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64

CHRISTIAN INITIATION:
INTO FULL COMMUNION
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In the past few decades, the Western Church has begun to return to a fuller understanding and celebration of the complete rites of Christian initiation. Adult baptism is seen as the normative rite, involving a lengthy catechumenate, gradual steps toward conversion, and community roles, rites, and ministries.

It is a temptation in our country to reject the ritual of *Christian Initiation of Adults* because we are not living in a jungle, an isolated oasis, or on a distant island.

This issue of the Bulletin shows how the rite of Christian initiation may be adapted to the reception of baptized persons into full communion, and suggests other forms of adaptation to meet pastoral needs. Parishes and communities are invited to see how they can use this rite in order to carry on Jesus’ saving work more fully.

The rite of adult initiation is the most important document to follow the reforms of the Second Vatican Council, and in every way is a *blueprint for parish renewal*. 
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CALL TO CONVERSION

Christian history: The gospel according to Matthew tells us that the Lord Jesus told his apostles to make disciples of the nations, baptize them, and teach them to obey his commandments (Mt. 28: 18-20). From the first Pentecost, we see Peter, Philip, Paul, and other followers of Christ preaching the Christian way of life: conversion (turning away from sin, and turning to God), faith in Jesus as Lord, and baptism in water and the Holy Spirit.

By the second century we find a form of catechumenate being organized, so that those wishing to become Christians might grow slowly in the Christian way of life, while being aided and tested by the community of believers.

After Constantine made it possible for the Christian Church to practise openly, it became fashionable to become Christian. Gradually, the catechumenate became less demanding and thus less effective, and by the year 500, the only “catechumens” were infants being brought for baptism. As a result, when the Germanic nations entered the Church, or — about 1,000 years later — when the natives of America were offered Christianity, there was no adult catechumenate in living memory. (In the Reformation, it was a later generation that insisted on believer’s baptism, baptism of a person who knew what he or she was doing.) Until the 1960s, Catholics used the children’s rite for adults being baptized into the Church.

Renewal: The Second Vatican Council called for reform and renewal in the rites of Christian initiation. An adult rite was to be developed for unbaptized people coming into the Christian community; a distinct children’s rite was to be used for the baptism of those who could not speak for themselves. These rites were realized between 1969 and 1972.

Today: Christ’s call to repent and believe (see Mk. 1: 15) remains as the basic message of Christian initiation: instructions, rites, and other practices have little value if they do not lead to conversion and renewal, worship and prayer, love and witness.

Adaptations

The adult catechumenate — the process by which the Church helps unbaptized adults to prepare for and celebrate the sacraments of Christian initiation — is seen today as the model for other adaptations of this process:

1. Exceptional circumstances: The Rite provides simplifications for three cases: when a candidate is unable to go through the normal stages (nos. 240-277); when a candidate is mature and already sincerely converted (nos. 240-277); when a person is dying or in proximate danger of death (nos. 278-294). Similar adaptations could be made when a baptized person is in similar circumstances.

2. Unbaptized children of catechetical age: The Rite provides this adaptation in chapter 5, nos. 306-369.

3. Baptized adults who have not completed their initiation: This refers to adults who were baptized as babies, but who were not catechized, and who did not complete their Christian initiation by the sacraments of confirmation and eucharist.
The *Rite* provides a two-page summary in chapter 4, nos. 295-305. This issue of the Bulletin expands upon it.

4. **Reception into full communion:** The *Rite* provides an appendix (nos. 1-30) for this, and this rite is included in this Bulletin. The full rite of formation outlined in this issue has also been adapted for persons coming into full communion.

5. **Baptized children** who have not been catechized and who have not received the sacraments of confirmation and eucharist: An adaptation of the rites for the children's catechumenate (nos. 306-369) would have to be developed along the lines of this Bulletin. The Canadian catechetical program will be helpful here.

6. **For lax Catholics?** The process in this Bulletin may be considered as one way of helping people who have been away from the practice of their faith, and who would like to make a sincere return. The rites could be simplified and shortened according to pastoral needs and the desires of those involved.

7. **For devout Catholics?** People who are trying to live a good life sometimes wish that they could have had the experience of the catechumenate. A parish or community wishing to share in some of these benefits could consider adapting the process and rites in this Bulletin for their needs, in harmony with the liturgical year (no. 19: 1). Running from fall to the Easter season, the program could include celebrations and instructions once or twice a month, and lead into a full Lent, the renewal of the baptismal commitment at the vigil Mass, and a reflective Easter season. People interested in this form of renewal may also be interested in assisting those who are candidates for admission to full communion during their year of formation.

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This issue of the Bulletin is intended for use in ordinary parishes and communities. It suggests some adaptation of the rite for Christian initiation of adults in these special situations, where God has touched people’s lives with his grace:

- **Baptized Catholics** with little instruction, or with a desire to return to full practice of their faith;

- **Baptized Christians** who gave up the practice of their faith, and who now wish to enter into full communion with the Catholic Church.

Bulletin 64 provides ideas and suggestions for parish action in these situations. It will help communities who want to live the Christian faith and witness to it. As we live out our continuing dying and rising with Christ to new life for God, we will be calling other children of his to conversion and new life.
INITIATION OF ADULTS

Christian initiation is a community process, for those who are being received into full membership depend greatly on the community during the long period of preparation. The next five articles (pages 133-147) speak of the ways in which the parish or other community needs to be renewed in order to be able to prepare and welcome new members.

STAGES IN CHRISTIAN INITIATION

This issue of the Bulletin is concerned with the adaptation of the rite of Christian initiation to people who are already baptized. In order to adapt the rite to these special circumstances, it is necessary to understand the original rite. This article summarizes the rite briefly, and presents an outline of suggested adaptations.

Christian Initiation of Adults

Christian initiation is a process by which we become full members of the Church, with Christ leading us to turn away from sin, to believe, and to be baptized. Throughout this process, the prayer and support of the Christian community is necessary and continuing.

The norm for initiation in the Catholic Church is the initiation of adults after a long catechumenate, leading to their baptism, confirmation, and first eucharist during the Easter vigil Mass. The seven weeks of the Easter season complete the process of instruction.

Though we have long become used to the baptism of children, with confirmation and first communion celebrated at a later date, the Church’s norm remains the initiation of adults. Elements in the children’s rite take their meaning and importance from those in the adult rite of initiation.

Adult initiation: Adults are initiated into the Church in stages. Step by step, they become more involved in the life of the believing community, and are able to take a fuller part in its work and worship. While the catechumens are growing in faith and love, the baptized members of the community continue to assist them by prayer, example, and friendship.

Whenever celebrations are held in the parish for the catechumenate, as many parishioners as possible should participate in order to encourage and help those on the way to Christian initiation.

Complete process of initiation: the full process of initiation involves these five steps, over a period of some years:

- **Precatechumenate:** This preparatory stage is a time for prospective candidates to enquire about the faith, and to mature in their desire to follow Christ and seek baptism. The Church uses this period for evangelization, the first preaching of the gospel to these people.

- **Catechumenate:** The candidates are accepted as catechumens, and experience a complete program of formation, lasting over a period of several years. This includes a formation with teaching and bible celebrations; living the Christian way of life among the community of believers; liturgical rites of exorcism, blessings, and presentations; and apostolic witness by working with the community to build up the Church by their lives and faith.

- **Period of purification and enlightenment:** During the final Lent before their baptism, the catechumens are called the elect, and spend this season in intense preparation for baptism. Prayer, meditation, and liturgical rites (scrutinies; presentation of the creed and the Lord’s prayer) are part of this preparation.

- **Easter vigil:** During the vigil service, baptism, confirmation, and eucharist are celebrated as one unbroken event.
Postbaptismal catechesis: During the Easter season, the newly baptized Christians join the people of God in meditating on the gospel, and continue to take part in the eucharist and in carrying out deeds of charity. When this period ends on Pentecost Sunday, the new Christians are expected to take their full share in the work and worship of the Church.

These rites, along with pastoral notes, prayers, and other texts, are contained in Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, particularly in the introduction and chapter 1 (nos. 1-239; Canadian edition, pages 1-71). See also Bulletin 51, Christian Initiation.

Adaptation for Baptized Candidates

The Rite for Christian Initiation of Adults provides a chapter on adapting the rites for candidates who were baptized as infants, but did not receive catechesis and the other sacraments of initiation. Chapter 4, “Preparing uncatechized adults for confirmation and the eucharist,” outlines the rite (nos. 295-305; Canadian edition, pages 95-96), and an appendix provides a “Rite of reception of baptized Christians into full communion with the Catholic Church” (Canadian edition, pages 145-155). These sections form the basis for the adaptations in this issue of the Bulletin.

Candidates: These rites may be used for adults who were baptized as children, but who did not receive catechetical formation and the sacraments of confirmation and eucharist to complete their Christian initiation (no. 295). They may also be used for baptized persons coming into full communion with the Catholic Church. Use of these rites for lax Catholics returning to full practice, and for children is discussed on pages 131-132 of this issue.

For the sake of simplicity, these persons are called candidates in this Bulletin, to avoid any confusion with unbaptized catechumens.

Basic difference: The Rite is careful to point out a most important difference between the preparation of unbaptized persons for baptism, and the preparation of baptized persons for completion of their initiation. The essential difference, of course, is the fact of baptism. They are already members of the Christian people, the Church. Their conversion will be based on their baptism, as the Church helps them to unfold the power of God in their lives (nos. 295, 300).

Period of time: Christian initiation is a process. It takes time for the baptismal faith of the candidates to develop and mature as they are taught about the Christian way of life (nos. 21, 296). The time of formation should be connected with the liturgical year, and leads them to their final preparation during Lent, and the completion of the sacraments of initiation at the Easter vigil (nos. 303-304).

Method of formation: A complete formation is to be given, involving catechetical instruction, liturgical rites, living the Christian life, and giving Christian witness (nos. 19, 296-297, 300-302).

Role of the community: The Christian community supports the candidates by love, prayer, and witness, and by testifying that they are ready to complete their initiation (no. 298). Some members of the community help to instruct them (no. 297). A sponsor and a godparent have responsibilities toward their candidate during this period of formation (no. 299).

Suggested Outline of Adapted Rite

Period of preliminary inquiry: No mention is made of this period in chapter 4. Corresponding to the precatechumenate, its need will depend on the individual candidates. See Preliminary inquiry, on pages 148-150.

Period of Christian formation: This corresponds to the catechumenate for unbaptized catechumens. In the adapted rite, it is suggested that this time should extend from Pentecost or September to the beginning of Lent, and be related to the liturgical year. This period is one of balanced and intense formation in the Christian way of life (nos. 19, 296-302). It begins with

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a liturgical rite of welcoming the candidates into the community, and of accepting them as part of it because they are already baptized. See Christian formation, on pages 151-161.

Period of final preparation: The Rite urges that the final part of the catechetical formation of the candidates should take place during Lent. Acts of penance during this season help them to prepare for the celebration of the sacrament of reconciliation (no. 303). This time corresponds to the period of purification and enlightenment for catechumens preparing for baptism. See Final preparation, on pages 162-173.

Easter vigil: The adults who have been through this formation profess their baptismal faith, are confirmed, and take part in the Mass (no. 304). See Easter vigil, on pages 174-177.

Catechesis during the Easter season: During this time, they complete their catechetical formation in the faith, and become fully active members of the Christian community (no. 305). See Catechesis during the Easter season, page 177.

NEXT ISSUE

Essays on Liturgy, the next issue of the Bulletin, is a general number. Many contributors share their liturgical understanding and insights with our readers.

Articles are included on the Sunday eucharist and some of its prayers, on singing the psalms, and on the word of God in the life of the Church's ministers. One article suggests ways of setting up a ministry of prayer by the elderly. A report on a parish 'mini-congress' on the sacraments is given, and the results of the survey on family prayer (Bulletin 63, pages 90-94) are analyzed.

Bulletin 65 will be ready for mailing in September.

CONFERENCE AND COURSES

Several schools and courses in liturgical studies were listed in Bulletin 63, page 94. To these we add the following notes:


- Atlantic Liturgical Congress: Life to Rite, at Halifax, October 6-8, 1978 (Canadian Thanksgiving weekend). Workshops on baptism, marriage, reconciliation, sacraments of the sick. Further information from Mrs. Joseph Mansour, 2851 George Dauphinee Avenue, Halifax, N.S. B3L 3S7. (902) 455-7474.

- Guided studies in scripture: Journey, part one — Old Testament (repeat of 1977). This 20-lesson course may be followed individually or in groups. For United States, write Rev. David Byrne, Center for Pastoral Ministry, 21 E. Superior St., Chicago, Ill. 60611, U.S.A. For Canada and other countries: Guided Study Programs in the Catholic Faith, 260 Colborne St., London, Ontario N6B 2S6. (519) 439-7211.
CATECHIZING ADULTS

The rite of Christian initiation of adults is quite explicit in pointing out the way in which people may prepare for entry into full communion with the Church. The period of preparation should last for a reasonable length of time—a year or the best part of it would seem to fit this description.

This period of preparation allows pastors to form candidates in Christian living, and to train them in Christian discipline, so that they may deepen the dispositions they showed in entering the time of preparation. The Rite (no. 19) proposes four ways in which this growth takes place:

1. Catechetical formation: Those who form candidates in the Christian way of life should do it in stages, and in accord with the spirit of the liturgical year. Celebrations of the word will enrich the quality of the formation, and thus lead the candidates to know what Christians believe and what precepts they obey. In this way, candidates will also be led to grasp more fully the mystery of our salvation through Christ's dying-and-rising (nos. 297, 19: 1).

2. Growing in the faith: The candidates need to become familiar with a Christian way of life, particularly by living it. They will be supported by the example of encouragement of their sponsors and godparents (no. 299), as well as of the entire believing community. The candidates need to learn to pray to the Father with greater ease; to live each day as witnesses to what they believe; to be faithful to Christ, and to see his presence in everything; to let the Spirit of God guide them in their actions (see Rom. 8: 12-17); and to show love for others, even to the point of denying themselves.

As they are formed in this way, they begin a spiritual journey. Because they already believe that Jesus has died and been raised for them, they continue to die with him to sin, and live with him for God, gradually becoming more perfect in Christ.

This period of change involves a growing change in attitudes and in morals. Gradually, the candidates become more aware of the social implications of their belief and action.

During this time of progress and growth, each candidate may experience—like the Lord Jesus, who is a sign of contradiction (see Lk. 2: 34; Mt. 10: 34-39)—division and separation in daily life. At the same time, candidates also feel the boundless joy (1 Thess. 1: 6) that the Father shares with those he loves. (See Vatican II, Decree on the Church's missionary activity, no. 13.)

3. Liturgical rites: The Church uses liturgical celebrations to help the candidates in their gradual journey toward the Easter vigil, when they will complete their Christian initiation. These rites cleanse the candidates gradually by encouraging them to move from sin to Christian living, and strengthen them with the blessing and grace of our heavenly Father.

   o Celebrations of God's word are encouraged, in order to help candidates grow in their knowledge and love of the scriptures (Liturgy constitution, no. 24). In this way, they will be led to a deeper appreciation of God's love for them, and be invited to respond by love and action in their daily living.

   o Liturgy of the word: Candidates are also encouraged to participate in the first part of the Mass, especially on the Lord's day. This helps them to prepare themselves to share in the eucharist after they come to full membership in the Church. (On participation in the Mass, see pages 151-152.)

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1 Much work has been done in the past decade on the ways that adults learn best. Many studies have helped us to understand better how adults are motivated to learn, on experiential and self-directed learning, on attitudinal change, on co-operative learning, on teaching methods, on retention of information, on creativity, and on developing values and skills. Any parish or community intending to use the rite of Christian initiation would be wise to find how modern studies can promote better religious education. See also the book reviews in this issue.

4. Apostolic witness: During the period of their formation, candidates should be invited to take an active part with other members of the believing community in the apostolic work of the Church. It is suggested that those who are guiding the period of formation should first read and discuss passages from the Vatican Council on the meaning of apostolate, especially that of the laity.3

The Rite (no. 19: 4) suggests two main areas of apostolic witness: spreading the gospel, and building up the Church (see Constitution on the Church, no. 36). By giving witness, they are sharing in the prophetic role of Christ and his chosen people (Constitution on the Church, no. 34).

To these areas may be added that of giving praise to God: as sharers in the priesthood of Christ, Christians have both the privilege and the responsibility of taking an active part in the liturgy, which is the primary and indispensable source of the true spirit of Christ (Liturgy constitution, no. 14; see also Constitution on the Church, nos. 10-11).

Many practical suggestions on doing the works of mercy are offered in Bulletin 42, pages 23-25. These works should be part of the daily life of the Christian community.

By being self-controlled, by living good and religious lives, and by waiting in hope for the coming of the Lord Jesus, the candidates and the Christian community will be giving special witness. Christ died and was raised for us to make us his own people. He has freed us from the power of sin and has purified us. Our only ambition should be to do good: we should be eager to do good works for the Lord. (See Titus 2: 11-14.)

* * *

Today the Church is inviting us to a new manner of helping candidates to become familiar with the life and teaching of the Christian people. Rather than relying on oral instruction only (faith does come by hearing: Rom. 10: 14-17), the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults suggests the fourfold manner of immersing the candidates in the life of the Church (no. 19). Catechetical formation, gradual growth in faith and prayer, participation in liturgical rites, and sharing in apostolic works: these four ways work together, and reinforce one another. These are the basis of the approach to adult catechesis in today's Church.

