

national bulletin on

liturgy

volume 8

november-december 1975

51

CHRISTIAN INITIATION



National Bulletin on Liturgy

A review published by the Canadian Catholic Conference

This Bulletin is primarily pastoral in scope, and is prepared for members of parish liturgy committees, readers, musicians, singers, teachers, religious and clergy, and all who are involved in preparing and celebrating the community liturgy.

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Business Office PUBLICATIONS SERVICE
90 Parent Avenue
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 7B1

Published five times a year
Appears every two months,
except July and August

Subscription: \$6.00 a year; outside Canada, \$7.00

Price per copy: \$1.50; outside Canada, \$1.75

Subscriptions available through Publications Service of the CCC, or through the chancery office in each diocese in Canada.

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International Standard Serial Number: CN ISSN 0084-8425.

Legal deposit: National Library, Ottawa, Canada.

Second Class Mail — Registration Number 2994.

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volume 8 - number 51
november-december 1975

CHRISTIAN INITIATION

The process of becoming a Christian involves much more than the individuals who are to be baptized. To be understood in its fullness, Christian initiation needs to be seen from many points of view:

- **Tradition:** Adult initiation is the norm for the Christian Church. A long period of serious preparation is needed before persons may enter the Christian community; in turn, the community is to support them by prayer and example.
- **Community:** The local diocesan Church in the universal community of faith; the bishop's role; the parish community — its ministries and responsibilities; preparing people for initiation; celebrating and renewing Christian initiation; witness of Christ in life and in liturgy.
- **Adults:** Attracted to the Christian way; first steps; growing closer to Christ and his people; learning from the community and ministering to it; entering the covenant community.
- **Present dilemma:** The original unity of initiation has disintegrated; our tradition is unknown to many; a distorted view resulting from breakdown of one unified rite; confusion from attempts to rationalize what we have inherited.

Though the picture may seem bleak, the Church has now begun to take some positive steps in renewing Christian initiation. This issue of the Bulletin presents an overview of the situation, both ideal and practical, and suggests some practical steps forward. In 1977, it is hoped, another issue will pursue the question of the catechumenate in a manner suited to our pastoral conditions.

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EDITORIAL

MY CHOSEN PEOPLE: A VISION

God the Father loves us. So much does he love us that he has sent his Son to bring us eternal life by suffering and dying for us; the Father sent his Spirit to raise up Jesus as Lord so that we might share with him in both his death to sin and his life for God.

In the fullness of his love, our heavenly Father chose us in Christ from all eternity *to be his beloved people*, his own adopted sons and daughters. Set aside to be people of prayer and holiness, we are to be his witnesses and to praise him by our lives, our words, our worship.

Baptized in water and the Spirit, nourished by the body and blood of Christ, we are the body of Christ. Like our Lord and brother, we are to be servants — of God and of all his people. Jesus was the suffering servant, the one chosen by God to bring salvation to the world; we are to follow Christ, to be the servant community which suffers and prays and works and lives to give glory to God and to lead his people to unending life.

The people of God: The Father chose Israel to be his covenant people. In Christ, God made a new covenant: in the waters of baptism and the blood of Jesus, we become the new covenanted people of God. It is we who are called in Christ to be the priestly nation, the royal family of God. In Christ we are the ones who offer the praise of creation to the Father; we are the ones who work with the Lord Jesus to lead our human race back to God under the leadership of our savior.

The Lord rejuvenates his Church by bringing new members into living communities of faith. In the process of Christian initiation, the early Church carefully prepared candidates by introducing them to the liturgy and the Christian life over a long period of time. The serious approach contributed greatly to the vitality of the first centuries of the Church's life. But as membership in the Church became easier and more socially acceptable, the idea of Christian initiation gradually atrophied, and its unity was distorted and lost.

Now the Church has restored the process of adult initiation as *the norm*, and calls on us to make it viable in our country. A return to the full process of Christian initiation in our communities is the way the Church is continuing to renew its life. This is the way that God is calling us to live as his chosen people.

The road ahead is not easy. There are many problems to face, confused attitudes to rectify, misplaced rites to renew. A lot of present and past practices need study, understanding renewal or rejection: indeed, the path before us is going to be difficult. Yet this is the way that Jesus' Spirit is leading us to a fervent Christian community, to a living liturgy growing out of the vitality of daily living, and to the full stature in Christ to which we are all called. A return to the full practice of the process of Christian initiation is the way to the true Christian spirit, to be shared by all the chosen people of God.

HISTORY OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION

To understand Christian initiation today, we need to see it in perspective. These three articles describe Christian initiation briefly, from its beginnings in the time of Christ and his apostles until the days before the Second Vatican Council.

What Is Christian Initiation ?

◦ *Initiation*: Many primitive tribes and religions had a form of initiation by which a young person became an adult member of the community. The procession of initiation involved leaving childhood behind (“When I was a child . . .” — 1 Cor. 13:11), being instructed in the lore and beliefs of the tribal religion, and returning to the community as a man or a woman, with adult responsibilities toward all its members. The mystery religions of the Greek and Roman civilizations developed such initiation processes into an impressive ritual.

◦ *Christian initiation* is to be understood as a combination of teaching and liturgical rites by which a person, led by God’s grace and guided by his Church, turns away from sin and becomes a follower of Jesus in the Christian community. Through the long process of initiation, which climaxes in the sacramental celebration of baptism, confirmation and communion, the person becomes a new man, a new creation in Christ, with a new relationship to God and the community.

NEW TESTAMENT BEGINNINGS

Jewish background: In the time of our Lord, a pagan man who wished to become a member of the Jewish faith had to follow a definite pattern. After instruction in the beliefs and practices of the Jews, he was circumcised, baptized — preferably total immersion in 'living' (running) water — and then went to offer sacrifice in the temple. The son of a Jewish mother became a Jew and a son of the covenant by circumcision a week after his birth (see Lk. 2:21).

Baptism of Jesus: The model for Christian baptism is found in the gospel accounts of Jesus' baptism, as recorded in Matthew (3:13-17), Mark (1:9-11), and Luke (3:21-22). At his baptism in the Jordan, Jesus was anointed by the Spirit as the suffering servant of God (see Lk. 4:16-21 and Is. 53:11-12). Jesus' baptism is a great manifestation (epiphany) of the Trinity: the Father proclaims his beloved Son, to whom we are to listen with obedience; the Spirit descends upon Jesus and anoints him as the servant who is to bear the sins of his people.¹

Symbolism of water: The bible sees several meanings in water. It is the source of life — the Spirit hovered over the primal waters (Gen. 1:2); rain brings life to the crops; in the desert, water is necessary for survival. Water can also be the source of destruction and death: thus, the flood cleansed the sin-laden earth in Gen. 7. The people of God were saved by passing through the Red Sea, while the Egyptians were destroyed in it (Exod. 14). These thoughts are picked up by the Church, which presents baptism as dying and rising (Rom. 6), as a birth into new life (Jn. 3), and a new creation (2 Cor. 5:17).

Jesus' teaching on baptism is summarized simply in several gospel passages. In Jn. 3:1-15, he emphasizes new birth by water and the Spirit, so that a person may enter God's kingdom. He also relates baptism to his death by his reference to being lifted up (crucified); a similar connection is made in Mk. 10:33-40, and Lk. 12:50, when he refers to his passion and death as a baptism. At the end of Matthew's gospel, we see the Lord sending his Church forth to teach all nations to be his disciples, and to baptize them (Mt. 28:19-20). The idea of repentance, so clear in the teaching of John the Baptist (see Mk. 1:4), is suggested in Matthew by the notes of obedience and discipleship. The importance of faith is clearly described throughout John's gospel.

The Apostolic Church

From its earliest days, the Church repeated the invitation of Jesus and of John the Baptist, to repent and to turn back to God. On the first Christian Pentecost, we hear Peter's sermon, calling on his hearers to turn away from their sins, and to be baptized in the name of Jesus, who was anointed by God as Messiah and Lord. In this way their sins would be forgiven, and they would receive God's gift, his Holy Spirit (see Acts 2:38-39; Mt. 3:11). The simple catechesis (kerygma) is outlined in Acts 2:22-24 and 10:36-43, moving from the baptism of Jesus to his resurrection.

¹ The Eastern Churches soon began to celebrate the Epiphany as the feast of the Lord's baptism: see Bulletin 47 pages 23-27, for the history and development of the Epiphany liturgy.

Early accounts of baptism continue this simple approach: Philip and the royal official from Ethiopia (Acts 8), Peter and Cornelius (Acts 10); in Paul's case, the Lord Jesus sends Ananias to Paul, and he was baptized (Acts 9). In each of these cases, the people were anointed by the Spirit, who poured out his gifts upon them.

The New Testament epistles could be described as thoughts about the consequences and responsibilities resulting from our baptism in Christ. St. Paul's letters show us a developing understanding of the meaning of becoming a Christian. The sixth chapter of Romans is to be read in its context of God's plan for our salvation, his mercy to his chosen people, his gift of the Spirit, his command that we are to love one another. The first letter of Peter is strongly baptismal in its content. John's first epistle tells us how we should live as the children of the God of love.

What about confirmation? The Church's understanding of the sacrament we now call confirmation developed gradually; for a long time, its effects are seen as a part of baptism. The New Testament Church is certainly aware of the gifts of the Spirit, given before or after baptism (compare Acts 10:44-48 and 2:38). Imposition of hands is known as a way of giving the Spirit (see Acts 8:17 and 19:6). But for a long time, the Church kept its rites of Christian initiation together, in one sacramental celebration, and did not break them down into the individual rites and ceremonies that we have known.

PRESENT POSSIBILITIES

To restore the rites of Christian initiation to their proper position in the life of the average parish will take many years. Right now, however, there are some ways in which we can all work toward these ideals:

- *Better preparation* for all who are involved in the celebration of infant baptism — including priests, parish baptismal team, parents and godparents, choir, readers, and others. More time spent in prayer, discussion and earnest preparation will reap a fruitful harvest for the entire community.

- *Better celebration of baptism*: we need signs that are used with meaning and care; use of the proper times for baptism. Indiscriminate baptism is to be avoided: all need to work for a celebration in faith of a sacrament of faith (see Liturgy constitution, no. 9).

- *Community involvement*: More efforts continue to be necessary in order to involve the community in the celebration of the sacraments: they are not private events but milestones in the life of the faith community.

- *Proper preparation of adults and older children* in accord with the guidance given in the adult rite.

Each time we prepare and celebrate the sacraments as well as we are able, we promote the work of the Lord. A good celebration helps to deepen the faith of all.

May the Lord continue to help us to proclaim his glory in the liturgy and in the life of our Christian communities.

INITIATION IN THE EARLY CHURCH

From the teaching and practice of Jesus and the apostles, the first generations of Christians gradually developed a process of initiation into their way of life.

Early References

Didache: Evidence on the Church's baptismal practices is found in the *Didache*, or *The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, a brief book, possibly from Syria or Egypt, and dating somewhere between the first and third centuries. Rediscovered in 1873, it gives a Christian revision of the instructions for converts to Judaism, and then some practical guidance on baptism, eucharist, visiting prophets and other matters of Church discipline.

Chapter 7 notes that after the person has been instructed, he is baptized in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, with water poured three times upon his head. Living (flowing) water is used, if possible. Before baptism, the one who baptizes and the candidate fast for one or two days; other members of the community are invited to join in this fast.

The eucharist is celebrated on the Lord's day (chapter 10). Only those who have been baptized in the name of the Lord may eat and drink of the eucharistic meal (chapter 9). Some quotations from this book were included in Bulletin 43, pages 80-81.

Justin: In Rome about 150 A.D., St. Justin, a Christian layman who was later martyred, described the Christian rites of baptism and eucharist in an explanation of the faith written to the emperor, Antoninus Pius.

After people have been instructed in the Christian teaching, and believe it and promise to live according to it, they are prepared for baptism. They are taught to pray, to fast, and to ask for the forgiveness of their sins.

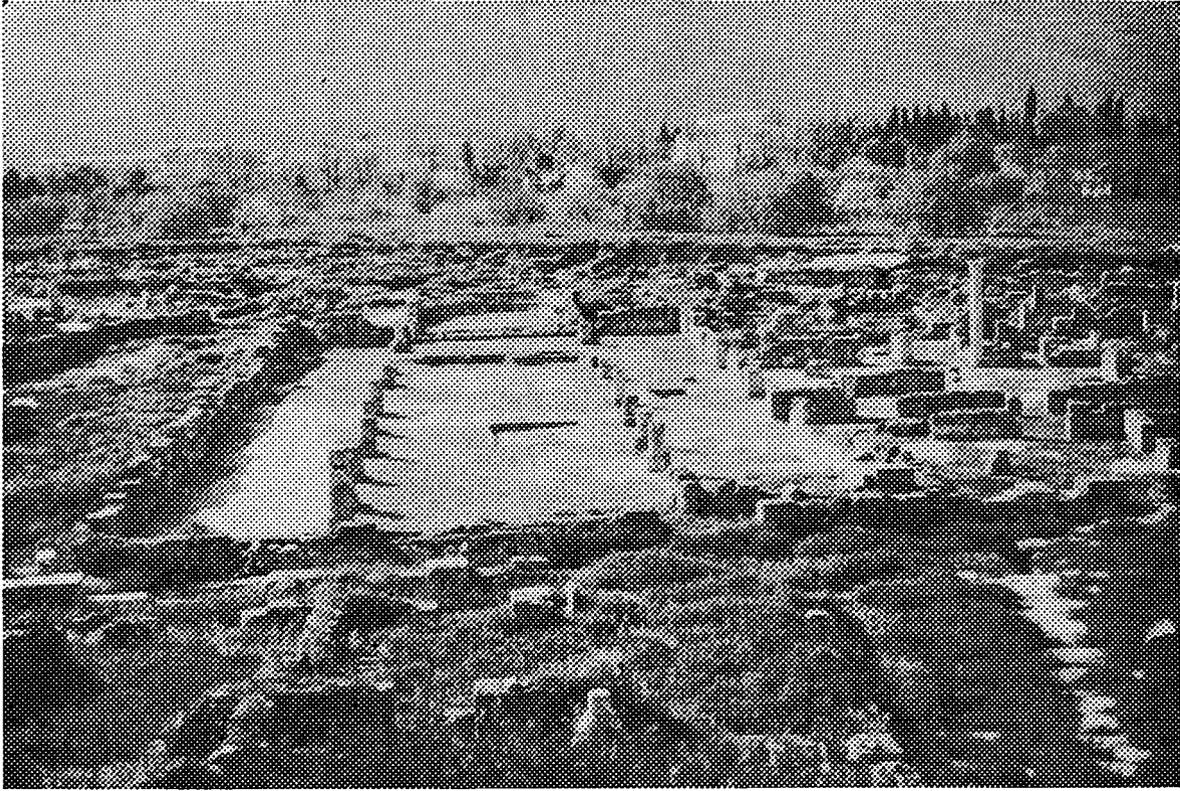
The community fasts with them before their baptism. The candidates are baptized in "a place where there is water." Repenting of their sins, they are born into new life by being washed in the water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Then the new Christians are led to the assembled brothers and sisters. All pray together for the community, for the newly baptized, and for all mankind. They ask God to help them to live as Christ has directed, to be good citizens, and to gain eternal life. This prayer concludes with the kiss of peace.

During the eucharist which follows immediately, the president offers a prayer of thanksgiving "with all his might." All who are present give their assent by saying *Amen* (Hebrew for "may it be so," he explains). All receive the flesh and blood of Christ under the forms of bread and wine.

A Clear Picture

The practice of the Church at Rome at the beginning of the third century gives us a clear picture of the process of initiation. Writing around the year 215, the presbyter Hippolytus describes how pagans became Christians. His book, *The Apostolic Tradition*, is still of importance today, for the process and rites given



St. Augustine's church: The remains of St. Augustine's cathedral at Hippo (now Bône, in Algeria), taken at Easter 1959. The photograph is taken from the front entrance. The pillar standing at the right is part of the baptismal font.

A close up of the presbyterium (sanctuary), showing the benches for the presbyters and the place in the center where Augustine's cathedra was placed, is to be seen in New Catholic Encyclopedia (McGraw-Hill, 1967), vol. 6, page 1137, under "Hippo Regius."

there remain as the foundation and basis of what we do today in all the major Christian Churches.

Catechumenate: The period of preparation for baptism was a lengthy one, marked from time to time by liturgical rites celebrating various stages along the way.

