COMMON WORSHIP: ADDITIONAL COLLECTS

Report by the Liturgical Commission
Background

1. In July 2001, the General Synod passed a motion noting ‘criticisms of the new collects for *Common Worship*’, and in the light of this criticism called on the House of Bishops to commission ‘additional collects for each Sunday and feast day in the liturgical year in a worthy contemporary idiom’. During the debate a range of criticisms were made. It was clear that there was a widespread desire for an additional set to be authorized as soon as was reasonably possible.

2. Following the debate, the Liturgical Commission conducted a consultative process, using a simple questionnaire, to ascertain the range of criticisms which were being levelled at the existing *Common Worship* collects. This initially involved the chairs and secretaries of Diocesan Liturgical Committees, who in turn were encouraged to consult as widely as possible within their own dioceses.

3. The House of Bishops duly commissioned an additional set of collects at its meeting in October 2001.

4. The Liturgical Commission accepts that there is a widespread demand within the Church of England for these additional collects to be authorized and published as soon as possible. Conscious of the length of time required for the full synodical authorization process (which is legally required because the collects are alternative to material contained in *The Book of Common Prayer*) and for subsequent publication, the Commission has sought to complete its work on initial drafting as quickly as possible. In order to achieve this, it has reduced the task to more manageable proportions by concentrating on producing collects for Sundays and Principal Holy Days and for Harvest Festival (the one Special Occasion for which provision is made in the main volume of *Common Worship*) – a collection of 68 collects. The collection provides for the same occasions as ‘Collects and Post Communion for the Seasons’ (*CW*, pages 376-426) – with the exception of the Weekdays after Pentecost and Corpus Christi – and ‘Collect and Post Communion for a Special Occasion (*CW*, page 447).
What is required of the Additional Collects?

5. The Liturgical Commission has attempted to work within parameters which have emerged from its consultative process and from consideration of the context (Common Worship) in which the Additional Collects would be used. The July 2001 debate anticipated some of the issues which would need to be considered in framing the new collects – for example, the extent to which any new collects should be governed by the typical syntax of traditional collects. In general, three sets of consideration have been borne in mind, concerning context, general issues of style, and the specific issue of relative clauses.

The Context of the Collect

6. Within Common Worship the role of the collect is to act as the ‘collecting prayer’, in the Eucharist drawing together the prayer of the people at the beginning of the liturgy, and at the office bringing to a close a period of intercessory or thanksgiving prayer. The context of Common Worship rules out the framing of ‘thematic’ collects, such as those in The Alternative Service Book 1980 (ASB). This is partly because, in line with liturgical tradition, the structure of the Common Worship Holy Communion service differentiates between the collect, as the concluding part of The Gathering, and the readings, which belong to The Liturgy of the Word. Thematic collects would undermine the traditional context and function of a collect as a ‘collecting’ prayer, rather than one which introduces a theme.

7. The Common Worship context also rules out thematic collects for a second reason. Common Worship has adopted the Revised Common Lectionary, which only synchronizes with the Calendar during the principal seasons. During Ordinary Time, the Calendar and Lectionary run according to different rules. Whilst it would, in theory, be possible to compile a set of collects tied to the readings in the Revised Common Lectionary (RCL), the questions arise as to which reading the collect should reflect (since the RCL is not a thematic lectionary) and whether the collect would make any sense during the other services in the week. Linking the collects to the readings would
also make it necessity to write at least three separate cycles of collects (for each year of the Lectionary).

**General issues of style**

8. The consultation exercise produced a wide range of criticisms of the *Common Worship* collects. Some of these recurred in the responses with considerable frequency:

- The syntax is too complicated and archaic.
- They are too long.
- They are bland in the themes, imagery and choice of language which they use (‘they end up saying very little, and take a long time to say it, in an unnecessarily complicated way’).
- The closing doxology adds to their complexity and length.
- Their language is frequently inaccessible for certain contexts; for example, where children are present in significant numbers, in ‘non-book’ contexts, and among missionary congregations where there is no background experience of the language of *The Book of Common Prayer*.

