

# FACTFILE: GCE RELIGIOUS STUDIES

## UNIT AS 4: DEVELOPING CHRISTIAN BELIEF AND PRACTICE



### Developing Christian belief and practice

#### Baptism

In the Early Church period, baptism was the universal rite of entry into the Church. Similar water based rituals were common; e.g. **Law of Moses** required ritual washing before participation in certain acts (cf. Leviticus 14–5: skin diseases, bodily discharges, period bleeding, semen emission); initiation in **Hellenistic mystery religions** (Egyptian goddess Isis and Serapis); **Essenes** (Qumran) practised bathing twice each day for ritual cleanliness; Gentile converts to **Judaism** received circumcision, immersed themselves and made a sacrifice. Water was widely used in the ancient world as a means of purification.

**John the Baptist** is the immediate antecedent to Christian baptism. His baptism, though related to repentance and the forgiveness of sins, was not Christian baptism. It did not bring the impartation of the Holy Spirit (cf. Acts 19:2–4). When Jesus was baptised by John the Baptist; he was acknowledged as God's Son and he received the Holy Spirit (cf. Luke 3:21–22).

#### Origins of baptism in the New Testament

The foundation of Christian baptism was Jesus' command to his disciples. Matthew 28:19. 'Go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit...'

Earliest extant records of baptism (nine) are in **Acts**:

1	2:41	3,000 converts on Day of Pentecost after Peter preached
2	8:12	converts in Samaria after Philip preached
3	8:38	Philip baptises an Ethiopian eunuch
4	9:18	Ananias baptises Saul of Tarsus in Damascus
5	10:48	Cornelius and Gentile converts baptised by Peter
6	16:15	Lydia and household baptised by Paul at Philippi
7	16:33	Jailer and family baptised by Paul at Philippi
8	18:8	Corinthian converts baptised by Paul
9	19:5	Ephesian believers baptised by Paul

Baptism was believed to be a **sacrament**: Greek *μυστήριον* (*mysterion*) and Latin *sacramentum*. There are no uses of this terminology prior to the early 3rd C. (i.e. Alexandrian Fathers in East and Tertullian in West)

#### Definition.

'The Church's sacraments are those external rites, more precisely signs, which Christians believe convey, by Christ's appointment, an unseen sanctifying grace' (J.N.D. Kelly: *Early Christian Doctrines* p.193).

Their number has been reckoned differently at different times. In Early church there were 3 commonly recognised sacraments: Baptism,

Eucharist, Penance. Not all Christians agree upon the validity of infant baptism. There is no specific example of a child baptised in the New Testament, but others argue that Acts 16:15 & 33 could include young children and that Christian baptism replaced Jewish circumcision and is therefore appropriate for children of believers.

## Development of the doctrine and practice of baptism

There is no description in the New Testament of how any baptism was performed.

Surviving references to Christian baptism are as follows:

### Didache 7. (early 2<sup>nd</sup> century)

*The procedure for baptising is as follows. After rehearsing all the preliminaries, immerse in running water 'In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost'. If no running water is available, immerse in ordinary water. This should be cold if possible; otherwise warm. If neither is practicable, then sprinkle water three times on the head 'In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost'. Both baptiser and baptized ought to fast before the baptism, as well as any others who can do so; but the candidate himself should be told to keep a fast for a day or two beforehand.*

The mode of baptism was not paramount: immersion in running water (therefore clean) was preferable but in East water could be in short supply and so sprinkling was equally valid. A trinitarian formula was required.

In earliest post-apostolic period, baptism was often performed at Easter each year, and followed by first Eucharist.

### Didache 9.

*But let no one eat or drink of your Eucharist but those who have been baptised in the name of the Lord; for the Lord has already spoken concerning this: "Do not give what is holy to dogs".*

No-one was permitted to take Eucharist who had not been baptised.