- *Admission to the catechumenate:* Before being admitted to be a hearer of the word, the person was examined on his reasons for becoming a Christian, and on his way of life. The people who brought him had to testify that he was ready to hear the word.

- *Prayer and teaching:* The catechumenate lasted three years, and during this time the catechumens were instructed. Their way of life was to reflect concern for the sick and needy, and they were to be active in well-doing. When in church, they were separated from the believers, and could not join in their prayers or in the kiss of peace. After the catechumens' instruction and prayer, their teacher laid hands on them, prayed for them, and dismissed them.

Final preparations: For some time before Easter, those who were to be baptized were set apart.¹ Their lives were examined once again, and their sponsors testified about them. Then they were permitted to hear the gospel for the first time.²

- *Daily exorcisms:* Each day, they were exorcised with the laying on of hands; as the time of baptism came closer, the bishop exorcised each one of them. The final exorcism was given on the day we now call Holy Saturday.

- *Paschal fast:* On the Friday and Saturday before Easter, they joined the entire Church in the solemn paschal fast.³

Solemn initiation rites: The night before Easter Sunday was spent in prayer and vigil, with the entire community listening to scripture readings and instructions.

The baptism took place in a separate room or area. At cockcrow, the bishop prayed over the water flowing through the baptismal tank. The candidates stripped completely. Then the bishop gave thanks over oil, known as oil of thanksgiving (similar in use to our chrism); he also exorcised some oil of exorcism.

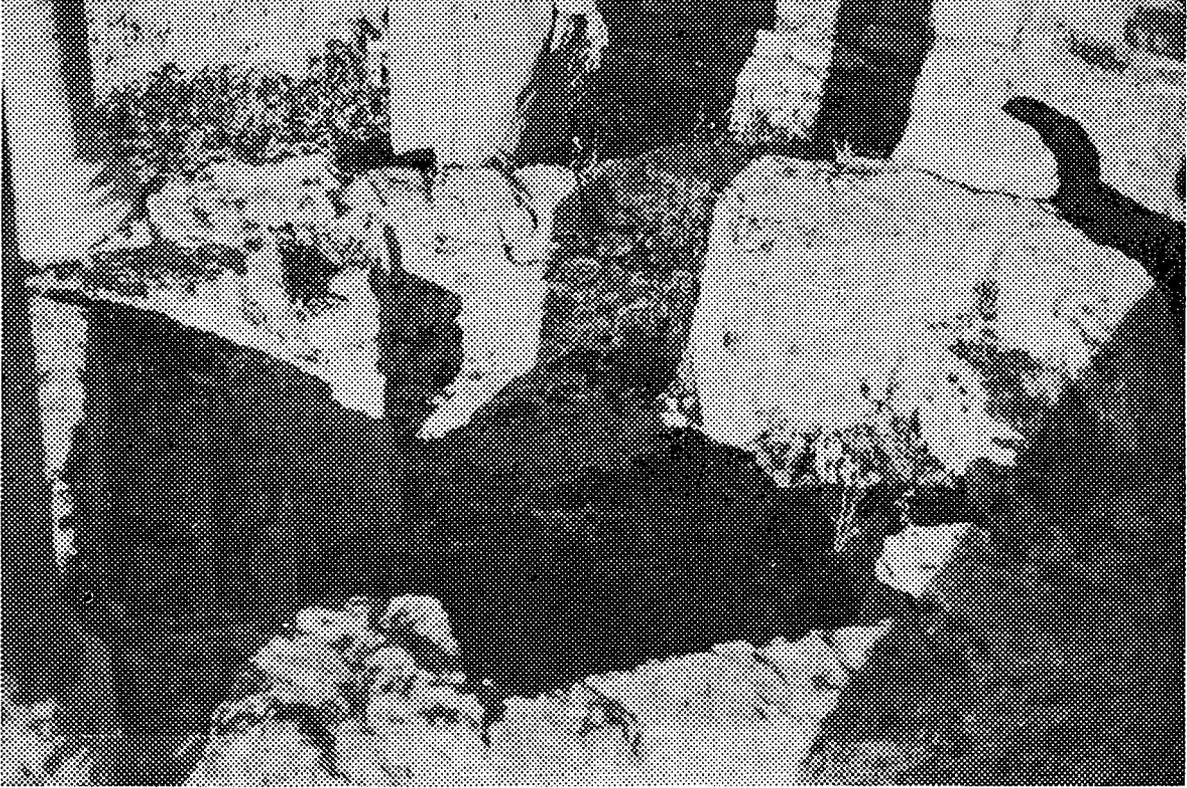
- *Prebaptismal anointing:* After each candidate renounced Satan, his servants, and his works, a presbyter anointed him with the oil of exorcism. (In those days, anointing normally meant the entire body, not a dab on one spot.)

- *Baptism:* The candidate went down into the water. The presbyter placed his hand on his head, and asked: "Do you believe in God, the almighty Father?" When the person answered, "I believe," he dipped him in the water. Similar

¹ At a later date, this preparatory period contributed to the development of Lent: see Bulletin 47, pages 31-33. The revised rite of adult initiation says that Lent is customarily the time of illumination, the final period of preparation for baptism during the Easter vigil (Rite, no. 21). This rite is described more fully in *Restored rite for adults* in this issue.

² While only baptized Christians were permitted to be present and take part in the eucharist, the catechumens were permitted to be present for the liturgy of the word; then they were dismissed from the assembly, and had their own period of instruction, prayer and exorcism. Rome was unique in not letting the catechumens hear the gospel; all the other Churches let the catechumens hear the gospel throughout their years of instruction and formation.

³ The Second Vatican Council restored the paschal fast, which was the tradition of the Church from at least the second century. (See Constitution on the liturgy, no. 110.)



St. Augustine's baptismal font: This small font was used by St. Augustine in celebrating the sacraments of initiation at the Easter vigil. Each candidate walked down the steps into the water, was baptized, and came out of the water, a new creation in Christ. The size of the font may be judged from the person standing behind it, at the top center of the photograph.

questions about faith in the Son and the Spirit led to the second and third immersion.⁴

- *First anointing after baptism:* When the person came up out of the water, the presbyter anointed him with the oil of thanksgiving. Then the candidate dried and dressed, and was brought into the church.

- *Anointing by the bishop:* The bishop laid hands on the newly baptized people, and prayed over them. He then poured the oil of thanksgiving from his hand on the forehead of each person, and signed him on the forehead.

- *Praying with the Church:* Then the new members of the Church were able to join for the first time in the prayer of the faithful, which concluded with the kiss of peace.

- *Eucharist:* The deacons carried the offerings to the bishop, including those brought by the candidates in preparation for their first Mass. The bishop proclaimed the eucharistic prayer. At communion, the new Christians received “the heavenly bread in Christ Jesus,” and then drank three times from each of three cups — one of water, one of milk mixed with honey, and finally the eucharistic cup.

Postbaptismal catechesis: After the solemn rites of initiation, the new members of the Christian community were to please God, to live good lives by devoting themselves to the Church, practising what they had learned, and thus advance in the service of God. If necessary, the bishop was to give the new believers any further instruction privately.

Hippolytus is of great importance in the history of Christian initiation. He gives us the first complete picture of the process of initiation. His influence also extends to the present, for the revised Catholic rites are based on his work, as are the more recent revisions by various Anglican and Protestant Churches.

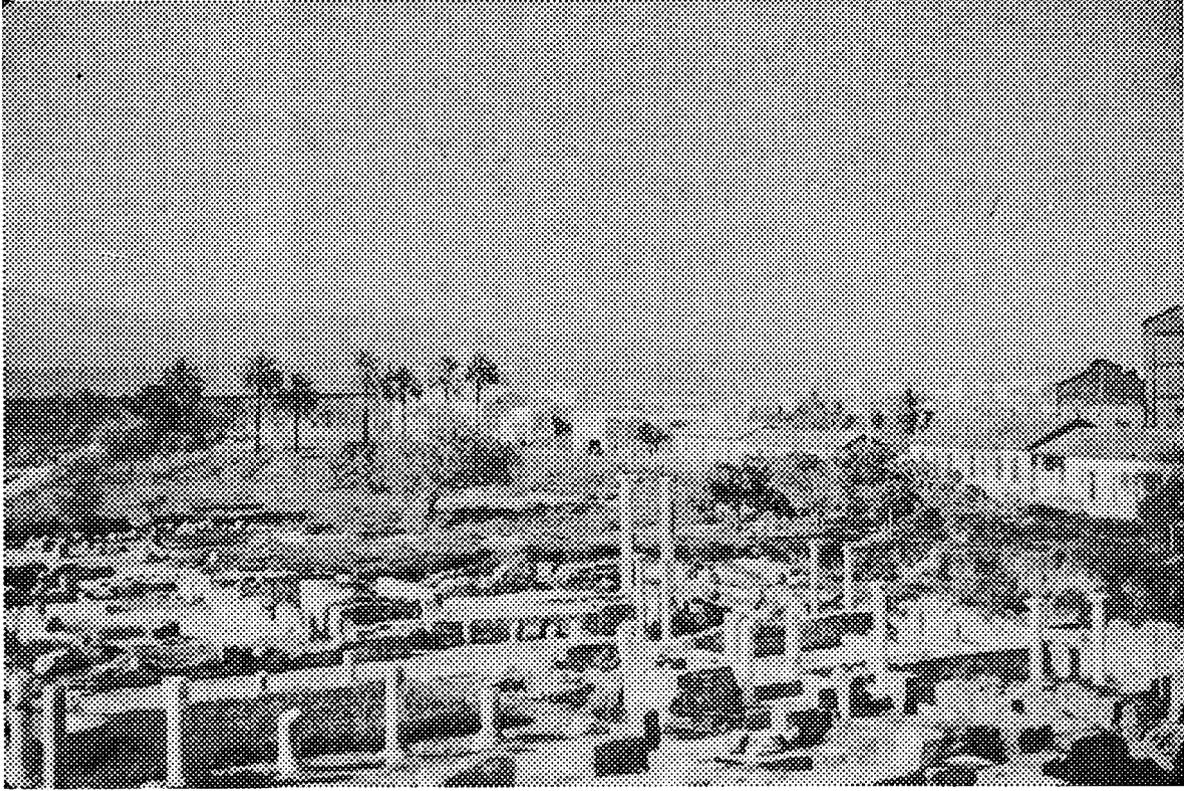
Later Developments

A century later, in 313, Constantine ended persecution of Christians and made it possible for the Church to take a full part in the civil life of the Roman Empire. One of the results was that it gradually became fashionable and even normal to become a Christian. Julian the Apostate tried to restore paganism in the 360s, but without much success.

- *Cyril:* As the number of converts increased, the Church’s catechumenate expanded and developed. In the second half of the fourth century, for example, Cyril of Jerusalem developed his catecheses for the final lenten preparation of those getting ready for Easter baptism; during Easter week, he explained the sacraments of initiation that they had experienced. This period of postbaptismal catechesis was called *mystagogia*.

- *Ambrose:* At the same time, Milan in northern Italy was hearing St. Ambrose as he prepared the candidates for baptism, and gave them their *mystagogia* during Easter week.

⁴ The wording of our present baptismal profession of faith is based on Hippolytus and the later Roman baptismal creed, which we now know as the apostles’ creed.



Another view of Augustine's church, looking toward the baptismal font, whose pillars are visible near the center of the picture.

● *Augustine*: One of Ambrose's converts, St. Augustine had a flourishing catechumenate in Hippo (now Bône, in Algeria.) Pictures of his church are on pages 280, 282, 284.

Conclusion

The early Church celebrated the process of Christian initiation in definite stages:

Catechumenate: Examination, admission; instruction, prayer, exorcism; practice of a Christian way of life; exclusion from the eucharist, prayer with the faithful, and the kiss of peace.

Immediate preparation for the sacraments: Some time before Easter, the candidates for baptism were set apart, and examined on their way of life. They entered a time of more intense spiritual preparation, concluding with the paschal fast (on the days we now call Good Friday and Holy Saturday).

Rites of initiation: In the midst of an all-night vigil, the candidates are baptized, anointed by the bishop, and nourished with the eucharistic food. Their initiation as Christians concludes with full participation in the eucharist for the first time.

Postbaptismal teaching: Some form of catechesis explained the sacraments of initiation they had experienced. Because of the *discipline of the secret*, these rites were not revealed to them beforehand.

* * *

The early Church's rites of initiation concluded the process of initiation. These rites, celebrated in one ceremony, were (in our terms) baptism, confirmation, eucharist.

● No one separated them into distinct events: they were all part of one rite of initiation.

● No one thought of the anointing by the bishop as a separate rite or event. It was the public acceptance or welcome for those who had been baptized in a place out of sight of the congregation.

● The process of initiation took several years. The rites of initiation, which crowned and completed this process, took place during the Easter vigil.

The unity of the sacraments of initiation is now being restored — after a long age of some 1400 years — by the renewed rite of adult initiation.

DISINTEGRATION: DECLINE AND FALL

From the simple celebration of the sacraments of initiation in one unbroken rite, a number of extraneous developments led to the distortion and shattering of the unity of Christian initiation.

It is a fact of liturgy that liturgical practices rarely die. Even when the circumstances and setting which give them meaning have been reversed or done away with, the rites continue on — even when they make little sense in their new setting. Perhaps the clearest example of such a happening was the performance of the Easter vigil ceremonies, with all their references to darkness and night, in the bright sunshine of Holy Saturday morning.

As circumstances varied down through the centuries, three distinct changes took place in the initiation rites:

- The baptism of children became the usual celebration, and the initiation of adults quite rare;
- The full rites of adult initiation continued at first to be carried out for children on various occasions; gradually some of these were summarized, or put together on one day;
- Then other circumstances led to the gradual separation of the sacraments of initiation into distinct and rather unrelated events.

A brief trip down this twisting and confused path will help us to see these changes more clearly.

Baptism of Children

New Testament: The scriptures throw little light on the practice of infant baptism in the early Church. Several accounts in Acts mention the baptism of the people of the household and members of the family (as in Acts 11:14; 16:15; 16:33; 18:8; see also 1 Cor. 1:16). The fact that Timothy was raised in faith by his mother and grandmother is suggested in 2 Tim. 1:5 (see also Acts 16:1-3), but this, like the passages on blessing children (Mk. 10:13-16; Mt. 9:13-15; Lk. 18:15-17) gives no definite proof one way or the other about infant baptism. What is important to remember is that the first generations of the Church considered adult baptism, with repentance for one's personal sins, as its normal practice.

Hippolytus (A.D. 215) casually mentions the possibility of baptizing children along with their parents in the Easter vigil rites. In such a case the children are baptized before the adults. If old enough, they speak for themselves; otherwise, their parents or another member of their family will speak for them. They are baptized, anointed by the bishop with the oil of thanksgiving, and receive communion with the rest of the adults in the group. Hippolytus makes no mention of the initiation of children born to Christian parents.

Tertullian: Around the beginning of the third century, Tertullian in North Africa was suggesting that children should not be baptized, since there was the possibility that they would later break their baptismal promises. Why should innocence hurry forward to gain the remission of sins? He also suggests that those who are single should not be initiated until they marry or are firm in their conti-

nence. (His thinking is overshadowed by his belief that there is but one chance for forgiveness of sins after baptism.)

Augustine: In Africa in the first part of the fifth century, adults often remained catechumens for years (as Augustine himself did). Each year, at the beginning of Lent, he would invite these catechumens to sign up for baptism and for the instructions leading up to it. Augustine also refers to the baptism of children too young to understand; he points out that the sponsors speak for the child in renouncing Satan and professing faith in Christ.

John the deacon: Writing in Rome about the year 500, John described the rites of initiation and their meaning. The lengthy catechumenate was now compressed into the few weeks before Easter, since most of the "catechumens" were infants who did not understand what was happening. Their parents or other people presented them for the rites of initiation. John explained the custom of infant initiation by noting this: since their damnation came through Adam's fault, their salvation should come through the profession of faith by other people.

Adult Rites Celebrated for Children

The rite of initiation varied from country to country during the medieval period. Some examples:

Rome (sixth to twelfth centuries): While baptism was celebrated here only at Easter and Pentecost in the time of John the deacon, the rites of the catechumenate were compressed into the three weeks before the vigil service. The scrutinies¹ were first celebrated on Sunday in a room away from the assembly, and then were transferred to weekdays. The rites were celebrated as though the infants understood what was being said (we ourselves need go back only ten years to the direct descendants of such rites).

Baptism by immersion took place during the Easter vigil celebrations, using the question and answer format known to Hippolytus. A bishop anointed the child's head with chrism. Then the infant received communion during Mass, usually under the species of wine alone.

Until the twelfth century, the rite of initiation remained stable, with baptism, confirmation and eucharist celebrated together in one undivided rite.

Some exceptions in the complete rite of initiation were made at Rome: at a time of high infant mortality, those not expected to survive until the following Easter or Pentecost would be baptized and given communion by a presbyter; a similar practice was followed if an adult catechumen became seriously ill. If the person recovered, he was brought to the bishop for the laying on of hands and the anointing with chrism.

¹ The scrutinies were public examinations of the faith and way of life of the adult candidates for baptism. By the time of Leo the Great (440-461), the scrutinies consisted mainly of exorcisms. These were celebrated at Rome on the third, fourth and fifth Sundays of Lent, in the presence of the gathered community.

They have been restored to these Sundays by the revised calendar: see *Rite of Christian initiation of adults*, nos. 25 (1), 153-180. The lectionary provides special readings for these Masses in year A (no. 28, the woman at the well; no. 31, the man born blind; no. 34, the raising of Lazarus). These texts may be used every year for the benefit of the community.

Other Italian dioceses: The Roman practice, which required the presence of a bishop for consignation with chrism during the initiation rites, was not possible in outlying districts of larger and more widespread dioceses in Italy and Sicily. During the time of Gregory the Great (590-604), for example, children were baptized and communicated at Easter by their presbyter. The bishop would visit the parishes and confirm the children baptized since his last visit.

Gaul and Germany: In the seventh century, Christian initiation was celebrated by the presbyter, and mainly for children. The rites consisted of a brief, ritualized "catechumenate," baptism at the Easter or Pentecost vigil, anointing with chrism, washing of the feet, vesting in white robes, and communion. If the bishop, was present, he would celebrate the rite; otherwise, it was normally the presbyter who anointed with chrism. A separate rite of episcopal anointing and imposition of hands — our confirmation — was unknown there at this period.

In the second half of the eighth century, Pepin and his son Charlemagne sought to bring unity to the empire² by imposing the books and rites of Rome on all their churches. Up to this time, the presbyter normally conferred the full ritual of initiation, with no later anointing by the bishop. Now the new Roman books, adapted somewhat by Alcuin to the needs and practices of his Church, added the bishop's laying on of hands after communion during the rite of initiation.

Charlemagne set about converting the pagans by force. Thousands were baptized with little preparation or real conversion, and soon lapsed. Alcuin persuaded him to send good preachers to lead the pagans to faith by a more adequate preparation.

Breakdown into Separate Events

Four different trends were at work in the middle ages to disrupt the unity of the rites of initiation. These trends had little to do with theology; when new practices were established, theology followed and gave them a reasonable basis.

1. **Confirmation is separated from initiation:** This separation is clearly seen in the Church in Gaul and Germany. Charlemagne's adoption of the Roman liturgy restored the emphasis on baptism at Easter and Pentecost, unless the child was in danger of dying. Most children were brought for initiation only on these two days; where the bishop was present, it was he who would lay hands on them and sign them with chrism.

◦ *Meaning of this rite:* Alcuin's disciple, Rabanus Maurus, explained that the Holy Spirit is given in the anointing with chrism; when the bishop imposed his hands and signed the forehead with chrism, he fortified the person with the Comforter, thus enabling the person to preach the faith to others. This aspect, and the analogy of a soldier of Christ, must be read in the light of the contemporary struggle by Charlemagne against the Moors who had overrun most of Spain and had invaded southern France.

² An interesting study could be made of the way the Church's liturgy has been affected by secular rulers who tried to use religion to bring about unity in their dominions: for example, Constantine's concern for political unity led to the Council of Nicaea in 325; the Frankish emperors brought about revisions in liturgical books and rites that have lasted to our day; the whole impact of *cuius regio, eius religio* in the sixteenth century is still present in the liturgy of all major Christian Churches.

◦ *Minister of the rite:* When the bishop was present, the child was baptized by the presbyter, confirmed by the bishop, and then communicated. If the bishop was absent, the rubrics directed the presbyter to baptize and communicate the infant. Originally each diocese had one baptismal font, in the cathedral church, but as Christianity moved out into the countryside, more churches with fonts were established — meaning that the bishop could not preside wherever the solemn initiation rites at Easter and Pentecost were celebrated; he had to supply the laying on of hands and the signing with chrism at a later time. Similar situations existed in England at this period.

◦ *Time for this rite:* Infants were to be initiated at the first Easter or Pentecost after their birth, thus within their first year. Around the year 800, the bishop laid hands on the newly baptized a week after they were baptized and communicated by the presbyter. Outside the bishop's city, parents were to have their children confirmed as soon as possible, and the bishop was instructed to make a yearly visit to all parts of his diocese.

Though this separation in time was brief, it — like the situation mentioned above for Italy — was the first step toward fragmenting the Church's initiation rites into distinct events.

2. *Communion is separated from initiation:* The Churches of the West continued to give communion to infants in the Mass which followed their baptism. In the eleventh century, however, they began to have doubts and uneasiness about giving the host to infants: this increasing scrupulosity arose in reaction to Berengarius. To avoid any unconscious disrespect toward the host, they gave infants communion under the species of wine only. The priest used a leaf or his finger dipped in the chalice. In some places the newly baptized were brought to Mass during Easter week and received communion each day.

In the thirteenth century (the time of Thomas Aquinas), the practice of lay communion from the chalice decreased. At the same time, children being initiated received either unconsecrated wine or no communion at all. The Fourth Lateran Council (1215), which commanded communion once a year during paschal time, and confession before communion, said that first communion was not to be received before the age of discretion. Different dioceses interpreted this somewhere between seven and ten years of age.

Infant communion survived here and there, such as in Amiens, France, and Milan, Italy. In the sixteenth century, the Council of Trent ended the practice effectively by stating that those without the use of reason are not required to receive the eucharist, since they cannot lose the state of grace.

It is important to note that throughout this period baptism was still being celebrated within the context of the Mass, especially at the Easter vigil: the Church continued to emphasize the corporate and solemn nature of baptism.

3. *Baptism is celebrated soon after birth:* A high rate of infant mortality and the fear that children would go to hell if they died without baptism led believers to celebrate baptism as soon as possible. While the Church's law until the twelfth century was the reservation of baptism for Easter and Pentecost, except in danger of death, the opposite practice was growing.

◦ *Early changes*: In England, as early as 693, the King of Wessex commanded that children were to be baptized before they were 30 days old. Eleventh century laws ranged from 37 days to nine to soon after birth.

◦ *Growing legislation*: Laws of the local Churches gradually enshrined the new practices: in 1072, the Council of Rouen allowed baptism at any time of the year. In the mid-twelfth century, Bernard of Saintes was ordering that newborn infants should be baptized without delay. Thirteenth century councils permitted baptism at any time. In England, Archbishop John Peckham (1279) said that only those born in the week before Easter or Pentecost were to be reserved for baptism at these special times. Fourteenth and fifteenth century councils in France, Spain and Italy commanded baptism as soon as possible, ranging from one day to a week after birth.

◦ *Results*: The short period of time between birth and baptism meant that the catechumenate was reduced to the first few moments of the baptismal ceremony, and eventually became just an introductory rite to it. A more serious and lasting effect was the elimination of the bishop from having a normal part in the celebration of the rites of Christian initiation: from now on, the presbyter was the ordinary minister of a curtailed rite.

4. *Confirmation is further separated from baptism*: Infant confirmation was approved until the thirteenth century, but in practice the interval between baptism and confirmation was growing greater because of few episcopal visits, neglect by parents, and a generally poor attitude toward confirmation as a somewhat superfluous ceremony. In the thirteenth century, English bishops and councils ordered confirmation before various ages — one, three, five, seven years. In 1280, the Council of Cologne stated seven or over as the age of confirmation. Local councils in the later part of the sixteenth century followed the teaching of the Council of Trent, and forbade confirmation for children under seven.

* * *

This complete separation of baptism, confirmation, and communion into three distinct rites was in full effect at the time of the Reformation. The Reformers inherited the bad theology and practices of the Roman rite of their time, and built on or renewed from that rather unhealthy situation. The Catholic reformation, working from the same basis, strove to reform the abuses in the contemporary situation, but did not work to restore the rites of initiation to their original unity.

The revised rites for Christian initiation, for adults and children, have begun to lead us ahead to a restored and unified vision:

◦ *General introduction on Christian initiation*, 1969: see Bulletin 29, pages 64-69.

◦ *Rite of adult initiation and its introduction*, 1972: see pages 292-296.

◦ *Rite of baptism of children*, 1969: see Bulletin 29.

◦ *Rite of confirmation*, 1971: see CCC edition, 1973, and Bulletin 39, pages 142-173.

CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS

BASIC NORMS

The restored rite of baptism for children was issued by the Congregation for Divine Worship in 1969. It was preceded by a general introduction on Christian initiation.¹ Some of the points contained in this document are summarized in this article:

a) Sacraments of initiation (nos. 1-2): These sacraments — baptism, confirmation, eucharist — bring us through the paschal mystery into the life of the Trinity, and enable us to carry on Christ's mission to the world.

b) Dignity of baptism (nos. 3-6): Because baptism is the sacrament of faith in response to Christ's gospel, the Church requires preparation of catechumens and of parents of children who are to be baptized. Baptism incorporates us into the Church, and may never be repeated, whether celebrated by Catholics or by other Christians. Through this sacrament, we are brought into the life of the Holy Trinity. We share in the death-rising of Christ: for this reason, baptism is celebrated at the Easter vigil or on the Lord's day.

c) Offices and ministries of baptism (nos. 7-17): This section discusses the ministry of the Church in calling people to baptism (7), and the role of the godparents (8-10). Bishops (11-12), priests (11, 13-15), and deacons (11, 14-15) are the ordinary ministers of baptism; in imminent danger of death, anyone may baptize (16-17).

d) Requirements for celebrating baptism (nos. 18-29): These paragraphs discuss baptismal water (18-21), immersion as the most suitable method (22), the form for baptism in the Latin rite (23), the place for the liturgy of the word (24). The baptistry is to be a worthy place (25-26). Babies are baptized in a common celebration (27), and their baptism is to be carefully recorded (29).

e) Adaptations (nos 30-35): The document outlines specific adaptations that may be made by the episcopal conference (30-33) and by the minister of baptism (34-35).

A careful study of these general principles, which apply to the initiation of adults as well as children, will be helpful to all who are involved in preparing and celebrating Christian initiation.

¹ *Rite of baptism for children*, May 15, 1969. The ICEL translation was published in Canada, in *Bulletin* 29, April 1970. The general introduction on Christian initiation is given on pages 64-69 of that issue.

RESTORED RITE FOR ADULTS

On January 6, 1972, the Congregation for Divine Worship issued the revised *Rite of Christian initiation for adults*. Though this has not had many fanfares sounded at the popular level, it is considered by liturgists to be the document that will do most to put Vatican II into effect in the next hundred years.

In this article we take a brief look at the spiritual journey for adults for which the new rite provides. Other articles consider the application of these rites in North America today.

Spiritual Journey

The journey to faith and membership in the Church is long and gradual. At each step along the way, the local Church — from catechumens to bishop — takes part in the process of initiation. The five stages of initiation last some three years, and are carefully planned to involve all members of the community of believers: the catechumens are baptized into their community, and therefore all are involved. The numbers in the text refer to the rite of adult initiation.

1. **Precatechumenate:** This preparatory stage is a time for prospective candidates to enquire about the faith (6), and to mature (7) in their desire to follow Christ and seek baptism (10). At the same time, the Church uses this period for evangelization, the first preaching of the gospel to these people (7a).

Christian Initiation for Adults

Some are calling this document the most important issued since the Second Vatican Council, the rite which has the most potential to influence the life of the Church in the next 100 years. This document clearly points out that adult initiation is the norm for all Christian initiation. For too long, we have thought just the opposite.

As well as the rites for the catechumenate in gradual stages, this book contains sections on:

- Preparing uncatechized adults for confirmation and eucharist.
- Initiation for children of catechetical age.
- Rite for receiving baptized Christians into full communion with the Catholic Church.

The Canadian edition also includes a penetrating explanation of the document and its contents: Father Aidan Kavanagh's article, "Christian initiation of adults: the rites," is reprinted with permission from *Worship*, vol. 48, no. 6, June-July 1974.

Pastors, catechists, seminarians, and liturgy committee members will find this book most useful in their ministry to adult catechumens, to those entering into full communion with the Church, and to lapsed or uninstructed Catholics.

The period is not marked by liturgical rites. It involves catechists (11), deacons (13), priests, pastors, and lay members of the community, who welcome the candidates in a friendly way. The precatechumenate is of undetermined length, long enough to lead to initial conversion. Before going on to the catechumenate, candidates are to have the basics of the spiritual life and Christ's teaching. They need an initial faith and conversion, with willingness to change their lives and come into contact with God in Christ, as well as the beginning of repentance and practice in prayer, with some experience of Christian community and spirit (15).

This period of initial evangelization ends when the candidates are ready to become catechumens (7a).

2. **Catechumenate:** After the rite of becoming catechumens, they experience a complete program of formation, lasting over a period of several years.

a) **Rite to become catechumens** (see nos. 6a, 14, 16-17, 68-97): This is a community rite, which includes instruction (74), asking the candidates their motives for conversion (75), a first promise to follow the leadership of Christ (76), and a community promise to assist the catechumens (77). The presiding celebrant, catechists and sponsors sign the candidates' foreheads with the cross (83); the president mentions their Christian names (88), and invites them to enter the church building (90). During a liturgy of the word, they may be presented with the book of the gospels, and all pray for them (91-95). Then they are dismissed, and continue for a time to share their spiritual joy with one another (96).

b) **Catechumenate** (see nos. 6b, 7b, 18-20, 98-132): This period, which is set aside for a complete catechesis and maturing in the faith, may last for several years. It is marked by a number of rites celebrating various aspects of the catechesis (7b). Among the rites that take place during the catechumenate:

◦ **Celebration of the word of God** (see nos. 100, 106-108): These celebrations are held on Sunday, leading the catechumens gradually to take part in the community's celebration of the liturgy of the word. The catechumens are dismissed after the homily, and continue together for a period of prayer and further instruction. Celebrations of the word may also be held after catechesis and when exorcisms are being performed.

◦ **Minor exorcisms** (see nos. 101, 109-118): The priest, deacon or catechist may celebrate these during the catechumenate. These exorcisms help the catechumens to understand that the Christian life is a battle between the flesh and the spirit, and that self-denial is necessary to ask God's help. (The meaning of exorcisms is explained in *Why exorcise the catechumen?* in this issue, pages 301-303.)

◦ **Blessings** (see nos. 102, 119-124): Showing God's love and the Church's concern for the catechumens, these blessings are given by the priest, deacon or catechist, and encourage the catechumens during their spiritual journey.

◦ **Other possible rites** include presentation of the creed (126, 183-187) and of the Lord's prayer (126, 188-193), prayer for opening the ears to hear God's word and the mouth to proclaim it (126, 194-199). These rites, which belong to those celebrated just before baptism, may be anticipated (126). A first anointing with the oil of catechumens may also be given by a priest or deacon (127-132).

◦ *Extended formation and discipline* (see no. 19): The catechumenate helps the catechumens to bring their faith and dispositions to maturity. This is done in four interconnected ways:

— *Formation*: The formation is presented integrally, in harmony with the liturgical year. Celebrations of the word enrich this period as they are taught the mysteries of our faith and the guiding principles for Christian living from the scriptures.

— *Christian way of life*: This is learned from the words of the instructors, from the example of the community, and from actual practice by the catechumens. Growth in Christian attitudes and morals is expected to be gradual but firm.

— *Liturgical rites*: During the catechumenate, the catechumens receive help and strength and gradual cleansing through the liturgical rites and services of the word.

— *Apostolic witness*: The daily life of the catechumens is to be a witness to all, and a sign of their growth in the Christian faith.

◦ *Lengthy stage*: The catechumenate may continue for several years, depending on God's grace and varying circumstances (7b, 20).

3. *Period of purification and enlightenment* (nos. 21-26, 133-207): This is the season of Lent which leads the catechumens to their baptism at the Easter vigil. The believing community joins with them in this time of preparation and renewal (see Liturgy constitution, nos. 109-110). This period corresponds to the time of final preparation described by Hippolytus when the catechumens are set apart (see *Initiation in the early Church*, above).

◦ *"Election"* — The Church chooses and admits the catechumens to enter the period of intense preparation for baptism. Their names are written or enrolled in the book of the elect. The bishop, his assistants, and the entire community are involved in this decision. (The rite of election, also called enrollment of names, is described in nos. 133-150 of the ritual.)

◦ *Intense preparation*: The emphasis during Lent is more on meditation than catechesis; it is a time of purifying and enlightening the hearts and mind of the elect. Important rites include the three scrutinies (on the third, fourth, and fifth Sundays in Lent), and the solemn presentation of the creed and the Lord's prayer (nos. 25, 153-199; other rites are given in nos. 200-207).

This period of lenten preparation concludes as the catechumens join in the celebration of the Easter vigil during which they will be receiving the sacraments of initiation.

4. *Celebrating the sacraments of initiation* (see nos. 27-36, 208-234): The sacraments of initiation are celebrated as one unbroken event:

◦ *Baptism*: The celebrating bishop or presbyter blesses the baptismal water, anoints those who are to be baptized, and invites them to renounce sin and Satan and to profess their faith in Christ. When they are baptized (preferably by immersion), they die to sin and rise to new life in God: see nos. 28-33, 210-226.

◦ *Confirmation*: By ancient Roman tradition, adults should not be baptized unless they are to be confirmed immediately (no. 34). The presiding bishop or

presbyter lays his hand on them and anoints them with chrism: see nos. 34-35, 227-231. (A similar importance is given to immediate confirmation when a baptized Christian is received into full communion with the Catholic Church: see appendix to the rite, pages 145-155.)

• *Eucharist*: For the first time, the newly baptized Christians join the people of God in public prayer, in bringing their gifts to the altar, in offering the eucharistic sacrifice, and in completing it by eating the flesh of the Lord and drinking his blood: see nos. 36, 232-234.

5. Postbaptismal catechesis (mystagogia): During the Easter season, the neophytes¹ and the veteran members of the Christian community meditate on the gospel, and continue to take part in the eucharist and to carry out deeds of charity. When this period ends on Pentecost Sunday, the new Christians are expected to take their full share in the work and worship of the Church: see nos. 37-40, 235-239.

* * *

Each year, the Christian community renews its faith and commitment during the time between Ash Wednesday and Pentecost Sunday. This is the universal time of retreat and mission. As veterans join with the catechumens and with the elect, they renew their own conversion, and pray for all the members of the Church.

Role of the Community

The initiation of adults is not a concern confined only to the catechumens, priests, sponsors, catechists and other ministers. Christian initiation is the responsibility of the whole Christian community.

The bishop is responsible for the whole process of initiation. As father and leader of the community of faith, he is to guide all to greater love and reverence in their daily living as well as in their worship.

Priests are the bishop's co-workers in leading and serving the people of God in their community. The day-to-day efforts and prayer of priests are necessary in building up the body of Christ. The local priests guide the catechumenate.

Deacons work with the priests in building up the body of Christ. As well as carrying out their liturgical roles in the various celebrations, they serve the community by devoted concern, especially to those in any need. Deacons are the bishop's right-hand men.²

Catechists carry on the instruction — by word, celebration and practice — of the catechumens, and testify publicly about their readiness to move ahead

¹ "Neophyte" comes from the Greek words for newly planted (*neos*, new, and *phyteuein*, to plant). The word refers to a person who has just been initiated into the Church, a new convert (see 1 Tim. 3:6).

"Mystagogy" means interpretation of mysteries. A mystagogue is one who leads others into understanding these mysteries. It is derived from the Greek *mystes*, one initiated in the mysteries, and *agein*, to lead.

² *Ministry and liturgy* will be the theme of Bulletin 53, March-April 1976. The entire issue will discuss the various ministries, particularly as they touch the liturgy. Both present and possible future ministries will be explored in that issue.

in the process of initiation. With the bishop's permission, the catechists may also give exorcisms during the catechumenate.

Catechumens: Once accepted as catechumens, they are considered as members of the Church, although they are able to take part only in certain liturgical acts. Their efforts at prayer and witness testify to their growing faith, and provide a source of inspiration to all the members of the believing community.

Sponsors stand up with the catechumens, and are with them throughout the long catechumenate. Their personal interest, witness and prayer encourage the catechumens. Sponsors also help the catechumens by bringing them into regular contact with the life of members of the local Church.

Other members of the community: The process of initiation takes place within the life of the community (no. 4). Every believing man, woman and child is linked to and responsible for the catechumens. By prayer and penance, by example and encouragement, by their love and the witness of their daily life, they provide the catechumens with a vision of what it means to be living members of the body of Christ. Each Lent, while the catechumens and elect are preparing for conversion and baptism, the faithful are renewing theirs (no. 4).

BAPTISMAL GUIDELINES

The past few years have seen a strong move toward a more faith-filled celebration of the sacraments, especially of baptism. In some dioceses, the need of guidance both for pastors and for the people has been recognized, and diocesan guidelines have been prepared to assist them.

In baptism, areas of concern include:

- o *Prebaptismal preparation* of parents (and godparents, when possible) to understand the commitment they are making. When they are "part time Catholics," not living up to their responsibilities as members of the Christian community, the pastor needs to encourage and invite them to return to the practice of their faith, including regular participation in the Sunday eucharist. Guidelines are also needed for knowing when he should postpone the baptism, as the rite advises.

- o *Good celebration* of the sacrament includes far more than observance of the rubrics. To make pastoral sense, the liturgy has to be celebrated in the midst of a believing community which is aware of its responsibility for the parents and their newly baptized children. Baptism celebration without adequate preparation or follow up is dangerously close to ritualism.

- o *Follow up:* Parents and other members of the community need help and guidance if they are to be able to live out their responsibilities undertaken in baptism. Only a parish which is truly a community of faith and love can provide this help.

* * *

What guidelines for the preparation and celebration of baptism does your diocesan liturgy commission or senate provide? Is it time to ask them for such help?

CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

It is evident that the fresh approach to Christian initiation will be successful only when it is celebrated within a Christian community. Some thoughts on what a parish community can and should be are presented here for discussion and action in your parish.

The gradual initiation of persons takes place "in the midst of the community of the faithful" (rite, no. 4). We need to deepen our understanding of what this community is, in order to live it and to make this community happen in our parish.

In bringing us into a Christian community, God has done many wonderful works for us in Christ:

Freed from the power of darkness: Through the obedient death of his Son, God our Father has freed us from the power of sin and Satan. God has transferred us out of the kingdom of darkness and into his own kingdom of light. He has enabled us to die with Christ to sin, so that it may no longer control our lives.

- *We rejoice*, because God has freed us. We praise him and thank him, especially in our Sunday eucharist.

- *We seek reconciliation* with others, forgiving them as God has forgiven us.

- *We pray and fast* for sinners, asking God to bring them back to his love and peace in his Church; we pray and do penance for ourselves, so that we may be able to continue in his love.

Brought into his kingdom of light: Our heavenly Father has reconciled us to himself through the death and rising of Christ. No longer are we orphans: we are God's beloved sons and daughters, members of his own family. Jesus is our brother and our Lord, and he is with us. The Spirit of Jesus dwells in our hearts to teach us to pray. We are God's priestly people, set aside to sing his praises.

- *We praise God and thank him:* Praise and thanks are the main acts of the Christian people in our worship. A spirit of joy should permeate our prayer and be evident in our gatherings.

- *We are the light of the world:* Jesus, who is the light of the world, has called us to share in this task too, so that others may see us, and be led to give glory to our Father in heaven. Our parish community must make sure that everything it does is in accord with this responsibility. Witness, not self-entertainment, is our job.

- *We seek authenticity and truth in our worship:* Our worship can be sincere only when it is backed up by love. Unless our community is honestly practising Christianity, our liturgy is going to be empty. A serious concern for the outcasts, the poor, the downtrodden must be the background for our Sunday worship. Our prayer to God cannot be honest if we are blind to our brothers and sisters in their distress.

- *We are concerned for the unity of his people:* The Christian Church cannot give the full witness of its life as long as it is divided. A serious approach to ecumenical needs and problems — by action as well as by prayer — remains one of the important tasks of each parish community.

YES, YOU CAN !

Monsignor Thomas Rowland, pastor of St. Pius X parish, El Paso, Texas, has introduced a more complete form of Christian initiation among the people of his community. He is a graduate of the program of liturgical instruction at Notre Dame University, and is now entering the doctoral program there. In this interview with the editor, he shares some of his community's experience with readers of the Bulletin.

Q. Please describe your parish for us.

Our parish consists of some 1200 families. In the 1950s, it was in the suburbs, but now it is near the geographical center of the city of El Paso, on the border with Mexico. In the past twenty years, there has been a complete turnover of the people. About 70% of our parishioners are Mexican-American. Some 15% are *Anglos*, speaking English only, and another 15% know only Spanish. We celebrate Masses in both languages.

Q. What is your parish program of preparation for Christian initiation ?

At present, after four years of development, the program consists of one year of intense preparation for baptism or reception into full communion with the Church.

- On Trinity Sunday, a week after Pentecost and the end of the Easter season, we enroll the candidates as catechumens. This year we have 17 people preparing for baptism next Easter:

- They take a full year of instructions. During this period, the parish community prays for the catechumens, and works with them.

- On the first Sunday in Lent, those who are preparing for their Christian initiation at the Easter vigil sign the *book of the elect* on the altar. They do this in front of the entire parish community, at Mass. This is followed by a gathering in the hall, so that all may meet them and their families.

- The scrutinies and the handing over of the creed and the Lord's prayer also take place at lenten Sunday Masses.

- During Lent, the catechumens assist at one of the three parish Masses each day. Especially during this period, the parishioners deepen their prayer for the catechumens.

- The Easter vigil includes their baptism or reception into full communion with the Church, their confirmation, and their first communion.

Throughout their year of preparation, we invite them to be involved closely in their neighborhood groups.

Q. What are these neighborhood groups ?

Our parish covers a large area, and is spread out. People from one end of it do not know those at the other. In this situation, it is the people living nearby who affect one another. We have some forty voluntary neighborhood groups, consisting of seven to twelve families each. They meet an hour each week for bible

reading and prayer for the needs of the parish. The Sunday readings are listed in the parish bulletin and people are encouraged to read them daily as part of their family prayer. At the group meetings, they share what they have come up with in their family reading at home. Once a month, the priest comes for the eucharist and a monthly meeting with each group.

Q. How are these neighborhood groups involved in Christian initiation ?

For adult initiation, the catechumens are sponsored by their neighborhood group. During the year of preparation, members of the group work and pray with their catechumens, and encourage them to take part in all our community and parish projects.

The neighborhood group of families may also be involved in preparation for infant baptism. When a family which is part of a neighborhood group announces that their child is on the way, the group prays for the child and his parents.¹ They also discuss the parents' role in bringing up their children as Christians, and the ways the parish community can support them in this work.

With the neighborhood group, the parents and the priest choose the Sunday for baptism. At a time outside the scheduled parish Masses, they celebrate the baptism within the eucharist. While they celebrate as a neighborhood group, the baptismal celebration is announced to the whole parish, and all are invited. The usual celebration has some 50 or 60 members of the neighborhood group with their children, and relatives of the family: we usually have 75-100 for the liturgy. After the Mass, we go to the hall for a party with ice cream and cake.

Q. What about those who do not take part in neighborhood groups ?

We have seven weeks of preparation with the parents, and then celebrate baptism every second month at the first Lord's day Mass on Saturday evening. This Mass is followed by a parish potluck supper. In this we seek to involve this family a little more in the community life of the parish.

Q. Going back to the lenten preparation for the celebration of the sacraments of initiation at Easter, would you like to describe some of the things your parishioners do in this period ?

We try to involve everyone in the parish family in these days of preparation. Here are some of the ways we do this:

- At the beginning of the Lent, the first names of the elect are placed on a banner and hung in church. This is a graphic reminder for all to pray for them and with them.

- The elect are introduced to the parish at each Sunday Mass in the first weeks of Lent, so that everyone may have the opportunity to see them and their families, and to come to know them by name.

¹ Blessings for a woman before and after childbirth may be found in Bulletin 49, pages 177-180.

◦ During Lent, they are expected to come to one of the Masses each day. This is part of their preparation, and also involves the 300 people who take part in daily Mass and bible instructions on lenten weekdays.

Q. Would you tell us about your celebration of initiation at the Easter vigil?

The vigil celebration begins as soon as it is dark. The scripture readings are the final build up. The litany of saints is sung, and includes the patron saints of the candidates and of the parish. We bless the baptismal water. In order that all may appreciate the sign value of the sacrament more fully, we place a microphone close to the font. In this way, everyone in the church can hear the water being poured, even if they cannot see it happening.

◦ *Baptism*: Those who are being baptized renounce Satan and profess their faith individually, and are baptized. After each baptism, the congregation sings a brief acclamation.

After the catechumens have been baptized, we receive those who have already been baptized into full communion with the Church. We do this standing in front of the font. Everyone sings an acclamation as they are welcomed. Then some babies are baptized.

The adults are given a white gown. The first year we celebrated this way, we had to borrow the gowns from a neighboring Lutheran church, but now we have our own. The neophytes wear these robes through the rest of the Mass.

◦ *Confirmation* follows immediately. The priest who baptized or received them now confirms them.

◦ *Eucharist*: the neophytes bring the gifts to the altar, and receive communion under both forms with their sponsors.

In this way, the unity of the sacraments of initiation is clearly brought out.

After the vigil service, which lasts just under two hours, we have a party — cookies, cake and punch — in the patio, under the paschal moon. This was completely spontaneous the first year, happening because of the enthusiasm of the people. It is now an established institution.

Q. How can you manage to do all these things in your parish? Where do you find the time?

We believe in sharing roles at St. Pius X parish. With neighborhood groups, readers, auxiliary ministers of communion, and other ministers and helpers, the preparation of catechumens for their Christian initiation becomes a parish event. The priests of the parish work to make it possible for everyone to carry out a personal ministry, and to share his or her gifts with all. In this way, we all use our gifts for building up the people of God.

WHY EXORCISE THE CATECHUMEN?

The revised prebaptismal rites for children and more especially, the rites for the adult catechumenate, still retain exorcisms. To some this may be a cause either of concern or of confusion. What purpose do they serve? We have documentary evidence from the earliest times that this practice, like anointing, was part of the preparation for baptism. It has always remained part of the prebaptismal rites. The very early witness to the practice of baptism is important. There is not much doubt that the understanding of the word exorcism today differs considerably from that of the very early Church. Exorcism has now come to mean a rite used for the expulsion of the devil who has taken possession of a person. That is simply not what it meant in the rites of the early Church.

No gospel account of possession: A few remarks about possession by the devil may serve to clarify the issue. Many people would be surprised to learn that there is not a single account of possession attributed to the devil in any of the four gospels! There is a linguistic problem involved, and even modern translations (the Jerusalem Bible for example) will describe people as being possessed by the devil.

In the Greek New Testament however, there are two words involved; one is **diabolos**, correctly rendered in English as devil; the other is **daimon**, which should be translated as demon. Such is the confusion today that many see no special difference between the two, but for the people of New Testament times there was a considerable difference. Lucifer, Satan, Beelzebul, are all names given to the devil in the New Testament, and he is discussed and seen as the particular enemy of Christ, the "father of lies," etc. This devil is a different being from the demons.

What then were the demons? In the Semitic thought of the time, belief in the existence of "spirits of the air" was universal. These spirits who dwelled in the air, or the desert, or water, were often malicious, and to them were ascribed many of the afflictions that befell mankind. In fact particular maladies were ascribed to particular demons. Thus **ashakku** attacked the head, **namtaru**, the throat, **utukku** the neck and so on. (There were also good demons who could be invoked for protection: such were the **shedu** and **lamassu**.) In the gospels, it is these evil demons which are described as possessing people. This is not to say that the New Testament does not trace any connection between Satan and the demons: he is seen as using them to afflict men. But, and this is important with reference to the prebaptismal exorcisms, he is portrayed in an essentially spiritual role. Thus he is the tempter who tempts even Jesus (see Mt. 4:1; Mk. 1:13; Lk. 4:2); takes the seed of the word from those who receive it (Mt. 13:19); puts betrayal into the heart of Judas (Jn. 13:2,27); seeks to sift the disciples (Lk. 22:31), etc. This is a very brief treatment of a complex problem, but it should suffice to indicate that possession is not the work of the devil, at least as far as the New Testament is concerned. It may be of use to add that the Greek verb which is the origin of our English word *exorcise* is never once used in the gospels to describe Christ's curing of any of the possessed brought to him.

Father Peter M. Gildea, CM, a Vincentian priest of the Irish Province, is the spiritual director in the National Irish Seminary at Maynooth. After ordination in 1962, he studied in Rome, earning his STL at the Angelicum, and STD in moral theology at the Alphonsianum. His doctoral dissertation was on the *Power Attributed to the Devil by the Moral Theologians of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*. He has treated the whole question of demoniacal possession at some length in an article in the *Irish Theological Quarterly*, vol. 41, 1974, pages 289-311. At present, Father Gildea is also a graduate student in the summer liturgy program at Notre Dame University, Indiana.

It was only some centuries after the gospels were written that the distinction between demon and devil became blurred, and exorcism developed as a rite for the expulsion of devils thought to have taken possession of a person. Before that happened there were exorcisms, specifically prebaptismal exorcisms, and they had nothing to do with expelling devils or demons for that matter. (In the *Apostolic Tradition* of Hippolytus, those apparently possessed by demons were specifically prohibited from being accepted as catechumens until such time as they were healed.) The exorcisms had, and should still have, a different purpose.

In the prayers of exorcism before the ceremony of infant baptism, the celebrant prays to almighty God,

who sent his only Son into the world
to draw out ~~the~~ power of Satan, the spirit of evil,
to save us from the kingdom of darkness,
and to bring us into the splendor of God's kingdom of light;

and in the alternative prayer,

God send his Son to free us from the slavery of sin
and to give us the liberty
enjoyed only by God's sons and daughters.

Similar expressions are found in the various prayers of exorcism given in the revised *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*. Exorcisms traditionally and originally were prayers for the freeing of the catechumen from the slavery, the power of sin, which is the state of fallen mankind; Satan, the prince of this world, under whose authority all sinners are held, is the slave master. Christ, through his passion, death and resurrection, has come to free men from Satan's power.

The type of this freeing process, which fits perfectly into the baptismal catechesis, is the slavery of the Israelites under Pharaoh, where ever increasing burdens were placed on them to break their spirit and perpetuate the slavery. So too sin enslaves man, and the exorcism is a prayer whereby the saving strength of God is sought for the catechumen as he is preparing to be liberated by the saving water of baptism, just as the Israelites were liberated by the saving waters of the Red Sea.

When the learner is determined to become a free man in the kingdom of the Lord, the Church undertakes certain actions. What would be the good of asking a slave, who is still in the power of his master, whether he wants to be free? If he dares ask for the freedom which is offered, he knows that he will be cruelly punished the moment he is left alone again with his master. Through fear and from a habit of slavery a man cannot ask for freedom until he is delivered from the authority of the devil. Therefore, before any question is asked of the one who stands there, with a new hope in divine salvation, he is made free from the power of Satan. This is the meaning of the exorcisms which are read in the catechumenate in the Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches. It is only when a man is free from the bonds of slavery that he is asked if he renounces the devil and if he wants to join Christ. And only after a free answer does the Church integrate him into herself, the Body of Christ. The devil wants slaves, but God wants free men in harmony of will with him.¹

¹ Metropolitan Anthony Bloom, *Living Prayer*, 1975, Libra Books, Darton, Longman & Todd, pages 22-23.

In the adult catechumenate the solemn exorcisms are part of the scrutinies, which refer to the moral growth in freedom of the catechumen already committed to following Christ. Exorcisms then should not be a cause for unease: they are part of the growth process of the catechumen, where the Church intercedes for him, that he may be freed from the slavery of sin personified by the devil. The references to spirits in the prayers in the revised rite for the adult catechumen specify the spirits from which he is struggling to be free, the effects of our slavery to sin, the spirits of falsehood, greed, sensuality, wickedness, selfishness, etc. (See *Rite for the Christian Initiation of Adults*, nos. 113-118, 164, 171, 178.)

OUR HERITAGE

What difference does it make if a feast or ceremony was observed or begun by Augustine or Chrysostom or Hincmar of Rheims ?

When we look at our celebrations during the year, we begin to realize that we are the modern representatives of the people of God who have worshipped God through the generations.

We are the men and women who carry on the celebration of the Lord's death-and-resurrection as it has been celebrated for the past 100,000 Sundays without missing a week.

We are the people of faith who worship the same God as Athanasius and Justin, Leo and Gregory, Thomas Aquinas and Thomas of Canterbury. With them, we are built on the foundations of the apostles, and woven into the living temple of God. We are one in the communion of saints with those who have gone ahead of us in the footsteps of the master. *We are a remembering Church !*

The liturgical year guides us in our prayer and praise as we march on, the pilgrim people of today, working to make God's kingdom come and his will be done on earth.

PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

“CONVERT INSTRUCTION”

The rite for adult initiation is concerned primarily with unbaptized persons who are preparing to become members of the Church, but its guidance does apply also to baptized adults who are entering the Catholic Church. In Canada and the United States, we are more involved with baptized people who want to become fully active members of the Catholic Church.

Norms for these situations are provided by the rite for adult initiation; it is up to us to adapt them and use them in our parishes:

a) **Uncatechized adults:** In chapter IV (nos. 295-305), the rite offers valuable guidance for the parish community wishing to help those who are baptized as infants but who received little or no catechetical formation as they grew up.

◦ *Similar to catechumenate:* Because they are already baptized members of the Church, these people are not catechumens. But their formation should, like that of the catechumens, include instruction, Christian living, liturgical rites, and involvement in the Church's apostolate (see no. 19).

◦ *Final preparation:* Their final period of preparation for the remaining rites of initiation should coincide with Lent.

◦ *Easter vigil:* At the Easter vigil, which is the Church's prime time for baptism, the candidates make their solemn profession of faith (a renewal of their baptismal profession), are confirmed, and receive the eucharist under both species. They complete their formation during the Easter season (postbaptismal formation or mystagogia).

b) **Baptized Christians** who wish to enter into full communion with the Catholic Church: this rite is given as an appendix to the rite of adult initiation (CCC edition, pages 145-155). Prepared with great sensitivity for ecumenical concerns (and to avoid some of our past errors, such as triumphalism and repetition of baptism), the rite is preferably celebrated during Mass.

◦ *Preparation* is both doctrinal and spiritual. A time of gradual growth is needed.

◦ *Reception* is preceded by the sacrament of penance. The reception consists of the profession of faith (saying the Nicene creed with the community), reception by the celebrant, confirmation (if the person has not already been confirmed), the kiss of peace, and the eucharist. The newly received person takes communion under both forms with his sponsors, catechists, Catholic members of his family and all Catholics present.

Children of catechetical age: Another group considered by the rite is unbaptized children who have now reached the age of reason: their parents bring them for initiation, or permit them to come.

The rite (chapter V, nos. 306-369) provides a full rite of initiation for them, accommodated to their age. This includes catechumenate, final preparation, celebration of the sacraments of initiation, and postbaptismal catechesis.

NO REBAPTISM

One of the serious ecumenical barriers in the recent past has been the erroneous practice of many priests, who were taught to rebaptize — albeit conditionally — persons from other Christian Churches. This error, which has been rejected by the Church at least from the third century, continues to be rejected by the present laws and practice of the Church.¹

○ “The rite of baptism is held in highest honor by all Christians. It may never lawfully be repeated once it has been validly celebrated, even if by fellow Christians from whom we are separated.” (General Introduction on Christian Initiation, no. 4: see Bulletin 29, page 65.)

○ “It is also their (pastors’) duty, in view of the power of sacraments already validly received (see General Introduction, no. 4), to see that a baptized person is not baptized again for any reason whatever. (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, Introduction, no. 16: see Canadian edition, page 3.)

○ “The sacrament of baptism may not be repeated, and conditional baptism is not permitted unless there is a reasonable doubt about the fact or validity of the baptism already received. If after serious investigation it seems necessary — because of such reasonable doubt — to confer such baptism again conditionally, the minister should explain beforehand the reasons why baptism is conferred conditionally in this instance, and he should administer it in the private form.”² (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, Appendix on reception of baptized Christians into full communion with the Catholic Church, no. 7: see Canadian edition, page 146.)

* * *

In Canada, five major Christian Churches have agreed to recognize the validity of baptism conferred according to the established norms of other Churches. In addition they will be able to use a common baptismal certificate in addition to those already in use, as a sign of belief that baptism unites all as followers of Christ.

The Anglican, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Roman Catholic and United Churches have agreed to recognize baptism conferred according to the norms of the Churches, with flowing water, by pouring, sprinkling or immersion, accompanied by the Trinitarian formula.

¹ The texts in this article are taken from the English translations of Rite of Baptism for Children, of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, and of the Rite of Reception of Baptized Christians into Full Communion with the Catholic Church, Copyright © 1969, 1973, 1974, International Committee on English in the Liturgy, Inc. All rights reserved.

² A note in the text refers to the Secretariat for the Promotion of Christian Unity, Directorium, nos. 14-15: AAS 59 (1967), page 580:

(14) Indiscriminate conditional baptism of all who desire full communion with the Catholic Church cannot be approved. The sacrament of baptism cannot be repeated (see Code of Canon Law, can. 732, 1) and therefore to baptize again conditionally is not allowed unless there is a prudent doubt of the fact or of the validity, of a baptism already administered (see Council of Trent, session VII, can. 4; Code of Canon Law, can. 732, 2).

(15) If after serious investigation as to whether the baptism was properly administered, a reasonable doubt persists, and it is necessary to baptize conditionally, the minister should maintain proper regard for the doctrine that baptism is unique by (a) suitably explaining both why he is in this case baptizing conditionally and what is the significance of the rite of conditional baptism; (b) carrying out the rite according to the private form (see Code of Canon Law, can. 737, 2).

BAPTISM OF CHILDREN

The baptism of children continues in our parishes. Some questions are proposed here for your parish liturgy committee, so that they may consider further areas of improvement and renewal in the way your community presently celebrates the baptism of children.

Preparation: There are several areas that concern good celebration:

◦ *Preparation of the parish:* How are adults being helped to understand the meaning of Christian initiation? (What about films, filmstrips, bulletin inserts, discussion groups, celebrations, participation in baptismal preparation?) Is everyone invited to take part in baptismal celebrations? Are the parishioners invited to join in prayer with the families as they prepare for baptism? Are people helped to understand that baptism, confirmation and eucharist are the sacraments of initiation?

◦ *Preparation for the families:* What sort of serious program has been developed to help parents, families, and godparents to prepare for baptism and for the Christian upbringing of their children? Is this preparation done by a team? (Some ideas on this were shared by St. Peter's parish from Regina in Bulletin 48, pages 134-137.) Are Christian names encouraged? How well do the parents understand the rites of baptism and their implications? What is done when a family gives little evidence that they will raise the child in the practice of the Catholic faith?

◦ *Baptistry:* Is the baptistry large enough? suitably lighted and decorated? Is the font adequate for baptism by immersion? Has provision been made for running water? How is the font and its meaning kept before the people? Are suitable banners used in or near the baptistry?

◦ *Ministries:* are sufficient readers and servers appointed to add to the solemnity of each baptismal celebration? What provisions are made for musicians and singers to lead the assembled community in song?

Celebration: As well as the full and proper observance of the ceremonies and use of the options provided, the following points could be considered:

◦ *Movement:* Are the various processions celebrated with care? Are they real processions? Are they used to mark a further step in the progress of the ceremony?

◦ *Signs:* How are the various signs carried out? How well are they explained and understood? (These signs include the signing with the cross by the celebrant and parents; vestments; laying on of the priest's hand; generous amounts of oil and water; adequate candles; a suitable white robe for the child,¹ and the ephphatha ceremony.) What effort is made during the year to help members of the parish to understand these and similar signs in the liturgy?

¹ During the period of the prebaptismal instruction, one priest in Barbados suggests that the mother or godmother could make a simple white cape, with a tape or ribbon to tie it. If desired they may decorate the cape with suitable Christian symbols, and possibly the child's name. This robe is easily put on the child, and appears dignified. During the years he is growing up, it can be brought out on anniversaries and special occasions, along with his baptismal candle, as a reminder of his baptism.

- *Baptism by immersion*: The baptism of Jesus in the Jordan is considered the model for all Christian baptism. Adult baptism is the **norm** — the proper and ideal way of celebrating Christian initiation. The pouring of a few drops of water on a child's forehead over a stylized "bird bath" cannot provide a good picture of Christian baptism, by which we are buried with Christ the suffering servant, and rise with him to new life for God.

One pastor of a large city parish tells us how he tries to encourage baptism by immersion. "We talk with the couple before their child is born. After the birth, we meet with them, and with the godparents if possible, and go over the celebration, using both printed material and a film strip. We discuss the implications of baptism for them and their child, as well as for the Christian community into which he is being baptized.

"When it comes to the method of baptism, we talk about immersion and its meaning, and show how it is preferable. Some choose this method when they understand its significance, and when they see how it can be done in a reasonably simple manner; we hope that more parents will choose this method in the next few years.

"On the day of baptism, the child wears a diaper, and is wrapped in a large towel (and blanket). At the moment of baptism, he is unwrapped and the diaper is removed. The child is handed to the priest, who lowers him into the font, up to his chin. Then he pours the water over the child's head as he says the words of baptism. (The warmth of the water is carefully tested beforehand by a mother.)

"When the child is raised from the water, he is handed to his mother or godmother and wrapped carefully in the towel; it may take a moment to dry and cover the child."

- *Music*: How many times is there singing or music during each baptismal celebration? The rite provides many opportunities: entrance psalm or hymn; psalm during procession before the liturgy of word; responsorial psalm or gospel acclamation; general intercessions; litany; procession to baptistry; acclamations during the blessing of the baptismal water; acclamation after the profession of faith and after each baptism; hymn during the procession from the font to the sanctuary; Lord's prayer; closing hymn or canticle. The celebrant may also sing many of his parts.

- *During the eucharist*: Is baptism celebrated occasionally during the Sunday Mass?

- *Minimalism*? Is there a tendency to omit,² combine or tone down rites? Or are they celebrated as well and fully as possible?

Follow up: What happens after the baptism has been celebrated?

- *Announcement*: Does the following Sunday's bulletin announce the names of the children and their parents? How often does the bulletin instruct people about the Church's present approach to this sacrament? about their responsibilities toward all who have been baptized?

² On this point, it is worth considering this statement: "One of the lessons of history is that when pastoral ritual diminishes, pastoral authority proportionately wanes." See Clebsch and Jaekle, *Pastoral Care in Historical Perspective*, 1967, Harper Torch books (Harper and Row), New York, page 68.

o *Anniversaries*: Are people helped to find and remember the baptismal anniversary of each member of the family? What suggestions and helps are given for celebrating these anniversaries?

o *Young families*: What help and guidance is given to parents to aid them in teaching their growing children to know God, to pray, to begin to live the Christian life?

* * *

These are only some of the questions that a parish liturgy committee should begin to ask about the way the baptism of children is prepared, celebrated and followed up in their community. Good celebration will not mend the loss of unity in the rites of initiation, but will help people to begin to understand their meaning a little more.

PASTORAL CARE OF THE SICK

A survey is currently taking place in Canada concerning the interim ritual, *Pastoral care of the sick and the rite of anointing*. Priests in parishes and hospital chaplains are being asked for practical and positive suggestions to make this book even more useful in their ministry to the sick.

Other readers of the Bulletin are invited to send in specific suggestions to the National Liturgical Office (address on the inside front cover) before January 31, 1976.

LENTEN AID

To help priests and deacons as they prepare the homily for each Sunday and weekday in Lent, the CCC has prepared *Homily Aids for Lent*. This book is also useful for communities and individuals who wish to meditate on the lenten scripture texts.

Designed to be of use each year, this book contains:

o Exegetical studies of the Sunday readings for all three cycles, including Easter Sunday; homily ideas for these Sundays.

o Theme, exegesis, homily considerations, sample general intercessions for lenten weekdays; brief notations on the responsorial psalm.

Sewn, soft cover, 8½ by 11 inches, 144 pages. \$5.00 in Canada; \$5.50 outside Canada. It may be ordered now from CCC Publications Service: address on the inside front cover.

GENERAL NOTES

SOME QUESTIONS TO ASK

A year ago, Canada's delegates to the 1974 synod spoke on a number of areas which concern liturgy. These interventions were printed in **Bulletin 48**, pages 86-102, and deserve to be read over several times a year. Here are some questions based on these talks (the page references are to **Bulletin 48**):

- *Popular spirituality and devotions*: What are we doing to help people base their spirituality solidly on scripture and the liturgy? What is our attitude to the "new poverty" of the Church? (See pages 86-89.)

- *Unity and pluralism*: How well do we know the teachings, worship, customs, liturgical year, and traditions of other Christian Churches in our community? How ready are we to accept different approaches and expressions of faith? (See pages 89-93.)

- *Laity and evangelization*: In our parish or community practices, actions, and attitudes, are lay people second class citizens? Is evangelization restricted to action by the clergy, or to proclamation of the word? What is the role of lay witness in the *laos*? What is our community doing to proclaim the full gospel, both in word and in witness? (See pages 93-96.)

- *Evangelization and daily bread*: How does our eucharistic celebration reflect and correspond to the life of the community? Are we sharing Christ both **physically and spiritually** in our life and worship? How do our attitudes toward others' daily bread affect and reflect the eucharistic bread in our lives? (See pages 96-99.)

- *Pluralism and the Eastern Churches*: What do we know about the customs and rites of Eastern Catholics,¹ especially those living in our area? Does pluralism disturb our supposed equilibrium? (See pages 99-101.)

- *Formation of the laity*: In our parish or community, what role do lay people have in the community's work of evangelizing the world? How **crucial** is the role of the laity in evangelization today? Are we Christians seeking new ways to evangelize? What support are we giving to lay members of the Church to fulfill their specific mission? What are we doing to develop family liturgies and popular spiritualities? (See pages 101-102.)

¹ In cooperation with the National Office for Religious Education, the Byzantine Ukrainian Church in Canada has prepared a book to explain to all its customs and practices. *Byzantine Ukrainian Catholics* presents the history, culture, liturgy, and customs of the Eastern Churches — concentrating on the Byzantine Ukrainian rite — to a varied audience: Ukrainian parents and teachers, Latin rite teachers of Ukrainian children, and to members of the Western or Latin Church. Roman Catholics will find this book of great assistance in understanding the value, benefit and desirability of maintaining a variety or plurality of rites in the Church. (This book may be ordered at \$3.00 a copy from CCC Publications, 90 Parent Avenue, Ottawa, Ontario K1N 7B1.)

SUNDAY WITHOUT A PRIEST

A priest in a remote, farflung parish explained that a sister, who taught catechism in a small and remote community, was leading the people in prayer when he could not come for Sunday Mass. He asked for some suggestions on the format of a Sunday service when no priest is available.

Dear Father:

It is desirable to do as you are presently doing, with a fine pastoral sense, having a sister call the people together to worship on the Lord's day. The best form of service for such a situation is a bible service, as the Vatican Council points out:

Bible services are recommended when no priest is available. In such cases, a deacon or some other person authorized by the bishop¹ should preside over the celebration (Liturgy constitution, no. 35:4).

While the service may be developed in many ways, it would seem best to have it follow the Mass as closely as possible, by using the introductory rites, liturgy of the word, and other prayers, as described below. In this way, the local community is always in greater harmony with the universal Church, and also will be more at home on any occasion (weekdays or Sundays) on which a priest is able to celebrate Mass with them.

An appropriate order for a Sunday service of the word would be:

Introductory rites: As at Sunday Mass, or simplified to greeting, penitential rite and opening prayer. The third form of the penitential rite could be adapted to reflect the gospel message for that week.

Liturgy of the word: As at Sunday Mass, from the lectionary for that day. Some effort should be made to sing the common response to the psalms — a minimum of six or seven refrains could be used during the year (one during Advent, another during the Christmas season, and so on), and more could be used in the years to come.² If the refrain cannot be sung, an appropriate hymn may be used as a response to the reading.

The homily should be based on the readings, especially the gospel. Some aids that you may find useful:

o *Preaching the New Lectionary:* The word of God for the Church today, by Reginald H. Fuller. 1974, 548 pages, \$7.00 (The Liturgical Press, Collegeville, Minn. 56321). (See review in Bulletin 47, page 78.)

¹ In A.D. 107, while a captive on the way to martyrdom in Rome, St. Ignatius of Antioch wrote to the people of Smyrna: "Make sure that no step affecting the Church is ever taken by anyone without the bishop's sanction. The sole eucharist you should consider valid is one that is celebrated by the bishop himself, or by some person authorized by him . . . Whatever does have his sanction can be sure of God's approval too. This is the way to make certain of the soundness and validity of anything you do . . . To go behind the bishop's back is to be a servant of the devil." See *Early Christian Writings*: the apostolic fathers, translated by Maxwell Staniforth, Penquin Books (Penquin Classics), 1968, 1972, Epistle to the Smyrnaeans, nos. 8-9, pages 121-122.

² See *Catholic Book of Worship*, nos. 172-191; the common seasonal refrains are given in nos. 192-200.

• *Discover the Bible*: A valuable and inexpensive weekly aid from the Bible Center (2000 Sherbrooke St. West, Montreal, Québec H3H 1G4). (Reviewed in Bulletin 34, page 129; no. 35, page 226; no. 45, page 248.)

• *Scripture in Church*: An Irish publication on both the Sunday and daily readings, as well as helps for the prayer of the faithful and brief introductions before each reading. A number of general articles also provide useful background. Issued four times a year. Available from Costello Publishing Co., 88 Nautilus Avenue, Northport, L.I., New York 11768, U.S.A.

The creed would normally follow the homily. Two forms of the creed are given in the sacramentary. In a service of this type, however, a creed may be developed to express the faith of this community in union with the universal Church (universal in time, space and belief): see Bulletin 38, pages 102-103; no. 40, page 225.

The general intercessions or prayer of the faithful provide another opportunity to develop the prayer life of the people, who should be encouraged to formulate their own petitions. The leader should make sure that the universal nature of the prayer is respected, so that the community's prayer is part of the prayer in a worldwide Church. The gospel and other readings may suggest petitions for this prayer. (Further suggestions are contained in *Guidelines for Pastoral Liturgy — 1975*, pages 19-20.)

Other prayers: In no way should the leader try to imitate the eucharistic prayer, since this could cause confusion in the minds of some. But it would not be out of place to have a prayer of thanksgiving: a litany along the lines of Psalm 136 (135); or a **berakah** (see Bulletin 49, which teaches the practice of this form of prayer).

The Lord's prayer,³ sung if possible, leads to the kiss of peace. Then communion may be distributed from reserved hosts. After a period of silence, a hymn of thanksgiving may be sung, and the closing prayer and blessing complete the rite. The prayers over the people and the solemn blessings in the sacramentary provide sufficient ideas here. It might be better to use the first person plural: "May almighty God bless us."

Throughout the service, there should be plenty of time for silent prayer and reflection — at the penitential rite, after *Let us pray*, after each reading, after the homily, perhaps during the prayer of the faithful, during the time of thanksgiving.

Carefully prepared — if possible, with the help of members of the community — such a rite will enable your community to share as fully as possible in the universal worship of the Church on each Lord's day.

* * *

We would be pleased to hear from other readers of their experiences with services of this nature, and we ask them to share what they have learned with other members of the Church.

³ A meditation on the Lord's prayer was given in Bulletin 44, *People of Prayer*, pages 154-159. These ideas may be shared with members of the parish community.

LITURGICAL STUDIES

The program of liturgical studies is a graduate school program at the University of Notre Dame, offering courses leading to the degree of master of arts in theology, with majors in liturgical instruction or in liturgical research. Other courses lead to an MA in liturgical music or to the degree of Master of Music, in music and liturgy.

Master of Arts : Liturgical Instruction : This program gives general information on the historical, social and theological issues involved in contemporary liturgical development. It is especially designed for teachers of liturgy and for directors of programs in Christian worship.

Requiring 30 credits, the program is available over a period of four summers, or in combination with study during the year at Notre Dame. Core courses, electives and practicum courses are part of the program, and practical experience is available through daily celebrations of morning prayer, eucharist and evensong.

For further information and application forms for the 1976 summer session (June 21 — August 6), contact:

The Director of the Summer Session
312 Administration Building
Notre Dame, Indiana 46556
U.S.A. (219) 238-7282

1976 Courses

Courses planned for the 1976 summer session include:

Proseminar in Liturgics

Keifer

An introduction for all new students to the basic concepts and methods of liturgical studies; 2 credits.

The Liturgical Year

Mitchell

The liturgical theology of festival and the development of Christian calendars and their effects on liturgical observance; 3 credits.

Liturgy of the Hours

Storey

The development of the liturgy of the hours from synagogue to the present, with observations on the place of the hours in Christian life and on recent reforms; 3 credits.

The Eucharist

Kilmartin

The development and theological significance of Christian eucharistic rites; 3 credits.

Eastern Liturgies

Taft

Introduction to the faith idioms and worship structures of the main non-Western liturgies; 3 credits.

Liturgies of the Reformation

Boehringer

An examination of the structure and theology of worship in the main liturgical traditions springing from 16th Century Reformation: Lutheran, Reformed, Anglican; 3 credits.

Theology of Word and Sacrament

Kilmartin

A systematic development of the role of preaching and sacraments wherein word and sacrament are viewed as interrelated forms of expression and communication of the life of faith; 3 credits.

Theology and the Lord's Prayer

Saliers

A study of prayer, theology and religious experience based on the treatises on the *Our Father* from the Patristic to the present age; 3 credits.

Liturgical Music

Music Dept. Faculty

A curricular opportunity for engagement in cantoral, instrumental and choral performance at celebration of the Hours, the Eucharist and other liturgical events; 2 credits.

Research Seminar

Keifer

Required of students in liturgical research to further their grasp of methods of research in special topics; 3 credits.

Liturgical Engagement

Storey

A review and revision of basic concepts in liturgics. Restricted to students taking their comprehensive examinations in 1976; 2 credits.

Practical mini-courses: These last two weeks, and earn one credit each:

The Liturgy of Funerals (July 12-23)

Smits

Theological and liturgical approaches to the pastoral situation of the Christian celebration of death and burial: wakes, funeral service, burial rite; 1 credit.

The Liturgy of Marriage (June 28-July 9)

Smits

Sacramental and liturgical approaches to the celebration of Christian marriage; 1 credit.

The Liturgy and the Parish Church (July 12-23)

Shaughnessy

Practical considerations in implementing liturgical renewal in the parish church; 1 credit.

A Theology of Celebration (June 28-July 2)

Gallen

An understanding of the principal elements of Christian worship: prayer, ritual action, and the dynamics of community exchange. How is Christian liturgy, as a poetic stylized event, a religious experience for a community? How is it possible for a community to create a symbol that suggests the reality of a transcendent God of mystery?

Liturgical Preaching (July 5-9)

Fuller

The theory and practice of liturgical preaching; the relationship of the homily to the reading of the Word and the celebration of the Eucharist; 1 credit.

Hymnody (June 28-July 9)

Saliers

Selected studies in hymnody: musical, textual, theological and pastoral-liturgical analysis; 1 credit.

Persons wishing to take one or more of these mini-courses may do so by registering with the university.

In the next issue of the Bulletin, we will include information on other schools and courses of liturgy.

PENANCE CELEBRATION

Advent 1975

INTRODUCTORY NOTES

a) **Purpose:** Bible services are encouraged in a special way during Advent and Lent as one way of promoting a warm and living love for scripture among God's people (Liturgy constitution, nos. 24; 35:4). Penance celebrations help the Christian community to deepen its spirit of penance, and assist individuals as they prepare to celebrate the sacrament of reconciliation.

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

During the final days of Advent, the Christian community is preparing for the celebration of Christmas. This penance celebration should help them in making straight the way of the Lord.

b) **Personal attention:** The priest should seek to make the celebration of the sacrament of reconciliation a personal meeting of the penitent with Christ and his Church. Individual attention in the form of instruction, advice, encouragement, should be given to each penitent by the priest. When the sacrament is celebrated after the bible service, as suggested in this outline, more time will be available for giving each penitent the individual attention he or she needs and desires.

c) **A guide:** The following outline is a guide, with suggested texts. While these may be used as printed, it is usually better to adapt them to the needs of the local congregation. Other suitable readings and psalms may be found in the lectionary for Advent (nos. 1-12 and 176-202; nos. 174-175, page 405), or in the liturgy of the hours for this season.

In *Rite of Penance*,¹ several outlines are provided for specific penitential services (Canadian edition, Appendix II, pages 113-152). As well, the rite provides an extensive list of scripture texts in nos. 101-201 (pages 86-94).

The parish liturgy committee should be encouraged to develop this service as required to meet the spiritual needs of the community.

d) **Proclamation:** The readings suggested are contained in the lectionary, and should be proclaimed from it or from a dignified bible. Canada's lectionary is richly bound in red and gold to signify our respect for the scriptures and to emphasize the place of God's word in our spiritual growth.

Scripture references are to the Jerusalem Bible; in the case of the psalms, the second number refers to the Vulgate.

¹ *Rite of Penance*, available from CCC Publications (address on inside front cover) at \$2.00 (six or more at \$1.50 each).

e) Participation: The Vatican Council suggests many ways of promoting active participation in the liturgy: pastors are to encourage people to take part by their acclamations and responses, and by singing psalms, antiphons and hymns, as well as by their actions and bodily postures. Reverent silence for reflection is an essential part of good participation (see Liturgy constitution, no. 30). An effort should be made to include all or many of these methods in this celebration.

f) Music should help the celebration to achieve its purpose. Hymns and songs are suggested from *Catholic Book of Worship*, the Canadian hymnal. Other ideas are given in the liturgical index of the choir edition (pages i-iv at the back of the book) under *Advent, Christian vocation, community, penance celebrations, word of God*.

g) Full celebration: There should be a presiding priest, a number of confessors, the reader carrying the lectionary, servers (including two with lighted candles), crossbearer, thurifer, and choir. The celebrant presides from the chair, leads the prayers and preaches the message of conversion. His work will be more effective when he encourages others to assume their proper roles.

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

i) People's leaflet: Some parishes may prefer to encourage the people to use the Canadian hymnal as their response book; others may wish to prepare leaflets to help their people take a full part in the psalms and responses.

j) Prayer for sinners: The people of God are called to be people of prayer. The entire Church prays for sinners, asking God in his mercy to bring them back to full life in his family. During the penance celebration, the celebrant should invite and encourage the congregation to pray for sinners: for themselves, for members of the community, and for sinners throughout the world (see 1 Jn. 5:16). This prayer may well be backed up by an appeal for individual, family and community fasting.

k) Prayer and fasting: During the week before the penance celebration, members of the parish may be invited to prepare for it by prayer, fasting and penance on one or more Advent weekdays. By their communal prayer and fasting they will plead for God's mercy on sinners and help for all his people in this community (see Bulletin 42, pages 16-18).

l) Suitable days: A weekday — especially Wednesday or Friday, the Church's traditional days for fasting and penance — is more appropriate for a penance celebration than is the Lord's day. In planning these services during Advent, pastors should lead their community into greater accord with the practice of the universal Church.

m) Banners and posters based on the theme, or reflecting the spirit of Advent, may help to set the mood for this celebration.

CELEBRATION OUTLINE

Theme

"Reconciliation with man." The theme may be explained in a few sentences before the service begins, after the greeting, or in any leaflet distributed to the congregation.

Entrance rite

1. Song

Father, see thy children

Awake, awake

Psalm 85(84)

CBW, no. 386

no. 255

no. 173

or another seasonal hymn

2. Enthroning the word of God

The lectionary, the book of God's word, is carried in procession by the reader, accompanied by servers with lighted candles, and the others mentioned in (g) above. He places the book in a place of honor (reading stand or lectern), and the candles are placed nearby. The celebrant incenses the book after it has been enthroned.

3. Celebrant's greeting

After all make the sign of the cross, the celebrant greets the assembled community with one of the following, adapted as necessary: 2 Cor. 1:2; Rom. 1:7b; or the following greeting from St. Polycarp,

May mercy and peace be with you
from almighty God and Jesus Christ our savior.

And also with you.

The celebrant or one of his assistants may explain the theme briefly, if this has not already been done.

4. Opening prayer

The celebrant may choose a suitable prayer from the Advent liturgy; he is encouraged to compose his own, based on the theme as developed in the readings chosen from this celebration. One example of this prayer:

Let us pray to God our Father,
asking him to reconcile us with all men,
for Jesus died that everyone might be saved:

All pause for silent prayer.

Praise to you, Lord God, king of the universe:
you have chosen us to be your beloved children,
united to you in your Son, our savior.

