

Services from the
Book of Common Prayer
with a Deacon as Officiant

Edited and Adapted by
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INTRODUCTION

The deacon is normally not the officiant at most of the services in the Book of Common Prayer. Nevertheless there are times when in necessity or for pastoral considerations the deacon is called upon to perform these functions. This may not always occur in the parish church; but may be in private homes, institutions, and other settings where the service of a priest is not always available.

This booklet is designed to help the deacon on such occasions. I have gone through the services of the Book of Common Prayer and, following the rubrics, have edited them for the deacon to be the officiant. I have opted for the word "*officiant*" instead of "*celebrant*" or "*presider*" for no other reason than that is the term used in the Daily Office to name what in the monastic tradition is sometimes called the "*hebdomadarian*".

I have not included the Daily Office in this booklet since the only change in that office when the Officiant is not a priest or bishop is the substitution of "*us*" for "*you*" and "*our*" for "*your*" in the absolution.

Nor have I included all of the Proper Liturgies for Special Days and for some I have only highlighted the rubrics.

Br. Justus Van Houten SSF
Deacon

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Holy Baptism

Holy Baptism is full initiation by water and the Holy Spirit into Christ's Body the Church. The bond which God establishes in Baptism is indissoluble.

Each candidate for Holy Baptism is to be sponsored by one or more baptized persons. Sponsors of adults and older children present their candidates and thereby signify their endorsement of the candidates and their intention to support them by prayer and example in their Christian life. It is fitting that parents be included among the godparents of their own children.

Holy Baptism is especially appropriate at the Easter Vigil, on the Day of Pentecost, on All Saints' Day or the Sunday after All Saints' Day, and on the Feast of the Baptism of our Lord (the First Sunday after the Epiphany). It is recommended that, as far as possible, Baptisms be reserved for these occasions or when a bishop is present. If on any one of the above named days the ministry of a bishop or priest cannot be obtained, the bishop may specially authorize a deacon to preside. In that case, the deacon omits the prayer over the candidates, page 308, and the formula and action which follow. These omitted portions of the rite may be administered on some subsequent occasion of public baptism at which a bishop or priest presides.

If desired, the hymn Gloria in excelsis may be sung immediately after the opening versicles and before the salutation "The Lord be with you."

Lay persons may act as readers, and it is appropriate for sponsors to be assigned this function. The petitions (page 305) may also be led by one of the sponsors. The Nicene Creed is not used at this service. If the Presentation of the Candidates does not take place at the font, then before or during the petitions (page 305), the ministers, candidates, and sponsors go to the font for the Thanksgiving over the Water. If the movement to the font is a formal procession, a suitable psalm, such as Psalm 42, or a hymn or anthem, may be sung.

Where practicable, the font is to be filled with clean water immediately before the Thanksgiving over the Water. At the Thanksgiving over the Water, and at the administration of Baptism, the Officiant, whenever possible, should face the people across the font, and the sponsors should be so grouped that the people may have a clear view of the action.

After the Baptism, a candle (which may be lighted from the Paschal Candle) may be given to each of the newly baptized or to a godparent.

Holy Baptism

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A hymn, psalm, or anthem may be sung. The people standing, the Officiant says

 Blessed be God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
People **And blessed be his kingdom, now and for ever. Amen.**

In place of the above, from Easter Day through the Day of Pentecost

Officiant Alleluia. Christ is risen.
People **The Lord is risen indeed. Alleluia.**

In Lent and on other penitential occasions

Officiant Bless the Lord who forgives all our sins;
People **His mercy endures for ever.**

The Officiant then continues

 There is one Body and one Spirit;
People **There is one hope in God's call to us;**
Officiant One Lord, one Faith, one Baptism;
People **One God and Father of all.**

Officiant The Lord be with you.
People **And also with you.**
Officiant Let us pray.

The Collect of the Day

People **Amen.**

At the principal service on a Sunday or other feast, the Collect and Lessons are properly those of the Day. On other occasions they are selected from "At Baptism". (See Additional Directions, page 312.)

The Lessons

The people sit.

One or two Lessons, as appointed, are read, the Reader first saying

A Reading (Lesson) from _____.

A citation giving chapter and verse may be added.

After each Reading, the Reader may say

People **The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.**

or the Reader may say

Here ends the Reading (Epistle).

Silence may follow.

A Psalm, hymn, or anthem may follow each Reading.

Then, all standing, the Deacon or a Priest reads the Gospel, first saying

The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ
according to _____.

People **Glory to you, Lord Christ.**

After the Gospel, the Reader says

The Gospel of the Lord.

