EDITORIAL

Ten years have passed since the Second Vatican Council opened on October 11, 1962.

This past decade has been one of suffering, upsets, change and development. It has been a time of rapid growth, of suddenly doing four centuries' change in a few years. It has been a time of ecclesiastical house cleaning to welcome the second spring, the return to the Spirit of Pentecost.

Now we begin our second decade after the Council. This should be a time of maturing, of realizing more fully what the Vatican Council teaches, of beginning to appreciate what riches we have in the renewed liturgy, of realizing that the most important change must be in our hearts and our lives.

Time for Questions

With how many Council documents are we truly familiar? Have we studied and prayed over each one? Have we allowed them to penetrate our thinking? Do we really put them into balanced practice?

This issue of our Bulletin is devoted to the parish or community worship committee. We see this group as a most important way of making a specific, concrete application of Vatican Council's teaching in the field of liturgy. Until an active liturgy committee is at work in each parish, religious community and other group of believers in our land, the Council documents are going to remain on paper.

In this issue, we have gathered many ideas together to help your liturgy committee carry out the tremendous task to which God is calling its members.

We pray that he will send his Spirit to guide every parish worship committee in Canada, and to breathe new life into our worship, so that from east to west, north to south, we may offer him glory and praise.
INTRODUCTORY NOTES

LITURGY AND LIFE

As pointed out in our editorial, we feel that the Vatican Council documents are going to remain theory until an active liturgy committee is at work in every parish and community in Canada.

We do not see liturgy as a cure-all, as the magic answer. We remember the prophets' warnings about people who go through the externals of worship without a change of heart. We encourage wholehearted worship, a balance between liturgy and life.

Worship cannot stop at the altar: it must continue into our daily lives, into the society we live in.

FOR EVERY COMMUNITY

While this issue speaks of parish liturgy committees, the ideas are applicable to worship committees in other communities and institutions: convents, schools, hospitals, prisons. Special notes on these are included, but most of the ideas can be adapted as needed.

SOURCE

This issue does not intend to give the last word in parish worship committees. It presents many ideas that your community can study, think about and work on. This Bulletin seeks to give you lots of jumping off points, ideas and questions to start you developing your own.
ROLE OF THE PARISH

To understand the work of the parish liturgy committee, it is best to see how it fits into the big picture. The notes below form a good foundation for understanding what the committee does.

A few references are given to help you in your further exploration of these ideas.

PEOPLE OF GOD

Out of complete love for us, God called us in Christ to become his people.

Take a few moments to read — prayerfully — the magnificent description of our vocation in Ephesians 1:3-10. (Perhaps you could use this some day as part of a scripture service on the people of God.)

Called by God, chosen to be his people, his own children. Called to be holy and spotless. Set aside, dedicated to sing his praise. What love God has shown for us in Christ!

We are a pilgrim people, working our way through life. We are sinners, yet helped by Christ to rise again, to go forward. We are called to work with the Lord Jesus and with one another to make this a better world, to restore all things in Christ. We are the people of God, his beloved sons and daughters.

In his loving mercy, the Lord has chosen from among us leaders, shepherds. Our bishops and priests have been called to lead us by serving us, by bringing us the word of the Lord, by being models of Christian living.

Chosen from the bishops is the Holy Father, servant of the servants of God. As chief shepherd, he is called to lead the whole flock to God.

(Read the Constitution on the Church, nos. 9-18.)

High Priest of the Flock

Such are the words used by the Vatican Council to describe the vocation of the bishop. He is the leader of the people of God in their worship, teacher of God’s word, shepherd in the service of the community until the end of time. He is the chief liturgist of the diocese.

Called to serve his brothers and sisters, the bishop has received the fullness of the sacrament of orders, and is promised the assistance and gifts of the Spirit in his ministry.

He carries on in his diocese — the family of God’s children in a specific area — the work of the Lord Jesus as teacher, high priest and shepherd. Christ is present in the bishop’s work and action among his people.
One of his greatest duties is preaching the gospel, the Good News of Jesus and our salvation. By praying and laboring for his flock, he carries on the work of the Church in this area.

Each bishop shares with all bishops and with the people in the concern and responsibility for the growth and holiness of the Church around the world.

When the bishop, priests, other ministers and the people gather for the celebration of Mass, they express in a vivid and visible way the unity of the Church of Jesus.

(Read Constitution on the Church, nos. 18-28; Liturgy, no. 41.)

Community Around the Altar

What is a parish? Some people look at a parish as a collection of buildings — church, rectory, school, convent, hall — down at the corner of Division and Main Streets. Some see it as all the territory within certain boundaries. But a parish should be seen as the people of God — actual and potential, active or negligent — living here: the people chosen by God in Christ from all eternity to be his children, his holy flock, his worshippers, his witnesses at this time and in this place.

The parish is the local community of believers, a family living in faith, hope and love. It is the assembly of people called to praise the Lord, to worship him in word and sacrament and life. The parish is this community gathered around this altar.

Parish and bishop: Through the bishop, the parish is united to the entire Catholic world. The pastor and his associates or assistants are cooperators in the bishop’s work, and are named by him to serve God’s people in this parish. Through his priests, the bishop is enabled to preside over this flock, and to maintain their Christian life by leading them more deeply into sacramental and eucharistic worship.

The relationship of the liturgical life of a parish to its bishop needs to be reinforced by practice. Some suggestions to be considered by a parish liturgy committee over a period of time:

—remembering the bishop during the eucharistic prayer: It is good occasionally to remember that the eucharist is offered legitimately only when done in connection with the bishop. Underground liturgies and breakaway groups tear down the unity of the Church. When we pray for the bishop, we should be asking God’s help for him to lead this flock to Christ. Once in a while, the bulletin might remind the parish of the bishop’s spiritual role, and ask for prayer and collaboration with the bishop’s plans and efforts.

—general intercessions: The first petition in the prayer of the faithful should concern the Church of God throughout the world, and those whom the Lord has called to lead his pilgrim people: the Holy Father, bishops and priests, especially our bishop and our priests.
—bishop's anniversary: Suggestions for celebrating this day in the parish are given in the introductory notes of the Liturgical Calendar.

—Mass celebrated by the bishop, surrounded by his priests and people is one of the clearest pictures of the Church. If possible, each parish should seek to have the bishop present for such a celebration each year.

—expectations: priests and parishioners should, in the light of ample references in the Vatican Council documents, continue to look toward their bishop primarily as a spiritual leader: teacher of God's word to his people, leader in worship and prayer, shepherd and father to all.

(Read Constitution on the Church, nos. 26-28; Liturgy, nos. 41-42.)

Center of parish life: What is the center of the life of your parish? Is it:

- the social activities during the year?
- the school and religious education program?
- the dynamic parish organizations?
- the clergy?
- the parish council?

The Vatican Council teaches that the true center of the parish is the eucharist, celebrated to praise God and to lead his people to Christian living:

“No Christian community, however, can be built up unless it has its basis and center in the celebration of the most Holy Eucharist. Here, therefore, all education in the spirit of community must originate. If this celebration is to be sincere and thorough, it must lead to various works of charity and mutual help, as well as to missionary activity and to different forms of Christian witness.

“Moreover, by charity, prayer, example, and works of penance, the Church community exercises a true motherhood toward souls who are to be led to Christ. For this community constitutes an effective instrument by which the path to Christ and to His Church is pointed out and made smooth for unbelievers, and by which the faithful are aroused, nourished, and strengthened for spiritual combat.”*

The Church made present: The universal Church is made visible in the faith and life, the prayer and worship of the local community of believers. The parish family represents the people of God. It is the Church in this area. (See CSL, no. 42)

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* Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests, no. 6. Quoted with permission from The Documents of Vatican II, pages 545-546. © 1966 by The America Press. All rights reserved.
The General Instruction of the Roman Missal (see Bulletin no. 28 for full text) states:

“Mass celebrated by any community is important, but especially the parish community which represents the universal Church at a given time and place. This is the ideal sign of the Church.” (no. 75)

“The Lord’s Supper is the assembly or gathering together of the people of God, with a priest presiding, to celebrate the memorial of the Lord. For this reason the promise of Christ is particularly true of a local congregation of the Church: ‘Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in their midst’ (Mt. 18: 20).” (no. 7)

STRIVING FOR EXCELLENCE

Excellence for the Lord.
Quality.
The best we have to offer.
Mediocrity has no place in liturgy.

Constant preparation, much planning, hard work by all involved in celebrating are the cost of good liturgy in any parish or community.

Prayer and work are both needed in order that our liturgy truly praises and pleases God.

What is your committee doing to strive for excellence?

The only pride that never harms a person is pride in one’s work.
Because the worship committee is part of the parish council, a few brief notes are in order on the work of the council in the life of the parish.

SPIRITUAL EMPHASIS

Because they feel more at home with buildings and finances and organizations than with spiritual realities, many lay members of parish councils tend to emphasize these aspects of parish life.

The social side of parish life is easier to grasp, it's in a good cause, and there is certainly enough to keep everyone occupied. And so the spiritual side — the prayer life of the community, the growth in holiness, the community of believers who assemble to praise the Lord, the work of salvation — this side of parish life tends to be ignored or at best tolerated.

Father Carley's article, Last Word, in this issue, is a serious contribution on this problem, and deserves thoughtful prayer, study and discussion.

Priorities

The spiritual side of parish life, rather than plumbing or finances, should be the main concern of the council. The opportunities for prayer being provided for the people of the community are much more important than parish bowling leagues, bingo and picnics combined.

A parish council should become prophetic — standing back, getting a Christian perspective, and inviting the community to follow Christ more closely.

Jesus Christ did not found his Church to run card parties, social teas or fashion shows. Strange to say, he came to establish a kingdom not of this world.

Council members who start looking at the spiritual and primary work of the parish are not going to be popular. People who stress prayer and spiritual service and love and other-worldly ideas (such as those given us in the sermon on the mount) are going to be persecuted. Jesus promised us this.

But it is time that Jesus' Church in your community started to become more Christ-like and less establishmentarian.

The parish is a spiritual community, gathered by Christ in his Spirit, called to praise God and help save men and women and children by witnessing to the love of God, showing his love by service and dedication.

Jesus did it by healing and washing feet and dying.

Are you going to do it by serving people or tea? by washing feet or cups? by gathering children to pray or to play hockey?
Your parish is God's people in this community, called to pray and to serve.

What are your priorities? What is your most important job? Are the tasks that take up most of your time and energy the important ones?

**Council Committees**

The same questions apply to the committees of the parish council. As long as a parish is considered as nothing more than a spiritual country club or fraternity, the council and its committees will have little to do with the real work of Jesus and his Church.

One or two members of a committee or council can bring a parish back to life, to *spiritual life*. What about your parish?

Each council committee has a purpose which must be based on the task or job or role of the parish itself.

Paragraph 37 of the Constitution on the Church is a good meditation for active Christians on their right to receive abundantly the spiritual goods of the Church. It echoes the words of Jesus: “I have come to give life, life in all its abundance.” (Jn. 10:10)

Bishop, priests, people, council and committee members are all responsible for seeing that the parish and its council and committees do the job Christ calls them to do; they must make sure that the ideal of the sermon on the mount challenges rather than embarrasses the people of God in this community.

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**Nothing which is worth doing is ever done without great sacrifice.**

— 182 —
LITURGY COMMITTEE

Before going any further, we should point out that this Bulletin is using various terms to describe one committee: parish liturgical committee, worship committee, liturgy committee. Choose the name you prefer, but keep the committee active and on a spiritual basis.

WHAT IS OUR JOB?

The task of the liturgy committee of the parish council may be expressed as:

working to develop and promote
the worship of God
and the prayer life of the parish community
within the universal Church and the family of man.

If members of a parish and their council take their spiritual task seriously, they are going to see that every activity in the parish leads to God's greater glory and the salvation of his people. The liturgy committee is going to strive for praise and sanctification in all its works.

The task of the worship committee is a spiritual work: it must be seen with eyes of faith, in the light of Christ. It is the work of God's people, who are set aside to praise God in worship and holiness of life.

Men and women of faith, concerned about giving glory to God and helping people to hear his word with profit, will strive for excellence. They will contribute the fruit of their own prayer and reflection. They will bring every human resource into action in order to plan, organize and assess.

Public worship is the first concern of the liturgy committee. It will work to make the community's worship truly fitting and reverent. The Sunday celebration should become the highlight of parish life. The sacraments — properly prepared and celebrated — are also public worship.

Prayer life of the parish: The liturgy committee is also concerned about the way the people of the parish pray. It should be working to help people grow in prayer, to encourage times of retreat and meditation for individuals, groups and indeed the entire parish. The committee will have a special concern to help people learn more about God's word in the bible, so that they may listen to him and follow his will.

What has prayer and scripture to do with worship? Public worship that is not backed up by personal prayer is a sham. It is the lip service that Jesus condemned. A growing understanding and love of the bible helps a community to be more attentive to God's thoughts. People who read the gospels regularly in a spirit of prayer are going to be trying to live their lives according to the will of God, and will be more ready to hear his word proclaimed solemnly in the Sunday assembly.
Liturgy and Life

The Vatican Council warns us that ceremonies and organizations are useless unless they help God's people to reach spiritual maturity. (Priesthood, no. 6) The worship committee must see that liturgy leads and encourages people to lead better lives: to practise each day what they hear proclaimed on the Lord's day. It aims to help people grow up in Christ, to develop the gifts and virtues he has given them, and to use them for the benefit of the whole community.

