

II. Customary for the Institution of Ministers

Note: There may be unusual circumstances or pastoral reasons sufficient to make exceptions to the guidelines that follow. Please do not hesitate to discuss any such concerns with the bishop.

In response to fairly constant demand, there is an alternative to this liturgy suggested in an appendix to this customary.

In the still-developing baptismal ecclesiology of the Episcopal Church, this service has become something of a whipping-child, and there can be no question about its status as the least satisfying piece of the 1979 revision. That said, there remains something to affirm about its somewhat clerical shape, and you will have the rest of your ministry to teach and enact special emphases of your ecclesiology. This liturgy has another purpose within that baptismal ecclesiology: it is a chance for the baptized and your colleagues to welcome and ritually support you in the challenging ministry you undertake — possibly the only or last experience of organized support you will receive. Let it happen. Let yourself be cared for; it is arguable that you will teach more by gracefully receiving than by designing “statement” liturgical embolisms.

The observations below follow the rite in the prayer book, under the italicized or bold section indicators as the prayer book presents them.

A few general notes:

- ♦ Please, *do not make this service look or feel like an ordination.*
- ♦ Please do not prostrate for the litany.
- ♦ Please be fully vested as a concelebrant of the eucharist from the very beginning of the service. Any other vestments you receive can be placed with the keys, books, oil, and other items brought to you as symbolic gifts.
- ♦ It is suggested that you use a litany other than that for ordinations, particularly new litanies for the church, mission, or evangelism.

- ♦ Ordinarily, the bishop will preach at institutions. If you have special requests, please speak with the bishop directly. In any event, a guest preacher should be acquainted with the spiritual resources and mission possibilities of the parish.
- ♦ Please also note the additional directions on page 564 of the prayer book.
- ♦ The color for the service is white or red, white always being used in Eastertide. Outside of Eastertide, please advise the bishop of your choice.
- ♦ Please also let the bishop know which parts of the service your congregation has some experience of as sung (this is not the same question as whether or not you personally can sing). Where possible and not a burden or a novelty, it is preferable that we sing at least the dialogue (“sursum corda”), preface, doxology (“by whom and with whom . . .”) and its great Amen.
- ♦ Please use a master of ceremonies in this service; it really will make a difference in how you can relax and experience the worship. Members of the diocesan Commission on Liturgy and Music are at your disposal for consultation.

The Institution

The wardens may be joined by other presenters, at your option.

The archdeacon will normally be present with the bishop and will read the letter of institution.

You kneel at the entrance of the chancel or other central place during the litany. Again, prostration is not appropriate.

At the Liturgy of the Word

Please select the lessons, the lay persons to read them, and a gospel, to be read by a deacon if at all possible (a deacon almost always accompanies the bishop). If there will be deacons present, a priest should not read the gospel. Please notify the preacher as early as you can of the lesson choices.

The deacon or priest reading the gospel should come to the bishop for a blessing before going to the place where the gospel is read. After “The Gospel of the Lord” and the people’s response, the gospel book, if there is one, should be brought, still open, to the bishop for veneration.

The sermon may be followed by responses, including words from you. Some find it helpful for the first response to be the renewal of baptismal vows by new rector and people, as introduction to the Induction. With rector and people answering together, solidarity in discipleship is clearly expressed, and the Induction has a more communal context.

The Induction

This modest symbolic expression of the hopes for and responsibilities of the person instituted needs to remain in proportion. You have been called here because you are a talented and caring person. Hard as it is for those in caring professions, please let people *care for you* at this moment without your having to reciprocate or “top” their gifts — having the last word, as it were. Let this be the time when the laity experience themselves as the strong and giving ones. Please consult the bishop on any changes or adaptations you contemplate making in the induction, especially any truly unusual gifts or symbols of office. Stuffed animals, entrenching tools (both of which I have seen), or any other things remotely cute, are very seldom appropriate. If something is reasonably anticipated to evoke a giggle, or cause people to dwell on some endearing aspect of your personality, it is very probably better to drop it or save it for the reception. There is, sad to say, in my observation of the use of this service since 1976, a high correlation between the presentation of seriously eccentric symbols and short rectorships. Again, let the congregation take care of you; you will have the next twenty years to express yourself to them.

Let the bishop know whether your family is to be presented with you, and if they are, the names of those family members who will be with you. Please also let the bishop know how you

wish to be referred to in the third person. (John, Mother Smith, Mr. Smith, Mrs. Smith, Dean Dana, Canon Candy, etc. *Academic or civil titles are never appropriate in this setting.*)

At the Eucharist

The bishop will ordinarily designate the offerings to your discretionary fund. If you prefer some other designation, that is fine. Either way, the designation should be listed in the service folder.

Please have, if possible, deacons or a deacon to set the table, assist with the book, and elevate the chalice at the great doxology at the end of the eucharistic prayer. Usually the bishop's deacon will perform the last function.

You may choose the eucharistic prayer.

You will join the bishop at the altar, as will the archdeacon. Please invite other "concelebrants" as you may desire and the space permits. Concelebration as practiced in our diocese is described in the ordination customary and the customary for eucharists at which the bishop presides.

The concelebrants will communicate themselves.

Please plan to distribute bread along with the bishop and to assign the chalices as you see fit. If for some reason there are not to be sufficient clergy to administer Holy Communion, the prayer book provides for lay assistants.

Please note the proper post-communion collect; it is best to print it in the service folder so that your Christian name (only), in the form you wish it used, will appear in the place designated.

Ordinarily, you give the blessing.

The dismissal is to be said facing the people, whenever it occurs.

An Alternative

The canons do not require the prayer book institution service, and if you are uncomfortable with its liturgical shape, there is another

way. A eucharist, presided at by the bishop or the bishop's representative, may be celebrated. After the prayers of the people, the letter of institution is read. A warden or representative of the parish may read a statement of welcome. The new rector may respond with a few words, the prayer given in the present service, or both. The new rector begins the peace, and the liturgy follows in the usual way, perhaps with the new rector presiding, observing the special practices associated with a liturgy celebrated in the bishop's presence. High revel may follow in the parish house, and gifts of intrinsic and symbolic worth may be given and more speeches by civic and church leaders can be made. Other approaches are of course possible, and you are invited to share your thoughts with the bishop.

From *The Bishop Is Coming! A Practical Guide for Bishops and Congregations*
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