ESSAYS ON LITURGY: I
National Bulletin on Liturgy

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

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ESSAYS ON LITURGY: I

This issue of the Bulletin offers a series of articles on liturgy, designed to provoke discussion and reflection. The writers come from various places and walks of life, but share a common interest in liturgy and the prayer life of the Christian community. The basic purpose of this issue is to build up the body of Christ by these contributions.

There are many ways to benefit from Bulletin 65. Liturgy committees and study groups may use individual articles for discussion. Priests and catechists may find them helpful in their teaching.

The ideas in this Bulletin can help your community to deepen its prayer life and make its worship more pleasing to God.
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CELEBRATING EUCHARIST

OUR OPENED TREASURE —
THE SUNDAY EUCHARIST

In this article, Father Regis Halloran discusses the grace-filled energies present in the Sunday eucharist when it is well prepared and well celebrated. Many positive suggestions are offered for liturgy committees in parishes and other communities of faith.

This century may well be designated by future historians as another "golden age" in the liturgical life of the Catholic Church. The mention of this possibility bears with it the awesome challenge for present liturgists to be the living "icons and vessels" that give creative expression to the wonders of God in our midst. The Constitution on the liturgy marked the official beginnings of this new age. New surges of energy pulsed in the liturgical hearts of concerned leaders. The new symbol, the celebrating people, will light and guide the local Church assembled in worship.

This past decade newly etched in history and memory has seen a significant change in the attitude and vision in regard to worship. The age of the passive onlooker to the sacred event has given way to that of active participant. Complex rites have been simplified. Clarity in liturgical expression has encouraged rich post-catechetical activity centered upon the celebrated liturgical action. Excessive repetition of words and gestures has been minimized.

The combined labors of liturgists, biblicists, language experts, and musicians have given renewed liturgical rites for the celebration of the sacraments, the liturgy of the hours, many of the sacramentals and blessings. Indeed, one exclaims: "Behold the treasures that contain the promise of life, the Easter mystery! Christ has died, he is risen, he will come again." Rejoice and exult, yes!

In the midst of this exclamation of joy, the challenge to sail the "liturgical ship" into unknown seas remains. The liturgical ship will sail when the oarsmen continue to row. This urgent concern constantly confronts the Church. How does a parish enflesh and quicken given liturgical rituals with qualities of dynamic faith, uplifting hope, and urgent stirrings of service, neighbor to neighbor? How does the liturgy become the cutting edge that elevates and raises a parish to the realm of an authentic group of people where reign excitement and joy in the lived mystery — Christ among us? The obligation is to create a celebration that is dignified, alive, and delightful.

The advent of parish liturgy committees carries within its heart explosive potential. It is empowered with the spirit of the living word and has transfigurative capabilities. This challenging reality is illustrated in the typical weekly journey of a liturgy committee. Parish priests, musicians, readers, family members, ushers,

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artists, and poets come together. Why? To plan a typical Sunday eucharist for the parish.

**Developing a Focus**

The liturgical journey in its beginning focuses these considerations:

**a) Liturgical seasons:** Each liturgical season accents a specific dimension of the mystery of Jesus Christ. *It is the Christmas season. It is Easter — Pentecost. Christ is born. He dies. He arises. The Spirit comes!*

**b) Wonders of creation:** The creative wonders of our God are recalled. The calm and angry seas are touched. The beauties of creation that bring wonder, awe, and excitement are rediscovered.

**c) Human journey:** The people of life, family and neighbors, are remembered. The events of the week past that influenced the parish family are recalled.

The next stopping point on the journey finds the liturgical travellers as they consider the given ritual for the Sunday eucharist. A spirit of inner silence binds the collective spirit of the group. This silence is the means to enter the dynamic heart of the faith event that is to be celebrated. The power of the readings begins to grow and flower in this silent environment of human hearts. The ensuing search and struggle directed by the power of the word may have these considerations as departure points:

— *What is the sacred event that the recorded word is bringing to the parish?*
— *When did this event happen?*
— *Who are the persons involved in the events?*
— *What are the messages given in the conversations?*
— *How do the Old Testament reading and gospel engage the troubled heart of today's parish?*

The journey now is under the guidance and wisdom of the living word of God. The written word slowly begins to take root in the human heart. It is in process of becoming the living word. The power of the Word, Jesus Christ, born in human hearts, highlights and makes precise the boundaries of human living. Life contains moments of anxiety and tranquillity; loneliness and belonging; despair and hope; rejection and acceptance. These polarities of life are embraced and baptized by the energy of the living gospel. The creative tension embodied and encased by the word reveals God's people, who are a consecrated and chosen nation, a royal priesthood. God has set us apart to sing his praises, for he has invited us to come out of darkness and into his own magnificent light. Now we are God's people, and we have received his mercy. (See 1 Pet. 2: 9-10.)

These holy moments stilled in silence focus the face of Christ in the human journey. Who is the Christ? He is the one who has compassion upon the hungry crowds; forgives the wayward son; gently handles Martha's resentment toward her sister Mary; confronts the hopelessness and bleakness in the garden of Gethsemane.

In this journey, a life line, a "through line" or theme, emerges. This line will be accented in the total development of the celebration of the eucharist.
This experience takes the liturgy committee beyond superficial concerns. It takes them to the tasty center of the liturgy. The flavor developed is one of meditation and contemplation. It is characterized by interiorization and assimilation in which the dying and rising of Christ, the living Word, is central to authentic celebration.

The basic approach by a liturgy committee in planning the Sunday celebration of liturgy accepts the principle that the given pattern of liturgy contains within itself the creative energy to fashion a celebrating people into the Lord's likeness. Further, this approach places the praise and thanks of the worshipping community under the umbrella of the gospel. It avoids the "selective themology approach" which fashions and constricts the liturgy to the decisions and wishes of individuals rather than the Church. ²

Specific Considerations

Specific elements of the Sunday celebration of the eucharist are now considered in light of the developed "through line." Each moment of the Sunday eucharist contributes in an essential way to the total celebration. Each element has inherent within it specific qualities that contribute to the building of a worshipping community.

1. Opening rites

   • Hospitality: How does a parish worship committee greet the arriving congregation? The hand of welcome extended to people who come to Sunday worship is an art form. The extending of Christian hospitality marks the service of ushers to the celebration. It is imperative that ushers create a friendly and welcoming reception to those who come to worship in spirit and truth. "Be mindful to receive others as Christ receives you with his gentleness and love." Remember there is always an aspect of the "stranger" even with those united in close family bonds. The task of the usher is to make welcome the "stranger" who comes to praise and thank the Father.

   The usher develops an atmosphere that allows the worshipper to become restful in the midst of restlessness; quiet in the midst of turmoil; expressive in the midst of mystery.

   • Processions: Processions mark the conscious decision of the worshipping congregation to become one in heart and mind as the journey to the Father unfolds. This human movement of persons sets the stage of sacred theater. Confirmed by and with music, the procession sparks an atmosphere of joy-filled anticipation. It strikes a chord of excitement in the heart of the worshipping community: "Something great is happening. This assembly, in common praise, comes into the presence of the Lord."

   It is clear that the length and manner of processions will vary. The common traditional one-line procession down the center aisle may become disproportionate in relation to the entire liturgy. The entrance procession may be varied by considering the following factors:

² See Archbishop Bugnini's article against Theme Masses, in Bulletin 54, pages 190-192.
— The space of the church building (e.g., consider having aspects of the procession enter from different locations).

— The number of persons involved (choir, servers, readers, and others).

— The music available, and how it supports and expresses the “through line.”

○ *Greeting:* Following the procession the celebrating priest greets and welcomes the praying community in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This greeting is characterized by warmth and the open arms of welcome.

○ *Penitential rite:* The penitential rite brings the mercy and forgiveness of the loving Father to the assembled worshippers. The initial movement or call to forgiveness is extended by the all-holy forgiving God. In the penitential rite he touches repentent hearts with new expressions of his compassion. In gifting his people in this way, the emptiness of heart and the crevices of weakened relationships with others come into sharp focus. Hearts are fashioned anew as the forgiving God and his mercy are acclaimed anew among believers.