9. To address these issues in an additional compilation is something of a challenge. To provide a clear alternative to the present collection, the Additional Collects would need to be:

i) short

ii) simple in their syntax

iii) vivid and interesting in their themes and imagery

iv) accessible in the kind of language they use, and

v) to end up by saying something which is clear and distinct.
Relative clauses

10. The collects contained in *The Book of Common Prayer* were, in many cases, translations of a Latin original. One effect of this was the use of the relative clause, which translates quite easily into the English of the sixteenth century, but in the context of contemporary English can sound unusually complex and formal, especially when the clause is a long one. This effect is accentuated to the modern ear when God is addressed using the vocative ‘O’ (O God...) or when the relative clause is extended in order to invoke a characteristic or work of God in some detail. There are many instances of this in the collects of *Common Worship*; for example, the adjacent collects for the Fifth Sunday of Lent and Palm Sunday:

    Most merciful God,  
    who by the death and resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ  
    delivered and saved the world:  
    grant …

    Almighty and everlasting God,  
    who in your tender love towards the human race  
    sent your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ  
    to take upon him our flesh  
    and to suffer death upon the cross:  
    grant …

11. In the first example, the relative clause is shorter. In the second example it is rather stretched.

12. One solution to this problem is to remove the relative clause altogether. This can be done in some cases by making the entire collect a petition. Examples of this can be found in *The Book of Common Prayer*. Another solution, common in the ASB, is to address God directly, introducing the qualifying clause with ‘you’ rather than ‘who’. This use of the pronoun has been criticised as appearing to tell God something about himself as if he didn’t already know it. Furthermore, although it avoids some of the problems associated with
the use of ‘who’, it can still fall foul of other pitfalls; for example, in
the Common Worship collect for the Fourth Sunday before Lent:

O God,
you know us to be set
in the midst of so many and great dangers,
that by reason of the frailty of our nature
we cannot always stand upright:
grant …

13. For many, this qualification is simply too long and its imagery too vague for the contemporary ear.

14. On the other hand, occasional use of a relative clause is probably still needed, as it forms part of the classic Anglican inheritance of collect-writing, where the petition is normally based on some prior spoken reflection on the nature and works of God. Sometimes a simple relative clause can achieve this, provided it is not at the expense of the flow of contemporary language. What is needed is a simple set of parameters governing the limits to complexity of the language which the collect uses to invoke the name of God.

**Guidelines influencing composition of the Additional Collects**

15. We concluded that a general set of guidelines was required, rather than hard and fast rules. The principles underlying our work, formulated in the light of our consultation exercise and further reflections, may be summarised as follows:

- the collects are, in general, significantly shorter than those contained in Common Worship;

- on the occasions when the relative clause is used, attention has been paid to the need for brevity;

- use of the vocative form ‘O God …’ has been avoided;
• use of archaisms in both syntax and language has been rigorously avoided;

• the use of a closing Trinitarian doxology has been dropped except in a few significant cases, but in a number of instances an essentially Trinitarian framework governs the structure of the prayer;

• contemporary imagery and directness of language have been adopted in many cases, without the concomitant pitfall of being so over-direct that the prayer fails to apply ‘across the board’ and so to perform its function of ‘collecting’ the prayers of all the people;

• when direct language is used, there is a related need to avoid sermonizing or moralizing in the prayer.

16. Particularly in relation to the latter points, a key question that arises is ‘What shall we pray about?’ Thomas Cranmer bequeathed to the Church of England a strong reliance (some might say ‘over-reliance’) upon the metaphor of defence. Since the new compilation is not a thematic one, we have tried to incorporate petitions, ideas and metaphors drawn from the following sources:

• reflection upon Scripture;

• reflection upon the season of the Church’s year (except in Ordinary Time);

• reflection upon key theological themes;

• reflection upon the general experience of being a Christian today, but also in the light of the history of Christian faith and discipleship down the centuries.

