name; the candidates kneel, and each sponsor may place a hand upon the shoulder of the candidate he/she sponsors.*

*The presider calls the congregation to prayer, in these or similar words:*

Dear friends in Christ,  
let us pray in silence for *these* chosen *ones*  
who *are* preparing to receive  
the illumination of the Holy Spirit  
in the sacrament of baptism.  
Pray that *they* may be delivered from all evil,  
and given the freedom  
to serve and worship God alone.

*The people stand to pray in silence.*

## Prayer of Deliverance

*The presider then says one of the following:*

*Lent 2A* Lord of heaven and earth,  
you are the true reward of all who seek for truth  
and the only source of life that endures.  
Reveal to *these* your *servants N and N*,  
whom you have called and chosen,  
your great salvation,  
that *they* may be freed from the dominion of the flesh  
and born from above by water and Spirit;  
through the one lifted up on the cross,  
Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**<sup>xxx1</sup>

*The rite continues below.*

*Lent 3A* God of mercy, through your Son  
you revealed your fatherly care for the woman of Samaria  
and offered salvation to all who are lonely and estranged.  
In your great love, show your mercy to *these* chosen *ones, N and N*,  
who *desire* to be reborn as your *children*.  
As *they draw* near to the fountain of living water,  
heal *them* of all bitterness and resentment;  
by the consolation of your gracious Spirit,  
awaken *them* to *their* real thirst for a share in your eternal life.  
May *their lives* be a sign of your redeeming love for all amongst whom *they live*.  
We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**<sup>xxxii</sup>

*The rite continues below.*

*Lent 4A* Gracious God,  
you helped the man born blind to believe in Jesus as the Christ,  
and through that faith to reach the light of your kingdom.  
Free your chosen *ones, N and N*,  
from the falsehoods that surround and blind *them*.  
Strengthen *their hearts* with your loving Spirit  
that truth may be the foundation of *their lives*.  
May *they* live in your light for ever  
and fearlessly bear witness to what *they have* seen and heard.  
We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**<sup>xxxiii</sup>

*The rite continues below.*

*Lent 5A*

Almighty God, fountain of life,  
you seek your glory in humanity fully alive;  
you make known your love in the resurrection of the dead.  
Rescue from the tyranny of death *these* chosen *ones*, *N* and *N*,  
who *approach* the waters of new birth and *hunger* for the banquet of life.  
Do not let the power of death hold *them* back,  
for by *their* faith *they* will share in the resurrection triumph  
of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**<sup>xxxiv</sup>

*The rite continues below.*

*Lent 2B*

Ever-faithful God,  
look upon your *servants* *N* and *N*.  
Free *them* from the power of the Evil One,  
and turn *them* from this sinful generation  
which looks to itself instead of keeping in mind the things of God.  
Give *them* courage and strength to take up *their* cross to follow your Son,  
so that *they* may find wisdom in sacrifice,  
and truly gain *their* life in the glory of your Son,  
Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**<sup>xxxv</sup>

*The rite continues below.*

*Lent 3B*

Loving God,  
you sent your Son to restore to us  
the joy of your presence,  
that we might worship you in spirit and in truth.  
Deliver *N* and *N* whom you have called  
from every spiritual tyranny and deceit.  
Reveal in *them* the splendour of your sacred dwelling place,  
the temple of Christ's body, the praises of your people,  
created anew in the resurrection of your Son,  
Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

*Or*

Holy God,  
look upon *these* your *servants*, *N* and *N*.  
Deliver *them* from all sham religion  
that masks real trust in you,  
and drive from us all that hinders passionate spirituality  
in *those* who *seek* you,  
that *they* may have zeal for your house,  
the people in whom you choose to dwell,  
and believe the words spoken by your Son.  
As *N* and *N* *pass* through the waters of baptism  
may *they* be raised to the New Life of Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**<sup>xxxvi</sup>

*The rite continues below.*

*Lent 4B*

Holy God, whose love embraces the whole world,  
we look to the dying victim for healing and salvation;  
we turn to the light of his cross  
so that every evil in us may be exposed.  
Deliver *N* and *N*, your chosen *ones*, from condemnation;  
illumine *their* inmost being with your truth;  
and fill *them* with your eternal life;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

*Or*

O God, rich in mercy,  
behold your *servants N* and *N*.  
Free *them* from evil,  
and fill *them* with the light of your truth,  
that *they* may look to the Human One lifted up  
and know your power to save the world.  
We pray for *them* with thanksgiving  
as we wait in joyful hope for the day  
when *N* and *N* will pass through the waters of baptism  
and be raised up to the New Life of Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**<sup>xxxvii</sup>

*The rite continues below.*

*Lent 5B*

Merciful God,  
as we come to the Passover of the Lord,  
the day of judgement of this world  
when the prince of this world is driven out,  
grant that *N* and *N*, as *they see* Jesus lifted up on the cross,  
may be drawn into his eternal embrace.  
Give *them* freedom to turn from the life of this passing age  
and welcome the life of the age to come;  
for by *their* faith *they* will share in the resurrection triumph  
of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

*Or*

God of power and might,  
drive out the prince of this world  
from the *lives* of your *servants N* and *N*.  
Help *them* to know that it is only by losing *their* life in you  
that *they* will truly gain it,  
and that by your Son's willingness to be lifted from the earth  
all people are drawn to him in your love.  
Honour *them*, Father, as *those who follow* and *serve*  
our Saviour Jesus Christ. **Amen.**<sup>xxxviii</sup>

*The rite continues below.*

*Lent 2C*

O God, the source and goal of all creation,  
defend and preserve *these* your *servants*, *N* and *N*,  
who *have* responded to your call.  
Protect *them* from every assault of the evil one,  
from the scorn and intimidation that this world holds  
for those who seek to know your ways.  
Grant that *they* may share the great compassion of your Son  
who gave his life for the life of the world.  
We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**<sup>xxxix</sup>

*The rite continues below.*

*Lent 3C*

God of all the ages,  
in the fullness of time you sent your Anointed One  
to bring to fulfilment the promised day of salvation.  
Ripen the seed you have planted in your *servants N* and *N*;  
and in this time of your grace,  
turn *their hearts* to you  
that *their lives* may bear fruit to eternal life;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**<sup>xi</sup>

*The rite continues below.*

*Lent 4C*

Father of mercy,  
when we come to ourselves  
and acknowledge the poverty of our alienation from you,  
your loving arms welcome us home.  
Reveal your healing love  
to *N* and *N* whom you have called by name.  
As *they come* to the waters of new creation,  
may *they know themselves* reconciled and welcomed  
into the household of faith  
through the passion of your Son,  
our Saviour Jesus Christ. **Amen.**<sup>xli</sup>