The third form of the penitential rite gives the liturgy committee a rich opportunity for the creative expression of the forgiveness and mercy of God. The following considerations are important in the creative development of this rite:

— The forgiving power of the Father.

— Jesus is the one sent by the Father to dwell among us. He is the one who gives the Father's forgiveness to a believing people.

— The Spirit is the one who makes the hearts of men, women, and children one with God and others.

— The ongoing need of reconciliation due to the waywardness and sinfulness of the parish family.

2. Liturgy of the word

*Be still before the Lord, and wait for him in patience* (see Ps. 37: 7).

It is in the silent heart that the word of God is heard and enfleshed. The inner silence is the rich soil in which the word is planted, takes root, grows, and flowers. This silence is not the mere absence of noise. It is the inner environment in which the wonders of God are announced, heard, accepted, contemplated. The energy of the word, in turn, electrifies Christians to express authentic love in service to others.

○ *Readings:* In the Sunday eucharist, a wide selection of the scripture treasure is available for the nourishment of believers. The first reading is from the Old Testament and is related to the gospel. The second reading is normally from the Acts of the Apostles, the letters of St. Paul, or the pastoral letters.

The liturgy committee guarantees that the readings are well prepared by the readers. The reader first hears the word of God in his or her own life. The word is allowed to touch and have decisive influence upon his or her life; then the reader is ready to proclaim the word to others. The reader brings the story of God’s saving acts of kindness and justice to the believing community. The life of God — his
chastisements; his encouraging words, *Your faith has saved you*; his perseverance with backsliders — comes alive in a forceful way to the listeners. They are challenged to consider their relationship with God, with others, and with the universe.

Humbly and sincerely the reader approaches the lectionary, the book that records the mighty deeds of God. The reader handles the lectionary with greater reverence and care than one would give to a priceless work of art.

- **Responsorial psalm:** The responsorial psalm following the Old Testament reading is the reply or answer of the community to the wonders of God proclaimed. The psalm may be expressive of joy and exhilaration experienced in touching the goodness of God; sorrow or regret in wandering from the Father’s embrace of love; awe and magnificence in seeing the holy God bestowing his love and forgiveness upon this believing parish family.

The task of the liturgy committee is to develop responsorial chords that are struck in the Old Testament reading as it is heard deep within searching hearts. The creative ability of the psalm response finds expression in varied patterns. The cantor-and-congregation approach to the responsorial psalm is highly recommended: the refrain is sung by all, the verses by the cantor. If singing is not possible, the psalm verses may be prayed by the reader, the psalm refrain proclaimed by all.

- **Gospel acclamation:** The congregation stands in readiness to hear the gospel of salvation. The gospel acclamation, the *alleluia*, is the vigorous shout of praise that heralds the proclamation of the gospel. A spirit of readiness and excitement is unfolded in the acclamation. This enables the gospel to be heard and take root in the heart. The liturgy committee provides music to help the community prepare to hear the gospel.

- **Gospel and homily:** The gospel is proclaimed!

The homilist brings before the community his reflection on the living word. The liturgy committee may provide him with “food for reflection.” This will enable the homilist to bring the word of God to the life situation of people. This joint inquiry will assist all to be servants of the word.

- **General intercessions:** It is essential that the liturgy committee take responsibility for the creative development of the prayer of the faithful. This prayer is this particular community’s plea of intercession to the Father. The given ritual pattern provides adequate guidance for the development of this prayer. The intercessions are made for the needs of the Church, the civic community, the expressed needs of others (such as the poor, the unemployed), and the needs of this assembled community in prayer. The liturgy committee must be creative in developing and having ownership of its universal prayer of intercessions offered by this parish family in the name of all others. A committee that parachutes “canned” intercessions upon a congregation does violence to the capabilities and wisdom resident in worshipping parish families.

### 3. Liturgy of the Eucharist

- **Preparation of the gifts:** The gifts are prepared for the celebration. Bread and wine are readied. The parish liturgy committee considers how these gifts are expressive of the bounty of God and the labors of mankind. They come from the soil
of the earth and are fashioned through the creative genius of hands. It is these hands that till the earth, harvest its crops, and make ready the gifts for the sacrifice.

Music may provide an atmosphere that leads the assembled people to be more unto the likeness of God in this celebrative action. Reflective silence may provide an atmosphere that acknowledges the creating power of God.

- **Sanctus:** There are rich moments in the eucharistic prayer that require the attention of the liturgy committee. In the preface, the creative and redemptive wonders of God are acknowledged. The power and energy embodied in the Sanctus swell forth in great crescendo. This acclamation acclaims the holy God with chants of glory and exaltation. The power of music is essential to capture in expressive justice the fires that have been ignited in hearts filled with the presence of God.

- **Memorial acclamation:** This acclamation is the affirmation of faith made by the believing community. In a way, it is the vocal seal to this newly covenanted community realized in the words of institution. The liturgy committee is presented with another opportunity for creative decision. The given ritual pattern presents four options to express the mystery of faith. A community nourished on the constant use of one option runs the risk of routineness and consequent boredom. The rich opportunity for varied expressions in proclaiming the mystery of faith is the challenge presented.

4. **Communion rite**

- **Our Father:** The communion rite follows upon the eucharistic prayer. It begins with the prayer that has sustained faith throughout the centuries, the Our Father. Once again, this prayer is the experience or rendezvous of life with the Father. The intensity of relationships quickens and bursts forth in praise of the Father. In the context of praise and thanks, the worshipping community asks for daily bread, forgiveness, and strength to do battle in the midst of temptation.

- **Prayer for peace and peace greeting:** The prayer for peace and the greeting of peace open anew the lives of this assembled group of believers to one another. The desire to express in gesture the existing oneness bears within itself the creative potential to be at peace with others in the Lord. The gesture of peace may take the form of the clasped hands or simple hand gesture. The intention of this rite is to make the gesture of peace a faith experience. It is the Christ who makes possible and expresses the peace of the community. The challenge of the liturgy committee is to authenticate the gesture of peace and its power to draw members of a community into oneness with one another in the Lord.

- **Communion:** The worshipping community is ready now to receive the bread of life and the cup of eternal salvation! This is a time of rich personal joy. It is a unitive time with others who are nourished with the bread of life. The liturgy committee should consider making the cup available to all who receive the bread of life.

The time after communion is one in which creative silence reigns and captivates the collective lives of worshippers. In this moment of silence, each one speaks and converses in an atmosphere of praise and thanks. The stupendous realization of the power of the words, *This is the body and the blood of Christ*, is foremost in these precious moments.
Some Conclusions

These notes provide a schematic outline of the creative potential that is present in the Sunday celebration of the eucharist. An approach has been presented that will enable the spirit of Sunday worship to quicken under the leadership of groups such as parish worship committees. The committee has the responsibility to harness all the potential of its members. The poet, the artist, and the musician gifted with creative talent and genius bring unique contributions to the building of the Sunday liturgy.

On first sight, the challenge may seem overpowering to a small band of liturgical planners in any parish. The challenge to liturgical leadership, however, is to bring countless others to celebrate the glories of God. It is to call together the Sunday worshippers. It is to involve others of all ages in planning and preparing for the celebration. After developing a “through line” for any given liturgy, satellite groups (such as the penitential group, liturgy of the word group, music group, creative expression group) may be established. These smaller groups then bring their creative thoughts to the large planning group. Further exchange, searching, and refinement takes place until the basic outline of the celebration becomes comfortable to all participants. Over a period of time, the liturgy committee aims to give many from the parish the opportunity to involve themselves in planning the Sunday liturgy.

The Sunday celebration of the eucharist continues to bring thousands to the parish church to praise and worship the God of all life. Priority must be given by parish leadership to developing authentic and vibrant celebrations of the paschal mystery, the Easter event. It is the parish family assembled that celebrates the paschal mystery. It is the celebrating priest that provides strong, loving, and wise leadership. It is the priests of the parish bonded in one with the liturgy team that give careful and gentle hours of preparation to make the Sunday celebration truly what the Lord intended. Remember:

*The liturgical journey has started.*
*The liturgical journey is continuing.*
*The liturgical journey will continue!*

NEXT ISSUE

The November-December issue of the National Bulletin on Liturgy, no. 66, is entitled *Diocesan Commissions and Parish Committees*. Following the scope of the Bulletin as described on the masthead (inside front cover) of each issue, Bulletin 66 gives a simple description of the work of the people who promote better liturgy at the parish and diocesan levels.