Help of the Spirit

By now you are probably ready to resign because we expect too much. The ideals urged in this Bulletin are exalted, but they are a goal to strive for.

Most important of all, the Lord Jesus has given us his Spirit, to us who believe, so that we still live no longer for ourselves but for Christ; to help us complete his work on earth, to give us the fullness of his grace. (Fourth eucharistic prayer)

The work of the parish worship committee is the work of the Spirit, renewing the face of the earth, helping God's people to pray, (Rom. 8) teaching people to listen to the word with reverence.

Tuned In

If individual members of the committee try to be persons of prayer, strive to live lives pleasing to God, and work to spread the Good News of Jesus, the Spirit will be working in them and through them. He will give his gifts, if they ask, for the good of the community they are serving. He will work with those who are doing his work.

The task is big, the odds tremendous, our weakness and inertia evident. But the Spirit is with us, ready to strengthen our faith and help us in our work. The Lord Jesus is ready to move mountains for us if we have faith and want to move them for him.

Specific tasks of the parish liturgy committee are described in the section entitled Areas of Responsibility.

The great use of life is to spend it for something that will outlast it.
COMMITTEE MEMBERS

NINE QUESTIONS

1. Who should belong?

The committee includes the pastor or one of the priests, someone familiar with music (choir leader, organist or one of the singers), a person involved with the group of readers (their leader or one of the readers), perhaps an artist, a representative of the servers, and anyone else involved actively in preparing parish worship. A cross-section of youth and age, married and single, men and women, brings a broad range of interests and views to the work of the committee. People who are interested in the liturgy and in the prayer life of the parish should be invited to belong to the committee or to one of its sub-committees.

2. How many members?

The simplest answer is: enough to do the job well.

The number of members will depend on how seriously the committee approaches its task, and on the extent to which it passes on various responsibilities to subcommittees. It will vary also with the size of the parish and its liturgical maturity.

If there are too few members, they will be overwhelmed by the tasks facing them, and will tend to become discouraged. Giving up often results from such a situation.

If there are too many members, some may become frustrated: having little to do, finding it hard to discuss matters in an oversized group, they may tend to rely on others to do the work, or decide they are not really needed in the committee.

What is the best number? Enough to do the job well in your community. You have to determine the right number by avoiding the extremes of too many or too few, and by working until you have the right number of people for your committee.

3. Who should name committee members?

This will vary, depending on the way your parish council has decided to choose members for its various committees.

In general, the council — in consultation with the priests of the parish and the persons concerned — will name members to the liturgical committee.

4. How should they be chosen?

In general, it would seem best to have the liturgy committee members — or at least the nucleus of its membership — handpicked by the council. At the same time, the council should extend an open invitation to the parishioners to take part in the committee's work. Such persons, when approved by the council, could become members of the committee.
The committee should be free to ask individuals to take on specific tasks (for instance, working on a bible service) without red tape or specific permission. After working with this person, if the committee feels he would be a good member, the council should be asked for approval.

(This may seem like a lot of rigmarole, but approval of committee members by the elected council keeps ultimate guidance in the hands of the community.)

5. How is the committee related to the parish council?

The parish council sets up the committee and assigns its role (or accepts the committee’s definition of its role).

Major activities of the committee should be approved by the council.

Often a member of the council will be a member of the committee, and bring its reports and requests to the council, and the council's decisions and plans to the committee.

The committee spends its full time and energy in one area, liturgy, while the council seeks to promote action and progress in many areas by different committees.

The council makes sure that the committee sets its priorities and keeps them in its planning and action during the year. It makes recommendations to the committee for study and action in various aspects of the parish liturgy.

The spirit between council and committee should be one of mutual respect, of cooperation in the Lord as they share in his work.

6. How should the committee members learn the job?

There is no single, simple or best way. Some suggestions on training members of the committee are outlined in the notes on Growing on the Job.

7. Who should be the committee chairman?

The person who can best coordinate the committee's work.

Any member of the committee may be chairman. Each committee should decide — unless this has already been done by the parish council — what is the best solution for its particular circumstances.

8. What about subcommittees?

Depending on the size of the parish and the degree of involvement of the worship committee, there may be one or many subcommittees.

At first, a subcommittee might be one person who looks after a specific task. For example, the person who appoints servers might be asked to continue doing this as part of the coordinated work of the liturgy committee. Gradually, either at his own suggestion or by invitation from the committee, a subcommittee might be formed to handle such related matters as training servers, looking after their robes, helping them to become more deeply involved in planning and celebrating liturgy, and so forth.
Other subcommittees should be involved with music; weddings and funerals; prayer life of the parish; the notes on the other Areas of responsibility suggest many openings for subcommittees.

You don’t need to call them by fancy titles: the important thing is to have people involved in carrying out the necessary work. If you have people preparing the petitions for each Sunday’s general intercessions, you may call them a subcommittee or work group or nothing at all, as long as they are doing the work well.

9. How is the committee related to its subcommittees?

A simple statement would describe the relationship of the committee to its subcommittees as that of the council to the committee.

The committee does for its subcommittees what the council does for the committee: see question 5.

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ADDING MEMBERS

We’ve all seen houses that have been neglected. Where a little paint and some minor repairs every so often would have kept them in good shape, the owners have let them fall apart and become dilapidated. Then, it seems, the only solution is major renovation or demolition.

Some councils tend to neglect their committees in a similar manner, and suddenly find they don’t have them any more.

A few “running repairs” will keep your committees alive and active:

- Make a point of saying “thank you” in public at least once a year to members of each committee. A pat on the back gives a greater lift than a boot in the end.
- Invite new members of the parish — especially those with council or committee experience elsewhere — to work with your committees on various projects.
- Don’t wait until every member is tired out. Add members or associates or subcommittee members as needed during the year.
- Encourage present members to recruit others. Enthusiasm is the best advertisement for the committee’s work.
- If a member is weary or no longer willing to do his share, invite him to join another committee that is more interesting; otherwise, thank him for what he’s done in the past, and invite him to resign or retire with honor.
How many times have you groaned because you had to go to another meeting?


We offer the following suggestions to make this society's ideals come true in your committee meetings:

Like most things in this life, a meeting has a beginning, a middle and an end. Start it well, carry out what it is supposed to achieve, and bring it to a conclusion. Simple words? Yes, they are, and most meetings would be much more enjoyable if the chairman followed that easy formula.

Start the meeting

- Begin it on time, every time, all the time.
- Open it with prayer: a few moments of serious prayer and meditation on the work of God.
- State the purpose of this meeting in a sentence or two.
- Set a reasonable time limit for the meeting to end.
- Review the last meeting by reading over its minutes, and complete any business left over from that meeting.

Hold the meeting

- Remind the members of the purpose of the meeting, and ask all to avoid distracting side-issues.
- Tackle the main business in stages: projects which may seem to be impossible are often cut down to size when shared by a number of people and handled in man-sized bites.
- Do the essential items first: others will come later in the meeting, if time permits.
- Leave room for new business and contingencies.
Close the meeting

- **Summarize** what has been achieved, and point out what remains to be done.
- **Thank everyone** for cooperating during the meeting.
- **Set the date** (and topics) of the next meeting.
- **Assignments**: work and activities should be assigned to members and subcommittees as required, with a date for reporting back.
- **Close with prayer**: Not a perfunctory ejaculation, but a few moments of offering up the work of this meeting to the Lord, and of serious prayer for his Church.

A MEETING SHOULD

- be necessary, and have a definite purpose,
- be interesting and enjoyable,
- move forward toward its goal,
- finish its task without finishing the people who meet,
- be long enough, but not too long.

MORE ON MEETINGS

*These are some jottings and some questions on meetings that may be of help to you in your committee work:*

- What does a chairman do? He helps to make the meeting worthwhile by keeping it on the track and focussed on the topic.
- Leadership is the quality of helping the group to move toward its goal. Any member of the committee can exercise this (without dislodging the chairman) by making sure he is contributing toward progress.
- Meetings should not be called at the last moment.
- Parliamentary procedure: is it a problem? How formal should liturgy committees be?
- Minutes of meetings: Should these be formal? Does anyone review them once in a while to see what has been left undone?
- Public libraries have rows of books on meetings and group dynamics. Ask your librarian to recommend a simple book or pamphlet to help members of your committee.
- When you find such a book, tell your parish council and tell us too.
- A well planned meeting is going to achieve much more than a half-hearted or hasty attempt to do some task. A simple agenda is like a road map: it keeps you on the track and headed for your goal.
ASSIGNING RESPONSIBILITIES

Back in 1968, one rural parish organized its liturgy committee in this way. It is still going strong.

a) Council's plan: First of all the parish council discussed the task or job of the liturgy committee, and came up with this:

*to promote and improve parish worship through Mass, sacraments and other ceremonies.*

Then the council suggested a number of areas of responsibility which it wanted the liturgy committee to look at:

- **Sunday Masses** — timetable, participation, ceremonies, sermons, music, singing
- parish bulletin
- **weekday and evening Masses**
- baptism
- confirmation
- confession
- **first communion**
- **weddings, preparation for marriage**
- **funerals, wakes**
- **bible services**
- **forty hours**
- **parish mission or retreat**
- plus other items as indicated by parish council

b) First meeting of liturgy committee: The agenda went like this:

1. Introduction of all members.
2. Relationship between liturgy committee and parish council:
   - recommendations by steering committee
   - approval by council
   - method of appointing new members
   (This was the same for each committee of the council.)
3. Discuss whole field of action
   - see (a) above
4. Plan this year's work:
   - two or three items
5. Need additional members?
6. Report to parish council — discuss contents
   - procedure
   — 190 —
7. Set next meeting
8. Assignments or "homework"

c) Further meetings: Continued to work at the above projects. More were taken on, or given to other groups as they grew in confidence and awareness of the task.

NOTE: This is not the only way or the best way: it is merely one method that worked in one rural parish.

Some find it easier to follow the footsteps of others, some find it better to forge ahead on their own. You have to discover the best way to do it in your own community.

WHAT SHOULD WE DO?

A parish liturgy committee often asks, what should we do?

Read over the article on liturgy in religious communities (Bulletin no. 34). Many of the ideas suggested there are useful in parishes.

By the time you do them all, you'll be ready to issue your own book on liturgical committees.

But don't let the vastness of the job to be done overwhelm you. Remember: the best way to peel a sack of potatoes is to start the first one.

Work Areas

The following pages give ideas on a number of areas which parish worship committees should be responsible. The Sunday celebration is the most important and should be tackled first. Other areas may be added as the committee grows in experience and ability.

SUNDAY LITURGY

Sunday is the Lord's day, a little Easter, the highlight of the week in the service of the Lord. The traditional day of Christian community worship should be celebrated in your parish or community with joy. As we grow in our understanding of Sunday as the Lord's day, and not just another holiday from work, it should be reflected in our prayer and our manner of living, as individuals and especially as the people of the Lord.

A study of the Canadian bishops' statement on Sunday observance (see Bulletin no. 33, pages 69-70) would help each community's worship committee to realize the importance of the liturgy and of their role in its celebration.
Sunday in Your Parish

**Attitudes:** Is Sunday approached in faith by members of the congregation, choir, servers, readers? How do your priests view their Sunday task?

Is Sunday a day of joyful praise to God? Do people gather together around the altar to hear God's word and eat the bread of life, or merely to fulfill an obligation?

What can your committee do to deepen the sense of Sunday as the Lord's day in your community? Give consideration to these suggestions, and let them trigger your imagination and initiative to go further still. How about a "Sunday subcommittee" to look into it?

- Reading, studying, discussing Sunday as the Lord's day. What books and resources are available? What do you have at hand?
- Sharing these ideas with others through the parish bulletin, in discussion with organizations.
- Advertising the meaning of the day by banners, posters, encouraging the occasional use of hymns on the Lord's day (see liturgical index of *Catholic Book of Worship*).
- Taking a serious look at the Sunday celebrations from many points of view: timetables, degrees of solemnity, aids to participation, quality of reading, serving, preaching.

**Physical resources:** The Sunday liturgy can be greatly affected — for better or for worse — by the physical aspects. Such things as lighting, heating, ventilation, and P.A. system are normally the responsibility of another committee, but the liturgy committee should make recommendations about these to the appropriate group.

**Full team effort:** A full effort by many members of the parish is required if the Sunday is to be celebrated to the best of the community's ability. *Preparation, celebration, evaluation* are key words.

**Preparation**

**Planning** for the year is discussed under *Planning*. Each Sunday helps to build up the community and leads it closer to its spiritual goals.

**Concentrate:** Don't head off in all directions at once! It is better to concentrate on three or four areas of importance, and add to these as you make progress. While your committee is working on the important areas, you might ask one or two persons to take a look at possibilities of going further; they would serve as a task group or subcommittee to help develop your Sunday celebration.

**Suggested areas for better preparation:** You might give serious study to the ways these are being prepared at present, and to how your committee can help to make it even better:
Singing: Are you making any effort to encourage singing? Does your committee understand the vital role of music and singing in the liturgy? What priorities are you setting? (The jacket of *O Sing a New Song to the Lord*, the C.C.C. record introducing the Canadian hymnal, points out what is most important.)