* * *

Helpful reading:


The First Catechetical Instruction (De Catechizandis Rudibus), by St. Augustine, translated by Joseph P. Christopher (1946, Newman, Westminster, Md.).

La Nature du “De Catechizandis Rudibus” de Saint Augustin, by Jean-Bernard Allard, pss (1976, Lateran University, Roma); reviewed in Bulletin 60, page 255.


3 All apostolic activity in the Church flows from Christ's mission—he was sent by the Father to save us (Decree on the apostolate of the laity, no. 4). We are commissioned in baptism and confirmation to take part in the apostolate (Constitution on the Church, no. 33). The liturgy, especially the eucharist, is the source and summit of all the Church's works (Liturgy constitution, no. 10). Examples of the apostolic works are given in the document on the laity, nos. 28-32, and in the Church constitution, no. 34. Each member of the laity is called to be a witness to the risen life of Jesus (Church constitution, no. 38). Many references on the apostolate are found in the Council documents (see their indices).


Adultes dans le Christ, par A. Liégé, OP (1958, Pensée Catholique, Bruxelles).


La conversion du monde, by Yves de Montcheuil (1944, Editions Universitaires, Bruxelles).


One Baptism, One Eucharist, and a Mutually Recognized Ministry: Three agreed statements, Faith and Order paper no. 73 (1975, World Council of Churches, Geneva, Switzerland).


FURTHER REFERENCES

For further references and articles on the topics discussed in this issue, see Bulletin 61, Complete Index, 1965-1977, pages 341-345. References are given there for articles on:

- Christian initiation
- Baptism
- Confirmation
- Eucharist
- Penance and reconciliation

See also Baptism: basis of our spirituality, in Bulletin 62, pages 4-8.

SURVEY ON FAMILY PRAYER

A survey, Some questions on family prayer, was included in Bulletin 63, pages 90-94. Diocesan liturgical commissions and parishes in English-speaking Canada have been invited to use this as a means of understanding the kinds of help that families want in their prayer life.

Believing communities are invited to use this survey in their own area, and to send a summary of their results to the National Liturgical Office.

The September issue of the Bulletin, no. 65, will summarize the results received here by the end of June.
THE FAITH WE TEACH

A faith in context: After we have read the article on Catechizing adults (pages 136-138), it is evident to us that the Church is returning to an earlier and more balanced form of catechesis. The Canadian catechetical system follows a similar approach.

Forty years ago, we memorized set answers to set questions, and considered that we knew our faith. At that time, our Catholic subculture was still strong and persecuted enough to provide support for our faith and its practices. Four decades ago, we were strong in our weakness because we opposed the contemporary culture.

Today's world: Today, most Christians have succumbed to current trends, and are rarely distinguishable from their non-Christian fellows. Too many Christians are more affected by the hit parade, the sports reviews, the latest fads and fashions, the consumers' guides, and the local lotteries than they are by Christ, his gospel, his values, and his Church.

In the book of Revelation (1: 4 - 3: 22), the message of Christ to the seven major Churches in Asia brings the Lord's call to conversion and repentance, as well as words of encouragement. Today we need a prophet to write to the biggest Churches in each country, to speak in the name of Christ to the people of God in a way that will rock their boats and lead them back to the Lord's ways. We need to hear what the Spirit is saying to our Churches (see Rev. 2: 7).

In the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, no. 19, the Church is returning us to a more balanced, experiential, and communitarian form of sharing the Christian faith with those who want to know more about it and live it. We are moving from man's questions and man's answers to our human situation and God's answers.

Outline of Our Teaching

What should we teach candidates or catechumens today? We have to teach them about a person, and about the truths, attitudes, and commandments he taught us. We have to teach about truths being lived (faith), about ideals to be realized (hope), and about humanly impossible loves being carried out (charity). Human brainpower and insight alone cannot do this work, for it is being achieved through us by Jesus and his Spirit.

An outline of our teaching: The main teachings of our faith concern Jesus and God's way of saving us:

• We are in need of salvation: Whether we listen to the canticle of Mary (Lk. 1: 46-55), read the letters to the seven Churches (Rev. 1: 4 — 3: 22), or observe the hate-ridden situations and structures in today's world, we need little time to realize that the human race is in a mess from which it cannot extricate itself by thought or force. When we look into our own lives, we see the same powerful forces embroiling us, sweeping us along. With Paul, we are torn in two directions (Rom. 7: 14-25). By ourselves, we are in darkness, sin, death: we need someone to save us!

• Jesus: Son of God, son of Mary, he is our Lord and our brother, our fellow-sufferer and our savior. We need to keep a balance between his divinity and his humanity, without placing so much emphasis on one that the other is submerged. ¹

As we talk about Jesus, we also pray to him. We pray to our Father and offer him thanks through Jesus his Son. We also seek to meet and assist our Lord in others (see Mt. 25: 31-46), and to recognize his presence among us in many ways (see Mt. 18: 20; Liturgy constitution, no. 7). We listen to his word, and ask him to help us to follow him in love, and with him to be obedient to the Father's will (see Heb. 5: 7-9).

We meet Jesus Christ in the gospels and other New Testament texts. After his resurrection, the apostles believed in him as the Son of God, and recognized him in the break-

ing of bread. He is the sign of God's love, teacher of his truth, our model and leader, and our only way to the Father. He is a man of prayer and our high priest, offering our praise and prayer to God our Father. He has promised to remain with us, and is present among us in many ways: we have to learn to recognize this.

- Growing in prayer: Christians have traditional times for praying — morning, evening, and mealtimes: we see Jesus praying at these times and on other occasions as well. He teaches us to pray always, and with trust in his name. We pray alone, with our family, with members of the Christian community. As people of prayer and prayer, we praise the Father and pray for the world through Christ our Lord. Members of the community should invite candidates to join them in prayer.

- His Church: Before time began, the Father chose us in Christ to be his holy people, his beloved family, his Church. Dedicated to sing his glory and to live spotless lives, we are sealed with his Spirit: we are the people of God! (See Eph. 1: 3-14.)

Our Church is a servant Church: like Jesus, we are to show our love for God by loving and serving others. In daily life and in many ministries, the people of God continue to live for God. Within the Church, some are called to serve the other members as bishops, presbyters, deacons, and other ministers. The Church on earth is linked in its prayers and liturgy with the Church in eternity. We experience the Church mainly in our own community's life and worship.

In teaching others about the Church, we have to be careful to show it in its full perspective. The Church is founded by Christ, and peopled by sinners whom he has called to holiness. The Church is a living community, guided by the Spirit; it is in continuity with the Church of the past, and in living contact with the Church in eternity. We have to go beyond narrow juridical concepts to see the Church described in the scriptures, the Fathers, and in the documents of Vatican II. (See for example, Constitution on the Church, no. 6.)

At the same time, our teaching must not remain theoretical: it must be practical, and embodied in the life of the community of which the candidates want to be full members. Talk about the Church as a community of faith and love is futile if ministers and people neglect the sick, the aged, the lonely, the discouraged. The faith has to be lived by this community, here and now. Candidates have to be able to discover and experience this reality both in the worship and in the daily witness of the local community: it is the only way they meet the Church. (Some suggestions for local discussion and action are given below, under "Learning by doing.")

- Sharing in the eucharist: We learn to participate in the eucharist by taking part in it: we learn by doing. We begin with physical and vocal sharing, and gradually realize that deeper sharing is possible. Better preparation, a beginning of a sense of offering, a more careful listening to the word in faith: these lead us week by week to full participation in the eucharist. As its graces flow into our daily life, we can become more and more ready to see God's will for us and to obey it.

- Basic Christian morality: Jesus reminds us that the person who hears his word but does not keep it or obey the Father's will is not pleasing to God (Mt. 7: 21-23; Jn. 15: 6). We are children of light (Mt. 5: 16; Eph. 5: 1-20), called to walk blamelessly in God's presence (Eph. 1: 4). The Spirit is our guide, helping us to follow Christ and reject the works of Satan (Rom. 8: 1-17).

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2 Christians have many forms of prayer in their tradition: see "Growing in prayer" in Sunday Mass Book, pages 1286-1335. Various devotional practices are discussed in Bulletin 62, Liturgy and Devotion. The main form of prayer is the liturgy of the hours, especially morning and evening prayer: see Bulletin 58, Day by Day We Give Him Praise; no. 63, pages 87-89.

3 See Sunday Mass Book, Introduction, pages 17-28. This book will be of great help to candidates, and is thus suggested as one of the early presentations: see page 155. See also Taking part in the eucharist, in Bulletin 62, pages 31-39.
Learning Christian values: Jesus and his apostles teach us his values. The sermon on the mount (see chapters 5-6-7 in St. Matthew's gospel) is a good mirror in which to view our ways. Other Christian values include the practice of daily self-denial, obedience, humility; we are called to follow Christ, to pray always, to be servants with him, to love God and neighbor.

How do we learn Christian values? These are best caught from the example of other members of the believing community. These values need to be preached and taught, but especially they need to be lived.

Not taught in a vacuum: The Christian faith cannot be taught in a vacuum or in an abstract way: it is always taught to people who see it practised and lived — or ignored and rejected — by living people in a community. Our faith is not a list of truths as much as a life to be lived with Christ and his people.

Each Sunday in the liturgy, the community is hearing the gospel and is teaching it by its reverence and attention to God's word. The reality of the total self-offering, which Christians should make each time they take part in the eucharist, is shown throughout the week by the way they continue to spread the Good News of Jesus in their daily living.

During the different seasons of the year, the liturgy presents the redeeming power of Christ, and leads us to pray and give praise with the Church. Week by week, life with the community leads both members and candidates to form their Christian attitudes more in accord with the mind of Christ.


Learning by Doing

In the notes below, some suggestions are offered for those who are helping candidates to grow in the faith.

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<th>Area</th>
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\textsuperscript{4} Gregory the Great (590-604) described the use of pictures in churches as a means of instructing people who cannot read: they are able to read pictures as others read books. Useful examples are given in Art in the Early Church, revised edition, by Walter Lowrie (1947, 1969, Norton, New York).
Scriptures

as word of God:
listening as they are proclaimed
reading, praying, studying
discussing in groups, in family

Apostolic works

see also *Church as servant*, above
contributing time, work, money to good causes
collecting and campaigning for good causes
applying gospel teachings to neighborhood situations, needs
visiting Catholic schools and classrooms
inviting community members to prayer and bible studies
working with parish council and liturgy committees,
with PTA and other parish organizations, societies, groups

Christian worship

praying morning and evening prayer with community, families
joining in parish celebrations of sacraments:
baptism, confirmation, weddings, penance celebrations,
communal anointing of the sick
eucharist: participation in Sunday celebrations, and weekdays
learning how to offer (see Bulletin 62, pages 38-39)
preparing to worship (see Bulletin 62, pages 31-33)
preparing, cleaning, caring for place of community worship
participation in eucharistic devotions (according to renewed rites)
joining in popular devotions
(with adequate preparation: see Bulletin 62)

Personal prayer

morning and evening prayer
discussing prayer in own family
talking about prayer with other parishioners and families
reading and studying about prayer
praying the psalms
exploring various prayer forms in Christian tradition
(see *Sunday Mass Book*, pages 1286-1335)
seeking and receiving counselling, guidance, direction about prayer
meditation and silent prayer
joining in prayer with other families
family celebrations (see Bulletin 63, pages 103-110)
retreat or day of recollection

**Broad Outline of Teaching Schedule**

This outline is presented as a framework for local discussion and adaptation. The teaching should be in tune with the liturgy and the liturgical year (no. 19: 1).

Candidates may enter the period of Christian formation on Pentecost or Trinity Sunday, during the summer, or in September: see page 151. (The content of the preliminary period is described in pages 148-150.)

a) **Summer and fall**: These seasons are in ordinary time, which resumes on the Monday after Pentecost. Ordinary time is a quieter period in the Church year, when the people of God may reflect on the gospel message of Christ, and on their share in the work of the kingdom.

   - **Sunday liturgy**: The Sunday liturgy of the word provides a solid help by following one gospel throughout this season. Thus in the summer and fall of 1978, the Church is in the year of Matthew (year A): we follow Matthew's approach to Jesus and his teaching. In 1979, the year of Mark, we let his gospel guide us, with five weeks of John (chapter 6) in the summer. In 1980, the year of Luke, St. Luke's approach to the gospel leads us to another view of Christ and his Church. In the summer of 1981, we are once more in the year of Matthew.5

   During these months of prayer, the Church helps the candidates to reflect on the gospels, and leads them to a basic Christian understanding of dying to sin and living for God in their daily lives. The witness of the Christian community is an important contribution if the candidates are to grow in faith and love as their response to the preaching of the gospel.

5 More details on this approach are given in past issues: see *The Church's catechism*, in Bulletin 56, pages 293-295. *Systematic preaching from the lectionary*, in no. 60, pages 221-233.
b) Advent and Christmas seasons: These seasons prepare for, celebrate, and meditate on one basic theme: God loves the world so much that he sent his Son to be one of us and save us (Jn. 3: 16-17). We reflect on our need of salvation, and on God's love and mercy in saving us: in response, we sing his praises more fully.

- **Advent:** The liturgy of this season has two stages. In the opening weeks, the emphasis is on the coming of Jesus in glory to be our judge. We are called to make straight the way of the Lord in our lives, to repent, to prepare. After December 17, we look forward to Christmas, which celebrates the incarnation of the Son of God: Jesus is our Lord and our brother, our savior and our model. Advent is a season of joy, for God has called us to be his beloved people, given us Jesus as our brother.

- **Christmas:** We celebrate because God has chosen to save us by sending his Son to be one of us. Jesus is our Lord, our brother, our savior. We ask him to help us live as the children of light.

- **Epiphany:** In January we celebrate the Epiphany, and praise God for calling all nations to salvation in Christ: we too are being called, and we thank him. The feast of the Lord's baptism closes this season, and can be an occasion for the candidates to reflect on their own baptism in the Lord, and on the works of grace that he continues to perform in their lives.

c) Ordinary time begins the day after the feast of the Lord's baptism, and continues until the day before Ash Wednesday. This season is brief, lasting from three to eight weeks.

- **Sunday liturgy:** The Sunday readings show the beginning of Christ's ministry on earth, with his invitation to believe the Good News of our salvation and to repent of our sins (see Mk. 3: 15). We begin to grasp the place of faith in Jesus' work and ours.

During these final weeks of the period of Christian formation, it is good to review the main teachings of the Christian faith and their implications for our way of life. This is a time for the candidates to draw closer to Christ in faith and love, and for deeper prayer for guidance and light. In these weeks the community ought to be supporting the candidates by prayer and witness.

The entire community may be invited to reflect on the kingdom of God on earth, on the mission of the Church and of every believer to work for the kingdom, and on God's will for each member of this community.

d) **Lent** is the period of final preparation for the candidates. It is a time of intense preparation for the renewal of their baptismal vows, and for their reception into full communion with the Church. During this Lent they purify their hearts by prayerful examination of conscience and by deepening their sense of repentance. Fuller details are given in *Final preparation*, pages 162-173.

e) **Easter vigil:** The main teaching for the candidates is contained in the nine readings, the rites, the homily, and in the experiences through which they are passing this evening: see pages 174-177.

f) **Catechesis during the Easter season:** During the seven weeks between Easter and Pentecost, those who were baptized or received into full communion at the Easter vigil continue to grow together with the community in listening to the gospel, participating in the eucharist, and in doing works of love. It is a time for deeper instruction and for frequenting the sacraments. The main catechesis takes place in the Sunday Masses during the Easter season, using lectionary texts from year A. (See *Rite*, nos. 37-40; and page 177 in this Bulletin.)
The process of Christian initiation presupposes a vibrant Christian community into which the candidates may be received. They are greatly affected by the quality of the Christian life and witness of the people they meet in the community. A community which is strong in faith, and active in prayer and good works, will attract candidates who want to be this kind of believers.

Some qualities that should be found in the community would include:

- **A spirit of ministry and service:** Jesus came as a servant, dedicated to save us by his love, obedience, and spirit of service. He has given us the charge of loving God by loving others, to the point that we cannot love God if we do not love his people. Each parish community should be asking itself: Are we trying to serve others in the way that Jesus wants us to?

- **A spirit of reverence and worship:** Jesus came to make us worshippers of the Father, offering our praise in spirit and in truth. Full and active sharing in the liturgy is the primary and indispensable source of the true spirit of Christ. Each parish should be asking: Is our Sunday liturgy really the best we can celebrate for God? (See Bulletin 63, pages 95-96.)

- **Working to establish the kingdom of God:** The Second Vatican Council called the Church to take its proper place in the work of restoring the kingdom of God in today’s civilization. The extent of each Christian’s responsibilities in this matter is described in the Pastoral constitution on the Church in the modern world. Each parish should be looking at this important document and discover some of the fields in which Christ is asking us to get to work.

- **Developing Christian ideals:** Every believer and believing community is called to put on the mind of Christ, to share his attitudes and ideals. Members of the parish community should be reflecting on the sermon on the mount, and see in which ways they need to improve their way of following Christ.

Helpful articles along these lines are Preparing the Christian community (Bulletin 59, pages 148-155), and Role of the parish community (Bulletin 63, pages 95-102); see also the references under Parish in Bulletin 61, pages 333-334.

**Sharing a strong prayer life:** One of the important steps in helping a community to become more Christian is to encourage its members to deepen its prayer life. Individuals, families, and neighborhood groups may be invited to pray together. Groups of five or ten families in the parish could be encouraged to come together regularly, even weekly, to listen to God’s word, to discuss the needs of the parish community and its families, and to pray. Candidates taking part in the parish program of Christian initiation should also be invited to take part in these gatherings.

A fine example of this is described in Yes, you can! (Bulletin 51, pages 298-300). See also Bulletin 44, People of Prayer; Bulletin 58, Day by Day We Give Him Praise (especially pages 112-116); Bulletin 63, Children and Liturgy. Fifty pages of Sunday Mass Book are devoted to “Growing in prayer” (see pages 1286-1335).

**Community involvement** with those preparing for full communion with the Church is described under each stage of the yearlong process.

**Pastoral councils:** A call was issued by the bishops at Vatican II to the entire Church to take a more active part in its mission and work. Among the benefits resulting from this invitation were parish councils and their liturgy committees; on a wider basis came pastoral councils at diocesan, regional, and national levels.

In too many cases, these have been tried and dropped, or allowed to remain at a rubber stamp level of action. Part of the trouble has been lack of experience for all, and often a lack of faith and trust in other people and in new methods.

Since the Second Vatican Council, we have all learned much. For a parish community to function in the Church of today, it needs an active parish council; among its committees, the liturgy committee has an important place. At the diocesan level, the pastoral council,
priests’ senate, and liturgical commissions, as well as other commissions, are needed if the work of renewal is to continue.¹

At the national level, similar bodies are also needed to promote renewal. These bodies will depend on active ones at parish and diocesan levels, and at the same time will encourage better participation at every level.

Without these councils and committees in action, the believing community will not be as fully alive and active as desired by the Vatican Council, and the Church will not shine as brightly as it should in the world of today.

**Social aspects of the gospel:** Since the late years of the nineteenth century, the popes have been trying to open up the Church to the social teaching of the gospels. This teaching has been increasing in frequency in the past two decades, under John XXIII and Paul VI. *Are we listening?*

Read the provocative article on *Preaching the social gospel*, in Bulletin 40, pages 244-251, and start asking about your own parish attitudes.

**Building up the Christian community:** What is the only way to build a Christian community? It must have the celebration of the eucharist as its basis and its center. All formation and training in the spirit of Christian community must originate in the celebration and living of the eucharist. For the eucharistic celebration to be sincere and realistic, it has to lead the community members to many works of love and mercy, to mutual support, to strong missionary activities, and to all forms of Christian witness. (See Vatican II, Decree on the ministry and life of priests, no. 6.)

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**Growing in Faith in Community**

Following the guidance of the 1977 synod of bishops, the Canadian bishops have begun to concentrate their work on word, celebration, and involvement. The basic direction of pastoral action is to deal with *growing in faith in and through Christian communities* (Plenary assembly, November-December 1977).

**Growing in faith:** Growth in faith is not communicated by catechesis alone. Rather, the Church's process of forming us in Christ requires three factors joined together: knowing God's work, celebrating the faith through the sacraments, and witnessing to our faith in our daily life.

Many elements are involved in this pastoral undertaking:

- **People:** adults, youth, children.
- **Basic pastoral elements:** God's word, liturgy (Mass, sacraments, liturgy of the hours, other rites), apostolic involvement.
- **Basic elements of continuing education:** through the process of Christian initiation, lifelong learning (desire, opportunities).
- **Places:** home and family, school, work, recreation, church.

**In and through the Christian community:** The 1977 synod speaks of the believing community as the *normal setting* for growth in faith. The community is taught by the word, and — since it shares the teaching role of Christ — also teaches its members and others: the community is both catechized and catechizing. Each Christian is taught by the community, and is sent to teach.

Today's Church wants believing communities that are lively and dynamic, guided by the Spirit and active in doing good works for the Lord (see Titus 2: 14). Each parish should be a community of faith, prayer, and loving service.

¹ Useful material is found in other issues of the National Bulletin on Liturgy. See Bulletin 35, *Parish Liturgy Committees*; no. 66, *Diocesan Commissions and Parish Committees*; other references are given in no. 61, pages 312-314. On diocesan commissions, see Bulletin 66, and other references in no. 61, page 294.
Qualities of the Christian community: In 1977, the synod based its picture of the Christian community on the ideas of Acts 2: 32-35, 42-44. The community gathered by Christ is:

- called to apostolic ministry and missionary activity;
- to live in close love and union;
- dedicated to praise and prayer;
- filled with and led by the Spirit of truth;
- a sacramental and mystical community;
- a community which shares and serves in love.

Individuals and the community: It is through the believing community that individuals are called to conversion, baptized into the Church, nourished in the faith, enabled to celebrate in joy, and called to witness and service. It is through the Christian community that an individual experiences membership in the universal Church, and in community worship that the Church is made present in this place (Liturgy constitution, nos. 41-42; General Instruction of the Roman Missal, nos. 7, 74-75).

Christ at the center: Our heavenly Father sent his Son to be one of us, our brother, and to be our savior. Jesus is our only way to the Father. Our route in this pilgrim Church involves following Christ in daily penance, as well as in asking the Father each day for our daily bread.

If a community is to be Christian, it must see Jesus Christ as the model and reason for all its activities. It must weigh all its actions, attitudes, and priorities, and look at them in the light of the kingdom: how will these help us to restore the kingdom of Christ? A believing community has to realize that it reflects Christ in the local area. The more Christ shines through their work and prayer, the more the Church can be Christ's light for all in this place.

Blueprint for parish renewal: The plan of action and formation outlined in the Rite of the Christian Initiation of Adults is much broader than a means of bringing new members into the Church. It is really a blueprint for parish renewal. As the community grows in its concern for the candidates, it is also being exposed to God's living word, and opened to the action of his Spirit.

A community should be working to make its liturgy prayerful and dynamic. As this spirit flows into its daily life, its members will be more willing to love and serve others, and to be involved in the many ministries open to all (see Bulletin 53, Many possibilities of service, pages 115-119). The example and power of such a living community will spread and will affect both members and those outside the community's life.

The Christian initiation of adults is the concern and responsibility of all the people of God in the local Church. It is their apostolic mission to lead others to Christ and to give them spiritual assistance. Each believer is called to spread the faith in the circumstances of his or her daily life and work (see Rite, no. 41). The ways in which the community may help candidates for initiation during the time of their growth in the faith are discussed under each of the stages.

WE HAVE NO TIME!

"We don't have enough time to read, to think, to meet, to discuss, to write, to reflect, to listen, to serve. We're too busy!"

Busy about what?
MINISTRIES IN ACTION

In helping the candidates to move along the path of faith and conversion and into full membership, the Church invites many people to carry out their ministries or services to the candidates and the believing community.

a) Whole community: The entire Christian community has a responsibility of praying and giving witness, and of taking part in the rites during the time of preparation: see A community which is alive, pages 144-146.

b) Sponsor: A member of the community speaks up for the candidate when he or she is welcomed into the period of Christian formation (no. 42): see page 149.

c) Godparent: This member of the community is with the candidate during the period of final preparation (no. 43): see pages 155-156.

d) Presbyters: During the period of preparation, the presbyters (priests) give pastoral care to the candidates, and work with the deacons and catechists to provide their catechesis. The presbyters are to celebrate the various rites as well as possible (Liturgy constitution, no. 11). In the absence of the bishop, a presbyter presides at the rite of receiving the candidates into full communion (nos. 45-46).

e) Deacons work with the presbyters in the formation of the candidates, and in the celebration of the rites (no. 47). Deacons may preside over many of these rites when no presbyter is available.

f) Catechists: These persons are to be well formed in their understanding and living of the spirit of the gospel. They teach the candidates about the faith, and join in the celebration of the rites (nos. 48, 44).

g) Bishop: The most important role in the time of formation is that of the diocesan bishop (see Liturgy constitution, no. 64). Personally or through a delegate, he is responsible for establishing and encouraging the Christian formation of candidates. At the beginning of Lent it is desirable for the bishop to preside at the rite of enrollment of names (see pages 164-167), and at the celebration of the completion of initiation during the Easter vigil. The bishop also appoints well prepared catechists (nos. 44, 20). The bishop will provide continuity in the program for formation in the diocese as priests are transferred from one parish to another over the years.

No massive structures: A community which is seeking to lead candidates to full membership by adapting the rite of the catechumenate need not set up massive structures with echelons of ministers. A few people can handle the beginnings of a program of formation, with others being added as it grows.

Resources: As well as the Rite and the other references mentioned throughout this issue, see Bulletin 53, Ministries and Liturgy; Directory for the Pastoral Ministry of Bishops (1974, CCC, Ottawa).

ACADEMY REPORTS

The North American Academy of Liturgy brings together many liturgists in the United States and Canada to share their work and projects. A summary of the work group reports from the 1978 meeting is to be published in the July issue of Worship.

These reports are helpful in showing current trends and emphases among liturgical scholars in various Christian Churches, and are recommended for your careful study.
ADAPTED RITES

PRELIMINARY INQUIRY

The precatechumenate is provided as an important step for unbaptized persons who wish to enter the catechumenate and prepare to become Christians. No similar period is mentioned in chapter 4 of the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*. After looking at the meaning of the precatechumenate for unbaptized adults, we consider the benefits of a similar period of preliminary inquiry adapted to the needs of baptized persons who want to complete their Christian initiation.

Precatechumenate for Unbaptized Persons

**Purpose:** The precatechumenate is a time of preparation, when the Church community works with the inquirers and helps them to prepare for their entry into the catechumenate. It is a time when each inquirer may inquire about the Church and its faith, and when the Church evangelizes (preaches the gospel of Christ to) those who show an interest in becoming Christians. The candidates listen to this first preaching of the Lord's gospel (no. 7d).

The length of this period will vary for each person, for its purpose is to lead him or her to want to become a Christian, and to be accepted by the Church as one of its catechumens (no. 6a).

The period of the precatechumenate lasts until the inquirers and the Church have accomplished the task of initial conversion in response to evangelization. The precatechumenate ends when the inquirers enter the order of catechumens (no. 7a). The *Rite* also notes that the precatechumenate is a very important period in the initiation of unbaptized adults, and that it should not be omitted (no. 9).

Suggested Adaptations

It is suggested that a *period of preliminary inquiry* would be of great benefit in preparing baptized persons to complete their Christian initiation.

In the normal course of parish life, inquirers turn up for various reasons and at various times. Since each person presents a unique experience in the journey of faith and life, the form, style, and length of the period of preliminary inquiry will have to vary according to his or her needs.

**Faith:** Since the inquirer has already been baptized, he or she has received the gift and power to believe. All the instructions, activities, and prayers during this period can be based on the fact that this person is able to arouse this dormant gift with the help of God’s grace. Persons who have already come to a fuller practice of faith will also benefit from the initial preaching and call to conversion.

**Reception into the period of preliminary inquiry** (see no. 12): If a reception is desired, it should be optional and informal, and it takes place without any liturgical rites. The purpose is to express openly the inquirer's good intentions (rather than his or her faith) to the community, and to let the community welcome this person as an inquirer. The reception is to be adapted to local circumstances.

- The reception or welcoming takes place at a friendly gathering of the local community, at a suitable time.
- A friend presents the inquirer to the community.
- The priest or another suitable member of the community welcomes the inquirer.
- It would be fitting for the community members to pray informally for themselves and for the inquirer.

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1 The episcopal conference may provide a rite for receiving inquirers: see nos. 12 and 65: 1.

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The inquirer has an opportunity to experience the Christian spirit of the community.

It would seem appropriate to conclude the gathering with coffee and donuts, or an informal meal, giving the inquirer a chance to meet some of the community members.

**Role of the believing community:** Throughout the period of preliminary inquiry, members of the community should try to share the saving message of Jesus with the inquirers. The people of the community do this by all that they say and do, and by sharing the graces they themselves have received (Vatican II, Decree on the apostolate of the laity, no. 6). Members of the believing community may share their Christian spirit with the inquirers by inviting them into their homes and to gatherings of the community, as well as by friendly conversation. (See *Rite*, no. 41: 1.)

During this period, members of the community continue to pray and do penance for the inquirers, welcome them to their activities, and give them witness of their daily living. The quality of the community's way of life, prayer, worship, and witness will have quite a strong influence on the inquirers. In a particular way, the bishop, priest, and others who help the inquirers during this period need to pray for them. See *A community which is alive*, pages 144-146.

**Sponsor:** During the preliminary period, the inquirer chooses a sponsor who will present him or her to the community during the rite of entering the period of Christian formation. The sponsor is someone — man or woman — who knows the inquirer, and who helps the inquirer during this preliminary period. Toward the end of the time of inquiry, the sponsor is to speak about the inquirer's faith, motives, and morals. (See nos. 299, 16, 42, 69.)

**Task of this period:** During the period of preliminary inquiry, both the inquirers and the Church have specific tasks to accomplish:

- *The Church* (see nos. 6a, 7a, 9-13, 15):
  - Admits the inquirers to the period of preliminary inquiry.
  - Preaches the gospel in a spirit of faith, proclaiming the living God and Jesus Christ, sent by him to save everyone. This preaching continues throughout the time of the preliminary inquiry, and is done with God's help.
  - Ministers of the Church (see page 147) explain the gospel to the inquirers, and help them to meet families and other groups of people in the Christian community.
  - The ministers also encourage them to purify their intentions or motives during this time.
  - Pastors help them to pray by teaching them suitable prayers.
  - The entire community prays and does penance for their full conversion to Christ.
- *The inquirers* (see nos. 6a, 7a, 7d, 9-13, 15, 68):
  - Ask about the life and beliefs of the Christian people.
  - Accept the basic proclamation of God's love, and of the Good News of our salvation (first evangelization).
  - Are helped to pray. The pastor and the community should lead inquirers into the practice of prayer in accord with the liturgical tradition of the Church.
  - Are encouraged to let the Lord open their hearts (see Acts 16: 14), and to cling to Jesus as their way, truth, and life (Jn. 14: 6). They have some faith in Jesus as our savior.
  - Are led to initial faith and conversion: to feel that God is calling them to leave their sins, and is attracting them toward his mysterious love.
  - Are helped to deepen their desire to follow Christ and to ask to complete their Christian initiation.
  - Listen to the explanation of the gospel.
— Co-operate with the graces they received from God, and purify their intentions or motives in following Christ.

— Come to know families and groups of people in the Christian community (initial faith in the meaning of the Church).

Ready to begin the period of Christian formation: The period of preliminary inquiry is intended to prepare inquirers for entering the period of Christian formation. The person who has concluded the time of preliminary inquiry should be formed in the basis of Christ's teaching and of the spiritual life:

- A beginning of faith in Jesus as Lord has developed — with God's help — during this time in response to the preaching, prayer, and the example of the believing community.

- Initial conversion: The inquirer wants to change his or her lifestyle, and to be in touch with God through Jesus Christ. In normal circumstances, this leads to a beginning of repentance (dying to sin), and to some initial experiences of living for God and with his people.

- Prayer: The inquirer responds to God's action by calling on God in prayer.

- Living with the people of God: The level of the spirit of Christianity met by the inquirers depends on the way that the Christian community lives its baptismal commitment to Christ. The inquirer begins to realize what it means to be a Christian by the experience of associating with Christian people in their way of life. C'est en forgeant qu'on devient forgeron.

- Desiring to complete Christian initiation: The inquirer wants to complete his or her initiation as a Christian, and wants to be accepted by the Church as a candidate in the period of Christian formation.

An inquirer who has reached this point may be considered ready to move into the period of Christian formation.

Pastoral judgment: Pastors are to consult with the sponsors, catechists, and deacons in order to determine if the inquirers show the necessary dispositions to enter the period of Christian formation (see no. 16).

Time should be taken to understand each inquirer's motives for wanting to complete initiation, and to make sure that these are adequate. Where possible, the inquirers should be given help to purify their intentions and make them even more worthy (see no. 69).

2 "You become a blacksmith by doing a blacksmith's work."

USEFUL RESOURCES

Thirteen years of liturgical resources are catalogued in two recent publications:

- Complete Index 1965-1977: Bulletin 61 provides the key to the first ten volumes (nos. 1-61) of the National Bulletin on Liturgy. This special 96-page issue (available for $2.00 in Canada, and $2.50 outside Canada) is of value to parishes, liturgy committees, teachers, students, and all who want to know more about pastoral liturgy in today's Church.

- Tables Générales du Bulletin (1965-1977): In French, Bulletin 62 opens the first eleven volumes (nos. 1-62) of the Bulletin National de Liturgie. This 70-page issue (available for $1.50) is of use to parishes, liturgy committees, teachers, students, and all who want to know what is happening in liturgy in the French-speaking world.
CHRISTIAN FORMATION

The period of Christian formation corresponds to the catechumenate for unbaptized persons. In the plan proposed in this issue of the Bulletin, the period of formation extends from summer (Pentecost, Trinity, or early September) to the beginning of Lent. Though it is a relatively short time, its role is most important. Because the candidates are already baptized (see nos. 295-296), they and their instructors may refer frequently to their baptism, and depend on the Lord to stir up the graces and powers he has already given the candidates in this sacrament. (See nos. 21, 296; see also Baptism: basis of our spirituality, in Bulletin 62, pages 4-8.)

