The title of our editorial is often used as a safe driving slogan. It is also a good watchword for the Advent-Christmas season.

**Slow down**: Shopping, presents, family celebrations, parties, holiday plans, trips, rush, rush, rush. With all the goings on from mid-November to mid-January, few people have time to think of the religious meaning of the season or to savor its spiritual impact.

Secular society is moving more swiftly, and leaves us less time than ever for meditation on the spiritual.

Let Advent and Christmas this year be a time to slow down and to think about meaning — what God means, what he is doing for us; to rethink the spirit of Advent and Christmas as it should be.

**And live!** This is a time to live the full Christian message, to be filled with joy of this holy season. It is a time to live our faith.

This issue of the Bulletin offers many ideas to help you think about the meaning of Advent and Christmas, and some practical suggestions for a sane and Christian celebration of these holy days.

To all our readers, we wish a happy Advent, a holy Christmas, and a blessed 1973 in the service of our Lord and his people.
INTRODUCTORY NOTES

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

This issue of the Bulletin is devoted to the Advent-Christmas season. The beginning of the liturgical year is a good time for any Christian community or parish, convent, or family — or for an individual believer to make a fresh start in living the spirit of the liturgy.

In this issue, we present a variety of ideas to think about and suggestions for practice in your own community.

A few diocesan commissions have prepared Advent and Christmas programs for their parishes and communities. We congratulate them, and hope that more dioceses will follow their example in the years to come.

This issue is offered mainly for those living where no diocesan approach to Advent and Christmas has been prepared this year.

SUGGESTED USES

Some ideas for using this issue of the Bulletin:

In a Parish

- the liturgy committee should be invited to study it and consider ways of putting new life into parish liturgy during the Advent-Christmas period.
- parish organizations, especially the parish council, could benefit from reading a copy.
- the teachers in the school, high school students.
- each of the priests, readers, choir leaders, organist, choir members.
- copies of this issue would make a fine Christmas present for friends; it may be used by them each year in celebrating Advent and Christmas.

In a religious community

- one or more copies could be sent to each house or community.
- members living away from the community because of studies, apostolate or health could benefit from a personal copy.
- extra copies make useful Christmas gifts that will continue to be of value each year.
• elderly, retired, sick or shut-in members would enjoy the opportunity to read it.
• persons showing interest in becoming members of the community might appreciate a thoughtful gift of this issue.

In a diocese: When there is no diocesan Advent program, the diocesan liturgical commission might consider these ideas:
• send several copies to each parish liturgy committee in the diocese, and encourage them to use it in planning activities this year and next.
• each priest — religious and diocesan, active or retired — might receive copy of this Bulletin, along with an invitation to apply some of its ideas during Advent and Christmas.

Order extra copies today from C.C.C. Publications (address inside front cover).

A PLAN FOR JAN.

January is named after the Roman god Janus. Equipped with two faces, he was admirably suited for giving his name to the first month of the year: he could look forward and backward at the same time.

The beginning of a new year is also a good time for a parish worship committee or a diocesan liturgical commission to do a little looking around too.

1. Look at your plans for this year. How have you done since September? How do things look between now and June?
3. How are you meeting the needs of the people you are called to serve?
4. Penitential celebrations: how have you used these in the past two years? What are your plans for next Lent?
5. Membership: do you need more members in your commission or committee to do the necessary work? Should some members be encouraged to retire gracefully? Is your commission or committee active or just a number of names in a book?

"Zeal for the promotion and restoration of the liturgy is rightly held to be a sign of the providential dispositions of God in our time, as a movement of the Holy Spirit in his Church. It is today a distinguishing mark of the Church's life, indeed of the whole tenor of contemporary religious thought and action." (CSL, no. 43)

On your enthusiasm, knowledge and work will depend the response of your priests and people in the liturgy.
ADVENT

We work and pray
that the Church of God may become holy
and be ready to welcome the Lord
when he comes.

SPIRIT OF ADVENT

Advent is a short period of joyful preparation for the coming of the Lord. It is a time of prayer, of meditation, of quiet renewal.

During Advent, the entire Church prays and works to become more holy, more prepared for the Lord's coming. God's people in Canada, the church in each diocese and parish and other community of faith, each family, should be joining in holy expectation, crying out with hope: "Come, Lord Jesus"

A new year of grace, another year in God's service has begun.

But for this to take place this year, each community has to prepare: to think about the way we celebrate (or ignore) Advent, to go more deeply into its meaning, to examine its practices and customs.

WELCOME, LORD JESUS

During Advent, the Church repeats the prayer of the early Church, the words indeed which close the sacred scriptures: "Come, Lord Jesus!"

We celebrate Mass, eating the sacred meal as he has taught us, until he comes.

Advent is a period of waiting, of increasing our desire to welcome the Lord in our Christmas celebrations. It is a time of deepening our willingness to know him and service, our readiness to clear away any obstacles we have left or placed in his path.

Coming, Yet Here

Though we often use the word come in our Advent liturgy, it is also a time for clearing our eyes of faith, and for recognizing that he is already among us: CSL, no. 7 is worthy of prayerful reflection.

The second coming is referred to in many passages of the epistles. When he comes, it will not be to save us from sin — as in his paschal mystery — but to save all who are waiting for him. (Heb. 9:28)

Waiting, preparing; being watchful servants who do the master's will while waiting for his return: these are the attitudes we need during Advent.
ADVENT SPIRIT

The words of Pope Paul on the spirit of the Advent liturgy are helpful as we begin to celebrate this season each year.

At this period of Advent there arises again the great problem of man's meeting with God; to put it better, "our" meeting with God: it is the religious problem. We well know what the solution of this problem is for us: it is Christmas, it is Christ, it is faith, it is Catholic life. But is this solution really acquired, definitive, for each of us? Is it satisfactory? Is it lived? Without answering now these questions which may raise worries and doubts in us, we must note that the Church, the great teacher of souls, brings up again, every year, the same question and in the same objective terms, according to her calendar, that is, the annual cycle of her liturgy, which repeats exactly the celebration of the same feasts, of the same doctrinal and spiritual themes. But repeat is not the right word; we should say renew, and, to be precise, not circling round on itself, but rather spiralling upwards for those faithful that accept her pedagogical guidance, always with the same program, always with a new method of exploring it.

This observation makes us realize that the subjective terms, that is, our aptitude to take part in the celebration of religious themes, are not always the same. They may vary, they may show a different interest according to our state of mind. With a change in age, our capacity for perceiving religious things changes, too. "When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became a man, I gave up childish ways" (I Cor. 13, 11).

Civilization of Images

And not only does our age change, but the world in which we live changes, and stimulates us, impresses us, occupies us in ever new forms and ever increasing measures. We are continually provoked by demands on our attention from outside. We never have a moment of peace.

The most frequent and urgent stimulus is the environment in which our laborious and often harassed day takes place, forcing upon us a psychological state that is continually turned outwards. A double appeal to the senses prevails more and more: listening and looking. Ours is becoming the civilization of sounds and images, as is said now. The screen of our psychology is continually occupied by the senses. And the latter supply thought with ever new material to digest; they help it, in fact, with their voices and their patterns.

Thus our life tends to take place in the sphere of the senses, and to find in it its nourishment and its exhaustion. Man becomes accustomed to this immediate and sure concreteness of knowledge, and does not seek anything else. This is typical of the man in the street nowadays. His formation and culture are at this level: the world of sensible experience. Rise higher? Yes, but nearly always with the ladder tested by the senses, with the quantitative one especially, the one most used in the scientific sphere. Then there arises and almost imposes itself the temptation to believe that this is everything. Think higher? Seek the reason for things? Not just what things are like, but why they are like this? Seek truth? The principle, the transcendent cause? Seek love? The secret purpose of things?
Contrary Tendencies

At this point it happens that man is tormented by two contrary tendencies: one of gravitation, fear, above all laziness, the pull of which makes him stay and be content with the experimental and sensible kingdom, in which he has made his usual and natural abode; and it holds him. The other tendency, which is also natural, in fact more deeply natural, a tendency of levitation, higher search, transcendent effort, invites him to move upwards.

This is where thought, that is understanding, begins; understanding the (metaphysical) movement in which everything is immersed: nothing is firm, nothing is stable; nothing explains by itself what it is and why it exists; where it comes from and where it is going. Everything, grasped in its deepest being, is sufficient in itself, refers to some principle, to some purpose outside itself. Everything is a "way," is a ladder. A mystery, that is, a kingdom unknown in itself, but now absolutely certain for those who have reached it in some way. It is the mystery of God: the religious mystery. This tiring and blessed journey, to start on which a moment is generally enough, and years are not enough to end it, is we were saying, religion.

It is natural religion, if reached with the effort of our being, predisposed to this incipient and indistinct meeting; supernatural religion, if to the longing of man the seeker, the thirsty pilgrim, there replies from that mystery, no longer completely unknown and empty, a living Voice, infinitely living: "I exist!" the voice of God opening the conversation with man, the conversation of faith, of "superlife," the conversation of the kingdom of God. The conversation of Advent, that is of the arrival of the living God among us and for us; the conversation of the Word, who becomes man for a surprising conversation, with men, or rather an ineffable and life-bringing communion.

Silence That Listens

These things are not new to you. You are all "pupils of God" (Jn. 6, 45). But for them to be present in our minds, operating in our lives, one first indispensable condition is necessary, silence. The psychological screen of our receptivity must be, for some moments at least, empty, free and quiet. Each of us must return for a moment to ourselves (Lk. 15, 17). The inward ear must begin to listen; first of all echoes, tumultuous at the beginning, then placated, of our own conscience, of our own individual personality, which is unique, and never completely explored. And then it becomes itself the echo of another voice which can at least be distinguished, the voice of religious conscience, the voice of the Spirit of God, "who will guide you into all the truth" (see Jn. 16, 13).

This is the first exercise for the present liturgical season, which is furthermore the season of our historic today, in order to live as men, as Christians, our daily experience, whether it be inward or exterior. The silence that listens. Just try. Listen carefully; what is that prophetic wind that brings, as if from an immense desert, an inspiring invitation, whispered and then acclaimed: make straight the way of the Lord? (Is. 40, 3-5; Jn. 1, 23).

We moderns must recreate this inner cell, a defence against the din outside, where we can listen to the steps and then the voice of God.

(Osservatore Romano, English edition, December 9, 1971)
ADVENT SUNDAYS

In its introduction, the Roman Lectionary notes that each Sunday gospel reading in Advent has a particular theme:

First Sunday: The Lord is coming in glory at the end of time. (The previous Sunday, we celebrated the solemnity of Christ our king, who rules and leads his Church until he returns at the end of time.)

Second and third Sundays: John the baptist (see Saints for Advent).

Fourth Sunday: Various events which prepare us for celebrating the birth of the Lord Jesus.

The Old Testament readings, which lead us to the gospel events, contain prophecies about the coming Messiah and about the great messianic period he will open. This is especially true of the readings chosen from Isaiah.

Each Sunday, the second reading brings us lessons on various Advent themes as they were viewed in apostolic times; the lessons are still true for God's people today.

By observing the way in which the Advent readings are carefully selected, we will be more able to reflect the Advent spirit in our Sunday celebrations.

ADVENT BULLETINS

Use your parish bulletin as a means of spreading the Advent spirit in your community. The following notes were used on the Sundays of Advent in one parish. They are reprinted here with permission.

Hope: Advent begins today. It is season of hope. We are celebrating the coming of our Lord Jesus.

It is a season of hope because Jesus has come to free us from our sins, to help us to do better as individuals, and to help us to work together to make this a much better world for all.