*The rite continues below.*

*Lent 5C*

Gracious God,  
in Jesus our Saviour you have made us your friends  
and shared in our very lives.  
May *N* and *N*, your chosen *ones*,  
find the freedom and courage  
to pour out *their lives*, a fragrant offering  
to the one who gave up his life for us all,  
your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**<sup>xlii</sup>

*The rite continues below.*

*The presider lays a hand on the head of each candidate in an act of silent prayer.*

*While this is being done, verses of the hymn Veni Creator Spiritus<sup>xliii</sup> or a similar hymn, may be sung by the people while the candidates remain kneeling.*

*The service continues with the Peace.*

*One of the following Proper Prefaces for The Great Thanksgiving may be used:*

*Lent 2A* Blessed are you, gracious God,  
creator of heaven and earth.  
We give you thanks and praise  
through Jesus Christ your Son, our Lord  
who came not to condemn the world  
but to save it in love,  
and through the waters of baptism  
gives us new birth from above  
that we may behold your kingdom.  
Therefore with angels and archangels  
we raise our voices to you in praise  
to proclaim the glory of your name.

*Lent 3A* Blessed are you, gracious God,  
creator of heaven and earth.  
We give you thanks and praise  
through Jesus Christ your Son, our Lord.  
For he is the living water gushing up to eternal life  
and quenching all thirst.  
Therefore with angels and archangels  
we raise our voices to you in praise  
to proclaim the glory of your name.

*Lent 4A* Blessed are you, gracious God,  
creator of heaven and earth.  
We give you thanks and praise  
through Jesus Christ your Son, our Lord,  
who came as one of us,  
to lead all people out of darkness  
into the light of faith.  
For we were born in darkness as slaves of sin,  
but through the waters of baptism  
we are reborn as your children  
whose eyes are opened to behold the One who heals us,  
enabling us to see the light of your truth.  
Therefore with angels and archangels  
we raise our voices to you in praise  
to proclaim the glory of your name.

*Lent 5A* Blessed are you, gracious God,  
creator of heaven and earth.  
We give you thanks and praise  
through Jesus Christ your Son, our Lord,

who wept at the grave of Lazarus his friend,  
and raised him from the dead  
to reveal his power over death.  
In his love for us all  
he gives us the holy mysteries  
of baptism and eucharist,  
and raises us up to eternal life.  
Therefore with angels and archangels  
we raise our voices to you in praise  
to proclaim the glory of your name.

*Lent 2B* Blessed are you, gracious God,  
creator of heaven and earth.  
We give you thanks and praise  
through Jesus Christ your Son, our Lord,  
who calls us to deny ourselves,  
and take up our cross and follow him,  
that in him we might gain true life.  
Therefore with angels and archangels  
we raise our voices to you in praise  
to proclaim the glory of your name.

*Lent 3B* Blessed are you, gracious God,  
creator of heaven and earth.  
We give you thanks and praise  
through Jesus Christ your Son, our Lord,  
who makes us a sacred dwelling place  
that we may become the home  
of his new and resurrected life.  
Therefore with angels and archangels  
we raise our voices to you in praise  
to proclaim the glory of your name.

*Lent 4B* Blessed are you, gracious God,  
creator of heaven and earth.  
We give you thanks and praise  
through Jesus Christ your Son, our Lord,  
who was lifted up on the cross  
that all who behold him may find healing and life.  
Therefore with angels and archangels  
we raise our voices to you in praise  
to proclaim the glory of your name.

*Lent 5B* Blessed are you, gracious God,  
creator of heaven and earth.  
We give you thanks and praise  
through Jesus Christ your Son, our Lord,  
who, like a grain of wheat which dies in order to bear fruit,  
gave his life that all people may live.  
Therefore with angels and archangels  
we raise our voices to you in praise

to proclaim the glory of your name.

*Lent 2C*

Blessed are you, gracious God,  
creator of heaven and earth.  
We give you thanks and praise  
through Jesus Christ your Son, our Lord,  
who gathers us like a mother hen protecting her young,  
and calls us to citizenship in the New Jerusalem.  
Therefore with angels and archangels  
we raise our voices to you in praise  
to proclaim the glory of your name.

*Lent 3C*

Blessed are you, gracious God,  
creator of heaven and earth.  
We give you thanks and praise  
through Jesus Christ your Son, our Lord,  
who came to reveal God's mercy and forgiveness  
that we might bear fruit to his glory.  
Therefore with angels and archangels  
we raise our voices to you in praise  
to proclaim the glory of your name.

*Lent 4C*

Blessed are you, gracious God,  
creator of heaven and earth.  
We give you thanks and praise  
through Jesus Christ your Son, our Lord,  
who forgives us even before we confess our sin,  
and who rejoices to welcome home the lost.  
Therefore with angels and archangels  
we raise our voices to you in praise  
to proclaim the glory of your name.

*Lent 5C*

Blessed are you, gracious God,  
creator of heaven and earth.  
We give you thanks and praise  
through Jesus Christ your Son, our Lord,  
whose compassion is a fragrance that fills this house,  
preparing your church to share in his death and resurrection.  
Therefore with angels and archangels  
we raise our voices to you in praise  
to proclaim the glory of your name.

# Rites for Turning Again to the Way of Christ

## Introduction to ‘Welcoming’

**Further Explanatory Notes:** This rite provides a graceful way to welcome and affirm baptised people who have not been active Christians for some time and wish to begin again. It launches people upon a pathway that resembles, yet is distinct from, the catechumenate, because it clearly starts from the reality of their Baptism and honours the membership they already have within the Church. See the suggested pattern of formation.

This welcoming rite presupposes that a supportive relationship has already developed between the person who is turning again to the way of Christ and another member of the church, who will act as sponsor.

This form may be used at any time in the year within a principal Sunday service, and no attempt should be made to fit people into a preconceived schedule. As with other catechumenal rites, it is appropriate to adapt this ceremony to the particular situation of both the individuals and the church community.

## Presentation

*The person being presented is brought to the service by a sponsor. After the opening greeting and an act of praise (BAS, page 185), the presider invites them to stand before the congregation<sup>xliv</sup>, and asks the sponsor to introduce the one being presented. The introduction includes these words, or other words appropriate to the situation.*

**I present *N* who wishes to turn again to the way of Christ, within the communion of the Church.**

*The presider asks of the inquirer,*

What do you seek?