17. The result, we hope, is simple and short prayers, which are recognizably in the Anglican tradition of collect-writing whilst having an accessible and contemporary style of language.
Features of the new collection

18. As with most collects, these prayers are usually addressed to the Father and end with a pleading through Christ. Some, however, are addressed directly to the Son. These are for festivals marking events in the life of Christ: Christmas Day, the Presentation of Christ in the Temple, Palm Sunday, Ascension Day and the Sundays of Easter except Easter Day and Pentecost. The collect for Pentecost is unique in being addressed to the Spirit. The collects for the Sundays of Easter which are addressed to the Son have a common ending: ‘to the glory of God the Father’ (in the case of the Second Sunday of Easter, ‘to the praise of God the Father’).

19. The seasons make their mark on the collects, with each one in a season marking something of the season’s themes and flavour. The Advent collects are not quite so strongly thematic as those in the ASB or Common Worship, but those for the Third and Fourth Sundays relate to the work of John the Baptist and the Blessed Virgin Mary respectively. The Epiphany collects tend to make reference to the missionary work of the Gospel. The Lenten collects, unsurprisingly, contain the themes of self-discipline and struggle against sin and evil, becoming more focussed on the Cross from the Fifth Sunday of Lent onwards. The Easter collects contain recollections of gospel accounts of the disciples’ encounters with the risen Christ. The Collects for Ascension Day, Trinity Sunday and Christ the King all contain explicit reference to the immanent life of the Holy Trinity.

An additional collection, not a replacement set

20. The Synod’s call for ‘additional’ collects has been at the forefront of the Commission’s thinking during the compilation of this collection. It is an additional collection of collects, not a replacement set. If these collects are authorized, there will be two collects for each Sunday. Those conducting services will be able to choose the collect which they consider more suitable for the particular service and congregation on each occasion. These additional collects should therefore not be viewed solely as a discrete set, but rather as part the complete provision of collects for the Church of England.
21. Unlike many other Anglican collections, these collects represent a complete departure from the collects of *The Book of Common Prayer*. This was a deliberate move, as the *Common Worship* collection was highly influenced by the Prayer Book tradition. The Additional Collects are written with the intention of filling out the provision of collects in the Church of England by providing collects which can convey the spirituality of the Anglican collect in a worthy, contemporary idiom, complementing the approach of those already contained in *Common Worship*.

On behalf of the Commission

✠ DAVID SARUM
Chairman 22 January 2003
TEXTS FOR AUTHORIZATION

\[\text{Advent}\]

The First Sunday of Advent

Almighty God,
as your kingdom dawns,
turn us from the darkness of sin to the
light of holiness,
that we may be ready to meet you
in our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

The Second Sunday of Advent

Almighty God,
purify our hearts and minds,
that when your Son Jesus Christ comes again as
judge and Saviour
we may be ready to receive him,
who is our Lord and our God.

The Third Sunday of Advent

God for whom we watch and wait,
you sent John the Baptist to prepare the way of your Son:
help us to speak the truth,
to hunger for justice,
and to suffer for the cause of right,
with Jesus Christ our Lord.

The Fourth Sunday of Advent

Eternal God,
as we wait with Mary for the coming of your Son,
bring us through the birth-pangs of our present age
to see, with her, our great salvation
in Jesus Christ our Lord.
\textit{Christmas Eve}

Almighty God,
as we prepare with joy
to celebrate the gift of the Christ-child,
embrace the earth with your glory
and be for us a living hope
in Jesus Christ our Lord

\textit{Christmas Night}

Eternal God,
in the stillness of this night
your almighty Word leapt down from heaven:
pierce the world’s darkness with the light of salvation
and give to the earth the peace that we long for
through our Saviour, Jesus Christ

\textit{Christmas Day}

Lord Jesus Christ,
your birth at Bethlehem
draws us to kneel in wonder at heaven here on earth:
accept our heartfelt praise,
as we worship you,
our Saviour and our eternal God.