Are you using *Catholic Book of Worship*? Do you have an adequate supply? Do your choir members, organist, other musicians and music directors have a copy of the complete edition?

Are you learning to sing psalms? How far ahead is your music when compared to this time last year?

How much preparation goes into choosing the music for each Sunday? What efforts are being made to develop a greater repertoire of music for the choir and for the congregation?

Do you have “silent” Masses without music? What are you planning to do about them?

What are your plans for the next six months for developing music and singing at your Sunday celebrations?

Readings: How do your readers prepare their texts? What helps do they have to understand the meaning of the texts? Do you provide them with aids such as *Discover the Bible* or one of the commentaries on Sunday readings? What help do they get to deepen their realization of the great role they perform? What helps are provided so that they can improve the quality of their microphone techniques and voice projection?

An introduction for each reading or for all the readings is of great benefit to readers and congregation (see Interventions, below).

Homily: The homily is the responsibility of the celebrant, but the worship committee can help him bring the message of faith to God’s people. Making sure that the priests of the parish have access to modern books on preaching and updated commentaries on the new readings will be of great value to all.

Interventions: See Bulletins no. 32, pages 17-20; no. 34. What is being done in your parish? Who works with the celebrant in preparing and coordinating these?

General intercessions: See the introductory notes in the Liturgical Calendar. This is a field for much creativity and growth. (See Starting Point, in this Bulletin.)

Other parts of the Mass: are discussed in various issues of the Bulletin. The committee should keep up to date and explore further areas for their activity by reading the Bulletin.
Celebration

A worship committee that wishes to do its work well must be ready to take a candid look at the way the Sunday liturgy is being celebrated at present. Each part of the celebration should be analyzed carefully, and three questions should be asked about each specific part:

- Is our present way giving great glory to God?
- Does it lead our people to greater love of God and neighbor?
- Does it lead our people to show this love by the way they live this week?

A full checklist is provided under Practical Projects.

By compiling results of this survey, the committee should see what needs improving, and begin to work on these areas without delay. Much of this work can be shared with subcommittees or interested individuals.

A list of priorities — the essential improvements that must be made in the next few months — should be drawn up. Once approved, these should be put into practice as soon as possible. Then further improvements may be made.

Evaluation

As the year goes on, the committee should keep its finger on the parish pulse to see that progress is being made. An occasional review of the survey of the Sunday celebration helps to keep priorities clear.

Unless it makes an occasional review of its progress, the committee may tend to lose sight of where it has been and — worse still — of where it is supposed to be going.

PRAYER LIFE OF THE PARISH

Your parish is intended to be a center of prayer. Not only should the church building be a house of prayer, but each Christian should be a man or woman or child of prayer, a living temple of the Spirit.

Your believing community is the Church of God in your corner of the world. You are the children of God. The Spirit has been poured into your hearts, and he is ready to help you pray.

You are called to thank God, to sound his praises in your town or city or countryside. Your lives as well as your words are living signs of your faith. God calls you in Christ to sing his praise, to pray.

It is the responsibility of the parish liturgy committee to be involved in the public worship of the community. It is also your responsibility to encourage and strengthen private and family prayer also. A parish committee should be providing opportunities for growth in prayer for those who wish to deepen their prayer life.

The committee should continue to remind all that prayer and witness, rather than bingo and lawn socials, are the works to which God calls his people.
An air of prayer, based on faith, will pervade the parish only when every home is truly a house of Christian prayer.

That is one of your goals as a parish worship committee!

**Personal Prayer**

Without personal prayer, liturgy is a sham; without public worship, private prayer is incomplete.

When each member of the community is a praying person, the Sunday assembly takes on new power. People of prayer bring a much deeper sense of reverence to public worship.

The Spirit of love has been poured into our hearts to help us realize we are God’s children; he also helps us to pray: read Rom. 5:5; 8:14-16, 26-27.

**Family prayer:** How many families in your parish really pray together? Do they realize that the words of Christ come true each time they gather to pray? (Read Mt. 18:20.) Should this be part of the instructions given in preparation for marriage in your parish?

**Growing in Prayer**

What are you doing in your parish to help your people grow in prayer? One small parish put the following ideas in their bulletin just before Lent:

**Lent — time for praying:** During Lent, Jesus is calling us to more ardent prayer. As God’s adopted sons and daughters, we should often be in conversation with our heavenly Father. Do we pray as well as we should?

Most of us were taught to say prayers when we were children, but did we ever learn to pray? There can be a big difference! Have we grown up in our prayer life as we have in our body and mind?

During Lent, one of our parish activities will be to explore new avenues of prayer, and to look at the familiar ones more fully. We will let Jesus teach us how to pray better. We will strive to follow his ways of praying, and find out how God wants to help us grow in prayer. We will work to see and overcome our faults in prayer. We will let the Spirit of God guide us in our prayer life.

Each week in each of our churches, after the evening Mass, those who wish may stay for a brief period devoted to a special aspect of prayer in our daily life. Each week we will see a little more how God wants us to grow in prayer, to help us make progress in our prayer life.

This Lent can be the beginning of a whole new, wonderful experience in prayer for God’s people in our parish.

With the apostles, we shall say: "Lord, teach us to pray!"

* * *

— 195 —
Among the topics discussed:

- Lord, teach us to pray
- Believe and ask
- Prayer of praise and thanks
- Prayer and peace of heart
- Our attitudes in prayer
- Praying in words and in silence
- Learning to pray with the psalms
- Using the gospels in our prayer
- Prayer and Christian joy

What about your parish?

Articles on prayer appear in each issue of the Bulletin. We refer, for example, to no. 32, pages 9-12: Liturgy as prayer; no. 33, page 64: prayer and action; no. 34: teaching children to pray. Use the Bulletin as one of your resources in encouraging your people to pray.

**Teacher of Prayer**

The priest is a teacher of prayer. This is one of his main duties. (It was discussed in Bulletin no. 33, pages 65-66.)

If your priests do not have time to teach the people of your parish to pray, then they are too busy about the wrong things. The apostles rebelled against such nonsense: "It is not right to neglect the preaching of God's word in order to handle finances." After telling the community to choose others to look after distribution of charitable funds, they added, "We ourselves will give our full time to prayers and the work of preaching." (Acts 6:2, 4, Good News for Modern Man.)

If your priests haven't time to teach you to pray better, then the parish council and liturgy committee and parishioners have a serious responsibility to protest. You need to rise up, rid your priests of unnecessary and time-consuming tasks, and let them devote themselves to prayer and concentrate on their spiritual work.

**Parish Project**

Growth in prayer is not accomplished by courses, books, pamphlets, discussions or talks. But these can help.

Why not consider a serious parish or community project for next Lent or next fall? Begin preparations now.

Further ideas on this will be given in Bulletin no. 36 (Advent-Christmas) and no. 37 (Lent-Easter).

In the meantime, explore the needs of your fellow parishioners, put a few brief articles on prayer in your parish bulletin, talk with committees in other parishes.
AUXILIARY MINISTERS

The Church now permits lay persons to distribute communion in special situations:

- at large assemblies
- bringing communion to the sick
- or in communities without priests.

Has your committee investigated the benefits that auxiliary ministers would bring to your parish or community, especially for the sick and shut-ins? What plans are you making to prepare these ministers and the people of your parish for their service?

Full details about auxiliary ministers are given in Bulletin no. 31; see also no. 33, pages 100-101.

LITURGY AND YOUTH

One of the areas of responsibility for a parish worship committee is the young people and children of the parish.

This concern is discussed in School Liturgy Committee in this issue; see also the eucharistic prayer for children in Bulletin no. 32, pages 24-28.

An article on liturgy and high school students is now being prepared for a future issue.

We invite you to share other ideas in this field with our readers.

ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS

Gradually these seasons have become secular celebrations. The spiritual aspect of these sacred times has been lessened, and all the pressures of the community are moving us away from the Christian meaning of this period.

The community of believers needs to take a fresh look at these seasons, at their meaning and celebration, and see how they fit into our lives.

The strengths and weaknesses, the possibilities, the ideals: these are discussed in the next issue of the Bulletin.

Many ideas for parishes, schools, communities, families and for worship committees are included in Bulletin no. 36.
WEDDINGS AND FUNERALS

These are special events in the life of a parish community. Their spiritual importance should not be lessened by failure of the liturgy committee to prepare adequately for their proper celebration by all.

Too often, weddings and funerals are considered as private or family celebrations, when they should be observed as milestones in the life of the community of believers.

Weddings

An outline of the spiritual opportunities open to the liturgy committee is given in the 1973 Liturgical Calendar, introductory note 14. Bulletin no. 30 gives the full ritual together with pastoral notes.

On mixed marriages, see Bulletin no. 34.

Catholic Book of Worship has a section on marriages; the complete edition suggests suitable music in the liturgical index. The article, Music for Weddings, in this issue is an excellent guide for parish celebrations.

Along with other committees of the parish council, the liturgy team should be working to make suitable marriage preparation available to all couples in the parish or area. Ecumenical preparation should also be discussed by the parish council.

At all weddings as at every liturgical celebration, full participation is to be encouraged in the normal way: singing, responses, psalms, acclamations, silence—all at their proper time. (CSL, no. 30)

Funerals

The Canadian ritual for funerals is currently under preparation. In the meantime, Bulletin no. 14 may continue to be used. Pastoral notes on funerals are given in introductory note no. 15 of the 1973 Liturgical Calendar.

Emphasis should continue to be placed on the victory over death gained by Christians in union with the risen Lord. (CSL, no. 81)

The Canadian hymnal has a section on funeral celebrations, and the liturgical index of the complete edition suggests music for the funerals of adults and of children.

Full participation in the liturgical celebration is the normal way for the community of believers to mark the passing of one of its members into eternity.

The Bulletin will announce when the new ritual is ready, and will publish background material to help your worship committee prepare and celebrate funerals in your parish or community.
DAILY MASS

Is weekday Mass in your parish just another drab between-Sundays routine, or something to look forward to? Do the people who come merely attend, or do they take part in the celebration? Routine and repetition can be deadly enemies of spiritual growth, or can be the foundation on which the spirit is nourished and developed. What is happening in your parish or community? There are many opportunities for a liturgy committee to explore.

Interventions: The interventions are one of the main ways in which the celebrant is encouraged to exercise his creativity in each liturgical celebration. In the Bulletin (no. 32, pages 17-20; see also no. 34), these are recommended in weekday Masses too; as a minimum we would suggest that the introduction to the Mass and to the readings should be made daily by the celebrant.

In the 1973 Liturgical Calendar, these interventions are described in greater detail.

Singing should not be considered an extraordinary or unusual part of the liturgy. It is a regular part of the worship offered by each community, and should be involved in every liturgical celebration. While the Sunday liturgy continues to be the highlight of the week's worship, it is not necessary for the weekday Masses to be devoid of music.

As a minimum, we would encourage the singing of one or two hymns — at the entrance and at the communion, for example. Or the responsorial psalm could be sung, at least in its seasonal form (see Catholic Book of Worship, nos. 172-200); or the Alleluia or Holy, holy could be sung.

Or the congregation may learn and use a new seasonal hymn.

Silent prayer: On a number of occasions during the celebration of Mass, a period of silence is recommended for prayer and meditation. In particular, these are in the penitential rite, after the “Let us pray” of the opening prayer, after each of the readings and after the homily.

In one parish we know, the pastor pauses exactly three seconds after inviting the people to call their sins to mind. (Either his conscience is remarkably at ease, or he has a strange sense of timing — or could it be that he has no idea that what he is saying is supposed to have some significance? We suspect the latter.)

Are things any better in your community?

Homily: A daily homily isn't really that difficult. It is a simple sharing with the assembled people of the riches to be found in the readings, prayers and other parts of the day's Mass. Next year, the Liturgical Calendar will contain daily “starters” — ideas to help the celebrant with his weekday homily, and to aid both priest and people to pray together.

— 199 —
General intercessions: When the readings are well introduced, the congregation has an opportunity to listen to them more openly. They are better prepared to grasp God’s word to them in the day’s liturgy.

By closing the liturgy of the word each day with the general intercessions, the celebrant will help deepen the faith of his congregation, and lead them into a more Christian concern for the needs of the Church around the world.

Are the general intercessions too hard to use each day? A simple form, involving the priest’s invitation to pray, two or three petitions and the celebrant’s closing prayer, is not too difficult. A petition for the Church, based on the readings, and one for the local assembly and for any other pressing needs, would certainly be adequate. Others might be added by the people in the congregation. (With a little training and guidance, the priest could help them to prepare these petitions in advance. Remember, the priest is a teacher of prayer.) The way this prayer is built is described in this issue in Starting Point.

Liturical growth: At weekday Mass, one can take the time to introduce new liturgical developments as they come along. In such a way, for example, the greeting of peace and the use of the chalice could have been introduced.

Opportunity Time

Daily Mass can be a time of great opportunities for the people of your parish. It is a time to help them deepen and strengthen their faith by nourishing them with the word of God more fully. It is a time to help them grow in the spirit of the liturgy. It is a time for the priest to be true spiritual father, leader in prayer and teacher of God’s truths to the people entrusted to his care.

LENT AND EASTER

Easter is the greatest feast of the year, and the entire liturgical calendar centers on this celebration. Each Sunday is a little Easter.

Lent is a time of prayer, penance and preparation for the renewed celebration of Easter.

