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54

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

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STORY OF THE MASS

This issue of the Bulletin takes the present Sunday Mass of the Roman rite, and looks at the origins and development of our current prayers and ceremonies. Each part of the Mass is described, showing various stages it has gone through from its origin to the present.

Great freedom for local development surrounded the Mass for almost 1600 years. In the Roman rite, trends toward centralization and uniformity occurred every few hundred years. Only in the past four centuries has there been a universal rule with printed books providing identical texts for all.

Through this Bulletin it is hoped that our understanding of the Roman rite’s Sunday Mass will be increased. As we begin to move toward further adaptations in the years ahead, we will be able to act more wisely with the perspective and wisdom of 2,000 years of experience in Christian worship.
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WORSHIP IN SPIRIT AND IN TRUTH

The eucharistic celebration is always the same in its essence as the center of the Church's life, but it has varied in its manner of celebration down through the centuries. The history of the Mass is long and complicated.

Many changes have taken place in the rites of the Mass as the Church has grown — or faltered — in its understanding of itself and of the eucharist. This fact need not shock us: rather, let us seek to understand the Mass in the light of our Christian and Jewish tradition, and to share its spiritual wealth with all.

History shows us that the Mass of the Roman rite suffered most when the people no longer had an active part in it because they did not understand Latin; then the clerics tampered with it, stuffed in extra prayers and actions, and added layer upon layer of allegories and symbolism. Their main achievement was to hide the meaning and shape of the eucharistic celebration, and to give rise to more changes.

One of the greatest blessings coming to us from the Second Vatican Council reforms is the restoration of a much simpler and clearer form of the Mass in our own language. Unfortunately, too many clerics and liturgy committees have already started to tamper with its noble simplicity (Liturgy constitution, no. 34). History shows that this type of sincere but misguided tinkering leads only to further liturgical disasters.

While the present form of the Roman Mass is not perfect, we may hope that future changes and adaptations will be based on a growing understanding of the Mass and its history, rather than on expediency or compromise alone. Let us be firm in avoiding local "improvements" in the Sunday celebration without truly understanding what we are doing to the Christian eucharistic tradition: history shows clearly that many changes in the past have resulted from local enthusiasms or aberrations. This fact does not preclude change, but does invite careful, prayerful thought and study first, as well as respect for the universal and ecumenical implications of our actions or proposals. Our task is to hand on the Mass to the succeeding generations as the clean oblation and form of worship offered from the rising of the sun to its setting.

The Church gives us many opportunities for creativity in the Mass today. It is our duty to explore these completely and to use the full symbolism already permitted in the rites. The present form of the Mass has tremendous impact if we will celebrate it properly and carefully.

As far as possible during our generation, let us work to build up a basic understanding of the eucharist. Let us contribute nothing to support any future dark age in the life of the Church of Christ.
INTRODUCTORY RITES

BEGINNING THE CELEBRATION

Every human action has to have a beginning. This is true of ordinary events — cooking a meal, washing windows, planting a garden — and it is true of sacred actions. In matters of importance, we feel uncomfortable if we do not begin at the beginning.

Through the ages of Christian worship, the same instinctive feeling is evident. Before we do the major things, we need to prepare ourselves, set the scene, make sure everyone is in the mood.

The introductory rites have had a varied history. Until the beginning of the fifth century, the celebrating priest entered the community and the Mass began immediately with the readings. In Justin's description of the Mass at Rome in the year 150, he mentions the assembly of the people on the day of the Sun. Once they have gathered, the writings of the apostles or prophets are read, and the presiding bishop preaches. (See Bulletin 55, page 242.)

Instead of looking for an underlying structure of the present opening rites, we should see them as a series of independent rites by which the worshipping assembly of a particular community prepared itself for the liturgy of the word and the liturgy of the eucharist.

In the present Roman rite, the introductory rites serve several purposes (see GI, no. 24):

- **Unity**: They help the people who have come together in one place to become a unified assembly, to realize that they are with their brothers and sisters, and that Jesus is present among them.

- **Preparation**: The introductory rites help the assembled worshippers to get ready to take part in the liturgy of the word by some calming moments of reflection. Both the introductory rites and the word service provide a time for all to be prepared to take a full part in the act of eucharistic worship.

- **Beginning and introduction**: These rites make a definite beginning, a call to order, a recognized vestibule through which we enter the day's liturgy. They introduce us to a mood for reverent listening and active response in word and act.

**Current introductory rites**: In the present order of Mass, the rites at the beginning are given as the entrance song, priest's greeting, penitential rite, *Lord, have mercy*, *Glory to God*, and collect or opening prayer. These are described in the following pages.

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1 GI: This abbreviation is used throughout this issue of the Bulletin to indicate the General Instruction of the Roman Missal. Written as a pastoral introduction and explanation of the rites of Mass, it is found at the beginning of the sacramentary. In the Canadian edition, it is given on pages 11-54.
Entrance Procession and Song

By the sixth century, an entrance psalm was being sung in papal ceremonies. In the seventh century, when all was ready, the pope would wave his maniple and the song began. With the choir and his attendants, he left the sacristy, near the entrance, and the song continued as they went in procession through the people to the altar. There the pope signalled the choir to begin the *Glory to the Father* and repeat the antiphon.

The singing of the psalm during the procession added dignity to the action, and introduced the Mass in an atmosphere of prayer. At this period, no musical instruments were used in the Roman ceremonies. The antiphon set the key, and was normally taken from the psalm itself; usually a verse was chosen that seemed most apt for that particular celebration. The Romans preferred words “dictated by the Spirit” to hymns, which were not allowed in the Mass until the end of the ninth century. Antiphons from other parts of scripture, and even from outside the bible, were introduced more freely in the middle ages.

On penitential occasions, the processional chant led directly to the collect, which concluded the entrance rite: on these days, the *Lord, have mercy* was sung at the beginning of the procession, and the *Glory to God* was omitted.

The Church at Antioch made the *Glory to the Father* (called the little doxology, in contrast with *Glory to God*, the greater one) the normal ending of the psalm in the Christian liturgy. Charlemagne's reform of the liturgy in the late eighth century encouraged the people to sing the doxology during the entrance song.

In the seventh or eighth century, the entrance chant (introit) was introduced in the “low” or “private” Masses developing at that time. This usually consisted of the antiphon, the opening verse of the processional psalm, doxology, and the antiphon. This format lasted until the new *Roman Missal* of 1970, although moves were made in the early years of this century to encourage use of the full psalm once more.

From the fourteenth century, the chant was not begun until the priest had reached the altar. The missal of Pius V in 1570 cleared away tropes (see page 148) that had attached themselves to the introit. After the prayers at the foot of the altar, the priest read it with a sign of the cross — even when the choir was singing the same text!

*Today:* The entrance antiphon alone is given in the sacramentary, and the psalm may be taken from the gradual or simple gradual books; usually, however, another hymn is sung. The song starts after the people have come together, and as the priest and his ministers enter. This singing begins the celebration, unites the people in a community of worship, introduces them to the spirit of the celebration, and accompanies the entrance procession. Various ways of singing the entrance psalm are given in the sacramentary (GI, nos. 24-26).

One anomaly remains in our present rite: when no entrance hymn is sung, the entrance antiphon is to be said — either by the congregation, by a few people, or by the reader — as the priest enters; otherwise, the priest reads it after he greets the people (GI, no. 26). The antiphon usually provides a good meditation on the season or the feast, and could be used beneficially as part of the introduction to the Mass.
Signs of Reverence

Several signs of respect used in the Mass rites came from papal court customs; they in turn derive from the ceremonial of the Roman emperor's court, and were based on oriental customs. These rites are seen clearly in the papal Mass of the seventh century.

Lights: Seven clerics carried lighted candles before the pope, just as fire and incense were carried as signs of honor before the emperor, magistrates, and other important personages. (Constantine had recognized the bishops' courts as equal to the civil courts, and gave the bishops civil honors.) The candles were placed next to the altar when the procession arrived at the front. From the time of Charlemagne, the custom began of placing them on the altar before Mass, and leaving them there. Thus candles gradually stopped being a sign of reverence for the bishop or priest, and were used for other symbolic reasons.

Today candles are signs of devotion and of the importance of the feast being celebrated. They are placed on the altar or around it, without blocking the people's view. At least two candles are lighted, or four or six may be used. When the diocesan bishop celebrates (see GI, no. 74), seven candles are lighted. Cross and candles may be carried in the procession, and then placed on or near the altar; the candles may also be put on the side table (GI, nos. 79, 84, 269).

Incense: In the time of the Roman persecutions, incense was offered to the image of the emperor; Christians died rather than perform this act of idolatry. After the persecutions ended, incense began to be used in Christian worship (see also Ps. 141: 2; Rev. 5: 8). Constantine gave a gold censer to the Lateran baptistry, and incense was used in Jerusalem by the end of the fourth century. At the same time Ambrose, who died in 397, mentions that Christians incense the altar; for him, the altar represented Christ. Incense is still used frequently in the Divine Liturgy of the Eastern Churches.

Incense was used in the papal Mass of the seventh century. By the ninth, the priest incensed the altar after greeting the people. This was seen as a sign of honor, as well as purification from sin and protection from harm. The tendency in Charlemagne's time to find Old Testament parallels for everything would probably reinforce the use of incense at the beginning of the Mass (see Lev. 16: 12).

Today the priest puts incense on the coals before the procession begins, and the smoking censer is carried at the head of the procession. In the sanctuary, the priest walks around the altar and incenses it as a sign of respect. He also incenses the cross (GI, nos. 27, 82, 85, 235-236).

Carrying the gospel book: When the seventh century papal Mass was ready to begin, an acolyte carried the open gospel book through the people to the altar. Then the entrance chant and the procession began. When the pope reached the sanctuary, he kissed the book as a sign of greeting, for it was considered to represent Christ (see GI, no. 9).
• Today, the deacon or reader goes ahead of the priest in procession, carrying the gospel book, which is placed on the altar or lectern (GI, nos. 9, 82, 84, 128, 148-149).

Veneration of the altar: In the Roman liturgy, a kiss was a sign of greeting and respect. The altar was saluted by a kiss by the end of the fourth century: the practice derived from the pagan custom of greeting the gods by kissing the threshold of the temple; and from the civic custom of sometimes saluting the family table in this way. The seventh century rite had the pope kiss the others around him; then he kissed the gospel book and the altar as representing Christ. By the twelfth century, the priest also kissed the crucifix. The later middle ages transferred this to a kiss of the image of the crucifix in the missal. It was omitted in Pius V's revision in 1570.

• Today the priest and deacon make a low bow to greet the altar as the table of the Lord, and venerate it by kissing it (GI, nos. 27, 84, 129, 232, 259).

Sign of the Cross

The importance of the cross as a symbol of Christ's saving death and resurrection is mentioned often in the New Testament. It has continued to influence Christian worship and devotion ever since (see Bulletin 62, Liturgy and Devotion). At the beginning of the third century, for example, Tertullian and Hippolytus described the common Christian practice of marking one's forehead with a small cross (we still do this at the gospel) many times during the day, both in prayer and in ordinary activities.

In the fourth century, the Church Fathers talk of the sphragis, the seal or sign of the cross made in the baptismal rite, usually during the anointing with chrism after baptism. This cross was seen as an indelible sign of Christ's ownership over his flock, a mark of his protective care, a badge of membership in Christ's army.

In the thirteenth century, the priest made a sign of the cross as he began to read the introit. The words now used at the sign of the cross come from the baptismal command of Mt. 28: 19, and were occasionally added at the beginning of Mass in the fourteenth century.

• Today: Priest and people make the sign of the cross together after the entrance song. The priest says the words, and the people respond, Amen (GI, nos. 28, 86).

Greeting

Until the new order of Mass, the Roman rite used only one form of greeting, immediately before the opening prayer. Now three forms are used by priests, and the bishop may use a special form.

• Peace be with you: The bishop uses the greeting given by the risen Lord Jesus to his apostles: see Lk. 24: 36; Jn. 20: 19, 21, 26; 15: 27; see also Lk. 10: 5 and Mt. 10: 12-13 for his earlier instruction on greetings. This was used in the East from the fourth century, and in the West it was reserved for the bishop. The present order of Mass reserves this greeting for the bishop's use with his people.

• The Lord be with you: The priest's greeting is found in the Old Testament (Ruth 2: 4) as "Yahweh be with you," and in the epistles (see 2 Thess. 3: 16; 2 Tim. 135
4: 22). It echoes Christ's promise to remain with his people (Mt. 18: 20; and 28: 20); Christ is Emmanuel, "God is with us" (Mt. 1: 23). Hippolytus quotes this greeting in the preface dialogue at the beginning of the third century.

The response, "And with your spirit," means "and also with you." Paul uses the phrase "with your spirit" in greeting at the close of some of his letters: see Gal. 6: 18; Phil. 4: 23; Philemon 25. St. John Chrysostom describes how the people answered their bishop's greeting by shouting out their acclamation, "And with your spirit!"

- The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ: This greeting, taken from 2 Cor. 13: 13, has been included in the new order of Mass. The people answer, "And also with you."

- The grace and peace of God our Father: This greeting is based on Paul's words at the beginning of many of his letters: see Rom. 1: 17; 1 Cor. 1: 3; 2 Cor. 1: 2; Gal. 1: 3; Eph. 1: 2; Phil. 1: 2; 1 Thess. 1: 1; 2 Thess. 1: 2; Titus 1: 4.

Two answers are provided for this greeting: "And also with you," or "Blessed be God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Eph. 1: 3).

In the new order of Mass, the greeting reminds the community that the Lord is present among them when they gather together as the Church (GI, nos. 14-15, 28, 86; Liturgy constitution, no. 7).

**Introduction**

The order of Mass has incorporated this into the liturgical celebration. Before Mass begins, or after the greeting, the priest or another minister, such as the commentator, gives a very brief introduction to the celebration. Only a few words are called for. Its purpose is to help the congregation understand this Mass more fully (GI, nos. 11, 29, 68a, 86). If an introduction is given before the Mass, another should not follow the greeting.

**Penitential Rite**

The need of reconciliation with others before offering sacrifice is stated quite clearly by Jesus in the sermon on the mount (Mt. 5: 23-24); God forgives us only when we forgive others (Mt. 6: 12, 14-15). Early in the Church's life, the Didache (14: 1) states that on the Lord's day, people are to come together, to break bread, and to give thanks after first confessing their sins, so that their sacrifice will be pure. (The final phrase echoes Malachy 4: 2 on the clean oblation.) Justin the martyr reminds us that the primary forgiveness of sins and regeneration takes place in baptism; as well, belief and good living are required in those who want to take part in the eucharist.

In the early middle ages, the Gallican rite developed private rites of prayer and repentance, including long apologies and confessions of sinfulness. From being private prayers before Mass or during the processional entry, they became the prayers at the foot of the altar around the year 1000. These were simplified by Pius V in 1570, and again in the years after Vatican II.

The priest invites all to acknowledge their sinfulness. Several forms are given in the rite as models. All pause for a moment of silent reflection. Then one of three forms is used for the penitential rite (GI, nos. 16, 29, 87).
• **I confess:** A simplified form of the medieval prayers, this is a public admission of sin, made by priest and people together. Each person is asking Mary and the saints and the other members of the community to pray for him or her. In the concluding prayer, the priest asks God’s mercy for his people. The *Lord, have mercy* follows.

• **Second form:** This brief form uses two versicles and responses (see Ps. 78:17; Ps. 85:7), leading into a single *Lord, have mercy*. The prayer concludes with the priest’s prayer and the people’s *Amen*.

• **Third penitential rite:** Three acclamations to Christ are made by the priest or another minister, incorporating the *Lord, have mercy*, and concluding as the other two forms.

### Replacing the Penitential Rite

The sacramentary now provides other approaches which take the place of the penitential rite; these are described in the order of Mass, but not in the General Instruction:

• **Blessing and sprinkling holy water:** In Sunday Masses, this rite may be used as a reminder of our Christian initiation, including our death to sin and living with Christ for God. The texts of this rite recall the solemn blessing of baptismal water at the Easter vigil.

• **Part of the liturgy of the hours:** When this is pastorally desirable, the public celebration of a liturgical hour may be woven into the beginning or end of the Mass: see General Instruction on the Liturgy of the Hours, nos. 93-98, for details.

• **On Ash Wednesday,** the blessing and imposition of ashes after the homily causes the penitential rite to be omitted.

### Lord, Have Mercy

Based on petitions used frequently in gospels and psalms, the *Kyrie, eleison* is addressed to Christ. Egeria describes its use in Jerusalem at the end of evening prayer in the closing years of the fourth century. There it served as the response to the petitions in a long litany. In Antioch at the same period, a similar litany with the same response was used at the prayer of the faithful after the scripture readings. Milan used the same type of prayer, but placed it between the introit and the collect.

In Rome, Pope Gelasius (492-496) replaced the solemn prayer of the faithful (similar to our Good Friday form) with a series of 18 petitions, to which the people responded with the *Kyrie*. A litany was sung in ordination rites. St. Benedict incorporated a litany in morning and evening prayer (a practice now restored in the liturgy of the hours), with a brief form at the end of the other hours, leading to the Lord’s prayer. Gregory the Great (590-604) ordered a penitential procession with litanies in a form similar to rogation days. He also dropped the rest of the litany from Mass on ordinary days, retaining only the final *Kyrie*.

Gaul developed the practice of saying the invocations in sets of three, wrongly seeing a Trinitarian meaning in the prayer. The formula became obligatory in private
Masses by the eighth century. From the ninth to the twelfth centuries, many tropes developed, but these were removed after Trent.

○ Today: This prayer follows the penitential rite, unless it is included in it. The petitions are addressed to the Lord Jesus, and are made twice; other varieties, even a trope, are permitted. The people are to have a part in it (GI, nos. 16, 24, 30, 87).

**Glory to God in the Highest**

In the early Church, many hymns were written in imitation of the psalms and the New Testament hymns. Among the few to survive is *Glory to God in the highest*, originally a morning hymn. It was sometimes called the greater doxology: *Glory to the Father* was the little doxology. Versions of this hymn were sung in the Nestorian and Byzantine liturgies, and one is contained in the *Apostolic Constitutions* around the year 375.

The hymn begins with the words sung by the angels (Lk. 2: 14), and continues with praise of the Father, and then of Christ; after some petitions, it closes with praise to the Trinity. It could be said that this hymn is influenced by the *berakah* type of prayer (see Bulletin 49, page 154).

This prayer is a festive thanksgiving song, and was used on special occasions in Rome. Around 530, it was used there in the Mass. Only bishops could intone it on Sundays and martyrs' days; by the seventh century, presbyters could use it once a year, on Easter. This privilege was gradually extended, and by 1100 it was used in all festive Masses. At first its music was simple and sung by the people, but later became more complicated, and was often sung by the choir alone. Tropes became common, but were dropped when St. Pius V reformed the missal in 1570.

○ Today: The Church is gathered in the Spirit to praise the Father and his Son, the Lamb of God. This prayer is seen as an independent rite, sung on Sundays (except Lent and Advent), solemnities, feasts, and in solemn celebrations of the local Church. The hymn may be begun by the priest, cantors, or by all the people, and is sung by all; or the people and choir may alternate; or the choir may sing it alone. When not sung, it is said by the people, together or alternating (GI, nos. 17a, 31, 87).

**Collect or Opening Prayer**

A variable presidential prayer to end the introductory rites entered the Roman liturgy from the time of Leo the Great (440-461), as a conclusion to the entrance procession. There was only one collect or oration — in which, as it were, the priest gathers the petition of the community — until the year 1000. Then, to make up for the prayer of the faithful, collects were multiplied — even up to ten.

This prayer has several distinct actions, which need to be respected for its proper celebration:

○ Invitation to prayer: The priest invites the assembly to join him in a moment of prayer, by a simple “Let us pray,” or by a brief invitatory. This was often expanded in the Gallican liturgy. The present sacramental text (ICEL) contains models or examples of this brief invitation. An ancient Roman form of invitatory is seen in the solemn prayers of intercession on Good Friday.
**Prayer:** The Roman collect is brief and concise. Addressed to God the Father, it usually gives him a title (sometimes simple, sometimes developed), and adds a relative clause in which we praise him for some of his great works. The petition asks for the needs of the Church. During the prayer, all stand — this is the ancient practice of our Church — and the priest extends his hands in the traditional *orans* position for prayer.

**Conclusion:** The collect is offered *to* the Father, *through* the Son, our mediator, *in* the Spirit. The people's acclamation, *Amen!* shows their assent to the prayer. This Hebrew word, meaning "certainly, truly," was used in the synagogue worship, and was adapted by the Christians (see examples in 1 Pet. 5: 11; Jude 25; Rev. 1: 6-7). It is given as a name for Christ in Rev. 3: 14.

*Today:* The Church has restored the original simplicity of the Roman collect. After the eucharistic prayer, the collect and its counterparts (prayer over the gifts, prayer after communion) are the most important of the presidential prayers. All are to pay attention when the priest sings them or says them in the name of the entire believing community. The pause for silent prayer — "for some moments" — gives priest and people time to remember God's presence and to offer their own personal petition. Only one opening prayer is said (GI, nos. 10, 12-13, 18, 23, 32, 88). Our present sacramentary includes an alternative opening prayer. On some days, a wide choice of collects is open to the priest (GI, nos. 323, 334, 341).

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*The introductory rites are intended to provide a recognizable and simple beginning to the celebration. Over the centuries, varying arrangements and numbers of rites have accumulated. The recent reform of the order of Mass has simplified these rites, but care is still needed not to over-emphasize them by too much song, wordy interventions, mini-homilies. Priest and people should spend the few opening minutes in reflection, praise, and prayer, and then move on, refreshed and open, to the far more important liturgy of the word.*

3 A helpful article on the introductory rites is "Our cluttered vestibule: the unreformed entrance rite," by Ralph A. Keifer, in *Worship*, vol. 48, no. 5 (May 1974), pages 270-277. See also Bulletin National de Liturgie, no. 48, January-February 1975 (available from Publications Service, at the address on the inside front cover).

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**ANOTHER VIEWPOINT**

In Bulletin 55, an article entitled *Story of the Mass* takes a look at the Mass from another point of view, presenting a brief glimpse of the way the Christian community has celebrated its eucharistic worship over the centuries. See pages 241-253.

This article complements the detailed material in Bulletin 54.
LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first five centuries of the Church, the service of the word and the liturgy of the eucharist could be celebrated independently. Even today, a service of the word is recognized as an independent celebration; it may also be the first part of a sacramental rite.

LISTENING TO THE WORD

The presiding priest listens to the readings and reflects on them with the rest of the assembled believers. Reading is a ministerial function. Readers are mentioned by Justin in the second century, and by Cyprian in the middle of the third. The ministry of reader, long in disuse, is being restored today (see Bulletin 53, pages 86-93; Bulletin 56 provides training for readers).

Today: The main portion of the liturgy of the word is found in the scripture readings and the songs between them. The service of the word is developed and made complete by the homily, creed, and the general intercessions. God himself talks to his people in the lessons, which are explained in the priest's homily. Present in the assembly of God's people by his word, the Lord Jesus is talking to them about salvation, and gives them spiritual help. In their singing of the responsorial psalm and the gospel acclamation, the people assimilate the word, and show that they are ready to keep it by professing their baptismal faith in the creed. God's word moves his people to plead in the general intercessions for the needs of his Church and for salvation for all the world (GI, no. 23).

Presidential introduction: As president of the celebrating community, the priest is to lead the people into the liturgy of the word, before the readings begin. By a brief admonition, he helps the congregation to listen more attentively to the word of God. Care needs to be taken that these comments are concise, and not wordy (GI, no. 11; Introduction to GI, no. 13).

First Reading

During the Easter season, the reading is taken from the Acts of the Apostles. St. Augustine tells us that this was already a custom in his time (354-430). These readings show the witness of the first Christians as they lived the word in their daily lives.

Old Testament reading: During the rest of the year, the first reading is chosen from the Old Testament.

New Testament times: The Christian community accepted the Old Testament in the Septuagint version, a Greek translation which contained more books and passages than the Hebrew books in use in the Holy Land. A number of references to the Jewish scriptures are found in the NT, showing this acceptance. In the gospels, we hear Jesus quoting and explaining the OT. Christians began to explain it as their own: see, for example, 2 Cor. 3: 12-18, and the letter to the Hebrews. In 1 Tim. 4: 13, scripture is read in public, and would seem to be the basis of teaching and preaching. All scripture is inspired (2 Tim. 3: 15-17), and the Good News is to be preached in season and out (2 Tim. 4: 1-5).
• Before long, however, the OT lesson dropped from the Sunday Mass, and was used only on lenten weekdays, ember days, and in a few other Masses.

• Vatican II called for a revised liturgy of the word, with a better proportion and arrangement of scripture texts. The new lectionary, first issued in 1969, has given us three readings — from prophet, apostle, and gospel — as a norm (introduction to lectionary, no. 3a).

• Relationship to gospel: The OT text is chosen to reflect on or lead up to the gospel reading: sometimes it acts as a prism to show forth the gospel teaching more clearly, or as a contrast between events or personalities in the two Testaments. The first reading should always be studied and understood in the light of the day’s gospel.

• The present arrangement of three readings is based on our tradition, and shows the unity of the two testaments of the scriptures, and the fact that there is one story of our salvation: Christ is its center, and we remember his saving paschal mystery, his death and resurrection (GI, no. 318).

At the end of the scripture text, the reader adds, “This is the word of the Lord.” This acts as a signal for the people’s acclamation. It echoes the scriptures (see Acts 15: 35; 1 Thess. 1: 8) and the Liturgy constitution (no. 7).

“Thanks be to God.” This simple acclamation by the people affirms that they have heard and understood the word of God. It seems to have entered the Mass from a similar practice in the liturgy of the Hours.

Silent Reflection

Some people are still surprised at finding silence listed as one of the ways of active participation in the Church’s worship (Liturgy constitution, no. 30). After each reading and after the homily, each member of the assembly is called on to reflect briefly on what has been read or said. The 1973 instruction (Bulletin 40, page 201, no. 18) states that this “silence must be observed” as an integral part of the celebration: in this way the people are able to gain the full effect of the scriptures and derive greater spiritual fruit from their proclamation (GI, no. 23).

A modern writer¹ notes: “Most churches seem to be afraid to allow the congregation time to reflect upon the Word of God in the lessons, and those in charge of planning services should remember that people need to assimilate what they have heard. There is no need to hurry into a vocal response, especially one which requires the participation of the entire congregation.”

Responsorial Psalm

After the last supper, Jesus and his disciples sang the hallel psalms (Mt. 26: 30; Mk. 14: 26). The singing of psalms was a practice of synagogue worship that the first Christians continued. Paul encouraged people to sing psalms (Eph. 5: 18-19; Col. 3: 16); see also James 5: 13. In the years after the Council of Nicaea in 325, the people knew and liked to use the psalms; children learned them by heart, and preachers

spoke about them. A century later, Augustine was preaching on the responsorial psalm, when it could be considered as one of the scripture readings. (On the psalms as Christian prayer, see Bulletin 58, pages 96-100.)

In the middle ages, the psalm was truncated to several verses, but has been restored in the 1969 lectionary.

° Today: Seen as an integral part of the liturgy of the word, the psalm text is a meditative response to the first reading. The refrain sometimes picks out an important aspect of the liturgy of the day or season.

In order to promote singing of the psalm, the lectionary has selected common psalms and refrains for the different seasons of the year. (See lectionary, nos. 174-175; Catholic Book of Worship, nos. 175-200; Sunday Mass Book, pages 679-685.)

A cantor sings each verse, and all listen. The people sing their refrain after each verse. The same procedure is used if the psalm has to be said instead of sung (GI, nos. 36, 39, 90).

Second Reading

Semi-continuous readings: In 150, Justin describes the reader as he reads from the memoirs of the prophets or of the apostles. He reads as long as time permits.

This practice of semi-continuous reading was adapted in part in subsequent lists of lessons used in the Roman Church, although later feasts and seasons made frequent interruptions in this pattern.

The new lectionary restored this practice to a certain degree in 1969 (see lectionary introduction, nos. 3c; 4c; 16: 1 and 3; 17; see also tables in Bulletin 50, pages 229-230).

Name: Before the recent reform, the one reading before the gospel was called the epistle, even though it sometimes was a reading from the Old Testament or from the book of Revelation. The new lectionary uses the term only once, for the eighth reading (Rom. 6) at the Easter vigil. On weekdays, the first reading may be from either Testament; on Sundays, a New Testament text is always chosen for the second reading.

Another reader: It is considered better practice to have another reader proclaim the second reading. The variety of voices aids the people to listen without fatigue and avoids the possibility of monotony (GI, no. 71).

Gospel Acclamation

Many of the psalms use the word alleluia as a cry of joyful praise, meaning praise to God! It forms part of the victory song in heaven: Rev. 19: 1-7. In Africa in Augustine's time, this was sung every Sunday, while in the middle of the fifth century, Rome sang it only on Easter; by the sixth century in Rome, it was sung throughout the Easter season. Gregory the Great, pope in 590-604, allowed it at other times. The final vowel was often prolonged as a sign of Christian joy.
By the middle ages, the *alleluia* was omitted from Septuagesima (three Sundays before Ash Wednesday) to the beginning of the Easter vigil, and in Masses for the dead. On these occasions, a tract (a series of psalm verses) was sung.

**Sequences:** The eleventh and twelfth centuries embroidered the *alleluia* by adding lyrics at the end. These sequences were numerous until the reform of Pius V in 1570: he retained only four, for Easter, Pentecost, the solemnity of the body and blood of Christ, and for some Masses for the dead. In the eighteenth century, another one was added for Sept. 15.

- **Today:** The gospel acclamation is seen as a chant of praise and welcome for the Lord Jesus, who speaks to us in the gospel (Liturgy constitution, no. 7). It is preferable to sing it: otherwise it may be omitted. All stand for the singing of the acclamation; during this song, the gospel procession is formed (GI, nos. 21, 36-39, 92-93, 131).

The reformed lectionary dropped the sequence in Masses for the dead; the two on Easter and Pentecost remain obligatory, and the other two are optional (GI, no. 40). They make sense only when they are sung.

**Gospel**

The gospel is the Good News of our salvation through the death and rising of Christ. Its proclamation comes in the place of honor in a series of three readings. Many signs of respect surround it as it is proclaimed to God's people during the Mass:

- **Special reader:** Only a deacon (or, if none is available, a priest) may read the gospel to the assembly. In the late fourth century, St. Jerome mentions this role of the deacon. During the middle ages, a special pulpit was used for the reading of the gospel.

- **Special book:** An evangeliary or gospel book contained only the gospel passages, and was often richly ornamented: the handwritten pages were decorated elaborately (books began to be printed from movable type only in the middle of the fifteenth century). The gospel book was carried in procession at the beginning of the Mass, and after, was locked away because of its value.

- **Prayer of purification:** Using words based on Is. 6: 5-8, the deacon prayed to be worthy to proclaim the gospel, and was blessed by the presiding priest. This practice was in use in Rome from the seventh century.

- **Lights and incense:** In 378, Jerome describes the Eastern custom of lighting candles as a sign of joy when the gospel is read. Lights and incense were marks of respect for the emperor and high civic officials, and were also given to bishops (see page 134). Soon they were considered as signs of honor for Christ present in his word. In the seventh century, incense is carried before the book (see note 2, page 134); by the eleventh century, the gospel book was incensed.

- **Standing:** All in the church have stood to hear the gospel proclaimed since ancient times: this custom is mentioned in the East in the fourth century, and in the West by the 500s.

2 For the fascinating history of the printed book, see *Five Hundred Years of Printing*, by S.H. Steinberg (1974, Penguin, Harmondsworth, Mdx.).
Acclamations: Directed to Christ himself, the acclamations at the beginning and end of the gospel have been in use since Charlemagne's reforms in the eighth century.

Sign of the cross: Between the ninth and eleventh centuries, the practice developed of making small signs of the cross on the book, the forehead, lips and heart. (A cross on the forehead was recommended in personal prayer in the third century by Tertullian and Hippolytus.)

Kissing the book: In eighth century Rome, the book was kissed by all the clergy after the gospel was proclaimed. Members of the congregation kissed it up to the thirteenth century, but this practice gradually disappeared until only the celebrating bishop or priest reverenced the book with a kiss.

Today: The Church states that it is Christ himself who is proclaiming his gospel, and that all should remain standing and listen with respect. The gospel procession during the gospel acclamation includes candles and incense. A deacon or another priest reads the gospel and kisses the book; the celebrating priest reads it only if there is no other priest or deacon. The people's acclamations and posture, and the other signs of respect, proclaim the presence of Christ in his word (G1, nos. 9, 21, 34-35, 61, 93-95, 131, 272, 318).

Homily

Preaching within the service of the word is part of the heritage the Christian Church received from Judaism. By the time of our Lord, the synagogue service on the sabbath day included scripture reading and an explanation.

Jesus and his apostles: We find Jesus preaching on such occasions in Luke 4: 16-30 (see also Mt. 13: 53-58; Mk. 6: 1-6; Mk. 1: 21; Jn. 6: 59). The New Testament also mentions preaching by St. Paul in a synagogue, after readings from the Law and Prophets: see Acts 13: 14-44. In Acts 20: 7-12, Paul preached a long sermon while the Christian community was meeting for the breaking of bread. Sermons, talks, and discourses outside liturgical celebrations are common throughout the gospels and Acts.

In the early centuries of the Christian faith, preaching was the task of the bishop. In Rome about 150 AD, St. Justin describes the homily as being given by the president of the assembly after he and the people have listened to the readings. By the third century, we see the homily being given also by priests. Though at times in the Church's history preaching has been omitted from the eucharist, the abundant homilies of the Fathers of the Church provide us with a strong testimony of the place of preaching in the Christian liturgy. Yet there were sad periods when preaching was neglected.

Middle ages: Preaching became stronger in the middle ages, and then began to take place outside the liturgy. The mendicant orders preached the message of Christ on every possible occasion.

3 The Second Vatican Council has re-emphasized that teaching the word of God is the primary duty of the bishop, and therefore of his co-workers, the priests: see Decree on the bishops' pastoral office in the Church, no. 12; Decree on the ministry and life of priests, no. 4.
Today: The homily is an important part of the liturgy of the word, and is necessary for nourishing the Christian life of the hearers. It is usually given by the celebrating priest. This homily draws its content principally from scriptural and liturgical sources. It is a proclamation of God's wonderful works in the history of salvation, showing how the mystery of Christ is made present and active within us, especially in the celebration of the liturgy. (See Bulletin 60, Liturgical Preaching.)

Through explaining some aspect of the scripture readings or of a text from the ordinary or proper of the day's Mass, the priest is able to help his congregation benefit more fully from the richness of God's word. He should keep in mind the mystery being celebrated on this day and any special needs of those present.

In all circumstances, the proper character of the homily should be respected. It is a presentation of the message contained in the biblical texts. In the homily, the mysteries of our faith and the guiding principles for Christian living are explained from the scriptures. The priest must avoid turning it to other purposes, or making it a means of publicising events and projects, however praiseworthy. A period of silent reflection may follow the homily, allowing the congregation to meditate on the word of God in their lives.

On Sundays and holy days, a homily is of precept in all Masses which the faithful attend. A homily is recommended in weekday Masses, especially during Advent, Lent, and the Easter season, and on other feasts and occasions when more people come to church. (See GI, nos. 9, 21, 41-42, 97; Liturgy constitution, nos. 35: 2 and 52; Constitution on revelation, no. 24.)

Profession of Faith

The primary profession of faith during the Mass is the eucharistic prayer. The saying of the creed by the congregation may be seen as an acclamation in response to the readings and homily, as well as a reminder of each person's profession of baptismal faith.

Nicene creed: The origin of this creed may be found in the creed taught by Cyril of Jerusalem to candidates for baptism around 350. In 451, the Council of Chalcedon made a credal summary of the faith expressed in the first two ecumenical councils, Nicaea in 325 and Constantinople in 381. The creed entered the Mass in the early sixth century in Constantinople, and soon was used throughout the East, after the dismissal of the catechumens.

In the West, the creed entered the Mass in Spain in the late sixth century, through Byzantine influence. By the end of the eighth century (Charlemagne's time), it was introduced in France, and was widespread in northern Europe by the tenth century. In 1014, the emperor visited Rome and found to his surprise that the Romans did not have the creed in the Mass; the pope therefore included it in the Mass for Sundays and for feasts mentioned in the creed. The genuflection at the mention of our Lord's incarnation was first observed in the eleventh century, and spread gradually through Europe during the next few hundred years.

Today: With the homily and the general intercessions, the creed is seen as developing and completing the liturgy of the word. By this statement, the community of faith is responding, giving assent, and showing its adherence to God's word proclaimed and preached (GI, nos. 33, 43). The creed also serves as a link between the
liturgies of the word and eucharist as the people recall the mysteries of the faith, mysteries which will be proclaimed again in the eucharistic prayer.

The community bows at the words, by the power of the Holy Spirit; on Christmas and the feast of the incarnation (March 25) everyone genuflects (GI, no. 98).

The creed is prayed by the whole community on Sundays, solemnities, and in solemn local celebrations (GI, no. 44). The English-speaking nations use the ICET translation, which has returned to the plural form (we believe), as used in the early councils.

**Apostles’ creed**: Canada and a number of other countries have permission to use the apostle’s creed in Masses celebrated with the people. The Roman directory for Masses celebrated with children notes that this creed may be used, but that they should be helped to become familiar with the Nicene creed (Directory nos. 49, 39: Canadian sacramentary, pages 63 and 61). In Canada, the ICET version of this creed is used at Mass.

The apostles' creed developed from the profession of faith used in Rome during baptism. The earlier form of questions (Do you believe in God, the almighty Father? I believe) was in use in the time of Hippolytus in 215, and is still used in baptism and in the Easter vigil or Easter day Masses (see Bulletin 51, pages 281-283). This gradually developed into the form we know as the apostles’ creed, which was used in baptism until the 1969 rite restored the earlier form.

Because the Nicene creed is common to all Christian Churches, there is ecumenical value in retaining its use on occasion. The Canadian liturgical calendar, *Guidelines for Pastoral Liturgy*, recommends use of the Nicene creed on specific Sundays and feasts during the year. Every congregation should be familiar with both forms in their Sunday celebrations. Both forms are contained in *Catholic Book of Worship*.

**General Intercessions**

Set aside as the people of God to sing his praises, the Church is also aware of its vocation to pray for the world. Like its master, the Church continues to live and make intercession for all.5

- *St. Paul* urges the Church to devote itself to prayer for all people, with particular mention of civic rulers, for God wants all to be saved: Jesus died for all, and he is our mediator (see 1 Tim. 2: 1-8).

- *Justin the martyr*, writing in Rome about the year 150, describes the Sunday eucharist. After the scriptures have been read, the president preaches a homily. Then all stand and pray together for themselves, for the newly baptized, and for other

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4 ICET, the International Consultation on English Texts, is an ecumenical body of liturgists and scholars from various Christian Churches in the English-speaking nations. Set up in 1969, ICET provides contemporary translations of prayers common to all Christians. Thirteen of these are contained in *Prayers We Have in Common* (Fortress Press, Philadelphia, Penn. 19129, U.S.A.). Twelve of them (all but the Lord's prayer — we still retain the version approved by Henry VIII) are used in the sacramentary and liturgy of the hours approved for Canada and the United States.

5 The call and responsibility of the Christian people to pray is the subject of Bulletin 44, *People of Prayer*. Copies are available from Publications Service, at the address on the inside front cover of this issue.
people all around the world. A person may take part in these prayers only after baptism.

- **Hippolytus** pictures the practice in Rome some 65 years later. After baptism, the new Christians are led into the assembly for anointing by the bishop with the oil of thanksgiving. Then they take part in prayers with all the members of the community. During the eucharistic prayer, the bishop asks the Father to send his Spirit upon the offerings of the Church, to give the Spirit to all who share in the offerings, to strengthen their faith, and to help the community to give him praise and glory through Christ.

- In both East and West, the common prayer was offered after the homily. It is mentioned by Cyprian and Augustine in North Africa. The community turned to the East, the direction of the rising sun, and prayed with outstretched hands (see 1 Tim. 2: 8). After the bishop invited the people to pray, he said the petition and the people answered. By the year 400, the deacon made the invitation to prayer, said the petitions in the form of a litany, and the people responded; the celebrating priest prayed at the end of the litany.

- **Solemn prayer:** In Rome, a solemn form evolved from the third century, and has remained to this day in the Good Friday liturgy, with some minor modifications in the past two decades. By the time of Gregory the Great (590-604), this prayer fell into disuse, except in Holy Week, and seems to have been replaced by the Lord, have mercy and the intercessions in the eucharistic prayer.

- **During the middle ages in Europe,** various forms of prayer for general needs were said after the sermon, often with the people saying an Our Father after each intention. Other forms included psalms and orations.

- **In modern times:** We need go back to the 1950s to see how this constant tradition of prayer after the homily was transmitted to us. When the priest finished the sermon, he led the congregation in prayers for the sick and the dead, and for various other intentions, concluding each intention with the Our Father; Hail, Mary; Glory to the Father. Since the time of Leo XIII, prayers after Mass were offered for the solution of the Roman question; since Pius XI arranged with Mussolini for the emergence of the Vatican State in 1929, these prayers were offered for the conversion of Russia. During World War II, prayers for peace were included in the Mass.

- **Vatican II:** In the early 1960s, the idea of the prayer of the faithful was becoming clearer, and was popularized in a practical way by St. Andrew's Bible Missal. In 1963, the Second Vatican Council restored the common prayer or prayer of the faithful, particularly on Sundays and holy days, and listed the type of general intercessions to be made (Liturgy constitution, no. 53). Further guidelines were issued by Rome in 1965.

- **Today:** Moved by God’s word, the community prays for the needs of the Christian Church and for the salvation of the world. In the general intercessions or universal prayer, the people exercise their priesthood by praying for all (see 1 Tim. 2: 1-4). It is most desirable that this prayer be included in all Masses with the people, including weekday Masses, so that God’s people may continue to pray for the welfare of all mankind.
The general intercessions permit the community to respond to God's word proclaimed in the readings and homily of each Mass. The usual order of the intentions is:

— for the needs of the Church;
— for those governing the country, and for the salvation of the world;
— for those crushed by troubles or needs;
— for the local community.

In special celebrations (such as confirmation, weddings, or funerals), the order of intentions may more closely reflect the particular circumstances of the occasion, without losing sight of the fact that this community is part of the universal Church.

The celebrating priest directs the prayer, invites the people by a brief introduction to pray with him, and concludes it with a collect. The priest's invitational sentence should be prepared in order to focus the prayer of the assembly at this Mass. Basically it says, *let us pray for our needs in the light of today's celebration.*

It is preferred to have the intentions announced by someone else, such as a deacon, cantor, or reader. The whole gathering expresses its prayer either by a common invocation, sung or said after the intentions are announced, or by silent prayer. The presiding priest offers the concluding prayer, asking the Father to hear the petitions of his people, and all respond by their *Amen* (G1, nos. 33, 45-47).

Prayers for the sick and dead of the community are normally included in the general intercessions.

Sample intercessions are included in the sacramentary (Canadian edition, pages 1040-1052).

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With the general intercessions, the liturgy of the word is completed. In the past, however, the catechumens were dismissed at this time, since they could not participate in the eucharist. The Byzantine Liturgy still includes this dismissal, and the 1972 *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* suggests that it could be brought back into our pastoral practice (see nos. 96-97, for example; see also Bulletin 64, page 152).

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**TROPES**

Tropes are extra phrases or sentences added between the words of a liturgical text, in order to embellish the chant of the Mass or office. Common from the ninth to the twelfth centuries, they were removed when Pope Pius V issued the reformed missal in 1570, seven years after the Council of Trent ended.
LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

In *The Shape of the Liturgy*, Dom Gregory Dix benefitted the Christian world by his analysis of the basic actions carried out by Jesus at the last supper:

1. Jesus takes bread
2. He gives thanks
3. He breaks the bread
4. He gives it to his disciples
5. Jesus takes the cup of wine
6. He gives thanks
7. He gives the cup to his disciples

From this sevenfold action, Dix noted that all Christian eucharists have followed this basic shape:

- Preparation of bread and wine ("he takes")
- Prayer of thanksgiving ("he gives thanks")
- Breaking the bread ("he breaks")
- Communion ("he gives")

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The first part of the liturgy of the eucharist was formerly called the "offertory." In the beginning it was done without ceremony, and then in the middle ages became quite elaborate. Today the Church has restored it to a more simple form, a few moments of quiet preparation for the eucharistic prayer. It is not a time of offering, but of preparing for the eucharistic action.

Preparation of the Altar

The early Christians were more aware of the presence of the risen Christ in their liturgical assemblies. The center of their gatherings was the bishop at his chair. After the liturgy of the word, the deacons would bring in a wooden table for the eucharistic sacrifice.

In the fourth century, however, as large basilicas were built, altars came to be made of stone. The ancient practice of celebrating Mass over the tomb of a martyr led gradually to the custom of placing relics or portions of a martyr's body in every altar and altar stone. (The history of the Christian altar is complex, and will be discussed in a future issue of the Bulletin on art and architecture.)

Today the Latin Church has returned to one freestanding altar which is the table of the Lord and the place for the thanksgiving offered in the eucharistic prayer. The altar is to be covered with at least one cloth; a cross and candles are placed on or near the altar (GI, nos. 259-270). The rite of Dedication of a Church and an Altar is now available from CCCB Publications Service.

Procession with the Gifts

In the early years, the gifts were simply brought to the president for the eucharistic prayer: Justin the martyr, writing around 150 in Rome, describes this in a few words. But within a generation, by the end of the second century, the Church reacted against the anti-material trends of the Gnostics, and began to express more emphatically the value of created things.

Irenaeus pointed out that the offerings of bread and wine were from the first fruits of creation. Hippolytus has the deacons bring in the gifts; a new Christian brought his offering for the first time when he came for the celebration of his Christian initiation, during the (Easter) vigil Mass. Around the same time, Tertullian speaks of the people bringing their gifts; in the middle of the third century, Cyprian mentions that the believers present their gifts, and scolds a person who comes to communion without bringing a gift.

In the fifth century, Augustine speaks of the singing of psalms during the time before the eucharistic prayer, probably referring to a processional chant. In the latter years of the sixth century, the national Council of Mâcon (in present-day France)
placed new emphasis on the traditional practice of offering bread and wine. At that
time, however, the gifts were given before the Mass, in a *sacrarium* or separate room.

The procession with the gifts was fully elaborated in the papal Masses in
seventh century Rome. The pope and his assistants collected the offerings of bread
and wine from the nobles, court officials, and clergy: the bread was placed in a cloth
or sack held by acolytes, and an archdeacon poured the wine into a chalice.

In eighth century England and among the Franks, the rite becomes a proces-
sion of the people as they bring their bread and wine to the altar. These gifts were not
used for consecration, since unleavened bread was coming into use, and commu-
nions were few. Writing around 1387, Chaucer mentions the offertory procession
briefly when he notes about the worthy woman from Bath:

In all the parish not a dame dared stir
towards the altar steps in front of her,
and if indeed they did, so wrath was she
as to be quite put out of charity.5

• *Other gifts* came to be offered, either before or during Mass: these included
oil, candles, wheat, and grapes. Gifts of precious vessels and deeds for donating
property were also made at this part of the Mass. In the ninth and tenth centuries,
other objects came to be more important than the gifts of bread and wine. In the next
two centuries, money became the first gift, and then other gifts fell into disuse except
on special feasts and occasions.

During the middle decades of the twentieth century, the liturgical movement
promoted a return to the procession with the gifts. While the intentions behind this
change were good, unfortunately too much stress was placed on “offering” instead of
on the presentation of gifts. This was corrected by the new order of Mass in 1969.

• *Today* the Church has restored the procession to a simpler form: members
of the congregation bring the gifts of bread and wine, and present them to the priest
or deacon. The General Instruction notes that this rite is intended to carry on “the
spiritual value and meaning of the ancient custom when the people brought bread
and wine for the liturgy from their homes” (GI, no. 49). A strong movement is under
way to promote the use of better and more realistic bread: see GI, no. 283; *Commu-
nion bread: significance or expediency?* in Bulletin 65, pages 216-221; a major article
on unleavened bread appears in Bulletin 69.

**Processions accompanied by song:** From the time of Augustine, psalms accom-
panied the procession with the gifts. The psalm was sung antiphonally at first (be-
tween two alternating choirs), and then responsorially.6 The chant was lengthened to
cover the time of the procession. After the year 1000, when the procession became
less frequent, the psalm verses began to drop out. The missal of Pius V in 1570 re-
tained only the offertory antiphon, without psalm verses. In 1970, the new rite
dropped the text from the sacramentary, but retained the idea of singing during the
procession until the gifts of bread and wine have been laid on the altar (GI, no. 50).

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5 Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Canterbury Tales*, translated into modern English by Nevill Coghill (1951,

6 See the notes on antiphonal psalmody in “The Structural Analysis of Liturgical Units: An Essay in
Methodology,” by Robert Taft, SJ, in *Worship*, vol. 52, no. 4 (July 1978), pages 314-329; see especially
pages 321-324.
Collection

The first Christians, Jewish and Greek, came from cultures where support of temple and worship were a normal part of life. Even Jesus paid the temple tax for himself and Peter (Mt. 17: 24-27).

Concern for the poor is a basic Christian precept. Paul reminds the believers at Corinth (1 Cor. 16: 1-4) to set aside some money every week on the Lord’s day to help the saints (the people of Jerusalem: see Rom. 15: 25-29; Acts 11: 27-30). This is part of Paul's teaching: to do good to all, especially those who belong to the family of the faith (Gal. 6: 10).

Money is to be used for God’s glory and to help others, especially in time of need (see 1 Jn. 3: 17-18). Our help to others can be a sacrifice which pleases God (Phil. 4: 18; Heb. 13: 16), because it is a sign of our love. By committing ourselves in this way, we can show our real concern for our brothers and sisters. Words not backed by action are condemned (James 2: 15-17; 1 Jn. 3: 17-18).

Gifts to God and his Church and to others must not be given for the wrong motive (see Mt. 6: 1-4; Mk. 12: 41-44), but the right one: see Mt. 5: 16. A Christian gives because he has first received: God’s generosity to us far outweighs whatever we do for him in return.

Justin mentions around 150 at Rome that those who are well off come to the aid of those in need. In the Sunday eucharist, “those who prosper, and who so wish, contribute, each one as much as he chooses to. What is collected is deposited with the president, and he takes care of orphans and widows, and those who are in want on account of sickness or any other cause, and those who are in bonds, and the strangers who are sojourners among (us), and, briefly, he is the protector of all those in need.”

As noted above, the procession with gifts gradually included things other than bread and wine. Money instead of gifts become more common from the eleventh century in some places, but as early as the seventh century in Spain.

Today, money or gifts for the poor and for the Church are brought forward during the preparation of the gifts (GI, no. 49). In the Mass of the Lord’s supper on Holy Thursday evening, it is noted that the people may take part in the procession with gifts for the poor.

The meaning of the collection needs to be discussed occasionally, in order that it may be seen as a liturgical act. Jungmann wisely noted, some 30 years ago: “There is no reason why this (collection) should not be permitted to serve a more than merely utilitarian purpose, no reason why it should not be given a deeper spirit and a more vivid form that it ordinarily presents — a spirit, by harking back to the living roots of this contribution which is primarily intended as a gift to God and which is destined for the earthly recipient only through and over the altar; a form, by confining the collection to the time of the offertory and clothing the activity with dignified and appropriate ceremonial.”

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“No act of public worship can mean so much or so little as the giving and receiving of our gifts in God’s house. If we offer our collection unthinkingly and formally, the act is devoid of all spiritual significance and warmth. But, if we see the collection as an integral part of corporate worship and anchor it thus firmly in the total response we make to the Gospel news, then it takes on a new, richer meaning; and the dedication of our money becomes the outward and visible sign of the inward and spiritual grace of a thankful heart. Like all true worship, the offering is sacramental.”

Preparation of the Gifts

**Bread:** At the last supper, Jesus used unleavened bread (it was during the Passover, the time of unleavened bread: Mk. 14: 1), probably bread made of wheat. Both leavened and unleavened bread continued in use in various places. Loaves were marked with a cross (for easier breaking — a pre-Christian custom), or with pious symbols or inscriptions. From the third century, the bread was sometimes braided and formed into a four-inch circle called a *corona.*

From the ninth century, the West moved toward using only unleavened bread for various reasons, including developments in the teaching on the blessed sacrament; the desire for making bread as white as possible; the practice at the last supper; the fact that leaven seemed to be undesirable (read 1 Cor. 5: 7-9). While the East retained the general use of leavened bread, the West used only unleavened bread from the eleventh century.

Because of growing devotion for the reserved sacrament, it was desired to make the bread intended for the eucharist to be special. In both the Eastern and Western Churches, it was baked with religious rites by special ministers. In the West, the bread used for the eucharist was no longer taken from the people's gifts, but from carefully prepared unleavened discs, which were broken for communion. Communion became less frequent; on communion days in the twelfth century, the priest's bread was reduced to its present size, and particles or small breads were prepared for the people: the gesture of breaking the one loaf was lost.

- **Today:** The Roman rite continues to use unleavened wheaten bread, but insists that it should appear as actual food (see page 151). The bread is to be made so that the priest may break it and give some parts to the people. There is some attempt being made to restore the apostolic gesture of breaking the one loaf (GI, nos. 281-283, 285; see Lk. 24: 35; Acts, 2: 42).

**Wine:** Grape wine is traditionally used in the eucharist (see Lk. 22: 18). The East preferred red wine. (This certainly has a richer symbolism, but has never been a universal obligation.) There have been times when breakaway sects have used water instead of wine (Irenaeus, Cyprian, and Augustine mention these), and later legislation forbade the use of beer instead of wine!

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10 See *And Taking Bread … Cerularius and the Azyrne Controversy of 1054,* by Mahlon H. Smith III (1978, Beauchesne, Paris.)

11 See 1 Cor. 10: 17. This is picked up in the *Didache* prayer (9: 4): “As this broken bread was scattered upon the mountains and was gathered together to become one, so let your Church be gathered together from the ends of the earth into your kingdom.”
Wine mixed with water: It was a Greek custom to mix some water with wine, and this was practised in Palestine at the time of our Lord. Around 150 at Rome, Justin mentions that bread and a cup of water and wine are brought to the president after the liturgy of the word. A century later Cyprian explains that the mixture of wine and water represents the union of Christians with Christ: like the wine and water, Christ and his Church cannot be separated. Luther questioned the use of water in 1523, and felt that the commingling of water with the wine should not be obligatory because it was a human invention. This led the Council of Trent to emphasize the rite.

Various Eastern Churches saw different theological meanings in the commingling of water and wine. In the sixth century, hot water was used in the Byzantine rite at Constantinople. The Roman liturgy uses very little water, while Eastern liturgies have been more generous in the amounts of water.

Today, natural and pure grape wine is used. A little water is added to it in the cup (GI, nos. 102, 281, 284-286).

Placing the Gifts on the Altar

In the history of the Roman rite, this action has gone from a simple act to a highly elaborate anticipation of the eucharistic prayer. It has been somewhat simplified in the present order of Mass, but there is room for further improvement.

As the people's procession with the gifts ceased to be important, the vacuum was gradually filled with rites and private prayers. The eighth century Franks had the bishop raise his own offering and look up to God in silence. Soon prayer texts were composed. By 1000 there are prayers of intercession, and many formulas were developed: Jungmann notes that the later middle ages had "a veritable jungle of new prayers and texts" for this rite. The use of the term "host" — derived from the Latin Hostia (“sacrificial victim”) — anticipates the consecration of the elements.

In the ninth century, we read of placing the breads in various patterns (usually in the form of a cross) on the altar.

The missal of Pius V (1570) contained prayers of offering during the “offertory,” private prayers anticipating the real offering, which takes place only during the eucharistic prayer.

Today: There are two prayers fewer than before, they are shorter, and their main thrust has been changed. Their presence, however, still makes more of the rite than need be. The prayers said with the bread and the cup are in the form of a berakah or prayer of blessing (praising) God while remembering his great and wonderful works. The gifts are placed on the altar, and most of the prayers are silent. Only the two berakoth are allowed to be said aloud, and these may also be silent (GI, nos. 49-50, 101-104; see also the order of Mass). Unfortunately the English transla-

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14 See Bulletin 49, Blessed Be God and His Creation, which describes the berakah or blessing prayer, and offers many helps for understanding it and for using it more in our personal and community prayer life.
tion of one of the silent prayers refers to “the sacrifice we offer you,” although the Latin does not mention offering. The action of offering belongs to the eucharistic prayer (see GI, no. 55f).

This part of the Mass is called the preparation of the gifts, and is no longer known as the offertory. (Again, unfortunately, the present sacramentary retains the term offertory song for the chant sung during the people's procession with the gifts.) The rite formerly known as the offertory is not a time of offering, but one of preparing altar, gifts, and people for the offering which takes places only in the eucharistic prayer.

Incensing the Altar and Gifts

The Roman practice was to burn incense in a stationary brazier, and to carry this in procession at the beginning and end of Mass, and at the gospel. Amalar reports around 832 that Rome did not have the practice of incensation. He also mentions the northern practice of incensing at the end of the preparation of the gifts.

By the eleventh century, this rite was fully developed, with prayer and incensing of those near the altar. These prayers consider incense as a dedication to God, a reminder of his burning love, a symbol of prayer rising to God like incense (see Ps. 141: 2; Rev. 8: 3-4).

• Today the priest may incense the gifts and altar as a sign of the offering and prayer made by the Church to the Father. Then the priest and people are incensed (GI, nos. 51, 105, 133).

Washing the Hands

This is a symbolic washing, done as a sign of the inner cleanliness we should have. Ceremonial washings were practised by devout members of the Jewish faith (see Mk. 7: 2-5). Hippolytus recommended washing one's hands before midnight prayer. In fourth century Jerusalem, the bishop and the priests around him washed their hands as a symbolic gesture. Antioch followed a similar practice.

The well or fountain at the entrance of early Christian basilicas — as our present holy water fonts — served the same purpose. With the reforms of Charlemagne holy water was sprinkled on the people at the main Sunday Mass, using Ps. 51: 6 or 7 as a formula.

The washing of hands took place at various times, sometimes before the people brought their gifts forward, sometimes after. The middle ages added a variety of prayers to the rite. In 1570, Pius V placed it after the laying of the gifts on the altar and the incensing. As a formula, Ps. 26: 6-12 was used, concluding with a doxology.

• Today: The washing of hands is a sign of desiring to be inwardly pure. The priest says the prayer in silence, since it is a private prayer (GI, nos. 13, 52, 106). The present formula is Ps. 51: 2.
Prayer over the Gifts

Invitation: In the eighth century among the Franks, we find an invitation addressed to the clergy, asking them to pray for the celebrating priest. This may be based on a similar rite among the West and East Syrians. During the middle ages, many formulas were developed, usually in the singular. Sometimes they were addressed quietly to the surrounding clergy, sometimes aloud to the men and women in the congregation.

□ Today the priest invites the people to pray that the sacrifice — to be offered during the eucharistic prayer — will be acceptable and pleasing to the Father (GI, nos. 53, 107). Some liturgists consider this dialogue as an invitatory to the prayer over the gifts.

Prayer over the gifts: The ancient Roman sacramentaries provided a prayer over the gifts. During the presentation of the gifts by the people, there were no silent prayers said, and the processional song was sung. When the gifts were placed on the altar, the priest sang the prayer over them, and then continued with the eucharistic prayer.

The prayer over the gifts normally contained words like offerings, gifts, sacrifice, eucharist, mysteries. It is addressed to the Father; only after the year 1000 were a few formulas addressed to Christ.

The eighth century Franks began the practice of saying this prayer quietly, and it became known as the secret. Several were said in a row in most Masses, as for the collects. This lasted until the 1960s, when once more it was prayed aloud.

□ Today the prayer is known once more as the prayer over the gifts. Only one is said, usually addressed to the Father, and it has a short ending. The people stand for this prayer, and give their assent by their Amen (GI, nos. 53, 21, 32, 107).

This prayer retains its ancient purpose of being the sole prayer said over the gifts which have been placed on the altar. The references to gifts, offerings and sacrifices in the various forms of this prayer refer to the sacrifice about to be offered during the canon.

At the end, the priest pauses for a moment before beginning the eucharistic prayer: he should not go at once to the preface dialogue. Both he and the congregation should be aware that a new part — the central and most important part — of the Mass is beginning.
EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

The eucharistic prayer is a prayer of thanks. The Church sees it as the central point and the apex of the Mass. From the preface to the final doxology, the priest is speaking this prayer and carrying out its action in the name of the community. The people join him by taking part in the preface dialogue, by singing their three acclamations, and especially by joining their personal praise and sacrifice to that which the Church is offering. The eucharistic prayer is offered to the Father, through the Son, in the Holy Spirit. (See GI, no. 54.)

Names for the eucharistic prayer: Down through the centuries the Church has used a number of names for the central prayer of the eucharistic liturgy. Some of them include:

- Eucharist: From the Greek for thanksgiving, this word sums up the main thrust of the eucharistic prayer.
- Canon: This is the Greek word for a fixed rule or standard (as in the canon of scripture). The Roman eucharistic prayer was fixed and stable from the sixth century to the twentieth. Other than the preface, there are few variations in its text during the year.
- The prayer: The Latin terms, prex, oratio, were used to describe it. Other names are the prayer of offering, the great prayer, the sacrificial offering, the action.
- Anaphora: From the Greek verb for offering as in sacrifice. This is the common Greek term for this prayer.
- Eucharistic prayer: This is the title used in the Roman rite today.

Unity of the Eucharistic Prayer

The eucharistic prayer is one prayer. It is not a series of disjointed or even connected prayers strung together: it is to be seen as one great prayer of thanksgiving, with various parts fulfilling different functions. The analogy of body members used by Paul could apply here also. Only in the context of the total eucharistic prayer are the parts understood clearly.

An example of this simplicity is the model eucharistic prayer given by Hippolytus in his Apostolic Tradition. This text, written down in Rome about 215, is all one long sentence. The narrative of institution is part of it, in a subordinate “who” clause.

From the opening preface dialogue to the great Amen, the eucharistic prayer is one. We have begun to recover this notion a little more clearly in the past few years. We need to be careful, however, not to lose sight of this unity with the growing multiplicity of changeable parts provided in our current liturgical books.

Form of the Eucharistic Prayer

At first glance, most eucharistic prayers seem to be a collection of individual prayers of thanks and petition. This impression of disjointedness seems increased by subtitles which point out the thrust of individual paragraphs.
A deeper understanding of the anaphora results once we realize that it is an elaborated form of a biblical and Jewish prayer structure, the berakah or blessing. Praise and thanksgiving are its primary elements, offered as we remember God's wonderful works in the past, and as we ask him for present help. The prayer usually concludes with a doxology or prayer of praise.

This form of blessing was used by the Jewish people in their daily lives, and still continues as part of their personal and synagogue prayers. Christians are once more beginning to use this treasure from their heritage.\(^1\) Two brief berakoth ("Blessed are you") are included in the preparation of the gifts in the present order of Mass.

The eucharistic prayer is a berakah in a developed form. By studying the text of one of these prayers, we can see some of its elements:

**Praise and thanksgiving:** The whole prayer is one of giving thanks — this is the meaning of the word eucharist. We praise the Father for all his works, which we recall, and we offer him the sacrifice of Christ his Son, all for his honor and glory.

**Remembering God's wonderful actions:** We recall:

- **His work in creation;**
- **His work in the realm of salvation:**
  - by sending his Son as our savior;
  - by what Jesus did at the last supper;
  - by our Lord's obedient suffering and death;
- **God's work of saving us** by the paschal mystery, summed up in the death and rising of Jesus.

**Offering:** We offer to the Father the sacrificial death of Christ his Son, as Christ told us to do, by presenting the bread of life and the cup of eternal salvation. We join our own living sacrifice to that of the Lord, and offer this to the Father with Jesus.

**Interceding:** As members of the people of prayer, we intercede for the Church and for the whole world. We continue the prayer of Christ the high priest that all will be saved. We pray that the fruits of his death and resurrection will be given to all.

**Doxology:** This prayer summarizes our act of honor and glory being offered by the Church to the Father, through the Son, in the Holy Spirit. The assembled people acclaim this prayer and make it their own by their resounding Amen!

**Growing in understanding:** In our personal and family prayer life, we can use the berakah form of praise more frequently. In this way we can begin to steep ourselves more in the spirit of the eucharistic action of the Church's greatest prayer.\(^2\)

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\(^1\) This form of praise and blessing is explained in detail, with many examples for personal and community use, in Bulletin 49, Blessed Be God and His Creation: see especially pages 152-153. This issue is available from Publications Service at the address on the inside front cover.

\(^2\) Help for praying with the berakah is given in Sunday Mass Book, pages 1286-1335, especially on page 1318.
Elements of the Eucharistic Prayer

To these basic elements of the berakah, the Church has added several others through the centuries, as described below, to constitute its eucharistic prayers in the present age:

The General Instruction of the Roman Missal (1970) now recognizes eight chief elements in every eucharistic prayer. These elements may vary in their order. They are not to be considered as eight “parts” or “pieces” which make up the canon, but rather as elements or dominant notes which penetrate it, and which may be more evident at different places in the prayer.

Thanksgiving: “Eucharistic prayer” means a prayer of thanksgiving and praise. This element is seen particularly in the preface, but continues throughout the canon. As the priest prays the anaphora in the name of the assembled community, he praises and thanks God our Father through our Lord and brother Jesus Christ. The entire assembly thus joins with Christ in recounting God’s wonderful works of creation and grace, and in thanking him for what he has done for us in and through Christ.

By the use of a variable preface, the Roman rite enables the community to express its thanks for some particular aspect of salvation which is being celebrated (GI, nos. 54-55a). The priest is encouraged to introduce the eucharistic prayer (before beginning the preface dialogue), and in this way help the community to realize that it too has a part in the history of salvation.4

Acclamation: At the end of the preface, the priest joins the community’s prayer of thanks to the Father by the saints and angels in heaven. They too give glory to him through Christ, our mediator and high priest. People and priest sing the Holy, holy, holy Lord together as an acclamation of praise (GI, nos. 55b, 17a).

Epiclesis (invocation): The priest holds his outstretched hands over the bread and wine, and asks God the Father to send his Spirit to sanctify these offerings. The gesture is a form of laying on of hands, which can signify the giving of the Spirit. We pray also that all who share in these gifts in communion will be saved by Christ, who is the victim being offered (GI, no. 55c).

Churches of the East and West have long placed different emphasis on the epiclesis. For the Latin rite, the consecration takes place at the words of institution: St. Ambrose, who died in 397, witnesses to this tradition.5 The Eastern Churches maintain an equally ancient tradition: the gifts do not become the body and blood of Christ until the priest asks the Father to send his Spirit to make these offerings holy. St. Cyril of Jerusalem (or his successor, John), writing in the final half of the fourth century, describes this tradition.6

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3 See GI, no. 55. The full text of the General Instruction is given at the front of the sacramentary: in the Canadian edition, pages 11-54.


5 In his instruction to neophytes, around the year 391, St. Ambrose states: “At the consecration this bread becomes the body of Christ . . . By what words is the consecration effected, and whose words are they? The words of the Lord Jesus . . . It is Christ’s word that brings this sacrament into being.” See his sermons on the sacraments (De Sacramentis) IV: 14, in Edward Yarnold, The Awe-Inspiring Rites of Initiation (1972, St. Paul Publications, Slough, England), page 133.
This is not a case of one being right and the other wrong: no one made a fuss over the different traditions until the Latin-Greek squabbles of the fourteenth century. Our Church states that all rites, Eastern and Western, are of equal authority and dignity (see Liturgy constitution, no. 4). The Council praises the ancient Eastern discipline of the sacraments (Decree on Eastern Catholic Churches, no. 12).

A growing trend today is to hold that the entire eucharistic prayer is consecratory.

**Narrative of institution:** The scriptural texts describing the narrative of institution come from the liturgical uses of believing communities. A careful study of the passages giving the last supper narrative shows that the Church has always adapted and modified the words and actions of Christ at the words of institution. Not all the actions are done: the breaking of the bread is reserved for the moments before communion, and the eating and drinking are done at communion time (GI, no. 55d). The people's memorial acclamation is an independent rite added at this point (GI, no. 17a).

**Anamnesis** (remembering, recalling): One important aspect of the ancient berakah form of praise is that we place before God the wonderful works he has done in the past, and praise him for them. Relying on his faithfulness to his covenant, we ask him to continue working his wonders among us by giving us his grace and blessings.

Jesus commanded his apostles to do the eucharist in memory of him. As we obey his precept, we pray to the Father and recall Jesus' passion, descent among the dead, resurrection, ascension, and his coming again in glory: we recall the fullness of his paschal mystery (GI, no. 55e).

**Offering:** In the four eucharistic prayers, the anamnesis is immediately followed by the offering. Remembering Jesus' death-resurrection, we offer this bread and cup, this sacrifice, the body and blood of our Lord. This offering is made by the entire Church, but especially by the community assembled here in faith (see GI, nos. 74-75). We offer the pure and holy victim to our Father in heaven. Those for whom we offer are mentioned in the intercessions (see page 162).

Today this offering is perhaps the most misunderstood element in the Roman Mass. The Church's offering takes place during the eucharistic prayer, and not

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6 This is the tradition of the Church of Jerusalem in the second half of the fourth century: “We call upon the merciful God to send the Holy Spirit on our offerings, so that he may make the bread Christ's body, and the wine Christ's blood; for clearly whatever the Holy Spirit touches is sanctified and transformed.” See Mystagogical Catecheses, V: 7, in Yarnold, op. cit., page 91. Theodore of Mopsuestia, preaching in Antioch around 383-392, agrees with the Jerusalem theology: see Baptismal homily V: 11-12, in Yarnold, pages 245-246.

7 The narrative is given in Mt. 26: 26-29; Mk. 14: 22-25; Lk. 22: 19-20; 1 Cor. 11: 23-25. The line about raising his eyes to heaven comes from some of the gospel stories of multiplying the loaves (see Mt. 14: 19; Mk. 6: 41; Lk. 9: 16).

8 See Dix, Shape of the Liturgy, pages 2-8.

9 The best guide to the celebration of the renewed Roman Mass is found in the General Instruction and in the rubrics in the order of Mass. Roman Catholic priests who busily break the bread during the narrative of institution are flying in the face of their liturgical tradition: only the West Syrians and Copts crack the bread at this moment: see Jungmann, Mass of the Roman Rite, II, page 202; The Early Liturgy, page 220.
during the so-called “offertory.” What few seem to understand, however, is when and how we do offer during the canon. The General instruction teaches us more about this:

- **Offering Christ:** The people are to offer the victim (in silent reverence: GI, no. 55h) as the priest offers him in their name and in the name of the Church (GI, no. 62). We offer Jesus Christ, who died that we might die to sin, who was raised that we might live with him for God. Christ his Son is the only gift that can be truly pleasing to God.

- **Offering themselves:** Yet we are also commanded to offer ourselves in union with Christ. Christians need to learn how to offer themselves and their lives during the Mass. They need to be taught to come with the necessary dispositions, so that they may make this offering (see Liturgy constitution, nos. 11-12).

We pray that Christ will make us *his gift to the Father* (third eucharistic prayer). St. Paul tells us to give God proper worship by offering ourselves to him as living sacrifices: we are to live in a way that is pleasing and acceptable to him. This involves a rejection of this world’s standards, and an opening of ourselves to God’s action, letting him transform us from within. Thus we will be able to know God’s will, and carry it out with his grace (see Rom. 12: 1-2; 1 Pet. 2: 4-5).

- **Union with the Father:** Union with God demands obedience in faith (Jn. 15: 10; Mt. 7: 21-23), and love (Jn. 14: 23). It is the Spirit, living in us as in his temples (1 Cor. 3: 16), who teaches us (Jn. 16: 13) to be spiritual people (Rom. 8: 1-17). This union with the Father is to grow daily (GI, no. 55).

- **Union through Christ:** The Lord Jesus is the way, the truth, the life: his is our only way to the Father (see Jn. 14: 6). If we are to grow each day in our union with the Father, we have to do it through Christ. He demands that we follow him by carrying our cross daily with him (Lk. 9: 23); he wants sincere followers who serve by deed, not by lip service only (Mt. 15: 7-9; James 1: 27 and 2: 14-17). Through the eucharist God will give us his strength to be true followers of Jesus.

- **Union with one another:** We have constantly been taught that our love of God must be shown in love for our neighbor: see Mt. 25: 31-46; 1 Jn. 4: 7-21, especially verses 20-21. If we are going to grow in union with God, if we hope that he will accept this sacrifice we offer (see Mt. 5: 23-24), we have to be seeking an ever-growing love and union with one another. This love will be the sign to all that we are Christ’s (Jn. 13: 35).

**Education necessary:** Members of the Church — both priests and people — need to deepen their understanding of the action of the Mass. Priests are to instruct their people on how to do this.¹⁰ The continuing liturgical education of the clergy remains a vitally important responsibility of the bishops.¹¹

**Intercessions:** The Church is called to be a praying people. Our unending task as sharers in the priesthood of Christ is to stand before God and pray in union with our Lord for all, asking our Father to bring them to salvation. The texts of euca-

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¹⁰ Vatican II, Decree on the ministry and life of priests, no. 5; Liturgy constitution, nos. 11-12, 14, 18-19, 48.

¹¹ Liturgy constitution, nos. 14, 17-18, 41-42; Decree on the bishops’ pastoral office in the Church, nos. 15-16, 30.
ristic prayers show that the Mass is being offered for the Church, for all its living
members, for the dead, and for peace and salvation for the whole human race. We
ask our heavenly Father to let us all share in the salvation gained for us by the dying
and rising of Christ his Son (GI, no. 51g).

The intercessions follow different arrangements in the eucharistic prayers, and
repeat in a general way some of the intentions prayed for in the general intercessions
or prayer of the faithful.

Final doxology: The closing words of the eucharistic prayer ("Through him,
with him") are a prayer of praise by which the celebrating priest sums up and con-
cludes the thanksgiving offered to God the Father in the canon (GI, no. 55h).12

- Acclamation: By their hearty Amen! the members of the community con-
firm and approve the action of the eucharistic prayer proclaimed in their name. St.
Justin describes this same acclamation in Rome around the year 150, noting that the
people give their assent to the president's prayer by saying Amen, which is a Hebrew
word for So be it.13 Augustine tells us that saying Amen is like putting our signature
to the prayer.14

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Participation in the eucharistic prayer, in no. 65, pages 207-216.

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As pastors become more deeply imbued in the liturgical spirit of the eucharistic
prayer, the central portion and highlight of the Mass (GI, no. 54), they will be able to
help their people by their word and example in participation in the Church's liturgy
(Liturgy constitution, no. 19), which is the summit of the Church's work and the
source of its spirituality (see Liturgy constitution, no. 10).

12 The doxology is the conclusion of the eucharistic prayer, and like the rest of the canon, it is pro-
claimed by the priest alone. Letting the congregation say the doxology is contrary to the tradition of the
Latin rite, and also forbidden by current guidelines. These note that the assembled believers are to listen
"in silent reverence" while the priest proclaims the eucharistic prayer (GI, no. 55h; letter on eucharistic
prayers, 1973, no. 8, in Bulletin 40, page 199). Their part is to offer, and to acclaim in the three acclama-
tions of the eucharistic prayer. All three acclamations should be sung for better participation by the
worshipping community.
13 Justin the martyr, First Apology, nos. 65: 3-4 and 67: 5. (See Bulletin 55, page 242.)
14 Serm. Denis. 6. 3 (PL, 46, 836).
Looking at the Eucharistic Prayers

Eucharistic Prayer I

A brief history: Known as the Roman canon, this prayer was the only eucharistic prayer used by the Roman rite for sixteen centuries, from about 375 until 1968. During most of that time, its text remained stable and fixed.

Its origins date back to the time of Ambrose (who died in 397) and Damasus I, pope from 366-384. It was in Damasus' time that the Roman Church moved from Greek to Latin in its liturgy. The Roman canon seems to have been written in Latin. In Milan at this time, St. Ambrose quotes many passages echoing the wording of the canon in his mystagogical lectures, De Sacramentis. (It was Pope Damasus who commissioned St. Jerome to make a new Latin translation of the scriptures.)

While pope (590-604), Gregory the Great touched up the language of the Roman canon. After his time, only a few changes were made, but they reflected the decline in understanding of the eucharistic action:

- Silence: For the first five centuries, the Church considered the eucharistic prayer as a presidential prayer to be proclaimed aloud by the bishop or priest, in the name of the gathered, participating community. In the East in the sixth century and in Spain in the seventh century, we find a tendency to say the eucharistic prayer quietly: it was "too holy" to be heard by the people. This trend grew, and the silent canon remained until 1967. The same mentality was seen in parallel areas: until the end of the last century, it was forbidden to print a vernacular translation of the canon!

- "Through Christ our Lord. Amen." This ending, repeated four times within the silent canon, was added between the ninth and twelfth centuries. It disrupts the unity and flow of the prayer, and shows little understanding of the meaning of communal prayer. The eucharistic prayer is one, and should have only one great Amen. The present rite makes these four endings optional, and shows this by putting them in parentheses and in smaller type. For good liturgy, they should be omitted. This is a change needed in future editions of the Roman canon.

- "Or who offer for themselves." Said to be added by Alcuin, this line showed a significant change in the theology of the canon. This addition makes it sound as if the priest alone is offering the sacrifice whenever he says we, and that the congregation are offering it for themselves. The we in the eucharistic prayer means the whole Church — which is present and offering (GI, nos. 74-75). The local community is certainly involved, but is not restricted to the celebrating priest. The English translation of this passage has made a first transition back to a more sound theology.¹

The last changes made to this eucharistic prayer have been in modern times. In 1962, Pope John XXIII added St. Joseph's name to the list of saints — a first break in the fixed nature of the canon. Following the Second Vatican Council, Paul VI led us to the reformed order of the Mass, gave us three new eucharistic prayers, added the memorial acclamation, and made many of the saints' names optional.

¹ See translators' note in Bulletin 18, pages 231-232. Still available from Publications Service (75c, plus 10c postage), this issue of November 1967 presents the interim ICEL text of the Roman canon, along with pastoral observations, translators' notes, catechesis on the canon, and theological observations.
As it stands now, the text of the Roman canon is in fairly good shape: only a few minor improvements are needed. What is really necessary now is that we work much harder to understand the liturgical and spiritual riches inherent in this prayer, and to grow in our understanding of its action.

Text: The English text of the first eucharistic prayer is in the sacramentary, in Sunday Mass Book (prefaces, pages 595-649; text, pages 650-655), and in other popular publications. The Latin is in the Missale Romanum, and in Soubigou (see note 8, below), pages 247-251. For the French text, see SMB, pages 694-699.

Structure: This canon includes all the elements used in Roman anaphoras (see GI, no. 55a-h):

- **Thanksgiving** (GI, no. 55a): The Roman tradition is to place specific reasons for thanking the Father in the preface, the opening part of the eucharistic prayer. By keeping a relatively invariable canon and a variable preface, the rite maintains both stability and flexibility. Early sacramentaries had more than 280 prefaces; later ages reduced these to very few. In the twentieth century, several more were brought into the Mass texts. The present sacramentary contains a rich variety (more than 80), and more are being added gradually. (See GI, no. 321.)

The preface dialogue used today is the same as the one recorded by Hippolytus at Rome in 215.

- **Acclamation** (GI, no. 55b): We do not know when the *Holy, holy, holy Lord* first entered the eucharistic liturgy. From the fourth century we find it in Mass texts, coming between the preface and the rest of the canon. (Later this was to cause a misunderstanding of the eucharistic prayer, which for centuries was considered to begin after the *Sanctus*. It was only in the last decade that the limits of the canon — from the preface dialogue to the great Amen — were once more clearly defined in Roman liturgical books.)

The first part of this acclamation is based on Is. 6: 3, and Rev. 4: 8. The second part, ("Blessed is he") depends on Mt. 21: 9 (see also Mt. 9: 27 and Ps. 118: 26), and is first mentioned by Caesarius of Arles in the sixth century. The acclamation is sung by all (GI, no. 108).

- **Epiclesis** (GI, no. 55c): This invocation ("Bless and approve"), asking God that these gifts may become Christ's body and blood, precedes the narrative of institution in the Roman tradition. As noted above on the elements of the eucharistic prayer, the Eastern Churches make this epiclesis after the last supper account. The Roman canon has this prayer directed to the Father. (In the three new eucharistic prayers, he is asked to send his Holy Spirit so that the consecration may take place.)

- **Institution narrative** (GI, no. 55d): A simple repeating of the Lord's words was part of the narrative of God's wonderful works of salvation. Originally it was not a separate section, but was introduced by a "who" clause: this practice of Hippolytus is still retained in the Latin text today (*Qui pridie*). The narrative was faithful to the tradition, but minor details varied in different rites. The new text for the Roman canon is improved over the former wording. Now all four prayers use the same central words, but vary somewhat the introductory texts of the narrative.
The middle ages said these words in silence as part of a silent canon. Various ways of emphasizing this moment for the people were evolved: bells in twelfth century France, elevations of the consecrated bread in thirteenth century Paris, genuflections in the fourteenth century. Our present rites have begun to modify the medieval practices.

- **Anamnesis** (GI, no. 55e): The recalling of Christ's death, resurrection, and ascension is done in response to his command to do eucharist in his memory. As we remember Christ in this way, we know that he is present among us. This prayer, spoken to the Father, leads us quickly into the offering.

In the present rite, the people make a memorial acclamation after the institution narrative. The Canadian sacramentary provides special introductions to these.

Two of the eucharistic prayers prepared in 1974 for use in Masses with children show a different approach. In the second prayer, a type of memorial acclamation is sung after the consecration of the bread, and then again after that of the wine, with an acclamation of praise repeated four times during the rest of the canon. The third prayer uses a cry of praise to the Father in a type of extended anamnesis.

- **Offering** (GI, no. 55f): In the Roman canon, the offering is made both before and after the narrative of institution. The first offering is mentioned in connection with the Church and its leaders. The second offering flows out of the anamnesis: as we remember Christ, we offer this sacrifice to God. It is because of Jesus' paschal mystery that we are able to offer in this Mass. Several prayers ask the Father to accept the offering we are making. As discussed above under elements of the eucharistic prayer (pages 160-161), the people too make this offering and join their spiritual sacrifice to it (GI, no. 55f).

- **Intercessions** (GI, no. 55g): The Roman canon makes intercession for the Church and for all the living in the first part, and then for the dead in the second part. Saints are commemorated before and after the consecration, and we ask that we ourselves may join them.

The words before the final doxology ("Through Christ . . . make them holy") refer to all God's created gifts. At this point, various blessings of food and other things used to be given; it is still the moment in the chrism Mass when the bishop blesses the oil for the sick (see Bulletin 37, pages 46-49).

- **Final doxology** (GI, no. 55h): The use of a doxology or phrase of praise to end a prayer ("sealing the prayer") is part of the Jewish *berakah* tradition. The middle ages — with silent canon, priests with their backs to the people, and with a

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2 Elevation of the host began in Paris in the early 1200s, and was done in many places by the middle of the century — at a period when the *Corpus Christi* type of devotion was growing. The chalice was elevated toward the end of the thirteenth century. "Visual communion" — *staring, not sharing* — remained a popular substitute at a time when the Church had to legislate annual communion! (See Fourth Lateran Council, 1215, canon 21.) See also Other eucharistic devotions, in Bulletin 62, pages 40-46.


4 Masses with Children: see note 9, below. The second prayer is on pages 92-97, and the third, pages 98-102.

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penschant for allegories and symbolism — made many signs of the cross at this point. Modern reforms have restored the conclusion of the canon to a solemn ending: the priest raises the bread and cup of everlasting life, and sings the doxology, while all listen. Then, as in Rome in 150, the people give their solemn approval — the great Amen — to the eucharistic action which they have been celebrating. (See also Rev. 3: 14 and 1: 5; Is. 65: 16.)

Use: The first eucharistic prayer is considered particularly suitable when seasonal inserts (In union; Father, accept) are provided: these are noted in Guidelines for Pastoral Liturgy, the annual liturgical calendar. This canon is also appropriate on Sunday and on the feasts of the 41 saints mentioned in its commemorations (GI, no. 322a).

Eucharistic Prayer II

Introduced to the Roman Church in 1968, the second eucharistic prayer is based on the model prayer given by Hippolytus in Apostolic Tradition, when he describes the traditional liturgy of Rome around the year 215. Simplicity, conciseness, and brevity are its characteristics. Some changes have been made in this early text to adapt it for use in the Roman rite today.

Text: The English text of the second eucharistic prayer is in the sacramentary, in Sunday Mass Book (pages 656-660), and in other popular publications. The Latin is in the Missale Romanum, and also in Soubigou (note 8, below). For the French text, see SMB, pages 700-703.

Structure: The second eucharistic prayer includes all the elements used in Roman anaphoras (see GI, no. 55a-h):

- **Thanksgiving** (GI, no. 55a): A proper preface (no. 42; SMB, pages 656 and 623-624) is provided, but another one may be substituted (GI, no. 322b).

- **Acclamation** (GI, no. 55b): The Holy, holy, holy Lord — probably a fourth century tradition — has been added to Hippolytus to match current practice.

- **Epiclesis** (GI, no. 55c): The canon addresses the Father, and at once asks him to send his Spirit, so that our gifts may become Christ’s body and blood. In Roman style, it is a consecratory epiclesis, coming before the narrative of institution.

- **Institution narrative** (GI, no. 55d): Hippolytus' text has been changed to the new standard Roman form to avoid confusion, omitting his fine passage on destroy-

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5 See Consilium for Implementing the Constitution on the Liturgy, June 14, 1968, Guidelines were provided to Episcopal conferences for instructing people in the new eucharistic prayers. This document is reprinted in English in Bulletin 24, pages 111-119 (now out of print).

6 The text of Hippolytus' eucharistic prayer — a model for the celebrating bishop's prayer — is available in various publications:


- Lucien Deiss, Early Sources of the Liturgy (1967, 1975, Collegeville, Minn.), pages 36-41.


ing death and harrowing hell. Jesus’ free submission to his passion and death is emphasized (see Jn. 10: 17-18; Is. 52: 7; Jn. 12: 27). A memorial acclamation, which would be more fitting after the anamnesis than the institution narrative, is added, in keeping with our present practice.

- **Anamnesis** (GI, no. 55e): This is extremely brief both in Hippolytus and in the second canon, and is combined with the offering.

- **Offering** (GI, no. 55f): The Roman rite bases its text on that of Hippolytus, with slight modifications. The note of thanksgiving and service is part of this prayer, and leads easily into the intercessions.

- **Intercessions** (GI, no. 55g): Hippolytus’ prayer for the Church is a communion epiclesis. In the modern Roman text this is expanded to prayer for the Church on earth with its leaders (universal and local), for the dead (a special form may be inserted — GI, no. 322b), and for the living. Mary and the saints are the ones with whom — we pray — we will share everlasting life. This format of the intercessions is significantly different from the Roman canon, where the intercessions are placed both before and after the institution narrative.

- **Final doxology** (GI, no. 55h): The formula from the first eucharistic prayer has replaced the one from Hippolytus.

**Starting point for catechesis:** Back in 1968 (see Bulletin 24, page 119), it was suggested that the simplicity of the second canon “makes it a good starting point in a catechesis on the various elements of a eucharistic prayer.” What is being done in your parish or community to help people grow in their understanding of the center (GI, no. 54) of the Mass?

**Resources:** The ICEL translators’ notes are still available in Bulletin 25.7 Soubigou also comments on these early texts.8

**Current use:** The second eucharistic prayer is considered particularly suitable for weekdays and other particular circumstances (GI, no. 322b). It is still fitting for use with children, although three new anaphoras are now available.9

### Eucharistic Prayer III

This prayer, introduced to the Latin Church in 1968, provides a good example in action of the Roman tradition (outlined in GI, no. 55). Its length is midway between that of prayers II and IV.

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7 Bulletin 25, issued in November 1968, contains the interim translation of the four eucharistic prayers and of eight new prefaces, along with musical notation. The ICEL translators’ notes on the prefaces (pages 171-172) and on the four eucharistic prayers (pages 173-183) are still available for $2.20 from Publications Service, at the address on the inside front cover.


9 *Masses with Children, Masses of Reconciliation* (1975, CCC, Ottawa). This book provides a complete sacramentary for use with children, with music for prefaces and acclamations, and all nine eucharistic prayers approved in the Roman rite. 142 pages, red and black, sewn, with flexible binding. $5.00 (six or more, $4.00 each): plus 10% postage. Available from Publications Service.
Text: The English text of this anaphora is in the sacramentary, in Sunday Mass Book (pages 661-665), and in other popular publications. The Latin is in the Missale Romanum, and also in Soubigou (see note 8, on page 167). The French text is contained in SMB, pages 704-707.

Structure: The third eucharistic prayer contains all the traditional Roman elements (GI, no. 55a-h):

- **Thanksgiving** (GI, no. 55a): Like the Roman canon, this prayer has no preface of its own: one is chosen from the 81 in the order of the Mass, and bears the burden of expressing thanksgiving in this eucharistic prayer.

- **Acclamation** (GI, no. 55b): See the notes on the first eucharistic prayer.

- **Epiclesis** (GI, no. 55c): We ask the Father to sanctify these gifts by the power of his Spirit (consecration epiclesis), and later we ask for the Spirit’s unifying action in the Church (communion epiclesis).

- **Narrative of the institution** (GI, no. 55d): See notes on the Roman canon.

- **Anamnesis** (GI, no. 55e): This is very short, and moves quickly to the offering. The usual memorial acclamations are added after the institution narrative.

- **Offering** (GI, no. 55f): We offer, and we ask that our gift will be accepted. Again, this offering is brief. Much catechesis needs to be done on its meaning, as described above.

- **Intercessions** (GI, no. 55g): We ask to share in our heavenly inheritance with Mary and the saints. The prayers for the Church and the world are clear and well expressed. The dead are remembered, and a special section may be inserted when the Mass is offered for the dead. In this eucharistic prayer, these intercessions come at the end, just before the concluding doxology.

- **Final doxology** (GI, no. 55h): The formula of the first eucharistic prayer is used.

Use: The third eucharistic prayer is considered to be particularly apt for Sundays and feast days (GI, no. 322c), but may be used in any Mass.

Eucharistic Prayer IV

This 1968 anaphora follows the example of some Oriental prayers by presenting a long summary of the history of salvation in the section after the preface.

Text: The English text of this eucharistic prayer is given in the sacramentary, in Sunday Mass Book (pages 666-671), and in other publications. The Latin is in the Missale Romanum, and in Soubigou (see note 8, above). For the French text, see SMB, pages 708-712.

Structure: This anaphora contains all the traditional Roman elements, but at greater length (see GI, no. 55a-h):

- **Thanksgiving** (GI, no. 55a): This begins in the preface, which is invariable, and continues in the part after the Sanctus. It is for this reason that no other preface may be used with this prayer (GI, no. 322d).
• Acclamation (GI, no. 55b): See eucharistic prayer I.

• Epiclesis (GI, no. 55c): This canon includes both a consecratory epiclesis (before the institution narrative) and a communion epiclesis (asking the Father to gather us into a living sacrifice by the Spirit's power).

• Narrative of institution (GI, no. 55d): As in the first eucharistic prayer, with a slightly different introduction.

• Anamnesis (GI, no. 55e): A little more extensive, this prayer recalls the past aspects of the paschal mystery and looks forward to the second coming of Christ.

• Offering (GI, no. 55f): We offer the body and blood of Christ as our sacrifice to the Father.

• Intercessions (GI, no. 55g): We pray for the Church and world, and for all the dead. We ask to share heaven with Mary and the saints. The canon draws to its conclusion with a fine vision of our heavenly worship (see also Liturgy constitution, no. 8).

• Final doxology (GI, no. 55h): See notes on the Roman canon.

Use: When proclaimed well, the fourth eucharistic prayer can be of benefit to any congregation. As a community grows in its understanding of scripture, it will appreciate this prayer even more (GI, no. 322d). This anaphora retains its own preface — which can never be replaced by another — even in Masses which normally demand a seasonal preface (GI, no. 322e).

Five More Eucharistic Prayers

The past few years have seen a rich abundance of liturgical texts, particularly in eucharistic prayers. For sixteen centuries we had only the Roman canon in Latin, relatively unchanged for most of that life span. In 1967 we received the interim English version of this prayer; in 1968, a more permanent translation of the first eucharistic prayer, and three new ones. Rome gave some firm guidelines about new eucharistic prayers and the celebration of the present ones in 1973 (see Bulletin 40, pages 197-203).

Then in 1974, we received five more anaphoras, three for Masses with children and two for Masses of reconciliation.\footnote{Masses with Children, Masses of Reconciliation: These have been published by Publications Service: see note 9, above.}

A study of these new prayers reveals some interesting facts about their structure and the arrangement of the traditional elements. While containing the basic elements of Roman eucharistic prayers, as outlined in GI, no. 55a-h, they adapt them in ways that could point out a path for future developments.
COMMUNION RITE

After the eucharistic prayer, the community prepares by a number of prayers and rites for communion in the sacrifice. In this paschal banquet, we eat and drink his body and blood (G1, no. 56).

Lord’s Prayer

Jesus gave us more than a prayer formula when he taught his disciples to pray this prayer (Mt. 6: 9-13; Lk. 11: 2-4). He gave us the right to address God as our beloved Father. The Lord’s prayer is found in the Didache (8: 2), which is probably about as old as the gospel texts. Many Fathers of the Church have explained this prayer, and it continues to be a subject of meditation and study among every generation of Christians.

In the Mass: In the early centuries, after the eucharistic prayer was concluded by the people’s acclamation, the great Amen, the holy bread was broken and priest and people received communion under both forms.

The Lord’s prayer seems to have been introduced into the Mass in the late fourth century. John Chrysostom, Cyril, and Ambrose mention it, and Augustine speaks of it on several occasions. At first it was said after the breaking of bread, just before communion. For Augustine, and for Aquinas later, the praying of the Lord’s prayer sincerely was an occasion of forgiveness. It thus served in the Mass as a moment of purification (see 1 Cor. 11: 28).

Gregory the Great (590-604) moved the Lord’s prayer to its present place, just after the eucharistic prayer, and at the beginning of the rites preparing for communion. In Rome it was said by the priest alone, while in other places it was said by the people too.

Today: the Lord’s prayer is the people’s communion prayer. The community is standing, and the priest invites all to join him in singing or saying the prayer. As in the early centuries, the Church continues to see a reference to the eucharist in the petition for daily bread (G1, nos. 56a, 16, 21, 110).

The Church of God now prays the Our Father solemnly three times a day, in its three great moments of public prayer: morning prayer, the eucharist, and evening prayer.

Expanded prayer: The final petition of the Lord’s prayer has been expanded into another prayer in both East and West. It seems to be present, at least in a simple form, during the fifth century. During the middle ages, saints’ names were added to the prayer, but these were removed in 1969, and an eschatological phrase from Titus 2: 13 was added.


Until 1964, the fraction or breaking of the bread took place during the silent recitation of the “Deliver us” prayer. This action has now been made a separate rite once more, so that it may stand out more clearly.

**Doxology:** The concluding acclamation, “For the kingdom,” is also included in the *Didache* (8: 2), and even in some Greek manuscripts of Matthew’s gospel (a definite sign of the influence of the liturgy on the formation of some scripture passages). Restored to the Roman rite in 1969, it has long been used in the Byzantine Divine Liturgy as the conclusion of the Lord’s prayer.

**Kiss of Peace**

The epistles mention greeting with a holy kiss as a sign of Christian love. This gesture passed into the liturgy. Both Justin (150) and Hippolytus (215) describe it: in Rome, it took place after the prayer of the faithful, and could be exchanged only among believers.

When celebrated at the end of the liturgy of the word, before the gifts are brought to the altar, the kiss of peace is seen as a sign of the reconciliation required before offering sacrifice, as commanded by Jesus in Mt. 5: 23-24 (see also *Didache*, 14: 1-2). It continues in this position in most liturgies today.

During the fourth century, Rome changed the position of the kiss of peace to make it a rite of reconciliation before communion. In 416, Pope Innocent I is defending its new place. Augustine mentions that Christians give the sign of peace by a holy kiss after the Lord’s prayer.

The kiss of peace was frequently reserved for those who would be going to communion. By the tenth century, it was the practice for the kiss of peace to be given by the bishop to those around the altar, and they in turn passed it down to the people. A *pax-board* was kissed in England during the 1200s, and passed from one person to another. The laity were eventually excluded from the kiss, and it remained a clerical preserve until 1969. The meaning of the rite was rarely discussed.

- *Today* the order of Mass has strengthened the rite of peace by beginning it with a prayer (“Lord Jesus Christ,” based on Jn. 14: 27), a greeting, and the invitation for all to exchange peace as a sign of mutual love (GI, nos. 56b, 112, 136, 194). Most importantly, it is being understood and experienced as a sign with meaning.

Though its form and position have varied through the centuries, the intention and emphasis of the kiss of peace have remained constant: it is a *seal and pledge of the fellowship and unity of the Spirit*, which is found in the bond of peace. (See Bulletin 48, page 123.)

**Breaking of the Bread**

**Breaking of the bread:** At the last supper, Christ broke bread before giving it to his disciples. The first Christians recognized him in the breaking of bread (see Lk. 24: 30, 35), and used this name for the eucharist (see Acts 2: 42, 46, 47; 20: 7, 11).

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4. *Holy kiss:* see Rom. 16: 16; 1 Cor. 16: 20; 2 Cor. 13: 12; 1 Thess. 5: 26; *a kiss of love:* see 1 Pet. 5: 14.

5. For a fuller article on the kiss of peace in the liturgy, see Bulletin 48, pages 122-124; see also *From the Sunday greeting of peace to daily life*, in no. 66, pages 280-282.
The breaking of bread was necessary, for one loaf was used and had to be broken so that all could eat of it. The symbolic nature of this gesture combined happily with the practical need of breaking. Thus Paul speaks of the unity of the body of Christ, the Church, and the sharing in one loaf (1 Cor. 10: 16-17). The Didache bases a prayer on this thought (9: 3-4; see also 14: 1, and footnote 11 on page 153).

Justin simply mentions that the deacons distribute a portion of the consecrated bread to each communicant, and Hippolytus briefly mentions the breaking. Before Gregory I, the breaking of the bread came immediately after the eucharistic prayer ended. When he inserted the Lord's prayer, the breaking of the bread followed. During the eighth century papal Mass, the rite was elaborate, with the pope presiding from his seat as bishops, priests and deacons broke the bread for communion.

The changeover to unleavened bread began in the West in the ninth century, and the priest's bread was smaller. Particles for the people were introduced in Germany in the tenth century, effectively ending the symbolism of the rite of breaking bread for the next thousand years. The middle ages added signs of the cross and kisses for various allegorical reasons, but these acts were simplified by Pius V in 1570.

Today the Roman rite is trying to do three things at once — to emphasize the symbolism of the breaking of the bread (some of the broken particles should be given as communion to some of the people — GI, no. 283); to retain the use of unleavened bread; and to be practical about the use of small breads for communion (read GI, nos. 283, 56c, 113). It remains an area for further reform (see Bulletin 69).

Commingling: The rite of dropping a particle of the consecrated bread into the chalice was considered in fourth century Syria as a sign of the Lord's resurrection. It was introduced into the papal Mass early in the eighth century, possibly by Sergius I (687-701), who was of Syrian origin, and who brought the Lamb of God into the Roman Mass. The middle ages allegorized over the commingling. The Council of Trent had to change its formula to get around the Reformers' arguments about communion under both forms.

Today it is significant that the order of Mass has reduced it to a silent formula, and makes no effort to give it a meaning (see GI, nos. 56d and 113).

Lamb of God: This chant, from the Syrian rite, was introduced into the Roman Mass by Pope Sergius I as a hymn for use during the lengthy breaking of the bread for communion. The song echoes the New Testament phrases of Christ as the Lamb of God (Jn. 1: 29), the passover or paschal Lamb (1 Cor. 5: 7; Jn. 19: 36) who was victorious over death (Rev. 5: 6-14).

Today, the Lamb of God is sung while the breaking of the bread and the commingling are taking place. The chant continues as long as these last — another sign that the Church wants us to return to a real breaking of real bread once more (GI, nos. 56e, 113).

Private prayers of the priest: From the ninth century in France we find private prayers in the first person singular for use by priests before communion. Texts varied throughout the middle ages, and in 1570 Pius V fixed the number at three.
Today, the order of Mass provides two private prayers, of which the priest is to choose one. The rite emphasizes that they are private, and hence are to be said in silence (GI, nos. 13, 56f, 114). It would seem that they could better be said by the priest in his devotions before Mass, and that a moment of silent recollection could benefit all.

Communion

Because of the variety of practices and texts through twenty centuries, we begin in this section with our current practice — mainly a restoration of the Church's earlier tradition — and then look back at its history.