### Ignatius – To Smyrna 8. (early 2<sup>nd</sup> century)

*Flee from divisions, as the beginning of evils. You must all follow the bishop, as Jesus Christ followed the Father, and follow the presbytery as you would the apostles; respect the deacons as the*

*commandment of God. Let no one do anything that has to do with the church without the bishop. Only that Eucharist which is under the authority of the bishop [or whomever he himself designates] is to be considered valid. Wherever the bishop appears, there let the congregation be; just as wherever Jesus Christ is, there is the catholic church. **It is not permissible either to baptize or to hold a love-feast without the bishop.** But whatever he approves is also pleasing to God, in order that everything you do may be trustworthy and valid. Valid sacraments came to be linked with recognised church leadership.*

### Justin Martyr – First Apology 61.

Justin was martyred c.165 in Rome and provides a famous description of Christian baptism.

*I will also relate the manner in which we dedicated ourselves to God when we had been made new through Christ; lest, if we omit this, we seem to be unfair in the explanation we are making. As many as are persuaded and believe that what we teach and say is true, and undertake to be able to live accordingly, are instructed to pray and to entreat God with fasting, for the remission of their sins that are past, we praying and fasting with them. Then they are brought by us where there is water, and are regenerated in the same manner in which we were ourselves regenerated. For, in the name of God, the Father and Lord of the universe, and of our Saviour Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit, they then receive the washing with water. For Christ also said, "Except ye be born again, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Now, that it is impossible for those who have once been born to enter into their mothers' wombs, is manifest to all. And how those who have sinned and repent shall escape their sins, is declared by Isaiah the prophet, as I wrote above; he thus speaks: "Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from your souls; learn to do well; judge the fatherless, and plead for the widow: and come and let us reason together, saith the Lord. And though your sins be as scarlet, I will make them white like wool; and though they be as crimson, I will make them white as snow. But if ye refuse and rebel, the sword shall devour you: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."*

*And for this [rite] we have learned from the apostles this reason. Since at our birth we were born without our own knowledge or choice, by our parents coming together, and were brought up in bad habits and wicked training; in order that we may not remain the children of necessity and of ignorance, but may become the children of choice and knowledge, and may obtain in the water the*

*remission of sins formerly committed, there is pronounced over him who chooses to be born again, and has repented of his sins, the name of God the Father and Lord of the universe; he who leads to the layer the person that is to be washed calling him by this name alone. For no one can utter the name of the ineffable God; and if any one dare to say that there is a name, he raves with a hopeless madness. And this washing is called illumination, because they who learn these things are illuminated in their understandings. And in the name of Jesus Christ, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate, and in the name of the Holy Ghost, who through the prophets foretold all things about Jesus, he who is illuminated is washed.*

There are a number of key points to note: Prayer and fasting precedes baptism (indicating sorrow for past sins), fellow Christians pray and fast with the candidates, candidates are 'born again' in their baptism (regeneration) and the crucial bible text is John 3:5. *Unless a man is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.* Baptism is in the Triune Name; Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Baptism secures remission (forgiveness) of sins, baptism secures 'illumination' in the understanding of the candidate and baptism secures the 'washing' of the candidate.

In all the 2nd century references to baptism, it is clear that the rite of baptism itself was believed to be the vehicle of conveying the Holy Spirit to the individual. It conveyed remission of sins and provided weapons for spiritual combat. It was the 'seal' or mark of eternal life. (like a brand on cattle – marking ownership.)

### Third Century.

In the 3<sup>rd</sup> century the basic ceremony of baptism was elaborated, especially in the East. e.g. special robes, sign of cross, anointing with oil, milk and honey given.

Infant baptism was now more common.

Rapid Church growth led to bishops delegating baptisms to presbyters.

We also see the first references to a separate rite of 'confirmation' by which the Holy Spirit is conveyed (i.e. NOT by baptism itself).

Ever-growing importance came to be attached to these subsidiary rites, especially anointing with sign of the cross, laying on of hands. The effect of baptism itself became limited to remission of sins and regeneration. The gift of the Holy Spirit was increasingly linked to laying on of hands.

#### **Hippolytus** *Apostolic Tradition*: (c. 215)

This work is the richest source of information on constitution and life of the Church in first 3 centuries. It was only discovered in 1910 but describes what was normal practice in the North African Church in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century.