How is Lent observed in your parish or community? Does the Easter season play an important part in your spiritual growth?

The first 1973 issue of the Bulletin, no. 37, will be devoted to Lent and Easter. It will be a valuable aid for your committee in taking a serious look at your local celebrations of these holy seasons.

— 200 —
INFANT BAPTISM

When baptism is celebrated in your parish, is it done in a hurried huddle in a corner of the church?

Or is it done with solemnity, before a full congregation, in a service full of song and God's word and recollected reverence?

**Preparation:** What sort of preparation do the parents, godparents and other members of the family make before the baptism? Is it a phone call the day before to make an appointment, or does the priest, with members of his liturgy committee (another team or subcommittee may work with him in baptismal preparation), meet the family on a number of occasions, discuss the meaning of baptism and Christian life, and work with them over a period of time?

Is baptism administered to anyone who comes along, or are there some standards laid down in your community?

**Celebration:** Baptism should be a parish event. In smaller parishes, it is not celebrated every time a baby arrives, but when a number of families are ready to have their children be accepted as members of the local and universal Church.

**Role of liturgy committee:** The committee should discuss its role in the coming year in working with the clergy to prepare families for baptism. They may also take part in the preparation and celebration of the ceremony. The committee may provide readers, arrange for choir and music, add a note of welcome to the community, perhaps present a New Testament to the parents. There is no limit to the contribution the committee may make.

**Bulletin no. 29:** The full ritual, including theological and pastoral notes, is available in the National Bulletin on Liturgy, no. 29. Copies may be obtained from the Publications Service of the C.C.C. (address inside front cover).

**Other areas of concern:** The committee may also work with the priests in preparing information on baptism for the parish bulletin every so often. They should promote Lent as a period of preparation for or renewal of baptism promises, culminating in the Easter vigil ceremonies. (See CSL, no. 109; also Bulletin no. 37 will deal at great length on the meaning of Lent and the role of the liturgy committee.) The parish community should also be helped to understand the Easter season as a time of quiet rejoicing and meditating on the great gifts and responsibilities God gives us in baptism.

**Parish bulletin:** How often does the bulletin educate the members of the community in matters of faith? A series of short articles on baptism (including its theology and apostolic and community implications) would be a worthwhile task for a group of parishioners to tackle once in a while.

**Adults too:** Who prepares adults for baptism or reception into unity with the Catholic Church? Is this left to the priests in your parish? A team approach, involving priests and members of the liturgy, education and apostolic committees of the parish council, would be much better.

_The better God's people realize what he does for them in baptism, the more they can respond in faith and love and living._

— 201 —
Many customs surround the first reception of communion, most of them inherited from days when liturgy meant rubrics. A brave worship committee may wish to examine current parish practices in the light of the liturgical renewal.

This is a touchy area, and it is better to work gradually: to survey the situation, to discuss, and to move slowly over the next few years toward a better celebration of this event, such as family groups, when each child is ready with little fanfare and hoopla.

Survey: What is currently done in your parish? In other parishes nearby?

Discuss: Many practices are being questioned by some today, such as parades of the whole group, mass production (everyone is ready on Trinity Sunday and no one before that), uniforms, children herded to the altar without their parents, photographers and relatives hopping up and down like jack-in-the-boxes.

Serious discussion should be held with parents, catechists and priests about these customs and about their lasting value. Are they contributing to the liturgical development of the children, the family, the parish?

The music used at such events should also be the subject for some frank discussion between the musicians and the committee. Are they simply coming up with the same old stuff? Do they realize the theological impact of what they sing on such occasions? What mood should be set?

Move slowly: Nothing but confusion and emotional upset will result from precipitous action. Careful study and discussion, explanation of the reasons behind old and new customs, a better understanding of the liturgical spirit: these are needed if a parish community is to move forward in the area of the first reception of communion by its children. Everyone should be helped to see the defects of the old and the benefits of the new.

In a later issue, an article will appear on this subject. Any suggestions for it will be appreciated.

While it is solving the problems concerning first communion, the worship committee might also like to tackle first confession and confirmation.

Maybe each of these is an area where a subcommittee or a pair of members might like to get to work and do the background exploration.

Every dream in its unfolding has difficult times, times when those who work with it are discouraged, when it seems as though those who were committed to it have lost the vision.
NOWHERE NEAR THE END

So far we have discussed a number of areas in which the parish liturgy committee should take a serious interest. There are many more as well, but the ones listed will be a good start.

As the committee grows in experience and membership, it might want to become involved in other areas of the liturgy that affect the spiritual life of the community:

- Sacrament of penance
- confirmation
- care of the sick, anointing, communion
- bible services
- eucharistic devotion
- music, choir, organist, musicians
- ecumenism
- readers and commentators
- servers
- and many other areas.

In the issues of the Bulletin during the next year, each of these areas will be discussed from the committee's point of view, and many practical helps, suggestions and resources will be mentioned.

A PASTOR COMMENTS

A liturgical committee should be more in the nature of what they call today a task force — and once more the needs of a particular parish must be considered; but I think you should have a background number of people — they have a sense of liturgical history — that you can fall back on when a situation arises (Christmas, school graduation, May procession, etc.); your advisors will vary — you're not going to have to discuss every liturgical action with the school principal, for instance, but he will be one of your group called in when the school is involved.

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— 203 —
STARTING POINT

A good way for a liturgy committee to begin its work is by having several members become responsible for preparing the general intercessions (prayer of the faithful).

Some background ideas on this prayer form were given in Bulletin no. 33, pages 84-85.

Four Distinct Parts

1. **Invitation**: The prayer begins with the celebrant’s personal invitation to all to join him in praying for the concerns of this assembly. This should be prepared by the celebrant himself, though the committee or group working on the prayers might wish to suggest a direction or expression for the invitation. It should be brief and clear, and should not lose its nature of invitation by becoming anything else. One sentence is usually adequate.

   While it should be carefully prepared, it need not be read. Some celebrants find it best to prepare it carefully, writing it out and honing it to perfection. When the time comes for its use, they will speak a real invitation to pray, based on what they have written.

   The celebrant should give the invitation and direct the prayer from the chair or at the lectern.

2. **Petitions**: Four intentions usually mentioned in the general intercessions are:
   - the needs of the Church around the world; this includes spiritual leaders from the local parish to the Holy Father;
   - for those governing the country, and for the salvation of the world; (we cannot forget that we are called by God to be people of prayer, the faithful few who pray for all);
   - for those oppressed by any troubles or needs: natural disasters, wars, racial troubles, unrest; when one member of the body suffers, all suffer; (of course, the Christian community must be ready to back up its prayer by practical action to remedy the problem or alleviate the suffering);
   - for the local community: both the local spiritual family and the civic community need prayers.

   Some may wish to expand one of the areas of concern, and have two petitions based on it; for example, the sick and deceased of the community might get a petition to themselves.
Petitions should not be lengthy, involved statements, but simple requests for help in these needs. Some people prefer to use direct discourse ("Lord, teach us..."), others indirect ("We ask the Lord to teach us..."). Like most liturgical prayer, the general intercessions are usually addressed to the Father.

Some like a built-in, regular conclusion leading to the response, while others are happy to avoid this method; others vary from week to week.

How many petitions? At least the four main intentions will be needed. Some parishes add one for the sick and dead when required. Sometimes a moment of silent prayer is added for personal petitions. Some add a prayer for all assembled at this Mass.

The intentions should be announced by someone other than the celebrant. In many parishes, the cantor or reader or commentator (that's a word we're going to have to discuss in a future issue) reads the petitions. Any member of the congregation, after suitable preparation, may be invited to read them.

3. Response: This is the congregation's portion of the general intercessions. By responding to the intention, the assembly gives its assent and makes this a prayer of the whole community. This may be done by making a common response or by silent prayer after each of the petitions.

The response may be said or sung. Some variety is desirable, rather than having the same one every Sunday. It should be brief and simple, and not a tongue-twister.

How do you tell everyone what the response is to be? If it needs to be announced, this is a ministerial task, and should be done by someone else, not by the celebrant. The simplest way would seem to be this: after the celebrant makes the invitation, the one who is to read the intentions says: "After each of the petitions, we will answer:..."

4. Closing prayer: As the leader of the assembly, the celebrant began the general intercessions, and now he concludes them. In a simple prayer, he asks God to hear the petitions of his people. One composed by the celebrant is best, and it should vary from week to week where possible. It should not duplicate the opening prayer (collect) of the Mass.

As with the invitation to prayer, the committee may pass on ideas and suggestions to the celebrant who prepares the closing prayer of the general intercessions.

With this prayer, the celebrant also closes the liturgy of the word.

Working Together

The liturgy committee's task is to see that the petitions are prepared and the response chosen for each Sunday's celebration, and may pass on ideas for the celebrant's invitation and concluding prayer.

In a one-priest parish, it would be easier to coordinate the general intercessions and the homily. But larger parishes should not give up too easily on this ideal.
To become familiar with what the task demands, it is suggested that the committee work out the petitions for one month's Sundays. They would work with the priest in exploring the readings and what their message is on that Sunday. Then they would jot down ideas to be included in the petitions. (Where possible, the petitions should reflect the readings; for example, when the gospel contains a parable about the Church, the first petition might allude to this.)

After the phrasing of the petitions and the choice of response is completed, it should be typed out and be ready for use. Adequate preparation should be done by one who reads them during the celebration.

After learning how to prepare the general intercessions, the liturgy committee should ask one or two of its members to work with other persons in the parish to prepare the petitions for a month at a time. Perhaps two or three families would take on the responsibility for it.

But someone on the committee needs to make sure the petitions are ready in good time, neatly typed or written, and ready for the day they are needed.

**Resources:** The homily aids in Canada’s loose-leaf missal give an explanation of the readings for each Sunday, and suggest several petitions for local consideration. Other prepared formulas are issued by various groups and organizations. Commentaries on the readings may help to point out the main concerns brought out in the liturgy of the word that day.

**Why Bother?**

Why should a parish or community make all this effort when you can get ready-made copies of the prayer?

Preparing the petitions is a field for creative liturgy, for the community to pray about its real concerns, to bring home the specific needs and cares of this parish.

It may be easier to take someone else’s petitions and use them as they are, but a community which takes its liturgy seriously will want to do better. It will be able to grow in its sense of prayer when its worship committee works to make its general intercessions reflect the current needs of that community. In this way, the committee is helping to open the hearts of this gathering of God’s faithful to the needs and concerns of the Church and world today.

As an individual, unique part of the universal Church, this community realizes its responsibility to pray, and exercises it by preparing its prayer to the best of its collective ability.

* * *

To help your committee prepare the petitions for each Sunday, one pastor has suggested a work sheet be prepared. A sample is given here. (Permission is hereby given to parishes to duplicate this copyright work sheet for their own use, but it is better to adapt it first to meet the needs of each community. If typed and duplicated on 8½ x 11 or foolscap paper, it would give sufficient room to write in the text as it is prepared. This worksheet, of course, would not be the copy used at Mass.)
WORK SHEET

GENERAL INTERCESSIONS

SUNDAY____________________

KEY IDEAS FROM READINGS

__________________________

__________________________

RESPONSE TO BE USED (preferably sung):

PRIEST'S INVITATION

PETITIONS

1. Universal Church: for needs; pope, bishop, priests; religious; laity; holiness
   and mission of God's people; faith and Christian living.
2. World: Salvation of mankind; peace; for civil officials.
3. Troubled: for people in trouble or need (especially recent disasters).
4. Local community: (religious and civic); special events, celebrations, activities
   in the life of this community.
5. Special intentions or needs: (including sick, deceased . . .)
6. For this assembly.

CLOSING PRAYER, BY PRIEST

CHECKLIST FOR SUNDAY LITURGY

This checklist suggests many things that ought to be done to make the
Sunday celebration truly significant.

You are encouraged to duplicate it (permission to duplicate this copyright
checklist is hereby given for the parish or community liturgy committee), and
have members of your committee analyze each of your Sunday Masses, including
those celebrated on Saturday evening.

Tick off those that are being done well; mark a big X opposite those that
are not being done, or that need some improvement.

The picture that you obtain will show you where your work lies in the
year to come.

Before Mass

— People are encouraged to come early and pray before Mass begins.
— Parish members and especially strangers are welcomed as they arrive.
— Servers come early, are properly and neatly vested, and do their share
  of preparing the sanctuary.

— 207 —
Lights, heat, ventilation are checked before Mass, to avoid unnecessary distractions and discomfort.

Hymn numbers are clearly visible.

The choir is ready before Mass begins.

Occasionally the organist provides soft music as the people gather.

Announcements (which Sunday, necessary page references, opening hymn) are brief and understandable.

**Introductory Rites**

- *The entrance song* is sung by all while the celebrant comes into the church.
- It is related to the season, a feast, or the theme, or is a general hymn of praise or thanksgiving.
- Variety is provided as the weeks go by in the hymns used and in the way the choir and people share and alternate the singing.
- *The entrance procession* moves through the church where possible.
- The servers and the reader bearing the lectionary form part of the entrance.
- The procession is carried out with unhurried dignity, is accompanied by song, and leads to an atmosphere of reverent celebration.
- Cross and candles are used often for this procession.
- *The greeting* is sincere, not routine or mechanical.
- The people respond heartily rather than out of habit.
- The options are used, and the best one for each celebration is carefully chosen.