Purpose of this period: During the period of Christian formation, the Church works and prays with the candidates to help them become ready for their period of final preparation (during Lent), and for their entry into complete membership in the Church during the Easter vigil.

The period of formation is a time to help the gift of faith — already received at their baptism — to grow and mature. This is a period of discipline and of teaching about the faith, in order that they may strengthen their Christian life. During this time they experience a growing contact with the believing community, and take part in some liturgical rites with them (no. 296). This is a period for catechetical formation, gradual growth in faith and prayer, participation in liturgical rites, and for sharing in apostolic works (no. 19); see Catechizing adults, pages 136-138.

We may describe this period as a time to develop commitment to Christ through sharing in the scriptures, the liturgy, and reflective prayer in community.

• Public declaration: The rite of welcoming the candidates (pages 157-160) is particularly important, for the candidates assemble in public for the first time and proclaim their intentions to the believing community; in this celebration, the Church admits them among those who want to be full members of the community of faith. This rite is seen as a welcoming and dedication of these candidates in the service of Jesus (no. 14).

• Part of the community: Even more than catechumens (no. 18), candidates in the program of Christian formation are members of the Church, although their initiation is still incomplete. As baptized members of a priestly people, they have the privilege and responsibility of participating in the liturgy as the primary and indispensable source of the true spirit of Christ (Liturgy constitution, no. 14). Thus they may take part in the liturgy of the community, including the Mass, but with one exception: they do not receive communion until they have been welcomed into full membership at the Easter vigil. When a candidate marries another baptized person in faith, this marriage is sacramental. A candidate who dies during the period of Christian formation is given the full rites of Christian burial. (See no. 18.)

Time: The period of Christian formation is described as “long” and “extended” in the Rite (nos. 296, 19). A sufficient time is needed for the process of conversion to take place, allowing the baptismal faith of the candidates to become mature, and their Christian life to become strong (no. 296). The format proposed in this Bulletin suggests a year as the time for formation, final preparation, and postbaptismal catechesis. This allows adequate time for prayer and reflection, for gradual discernment, and for making decisions of importance. The time needed for preliminary inquiry, comparable to the precatechumenate, precedes this year of communal preparation. It is the responsibility of the bishop to determine this period (no. 20).

Method of formation: This is described in detail in the Rite (no. 19), and in a commentary on this section: see Catechizing adults, pages 136-138.

Participation in the Mass during the year of preparation: Several points need to be made about this:

• Already baptized: Since the candidates have been baptized into the priesthood of Christ, they have both the privilege and the responsibility of sharing in the Church's liturgies (Constitution on the liturgy, no. 14). For this reason, candidates are encouraged to come to

1 This may be compared with Hippolytus' three years of catechumenate. See also Rite, nos. 20, 98.
church each Sunday, and participate as fully as possible in the eucharist (see Bulletin 62, Taking part in the eucharist, pages 31-39). Baptized candidates in the process of completing their Christian initiation can do all that other baptized Catholics do, with the exception of receiving communion: at Mass, they may take part in the prayer of the faithful and in the kiss of peace, since they are already members of the Christian people by baptism.

- On special occasions, it may be desirable to separate the candidates from the rest of the community toward the end of the liturgy of the word, in order to teach both the community and the candidates the dignity of Christian initiation. A form of prayer and dismissal is given in various rites in this issue.

Liturgical Rites

Liturgical rites are celebrated during this period in order to cleanse and strengthen the candidates (no. 19: 3). These rites, celebrated at suitable intervals, serve to mark the candidates' gradual passage or journey in faith and conversion (no. 103). The Christian community should be invited to take part in some of these rites (no. 105).

Rites suggested during this period of formation include:

a) Welcoming candidates into the period of formation: This rite is most important for the candidates and for the community (no. 14). A suggested outline is given on pages 157-160, based on the rite in nos. 68-97.

b) Celebrations of the word of God: The Rite recommends that there should be special celebrations of God's word for the benefit of the candidates, and points out the particular benefits of these rites (no. 106):
- They help to plant Christ's teaching in the hearts of the candidates (see Mk. 4: 3-9, 13-20). This teaching includes the unique way of life provided in the gospels, forgiveness of injuries, an understanding of sin and repentance, and Christian duties in daily living.
- These celebrations continue to teach the candidates how to pray in different ways.
- The celebrations may also help to explain the seasons of the liturgical year, along with the various signs and actions used in the liturgy (see also Liturgy constitution, no. 24).
- Celebrations of the word also lead the candidates gradually into the worship life of the entire community of faith.

While catechumens have a celebration of the word each Sunday, and are gradually led to take part in the community's liturgy of the word, it is suggested that candidates in the period of Christian formation may take part in the community's prayer each Sunday in this way: on most Sundays, they take part with the community in the Sunday eucharist, but without going to communion until the Easter vigil; on particular Sundays, they may be dismissed solemnly, and continue their celebration as a group.

Celebrations of the word may also be held after a session of catechesis (see no. 108). In the outline described on pages 154-155, it is suggested that they be held at least once a month for the candidates.

c) Minor exorcisms: In today's Church, an exorcism is a prayer by which the Church asks Jesus or his Father to free a person from evil in all its forms, and to give this person his gifts, especially the Spirit. This is evident from a study of the prayer texts used for exorcism in the Rite (see nos. 113-118, 373, 164, 171, 178). Exorcisms were being used in the preparation of catechumens at the beginning of the third century, and are mentioned by Hippolytus.

Purpose today: During the period of Christian formation, the Church may use these exorcisms prayerfully to cleanse the candidates (no. 19: 3), and to help them understand the meaning of the Christian life as a battle and a death: it is a battle for the kingdom of God and against the kingdom of darkness; it is dying with Christ to sin and living with him for God. Self-denial and penance3 are necessary if we are to follow Christ (Lk. 9: 23) and receive God's help (see no. 101).

Time: Exorcisms may be celebrated during a service of the word, or at the beginning or end of an instruction period. In cases of particular need, an exorcism may be celebrated privately for an individual candidate (no. 110).

Rites: The priest or deacon, or a catechist delegated by the bishop, may celebrate these exorcisms (no. 109). These prayers may be repeated on various occasions (no. 112). The minister stretches his or her hands over the candidates, and offers one or two of the prayers (no. 109).

Prayers of exorcism: For convenience, a prayer suitable for baptized candidates is given here.4 Other suitable prayers are given in nos. 116, 117, 118; 373: 1, 3.

Let us pray:
All pause for a moment of silent prayer.

Lord Jesus Christ, our redeemer,
you were sent with all power to save the world:
we praise your holy name.

Listen to our prayers for these candidates,
and fill their hearts with your light.
Guard them from the hatred and cunning of Satan.
Heal the effects of sin in their lives,
and be their strength in time of temptation.
Help them to love you and keep your commandments.
Give them your Spirit to guide them
as they try to live according to your gospel.

Lord Jesus, hear our prayer,
for you are Lord for ever. Amen!

The other prayers (nos. 113, 114; 373: 2; 373: 4-5) need to be adapted to reflect the fact that the candidates have already been baptized in Christ. The text in no. 115 needs the first two sentences revised to reflect current views on discriminatory language: the substitution of "us" for "man" would be helpful in this prayer (see Rite, no. 67).

d) Blessing the candidates: The blessings show God's love for these candidates and the Church's pastoral concern for them. Through the blessings, the Church offers the candidates its spirit of joy and peace as they continue their journey in faith toward the Easter vigil (no. 102).

Time: These blessings may be used to conclude a service of the word or a period of instruction; in cases of particular need, a blessing may be celebrated privately for an individual candidate (no. 119).

Rites: The priest or deacon, or a catechist delegated by the bishop, may celebrate these blessings. The minister stretches his or her hands over the candidates, and offers one or two prayers. At the end of the prayer, the candidates come to the minister, who lays his or her hands on their heads (no. 119).

Penance and self-denial are discussed in detail in Bulletin 42, Call to Penance; many traditional forms of penance and their modern applications are described there in The top ten, pages 20-33.

Other alternatives and options are provided in the Rite for many of the prayers and rites given in this Bulletin.
Prayers of blessing: For convenience, a prayer suitable for baptized candidates is given here:

Let us pray:
All pause for a moment of silent prayer.

Loving Father,
we praise you for your mighty works among us,
and for calling these men and women to your gospel.
Bless them with the joy of your Spirit,
and help them to follow your Son.
Make them generous in service,
perservering in prayer,
and holy in their living.
Help them to share in the work and worship
of the Church on earth,
and bring them to the everlasting peace of heaven.

Father, we give you praise
through Christ our Lord. Amen!

— Two prayers are given in nos. 123 and 374: 5. The others (nos. 121, 122, 124, 374: 1-4) need to be adapted to reflect the fact that the candidates have already received baptism.

e) Presentations: The Rite for Christian Initiation of Adults makes allowance for a number of presentations during the period of time when the candidates are being formed in the Christian Way (Acts 9: 2) and Life (Acts 5: 20).

Over the centuries, the Christian people have developed many signs, images, and symbols to express our faith and to remind us of the place of true religion (James 1: 27) in our daily lives. Among these signs are the book of God's word, sacred images, the cross, biblical scenes, banners, posters, books, music. (See Signs of our faith, in Bulletin 62, pages 75-78; A book for God's people, pages 79-85.)

In adapting the rites of Christian initiation to baptized adults, it is suggested that presentations be made on several occasions during the year of preparation:

Rite of welcoming: A bible is presented to each candidate: see page 159.
Period of Christian formation: Presentations may include a cross (see no. 93); an icon, picture, carving, or statue of Christ, Mary, or the patron saint of the candidate or parish; or of another suitable heavenly patron; books about the faith, liturgy, or practices of the Christian people.
Period of final preparation: see pages 169-171.

Appropriate times for making these presentations are suggested in the outline of the period of Christian formation, below.

Outline of the Period of Christian Formation


Community involvement: During the period of formation, members of the community should be invited to take part in the rite of welcoming and in the celebrations of the word (no. 105). They may also help the candidates by prayer, by their conversations, by their example of Christian living, and by friendly invitations to their homes and to gatherings of the community (no. 41: 1-2). See A community which is alive, pages 144-146. Further suggestions and practical ideas are contained in Yes, you can! in Bulletin 51, pages 298-300.

Schedule of instructions and rites: The outline below proposes a useful schedule for instructions and celebrations during this period. Adaptations may be made in the spirit of the
Rite to meet local circumstances. It is suggested that two or three periods of instruction be given to the group of candidates each month (see *The faith we teach*, pages 139-143), with a bible celebration (including a brief instruction) at the end of the month.

- **Pentecost**: As the candidates received into full communion at Easter are completing their postbaptismal catechesis, the new candidates are welcomed into the period of Christian formation. This may also be celebrated on Trinity Sunday, if desired; in September, another celebration may be held for those who are now ready to become candidates. Rites: Welcoming, presentation of bible, blessing; see pages 157-160. Holy water may be blessed at Sunday Mass as a memorial of our baptism (the rite is given in the sacramentary, before the order of Mass).

- **July-August**: During the summer, the candidates may be helped to deepen their understanding and practice of prayer. It would be good to help them grow in their participation in the eucharist. Celebration of the word: This would include a presentation (a book of liturgy and prayers, such as *Sunday Mass Book*); perhaps a first exorcism; blessing.

- **September**: Instructions: see page 142. The rites could include a presentation of a cross\(^5\) (perhaps on Sept. 14), and a blessing.

- **October**: Instructions: see page 142. The service of the word could include an exorcism and a blessing.

- **November**: Instructions: see page 142. The rites could include the opening of ears and mouth (see page 161); the presentation of a picture, icon, carving, or statue; and a blessing.

- **December**: Instructions: see page 143. The candidates could be invited to take part in the parish Advent penance celebration as part of their process of conversion. If a special celebration of the word is celebrated with the candidates, it could include an exorcism and a blessing.

- **January**: Instructions: see page 143. During the celebration of the word, the community may present a book about the Catholic faith to the candidates.\(^6\) The rite ends with a blessing.

- **February**: If there is time before Lent begins, a final celebration of the word may be held, with an exorcism and a blessing.

During the two or three weeks before Lent, the candidates should be invited and encouraged to make a retreat, or at least a full day of recollection. By doing this together, with time for individual counselling, reflection, and prayer, they will be preparing themselves to move into the final stage in the process of their initiation, which begins on the first Sunday in Lent (see pages 162-173).

**Other Notes**

**Choosing godparents**: During the period of Christian formation, each candidate is to choose a godparent (no. 104). The priest is to approve the person chosen. The one who served as godparent when the candidate was baptized could be chosen if he or she is able to carry out the responsibilities of this position (no. 299).

- **Responsibilities**: The godparent should be a good friend of the candidate, and a person who is able to help him or her with good example.\(^7\) When the priest has approved of the

\(^5\) A glorious cross (*crux gemmata*) may be presented: it need not be a crucifix. See Bulletin 62, pages 27-28; no. 63, pages 76, 107.

\(^6\) One good example of this type of book is *A New Look at the Sacraments*, by William J. Bausch (1977, Fides/Claretian, Notre Dame, Indiana 46556).

\(^7\) The godparent is to be a Catholic who has received the sacraments of initiation, and who is sufficiently mature to carry out the responsibilities of a godparent (General introduction on Christian initiation, no. 10). It is to be hoped the godparent will be a person of strong faith, deep prayer, and exemplary life: minimal Christians are of little benefit to candidates or community.
candidate's choice, the believing community delegates the godparent to act on its behalf for the adult (nos. 299, 43).

During the period of Christian formation, the godparent is to help the candidate to understand the role of the gospel both in the personal life of each believer and in the life of our society; he or she also helps the candidate in time of doubt or hesitation, and may encourage the candidate to grow in the life of a baptized Christian (no. 43). This office is exercised privately during the period of Christian formation, and becomes public during the weeks of final preparation.

**Pastoral judgment:** Before candidates may enter the period of final preparation, they should be converted both in their thinking and in their way of living; they should have an adequate knowledge of Christ's teachings, and have a sense of Christian faith and love (no. 23).

It is the responsibility of the community to make sure that each candidate has attained these graces, and is worthy to enter the final stage of preparation (no. 23). The priests, deacons, and catechists who are forming the candidates join with the godparents and delegates of the community in making this judgment. The godparent testifies about the faith of his or her candidate (nos. 23, 137; General introduction on Christian initiation, no. 9).

The group makes a pastoral judgment about each candidate: Has he or she been faithful in listening to God's word? in living this word? in joining with other members of the community in prayer and good works? (See nos. 144-145.) If the candidates have been truly formed during the previous months, then they are permitted to be enrolled on the first Sunday of Lent in the period of final preparation.

**Exceptions:** The *Rite* provides for several exceptions to the normal form of the catechumenate for unbaptized persons:

- **Extraordinary cases:** with the permission of the local ordinary, when a candidate is unable to go through all the stages: see nos. 240-277.
- **Maturity:** with the permission of the local ordinary, when a person is mature and already sincerely converted: see nos. 240-277.
- **Danger of death:** when a person is dying or in proximate danger of death: see nos. 278-294.

When a baptized person is in similar circumstances, the above sections may be adapted as required.

**Problems:** Conversion in faith and morals is a lengthy process, and cannot be rushed. Sometimes a person wants to take instructions and become a Catholic before marrying. Rather than rushing ahead with instructions, it is usually better to recommend that the person enter the period of preliminary inquiry as described in this Bulletin (pages 148-150). The instructions before marriage and the marriage can take place as usual (no. 18), and the candidate will have sufficient time and freedom from pressure to prepare for entry into full communion during the next year of preparation.

* * *

**Rites during the period of Christian formation:**

- Exorcisms  
- Blessings  
- Presentations  
- Entering the period of Christian formation  
- Rite of opening ears and mouth

* * *

156
Rites

Entering the Period of Christian Formation

Introductory Rites

The members of the believing community gather with the inquirers and their sponsors in a suitable place outside or inside the church. The priest or deacon who presides at the celebration vests in alb or surplice, stole, and may wear a cope: the color is festive. As he goes to meet the community, all may sing an opening hymn.

Instruction: The priest or deacon greets the entire community, and then may speak with the inquirers. To all, he mentions the joy that the Church of God is experiencing at this moment, and reminds the sponsors and friends that the example of their Christian living and prayer has helped to lead the inquirers to this important step in their lives.

The president invites the sponsors and inquirers to come before him. As they are moving forward, a song may be sung, such as Ps. 63: 1-9.

Opening dialogue: The priest or deacon calls each inquirer by name; each answers, "Present."

President:
What do you seek from the holy Church of God?

Inquirers:
To come closer to Jesus through growing in faith and living with his people.

President:
Who is Jesus Christ?

Inquirers: Jesus is Lord!

First promise: The priest or deacon speaks to the inquirers:

It is the Spirit of God who leads us to say that Jesus is Lord. Eternal life comes from knowing God and Jesus Christ, whom he has sent to save us. Our master suffered and died for us, and was raised in glory to be our king and Lord.

If you want to follow Jesus as members of his Church, you must come to the fullness of his truth, and put on the mind of Christ. Seek to model your love on his and to obey the teaching of his gospel: love God with all your heart and strength, and love your neighbor as Christ has loved us.

Do you promise to live in this way?

Inquirers: I do.

The president speaks to the sponsors:
Are you ready to help these inquirers to know Christ better and to follow him more closely?

Sponsors: I am.
He speaks to the assembled community:
Are you ready to help these inquirers
to know Christ better and to follow him more closely?

All: I am.

**Prayer of thanks:** The president joins his hands and prays:

*Merciful Father,*
we praise you and give you thanks
for guiding the lives of these candidates,
and for helping them to answer your call to faith
in the presence of this community of believers.

All praise is yours for ever and ever. Amen!

**Signing on the forehead:** By making the sign of the cross on the forehead of
each inquirer, the priest or deacon is enrolling this person as a candidate in the
period of Christian formation.

The president speaks to the inquirers:

*Come forward with your sponsors,*
and be marked with the sign of the cross
as you enter a new way of life.

Each sponsor and inquirer come to the president. He makes a sign of the cross
with his thumb on the inquirer's forehead, saying:

*N., I seal you with the cross of Christ.*
The Lord Jesus loves you, and will give you his strength
as you learn to know him and follow his paths.

The priest or deacon may then invite the sponsors and catechists to make the
sign of the cross on the candidates' foreheads, in silence. Then he invites the com-

**Let us pray for these candidates**
as they enter the period of their Christian formation:

All pause for silent prayer.

**Father in heaven,**
listen to our prayer for these men and women,
candidates for Christian formation.
Guard them in your love,
for they have been marked with the cross of your Son Jesus.
Keep them faithful to your teaching
and firm in the way of your commandments,
and lead them into full membership in your holy people.

**Father,**
we ask this grace through Christ our Lord. Amen!

* * *
Entry into the church: If the previous part of this celebration took place outside the church, the priest or deacon invites the candidates and their sponsors to come into the church:

My friends,
we welcome you into our church.
Let us listen together to the word of the Lord.

Members of the community, candidates, and sponsors move into the church, with the priest or deacon at the end of the procession. During this, Ps. 34 (2, 3, 6, 9, 10, 11) may be sung, with verse 11 as a refrain. Another song may replace this psalm.

* * *

Celebration of the Word of God

The priest or deacon speaks to the candidates briefly of the holiness and importance of the word of God. When the word is proclaimed and heard in their church, God himself is speaking to his people. The book of God's word is brought into the church in procession. The book is placed on the lectern with signs of reverence, and may be incensed as a further mark of honor. Then the celebration of the word of God follows.

Readings and homily: One or more scripture readings may be proclaimed from the lectionary, no. 743. A responsorial psalm may be sung. The final reading is a passage from the gospel.

The priest or deacon preaches the homily, explaining the word of God to this assembly, and encouraging all to continue with prayer and love in the service of the Lord Jesus. At the end of the homily he may speak directly to the candidates, leading to the presentation of the gospels.

Presentation of the gospels: The president may present a bible or New Testament to the candidates. He may say these or similar words:

N., receive the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.
Listen to his word, and follow him in love.

Each candidate may respond in his or her own words, or may remain silent.

Community prayer for the candidates: The president invites the community to stand, and asks the candidates alone to kneel.

He invites all to pray:
Let us ask God our Father to hear our prayer
for the Church and the world,
and particularly for these candidates
as they prepare to become full members of his Church.

Reader:
May our Father in heaven bless his holy people,
and guide our pope and bishops to know his will,
we pray to the Lord:

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

May the God of mercy show his love for the world,
and open the hearts of all to the light of his Son,
we pray to the Lord: R.

May God reveal his Son to these candidates,
so that they will know and love Jesus
more and more each day,
we pray to the Lord: R.
May they be generous in their response
to God's word and will for them,
we pray to the Lord:  R.

May we be able to give them our love and prayer
each day of their journey toward Easter,
we pray to the Lord:  R.

May the community of N. give them unfailing witness,
and lead them closer to Jesus,
we pray to the Lord:  R.

May they become ever more ready
to join us in full fellowship at the table of the Lord,
we pray to the Lord:  R.

May we all be more willing to meet the needs
of all our brothers and sisters,
we pray to the Lord:  R.

The president extends his hands over the candidates while he prays:

Blessed are you, Lord God, king of all creation:
you have chosen these men and women in your love,
and call them to complete their initiation in your Church.
Give them joy and hope as they listen to your word.
Strengthen the effects of baptism in their lives,
and let them grow in the love and service of Christ.

Father,
all glory and praise are yours
for ever and ever.  Amen!

Song: All may sing a hymn.

Dismissal: The priest or deacon may lay his hands on the heads of the candidates in silence.

Then he dismisses the community:
People of God, go in peace
to love and serve the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

After the celebration, the community may gather for light refreshments, and have an opportunity to meet and greet the new candidates for Christian formation.
Rite of Opening Ears and Mouth

This rite may be celebrated during the November service of the word (page 155). It proclaims dramatically that we need God's grace to open our ears to hear his word in faith, and to open our mouth so that we may give him praise with Christ and his priestly people (no. 200).

* Gospel: The service continues as usual until the gospel, which is Mk. 7: 31-37 (lectionary, no. 750). The alleluia or another acclamation may be sung before and after the gospel. The priest or deacon explains the gospel briefly (no. 201).

* Rite: Each candidate comes to the priest or deacon, who touches each ear and then the person's closed mouth. He says:

Be opened by the grace of Christ:
listen to the word of God,
and proclaim the faith he teaches you
for his praise and glory.

* Presentation: After this rite, the minister may make a presentation of a piece of Christian art (see page 154), and conclude the celebration with a blessing.

SECOND EDITION

In the past six years, there has been a growing demand for copies of the National Bulletin on Liturgy. When necessary, we have reprinted issues to keep up with the orders. For the past few years, the Publications Service of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops has promised to keep Bulletins in print from no. 34 (September 1972) to the present.

During the last half of 1977, however, increased demand has suggested that we reissue some Bulletins in an updated form, incorporating later references and resources.

To the date of this issue, three numbers of the Bulletin have been revised and updated as a second edition. They have been reset in the same format as the present issue.

* No. 35, Parish Liturgy Committees
* No. 36, Advent and Christmas
* No. 42, Call to Penance.

These issues may be ordered for $1.50 ($1.75 outside Canada) from Publications Service, 90 Parent Avenue, Ottawa, Ontario K1N 7B1, Canada. Please enclose payment with your order to avoid delay in shipping.
The period of final preparation is celebrated during the Lent which leads up to the candidates' entrance into full communion. This period of six weeks may be compared to the period of purification and enlightenment, when unbaptized catechumens prepare for baptism at the Easter vigil. (See Rite, nos. 21-36, 133-207.)

**Purpose of this period:** The period of final preparation normally coincides with Lent (nos. 21, 303), and is closely related to this season:

- **Purpose of Lent:** Lent is a time of preparation for the full celebration of Easter. During this season, the liturgy prepares catechumens (unbaptized persons) to enter the paschal mystery by celebrating the sacraments of Christian initiation (baptism, confirmation, eucharist) at the Easter vigil.

The rest of the Church — members of the community, and candidates preparing for entry into full communion with the Church — prepare for Easter by recalling their baptism, by doing penance, and by being open to the action of the Spirit as they prepare to renew their baptismal promises during the Easter vigil. The lenten liturgy — both on Sundays and on weekdays — is intended to help the Christian people take part in this work of renewal: of dying with Christ to sin, and of living with him for God. (Further notes on the work of Lent are contained in Bulletins 37 and 42.)

- **Purpose of the period of final preparation:** During this period, the Church chooses the candidates who are properly disposed and admits them to a period of intense preparation, so that they may be ready to celebrate the paschal mystery at the Easter vigil celebration. This period is a time for reflection and recollection, for helping the candidates to recall what they have been taught: it is not a time for further catechesis. It is a season for them to purify their hearts by prayerful examination of conscience and by deepening their sense of repentance. This final period is also intended to lead them to know Christ our savior more intimately (see no. 25).

**Carrying out the work of this period:** The work of this time of final preparation is carried out mainly in the rites, particularly in the scrutinies and in the presentations (no. 25). The bishop, presbyter, or deacon in charge of the period of formation may help the candidates by individual counselling and instruction as required.

Several good ideas for this period were suggested in *Yes, you can!* in Bulletin 51, pages 298-300: introduction and enrollment of the candidates on the first Sunday of Lent; daily Mass by candidates; banner containing their names.

**Community involvement:** The community shares with the candidates in the period of renewal during Lent, for all are called to prepare by prayer and penance for the renewal of their baptismal vows at the Easter vigil (nos. 21, 135, 152; Liturgy constitution, nos. 109-110).

Members of the parish community continue to assist the candidates by their example and support during this lenten period (see Rite, no. 19: 2), by their active presence at the rites, and by prayer and fasting with the candidates. It is fitting to mention the candidates in the daily general intercessions (both at Mass and in morning and evening prayer). All — both candidates and community members — join together in the solemn paschal fast on Good Friday and Holy Saturday, in preparation for the Easter rites (Liturgy constitution, no. 110).

**Timetable of rites for catechumens:** A full schedule of celebrations is proposed in the Rite for those taking part in the period of purification and enlightenment, in preparation for baptism (nos. 21-26, 152-157):

- First Sunday in Lent: election or enrollment of names
- Third Sunday in Lent: first scrutiny
- During the third week: presentation of the creed
- Fourth Sunday in Lent: second scrutiny
- Fifth Sunday in Lent: third scrutiny
- During the fifth week: presentation of the Lord's prayer
Holy Saturday: preparatory rites:
saying the creed
ephpheta rite
choosing a Christian name
anointing with oil of catechumens

Suggested adaptation of rites: During the period of final preparation the rites are intended to help the candidates in their time of recollection, purification, and repentance (no. 25). The following public rites will enable the local community to assist the candidates during the lenten period:

• Rite of enrollment of names: Those who are going to receive full initiation at the Easter vigil declare their intention on the first Sunday in Lent, in the presence of the Christian community (see pages 164-167).

• Scrutiny: The scrutiny is intended to help the candidates to understand more about the mystery of sin, from which they want to be saved, and to know more about Jesus as their savior. The scrutinies are linked closely with the three gospel stories from John: the woman at the well (Jn. 4: 5-42 — Jesus is the living water, and savior); the man born blind (Jn. 9: 1-41 — Jesus is the light of the world); and the raising of Lazarus (Jn. 11: 1-45 — Jesus is our resurrection and our life). These gospels are read on the third, fourth, and fifth Sundays of Lent in year A, and may be used in any year, especially when candidates are preparing for initiation at the Easter vigil (nos. 157, 159).

The scrutinies are an important part of the period of final preparation, and should be encouraged. They are normally celebrated during the Sunday Mass; if this is not possible, they are held during a service of the word on the appropriate Sunday. Rather than omit them, however, they may be celebrated during the week.

If only two scrutinies can be celebrated, it is suggested that these be on the third and fifth Sundays; if only one is possible, it is best celebrated on the third Sunday. The texts appropriate to the Sunday are to be used.

The scrutiny is a look into our own hearts, soul-searching in the presence of the Lord Jesus. Both candidates and members of the community need to do this as part of their lenten conversion and preparation for the renewal of their baptismal promises at Easter.

• Presentations: During the lenten period, two separate celebrations surround the solemn handing over of the creed and the Lord’s prayer to the candidates, as signs of the Church’s tradition of belief and prayer (nos. 25: 2; 181-182). These rites take place at a weekday service in the third and fifth weeks of Lent: see pages 169-171.

• Preparatory rites: These may take place on Holy Saturday at a meeting of the candidates: see pages 171-173.

Preparing for the Sacrament of Reconciliation

For the believing community, Lent is a time of repentance and renewal (Liturgy constitution, nos. 109-110; Bulletin 37, pages 5-12). For the candidates, this is a time of preparation for the first celebration of the sacrament of reconciliation, just before the Easter vigil rites. Those who are responsible for this final period would be wise to review the introductory pastoral notes (nos. 1-40) of the Rite of Penance. A commentary on the rite is given in Bulletin 52, Reconciliation and Forgiveness; also included is the Canadian bishops’ statement on Formation of conscience (Bulletin 52, pages 40-50).

Community penance celebrations: The Rite of Penance (no. 13) suggests that parishes have several penance celebrations during Lent. It is fitting to hold one at the beginning of the season, as the community undertakes the lenten journey of conversion. Another service will be of great benefit in the final two weeks of Lent. The candidates may take full part in the service, listening to the readings, and singing and praying with the community. The examination of conscience is also of benefit to the candidates as they prepare to celebrate the sacrament before Easter.

1 Rite of Penance, available from Publications Service, 90 Parent Ave., Ottawa, Ontario K1N 7B1, Canada.
Celebration for the candidates: It may be desirable to have several penance celebrations for the group of candidates during Lent, with a thorough examination of conscience, as a means of assisting them to recognize sin and put it out of their lives. Many examples of the penance celebration and examination of conscience are given in past issues of the Bulletin.2

Sacrament of penance: The candidates should be invited to celebrate the sacrament of penance just before Easter. It is suggested that this be done in Holy Week. Holy Thursday is the traditional day for the reconciliation of penitents in the Roman rite. In some parishes, it may be better to have a celebration for the candidates on Good Friday evening or Holy Saturday during the day. (A helpful outline of the individual celebration is given in Sunday Mass Book, pages 1114-1115. Other prayers and suggestions are contained in pages 1107-1117 and 1309-1316.)

General absolution? This form of celebrating the sacrament was restored in 1973, and is developing gradually. If its use is warranted (see Rite of Penance, nos. 31-35), the third rite is used. This might occur at one of the parish celebrations. In celebrations specifically for the candidates, it would seem better to have face-to-face celebration with the individual candidates after a penance celebration. The bishop should be consulted if the possibility of general absolution is being considered.

Rites

Rite of Enrollment of Names

When the candidates are accepted by the Church for the period of final preparation, they have their names placed in the book of the elect, and begin their weeks of preparing for the celebration of the Easter sacraments (see Rite, no. 22). The enrollment celebration is a turning point in their year of preparation for entry into full communion with the believing community (no. 23). This rite is celebrated during Mass on the first Sunday in Lent, and takes place after the homily (nos. 140, 142):

Presentation of the candidates: After the homily, someone who is responsible for the formation of the candidates presents them to the presiding priest in these or similar words:

Reverend Father:
These candidates have completed the period of their Christian formation. Now, as our community begins to prepare for the Easter celebration, these candidates ask to enter their time of final preparation. After further prayer and scrutinies, they ask to be allowed to complete their Christian initiation during the Easter vigil this year.

The president invites the candidates and their godparents to come forward. When called by name, each candidate steps forward with his or her godparent, and stands before the priest.

The priest speaks to the community:

2 Lenten forms of the celebration are given in the Bulletin: see nos. 32, 37, 42, 47, 52, 56, and 62. Helpful forms for the examination of conscience are contained in these issues, and also in nos. 36, 41, 46, 51, 55, 61, and 66. Another example, in the form of a prayer, is included in Sunday Mass Book, pages 1108-1112.

3 See Rite of Penance, nos. 60-66; Canadian edition, pages 71-74. An outline and explanation of the third rite, for general absolution, is given in Bulletin 52, pages 30-33.

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My brothers and sisters in Christ:
Last year, these candidates began their time of preparation. They have been listening to the word of the Lord in their hearts, and they have tried to live according to his teaching. They have shared with us in prayer and fellowship. Now they are asking to complete their Christian initiation, and to celebrate the sacraments of faith with us.

After prayer and reflection, our community has decided to call them to be one with us in our faith and worship.

He speaks to the godparents:
Godparents of these candidates, do you consider that they are ready and worthy to complete the sacraments of Christian initiation?

The godparents answer: I do.

The priest invites the community to give consent by some customary sign, such as clapping, or singing an acclamation.

Examinaion of candidates: The priest speaks to the candidates in these or similar words:

My friends: During your time of formation, you have been open to the word of God and to the way of life of the Christian community. Your godparents and your teachers are satisfied that you are trying to live in Christ.
Now the Church of God calls you to prepare for the completion of your initiation. You have been listening to the voice of Christ, calling you. Now we ask you to state your intention openly in the presence of his Church.

Do you want to complete your Christian initiation by your full participation in the Easter vigil this year?
Candidates: I do.

Come and write your names in the book of the elect. May your names always be found in the book of life.

The candidates may write their names clearly in the book of the elect. During the enrollment, the choir and people may sing; Ps. 16 is appropriate.

* * *

In the case of a large number of candidates, a catechist may give the priest a list of their names, saying:

These are the names for the book of the elect. May they always be found in the book of life.
The names are entered into the book as soon as possible after the celebration.
Admission to the period of final preparation:

Priest:
(N. and N.,) you have been chosen
to be admitted to full membership in the people of God
during the celebration of the Easter vigil this year.
Candidates: Thanks be to God.

During the days of Lent,
we must all join in prayer to ask God to help you.
He will be true and faithful to you,
and you must be faithful to him.
Live these final days of preparation well,
for soon you will be welcomed to the table of the Lord.

The priest speaks to the godparents:
We have entrusted these candidates to you in the Lord’s name.
Continue to care for them in love.
By your prayer and example,
help them to be ready to celebrate the completion
of their initiation into the people of God.

The priest invites each godparent to place the right hand on the right shoulder
of his or her candidate:

Please place your right hand
on the shoulder of the candidate
you are presenting to the Church.

The godparents leave their hand on the candidate’s shoulder during the follow-

Prayer for the candidates: The priest invites the community to pray for the
candidates:

My brothers and sisters,
let us pray to our heavenly Father
for these candidates and for our community:

Reader:
For our candidates, we pray to the Lord:
All: Lord, hear our prayer.
For their teachers, we pray to the Lord: R.
For their godparents, we pray to the Lord: R.
For their families, we pray to the Lord: R.
For our community, we pray to the Lord: R.
For all who hesitate to give themselves to Christ, we pray to the Lord: R.

Other suitable intentions may be added.
The priest extends his hands over the candidates as he prays:

Blessed are you, Father, creator of the universe:
you have made us in your image and likeness,
and continue to renew us in your love.
You chose these candidates to be baptized in Christ.
May they continue to hear your holy word
and come to full communion with your Church.

We bless your name, Father, for ever and ever. Amen!

Dismissal: It is fitting to dismiss the candidates on this occasion, so that they may spend some time together in prayer and reflection on the meaning of this day's rites. The priest may say:

Friends, God has chosen you in his love,
and has called you to keep this Lent with us.
Let Jesus Christ lead you
and help you to overcome sin and to live for him.
Go in peace now, in the name of the Lord.

Eucharistic celebration: The Mass continues with the profession of faith and the general intercessions. Then the liturgy of the eucharist begins with the preparation of the gifts.

First Scrutiny: Water

The first scrutiny (see Rite, nos. 160-166) is celebrated during the Mass of the third Sunday in Lent, using the readings from year A (lectionary, nos. 28, 745; Canadian sacramentary, no. 436).

Homily: The priest helps the community to understand the word of God, and explains this scrutiny as part of the lenten journey of the community and the candidates on the way to the Easter sacraments.

Silent prayer: The candidates and their godparents stand in front of the priest. He invites the community to pray in silence for the candidates:

Let us pray in silence for these candidates:
may the Lord give them an understanding of sin
and the spirit of true sorrow,
and lead them to the freedom of God's people.

He asks the candidates to bow or kneel as a sign of repentance, and to pray in silence:

Kneel (bow your heads) and pray in silence
as a sign of your sorrow and repentance.

After the whole community has prayed for some moments in silence, all stand.

Prayer for the candidates: During this prayer, the godparents place their right hand on the shoulder of their candidate.

Let us pray for these candidates:

Father,
lead them to acknowledge their sins before Christ.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.
Open their hearts to your word:  R.
Deliver them from the spirit of scepticism:  R.
Give them the living water of eternal life:  R.
May they adore you in spirit and in truth:  R.
Help them to share their love of Christ with others:  R.
Lead all people to the gospel of Jesus Christ:  R.
Help us to listen to Jesus our teacher:  R.

Prayer of exorcism:
Let us pray:

Father in heaven,
we praise you for sending Jesus to be our savior.
Help these candidates to thirst for living water
as did the woman of Samaria.
Change their lives by the teaching of your Son,
and help them to recognize their sins and weaknesses.
Free them from the power of evil,
and let them rely on you for strength.
Cleanse their hearts from sin,
and lead them forward on the path of salvation.

Father,
we ask this grace through Christ our Lord.  Amen!

In silence the priest lays his hands on each candidate's head. Then he extends
his hands over them and prays:

Lord Jesus, our teacher,
you are the source of life and holiness.
Look with love upon those chosen men and women,
who open their hearts to you and seek your forgiveness.
Free them from all sin, and grant them your peace.
Remain with them at all times,
and cast out any spirit of evil from their lives.
May your Holy Spirit guide your beloved people,
and lead us to worship your Father in spirit and in truth.

Jesus, hear our prayer,
for you are our Lord for evermore.  Amen!

A suitable song, such as a penitential psalm, may be sung.

Dismissal: The priest dismisses the candidates:

Go in the peace of Christ,
and ponder these things in your hearts.

The candidates go with their catechists for a period of teaching, prayers, and
discussion. At the end, the catechist may bless them (see pages 153-154).

Mass continues: The liturgy of the word concludes with the creed and general
intercessions. Then the liturgy of the eucharist begins.
Second Scrutiny: Light

The second scrutiny (see Rite, nos. 167-173) is celebrated during the Mass of the fourth Sunday in Lent, using the lectionary texts for year A (lectionary, nos. 31, 746). It follows the same order as the first scrutiny:

Homily: see page 167.
Silent prayer: see page 167.
Prayer for the candidates: rite on pages 167-168; use prayer from the Rite, no. 382.
Prayer of exorcism: rite on page 168; use prayers in no. 383.
Dismissal: see page 168.
Continuation of Mass: see page 168.

Third Scrutiny: Life

This scrutiny (see nos. 174-182) is celebrated during the Mass of the fifth Sunday in Lent, using the lectionary texts for year A (lectionary, nos. 34, 747). It follows the same order as the first scrutiny:

Homily: see page 167.
Silent prayer: see page 167.
Prayer for the candidates: rite on pages 167-168; use prayer from the Rite, no. 386.
Prayer of exorcism: rite on page 168; use prayer in no. 178.
Dismissal: see page 168.
Continuation of Mass: see page 168.

Presentations

Presentation of the profession of faith: This celebration takes place during the week of the third Sunday in Lent (see nos. 183-187). The readings are those of the weekday Mass, or may be chosen from the lectionary, no. 748.

- Homily: The priest preaches on the scripture passages, and points out the importance of the creed as a profession of the faith which they received in baptism, and which they will renew at the Easter vigil.
- Presentation: The candidates stand before the priest, who says:

Friends, you have received the gift of faith in your baptism, and have deepened it during this past year of preparation. Listen with care to the profession of our faith, and believe with the people of God.
The priest invites the community to join him in saying the apostles' creed:

I believe in God, the Father almighty, 
creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. 
He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit 
and born of the Virgin Mary.
He suffered under Pontius Pilate, 
was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again.
He ascended into heaven, 
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, 
the holy catholic Church, 
the communion of saints, 
the forgiveness of sins, 
the resurrection of the body, 
and the life everlasting.

Prayer over the candidates: The priest invites the community to pray for the candidates:

Let us pray for these men and women, 
our brothers and sisters in Christ.
God our Father has called them to renew their baptismal faith, 
and to be active members of his holy Church.

All pause for a moment of silent prayer.

Extending his hands over the candidates, the priest says:

Heavenly Father, source of light and love, 
listen to the prayers of your holy people 
for these men and women. 
Purify their lives, 
and open their hearts to your teaching. 
Let them follow Jesus in faith and love, 
and worship you in spirit and in truth. 

Father, 
we ask this grace through Christ our Lord. Amen!

The Mass continues with the general intercessions. The candidates may remain with the community for the rest of the celebration, but do not receive communion until the Easter vigil.

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Presentation of the Lord's prayer: This celebration takes place during the week of the fifth Sunday in Lent (see Rite, nos. 188-192). The readings are those of the weekday Mass, or may be chosen from the lectionary, no. 749.

Presentation: After the gospel, the priest invites the candidates to stand before him. He begins by saying:

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1 English translation of the apostles' creed by the International Consultation on English Texts.
Friends,
when the disciples asked Jesus to teach them how to pray,
he told them to pray in this way:

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.

- Homily: The candidates return to their places, and the priest begins the homily. He points out the importance of the Lord’s prayer as the prayer of God’s beloved people. Since the candidates have already been baptized, they are the adopted sons and daughters of God, and may call him Father with the rest of his Church.

- Prayer over the candidates: The priest invites the community to pray for the candidates:

Let us pray for these men and women,
our brothers and sisters in Christ.
Our heavenly Father has made them his children in baptism,
and has given them his Spirit
so that they may call him Father.

All pause for a moment of silent prayer.
Extending his hands over the candidates, the priest says:

Heavenly Father,
you have sent your Son Jesus to be our savior and brother.
Help these candidates to hear his word,
and to join your Church in praising your name.
Cleanse their hearts and make them holy.
Give them the joy of your Spirit,
and call them to eternal life with you.

Father,
grant this grace through Christ our Lord. Amen!

The Mass continues with the general intercessions. The candidates may remain with the community for the rest of the celebration, but do not receive communion until the Easter vigil.

Preparatory Rites

The tradition of fasting before baptism is mentioned in the Didache around the beginning of the second century. Around 215, Hippolytus speaks of the paschal fast on Friday and Saturday as the normal preparation of the whole community for the celebration of baptism at the Easter vigil.

Paschal fast: The Second Vatican Council restored the ancient tradition of the paschal fast (Liturgy constitution, no. 110). On Good Friday and Holy Saturday, the people of God are called to a solemn fast, in union with the Christians of every century. After the two-day fast, they will have uplifted and responsive hearts, and will be ready to share more fully in the joys of the Lord’s resurrection.
**Good Friday:** The candidates should be encouraged to take part in the liturgical action in the afternoon. The community will pray for them in the fourth of the solemn intercessions; the text will need some adaptation to meet the circumstances of baptized persons preparing for entry into full communion.

**On Holy Saturday,** the paschal fast continues as the whole Church prepares for the renewal of the baptismal promises. The candidates should be encouraged to fast, to refrain from their ordinary work as far as possible, and to spend the day in prayer and recollection (see *Rite,* no. 26: 1).

**Preparatory rites:** The *Rite* allows for a meeting of the candidates for final rites of preparation. These include saying the creed, opening the ears and mouth (*ephpheta* — see Mk. 7: 31-37), choosing of a Christian name, and anointing with holy oil (no. 26: 2). The purpose of this celebration is to help the candidates to be more recollected and prayerful in their final day of preparation for the Easter vigil (nos. 152, 193).

If these rites are celebrated, they may be done as described in nos. 193-207, or in the briefer celebration outlined below. The celebration may be held in the place where they were instructed. The godparents, families, and close friends of the candidates may be invited to share in these rites.

**Saying the creed** (no. 194-199): This rite helps the candidates to be ready to profess their faith and share the gospel at all times (no. 194).

- Hymn
- **Gospel reading:** Mt. 16: 13-17 (lectionary, no. 748); or Jn. 6: 35, 63-71.
- **Brief homily**
- **Prayer:** The priest or deacon extends his hands over the candidates:

Let us pray.
All pause for a moment of silent prayer.

**Loving Father,**
you have given these chosen candidates, our brothers and sisters,
the grace to accept your word
and your gift of salvation in Jesus Christ.
Help them to grow in faith and prayer,
and to obey your will at all times.

Father,
we ask this grace through Christ our Lord. Amen!

- **Saying the creed:** The candidates say the apostles' creed together (see page 170).

**Explaining a Christian name:** The legal implications of changing registered names in most countries today would suggest a pastoral adaptation of the *Rite,* nos. 203-205. Rather than giving a new name, the priest would help each candidate to see the Christian meaning of one of his or her names, or — in the case of a person without a Christian name — would suggest an appropriate saint whom the candidate could choose as a special patron.

- **Reading:** Mt. 16: 13-18 (lectionary, no. 748).
- **Christian explanation of names:** For those candidates who already have a Christian name, the priest or deacon may explain its Christian meaning. He may speak briefly about the person's patron saint, or of the Christian meaning of the name. These explanations need to be brief and carefully prepared.

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1 In this Bulletin, the rite of opening the ears and mouth has been suggested as more appropriate during the period of Christian formation: see page 161. The anointing with the oil of catechumens (nos. 206-207) is traditionally reserved for those who have not been baptized, and is therefore omitted here.
Proposing a patron saint: Where the candidate does not have a Christian name, the priest or deacon could suggest a saint whose life and ideals would serve as a good model for this particular person. Again, the explanation needs to be brief and carefully prepared.

Presentation: The priest, deacon, catechist, or godparent may present a book of the lives of the saints, or a history of the Church (in general, or in this country) to the candidates. In this way they are being invited to become more familiar with their Christian tradition.

Blessing: The preparatory rites may close with a blessing.

AN OBSERVATION

One of the hopes of the human race is the fact that young men and women can become angry at abuses and injustices, and concerned about changes that need to be made in institutions and systems. Their ideals are high and unblunted.

One of the stark realities, however, occurs fifteen or twenty years later, when the same young people are in a position to do something about the abuses, problems, and attitudes they decried earlier.

- Some elect to stay with the status quo: don’t rock the boat, be satisfied with the way things are; don’t expect anything higher of human nature; go along with the crowd. The fire has gone out, and the ashes are well wetted down to prevent ignition of any sort. And they stay that way for the rest of their life.

- Some will be as fiery as ever, still demanding change at once, instant reformation, upheavals in institutions, about-faces by everybody. They will continue to be frustrated by the fact that the world goes on without making the changes they want.

- There are some who continue to work in faith, steadily, undiscouraged, within the system, not looking for immediate results, knowing that Christ and his Spirit are still active among us.

Pope John was one of this third group. Where are you?
EASTER VIGIL

If adult catechumens are being baptized during the vigil, it is important that their baptism and the reception of the baptized candidates into full communion be seen as distinct actions.¹

A suggested format for use at the Easter vigil is described in this article.² It makes a clear distinction between the catechumens and candidates, and groups the candidates together with the members of the community, who are also renewing their promises in this celebration.

When persons are received into full communion at another time during the year, the rite given on pages 178-183 is used.

Invitation: After the blessing of baptismal water, the catechumens are baptized and confirmed (see Rite, nos. 208-232). They remain in the sanctuary during the following rite. Any infants receiving baptism are baptized with the catechumens.

Then the presiding bishop or priest invites the candidates for reception into full communion to come forward.

Renewal of Baptismal Promises

Everyone in the church stands and holds a lighted candle.

Instruction: The bishop or priest speaks to the candidates:

My brothers and sisters in Christ:
Throughout this past year you have been preparing for this night.
Aided by God's grace,
you have been listening to his word,
sharing in the worship of our community,
and doing good works with God's people.
During this season of Lent,
you have prepared with this Christian community
to renew your baptismal promises
and to enter into full communion with us.

Then he speaks to the community:

Dear friends,
through the paschal mystery
we have been buried with Christ in baptism,
so that we may rise with him to a new life.
Now that we have completed our lenten observance,
let us renew the promises we made in baptism
when we rejected Satan and his works,
and promised to serve God faithfully
in his holy Catholic Church.

¹ See Rite, appendix, no. 5; Canadian edition, page 146; page 178 in this Bulletin.

² These notes are based on the texts and rubrics given in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (nos. 208-234; Canadian edition, page 61-70); the Easter vigil rites in the Sacramentary (Canadian edition, pages 268-269); Rite of Reception of Baptized Christians into Full Communion with the Catholic Church (appendix to the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults; Canadian edition, pages 145-155; see also pages 178-183 of this Bulletin).
Renunciation: The bishop or priest continues:

And so:
Do you reject sin, so as to live in the freedom of God’s children?
All: I do.

Do you reject the glamor of evil, and refuse to be mastered by sin?
All: I do.

Do you reject Satan, father of sin and prince of darkness?
All: I do.

* * *

Or he may use these questions:

Do you reject Satan?
All: I do.

And all his works?
All: I do.

And all his empty promises?
All: I do.

* * *

Profession of faith: He continues:

Do you believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth?
All: I do.

Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was born of the Virgin Mary, was crucified, died, and was buried, rose from the dead, and is now seated at the right hand of the Father?
All: I do.

Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting?
All: I do.
Reception into full communion: He invites the candidates to add these words to their profession of faith:

I believe and profess
all that the holy Catholic Church believes,
teaches, and proclaims to be revealed by God.

The bishop or priest says:

N., N., the Lord receives you into the Catholic Church.
His loving kindness has led you here
so that, in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
you may have full communion with us
in the faith that you have professed
in the presence of his family.

Confirmation: If they have not been confirmed, the bishop or priest lays his hands on the head of each candidate, or extends his hands over them. He prays:

All-powerful God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
by water and the Holy Spirit
you freed your sons and daughters from sin
and gave them new life.
Send your Holy Spirit upon them
to be their Helper and Guide.
Give them the spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the spirit of right judgment and courage,
the spirit of knowledge and reverence.
Fill them with the spirit of wonder and awe in your presence.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

The sponsor places his or her right hand on the candidate's shoulder. The bishop or priest dips his right thumb in the chrism, and makes the sign of the cross on the forehead of the one to be confirmed, saying:

N., be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit.

Newly confirmed person: Amen.

Bishop or priest:
Peace be with you.

Newly confirmed person: And also with you.

Greeting: The bishop or priest greets those who have been received into full communion, and takes their hands in a gesture of friendship.

Sprinkling: The bishop or priest speaks to the community:

God, the all-powerful Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
has given us a new birth by water and the Holy Spirit,
and forgiven all our sins.
May he also keep us faithful to our Lord Jesus Christ
for ever and ever. Amen.

He goes through the church, sprinkling the people with the blessed water. A baptismal song is sung.
Seating: The bishop or priest leads the newly baptized persons and those who have been received into communion to their place in church among the faithful.

Liturgy of the word continues: The creed is not said, since it has been replaced by the profession of baptismal faith. The general intercessions include a petition for those baptized or received into communion during this celebration.

Liturgy of the eucharist: The newly baptized adults and those received into communion take part in the procession with the gifts. The eucharistic prayer contains a special mention of those who were baptized this evening (see Rite, no. 391; no. 377, with a change to the present perfect tense). The whole community is invited to receive communion under both species.

Informal gathering: It would be fitting to conclude the evening’s celebration with an informal gathering for coffee: see It can be done! in Bulletin 51, page 300.

CATECHESIS DURING THE EASTER SEASON

The seven weeks between Easter and Pentecost are celebrated as one great feast day. St. Athanasius called this period the great Sunday. Christians sing the alleluia during these days in their rejoicing. The Easter season is 50 days in length, 10 days longer than Lent.

- Neophytes: These who were baptized in the Easter vigil are helped by the community to become full and active members of the community (see Rite, nos. 235-239). This is the time for their mystagoga or postbaptismal catechesis, the final stage in their Christian initiation.

- A similar period is desirable for those welcomed into full communion at the Easter vigil, sharing in the teaching and prayer of the Easter season with the newly baptized and with the rest of the community (no. 305).

Means: the whole community, including those members who were initiated at the vigil, shares in this time of reflection. They meditate on the Lord’s gospel and on the sacramental rites, share frequently in the eucharist, and do works of love and mercy (nos. 37-40). The Sunday Masses during this season — particularly with the readings from year A, which may be used every year — are the main arena for this period of integration into the spiritual life of the believing community (no. 40). Gradually, all are led to a fuller understanding of the paschal mystery of Christ, and bring this mystery into their daily life (no. 37).

- Understanding the Christian mysteries: Those who are baptized or received into full communion at the Easter vigil have experienced the Lord’s love and goodness in a deeper way, and come to a new sense of the Christian faith, and of the Church (see no. 38).

- Deepening relationship with the community: As well as becoming more fully integrated into the community, those initiated at Easter minister to the community by sharing a fresh vision and new incentives for faith and action (see no. 39). The members of the community should participate fully in the liturgies of the season (no. 40), and help the neophytes to experience the joy of being full and active members of God’s people (no. 41: 5).

Related to the liturgy: The Sunday celebrations are the main rites during this season, along with the Masses of the Easter octave. It could be helpful to have one or two bible celebrations for the newly initiated members during this season.

The Easter season is a time for joyful reflection for the whole community, including the newly initiated members. It is a time when the Church should experience itself as Church, and be more aware of its mission: to praise God, and to pray and work for the salvation of the world.

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

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

RECEPTION INTO FULL COMMUNION

The Ordo Initiationis Christianae Adultorum was issued by the Congregation for Divine Worship on January 6, 1972, and was translated in interim form ("green book") by the International Commission on English in the Liturgy (ICEL) as the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults in 1974. In an appendix, this book contains the Rite of Reception of Baptized Christians into Full Communion with the Catholic Church. The white book form of this was issued by ICEL in 1974, and is reprinted here with permission. This rite was approved by the Canadian bishops in November 1974 for use in Canada.

Introduction

1. The rite for the reception of one born and baptized in a separated ecclesial community into full communion with the Catholic Church, according to the Latin rite, is arranged so that no greater burden than necessary is demanded for reception into communion and unity (see Acts 15: 28).

2. In the case of Eastern Christians who enter into the fullness of Catholic communion, nothing more than a simple profession of Catholic faith is required, even if they are permitted, upon recourse to the Apostolic See, to transfer to the Latin rite.

3. a) The rite should be seen as a celebration of the Church, with its climax in eucharistic communion. For this reason the rite of reception is generally celebrated within Mass.

b) Anything which has the appearance of triumphalism should be carefully avoided, and the manner of celebrating this Mass should be precisely defined. Both the ecumenical implications and the bond between the candidate and the parish community should be considered. Often it will be more appropriate to celebrate the Mass with only a few relatives and friends. If for a serious reason Mass cannot be celebrated, the reception should take place during a liturgy of the word. The person to be received into full communion should be consulted about the form of reception.

4. If the reception is celebrated outside Mass, the connection with eucharistic communion should be made clear. Mass should be celebrated as soon as possible, so that the newly received person may participate fully with his Catholic brethren for the first time.

5. The baptized Christian is to receive both doctrinal and spiritual preparation, according to pastoral requirements in individual cases, for his reception into full communion with the Catholic Church. He should grow in his spiritual adherence to the Church where he will find the fullness of his baptism. During the period of preparation the candidate may share in worship according to the norms of the Directory on Ecumenism. Any confusion between catechumens and candidates for reception into communion should be absolutely avoided.

6. No abjuration of heresy is required of one born and baptized outside the visible communion of the Catholic Church, but only the profession of faith.

7. The sacrament of baptism may not be repeated, and conditional baptism is not permitted unless there is a reasonable doubt about the fact or validity of the baptism already received. If after serious investigation it seems necessary — because of such reasonable doubt — to confer baptism again conditionally, the minister should explain beforehand the reasons why baptism is conferred conditionally in this instance, and he should administer it in the private form.

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1 See Second Vatican Council, Constitution on the liturgy, no. 69b; Decree on ecumenism, no. 3. See also Secretariat for the Promotion of Christian Unity, Directory concerning Ecumenical Matters, part one (May 14, 1967), no. 19 (see note 3a, below).

2 Decree on ecumenism, no. 18.

3 See Decree on the Eastern Catholic Churches, nos. 25, 4.


The local Ordinary shall determine, in individual cases, what rites are to be included or excluded in conditional baptism.

8. It is the office of the bishop to receive baptized Christians into full communion. But the priest to whom he entrusts the celebration of the rite has the faculty of confirming the candidate during the rite of admission, unless the latter has already been validly confirmed.

9. If the profession and reception take place within Mass, the one to be received — with due regard to the individual case — should confess his sins beforehand. He should first inform the confessor that he is about to be received into full communion. Any confessor who is lawfully approved may receive the confession.

10. At the reception, the candidate should be accompanied if possible by a sponsor, that is, the man or woman who has had the chief part in bringing him to full communion or in preparing him. Two sponsors may be permitted.

11. In the eucharistic celebration or, if the reception takes place outside Mass, in the Mass which follows, communion may be received under both kinds by the one received into communion, by his sponsors, parents, and spouse, if they are Catholics, by lay catechists who have instructed him, and also by all Catholics present, if the numbers or other circumstances suggest this.

12. Episcopal conferences may accommodate the rite of reception to various circumstances, in accord with the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (no. 63). The local Ordinary, moreover, may adapt the rite, enlarging or shortening it in view of special personal or local circumstances.

13. The names of those received into full communion should be recorded in a special book, with the date and place of baptism also noted.

Chapter 1

Rite of Reception within Mass

14. a) If the reception into full communion takes place on a solemnity or on a Sunday, the Mass of the day should be celebrated. On other days the Mass for the unity of Christians may be used.

b) The reception takes place after the homily. In this the celebrant should express gratitude to God and should speak of baptism as the basis for reception, of confirmation to be received or already received, and of the eucharist to be celebrated for the first time by the newly received Christian with his Catholic brethren.

c) At the end of the homily the celebrant gives a brief invitation for the candidate to come forward with his sponsor and to profess his faith with the community. The celebrant may use these or similar words:

N., of your own free will
you have asked to be received into full communion
with the Catholic Church.
You have made your decision after careful thought
under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.
I now invite you to come forward with your sponsor
and profess the Catholic faith in the presence of this community.
This is the faith in which, for the first time,
you will be one with us
at the eucharistic table of the Lord Jesus,
the sign of the Church's unity.

See Rite of Confirmation, Introduction, no. 7.

15. The one to be received then recites the Nicene Creed with the faithful. The profession of faith is always said in this Mass.

We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made, one in Being with the Father.
Through him all things were made.
For us men and for our salvation
he came down from heaven;
by the power of the Holy Spirit
he was born of the Virgin Mary, and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered, died, and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in fulfilment of the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son.
With the Father and the Son he is worshipped and glorified.
He has spoken through the Prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Afterwards, at the celebrant’s invitation, the one to be received adds:

I believe and profess
all that the holy Catholic Church believes,
teaches, and proclaims to be revealed by God.

16. The celebrant then lays his right hand upon the head of the one to be received, unless confirmation follows, and says:

N., the Lord receives you into the Catholic Church.
His loving kindness has led you here
so that, in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
you may have full communion with us
in the faith that you have professed
in the presence of his family.

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Confirmation

17. If the one to be admitted has not been confirmed, the celebrant next lays his hands upon the candidate’s head and begins the rite of confirmation with the prayer.

All-powerful God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
by water and the Holy Spirit
you freed your son (daughter) from sin
and gave him (her) new life.
Send your Holy Spirit upon him (her)
to be his (her) Helper and Guide.
Give him (her) the spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the spirit of right judgment and courage,
the spirit of knowledge and reverence.
Fill him (her) with the spirit of wonder and awe in your presence.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

The sponsor places his right hand upon the shoulder of the candidate.

The celebrant dips his right thumb in the chrism and makes the sign of the cross on the forehead of the one to be confirmed, as he says:

N., be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit.

The newly confirmed responds: Amen.

The celebrant says:
Peace be with you.

The newly confirmed responds: And also with you.

18. After the confirmation the celebrant greets the newly received person, taking his hands as a sign of friendship and acceptance. With the permission of the Ordinary, another suitable gesture may be substituted depending on local and other circumstances.

If the one received is not confirmed, this greeting follows the formula of reception (no. 16).

19. The general intercessions follow the reception (and confirmation). In the introduction, the celebrant should mention baptism, confirmation, and the eucharist, and express gratitude to God. The one received into full communion is mentioned in the first of the intercessions (see no. 30).

20. After the general intercessions the sponsor and, if only a few persons are present, all the congregation may greet the newly received person in a friendly manner. In this case the sign of peace before communion may be omitted. Finally the one received into communion returns to his place.

21. Then Mass continues. It is fitting that communion be received under both kinds by the one received and by the others mentioned in no. 11.
Chapter 2

Rite of Reception outside Mass

22. If for a serious reason the reception into full communion takes place outside Mass, a liturgy of the word is to be celebrated.

23. The celebrant vests in an alb (or at least in a surplice) and a stole of festive color. First he greets those present.

24. The celebration begins with (an appropriate song and) a reading from scripture on which the homily is based (see no. 14b).

25. The reception follows, as described above (nos. 14c-19).

26. The general intercessions are concluded with the Lord’s Prayer, sung or recited by all present, and the priest’s blessing.

27. Then the sponsor and, if only a few are present, all the congregation may greet the newly received person in a friendly way. Then all depart in peace.

28. If in exceptional circumstances the liturgy of the word cannot be celebrated, everything takes place as above, beginning with the introductory words of the celebrant. He should start with a quotation from scripture (for example, in praise of God’s mercy which has led the candidate into full communion) and speak of the eucharistic communion which will soon follow.

Chapter 3

Texts

29. 1. Biblical readings: The biblical readings for Mass or for the liturgy of the word may be taken in whole or in part from the Mass of the day, the Mass for the unity of Christians (see Lectionary for Mass, nos. 811-815), or the Mass for Christian initiation (see ibid., nos. 752-756).

When the rite is celebrated outside Mass, the following texts may be used:

- First readings and psalms:

  - Rom. 8: 28-39
  - Ps. 61: 2-3a, 3bc-4, 5-6, 9
  - R. (4a) Lord, you are my refuge.
  - 1 Cor. 12: 31 — 13: 13
  - Ps. 42: 2-3; 43: 3-4
  - R. (42: 3a) My soul is thirsting for the living God.
  - Eph. 1: 3-14
  - Ps. 65: 2-3a, 3b-4, 5, 6
  - R. (2a) It is right to praise you in Zion, O God.
  - Eph. 4: 1-7, 11-13
  - Ps. 27: 1, 4, 8b-9abc. 13-14
  - R. (1a) The Lord is my light and my salvation.
  - Phil. 4: 4-8
  - Ps. 121: 1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8
  - R. (2a) Our help is from the Lord.
  - 1 Thess. 5: 16-24
  - Ps. 63: 2, 3-4, 5-6, 8-9
  - R. (2b) My soul is thirsting for you, O Lord my God.

- Gospels:

  - Mt. 5: 1-12a
  - Mt. 5: 13-16
  - Mt. 11: 25-30
  - Jn. 3: 16-21
  - Jn. 14: 15-23, 26-27
  - Jn. 15: 1-6

* These texts are contained in full in Lectionary for Mass — Weekday Edition (1978, CCCB, Ottawa), nos. 762(1) to 762(12).
30. **Sample general intercessions:**

Brothers and sisters: our brother (sister) N. was already united to Christ through baptism (and confirmation). Now, with thanksgiving to God, we have received him (her) into full communion with the Catholic Church (and confirmed him (her) with the gifts of the Holy Spirit). Soon he (she) will share with us at the table of the Lord. Rejoice with the member we have just received into the Catholic Church. With him (her), let us seek the grace and mercy of our Savior.

That N. may have the help and guidance of the Holy Spirit to persevere faithfully in the choice he (she) has made, we pray to the Lord.

R. Lord, hear our prayer.

That all Christian believers and the communities to which they belong may come to perfect unity, we pray to the Lord. R.

That the Church (Communion) in which N. was baptized and received his (her) formation as a Christian may always grow in the knowledge of Christ and proclaim him more effectively, we pray to the Lord. R.

That all whom God’s grace has touched may be led to the fullness of truth in Christ, we pray to the Lord. R.

That those who do not yet believe in Christ the Lord may enter the way of salvation by the light of the Holy Spirit, we pray to the Lord. R.

That all men may be freed from hunger and war and live in peace and tranquility, we pray to the Lord. R.

That we who have received the gift of faith may persevere in it to the end of our lives, we pray to the Lord. R.

**Prayer:**

God our Father,
hear the prayers we offer.
May our loving service be pleasing to you.
Grant this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

31. If the reception is celebrated outside Mass, the transition from the general intercessions to the Lord’s Prayer (see no. 26) can be expressed in these or similar words:

Celebrant:
Brothers and sisters,
let us join our prayers together
and offer them to God
as our Lord Jesus Christ taught us to pray.

All:
Our Father... .

If the person received into full communion is accustomed to the final doxology, For the kingdom, etc., it should be used in this place.
CONTINUING PASTORAL CARE

What happens when the Easter season is over, and the special rites are ended? The Christian community can continue to work with new members in many ways:

Lifelong catechesis: The Church continues to catechize the whole community each week through the liturgy of the word. Over a three-year period, the Sunday readings speak on the basic truths of the faith, and constantly lead us to Jesus. In the homily, the priest shares these truths with his people, and calls them to conversion. (See The Church’s catechism, in Bulletin 56, pages 293-295; Systematic preaching from the lectionary, in no. 60, pages 221-233.)

Many ministries: The local community should encourage the new members by the example of service. There are many ways open to those who want to serve others for Christ’s sake: liturgical ministries (reader, acolyte, minister of communion, musician, liturgy committee), and other community ministries (catechist, minister to the sick and aged). These and many others are described in detail in Bulletin 53, Ministries and Liturgy; see also Many possibilities of service, in no. 53, pages 115-119. New members should be gradually encouraged to take on a particular ministry or responsibility in the life of the community.

Continuing pastoral care: Those in charge of the time of formation could follow up their work by prayer for those they helped, and by an occasional call or visit. One or two meetings or celebrations could be held during the first year, with a bible celebration or even a small group eucharist, if this would cause no embarrassment. Godparents should pray for the person they sponsored, and remain in touch with him or her.

Annual call to conversion: Each Lent the entire community is called to conversion and repentance. Prayer, reading the scriptures, fasting, aims, and other penances are encouraged, in order to prepare the members of the community to renew their baptismal promises at the Easter vigil. (On the work of Lent, see Liturgy constitution, nos. 109-110; Bulletin 37, Taking Lent Seriously; no. 42, Call to Penance.) Penance celebrations during Lent (and Advent) help the community to be more fervent in the Lord’s service. The Easter vigil Mass is the anniversary celebration of the baptism of every member of the Church. During the Easter season, the community is renewed in its understanding of the Church and of what it means to be members of the people of God.

Prayer: A strong prayer life is important for all Christians. Prayer in the morning and evening and at mealtimes is our tradition (Bulletin 63, page 69). Family prayer should be in harmony with the liturgical seasons: see Bulletin 63, Children and Liturgy, for many suggestions. Help for Growing in prayer is given in Sunday Mass Book, pages 1286-1335. Parishes should be giving serious consideration to ways of restoring morning and evening prayer, at least on Sundays (see Liturgy constitution, no. 100; Bulletin 58, pages 112-116). The parish community should also encourage days of prayer and recollection, and retreats. The solemn annual exposition is another opportunity for prayer (Bulletin 62, pages 44-46; Three days for prayer, in no. 48, pages 125-133).

Good works: True religion and worship are described by James (1: 26-27) in terms of looking after the helpless and of keeping oneself unstained before God. Christ has saved us so that we may be eager to do good works (Titus 2: 14), and live as the children of light (Eph. 5: 8), letting our example lead others to praise the Father (Mt. 5: 16). We are to remain on the vine and bear abundant fruit for the Father (Jn. 15: 1-17).