In protest at recent innovations Hippolytus records traditional forms and rites in the Church.

Regarding baptism, three questions are addressed to catechumens and they are immersed in water after each answer. The newly baptised Christians are anointed with oil of thanksgiving by a presbyter.

Confirmation is a distinct act from baptism. The bishop lays hands on newly baptised Christians and prays for filling with the Holy Spirit. The candidate is then anointed with oil. The kiss of peace followed prayers.

**20** *When they are chosen who are to receive baptism, let their lives be examined, whether they have lived honourably while catechumens, whether they honoured the widows, whether they visited the sick, and whether they have done every good work..* <sup>2</sup>*If those who bring them forward bear witness for them that they have done so, then let them hear the* <sup>3</sup>*From the time at which they are set apart, place hands upon them daily so that they are exorcised. When the day approaches on which they are to be baptised, let the bishop exorcise each one of them, so that he will be certain whether each has been purified.* <sup>4</sup>*If there are any who are not purified, they shall be set apart. They have not heard the Word in faith, for the foreign spirit remained with each of them.* <sup>5</sup>*Let those who are to be baptised be instructed that they bathe and wash on the fifth day of the week.* <sup>6</sup>*If a woman is in the manner of women, let her be set apart<sup>a</sup> and receive baptism another day.* <sup>7</sup>*Those who are to receive baptism shall fast on the Preparation of the Sabbath<sup>b</sup>. On the Sabbath<sup>c</sup>, those who are to receive baptism shall all gather together in one place chosen according to the will of the bishop. They shall be commanded to pray and kneel<sup>d</sup>.* <sup>8</sup>*Then laying his hand on them, he will exorcise every foreign spirit, so that they flee from them and never return to them. When he has finished exorcising them, he shall breathe*

on their faces and seal<sup>e</sup> their foreheads, ears and noses. Then he shall raise them up. <sup>9</sup>They shall all keep vigil all night, reading and instructing them. <sup>10</sup>Those who are to be baptised are not to bring any vessel, only that which each brings for the eucharist. It is indeed proper that each bring the oblation in the same hour.

<sup>a</sup> Lit., isolated.

<sup>b</sup> Friday

<sup>c</sup> Saturday

<sup>d</sup> Lit., bend the knee.

<sup>e</sup> With the sign of the cross.

**21** At the hour in which the cock crows, they shall first pray over the water. <sup>2</sup>When they come to the water, the water shall be pure and flowing, that is, the water of a spring or a flowing body of water. <sup>3</sup>Then they shall take off all their clothes. <sup>4</sup>The children shall be baptised first. All of the children who can answer for themselves, let them answer. If there are any children who cannot answer for themselves, let their parents answer for them, or someone else from their family. <sup>5</sup>After this, the men will be baptised. Finally, the women, after they have unbound their hair, and removed their jewellery. No one shall take any foreign object with themselves down into the water. <sup>6</sup>At the time determined for baptism, the bishop shall give thanks over some oil, which he puts in a vessel. It is called the Oil of Thanksgiving. <sup>7</sup>He shall take some more oil and exorcise it. It is called the Oil of Exorcism. <sup>8</sup>A deacon shall hold the Oil of Exorcism and stand on the left. Another deacon shall hold the Oil of Thanksgiving and stand on the right. <sup>9</sup>When the elder takes hold of each of them who are to receive baptism, he shall tell each of them to renounce, saying, "I renounce you Satan, all your service<sup>a</sup>, and all your works." <sup>10</sup>After he has said this, he shall anoint each with the Oil of Exorcism, saying, "Let every evil spirit depart from you." <sup>11</sup>Then, after these things, the bishop passes each of them on nude to the elder who stands at the water. They shall stand in the water naked. A deacon, likewise, will go down with them into the water. <sup>12</sup>When each of them to be baptised has gone down into the water, the one baptising shall lay hands on each of them, asking, "Do you believe in God the Father Almighty?" <sup>13</sup>And the one being baptised shall answer, "I believe." <sup>14</sup>He shall then baptize each of them once, laying his hand upon each of their heads. <sup>15</sup>Then he shall ask, "Do you believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who was born of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate, and died, and rose on the third day living from the dead, and ascended into heaven, and sat down at the right

hand of the Father, the one coming to judge the living and the dead?" <sup>16</sup>When each has answered, "I believe," he shall baptize a second time. <sup>17</sup>Then he shall ask, "Do you believe in the Holy Spirit and the Holy Church and the resurrection of the flesh?" <sup>18</sup>Then each being baptised shall answer, "I believe." And thus let him baptize the third time.