During Advent, our daily prayer should be: "Come, Lord Jesus!" Come into our hearts and lives and help us to be your holy people. Come and bring hope into the lives of everyone. "Come, Lord Jesus!"

* * *

Praying: Advent is a time of prayer. Here is a suggestion: pray for our own parishioners, and ask God to help us all to grow closer to him, to have a growing taste for spiritual things.

Have you invited a friend, neighbor or relative to come to Mass on Christmas?

* * *

Light: Advent is a time of light, preparing ourselves to meet Jesus, the light of the world, and to let him shine in and through our life.
St. John tells us: “This was the real light, the light that comes into the world and shines on men. The Word was in the world... yet the world did not know him. He came to his own country, but his own people did not receive him. Some, however, did receive him and believed in him; so he gave them the right to become God's children.” (Jn. 1:9-12)

How will we receive Jesus?

* * *

Home cribs: Have you a crib in your home? Why not make a simple one this week, using ordinary materials and lots of imagination. It can be a good way of helping children understand what Christmas is all about.

SAINTS FOR ADVENT

Three persons come to mind as the saints who display the Advent spirit of waiting. The Church presents them to us in the liturgy of this season.

Mary: The Church looks on Mary as the model of the people of God. (CSL, no. 103) Her attitudes of faith, obedience to God’s will, and prayer are ones that today's Christians should adopt. This is true of parishes, families and individuals as well as of the universal Church.

John the baptist: Led by the Spirit, John urged people to prepare the way of the Lord, to remove obstacles from his path by their repentance and conversion. The same message rings out today, and God's people are called back to the way of the Lord. John's role is described in Lk. 1:17, 76-77. (See also The Bible Today, no. 57, December 1971, pages 564-570, on this saint.)

Joseph: The gospels present little of Joseph, but the few glimpses show a man of faith, obedient to God's will. The preface of St. Joseph praises him in terms of the parable of the talents (Mt. 25, Lk. 19), and reminds us of his love for and duties toward Jesus and Mary. His example is one of trust in God's ways, of faith like Abraham's: human wisdom to the contrary, God will take care of those who live him and do his will.

* * *

"Watching in prayer, our hearts filled with wonder and praise," is the description applied to us by the preface used during the last few days of Advent.

The people of the Old Testament — including our three saints for Advent — prayed in the words of the psalms.

During this season, perhaps a more serious effort might be made to pray the psalms, especially the two seasonal psalms, Ps. 25 (24) and 85 (84). (These are found in the pew edition of Catholic Book of Worship on pages 27-28; the music for the refrains is given in nos. 172-173.)
JOYFUL PREPARATION

"Prepare the way of the Lord" is the Church's admonition. While "we wait in joyful hope for the coming of our savior," as we wait to celebrate the feast of Christmas, we are encouraged to clear away some of the obstacles we have placed in his path.

Some of the ways in which we can prepare:

- bible reading
- prayer
- renewal and rededication to the work of the Lord
- rediscovering the presence of the Lord.

These activities are ways in which your community or parish may carry out its joyful preparation during Advent.

Bible Reading

A warm and living love for scripture will be a long time coming if the only time we meet the word of God is at Sunday's liturgy.

If liturgy committee members want to lead their community to better worship, they must become servants of the word. Committee members should begin reading the bible — especially the gospels — each day, and gradually should lead the members of the parish into daily reading.

It is hard to look for the true Christian spirit if we diligently stay away from the mind of Christ as revealed in the bible.

Prayer

Called to pray: We are the people of God. He has called us out of darkness into his light. He has chosen us in his Son to be his beloved people. In Christ he has made us his beloved sons and daughters. We are brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ and of one another. We are temples of his Spirit. God loves us and makes his dwelling in us.

He has called us, set us aside to sing his praise, to be his people who give him thanks. The eucharist is the greatest of these prayers of praise and thanksgiving.

Called as a community: God has called us as a community — parish, religious community, family — to pray. As individuals, swept up into Christ in baptism, we are called to join in the chorus of praise on earth and in heaven.

What can we do during Advent to help our people realize that they are called to prayer, and carry out this privilege more joyfully?

Rededication to the Lord's Work

The spirit of Jesus' teaching — the ideals and standards he sets for us — is clearly and bluntly proclaimed in the sermon on the mount (chapters 5-7 of St. Matthew).
• Are we like the people who call him Lord but who refuse to carry out the Father's will?

• Are we still the people of the Lord, called to serve him in holiness, dedicated to following Christ by dying to sin and living for God?

If we want to see how the Lord's path should be cleared, a careful meditation on the sermon on the mount would keep most of us busy throughout Advent.

Let's do that as we wait joyfully for the Lord to come!

Rediscovering the Presence of the Lord

A serious, prayerful study of Mt. 18:20; Mt. 25:31-46; and paragraph 7 of the liturgy constitution should provoke some interesting discussions.

Do we really believe that Jesus is present in these ways? Do we act on our faith?

* * *

How can we as individuals and as members of believing communities prepare the way of the Lord this Advent?

ADVENT BIBLE SERVICE

The Vatican Council encourages bible services, especially on some weekdays in Advent. (CSL, no. 35:4)

This issue of the Bulletin contains an example of an Advent penance celebration.

Are you preparing other services for use during Advent? Such services can help the members of your congregation to grow in their warm and living love for scripture. (CSL, no. 24)

SACRAMENT OF Penance

When we listen to the word of the Lord during Advent, we hear God calling us to repent, to turn back to God, to make ready the way of the Lord. The Advent penance celebration is presented in this way.

The joy of the community should grow during Advent, knowing that many will come back through the sacrament to the community and its worship.

How many pray for sinners? Such an intention could be one of the parish concerns during Advent. The aged and shut-ins could be enlisted in this cause. And who prays for those who return, that they will have the grace to remain faithful in God's service?
ADVENT PENANCE CELEBRATION - 1972

Introductory Notes

a) Bible services are encouraged in a special way during Advent and Lent as one way of promoting a warm and living love for scripture among God's people (CSL, nos. 35 (4), 24).

Many members of a spiritual community may benefit from a bible service celebrating God's gift for forgiveness. This service may be used at any time during Advent, but it is recommended for the final two weeks of the season. Preparations should begin well in advance of the date chosen.

b) The celebration of a penance service does not always involve sacramental confession. Some may have been to confession fairly recently; others may prefer another confessor, or may be ready to go to confession at this service. The goal of this celebration is conversion. To focus everyone's attention on confession rather than conversion is to measure a Christian's change of heart too narrowly.

At the same time, one must not mislead people into thinking that a communal penance celebration is the equivalent of sacramental absolution.

c) Personal attention: When the sacrament of penance is celebrated, the priest should help it become a personal meeting of the penitent with Christ. Individual attention in the form of instruction, advice, encouragement, should be given to each penitent by the priest. If the sacrament is celebrated after the bible service, as suggested in this outline, more time will be available for giving each person the individual attention he or she needs and desires.

d) The following outline is a guide, with suggested texts. While these may be used as they stand, it is often better to adapt them to the needs of the local congregation. Other suitable hymns, psalms and readings may be found in the Masses and office of the season, as well as in Catholic Book of Worship. The liturgy committee of the parish council should be encouraged to develop this service as required to meet the needs of the community.

e) All scripture references are to the Jerusalem Bible. In the case of the psalms, the second number refers to the Vulgate.

f) The degree of participation will depend on the level of the liturgical development of the community. Priests and their liturgy committees may wish to use this bible service to lead their people into further participation in the community Mass.

g) For a full celebration, there should be a celebrant, a number of confessors, one or more readers, servers, choir, (thurifer, if incense is used). The celebrant presides from the chair, leads the prayers and preaches the message of conversion. His work will stand out more clearly when he encourages others to assume their proper roles.

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h) A number of smaller or scattered parishes may wish to pool their efforts in celebrating penitential services in each place. A team of neighboring priests going from parish to parish on several different days will bring the benefits of this celebration to more people.

i) **People's leaflet:** Some parishes may wish to prepare leaflets to help their people take a full part in the psalms and responses.

Others may prefer to encourage the people to use the Canadian hymnal. In this outline, appropriate references are made to the hymnal for all parts sung by the congregation.

j) Further ideas may be found in:

- *Penance*, Catholic Information Center, 3225 — 13th Avenue, Regina, Sask.
- *Repent and Believe*, by William Freburger, Ave Maria Press, Notre Dame, Indiana 46556, U.S.A.

Many books of bible services are available, and most have services for Advent or for the sacrament of penance.

The services outlined in the Canadian missal last year also provide further references and suggestions.

**ADVENT PENANCE CELEBRATION • 1972**

**Theme**

*Prepare the way of the Lord*

**Entrance Rite**

1. **Processional Hymn**

Seasonal hymn  
or Ps. 100 (99)  
or Ps. 115 (114)  
*CBW nos. 238-239 CBW no. 241*  
with suitable refrains

2. **Enthroning God's Word**

*The book of God's word (bible or lectionary) is carried in procession by the reader, accompanied by servers with lighted candles, and the others mentioned in (g) above. He places the book in a place of honor (reading stand or lectern; on the altar, if necessary), and the candles are placed nearby. If desired, the celebrant may incense the book.*

*The readings are proclaimed from the book in this place of honor. The book used for the service should have a special binding to show and reinforce our reverence for God's word. When it appears, Canada's new lectionary will be particularly suitable for this purpose.*
3. **Sign of the Cross, Greeting**

   (Rom. 15:13)

   May the God of hope
   bring you such joy and peace in your faith
   that the power of the Holy Spirit
   will remove all bounds to hope.

   **Prayer:**
   Blessed be God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.
   or
   the greeting may be given as at Mass.

4. **Introduction**

   The celebrant may give a brief explanation of the theme of this cele­bration.

5. **Collect**

   Celebrant: Let us pray for strength and courage
   to prepare the way of the Lord:
   (Pause for silent prayer).

   *A suitable Advent collect should be used, or the opening prayer of the 32nd Sunday through the year, or one composed by the celebrant.*

6. **First Reading**

   Ez. 36:25-27, 28b God gives us a new heart
   Col. 2:6-8 Living in Christ
   James 1:19-27 True religion
   1 Pet. 1:13-16 Living a new life

7. **Silent Prayer**

   *A few moments of silence should follow the reading, allowing the assembly to reflect on what God has spoken to them during this reading.*

8. **Our Response to God's Word**

   Ps. 25(24) CBW nos. 172-173, 229

   or

   If the psalm cannot be sung, the reader may proclaim Ps. 119 (118): 145-152 or 169-176, with a suitable refrain said by the congregation.

   or

   A responsory based on Lk. 1:76-78 may be developed by the liturgy com­mittee.

9. **Gospel Acclamation**

   A suitable one should be chosen from the Advent liturgy.
   *If possible, the alleluia should be sung by all (CBW, nos. 201-208)*

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10. Gospel
Mt. 3:1-12
Mk. 1:2-8
Lk. 3:2-18
Jn. 1:19-28

Prepare the way of the Lord

11. Brief Homily
Based on the scripture readings, leading into the examination of conscience.

Penitential Rite

12. Examination of Conscience
Consider: how do I block the Lord’s way?
how can we do better at preparing the way for him?

NOTE: The emphasis here should be on the moral teaching of Jesus and his apostles, as well as on the fact that our sin impedes the way and work of the Lord in the world. A manner of living by which we prepare the way of the Lord should be encouraged among the people of God.

A pause should be made for reflection after each consideration. Some may wish to add a community response each time, using a suitable psalm verse or a prayer such as Forgive us, Lord, if we have said NO.

One way of presenting the examination of conscience is given at the end of this outline.

13. Silent Prayer
For about five minutes, all remain in silence. Sitting or kneeling as they wish, they discuss their way of life with the Lord.
For those who wish it, the sacrament of penance will be available after the bible service.

14. Community Act of Sorrow
Third penitential rite, adapted to theme. (See 1972 Liturgical Calendar, pages 8-9.)
or part of Ps. 51 (50)  
CBW no. 235
or part of Ps. 23 (22)  
CBW nos. 227-228
or Loving Father,  
we have sinned against you.  
Have mercy on your people,  
for we are no longer worthy  
to be called your sons and daughters.  
(based on Lk. 15:21 and Ez. 36:25-27)

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Cleanse us from all evil,
and give us a new heart, a new spirit,
that we may respect your law
and love you with all our heart.

15. Acclamation

A song of joy or of thanksgiving may be sung by all, or by the choir. One of the seasonal psalms may be sung, or organ music played to bring an atmosphere of the joy and eagerness of God's people to prepare the way of the Lord.

Conclusion of the Rite

16. Lord's Prayer As at Mass; sung if possible

The celebrant may wish to compose a simple introduction based on the theme of this service.

17. Concluding Prayer chosen from Advent liturgy

18. Blessing as at Mass; a more solemn form may be prepared.

19. Dismissal Go forth in joy
to prepare the way of the Lord.
R. Thanks be to God!

20. Recessional Hymn Seasonal or thanksgiving
or hymn of praise

Sacrament of Penance

Those who wish to receive individual guidance and sacramental absolution are encouraged to take the opportunity provided by the presence of a number of confessors. The choir might sing meditative or seasonal hymns or suitable psalms in a quiet manner for the first five or ten minutes after the service.
EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE

NOTE: This form is a sample of how one may approach the examination of conscience for adults in the spirit of the Vatican Council.

The emphasis is on the positive commands of Jesus, on living his gospel in our daily lives, on the social dimensions of a good life as well as of sin.

Pauses should be made for meditation and examination between the questions asked by the celebrant.

It is suggested that some, rather than all, of the areas of Christian living be explored in one service. The parish or community liturgical committee could also work with the celebrant to develop other areas, along similar lines.

If your community does develop further outlines, please send a copy to:

National Liturgical Office
90 Parent Avenue
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 7B1

Introduction

(This introduction may be modified to bring in the specific theme of this service.)

Celebrant

We are aware of the sins we have committed. During this season of Advent
the Church urges us to look further:
to see how well we are doing
all that Jesus has asked us to do
in the service of his Father.
Let us listen to his words,
find out where we are failing to follow him,
and how we can improve.
Let us ask his help to be converted,
to rebuild our lives in his service.

Faith or Fear

Reader

The apostles were overcome by fear during a storm at sea.
When they cried out in fright,
"Save us, Lord!"
he answered: "Why are you frightened?
How little faith you have!"
Then he commanded the winds and waves,
and there was a great calm.

Celebrant

Do I have a deep faith in Jesus?
Do I trust in him, and rely on him alone to save me?
How often do I ask him to strengthen my faith?
Do I try to deepen it by prayerful reading of the gospels?
(pause)
Do I try to see God’s hand in events?
Do I realize that hardships and crosses are his way of deepening our faith?
Do I remember that Jesus himself learned to be obedient to God, and for this reason he is the source of salvation to all who believe in him?

Heb. 5:7-9

Do I trust in God’s loving care, in his grace and strength, or do I try to save myself as though I did not need his help?

(pause)

Heb. 5:7-9

By his example and his words, Jesus teaches us to pray. He prays frequently, even spending whole nights in prayer to his Father. Lk. 6:12
He prays before making important decisions. Lk. 22:39-46
He prays in suffering.
Jesus teaches us to ask God for what we need, for our “Father in heaven will give good things to those who ask for them.” Mt. 7:11
He teaches us to persevere, not to give up easily. Lk. 11:5-10; Mk. 15:34
St. Paul reminds us: “The Spirit comes to help us” to pray, to help us put all our concern before God. Rom. 8:26-27 Lk. 11:13

Do I pray as Jesus teaches us?
How well do I pray? How often?
Do I pray in times of need?
Do I ever turn to God to praise him and thank him?
(pause)
What kind of example of prayer life do I give to those in my care?

(pause)
Do I encourage and help them to deepen their spirit of prayer?

(pause)
Are we narrow or generous in our praying?
Do we pray for others: for our parish; for those in need; for our spiritual and civil leaders; for Christians in our community and around the world; for peace and justice in the world?

(pause)
Are we trying to grow in our prayer life? in personal and family prayer? in our parish (or community) worship?
Eager to Do God’s Will

Reader Jesus encourages us to be eager to do God’s will.
“My food,” he tells us,
“is to obey the will of the Father who sent me.”
In the garden, he accepts the suffering and death
that God gives him.
“Not my will, Father, but your will be done.”
He reminds us:
“The person who does what my Father wants him to do
is my brother, my sister.”
Jesus invites us to give service from our
hearts
and teaches us to pray:
“Father, may your will be done
on earth as in heaven.”

Celebrant What is my attitude toward God’s will for me ?
Do I give lip service or service from the heart ?
Do I resent God’s law as an interference in my life,
or do I see him as our loving Father,
showing us right from wrong,
helping us to grow in our love for him ?
(pause)
Do I base my life on the Lord’s commandment
to love God with all my strength
and to love my neighbor as myself ?
(pause)
Do I look for ways of spreading God’s love in
the world ?
Can people see Christ in my actions and words ?
Does my life lead people to Christ or away from him ?
(pause)

Forgiving Others

(see also Mk. 4:24)

Reader While dying on the cross,
Jesus prays for his executioners and for all of us,
for our sins are the cause of his death:
“Father, forgive them,
for they do not know what they are doing.”
Jesus teaches us to pray to God:
“Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.”

Celebrant Do I hold grudges against others
who have done me some real or imaginary harm ?
(pause)
Do I keep bringing up other people’s past faults
and failings ?
Am I doing this to avoid looking at my own weaknesses?
(pause)
Am I ready to forgive others as generously as Jesus forgives me?
(pause)

Do This in My Memory

**Reader**
In baptism Jesus made us God's beloved people, chosen in Christ from all eternity.
Filled with his Spirit and called to be holy, we are a royal nation of priests, chosen to sing God's praise.
At the last supper, Jesus tells us to remember him by celebrating his supper together.

**Celebrant**
Modern society considers Sunday less as the Lord's day, and more as a holiday, let us ask ourselves: As God's people in this community, how seriously do we take our responsibility to praise him by taking a full and active part in the weekly celebration of Mass?
(pause)
Do we see Sunday Mass as our response to God's invitation to gather us together around his altar to hear his word, praise his name, and eat the bread of life?
Do we come to remember the death and rising of the Lord Jesus?
(pause)
What contribution do I make to our community celebration?
If already a reader, choir member, server or usher, am I doing my best for God's glory?
How can our family help to make our parish celebration better?
(pause)
Do I make any effort to take part in weekday Mass once in a while?
What can I do to encourage others to come now and then?
(pause)
End of Examination

Reader

Listen, people of God,
the Lord is speaking to us:

Celebrant

"Now is the acceptable time,
today is the day of salvation."

Reader

"The right time has come,
and the kingdom of God is near!
Turn away from your sins
and believe the good news" of your salvation!

Celebrant

"Harden not your hearts today,
but listen to the word of the Lord."

*  *  *

Some other areas that may be explored:

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<thead>
<tr>
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ADVENT NEXT YEAR

Advent is a time for beginning and preparing rather than a time of completing.

Except for a one-night stand, people are too busy and distracted in Advent to concentrate on a theme or complete a project.

A parish project, such as bible reading or growing in prayer, might begin in Advent, but it should continue in January and throughout the winter months, or at a time more suited to the community's tempo of life.

Advent is too short to complete any long range program, but it is a good time to begin one.

What are you planning for Advent of next year? It is not too soon to discuss and study, or to start laying foundations and seeking advice, so that you may lead the people of your parish or community into a more profound worship of God.

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FOR DISCUSSION

Many customs surround Christmas. Some are religious, some secular, and some are a combination of both.

We offer the following ideas for discussion in your parish or community.

Don't try to solve them or change them this year — but do think about them from a Christian viewpoint.

1. Christmas cards:
   - There are positive and negative aspects of this custom.
   - The choice of pictures and messages sometimes has little to do with celebrating the birth of the Lord Jesus.
   - Some people have stopped sending cards, or send less expensive ones, and give the money saved to a worthy cause.

2. Christmas music:
   - Radio stations and department stores play Christmas music (which celebrates the birth of Christ) for six weeks before Christmas. Everyone is sick of it by the time Christmas arrives.
   - Is there nothing positive that believers can do about this in their local community?

3. Christmas concerts:
   - The Advent spirit is better retained when the concert is a pageant of the Good News of our salvation, a presentation of the expectation of the savior as well as his coming and the reception he received.
   - What place does Santa Claus have in Advent?

4. Christmas parties:
   - During Advent, should parties be Advent parties, rather than anticipated Christmas celebrations?

In discussing customs, it is good to distinguish:

- Advent customs, which prepare for the coming of the Lord in the Christmas celebrations, and
- Christmas customs which are anticipated during Advent.

Remember: don't try to change the world this year. But do discuss the needs and possibilities, and see where you can get started next year, at least in your personal life and by sharing these discussions with others.
LITURGICAL HOUSE CLEANING

There is a growing feeling that Advent and Lent should be "cleaned out" of all saints' feasts, letting God's people concentrate on the main mysteries of salvation being celebrated at that time.

This would mean that the saints' feasts which presently coincide with Advent and Lent would be placed elsewhere.

In a certain way, the Church did this during Advent with the three ember days, marking the incarnation (annunciation), visitation and John's call for repentance. Now these events are remembered on December 20-21, and the third and fourth Sundays in Advent.

What do you think about celebrating the annunciation during Advent instead of during Lent? We would ask you to give some serious consideration to this idea, discuss it, and share your positive ideas with us.

DAILY NOURISHMENT

A daily homily is recommended during the Advent and Christmas seasons. Through a brief but well prepared homily, the celebrant will help his congregation to benefit more fully from the richness of the special selections from God's word.

As the members of a spiritual community grow in their appreciation of the liturgical readings, they will be moved to give greater praise and thanks in the eucharist for all the wonders that God is performing among his people.

Some ideas on the homily are contained on page 12 of the 1972 Liturgical Calendar.

Where ambition ends, happiness begins. (Hungarian proverb)
CHRISTMAS

CHRISTMAS SPIRIT

We hear the words Christmas spirit bandied about quite frequently. It seems to be taken by many to be a cross between Santa Claus jollity and a feeling that one should be kinder and more generous to others.

What is the true spirit of Christmas? The New Testament gives us some ideas to pray about:

**It is love:**
- God loves us: Jn. 3:16
- He wants us to love him: Mk. 12:30
- We show this love by loving our neighbor: Mt. 22:39, Jn. 13:34-35, Mt. 5:43-48; 6:1-4, 1 Jn. 4:7-21

**It is giving:**
- Jas. 1:27; 2:15-17

**It is forgiving:**
- Mt. 18:21-35
- 2 Cor. 2:5-11

**It is quiet joy:** The joy of Advent is continued into the Christmas season. We rejoice because of the Good News of our salvation: our savior has come. Yet our joy is muted, for we are not homefree yet. We still carry God's grace in fragile vessels. We are weak and tempted, yet God is with us! Emmanuel is here!

What is being done in your parish or community — a community of believers, called to praise God and love others as Christ did — to deepen and spread the spirit of Christmas?

SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS

The spirit of Christmas is well stated in Luke's angelic announcement: "I bring you good news of great joy for all the people. Today your savior has been born for you." (Lk. 2:10-11) The joy of Advent is deepened.

Themes which are developed in the liturgy of the Christmas season revolve around the good news of our salvation, the message of Jn. 3:16, the fact that God is with us (the answer to "Come, Lord Jesus" is Emmanuel); the wonderful exchange: God's Son becomes one of us so that we might share in God's nature as his adopted children.
We must take care not to let peripheral activities distract us from the real meaning and essential values of this season.

And startling as it might seem at first sight — though we mention it in every Mass — we must keep our eyes on the central truth, the paschal mystery. Jesus has come to save us by dying and rising, and by involving us in his passover from death to life.

That is why we celebrate at Christmas and why we thank the Father in the eucharist: because he has given us his Son as our saving Lord.

CRIBS

Like all other devotions, the practice of using cribs in church must be submitted to the principles of the renewed liturgy.

Paragraph 13 of the liturgical constitution tells us that each devotion should be in harmony with the liturgical season and with the liturgy. It should be derived from the liturgy in some way, and lead the people of God to the liturgy.

Here are some thoughts on the use of cribs in the spirit of Vatican II. Perhaps you would like to share other ideas with our readers.

At Home

**Home cribs:** A parish community might encourage families to set up a crib in their homes. A home crib need not be fancy, especially when children are involved in making them. With a growing use of handicrafts in schools and youth groups, children will be able — if left unfettered by adult restrictions, hesitation and sometimes limited imagination — to design and set up suitable home cribs.

Figures may be drawn, cut out or made from construction paper, made with play dough, clay or plasticine. Patterns, stencils or ideas might be prepared by teachers or youth groups or parish organizations such as the PTA, duplicated and distributed, perhaps as an insert in the parish bulletin at the beginning of Advent.

Emphasis should be on preparing the figures of the holy family, and possibly a few shepherds in the first days of Advent. The wise men can be worked on after Christmas. There is little need to be too distracted by animals: herds of camels, donkeys and sheep really are not that important. The star belongs to Epiphany, not to the Christmas story.

**Gospel story:** One rural parish encouraged its families in their preparation by outlining in a bulletin insert the main events indicated in the infancy narrative. For pre-school children, these are easily told in simple words; older children are able to use or listen to the gospel texts. (See The Bible Today, no. 57, December 1971, pages 572-578, on the literary genre of Matthew 1-2.)
Gradual preparation: There are about four main phases or stages: the beginning of Advent is a time for designing and making the crib set, and for discussing the general meaning of Christmas and its story. The second phase begins on December 17, when the second preface and the O antiphons enter the daily liturgy.

The crib is set up in a place of honor; a few days before Christmas, the figures of Mary and Joseph are added. The third stage is the celebration of Christmas: the babe, and then the shepherds are placed in the crib.

Epiphany marks the last stage. The gospel narrative brings in the star and leads the wise men to a house (not a stable).

With ceremony: A bible service (recommended in Advent — see CSL, no. 35:4) may be used in marking the various stages. The example below describes the Advent service in the first phase.

- The family gathers around the crib.
- Psalm: Where the children are old enough, a seasonal psalm — Ps. 25 (24), 85 (84) — or the daily O antiphon could be said.
- Gospel story: The story is read or told; possibly it is discussed by the family for a few minutes.
- Prayer: Come, Lord Jesus! should always be used. Perhaps a simple litany of the Advent saints could be added:
  
  Holy Mary, mother of God, pray for us.
  St. John the baptist, pray for us.
  St. Joseph, pray for us.

Or the Hail, Mary might be said with special care.

- Action: A few days before Christmas, the figures of Mary and Joseph are placed in the crèche, with the empty crib. Where possible, this is done by the children, even repeating the story about no room in the inn (motel?) if they wish.

- Advent hymn: to close the brief service. (A Christmas carol or hymn would be as out of place here as Jingle Bells in July.)

Similar services — based on psalm or opening hymn, gospel story (scripture reading), discussion (homily), prayer, action and closing hymn — could be developed for Christmas and Epiphany, using suitable elements from their liturgy.

School Cribs

Here the problem lies in the fact that schools go on holidays a few days before the end of Advent, and return around the time of the Epiphany celebration.

The following suggestions may help students and teachers to keep the use of a crib in perspective.

Where possible, each class would make its own crib, according to the suggestions given for home cribs. (Simple, rather than elaborate constructions should be encouraged for classrooms.)
During Advent (stage two), daily celebrations could be along the same lines as those suggested for home bible services. Older classes in elementary school might be involved in developing their own.

Instead of anticipating the antiphon to fit the number of school days before Christmas, it would seem better to use them on their proper days, beginning on December 17 (see Liturgical Calendar; the antiphons are listed in the Advent section of any English breviary). The others are used at home in family celebrations. Perhaps the series might be duplicated and brought home, or made available as an insert to the parish bulletin. Their imagery might be discussed in class before they are used.

When the students return in January, the crib should be set up and the babe placed in the manger, perhaps with a brief bible service using Christmas themes (stage three may be omitted if school begins after Epiphany).

Epiphany (stage four) should be marked by removal of the stable scenery (manger, animals, shepherds, sheep) and by the arrival of the star and the wise men.

At the end of Epiphany week, a prayerful discussion might lead to lessons for living now, and improvements for next year's celebrations.

**Stores and Other Public Places**

Rather than setting up the whole panorama at once (shepherds and wise men, star and menagerie), public cribs would benefit by following the Advent, Christmas and Epiphany phases described for home use.

Cards or posters, carefully worded, could spell out the main details of the gospel story. An invitation to celebrate Christmas in church might be included during Advent.

If accompanied by music, public displays would be more effective if Advent music were played during Advent, Christmas music during Christmas and Epiphany music to close the celebrations. (No Advent music available on records? Perhaps your choir could tape a number of selections from Catholic Book of Worship.)

**Cribs in Church?**

*NOTE: While the foregoing ideas may be put into practice immediately, these questions about the use of the crib in church are intended for discussion only.*

Do cribs belong in church? Considering the state of liturgy in St. Francis' time, were they a contemporary substitute for participation that was lacking?

Does the custom build up the paschal mystery or simply ignore it? Is it beneficial or merely a distraction in the liturgical growth of the community of believers?

Do processions before midnight Mass, bearing an encushioned doll to the crib, form a proper opening ceremony for the Mass?

When crib displays clutter the sanctuary or block off portions of it, reroute communion processions and form too prominent a focal point, are they undermining the liturgical design of the sanctuary?

Do nodding angels and saucers to collect money emphasize the Christian attitude toward wealth, or reinforce the suspicion that the money-changers are alive and well and still operating in the temple?
PARISH BULLETIN

The liturgy committee should be concerned with the teaching power of the parish bulletin. Each week, at least one item or article should be thought-provoking, above the level of timetables and bakesales.

In a powerful season such as Christmas, when people are being bombarded by inane commercialism from every direction, the parish bulletin can serve as an antidote by helping to bring some positive truths and searching questions before their minds.

When a parish looks on its bulletin as a continuation and extension of the homily and teaching role of the priest, it is on the way toward perfection.

Plan now with your priests and those involved in preparing the bulletin to include some special thoughts in your bulletin in the weeks after Christmas: Holy Family, New Year's, world day of peace, Epiphany, prayer for Christian unity — these give us plenty of scope for leading our people closer to the mind of Christ.

FIFTY WEEKS OF WHAT?

At Christmas time, most healthy people develop a slight pang of conscience over their sick, aged and shut-in relatives and acquaintances.

Youth groups tune up their voices and pay a flying visit to hospitals and homes for the aged.

Generous organizations organize food baskets.

Then comes the climax: eleven months and two weeks of nothing.

* * *

This is an area where every parish could and should ask itself some frank questions about the sick, the aged, shut-ins, those in hospitals and nursing homes.

- Would it be better to organize a monthly visit to these people? This would prevent their being overwhelmed at Christmas and neglected for the rest of the year.

- What is being done to help them be and feel part of the parish? See Bulletin no. 33, pages 70-73 for many ideas.

- Does anyone take these people out once in a while? An occasional invitation to a meal, or tea, would be appreciated.

- Christmas baskets: What about the rest of the year?

- Sacraments: What is done in your parish to bring the sacraments to the sick and shut-ins? Your liturgy committee should give serious consideration to the use of auxiliary ministers, especially on Sunday. (See Bulletin no. 31.)
FOR DISCUSSION

The rules permit a priest to celebrate three Masses on Christmas and All Souls' Day.

In the light of liturgical developments since the Second Vatican Council, is this practice desirable?

We are not referring, of course, to public, scheduled Masses, but to Masses celebrated back to back, one after another, just for the sake of celebrating them.

Have conditions and attitudes changed since 1915?

Shall we discuss this in a calm and positive manner?

HOLY FAMILY

The feast of the holy family began to be celebrated in French-speaking Canada, and from here spread to the universal Church. In the reformed calendar, it has been moved from after Epiphany to the Sunday between Christmas and New Year's.

Some parishes have a special afternoon service of blessing children on this occasion. If this is done in your community, may we suggest that the ceremony be reviewed in the light of CSL, no. 13 on popular devotions.

A brief bible service could be suitable on such an occasion. Through the prayers, readings and homily, the parents could meditate on:

- the great and wonderful gift God has given their children in baptism;
- the responsibilities they bear as Christian parents, and the willingness of the community to share with them in fulfilling these duties;
- the grace of God which is always available to those who ask in faith.

This might be a good occasion for families which prepared together for the baptism of their children to renew acquaintances, and for the parish council committees responsible for Christian education to be available.

The joy of the Christmas season should penetrate the entire celebration, which could end with blessings for the individual children.
A watchnight service on December 31? A prayer vigil? Why not?

Pastors and their liturgy committees might wish to encourage members of their community of believers to assemble for an hour of prayer (not necessarily in church) before they go off to their New Year's celebrations.

During this prayer vigil, God's word would be proclaimed, and time would be available for meditation and prayer. Among themes that could be considered in this service would be: reviewing the past year spiritually (repentance and thanksgiving); looking forward in faith to beginning a new year in the service of God, his people and the world; God's people are a year nearer to eternity; prayer for peace in the world (tomorrow is also the world day of prayer for peace).

Following this service, the first Mass of the solemnity of Mary the mother of God might be celebrated.

Service Outlines

Your liturgy committee might wish to adapt this outline for its service:

1. **Entrance** or opening hymn or psalm
2. **Enthroning** God's word
3. **Prayer**
4. **Look back at the old year**
   - **World** (read headlines; flash slides; montage)
     - negative: war, strife, hate; disaster
     - positive: good, joyful love, service; gospel preached
   - **Civic community and our parish**
     - negative: (time for public examination of conscience)
     - positive: spiritual assets, advances
   - **Family and personal**
     - negative:  
     - positive: Brief, individual examination of conscience

A hymn of thanksgiving may be sung.
5. **God's loving concern for his people**
   - reading from scripture
   - psalm: such as Ps. 8, Ps. 24 (23)
   - **recalling God's blessings**: some time is spent in remembering signs of God's love for us in the past year. Those present are invited to share their recollections with all.
   - prayer.
6. Our response in the new year

- gospel: Mt. 5:3-12
- homily
- silent reflection and prayer
- general intercessions
- sacred action: our resolve. Personal and parish resolutions should be considered. A parish council could resolve to concentrate on the spiritual aspects of the community.
- blessing: a more solemn form should be considered (such as Num. 6:24-26).
- joyful dismissal.

* * *

Other suitable readings for a New Year's eve service:

Rom. 13:8-14
1 Cor. 7:29-31
Jas. 4:13-15
Mt. 6:31-34
Lk. 12:35-40

* * *

It is reasonable that a man should be something worthier at the end of the year than at the beginning.

(Thoreau)

NEW YEAR'S DAY

The first day of January has a heavy load to carry. While every aspect cannot be fully celebrated each year, the liturgy committee should include some of these in its annual program for parish worship.

a) Feast of Mary: one of the most ancient of Marian feasts, this day has once more become the solemnity of Mary as the mother of God. It honors her according to the teaching of the Council of Ephesus in 431. The civil year now opens under the patronage of Mary, who is the image of the Church, the model for God's people.

A meditation on the Hail Mary would not be out of place in the parish bulletin today or sometime during the year.
b) **Beginning of the civil year:** Today is the first day of a new year in the service of the Lord. The people of God continue their pilgrimage toward their heavenly homeland. We begin a new year of praise, a time of salvation. It is a time for renewal, repentance, conversion, for returning to active service. God has given his people this acceptable time, and is calling us to grow in love this year.

Some suggestions for marking this milestone in time:

- The new missal will carry a special blessing, which may be used in today's Mass.
- See *End and Beginning*: if a watchnight service was not held, the people of the community might be invited to a time of prayer:
  - asking God's forgiveness for our trespasses and failures of the past year.
  - thanking and praising him for his blessings and protection last year.
  - rededicating ourselves to his work this year.
  - asking his help for the days to come.
- A prayer that might be reprinted in the bulletin for family prayer on New Year's day:

  Eternal Father,
  you have brought your people
  to the beginning of another year in your service.
  Forgive our past sins,
  bless us during this new year,
  and remain with us all the days of our life.
  We ask this grace, Father, through Christ our Lord.

(Based on a collect for this day in *Book of Common Prayer.*

- French-speaking Canadians have the custom of inviting the parents to bless their children at home on this day. This might be encouraged in your community.
- **One resolution:** Perhaps in the parish bulletin the people of the parish might be invited to make one, positive resolution for this year. Some suggestions:
  - spend five minutes every day reading the gospel.
  - read a chapter of the bible each day.
  - pray one (extra) psalm daily, saying it well and with care.
  - those who say daily office might spend ten minutes each day studying one of the psalms with the aid of a good commentary.

c) **World day of prayer for peace:** see *Peace Day.*

* * *

**Problem:** After celebrating New Year's Eve, and after the flurry of weeks of hyperactivity, people are too tired and distracted to concentrate on any particular spiritual theme.

Are we going to let that be our excuse, or set out to remake the world in the image of Christ?
PEACE DAY

January 1 is the world day of prayer for peace. Its theme in 1973 is Peace is possible. The suggestions described below may be of help to your parish council in planning local celebrations.

While these are being suggested for New Year’s Day, many of the ideas can be used at various times during the year. Prayers for peace are needed constantly.

1. New Year’s Eve: Prayers for peace may be offered during the vigil service. Peace could even be the theme of the celebration. See End and Beginning, above.

2. General intercessions: At Mass and especially in bible services, petitions should be included for:
   - peace and good will among individuals and in families in this community.
   - peace and harmony among the nations of the world.
   - return to God’s law (In his will is our peace, Dante reminds us.)
   - light and guidance for civil leaders and for the UNO.

3. Family celebrations: People gathered together in family celebrations should be encouraged to pause for a few moments at the beginning of the year; to discuss the longing for peace in the world; to consider their personal and family responsibility to work and pray for peace during this new year.

4. Parish bulletins and bulletin inserts could develop the theme of “pray and work for peace” by suggesting ideas for prayers for peace. Opportunities to work for peace are open to individuals and families in this community.

   A brief prayer service for peace might be included (see no. 5). At various times in the year, the parish bulletin might also be used to remind people of the need to pray and work for peace.

5. Mini-service: Why not a brief prayer service for home use? It would be simple: a theme, a prayer, a reading, psalm, moment of silent prayer and meditation, sharing of thoughts prompted by the reading and prayer, a family resolution, litany (as in the general intercessions), a blessing. Such a service could be used on New Year’s day, and several times during the year when the family gathers: holidays, family celebrations, anniversaries, birthdays.

   This service could be prepared in leaflet form, with extra copies available so that families may use them now and then.

6. Invite the sick, aged and shut-ins to join your community in praying for peace. (See Bulletin no. 33, pages 72-73.)

7. Parish council: If prayer and work for peace is to have a real part in the life of the community, the council and its committees should plan for it. A number of prayer services during the year, ideas for family prayer, ecumenical approaches to prayer and action are needed. The council should lead the parish in a serious self-examination of attitudes and concern for peace in the world, and reconsider other parish activities and projects in this perspective.
8. Young people today make a great effort to greet one another with “peace” and to wave peace signs at everyone. While this is certainly good, they might also ask themselves how much working and praying they are doing for peace. And their elders might learn to appreciate gospel values by observing youth today.

Through its appropriate committees, the parish council should explore with the young people of the community ways of working together for peace, ways of influencing others to take a Christian stand for peace in the world, to form a real movement for world peace based on harmony between God and man.

9. Prophetic value of prayer: Peace depends on God as well as man. By praying for it, we display our faith in God’s promises. At the same time, we must back up our prayer by a deeper awareness of our social responsibility, by working for justice.

True Christians are followers of the prince of peace — not on New Year’s Day alone — but throughout the year.

* * *

Where there is no brotherhood, there can be no peace.

(Max Lerner)

YOUTH MASSES?

In Bulletin no. 34, the London diocesan commission made this comment on youth Masses:

“It is obvious that certain styles of liturgical expression are going to be particularly attractive to the youth of the parish. But the Commission feels very strongly that no Mass should be promoted as a Youth Mass, and this for clear, theological reasons. The very nature of the Sunday celebration is that it seeks to break out beyond the divisions that traditionally hold people apart, and to assemble together in one mind mankind — the rich and the poor, the young and the old, the learned and the unlettered — as a sign before the nations that even now God gathers his people into the kingdom of peace and love. Sunday is simply not the day for Masses for specific groups, and we do an injustice to the Sunday assembly when we promote them on this day. Each Sunday Mass should be of such a nature that it makes its appeal to a broad spectrum of the parish community.”

We would be pleased to have your positive reactions and comments.
EPIPHANY

A study of the texts used in the Mass of this solemnity shows us what we are celebrating. We are remembering the manifestation (showing, unveiling, epiphany) of part of God's plan for our salvation.

That plan is magnificently outlined for us by Paul at the opening of his letter to the Ephesians (1:3-14). Moving from proclamation of God's work to praise of his mercy, he helps us to increase our thanks as we deepen our understanding of God's love for us.

In today's Mass, we proclaim Jesus as savior, king and light of all nations, and we thank our Father in heaven for his great gift of salvation.

Savior of the World

The new preface of the Epiphany praises God who reveals to us his eternal plan for salvation in Christ. The second lesson (Eph. 3:2-3a, 5-6) reminds us that all nations are called to salvation. God wants all men to be saved and to become parts of his son's body, the Church (see also Rom. 1:2-7). In God's family, all will become one holy people, honoring one Lord, sharing one faith and baptism.

In the gospel (Mt. 2:1-12), the savior who was revealed to Joseph (1:21) and to the Jewish people at Christmas (represented by the shepherds — Lk. 2:11), is now made known to the representatives of all nations. The echoes of the procession of nations in the first reading (Is. 60:1-6) and in the responsorial psalm — Ps. 72 (71) — are deliberately brought to our attention. God wants to save all people, not just a few persons or members of one nation.

Luke's gospel brings this out in the canticles of Zechariah (1:68-69) and Simeon (2:31-32). As members of God's redeemed people, we use these songs of praise in morning and night prayer, praising our Father for sending Christ as the savior of the world.

Like the Samaritans of Sychar, we should proclaim our act of faith (Jn. 4:42) in God's wonderful fulfillment of our Advent hopes and prayers for our Messiah and savior.

King for Ever

The old year of grace closed with the solemnity of Christ as king of the universe. In him, God would bring all things together.

Now, near the beginning of a new civil year of grace, we hear Jesus proclaimed as King, the son of David who will reign for ever over his people (Lk. 1:32-33).

The royal psalm 72, probably a coronation song for one of David's descendants, is easily applied to Christ. He is the Lord who judges his people in justice, who leads them into a kingdom of justice and peace (preface of Christ the king). He rules from sea to sea. (Yes, that's where they got our nation's motto: and we should be asking ourselves if we allow Jesus and his principles to guide our country; we need to remember our nation and its leaders often in the general intercessions.)
While even kings bow before him, our king is ready to save the poor, the needy and the weak when they call on him.

Lest we become distracted, we are recalled to the paschal mystery by remembering another time that Jesus was called king: the title over the cross in Mt. 27:37. And we are reminded too that our risen Lord will come again as king and judge (Mt. 25:31-46).

**Light of the Nations**

The theme of light and glory is quite pronounced in the Epiphany Mass.

The message of chapters 1, 8 and 12 of John’s gospel is foreshadowed in the “light of the nations” (Lk. 2:32). The star is but a faint reflection of the glory of God which shines on us in Christ.

Though it may take some time and effort, any individual or community will benefit from a study of the Mass texts of this feast, which speak of Jesus as the light of the world, the one who reflects the glory of the Father and reveals him in the light of faith.

**“We Have Come to Worship the King”**

The need of adoration and worship is brought out in today’s Mass, especially in the first reading, its responsorial psalm, the acclamation and the gospel. A sensitive community would make sure that its general intercessions reflect the mood of this feast.

*We have come to worship:* This year, our community will take more seriously its responsibility to be the men and women of prayer in this area.

*We have come to worship:* In each Mass, we will gather as God’s people, called to praise him. We will rejoice as we recall his great deeds among us, and thank him for saving us in the death and rising of the Lord Jesus.

*We have come to worship:* This is the work of the new year of grace, to worship God by our words and by our lives, as individuals and as the Christian community of faith in this locality.

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Nothing can bring you peace but the triumph of principle.

(Ralph Waldo Emerson)

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BAPTISM OF THE LORD

The Fathers of the Church noticed three manifestations or epiphanies of Jesus Christ to the human race:

- The infant king is revealed to the wise men.
- At the baptism of Jesus, the Father proclaims Jesus as his beloved Son and messenger.
- At the wedding banquet in Cana, Jesus showed his glory to his disciples for the first time, and they believed in him.

Each of these is a feast of faith, a revelation calling for our response in faith.

The liturgy celebrates these three manifestations during the weeks after Christmas, and invites us to respond to God's loving action in Christ.

In 1973, by way of exception, the feast of the Lord's baptism is not celebrated in countries where Epiphany is observed on a Sunday. But we can make sure we respond in faith to the action of the Lord throughout the Advent-Christmas season of grace.

PENANCE CELEBRATIONS - 1973

From Advent 1970 to Lent 1972, penance celebrations prepared by the National Office were included in the loose-leaf missal. Now that Canada is moving toward a permanent lectionary and sacramentary-missal, these celebration outlines will continue to be published in the Bulletin.

In 1973, the following themes have been chosen:

**Lent:** Christ is the light of the world.

**Advent:** The peace of the Lord.

These will appear early enough to let you adapt them from your community celebrations.

If you have any suggestions or material for these services, we would be glad to hear from you soon.


OTHER CELEBRATIONS

PRAYER FOR UNITY

Canada is celebrating the week of prayer for Christian unity from January 21-28, 1973. The theme is "Lord, teach us to pray." (Lk. 11:1)

This is a week in which Christians may grow in prayer. As they come closer to the Lord Jesus, more ready to accept and carry out his will, they will become closer to one another.

During this week, we are called to deepen our understanding of the implications of our prayer for unity, and to explore together the depths of the Lord's prayer.

Model service: A model service has been provided by a committee representing the Christian churches in Canada, and is available from the National Office of Ecumenism, 830 Bathurst Street, Toronto 179, Ontario. The National Liturgical Office helped in the preparation of this booklet and the model service it contains. Local churches are encouraged to get together to plan and develop celebrations to meet their circumstances.

Further suggestions: Rather than being concerned about unity for one week and then paying little attention to it during the other fifty-one, this year's booklet offers suggestions to lead congregations and communities into practical ecumenism.

Other ideas are contained in the 1973 Liturgical Calendar.

Daily readings: During the week of prayer, the following readings are encouraged in families, communities and churches:

1. Our Father, who art in heaven
   Ps. 100 (99)
   Eph. 3:14-21
   Lk. 11:1-13

   In Christ all men can come to God with confidence as to their Father.

2. Hallowed be thy name
   Gen. 11:1-9
   Acts 2:1-11
   Jn. 17:1-8, 17-26

   In healing the divisions caused by human pride the Spirit enables us to unite with the Son in glorifying the Father.

3. Thy kingdom come
   Is. 40:3-11
   Rom. 8:14-34
   Mk. 1:14-15, 32-39

   The Spirit in us pleads with the Father to complete the work of the Son and liberate all creation.
4. *Thy will be done*
Ezek. 36:22-28
Rom. 12:1-12
Mt. 26, 36-42

With hearts renewed, we join in prayer with the love of the Son who, in accepting the will of the Father, gives his life for mankind.

5. *Give us this day our daily bread*
I Kings 19:1-8
I Cor. 11:17-26
Lk. 12:22-34

God's gifts are available to all who trust in him, even before they pray, and who are ready to share with others.

6. *And forgive us our trespasses*
I Sam. 24:1-20
Col. 3:12-17
Mt. 5:21-24

Those who treat one another as brothers, God will accept as sons.

7. *Lead us not into temptation*
Ps. 13 (12)
I Peter 5:6-11
Lk. 22:24-32

Unworthy servants can but look to their Lord for salvation.

8. *For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory for ever and ever*
Zech. 9:9-10
Rev. 5:11-14
Lk. 10:17-24

In an eternal chorus of praise, God's people tell of his great victory in Christ.

Now is the time to make sure that your parish or community is involved in local planning for the week of prayer, and to consider ecumenical work one of the responsibilities of today's Christians.
BLESSING THROATS

The blessing of throats can be a passing event of little significance, but a parish or institution can also use it as an occasion to deepen the faith of the community. Some thoughts are presented here for the consideration of your liturgy committee.

A long line up after Sunday Mass, a waving of candles, some strange words, frightened children: and the blessing of throats is done for another year.

To make it more fun, it often coincides with the distribution of blessed candles, and sometimes with the imposition of ashes.

Bible Service

One way of celebrating the blessing of throats with more dignity and meaning would be by a bible service on a Sunday afternoon, with the blessing of throats as a climax. It need not be the Sunday nearest the feast of St. Blase: it may be celebrated at any time during the year. The celebration would be better, however, if held outside the Advent-Christmas and Lent-Easter periods, since these seasons have sufficient themes to develop; popular devotions must be in harmony with the liturgical seasons: CSL, no. 13.

Some suggestions to help your liturgy committee make this an occasion for a growing understanding of the Christian message in your community:

Theme: God's loving care for the world and for his people.

God enters into our lives:

- Acts 3:1-10 — cure of the lame man in the name of Jesus. Note the air of unbounded joy and thanksgiving.
- Mk. 2:1-12 — cure of the paralytic. Jesus brings us spiritual healing too.

We recognize God's rule, care, concern, and give him praise for his mercy:

- Ps. 8 — praising the creator
- Ps. 24 (23) — God owns the world
- Ps. 23 (22) — God looks after me
- Ps. 100 (99) — God's people praise him.

God continues to teach us through the Church. Especially in its pastoral document on the Church in the modern world, the Vatican Council guides our Christian involvement in building up the world. The message from some of its paragraphs should be part of the teaching in this service. Some examples:

- no. 27: respect for the human person and for the quality of life.
- no. 34: value of human activity
- no. 38: human activity finds its perfection in the paschal mystery.

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Homily: we recognize the power and responsibility that God has given us to do his work, including laboring to restore groaning creation to its ultimate perfection in Christ. We praise God, who has given such power to men.

General intercessions: These could ask God to enlighten and encourage his people to do his work in the world; to bless and guide those working to improve the quality of life; to help the sick of this community to bear their suffering with Christ, and so help make up for the needs of his mystical body; to help all members of the community to see and serve the Lord Jesus in the sick and needy (Mt. 25:31-46).

Or the litany of the saints could be used (see Bulletin no. 26, pages 223-224; omit the three petitions near the end for the ordinand, and substitute others along the lines suggested above).

Blessing the candles: The liturgy committee could prepare and decorate candles for each priest. The meaning of blessings might be explained now, or sometime during the year in the parish bulletin.

Blessing of throats: To make it a dignified ceremony, the people should be asked to come forward in procession, two by two, as is done in many churches for communion. Parents with babies and little children might be invited to come first. The choir could lead the assembly by singing a suitable psalm with a simple refrain.

People should be encouraged to listen to the formula of the blessing and to respond “Amen!” heartily.

Closing prayer: The service could end with the Lord’s prayer, the celebrant’s blessing and a hymn of thanksgiving.

Party: An informal gathering for cookies and milk or coffee in the hall could conclude the day.

Other Services

Similar services, adapted as necessary, should be considered for other groups in the community:

School: Working with the teachers and the school liturgy committee (see Bulletin no. 35, pages 220-222), the priest can make this a meaningful celebration for the young people of the parish.

Home for the aged, nursing home, hospital: A simple form of the service or just the blessing of throats will be appreciated by the sick and aged.

Sick and shut-ins: The priests of the parish should make a special effort to bring this blessing to all the sick in the community.

'Flu season: The blessing of throats might be celebrated before the 'flu season starts, or when an epidemic is threatening.
Room for Improvement

_Deliver us from evil_: In the blessing prayer, we ask God to protect us from ailments of the throat and from every other evil. The greatest evil for any Christian individual or community is moral evil, sin. The prayer after the Lord's prayer at Mass prays for similar protection.

_Parish bulletin_: This can be a most effective teaching aid when well prepared. A week or two before the service, it should explain its value and meaning. At various times during the year, it should explain the meaning and use of sacramentals.

_Banners and posters_ may be prepared in good time by the liturgy committee, by pupils in the parish school or religious education classes, by youth groups or by other interested persons in the community.

_Music_: As in any liturgical service, music and singing can raise the level of participation, help the community to offer greater praise to God, and dispose all to be more open to God's action. A good choice of psalms and hymns is found in _Catholic Book of Worship._

* * *

_Much ado about nothing?_ In the past few years, a general neglect has fallen upon the sacramentals. Their value is discussed in the liturgy constitution (CSL, no. 61; also nos. 60, 62). Their relationship to the saving death and rising of Christ must be kept in mind.

In the old days, a web of sacred events — many, unfortunately, remote from the liturgy — surrounded the life of the faithful. In rebuilding today, we should seek a balanced approach to lead our people and all men closer to Christ.

The blessing of throats is not a big event, but it can be a little step forward in the service of the Lord and his people in your worshipping community.
HOMILY SERIES

FORM OF THE HOMILY

The third article in our series on the homily discusses how the homily may be "put together" by the priest.

At a recent meeting of priests in a small rural diocese, the following comments were made:

"I'm lost with the new readings we have on Sundays."

"We should go back to good sermons, with content that our people understand, doctrinal and moral sermons instead of 'love your neighbor' all the time."

"These new sermon books are no good. They don't help me on the style and presentation and structure of my sermon."

* * *

The first is easy to answer: go and use a good modern commentary and many of the aids now available, including the exegesis contained in the homily aids of the Canadian missal. (See Bulletin no. 34.)

To the second, we point out paragraph 52 of the constitution on the liturgy: "By means of the homily the mysteries of the faith and the guiding principles of the Christian life are expounded from the sacred text during the course of the liturgical year."

The third is covered in this article.

* * *

Three dimensions: There are three major tasks in the homily:

• presentation of the Easter mystery of Jesus Christ, based on the readings and other texts of this particular Mass.
• particular application to our life as his followers.
• moving from the liturgy of the word to the liturgy of the eucharist.

First Dimension — "Faith"

Presenting the Easter Mystery: Christ's death and rising and our share in the mystery is what we celebrate in each Mass. You should read over paragraph 6 of the liturgy constitution once more, and relate it to the truths discussed in nos. 47, 102 and 107. Every Sunday is a 'little Easter' (CSL, nos. 102, 106).

Based on sacred texts: The homily is based on and derived from the scripture readings and the other liturgical texts of this day's Mass.

The readings from the bible are the word of God. Through them, Christ speaks to his assembly. (CSL, no. 7) As a servant of the word, the celebrant presents not his message but the Lord's. He does not bend the scriptures to fit
his preconceived theories (we've had enough of that type of text-slinging in the last five centuries); rather, he seeks to present what the texts actually say. This is why exegesis is so important in homily preparation (see Bulletin no. 34). From God's word he draws forth God's truth for this assembly.

This is done not only by explaining the text, but by seeing this passage as part of God's action of love: in this past event, he showed his love for his people, his faithfulness to his covenant, his readiness to listen to prayer and help those who recognize their neediness. We have to learn to realize that God wants to act among us today in a similar way: he still loves us, he is faithful, he is ready to hear us and heal us.

Scripture is not a dead, historical narrative — it is the living word of God, given to us to accomplish his will among us.

Or other Mass texts: The celebrant may occasionally wish to use other texts as the basis of his homily. He may base his words on parts of the Order of the Mass, and/or other prayers and chants proper to this Mass. When he uses parts of the eucharistic prayer and its preface as a foundation for the homily, he will reinforce his teaching by using these texts in that celebration.

Liturgical texts are not the passing thoughts of an individual. They are the words of the Church, normally echoing the words of scripture and the mind of Christ. What we believe about, we pray about.

As with the scriptures, the celebrant seeks out God's truth within these texts, meditates and prays about it, and shares it with his people in the homily.

Second Dimension — “Morals”

The Vatican Council (CSL, no. 52) pointed out that the homily also brought the guiding principles of Christian living to the notice of the hearers. As followers of Christ, we are not going to be satisfied with the mysteries of our faith unless we are helped to understand how we should live them. We want to know how we should die to sin and live for God each day, how we are to pick up our daily cross and follow the Lord Jesus.

Moving always from the sacred or liturgical texts, the celebrant brings the prophetic message of Christ our teacher into the daily lives of this assembly, helping each individual — as well as the believers as a community — to draw practical conclusions for everyday living.

We are helped to realize how witnesses for Christ should live, what the community at large expects of the children of light: that we let our light shine before them, so that they will see the good we do and come to praise our heavenly Father. (Mt. 5:16)

This is difficult, but with Christ's help (the guiding Spirit is with us; Christ is present to us in so many ways; our prayer; the example and encouragement of others; God's word in scripture is light for our ways; the prayer and sacramental life of the Church — all these are graces by which Jesus guides us), we can do all things.
Third Dimension — This Eucharist

Many preachers bring in the first two dimensions — though not always drawing them from the texts of the day — but fail to relate this homily to this eucharist.

The liturgy of the word, of which the homily is the celebrant’s part, should bring us into the eucharist. The word of God and the bread of life are not to be separated. The liturgy of the word should be leading this assembly of God’s people to a deepening of their faith, bringing them to respond in love both in this eucharistic and in their daily living.

In the eucharist, the celebrant praises and thanks God for the truths expounded, especially for the Easter mystery, and for the specific theme or truth celebrated in this Mass.