*Answer* (The person makes a response that has been prepared in conversation with the sponsor, during the time of inquiry).

*Presider* What do you ask of this community?

*Answer* (Again, the response will be something prepared in conversation with the sponsor, during the time of inquiry).

*Question* Have you been baptized in water, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit?

*Answer* **I have.**<sup>xlv</sup>

*The presider replies as follows, or in some similar words, adapting the reply to the answer given:*

In baptism, we died with Christ<sup>xlvi</sup>  
so that we might begin a new life together  
in the power of his resurrection.  
You were marked in your baptism with the sign of his cross;  
and now you have come  
to enter more fully into the meaning of that sign.  
Will you reexamine the covenant made in your baptism,  
and seek the help of God and the support of this community  
in embracing that covenant?

*Answer* **I will.**

*To the sponsor and congregation the presider says,*

Dear friends in Christ,  
will you care for *N*,  
and support *him/her*  
by prayer and by example?

*People* **We will.**

*Presider* Will you help *him/her* continue to grow  
in the knowledge and love of God  
and of God's Son, Jesus Christ our Lord?

*People* **We will.**

*Presider* Will you share with *N*,  
as God gives you opportunity,  
your own experience of life in Christ?

*People* **We will.**<sup>xlvii</sup>

## Thanksgiving

*The presider prays for the person, saying,*<sup>xlviii</sup>

God of steadfast love,  
on behalf of this our *brother/sister N*,

we offer thanks and praise to you  
for the covenant you made with *him/her* in baptism  
and for the experience of your guiding presence  
which has brought *him/her* to this day.  
Help us to serve *him/her* faithfully  
with the kindness you have shown us  
and to accept with joy all the gifts of grace *he/she* brings.  
Together may we offer ourselves in your service,  
seeking your kingdom and the honour of your holy name;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

*A musical acclamation may be sung.<sup>xlix</sup> Then the presider says to him/her,*

God's word is like bread to our hearts;  
we cannot live without it.  
God's word is like rain  
that comes down upon the earth;  
it brings forth fruit in our lives.  
Come now and share with us  
in hearing the word of the Lord.  
Let us prepare our hearts  
to hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church.<sup>l</sup>

*The person and his/her sponsor now return to their places. The service continues with the Collect of the Day and the Proclamation of the Word.*

## **Handing on the Gospel**

*After the gospel reading, or before the invitation to come and hear God's word, the person turning again to the way of Christ may be brought before the congregation; and a copy of the Bible may be presented to him/her by the catechist, saying,*

Remember the story of God's great work  
begun in you at your baptism.  
May you grow day by day  
until you reach the measure of the full stature of Christ.<sup>li</sup>

## **The Prayers of the People**

*The person may be prayed for by name; and the prayers on pp 627 and 628 of the BAS may be adapted for this purpose.*

## **Ash Wednesday: Calling to the Life of Conversion**

### **Introduction to 'Calling'**

Ash Wednesday launches the followers of Christ into the Lenten journey with an act of penitence that demonstrates our vulnerability and the recognition of our utter dependence upon God. As St Augustine reminds us, it is the compelling generosity of God's compassion and forgiveness that empowers us to repent. Experiencing this excess of love, we can begin to let go of enslavement to our own deformed desires and addictions, as we are enticed into a life of increasing liberation and purpose. In a culture where individualism and personal gratification predominate, it is profoundly creative, albeit exceptionally difficult, for Christians to set aside time for the purpose of exposing our inner darkness to the revealing light of Christ. But as Jesus turned toward Jerusalem, confronting the powers of darkness that resisted the reign of God, we also turn to acknowledge and renounce those powers which have drawn us away from the light.

When those who have been alienated from the gathered life of the Church return to a more intentional relationship with God and fellowship with the community, their presence is a powerful reminder of the Church's call to on-going conversion. Their willingness to return, to forgive and to be forgiven, reveals our own need for the healing of divisions and for harmonizing the fragmented aspects of our lives. See the suggested pattern of Lenten Scripture Reflection.

It is assumed that, by Ash Wednesday, those who are returning to Christ will already have spent time telling their stories to sponsors who will have helped them to articulate the ways in which God has been drawing them back into the worship and service of the body of Christ.

Ash Wednesday, of course, draws all the followers of Christ into reflection on his disturbing determination to go to Jerusalem. But there are times when a member already invested in a life of faith has turned some new corner on this pathway, or has experienced a new perspective which results in a desire to mark this particular Lenten journey by celebrating it more intentionally. This too may be celebrated within this rite.

*The exhortation following the sermon (BAS p 281) may be expanded in the following manner.*

*After the sermon, all stand, and the presider addresses the congregation, saying,*

Dear friends in Christ,  
every year at the time of the Christian Passover  
we celebrate our redemption  
through the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.  
Lent is a time to prepare for this celebration  
and to renew our life in the paschal mystery.  
It is also a time for those who are turning again to the way of Christ  
to prepare by self-examination and penitence  
for a new commitment to the covenant they once entered at their baptism.  
We begin this holy season  
by remembering our need for repentance,  
and for the mercy and forgiveness proclaimed  
in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

## Presentation

*Those turning again to the way of Christ may then be presented individually.<sup>lii</sup>*

*Sponsor*     **I present N who wishes to follow the path of penitence,  
and turn again to the way of Christ.**

*Presider*     For some time now you have been confirming your baptismal  
commitment. Are you ready to answer again the call of Christ?

*Answer*     **I am.**

*Here the person being presented may be invited to tell how the Spirit has led him/her to this moment.<sup>liii</sup>*

*As each one is presented, the presider asks of the sponsor,*

Do you, as sponsor, believe that the time has come for this person to join us in this time of  
discipline, in submission to the Spirit of Christ?

*Sponsor*     **I do, as God is my witness.**

*The presider may then ask the sponsors and the congregation,*

Brothers and sisters, will you accompany *these* our *friends* through the coming days of spiritual  
preparation?

*Sponsor*     **We will.**

*The presider then continues,*

I invite you therefore, in the name of the Lord,  
to observe a holy Lent  
by self-examination, penitence,  
prayer, fasting, and almsgiving,  
and by reading and meditating on the word of God.  
Let us kneel before our Creator and Redeemer.

*The service continues with the silence, and Psalm 51 (p 282).*

*After the prayer over the ashes (p 285), the presider may say,*

I invite N and N who *are* turning again to the way of Christ  
to receive this sign of ashes.  
By the power of the Holy Spirit,  
may God grant you to be for us  
a living sign of that conversion  
to which the Lord now calls us all.<sup>liv</sup>

*Ashes are applied to the forehead of each, with the following words.*

Remember you are dust, and to dust you shall return.