In this issue, further help is provided to liturgy committees in parish and religious communities, and to members of diocesan liturgical commissions. Particular attention is given to smaller ones without great resources. A penance celebration is included for Advent, built on the theme, *Not my will, but yours be done.*

Bulletin 66 will not duplicate material from Bulletin 35, but will continue to build on the foundation given in the earlier issue.

The next Bulletin will be ready for mailing in November.
POSTURE AND PREACHING

In the light of tradition and current needs, Dr. Frank Henderson\(^1\) examines the practice of preaching while seated at the presidential chair.

In some parts of the country it is becoming popular for priests to preach at the Sunday eucharist while seated in the presidential chair. This practice is said to be justified or even preferred a) because it is an approved option stated in the rubrics, b) because it is an ancient and authentic tradition in the Church, and c) because it stresses the importance of the presidential chair and the authority that it is said to signify and represent.

Although I would agree that preaching while seated is quite appropriate in small group Masses in informal settings, I believe that to do so at the Sunday eucharist, or on other formal occasions with a large congregation, is a bad liturgical practice. Though preaching while seated is permitted, it is not especially favored by the rubrics; the tradition upon which this practice is based does not seem a useful one today; and authority is not the most authentic symbol associated with the presidential chair. Finally and most importantly, preaching while seated is inconsistent with the basic nature and purpose of the homily. Let me expand on these points.

Official Directives

First, what do the ‘rubrics’ (I am using this term very broadly to refer to official documents on the liturgy) actually say about preaching while seated in the presidential chair? The General Instruction of the Roman Missal makes two statements regarding the place of the homilist: It notes that the homily may be preached “at the chair or at the lectern” (no. 97) and that the homily may also be given at the lectern (no. 272). Clearly it is indeed an officially approved option to preach from either location. It is to be noted, however, that the General Instruction says “at the chair” (ad sedem in the original Latin text), and hence it would seem to allow the preacher either to sit in the chair or to stand before the chair. To provide for both of these postures echoes the ancient practice that a bishop could speak either while seated upon his cathedra or while standing on the steps that led to it.\(^2\)

Thus there are in fact three official options regarding the posture of the preacher: standing at the lectern, seated in the presidential chair, or standing in the immediate vicinity of the chair. No preference for one or another posture is stated in the rubrics. However, one important commentary on the General Instruction says, with reference to section 97: “For very small audiences an appropriate location would be the celebrant’s chair. Seated there, he can speak as a brother to the people. For the usual congregation, the homily would be given from the lectern.”\(^3\)

In Our Tradition

The modern practice of preaching while seated in the presidential chair is said to be especially favored by an ancient tradition of the Church. Certainly in the early Church it was the special obligation and privilege of the bishop to preach, and ordinarily this was done from

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\(^1\) Dr. Frank Henderson of Edmonton, Alberta, is a former member of the archdiocesan liturgical commission, and is presently a member of the National Council for Liturgy. He is a consultor to ICEL, and a member of its subcommittee on discriminatory language. A previous article on Gregorian music in today’s liturgy appeared in Bulletin 60, pages 249-251.


the *cathedra*. Thus it was noted as something of an exception when St. John Chrysostom, as Patriarch of Constantinople, preached from the ambo instead of the *cathedra.*

Priests did not always preach in the ancient Church; this varied from place to place and from period to period. Quite clearly they did not preach from the episcopal *cathedra*; in some ancient churches there was a special priests' ambo within the sanctuary. It was in the middle ages that the preacher's pulpit became elevated and moved into the body of the church. There seems to be no suggestion that priests preached while seated in the early centuries of the Church.

To stress the tradition of preaching while seated and to favor its general applicability today is, therefore, to extend to every priest what clearly used to be an episcopal practice and prerogative. This in fact is what the new rubrics have done — at least as an option.

In considering the modern applicability of an ancient tradition, however, it is necessary to go beyond establishing the fact of the tradition. It is also necessary to examine the origins and original meaning of the tradition, how its meaning changed in the course of time, and finally it is necessary to evaluate its validity and usefulness or applicability today.

One origin of the Christian custom of preaching while seated is said to be the practice of the synagogue, as illustrated, for example, by the practice of Jesus himself: After reading from the prophet Isaiah, he returned the scroll to the attendant, sat down, and began to speak to the assembly (see Lk. 4: 20-21). Although it is also mentioned that Jesus taught while seated at meals (as would be natural), and while seated in boats (it is prudent to sit in small boats), the gospels in general do not make much of a point of Jesus' posture while preaching.

Probably much more important than the synagogue was the form that church architecture took after Christianity became the public state religion of the Roman empire. As Mitchell notes: "The *basilica*, the imperial hall in which the Roman magistrate conducted his official business and other civic affairs took place, was the model. The *cathedra*, the bishop's throne, took the place of the magistrate's chair. Constantine also extended to bishops the right to hear certain civil cases at law. Within a century the bishop began to wear the insignia of magistrates, and the ceremonial of the imperial court began to find its way into the church."

Thus although the bishop undoubtedly was the principal preacher and teaching authority in the Church prior to this period, the virtual identification of episcopacy with the civil authority of the magistracy stressed the identification of preaching while seated in the *cathedra*, with the exercise of authority. It is to be remembered that for centuries many bishops were civil rulers or authorities of some sort. It is also to be remembered that general civil etiquette for many centuries reinforced the association of authority and speaking while seated, especially in the days of few chairs and no church pews. It was always the case that the king or lord or other senior civil authority had the right to sit, while others stood in his presence. This custom survives today in the speeches from the throne by the queen and her representatives and sometimes in state speeches by other heads of state or heads of government.

The custom of preaching while seated in the *cathedra* or presidential chair is basically a secular custom which emphasizes and reinforces the authority of the speaker. In modern North American culture — and this may be different elsewhere — speaking while seated is

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5 Jungmann, *op. cit.*, page 290.

6 Mathews, *op. cit.*, page 151.

7 Jungmann, *op. cit.*, page 291.

8 Mathews, *op. cit.*, page 150.

permitted monarchs and presidents as an anachronistic practice attached to their offices. However, for others to attempt to so — except possibly for someone who is infirm — would be seen as a gesture of dominance and seeking after authority. As such, this posture seems inappropriate today for either priests or bishops. In our culture, speakers stand out of respect for their audience.

Interestingly, our culture differentiates between dominating postures in large and small groups. As discussed above, formal speaking while sitting can be dominating in a large group. In a small group, however, a seated audience would find a formal speaker (e.g., preacher) dominating if he stood. This is why it is often well or preferable for the preacher to sit at an informal, small group Mass.

Finally, the ancient tradition of which we are speaking dictated not only the posture of the bishop-preacher, but also the posture of the congregation. "Although the teacher was seated the audience . . . was obliged to hear the lecture while standing." If the more feeble were allowed to sit during the sermon, as some bishops permitted, they sat on the floor, whereas the more sturdy used canes upon which to lean. "Only the clergy were provided quite generally with seats in those early days. Only in modern times . . . did the laity obtain pews." I am sure that any attempt today to require congregations to stand and listen to a priest preach while seated in his presidential chair would invite instant rebellion. It is clear that ancient customs should not be resuscitated indiscriminately.

Sign of Leadership and Service

The third point made by proponents of preaching while seated in the presidential chair is that the chair signifies and represents authority, and hence imparts authority to the one who occupies it and to his preaching. This view quite clearly is supported by the tradition that has already been discussed. Just as clear, I hope, are the limitations and deficiencies of this tradition.

What, in fact, is an appropriate way of regarding the presidential chair? What symbolic significance should it convey? The General Instruction says that the president's chair is to show that his office is to preside over the liturgical assembly and to direct its prayer (see no. 271). The chair thus is associated with a ministry — a service — and is used in aid of this ministry. The ministry is presiding, which may briefly be described as leadership for the sake of unity. Although authority is associated with this leadership, it is neither its primary characteristic nor independent from the ministerial focus and purpose of this leadership.