Invitation to communion: The present rite has several steps:

- The priest genuflects, and holds the broken host over the paten before the people.
- He invites the people to communion, using words based on Jn. 1: 29 and Rev. 19: 9. Other words may be used.
- Priest and people say a prayer developed from Mt. 8: 8.6

Gradual development: These rites came into the liturgy over a period of time. There is no sign of them in the early centuries. The genuflection is first mentioned in the late middle ages, in the fourteenth century. The scripture passages included various protestations of sinfulness or pleas for mercy (forgetting that the main prayer for forgiveness is the Lord's prayer). The Lord, I am not worthy prayer has been in use since the tenth century. This came to be repeated three times.

The 1570 missal of Pius V provided for the Confiteor; Behold the Lamb of God; Lord, I am not worthy, three times. The I confess was dropped during the 1960s.

Priest's communion: In the present order of Mass, the priest says a quiet prayer (the Latin term is secreto — GI, no. 116: it is not proclaimed aloud). Then he eats the body of the Lord and drinks his blood with reverence.

In the first centuries of Christian liturgy, the priest simply consumed some of the consecrated elements. Various prayer texts for the priest's communion began to appear around 1050, including salutations and scriptural passages. In 1570, these were simplified to a petition, a psalm prayer (Ps. 116: 12-13 and Ps. 18: 3), and another brief prayer before the chalice. The present rite omits the psalm text and abbreviates the petitions slightly.

Distribution of communion: The minister of communion gives the host to the communicant with the brief formula, The body of Christ. A similar formula, The blood of Christ, is used as the chalice is given to the person, who answers Amen each time. These formulas go back at least to the fourth century. The communicant's response is an act of faith.

6 These prayers are good examples of using scripture as the inspiration for our prayer forms: see Liturgy constitution, no. 24 (also no. 121, for hymns).
In history: At the last supper, the Lord Jesus told his apostles to take and eat and drink, and gave them the sacred food. Justin mentions in 150 that the deacons distributed portions of the gifts over which thanks (eucharist) have been offered, and that the people receive this food as the body and blood of Jesus.

The first formulas for communion are documented by Hippolytus in 215. As the bread of life is given to the neophyte at the Easter vigil, the bishop breaks the bread and gives a fragment to him, saying: The heavenly bread in Christ Jesus. The neophyte answers, Amen! For the triple tasting of the three cups (of water, milk mixed with honey, and the consecrated wine), a trinitarian formula is used. Again, the recipient answers each time. In God the Father almighty. Amen! In the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen! In the Holy Spirit and the Holy Church. Amen!

Jungmann details the great variety of formulas used in the ensuring thirteen centuries. In the missal of 1570, the priest said: May the body of our Lord Jesus Christ keep your soul unto life everlasting. Amen. This was done in Latin, and a small sign of the cross was made with the host. Our present rite, taken from the fourth century practice, was restored in 1964.

Communion procession: The present rite restores the communion procession: now it is one of the actions of the Mass. It is to be accompanied by the singing of the people, and thus express their brotherhood and joy (GI, nos. 22, 56i). Liturgy committees need to work on this procession still, and to help parishioners to understand its meaning and value.

In the past, various practices have been followed: going right up to the altar (from the fourth to the eighth centuries), receiving in their places, at a side altar in front of the railing, or going to the railing. After the eighth century, the laity was generally excluded from the sanctuary.

Railing: Today the sanctuary is to be distinguished from the body of the church by its height or structure (GI, No. 258). The railing is no longer mentioned. Augustine speaks of railings used to distinguish the sanctuary and the people's place: they approached the railing for communion. In Europe, as long as people stood for communion the railing was chest height, and communicants could put their elbows on it. When kneeling was introduced, the railings were made lower. The communion cloth was used in some places in the thirteenth century.

Standing for communion: The early Church received communion standing. The practice of kneeling developed and spread in the Western Church from the eleventh to the sixteenth centuries. (Even then, standing was the normal position for receiving from the chalice.) Today both standing and kneeling are permitted, but the standing position is becoming the general practice.

Sharing in the sacrifice: The Church strongly desires that people receive communion from bread consecrated during the celebration in which they participate. This was urged by the 1570 missal, and in 1947 by Pius XII in Mediator Dei, no. 118, quoting Benedict XIV: The Church approves of this practice, and wants it to be done; moreover, the Church would disapprove of priests "through whose fault and negligence this participation would be denied to the faithful."

The Vatican Council called this “the more perfect form of participation” (Liturgy constitution, no. 55). It has been repeated in the 1965 rubrics, and again in the 1967 decree on the eucharistic mystery, no. 31 (see Bulletin 17, page 202; Bulletin 19, page 263). The same instruction is contained in the present sacramentary (GI, no. 56h). It would seem that many parishes must examine their conscience on this point.

Communion in the hand: This was the Church’s practice from the beginning until the ninth century, when unleavened bread came into use, and when a change was taking place in the direction of eucharistic devotion. This traditional practice was restored in Canada in 1970. Now it is the communicant who has the right to decide whether to receive the eucharistic bread in the hand or on the tongue.

Communion under both forms: Jesus commanded his apostles to eat and to drink in his memory. Communion under both forms is the tradition of our Church, interrupted in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and now being restored (GI, nos. 56h, 240-242).

Communion under the form of wine was given to infants at their initiation (see Bulletin 51, page 289). The chalice was restored in some countries in Europe in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, but was withdrawn by 1621.

Communion under both forms expresses the sign of the eucharistic banquet in a clearer manner; it is also important from an ecumenical point of view that we restore this sadly neglected part of our tradition.

Communion song: The communion song is intended to accompany the communion procession of the people, and begins as the priest receives communion. A psalm is recommended, with a refrain sung by the people as they come to communion (see GI, nos. 56i, 119).

This tradition is first mentioned in the fourth and fifth centuries, when it was common to sing Ps. 34 (especially because of verse 8, “O taste and see”). Augustine mentions that the singing of psalms during the communion procession was introduced in North Africa in his time.

Ablutions: In the late fourth century, John Chrysostom encourages priests to cleanse their mouth by eating a piece of bread or drinking water after communion. This type of practice appeared now and again through the middle ages. In 1204, Innocent III ordered priests to take some wine after communion. After chalice communion ceased for the laity, they were given ordinary wine to purify their mouths.

It is not until the ninth century that directives are laid down for cleansing the chalice: the deacon or subdeacon washed it with water. Wine came into use in the ablation of the chalice in the eleventh century. Mention is made of washing the fingers in the eighth century, and of drinking the ablations in 1256. Gradually this became the norm.

• Today: It is recommended that the washing of the vessels be done at the credence table by the priest or deacon, either after communion or after Mass. (The latter would seem preferable, allowing the priest a further moment of silent prayer.) Wine may be used, water must, and then the deacon or priest drinks it. Further details are given in GI, nos. 120, 237-239. (Another interesting but strange performance is described in GI, no. 249b.)
Prayer after Communion

Silent prayer: The present rites have encouraged moments of silence at different parts of the Mass, in order that priest and people may reflect and pray (see Liturgy constitution, no. 30; GI, no. 23). One of these periods for silent prayer is after communion. During this, the priest may stay at the chair (GI, nos. 56j, 121). This time of silent prayer must not be ruptured by announcements.

The rite also provides an alternative, of singing a psalm or a hymn of praise (GI, nos. 56j, 121).

Prayer after communion: This prayer came into the Roman liturgy during the second half of the fifth century, between the time of Leo I (440-461) and Gelasius I (492-496). A presidential prayer, it is in the form of a collect. Its early names included prayer after communion and prayer at the conclusion. At first, only one was said, varying with the season or feast. (See The prayer after communion, in Bulletin 65, pages 222-225.)

Alcuin (c. 735-804) called it the postcommunion prayer, and this name remained in use until modern times. During the middle ages, the number of collects multiplied, and a corresponding number of postcommunions was used in each Mass.

Today: The ancient title has been restored. We now use only one prayer after communion in each Mass. A time of silent prayer precedes the prayer. It is not a prayer of thanksgiving, but one in which the Church asks God to grant the effects of the eucharist to his people. The assembled community expresses assent to the prayer by acclaiming Amen (GI, nos. 23, 32, 56k, 122).

Not a prayer of thanksgiving? The main act of thanksgiving during the Mass is the eucharistic prayer, particularly in its preface (GI, nos. 54, 55a); see page 159. The prayer after communion is not a prayer expressing thanks, but rather one asking for the spiritual fruits or effects of the eucharistic celebration for all who have been nourished in communion (GI, no. 56k). Personal thanksgiving — to the Father for giving us the bread of life, and to our Lord for being our spiritual food — may be expressed in the moments of silent prayer before the prayer after communion. It is also desirable to encourage some time of personal prayer after Mass concludes. (Some suggestions for this are provided in Sunday Mass Book, pages 1332-1335.)
CONCLUDING RITES

BRIEF ENDING

The Roman Mass ends with a brief rite. After greeting the people, the priest blesses them. Then the deacon says the dismissal which sends the community forth to continue its work for the Lord.

When, on occasion, another liturgical rite is added at the end of Mass, the prayer after communion concludes the eucharist, and then the other rite begins at once (GI, no. 126). The other ceremony will normally have its own blessing and dismissal.

Final Blessing

One New Testament account of our Lord’s ascension describes him as raising his hands and blessing his disciples as he was taken up into heaven (Lk. 24: 50-51). Hippolytus mentions in 215 that a teacher, whether layman or cleric, completes a period of instruction for catechumens by laying his hands on them, praying for them, and then dismissing them.

The Gallican liturgy before Charlemagne had a solemn blessing after the Lord’s prayer as a dismissal of those who were not going to communion. In the papal Mass of the early eighth century, the pope blessed people silently as he was going out in procession after the solemn dismissal. A text for the final blessing by a priest appears in the thirteenth century, and for the bishop in the fourteenth.

In 1570, Pius V included the text of the blessing in the missal, placing it after the dismissal.

- Simple blessing: The priest blesses the assembled community in the name of the Father, Son, and Spirit.
- Solemn blessing: Sometimes the blessing is given in a more solemn way. The deacon invites the people to bow, and the priest reads a blessing which varies according to the season or feast. After each of its invocations, the people answer Amen! The priest concludes this form with a simple blessing.
- Prayer over the people: The priest may conclude the Mass by a prayer or collect said over the community. All answer Amen! The priest concludes this form with a simple blessing.

Dismissal

When Mass was celebrated in Latin, the words used as the dismissal were Ire, missa est. By the fourth century, the word missa came to mean both dismissal (its original meaning) and Mass. This name has remained in use in the Latin rite to the present.
By 800, the Franks were using another formula, "Let us bless the Lord." To either of these forms, the community answered, "Thanks be to God." These two forms were assigned for various seasons and types of celebrations by the eleventh century. A special form was used in Masses for the dead from the twelfth century until the present reform.

• Today, the Latin text retains only the original Ite. In English, there are three forms in order to bring out its fullness a little more clearly. The deacon sings or says the dismissal, and sends God's people to carry on the work and praise of the Lord (GI, nos. 57b, 124).

Before leaving the altar, the celebrating priest salutes it by a kiss: a sign of veneration or respect similar to the kiss at the beginning of Mass (GI, no. 125): see page 135.

Music or a hymn frequently accompanies the final procession of the priest and ministers.

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**IN THANKS FOR THE LORD’S DAY**

_Blessed are you, O Lord our God,_
_king of time and space,_
_ruler of the universe:_
_you have chosen us to be your people,_
_to sing your praises in our word and work._

_We thank you for giving us the Lord’s day:_
_we praise you for calling us together each week,_
_and for nourishing us with your saving word._

_We ask you to accept our praise and thanksgiving which we give to you through Christ our Lord._
_Send us forth to do your work,_
_and keep us always in your love._

_Father,_
_we bless you_ _through Jesus Christ our Lord_ _in the unity of your Holy Spirit,_ _now and always and for ever._ Amen!
OTHER NOTES

HELPFUL READING

Among the many books on the Mass, the following are useful to persons wishing to go more deeply into the information briefly explored in this issue of the Bulletin.


- no. 18: Eucharistic prayer I: translator's notes, catechesis, pastoral observations (1967);
- no. 20: Notes on the prayer of the faithful, pages 279-292 (1968);
- no. 25: Iterim translations of eucharistic prayers and prefaces — texts, melodies, translators' notes (1968);
- no. 44: Meditation on the Lord's prayer, pages 154-159 (1974);
- no. 46: Notes on the Canadian edition of the sacramentary, pages 280-289, with insert (1974);
- no. 50: Reading God's Word: The Lectionary (1975);
- no. 55: pages 241-253;
- no. 56: Training Readers;
- no. 60: Liturgical Preaching;
- no. 61: Complete Index, 1965-1977;
- no. 62: pages 31-39;
- no. 63: Masses with children, pages 111-123;
- no. 65: pages 195-225;
- no. 66: pages 275-279;
- no. 67: Planning Our Year of Worship.

Most issues of the Bulletin contain articles on various rites or prayers of the Mass.

Bulletin National de Liturgie (Publications Service, 90 Parent Avenue, Ottawa, Ontario K1N 7B1). In French:

- no. 8: includes notes on the Lord's prayer, pages 261-284 (1966);
- no. 18: introduction and commentaries on the four eucharistic prayers (1968);
- no. 45: Sunday lectionary;
- no. 47: salvation history in the eucharistic prayers (1974);
- no. 48: introductory rites (1975);
- no. 49: liturgy of the word — I (1975); II — no. 59 (1977);
- nos. 42 and 56-57: Documents on the eucharist;
- no. 55: Jewish and Christian liturgy;
- nos. 60 and 61: Eucharistic liturgy;
- no. 63: Celebrating eucharist today.


These two books are the beginning of a major project to do for the Byzantine Liturgy what Jungmann accomplished in “Mass of the Roman Rite.” They appear in the series, Orientalia Christiana Analecta (Pontificium Institutum Studiorum Orientalium, Piazza S. Maria Maggiore, 7, 00185 Roma, Italia), nos. 191 and 200:

• Juan Mateos, SJ, La Célébration de la Parole dans la Liturgie Byzantine — étude historique. 1971, 184 pages.

TEACHING ABOUT THE MASS

This article points out how Sunday Mass Book may be used as a means of helping people to grow in their understanding, celebration, and love of the liturgy in their daily lives. In this article, we consider how it helps us to understand the Mass better. This book will be of value during different seasons of the liturgical year, in celebrating the sacraments, and in prayer.

Pastors and teachers can use Sunday Mass Book to help themselves and the people they serve to grow in their understanding of the Mass and other forms of eucharistic devotion. Parents can use this book to guide them in the liturgical formation of their family.

Learning about the Mass: The best way to learn about the eucharist is to be involved frequently in a good, joyful, faith-filled celebration of the Mass. A community which is strong in its faith and love will not accept anything but the best celebration.

We can also learn about the Mass by reading its texts, by reading or talking about it, and by taking part in it in various ministerial roles.

Many helps are provided by Sunday Mass Book:

- Mass texts: The readings, prayers, prefaces, and antiphons are printed for each Sunday; all the texts and the scripture references are given for additional solemnities, feasts, and celebrations of Mary and the apostles (pages 1182-1283). The order of Mass, both in English (576-685) and in French (687-715), is the framework in which the weekly texts are fitted. Handy calendars make it easy to find the Sunday texts each week (1336-1344).

- Instruction about the Mass: After discussing the Church and its liturgy (pages 17-22), the introduction describes the Mass and its parts (18, 23-24), and the meaning of participation (26-27). Suggestions for preparation are also given (15, 24-26). Each Sunday contains a concise introduction to its liturgy of the word.

- Prayers: Suggestions for praying before (1331) and after Mass (1332-1335) are given within the context of 50 pages on growing in prayer (1286-1335). Many prayers and ideas for praying are offered from the Church's tradition, including suggestions for morning and evening prayer (1299-1302); see also Bulletin 63, pages 87-89.

- Eucharistic devotions: Helps for understanding the Church's present approach to eucharistic devotion outside Mass are provided in the sacramental section (1095-1106). This also includes eucharistic hymns, prayers, and references for appropriate readings from scripture. Outlines are provided for many devotions: exposition

1 Sunday Mass Book for Canada: Designed by the National Liturgical Office as a pastoral aid for preparing and following up the Sunday liturgy, this is a book for worship, for prayer, and for Christian living. Twenty Canadian artists from all parts of the country were commissioned to prepare the art section: 19 pages of full-color reproductions, seven pages of black-and-white pencil drawings. Printed in red and black, padded covers, ribbons, protective slip case; 1344 pages, 4½ x 6¼ inches. $18.90, including postage. Available from Publications Service, 90 Parent Avenue, Ottawa, Ontario KIN 7B1.

2 See Bulletin 53, Ministries and Liturgy, on the various ways that Christian ministry relates to liturgy. This issue is available from Publications Service.
of the blessed sacrament, benediction, solemn annual exposition (formerly known as the forty hours), eucharistic processions, visits, and a personal holy hour. (See also Bulletin 62, pages 40-46; Bulletin 69, Eucharistic Devotions.)

*Sunday Mass Book* provides many helps for parishes, liturgy committees, study and prayer groups, schools, families, and individuals. The parish bulletin could suggest a topic for prayer and study each week. Some parishes already publish the page references for the following Sunday’s Mass, and encourage their people to pray over the texts in preparation.

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**FURTHER REFERENCES**

For many other articles on the Mass, see Bulletin 61, *Complete Index, 1965-1977*. References are given there for articles on: General notes, pages 315-317; Introductory rites, pages 317-318; Liturgy of the word, pages 318-320; Liturgy of the eucharist, pages 320-324; and Concluding rites, page 324.


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**PRIVILEGED PEOPLE**

Writing to Pope Xystus (Sixtus) II (257-258), Bishop Dionysius of Alexandria mentions some of the privileges of the people of God:¹

- They listen to the eucharistic prayer.
- They join together in the *Amen*.
- They stand by the holy table.
- They hold out their hands to receive the sacred food.
- They partake of the body and blood of our Lord.

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THE TASK AT HAND

The National Liturgical Office considers that the main task of the Church in
Canada at this time is to understand the liturgical treasures that we have, and to use
them well, before we go on to compose new ones. When each celebrating commu-
nity is ready to take full advantage of the multiple options we now have in the
Sunday eucharist, and when each president fully appreciates the structure and role of
the eucharistic prayer, it will be time enough to consider writing new ones and to
consider further sets of readings.

Experience shows that willingness to dabble in unauthorized eucharistic
prayers and non-scriptural readings usually goes along with a lack of understanding
of the liturgical traditions of the Church; it is often but an over-eager reaction —
though done with the best of good will — to recent trends and abuses of the post-
Tridentine era. But undisciplined creativity dissipates the community's energies,
often distracts us from essentials, and sometimes leads us away from the paths fol-
lowed by the Church universal.

Creativity at present does not mean tampering with the eucharistic prayer texts
or making up new ones. It is always to be exercised within the guidelines given by the
Church. And today the Church is encouraging us to explore the fullness of the
liturgy we have, and to use it more effectively in the service of the Lord and all his
people.

We are not against sound creativity; we encourage it. But we feel that more
work is needed now on understanding the liturgical texts and rites that we are cele-
brating at present.

PASCHAL MYSTERY

Lord God, eternal Father,
you sent your Son to redeem the world
by his obedience to the point of death.

As your beloved people,
we ask you to grant our prayer:
teach us to crucify our flesh and its affections,
that we may die to sin and live for you.

May we die to sin with Christ,
rest with him,
and rise again with him to new life.
May we live with our Lord for ever.

Father, through Christ, our brother and our Lord,
we offer all glory and honor
to you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit:
Father, listen to our song of praise.
Alleluia! Amen! Amen!
BRIEF BOOK REVIEWS


When first printed in 1951, this book helped many to understand the Mass more fully. It has now been rewritten in the light of the Second Vatican Council and the subsequent changes in the Order of Mass. The pages on the meaning of Amen (pages 29-32) are worth the price of the book. A valuable resource for every member of the parish liturgy committee, for catechists, religious, and clergy, as well as for all who want to grow in their understanding of the Mass.

* * *

Christ's Priesthood according to the Epistle to the Hebrews, by Ernest Lussier, SSS. 1975, Liturgical Press (Collegeville, Minn. 56321). 71 pages.

The author studies eight passages from the letter to the Hebrews, and offers the reader insights and reflections on Christ as priest, and on his ministry and sacrifice. It is helpful in reflecting on these passages.

* * *

New Life for Parish Councils by William J. Rademacker, 1976, Twenty-Third Publications (P.O. Box 180, West Mystic, Conn. 06388). 23 pages. $0.35 (25¢ for 50 or more).

A parish council would do well to study a copy of this booklet. The liturgy committee is mentioned only in passing references.

* * *


This is a study volume, containing the ICEL prayer texts, readings from the Jerusalem Bible, and the Grail responsorial psalms. Red and black ink are used throughout. This book is useful for preparing or studying the texts of the sacramentary and lectionary for Masses on weekdays and other occasions. Most of the texts are in accord with those in use in Canada.

* * *

How to Face Death without Fear, by Norman J. Muckerman, CSsR. 1976, Liguorian Publications (Liguori, Mo. 63057). 64 pages. $1.00.

This booklet presents selections from Preparations for Death, written in 1758 by St. Alphonsus Liguori. Relying heavily on the scripture and the Church Fathers, this book has much to offer to the modern reader.¹

¹ Bulletin 57, January-February 1977, is on the subject of the liturgy for the sick and the dying.

Father Wild, a priest of Madonna House in Combermere, Ontario, presents insights into the charismatic renewal at different periods of our Church's history.

* * *

Teach Us How to Pray, by William V. Coleman. 1976, Twenty-Third Publications (Box 180, West Mystic, Conn. 06388). Illustrations, 55 pages. $0.95.

This booklet is designed for the leader of a parish program for prayer. It also provides many useful meditations and prayers for individuals. A five-session adult education course on learning how to pray is outlined in pages 41-55. We have not seen the people's booklet and A/V material that go with this publication.

* * *


This little booklet (3¾ x 5 inches) proves handy for pocket or purse, for reading on the bus or in other spare moments. Simple, direct, brief meditations are excellent personal preparations for celebrating liturgy. The pages (78-86) on Love to pray provide sound thoughts on the relationship of liturgy and life.

* * *


Eight experts provide the best picture of current thinking and developments in Christian initiation, and ask probing questions of modern Christian Churches. No serious liturgist or parish committee should fail to read this book with its penetrating insights.

* * *


This is Father Jungmann's final work, in which he gives us as balanced a look at the Mass as is possible at this stage of our history. Beginning with a survey of the eucharist from the last supper to the present, he moves on to look at the theology of the eucharist as sacrifice. Then he studies the form of the liturgy. The work is completed by notes on the spiritual and pastoral aspects of the Mass.

Every priest and liturgy committee, as well as catechetical and liturgical offices and commissions, should have this book and use it regularly.

Ten years in the making, this book continues the fine tradition of its publisher. Many scholars, pastoral experts, and ordinary people have contributed to its preparation. Well laid out, and with clear typography and two colors throughout, the book has many uses: in preparing celebrations, as a guide to services, in catechesis, for devotions and personal prayer. More than 500 pieces of music are included. Sound notes provide good catechesis for today's believers.


From the Pioneers to the Seventies, a history of the Diocese of Peterborough (1882-1975), by Edgar J. Boland. 1976, Diocese of Peterborough (Box 175, Peterborough, Ontario K9J 6Y8). xviii, 390 pages. $8.00.

When Kingston became a diocese in 1826, its territory embraced the whole of Ontario; now there are 14 dioceses and an eparchy in the province. The Kingston volume covers diocesan and parish histories, as well as accounts of religious institutions and other apostolates. The Peterborough book is arranged under the stories of the bishops and parishes, but does include other aspects of diocesan life in these. Both volumes are illustrated.

From a liturgical point of view, these books present many signs of the importance of worship in the lives of Catholic people in Canada. Ways of worship, forms of devotion, the place of Mass and sacraments in the life of the Church are described, and notes on church architecture are included. Worship, education, and public works of charity were priorities for our forefathers.

Books such as these help us to reflect on what we have received, and on how we are passing on this heritage to those who follow us. These two volumes are recommended and fascinating reading — and we suggest that you also consider rereading your own local Church history from a liturgical viewpoint.


Written both for young couples and for students in college or senior high school, this book discusses the Christian approach to marriage in a frank manner. It faces various moral problems and local customs in order to help the couple prepare for marriage and celebrate their wedding well.

Father Prieur, who teaches at St. Peter's Seminary in London, Ontario, offers practical guides to the preparation and celebration of the marriage liturgy, along with suggestions for music and ministers. We recommend this book for use in parishes and in campus ministry.

This book proposes 24 "model" liturgies for the eucharist and four penance services for children in grades 1-4. These are arranged according to the liturgical seasons as they occur during the school year.

The "models" go against the directory for Masses with children in a number of ways, and cannot be recommended as they stand. Many good suggestions for texts and hymns are included, however, and could be used well in bible celebrations. In general, the language level tends to be a little above children in the first two grades.

* * *

Your Marriage, a practical guide for the engaged and married, by John F. DeYonker, DO, and Thomas E. Tobin, CSsR. 1968, revised 1976, Liguori Publications (1 Liguori Road, Liguori, Mo. 63057). 144 pages. $1.50.

In the preface (page 5), it is noted that more money is spent in preparing young people to drive than in helping them to prepare for marriage. This practical book for couples speaks of many aspects of marriage — vocational and sacramental, physical and spiritual. Religion in the home is the last of the 17 chapters. For completeness, however, a chapter is needed on the liturgical preparation and celebration of marriage.

* * *

The Sacraments and Your Everyday Life, by Bernard Haering, CSsR. 1976, Liguori Publications (1 Liguori Road, Liguori, Mo. 63057). 192 pages. $2.95.

Following the guidance of Vatican II, Father Haering looks at the seven sacraments in their broad context: Christ is the great sacrament, and his Church is a sacrament or sign of his love and presence. In this book, the author seeks to reunite liturgy and life, and does this with special reference to the sacraments of reconciliation and marriage.

We recommend this book to all who want to see the true meaning of the sacraments in the life of the Church today.

* * *

One Day at a Time: meditations and prayers on the eleventh step, a message of hope, by Joseph E. Farrell. 1976, Liguorian Publications (1 Liguori Road, Liguori, Mo. 63057). 61 pages. $1.00.

The eleventh step of the Alcoholics Anonymous program stresses prayer and meditation as a means of contact with God. This booklet provides meditations and prayers for a month. It is intended both for AA members and for those who are facing other problems in life.

This booklet studies sacrifices in natural religions, and relates them with Jewish and Christian ideas of sacrifice. While many good traditional ideas are expressed, the treatment seems *a priori*. The author stresses daily Mass, without placing it in the context of the Sunday eucharistic celebration of the Christian community. Unfortunately, the format overwhelms and strangles the positive ideas in the text.

Basic Truths of the Catholic Faith, by Joseph T. McGloin, SJ. 1976, Liguori Publications (1 Liguori Road, Liguori, Mo. 63057). 64 pages. $1.00.

The author takes Pope Paul's creed of the people of God as his summary of our faith. His ideas are good (better than in a previous work — see Bulletin 46, page 319), but he tries too hard to be relevant, using slang and poor grammar to express what he wants to say. The book would be better if the layout were less crammed: a space between paragraphs would be easier on the eyes.


When they write “Forward” when they mean *Foreword*, one should be wary (counsellor's guide, pages 4 and 7). The authors present many good ideas in a workbook format, but they are sloppy about their liturgy: the opening prayer is not a part of the liturgy of the word; they invent a “couple's prayer” and rank it with the rest of the Church's liturgy. Some good editing and liturgical advice could make these programs more acceptable.
AGAINST THEME MASSES

This article, prepared by Archbishop A. Bugnini, is translated from "Notitiae" nos. 111-112, November-December 1975. It is reprinted here with permission from the February-March 1976 issue of the "Newsletter" of the Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy, National Conference of Catholic Bishops, Washington, D.C.

Archbishop Bugnini was secretary of the Congregation for Divine Worship until 1975.

The so-called Theme Mass is another distortion in the rebirth of contemporary liturgy.

1. The origins of this movement antedated the Council, but the Council did not sanction it. While the reformers went about their work, others here and there, impatient, . . . did it themselves!

In one region, the secretariat of the liturgical commission had the idea of preparing a series of thematic Masses for each of the Sundays, polarizing them around the theme selected from the readings, songs, and prayer texts. Notice some titles: "Feast of Liberty," "Give us this day our daily bread," "The rich and the poor among us," "The responsibility of authority," "Unity among the faithful," "Especially for those who live in matrimony." The horizontal character of this type of liturgy is already evident in their titles, but becomes even more so if you examine the texts — not always a happy selection, and at the same time sewn together in an arbitrary fashion. This example is from 1969, shortly after the publication of the Missale Romanum. Today also that ecclesial community, despite the destruction caused by the preconceived ideas and initiatives, is moving forward with others, more prepared and respected among the people of God, to a normal integration into the halo of faith and charity of the universal Church.

2. But why opposition to theme Masses?

a. Because they do not respect the traditional course of the liturgical year — the wisdom of the ages — the history of salvation, which revolves around the mystery of Christ, unwoven during the course of the liturgical year. The abuse, even the multiplication of thematic Masses, will destroy the liturgical year.

b. Because of the texts, readings, and the various and numerous songs within the renewed liturgy, there is such a great richness of doctrine, asceticism, and pastoral motivation that can overcome all the "sermons" of this world.

And, first of all: they have never read the "introduction" of the lectionary where the principles, norms, and criteria used in the selection and organization of the readings are clearly laid out. Are the faculties which the priest celebrant has for selecting one or the other text for particular circumstances well known? What is the end which the lectionary aims to achieve?

If the priest knows everything that the Church has placed in his hand, ipso facto the greater part of the whim to do something new would disappear.

c. Because the thematic Mass is a form of imposition on the entire community; the priest imposes his own selections, opinions, tastes — and all in the name of pastoral practice.
3. In particular circumstances (matrimony, baptism, opening of the school year, ecumenical day, for the lepers, military, charity, vocations, Father's Day, Mother's Day, mission day, Christian ecology, the feast of the superior, etc.), is it not possible to prepare a Mass to fit, choosing texts already found in the lectionary and sacramentary?

The occasions indicated, as well as other possible ones, are greatly different from one another. For some the rubrics already foresee the possibility of substituting texts from the Mass of the day along with others taken from the respective liturgical books. In this case the priest is free to make use of this possibility. It can happen on occasion that one or the other text might be less fitting. But for other cases — as for example the last listed above — this possibility does not exist and to do so would be to act arbitrarily.

To "fabricate" the entire Mass or the greater part of it is a true distortion, the result of misunderstanding and at times lack of preparation.

4. Would it not be simpler in certain circumstances to "create" new texts freely?

In no way. It is the most serious injury that one could do to the liturgy and an injustice to the people of God who have the right to participate in the authentic prayer of the Church and not that which has been invented according to the personal propensities and sentiments of others.

Someone recently wrote that even some outside the hierarchical organization of the Church have prepared the best liturgical texts. No one can deny this, but the liturgy, as the Church itself, is hierarchical and is the expression of the faith of the Church and not of an individual. It remains regulated by the one liturgical Constitution which came forth from the Council and affirmed by all the bishops. To this Constitution all must adhere if they do not wish to undermine the very foundation of the Church and therefore the faith itself. It was for this reason that the Constitution has committed the control of the liturgy for the universal Church to the Holy See and, within clear limits, to the bishops (see Constitution on the Liturgy, no. 21), and not to private individuals.

It is necessary, however, to be on guard against disillusioning oneself too easily. Whoever undertakes the task of "creating" is convinced that it is obviously done with competency. Is this really true?

For a time, in a country which is liturgically prolific, it was the fad to compose new formulas for the rite of marriage. There was no couple which did not have its own rite. But what was it in reality? Nothing else than the rite of the Church cut up, badly handled, patched together, martyred. The few new "pieces" frequently exhibited a type of piety that makes one shudder. In an example before me, the word "love" is repeated seven times in eight lines; the names of the spouses or their equivalent (nicknames, diminutives) are found throughout the formulas, including, naturally, the eucharistic prayer. We need not mention the imprecisions, errors, superficiality, and sentimentality exhibited. There is very little or nothing referring to the sacred. And it is all mimeographed or typed in an atrocious manner. Poor liturgy!
5. What Mass, then?

That of the day: the Sunday, feast day, weekday, saint, the ritual Mass or, in case of need, the Masses and prayers for various needs and occasions. Use would be made, however, of the treasure trove of provided texts, inserted in their historical and exegetical context, and placed in the existential situation in order to indicate a supernatural and human point of reference.

The evil of our times is superficiality. We no longer know how to think, meditate, contemplate. We want everything at once, like packaged food, ready for immediate use.

The revised liturgy must be meditated upon, interiorized, and assimilated in order for it to reveal all of its richness. Go beyond a love for the crust, St. Jerome urges, and you will find the tasty center.

Exhaust those other parts of the Mass where personal intervention is in place: the general intercessions, the homily, and music. These elements still remain to a good degree unexplored: a beautiful general intercession with well-prepared intentions, well read, appropriate; a homily with some substance, explaining the liturgical texts (all the texts), the responsorial psalm and orations as well. Make them current whenever it is possible without distorting them; leave them in their proper place. It is possible that they will give a certain completeness and lyrical form to the celebration!

The propensity to invent, fabricate, and create is frequently only a craze for novelty. The formulas and texts which the Church has provided are excellent in form. The obligation remains to create a celebration that is dignified, alive, and delightful. This is what the people of God expect.

A PRAYER FOR OUR MINISTERS

Members of the parish family can be encouraged to pray at any time for those who serve in various ministries:

Lord Jesus, Word of God, we praise you for your glory. We thank you for teaching us your truth in so many ways each week.

Bless the ministers who serve us: our priests, deacons, and readers, our servers, singers, and musicians, our catechists, and those who care for our sick. Bless their ministry, and lead us all to love you more, Lord of glory for ever and ever. Amen!

(Another prayer for ministers is given in Sunday Mass Book, page 1132.)