*Then one of those turning again to the way of Christ may say,*

I invite all who in this season of Lent  
are turning again to the way of Christ  
to receive this sign of ashes.

*They may then join with the presider in applying ashes to others, using the same words.*

# **Maundy Thursday: Restoring Communion in Mutual Service**

## **Introduction to ‘Restoring’**

Maundy Thursday begins the most intense three days (the Triduum) of the Christian year. The liturgies of Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, the Great Vigil of Easter, and Easter Day are intended to be experienced as one extended celebration. The Thursday rite is a particularly appropriate and poignant moment to complete the period of reconciliation for those turning again to the way of Christ. From this moment on, they will participate fully with all the Faithful in Christ in celebrating the passion and resurrection of the Lord.

*The exhortation following the sermon (BAS p 305) may be expanded in the following manner:*

*Presider* Fellow servants of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
on the night before his death,  
Jesus set an example for his disciples  
by washing their feet, an act of humble service.  
He taught that strength and growth in the life of the kingdom of God  
come not by power, authority, or even miracle,  
but by such lowly service.

*N* and *N* have been examples for us in turning again to the way of Christ.  
Therefore, I invite *them* to receive this sign of restoration  
to the community perpetually reborn  
in the cleansing waters of baptism.

*Those turning again to the way of Christ are then seated on chairs near the front of the assembly; the presider, carrying a towel, proceeds to wash their feet, and then hands them towels.*<sup>lv</sup>

*One of those turning again to the way of Christ may say,*<sup>lvi</sup>

In this season of lent we are all turning again to the way of Christ.  
Therefore I invite you, who share in his royal priesthood,  
to come and accept this sign of his loving service.  
But come remembering his admonition  
that what will be done for us is also to be done by us to others,  
for “a servant is not greater than his master,  
nor is one who is sent greater than the one who sent him.  
If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.”

*These then share in washing the feet of others; those receiving this sign may also share in administering it to others (including the presider).*<sup>lvii</sup>

*The service continues with the Prayers of the People.*

*The presider may introduce the greeting of the Peace in these or similar words:*

On this night Jesus gathered his own  
and gave them this holy meal as a sign  
that would draw them back into his peace  
even after they had betrayed and forsaken him.  
We ourselves, who have often betrayed him  
and betrayed or offended one another,  
are now reconciled by the blood of his cross.  
Therefore, in Christ’s name I implore you,  
be reconciled to one another.

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

**And also with you.**

*The presider may first greet those who have turned again to the way of Christ, and then invite members of the congregation to greet them as well.*<sup>lviii</sup>

*If the room is stripped of ornaments after the communion, those who have turned again to the way of Christ may appropriately assist in this work.*

# Reaffirming the Baptismal Covenant

## Introduction to Reaffirmation

**Who is it for?** There are many ways for members of the Church to affirm their Christian faith. Weekly participation in the eucharist is the normative reaffirmation of the baptismal covenant. Daily prayer, private and corporate, articulates and nourishes trust in the Lord. Acts of ministry also confirm the faith that is in us. James has much to say on this in his epistle (James 2:14-26). Those turning again to the way of Christ, particularly when coming home to the Church after some time away, should be encouraged to reaffirm their faith formally within the Community of the Faithful. This act of reaffirmation *with* the Church, then, emphasizes re-integration into the Body of Christ, and has a profound effect both upon those returning and upon the members of the Church. It is a reminder both of the need for continual conversion for all Christians inspired by Christ's Spirit, and of the Spirit's work of reconciling all humanity.

**When to do it.** In the ancient Church, the Great Vigil of Easter eventually came to be seen as the most fitting occasion for baptism, when the Faithful gathered to celebrate Christ's death and rising. The Easter Vigil is, once again, increasingly becoming the annual rite of reaffirmation for Christians, and as such is the most appropriate occasion for those who have turned again to the way of Christ to publically reaffirm their faith. The *Book of Alternative Services* makes specific provision for all members of the congregation to reaffirm their faith at the Easter Vigil, even when there are no baptisms. It is in this context that those who have turned again to the way of Christ re-assert their profession of faith. Care must be taken not to usurp the special status of those being baptized at the Vigil, however. For this reason those who have turned again to the way of Christ stand with the community during the Baptismal Covenant; then, after the Welcoming of the Newly Baptized, they may symbolize their reaffirmation by going first to the font to touch the water, giving the lead to the rest of the congregation.

*After the welcoming of the newly baptised (or, when there are no baptisms, after the renewal of baptismal vows), each person who has turned again to the way of Christ may go to the font to touch the water as a memorial of their baptism.*

*The presider then invites the whole congregation to touch the water,*  
Emboldened by the work of God's Spirit in *N and N*,  
let us all come to the font and touch the water of life,  
reaffirming our commitment to the way of Christ.

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i

Beginning the ritual at the entrance means that the members of the congregation (or its representatives) make the first move in welcoming a newcomer. It also gives symbolic weight to the act of crossing the threshold. In accompanying the presider members of the congregation demonstrate that they are not mere spectators but desire to encourage the Inquirer toward the way of Christ. The logistics of this will depend on the details of the local setting, and require adapting. This is a kind of welcome in which children may have a special ministry. If microphones are used by the worship leaders, it is desirable for the newcomers and sponsors to have them as well. If the one being welcomed is a child of members of the worshipping community, it may be more appropriate that the family begin among the assembly rather than at the door.

ii

True evangelizing begins where people are, encouraging them to know themselves so they may embrace God's love for them. It takes their concerns and longings seriously and helps awaken them to the deeper hunger of their lives. So a newcomer begins by articulating some deeper longing to the gathered community, encouraging all the faithful to remember their own desires which motivated them on their spiritual journey. Of all the various elements of the catechumenate, this has often been the easiest to introduce in parishes because it opens up the congregation to the myriad ways in which God invites people into community.

"What do you seek?" is the same question Jesus put to would-be disciples, the question he asked the blind man at Jericho, the question we all must face if our religion is to be more than the impulse to measure up to some external expectations of us. It is the question we will want to ask if we trust the stirring of the Spirit.