\textit{The First Sunday of Christmas}

God in Trinity,
eternal communion of perfect love:
gather the nations to be one family,
and draw us into your holy life
through the birth of Emmanuel,
our Lord Jesus Christ.
The Second Sunday of Christmas

God our Father,
in love you sent your Son
that the world may have life:
lead us to seek him among the outcast
and find him in those in need,
for Jesus Christ’s sake.

Epiphany

The Epiphany

Creator of the heavens,
who led the Magi by a star
to worship the Christ-child:
guide and sustain us,
that we may find our journey’s end
in Jesus Christ our Lord.

The Baptism of Christ
The First Sunday of Epiphany

Heavenly Father
at the Jordan you revealed Jesus as your Son:
may we recognize him as our Lord
and know ourselves to be your beloved children;
through Jesus Christ our Saviour.

The Second Sunday of Epiphany

Eternal Lord,
our beginning and our end:
bring us with the whole creation
to the glory hidden through past ages
and now made known
in Jesus Christ our Lord.
The Third Sunday of Epiphany

God of all mercy
your Son proclaimed good news to the poor,
release to the captives,
and freedom to the oppressed:
anoint us with your Holy Spirit
and set all your people free
to praise you in Christ our Lord.

The Fourth Sunday of Epiphany

God of heaven,
you send the Gospel to the ends of the earth
and your messengers to every nation:
send your Holy Spirit to convert us
to the good news of everlasting life
in Jesus Christ our Lord.

The Presentation of Christ in the Temple
Candlemas

Lord Jesus Christ,
light of the nations and glory of Israel:
make your home among us,
and present us pure and holy
to your heavenly Father,
your God, and our God.

Ordinary Time

The Fifth Sunday before Lent

Lord of life,
help us to put away all habits of mind and body
that lead to eternal death,
and to choose again your gift of life,
revealed to us in Jesus Christ our Lord.
The Fourth Sunday before Lent

Lord of the hosts of heaven,
our salvation and our strength,
without you we are lost:
guard us from all that harms or hurts
and raise us when we fall;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The Third Sunday before Lent

God of purity and power,
as you call us to your service,
cleanse our minds with the salt of the gospel,
and our lips with the fire of the Spirit,
that we may speak and live the truth
in Jesus Christ our Lord.

The Second Sunday before Lent

Almighty God,
give us reverence for all creation
and respect for every person,
that we may mirror your likeness
in Jesus Christ our Lord.

The Sunday next before Lent

Holy God,
you know the disorder of our sinful lives:
put right our crooked hearts,
and bend our wills to love your goodness
and your glory
in Jesus Christ our Lord.
Lent

Ash Wednesday

God the only saviour,
our lives are laid open before you:
help us to turn to you this Lent,
and through your Son,
the skilful healer,
strengthen us and make us whole
in the power of the Holy Spirit.

The First Sunday of Lent

Heavenly Father,
your Son battled with the powers of darkness,
and grew closer to you in the desert:
help us to use these days to grow in wisdom and prayer
that we may witness to your saving love
in Jesus Christ our Lord.

The Second Sunday of Lent

Almighty God,
by the prayer and discipline of Lent
may we enter into the mystery of Christ’s sufferings,
and by following in the Way
may we come to share in the glory;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The Third Sunday of Lent

Eternal God,
give us insight
to discern your will for us,
to give up what harms us,
and to seek the perfection we are promised
in Jesus Christ our Lord.
The Fourth Sunday of Lent

Merciful Lord,
you know our struggle to serve you:
when sin spoils our lives
and overshadows our hearts,
come to our aid
and turn us back to you again;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Mothering Sunday

God of love,
passionate and strong,
tender and careful:
watch over us and hold us
all the days of our life;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The Fifth Sunday of Lent
Passiontide begins

Holy God,
in the Saviour’s cross
your boundless love meets human sin:
strengthen and deliver us
that we may know the victory is ours
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Palm Sunday

True and humble King,
the crowd hailed you as Messiah
then turned against you:
may our praise last longer than a day;
may we be found beside you
on the way of the cross,
which is the path of glory.
Maundy Thursday

God our Father,
your Son Jesus Christ was obedient to the end
and drank the cup prepared for him:
may we who share his table
watch with him through the night of suffering
and be faithful.