<sup>19</sup>Afterward, when they have come up out of the water, they shall be anointed by the elder with the Oil of Thanksgiving, saying, "I anoint you with holy oil in the name of Jesus Christ." <sup>20</sup>Then, drying themselves, they shall dress and afterwards gather in the church. <sup>21</sup>The bishop will then lay his hand upon them, invoking, saying, "Lord God, you who have made these worthy of the removal of sins through the bath of regeneration, make them worthy to be filled with your Holy Spirit, grant to them your grace, that they might serve you according to your will, for to you is the glory, Father and Son with the Holy Spirit, in the Holy Church, now and throughout the ages of the ages. Amen." <sup>22</sup>After this he pours the oil into his hand, and laying his hand on each of their heads, says, "I anoint you with holy oil in God the Father Almighty, and Christ Jesus, and the Holy Spirit." <sup>23</sup>Then, after sealing<sup>b</sup> each of them on the forehead, he shall give them the kiss of peace and say, "The Lord be with you." And the one who has been baptised shall say, "And with your spirit." <sup>24</sup>So shall he do to each one. <sup>25</sup>From then on they will pray together with all the people. Prior to this they may not pray with the faithful until they have completed all. <sup>26</sup>After they pray, let them give the kiss of peace.

#### **Tertullian On Baptism** (c. 200)

This is the only Ante-Nicene treatise on any sacrament and is therefore an extremely important document.

The period of instruction prior to baptism could last up to three years (Cpt 20).

Candidates were examined and for baptism on evening before Easter Sunday (Cpt 20).

The Holy Spirit was asked to come upon the baptismal waters (with reference to Spirit hovering in Genesis 1 and angel disturbing Pool of Bethsaida water in John 5:1ff).

The candidate disrobed and denounced Satan and all his works.

The candidate was anointed with the oil of exorcism to banish all evil spirits.

Standing in the water, he/she confessed faith in each person of the Trinity.

The candidate was immersed three times, once after each confession.

Then the candidate was anointed, re-clothed, and anointed again with the laying on of hands (symbolising the reception of the Holy Spirit).

The congregation gave the kiss of peace.

The baptismal Eucharist followed.

This basic outline continued to be observed.

In Syria, the principal anointing came before the baptism, not after.

*On Baptism 18.*

*But they whose office it is, know that baptism is not rashly to be administered. Give to every one who begs you, has a reference of its own, appertaining especially to almsgiving. On the contrary, this precept is rather to be looked at carefully: Give not the holy thing to the dogs, nor cast your pearls before swine; Matthew 7:6 and, Lay not hands easily on any; share not other men's sins. If Philip so easily baptized the chamberlain, let us reflect that a manifest and conspicuous evidence that the Lord deemed him worthy had been interposed. Acts 8:26-40 The Spirit had enjoined Philip to proceed to that road: the eunuch himself, too, was not found idle, nor as one who was suddenly seized with an eager desire to be baptized; but, after going up to the temple for prayer's sake, being intently engaged on the divine Scripture, was thus suitably discovered— to whom God had, unasked, sent an apostle, which one, again, the Spirit bade adjoin himself to the chamberlain's chariot. The Scripture which he was reading falls in opportunely with his faith: Philip, being requested, is taken to sit beside him; the Lord is pointed out; faith lingers not; water needs no waiting for; the work is completed, and the apostle snatched away. But Paul too was, in fact, 'speedily' baptized: for Simon, his host, speedily recognized him to be an appointed vessel of election. God's approbation sends sure premonitory tokens before it; every petition may both deceive and be deceived. And so, according to the circumstances and disposition, and even age, of each individual, the delay of baptism is preferable; principally, however, in the case of little children.*