People **Praise to you, Lord Christ.**

The Sermon

Or the Sermon may be preached after the Peace.

Stations of the Cross *Bro Justus Richard*

1—Jesus is condemned

Jesus, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world—himself the sinless one is condemned to death. There seems to be no justice in this condemnation. Bad things always seem to happen to good people: the stray bullet killing the young child, so-called “acts of God” wreaking vengeance undreamed of. But Jesus accepts this verdict and forgives those who condemn him. Can we also have the grace to forgive?

2—Jesus takes his cross

Jesus prophesied that he would be lifted up like the serpent in the wilderness and in that process draw all humankind unto himself. Jesus accepts his cross and bids us to take up our crosses and to follow him. As we pick up our cross we recall how he said, “Come unto me all ye who are heavy laden and I will give you rest”.

3—Jesus falls the first time

Jesus is no super-human endowed with Atlas like strength. He is the most humanly human of all. His cross weighs heavy upon him. He was tempted in every way that we are and knows our human frailty. As he condescended to share our humanity, can we have the desire to partake in his divinity?

4—Jesus meets his mother

Parents aren’t supposed to see their children die. Yet countless mothers of people with AIDS bear this grief. Mary grieves at her son’s agony and so often we too can do nothing but grieve at the loss of a loved one. This common grief links us to Mary—the mother of our Lord—with bonds of love and compassion.

5—Simon helps Jesus

Jesus—the one who healed the sick and fed the multitudes must now accept help from a stranger. We like to be able to give unto others and believe that it is more blessed to give than to receive, and yet like Jesus, we must also receive so that others may give. In order for the Body to be sound each part must both give and receive. We must follow our Head in accepting the services of others.

6—Veronica wipes his face

It takes courage to come out from the crowd; to not be a moral coward. To keep hope and faith when everything and everyone around us speak of despair and forsakeness. There is a tendency to try to be like everyone else. And yet the woman broke from the crowd to wipe Jesus’ face, and as we remember her simple act of bravery, we are encouraged to do the same.

7—Jesus falls a Second Time

It’s hard to persevere. Even when others are helping us and encouraging us, we still need to struggle on and that isn’t easy. Things don’t always go as easily as we had thought or hoped that they would. Setbacks occur and there isn’t much we can do about them. Jesus knows what it is like to falter under the burden he had to bear and can give us grace to carry on.

8—Jesus speaks to the Women of Jerusalem

Sometimes like Jesus, we have to minister to others even when we are in need of being ministered unto. We go hungry so that another can eat. We place needs of others before our

own. And sometimes we are like the women of Jerusalem who can never have our appetites satiated, always wanting more and are full of self pity.

9—Jesus falls the Third Time

Sometimes things in life are so painful that we don't see how we can take another step. We suffer the Midas touch in reverse—everything we touch turns to dross—and we want to just give up everything. And then we look at Jesus who was obedient unto death—death on a cross, and in his humiliation, we find the strength to continue our own journey.

10—Jesus is stripped

We love to surround ourselves with finery—to have a comfortable home and a classy car. We think that by surrounding ourselves with things that we will have security. But Jesus reminds us that in the end we have nothing—we are nothing—except what we have and who we are in Christ.

11—Jesus is nailed to the cross

Jesus said that no one had more love than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. We glibly say that Christ died for us. But can we begin to comprehend the love that his death reveals. May God give us grace to live for the love of Christ's love as he did die for love of ours.

12—Jesus dies

Jesus gave his all—he withheld nothing. And even in that final agony he commits his mother to the care of a friend, he assures a penitent thief of pardon, and forgives his executioners. His final acts are in perfect congruity with the rest of his life. This is true perfection—the kind of perfection enjoined on us in the call to be perfect as he is perfect. To have that integrity of living and dying as a child of God.

13—Jesus is taken from the cross

Before Jesus was born, Mary said the Magnificat: "He has cast down the mighty from their thrones and lifted up the lowly." Now as she holds the body of her son the paradox continues. The bringer of abundant life is dead. But, death brings forth life, hope springs from despair, light shines in the darkness.

14—Jesus is laid in the tomb

Everything is empty and silent, cold—stone cold. The Son of God is dead and buried. And we die—we die and will also be buried, but we also die countless little deaths as we are divorced from parts of our past, as we lose things we had held dear and we shed ourselves of actions that have been destructive. These deaths prepare us to share in resurrection—not just the Resurrection of the end of time—but also as we seek to daily live in Christ, our risen Lord.