That authority and dominance are not primary symbols associated with the presidential chair is implied by the General Instruction when it warns that the chair is to avoid looking like a throne (no. 271). A recent commentary expresses this point more explicitly: "A chair that is prominent without dominating expresses the celebrant's dual role of leadership and service." James F. White, a Methodist liturgist, recently commented on this question in addressing a meeting of Catholic liturgists: "... a living person is not identified with the chair in the same way that water is with a font, the bible with the pulpit, or the eucharistic species with the altar table. A person can stand and move without an object for support. A chair by itself does not function the way a font, a pulpit, and an altar table do. This is particularly true when the chair has become a throne. There are dangers in copying too carefully the early Church. The early Church, after all, was borrowing a pagan building type with the magistrate's throne at the focus . . . . I think we must realize that the primary symbol here of Christ's presence is the person, not the chair. An empty chair reflects nothing but emptiness. I think celebrant's chairs should be designed with extreme reticence . . . . At any rate, I feel the chair has been too readily

10 Jungmann, op. cit., pages 291-292.

exalted as a post-Vatican II object and has become more prominent than its function deserves.”

Concern with authority is a quite inadequate approach to any ministry in the Church. The ministry of liturgical presiding and preaching is one of service, and it should be as a servant of Christ and of his body, the Church, that the presider and preacher should approach his task. No layperson doubts the authority and power of priests and bishops, and this is recognized whether they sit or stand. The authority associated with these offices is not in question, but it is given that they be more effective and more faithful servants, and not as an end in itself.

**Posture of the Preacher**

Finally and more importantly, what does all this have to do with preaching? Does it really make any difference whether the preacher stands or sits? I contend that it in fact does make a difference, because the preacher's posture is an indication of how he sees his own role, and is also an indication of how he sees his relationship to the congregation.

Preaching first of all concerns communication, and the official documents clearly show that communication is related to the function of the presidential chair; in fact, communication is more important than ancient tradition with respect to the location of the chair in the sanctuary. (As a corollary to this, communication then becomes more important than the exercise or signification of authority.) The General Instruction says that the chair should be at the center (Latin, “head, top”) of the sanctuary, facing the people, unless the church's structure or other circumstances prevent this (no. 271). The official translation omits a significant point that is made in the original Latin text, namely the reason why too much distance is undesirable. The last phrase of section 271 might better be translated: “for instance, if communication between the priest and the assembly of the faithful is made difficult because of too great a distance.” (emphasis added).

In far too many church buildings, the location of the chair discourages communication between the seated president and the rest of the assembly. Even with the best placement, a preacher who is seated is much restricted with respect to gestures and movement, what to do with his notes, etc. To preach in any manner or from postures or positions that diminish or impede good communication would seem to show a lack of concern by the preacher both for his message and for the congregation.

But what sort of communication is the liturgical homily supposed to be? First, it has to do with God's word, and not just the word of the preacher. For this reason it is symbolically important for the preacher to be physically close to and associated with the lectionary when he preaches — even perhaps holding it in his hands; he may point to the text or read from it in the course of the homily. Although this is of course possible if the preacher takes the lectionary with him to the chair, in practice this is not likely to be done, and the preacher therefore symbolically separates himself from the scriptures.

Furthermore, unlike the sermon of yesteryear, the homily is not supposed to be didactic teaching, or the giving of moral directives, or popular theology. Thus it is not a 'head trip,' something coming from the head of the preacher and addressed to the heads of the congregation. Instead, preaching must be communication 'person to person' rather than 'head to head.' To preach person to person, the preacher himself must first encounter the scriptures with his whole person. God's word must first of all touch him, convert him, change his life in some way. Only if the preacher has encountered in his own heart the dying and rising which comes from encountering the word, can he with some confidence attempt to lead other hearers of the word to the same dying and rising.

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13 Patino et al., *op. cit.* (see note 3, above), page 251.

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It follows, then, that the whole lifestyle of the preacher must be one with what he says; the gospel that is preached must be reflected in the person who preaches it. In the homily itself, the preacher's tone of voice and 'body language' must communicate the same message as his words; thus the message must not be contradicted or undermined by the manner in which it is communicated. Both the preacher and the preaching must be gentle, caring, healing, nourishing, and hope-filling. The preacher's posture as well as tone of voice and the words spoken must show respect for the congregation, demonstrate the servanthood of the preacher, and express a going-out of himself on behalf of the people.

In my opinion, and for reasons already expressed above, this will not be achieved by preaching while seated in the presidential chair.


FAITHFUL TO THE COUNCIL

On August 6, 1978, the feast of the Lord's Transfiguration, Pope Paul VI was called by the Lord into eternity. May Paul rest in peace, and enjoy everlasting refreshment and light.

Paul inherited the role of Peter in 1963, after Pope John XXIII had led us through the first session of the Second Vatican Council. As pope, Paul guided the next three sessions of the Council, and closed it in 1965. Since that time, he encouraged the Church as we began to carry out the reforms of Vatican II.

In his testament, Pope Paul asked us to be faithful to the Council. To understand this request, we have to remember once more the purpose of the Council, as outlined in the Liturgy constitution (no. 1):

- To help Catholics to live a more intense Christian life;
- To adapt Church practices to the needs of our time;
- To foster whatever builds up Christian unity;
- To make the Church more attractive to all people.

Being faithful to the Council means working for these goals.
PARTICIPATION IN THE EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

Participation in the eucharistic prayer is a major liturgical problem. This prayer is supposed to be the center, the high point of the eucharistic celebration (GI, no. 54), in which the people of God are to participate actively, and with understanding and devotion (Liturgy constitution, no. 48). Lucien Deiss describes the ideal: "The eucharistic prayer . . . is the most festive moment of the Mass, the moment when the people participate most intently."

It is all too apparent, however, that these ideals are seldom achieved; instead, many people at many Masses are strangers or mute spectators (Liturgy constitution, no. 48) at the eucharistic prayer, though the consecration itself may be very important to them. Wandering eyes, lack of enthusiasm for the three congregational acclamations (often still spoken rather than sung), priests who still read the prayer as if it were simply their own personal prayer — these and other symptoms show that there is a fairly widespread lack of understanding of what the eucharistic prayer is and of what it means, and of exactly how priests and people are supposed to participate in it.

Part of the problem with participation in the eucharistic prayer lies in the fact that the changes that took place at and after the Second Vatican Council were really rather subtle. Thus the only real change in the form of the eucharistic prayer was the addition of the memorial acclamation; in addition, of course, the text of the Roman canon was modified slightly and three new eucharistic prayers were adopted. Important though these new texts are, the theological shift adopted by the Council was far more radical and far more demanding. Especially significant was an expanded view of the Church, now seen more as the whole people of God and as embodied and expressed in the local Church, especially when it celebrates the eucharist. Though its universality is not in question, the Church is no longer seen primarily as an institution, in which only clergy are really important.

The liturgical consequences and expressions of this theological shift in our view of the Church are appreciably different for priests and for the laity. Whereas before, priests alone were seen as the celebrants, now they are also presidents, praying the eucharistic prayer as the voice of the entire assembly. The people still are mostly silent, but whereas before they were rather passive spectators, now they are called on to listen actively and attentively and respond in sung acclamations, because they now are celebrants too.

Thus the most significant changes that the liturgical renewal has brought to this part of the Mass are the self-understanding of priest and laity, and in the attitudes and even lifestyles that they bring to the whole eucharistic celebration and to its heart, the eucharistic prayer. Under these circumstances it is natural that there should be questions about the meaning of participation in the eucharistic prayer and how to go about it.

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1 This article is by Dr. Frank Henderson: see note 1 on page 202.
2 GI: This abbreviation indicates the General Instruction of the Roman Missal. Written as a pastoral introduction and explanation of the rites of Mass, it is found at the beginning of the sacramentary; it is given on pages 11-54 of the Canadian edition.
Toward better participation: In order to see what is involved in participation in the eucharistic prayer and to make suggestions regarding better participation, it seems useful to pose three questions, and to consider them in detail:

- What is the eucharistic prayer?
- Who prays the eucharistic prayer?
- How do we participate in the eucharistic prayer?

What Is The Eucharistic Prayer?