*For why is it necessary— if (baptism itself) is not so necessary — that the sponsors likewise should be thrust into danger? Who both themselves, by reason of mortality, may fail to fulfill their promises, and may be disappointed by the development of an evil disposition, in those for whom they stood? The Lord does indeed say, Forbid them not to come unto me. Let them come, then, while they are growing up; let them come while they are learning, while they are learning whither to come; let them become Christians when they have become able to know Christ. Why does the innocent period of life hasten to the remission of sins? More caution will be exercised in worldly matters: so that one who is not trusted with earthly substance is trusted with divine! Let them know how to ask for salvation, that you may seem (at least) to have given to him that asks. For no less cause must the unwedded also be deferred— in whom the ground of temptation is prepared, alike in such as never were wedded by means of their maturity, and in the widowed by means of their freedom— until they either marry, or else be more fully strengthened for continence. If any understand the weighty import of baptism, they will fear its reception more than its delay: sound faith is secure of salvation.*

**Cyprian** (mid 3<sup>rd</sup> century)

Cyprian defended the validity of infant baptism (cf. *Letter 58 To Fidus*). He tied the validity of baptism to the purity of the administrator – a heretical bishop cannot administer valid sacraments because he does not possess the Holy Spirit (cf. *Letters 69-75*). The practice developed in North Africa that Christians in minority groups who wished to join the mainstream catholic church had to submit to re-baptism. In Rome and elsewhere, baptism was not repeated but such individuals had to submit to laying on of hands by a catholic bishop. Eventually, Cyprian's view was defeated at the Council of Arles (314) and the Roman view prevailed.

## Eucharist

### Definition.

'The consecration and communion of bread and wine as a memorial of Christ's death and resurrection in the Christian liturgy'. (Everett Ferguson: *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity Vol. 1. p.393*).

### Origins of the Eucharist in the New Testament

The Eucharist had a direct historical connection with the practice of Jesus and was the central celebration of the early Christian liturgy.

In an upper room in Jerusalem Jesus instituted the '**Last Supper**' with his disciples. It is recorded in synoptic gospels; Matt. 26:17–30; Mark 14:12–26; Luke 22:7–23 and featured in early Church life of early Church. cf. Acts 2:42, 46; 20:7.

It is also recorded by Paul. cf. 1 Corinthians 11:23–29. (written about 20 years after Last Supper). In Corinth, some Christians were drunk at Eucharist (while waiting for 'working Christians' to arrive). cf. 1 Corinthians 11:21.

Eucharist was initially called 'Lord's Supper' (1 Cor.11.20) or 'breaking of bread' (I Corinthians 10:16; Acts 2.42, 46; 20:7, 11). The term **Eucharist** (Greek, 'thanksgiving') became the accepted term for this sacrament in the early Church period even though it is not found in the New Testament.

Jesus' last supper was a full meal at which Jesus gave special significance to bread and wine as symbolic of his body and blood. By the second century the **full meal** was separated from a **sacramental meal**. Most early documents focus upon the practice of Eucharist – not a theology of Eucharist.

### Development of the doctrine and practice of the Eucharist

One early decision was on how often Christians should celebrate Eucharist. Jesus' Last Supper seems to have been a Passover meal (celebrated annually by Jews). If the Church had followed this pattern it would have been very closely tied to Judaism.

Weekly celebration, on Sunday, was the normal practice in early church period. In its earliest form Eucharist was celebrated as part of a full meal (as by Jesus in upper room). The bread was blessed, broken, and distributed before the meal proper.

This meal was given the name '**love meal**' (*agape*). Eucharistic wine was distributed after the meal. (cf. Luke 22.20; 1 Corinthians 11.20-22.) It could take place on a Sunday evening (cf. Acts 20:7).