Good Friday

Almighty God,
as we stand at the foot of the cross of your Son,
may we know your love for us,
that in humility, love and joy
we may place at his feet
all that we have and all that we are;
through Jesus Christ our Saviour.

Easter Eve

In the depths of our isolation
we cry to you, Lord God:
give light in our darkness
and bring us out of the prison of our despair;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Easter

Easter Day

God of glory,
by the raising of your Son
you have broken the chains of death and hell:
fill your Church with faith and hope;
for a new day has dawned,
creation is restored,
and the way to life stands open
in our Saviour Jesus Christ.
The Second Sunday of Easter

Risen Christ,
for whom no door is locked, no heart is closed:
open the doors of our compassion,
that we may seek the good of others
and walk the joyful road of sacrifice and peace,
to the praise of God the Father.

The Third Sunday of Easter

Risen Christ,
you filled your disciples with boldness and fresh hope:
strengthen us also to proclaim your risen life
and fill us with your peace,
to the glory of God the Father.

The Fourth Sunday of Easter

Risen Christ,
faithful shepherd of your Father’s sheep:
teach us to hear your voice
and follow your command,
that all your people may be gathered in one flock,
to the glory of God the Father.

The Fifth Sunday of Easter

Risen Christ,
your wounds declare your love for the world
and the wonder of your risen life:
give us compassion and courage
to risk ourselves for those we serve,
to the glory of God the Father.
The Sixth Sunday of Easter

Risen Christ,
by the lakeside you renewed your call to your disciples:
help your Church to obey your command
and draw the nations to the fire of your love,
to the glory of God the Father.

Ascension Day

Risen Christ,
you have raised our human nature to the throne of heaven:
help us to see and serve you,
that we may join you at the Father’s side,
where you reign with the Spirit in glory,
now and for ever.

The Seventh Sunday of Easter

Risen, ascended Lord,
as we rejoice at your triumph,
**fill your Church on earth with power and compassion,
that all who are estranged by sin
may find forgiveness and know your peace,
to the glory of God the Father.

Day of Pentecost

Holy Spirit, gift of the Father:
pour out afresh the fullness of your gifts
renew the face of the earth,
and revive your Church with pentecostal fire;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Ordinary Time

Trinity Sunday

Holy God, faithfalt and unchanging:
enlarge our minds with the knowledge of your truth,
and draw us more deeply into the mystery of your love,
that we may truly worship you,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

The First Sunday after Trinity

God of truth,
help us to keep your law
and to walk in ways of wisdom,
that we may find true life
in Jesus Christ your Son.

The Second Sunday after Trinity

Faithful Creator,
whose mercy never fails:
deepen our faithfulness to you
and to your living Word,
Jesus Christ our Lord.

The Third Sunday after Trinity

God our Saviour,
look on this wounded world
in pity and in power
and help us to hold fast
to your promises of peace
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
The Fourth Sunday after Trinity

Almighty God,
you search us and know us:
may we rely on you in strength
and rest on you in weakness,
now and in all our days;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The Fifth Sunday after Trinity

Almighty God,
send down upon your Church
the riches of your Spirit,
and kindle in those who minister the gospel
your countless gifts of grace;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The Sixth Sunday after Trinity

Gracious God,
you call us to fullness of life:
deliver us from unbelief
and banish our anxieties
with the liberating love of Jesus Christ our Lord

The Seventh Sunday after Trinity

Generous God,
you give us gifts and make them grow:
though our faith is small as mustard-seed,
make it grow to your glory
and the flourishing of your kingdom;
through Jesus Christ our Lord
The Eighth Sunday after Trinity

Lord God,
your Son left the riches of heaven
and became poor for our sake:
when we are prosperous save us from pride,
when we are poor save us from despair,
that we may trust in you alone;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The Ninth Sunday after Trinity

Gracious Father,
revive your Church in our day,
and make her holy, strong and faithful,
for your glory’s sake
in Jesus Christ our Lord.