By way of pastoral preparation for this presentation and welcome, Inquirers may be assisted in coming to a clear sense of what they most deeply desire of God. Out of this experience they may then formulate true responses to the two questions of the rite. The answers to these questions will be given more confidently, and with more conviction, if they have already been heard and affirmed by the sponsors. This also provides an opportunity to make clear that if 'baptism' is the Inquirer's initial answer, the question must be explored more deeply: "What do you seek from God in a baptized life?"

iii

The catechumenal process makes a fundamental assumption that God has always been active in the life of Inquirers (indeed, of all people). Everyone who inquires about baptism has been called, encouraged, unsettled, or wooed by God. Before they are formally welcomed as hearers, their sponsors help them reflect on that experience and articulate how God has been present to them.

The question, "Are you ready . . ." articulates the minimal terms of the covenant which the person enters as a hearer.

iv

It is essential that this covenant with an Inquirer be mutual and shared by a community that is eager to do its part.

v

The communal life of a parish can grow in richness and vitality as the congregation welcomes and supports those who are becoming fellow members of the faith community, celebrating the gifts they bring. In order to make these commitments, it is important that members of the congregation have opportunities to explore the meaning of their own baptism, and find practical ways of supporting those who come among us. It is through the stories that we share that we find meaning and order in our own lives, within the larger drama of God's story.

vi

The prayer of thanksgiving, "God of steadfast love...", makes explicit the awareness that all this has taken place in the presence of a delighted Father who has run out into the road to embrace a returning son or

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daughter/child. Every newcomer enriches and changes the community, and our response is thanksgiving.

vii

It is important that an Inquirer knows that the way of the cross is the path Christians take in all that they do. The signing with the cross is a dual act of sanctification and remembrance: we recall the utter profanity of the cross as an instrument of defilement and death, and the sacredness of the crucifixion as the beginning of the transfiguration of all things. In a moment of tender intimacy, the Inquirer is invited to share our path, receive life in all its fullness, and face the evil of the world with no more defence than trust in God.

It is desirable (but not necessary) that the sponsor touch the Inquirer when making the sign of the cross. If there are a number of Inquirers being welcomed, all can be signed at the same time, each by a sponsor, while the presider speaks the meaning of the action.

viii

In using the word ‘hearer’ (an English equivalent of the Greek ‘catechumen’), we have opted for clarity over ecclesiastical jargon. *Catechumen* comes from ancient Greek *kata* (=down, against, reflected back, answering to, alongside of, each to each), + *ekhein* (to sound/ring); hence, to echo. It is hoped that the good news of Jesus will ring a chord in the experience and longing of the catechumen. Catechesis always involves a question/answer format, as opposed to lecturing — a mutual hearing by which the Spirit inspires both the Inquirer and members of the Church.

This Calling to be Hearers is therefore placed before the ritual Proclamation of the Word. Clearly this rite of Welcome expects the proclamation that follows to be joyful, intelligent and thoughtfully presented. The challenge is to make our ritual proclamation something worthy of serious attention. The *BAS* has clearly issued the same challenge by extending the title ‘proclamation’ to include the ritual of public scripture reading. Beyond any attending ceremonial (e.g., processing the book during the initial entrance to the room, maintaining an auspicious place for scripture readings, use of candles or incense etc.), the most important dimension of proclamation is the active participation of the congregation.

ix

The processional cross should lead the procession. The hearer and sponsor may be preceded by the paschal candle as a sign of the light that illumines all people and leads us to the knowledge of God. The procession symbolizes the shared pilgrimage of disciples.

x

Presentation of a copy of the bible, if included, must not overshadow the ritual of Proclamation of the Word, which is the real ‘handing on of the good news.’

xi

The first paragraph (used only if hearers are being called to baptism at the beginning of Lent) can serve as a summons to all to recognize the renewed character of Lent within our tradition: a time of preparation for the renewal of the covenant of our baptism in the Paschal Feast. The following paragraph acts as an alternative when baptism is to occur at one of the other great baptismal festivals.

xii

The words about being ‘called’ and ‘chosen’ are not meant to suggest that there are any who are *not* called, but to acknowledge the need for discernment in recognizing God’s call — of responding to the voice of the Good Shepherd — against the clamour of tradition, family, community or culture. It is the integrity of *this* response that allows individuals to recognize that they are truly called and rightly chosen.

xiii

This commendation may be made with confidence when sponsors have had opportunity to guide and encourage hearers during the initial time of exploration of the Christian way, practice of Christian life skills and discernment of their readiness to embrace the challenge of being actively committed Christians.

xiv

Adult hearers may be given the opportunity to amplify their own response to the question, “Do you desire to be baptized?” and so to share with their new found family of faith something of their sense of discovery, or of anticipation, or the nature of the decision they have made.

xv

There is a difference between the recognition of God’s call to enter the Christian covenant and the experience of participation in Christ’s death and resurrection, through which those being baptized actually do enter the covenant. There is a distinct change of agenda here, from a timetable determined by the needs of the individual to the rhythm of life of the Christian community — to the dimension of ‘Church time’.

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xvi

This question (“Do you believe that the time has come...”) assumes a direct personal knowledge of the potential candidates who, by this point, should be well known, by sight at least, to the congregation. Sponsors may be given the option to add personal testimony in corroboration of their response. It should be noted that this is *not* a question of the candidates’ *worthiness*, or the credibility of their performance or conformity. Rather, the issue is *readiness* to enter this very specific covenant — to pass through this particular narrow door.

xvii

During catechesis, parents and sponsors have undertaken to strengthen their faith, through questioning, study and prayer, in recognition of their responsibilities for the primary nurture of the faith of this child. Because the Church is going to ask parents to undertake the spiritual formation of their children, it is incumbent upon the Church to provide appropriate resources. While many churches offer Sunday School, this question implies that the primary form of Christian nurture will be at home. Workshops on faith development for parents, celebrating ecclesiastical seasons at home, print and Internet resources (for both adults and children), and small peer groups, are all possible means to give parents the skills and support they will need in order to accomplish this important ministry.

xviii

Through the companionship and hospitality extended by the congregation, candidates are more fully integrated into the life of the parish by the time of their baptism. The willingness of the congregation to be open to share personal experiences will set the stage for those seeking baptism to fully explore their call to the Christian life.

xix

The question challenges the congregation to recognize in the candidates the Christ with whom, like the disciples in Gethsemane, we are called to watch and pray. From this point the congregation remembers the candidates (and their parents) in the Prayers of the People.

xx

This moment is the culmination of a long period of soul searching, and brings with it a joy and anticipation which may be celebrated with embraces and a suitable hymn or song. (See footnote 2.)