The combination of Eucharist and full meal did not last long. Even in the first century Eucharist was separated from *agape*, transferred to morning and combined with ministry of Word. These early changes are still dominant today.

**The practical implications** of these changes included; no need for tables to celebrate Eucharist, only the bishop/presbyters had a table for bread and wine, and Christians stood around this table and offered prayers of thanksgiving.

A later development was to regard Eucharist in terms of a sacrifice and consequently the table became an altar. There are several early references to Eucharist as a sacrifice, often based upon an early Christian understanding that God rejects Jewish worship/sacrifice and prefers Eucharist (cf. Malachi 1:10).

There were other elements of **liturgical creativity** regarding Eucharist. Jewish prayers over their Sabbath meal were reworked by Christians. For example, the Didache Eucharist prayer mirrors the Jewish Sabbath meal prayer in that the Jewish 'bless' is replaced by the Christian 'thanks'.

Jewish Sabbath prayer	Didache Eucharist prayer
' <b>Blessed</b> are you , Lord our God, King of the universe, for you nourish us and the whole world with goodness, grace, kindness and mercy. <b>Blessed</b> are you, Lord, for you nourish the universe.'	We give <b>thanks</b> to you, holy Father, for your holy Name which you have enshrined in our hearts, and for the knowledge and faith and immortality which you have made known to us through Jesus your child: glory to you for evermore.'

Ancient Jewish prayer protocol tended to:	Early Christians thanked God at Eucharist with emphasis upon Jesus as the revelation of God.
<b>Bless</b> God for creation	
<b>Thank</b> God for revelation, and	
<b>Petition</b> God for redemption.	

The full meal was gradually separated from these 2 prayers (over bread and over wine). The two prayers were then joined, resulting in a shorter 'ceremony': bread taken first, then wine.

By the 3<sup>rd</sup> century this prayer had developed to include remembrance of the Last Supper plus all salvation history from Genesis to Jesus.

By end of 4<sup>th</sup> century the prayer had developed again and now incorporated many topics.

The full meal did not disappear from Church practice (despite separation from Eucharist).

Hippolytus' *Apostolic Tradition* describes a full meal under leadership of the bishop. The un-baptised could participate (but not sit at same table as the baptised). One purpose of this full meal was to help feed the poor and the table talk was to be sanctified and on religious topics (probably as a means of Xian instruction). This meal was under very tight discipline to avoid any scandal and, interestingly, Hippolytus does not use the term *agape* to describe it.

The full meal died out in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century. There were now more effective means of instruction (catechetical schools), and more effective means of feeding the poor (ministry of deacons).

Fellowship was still an important need as churches grew in size in 3<sup>rd</sup>–6<sup>th</sup> centuries. In this period some groups withdrew into monastic communities where Eucharist was central.

Surviving references to Christian Eucharist are as follows:

#### **Didache 9. (early 2<sup>nd</sup> century)**

Only those believers who had been baptised could take Eucharist.

9.5 *And let none eat or drink of your Eucharist, but they that have been baptised into the name of the Lord; for concerning this the Lord has said: 'Give not that which is holy to the dogs'. (Matt. 7.6.)*

A **pattern** of how to give thanks in prayer is given.

9.1. *And concerning the Eucharist, give thanks in this manner. . . . (yet freedom is allowed to the prophets 10.7. 'But suffer the prophets to give thanks as much as they will').*

**During** this meal, prayers are said in similar fashion to a Jewish Sabbath meal (on Friday evening).

**Before** the meal, thanksgiving prayers are said over an initial cup of wine and broken bread. **After** the meal, a three-fold thanksgiving prayer is said over

a final cup of wine mixed with water (this is the 'cup of blessing' – a Jewish phrase used by Paul in I Corinthians 10:16).

#### **Didache 10.**

Eucharist was celebrated as part of a full meal. ie: more than a symbolic meal.

10.1 *... after you are filled...*

Perhaps the Didache account represents a Christian reworking of the Jewish Sabbath meal? The Jewish pattern was: Prayer before meal – meal – final prayer after meal. The Didache: prayers over wine & bread – meal – final prayer after meal.