The Tenth Sunday after Trinity

Lord of heaven and earth,
as Jesus taught his disciples to be persistent in prayer,
give us patience and courage never to lose hope,
but always to bring our prayers before you;
through Jesus Christ our Lord

The Eleventh Sunday after Trinity

God of glory,
the end of our searching,
help us to lay aside
all that prevents us from seeking your kingdom,
and to give all that we have
to gain the pearl that has no price,
our Saviour Jesus Christ.
The Twelfth Sunday after Trinity

Almighty God,
in whose service lies perfect freedom:
teach us to obey you
with loving hearts and steadfast wills;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The Thirteenth Sunday after Trinity

Father,
by the obedience of Jesus
you brought salvation to our weary world:
draw us into harmony with your will,
that we may find our world restored in him,
our Saviour Jesus Christ.

The Fourteenth Sunday after Trinity

Father, giver of all gifts:
bring joy to our hearts through your Holy Spirit,
that the world may believe the good news
which comes to us through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The Fifteenth Sunday after Trinity

God of constant mercy,
who sent your Son to save us in our weakness:
keep us mindful of your goodness,
that, as your grace increases in us,
our thankfulness may also grow,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
The Sixteenth Sunday after Trinity

Lord of creation,
whose glory is around and within us:
open our eyes to your wonders,
that we may serve you with reverence
and come to our lives’ end in peace,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The Seventeenth Sunday after Trinity

Creator God,
you made us all in your image:
may we discern you in all that we see,
and serve you in all that we do;
through Jesus Christ our Lord

The Eighteenth Sunday after Trinity

God, our judge and saviour,
teach us to be open to your truth
and to trust in your love,
that we may live each day
with confidence in the salvation which is given through
Jesus Christ our Lord.

The Nineteenth Sunday after Trinity

Faithful Lord,
whose steadfast love never ceases
and whose mercies never come to an end:
grant us the grace to trust you
and to receive the tokens of your love
new every morning
in Jesus Christ our Lord.
The Twentieth Sunday after Trinity

God, our light and our salvation:  
illuminate our lives,  
that we may see your goodness in the land of the living,  
and looking on your beauty  
may be changed into the likeness of Jesus Christ our Lord.

The Twenty-first Sunday after Trinity

Lord God,  
defend your Church from all false teaching  
and give to your people knowledge of your truth,  
that we may find eternal life  
in Jesus Christ our Lord.

The Last Sunday after Trinity

Merciful God,  
teach us to be faithful in change and in chance,  
that trusting in your word  
and obeying your will  
we may enter the unfailing joy of Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Saints’ Day

God of holiness,  
your glory is proclaimed in every age:  
as we rejoice in the faith of your saints,  
inspire us to follow their example  
with boldness and joy;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The Fourth Sunday before Advent

God of glory,  
touch our lips with the fire of your Spirit,  
that we with all creation  
may rejoice to sing your praise;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
The Third Sunday before Advent

God, our refuge and strength,
bring near the day when wars shall cease
and poverty and pain shall end,
that earth may know the peace of heaven
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The Second Sunday before Advent

Heavenly Lord,
you long for the world’s salvation:
revive us from inaction,
restrain us from excess
and stir in us new hope
that all creation will one day be healed
in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Christ the King
The Sunday next before Advent

God the Father,
help us to hear the call of Christ the King
and follow in his service,
whose kingdom has no end;
for he reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, one glory.

Special Occasion

Harvest Thanksgiving

Creator God,
in the evolution of time
your hand has shaped the world:
as we give thanks for the fruits of the earth,
enrich our lives with the fruits of your love;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.