*Introductory remarks* by the celebrant or another minister are related to the celebration.

- The theme of the celebration is brought out clearly in these remarks.
- *The penitential rite* is celebrated in a recollected manner, leading all to a deeper desire for God’s help in this Mass.
- The celebrant introduces the penitential rite in his own words, adapted to this celebration.
- He pauses for an adequate period of recollection.
- The various forms of this rite are used.
- When the third form is used, the words are prepared for this celebration.
- Occasionally the Lord, have mercy is sung as part of this third form.
- *The opening prayer begins* by an invitation to prayer, followed by a meaningful period for silent prayer.
- Through the bulletin and other means, the congregation is helped to realize how silence is used in the liturgy.
- The prayer is said distinctly so that all may hear the petition addressed to God.
- The people’s Amen is recognized as an acclamation of assent to the celebrant’s prayer.
— *Place*: The celebrant leads the introductory rites at his chair.

— *The microphone* is a good aid if used: was the celebrant in a place where he could use it for the introductory rites? (If a microphone is necessary and is not located at the chair, the committee should arrange with the building committee for its installation.)

**Liturgy of the Word**

— Nothing happens until everyone is seated and silent.
— In a few concise sentences, someone (celebrant or reader) explains the meaning of the three readings, or of their predominant theme.
— *Or else* the meaning of the first reading is explained briefly.
— These explanations have been carefully prepared before Mass, and are not “off the cuff” remarks.
— *The first reading* is proclaimed with faith and reverence, in a way that shows the reader understands and believes what he is reading.
— His statement, “This is the word of the Lord,” is a declaration of faith, not a sigh of relief.
— The people respond with a joyful and fervent cry of thanks.
— Everyone is invited to a period of silent reflection and prayer after the reading.
— The lectern is adequate and decorated to show respect for God’s word.
— The microphone is adequate and well placed at the lectern.
— *The responsorial psalm*: is any effort made to ensure this is sung in response to the first reading?
— The cantor or choir sings the refrain, and the congregation repeats it.
— Then the psalm is sung, and the congregation sings the refrain after each verse.
— If there is no singing, the reader (or someone else) reads the refrain, all repeat it; then he reads the psalm, with the congregation repeating the refrain after each verse.

— *The second reading* is introduced and explained (if all three were not explained at the beginning of the liturgy of the word).
— It is proclaimed with faith and reverence, in a way that can be heard and understood by all believers.
— The response and its invitation are said with meaning.
— Silent reflection and prayer follow this reading, at least occasionally.
— *The gospel acclamation*: the cantor sings the Alleluia, the congregation repeats it; the cantor sings the verse, and the congregation repeats the Alleluia.
— The congregation understands that the acclamation is sung as a welcome to Christ, who speaks through the gospel reading, about to be proclaimed.
— If not sung, the Alleluia may be omitted.
— The congregation stands for the acclamation.
— *The gospel* is introduced by a real procession to the place where it is
to be proclaimed.

— Candles and incense are used at least on special occasions.
— When used, they are handled with dignity by well trained servers.
— The reading does not begin until all are standing in reverent silence.
— Where another priest or deacon is present, he proclaims the gospel, while the celebrant stands at the chair and listens.
— The proclamation of the gospel is introduced by a brief explanation (if not already given before the three readings began).
— The gospel book is dignified, and is treated with reverence.
— The people's acclamation and its invitation are said with meaning.
— The prayer, "By the words of the gospel," is said in silence.
— A period of silent prayer and meditation sometimes follows the reading.

— The homily is ordinarily given by the celebrant, not by another priest.
— It follows immediately after the gospel reading, without any "commercials" or announcements.
— The celebrant preaches at the chair or lectern.
— The celebrant uses the microphone well during the homily.
— It is based on the sacred readings or other prayers of the day's liturgy.
— In the homily, the celebrant expounds the mysteries of our faith and the guiding principles of Christian living.
— He proclaims the death and rising of the Lord, and invites the assembly to respond in faith and action.
— The homily invites the people to enter into the action of the liturgy of the eucharist, crowned by communion.
— The people recognize the homily as a necessary source of nourishment for their Christian life.
— The celebrant invites the assembly to go forth from this eucharist into a fuller, more Christian way of life this very week.
— In this parish, the homily is seen as an integral part of the liturgy, and is not omitted for inane excuses.
— A period of silent prayer and reflection follows the homily.

— The creed: occasionally it is introduced as the community's response in faith to the word of God proclaimed in the readings and homily.
— The creed does not begin until all are standing quietly and ready to make their community profession of faith.
— The general intercessions (prayer of the faithful): The celebrant invites all to pray about the needs of the Church and the world.
— The celebrant directs the general intercessions from the chair or lectern.
— The petitions are read clearly by a reader, cantor, or member of the congregation, and not by the celebrant.
— If spontaneous petitions are permitted, this is done with reverence.
— Everyone knows what response to make.
— The response is sometimes sung.

— 210 —
— The people make the petition their own by meaning what they say in response.
— The celebrant concludes the petitions with a brief prayer.
— *The collection:* After the general intercessions, everyone is seated and the collection is taken up.
— There is an adequate number of collectors.
— The collection is made with dignity.

**Liturgy of the eucharist**

— *Preparation of the gifts:* the altar is prepared *at this time* by placing the corporal, purificator, chalice and missal on it. (This may be done by the servers.)
— The gifts (bread and wine) are brought forward by members of the congregation in procession.
— The money collected is placed in a suitable area, but not on the altar.
— The gifts and offerings are received by the priest.
— Singing accompanies the procession with the gifts.
— The silent prayers are said silently by the celebrant.
— If incense is used, it is done with dignity.
— Occasionally the meaning of incense is explained.
— The invitation to prayer ("Pray, my friends...") and its response are said with meaning.
— All stand for the prayer over the gifts.
— The celebrant does not begin the prayer over the gifts until all are standing in silence.

— *Eucharistic prayer:* The celebrant says a few words to introduce the eucharistic prayer, or *pauses* after the prayer over the gifts before beginning the preface dialogue.
— Priest and people realize that the preface is really the opening words of the eucharistic prayer.
— The preface and its eucharistic prayer are proclaimed by the celebrant as a prayer of praise and thanksgiving.
— The acclamation (Holy, holy) is sung whenever possible.
— When said, it is done with the correct pauses: Holy, holy, holy Lord, / God of . . .
— No announcements interrupt the prayer after this acclamation.
— The eucharistic prayer is varied according to the occasion, so that no one prayer is always or never used.
— Only the celebrant says the eucharistic prayer, and all listen in reverent silence.
— (In a concelebration, the concelebrants say their parts quietly, so that the chief celebrant’s voice stands out clearly.)
— The celebrant proclaims the eucharistic prayer in a strong clear voice, speaking distinctly and without haste, so that all may listen and understand.
People are looking at the host and chalice when the celebrant shows them to the people.

The acclamation is sung when possible.

The doxology is said clearly and the people respond with a hearty Amen.

When possible, the doxology and Amen are sung.

From the beginning of the doxology to the people's response, the celebrant holds the chalice in one hand, the paten with the host in the other, as a visible sign of the praise all offer to God.

Communion rite: The priest introduces the Lord's prayer, sometimes with his own words.

All join in singing or saying the Our Father.

The rite of peace is used with meaning in each Mass.

The congregation has been recently instructed in its meaning.

It is done with informal joy, yet with dignity.

The breaking of bread is carried out solemnly and in such a way that the congregation can see the celebrant's actions.

During the breaking of bread, all sing or say Lamb of God.

The Lamb of God accompanies the breaking of bread, and need not be done three times.

The private preparation of the priest is done privately, not aloud.

The celebrant gives himself communion in silence.

After the invitation to the people, a communion hymn is begun.

People are able to receive communion from hosts consecrated at that particular Mass.

The communion procession is reverent and dignified, without haste.

People are encouraged to sing while in procession.

The priest is aware that the sacred vessels may be taken by the server to the credence, and purified after Mass.

The priest returns to the chair, and a period of silence may be observed.

No matter how tempting the gap may be, announcements ("commercials") are not made before the prayer after communion closes the liturgy of the eucharist.

Or a psalm or a hymn of praise may be sung at this time.

when all are standing in silence, the priest says the prayer after communion to complete the liturgy of the eucharist.

Concluding Rites

Brief announcements: While these are permitted at this time, the parish council works with the priest to help the people understand that the Mass is not a verbal bulletin board or community information center.

All other means (such as bulletin, notice board at all entrances, posters) are used to avoid all but necessary announcements during the Mass.
— Blessing: Occasionally the celebrant uses a more solemn form, or expands it with the prayer over the people.
— All respond with a hearty Amen.
— Dismissal: The people are occasionally reminded of what they are being sent to do.
— He varies the form of the dismissal.
— The people respond heartily, realizing what they are taking on.
— Recessional: The procession at the end of Mass is carried out with dignity, and by the more solemn route used at the entrance.
— All sing as the procession goes through the church.
— The people stand in their places until the procession has left the church.

— 213 —

REVIVING THE DEAD

What do you do if your liturgy committee has died along the way, or if the present one is as good as dead?

First of all, why did it die?

Some of the more common reasons might be:

- lack of interest or opposition by priest
- committee given nothing to do
- did not understand its work
- frustration of its initiatives and efforts
- too few or too many members
- wrong people as members
- other reasons?

A careful analysis of the cause of death is necessary so that it can be avoided for the next committee.

What do you expect the new committee to do?

The parish council should work out what is expected of the new committee, and state it clearly, while still leaving scope for the committee to go further.

How will you help it avoid what killed the previous committee?

When you do that, your liturgy committee will have a chance to succeed.
A LONG LOOK AHEAD

Shortsightedness and discouragement cause more committees to falter than does overwork.

A liturgical committee should remember it is working for the future as well as for the present.

It should have long-range plans for long-range results. These will come of faith backed up by hard work.

Care should be taken that the liturgy team doesn’t become a rubrics or furniture committee.

ELEVEN STEPS TO SUCCESS

These ideas are not new, and we instinctively use them in many of the ordinary things we do. When applied in an orderly way to the work of the liturgy committee, they help us to achieve much without confusion or wasted effort.

1. Find out your needs: By studying its areas of responsibility and the community’s needs in each of them (by the survey and checklist, for example), the committee becomes aware of the job to be done.

2. Pin down a few key areas: No one can do everything at once. Decide which areas your committee will work on during the next year.

   a) Primary tasks: For example, you might choose to work on:

      Sunday celebration
      weddings and funerals
      Advent and Christmas
      Lent and Easter

   b) Eventual tasks: List a few more tasks you will undertake if time permits:

      Baptism
      Parish bulletin and the liturgy
      Prayer life of the parish
      Sacrament of penance

3. Set some precise goals: In each of your primary tasks, decide on the specific goals you want to achieve this year. Choose items that will have long range effects. For example, the Sunday celebration may be broken into improved readings, improved general intercessions, singing the Holy, holy at all Masses, and further training for servers.

   Similar choices should be made for the other primary tasks.
4. **Set your priorities:** Choose the most important four or five of these precise goals, and take these on as your main tasks for the year ahead.

5. **Choose the right people:** Your list of objectives and priorities is only the first step. Now the committee has to assign the tasks to people who will carry them out. Some will be done by the whole team, some by small groups or individuals, others by outsiders brought in for a specific task.

6. **Set some deadlines:** Depending on the complications in each task, an approximate date should be set for achieving it. At each meeting of the committee, a progress report will show which ones are moving ahead and which are bogged down.

7. **Get to work:** and carry out the tasks as assigned.

8. **Take on more:** When a person or a group has finished the assigned task, they should be encouraged to tackle one of the secondary tasks, or to help complete one of the primary ones. As your committee becomes more experienced, it can take on more members or subcommittees to handle more of its responsibilities.

9. **Keep your perspective:** Faith, prayer, community worship, deepening love — these are the goals of the parish and of its liturgy committee. All activities and achievements have to be measured by Christ's standards, not the world's.

10. **Evaluate:** What you have done, where you've succeeded or failed, and learn from your experience.

11. **Start planning for next year:** As people work on this year's plans, they will have suggestions and ideas for next year's activities. Take these into account, and build one year's work on last year's foundations.

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Other notes on planning have been included in recent issues of the Bulletin: see no. 32, page 45; no. 33, page 83.

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**No one plans to fail — but many fail to plan.**
LEARNING BY DOING

There is no easy way to learn how to be a liturgy committee. The first, the hardest but the best method is to learn while carrying out the work of promoting worship in your believing community.

Many suggestions and resources are offered throughout this issue of the Bulletin. Some special considerations are given below:

**Liturgical spirit:** Do you realize the liturgy is the source and center of the true Christian spirit? A growing understanding of the spiritual power of the liturgy is necessary for members of the worship committee.

Much reading and praying is required to grasp the spirit of the liturgy. The basic reading is of course the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, issued by the Vatican Council in 1963. The Liturgical Calendar and the National Bulletin on Liturgy give much background information, and suggest many ways of putting the liturgical spirit into action in your community. *Catholic Book of Worship* is another valuable source of ideas for the community.

If possible, each member of the committee should have his own copy of these aids. See the notes on Resources.

Reading alone is not enough. Prayer must accompany the efforts of the liturgy committee, because theirs is a spiritual task. Growth in personal prayer should be taking place while they are seeking to lead the community to better worship.