xxi

It is preferable that the candidates’ names be written into the Baptismal Register. If this seems inappropriate (“What if they decide not to be baptized?”), then this rite of Calling may very likely be premature. In the event that names are written into another book, it should be of significant size to indicate its importance and permanence. It is possible, for example, to purchase a commercially available *Book of the Elect*.

xxii

The invitation to pray for the candidates marks the beginning of the period of Candidacy. This is a moment of great solemnity, signified by the gesture of the sponsors.

xxiii

This exhortation acknowledges (especially for the sake of visitors) that what follows is the climax of a long preparation involving both the congregation and the candidates. If the movement suggested in the rubrics that follow has been adopted, this exhortation may appropriately precede the movement of the principal ministers to the place of the examination (Act of Repentance).

xxiv

This movement has its origins in the practice of the early Church (and finds its echo in the current practice of the Eastern Orthodox rite of Baptism). Although the *BAS* rite is sometimes experienced as excessively ‘wordy’, once these movements — movements implied by the words themselves — have been introduced, the words may be heard in all their power. An appropriate gesture that candidates may use to accompany the act of facing the ‘darkness’ is to hold their arms out before them, palms facing away from themselves — a gesture of ‘renunciation’. The positioning of the Paschal Candle in this movement is important within the symbolism of the act as a whole.

xxv

A shower of gifts upon the new Christians is a fitting welcome and a moving sign of the new life of grace which is sustained by the generous gifts of God shared among God’s holy people. It is fitting for gifts to be presented by sponsors and/or other members of the congregation, including children.

xxvi

Robing in white after baptism may well be the earliest post-baptismal ceremony of all, a sign of “putting on Christ” (see Galatians 3:27, and compare Colossians 3:9-10 and Ephesians 4:22-24). It is important to recover the memory that the alb is not a ministerial garment, but the white robe of the baptized, the legitimate vesture of every Christian in worship. Candidates for baptism should be encouraged not to don the new clothes until after coming up from the water; parents of child candidates should be urged to save the ‘christening gown’ for this moment. If

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candidates have been immersed (or water has been poured over them), they will not be able to don the new clothes until they have taken off the wet ones; for the purpose of this presentation, it is enough that the new garment be draped over the candidate's arm (or over the arm of a sponsor).

xxvii

The sign of light is the one gift suggested by the *BAS* rite. The gift of light is not the gift of a candle but the gift of the flame taken from the Paschal Candle. Thus the new Christians may appropriately light their candles from the Paschal Candle held before them.

xxviii

A pendant cross to be worn daily is a fitting gift, and one commonly offered by sponsors in some traditions. Like the gift of new clothes, it can be a sign of "putting on Christ".

xxix

Milk and honey were the legendary blessings associated by God's people of old with their entry into the land of God's promise. It is appropriate to link together the Christian appreciation of the new life in Christ and these ancient symbols of the blessings of God's kingdom. Thus, a bowl of milk sweetened with honey, may be presented to each new Christian to taste; alternatively, a tray with a cup of milk and a plate of honeycomb may be offered for tasting.

xxx

Another way to perform these post-baptismal ceremonies is for one of the ministers to say the first part of the assigned text as the gift is presented to each of the newly baptized, and then, after all have received that gift, to use the first line of the response as the cue line for the congregation to join in, thus:

*Minister*           Receive the riches of your homecoming  
                          to a land of milk and honey.

*When the newly baptized have all been served, the minister says,*  
Taste and see that the Lord is good.

*All*                   **Happy are they who trust in God.**

xxxii

**Gospel Reading Behind the Prayer: *John 3: 1 - 17***

Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. He came to Jesus by night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God." Jesus answered him, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above." Nicodemus said to him, "How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother's womb and be born?" Jesus answered, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be astonished that I said to you, 'You must be born from above.' The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit." Nicodemus said to him, "How can these things be?" Jesus answered him, "Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things? "Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen; yet you do not receive our testimony. If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. "Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him."

xxxiii

**Gospel Reading Behind the Prayer: *John 4: 5 - 42***

So he came to a Samaritan city called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired out by his journey, was sitting by the well. It was about noon. A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink." (His disciples had gone to the city to buy food.) The Samaritan woman said to him, "How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?" (Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans.) Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water." The woman said to him, "Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well, and with his sons and his flocks drank from it?" Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life." The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water." Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come back." The woman answered him, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You are right in saying, 'I have no husband'; for you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband. What you have said is true!" The woman said to him, "Sir, I see that you are a prophet. Our ancestors worshipped on this mountain, but you say that the place where people must worship is in Jerusalem." Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshippers will worship the Father

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in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.” The woman said to him, “I know that Messiah is coming” (who is called Christ). “When he comes, he will proclaim all things to us.” Jesus said to her, “I am he, the one who is speaking to you.” Just then his disciples came. They were astonished that he was speaking with a woman, but no one said, “What do you want?” or, “Why are you speaking with her?” Then the woman left her water jar and went back to the city. She said to the people, “Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done! He cannot be the Messiah, can he?” They left the city and were on their way to him. Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, “Rabbi, eat something.” But he said to them, “I have food to eat that you do not know about.” So the disciples said to one another, “Surely no one has brought him something to eat?” Jesus said to them, “My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to complete his work. Do you not say, ‘Four months more, then comes the harvest?’ But I tell you, look around you, and see how the fields are ripe for harvesting. The reaper is already receiving wages and is gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. For here the saying holds true, ‘One sows and another reaps.’ I sent you to reap that for which you did not labour. Others have laboured, and you have entered into their labour.” Many Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them; and he stayed there two days. And many more believed because of his word. They said to the woman, “It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is truly the Saviour of the world.”

