

Comparison of the Confession rites from the BCP and the 1979 Book.
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This paper was first published in the Deanery of Appalachia News and Commentary

1928 BCP	1979 book
<p>YE who do truly and earnestly repent you of your sins, and are in love and charity with your neighbours, and intend to lead a new life, following the commandments of God, and walking from henceforth in his holy ways; Draw near with faith, and take this holy Sacrament to your comfort; and make your humble confession to Almighty God, devoutly kneeling.</p>	<p>A Confession of Sin is said here if it has not been said earlier. <u>On occasion, the Confession may be omitted.</u> (emphasis mine.)</p>
<p>Then shall this General Confession be made, by the Priest and all those who are minded to receive the Holy Communion, humbly kneeling.</p>	<p>One of the sentences from the Penitential Order on page 351 may be said.</p>
<p>ALMIGHTY God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Maker of all things, Judge of all men; We acknowledge and bewail our manifold sins and wickedness, Which we, from time to time, most grievously have committed, By thought, word, and deed, Against thy Divine Majesty, Provoking most justly thy wrath and indignation against us. We do earnestly repent, And are heartily sorry for these our misdoings; The remembrance of them is grievous unto us; The burden of them is intolerable. Have mercy upon us, Have mercy upon us, most merciful Father; For thy Son our Lord Jesus Christ's sake, Forgive us all that is past; And grant that we may ever hereafter Serve and please thee In newness of life, To the honour and glory of thy Name; Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.</p>	<p>Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.</p>
<p>Then shall the Priest (the Bishop if he be present) stand up, and turning to the People, say,</p>	<p>Silence may be kept</p>
<p>ALMIGHTY God, our heavenly Father, who of his great mercy hath promised forgiveness of sins to all those who with hearty repentance and true faith turn unto him; Have mercy upon you; pardon and deliver you from all your sins; confirm and strengthen you in all goodness;</p>	<p>Minister and People</p>
	<p>Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent. For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us; that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your Name. Amen.</p>
	<p>The Priest stands and says</p>
	<p>Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you all your sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life. Amen.</p>

and bring you to everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Then shall the Priest say,

Hear what comfortable words our Saviour Christ saith unto all who truly turn to him.

COME unto me, all ye that travail and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you. St. Matt. xi. 28.

So God loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, to the end that all that believe in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. St. John iii. 16.

Hear also what Saint Paul saith.

This is a true saying, and worthy of all men to be received, That Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. 1 Tim. i. 15.

Hear also what Saint John saith.

If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the Propitiation for our sins. 1 St. John ii. 1, 2.

Analysis

Liturgical Theology is of necessity, inferential. We cannot know what was in the minds of the authors, but we can safely infer a great deal from what is said, and often even more from what is left unsaid. In the case of these two confession rites, we can note several differences, and make certain inferences.

The first, most obvious, and rather terrifying difference is that in the 1979 Book, the entire rite is optional. "A Confession of Sin is said here if it has not been said earlier. On occasion, the Confession may be omitted." The notion of receiving the Body and Blood of Our Lord without being first shriven of our sins suggests a lack of understanding of (or belief in) the grave dangers involved in unworthy reception. (See: I Cor. 11:28-31)

The second, and perhaps even more dangerous difference is the total lack of any sense of conditionality in the 1979 book. In the 1928 BCP, the conditions for receiving God's forgiveness are set forth in a straightforward and highly confrontational manner, to wit:

