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GROWTH IN LITURGY

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EDITORIAL

NOT DOWN BUT UP

It is easier to tear down than to build up, to scatter instead of gathering.

It is simple to destroy the labor of many persons over a long period of time by a few snide comments.

As people of God, however, are we not called to do better? If Christ had spent all his time grumbling about the Pharisees instead of building the kingdom of God, where would we be today?

If the Second Vatican Council had filled its ecclesial quivers with stinging darts, and hurled them with anathematized venom at every problem and “enemy” in sight, where would the second Pentecost be?

* * *

In the field of liturgy, let's not be too quick to condemn in print or in public. Let's follow the gospel method (Mt. 18:15-17) and start out by making our comments privately, and constructively. If this doesn't seem to get anywhere, let's move in — again, positively, constructively, calmly — with a few more persons. Only as a last resort should we bring our problems into the public forum, where too often they tend to confuse people, to tear down instead of building up the kingdom.

If we feel we have improvements to offer, let's do so. But not in a sniping way. Let's offer our opinions, ideas and suggestions for improvement, without tearing down or condemning, after a good long pause to see the good instead of the bad, the strengths before the weaknesses.

Let's build up the cause of Christ, not our egos. Let's work to build up his kingdom, not tear it down.

* * *

Generally speaking, in Canada we are blessed with sincerity in efforts. We generally concede that “they” are trying (sometimes, however, very trying). This is good, and more of this spirit needs to be encouraged.

If we used the principles of ecumenism in our dealings with one another, we would not go wrong — especially when it comes to accepting the good faith and sincerity of others, trying to understand their position and re-examining our own.

Let's keep working in that direction, by working to build up, not tear down!

TEXTS

BOUND TO MAKE PROGRESS

Some fears have been expressed about hardbound books as a possible threat to flexibility in the liturgy. Some benefits of permanent books are considered in this article, and the real obstacle to flexibility is discussed.

Hardbound books will not mean the end of flexibility. On the contrary, they will permit an even more flexible celebration to those who know how to use them well.

Greater Flexibility

Bound books — specifically the lectionary and the sacramentary — will provide greater flexibility for communities that are ready to explore the treasures they contain.

○ *Lectionary*: This book provides a much wider choice of readings than is presently available in the loose-leaf missal. On September 17, for example, the memorial of St. Robert Bellarmine, the celebration has many options: the reader and celebrant may choose the ferial readings and psalms, or any of the wide choice from two commons:

	<i>Common of pastors</i>	<i>Common of doctors</i>
<i>first reading</i>		
— <i>outside Easter season</i>	9 readings	4 readings
— <i>during Easter season</i>	3 readings	2 readings
<i>responsorial psalm</i>	6 psalms	3 psalms
<i>second reading</i>	13 readings	7 readings
<i>acclamation</i>	6 acclamations	4 acclamations
<i>gospel</i>	11 gospels	3 gospels

This tremendous variety gives the celebrant and reader wide opportunities to select texts which are best suited for this celebration in this community. (We leave it to the mathematicians to work out the possible permutations and combinations.)

○ *Sacramentary*: The celebrant's book presents such options as 81 prefaces, optional alternatives for the Sunday collects (already in Canada's loose-leaf missal), all the commons, many solemn blessings and prayers over the people. The present loose-leaf format does not offer such a variety.

What is the Problem?

The problem seems to come more from fixed ways than from fixed pages. The real cause of inflexibility is not hardbound books, but **hidebound people** involved in preparing and celebrating liturgy.

That may seem a harsh statement at first, but examine it again. *The trouble isn't with books but with people.* With the best books in the world, we cannot guarantee flexibility. Each celebrating community — priests, readers, choir, musicians, liturgy committee — has to take its task seriously, prepare each Sunday celebration well, and choose and use the options deliberately and wisely. Each community has to learn how to become creative.

People who say, "When we get the bound books, we will have no more problems," are the ones who are going to have — or be — the problems. Celebrants and readers who fail to choose texts carefully, who fail to prepare to carry out their role fully, people who are satisfied with imposing an instant, unprepared celebration on their community: these are the ones who are inflexible now, and who will be then, unless they take their liturgical role more seriously, and start to change.

Preparing for the Future

The best way to get ready to use the riches of the bound liturgical books is by using fully the options already available in the current missal.

How many people make use of **all** the options and choices now available in the Order of Mass? How many are using creativity where it is now permitted and encouraged?

Is your parish using all the eucharistic prayers, choosing carefully the one best suited for each celebration? How about the memorial acclamations? (Too many are still using only the first one.) How many take advantage of the variety of collects? (See Liturgical Calendar 1973, page 11.)

For fuller details on ways of doing this, we refer you to past articles in the Bulletin: no. 32, pages 17-20, 49; no. 33, pages 59, 80; no. 34, page 128; no. 35, page 193; and to the Liturgical Calendar, pages 7-10.

It takes effort and time to choose options, it takes skill to make interventions well. But by making a conscious effort now, to do this in each celebration, a community will be ready to take full advantage of the bound books.

Hope for the Future

Gradually, more and more worshipping communities are beginning to realize the need for creativity in planning and celebrating the Sunday liturgy. These are the communities that will enjoy the bound books, and will explore and exploit the treasures they hold.

Good books alone will not make good liturgy, but with good books and sensitive liturgists, the Church in Canada is bound to make progress in giving glory to God.

* * *

The earth has a spirit of growth.

(Leonardo da Vinci)

ANOINTING OF THE SICK

As this issue was going to the printers, word was received that the Holy Father had promulgated the new Latin text for the anointing of the sick.

This document will be translated by the International Committee on English in the Liturgy, and then sent to all the English-speaking bishops of the world: once for their criticism of the translation, and then, after improvements have been made, for their final approval. After each episcopal conference gives its approval to the new rite, the text will be sent to the Holy See for confirmation. Then it will be published in ritual form.

Why all this effort to produce a simple translation? This is done in order that the liturgy may be celebrated in language which is fitting to its dignity, and which will increase devotion and prayer through its use.

It may seem to take longer this way, but the goal is worth the effort expended: the greater glory of God and the building up of his holy people during their pilgrimage toward our promised land.

SAME HOLINESS

“In the various types and duties of life, one and the same holiness is cultivated by all who are moved by the Spirit of God, and who obey the voice of the Father, worshipping God the Father in spirit and in truth. These souls follow the poor Christ, the humble and cross-bearing Christ, in order to be made worthy of being partakers in his glory. Every person should walk unhesitatingly according to his own personal gifts and duties in the path of a living faith which arouses hopes and works through charity.”

(Vatican II, Constitution on the Church, no. 41)

GROWTH IN LITURGY

Each article in this issue intends to help you grow in understanding and celebrating the liturgy, and therefore of Christian living.

Let us read, study, discuss, act, and work together, as we strive to grow to spiritual maturity, to the very height of Christ's full stature.

(See Eph. 4:13.)

WHAT'S NEW IN LITURGY?

That question, in several variations, is asked about once a day by people who phone or write or visit the National Liturgical Office.

And our answer usually goes this way: *Nothing is new. What are you doing with what we already have?*

The time of frequent and rapid changes is over. At present we are in a period of consolidation, of exploring the wealth of the liturgy. It is a time for growing in understanding, for penetrating more deeply, for broadening our grasp of liturgical principles.

One of the big tasks in liturgy today is to continue involving more people in preparing and celebrating the liturgy as well as possible. The formation and development of parish and community liturgy committees is important.

Growth in personal prayer is the foundation for good liturgy. Each liturgy committee should be working to provide opportunities for a deeper prayer life for its people.

A constantly improving Sunday celebration is also desirable. What is your community doing to make the Lord's day the spiritual highlight of the week?

How creative is your parish liturgy? The present rites leave much scope for celebrants, readers and choirs to personalize the liturgy, to adapt it to local needs and circumstances.

Homilies, prayers of the faithful, introductions to the Mass and to the readings are among the areas where local creativity is invited, based on the models in the Order of Mass.

How are your readers and celebrants exploring the wealth of readings contained in the three year cycle? Is the homily and prayer of the faithful part of your daily liturgy? What use is being made of the daily 'starters' for prayer and preaching in *Guidelines for Pastoral Liturgy* (1973 Liturgical Calendar)?

A wide choice of hymns and psalms is presented in *Catholic Book of Worship*. Each community's musicians should ask themselves how well they have begun to explore and use the treasures contained in Canada's hymnal. Did their Advent and Christmas music reflect this? What plans did they lay for lenten and Easter music as part of the liturgical celebration of these seasons?

A sense of celebration, a growing sense of respect and worship, a deepening of the spirit of prayer, a fuller participation for Sunday's liturgy: these are the areas in which Canadians can seek to improve.

What's new in liturgy?

Should we not be asking ourselves: *What are we doing in our parish or community to improve our celebration of liturgy this year?*

PRAYER

PRAYER AND LITURGY

At the January meeting of Atlantic Liturgical Commissions, Most Reverend James M. Hayes, Archbishop of Halifax, gave the opening address on the liturgy as prayer.

Liturgy is always and entirely prayer. Prayer is not just an element of liturgy, not just one item in an assortment of Chinese food called liturgy. The whole thing, the whole celebration is common prayer. This should be obvious, but unfortunately it is not.

For while prayer still, or perhaps again, intrigues and attracts many of our contemporaries, liturgy does not participate noticeably in its popularity. Many people who are actually or emotionally brought to their knees in prayer find liturgy only a curiosity. A youth culture which gives much evidence of a deep thirst for the spiritual seems to find anything from astrology to the stringent discipline of Zen, much more interesting than the public worship of the Church.

How do we explain this fact that the Church, the community of faith, is not considered or thought of as a teacher and example of prayer? People come to me for many kinds of help. They come for space in our buildings, for the public support of campaigns, for influence of one sort or another. Hardly ever does anyone come to the Church and ask: "Teach me to pray. Help me to find reconciliation and peace, lead me to God."

It isn't hard to find reasons to explain this situation. Some will dismiss us as long as the Church is human and sinful, and that is our permanent condition. The Pharisees and the self-righteous will always condemn us.

Some confuse the foreign with the mystical, and equate faith with the strange and unfamiliar. But biblical symbols are really so much a part of our culture that they need not seem to be regarded as foreign. The titillation of the exotic has no necessary relation to Christian prayer, public or private. In spite of the merry scene in religious houses, university chapels, floating parishes and elsewhere, the purpose of liturgy is not entertainment. Its purpose is to provide for the local Christian community a genuine experience of prayer. In other words, a genuine experience of communion with God and with one another. A liturgy is meaningful and has value to the extent that it serves this functional purpose of giving a local community a genuine experience of encounter with the Lord and an experience of communion with one another.

Prayer Unites Us

Some seek in prayer escape from tension and struggle, an island where no one can hurt or touch or challenge them. Yet prayer — more than any other activity of man — should make us feel the common strength and weaknesses, the sins and struggles of the race. More than any other deed, our prayer must spring from and create a sense of solidarity. Remember what the great storyteller we call Lord thought of the man who sought in prayer an isolation from his sisters and his brother, the man who said: “Thank God, I am not like the rest of men!”

The one big factor that we have to consider in our treatment of this topic is the liturgical renewal which either peaked or reached “blast-off” at Vatican II — depending on your point of view. In any case, it is true to say that since the Council, “We don’t pray like we used to, anymore.” In fact we don’t have liturgical meetings like we used to, either! We were never satisfied, and never could be satisfied with perfunctory liturgy, but at least now people are disturbed when an intelligible prayer lacks personal conviction and fervor.

We haven’t paid half enough attention to our senses and our feelings. But the deification of the senses, or the assumption that they are in some way an “instant” experience of God, merely substitutes a new imbalance for an old one.

Responding to the Spirit

We need to discover just how we can and how we will respond to the call from the Spirit to “worship in a manner worthy of thinking beings.” (Rom. 12: 11) “The Spirit too helps us in our weakness, for we do not know how to pray as we ought; but the Spirit himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be expressed in speech.” (Rom. 8: 26) Yet the cries, groans, alleluias or sighs which have prompted the prayer experience, have demanded a series of words and forms with which the Christian feels comfortable.

When people gather for common prayer they are more sensitive and more vulnerable than at any other time. Ideally, at least, they are open for that moment to ultimate reality, awesome judgment, transcended hope, utterly basic meaning and value and purpose. What people need and have a right to feel in their prayer assemblies is that the business at hand is serious and is to be taken seriously. This means that everyone in the assembly — the ministers and other leaders most of all — must be especially conscious of God, of their own contingency, of their frailty. “Abraham spoke up again: See how I am presuming to speak to my Lord, though I am but dust and ashes.” (Gen. 18:27) “Believe me, this man went home from the temple justified but the other did not. For everyone who exalts himself shall be humbled while he who humbles himself shall be exalted.” (Luke 18: 14)

We used to find it hard to pray concretely because we had an absolutist vision of the Church and everything it does. Now we are pilgrims in a pilgrim Church, not without light, but hesitant and groping nonetheless. Now we can make mistakes, be real, not false or phony, and this new reality can create a prayer that is **our** prayer, wherever we are.

This does not mean that in our search for meaning and relevance that we should abandon our methods or prayer from the past. Even pilgrims are entitled to carry with them the baggage they need for the trip. Indeed the true pilgrim is acutely aware of whence he came and the Christian pilgrim is grateful for all he has been given to sustain him along the way and lead him to his final destination.

Experience of Prayer

Our liturgy is successful when it has mediated the experience of encounter with the Lord and communion among the participants. It is very important to distinguish the experience of prayer from any form of prayer. Jesus Christ, in a moment of an intense experience of communion with his Father, articulated the words of the Our Father. The Our Father is the residue, if you will, from Christ's experience of communion with the Father, his sense of being in union with the Father. The form of prayer is the formula for the ritual action, which is left from some holy person's experience of God. Other people who desire this experience, therefore, mimic, if you will, or imitate the words, the formula, the ritual form or expression, in the hope that somehow, by taking on or acting out this ritual form, by repeating the formula, they will have the same experience of communion with God. And therefore Christians from time immemorial pray the words of the Our Father in the hope that somehow in the praying of this formula, in the recitation of these words, they too will experience a moment of prayer.

Now, this is the objective of the formula. It is left over from a holy person's experience and is intended to stimulate a recurrence of that experience for others. The form is therefore to be judged on the basis of its functionality to mediate that experience for others. So a good prayer form, a good form of prayer, a good ritual, a good formula is one which a number of people can use and have the experience of communion with God. However, when people fail to distinguish between the forms of prayer and the experience of prayer, it can happen in times of a changing culture that the form of prayer will not be quite as functional for certain people in certain situations. Then people will experience a crisis in the use of a specific form of prayer. And if they have not distinguished the **form** from the **experience**, a crisis in the form of prayer can easily become a crisis in their own experience of prayer.

Value of Prayer Forms

This, I think, is to some extent what has happened to a number of people since the reforms of the liturgy and our prayer life. Many people found certain devotions, certain private prayer forms, devotional services or even the breviary are not quite as functional anymore, and so they temporarily dropped those devotions, those prayer forms, only to discover that now there seems to be little prayer in their life. Of course the forms must be updated, but you always need some forms because you cannot have the experience apart from the forms which incarnate that experience. The value of forms always is that hopefully they stimulate that experience anew. That is why a certain fidelity to forms of prayer on some kind of routine basis is so wise and advisable.

It is through prayer forms, especially scriptural prayer forms, and the silent reflection that must accompany and follow them that the Church becomes the loving mother of her pilgrim children and reaches out to embrace them. And the joyful mother of many children sings the glory of her Lord and laments the anguish of her family. Here in the prayer forms of scripture she makes all her children utterly universal as she summons bishop, priest and monk and nun and lay apostle and housewife and laborer to meet their work in prayer, bidding them to make the Word of God their home, their own. For here the joyous and happy utter the psalms of pain and sorrow for every pain-filled heart and every distressed mind and every twisted body. And a fervent group stilled before the altar and the enduring dwelling place of the Word cries: "Save me, O God, for the water threatens my life. I am sunk in an abysmal swamp . . . I have reached the watery depths, and the flood overwhelms me. I am wearied with calling, my throat is parched; my eyes have failed with looking for my God." (Ps. 68)

And in their prayer they are one with the addict suffering withdrawal pains. They are one with the hungry, wide-eyed, tubercular child in the Brazilian slum. Their brother is the anguished parent of a criminal; and down all the filthy alleys of all the ghettos of the world, their voice enters embracing every tormented heart — the Word embracing his own. The Son of God leaping down again.

And somewhere the aged priest, crippled by life's toil, and somewhere the lonely lay apostle, wondering if all the sacrifice was worth it after all, and somewhere the housewife, tired and worn by the care of many children, call upon God with psalms of joy: "It is good to give thanks to the Lord, to sing praise to your name, O Most High, to proclaim your faithfulness through the night. For you make me glad, O Lord, by your deeds; at the works of your hands I rejoice."

And their hearts in pain, forgetful of self, voice the joy of the saints and the innocent hearts of little children, and the songs of creation and the goodness of the Creator; and the suffering man and woman in prayer are Christian, indeed they are Christ: The Vatican Council's Constitution on the Liturgy makes that clear: "Christ Jesus, high priest of the new and eternal covenant, taking human nature introduced into his earthly exile that hymn which is sung throughout all ages in the hall of heaven. He joins the entire community of mankind to himself, associating it with his own singing of this canticle of divine praise." (no. 83)

GLORY TO THE LORD

**"My soul gives glory to the Lord
because God is my savior."**

Each evening, Christians use these words to praise the Lord in phrases drawn from the gospel according to Luke (1:46-55).

This canticle expresses the Christian's role as servant (as well as son or daughter) of the Lord. As a prayer, it is positive and noble, and is written under the influence of the Spirit. Echoes of the Old Testament are abundant, as any good bible will show.

By this traditional evening song of praise, the Church reminds us of Mary's role as servant of the Lord. The gospel narratives present her as a model for the people of God and for each individual member of the believing community. Mary, the servant of the Lord, is a model for us in her life of faith, of prayer, of obedience to God's will.

Evening and morning prayer are the main or “hinge” hours of praise (CSL, no. 89), and the canticles or gospel songs serve as a climax of the scriptural portion of the hour. Morning and evening prayer taper off quietly with prayers of intercession, the Our Father, the concluding collect and the blessing.

When we use this canticle in public prayer, we offer it in our own name as well as in the name of the Church. As the day draws to its close, as light begins to fade (are there echoes here of Jn. 12:35-36?), God’s servants gather to rededicate themselves in his service.

In private prayer: People who do not celebrate the liturgy of the hours (as the divine office or breviary is now called) might find the canticle of Mary a good prayer to use each evening. After trying several versions, they might type out the one they like best, and use it as a psalm of quiet praise and thanks.

Growth: As we grow in our public and prayer life, we will want to share more in the attitudes of Mary as servant of the Lord. Like her, we are the beloved children of God. With her, we will want to deepen our lives and our faith, our prayer and our willingness to obey God’s will, our generosity and our readiness to serve God in our neighbor. She is our model in following Christ, and we ask her and the saints (in the third eucharistic prayer, we say that we **rely** on the saints’ constant intercession) to help us serve the Lord more faithfully.

Marian devotion: Instead of grumbling about faltering devotion, parishes might consider promoting an understanding of the canticle of Mary — with its scriptural richness and color — as one form of devotion to Mary, fully in accord with article 13 of the Liturgy Constitution. Through bulletins, banners and posters, the phrases of this prayer can become more familiar to the community members. The choir could learn to sing it, especially for Marian feasts (Catholic Book of Worship, no. 400). It could be used occasionally in bible services, at meetings of various parish organizations and gatherings.

Prayerful study: No matter how familiar we may be with the words of the canticle, we can benefit from an annual study of a good commentary on the prayer. As we grow in our understanding of the OT phrases and attitudes reflected in this prayer, we can better grasp the intention of the evangelist in including this canticle in the gospel, and deepen our sense of prayer as we use it.

* * *

*Holy Mary, mother of God, pray for us,
and teach us to praise the Lord by word and deed.*

DEVOTION TO MARY

Priests “can always find a wondrous model of such docility (to the Spirit) in the Blessed Virgin Mary. Led by the Holy Spirit, she devoted herself entirely to the mystery of man’s redemption. With the devotion and veneration of sons, priests should lovingly honor this mother of the supreme and eternal priest, this queen of the apostles and protectress of their ministry.”

(Vatican II, Ministry and Life of Priests, no. 18)

GROWING IN PERSONAL PRAYER

Each parish is responsible for helping all its members to grow in prayer. Unless personal prayer is flourishing among the people of a community, its liturgy will lack fullness and joy, and will fail to give God the glory it should.

Parish and community worship committees might ask themselves these questions, and then invite people to do the same.

We present this in the form of a dialogue with the Lord. That means we give him plenty of time to answer each of our questions.

Where Am I?

Lord Jesus, where am I in my prayer life?

Strengths: How far have you brought me along the road of prayer? Do I pray for others? Do I show concern in my prayer for our spiritual leaders? Are the concerns of the Church for the missions and the oppressed prominent (or even evident) in my prayer?

Do I pray for civic leaders, for nations which let materialism or nationalism or other warped views drive them away from you, their king? Do I pray for the UN and for all who are working in any positive way to bring about your kingdom of justice, peace and love?

Do I encourage others to pray? How often do I invite them to join me in prayer, or ask them to remember a particular cause or need when they pray?

In our home, is prayer a normal part of our family life? Do we pray at meals? Do we ever gather as a family to praise you and thank you? How much provision do we make for meditative reading, for your word, for provocative discussion of your ways?

How do we relate the Sunday liturgy with our family devotions and life?

What part do your psalms fill in my prayer life? Does our family use them as guides to better prayer?

Do I ever meditate on the prayer you taught us to say to our Father? or on the great gospel canticles?

How open am I to the action of your Spirit, who comes to us to help us to pray?

Weaknesses: When it comes to praying, am I still an infant? (*God bless everybody, and make me a good boy.*) Am I selfish or narrow in my outlook? Do I exclude some of your people from my prayer, Lord?

Have I worn myself a deep, smooth rut where I am comfortable in my prayer? Do I succeed in keeping your concerns out of my praying? Do I ignore the urgent needs of the Church and the world around me?

Am I so tied to certain formulas that I feel I can't pray without them, excusing myself from prayer if I don't have certain books available?

Am I bored with praying, or tired of it, or discouraged because I never seem to get my way with you? Do I let my past failures keep me from growing and progressing in my prayer? Am I ashamed to pray because of past neglect? Do foolish, empty excuses or stubborn pride keep me from praying to you?

Where am I? When I look back over the past year, has it been one of growth or erosion in my personal prayer life? Has our family prayer grown better or weaker? Am I satisfied with this state of affairs? Are you, Lord?

What Could I Be?

(A fair amount of time should be spent here.)

I should ask you two questions, Lord: what *could* I be, and what *should* I be in my prayer life?

In all honesty, what are the strengths in my prayer? What good gifts of your Spirit have you given me? Where do you want me to improve and develop?

What weaknesses have I in my prayer? What do you want me to reverse and overcome?

What Will I Do?

What do you want me to do about my prayer life this year, Lord? Where do I start, so that my prayer will become more pleasing to you?

Lord Jesus, help me to make my plans with determination, guided by your Spirit.

* * *

A parish worship committee may wish to sponsor a prayer day or a day of recollection for those who wish to grow in prayer. Some of this time should be spent in the presence of the blessed Sacrament.

As well as the questions asked above, other ideas are contained in the penance celebrations given in past issues of the Bulletin, and in the index of volume five (see Bulletin 36).

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Lord Jesus, help us to grow in prayer, filled with your Easter joy, and led by your Spirit. Amen!

LITURGY OF THE HOURS

Praise by God's Chosen People

The Second Vatican Council emphasized the meaning of the liturgical hours of praise in the life of the Church:

“Christ Jesus, high priest of the new and eternal covenant, taking human nature, introduced into this earthly exile that hymn which is sung throughout all ages in the halls of heaven. He joins the entire community of mankind to himself, associating it with his own singing of this canticle of divine praise.

“For he continues his priestly work through the agency of his Church, which is ceaselessly engaged in praising the Lord and interceding for the salvation of the whole world. This she does not only by celebrating the eucharist, but also in other ways, especially by praying the divine office.

“By tradition going back to early Christian times, the divine office is arranged so that the whole course of the day and night is made holy by the praises of God. Therefore, when this wonderful song of praise is worthily rendered by priests and others who are deputed for this purpose by Church ordinance, or by the faithful praying together with the priest in an approved form, then it is truly the voice of the bride addressing her bridegroom; it is the very prayer which Christ himself, together with his body, addresses to the Father.

“Hence all who perform this service are not only fulfilling a duty of the Church, but also are sharing in the greatest honor accorded to Christ's spouse, for by offering these praises to God they are standing before God's throne in the name of the Church their mother.

“Priests engaged in the sacred pastoral ministry will offer the praises of the hours with fervor to the extent that they vividly realize that they must heed St. Paul's exhortation: ‘Pray without ceasing’ (1 Thess. 5:17). For only the Lord can give fruitfulness and increase to the works in which they are engaged. ‘Without me,’ he said, ‘you can do nothing’ (Jn. 15:5). That is why the apostles, appointing deacons, said: ‘We will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word’ (Acts 6:4).”

Principles

The divine office has been reformed in order that it “may be better and more worthily prayed in existing circumstances, whether by priests or by other members of the Church.” (CSL, nos. 83-87)

Some of the principles involved in this renewal in the prayer life of the people of God:

1) *Prayed in common*: The Church is a community called by God to pray. As the celebration of the whole Church, the liturgy of the hours is designed as common prayer. Individual recitation is not the norm but the exception, and should exist only when common celebration is truly impossible. Priests are encouraged to celebrate at least part of the divine office in common (CSL, no. 99).

2) *Consecrating the entire day*: The liturgy of the hours is an invitation to praise God and reflect on his word at various times during the day. It is a constant reminder that God is present among his people. Its purpose is to make the entire day holy by giving continual praise to God. (CSL, nos. 84, 88, 94)

3) *Celebrated at the proper hours*: Each hour should be prayed at its proper time of day (CSL, nos. 88, 94):

- office of readings: at any hour of the day, even the night before;
- morning prayer: at the beginning of the day;
- midday prayer: during the day, continuing the Church's tradition of praying in the midst of the day's work;
- evening prayer: toward the end of the day, when daylight is failing;
- night prayer: the final prayer of the day, said before going to bed.

Other than joining the office of readings with another hour, it is an abuse to lump a group of hours together, or to "clean up" the daily office in one or two sessions.

4) *Chief hours*: Morning and evening prayer are the most important hours. The Council calls them "the hinges" of the liturgical hours. (CSL, no. 89a) These should become the prayer of the Christian community.

5) *Belong to laity too*: All members of the Church are called to join in the public prayer of God's people, praising God and praying for the welfare of mankind. It is not reserved to clergy or religious. Lay persons are encouraged to celebrate at least some of the liturgical hours, especially in common. Pastors should promote this work of praise in their parishes. (CSL, no. 100) Parish worship committees should be looking for ways of promoting the celebration of the hours in their community.

6) *Nourishing personal prayer*: Celebrating the liturgy of the hours should be a source of piety and nourishment for personal prayer, especially among priests. Those who take part in the Office should improve their prayer by deepening their grasp of the liturgy and the bible, especially the psalms. (CSL, nos. 90, 86)

Sacred Silence

As at Mass, silent meditation is desirable in the office, allowing each person to join his prayer to that of the Church, and to reflect on God's word. A period of silence should follow each psalm and reading, and may come before or after a responsory. Meditation and silence are encouraged as an aid to devotion when one prays the hours alone.

A man who has never made a mistake, never made anything.

(Baden-Powell)

LITURGICAL YEAR

PENTECOST

The Church celebrates Pentecost as a day of great joy, the day on which God's people of the new covenant were revealed to the world. It is an epiphany: Christ makes his spouse known to the world, and invites all to become his members.

Day of the Spirit: On this day we praise God who pours his Spirit on us as his first gift to believers (see eucharistic prayer IV). We praise God for his gift, the Spirit, and for the many ways in which the Spirit is poured into our hearts and lives. Pentecost is a day of praise and gratitude.