**Lead us from sin
and help us to love and forgive others
as you have loved and forgiven us.**

**Father,
we praise you and bless your name
through Jesus Christ our Lord.**

Liturgy of the Word

God's word invites us to conversion and renewal of our life by proclaiming that Christ's death and rising have freed us from slavery to sin.

5. Readings from the word of God

The first reading is chosen from Sir. 27:33-28:9 (lectionary, no. 131); 2 Cor. 5:20-6:2 (no. 220, second reading); or Col. 1: 12-20 (no. 163).

6. Meditative silence

A few moments of silence should follow the reading, allowing all to reflect and pray in response to the word they have heard in faith.

7. Psalm

After silent prayer, a psalm or hymn is sung:

Ps. 126(125) Lectionary, p. 405

CBW, no. 243

Ps. 25(24) Lectionary, p. 405

nos. 172, 229

Forgive our sins

no. 276

8. Second Reading

If a second reading is used, it may be chosen from one of the texts above, or from Advent readings in the lectionary. A moment of silent prayer follows the reading.

9. Gospel reading

The deacon (or another priest, but not the celebrant) takes the gospel book and prays for God's help. After receiving the celebrant's blessing, he goes in solemn procession with candles and incense to the lectern. He incenses the book solemnly, and then proclaims the gospel.

Mt. 5:20-26

lectionary, no. 229

Mt. 18:21-35

no. 131

Lk. 7:36-50

no. 446

10. Homily

The celebrant proclaims the wonderful works and mercy of God as revealed in the scripture texts, and leads the assembly to prayer for sinners, to a reflective examination of conscience, and to repentance.

11. Prayer for sinners

The celebrant introduces this prayer; he may use ideas from introductory note (j). Then he invites all to prayer:

Let us pray for sinners
and ask God to forgive them:

All pause for silent prayer

Heavenly Father,
you do not want sinners to die,
but to live in grace and serve you in love.
Look upon the people of the world
and draw them back to you through Christ.
With him we pray:
Father, forgive them,
for they know not what they do !

Send your Spirit to soften hard hearts,
to bend rigid wills
and to warm those who are indifferent to you.

Father, forgive us our sins
and listen to our prayers for all sinners.
Bring them back to your love through our example,
so that with them we may praise you
and celebrate our thanks
through Christ our Lord.

Responsory

Reader Christians, remember your dignity:
you are the chosen people of God !

All Christians, remember your dignity:
you are the chosen people of God !

Reader God our Father has blessed us with every spiritual gift,
choosing us in Christ to be his people,
holy and without sin in his sight. R.

Reader He called us to be his sons and daughters.
He set us free by the death and rising of Christ,
and forgives our sins.
He has rescued us from the kingdom of darkness
and allowed us to share the joy of the saints in light. R.

Reader Our Father has chosen us to be his own people
in order to carry out his plan:
to bring all creation together with Christ as head. R.

Reader **He has marked us as his own by the seal of the Holy Spirit,
to assure us that he will make us free
with the freedom of the children of God. R̄.**

Another antiphon (from Wis. 18:8) may be chosen as a response:

**You have made us glorious
by calling us to you.**

12. Hymn

If desired, a hymn may be sung:

The Lord has done marvels	CBW, no. 400
We will walk with Christ	no. 395
In Christ there is no east or west	no. 378

Examination of Our Christian Living

The points below are suggestions based on the sermon on the mount. The liturgy committee may work on developing others. Care should be taken, however, not to omit the ones that disturb you or the community: these are probably the questions that most need to be asked. (Other forms of the examination are given in past issues of the Bulletin: nos. 32, 36, 37, 41, 42, 46 and 47.)

A pause is to be made for reflection after each consideration. The examination of conscience is the heart of the penance service; unless suitable time is given for reflection during it, it becomes a waste of everyone's time.

The people may sing their response after each pause for silent reflection, using CBW, no. 173.

13. Examination of conscience

Celebrant **Let us turn to God our Father,
and ask his mercy,
that we may repent of our sins
and turn back to him in love.**

Reader **You are to be the light of the world,
so that all may see the good lives you lead,
and be led to praise your Father in heaven.**

Pause for silent reflection

Reader **Father, forgive us**

All **Let us see, O Lord, your mercy** CBW, no. 173

Reader **You are to obey his law, the will of God,
and to teach others to obey in faith,
to do his will on earth and to enter the kingdom.**

Pause for silent reflection

Reader **Father, forgive us.**

All **Let us see, O Lord, your mercy.**

Reader **You are to forgive those who offend you,
to work for peace among all men,
to be friendly and not angry with others.**

Pause for silent reflection

Reader **Father, forgive us.**

All **Let us see, O Lord, your mercy.**

Reader **You are called to be pure of heart:
not to lust after others
or to sin with them;
you are to give up whatever leads you to sin.**

Pause for silent reflection

Reader **Father, forgive us.**

All **Let us see, O Lord, your mercy.**

Reader **You are to love your enemies,
and do good to those who harm you,
and not seek to take revenge.
You are to forgive them as God has forgiven you.
You are to be as perfect as your heavenly Father is !**

Pause for silent reflection

Reader **Father, forgive us.**

All **Let us see, O Lord, your mercy.**

Reader **You are to help those in need,
but without showing off or boasting,
so that only your Father in heaven
may see your good deeds.**

Pause for silent reflection

Reader **Father, forgive us.**

All **Let us see, O Lord, your mercy.**

Reader **You are to pray without showing off,
in simple words to your heavenly Father,
trusting him in faith to give you what you need.**

Pause for silent reflection

Reader **Father, forgive us.**

All **Let us see, O Lord, your mercy.**

Reader **You are to fast and do penance,
to follow Christ and carry your daily cross,
and not to boast of what you do for him.**

Pause for silent reflection

Reader **Father, forgive us.**

All **Let us see, O Lord, your mercy.**

Reader **You are to serve God and not money,
to store up treasures in heaven,
to share what you have with others.**

Pause for silent reflection.

Reader **Father, forgive us.**

All **Let us see, O Lord, your mercy.**

Reader **You are to follow the hard way to eternal life,
to base your lives firmly on the word of God,
to bear fruit for the Lord by doing his will.**

Pause for silent reflection

Reader **Father, forgive us.**

All **Let us see, O Lord, your mercy.**

* * *

Celebrant **People of God,
prepare a way for the Lord.
Make his paths straight in your lives,
and smooth out the rough roads in your hearts.
Let his Spirit lead you back to him,
forgiving you and filling you with his love.**

14. Silent prayer

For about five minutes, all remain in silence. Sitting or kneeling as they wish, they discuss their way of life with the Lord.

For those who wish it, the sacrament of reconciliation will be celebrated after this bible service.²

² The act of satisfaction (formerly known as "the penance") is to be personal and must be given individually, in a way that is fitting to each person's sins and sorrow. It is contrary to the mind of the Church to impose a general or universal act of satisfaction on all members of the congregation before or after the individual celebration of the sacrament of reconciliation (see rite, no. 55).

15. Community act of sorrow

The "Lord, have mercy" may be sung from CBW, nos. 165-169, or using a tune familiar to the community.

Leader **Lord, you have called us to be the children of light:
forgive us for choosing the darkness of sin.
Lord, have mercy.**

All **Lord, have mercy.**

Leader **Christ, you have chosen us to do good
and help others in your spirit of love:
forgive us for preferring to serve ourselves.
Christ, have mercy.**

All **Christ, have mercy.**

Leader **Lord, you have taught us to be the light of the world;
forgive us for bringing darkness into the lives of others.
Lord, have mercy.**

All **Lord, have mercy.**

16. Acclamation

A hymn may be sung:

Prayer of St. Francis	CBW, no. 404
From the depths of sin and sadness	no. 279
Awake, awake, fling off the night	no. 255

Or a brief prayer of the faithful may be based on the theme, ending with the Lord's prayer, no. 17.

Conclusion of the Rite

17. Lord's Prayer

This prayer is best sung by all, as at Mass (CBW, nos. 221-223). The celebrant may prepare an introduction to this prayer, based on the theme of the service. For example:

**God has reconciled us
to himself and to one another
by the death and resurrection of his Son.
Let us pray to our Father in love:**

Our Father . . .

18. Sacred action

The celebrant invites all to share the peace of Christ with one another. This may be done as at Sunday Mass, or less formally. He may introduce the rite in this way:

**Jesus gives his forgiveness and peace
to all the people of God.
Let us share his peace and love with one another.**

19. Invitation to the sacrament

The celebrant invites the congregation to celebrate the sacrament of penance after the bible service has ended. The various places for a personal encounter with Christ through the priest (see introductory note, b) should be mentioned in a positive way. (They should also be described in the parish bulletin on the previous Sunday, with a strong mention of the spiritual opportunities being offered on this occasion of grace.)

20. Blessing

The celebrant may conclude with a simple blessing, or may use this form:

One priest **May the Father who has reconciled us in his love
continue to shower his blessing upon us.**

All **Amen.**

Another priest **May the Son who died and rose to save us
forgive us our sins
and lead us in his footsteps.**

All **Amen.**

Another priest **May the Holy Spirit of God,
who makes us his temples of love and praise,
give us unending joy and peace.**

All **Amen.**

Celebrant **May almighty God bless you,
the Father, and the Son + and the Holy Spirit.**

All **Amen.**

21. Concluding hymn

As the priests move toward the places for individual reconciliation, all sing a seasonal hymn or song of praise:

The king of glory	CBW, no. 353
Help us to help each other	no. 281
or another Advent hymn may be chosen	nos. 248-256

Sacrament of Penance

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

BAPTISMAL RENEWAL

In the revised rites, the Church invites us to renew our baptism (by renewing our promise and intention to die with Christ to sin, and to live with him for God) on various occasions in our lives:

◦ *During Lent*, we recall our baptism, and prepare ourselves for Easter by prayer, penance, scripture reading, liturgical celebrations, and other good works.

◦ *At the Easter vigil*, we renew our rejection of Satan and our commitment to Christ. (On Easter Sunday in Canada and the United States, this renewal is also made by those who did not take part in the vigil service.)

◦ *On Sunday*, the rite of sprinkling holy water reminds us of our baptism, so that God the Father may keep us faithful to his Spirit, whom he has sent to dwell in us. The prayers of the rite explain its meaning further. The penitential rite, which is omitted when holy water is blessed and sprinkled, may be seen as a renewal of our baptismal rejection of sin and Satan.

◦ *In communion for the sick*, the minister sprinkles the sick person with holy water to remind him that we share in Jesus' saving death and resurrection through baptism.

◦ *When receiving viaticum*, the person is sprinkled with holy water (as in the communion of the sick). He is also asked to reject sin (sacrament of penance or penitential rite) and to renew his baptismal profession of faith before receiving viaticum.

THANKSGIVING

A prayer to express our personal thanks to God for having led us to him through Christian initiation. It may be adapted to suit individual circumstances.

Blessed are you, Lord God,
ruler of all creation:
you have made us your beloved children,
brothers and sisters of Jesus our savior
and temples of your Spirit.

Father, we thank you for making us Christians:
give us your help to continue dying to sin
and to live with Christ for you.
Lead all people into your kingdom of light.

All praise and glory be to you, Father,
through your Son Jesus Christ,
in the unity of your Holy Spirit,
now and for ever. Amen !

BLESSINGS

In Bulletin 49, *Blessed be God and his creation*, the traditional prayer of praise was studied, and many sample prayers and blessings were included. This section contains some further examples of the ways we may praise God and thank him for his wonderful love for us.

BLESSING A GROUP OF PEOPLE

After the last class for the week, a teacher may wish to bless her students. A Scout or Guide leader may bless the members of the group at the end of a weekly meeting, or at the close of an outing or a day in camp. The chairman or chaplain of a parish council could conclude the meeting with a blessing. This blessing may also be used for any large gathering of people, or adapted to the specific occasion.

A simple outline is given below. It may be developed more fully for special occasions. Those working with young people should invite them to participate in selecting and preparing readings and prayers. The final blessing may be expanded in the form of the solemn blessing.

At the close of the class or meeting, the leader invites all to pray:

Leader Let us ask God to bless us,
and our families and friends.

All pause for silent prayer.

Father of us all,
look upon us in your love, and bless us.

Be merciful to us, and to our families and friends.
Protect us from sin and harm,
and guide us with your light
until we come together again.

All praise, glory and honor to you, Father,
through Christ our Lord.

All Amen !

All may sing a psalm or hymn. At an evening meeting, the canticle of Mary is appropriate (see CBW, no. 400).

Leader May you be protected and blessed,
and made strong in faith, hope and love
by our all-powerful God,
the Father, the + Son, and the Holy Spirit.

All Amen !

Imposition of hands by the leader, or a gesture of peace exchanged by all may conclude the celebration.

BLESSING AN ENGAGED COUPLE

An informal celebration to praise God and to ask his help for a young couple when they become engaged. The two families and close friends may wish to mark the occasion by prayer and rejoicing. The prayers given here may be used at a family meal, or if the couple so desires, in the parish church.

These prayers may be adapted, and suitable scripture readings chosen in advance by the couple. The leader may be a priest, the parents of the couple, or a family friend. *Informal but serious* should describe the atmosphere for this rite.

After the sign of the cross, the leader invites all to pray:

Leader Let us pray for N. and N.,
and ask God to bless them.

All pause for silent prayer.

Father in heaven,
you have blessed us as your people,
and have called us to serve you in love.
Listen to our prayers for this young couple,
and bless † them as they prepare for marriage in the Lord.

Guard them from evil and guide them with your light,
so that they may enter their marriage in your love
and serve you faithfully at all times.

All praise to you, Father,
through Jesus Christ, your Son and our Lord.

All Amen !

He may sprinkle them and the members of the assembly with holy water.

A brief reading from scripture is proclaimed. In a church service, two readings may be preferred: in this case, a psalm or hymn should follow the first reading, and the second lesson will be chosen from the gospels. Suggested texts include: Deut. 10:12-15; Deut. 30:15-20; Mt. 5:13-16; Mt. 6:7-15; Mt. 18:19-22; Lk. 1:46-55; 1 Cor. 13:4-7 or 4-13; Col. 1:9-14; 1 Thess. 3:12-13; Heb. 13:20-21; selections from 1 Jn. 4:7-21.

In the prayer of the faithful, other petitions may be prepared. The music for the closing phrase and for the people's response is found in the sacramentary for Good Friday, page 227, and in *Catholic Book of Worship*, page 54.

Leader Let us pray for N. and N.,
and for their families and friends,
and ask God's help for all in need:

All pause for silent prayer.

Reader Lord, bless N. and N.,
and help them as they prepare for marriage.
We pray to the Lord.

All For the sake of your Son, have mercy, Lord.

Reader Keep them holy and pure in their lives,
 deepen their spirit of prayer and love,
 and lead them in perfect joy.
 We pray to the Lord.

All For the sake of your Son, have mercy, Lord.

Reader Bless their parents, families and friends,
 and lead us to help N. and N.
 by our prayer and example as they prepare to marry.
 We pray to the Lord.

All For the sake of your Son, have mercy, Lord.

Reader Have mercy on all who suffer need or pain,
 and through our generosity and love,
 bring them help and consolation.
 We pray to the Lord.

All For the sake of your Son, have mercy, Lord.

Leader Father,
 hear our prayers in your love.
 Bless this couple, and help them as they prepare
 to celebrate the sacrament of marriage.
 Father, we ask this grace through Christ our Lord.

All Amen !
 The Lord's prayer should be sung, if possible.

Leader Let us pray together as Jesus has taught us:

All Our Father . . .

If they wish to have their engagement ring blessed, the leader may say:

Father in heaven,
 bless + this ring,
 and grant N. and N. your grace,
 so that they may prepare worthily for the sacrament of marriage,
 and live as your beloved children.

Grant this, Father, through Christ our Lord.

All Amen !

Leader May almighty God bless you, N. and N.
 May he grant you love and happiness,
 peace and joy, and strength in trials,
 all the days of your life together.

May almighty God,
 Father, Son + and Holy Spirit,
 give his blessing to you for ever and ever.

All Amen !

The celebration closes with a gesture of peace and friendship.

BLESSING FOR A WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

It is desirable to celebrate the wedding anniversary by a community Mass (see sacramentary, nos. 449-451; lectionary, nos. 774-778 or 881-885). The blessing below may be used at a family meal, and may be given by the priest, a member of the family, or by a long-time family friend.