Unless the committee members are men and women of prayer — or people striving to deepen their prayer life — they may as well retire and leave the work to those who believe in prayer.

The role of the priest as teacher of prayer (see Bulletin no. 33, pages 65-66) is most important in the life of the worship committee.

**Areas of responsibility:** This Bulletin refers to many Areas of Responsibility which face the worship committee. How can they learn about the principles and ideas involved in each of these tasks?

Under each of the areas, resources are suggested. By using these well and by keeping alert to needs in the parish, committee members will grow gradually in their understanding of their work.

**Diocesan commission:** Just as the pastor has a worship committee to help him in this part of the parish apostolate, so the bishop — chief liturgist for the diocese — has a diocesan liturgical commission. (See CSL, nos. 45-46.)
This commission helps to promote the liturgical apostolate throughout the diocese. For the parish liturgy committee, the diocesan commission should be a source of guidance, information, help and encouragement.

If your diocesan liturgical commission is dead or nonexistent, then ask for help! Through your parish council, your committee should request your diocesan pastoral council to establish or revivify your diocesan liturgy commission. If you do not have a pastoral council, then ask your parish council, through your pastor, to direct a plea directly to your bishop as chief liturgist. Ask him to establish an active commission in your diocese to assist parishes and communities to plan and celebrate the liturgy in the spirit of Vatican II.

But before you do that, make sure that you are doing your best in the liturgical apostolate in your community. Be careful not to let others' negligence become an excuse for your own.

GROWTH IN PRAYER

The priest should give serious consideration to introducing the members of the parish worship committee to the liturgy of the hours. Perhaps he will extend this to others in the parish who want to be more involved in the public prayer of the Church. (See Liturgical Calendar, 1972, pages 30-32, and CSL, no. 100.)

One way of beginning the office would be with midday prayer. Once its rather simple rubrics are understood, the more important hours of morning and evening prayer may be approached with greater confidence.

(The priest is a teacher of prayer: see Bulletin no. 33, pages 65-66.)

WORKING AS A TEAM

The important thing about the liturgy committee is not its title, but what it does.

The word “team” does have advantages, some feel, because it indicates a group of people working together to obtain a goal.

Cooperation, teamwork, sharing of effort, inviting others to become involved: these should be found in every worship committee.

How about your committee? Whatever you call it, does it work as a team in the Lord's service?
FORMING THE LITURGICAL COMMITTEE IS MORE THAN A JOB OF TECHNICAL TRAINING IN RUBRICS. IT INVOLVES A PERSONAL SPIRITUAL RENEWAL.

RESPONSIBILITY OF THE PRIEST: MUCH OF THIS TASK WILL FALL ON THE PRIEST OF THE PARISH, WHO IS CALLED TO BE THE CHIEF LITURGIST OF THIS COMMUNITY. THOUGH THE WORK IS HARD, IT WILL EVENTUALLY RESULT IN A MORE DEDICATED GROUP OF WORSHIPPERS.

His first task is to help the committee to understand the theology of the Church — universal and local — as the people of God. This is sketched in the section on the role of the parish.

He has to help them understand the basic principles underlying the reformed liturgy (see 1972 Liturgical Calendar, introductory note no. 2b).

He has to help them to understand the Sunday celebration as the high point of the week's prayer.

The priest can do this by encouraging them to read (see Resources), by letting them work with him in preparing the Sunday liturgy, by celebrating in a way that will lead the parish forward. It goes without saying that the priest himself will be studying and praying about the liturgy and Church renewal.

The National Bulletin on Liturgy will continue to present articles to help priests and liturgy committees in their special task.

A FEW OTHER SUGGESTIONS:

SHARING SESSIONS: Once or twice a year, two or three neighboring parishes could have their liturgy committees meet together informally. They would come prepared to share ideas on a particular topic first of all (such as plans for Lent, or growth in prayer, or helping to improve congregational singing), and then be free to discuss other topics of mutual concern. When possible, a member of the diocesan liturgy team might be present to share wider concerns and insights with the group.

DIOCESAN STUDY DAYS: Ask your diocesan liturgy commission to set up diocesan or regional sessions, courses or study days for members of parish and community worship committees. When a number of committees gather in this way, it is easier to bring in someone who understands their work, and who can help them. Such sessions should leave room for committees to meet one another, and to pursue their various interests (music, readers, Sunday celebration, and so on) sometime during the day. Adequate time for questions is needed both for beginners and those committees that have been active for several years.

KEEP UP TO DATE: Through careful study of current publications such as Worship, National Bulletin on Liturgy and the annual Liturgical Calendar, a liturgy committee can keep itself abreast of developments as they take place.

Make sure you are always ready to grow: see the editorial in Bulletin no. 34.

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THE MEASURE OF SUCCESS IS NOT WHETHER YOU HAVE A TOUGH PROBLEM TO DEAL WITH, BUT WHETHER IT IS THE SAME PROBLEM YOU HAD LAST YEAR.
SPECIAL COMMUNITIES

BUILDING COMMUNITY

This issue of the Bulletin speaks mainly of the liturgy committee in the parish, but most of the ideas can be adapted by special communities, such as convents, hospitals, schools and prisons.

First of all, a special community must remember it is part of the universal Church. Sometimes it is evidently part of a parish (a small convent, for example), sometimes it has a more independent life, and relates to the bishop in a way similar to a parish.

Whatever its set up, the eucharist should be the center of this community if it is to have spiritual reality. Building community must be based on eucharistic and faith values more than on group dynamics.

Spiritual responsibilities normally taken on by the parish and its priests — responsibilities for the diocese and universal Church, as well as those for the members of the community — rest upon the chaplain and administering body.

Each of these special communities has a particular emphasis to its way of life, but care must be taken not to lose sight of the grand perspective.

RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES

Most of the ideas in this issue may also be applied to religious communities.

Small communities which are a part of the parish are usually deeply involved in parish activities and celebrations, but often have a chapel of their own.

Larger communities are not as closely involved with the life of the parish, and have their own chaplain.

In most cases, religious men and women can bring much guidance and insight to the celebration of liturgy in a parish. Zeal for promoting the celebration of the liturgy is still a sign of the Spirit's work among us. (CSL, no. 43)

Bulletin no. 34 presented a long article on Liturgy in the Religious Community; giving many suggestions and ideas for community liturgy committees.

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Take the lead! There is nothing more difficult to take in hand, more perilous to conduct or more uncertain in its success than to take the lead in a new order of things. (N. Machiavelli—1513)
**PRISONS**

A chapel worship committee is a possibility in a prison too.

In Bulletin no. 33, page 101, Father Sullivan wrote about a conversation with a prison chaplain.

The national association of prison chaplains is one way in which chaplains may wish to share their problem and experiences.

In some communities, sisters and lay groups work with inmates on such activities as Christopher courses; these can be helpful in preparing people to be readers.

Many of the suggestions throughout the Bulletin may be adapted by a local committee.

**SCHOOLS**

School occupies a great part of a student's energy and time.

The school years form an important part of a person's life, preparing him to take a mature role in society — both in the Church and in civic life. Since the Vatican Council, Catholic schools have been making fuller use of the liturgy as part of their program of formation.

A school committee can be of assistance to both school and parish in continuing this work and development.

**Schools and Liturgy**

**Varying nature:** A boarding school, for example, takes the place of home for much of the year. As with any Christian community, the eucharist should be its center. In a day school, the students' liturgical center is usually the parish, but some celebrations take place in the school. The situation will vary when the chaplain is one of the priests from the parish, or when he is not attached to the local parish.

The type of work to be done will vary too in elementary or high schools, or in college or university. The more mature the students, the greater responsibility they should take in liturgical planning.

**Chaplain:** In many ways, the chaplain has the responsibilities of a pastor toward the students in the field of liturgy. Much of the results of the school liturgy committee's work will depend on his attitudes of openness, enthusiasm, insight, willingness to broaden his horizons and theirs.

**Teachers:** As respected members of the parish and community, teachers can help bridge the gap that often seems to exist between students and parish. The greatest contribution teachers can make is openness to youth's role in the community and the power of personal example in Christian living.
School Liturgy Committee

The work of this committee is basically that of the parish committee. Some of its concerns might include:

- **class Masses**: working with class members to develop and improve celebrations.
- **school Mass**: when celebrated, it should be a liturgical highlight.
- **liturgical celebration of school events**.
- **liturgical content of school library**: in a high school or college, many of the publications listed in Resources would be useful.
- **participation aids**: use of books such as Catholic Book of Worship to bring a maturity to participation in liturgical celebrations.
- **liturgy content of religious education program**: serious discussion by older grades in elementary school and by all in high school and college might help to demonstrate and meet their needs.
- **responsibilities of the Church at large**: including youth elsewhere, missions, vocational development, relationships between school and parish liturgy.
- **unlimited scope**: the article on liturgy in the religious community (Bulletin no. 34) may be studied as a source of many ideas for the school liturgy committee; the present issue presents many ideas which may be adapted for the school community.

Working with the Parish

There are many ways in which the school worship committees may encourage cooperation with the parish and its liturgy committee. Only a few are suggested here; many more will arise if the parish and school committees meet together, preferably informally, to discuss ways of sharing their concerns, needs and resources.

- School committee members are developing experience they will be able to use on the parish committee, either now as a youth member or later in adulthood.
- In school liturgies, young people learn to choose texts for celebrations, to prepare petitions for the general intercessions, to choose good hymns and psalms, to read and lead and sing and pray; all these abilities can be of service now in parish communities.
- During holiday periods, young people often have free time which they are willing to use in community projects; in what ways can they work in parish liturgy, either for present or future celebrations?
- School celebrations are helping to train a whole new generation of readers.

Helping students to become a part of the parish scene is important; they have much to offer.
Liturgical Thrust

The energy, generosity and good will of young people can be a dynamic source of power and enthusiasm in any community.

Contacts with other schools can lead to further developments in liturgy among youth.

Parents and alumni associations can be sparked by dynamic young people, if they are given a chance to be heard.

Dead or dying liturgy committees can be led back by a determined young person.

*Opportunities are waiting in your community. Go out and make the most of them!*

HOSPITALS

Now that governments are inclined to take over hospitals and medical care, the Church should not abandon the field, (we've been in it since the beginning: Mt. 25:36, 40), but rather change our mode of operation. Freed of the responsibility of financing and administering, now perhaps religious congregations can continue their work with the stronger and more spiritual approach needed in today's world.

Circumstances will vary, of course, depending on whether we are serving in a Catholic hospital or a civil institution, one with or without a chaplain, or with a group of chaplains of various denominations; with or without a chapel or prayer room, or one with a Catholic chapel.

A few areas of special concern for the liturgy committee of a hospital are listed here. Each committee should develop them according to local needs and circumstances.

**Prayer:** A committee may work with others to encourage patients to pray in various ways: visiting, providing simple prayer books (in tune with the renewed liturgy, please!), encouraging bible reading (consider the use of large type prayer books, New Testaments or psalters). An ambitious committee might wish to develop a simple form of prayer (along the lines of midday prayer, for example, with appropriate psalms and prayers) for the sick.

**Ecumenism:** What can be done in cooperation with clergy and organizations of other churches? Are there difficulties or obstacles from the past that should be faced and cleared away? Is the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity celebrated with meaning in your hospital?

**Power house of prayer:** In Bulletin no. 33, pages 70-73, the idea of asking old people to take part in the spiritual life of the parish was discussed at length, particularly the idea of asking them to devote themselves to prayer. The same ideas could be applied to the sick.
Apostolate of suffering: Today's world has many ways of running away from and ignoring pain and suffering. Yet Christ asks us to suffer with him. Are you helping your patients to learn to accept suffering in a Christian spirit, sharing it with Christ, making up in their bodies what is lacking in the suffering of Christ?

Sunday: Sunday should be a special day of praise and joy. Are there ways in which the liturgy committee could work to deepen this spirit? Are auxiliary ministers used to bring communion to patients that day, especially where there is no resident chaplain?

Friday: See Bulletin no. 33, pages 75-76. Perhaps your committee might study ways of inviting patients and staff to make this a more Christian day.

Anointing of the sick: Instead of a last minute sacrament, this is now understood to be a sacrament for sick people. Does your committee provide help to patients to understand this new approach?

These are just a few of the areas a hospital liturgy committee might discuss. The various articles in this issue of the Bulletin should be examined, and what applies to the hospital apostolate should be studied and put into practice.

Many of these ideas might be applied also in homes for the aged and in nursing homes.

In all these situations, cooperation with local parish committees is to be encouraged.

SPECIAL CELEBRATIONS

Each year, a number of special events occur in the life of a parish or community. Occasions such as an ordination or religious profession of a parishioner, the appointment of a new pastor, significant anniversaries can become a reason for a special celebration.

The emphasis should be on the spiritual aspects, and the highlight should be a bible service or Mass.

For example, if a lay person or family were taking up “peace corps” work, a parish send-off could be centered around a Mass, or a bible service on serving God by serving his people.

In planning these special celebrations, the worship committee needs to keep a sense of perspective and of liturgy. Participation by all, each doing all and only what he should do (CSL, no. 28), awareness of the liturgical season, respect for the Lord's day celebrations, consideration of the wishes of those closely involved in the special event: all these are to be remembered during the planning.