### **Justin Martyr**

(martyred in Rome c. A.D.165)

*First Apology.* 65–66. (relates to a new convert receiving **first Eucharist.**)

*... the president of the brethren* = the designation of the leader/officiating individual (65.10).

The wine is mixed with water (ie. not too strong) (65.10).

The president offers *prayers of thanksgiving* and all present say *Amen* (65.14–16).

The title *Eucharist* (lit. 'thanksgiving') is expressly mentioned (66.1).

Only baptised believers are permitted to take Eucharist (66.1–4).

There is a conscious identification with Jesus' actions (66.5ff.).

The bread and wine is in some sense the flesh and blood of Christ (66.5–11).

*First Apology.* 67. (gives us a detailed description of a usual **Sunday Eucharist**)

All Christians in a locality gather together on Sunday (line 7). This is the day in which God made the world and also it is the day of Christ's resurrection.

Scripture is read continuously for some time (lines 9–12).

The president addresses and exhorts the believers – ie. a sermon (line 12).

All present rise together for prayer (line 14).

Bread, wine, & water are brought and the president offers prayers of thanksgiving. The people present all say *Amen* (lines 15–19).

Everyone present celebrates the Eucharist (line 19).

The deacons keep some bread and wine for those who are absent (lines 21–22)

–Gifts are presented to the president for care of orphans, widows, the sick, prisoners, travellers.

Although there is a basic outline, yet there are no set prescriptions for the liturgy. The bishop offers thanks *to the best of his ability* (with total freedom to compose). Also, thanksgiving is at the centre, and communion is a second focal point.

#### **Hippolytus** (*The Apostolic Tradition* c.A.D.215)

In the introduction to this work Hippolytus informs us that he intends to record only the traditions and customs already long established and he does so in protest against recent innovations. His record is thought to relate to Christian practices in Rome in later 2<sup>nd</sup> century.

(Prologue) *We turn to the subject of the Tradition which is proper for the Churches, in order that those who have been rightly instructed may hold fast to that tradition which has continued until now, and fully understanding it from exposition may stand the more firm therein. This is now the more necessary because of that apostasy or error which was recently invented out of ignorance and because of certain ignorant men.*

Like Justin Martyr, Hippolytus describes 2 eucharists; after the consecration of a bishop (Cpt. 4) and after a baptism (Cpt. 23).

#### **Chapter 4.** (describes Eucharist following ordination of a new bishop)

Hippolytus gives us the earliest surviving full text of a Eucharistic prayer. It is very brief and focuses on Jesus (also mentions Father and Holy Spirit). It follows pattern of prayer of thanksgiving for coming, life, suffering & death of Christ (4–8)

This is followed by eucharistic words of institution (10). *When you do this, you make my remembrance.* This phrase does not occur in any biblical text!

The offering of the bread and cup (11).

The invocation of the H.S. on the eucharistic gifts (12).

Finally, the doxology (hymn of praise) forms the conclusion (13).

#### **Chapter 23.** (Easter, after baptisms)

The deacons bring the elements to the bishop (1).

The bishop gives thanks (1)

The bishop *gives reason* (4) (explanation) of all the elements (2-4); **bread and wine** representing Christ's body and blood (1), **milk and honey** representing the Promised Land (2) and **water**, representing washing (3).

On distribution of bread the bishop shall say *The bread of heaven in Christ Jesus* (5) and the people reply, *Amen*. This title 'bread of heaven' is not linked to Eucharist in the New Testament.

Presbyters (and if necessary deacons) shall serve the people (7)

The statement in paragraph 8 is ambiguous. Either the people taste of the elements three times, or the presbyters say 'In God the Father Almighty' three times (probable Trinitarian symbolism).

By Hippolytus' time (c. 215), as opposed to that of Justin (c. 160), eucharistic prayers were passing from improvisation to a set form. Although Hippolytus provides exact wording for this prayer, he makes it clear that the celebrant still had the right to compose his own.