From this eucharist, nourished by the word of life and fed on the bread of life, God’s people go forth to love and serve the Lord, to praise him by serving him in others during this coming week.

Practical Outline

All these ideas sound fine, but how do we do it next Sunday?

A simple format is suggested below. It is not the only way, but it is an adequate beginning.

This outline is based on the preaching of some of the Fathers, and has proved a practical way to start out.

Simple form:

• God’s action in the past:
  what he did for his people
  as described in today’s texts.

• God’s action in the present:
  what he wants to do in us
  — his whole Church as well as this assembly —
  based on what he did in the past.

• Our response:
  how are we going to live
  in response to God’s saving word?

• Leading us into this eucharist:
  we will praise and thank God
  for his wonderful works among us.

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More detailed outline:

• Theme (for guidance of the celebrant, liturgy committee, musicians and all who are planning this celebration)

• Introduction

• God's past action

• God's present action

• Our response (in this liturgy and in life)

• God promises eternal life to his people

• Conclusion

You may find this approach uncomfortable at first, either for preaching or for listening to, but gradually you will become more at home with the homily approach.

Next issue: Homily preparation (continued).

VALUABLE RESOURCES

Now is the time to order these important resources for planning, celebrating and understanding the liturgy all year.

GUIDELINES FOR PASTORAL LITURGY — 1973 Liturgical Calendar

Many suggestions for celebrating seasons, feasts and events in harmony with the liturgy are included in this new book. Intended for all who are involved in the parish or community, it is written for everyone, not for experts. Guidelines, ideas, background information are presented clearly. Each member of the liturgy committee, as well as organists, choir directors and priests should have a copy. It is now available.

NATIONAL BULLETIN ON LITURGY — Volume 6

Five issues — at least 300 pages — of practical, pastoral ideas on liturgy in your community or parish. Written for liturgy committees, choirs, musicians, readers, celebrant — for all interested in preparing and celebrating liturgy. The subscription for 1973 remains at $6.00.

Send your order today:

If your chancery office sells these books, please order through them.
Otherwise: CCC Publications
90 Parent Avenue
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 7B1

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Continuing the reform of the sacramental rites begun by the Vatican Council, Pope Paul has issued a motu proprio (August 15, 1972) on first tonsure, minor orders and subdiaconate. These changes take effect on January 1, 1973.

Some of the details of these developments are outlined below:

1. **First tonsure** is no longer conferred. Entrance into the clerical state is joined to the diaconate.

2. **Subdiaconate**: This major order no longer exists in the Latin Church, and its functions are entrusted to lectors and acolytes.

3. **Minor orders**
   a) **Renamed**: The minor orders are now called ministries. They are received by installation instead of ordination.
   b) **Lector and acolyte**: These two ministries are to be preserved throughout the Latin Church.
   c) **Not reserved**: These ministries may be given to lay Christians, and are no longer reserved for candidates to the sacrament of orders.
   d) **Men only**: "In accordance with the venerable tradition of the Church, installation in the ministries of lector and acolyte is reserved to men."

4. **Lector**
   - The lector is appointed to read God's word in the liturgical assembly.
   - His proper function is to read the scripture lessons, except the gospel, during the Mass and other liturgical services.
   - When there is no psalmist or cantor, he recites the psalm after the first reading.
   - In the absence of the deacon or cantor, he presents the intentions for the prayer of the faithful or general intercessions.
   - By instruction, he is to prepare the faithful for the worthy reception of the sacraments.
   - He may prepare others who are temporarily appointed to act as readers.

The motu proprio adds some advice to the lector:

"That he may more fittingly and perfectly fulfill these functions, let him meditate assiduously on sacred scripture. Let the lector be aware of the office he has undertaken and make every effort and employ suitable means to acquire that increasingly warm and living love and knowledge of the scriptures that will make him a more perfect disciple of the Lord." (The document refers here to CSL, no. 24, and to the constitution on revelation, no. 25.)
5. Acolyte

• The acolyte is appointed to help the deacon and to minister to the celebrant in liturgical celebrations.

• He may serve as an auxiliary minister of communion (see Bulletin no. 31).

• He instructs the other servers.

"He will perform these functions more worthily if he participates in the holy eucharist with increasingly fervent piety, receives nourishment from it and deepens his knowledge of it.

"Destined as he is in a special way for the service of the altar, the acolyte should learn all matters concerning public divine worship and strive to grasp their inner spiritual meaning; in that way he will be able each day to offer himself entirely to God, be an example to all by his seriousness and reverence in the sacred building, and have a sincere love for the mystical body of Christ, the people of God, especially the weak and the sick."

6. Rite: The ceremonial for conferring the ministries of lector and acolyte will soon be published by Rome.

7. Candidates for major orders of diaconate and priesthood are to receive the two ministries and exercise them for a suitable time. This should help them to be better prepared for the future service of the word and of the altar.

* * *

In future issues of the Bulletin, we will discuss the implications of this reform, particularly as it applies to lay readers. Your thoughts and suggestions are welcomed.

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Beginning with no. 32, the National Bulletin on Liturgy has become more pastoral in its approach. Most issues cover many areas of liturgy, rather than concentrating on one topic. It is addressed to everyone interested in liturgy, especially to those involved in planning and celebrating liturgy in parishes and other spiritual communities.

BULLETIN 32 New Task, New Approach $1.25
BULLETIN 33 Ideas for Community Worship $1.25
BULLETIN 34 Celebration and Growth $1.25
BULLETIN 35 Parish Liturgy Committees $1.25
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Please send your order with cheque or money order to C.C.C. Publications Service, 90 Parent Avenue, Ottawa, Ontario K1N 7B1.
BOOK REVIEW

The renewal of the sacrament of penance, promised by the Vatican Council (CSL, no. 72) has been a long time coming. The greatest benefit of the delay, however, has been the opportunity provided for the people of God to mature in their approach to this sacrament.

The past decade has seen many attempts at renewal of the sacrament of reconciliation, and these have contributed gradually to a deepening faith, based on the scriptures and good liturgical practice.

In the development of penance celebrations, for example, we have seen a growing understanding of the social nature of sin, reconciliation and penance (see CSL, nos. 109-110).

In *Repent and Believe*, Father Freburger has summarized contemporary developments in the sacrament of penance in a practical way for parish celebration. Suggested services, examination of conscience, ideas for children and young people, as well as for adults, are presented.

Like any book of this nature, it is best used when taken as a model and source of ideas rather than as a final text for a penance celebration.

Some have expressed disappointed at the sample examinations of conscience. They do provide one approach, however; a similar approach is developed a little further in the Advent celebration in this issue. (See also Bulletin no. 32, pages 35-38.)

This book is recommended as a good source book for liturgy committees and others involved in preparing and developing penance celebrations, as well as for all interested in the renewal of this sacrament of peace.

*REPENT AND BELIEVE*, edited by Rev. William Freburger, Ave Maria Press, Notre Dame, Indiana 46556; 96 pages, photographs. $1.00.
INTERVIEW

EVANGELISM: WHAT IS THE FUTURE?

Peru is a long way from us, about 5,000 air miles from the centre of Canada to the capital, Lima. Thirteen million people make up Peru's population: besides Spanish, there is a generous assortment of languages spoken. This diversity poses a communications headache of the first order.

As is the case throughout Central and Latin America, almost everyone for hundreds of years has been baptized into the Catholic religion. Many foreign missions dot the land. 420 Canadian missionaries are found there: 2 bishops, 23 diocesan priests, 82 religious priests, 58 brothers, 215 sisters, 4 members of secular institutes, 36 lay persons.

Father John Hunt, O.M.I. recently returned from Peru. He is a convinced missionary, and makes certain observations which are of more than ordinary interest.

The interview which follows was given to Father John Carley, of the CCC Lay Apostolate Office and Father L. L. Sullivan, of the National Liturgy Office.

Q. Where exactly did you work in Peru, and under what conditions?

A. Our parish is about eight kilometers from Lima. Fifteen years ago, nearly two thousand squatters took over some vacant government land in the area: gradually, others followed, till 450,000 people had formed a huge city — it has the same population as Winnipeg or Ottawa. The Oblates ended up with a portion of the city for their mission: 145,000 were in our charge. Of these, about 73,000 persons lived in my parish. The Edmonton mission is not far off — they are at Kilometer 22.

The conditions under which these people live are surprising. The average family is seven in number. $380 is the annual income. 40% are not gainfully employed.

Q. How can the family survive, under such pressures?

A. Many families don't survive. 60% of the marriage unions are in one sort of difficulty or another — either the wife has had to get another husband to replace the one who left her, or children have had to bunk in with a new household because the former or original household was dissolved.
Family income depends on male breadwinners: sons are an economic asset. Female births are not exactly signals for mass rejoicing. There is no sewer, water or plumbing for the masses.

The birth control proponents say “Stop the baby crop and there’ll be jobs for all.” Others say, “A massive economic reform will afford jobs for nearly all, and children will be no more drawback here than they are in Canada or China.”

Q. Life expectancy?
A. Less than 50 years, over all; in the jungle, 37 years is about the average span of life.

Q. What holds the social system together?
A. The mother, I would say. Her faithfulness to the children is heroic. If she took off as the men do, there’d be chaos and ruin. At first sight she looks like a subservient citizen, a human broodmare: in actual fact, she is integral to the nation’s survival. Unhappily, machismo — meaning, “I will prove my manhood on any woman available” — is the nationally accepted double standard for bedroom morality, and women suffer much degradation as a result of it.

There is not as much poverty by reason of laziness as there is poverty due to lack of opportunity.

Yet the amazing patience of these people has to be seen to be appreciated. We northerners are direct, blunt, work-oriented; by contrast, they are far more polite, persuasive, “subjunctive” in their dealings with one another. In short, they tend to find us abrasive.

Q. What were some of your predecessors’ projects, and how did these turn out, say, a dozen years after they were begun?
A. Father Godin, via a Ford Foundation grant, got a big industrial school going. It takes in 350 students, and is of very high quality. In my opinion, it is better than anything in the public or private sector. This school still operates — the German volunteer staff is gradually being phased out in favor of an all-Peruvian staff.

Under John XXIII’s impulse, the first foreign missionaries hit out at the poverty problem: theirs was mainly an economic drive against paralyzing under-development. Meanwhile, the native clergy worked in a more traditional line (ritual Catholicism with scarcely any social involvement). Frequently, the foreign missionaries and the native clergy clash over priorities: there has been a good deal of friction.

Beginning Sacramentally

Q. Father Hunt, you mentioned earlier that you and two other priests had 73,000 Catholics in your care. In Canada, more than half our English sector dioceses have fewer people. How do you propose to pass on faith in Jesus Christ to these thousands?
A. The people already have a transcendent awareness — the mountains are God’s kindergarten. The mountain people have a strong sense of his power and his presence. Their root faith is firm, though intermixed with folklore, manipulation and misplaced emphasis. In many respects, it is not unlike the faith of the rural
Quebecois of fifty years ago. In terms of literal orthodoxy, Peruvian faith is different from the seminary’s Tanquerian cast: but in terms of orthopraxis, many deep elements are present. We are trying to soften our preponderant anxiety for orthodoxy and let the Spirit emerge. Surely Latin and Greek prisms are not the only refractors of Jesus’ light.

We began “sacramentally,” in a very orthodox framework, changed few lives, and felt that if we left the area, the whole message as we had preached it would be muted. This had happened before: in the absence of priests, bizarre cults of saints and magic statutes had flourished. People demand signs, and they substitute fancy for truth with no inhibition whatever.