In order to participate well in the eucharistic prayer it is necessary first to have some appreciation and knowledge of its basic nature and of its internal structure. In addition, it should be understood to be not just words, but also ritual action. Finally, the place of the eucharistic prayer in the celebration as a whole should be appreciated.

Nature of the eucharistic prayer: When Jesus instituted the eucharist at the last supper, he inserted his own words into the Jewish meal prayer that was used on such occasions. This prayer — basically that still used by Jews today — was a profound and lengthy prayer of thanksgiving, praise, blessing, and intercession, and it was said by a leader in the name of all present.

The early Church took up the basic elements of this Jewish prayer and added texts appropriate for its use by Christians. Thus the account of what Jesus did at the last supper was inserted, together with thanksgiving for the redeeming work of Christ and invocations asking the Father to send his Spirit.

A writer of around the year A.D. 150 described the core of the eucharistic celebration in this way: “The bread and a cup of water and mixed wine are brought to the president of the brethren and he, taking them, sends up praise and glory to the Father of the universe through the name of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and offers thanksgiving at some length that we have been deemed worthy to receive these things from them. When he has finished the prayer and the thanksgiving, the whole congregation present assents, saying Amen.”

This passage also substantially describes our present eucharistic rite, and we can therefore appreciate that our present eucharistic prayer, though developed and expanded, is basically the same sort of prayer as those we have from the early Church. In it “the Church recalls and makes present the saving deeds of God so that she may receive into herself the eucharist, the thanksgiving of Christ, her head.” Furthermore, “the whole prayer is one of thanksgiving and praise, the whole prayer is consecratory, where memorial and intercession intertwine and overlap, bringing out different aspects of God’s presence in our midst.”

Structure of the eucharistic prayer: The eucharistic prayer, though indeed a unity, does have an internal structure of its own, with a number of distinguishable parts. To be aware of this structure should help the presiding priest to pray and

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proclaim the eucharistic prayer more intelligently and intelligibly, and also help the congregation participate more deeply in listening and in making their acclamations.7

There are three major parts of the great thanksgiving prayer, to each of which the congregation responds in praise to the proclamation of the priest. Each of these parts has several subsections.

A. The summary of thanksgiving of the whole dispensation of God's creation, providence and redemption. Our response is the Holy, holy, holy Lord.

1. introductory dialogue
2. preface: thanksgiving to the Father
3. acclamation: Holy, holy, holy Lord.

B. The special recalling of our Lord's sacrifice of himself for us. Our response is the memorial acclamation of faith.

4. further thanksgiving
5. invocation: asking the Father to send the Spirit
6. account of the institution of the eucharist
7. acclamation: Christ has died/risen (or another text).

C. Our prayer for God's acceptance and blessing of our offering, of ourselves, and of the whole Church. Our response is the great Amen.

8. memorial development
9. offering
10. invocation: asking the Father to send the Spirit
11. intercessions
12. final doxology

Further discussions of the nature and structure of the eucharistic prayer may be found in previous issues of the Bulletin.8

Action as well as words: The eucharistic prayer is not just words, not simply a text that the priest reads. It is also action and ritual.

First, the eucharistic rite as a whole is an action in which we do what Jesus did at the last supper. Just as he took bread and wine, blessed them, broke the bread and distributed the bread and wine, and all present ate them, so we do the same in every eucharist. Of this fourfold action, the eucharistic prayer is the blessing, and it should be seen both as an action itself and as accompanying and helping to interpret the other actions of taking, breaking, and eating.

We must also recall that on a more purely ritual level the priest does not merely say certain words, but also accompanies these with various gestures and movements. Each gesture and movement has a purpose and a meaning, and is supposed to help


8 See Bulletin 24, New eucharistic prayers: guidelines for catechesis; Bulletin 28, General Introduction for the celebration of the eucharist (General Instruction), nos. 54-55; Bulletin 33, Liturgy of the eucharist, pages 86-89; Bulletin 54, as described in footnote 7, above.
interpret the meaning of the words being spoken. These gestures should be done carefully, and should be authentic; the priest should be aware of what he is doing and of what it means.

Finally, the paten and chalice, the bread and wine, the altar, sacramentary, and candles — all of these speak of the eucharistic prayer too, and care should be taken that they do so well. The central symbols, the chalice with the wine and the paten with the bread, should be clearly visible to the congregation, and not hidden behind sacramentary and candles.

Priorities and rhythm: According to the General Instruction, the whole eucharistic prayer (and not just the consecration), "is the center and high point of the whole celebration" (no. 54). Unfortunately, at many celebrations this simply is not the case, and participation is thereby made more difficult both to achieve and to facilitate.

The eucharistic celebration as a whole has a rhythm, with high and low points, and fast and slow tempos. Alternatively, we can say that there are priorities among parts of the Mass, some being more important and others less so. Thus the scripture readings plus homily and the eucharistic prayer plus reception of communion are the major high points, whereas such parts as the introductory and concluding rites and the preparation of the gifts are less important.

In the practice there sometimes is a tendency to flatten out the rhythm, and to ignore priorities. Thus it sometimes appears as if each word were as important as the next, each part of the Mass of the same weight (see Eucharistic prayers, letter of the Congregation for Divine Worship, April 27, 1973, in Bulletin 40, pages 197-203; especially no. 17, page 201).

Sometimes also, emphasis is placed upon less important parts, while the more significant are understressed. It is clear, for example, that the correct priorities are quite reversed when there is an 'offertory' song but the memorial acclamation is only spoken.

To achieve good participation, the eucharistic prayer must be perceived clearly to be the center and high point that it is supposed to be. This is aided by singing the acclamations and by proclaiming the eucharistic prayer especially well and especially prayerfully, and by not overstressing the preparation of the gifts.

Who Prays the Eucharistic Prayer?

In order to participate well in the eucharistic prayer, it is necessary not only to come to it with some knowledge, but also to come with some understanding of whose prayer this is. The eucharistic prayer is not simply the priest's prayer, nor is it simply the prayer of individual Christians who have gathered together for worship. Instead, the eucharistic prayer is first and foremost the prayer of the Church, the body of Christ. All should come to it with the realization that they are the Church and the eucharistic prayer therefore must truly be their prayer — and Christ's — as Church. The members of the Church should also come to the eucharistic prayer as a prayerful and eucharistic people; they should come from daily lives that are based on and supported by regular prayer and from daily lives that are deeply eucharistic. They should also come to the eucharistic prayer as a Church that has just encountered God's word in scripture, and that has been led in the homily to know the eucharistic
prayer as response to that word. Finally, they should come to the eucharistic prayer as a Church in which there are different Spirit-given gifts and ministries, and knowing that it is the ministry of the presiding priest to speak this prayer in their name.

A prayer of the Church: The whole of the eucharistic prayer is the prayer of the Church, and the community gathered round the altar is the local Church. All, therefore, should come to the eucharistic prayer with a sense of Church and experience of Church, being conscious that they are a redeemed and redeeming people and that they are worshippers of the Father in spirit and in truth. All should be aware that they offer the eucharist not merely through the priest but with him; that both priest and people make the sign — the eucharist — that in a pre-eminent way manifests the Church. The whole people — the entire Church — have a real and active part in the eucharistic prayer.

Many Christian people, unfortunately, do not have a sense of being the Church, and have little real experience of Church. Until this very real and important problem is remedied, participation in the eucharistic prayer will be something less than it should be. (See GI, nos. 7, 74-75.)

A prayer of prayerful and eucharistic people: Those who pray the eucharistic prayer must be a praying people in daily life as well as on Sunday. We cannot participate in and proclaim the eucharistic prayer, in and through which we enter into the Lord's death and resurrection in a special way, unless we come to it in a spirit of prayer and hence unless our daily lives are built on and supported by regular prayer. What we do on Sunday is closely related to what we do and who we are the rest of the week: if we do not pray well each day, we cannot pray as well as we ought on Sunday.

Similarly, there is a close relationship between the dying and rising that is experienced in daily life and that experienced in the Sunday eucharist. If we do not live lives of Christian charity and sacrifice every day, we will not be able to appreciate the meaning of the eucharistic prayer on Sunday, nor able to enter into it as we should.