xxxiii

**Gospel Reading Behind the Prayer: *John 9: 1- 41***

As he walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” Jesus answered, “Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God’s works might be revealed in him. We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man’s eyes, saying to him, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam” (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see. The neighbours and those who had seen him before as a beggar began to ask, “Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?” Some were saying, “It is he.” Others were saying, “No, but it is someone like him.” He kept saying, “I am the man.” But they kept asking him, “Then how were your eyes opened?” He answered, “The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and said to me, ‘Go to Siloam and wash.’ Then I went and washed and received my sight.” They said to him, “Where is he?” He said, “I do not know.” They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. Now it was a sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. Then the Pharisees also began to ask him how he had received his sight. He said to them, “He put mud on my eyes. Then I washed, and now I see.” Some of the Pharisees said, “This man is not from God, for he does not observe the sabbath.” But others said, “How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?” And they were divided. So they said again to the blind man, “What do you say about him? It was your eyes he opened.” He said, “He is a prophet.” The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight and asked them, “Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?” His parents answered, “We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; but we do not know how it is that now he sees, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for himself.” His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews; for the Jews had already agreed that anyone who confessed Jesus to be the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue. Therefore his parents said, “He is of age; ask him.” So for the second time they called the man who had been blind, and they said to him, “Give glory to God! We know that this man is a sinner.” He answered, “I do not know whether he is a sinner. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.” They said to him, “What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?” He answered them, “I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples?” Then they reviled him, saying, “You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from.” The man answered, “Here is an astonishing thing! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. We know that God does not listen to sinners, but he does listen to one who worships him and obeys his will. Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.” They answered him, “You were born entirely in sins, and are you trying to teach us?” And they drove him out. Jesus heard that they had driven him out, and when he found him, he said, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?” He answered, “And who is he, sir? Tell me, so that I may believe in him.” Jesus said to him, “You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he.” He said, “Lord, I believe.” And he worshipped him. Jesus said, “I came into this world for judgment so that those who do not see may see, and those who do see may become blind.” Some of the Pharisees near him heard this and said to him, “Surely we are not blind, are we?” Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now that you say, ‘We see,’ your sin remains.”

xxxiv

**Gospel Reading Behind the Prayer: *John 11: 1 - 45***

Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. Mary was the one who anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped his feet with her hair; her brother Lazarus was ill. So the sisters sent a message to Jesus, “Lord, he whom you love is ill.” But when Jesus heard it, he said, “This illness does not lead to death; rather it is for God’s glory, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it.” Accordingly, though Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, after having heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was. Then after this he said to the disciples, “Let us go to Judea again.” The disciples said to him, “Rabbi, the Jews were just now trying to stone you, and are you

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going there again?” Jesus answered, “Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Those who walk during the day do not stumble, because they see the light of this world. But those who walk at night stumble, because the light is not in them.” After saying this, he told them, “Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going there to awaken him.” The disciples said to him, “Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will be all right.” Jesus, however, had been speaking about his death, but they thought that he was referring merely to sleep. Then Jesus told them plainly, “Lazarus is dead. For your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him.” Thomas, who was called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, “Let us also go, that we may die with him.” When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, some two miles away, and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them about their brother. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary stayed at home. Martha said to Jesus, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him.” Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.” Martha said to him, “I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.” Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?” She said to him, “Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world.” When she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary, and told her privately, “The Teacher is here and is calling for you.” And when she heard it, she got up quickly and went to him. Now Jesus had not yet come to the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met him. The Jews who were with her in the house, consoling her, saw Mary get up quickly and go out. They followed her because they thought that she was going to the tomb to weep there. When Mary came where Jesus was and saw him, she knelt at his feet and said to him, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.” When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved. He said, “Where have you laid him?” They said to him, “Lord, come and see.” Jesus began to weep. So the Jews said, “See how he loved him!” But some of them said, “Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?” Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. Jesus said, “Take away the stone.” Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, “Lord, already there is a stench because he has been dead four days.” Jesus said to her, “Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?” So they took away the stone. And Jesus looked upward and said, “Father, I thank you for having heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me.” When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!” The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth, and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, “Unbind him, and let him go.” Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what Jesus did, believed in him.

xxxv

**Gospel Reading Behind the Prayer: *Mark 8: 31 – 38***

Then he began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, “Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.” He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, “If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.”

xxxvi

**Gospel Reading Behind the Prayer: *John 2:13-22***

The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. In the temple he found people selling cattle, sheep, and doves, and the money changers seated at their tables. Making a whip of cords, he drove all of them out of the temple, both the sheep and the cattle. He also poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. He told those who were selling the doves, “Take these things out of here! Stop making my Father’s house a marketplace!” His disciples remembered that it was written, “Zeal for your house will consume me.” The Jews then said to him, “What sign can you show us for doing this?” Jesus answered them, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” The Jews then said, “This temple has been under construction for forty-six years, and will you raise it up in three days?” But he was speaking of the temple of his body. After he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this; and they believed the scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.

xxxvii

**Gospel Reading Behind the Prayer: *John 3: 14 - 21***

And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. “Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. Those who believe in him are not condemned; but those who do not believe are condemned already, because they have not believed in the name of the only Son of God. And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. For all who do evil hate the light and do not come to the light, so that their deeds may not be exposed. But those who do what is true come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God.”

**Gospel Reading Behind the Prayer: *John 12: 20 - 33***

Now among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks. They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and said to him, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus." Philip went and told Andrew; then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. Jesus answered them, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honour. "Now my soul is troubled. And what should I say – 'Father, save me from this hour'? No, it is for this reason that I have come to this hour. Father, glorify your name." Then a voice came from heaven, "I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again." The crowd standing there heard it and said that it was thunder. Others said, "An angel has spoken to him." Jesus answered, "This voice has come for your sake, not for mine. Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out. And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself." He said this to indicate the kind of death he was to die.

**Gospel Reading Behind the Prayer: *Luke 13: 31 - 35***

At that very hour some Pharisees came and said to him, "Get away from here, for Herod wants to kill you." He said to them, "Go and tell that fox for me, 'Listen, I am casting out demons and performing cures today and tomorrow, and on the third day I finish my work. Yet today, tomorrow, and the next day I must be on my way, because it is impossible for a prophet to be killed outside of Jerusalem.' Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! See, your house is left to you. And I tell you, you will not see me until the time comes when you say, 'Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.'"

**Gospel Reading Behind the Prayer: *Luke 13: 1 - 9***

At that very time there were some present who told him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. He asked them, "Do you think that because these Galileans suffered in this way they were worse sinners than all other Galileans? No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish as they did. Or those eighteen who were killed when the tower of Siloam fell on them – do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others living in Jerusalem? No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish just as they did." Then he told this parable: "A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it and found none. So he said to the gardener, 'See here! For three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree, and still I find none. Cut it down! Why should it be wasting the soil?' He replied, 'Sir, let it alone for one more year, until I dig around it and put manure on it. If it bears fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down.'"

**Gospel Reading Behind the Prayer: *Luke 15: 1 - 3, 11b - 32***

Now all the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to him. And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, "This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them."

So he told them this parable: "There was a man who had two sons. The younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of the property that will belong to me.' So he divided his property between them. A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and travelled to a distant country, and there he squandered his property in dissolute living. When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. He would gladly have filled himself with the pods that the pigs were eating; and no one gave him anything. But when he came to himself he said, 'How many of my father's hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands.' So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. Then the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' But the father said to his slaves, 'Quickly, bring out a robe – the best one – and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!' And they began to celebrate.