Day of youth and vigor: Today we remember the vigor of the Church, the promise of the opening paragraph of the Liturgy Constitution. The joy and enthusiasm of the first days of the Church can be ours once more, if we seek the Holy Spirit's aid.

Day of vision: On Pentecost, we are called to see more clearly the vision that Christ has for his Church. It is a day for locating and scraping off spiritual barnacles, for letting the Spirit warm what is cold, bend what is rigid, soften what is hard in us. Today we should want to see the Church and our role in it as Christ sees it. Progress, renewal, salvation are but empty words until their meaning is founded on the Lord.

Missionary day: The mission of the Church is not limited to distant jungles and frozen wastes. It is here and everywhere. It is first of all in the hearts and lives of men that Christ wants to plant his gospel: today we should be asking how well the seed is growing in our hearts.

On Pentecost the Church should be looking outward, to see and continue its mission to the world. A review of the Council document on the Church in the modern world would help the local Church to realize how much is to be done for Christ.

The work of Jesus can be summed up simply. He came to give praise to the Father and to save the world. He associates us, his Church, in this same task. How much of the efforts of our local church are being expended to carry on Christ's task, and how much on our own entertainment? People open to the Spirit will let him clarify their vision.

Day of love: The greatest commandment is love. The greatest of the Spirit's gifts is love. Love is the sign by which all will recognize the followers of Christ. Are people finding the Church of love when they look at us?

Day of strength: God sends his Spirit to shower his gifts upon us, gifts which enrich us in order that we may serve God and his people. They are gifts to be shared, to be used in the work of the Church.

The grace and strength of the Spirit, his courage and fortitude, his wisdom and generosity are ours if we are open to his action.

Day of the Church: Pentecost is a day to recall that we are the people of God, his chosen servants, his beloved sons and daughters in Christ. It is a day to begin rereading the Constitution on the Church, (paragraph no. 4 alone would make a fruitful source of meditation) and to work more diligently to let this vision take hold of our believing communities, to guide our works for Christ's sake.

Day of prayer: This is a day of prayer. The Spirit is sent to us to help us recognize that we are God's children, and speak to him as Father; the Spirit comes to help us to pray: see Rom. 8. Pentecost is a day when every Christian individual and community should ask Jesus: *Lord, teach us to pray! Pour your Spirit into our hearts, and open our lips to sing the Father's praise.*

Day of celebration: Each parish and community should make Pentecost a day of special celebration, praising the Father who sends his Spirit and his gifts into our lives. By hymns, banners, decorations and bulletins, the assembly can be helped to grasp the mood of the day. Careful, creative interventions by celebrant, ministers and readers can help all to celebrate more fully.

Each worship committee should prepare for the celebration of Pentecost, making sure that this spiritual event will be a worthy occasion in the life of the local Church.

Closing of the Easter season: As the Easter celebrations draw to a close, the people of God are sent out to proclaim the death and rising of Jesus in their lives. Ordinary time resumes this evening. It is a period of meditation on the role of the Church, of Christian living, of witnessing for the Lord. On most Sundays in ordinary time, the second reading speaks to us on how we who are Christ's followers should be living.

And so we continue to go forth to love and serve the Lord until we come to the celebration of Christ the King at the close of this season.

* * *

Pentecost can be just another Sunday, or it can be one of the highlights in the devotional life of the Church. What will it be in your parish or community this year?

REWARDS OF EASTER CYCLE

On Trinity Sunday, 1971, Pope Paul spoke to the people gathered in St. Peter's Square about the virtues which should be the result of our celebration of the Easter season.

His talk was reprinted in Bulletin no. 33, pages 106-107.

May we suggest that a rereading of these ideas could improve our lenten and paschal celebrations?

RHYTHM OF THE YEAR

There was a time when each month of the year was neatly labelled as the month of St. So-and-So, usually because his/her feast was celebrated during that month.

Since the Vatican Council, there has been a notable lessening of such a tendency, in response to the Liturgy Constitution's guidance on popular devotions (no. 13).

Today, the emphasis is more on Advent than December, the Easter season rather than April and May.

Planning

Parish and community liturgy committees may choose to plan month by month, but many prefer to take the year in blocks more in accord with the liturgical cycles.

In simple outline, these could be:

Advent
Christmas
Ordinary time
Lent and Holy Week
Easter season
Ordinary time resumed:
— *(May), June*
— *summer: July, August*
— *fall: September, October*
— *final weeks: November*
and so back to Advent.

How does your committee plan? Perhaps serious consideration of this outline will help you to undertake your year's work more effectively.

PERFECTION

Human activity finds its perfection in the paschal mystery, the death-resurrection of the Lord Jesus:

For God's Word, through whom all things were made, was himself made flesh and dwelt on the earth of men. (See Jn. 1:3, 14.) Thus he entered the world's history as a perfect man, taking that history up into himself and summarizing it. (See Eph. 1:10.) He himself revealed to us that "God is love." (1 Jn. 4:8) At the same time he taught us that the new command of love was the basic law of human perfection and hence of the world's transformation.

To those, therefore, who believe in divine love, he gives assurance that the way of love lies open to all men and that the effort to establish a universal brotherhood is not a hopeless one. He cautions them at the same time that this love is not something to be reserved for important matters, but must be pursued chiefly in the ordinary circumstances of life.

Undergoing death itself for all of us sinners (see Jn. 3:16, Rom. 5:8), he taught us by example that we too must shoulder that cross which the world and the flesh inflict on those who search after peace and justice. Appointed Lord by his resurrection and given plenary power in heaven and on earth (see Acts. 2:36, Mt. 28:19), Christ is now at work in the hearts of men through the energy of his Spirit. He arouses not only a desire for the age to come, but by that very fact, he animates, purifies, and strengthens those noble longings too by which the human family strives to make its life more human and to render the whole earth submissive to this goal.

Now, the gifts of the Spirit are diverse. He calls some to give clear witness to the desire for a heavenly home and to keep that desire green among the human family. He summons others to dedicate themselves to the earthly service of men and to make ready the material of the celestial realm by this ministry of theirs. Yet he frees all of them so that by putting aside love of self and bringing all earthly resources into the service of human life, they can devote themselves to that future when humanity itself will become an offering accepted by God. (See Rom. 15:16.)

The Lord left behind a pledge of this hope and strength for life's journey in that sacrament of faith where natural elements refined by man are changed into his glorified body and blood, providing a meal of brotherly solidarity and a foretaste of the heavenly banquet.

Vatican II, Church in the modern world, no. 38.

AND APOSTOLIC TOO

While doing some study recently on the general Roman calendar, we were struck by the frequency of celebrations in honor of the apostles. We should use these celebrations to grow in our awareness of their role in our Christian life.

Apostolic Church

We are an apostolic Church! We are God's people, built on the foundations laid by apostles and prophets, and Christ is our cornerstone. (Eph. 2:20) God has put the apostles in first place in our Church. (1 Cor. 12:28)

For this reason, the Christian calendar has long celebrated the feasts of apostles with special fervor. European folkways have been influenced by these days; even the St. Bartholomew's day massacre (August 24) is remembered by its coincidence with the feast!

Monthly Celebration

The universal calendar lists these feasts for apostles:

January 25	Conversion of St. Paul
February 22	Chair of St. Peter
May 3	St. Philip and St. James
May 14	St. Matthias

June	11	St. Barnabas
June	29	St. Peter and St. Paul
July	3	St. Thomas
July	25	St. James
August	24	St. Bartholomew
Sept.	21	St. Matthew
Oct.	28	St. Simon and St. Jude
Nov.	18	Dedication of the churches of Peter and Paul
Nov.	30	St. Andrew
Dec.	27	St. John

To these may be added the feasts of the evangelists:

April	25	St. Mark
Oct.	18	St. Luke

Thus we see that except for March, which is usually in the heart of Lent, an apostolic feast is celebrated each month of the year. These feasts seem to go beyond the individual apostle, and really celebrate the role of apostle in the Church of God. The preface of the apostles emphasizes this by noting the Father is the eternal shepherd who never leaves his flock without someone to care for it; he does this through his apostles, who share in the work of the Lord Jesus. It is important to note that the preface refers to the apostles as **still guiding us** from their heavenly thrones.

Each parish is linked to the universal Church through its bishop. As part of the worldwide college of bishops, successors to the apostolic office, he is the source of apostolic and liturgical life of each believing community within the diocese. (Reread Liturgy Constitution, nos. 41-42; Constitution on the Church, nos. 7-8, 17-24, 50; Bishops, nos. 2, 4-8, 36-37.)

A deeper theology of the place of the apostles in the life of the Church may be found in the liturgical treasures available to us: the texts of the eucharistic prayers, the preface of the apostles, the feastday Masses and the liturgy of the hours all deserve thorough, prayerful exploration.

In Your Community

How does your parish or community recognize the place of the apostles in our spiritual life? How do you meditate on their role of praying and preaching, of suffering and witnessing?

Feasts: Each time the general calendar celebrates the feast of one of the apostles or evangelists, the local church — which is founded on the apostles — should make it more than just another weekday. A brief homily, general intercessions, a word of introduction to the readings: each apostolic feast is really a feast of all the apostles.

Once a year: Every believing community could make a special effort every year to celebrate an apostolic feast. Parishes, dioceses, schools or communities under the patronage of an apostle should mark this feast (or in the case of Peter and Paul, one of their feasts) in a special way. Or they may choose another apostolic feast at a different time of the year.

After carefully choosing a feast which is appropriate the liturgy committee has to consider how to celebrate it. Some may choose to hold a bible vigil on what the apostles mean in the Church. Some will have an evening Mass. A parish may hold a picnic after an outdoor Mass for one of the summer feasts. Ecumenical celebrations may be considered in some communities. The possibilities are endless.

In any case, banners, posters, hymns may be used to bring home the message. The parish bulletin can develop it and leave the message in the hands of the people for further reflection.

Missionary Church

The Vatican Council reminded us that we are a missionary Church. Each parish and community is a missionary church, an apostolic community gathered to praise the Father through Christ, in the Spirit, and to share God's life and love with the world. After nourishing us with his word and the bread of life, God sends us to broadcast it everywhere, to bring all to the obedience of faith (see Rom. 16:26).

* * *

This is why Jesus sent the apostles; it is why he sends us today.

In our Sunday profession of faith, we affirm that we are members of a Church which is one, holy, catholic and apostolic. How much thought have we given lately to the fourth of these attributes?

WHEN A CHRISTIAN PRAYS

What is the spirit of Christian prayer, public or private? Is it the forms or formulas used, or the attitude with which a Christian prays?

The essence of Christian prayer is this: a human person speaks to God and calls him Father.

Chosen from all eternity by the Father, adopted by him in Christ, filled with the Spirit, who helps us to pray, we are indeed the holy people of God.

Not only at Pentecost but frequently during the year, we should remember how the Spirit teaches us that we are God's children, how he convinces us to be comfortable (but never, God forbid, blasé!) with the thought of speaking to God as our Father.

* * *

What about a meditation on this topic for your parish bulletin? Help your people to appreciate a little more fully the attitude (*reverent familiarity* might be a good term for it) we need in prayer — both in public worship and personal prayer.

CALENDAR REFORM

The most sacred Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican recognizes the importance of the wishes expressed by many concerning the assignment of the feast of Easter to a fixed Sunday and concerning an unchanging calendar. Having carefully considered the effects which could result from the introduction of a new calendar, the most sacred Council declares as follows:

- 1. It would not object if the feast of Easter were assigned to a particular Sunday of the Gregorian Calendar, provided that those whom it may concern give their consent, especially the brethren who are not in communion with the Apostolic See.*
- 2. The most sacred Council likewise declares that it does not oppose efforts designed to introduce a perpetual calendar into civil society.*

But among the various systems which are being devised for establishing a perpetual calendar and introducing it into civil life, the Church has no objection only in the case of those systems which would retain and safeguard a seven-day week including Sunday, without the introduction of any days outside the week. In other words, the sequence of seven-day weeks should remain unbroken. Only the weightiest of reasons, acknowledged as such by the Apostolic See, would make the contrary acceptable. (Vatican II documents, pp. 177-178.) (Declaration attached to the Liturgy Constitution)

* * *

Well?

These words are among the least remembered of the liturgy constitution's wealth, and need to be brought to the surface again. In a past issue of the Bulletin (no. 34, page 171), we scratched the surface, but we have heard no reactions whatsoever.

It is our opinion that the Church should continue (should we say **begin?**) to work for civil calendar reform. When a world calendar settles and stabilizes the date of Easter and other major feasts, in conjunction with all the churches, we should go along. Or better still, we should be in the forefront of such reform.

Have we given any thought to such matters? What does the seven-day week mean in our rhythm of worship? How well do we understand the makeup of the liturgical year since the days of Vatican II?

CELEBRATING SPECIAL EVENTS

The Church has always endeavored to give spiritual significance to special events in the life of the people by celebrating them with or in the liturgy.

Throughout its history, it has taken secular, even pagan festivals, and built a Christian celebration on their positive elements, while eliminating harmful aspects and excesses. By helping to raise the quality and level of such celebrations and by emphasizing the spiritual aspects of the event, the Church has helped to integrate the spiritual and temporal sides of life.

It is important for Christians to establish a firm bond between the liturgy and life today, to celebrate this life and thank God for it and through it, and to raise it to his service.

In former days, when an agricultural economy was dominant, the rogation and ember days were such celebrations.

The regulation of special events is now left to the bishops' conference, which issues guidelines for the time, solemnity and celebration of these events in the life of their people. In this way, the celebration can lead to a deepening of the spiritual purpose of the event.

In Canada's liturgical calendar, special events (such as the week of prayer for Christian unity, days of prayer for peace or vocations, Labor Day, Thanksgiving . . .) are indicated in boxes, and suggestions for their celebration are given. Their connection with the liturgy and the vigor of the celebration will vary. Each believing community will adapt the celebration to local needs and circumstances.

Many ways of celebrating: We should not limit ourselves by thinking that special days are to be celebrated at Sunday Mass only. There are many ways of observing these days. The more we develop these other ways, the more meaning and impact these days will have on the minds and hearts of the community. Then when it is mentioned in the liturgy, it will have some meaning for the assembly, and will truly be part of their celebration of prayer and praise.

Parish councils and liturgy committees should be involved in planning so that some of the following methods may help the community celebration:

- schools; help, guidance to teachers and classes;
- parish and community organizations, youth groups; encourage them to share in planning and celebrating the event;
- parish bulletin: presenting ideas, explanations, suggestions for prayer, or inserts and reprints included with the bulletin;
- cooperation with other agencies and groups sharing similar concerns;
- personal and family prayer: what help is the parish giving to encourage people to pray about these days and their themes?
- bible services
- ecumenical celebrations, where appropriate;
- general intercessions
- banners, posters
- promoting celebrations in homes and schools.

MASS

LATE ENTRY

There are two entrance processions in our Sunday celebration. The first is at the beginning of the Mass, when the celebrant enters solemnly, accompanied by the readers and servers. During it, the people sing a psalm or hymn.

While we are pleased with this form of the entrance, we are not so happy with the second entrance procession.

This one begins as soon as the celebrant enters, and lasts until the liturgy of the word is completed.

It consists of many people who march or creep or traipse or steele in after the service begins, hoping that the 11:00 Mass doesn't begin until 11:05.

* * *

Instead of giving in to the temptation to hurl anathemas or to unleash thunderbolts, perhaps a parish council could encourage these latecomers to think along positive lines:

● *Theme:* At the beginning of the celebration, the celebrant or another person explains the theme of today's Mass. Members of the congregation who come late miss the key to this day's specific celebration.

● *Repentance:* Able to play with DNA and atomic power, man is sometimes tempted to think himself at least equal to God. The thought of God's supremacy, of our sinfulness and weakness, or of our need for divine mercy tends to be put aside. Wisely indeed has the penitential rite been kept at the beginning of the Mass, for we need to be reminded that God casts down the proud and uplifts those who are humble enough to admit their need of his help. When people come late, they miss this vital reminder, this opportunity to realize their need of God's help and to ask for his help.

● *Readings and explanation:* The celebrant is encouraged to see that an explanation or introduction is made before the readings — before each one or before all three (see Bulletin no. 32, p. 17-20). By coming late, members of the congregation are likely to hear readings without any introductory words — and rare indeed are those who can grasp the Sunday readings without preparation.

● *Homily:* The celebrant bases his homily on this day's readings. When people miss one or more of these readings, they are hardly able to benefit from the homily.

○ *Liturgy of the word:* There are people here and there who seem to time their arrival for the end of the service of the word. Somehow, they appear to fail to grasp that this is a vital preparation for the liturgy of the eucharist. They do not seem to realize that the Lord is gathering his people on his day. He calls us together around this altar to hear his word, to celebrate his praise, to thank him for saving us by the death and rising of the Lord Jesus. He invites us to eat and drink the food from heaven. Without full participation in the introductory rites and liturgy of the word, latecomers are not able to render complete worship or receive all the spiritual benefits available to them.

* * *

Though we cannot cure others of their tardiness, we can pray for them, and encourage them to fuller participation in the Sunday eucharist by coming on time each week.

READ WITH EMPHASIS

Some ideas for the readers in your community may be useful for your liturgy committee and celebrants as well as for your lectors.

Understand what you are doing: When we realize what a privilege it is to proclaim the Lord's word to his people, we should be more willing to prepare for this great act by serious prayer, study and practice.

Emphasize the right phrases: Once we understand the meaning of our selection from God's word, and its place in the ensemble of readings in this particular celebration, we will be able to put proper emphasis on the important parts of the text. Often the little summary of the reading is a key to the central idea of this text in relation to the day's theme.

Reading the text in its biblical context is often helpful, for it enables the reader to grasp more fully the meaning of the excerpt chosen.

Introduce the readings: A carefully worded, well prepared sentence of introduction will guide the congregation, and help the community to be more open to the word of the Lord. (See 1973 Liturgical Calendar — *Guidelines for Pastoral Liturgy*, pages 8-9.)

CONCELEBRATION

When they say prayers with the chief celebrant during the eucharistic prayer, concelebrants are reminded that they should say these prayers in a low voice. The chief celebrant's voice should predominate, and be the one which is heard and understood by the members of the congregation. (GI, no. 170)

It would be good for all involved in concelebration to review the General Instruction of the missal, nos. 153-207, contained in Bulletin 28.

BLESSING AND PRAYERS

The lenten issue of the CCC loose-leaf missal contains interim texts for the solemn blessings and for the prayers over the people.

While the rubrics given with the texts explain the manner of performing these rites, they do not give suggestions for their use, except to mention that they may be used — at the priest's discretion — at the end of Mass (to replace the simple blessing), or after a bible service, part of the liturgy of the hours, or to conclude any sacramental celebration.

Solemn Blessings

The solemn blessings normally consist of three sets of holy desires and a blessing. To each of these, the congregation answers *Amen*. They are introduced by a diaconal invitation, and during them the priest extends his hands over the congregation while he sings or says the blessing.

Blessings are provided for the liturgical seasons, for celebrations of saints, for the dedication of a church, and for services for the dead.

Fourteen blessings cover Advent, Christmas, New Year's, Epiphany, the Lord's passion, Easter vigil, Easter Sunday and the paschal season, Ascension, Holy Spirit, and five blessings for ordinary time (season of the year).

The others are for feasts of Mary, Peter and Paul, the apostles, all saints, dedication of a church, and celebrations for the dead.

(The solemn blessings were described last year in Bulletin no. 32, pages 29-30; no. 35, page 213.)

Prayers over the People

These prayers — familiar to oldtimers from the Latin lenten liturgy — are introduced and concluded in the same way as the solemn blessings. Twenty-four general prayers and two for saints' feasts are provided. When the general prayers are studied carefully, however, it will be found that certain ones are more appropriate for particular seasons or celebrations.

Scope for Creativity

Liturgists differ when it comes to the frequency of the use of the solemn blessings and the prayers over the people. Some think they should be encouraged in every celebration, others only on special occasions.

Without taking sides, let us suggest that when the prayer or blessing is used, it should be chosen deliberately — not automatically or routinely — in order to complete and perfect this particular celebration.

Here too is an area where the liturgy committee can study the available riches, and help the celebrant prepare the community liturgy. In this way, it can achieve more fully its twofold purpose: greater honor to God, and a deeper growth in holiness for his people.

COMMUNITY MASSES

The conventual (community) Mass, a part of the daily office of praise, holds a special place in some communities. It should be a sung Mass, especially when all the members of the community of religious take part in it.

A homily and general intercessions, based on the readings of the day and prepared with the help of the community (or at least of the liturgy committee), will enable all to receive greater benefit from this celebration.

In the conventual Mass, each person should exercise his office according to the orders he has received; as far as possible, all priests should concelebrate. All members of the community may communicate under both forms.

OUR LADY'S SATURDAY

On all Saturdays in ordinary time, when no obligatory memorial is to be celebrated, an optional memorial of Mary may be observed.

This celebrated as a memorial: ordinary office, Mass and preface of Mary; the *Glory to God* is omitted. Green or white vestments may be used for this Mass.

The ferial readings are preferred, but they may also be taken from nos. 707-712 of the lectionary. The congregation will benefit more from this Mass if the celebrant gives a brief homily based on the readings, and leads the people in the general intercessions.

YOUR APPRAISAL, PLEASE

In *Guidelines for Pastoral Liturgy* (1973 Liturgical Calendar), each weekday has a **starter** for prayer and preaching.

The purpose and value of these brief helps are outlined in the introductory notes, pages 15-16.

As we begin to prepare the 1974 edition, we would appreciate some information on how you are using them, and whether you wish to see a similar feature in next year's calendar.

We would also be happy to receive any suggestions you have to make this book even more useful for you in preparing and celebrating the liturgy.

LET SILENCE BE HEARD

When describing ways of promoting participation, the Vatican Council suggested that the people should take an active and intelligent part in the liturgy by acclamations, responses, psalms, antiphons, songs, actions, gestures and bodily attitudes. And it added: "At proper times all should observe a reverent silence." (CSL, no. 30)

The General Instruction of the Roman Missal develops this by noting that silence at specific times is a part of the liturgical celebration. Recollection is encouraged during the penitential rite and after the words, "Let us pray." After a reading or the homily, everyone should meditate for a moment on God's word. When the congregation pauses for silence after communion, each member should praise and thank the Father. (GI, no. 23; see Bulletin no. 28 for full text.)

In the liturgy, silence is not passive inactivity or a pulling away from the worshipping community. Rather it is an opportunity for the assembly to reflect on what it is doing. Silence provides the *heart* in worship, and helps to prevent it from degenerating into lip service.

Silence acts as a contrast to more active modes of participation, allows all to "catch their breath," as it were, and prepare for greater sharing in the celebration. The dramatic values of silence should not be ignored or forgotten.

For the celebrant, providing silent moments of reflection (and helping his people to grow in this mode of prayer) is one way of ensuring "that the faithful take part knowingly, actively, and fruitfully." (CSL, no. 11)

Brief suggestions for the use of silence are included in *Guidelines for Pastoral Liturgy — 1973* on pages 9, 13, 15, 17 and 18.

One of the saddest aberrations is what might be termed a "non-stop celebration." Celebrant and commentator fill in every blank space, and never leave a congregation time to pray, reflect or meditate. After such a liturgy, one is tired out.

Our present liturgy demands a lot of listening and praying aloud and singing. To reach its fullness, it also demands moments of silence, that God's people may reflect on his word and his wonderful deeds, and give him greater praise and glory.

* * *

Previous articles on silence in the liturgy: see no. 32, page 21; no. 34, pages 173, 174; no. 35, page 199.

PRAYERS FOR GOOD HARVESTS

On a suitable day in spring, prayers are said for good harvests. These prayers (rogations) will be of greater concern in rural parishes. These prayers are celebrated in the way considered best in each community, and may be offered on a Sunday and/or a weekday.

On a weekday, the Mass for productive land (nos. 851-855) may be celebrated. The homily would emphasize the goodness of our Creator and Father, who supports man's life by giving him the benefits of the earth's produce; our responsibility for sharing the goods of the earth with others should not be forgotten. This could be followed by the blessing of seeds. The general intercessions should include a petition for good harvests.

This celebration could take place in church or in the open air. A scripture service, incorporating some of these ideas, could be celebrated.

On Sunday, the general intentions could include a petition for good harvests; the blessing of seeds may take place after the homily.

A complementary celebration may take place in the fall to praise and thank God for his loving care (Thanksgiving Day is October 8).

ORDINATION ANNIVERSARIES

The anniversaries of the pope and bishop, and of the priests attached to the parish or community, provide an occasion for the people of God to grow in their understanding of the ministerial priesthood and of the special role of the clergy in the servant Church. It is good to mention these anniversaries so that community members may deepen their appreciation of the manner in which Christ shepherds his people along the way of life.

A suitable note might be included in the parish bulletin on the Sunday before the date, drawing the attention of the people to the anniversary, and asking their prayers on this day.

It is recommended that these anniversaries be remembered in the general intercessions on the actual day, and on the Sunday before or after the event. (It is no longer permitted to add a special collect.)

Examples of petitions which may be used in the general intercessions:

Let us pray for Pope . . ., whose anniversary we celebrate today (this week). May God grant him wisdom and courage to carry out his task as our spiritual leader:

As we celebrate the anniversary of our bishop, we ask God to give him strength and vision, that he may lead God's people on the pathways of holiness:

Other petitions may be composed from the ideas presented in the Council documents on the Church, liturgy, bishops and priests.

Occasionally during the year, pastors might include thoughts or simple quotations from these documents in their parish bulletins, to help the people assimilate into their daily living the teaching of the Vatican Council. Prayers for vocations (see Fourth Sunday in the Easter season) are also to be encouraged on these anniversaries and throughout the year.

FOR DISCUSSION

There is a growing awareness that certain announcements in the Mass are diaconal functions. They belong to the deacon rather than the celebrant.

Recently, for example, we heard a deacon who was assisting the celebrant make the declaration, "This is the mystery of faith."

Liturgists are becoming more convinced that the deacon, the reader, or someone other than the celebrant should make such announcements.

We would appreciate hearing the results of your discussions on this point.

TRUE CENTER

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

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

"In building the Christian community, priests are never to put themselves at the service of any ideology or human faction. Rather, as heralds of the gospel and shepherds of the Church, they must devote themselves to the spiritual growth of the Body of Christ."

(Vatican II, Ministry and Life of Priests, no. 6)

EDUCATORS IN THE FAITH

"As educators in the faith, priests must see to it, either by themselves or through others, that the faithful are led individually in the Holy Spirit to a development of their own vocation as required by the gospel, to a sincere and active charity, and to that freedom with which Christ has made us free (cf. Gal. 4:3; 5:1, 13). Ceremonies however beautiful, or associations however flourishing, will be of little value if they are not directed toward educating men in the attainment of Christian maturity."

(Vatican II, Ministry and Life of Priests, no. 6)

SACRAMENTS

GENERAL ABSOLUTION

The bishops of Canada made this statement about general sacramental absolution at their plenary assembly in October 1972.

God's mercy toward men, made manifest in Jesus Christ, has been continued by the Church in an uninterrupted way throughout the course of the ages, thanks to the exercise of the ministry of penance which the Lord confided to it on Easter morning.

The history of this sacrament shows that the Church has always recognized its power to remit sins in the name of God, although it has exercised this ministry in different ways throughout the course of time according to the needs of the faithful. Different ways of celebrating the sacrament have emphasized now one, now another aspect of the whole, such as sin or divine mercy. Together they express the richness of the sacrament, but sometimes the particular emphasis on one aspect may obscure certain other important points of view. In our times the ecclesial dimension of sin and pardon has occasionally suffered an eclipse thus lessening the interest of many in so great a benefit.

The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith has expressed concern over certain developments in current penitential practice. Among these is a general decline in the use of the sacrament of penance, as well as misunderstandings regarding the use of communal sacramental absolution. Another area of concern has been the difficulty in confessing individually which the faithful of a given region have sometimes experienced because of the shortage of priests. Accordingly, the Congregation has published, with the approval of the Holy Father, some pastoral norms for the administration of the sacrament of penance, with particular attention being given to the use of communal sacramental absolution.

Present Discipline

This document restates the present discipline regarding individual confession:

Individual and integral confession and absolution remain the only ordinary way for the faithful to be reconciled to God and the Church unless excused by physical or moral impossibility from such confession. (no. 1)

Something new, however, is added regarding communal sacramental absolution in cases other than the danger of death:

Apart from the cases of danger of death, it is lawful to give sacramental absolution collectively to a number of faithful who have confessed only generically but have been suitably exhorted to repent, provided that there is serious necessity: namely, when in view of the number of penitents there are not enough confessors

at hand to hear properly the confessions of each within an appropriate time, with the result that the penitents through no fault of their own would be forced to do without sacramental grace or holy communion for a long time. This can happen especially in mission lands but in places also and within groups where it is clear that this need exists.

This is not lawful, however, when confessors are able to be at hand, merely because of a great concourse of penitents such as can for example occur on a great feast or pilgrimage. (no. 3)

The application of this norm is reserved to each local bishop. Accordingly, the bishops of Canada provide the following directives:

a) We are conscious of the confusion and even the suffering of many Catholics concerning individual confession and we feel strongly that as pastors we have a primary duty to help our people to understand and accept this sacramental practice which remains the privileged means of obtaining pardon for sin. In this light we urge all priests, parents, educators and catechists to do everything possible to establish and maintain among the faithful a sound practice of confession.

They should be instructed on the value and necessity of individual confession, and should be taught to confess well in advance of great feasts and solemnities. Good pastoral practice can all but eliminate the crowding that sometimes takes place on these occasions to the detriment of the sacrament.

b) Communal sacramental absolution is linked, as the document from the Congregation specifies, to cases of real necessity. These cases must be specified by the local bishop. Then, **on the basis of these specifications**, the priest may consider the possibility of communal sacramental absolution. Apart from those cases, if a serious need arises, the priest is obliged, whenever it is possible, to have previous recourse to the local bishop in order to grant the absolution lawfully: if this is not possible, he is to inform the bishop as soon as possible of the need and of the granting of the absolution.

Norms Recalled

We want to recall to pastors the insistence of the norms on certain points which affect the faithful. First of all, individual confession remains the general rule. When, by way of exceptional circumstance, recourse is had to communal absolution, it is imperative that the faithful be suitably disposed, having true sorrow for sin, firm purpose of amendment, and the intention of repairing any scandal or loss caused by sin. The faithful are also required to confess in due time (at least within the year, unless prevented by moral impossibility, and before a second communal absolution, unless a just cause prevents them) each serious sin that was part of the communal absolution. This last point must be well explained in order to avoid spreading of the opinion that general absolution will now take the place of individual confession.

The faithful should likewise be instructed on the reasons which underlie the obligation of confessing serious sins individually to the priest: to signify the personal reception of reconciliation at the heart of the Christian community, to assure the firmness of their conversion, to specify the concrete steps that must be taken,

to find in this fraternal dialogue with the priest the light of the gospel as it applies to their particular situation, to assist them to repair the damage or scandal that they may have caused, and so on.

These present directives will have to be drawn within the framework of an improved, pastoral catechesis of the sacrament of penance.

Since we are dealing with the mode of administering this sacrament, it will be important that those responsible for this pastoral ministry evaluate the results, particularly the various effects upon the faithful and communicate their findings to the bishop of the diocese.

Further Guidance

For its part, the Canadian Catholic Conference intends to follow attentively the application of these directives and will continue, in communion with the other episcopal conferences of the universal Church, to dialogue with the Holy See in order to bring about whatever adaptations may be called for in the pastoral needs of our country. We therefore intend to publish a pastoral directory on penance and a document on the formation of conscience.

We take this opportunity to recommend once again the practice of holding communal penitential celebrations, with private confession of sin and individual absolution. We are happy to see an increase in this type of service, because it brings with it a strong sense of celebration, the celebration of joyful reconciliation with the risen Lord, and gives us a renewed sense of the pardon of the Lord. These communal rites also underline the social dimensions of sin and pardon in the Church, and show the common lot of man both in evil and in his return to God. This penitential style corresponds to the desire of Vatican II, which sought to strengthen the ecclesial role in the penitential action and emphasize the intercessory power of the prayer of the entire Church on behalf of sinners.

We hope that priests and faithful alike will welcome the norms approved by the Holy Father "after considering with a sense of responsibility and pastoral insight the real welfare of the Church and of each of the faithful."

We count above all upon priests to give these directives wide circulation in a program of re-education of consciences to the meaning of sin and to the importance of the sacrament of pardon. We appeal to their love for souls and to their apostolic zeal as confessors to accept willingly the self-denial required for the assiduous exercise of this holy ministry, and to make themselves available to the faithful, not only in special periods of the liturgical year, but as often as possible, especially before the celebration of the holy sacrifice of the Mass.

When should a parent turn over authority to a child? When the child stops reaching for authority and reaches for responsibility.

(Donald Barr)

BIBLE SERVICES

CELEBRATING THE EASTER SEASON

The seven weeks of the Easter season are intended to be a period of reflecting on the meaning of Jesus' resurrection in our lives as Christians.

We suggest that a bible service, to be celebrated three or four weeks after Easter, might reinforce the paschal message. Such a service is recommended particularly for communities or parishes which have never dared to design one of their own.

Celebrating the Easter season with a scripture service is one way of helping those who take part to grow in their appreciation of the paschal mystery. Removed in time from the bustle of Holy Week and Easter, people are more inclined to stop and reflect more deeply on the meaning of Jesus' resurrection for the people of God.

The suggestions below will be useful to your liturgy committee in designing this service. (Further help may be found in past issues of the Bulletin: see no. 33, pages 84-85, 94; no. 34, pages 113-114, 140-143, 163.)

Informal: Try an informal service, celebrated with a small group. Consider using a setting outside church. It should be planned by a few members of the group.

Possible themes: it could be one of these, or another chosen by the group:

*Our Lord is a risen Lord
Faith in the Lord of glory
The people of God
New life in Christ
Die to sin, live for God
Peace is his Easter gift
The Lord is with us.*

Freedom of form: There is no fixed outline for a bible celebration. It is based on three simple steps:

- *listen* in faith to God's word
- *reflect* in silence, and possibly aloud as well
- *respond* in song, prayer and action.

Designing a service: Without making their celebration too formal or stilted, the planners should choose a theme and two or three readings. Adequate periods of silent prayer and reflection are needed after the readings, and after the homily or sharing of personal reflections. Some prayers, hymns or psalms may be desired as a way of responding to the readings after the time of silent prayer. A beginning and an ending, preferably with music, complete the plan.

Homily or shared reflections: As the group grows in faith, members will find it easier to share their thoughts and reflections after hearing all the readings. This moment should not become a discussion or debate, but rather a privileged moment of prayerful insights. The leader concludes the period by a few words.

Variety: An appropriate paragraph from the Vatican Council may be used for the first reading. The prayer of the faithful may be less formal, with individuals suggesting petitions for the community's prayer. The litany of the saints, in a shorter form if desired, may be used.

Sources: Readings may be chosen from the New Testament, especially from those used in the liturgy of the Easter season. The liturgical index in the complete edition of Catholic Book of Worship suggests many hymns and psalms for the Easter season. See also the Masses of Easter season, and don't forget the variety of Alleluias and acclamations in the hymnal.

* * *

A bible service is not hard to design, and it gives your community a wonderful opportunity to grow in your faith while you deepen your sense of liturgy.

Plan now to celebrate the Easter season in this way.

* * *

**The bible is bought by millions but,
unfortunately, only read by hundreds.**

Dr. George M. Lamsa

MORE PARTICIPATION

Ideas on developing a bible service were discussed in Bulletin no. 34, pages 140-143. Now we go on to answer an objection that is sometimes heard, to the effect that many bible services do not permit much participation by the congregation.

How can people participate in a bible service?

The Vatican Council (CSL, no. 30) suggests a number of ways of encouraging the active participation of the congregation in the liturgy:

Acclamations: At Mass, we sing the "Holy, holy" and the memorial acclamation. Acclamations are encouraged in the baptismal liturgy. Have we given any consideration to the use of acclamations in bible services? How can they become more spontaneous?

Responses: Has your community gone beyond the simple responses used in the celebration of Mass? We would always be pleased to share your ideas with others. Responsories, similar to those used in morning and evening prayer, may also be developed.

Psalms, antiphons: Composed under the influence of the Spirit, who teaches us to pray (Rom. 8:26-27), the psalms are used in response to the readings. They may also be used as entrance and recessional hymns. Their effect will increase when chosen for their relationship to the theme and message of the service. Have you thought of using some of the biblical canticles?

Songs, hymns: Good singing, variety, well chosen selections — how much care goes into the singing in a bible service?

Bodily gestures, actions, positions: Many congregations have not gone beyond the simple ones used in Sunday Mass. Some remain in fixed pews, others find the use of movable chairs an easy way to gather the group into an effective assembly. When the sacred action is well chosen, it can help make the service both successful and memorable.

Reverent silence: Are we busy saying so many prayers that we do not have time to pray? Adequate time for personal reflection and prayer is desirable. Silence should be the first response to a reading and also to the homily.

Further Ideas

To these ways of participation, we might add the following suggestions:

Preparation and development: When a group of people work together to prepare a bible service, they will be able to contribute their insights into its development. They will also want to help all involved — readers, musicians, servers, congregation — to prepare and celebrate the service well. Effective publicity and a personal effort to invite more people to come will also improve participation, for they will have a greater interest in the service. A service prepared by this community to meet its prayer needs at this time is much more effective than one taken straight from a book.

Listening in faith: We often use this term about readings. How are we helping people to listen? A careful choice of readings, the use of the best version for that occasion, a good, brief introduction will help. The reader needs to understand the theme of the service, the meaning of his text, and how it fits into the whole service. Sometimes a change of pace helps too: all may listen to music, or reflect in silence while the choir sings.

Personal contributions: During the preparation period, members of the parish or community may be invited to pass on their ideas and suggestions for readings, psalms or hymns to the liturgy committee. At the service itself, they should be encouraged to contribute in the general intercessions.

Deeper understanding of scripture: The liturgy of the word — both in the Mass and in bible services — will be more effective as people grow in their understanding and love of God's word. A parish or community program for growing in this way should be part of each congregation's plans.

Growth in prayer: A deepening sense of prayer is needed in each believing community. While a bible service can help the spirit of prayer, it is much closer to the truth to say that a deep prayer life in a community makes a bible service much better. A parish program of growth in prayer should be part of each year's plans.

Variety: Great freedom, within the principles of liturgy, is permitted in bible services. Full scope is given for the community's creativity. Less formal prayer forms, including their own version of a litany or profession of faith, may be used. (CSL, no. 13 must not be forgotten here.) Within a general pattern of *listening to God's word and responding to it by personal and public prayer as well as by action*, much variety can be introduced to enhance the service.

Council Teaching

To keep ourselves in perspective, it is good to review these words of the Vatican Council on the meaning and responsibility of community participation in the liturgy:

"In order that the sacred liturgy may produce its full effect, it is necessary that the faithful come to it with proper dispositions, that their thoughts match their words, and that they cooperate with divine grace lest they receive it in vain (see 2 Cor. 6:1). Pastors of souls must therefore realize that, when the liturgy is celebrated, more is required than the mere observance of the laws governing valid and licit celebration. It is their duty also to ensure that the faithful take part knowingly, actively, and fruitfully." (CSL, no. 11)

"With zeal and patience, pastors of souls must promote the liturgical instruction of the faithful, and also their active participation in the liturgy both internally and externally. The age and condition of their people, their way of life, and degree of religious culture should be taken into account. By so doing, pastors will be fulfilling one of the chief duties of a faithful dispenser of the mysteries of God; and in this matter they must lead their flock not only in word but also by example." (CSL, no. 19)

CREATIVE CREED

Sometimes a bible service needs a way of expressing the faith of this congregation in response to God's word. One method of doing this is by preparing a statement of this faith, a homemade creed, as it were.

It should be simple and informal, positive and to the point. By basing it on the theme of the service, by weaving in scriptural ideas and phrases, those preparing the celebration can summarize it in an emphatic form.

An example of such a creed was used in the 1973 week of prayer for Christian unity in Canada:

Father,
we believe you have invited us to pray to you,
and we know you listen with love to our prayers.
Your Son Jesus taught us how to pray,
and gave us his own example in constant prayer.
You send your Spirit into our hearts
to teach us to pray
and to help us call you our Father.

We believe that you call us to be one,
for we have one Lord, one faith, one baptism.
We believe you are calling us
— all the members of this assembly —
to work this year in our community
so that we may be one according to your will.

Lord, we believe.
Help us to believe more firmly
and to show our faith by our action.

* * *

Some themes developed through bible services could be:

- *We believe we are the people of God*
- *We believe in love* (keep this firmly scriptural, and balanced, or else it will tend to be mawkish and maudlin)
- *We believe that Christ is king.*

During Advent, for instance, a group could express its faith in Christ's second coming. What about other seasons of the year? Christmas, Lent, Easter, ordinary time are filled with possibilities.

Carefully, prayerfully prepared by two or three persons, this idea can be a real expression of prayer, faith and service.

If everyone is to be asked to say it during the service, copies should be prepared. The use of senselines (as in the creed and Glory to God in the altar missal) will be helpful.

Those taking part in the service might be encouraged to keep their copy, and read it over occasionally, thus prolonging the benefits of this particular service. It could be reprinted in the parish bulletin, with a word of explanation, so that more can share in this expression of faith.

Somebody will probably be tempted to sit down and grind out a dozen or two of such credal statements, publish them, and have them available. *Don't be seduced!* If the creed isn't created and prepared by your own group, it loses much of its effectiveness; part of its value lies not in the words written out as much as in the gradual increase of openness to the word of the Lord.

Writing such a creed — as a concrete expression of the Church's faith, felt keenly by this local church — can be an important form of creativity. Why not try it at least once a year?

MUSIC

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

How do you explore a book like the Canadian hymnal, *Catholic Book of Worship*? Some thoughts on becoming familiar with its wealth should be shared with the musicians and liturgy committee of your community or parish.

Start at the Back

We are accustomed to reading a book from left to right, front to back. The hymnal begins to yield its treasures best when you start at the back of the complete or choir edition.

The indices which follow selection no. 440 are the key to your community's use of the hymnal.

Liturgical index: In four pages, those who compiled the book outline the various seasons, sacraments and special themes, and under each of them indicate psalms and hymns which are suitable at such times. Particularly important are the psalm settings. This index is most important, and should be used each time liturgical music is being chosen for celebrations.

Composers, arrangers, authors, translators: A quick glance at these indices shows the great range of time and geography which has contributed to our worship today. Once again we are reminded that we are part of a worldwide Church, twenty centuries young, one grafted onto the faith of Judaism.

Metrical index: This index shows all hymns which share a common metre. One may use the music of one with the words of another on occasion, permitting a broader repertoire for choir and congregation.

Index of tunes: A fascinating list at first sight, this index lists the music of the hymnal by internationally accepted names. Using this list, one may find other arrangements and settings of these in other books of music.

General index: Listing all the hymns by their title, this index also shows which ones have guitar chords, both guitar chords and organ accompaniment; the rest of the music has organ accompaniment only.

Tools for Better Planning

When musicians and liturgy committees use these indices as planning tools, they are able to prepare a better liturgical celebration. When the music is planned over a period of time, a good balance may be maintained between seasonal and general music, between new hymns and familiar ones.

The sixteen pages of indices in the complete edition of the hymnal can be the key to greater meaning and variety in preparing and celebrating the ministry of music. It certainly beats leafing through the pages, looking for something to sing or play!

TRIBUTE

One choir director wrote recently, mentioning the impact of the Canadian hymnal in his parish:

Catholic Book of Worship is so superior to any previous missal-hymnal I have ever seen. It is a joy to use.

During Advent our choir and congregation (between them) used every single hymn in the Advent section, and during Christmas we used all the Christmas hymns except one.

Now I am looking forward to a Lent which will be penitential without being dreary!

I figure that CBW will keep my choir busy for at least another year before I have to go out and buy some new sheet music for them.

PLEASE STAND

The General Instruction of the missal notes that the congregation should stand during the prayer over the gifts. (GI no. 21; the full text of this instruction is given in Bulletin no. 28.)

This prayer is used to conclude the preparation of the gifts, somewhat as the opening prayer closes the introductory rites.

In some parishes, people are still sitting during this prayer. In others, people begin to rise as the celebrant begins the prayer, with the result that many fail to hear it.

After "Pray, brethren" and its response (some consider this as an invitatory to the prayer over the gifts), the celebrant pauses, and all rise. When silence returns, he sings or says the prayer over the gifts.

Thus the preparation of the gifts concludes with the prayer over the prepared gifts, and the celebrant is ready to begin the eucharistic prayer with its preface.

SPIRITUAL HELPS

"That priests may be able to foster union with Christ in all the circumstances of life, they enjoy, in addition to the conscious exercise of their ministry, those means, common and particular, new and old, which the Spirit of God never ceases to stir up in the people of God and which the Church commends and indeed at times commands for the sanctification of her members. Of all spiritual helps, those acts are outstanding by which the faithful receive nourishment from God's word at the twofold table of sacred scripture and the eucharist. It is obvious how important for the proper sanctification of priests is the energetic and frequent exercise of such acts."

(Vatican II, Ministry and Life of Priests, no. 18)

PEOPLE IN LITURGY

CONSULTATION

As an indication of the kind of dialogue that is pursued by bishops and their senates, here is a list of questions proposed by one bishop to his senate. A number of these are related to liturgy.

1. What image are we priests enjoying in the minds of the laity as regards our holiness, our prayer life, our thrift, our exercise of justice, our conduct of the liturgy, our administration of the sacraments?
2. How successful are we being in the pastoral care of people in our parishes, especially in such matters as home visitation, care of the sick, the shut-ins and the elderly; thoroughly preparing couples for marriage, making converts?
3. How active are we in catechizing the children in the parish and in preparing them for the sacraments? Is too much of this work being left to teachers and untrained lay people?
4. How much contact is being established with adolescents and teen-agers, either through informal gatherings or structured activities?
5. Are we doing anything to encourage vocations to the priesthood and religious life? What should we be doing?
6. Are we showing interest in the affairs of the community in which we live? Do we exercise any leadership in community problems?
7. Can we do more for the Church's foreign missions; for the world's poor?

LITURGY AND THE HANDICAPPED

Respect for Life Day is being celebrated in Canada on May 20, 1973. The National Liturgical Office has prepared these notes for parish worship committees, offering suggestions for helping the handicapped to become more involved in the liturgical life of the community.

It is hoped that these ideas will open up new avenues of exploration in your parish or community throughout the year.

One way of describing the purpose of Respect for Life Day is this: it is a reminder from the Spirit, prodding the Christian — not just the Catholic — community (individuals, families, parishes, religious communities, institutions, organizations) to take a longer look at some aspect of life from Christ's viewpoint. After a searching look, the community is invited to put its faith into action by carrying out its responsibilities in this area in a more Christian way.

This year, the Church in Canada is called by its bishops to consider the place of the handicapped in our civil and religious society.

Parish Council's Responsibility

On the occasion of Respect for Life Day this year, each community or parish council should do a penetrating examination of conscience:

● **What are the present attitudes** of this community toward those who are handicapped?

● **What changes are needed** in the light of Jesus' concern for the handicapped? A meditative, prayerful reading of Mt. 25:31-46 can help a group to focus its awareness more clearly.

● **How can the community's concern** more fully reflect that of Christ?

● **Who are the handicapped** among us? A careful and complete survey will show who the handicapped are and what handicaps they have. It should also include institutions or sheltered workshops in the parish territory.

● **Who is presently working** with the handicapped of this parish and community? What organizations, associations, institutions, societies are working with the handicapped of this area?

● **What can we do in this parish** or community to share Christ's concern for the handicapped he has placed in our midst?

Some thoughts for council consideration would certainly include:

- encouraging parish and community organizations and fraternal organizations to a similar self-examination about the handicapped;
- consulting associations already working with the handicapped: what are the needs of the handicapped? How can this parish be of service?
- helping organizations working with particular handicaps by such means as providing volunteer help on occasion, use of the parish mimeograph facilities, use of the parish hall.

● **How can parish council committees** carry on this work? The council should involve the committees in this process of Christian concern, and invite them to explore ways in which their committee can undertake its responsibilities for the handicapped.

Diocesan pastoral councils should take these ideas on a diocesan basis, and encourage all to follow them up seriously.

Parish Liturgy Committee

A simple statement of the worship committee's concern with the handicapped would be this: *How can we help them to take as full a part as possible in the liturgy?*

Liturgy here is seen in its broadest sense: the prayer life and worship of this Christian community. It includes Mass, sacraments, private and public prayer, scripture and Christian action nourished by the liturgy. And we are speaking of the whole year, not just an occasional or sporadic spurt.

Sunday Liturgy

Some of the areas the committee should explore with the handicapped, their families, concerned associations, the parish council and the clergy:

Accessibility: Do persons in wheelchairs or on crutches have easy access to the church? Modern construction standards for entrances, washroom facilities and so on are a reflection of Christian concern. With the building committee, the liturgy group should explore these needs. *Can the Church afford not to give leadership in this way in each community?*

Participation: The liturgy committee should encourage the handicapped to take as full a part as possible in the parish worship:

○ *Servers:* Why shouldn't a blind or retarded or deaf or crippled boy be able to serve Mass?

○ *Singers and musicians:* The ministry of music is a most apt way of participating for many persons who are handicapped.

○ *Readers:* If necessary, a reader could remain seated in a pew or wheelchair while reading; the microphone should be adjustable and brought closer to him for his proclamation.

○ *Preparation:* Handicapped persons can also help in preparing for ordinary and special celebrations by working on banners or posters, the prayer of the faithful, bible services, bulletins, and in many other ways. The only limits are usually those imposed by narrow imaginations.

Shut-ins: Persons who are confined to home, hospitals or institutions are usually not able to come to church. In what ways can the parish come to them on the Lord's day? (We are taking for granted the normal sacramental care at other times, but perhaps the liturgy committee should look into that too.)

○ *Auxiliary ministers* may bring them communion. (See Bulletin no. 31.)

○ *Saturday Mass:* Some parishes provide a late afternoon Mass for residents in institutions or senior citizens' residences, especially during the winter months.

○ *Home Masses:* on weekdays, Mass may be celebrated in the homes of those unable to go out to the parish church.

Instruction in Prayer

One of the responsibilities of the liturgy committee is that of helping all the members of the parish community to grow in prayer. This responsibility extends both to adults and to children. The committee should see if there are special needs in this field for handicapped members of the community.

Unless people are growing in prayer, they will be limited in their ability to participate in public worship.

Teach us to pray: Some handicaps make it harder for a person to grasp some of the external elements of prayer; the isolation, loneliness or even hurt that a handicapped person may feel will affect his prayer life. How is he being helped to grow in prayer? How are handicapped children in your community learning to pray?

This is an area in which an ecumenical approach may be helpful.

While every issue of the Bulletin speaks about prayer, two particular articles should be reread carefully by those concerned about helping the handicapped to pray better:

Teacher of prayer, no. 33, p. 66-67; no. 35, p. 196, 217.

Teaching children to pray, no. 34, p. 118-120.

Sacraments

Mass with communion: How are handicapped children introduced to these sacraments? In what ways is the parish working with their parents and others to introduce them to living as full and as normal a sacramental life as possible? Are there ways in which they need special help on the way to full participation?

What about the sacraments of confirmation and of penance?

As these people grow, what help is provided so that they may mature in their approach to these basic Christian actions of public worship?

Invitation to Christian Living

How does a Christian community help all its members to grow in the Spirit of the Lord Jesus?

How can we help our parishioners to be more aware of Christ's concerns, to be more alert to the movements of the Holy Spirit?

This problem goes beyond the liturgy committee — it is the responsibility of the whole community, including the parish council and all its committees.

Persons who are handicapped are often blessed with a greater sensitivity to the feelings and needs of others. Consult with them, and work together to find ways of involving more people in the spiritual work of the Church: praise to the Father, salvation to the world.

A Day Or A Year?

Special prayers and sermons — yea, even a notice in the parish bulletin — on one Sunday of the year will not solve any of these problems; in fact, such tactics can sometimes soothe consciences into a false air of contentment, leaving the feeling that we have done all that needs doing, and that's that!

Nothing useful is going to happen until **you** start working with concerned people in your parish and civil community to understand and meet the needs and concerns of the handicapped.

Respect for Life Day depends on your community's welcome and sharing of Jesus' concern for people, as shown, for example, in Mt. 25:31-46.

You have to be concerned for his handicapped brothers and sisters. You have to see your local situation, and come to know the needs of people in your area.

You are the one who has to become involved, and what you do has to be carried on. It can begin on Respect for Life Day, or sooner, or later — but it can't end there: it has to go on, from now on.

No one else can do it for you.

Challenge

The liturgy is the source and summit of Christian activity; the eucharist is the center of the believing community. Wholehearted participation in the liturgy is the primary and indispensable source of the true Christian spirit.

What are you, in your parish, going to do to help the handicapped participate more fully in the life and worship of your Christian community?

Some Guidelines

Other material distributed to dioceses across Canada stress these guidelines for working with the handicapped:

○ Remember that *they are people*, with normal feelings, hopes, desires, problems. They are much more like you than different from you.

○ They have a *need to belong*, to be wanted, needed and loved (just as you do). They want to participate in activities and organizations in as normal a way as possible. Help them by inviting them to be involved in your groups and liturgy.

○ A handicap is a *challenge* to the person and to the community. How can we work together to meet it?

○ We need to *emphasize the positive*, to consider a person's abilities, instead of concentrating on what he cannot do.

○ Everyone should analyze his *personal attitudes* and reactions to the handicapped in the light of Jesus' gospel.

○ Instead of working for them, *let's work with the handicapped*, their families and their associations.

GENERAL NOTES

PARISH BULLETINS

Routine job or priceless opportunity?

A stew of local announcements or a continuation of the liturgy of the word?

How is the parish bulletin seen in your parish?

Something Each Week

By explaining one or two thoughts about the liturgy each week in the bulletin, a pastor can help his people to grow in their understanding of the Church's worship.

In this way, the liturgical spirit of a parish can be fostered, and a gradual progress will be achieved.

For example, one pastor passed on some ideas to his people about periods of silence during the Mass in this way:

Periods of silence during Mass:

Penitential rite: The priest asks us to recall that we are sinners, to think about our faults, so that we can be sorry for them and ask forgiveness. This is not the time for the examination of our whole life; we might suggest examining our faults since the last Mass we attended. Our common confession follows: together we proclaim that we are sinners before God.

Our sin is not only personal, but it is also a fault against the community. This rite is a sacramental: when I am sorry for my venial sins, God forgives them.

Opening prayer: This begins when the priest says, "Let us pray." Some might ask, "But haven't we been praying all this time?" Yes, but there are some places in the Mass where prayer manifests itself in a special and official way. This is the case of the orations.

"Let us pray" invites all to pray in silence since we are in the presence of God. All pray in silence, and then the priest gathers all these prayers together, and with one prayer presents them to the Father.

Here we have an active participation of the people: we should be bringing to the Mass all our pains, frustrations, cares, concerns, family needs, ambitions, problems. Without these the priest would be reciting empty formulas.

After communion: Instead of calling this a thanksgiving prayer, it might be better to use this period of silence to look forward to the future.

One of the best thanksgivings is to make or renew a spiritual resolution **just for today.**

This is a private, personal prayer, but it is done in community. A liturgical silence provides each person with the opportunity to pray personally, to make the liturgy part of his own life, and to add his personal touch to the community's prayer.



Source of Ideas

Where will you find things to write about?

○ Consider some of the questions your people ask about Mass, sacraments and prayer.

○ Develop a paragraph or two from articles in the National Bulletin.

○ Watch other parish bulletins for the ideas they develop.

○ Occasionally, explain some part of the Mass, our role in it, what the Church intends to achieve by this ceremony. But make sure the ideas are based on the liturgical principles of today's Church. (*"Yes, Virginia, there is a Pontius Pilate. That's why we wash our hands during the preparation of the gifts."*)

Positive Approach

When a positive outlook is taken, when ideas about the liturgy are passed on with enthusiasm, a parish will grow. Hand-wringing, deploring notes or negative stands usually do little good. Accentuate the positive!

Give the reasons behind the way we participate, and be specific. It is good to remind people why we stand at the gospel, who is speaking, what our attitude should be at this point in the celebration.

What About Yours?

The parish bulletin can be a strong means of forming a deep spirit of the liturgy among the members of a worshipping community.

Take a look at last Sunday's bulletin in your parish. How many positive thoughts were expressed about liturgy? (The **indispensable** source of the true Christian spirit, remember, is active and understanding participation in the liturgy — CSL, no. 14.)

We would suggest that the first item planned for each week's bulletin should be a positive, liturgical article.

* * *

Future issues will continue to bring ideas for your parish bulletins, but we would also appreciate your sharing ideas and examples with us.

HOW NOT TO

We saw the following announcement in the parish bulletin of a cathedral in a city outside Canada. We present it as a horrible example of how one should not announce or celebrate a penance service.

This coming Saturday at 4 p.m. we will hold our usual Advent Community Penance Service. All who desire are urged to attend.

THE FOLLOWING RULES MUST BE OBSERVED: You must stay for the entire service which will consist of hymns, scripture reading and examination of conscience. Then you **must** go to one of the priests and confess your sins as usual. The priest will give **no advice, no penance, only absolution.** The penance will be the closing hymn. Priests will not only be in the four confessionals but also in the Baptistry, St. Francis' Chapel and Sacristy.

FAMILY TRADITION

Over the past eight years, most parishes have formed and trained a corps of readers to proclaim the word of God during the Mass and other liturgical services.

One rural parish we know has encouraged its readers to train their sons, when they become old enough, to follow their fathers as readers.

By encouraging the development of such a family tradition, the parish liturgy committee is helping to establish new customs to build the Church of the twenty-first century.

What are you doing in your worshipping community to develop and build the body of Christ?

GUIDING VISION

Your vision of the Church, your theology and ecclesiology affect (for better or for worse) your attitude toward liturgy, your approach in the parish council and its worship committee, your feeling toward renewal.

If the Church is perfect and sinless, you will see little need to work for improvement. If you accept the teaching of Vatican II, you know that the Church is always in need of reform, and you will work with God's people for this goal.

Is the Church called to rule or serve? Is its main task spiritual, temporal, or interpenetrating?

After examining our own attitudes, we might discuss these questions with members of the parish council and its liturgy committee, celebrants, readers, musicians and others involved in planning and celebrating liturgy.

INDEX OF CELEBRATIONS

This index lists all the saints and celebrations in the General Roman Calendar, as well as those proper to Canada and the United States.

Achilleus	May 12
Agatha	Feb. 5
Agnes	Jan. 21
Albert the Great	Nov. 15
All Saints	Nov. 1
All Souls	Nov. 2
Aloysius Gonzaga	June 21
Alphonsus Liguori	Aug. 1
Ambrose	Dec. 7
Andrew	Nov. 30
Angela Merici	Jan. 27
Angels — Guardian angels	Oct. 2
Michael, Gabriel, Raphael	Sept. 29
Ann	July 26
Annunciation	Mar. 25
Anselm	Apr. 21
Ansgar	Feb. 3
Anthony	Jan. 17
Anthony Claret	Oct. 24
Anthony of Padua	June 13
Anthony Zaccaria	July 5
Assumption	Aug. 15
Athanasius	May 2
Augustine	Aug. 28
Augustine of Canterbury	May 27
Baptism of the Lord	Sunday after Epiphany
Barnabas	June 11
Bartholomew	Aug. 24
Basil the Great	Jan. 2
Bede	May 25
Beheading of John the Baptist	Aug. 29
Benedict	July 11
Bernard	Aug. 20
Bernardine of Siena	May 20
Birth of John the Baptist	June 24
Birth of Mary	Sept. 8
Blase	Feb. 3
Blessed Virgin Mary:	See Mary
Bonaventure	July 15
Boniface	June 5
Bridget	July 23
Bruno	Oct. 6

Cajetan	Aug. 7
Callistus I	Oct. 14
Camillus de Lellis	July 14
Canadian Martyrs	Oct. 19
Casimir	Mar. 4
Catherine of Siena	Apr. 29
Cecelia	Nov. 22
Chair of Peter	Feb. 22
Charles Borromeo	Nov. 4
Charles Lwanga	June 3
Christ:	See Feasts of the Lord
Christmas	Dec. 25
Christmas octave	Jan. 1
Christ the King	Last Sunday in ordinary time
Clare	Aug. 11
Clement I	Nov. 23
Columban	Nov. 23
Conversion of Paul	Jan. 25
Cornelius	Sep. 16
<i>Corpus Christi</i>	Sunday after Trinity Sunday
Cosmas	Sep. 26
Cyprian	Sep. 16
Cyril	Feb. 14
Cyril of Alexandria	June 27
Cyril of Jerusalem	Mar. 18
Damasus I	Dec. 11
Damian	Sep. 26
Dedication of Saint John Lateran	Nov. 9
Dedication of Saint Mary Major	Aug. 5
Dedication of the churches of Peter and Paul	Nov. 18
Denis	Oct. 9
Dominic	Aug. 8
Elizabeth of Hungary	Nov. 17
Elizabeth of Portugal	July 4
Elizabeth Seton (U.S.A.)	Jan. 4
Ephrem	June 9
Epiphany	Sunday after January 1
Eusebius of Vercelli	Aug. 2
Fabian	Jan. 20
Feasts of the Lord	
Annunciation	Mar. 25
Baptism of the Lord	Sunday after Epiphany
Christ the King	Last Sunday in ordinary time
Christmas	Dec. 25
<i>Corpus Christi</i>	Sunday after Trinity Sunday

Epiphany	Sunday after January 1
Presentation of the Lord	Feb. 2
Sacred Heart	Friday after <i>Corpus Christi</i>
Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ (<i>Corpus Christi</i>)	Sunday after Trinity Sunday
Transfiguration	Aug. 6
Triumph of the Cross	Sept. 14
Felicity	Mar. 7
Fidelis of Sigmaringen	Apr. 24
First Martyrs of the Church of Rome	June 30
Frances Cabrini (U.S.A.)	Nov. 13
Frances of Rome	Mar. 9
Francis de Sales	Jan. 24
Francis of Assisi	Oct. 4
Francis of Paola	Apr. 2
Francis Xavier	Dec. 3
Gabriel	Sep. 29
George	Apr. 23
Gertrude	Nov. 16
Gregory Nazianzen	Jan. 2
Gregory VII	May 25
Gregory the Great	Sep. 3
Guardian Angels	Oct. 2
Hedwig	Oct. 16
Henry	July 13
Hilary	Jan. 13
Hippolytus	Aug. 13
Holy Family	Sunday within Christmas octave, or Dec. 30
Holy Innocents	Dec. 28
Holy Trinity	Sunday after Pentecost
Ignatius of Antioch	Oct. 17
Ignatius of Loyola	July 31
Immaculate Conception	Dec. 8
Immaculate Heart of Mary	Saturday after <i>Corpus Christi</i>
Irenaeus	June 28
Isaac Jogues	Oct. 19
Isidore	Apr. 4
Isidore the farmer (U.S.A.)	May 15
James (and Philip)	May 3
James, apostle	July 25
Jane Frances de Chantal	Dec. 12
Januarius	Sept. 19
Jerome	Sept. 30
Jerome Emiliani	Feb. 8

Mary, Mother of God	Jan. 1
Our Lady of Guadalupe (U.S.A.)	Dec. 12
Our Lady of Lourdes	Feb. 11
Our Lady of Mount Carmel	July 16
Our Lady of Sorrows	Sept. 15
Our Lady of the Rosary	Oct. 7
Presentation of Mary	Nov. 21
Queenship of Mary	Aug. 22
Visitation	May 31
Mary Magdalene	July 22
Mary Magdalene de Pazzi	May 25
Matthew	Sept. 21
Methodius	May 14
Michael	Sept. 29
Monica	Aug. 27
Nereus	May 12
Nicholas	Dec. 6
Norbert	June 6
North American Martyrs	Oct. 19
Our Lady	See Mary
Pancras	May 12
Patrick	Mar. 17
Paul — Conversion	Jan. 25
Peter and Paul	June 29
Paulinus of Nola	June 22
Paul Miki	Feb. 6
Paul of the Cross	Oct. 19
Perpetua	Mar. 7
Peter — Chair of Peter	Feb. 22
Peter and Paul	June 29
Peter (and Marcellinus)	June 2
Peter Canisius	Dec. 21
Peter Chanel	Apr. 28
Peter Chrysologus	July 30
Peter Claver (U.S.A.)	Sept. 19
Peter Damian	Feb. 21
Philip	May 3
Philip Neri	May 26
Pius V	Apr. 30
Pius X	Aug. 21
Polycarp	Feb. 23
Pontian	Aug. 13
Presentation of Mary	Nov. 21
Presentation of the Lord	Feb. 2
Queenship of Mary	Aug. 22

Raphael	Sep. 29
Raymond of Penyafort	Jan. 7
Robert Bellarmine	Sep. 17
Romuald	June 19
Rose of Lima	Aug. 23
Sacred Heart	Friday after <i>Corpus Christi</i>
Scholastica	Feb. 10
Sebastian	Jan. 20
Seven Founders of the Order of Servites	Feb. 17
Simon	Oct. 28
Sixtus II	Aug. 7
Stanislaus	Apr. 11
Stephen	Dec. 26
Stephen of Hungary	Aug. 16
Sylvester I	Dec. 31
Theresa of Avila	Oct. 15
Theresa of the Child Jesus	Oct. 1
Thomas	July 3
Thomas Aquinas	Jan. 28
Thomas Beckett	Dec. 29
Thomas More	June 22
Timothy	Jan. 26
Titus	Jan. 26
Transfiguration	Aug. 6
Trinity Sunday	Sunday after Pentecost
Triumph of the Cross	Sep. 14
Turibius de Mongrovejo	Mar. 23
Venerable Bede	May 25
Vincent	Jan. 22
Vincent de Paul	Sep. 27
Vincent Ferrer	Apr. 5
Visitation	May 31
Wenceslaus	Sep. 28

HOMILY SERIES

ANGLICAN PREACHING

One of the important benefits of ecumenism is the sharing of insights among Christians of varying traditions. In this interview, an Anglican priest explains what preaching means in his Church.

The Reverend David Sinclair, ordained in 1961, has served at Belleville, Tweed and Kingston in the Diocese of Ontario. He is presently priest-in-charge of the Land O'Lakes parish, a grouping of several villages and three churches in a rugged and beautiful tourist area. He lives in Cloyne, Ontario, with his wife and two daughters.

In this interview with the editor, Father Sinclair shares his thoughts and experiences with readers of the Bulletin.

What part does preaching play in your Sunday eucharistic service?

The Anglican rite makes the sermon integral with the Sunday celebration of the eucharist. The Book of Common Prayer (1959) contains in a rubric concerning announcements and "other communications as are enjoined by lawful authority," the boldface words, **the sermon**. In the older English books from 1549 on, the same intent was voiced even more strongly ("here shall follow the sermon"). Thus an Anglican eucharist without a sermon would be as deficient as one without a canon.

The underlying aim of preaching at the eucharist is expressed in a prayer for the congregation within the intercession, "that, with meek heart and due reverence they may hear and receive thy holy word." If liturgy is to be the celebration by the people of God of the presence of Christ in their midst, reaching a climax in the sacramental communication of the divine presence, surely it is consistent with our understanding of the person of Christ to expect verbal as well as non-verbal contact.

Whatever the gifts of the particular preacher, he is blessed always with good material: the Good News of Jesus Christ. Just as good news reportage aims to bring the reader "into the action," good preaching brings Christ into the lives of those who hear.

Related to Readings

How close is the relationship between the sermon and the day's readings and prayers?

The relationship must be direct if the whole celebration (including the sermon) is to be an experience of Christ. What is read, and what is said about what is read, should elicit a response in the people to the impact of the word as presented in this particular set of circumstances.

The Anglican cycle of readings arises from our peculiar history. Most of the eucharistic propers are the same as the 16th century Roman Missal from which the Prayer Book came. These two appointed readings are supplemented by the cycle of the lectionary for use at the offices (morning and evening prayer for every day as well as Sundays). The pattern, then, is six readings for the day: Old Testament and New Testament lessons for the offices and an epistle and gospel for the eucharist. (The first eucharistic reading comes occasionally from the Old Testament, Acts, or Revelation.) Unfortunately modern Anglicans haven't the stamina to perform the liturgy in its entirety (mattins, litany and eucharist in the morning, back for evensong in the late afternoon), so instead of getting six readings they hear at the most two.

My usual rule for preaching is to take a key idea for the sermon from one of the readings for that particular service. Where a consistent theme is evident in other readings for the day, I try to bring them into play. Much of the time, though, the lectionary, based on a two-year scheme, corresponds only remotely with the theme of the eucharist of the day.

As for the response in prayer, we do have some beautiful collects written for the early English Prayer Books to reflect the thought of the epistle and gospel. Other collects are direct translations of the Latin which may or may not correspond in theme to the readings.

Although Canada has a recent Prayer Book revision (1959), in some respects our Church is still impressed by the English ideal of total uniformity within the realm. The great intercession, or prayer of the Church, in our rite is always the same, although permission to deviate from the fixed form is being granted by our bishops.

My hope is that future developments of the Prayer Book will provide for greater variety in authorized options as to readings and the form and intention of the prayers.

Related to this Assembly

Is there an emphasis on relating this sermon and this eucharist?

Let me see if I can separate this question from your last, since the readings and prayers are part of the whole. Do you mean here an attempt to relate the sermon to a specific celebration in a specific place by a certain group of people?

Yes, as long as we don't forget that each individual eucharistic celebration is part of the total offering of the whole Church.

The idea of a fixed liturgy, essentially the same in every Prayer Book of the Anglican communion, is our attempt to express universality. However, there may be very good purpose in having the flexibility to "tune" the liturgy to some special cause or group of people. When the occasion calls for a "Royal George," (if that term is new, it's a common name for a preacher's presentation piece in those communions in which clergy may "preach for a call"), it would be well to select readings connected to the sermon. Not that we should develop sets of readings for

National Pickle Week or what have you, but there are certain circumstances in which a votive eucharist is appropriate. Special occasions are kept within the framework of the whole Church by clearing any departure from the liturgy of the day with the bishop.

One secular festival that has found its way into the life of our communion in North America is Harvest Thanksgiving. Both the U.S.A. book and ours have propers for Harvest. The Americans fix the date, but we have a movable feast to be kept when appropriate. In this parish it's always a race to mark the celebration in the fall before the frost kills all the flowers and produce used to decorate the churches.

Generally speaking, though, we take the service the Prayer Book sets out for the day and use the sermon to relate the prayers and readings to the congregation gathered for worship. The content of the eucharist can be adapted to the needs of the moment through the manner of its presentation. Ritual, music and sermon can be adjusted to make the impact of the message of the whole Church fit the particular church.

How do you bring out the connection between God's word and the life of this congregation?

I suppose that's the major goal of the priestly life. One hopes to be a means whereby the word of God as revealed in history becomes the word of God for the lives of those to whom he ministers. I can't say I'm successful in this, but I can tell you how I try.

By total immersion in the life of God and the life of man, the priest is enabled to relate one to the other for his own life and for the lives of those committed to his care. I'm never sure whether the objective is a worldly holiness or a holy worldliness. The life of prayer and study of the scriptures finds its practical expression in pastoral activity. Experience, living with and among people, sharing trials and joys, triumphs and tragedies, sends the priest back to his study to verify and reflect upon the tremendous activity of God's love to man. Hopefully when the community gathers for common worship, the sermon brings to bear the common experience of the whole people of God throughout history upon the lives of those called to be the people of God today.

One great aid to this relating of God's word to life has come through participation in bible study groups with layfolk. If he can avoid the temptation to preach at such gatherings, the priest can gain wonderful insights into the impact of the scriptures on people where they live.

I suppose every priest finds his own way to enjoy life both with God and among men, and indeed methods must often be adjusted from parish to parish since the people may differ so greatly. For me, in this parish, the life of a total contemplative might give me more to preach about, but it would be preaching in a vacuum insofar as the people in the pews are concerned. Complete Christian activism, so popular today, might increase my social contact and awareness of the world, but would I lose sight of the only thing we have to bring to the world: the gospel of Christ?

Preparing Sunday's Sermon

Can you give us some practical thoughts on preparing for Sunday's preaching?

Not having any particular talent, for me preaching means hard work. I can tell when I am not prepared — the sermon is much too long.

Gathering sermon material is a constant process. Some preachers keep careful notebooks on their visiting, reading and counselling, but I'm not that well organized at the initial level. I do keep track of references once a sermon is written, and cross-index my "barrel" to avoid using the same idea two years running, and to help the search for notes that might be used in another context.

I work on a month's preaching at once — sometimes on related ideas, as is natural in some of the seasons in which Sunday readings develop a common theme, but much of the time on several distinct sermons. Each Monday morning I look again at the liturgy for the coming Sunday, sift through the notes made on these readings over the past month and then start to write. The first draft usually has enough material to last for two hours. Working whenever and wherever some time is available, I try to have the theme edited down to reasonable proportions by Thursday.

Even after eleven years in orders I can't avoid working Saturday night. There's a distilling process here that works only under pressure. My main worry approaching the fact of having to preach tomorrow is language: do I really understand what I am saying? It strikes me as easy to sound theologically profound: what takes all the work is making a profound idea simple.

Living with a passage of scripture casually for a month and intimately for a week, in the midst of all the rest of one's work and prayer, a sense develops of what God might be saying and want said on Sunday. If the preacher can truly make that message a part of himself, then the sermon becomes a real communication of the presence of Christ.

Varying Forms

What form does the Sunday sermon take in your tradition?

I'll have to beg off any sweeping statements about Anglican preaching in general because I haven't that broad or that recent experience. Having been in single-priest parishes for the past eight years I don't get much chance to sample what's going on.

There are several different types of sermons, the most common being the expository style. A close examination of a passage of scripture as to context, content and application is always valuable, especially when the passage comes from the liturgy of the day. I would say from contacts with other clergy and people from other parishes that it is common to relate the sermon to the service of the day.

Evangelistic sermons are popular in many areas. The word may have become burdened with some narrow interpretations, but in this setting I use it to

indicate a sermon with the express object of commanding from the listener a personal decision for Christ as Savior. I should hope that conversion is still an acceptable Christian experience, and evangelistic sermons can aid in that process. If the homiletic diet goes no further, however, there is the danger of developing great fervor with little foundation for the faith.

Didactic or teaching sermons enjoy some currency as well. Christ commands the mind as well as the heart, and a severe challenge to deep thought is good for a congregation. The heated “God is dead” debate of a few years ago (remember John A. T. Robinson, Anglican Bishop of Woolwich?) had the salutary effect of making preachers rethink their presentation of some of the classic doctrines of the Church.

A fourth type of sermon might be called “topical.” The object is to relate some burning issue or pressing cause to the word and will of God. Such preaching starts where people are in their daily lives and tries to lead them to an awareness of God in the particular situation. My own prejudiced experience with this type of sermon is that I suspect my being led to mount the preacher’s favorite hobby-horse, with God’s will running a distant second.

Basing the sermon on the liturgy for the day provides ample variety in itself. Indeed within one passage of scripture may lie the seeds of a sermon for careful exposition, evoking decisions from its hearers, elucidating some esoteric theology and making a relevant commentary on the events of the past week. Picking that seed out, fertilizing it, planting it and seeing it bear fruit in the lives of the congregation is the preacher’s task.

Past and Present Influences

What are some of the factors that have influenced preaching in your Church in Canada?

Historically we’re not that far from being a mission field of the Church of England, and strong preaching is a missionary tradition. In certain areas of the west, for instance, it is possible to tell which English missionary society established the work of the Church locally by the flavor of the preaching. In the east there may be more of a hangover from the “chaplaincy” period, in which most of the first clergy came with garrison units and stayed. Here in Eastern Ontario the dominant factor in the life of the Church was the Irish immigration of the 1840’s and later.

Through all these historical developments runs the common thread of strong (and often long) preaching. I came into the Anglican Church as a youth, and remember my relief to discover that the sermons lasted only forty minutes instead of an hour. So nearly as I can tell, the disciples of both the evangelical revival (who stressed personal conversion and abhorred ritual in the services) and the Oxford Movement (who re-emphasized the Catholic order of Anglicanism, but often were sidetracked by liturgical fussiness) used effective sermons as a means of reaching the people. I’ve met wonderful Christian people raised in parishes reflecting both viewpoints.

What about some current trends and developments in preaching in the Anglican Church?

For one thing there aren't as many forty minute sermons.

The old internal debates of the Anglican Church seem to have been smoothed over in the past few years, perhaps by the realization that while we were arguing about emphases in the presentation of the gospel, many people were growing away from the central fact of Christ. All churches have become aware of the need for more effective communication of the Good News to the world both within and without the recognized ecclesiastical structure. Where McLuhan rates preaching on his scale of media I don't know, but the Sunday sermon can still be a potent force.

Dialogue sermons have been used well in some settings, as have multi-media presentations. For the average parish, however, the positive trend is simply to make more telling use of the fact the people expect a sermon at services of worship. Part of the increased effectiveness comes from attempts to relate the sermon to the rest of what's happening on Sunday morning within the walls of St. Swithin's-under-the-hill.

What about preaching at services other than the eucharist?

I almost brought that up when discussing our schedule of Sunday readings. If you are working at the restoration of sermons at the eucharist, we're still working at the restoration of the eucharist at sermons.

Not that the Anglican Church officially down-graded the eucharist as the chief act of worship on Sundays. In fact, the intent was the opposite: that the people learn to participate in the liturgy in their own language and receive the sacrament whenever a celebration was held. The unfortunate effect of the rubric in the 1549 and subsequent rites, stating that there should be no celebration unless people were to communicate, was that priests found themselves unable to offer the eucharist at all except on major festivals. To advance from the standard of "Easter duty" to regular reception overnight was beyond the capability of the English people. Although the Ante-Communion (liturgy of the word, creed, sermon and intercession) was suggested as an alternative to the eucharist, the Anglican tradition of public morning prayer as the most common service on Sundays was the end result. Oddly enough a sermon is not demanded at morning prayer.

Within the time of my own ministry the frequency of celebrations of the eucharist at the main Sunday service has increased from monthly to twice monthly on the average, with more and more parishes coming to the standard of weekly parish communions.

The experience of non-eucharistic services is not all bad. "Fringe Christians" and outsiders to the Church can sometimes be reached by an effective presentation of the gospel in the setting of readings, prayers and music of mattins. A celebration of the eucharist, demanding a prior commitment if participation in the liturgy is to be meaningful, would probably not achieve this.

Gatherings of people at which a sermon might be preached to present the claim of Christ for their souls do happen. An example of this is the interdenomi-

national service held on summer Sundays in the local provincial park. Some very rewarding results have come from preaching there in a very informal service.

Non-eucharistic liturgies based on word and prayer can provide a suitable mounting for the gospel-jewel. Further devotion of the faithful can be aided at such services, too. (Our evensong and sermon can be a beautiful and stimulating ending for a Sunday.)

Daily Preaching

What is thought in your tradition about preaching every day?

If my history books are correct, eucharist and sermon was the daily pattern in Calvin's Geneva. In our church in Canada some older Anglo-Catholic parishes have had a daily eucharist for years, but most seem to omit the sermon.

Daily sermons mean a great deal of work for the preacher. They are a different type of sermon from the Sunday effort: short, concise commentaries on one of the readings, single point instructions and the like are more applicable in these smaller gatherings. I think we'll see more and more of this in response to the terrifying pace of life today, with its shift-work, three day weeks and so on. While I'm still a firm believer in the need for Christians to come together for the divine liturgy on the Lord's Day, if some cannot come on Sundays but will gather in churches or elsewhere at other times for the celebration of the presence of Christ, the priest should be prepared, in season and out of season, to preach the word.

Ecumenical Sharing

How can Anglican and Roman priests share ideas on preaching with one another?

More and more sharing is being done every day by priests in overlapping or neighboring parishes. Most priests of both our communions have discovered that we have a great deal in common both in faith and practice, and even a pooling of ignorance can help face mutual problems.

The generation of clergy coming out of seminaries today will have done a great deal of their studying side by side with postulants from other churches. I wish we had had that opportunity.

On-going education, vocational retraining and refresher courses are very popular in our Church now, and I suspect in yours. There is no reason for not working at this sort of thing together, joining in the study of the word of God and the examination of the life of the Church in the world with a view to furthering the common task of making Christ real for our people. In our area we have marked the Octave of Prayer for Christian Unity for several years now with a joint study day shared by our diocese, the Archdiocese of Kingston, and the Kingston Presbytery of the United Church.

I mentioned earlier our need for expansion of the cycle of propers for the eucharist. Just imagine the local consultation and support that could occur if we were to use your new three-year cycle when it reaches its final form!

* * *

Readers are invited to share in this series by pointing out needs and problems and by making suggestions for improved listening and preaching.

In the next issue, our sixth article in the homily series will look at the dialogue homily.

SCRIPTURE IN THE CHURCH

“All the clergy must hold fast to the sacred scriptures through diligent sacred reading and careful study, especially the priests of Christ and others, such as deacons and catechists, who are legitimately active in the ministry of the word. This cultivation of scripture is required lest any of them become ‘an empty preacher of the word of God outwardly, who is not a listener to it inwardly’ (St. Augustine), since they must share the abundant wealth of the divine word with the faithful committed to them, especially in the sacred liturgy.

“This sacred Synod earnestly and specifically urges all the Christian faithful, too, especially religious, to learn by frequent reading of the divine scriptures the ‘excelling knowledge of Jesus Christ’ (Phil. 3:8). ‘For ignorance of the scriptures is ignorance of Christ.’ (St. Jerome)

“Therefore, they should gladly put themselves in touch with the sacred text itself, whether it be through the liturgy, rich in the divine word, or through devotional reading, or through instructions suitable for the purpose and other aids which, in our time, are commendably available everywhere, thanks to the approval and active support of the shepherds of the Church. And let them remember that prayer should accompany the reading of sacred scripture, so that God and man may talk together; for ‘we speak to him when we pray; we hear him when we read the divine sayings’ (St. Ambrose).”

(Vatican II, Revelation, no. 25)

GOOD NEWS

As this issue of the Bulletin goes to press, we are happy to be able to announce that three major books are nearing completion:

- **Lectionary:** The book of readings is now in its final stages, and should be available by the beginning of May.
- **Confirmation:** A combined ritual and pastoral guide has been prepared, and will be ready in the near future.
- **Funeral rite:** The Canadian ritual for funerals is now being typeset.

These books have been prepared by the National Liturgical Office to serve the needs of Canadian parishes and communities. Full information will be mailed to all parishes soon, and will be included in the next issue of the Bulletin.

BAPTISMAL NAMES

For more years than most of us would care to admit, parents have been naming their babies after movie stars, favorite uncles, political leaders or grandparents.

If remembered at all, patron saints come near the last place in consideration. How many people know the saint whose name they bear? How few know something about their patron, or celebrate his feast, or pray to him?

The members of each parish liturgy community are invited to ask themselves whether the present state of affairs is good or bad; whether it is a temporary phase or a permanent trend.

May we suggest that you reread the rite of baptism, and note the place given to the patron's name. During the baptismal ceremony for children, the parents announce the child's Christian name, and the patron saint is addressed in the litany. In preparing for adult baptism, the catechumen's Christian name and its meaning are announced to the assembled community. Throughout the baptismal ceremony, the candidate is frequently addressed by his name in Christ.

What recommendations can your parish liturgy committee offer to promote a greater use of Christian names in future?

Day of the Lord

By an apostolic tradition which took its origin
from the very day of Christ's resurrection,
the Church celebrates the paschal mystery every eighth day;
with good reason then,
this bears the name of the Lord's day . . .

For on this day

Christ's faithful should come together in one place
so that, by hearing the word of God
and taking part in the eucharist,
they may call to mind
the passion, the resurrection, and the glorification
of the Lord Jesus,
and may thank God who "has begotten us again,
through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,
unto a living hope" (1 Pet. 1:3).

Hence the Lord's day is the original feast day,
and it should be proposed to the piety of the faithful
and taught to them in such a way
that it may become in fact
a day of joy and of freedom from work.

Other celebrations, unless they be truly of overriding importance,
must not have precedence over this day,
which is truly the foundation and nucleus
of the whole liturgical year.

(Liturgy constitution, no. 106)