Christian attitudes: Men, women, and children who want to be better followers of Jesus will strive to put on the mind of Christ, rather than the attitudes of the world; they will try to discern God’s will for them (see Rom. 12: 1-2). Ideas for the work of the parish are suggested in Preparing the Christian community, in Bulletin 59, pages 148-155.

Continuing Christian growth is necessary for all believers. Only thus can we — the Church, the holy people of God — be the light of the world (Mt. 5: 14).
BASIC BIBLIOGRAPHY ON INITIATION

Many books and articles have been written on Christian initiation. Some of the most useful are listed below:


Many other references are given in the footnotes and articles in this issue; see also the references in Bulletin 51; and the list of articles on initiation in Bulletin 61, pages 341-344. Further titles are given in the bibliographies of the books and articles listed above.

See also Studia Liturgica, vol. 12 (1977), nos. 2-3 and 4: Report on the 1977 Canterbury Congress of the Societas Liturgica, on Christian Initiation. Further information on these issues is available from Administration office, Studia Liturgica, P.O.B. 25088, 3001 HB Rotterdam, The Netherlands. All articles are in English.
BRIEF BOOK REVIEWS


In 1966, this book appeared in England (SPCK) as no. 48 of the Alcuin Club series of liturgical studies. Out of print for some years, it has been updated with a new preface and bibliography, and re-issued. As the author notes in the preface, the subject it studies — the anointing before and after baptism, and the development of confirmation rites — is of greater concern among the major Churches today than in 1966.

Father Mitchell looks at the meanings of oil and anointing in the scriptures and in the Greek and Roman worlds. His book provides a useful collection of the various references on anointing from Church writers; also included are prayer texts concerning anointing from the earliest liturgies, as well as those of the ancient Syrian, Eastern and Western rites.

Clearly written, this book is a valuable help for anyone who wishes to understand the place of anointing in Christian initiation rites, both in our history and in our modern liturgies. Recommended.


This book presents thirty-one brief meditations — a month of daily reflections — on the role of Mary in the life of Jesus and his people. Father Haering, one of the prophets of the Second Vatican Council and the subsequent renewal, clearly relates the place of Mary in the life of Christians, and shows us how the Old and New Testaments come together in Jesus, son of Mary. Each day's meditation concludes with a prayer to the Father, and one to Mary.

Scripture, tradition, and liturgy cannot be separated in our history and contemporary life. This book helps us to have a balanced view of Mary in the life of the Church today. Recommended.

The Church as Reflecting Community: models of adult religious learning, by Loretta Girzaitis (1977, Twenty-Third Publications, P.O. Box 180, West Mystic, Ct. 06388). Illustrations, 186 pages, 8½ x 11 inches, paperback. $7.95.

The author shares her extensive and practical experience in the field of religious education for adults. This book provides a useful guide for parishes who wish to develop adult religious learning in their community. Many other books and articles are suggested (with, thank goodness, addresses where they may be obtained).

Any parish wishing to get involved in the process of adult initiation would be wise to purchase and study this book and the one reviewed below. Recommended.

Creative Learning for Adults: the why/how/now of games and exercises, by Leon McKenzie (1977, Twenty-Third Publications, P.O. Box 180, West Mystic, Ct. 06388). Illustrations, 191 pages, 8½ x 11 inches, paperback. $7.95.

Games and exercises have been used in adult education for many years, and are valuable tools for stimulating people to put themselves into creative contact with both new and familiar situations. The materials in this book are presented in an easy manner, and tearout copies of pages are provided for ease of duplication. Recommended for any parish or adult group that wants to grow in the faith and practices of the Church.
The Admission of Women to the Ministerial Priesthood/L'admission des femmes au sacerdoce ministériel: Église et Théologie, vol. 9, no. 1, January 1978 (St. Paul University, 223 Main St., Ottawa, Ontario K1S 1C4): 235 pages, $5.00.

Six penetrating articles calmly analyze the theology underlying the 1976 declaration by the Congregation for the doctrine of the faith, and help us to understand the need of honest and continuing dialogue in today's Church.

• In "It Is Not Good that the Mensch Should Be Alone: I Will Make Him/Her a Helper Fit for Him/Her" (pages 9-35), Walter Vogel clearly shows that modern scripture studies do not support the exegetical methods used in the Roman document, and points out some of the wider meanings of Gen. 2: 18.

• "L'attitude du Christ et la pratique des apôtres" (pages 37-50): This brief article by Jean-Paul Michaud helps us to understand the scriptures more fully, and to see how certain texts have been narrowly interpreted in the 1976 declaration.

• J. Kevin Coyle writes on "The Fathers on Women and Women's Ordination" (pages 51-101): He examines the meaning and context of the eight patristic texts cited by the Vatican declaration, and demonstrates that they do not support the claims alleged for them.

• In "L'être-femme: deux lectures" (pages 103-168), André Guindon examines the declaration's attitudes toward women, and contrasts them with tradition, the teaching of recent popes and the Second Vatican Council, and modern experience.

• "The Church in the Light of the Christ Event" (A Meditation Based on the Writings of Hans Urs von Balthasar), pages 169-207: Achiel Peelman reflects on the meaning of Christ's incarnation, and on his relationship with his Church, and suggests that the declaration is inadequate in its reflections.

• In "Église et sacerdoce ministériel!" (pages 209-221), Normand Provencher considers the relationship of tradition to the present and future directions of the Church, and sees the priest's resemblance to Christ mainly in service rather than masculinity.

This issue concludes with unfavorable reviews (in French) of Mystère et ministères de la femme, by Louis Bouyer, and Women and the Church's Ministry, by Nils Johansson (pages 223-235).

We recommend this issue of Église et Théologie to all who are interested in good theological thinking on the Church and its ministries.

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Father Tickle, director of religious education in El Paso diocese, has provided a simple and useful book for individuals and parish groups to use in understanding the bible better, and to use it in prayer. After an introductory chapter, he presents the eight keys (themes): revelation, election, covenant, law, sin, redemption, Messiah, and love. Each has a session on this key in the Old Testament, and then in the New.

The individual chapters or sessions are about four pages in length, and contain background, appropriate scripture references, questions for discussion, and a brief prayer service. The approach is both simple and effective. Recommended.

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Older readers may remember Fr. Lawrence for his works in the 1950s, The Week with Christ, and Meditating the Gospels. The present book addresses a series of monologues to Christ, reflecting on various gospel passages, which are themselves more or less arranged in the format of a life of Christ.

To find the meditation on a particular Sunday's gospel, you have to find the scripture references in your own lectionary or Mass book, then look up the table of passages in the front of Lawrence's book, then turn to the passage or passages. The meditations are brief, personal, and end with a brief prayer from the psalms.

For homilists and readers, this book does not replace a good commentary on the readings, but may be useful as a supplementary book for prayer. Others will benefit from its use as a help to reflection. A table of Sunday readings would have been handy. (And the word is foreword, not "forward.")

Prepared by liturgists at the request of the bishops of Ontario, these attractive booklets provide useful guidelines responding to pastoral needs. They are in accord with the official books, and are intended for clergy, catechists, and funeral directors. Recommended.

Best Seller: six cassettes, 12 sides of half-hour tapes, in vinyl case (1978, Communications Center, Pranstown House, Booterstown Ave., Co. Dublin, Ireland). No price indicated.

In 1977, Irish television (RTE) produced a 13-program series as an introduction to the bible. These cassettes give the soundtrack for 12 of these programs. They contain background information, discussions, and interviews with experts on many topics — beginnings, Old and New Testaments, prophets, Jesus, Paul.


While tapes and book may be used separately, they are best used together for greatest effect. They provide excellent openers for bible study groups and for teachers taking further training in catechetics. Recommended.

BLESSING OF BOOKS

Writing and printing are ways of handing on ideas from one person to another, and from one generation to the next. For Christians, books have passed on the scriptures and liturgical texts. Books also help us to share the thoughts of many about prayer, the heritage of the Church, and the witness of many believers.

Blessing books: What is the meaning of a blessing for books? What are we trying to express by such an action?

We may praise God for giving talents to their authors, and thank him for enriching our lives by these books. We may ask our Father to help us to use them well in our service of his people, working to make this a better world and preparing for the coming of his kingdom. We may pray for all who read these books and learn from them.

Occasions: There are various opportunities for using the blessing of books: at the opening or dedication of a library (public, parish, school, or personal) to the service of God and his people; when a gift is given to a library; when prayer books or hymnals are purchased for a parish, hospital, or religious community; when a family decides to set up a good library in their home; when a family or class wishes to bless a new bible or other books.

Resources: Many helps for developing a blessing ceremony are contained in Bulletin 49, Blessed Be God and His Creation (available from Publications Service, 90 Parent Avenue, Ottawa, Ontario K1N 7B1: $1.50 a copy in Canada, $1.75 outside Canada).
Rite of Blessing

Simple rite: Gathering, opening prayer, scripture reading, reflection (brief homily, discussion, or silence), prayer of blessing, Lord’s prayer (preferably sung), conclusion.

More developed rite: Gathering of the community, psalm or hymn, one or more readings from the bible, silent reflection, brief homily (or discussion), prayer of blessing, general intercessions, Lord’s prayer (sung), conclusion.

Prayer of blessing:

Father of light and wisdom,  
we praise you for your gifts:  
for giving us the power to see,  
and the ability to write and read,  
and to use the arts of printing.

Help us to use these crafts and skills  
for your greater honor and glory,  
and for the salvation of all your people.

Bless these books (this book),  
and grant that all who use them (it)  
may grow in wisdom and grace  
before you and all your people.

Father,  
we praise you through Jesus Christ your Son  
in the love of your Holy Spirit,  
now and always and for ever. Amen!

WORK OF THE LITURGY

What is the task of the liturgy?

• To carry on the work of our redemption;

• To help us to show the mystery of Jesus Christ and express the nature of his Church through our lives;

• To build us up each day into the holy temple and dwelling of the Father (see Eph. 2: 21-22; Jn. 14: 23);

• To make us strong and able to preach Jesus Christ to all;

• To reveal the Church as a sign to all nations (see Is. 11: 12);

• To gather all God’s children in the Church, under the leadership of Christ, our Lord and our brother.

See Constitution on the liturgy, no. 2.
HAIKU PRAYERS

Following the haiku format (see Bulletin 62, page 64; no. 63, page 85), a class of grade 10 students at St. Patrick’s Junior High School, Ottawa, prepared these prayers. Sister Amelia Belohorec, CSJ, a member of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Peterborough, is a native of Edmonton, Alberta. As the teacher of RK 251A, she recommends that the scripture passage be read over before the prayer which follows it.

Mk. 6: 1-6:
You kept on praying,
You helped those who were faithless:
Help me to keep faith.
Karen Linklater

Lk. 8: 9-10:
Parables you taught:
We listened, not understanding.
Jesus, give us God.
Bruce Marks

Mt. 27: 32-56:
You died on the cross
For sinners of all mankind:
Eyes look up to you.
Theresa Hronowski

Mt. 17: 24-27:
You paid your taxes.
Even though you were the best.
Help me understand.
Cathy Monette

Mt. 26: 36-46:
Sorrow in my heart,
I do not understand:
Let me hear your voice.
Danny Gagnon

Mt. 4: 1-11:
You resist Satan,
Lord: keep me from temptation
And fill me with love.
Sharon Taylor

Lk. 2: 47-52:
You have all the praise.
Lord, but not all the freedom.
We two are alike.
Morena Vezzaro, Nick Prinzo

Lk. 11: 2:
May your kingdom come,
May your name be kept holy,
Now and forever.
Terry Rutherford

Lk. 2: 1-20:
You were born a child,
You grew up caring for us:
For this I thank you.
Monique Joyal

Lk. 1: 49:
Your name is holy,
And it will remain like so
Till eternity.
Marcia Khandkar

Mt. 4: 1-11:
For you are the Lord
To save us from temptation.
Grant us your freedom.
Theresa Hillock

Lk. 23: 46:
Please hear my prayer, Lord:
Into your hands, my Father,
I place my spirit.
Viktor Jutasi

Mt. 22: 37:
I must love you, Lord.
My God — with mind, heart, and soul —
To live forever.
Paul Fowler

In prayer I join you.
Forgive us all of our sins;
Save us from evil.
Steven Smith

O Lord, shine on me
And take away my darkness;
Fill me with your love.
Shelly McCoy

You were born, you walked.
You ate, you learned, and you slept.
Let me learn like you.
Andrew Mullen

Father, I am down.
Lord, I knock at your door:
You could be trusted.
John Bellachi

You loved us greatly,
But we could not understand
You were a great man.
Steve Colledan, Steven Quinlan

With wisdom you taught
The ways of heaven and earth.
I wish to learn all.
Phil Drouillard

O my dearest Lord,
I come to you, Lord, for help,
To help me through life.
Mark Plant

Let it be this way,
The right shall win over wrong.
Help me be the right.
Lorraine DeCoste

You gave us your life
So that we could be happy.
We thank and praise you.
Andrew Balfour

You, greater than all,
You, who came to save us all:
Help us through sorrow.
Agostinho Lucas

We pray to you, Lord,
To save us from all evil.
Love we all your name.
Tony Carew
A leader of men,
You spoke of truth and wisdom.
We call you our Lord.
John Godin

We praise you, O Lord,
And it will remain like this.
Grant peace forever.
Paul Hamilton

You were a teacher.
Some did not listen, O Lord.
Give me your patience.
Sister Amelia Belohorec, CSJ.

PRAYING

The way we pray depends on our attitudes on what prayer is, on different forms of prayer, on how we pray, and on what we expect to “accomplish” in our prayer. The relationship of individual and group or community prayer has to be analyzed carefully.

What is praying? Some people would describe prayer as talking to God; others would tend to suggest that it is a conversation with God, begun and ended by us; still others would describe prayer as listening to God and responding to him.1

Prayer has many dimensions:

- Our beloved Abba2 has given us his Son to be our brother and friend, our Lord and savior. We are brothers and sisters of Christ and of one another. As God’s beloved children, we pray to our Father through Christ (Jn. 14: 14), who is our mediator (1 Tim. 2: 5) and our only way to God (Jn. 14: 6).

- Our Father has poured out the Spirit of his Son into our hearts (Rom. 5: 5), to move us to spiritual (“Spirit-filled”) works (Rom. 8: 5-13), and to teach us to pray: even when we do not know how to choose the right words for our prayer, his Spirit expresses it in a manner that is beyond human expression (see Rom. 8: 26-27).

- We are called to pray as individuals, opening our hearts to our Father (Mt. 6: 6). This personal prayer is not to be done in a spirit of showing off (Mt. 6: 5-6) or boasting (Lk. 18: 9-14).

- We are called to pray with others: Jesus has promised to be with us when we come together in his name, and to bring our common prayer to his Father (Mt. 18: 19-20).

- Our prayer, individual and collective, is both praise and pleading. As God’s people of prayer, we are called to sing his praises in the name of all creation, and to plead with him for the needs of the world. Pettiness has no place in our prayer: it is to be generous and universal.

1 Bulletin 44, People of Prayer, and no. 58, Day by Day We Give Him Praise, concentrate on prayer. A full list of references to prayer in past issues is given in Bulletin 61, pages 336-340.

2 See Jesus — man of prayer in Bulletin 58, pages 73-74. Bulletin 62, Liturgy and Devotion, provides a number of articles on prayer and devotion to the Father and to Jesus: see pages 9, 16-46.
• Liturgy is the prayer of the Church, the pilgrim people of God. Our Christian worship is offered by and through Christ — by the whole Church, head and members — to the Father. It is offered in a spirit of faith, guided by the Spirit who has consecrated us in baptism as God's temples.

• To be authentic, liturgical worship needs to be based on the personal faith and prayers of the members of the community, and to use the modes of common celebration approved by the Church. Christian liturgy includes the eucharist, the sacramental celebrations, the liturgy or prayer of the hours, blessings, and other approved rites. The liturgy of the Latin or Roman Church is but one of many liturgies in the universal Catholic Church of Christ. All these Churches and rites are equal in dignity (see Liturgy constitution, no. 4; Decree on Eastern Catholic Churches, no. 3).

Helping children to grow into these various dimensions of prayer is not simple. We adults need to be reminded of them frequently, and to make sure that they are in our own prayer too. Salvation does not come through raffles or rummage sales, bingo or bazaars, dramas or drives. Each parish must come to realize that its primary purpose is praise and prayer.

A QUESTION

May we use the rites in this issue of the Bulletin?

The Rite of Reception of Baptized Christians into Full Communion with the Catholic Church was approved for use in Canada by the bishops in November 1974.

The local bishop should give his approval for use of the other adapted rites in Bulletin 64. As chief shepherd and liturgist of the diocese, the bishop is the one who is responsible for all aspects of Christian initiation in the diocese (see Rite, nos. 44, 66).

Blessed are you, Lord God. Father of all:
you have made us your beloved children, and call us to be your holy Church.

Remember the promises you have made to us, and give us your strength and love as we follow Jesus your Son.
Fill us with the power of your Spirit, lead many people to you by our prayer and example, and help us to live as children of light.

We give you praise, Father, through Christ your Son, in the love and unity of your Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. Amen!