"Now his elder son was in the field; and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. He called one of the slaves and asked what was going on. He replied, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has got him back safe and sound.' Then he became angry and refused to go in. His father came out and began to plead with him. But he answered his father, 'Listen! For all these years I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed your command; yet you have never given me even a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!' Then the father said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found.'"

**Gospel Reading Behind the Prayer: *John 12: 1 - 8***

Six days before the Passover Jesus came to Bethany, the home of Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. There

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they gave a dinner for him. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those at the table with him. Mary took a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard, anointed Jesus' feet, and wiped them with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (the one who was about to betray him), said, "Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor?" (He said this not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief; he kept the common purse and used to steal what was put into it.) Jesus said, "Leave her alone. She bought it so that she might keep it for the day of my burial. You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me."

xliii

The translation by John Webster Grant is very apt (Common Praise #638); also appropriate are 'From the Waiting Comes the Sign' (CP #642), 'Come Down, O Love Divine' (CP #645), 'O Holy Spirit, Enter In' (CP #648), 'God's Spirit As a Rising Gale' (CP #650).

xliv

For those who are turning again to the way of Christ, the place of welcome is always the place of worship itself, for they are already members through baptism. They are welcomed back into the assembly of those who gather together to hear the proclamation of God's word. The role of the sponsor will be important here, as in the initiation of Christians. As spiritual companion, the sponsor embodies the Church's care for the returning member until that person is able to make a solemn reaffirmation of the baptismal covenant. The text "I present..." should be adapted if it does not express what is happening in the life of the person being presented, for example, when changing denominations.

xlv

"What do you seek?" is the same question Jesus put to would-be disciples, the question he asked the blind man at Jericho, the same question we all must face if our religion is to be more than the impulse to measure up to some external expectations of us. It is the question we will want to ask the one returning if we trust the stirring of the Spirit in their interior lives. And so it needs to be asked with sensitivity.

The second question, "What do you ask of this community?" is a gentle reminder of the congregation's involvement and delight in the member's return. The members of the community will then have a better understanding of how they may be able to support and help this person.

These questions are about knowing one's own heart, and bringing that openness of heart to the gospel proclamation. It is followed by publicly confessing and declaring one's baptismal standing; consciousness of this standing is thereby reinforced as the real basis of restoration.

xlvi

The words "In baptism, we died with Christ" challenge the person to recognize the profound meaning of baptism and the seriousness of this step. The affirmation about a person's readiness to begin this journey back to life within the covenant leads into the question "Will you reexamine...?"

xlvii

The congregation is called upon to promise its support and faithfulness. The communal life of a parish can grow in richness and vitality as the congregation welcomes and supports those who are turning again to the way of Christ, celebrating the gifts they bring. In order to make these commitments, it is important that members of the congregation have opportunities to explore the meaning of their own baptism, and find practical ways of supporting those who come among us. It is through the stories shared with others that people find meaning and order in their lives and within the larger drama of God's story.

xlviii

The thanksgiving follows without pause ("God of steadfast love...") It makes explicit the awareness that all this has taken place in the presence of a delighted father who has run out into the road to embrace a returning child. It acknowledges the fact that a returning member enriches and changes the community, and our response is thanksgiving.

xlix

Some suggested refrains from *Common Praise* for this moment:

548 Eye Has Not Seen, Ear Has Not Heard (refrain)

61 As We Gather at Your Table (verse 1)

712 Speak, O Lord; Your Servant is Listening (verse 1)

l

These words link our thanksgiving and the reading of the word, and echo the situation of those turning again to the way of Christ: their recognition, conscious or sub-conscious, that they are indeed starving, hands reaching out for the bread of life. It is hoped that the good news of Jesus will resound in their experience, that they will hear it again as if for the first time, testing the meaning of their history in the Church against this new hearing of the word. It is for this reason that this Welcome is placed before the ritual Proclamation of the Word.

Clearly the Welcome expects the proclamation that follows to be joyful, intelligent and transformative. The

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BAS has issued the same challenge by extending the title ‘proclamation’ to include not only preaching but the public reading of scripture as well. The attending ceremonial can help to suggest the supreme importance of this proclamation (e.g., processing the book during the initial entrance, maintaining an auspicious place for scripture readings, use of candles, incense, etc.). The most important element, however, is the active participation of the congregation.

Essentially, this is a period of mystagogy (i.e., of growing into a fuller appreciation of our sacramental life) in which people may rediscover their identity and calling as the Baptised. It is a time to re-enter the life of ongoing conversion and to seek reconciliation with the community from which they had become estranged. Insofar as this estrangement may have resulted from failings of the Church itself, the contrition of the community of faith will play a part in this reconciliation.

li

Presentation of a copy of the bible must not overshadow the ritual of proclamation, which is the real “handing on of the Good News”.

lii

It is appropriate that those being presented not be called forward at this point, but remain standing in their place (together with their sponsors). Their identity as part of the company of the baptized is thus underlined.

liii

Those turning again to the way of Christ may be invited to speak about what caused their alienation from the Church, and the experiences through which the Spirit enticed them back into the community of the Faithful. The sponsor needs to guide them in preparing what they will say at this moment.

liv

Those turning again to the way of Christ are invited to receive the sign of ashes first. One of them then invites the congregation to come forward, thus confirming the ongoing conversion of the community. They may join the presider in applying ashes to others. The interdependence of congregation and penitents is strengthened by the active role they are given in this rite.

lv

Some visual link to baptism (to underscore the implications of Jesus’ response to Peter) is appropriate. The water for the foot-washing may be taken from the font at this moment, using the vessel customarily used in filling the font; or the foot-washing ceremony may be set within the baptistry (if there is one).

lvi

The iconic leadership of those turning again to the way of Christ through the lenten journey will become explicit when one of them voices this final paragraph of the invitation.

lvii

Various approaches are envisaged in this rubric. If the presider alone had washed the feet of those turning again to the way of Christ, one of them could be handed the pitcher and another the towel so that they, with the presider (holding a basin), may wash the feet of others. Or this ministry may be given over entirely to those whose feet have just been washed (so that the presider is free to receive the foot-washing with others). Those who subsequently receive the foot-washing may in turn administer it to others in a continuing rotation through the congregation.

lviii

The sharing of the Peace becomes the first recognition of a fully restored communion between those turning again to the way of Christ and the community of the Faithful. In greeting returning members first, the congregation publicly acknowledges the profound reconciliation that God has brought about.