A prayer of those who have encountered God's word: There is an intrinsic relationship between God's word in scripture and the action of the eucharist, and hence between the liturgy of the word and the liturgy of the eucharist. The liturgy of the word as a whole should build up the congregation into Church, so that it can act as Church in the eucharistic liturgy. Furthermore, what is proclaimed in the liturgy of the word will become present sacramentally in the eucharist; see Lk. 4: 21. Thus the liturgies of word and eucharist are not (as often appears) two separate services that just happen to be held one after another; they are a unity, and one role of the homily is to indicate this truth. (See Bulletin 60, Liturgical Preaching.)

Ideally, therefore, the homily not only explains, develops, and reflects on the message of the scriptural word and refers this to the daily lives of the people, but it also leads the community to the celebration of the eucharist. It is truly an integral part of the whole eucharistic celebration, one aspect of that dying and rising, that entering into the paschal mystery, which the community has gathered to celebrate. In the writer's opinion, one of the most significant causes of poor participation in the eucharistic prayer is inadequate preaching.
A presidential prayer: The Church which prays the eucharistic prayer is not a homogeneous mass, but rather is richly differentiated by the action of the Holy Spirit, who gives distinct gifts and ministries to its different members. These diverse gifts are manifested, and the various ministries expressed, in all aspects of the Church's life, including its eucharistic worship. By the most ancient tradition, therefore, the eucharistic prayer is voiced by the presiding bishop or priest; as mentioned previously, this practice is based on the very origins of our eucharistic prayer in Jewish usage and in our Lord's presidency at the last supper.

In being a presidential prayer, the eucharistic prayer is no less the prayer of the whole Church; it still expresses the faith and love of the whole assembly and depends upon their response and ratification. The president voices the thanksgiving in the name of all, and is in a way the spokesman of the community. The role of the president must be understood and respected, and for all to try to say the eucharistic prayer aloud together is a serious distortion.

How Do We Participate in the Eucharistic Prayer?

All that has been said above is preparation for participation. In order to participate well in the eucharistic prayer, it is necessary first to understand what the term participation really means, and the various ways this can be accomplished. It should also be clearly understood that priest and assembly participate in the eucharistic prayer in different ways. It is necessary then to consider not only how it is the people's prayer as they listen to the priest, but also what the meaning and function are both of the introductory dialogue and of the acclamations. Finally, we may examine in what way it is prayer and proclamation for the priest-president.

Participation — meaning and expression: To participate in the eucharistic prayer means quite simply to make it our own prayer — our own as individuals, and our own as parts of the body of Christ. It is to enter into it actively and deeply; to enter personally into the death and resurrection of Christ which it brings to us; to offer our own lives to the Father in union with Christ's; to bring to it the dying and rising of our daily lives; to take from it assurance that he is with us as we go back to the eucharistic prayer that is our daily lives; to know that we and all the world are loved by the Father and to express gratitude and thanksgiving to him; to experience the new life given the Church and each of its members personally by the Holy Spirit.

This basic meaning of participation should not be confused with how we do it — the form or manner in which this participation is expressed and manifested. In general, one may participate in different parts of the liturgy in many different ways: by listening, by seeing, by making various gestures and movements, by entering into prayerful silence, by reciting prayers and responses aloud, and by singing various kinds of chants and songs. (See Taking part in the eucharist, in Bulletin 62, pages 31-39.)

The forms in which the congregation participates in the eucharistic prayer are:

1) attentive listening
2) responses of the introductory dialogue
3) the three acclamations
4) by seeing the altar (and what is on it and around it), the presiding priest, and at least some of the rest of the congregation
5) by assuming a posture of prayer.

The presiding priest participates in the eucharistic prayer:
1) by praying aloud and proclaiming the written text
2) by seeing both what is on the altar and the congregation
3) by posture, gestures, and movement
4) especially and most importantly, by presiding.

Although it seems so apparent that priest and congregation participate in the eucharistic prayer in somewhat different ways, the implications of this are seldom considered. Priests in particular often are not really conscious how the people experience and participate in the eucharistic prayer. The priest has the texts before him (though a few say them from memory), and his participation is strongly book-oriented. In contrast, the people neither have the text before them nor have they memorized it, and they depend primarily on hearing it. Reading and hearing are quite different modes of experience, and great harm is done if the priest acts as if the people also have the texts, or if the congregation uses missalettes.

**Introductory dialogue:** Lift up your hearts. We lift them up to the Lord. Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. It is right to give him thanks and praise. These phrases, with *The Lord be with you. And also with you* that precedes them, constitute the dialogue with which the eucharistic prayer is introduced. Unfortunately, they are so familiar that we sometimes forget their meaning, purpose, and importance.

Each phrase of the introductory dialogue that the priest says can be interpreted, 'pay attention,' 'participate,' 'listen attentively,' and each congregational response means, 'yes, we will pay attention,' 'we will participate,' 'we will listen attentively.' If taken seriously, this dialogue indicates that as the presiding priest proceeds into the eucharistic prayer itself, he not only goes with the assent and backing of the entire assembly, but is also accompanied by them.

The force of the introductory dialogue often is diminished or obscured in several ways. Common faults are:
1) to say it as the congregation is rising from their seats;
2) to start it immediately after the prayer over the gifts, with no pause in between;
3) to look for the preface in the sacramentary while the dialogue is being said;
4) for the priest not to look at the people while he says his parts of the dialogue;
5) for him not to look at the people when they say their response;
6) for one or both parties to say the dialogue mechanically and without meaning.

Instead, after the prayer over the gifts, the priest should pause briefly to indicate that a new part of the Mass is about to begin. Then he should begin the dialogue

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9 English translation of the *Sursum corda* (preface dialogue) by the International Consultation on English Texts.

10 The General Instruction (no. 21) notes that the people should be standing for the prayer over the gifts (as for the opening prayer and the prayer after communion).
while looking at the congregation and should receive their response while still looking at them. All should speak with meaning. Then the priest may turn to the sacramentary and continue with the preface.

**Active listening:** The main way in which the congregation participates in the eucharistic prayer is through listening. Unfortunately, just because the congregation is silent it is often implied that its role is thus a passive one. And yet silence need not — and at the eucharistic prayer definitely should not — be equated with passivity. There is an active, involved kind of listening, and this is what is desired and intended in the liturgy. To make the prayer our own, we must really hear it; it must ‘soak in.’

**Acclamations:** The three official congregational acclamations are the *Holy, holy, holy Lord, the Christ has died* (or one of the alternative texts), and the great *Amen*. These are proclamations, and they are meant to be sung. Each in a different way is a statement of faith, of praise, and of thanksgiving.

The acclamations are not used because of tradition or from a desire to give the people something to do; they are not prayers inserted into the eucharistic prayer as somewhat artificial interruptions. As has already been pointed out, they are not the only way — or even the main way — in which the congregation participates in the eucharistic prayer. Instead, they follow from and depend upon the prior active listening of the people to what the priest is saying in their name. It is because they have first listened and agreed that they respond in acclamation, and thereby support the presiding priest in what he is saying. In the acclamations the assembly expresses its acceptance and ratification of what the priest is saying on its behalf, and unites itself in heart and mind with Christ in whose name the celebrant is presiding. A joyfully sung acclamation is a sign that the presider is really engaging the people in what he is praying.

**Prayer and proclamation of the priest:** The eucharistic prayer must not simply be read aloud by the presiding priest, but must be both prayer and proclamation. And it is not enough that it be an interior prayer; it must be read in such a way that it is apparent to the congregation that, for the priest, it truly is prayer.

The eucharistic prayer is proclamation in that it is public prayer, and in that it is a statement of faith as well; it should be clear to the people that the priest thinks it important that each member of the congregation hear this prayer.

**Ministry of presiding:** As mentioned above, the priest’s role at the eucharistic prayer has undergone recent changes that are as subtle, important, and demanding — and largely as unappreciated — as those that have affected the people’s role. This change focuses on the relationship between the priest and the people, and it may be understood by outlining four different kinds of such a relationship:

1. The priest prays his own prayer, and the people attend and look on;
2. The priest prays his own prayer, but prays on behalf of the people;
3. The priest leads the people in prayer;
4. The priest leads the people into prayer.