Q. Is there a call for baptism?
A. There is a strong desire for infant baptism. Even though they may not be married, or free to marry, parents will carry a child 15 miles for baptism. A latent voodoo impels baptism for some, “please baptize the child now, or it will develop horns”.

If one wanted, one could baptize all the time. The sacramental approach will not change anything for the better. The faith response is strong, nonetheless: when did we last walk fifteen miles, even for the eucharist?

Q. So much of pure ritual, then. What of a socio-economic message?
A. The message of the industrial school was clear: the Church cared for people. Joe Devlin’s CEDA grant gave some water and sewage to parts of our area. Father Goebel’s co-op efforts put up 100 houses. Family education and “paternidad responsible” courses gradually produce group leaders, who carry the message on to the next groups who become interested. It’s a chain reaction.

In our parish, the Oblates are deeply involved in social reform.

I would like to talk a bit about what I feel was an important break-through in evangelization, though.

Prayer Life

Q. You have spoken very highly of your people’s prayer life. Is this the change or success that you find so encouraging?
A. Yes. The charismatic renewal prayer groups came to life a few years ago: priests who had served the Peruvian missions for many years greeted this movement with enthusiasm, welcomed it and fostered it.

The prayer groups’ emphasis is on community, stability, and leader development. Priests cannot leave these people “on their own” of course, but one cannot rein in the Spirit, either: the Spirit blows as it wills.

Q. Did the peoples’ prayer life lead them into helping with the community’s religious and social apostolate?
A. Indeed.

Both preaching and baptism are carried on — that is, prepared and administered — by the laity, under the overall guidance of the pastoral team. We priests became somewhat like apostolic bishops in the primitive church: our function was to form community, to incorporate the energies and talents of the community into the overall ministry of the word.
Education

A "Christian deepening" program was available at the University, for those who wanted to become leaders in the faith: three hours a week in ad hoc theology. I also taught three hours of sacred scripture per week, using the new lectionary as my textbook. The new lectionary is the pivotal point of the whole parochial spirituality — the groups develop around the lectionary — it gives the groups its unity. The study of marriage, for instance, is based on the lectionary's many texts (more than thirty) dealing with marriage as an ideal to be pursued.

Leaders

Our basic endeavor was to form the 14 lay leaders: these men lived the five divisions of the parish. They are the leaven. They teach and "give witness" in their local meetings and happenings. They help me with the scripture-via-radio program every Tuesday night — again, the basis of the program was the Sunday scripture cycle set out in the lectionary. It was a 15 minute program, on a shoestring budget, from a tin-can radio station, but it did effect a lot of people in the diaspora, many we'd never have been able to contact face to face.

Q. Do you have a more-than-seminary scripture education, John?
A. No. I have always been interested in scripture, and have read extensively in that field. It is the important study for a bishop or priest, it seems to me.

Woman's Role

Q. Did the women do any specialized work for you? So far your fourteen disciples are men only; is there some reason for your choice?
A. The women have much to do in the Legion of Mary, and in their mothers clubs. And they are good, no doubt about that. One hesitates about putting female leaders atop a male-oriented society: she could not carry the day "at the top," but she can have unlimited influence at the grass roots. Again, this situation is temporary and local: a Latin American Golda Meir or Indira Gandhi will be powerful someday, indeed.

Leadership

Q. How did you get your leaders?
A. We took the natural leaders, not the "spiritual leaders". When we used foreign money to build the water-projects, leaders emerged soon enough. The area was cut into blocs, and the leaders soon asserted themselves. Cursillos were the next step. The difference was this: instead of reverting to wishful thinking after the cursillo was finished, as so often happens at the close of a spiritual experience, the men were led into a spiritual formation based on scripture. As soon as we could, we delegated much of our ministry to them, and continued to foster their prayer life along lines the charismatic renewal took in our midst. It stabilized their lives, and changed them into genuine disciples — they gave up a lot of their unhappy past, such as too much alcohol, loose women, drifting; gradually, they settled into the shared ministry.

Q. Do you celebrate daily Mass with them?
A. No, we aim rather at a special gathering of the leaders once a week, in the evening, in the hall. About 200 leadership team members come. There is a serious examination of the heart, public confession, and prolonged prayer. The scriptures
are proclaimed, and “worked-over” in groups. Exegesis is not the goal: rather, “how does this apply to next week?” “How did this apply to last week?”

The homily is the joint expression of their faith experiences — I summarize it and bring it to unity.

On occasion, the blessing of the sick follows, with the signs of the community’s concern: hands are imposed on the sick, as the scriptures ask.

Communion under both kinds is the norm. The Mass ends at 11:30 p.m.; it’s a long evening, but it is the “push” behind the 20 prayer groups in the region.

Auxiliary Leaders

Q. In your “homecoming” Ottawa sermon, you mentioned your auxiliary ministers program. As I recall, you said you normally celebrated only one eucharist on Sunday, and the auxiliary leaders — at different hours and in diverse locales — proclaimed the word, preached, and prayed a diaconal variant of the eucharistic prayer, which was followed by the rite of peace and communion for all present. I believe you mentioned you would not seek — and did in fact refuse — the ministry of additional priests. Did I hear correctly? Is this the wave of the future?

A. The leaders began by functioning as extraordinary ministers of the eucharist, at the railing beside me, or alongside another priest. That particular type of ministry began three years ago: the men were, in many instances, lectors as well.

We have Mass in the several sectors of the parish on certain Sundays, to be followed by a service of the word the next Sunday. This latter service follows the regular eucharistic format, except for changes in preparing the gifts and omitting the great eucharistic prayer. There is a clear distinction between the diaconal prayer of union with the Church, and the presbyterial memorial of the Lord’s saving passover. There is no confusion in the people’s minds. Indeed, we have gone to great lengths to avoid any blurring of roles: the celebrant’s prayer is the full narrative of the Lord’s coming, passion and victory; the lay minister’s work is to lead the people in a communion rite. The ministers wear an alb and cincture, no stole. They preach at these services, under my supervision. Before I came back to Canada, they also preached at certain public eucharists in the presence of the cardinal and auxiliary bishop.

Q. How do they fare, as preachers?

A. They are excellent, excellent — they preach really well. As long as they are prepared, they are fine speakers. They are constantly studying the scriptures, so there is no problem of what to say. The basic scripture text is the Spanish “Good News For Modern Man.” 6,000 copies have been distributed in the parish.

Q. Do they preach differently from priests, from you, for instance?

A. Yes. They are more practical. Their applications are bedrock.

Q. Do you use other aids?

A. We distributed about 10,000 Bible tracts in a 4-day blitz one time. Those below 20 years of age are literate, generally speaking. Literacy decreases among the older people.

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Q. Do you call these men "deacons"? Do they have any ecclesiastical office, so to speak?

A. No. The common people knew these leaders very well — their weaknesses were not hidden from them. We tried to overcome this lack of deference and respect by assigning the leaders to different sections of the parish rather than appointing them to their own original locale. Like Capharnaum for Jesus, the home mission frequently wasn't very fruitful. The word didn’t get entangled in the personality when a “fresh start” was made. We did not try to label them “deacons” or “acolytes”. They are Christian leaders of prayer and worship. They are “inducted” by functioning alongside the bishop or cardinal when they come for pastoral visitations: they are “recognized by the Church” because they work “in the Church”. There is no formal induction ceremony in our parish, though there is such a ceremony elsewhere.

I might add, our leaders are not permanentized by ordination: as a result, problem leaders are easily phased out. Their work is a natural overflow of their fervor: if the fervor ceases, the ministry soon falls off.

It goes without saying, they administer the parish finances in toto, though we manage our own rectory affairs.

Liturgical Participation

Q. What is the musical participation like in your parish, Father Hunt?

A. The people sing a lot, very readily in fact. At the beginning, they need prompting. The national offices in Lima have turned out three or four records to help the people; the accompaniment is easily obtained, and there are small hymn books for the people’s use. The bishop is very interested, and watches with much concern for the diocese’s progress in the work of prayer and eucharist.

Q. Are there two streams of ministry — old and new?

A. Yes, and we are still trying to find the right paths to climb. The foreign missionary is turned off by the sanctorial cult; he discards statutes, and introduces slides or overhead projectors — but these are simply saints that move, lessons via electronics! The sensitivities of the people are often mangled, and their traditions manhandled, as a result.

There has to be a pastoral ministry to the masses of people, alongside personal formation of leaders. Mainly ministerial functions, such as wakes, funerals, viaticum and the like, can be taken care of by well prepared auxiliaries. In this way, we have time to preach the gospel and form leaders.

Q. Did you seek to form the leaders, and send them out to the problems, or did you find the leaders amid the problems and seek to infuse the spiritual quotient of the gospels?

A. Actually, it is never quite as simple as an either/or. We formed a parish council and it fell flat on its face. Structures are simple to form, but go nowhere without the inner spark. So we formed the prayer groups, learned the scriptures in a prayer atmosphere, and then looked at the problems besetting the people at our door. Stability and initiative came from the prayer groups, not from structures. The groups’ judgment was a scriptural judgment.
Confirmation

Q. How is confirmation celebrated?
A. In two ways. On a national level, the cathedral accepts "those who come" once a year.

We, however, run a yearly program of classes (14-15 year old children, or adults) for those who are willing to come and be prepared for the Spirit. We are blessed with an excellent bishop, and his coming among us is a fine event. Confirmation is a sign of the parish's faith: the bishop's visit is itself an event of social significance, and we invite him out for other events as well.

Life Style

Q. How do you live? As rich? or poor?
A. We have a Volkswagen, the people do not. We have a home, simple and good, but we could never survive if we lived as they do. Our health would go quickly — some have tried this, with bad results. The people are not satisfied with their own low level, and do not resent our simple presence.

In the crunch, the real sign of poverty is availability for work in movements which liberate the masses. Poverty which suffers the cultural environment to deteriorate the missionary's sanity is no virtue — it is merely a sign of anxiety and panic.

Future

Q. What parts of your evangelical program are applicable to Canada? Should we continue to send priests and money to Latin America?
A. Money is much needed. The big religious and economic programs are supported from outside Peru; we need such help desperately.

In terms of foreign missionaries: I believe present levels should be maintained. The commitment to Latin American missions should be of long duration, not stopgap — 7-10 years is a term to be aimed at for maximum effect. Father John Maddigan, for instance, is the ideal type of missioner — I rate him very highly among all others. He's been in the same area for ten or eleven years. Short term workers are a drag.

If I had an area with a high density of population in Canada, what would I do? Without trampling on toes — I do not want to criticize what has been done — I would make some pastoral applications which parallel the L. A. scene. A further shortage of priests will accelerate the lay auxiliary programs. There will be clerical "static," as always. We were lucky in L. A.; our team's average age was under 35, so we didn't have to run the gauntlet of tradition or advanced age's understandable conservatism. The theory of our Peru program is good — it is evangelical to its roots — but its application is quite another fact.

Relating it to Canada: well, seminary preparation for it would have to be radically re-arranged. A commitment which evidences itself in pastoral work for specific apartment blocks or streets is the sign of evangelism and vocation; successful academics alone will never help the gospel. An evangelist must know scripture and theology, but not everyone with those skills is suited to be an evangelist. Head-
oriented academics with an optional spirituality — even if there are hundreds of them — will do little to proclaim Jesus’ gifts.

**Conclusion**

In summary: the spark of lay auxiliary participation leaps from striking priest-shortages against the firm rock of gospel initiation: when one can no longer rent-a-monk on Saturday, and one can no longer personally offer five or six Masses on the weekend, one discovers by default that the necessary help *is at hand*, in the vocation of the baptized and confirmed. It was for this reason that, even in the midst of 73,000 impoverished Peruvians, we did not feel a need to call for more priests.
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