#### **Tertullian** *De Corona*. c. 211.

*On the Soldier's Crown* was written in defence of a Christian soldier who refused to wear a crown in deference to Emperor Septimus Severus. As a result this soldier was in prison awaiting death. Tertullian scoffs at the Catholics who criticised this man's action as a provocation to the authorities.

#### Chapter 3.

Tertullian discusses ideas regarding baptism, fasting, kneeling and the sign of cross. He is seeking **authority** for practices in the North African Church.

Tertullian states that it is customary to celebrate Eucharist 'before daybreak' and 'from the hand of none but the presidents'.

**Cyprian** (bishop of Carthage 248–258)

*Letter 63:14*

*If Christ Jesus, our Lord and God, is Himself the High Priest of God the father and first offered Himself as a Sacrifice to His Father and commanded this to be done in commemoration of Himself, certainly the priest who imitates that which Christ did and then offers the true and full Sacrifice in the Church of God the Father, if he thus begins to offer according to what he sees Christ Himself offered, performs truly in the place of Christ.*

*De lapsis 26*

*[One who has been guilty of apostasy] could not eat or handle the holy things of the Lord. He found himself holding a cinder in his open hands. By the instance of this one man it was shown that the Lord departs when he is denied, and that what is taken does not benefit the undeserving unto salvation, seeing that the saving grace is changed into a cinder on the departure of the holy thing.*

For Cyprian a bishop is a parallel with an Old Testament priest (offering sacrifice at Eucharist). A bishop is holy (as an Old Testament priest) otherwise his sacraments are invalid.

### The Council of Nicaea (AD 325)

*Canon 18.*

The Council rules against deacons who are acting above their position; some are distributing the Eucharistic elements to presbyters (18.1–4), and some are receiving the Eucharist *even before the bishops*. (18. 4–6)

*... let the deacons keep within their proper bounds, knowing that they are the ministers of the bishop and inferior to the presbyters.* (18. 6–8)

Deacons should receive Eucharist after the bishop and presbyters and not even sit among the presbyters. If any deacon refuses to accept this ruling, they are to be put out of the diaconate! (18. 8–14)

## General development of understanding:

**WESTERN** church viewed eucharist as recollection of the sacrifice of Christ for the forgiveness of our sins.

**EASTERN** churches saw eucharist more in terms of bestowing the power of immortality on those who took part.

## Development of the Christian Sunday.

The history of the Christian Sunday is also linked with the Eucharist. Christians held their weekly Eucharist on Sunday, not the Jewish Sabbath (Saturday)

In earliest days Sunday was a normal working day. Originally eucharist was celebrated on Sunday evening (see Acts 20:7) later, in the morning.

In 321 Constantine introduced Sunday as a weekly day of rest. But there was no Christian basis for a rest from work on this day. So the Jewish Sabbath commandment was applied to the Christian Sunday.

By the 6th C. Sunday and Sabbath had been identified completely.

In the first centuries of the Church era, Eucharist was celebrated on Sunday. The Didache and Justin describe Sunday as the day of Eucharist.

Other festivals were added which fell during the week (eg: Easter Week) – in addition there were days of preparation before many festivals.

Individual churches also celebrated feasts of local martyrs. In the 4th C. Eucharist spread to Wednesday and Friday (& Saturday in the East)

Daily celebration of Eucharist was not common at the beginning of the 4th C. By the end of the 4th C. daily celebration was normal for many Church fathers; eg. Jerome, Ambrose, Augustine.

‘Communion’ was separate from ‘eucharist’. From the 2nd C. there is evidence of daily communion. It was a Christian custom for deacons to take Eucharistic bread to the homes of those who were absent on Sunday. Often it was eaten in the morning as the first food of the day.

In earliest Christianity Eucharist stood for;  
– the commemoration of Jesus’ death.  
– an anticipation of the heavenly feast.  
– an antidote to death (Ignatius) the ‘medicine of immortality’ (To the Ephesians 20.2)  
‘you are all .... ready now to obey your bishop and clergy with undivided minds and to share in the one common breaking of bread - the medicine of immortality, and the sovereign remedy by which we escape death and live in Jesus Christ for evermore’.