For many centuries our practice was at steps 1 and 2; now our theology has advanced to step 4, but in general the level of practice still is back at step 2 or 3.

It is quite a different thing to participate in the eucharistic prayer as priest who simply prays on behalf of the people, and as president, who is also to see that it is the
prayer of the entire assembly. In the former case the priest is in a certain way separate or distinct from the congregation; in the latter, he is an integral part of the whole assembly. The priest now is not simply the leader, the one who leads in prayer, but the presider, one who leads all into prayer.

Thus the priest must not only make the eucharistic prayer his own personal prayer, but must in a sense reach out to the people and gather them, draw them, incorporate them, into this prayer so that it is theirs too. This first of all requires an authentic desire to do so, and a deep consciousness that the eucharistic prayer is the prayer of all as Church. In addition, presiding well is an art, and it requires certain skills that have to be acquired. Robert Hovda has recently written an excellent book on presiding.11

The Future

This discussion of participation in the eucharistic prayer has been carried out within the context of our present texts and rites. It has to be said, however, that these do have certain drawbacks with respect to participation, and it may be hoped that these matters will be improved in due course.

First, the texts of the present eucharistic prayers have been criticised as being too abstract, and not reflecting the daily concerns and lives of people today; they are not sufficiently explicit in exhorting people12 to offer themselves and their work through Christ to God and to enter personally into the paschal mystery. The fact that many adults find the new eucharistic prayers for children particularly attractive may also be telling us something about the language of these texts (and perhaps also something about the adults).

The invariability of our present eucharistic prayers also is something of a problem. Although there now are four official texts (and an additional five for provisional use) instead of the one of former times, they still tend to be rather repetitious (especially for those who also participate in weekday Masses). The new German sacramentary contains a number of adaptations and insertions for specific feasts and seasons, and it is to be hoped that this will be done also in English.

Finally, it is to be hoped that the assembly will be given more opportunity to respond and participate through additional acclamations. To be able to respond vocally to more of the significant parts of the eucharistic prayer would be of great advantage.

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12 Editor’s note: Should the eucharistic prayers exhort? They are addressed to the Father, not to the people. It is the homily and the pastoral care of the priests and ministers that should exhort and encourage the people to offer themselves fully. See Taking part in the eucharist — “offering,” in Bulletin 62, pages 38-39.
Communion Bread: Significance or Expediency?

Rev. Claude Poirier, OP, writes about the meaning of bread used for communion, and about the importance of benefiting from the full value of the signs we use in liturgy.

Much has been said and done in recent years to emphasize the importance of the liturgy of the word and of the eucharistic prayer in our liturgical assemblies. Not quite the same effort has been displayed to underline the place of the communion rite. It is time to point out many weaknesses in the way we celebrate communion, namely:

- The insufficient stress placed on the relation between sacramental communion and its entire celebrative context;
- The lack of concern for good quality communion bread;
- The almost total disregard for the symbolism of the rite of fraction.

Come to the Banquet

Most Catholic communicants in North America are not offended when priests, deacons, and auxiliary ministers of communion head toward the tabernacle at the time of communion and distribute hosts from a previous celebration. Many of them would be surprised to learn that they have a right to receive bread consecrated at the celebration they are taking part in. And many ministers of communion might themselves be hard put to explain why this widespread practice constitutes an anomaly.

As long as we continue to understand communion almost exclusively as an individual encounter with the Lord sacramentally present in the bread, and not as a privileged expression of everyone's participation in the memorial of the death and resurrection of Jesus celebrated here and now; and as long as the altar table is seen as a support for the priest's chalice, his paten and host, his book, and not as the community table, we will continue to consider that giving to everyone the bread of this celebration is an unnecessarily complicated procedure, which only liturgists who have no experience of the practical problems of numbers in a liturgical assembly can seriously consider.

If our theology of celebration were as developed as our theology of real presence, we would gain greater sensitivity for the uniqueness of the act of celebration and of its various components; we would readily understand that these people, at this particular time, assemble in this place of worship; listen to a given scripture message with its homily; respond with songs designed for this event, with eucharistic acclamations that belong to this assembly; emit their own coughs, infants' wails, and adolescents' chatter; bring this bread and wine to the altar; exchange these particular

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1 Rev. Claude Poirier, OP, was born in Alexandria, Ontario. A member of the Dominicans, he was ordained in 1951, and graduated with an M.A. in Liturgical Studies at Notre Dame University, Notre Dame, Indiana. At present he is director of the Toronto Pastoral Centre for Liturgy, professor of liturgy at the Toronto School for Theology, and co-ordinator of liturgy at St. Augustine's Seminary, Scarborough, Ontario. He has also served as pastor in Montréal and Mississaugua.
greetings of peace; and therefore should expect to receive the bread of this particular meal, not the anonymous hosts of a previous liturgical event, however solemn.

Communion to the sick and shut-in has always been the primary purpose of the eucharistic reservation. Both this purpose and that of eucharistic adoration require only a small amount of eucharistic bread in the tabernacle. Judging from the inordinate supplies of hosts in most of our tabernacles, one would think that every active member of the worshipping community is more or less expected to become seriously ill following the Sunday liturgical gathering. (See also Other eucharistic devotions, in Bulletin 62, pages 40-46.)

Giving communion from the altar is not a recent requirement. Its importance is already stressed by Pius XII in 1947, quoting an eighteenth century encyclical letter of Pope Benedict XIV on this matter. Then the Constitution on the liturgy (1963) warmly recommends "the more perfect form of participation in the Mass," when the people receive the body of the Lord from the same sacrifice (no. 55). The 1967 instruction on the eucharistic mystery insists further: "In order that, even through signs, the communion may be seen more clearly to be participation in the sacrifice which is being celebrated, care should be taken to enable the faithful to communicate with hosts consecrated during that Mass." The 1970 General Instruction of the Roman Missal repeats the same recommendation (no. 56h).

The sign value of the celebration is what we are concerned with here. Partaking of the eucharistic bread expresses our participation in this memorial of the Lord's supper celebrated by this assembly and in this proclamation of the death/resurrection of Jesus. The bread of this meal is also the expression of our unity as a worshipping community, the sign of our gathering around the one table of the Lord. How can I see a sign of unity in the bread that is distributed from the tabernacle and which relates to an indeterminate previous celebration of which I may or may not have been part, and if so, certainly not with exactly the same people?

Many parishes, though they may have made little or no effort to ensure participation from the table of celebration, yet have stressed the importance of the bringing of the gifts to the altar by members of the assembly. Few are struck by the inconsistency of this gesture. Oftentimes a token quantity of altar wafers placed in one container is brought in procession, when three or four ciboria would be needed. If the laity are invited to bring the bread to the altar then it should be returned to them as bread of life at the time of communion. What ought to be expected here is a symbolic exchange (sacrum commercium) whereby the gifts brought to the altar return from the altar. It may be added that there is not much point in solemnly bringing wine in procession if the cup is considered the priest's cup and is never presented to the people.

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3 Instruction on the Worship of the Eucharistic Mystery ("Eucharisticum mysterium"), May 25, 1967: the text is given in Bulletin 17, pages 185-216. A commentary from Notitiae, nos. 31-33, pages 261-268, is included in Bulletin 19, pages 251-274. The quotation above is taken from the instruction, no. 31 (Bulletin 17, page 202); it is also contained in Vatican II, the conciliar and postconciliar documents, edited by A. Flannery, OP (1975, The Liturgical Press, Collegeville, Minn. 56321), pages 100-136: see no. III A, page 120.

The presence of auxiliary ministers of communion at our Sunday assemblies should also alert us to the importance of maintaining greater unity between the act of communion and its context. The reason normally given for their presence is the shortage of ordinary ministers of communion. This, however, does not mean that all we are interested in is shortening the time of distribution. What these ministers help us to avoid is hasty and perfunctory distribution; what they enable us to achieve is greater quality in the rite of communion: leisurely pace, eye contact, host reverently placed in the hand or on the tongue, words said with meaning.

But greater quality also refers to distribution of the eucharistic bread taken from the altar. How can one instruct new ministers of communion to give communion from the tabernacle and present this to them as the norm? The greater number of ministers should serve:—

1. To stress the solemn character of the eucharist as meal; and
2. A meal is normally served on a table, where food prepared for immediate consumption has been placed.

