

General Synod - Holy Communion Canon 2001 Adopting Ordinance 2002

Explanatory Statement

Introduction

1. The Canon Concerning the Holy Communion or the Lord's Supper 1992 was passed by the General Synod as Provisional Canon P4 in 1992. The Standing Committee appointed a committee to make recommendations in relation to a number of General Synod provisional canons of which provisional canon P4 was one. A report of that committee was published for our Synod and appears on pages 364 to 385 of the *1998 Year Book*.

2. A number of dioceses, of which Sydney was one, did not assent to the provisional canon and accordingly it did not come into force as a canon. In 1998 the General Synod passed resolution 68/98 in the following terms:

"The General Synod encourages the Church Law Panel to circulate to all dioceses an amended form of canon P4, 1992 so that it can be considered at the next General Synod."

3. The Standing Committee considers that the canon ultimately passed by General Synod at its session in 2001, in the main, addresses the concerns raised by the committee appointed by the Standing Committee to review the provisional canon.

The Canon

4. The canon provides for the following -
- (a) Wherever possible, in the church or 1 of the churches in every parish, holy communion should be celebrated sufficiently frequently and at appropriate times so as to provide reasonable opportunities for every parishioner to communicate regularly and frequently and at Easter (clause 2).
 - (b) Every minister when celebrating holy communion must receive the sacrament, normally first (clause 3).
 - (c) The sacrament must normally be offered separately in both kinds to every communicant (clause 4).
 - (d) If a minister who has the cure of souls believes that anyone who intends to take holy communion should not be admitted by reason of malicious and open contention with another or other grave sin without repentance, the minister must inform the bishop of the diocese of that belief and not refuse to admit that person to holy communion unless directed by the bishop to do so. The minister may however refuse to admit the person in the

case of grave and immediate scandal pending receipt of a direction from the bishop (clause 6(1)).

- (e) If a bishop directs a minister not to admit a person to holy communion, every other minister in the diocese should refuse to admit that person to holy communion unless and until the bishop otherwise directs (clause 6(2)).

Repeal of 1603 Canons

5. Clause 7 of the canon provides that canons numbered 20, 21, 22, 23, 26, 27 and 28 of the Canons of 1603, in so far as the same may have any force, have no operation or effect in a diocese which adopts the canon. The text of those canons is as follows -

“20. Bread and Wine to be provided against every Communion.

The church-wardens of every parish, against the time of every communion, shall at the charge of the parish, with the advice and direction of the minister, provide a sufficient quantity of fine white bread, and a good and wholesome wine, for the number of communicants that shall from time to time receive there: which wine we require to be brought to the communion-table in a clean and sweet standing pot or stoop of pewter, if not of purer metal.

21. The Communion to be thrice a Year received.

In every parish-church and chapel, where sacraments are to be administered within this realm, the holy communion shall be ministered by the parson, vicar, or minister, so often, and at such times, as every parishioner may communicate at the least thrice in the year, (whereof the feast of Easter to be one,) according as they are appointed by the Book of Common Prayer. Provided, That every minister, as oft as he administereth the communion, shall first receive the sacrament himself. Furthermore, no bread or wine newly brought shall be used; but first the words of institution shall be rehearsed, when the said bread and wine be present upon the communion-table. Likewise the minister shall deliver both the bread and wine to every communicant severally.

22. Warning to be given beforehand for the Communion.

Whereas every lay person is bound to receive the holy communion thrice every year, and many notwithstanding do not receive that sacrament once in a year, we do require every minister to give warning to his parishioners publicly in the church at morning prayer, the Sunday before every time of his administering that holy sacrament, for their better preparation of themselves;

which said warning we enjoin the said parishioners to accept and obey, under the penalty and danger of the law.

23. *Students in Colleges to receive the Communion four times a Year.*

In all colleges and halls within both the universities, the masters and fellows, such especially as have any pupils, shall be careful that all their said pupils, and the rest that remain amongst them, be well brought up, and throughly instructed in points of religion, and that they do diligently frequent public service and sermons, and receive the holy communion; which we ordain to be administered in all such colleges and halls the first or second Sunday of every month, requiring all the said masters, fellows, and scholars, and all the rest of the students, officers, and all other the servants there, so to be ordered, that every one of them shall communicate four times in the year at the least, kneeling reverently and decently upon their knees, according to the order of the Communion Book prescribed in that behalf.

26. *Notorious Offenders not to be admitted to the Communion*

No minister shall in any wise admit to the receiving of the holy communion, any of his cure or flock, which be openly known to live in sin notorious, without repentance; nor any who have maliciously and openly contended with their neighbours, until they shall be reconciled; nor any church-wardens or side-men, who having taken their oaths to present to their ordinaries all such public offences as they are particularly charged to inquire of in their several parishes, shall (notwithstanding their said oaths, and that their faithful discharging of them is the chief means whereby public sins and offences may be reformed and punished) wittingly and willingly, desperately and irreligiously, incur the horrible crime of perjury, either in neglecting or in refusing to present such of the said enormities and public offences, as they know themselves to be committed in their said parishes, or are notoriously offensive to the congregation there; although they be urged by some of their neighbours, or by their minister, or by their ordinary himself, to discharge their consciences by presenting of them, and not to incur so desperately the said horrible sin of perjury.

27. *Schismatics not to be admitted to the Communion.*

No minister, when he celebrateth the communion, shall wittingly administer the same to any but to such as kneel, under pain of suspension, nor under the like pain to any that refuse to be present at public prayers, according to the orders of the Church of England; nor to any that are common and notorious depravers of the Book of Common Prayer and Administration of the Sacraments, and of the orders, rites, and ceremonies therein prescribed, or of any thing that is contained in any of the articles agreed upon in the convocation, one thousand five hundred sixty and two, or of any thing contained in the book of ordering the priests and bishops; or to any that have spoken against and depraved his majesty's sovereign authority in causes ecclesiastical; except every such person shall first acknowledge to the minister, before the church-wardens, his repentance for the same, and promise by word (if he cannot write) that he will do so no more; and except (if he can write) he shall first do the same under his hand-writing, to be delivered to the minister, and by him sent to the bishop of the diocese, or ordinary of the place. Provided, That every minister so repelling any, as is specified either in this or in the next precedent Constitution, shall, upon complaint, or being required by the ordinary, signify the cause thereof unto him, and therein obey his order and direction.

28. *Strangers not to be admitted to the Communion.*

The church-wardens or questmen, and their assistants, shall mark, as well as the minister, whether all and every of the parishioners come so often every year to the holy communion, as the laws and our Constitutions do require; and whether any strangers come often and commonly from other parishes to their church; and shall shew their minister of them, lest perhaps they be admitted to the Lord's table amongst others, which they shall forbid; and remit such home to their own parish-churches and ministers, there to receive the communion with the rest of their own neighbours."

Recommendation

6. The Standing Committee recommends that the Synod pass the bill as an ordinance.

For and on behalf of the Standing Committee

ROBERT WICKS
Legal Officer

14 August 2002