The long range goal to be kept in mind is always spiritual, leading this assembly of God's people closer to him.
RESOURCES

STARTING OUT

It is the responsibility of the liturgy committee to make sure that everyone involved in community worship has the necessary tools. The committee itself needs books and other aids to help it in its work. These aids are discussed below:

There are many of these aids on the market. A few — enough to start with — are described below.

Liturgy Constitution (Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, CSL): This may be obtained in pamphlet form. Many editions have notes and study outlines. This is the basic document of the liturgical renewal. While some of the reforms have taken place, others are yet to come. Most important is the spirit, the WHY behind the renewal. Every member should have a copy of his own.

The Documents of Vatican II: America Press has given the Church a tremendous boost by publishing this inexpensive paperback edition of the Council documents. It contains the liturgy constitution as well. Every member should own and use his copy.

Liturgical Calendar: Guidelines for Pastoral Liturgy is the new name for the new book which helps all involved in liturgical celebrations. Prepared by the National Liturgical Office each year, it helps worship committees to improve their background knowledge of liturgy, and to use more of the opportunities available during the year.

This book may be obtained from your chancery office, or from the C.C.C. Publications Service (address inside front cover).

Every member of the committee is encouraged to have his own copy for family use as well as at meetings of the liturgy committee.

Worship: Pioneer liturgical review in North America, it is published by the Benedictines of St. John's Abbey, Collegeville. Theological articles about the liturgy, background analyses of new rites as they appear, exegesis and homily ideas, reviews of books concerning the liturgy: these come to us ten times a year. Solidly based in the balanced Benedictine tradition, where liturgy has always been appreciated, Worship has also taken an ecumenical approach in these past few years. We recommend that at least one copy should be received by the team involved in preparing your celebrations. Available from Worship, Collegeville, Minnesota 56321, U.S.A.

The Bible Today: This periodical, issued six times a year by the Liturgical Press, seeks to promote popular appreciation of God's word in scripture. Its articles are well researched and scholarly, though not beyond the reach of the ordinary serious reader. Reviews of books affecting the field of scripture reading are included. Because scripture is important in the celebration of the liturgy,
(CSL, no. 24) we would recommend a subscription for the parish library, where readers and committee members could consult it. Available from the same address as Worship, above.

**Liturgy Committee Handbook:** This study guide for a nine-week learning experience is a workbook full of wisdom and sound liturgical sense. Prepared by The Liturgical Conference, its nine chapters speak about:

- Organizing a committee
- your community at worship
- environment of worship
- planning the Sunday celebration
- planning liturgies for special occasions
- audio-visuals in the liturgy
- music in the liturgy
- liturgies for children and youth
- team ministry approach.

This valuable aid for committees may be ordered from The Liturgical Conference, 1330 Massachusetts Avenue N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005 for $3.50; $3.00 for five or more.

**National Bulletin on Liturgy:** Since its concern is primarily pastoral, Canada's Bulletin is addressed to everyone involved in planning and celebrating liturgy: parishioners, members of parish liturgy committees, priests, religious, teachers, musicians, choirs, readers. In a special way it seeks to help parish worship committees to become more familiar with their field of responsibility. Each issue contains many practical ideas and questions to encourage committee members to look further.

Subscription information is on the inside front cover. *Every committee member should have a personal copy of this issue, Bulletin no. 35.* It would be good to have a subscription for the committee members to share, better still to have one each.

Back copies are still available. Letters and suggestions from parish committees are always welcomed.

**Catholic Book of Worship:** Years of work by people from across Canada led up the publication this year of a national hymnal. Available in two editions, it can spark and strengthen your community's efforts to praise God in song.

*The complete edition* is used by those who plan the community liturgy: liturgy committee, organist, other musicians, choir members and priests. The committee should see that these persons have a copy of the complete edition. The liturgical index is of great value in planning celebrations.

*The pew edition* is for congregational use, and provides the assembly with all the texts required for participation in Sunday Mass, weddings, funerals and Holy Week ceremonies.

The hymnal may be ordered from C.C.C. Publications (address inside front cover).
O Sing a New Song: Two L.P. records are in this album, which introduces some of the new music contained in the Canadian hymnal. By listening to these records, people may learn the melody quickly. Recorded by RCA studies, the album may be obtained for $6.75, including mailing, from C.C.C. Publications (address inside front cover).

As an added feature, the album jacket presents guidelines for the proper use of music in the liturgy, especially during Mass. Musicians, choirs, priests and liturgy committees will benefit from learning or reviewing the parts on which musical emphasis is to be placed.

The New Mass, A Pastoral Guide, by Peter Coughlan: Published by Chapman in 1969, this book of 168 pages helps priests and liturgy committees to understand the liturgical developments in the Mass. By showing how the changes are based on sound liturgical principles, rooted in tradition, Father Coughlan helps to explain the renewal. Practical suggestions for the Sunday celebration in the parish make this a valuable book for every liturgy committee.

A number of commentaries on the Sunday or daily liturgy are also available:

Guide for the Christian Assembly: This was reviewed in Bulletin no. 34. A set of these, available to priests, readers, teachers, musicians and others who are interested in the Sunday celebration, would be a valuable addition to the parish library.

Discover the Bible: Reviewed in Bulletin no. 34, this leaflet can be a valuable aid to many members of the community. Some parishes distribute it with their bulletin, or leave this leaflet where parishioners may pick it up and take it home. As a minimum, we would recommend a copy for each priest, reader, member of the choir and liturgy committee, organist, other musicians. Bulk orders are quite inexpensive.

C.C.C. Homily Aids: Provided free of charge with the looseleaf missal, these aids are helpful in preparing the Sunday liturgy. They contain a brief exegesis or explanation of the Sunday readings, some homily ideas for the celebrant, and some suggestions to begin the general intercessions. The exegesis may be used by the readers and musicians to help them prepare for the Mass, and by those responsible for the petitions of the general intercessions. Make sure that your parish copy or copies will be put to great use, and not hidden away.

Everybody wants to be somebody; nobody wants to grow.
(Goethe)
DIOCESAN COMMISSIONS

DIOCESAN LITURGICAL COMMISSIONS

Some diocesan commissions have a few members who meet occasionally, others have established offices and full time workers.

Some of the bulletins on music prepared by the London commission have been reprinted in the National Bulletin (nos. 34-35).

In the annual report of Winnipeg’s Office of Liturgical Renewal, Father Albert C. Lafreniere, omi, outlines the work of his office. These notes are adapted with permission:

Orientation: Together with the other facilities of the Catholic Pastoral Centre of Winnipeg, this Office is primarily a resource centre where the persons responsible for the liturgy in the various parishes and institutions may find assistance in the planning and preparation of their liturgical celebrations.

Its director makes himself available to these persons not as one who would give direction or directives, but rather as one who seeks to assist in drawing out the best of each person’s talents, knowledge and culture for the advancement of true liturgical renewal. His approach stresses the spirit of liturgy, common sense adaptations, and meeting the needs of individual congregations.

Constantly in touch with, and working closely with the existing diocesan structures (Diocesan Liturgical Commission, Sacred Music Commission, Building Commission), the Office of Liturgical Renewal produced or collaborated on many projects, including:

Projects
- Planning of liturgical celebrations at diocesan level and other special occasions.
- Preaching institute — with four specialists from the U.S. and video tape recorders.
- Parish liturgy committee formation sessions.
- Confirmation — formation of diocesan policy and guidelines.
- Music workshop and training program (still in planning stages).
- Lector training program — follow-up on last year’s program, with use of VTR.
- Full time / part time liturgical music coordinators — first steps currently being made, with three prospects in the works.
Publications

- *Liturgica* — official liturgical bulletin for clergy and institutions.
- *Liturgical Notes* — monthly newsletter, circulation approximately 1,800.
- New music compositions for the liturgy.
- Booklet of readings and prayers for communion service to the sick (planning stage).

Cooperation: Having assisted in the founding of the *Western Liturgical Conference*, an association of all Western Canadian Diocesan Liturgical Commissions, the director of this office is now its first chairman. Three conference meetings were held during 1971-72, the last two being primarily aimed at the further education and formation of the members themselves. A joint meeting with the directors of religious education is planned for late October 1972.

Continued cooperation is fostered between the neighboring dioceses of Winnipeg and St. Boniface. The directors of diocesan offices of liturgy meet regularly and exchange resources and personnel freely.

Priorities: The same priorities will continue in the new year. Plans concerning work in the area of liturgical music will be resumed and intensified with the publication of *Catholic Book of Worship*.

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Every diocesan commission — part time or full time — should be active in such fields of endeavour, especially helping parish and community liturgy committees to grow.

What is happening in your diocese?

STARTING A DIOCESAN COMMISSION

*After several meetings of a small group of interested persons, one commission began to study its task by using the following questions:*

1. What are the liturgical needs in our parishes?
2. Which two or three of these are most urgent?
3. What can we do about:
   a) various areas of liturgy — Sunday celebration
      baptism
      penance
      weddings
      funerals
      other sacraments
      children's Masses
      other Masses
      bible services
      other areas?

— 228 —
b) for whom? — readers
teachers
liturgy committees of parish councils
others
c) by what means? — meetings — in parish; central
publications
workshops
others
d) resource people available — who in what areas of liturgy
e) what about non-parish situations? — high schools
convents
others
f) coordinate with pastoral regions — how?

4. Specific plans for rest of year (until next June)
   — goals
   — helping whom?
   — how achieve this
   — when

5. General plans for next September to the following June.

6. What is our next step after today’s meeting?
   — who is going to do what?
   — date and place of next meeting.

READERS RESPOND

While it is true that most of us would rather be ruined by praise than saved by criticism, we do want you to help us. We invite you to share your ideas and positive suggestions with our readers.
MUSIC FOR WEDDINGS

These notes, prepared by the Liturgical Commission of the Diocese of London, follow the Guidelines for Music in the Liturgy given in Bulletin no. 34. They are reprinted here with permission.

This policy statement has been prepared in response to many received from parishes.

At the end, two books of organ music for weddings are recommended. No "white" or "black" lists of hymns for choirs, soloists or congregations are offered. The real answer to the use of proper music at weddings has to be found not in lists, but in the knowledge of the parish musicians. It is most important that they develop a liturgical sense in the selection of music. The present statement and Guidelines for Music in the Liturgy will be very helpful in this regard.

It cannot be expected that all those who are planning for marriage will have sound musical liturgical tastes. Generally, the guidance of the parish musician is necessary. A firm position should be taken in respect to suitable music, both by the priest and the musicians; if it is taken throughout the diocese, a good tradition will be established, and there will be fewer and fewer problems with wedding music. Patient and constant insistence on good, liturgical music at weddings will be made easier when people come to realize how much of it is available. The result will be rewarding: better music and better liturgy.

* * *

I. Liturgical Principle

The principles that apply to music in the liturgy generally, apply also to music at weddings. Briefly, it must be music of high quality, specifically Christian in content and tone, and supporting the liturgical action. (See Guidelines for Music in the Liturgy.)

II. Practical Guidelines

A. Planning wedding music: Several weeks in advance of the wedding, the bride and groom should have a meeting with the parish organist to plan the music. The priest could also be present, but this will be unnecessary if he and the parish organist have developed a good rapport on wedding music policy; or, perhaps the discussion on music could be held in conjunction with the meeting the couple will have with the priest to plan the liturgy of the wedding.

The couple should be given the opportunity to choose the music for their wedding, as long as it meets the required musical and liturgical standards. It is here that the role of the church musician to advise and educate is so important. Early counselling will obviate many of the usual problems.

B. Congregational participation: Congregational singing should be encouraged because it emphasizes the social aspect of the sacrament of matrimony. Presently, the people tend to assume a passive, spectator role at weddings. Admittedly, it will not be an easy task to change this. Much will depend on the make-up of a given congregation. In any case, a song leader is a practical necessity.
The entrance and recessional hymn, and the Sanctus might be sung by the congregation. The selection of hymns, which need not be wedding hymns, should take the nature of the congregation into account, e.g., its ecumenical character.

The singing of the responsorial psalm, with the congregation joining in the refrain, might be considered in the event that a choir, cantor, or soloist is available to sing the verses.

C. Choirs at weddings: The most effective support for the liturgy in any celebration is a well trained choir. Folk choirs participate quite frequently in weddings. The participation of traditional choirs should be encouraged, but, for the most part, it remains an ideal.

D. Solos and soloists: A soloist with musical ability and sensitivity for the liturgy can enrich the celebration of a wedding; otherwise, it is better not to have a soloist.

The choice of solos, of course, should be determined by the principles set down in Guidelines for Music in the Liturgy. Many wedding songs would be eliminated if this simple test were applied: “Are the words addressed to God or to the bride?”

If the words are irrelevant to the liturgy, the soloist’s efforts become merely entertainment for the people. Ostentation in the character of the music, or in the style of the singer, conflicts with the liturgy.

Solos are best used at the time of the offertory or communion, or during the singing of the register. The length of the solo should fit these times, and the words, of course, should support the liturgical action. A hymn to the virgin Mary would be inappropriate unless the Mass being celebrated is in her honor, or the wedding day is proximate to one of her feast days. The communion song should be explicitly eucharistic in content.

E. Organ music: Organ solos can contribute immensely toward setting a joyful tone for a wedding celebration.

(i) Prelude: In a special way, the prelude is important as a creator of atmosphere, or a mood-setter for the celebration. A great many preludes are available to suit the talents of the organist.