Leader Let us pray for N. and N.
as we celebrate this anniversary with them.

All pause for silent prayer.

Leader Blessed are you, Lord, king of all creation:
you have made us your beloved people,
and have showered your gifts upon us.
With N. and N. we bless you,
and thank you for their years together.
Continue to fill their hearts
with love for you and for each other.
Bless (their children and) all their relatives and friends,
and lead them through this life to eternal happiness with you.

We offer you all praise and glory
through Christ our Lord.

All Amen !

A brief reading may be proclaimed.

Leader Let us praise God our Father
in the words that Jesus gave us:

All Our Father . . .

The children of the family may lead a brief litany or prayer for their parents and for all who are present for this celebration.

The couple may wish to make a symbolic gesture to recall their vows. For example, while holding the other's hand, each may say these or similar words:

Remember, N., this ring I gave you:
I love you,
and promise you I will always be your faithful partner.

Leader N. and N., may God bless you and grant you joy.
May he deepen your love for each other.
May he bless you in your family and friends,
and lead you to unending happiness in heaven.

May almighty God,
Father, Son + and Holy Spirit,
bless us all, and keep us in his love for ever.

All Amen !

BLESSING OF A PUBLIC BUILDING

Some buildings, such as libraries, civic offices and firehalls, are erected for the service of the entire community. When they are being opened, it is desirable to bless them or dedicate them.

The blessing will normally be a part of the civic celebration, and will be ecumenical in its approach. Each community will need to prepare a form which is suitable for its circumstances, considering the role of the new building in the life of the community, and the way in which this edifice may help to make this world better for all the children of God.

An example of a blessing of a community center is given here:

Leader Let us pray in silence,
and ask God to bless us all.

All pause for a moment of silent prayer.

Father in heaven,
we thank you for this community center
which we are opening today.
Bless this building and all who use it.
Grant that all the activities that take place here
will build up a spirit of community among us
and lead to the well-being of all our citizens.

Father, we praise you,
and ask your blessing through Christ our Lord.

All Amen!

The Lord's prayer may be said by all together, and a familiar hymn, such as O God our help in ages past, *CBW*, no. 391, may be sung to conclude this part of the ceremony.

PASTORAL IN SCOPE

The 1976 issues of the Bulletin will continue to provide pastoral guidance and aid to members of parish liturgy committees, readers, musicians, singers, teachers, religious and clergy, and all who are involved in preparing and celebrating the community liturgy.

Issues planned for next year:

- Bulletin 52 Reconciliation and forgiveness
- Bulletin 53 Ministries and liturgy
- Bulletin 54 Story of the Mass
- Bulletin 55 Advent-Christmas
- Bulletin 56 Training readers

The subscription for 1976 is \$6.00 for five issues (nos. 52-56); outside Canada, the cost is \$7.00, because of higher postage costs. Single issues are available at \$1.50 (\$1.75 outside Canada). Orders may be sent to Publications Service (address on inside front cover).

PRAYING WITH THE CHURCH

In the solemn form of the prayer of the faithful used on Good Friday, we pray for catechumens preparing for baptism, especially the elect who are to be initiated during the Easter vigil celebration. During the Easter season, the Church prays for all who have been baptized in Christ, and in a particular way for those baptized at Easter.

Throughout the year, parishes and communities should remember their responsibility to pray for catechumens, and to assist them by their example and their friendliness, so that they may become fully united with the Christian community of believers.

TIME FOR A SECOND LOOK

In January, 1959, Pope John announced the Vatican Council. After three years of intense preparations, it was opened on October 11, 1962. Its fourth and final session closed on December 8, 1965. *A new era had begun in the life of the Church.*

This tenth anniversary of the closing of the Vatican Council is a good time for us to begin to go more deeply into its documents, to read them (have you read all 16 documents in the past year? or in the past ten years?), to see where we should be applying this teaching.

Let us take this occasion to open our lives and our communities more fully to the calm but powerful teaching of the Second Vatican Council. Guided by the Holy Spirit, we can begin to fulfill the Council's great goals, set out so clearly in the opening paragraph of the Constitution on the liturgy.

SLOW DOWN AND CELEBRATE

Good liturgy needs time to develop. It needs an adequate time spent on preparation, it needs time for celebration, it needs time for meditation and reflection.

Good liturgy cannot be rushed. Instant celebration is as impossible as instant community.

The following thought applies to Canadians and to liturgy as well as to the compatriots of its author:

*The superficiality of the American is the result of his hustling. It needs leisure to think things out; it needs leisure to mature. People in a hurry cannot think, cannot grow, nor can they decay. They are preserved in a state of perpetual puerility.**

* Eric Hoffer, *The Passionate State of Mind*, Harper & Row, New York, 1968, page 97.

BOOKS

KEEPING UP TO DATE

None of us would trust a doctor who didn't keep up with current trends in medicine and health care techniques by regularly reading journals and books, and by attending seminars and brief courses once or twice a year.

A teacher who didn't keep up with new developments in education and teaching materials would soon be without a job.

What about our clergy and liturgy committee members and others who lead or guide our worship? What provisions are made in the parish for obtaining up to date material, and for participation in conferences and seminars?

"Everything's up to date in Kansas City," according to the song. How about your parish or community?

NEW PUBLICATIONS

Some recent publications from the Canadian Catholic Conference provide useful help for you in your parish and community.

- *Masses with children, Masses of reconciliation*: five new eucharistic prayers, approved for use in Canada. Two colors, complete order of Mass, all nine approved eucharistic prayers; directory for Masses with children; music; selection of seasonal and votive Masses. Prepared for use in school and home Masses. 142 pages. \$5.00 (six or more copies, \$4.00 each).

- *Rite of penance*: Official translation of introduction, ritual texts, sample penitential services, examination of conscience. 160 pages. \$2.00 (six or more, \$1.50 each).

- *Liturgy of the hours*: four volumes are being issued to cover the full year: Volumes 1, 2, 3, 4. Two colors, six ribbons, some 2,000 pages in each volume. \$19.95 each volume (six or more copies of each volume, \$16.00 each).

- *The Byzantine Ukrainian Rite*: a simple and reverent presentation of the history, liturgy and traditions of the Ukrainian Catholic Church. Nine chapters, 27 photographs. 124 pages, four-color icon on cover. \$3.00 (ten or more, \$2.50 each).

- *Your child's baptism*: This leaflet for parents explains the community's interest in the public celebration of baptism, and discusses the spiritual preparations needed. Illustrated, six pages, 6½ by 6½ inches. One copy, 12 cents; 10 cents each for 100 or more.

- *Charismatic renewal*: message of the Canadian bishops (April 1975). 16 pages. 25 cents a copy (15 cents for 25 or more).

* * *

These publications may be obtained from Publications Service, 90 Parent Avenue, Ottawa, Ontario. K1N 7B1. (Please enclose cheque or money order to avoid unnecessary billing and additional costs.)

PASTORAL AND PRACTICAL

Pastoral Liturgy, a symposium edited by Harold Winstone. 1975, Collins (the book may be ordered from Canterbury House, 228 Bank St., Ottawa, Ontario K2P 1X1). 284 pages. \$8.95.

* * *

Written for the priest and his liturgy team, this book presents a practical guide to the full exploration and celebration of the liturgy in parish life. Father Winstone, director of the St. Thomas More Center for Pastoral Liturgy in London, England, has brought together fifteen writers to present the subject from every angle. Among the names most familiar in North America are Clifford Howell and J. D. Crichton.

In the first part of the book, seven articles cover various aspects of celebration, including its meaning, the place of the Spirit in eucharistic celebration, and thoughts on preparing people to celebrate. Music, movement, art, and architecture also have separate chapters.

The second part is on celebrating the eucharist, and discusses the parish Mass, Masses for children, for young people and for small groups. An article on some urban problems concludes this section.

Celebration of the other sacraments, the final part of the book, has chapters on Christian initiation (perhaps the best article in the book), penance, pastoral care of the sick and dying, Christian marriage, and mixed marriages; chapters on religious profession and funerals conclude the symposium.

A few negative points need to be mentioned. The sacrament of orders is omitted and newer trends in ministries are not discussed. The chapter on art would have been improved if the ax-grinding had been omitted. Practices are suggested here and there that are contrary to current legislation: we trust the good sense of our readers to spot these. Although most of the writers address their articles to an English audience, they are easily applied to the North American scene.

Every parish liturgy committee could benefit from having several copies of this book in circulation. If one of the eighteen chapters were studied and discussed at each meeting, many sound ideas could be brought into the life and liturgy of their parish. We recommend *Pastoral Liturgy* to each member of the liturgy committee and parish clergy.

MINISTRY OF MUSIC

The Ministry of Music, a guide for the practising church musician, by William A. Bauman. 1975, The Liturgical Conference (1330 Massachusetts Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005, U.S.A.). 108 pages. \$5.95.

* * *

It is always a delight to give a whole-hearted welcome to a much needed book. In this publication, Father Bauman has combined theory and practice at the parish level. Designed as workshops, the chapters contain many ideas for cantors, choral groups, organists, guitarists, and those playing other instruments. The

combination of competent performance, pastoral judgment and liturgical judgment is encouraged throughout the book. Suggestions for the use of music in the celebration of Mass and the sacraments are sound and practical. Further ideas are given for other rites, including the liturgy of the hours.

We have no hesitation in recommending this book for musicians, liturgy committees, and clergy. If every community carried out the book's suggestions, what praise would be given to God !

RECONCILIATION

Study Text 4: Commentary on the Rite of Penance, by the Bishops' Committee on Liturgy. 1975, United States Catholic Conference (Publications Office, 1312 Massachusetts Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005, U.S.A.). 41 pages. \$1.50.

* * *

The fourth of the series of study texts comes at a time when many parishes are looking more carefully at the revised rites of reconciliation. More compact in style than previous texts (see Bulletin 43, page 127), this book is to be read along with the rite of penance.*

With wide margins handy for notes and cross references, this book is intended for diocesan commissions, liturgy committees, catechists, clergy and everyone else interested in celebrating this sacrament as well as possible. We recommend this book as a valuable aid for all.

A BOOK FOR EVERYONE

Day by Day, the Notre Dame prayerbook for students, edited by Thomas McNally, CSC, and William G. Storey. 1975, Ave Maria Press (Notre Dame, Indiana 46556, U.S.A.). 208 pages, photographs. \$2.45.

* * *

Intended for high school and university students, this book of prayers offers help to every serious believer. Prayers from most centuries of the Christian era are brought together as aids for today's young person (including a translation on page 31 quoted from Bulletin 45, page 256). The editors are men with many years of practical experience in helping students to pray.

Daily prayer, psalms, prayers for moments of silence or reconciliation, morning and evening prayer, way of the cross, rosary, and Jesus prayer: all are presented in ten useful sections. The book is a valuable resource for prayer, and is sturdily bound and clearly printed.

We recommend it for young people — it would make an excellent gift; for teachers and parents; and for all who want to be more open to the ways of the Spirit.

* *Rite of penance*, now available from CCC Publications (address on inside front cover of this issue), for \$2.00 (six or more copies, \$1.50 each).

MARIAN DEVOTION

In Praise of Mary, by Donal Flanagan. 1975, Veritas Publications (Pranstown House, Booterstown Ave., Co. Dublin, Ireland). 175 pages. £ 1.10.

* * *

The devotion of Christians for Mary — *Theotokos*, the one who bore God — extends back to the early days of the Church. In this simple book, the author leads us through a number of witnesses to this devotion. The second and larger section of the book presents selections from Marian literature, including Oriental, Italian and Irish poetry; some medieval Fathers; Erasmus, Luther and Calvin; and modern papal documents.

While the liturgical aspects of Marian devotion are discussed in the section on Pope Paul's apostolic exhortation * on Mary, the varying relationship between liturgy and Marian devotion is not described. The role of the early Councils and the deep devotion of the Eastern Churches for Mary are mentioned only in passing.

A MARTYR'S TESTIMONY

Oliver Plunkett — in his own words, by Desmond Forristal. 1975, Veritas Publications (Pranstown House, Booterstown Ave., Co. Dublin, Ireland). 136 pages. 80 pence.

* * *

A sober yet fascinating account of the Church in Rome, Ireland and England in the second half of the seventeenth century, this book provides some penetrating and even shocking insights into the life of the Church of that period.

The last Catholic martyred for the faith in England (1681), Oliver Plunkett was canonized this autumn. His story, told with frequent excerpts from his letters, is faith-filled and inspiring for Christians today.

From a liturgical point of view, a number of facts are of interest. He confirmed thousands in areas that had seen no bishop for forty years — another reminder of the state of Christian initiation in his time. England and Ireland were still on the Julian calendar, while the continent followed the Gregorian reform of the previous century.

We recommend this book, dramatically written and easy to read, as an important contribution to the devotion toward the saints in today's Church. *St. Oliver Plunkett, pray for God's Church today!*

* *Marialis cultus*, February 2, 1974. This 46-page booklet is available from CCC Publications at 60 cents a copy, plus postage.

AUTHORITATIVE COMMENTARY

Celebrating Mass with Children, a commentary on the Directory for Masses with children, by Edward Matthews, 1975, Collins (available from Canterbury House, 228 Bank St., Ottawa, Ontario K2P 1X1). 192 pages. \$4.95.

* * *

Father Matthews was the only English-speaking member of the commission which prepared the text of the 1973 directory for Masses with children. His practical experience and sensitivity for the religious feelings and needs of young people are evident throughout this fine book. Two appendices give a checklist of parts of the Mass which may be adapted, and the text of the 1973 directory for easy reference.

The book covers the subject well, and goes beyond school to family prayer (chapter 3, on education for worship, is excellent) and to ways that adult celebrations can be improved. Song, word, gesture all have their place in his balanced treatment; no doubt some priests will be surprised to read: "Dance within the liturgy is nothing new. Even the priest's own ritual movements are really another form of dance" (page 116).

A few negative comments: the prayer of the faithful is a prayer of petition only, not of thanksgiving; his examples of this prayer seem too individualistic (pages 82-84, 144). His approach to the opening prayer seems to exclude or ignore the rest of the Church community, and to be concerned only about this group of children (126). The washing of the hands has nothing to do with baptism — that is the purpose of the sprinkling of holy water at the beginning of a Sunday Mass (152). Throughout the book, he seems to concentrate mostly on theme Masses, with only scattered references to feasts or liturgical seasons. (With his ability, he could have written a powerful chapter on the Church year and the classroom).

These points aside, this book is a valuable guide for priests, teachers, catechists, and liturgy committee members. Used in conjunction with the new eucharistic prayers¹ for Masses with children, it can provide sound guidance toward even better celebrations.

¹ *Masses with children, Masses of reconciliation: five new and approved eucharistic prayers, with order of Mass, seasonal, festive and votive Mass texts.* Two colors. 1975, Canadian Catholic Conference, 142 pages. \$5.00 each; six or more copies, \$4.00 each. Now available from Publications Service: address on the inside front cover.

FIXING THE DATE OF EASTER

At the end of its Liturgy constitution, the Vatican Council pointed out that our Church is ready to have Easter assigned to a fixed Sunday, as long as other Christian Churches assent to this.

In May 1975, the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity extended Pope Paul's concrete proposal to the Orthodox, Anglican and Reformed Churches of the world.

In 1977, all Christians happen to celebrate Easter on April 10. The pope is proposing that from then on, all should choose the Sunday after the second Saturday of April as the date for Easter each year.

This means a new way of settling the date of Easter for all Churches, and will help all Christians give one further sign of their unity of faith in the risen Lord. From a practical point of view, it will mean that the celebrations between Ash Wednesday and Pentecost will vary only within a week from year to year; at present, this variation can be up to five weeks.

A consultation is being carried on with other Churches through the World Council of Churches.

Let us pray that we may make this one small step together in unity — as another step closer to the full unity that the Lord Jesus desires among all his Christian people.

NEXT ISSUE

Reconciliation and forgiveness is the title of Bulletin 52. It will begin the 1976 series of five issues, and will be ready for mailing in January.

This issue will study the new rite for the sacrament in the light of its history, and will explore the meaning of recent changes, with emphasis on attitudinal changes and community aspects. A sample penance celebration is also given in preparation for reconciliation before Easter.

Like every issue of the Bulletin, this issue is written for people working at the parish level, so that they may be helped in their liturgical efforts.

Extra copies may be ordered now for January delivery: \$1.50 for each copy in Canada; outside Canada, \$1.75 each. You may send your order and cheque to Publications Service at the address on the inside front cover.