

General Ordination Examination 2014

Set 1: The Holy Scriptures

LIMITED RESOURCES: A printed one-volume annotated Bible; a printed one-volume concordance. **NO** electronic or Internet resources.

The Church teaches that Holy Scripture is an authoritative source of direction for addressing the challenges of contemporary faith and living. The Bible helps us understand what God has called and is calling the people of God to be and do. Sometimes, however, it would seem the biblical direction in which we are to walk is not clear. This is true when we look at the issue of violence.

Consider, for example, the following *pairs* of texts from Old and New Testaments:

Isaiah 2:2-4

² In days to come
the mountain of the Lord's house
shall be established as the highest of the mountains,
and shall be raised above the hills;
all the nations shall stream to it.
³ Many peoples shall come and say,
'Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord,
to the house of the God of Jacob;
that he may teach us his ways
and that we may walk in his paths.'
For out of Zion shall go forth instruction,
and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.
⁴ He shall judge between the nations,
and shall arbitrate for many peoples;
they shall beat their swords into ploughshares,
and their spears into pruning-hooks;
nation shall not lift up sword against nation,
neither shall they learn war any more.

AND

Joel 3:9-12

⁹ Proclaim this among the nations:
Prepare war,
stir up the warriors.
Let all the soldiers draw near,
let them come up.
¹⁰ Beat your ploughshares into swords,
and your pruning-hooks into spears;

let the weakling say, 'I am a warrior.'

¹¹ Come quickly,
all you nations all around,
gather yourselves there.

Bring down your warriors, O Lord.

¹² Let the nations rouse themselves,
and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat;
for there I will sit to judge
all the neighboring nations.

OR

Matthew 5:9

9 Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

AND

Luke 22:35-38

35 He said to them, 'When I sent you out without a purse, bag, or sandals, did you lack anything?' They said, 'No, not a thing.' 36 He said to them, 'But now, the one who has a purse must take it, and likewise a bag. And the one who has no sword must sell his cloak and buy one. 37 For I tell you, this scripture must be fulfilled in me, "And he was counted among the lawless"; and indeed what is written about me is being fulfilled.' 38 They said, 'Lord, look, here are two swords.' He replied, 'It is enough.'

Taking seriously the need for biblical direction *and* the differing perspectives taken by the Bible on violence, in an essay of 1,500 words:

1. Exegete *either* the Old Testament *or* the New Testament pair of texts, analyzing and presenting their literary, historical, and theological characteristics. Your exegesis should clearly explicate the purposes of each text. (1,000 words)
2. Apply your exegesis to a contemporary issue of violence. Your argument should honor the integrity of the Bible and take seriously the church's call for authoritative direction. (500 words)

Set 2: Liturgy and Church Music

LIMITED RESOURCES: A printed one-volume annotated Bible; a printed 1979 Book of Common Prayer; a printed *Book of Occasional Services*; a printed *Lesser Feasts and Fasts*; printed *Enriching Our Worship* volumes; and other printed authorized supplemental or provisional material; a printed Hymnal 1982, a printed *Wonder, Love and Praise*; and authorized supplemental musical material. **NO** electronic or Internet resources.

In a lecture, the Episcopal liturgist Thomas Talley, speaking of Easter, said:

By virtue of the resurrection, Christ is now trans-historical and is available to every moment. We may never speak of the Risen Christ in the historical past. The event of his passion is historical, but the Christ who is risen does not exist back there, but here, and as we live on this moving division line between memory and hope, between the memory of his passion and the hope of his coming again, we stand always in the presence of Christ, who is always present to everyone.

In his theological commentary on the American Prayer Book, Leonel Mitchell shows how this applies in a particular instance, the Feast of the Nativity of Our Lord. Reflecting on the second collect for the feast (BCP 1979, p. 212), he writes:

It identifies this night [this very night in our time] with the breaking forth into this world of the true Light which is Christ, and it identifies the celebration of the festival with the shining of the Christ Light in our lives. To celebrate Christmas, then, is in a real sense to participate in the event which it celebrates.

Robert Taft, another prominent liturgist, writes, echoing the previous quotations:

The actuality, the presentness of it all, is because we are celebrating not something from the past, but a permanent present reality, an ongoing call and response, a new life, which we call salvation, that was called into being by saving events that are past only in their historicity.

- 1) In an essay of 750 words, comment upon how the quotations inform a coherent theology of the liturgical year, addressing both the once-for-all nature of the events in the life of Christ and the here-and-now active presence of Christ.
- 2) Building upon the previous answer in a further 750-word narrative essay – *not a list or an outline* – give representative examples of how you would plan the Eucharist for a Principal Feast as designated by the BCP 1979 in view of this theology, describing what you would do, your rationale, and what you would avoid doing. Please consider, for example, hymnody, choreography, spatial arrangement, iconography, imagery and homiletics, including at least three of these in your response.