(ii) Processional: The processional should be somewhat more subdued than the recessional. An overly active processional may produce a feeling of anti-climax when it is concluded. Any music of quiet, restrained dignity is suitable; it does not have to be wedding music, or even a march. It should, at once, underline the seriousness and the joy of the occasion. From a practical standpoint, the processional should consist of short sections so that it can be concluded promptly when the procession is over.

It must be said that a processional hymn is preferred.

(iii) During the celebration: The playing of interludes is severely restricted by the nature of the liturgy. There may be some time available at the communion or during the signing of the register.
(iv) **Recessional**: The recessional should be exuberant, a full expression of joy and thanksgiving. There is a wide choice of such pieces in the standard organ repertory.

(v) **Postlude**: The value of a postlude depends upon how promptly the church is vacated by the congregation. Again, a wide choice of these is available to the organist.

**Recommended Organ Music**

*Old-English Music for Manuals*, Oxford (4 volumes).

This is a recent publication and is highly recommended. The music is good, and easy to medium.


This book is also well recommended. The music is medium to difficult.

Both books contain preludes, processionals and recessionals for weddings, and general service music.

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**Each bit of dirt helps build the dam.** (Guyanese proverb)

* * *

**Success does not depend so much upon external help as on self-reliance.**

(Abraham Lincoln)

* * *

**Life does not require us to make good; it asks only that we give our best at each new level of experience.** (H. W. Ruopp)
HOMILY SERIES

PREPARING THE SUNDAY HOMILY

This is the second article of our series on the homily. While it is directed mainly to the celebrant, it is of value to the liturgy committee and others to realize the importance of good preparation for a homily. The committee should see that their priests have both the necessary aids and adequate time to develop and prepare the homily.

Preaching a homily involves the priest in all three roles as teacher of God's word, leader in prayer, spiritual father and shepherd. Paragraphs 4-6 of the Vatican Council document on the ministry and life of priests form an excellent summary of what the priest does when he is preaching.

At this point in the liturgy of the word, the celebrant (who ordinarily gives the homily) helps the congregation to grasp more fully the Good News, as heard in today's readings, and leads them to respond in the liturgy of the eucharist and in life.

Steps Along the Way

This is not the only way to prepare a homily. The steps outlined in the article, however, should be involved in preparation.

1. Prayer: The priest prays for himself, not for what to say as much as to be ready to let the Spirit speak through his words and example. He prays for courage to be a prophetic voice among his people, and asks the Spirit, who inspired the sacred writers, to let him see and pass on God's message. He prays for light and ability to be a good teacher of God's word.

Like Paul, he also prays that he will be converted by the word, lest after preaching to others, he himself should be lost.

He prays for his listeners that they will be open and eager for God's teaching. As in the parable of the sower, his listeners will be in many states of readiness (Mt. 13:19-23); he prays for those not yet ready to welcome the word.

- The people too must pray about the preaching in their parish or community. They should be praying — perhaps during the week, maybe before the Sunday celebration begins — that the priest who gives the homily will be filled with the Spirit of the Lord. Their prayers are also needed that the congregation will be open and attentive, ready to hear the word of God and understand it (Mt. 13:23).

- After the gospel, a moment of silent reflection and prayer is permitted. Perhaps some of the community might remember to pray for the celebrant and congregation just before the homily begins.

- Power houses of prayer: The idea of asking the sick and aged in the parish to devote themselves to prayer was developed in Bulletin no. 33 (pages 72-73). The liturgy committee might take on the responsibility of inviting these men
and women to pray God's word will be proclaimed well and welcomed each Sunday in that parish.

**Liturgy committee:** More than others, the committee members have a role to fulfill by praying for both the priest who gives the homily and for the members of the congregation. They might also discuss the matter of praying with the priest as he prepares the Sunday homily.

2. **Readings and Psalm**

*Text and content* of each of the readings and the responsorial psalm must be read in a spirit of faith. What is God saying to his people by these words and events? (It is too soon yet to worry about what *I* am going to say.)

Realizing this is God's word, some may prefer to read it on bended knee.

Reading another version of the text sometimes helps to give a few insights into the meaning of the readings.

*Order:* The readings for each Sunday have been chosen around a specific theme. When the *liturgical use* of the texts is understood, the homilist is better able to help his people appreciate the message of the particular celebration.

During the preparation of the homily, the celebrant should read the gospel first; then the first reading, which was chosen to prepare for the gospel; then the responsorial psalm, which is sung in response to the first reading.

The second reading is less simple to classify. During the seasons of Advent-Christmas and Lent-Easter, as well as on feasts, the first two readings are chosen to harmonize with the gospel text. But during the season of the year (ordinary time — when green vestments are worn), the second Sunday reading has nothing to do with the gospel text. Rather it gives an independent reflection about our Christian faith and how we Christians should live it each day. To try to relate it directly to the gospel and first reading during the "green season" is to court frustration.

*Study and meditation:* While some prefer to go immediately to commentaries and books of exegesis, it would seem better for the celebrant to reflect and meditate on the texts of his readings; to study them prayerfully, and to let the Spirit guide him to a deeper understanding of God's message. After going through the struggle first, he will be more open to the nuances in others' thoughts and closer to his listeners' needs.

3. **Exegesis:** After personal meditation and prayer on the readings and psalm, the priest consults some resources to gain a deeper understanding of the text. Scripture scholars and liturgists share their insights in many good books today. The Jerome Biblical Commentary, Scripture in Church, Discover the Bible, Guide for the Christian Assembly, the C.C.C. homily aids, current issues of Worship, footnotes in a good, recent bible, such as Jerusalem, to mention only a few sources, will help the priest to understand his texts better, and to test his personal ideas in the light of more expert knowledge.

*Homily outlines:* Some priests like to use one of the various homily services available, some don't. Some find them helpful, others avoid them completely. This is a matter of personal choice, but each should be tested carefully for its understanding of the nature and role of the homily in today's liturgy.
4. Other liturgical texts: The homily is not limited to the three readings and responsorial psalm. The celebrant will normally base his preaching on the message contained in one or more of the readings, but he is free to back up what he says from the other texts of the Mass as well. Sometimes he may choose to base the homily on God's message as contained in the Mass prayers.

He may choose texts and ideas from the Order of Mass, from the texts of the day being celebrated, or from both.

By referring to these other Mass texts, the celebrant may help the congregation to come to a fuller realization of the wealth of faith contained in and celebrated by these texts.

When one of the eucharistic prayers is based in part on the texts used in that day's readings, or emphasizes the theme of the day, it is good to use this, and to draw the people's attention to it. This may be done either during the homily or before the preface.

5. Discuss: There are many benefits to the people of a community when the priests responsible for its spiritual welfare discuss their homilies together. Sharing insights and concerns leads to a fuller and more balanced homily for the people of this community.

Priests should feel comfortable discussing the readings and the homily with other priests during the week. This is especially beneficial for the people in a one-priest parish.

The worship committee — at least some of its members at a time — should also be invited to study and pray over the readings with the celebrant, and discuss their insights into the texts as well as their understanding of the needs of this parish.

During the week, he may also talk over the ideas contained in the readings and Mass texts with other members of the parish; he could also visit some of the sick and shut-ins, and ask their prayers for the people and himself on the following Sunday.

The priest should also discuss it with the Lord in prayer, asking for help to preach the message as God wants it given to his beloved people.

6. Outline: Somewhere during the last few steps, the first outline of the homily should be committed to paper. (Some might prefer a blackboard, especially for discussion with committee members.)

A clearer picture is obtained by choosing the theme of the homily and marking it clearly at the top: this helps also to keep homily and homilist on the track.

Care should be taken to see that we are saying what is in the readings, rather than bending them to fit our ideas. “Lord Jesus Christ, keep me faithful to your teaching.”

An outline of the homily should give a clear picture of the message and how it will be elaborated. The next issue of the Bulletin will discuss this in detail.

7. Further resources: As well as those mentioned above, other sources of ideas are past issues of Bible Today; Bible Themes; a good dictionary of the bible (such as McKenzie or Léon-Dufour) on various themes.
8. **Leading into eucharist and life**: One important dimension of the Mass homily which many celebrants miss is the relationship between the service of the word and the liturgy of the eucharist.

“Although the Mass is made up of the liturgy of the word and the eucharistic liturgy, the two parts are so closely connected as to form one act of worship. The table of the Lord is the table of God’s word and of Christ’s body, and from it the faithful are instructed and refreshed.” (General Instruction of the Roman Missal, no. 8, as cited in Bulletin no. 28; see also CSL, nos. 51, 56.)

In the eucharist, this assembly praises God for all his benefits, including those brought out in the readings and homilies. Nourished by God’s word and the bread of life, they go forth to continue their praise by their lives and words, thus carrying out the work of the Lord (see G. I., no. 57).

Occasionally, say once a year, each priest should read a serious book on the theology of preaching, so that he may grow. His concern should be more on the **why** of preaching than on the **how**.

**Next issue: Form of the homily.**

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**EMPHASIS**

There are lots of ideas in this issue for your worship committee to discuss and tackle.

But your emphasis must ever be on what is important:
- The spiritual comes first.
- Read God’s word daily, and let him guide you in your prayer and in your work for him.
- Strive for excellence in the Lord’s service. Do not be satisfied with less than the best.
- Plan carefully and set some definite targets for your parish this year.
- Keep your eye on these objectives.
- Hard work is needed if you are going to achieve your objectives.
- Continue to deepen your appreciation of the liturgy, and look for opportunities to grow and develop.
- Keep a strong concern for the prayer life of your parish so that you continue to help others grow in prayer.
- Be positive in your attitudes: see difficulties as challenges and possibilities for progress, rather than obstacles or stumbling blocks.
- Pray.
LAST WORD

LITURGY AND PARISH COUNCILS

When the editor of the National Bulletin on Liturgy asked me to contribute an article on the parish liturgy committee within a parish council, I answered rather rudely that this committee should never exist. And where it now exists, it should be abolished.

The editor, in a calm, charitable voice, responded, "Fine. Write on the subject of abolishing the parish liturgy committee."

Activities in Church

The short history of parish councils has shown that in the first fervor to establish them, there was a ritual reaction to formulate committees to be concerned about activities that take place in the church building. We hear of finance, (count the collection!), social (bingo, suppers, church basement), spiritual (who is in the hospital, who died, and so forth), education (list of catechism teachers), and liturgy committees (readers, singing, servers).

The pastor, who for years picked up the phone and sorted out these activities, now must contend with several committees a week, to direct traffic through the church building.

All this because both priest and parishioners believed that the life of the Church is life in a church building. The experience of the parish liturgy committee was to keep informed of new choices of readings and hymns, and to draw up the list of next Sunday's liturgy. It was like putting together a weekly series of half-hour TV shows. It had to entertain, be different, give everyone a chance, and perhaps have a message.

What then, asks the wise editor, do you suggest? The first and necessary work of the members of the parish council is to take the time and the necessary gospel and doctrinal reflections to sense themselves as a community of believers.

Believers in what? Well, that's what they have to struggle with. Is that not the invitation of the constitution on liturgy? Before men can take part in the liturgy they must be called to faith and to conversion: "How then are they to call upon him to whom they have not believed? But how are they to believe him whom they have not heard? And how are they to hear, if no one preaches? And how are men to preach unless they be sent?" (Rom. 10:14-15; CSL, no. 9)

Secondly the members must sense themselves as "the church" which is "being sent" to the community at large to preach the "good news."

Finally the council may divide into committees but for this purpose — to know their beliefs and express them, to give witness and to implant the seeds of justice and charity in this world. For the liturgy to produce its full effect, the faithful should come to it with proper dispositions, their thoughts matching their words; they must cooperate with God's grace lest they receive it in vain. (2 Cor. 6:1; CSL, no. 11)
Another Solution

We would suggest that the parish council simply divide into:

1. Committee on faith: this group would try to identify and understand the basic elements of faith, and assure their proclamation through teaching, celebration and worship. “They continued steadfastly in the teaching of the apostles and in the communion of the breaking of the bread in favor with all the people.” (Acts 2:46-47; CSL, no. 6)

This committee is the one to assure the continuing relationship between belief and worship, so that people may show by action what they hold in faith. (CSL, no. 10)

Therefore, there should be no liturgical committee, because it has the intrinsic weakness of simply defining the ritual and rubric norms for a celebration.

A committee on faith must continually struggle and live with the tension of attempting to express a belief, on which they have reflected, studied and prayed, in a public sign through the liturgical celebration.

2. Committee of witness: this group should reflect and find pastoral expression for public witness in their local community of the implications of the gospel message.

3. Committee of resources: this group is to become responsible for the resources of people, money and buildings, seeing that they are harmonized and used in a way that best serves the mission of the Church.

4. Committee of people of God: this group coordinates the variety of individual or group apostolic interests and assures the free expression of the particular gifts within the larger Christian community.

So let’s abolish the term and restricting activities of so-called liturgy committees, and enlarge the vision of a celebrating and worshipping community to the more meaningful areas of faith and witness.

This will not hinder liturgy, but allow liturgy to become what it is: the goal of apostolic works is that all who are God’s children by faith and baptism should come together to praise God in the midst of his Church, to take part in its sacrifice and to eat the banquet of the Lord. (CSL, no. 10)

Rev. John Carley, Director
Lay Apostolate Office
Office for the Clergy
C.C.C.