Set 3: Contemporary Society

NO EXTERNAL RESOURCES

You are the priest in an inner city parish that has undergone several changes in its 100-year history. It has a strong sense of self-identity as a predominantly African-American congregation, with some members from other racial and ethnic backgrounds. Some congregants live in the community and others drive long distances. As is currently the case in many urban areas, the economy is changing, and new demographic groups are moving in. New businesses are being

opened; new housing is being built. As a result, as in any group faced with change, fear of change is rising in the congregation. You have been called to help the congregation address this fear and move forward.

In an essay of 1,500 words, propose how you will approach this task. Include in your answer:

- The probable historical and contemporary experience of the congregation in question and how these experiences relate to the groups that are moving in. Identify at least one such group, and include how aspects such as race, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, marital or social status may have affected the fear of change.
- The role that the mission of the church as stated in the Catechism plays in your proposal.
- The day-to-day practice of your own ministry that will respond to the complexity of social change both inside the congregation (for example, pastoral care, leadership, and worship) and outside the congregation (for example, the relationship of this congregation to the wider community).

Set 4: Christian Ethics and Moral Theology

NO EXTERNAL RESOURCES

The Preamble of the 1948 United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights includes the following statements:

Whereas the peoples of the United Nations have in the Charter reaffirmed their faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women...

Whereas a common understanding of these rights and freedoms is of the greatest importance for the full realization of this pledge ...

Now, Therefore THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY proclaims THIS UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations, to the end that every individual and every organ of society, keeping this Declaration constantly in mind, shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms and by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance, both among the peoples of Member States themselves and among the peoples of territories under their jurisdiction.

This statement is a representative example of a generally accepted concept, “fundamental human rights,” and implies that the Church, as an organ of society, and Christians, as individual members of society, should teach, promote and secure the rights and freedoms described.

In an essay of 1,500 words:

1. Explain what is commonly meant by the concept “fundamental human rights” and how these rights are generally thought to be established;
2. Drawing on your existing knowledge of sources in Scripture and the tradition of Christian thought, explain how these “rights,” so defined, fit or do not fit within a Christian understanding of moral theology;
3. Given your response in 2, and choosing one issue generally discussed employing the language of “rights,” describe how the Church and its members can best participate in the public discussion of this issue, specifically with regard to the concept of “rights.”

Set 5: Church History

NO EXTERNAL RESOURCES

An enduring theme of church history has been the relationship between the sacrifice of Christ on the cross of Calvary and the holy Eucharist. This development has had a substantial effect on the history of ordained ministry in the Church.

Part A: Write an essay of 500 words on each of the two topics below:

1. Considering the Church in its first four centuries, discuss the development of a sacrificial understanding of the Eucharist as it affected concepts of ordained ministry. Give two specific examples of historical texts and/or historical figures who contributed to this sacrificial understanding of both Eucharist and/or ordained ministry. How did these two examples influence this historical evolution?
2. During the English Reformation of the 16th century, Archbishop Thomas Cranmer rejected the concept of the Eucharist as a sacrifice and the priest as the minister of sacrifice, and both Cranmer’s 1550 Ordinal and his work on the 1552 edition of the Book of Common Prayer reflect this rejection liturgically. What were two historical figures or texts that lay behind Cranmer’s thinking of the Eucharist as a sacrifice of praise, if a sacrifice at all? How did these examples influence Cranmer?

Part B: Write an essay of 500 words that discusses an example of how the issues of the Eucharist as sacrifice and/or the priest as minister of sacrifice have continued to shape Anglican belief and practice since the Reformation. Also explicate an example of how these issues remain significant in The Episcopal Church today.

Set 6: Christian Theology and Missiology

NO EXTERNAL RESOURCES

Within the history of Christian theology, one can find two views of the knowability of God that seem incompatible. One is a view of God as active in history and knowable through divine acts. The other is a view of God as ontologically transcendent and therefore beyond all categories of human understanding and explication. You want to understand the relationship between these two views of God, which may appear to many in your congregation to be in conflict with each other.

Using two theological traditions within the history of Western Christianity that you think are appropriate, explain in an essay of 1,500 words how you would explicate the relationship between these two views to members of your congregation.

Set 7: Theory and Practice of Ministry

NO EXTERNAL RESOURCES

During your first year as the only clergy of a parish, you discover the parish has dire budget problems and the very survival of the parish is at stake.

The congregation is slowly growing but you know that even parishioners giving more generously would not be enough to make a significant dent in the church's financial outlook. There is a small unrestricted endowment.

Write an essay of 1,500 words to explain how you would approach this dilemma theologically, pastorally, and practically. Your answer should include how you would use this as an opportunity to engage the congregation and wider community in mission-oriented ministry.