The practical difficulties of foreseeing accurately the amount of bread needed for a large Sunday assembly cannot be overlooked, but what must be weighed against this inconvenience—before we conclude it cannot be coped with—is the pastoral gain, the catechetical value, the ritual honesty of always associating the faithful in the eucharistic banquet which they celebrate as God’s people.

Experience shows, that after a very short time, one is able to estimate with sufficient precision what is needed for a given assembly. Having people place their own host in a receptacle as they enter the church is no great help, since many communicants will not take the time to stop on their way in. And besides, this unhygienic method has no particular liturgical significance. If giving communion from the altar is clearly understood as a priority, then one finds his own way of solving the difficulty.

There will often be hosts left over: they may be consumed by the ministers of communion or placed in the tabernacle. Many will deem it wise to keep a certain amount in the tabernacle in case there are more communicants than expected, but this should not become an object of exaggerated concern.

When hosts from the tabernacle must be used because the supply is larger than what is needed for the reservation, then one of the ministers of communion should take the container to the altar during the singing of the Lamb of God and all ministers should leave the altar together to give communion.

The sign value of the eucharistic bread does not reside solely in its close relation to the celebration but also in the very quality of the bread used and in the action of breaking bread.

**Altar Bread Should Appear and Taste like Bread**

It is a sad comment on the quality of communion bread commonly used in parishes throughout the world that the General Instruction of the Roman Missal should find it necessary to remind us that the matter for celebrating the eucharist should appear as real food: this is demanded by its nature as a sign (no. 283). It seems that for a very long time we have failed to ensure that basic requirement of any eucharistic meal: authentic bread.
The third Instruction further elaborates the statement of the General Instruction: "The necessity for the sign to be genuine applies more to the color, taste, and texture of the bread than to its shape. Out of reverence for the sacrament, every care and attention should be used in preparing the altar bread. It should be easy to break and should not be unpleasant for the faithful to eat. Bread which tastes of uncooked flour, or which becomes dry and inedible too quickly, must never be used."

Some religious communities who provide altar bread to parishes now offer whole-wheat wafers as an alternative. These are larger and thicker and of a darker color. Their taste is definitely more pleasant and they represent without doubt a step in the right direction.6

"The Bread That We Break"

The question of the fraction of the eucharistic bread should have been considered first in this article, since using a large loaf of bread for the eucharistic banquet should be seen not only as an added and stronger expression of the eucharistic meal, but as representing the ideal toward which all should strive for an authentic celebration. It would never have occurred to the first Christian communities to use particles or small hosts. Even nowadays these should be used, according to the General Instruction of the Roman Missal, only when there are many communicants or when this is required for pastoral reasons (no. 283). But since a sound effort toward assuring greater truth to the eucharistic meal might follow a gradual order of changes, it seemed pastorally advisable to suggest first the things which are easier to modify. Giving communion from the banquet table can begin tomorrow or next Sunday; obtaining a better quality of bread can become a reality as soon as one has had the time to change the current order for altar breads and to explain to the members of the liturgical assembly that communion bread need not be pure white. It might take a little longer to obtain altar breads or home-made unleavened bread for the fraction. This, at any rate, should be preceded by a sound catechesis on the meaning of the gesture of fraction; otherwise, this kind of change might well result in making communicants only increasingly time-conscious.

People are well aware that the presiding priest has always broken the "large" host before communion. They understand that this is a necessary and practical gesture and that it likely concerns the priest only. They may not as easily understand why, since the General Instruction and the Third Instruction, both of 1970, there is such insistence on still larger altar breads and on sharing with the other communicants.

The synoptic gospels mention the fact that, at the last supper, Jesus, after taking bread and pronouncing a blessing, broke it and gave it to his disciples. Luke also informs us (24: 31, 35) that the disciples of Emmaus recognized Jesus in the breaking of bread. The eucharist itself seems to have been called 'breaking of bread' in apostolic times (Acts 2: 42, 46; 20: 7, 11), as the General Instruction points out (nos. 56c, 283). This Instruction (no. 56c) also refers to Paul's statement about the

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6 These whole-wheat breads may be obtained from:
- Monastery of the Precious Blood, 35 Herron Avenue, Scarborough, Ontario M1L 3V9.
- Moniales Dominicaines, C.P. 470, Berthierville, Cte Berthier, P.Q.
many being made one body in partaking of the one bread (1 Cor. 10: 17); through this gesture, the eucharist is more easily seen as a sign of unity and charity, since bread is being distributed among the members of one family. It is because the breaking action was so typical of the Lord, belonged to him, so to speak, that the early disciples recognized the risen Jesus in the breaking of bread. Every time they themselves broke bread it was a way of remembering him, of producing a clear sign of his presence in the community.7

Is insistence on the breaking of bread another unrealistic refinement of liturgists, or is it not rather a statement in favor of a strong gesture that expresses the state or yearning of the liturgical assembly regarding unity and love? As long as our proclamation of scripture, our commentaries, our homilies on Christian solidarity fail to be illustrated and sustained by a ritual action which proclaims unity and sharing, the message runs the risk of remaining weak and of provoking no other reaction than that of the “there-we-go-again” type.

One is only too aware of the acute verbalism of many liturgical celebrations since Vatican II. The disappointment often voiced that incense, bells, genuflections, and much of the former pageantry are now absent from our celebration is a clear indication that telling symbolic actions are needed to restore balance to our liturgies.

Many well-intentioned presiders and liturgy committees who would never think of omitting the least word contained in the sacramentary or the lectionary for any given celebration, or at no time hesitate to give lengthy introductions followed by interminable commentaries, are very lax in considering seriously the importance of gesture and liturgical symbol. If we wish our assemblies to see the eucharist as a meal, no amount of words will convey that awareness to them unless these are supported by the signs of the meal before them: real food; all of it placed on the table of celebration; some of it, at least, in portions large enough to necessitate a solemn gesture of sharing.

The whole-wheat communion wafers mentioned above are also available in larger sizes (e.g., 4½ inches in diameter — the so-called “concelebration hosts”). By no means representing an ideal, they nevertheless enable the priest celebrant to make a meaningful gesture of fraction: each can be broken in ten or twelve generous particles. On weekdays, two or three of these hosts might suffice for the eucharistic meals of our reduced assemblies. On Sundays, even though we might not judge advisable to break as many large hosts as are needed for hundreds of communicants, we may well want to remember the insistence of the General Instruction on breaking bread and distributing the parts to at least some of the faithful (no. 283).

The ideal is attained with the one loaf broken for the many, since only then does the sign truly reveal the relationship between Christ and the members of the assembly: Jesus, the one bread, is broken in order to be the source of nourishment and of unity for his Church.8


Providing this kind of bread will require some planning. Loaves of unleavened bread are available in some specialized bakeries (e.g., Lebanese bread). The best unleavened loaves are probably those that might be baked by members of the parish. Many recipes for such bread have been published in the last few years, and it is not uncommon nowadays to hear the respective merits of Caritas or Trappist or Tortilla Mass Bread being discussed.

Seminarians at St. Augustine’s Seminary of Toronto have developed their own recipe, a variation on the St. Meinrad Mass Bread, and the community of seventy-five is now presented daily with this nourishing food at its eucharist. Having first experimented with smaller loaves for twenty-five — three of these were needed for each celebration — they have now learned to bake a loaf large enough for the entire assembly. The preparation and baking of a weekly supply takes about 45 minutes.

It would probably not be particularly effective to make many more practical suggestions since each liturgical assembly will find its own way of answering the need to express unity in sharing. If we agree that the breaking of bread should become one of the high points of our eucharistic celebrations, then realistic creativity will enable us to celebrate the Lord’s supper with genuine signs.

For further references and information, you may write to Toronto Pastoral Center for Liturgy, 2661 Kingston Road, Scarborough, Ontario M1M 1M3.

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.
THE PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Rev. Thomas A. Krosnicki, SVD, is the executive director of the Bishops' Committee on Liturgy in the United States, and a consultor of the Congregation for Sacraments and Divine Worship. He describes the history, meaning, and prayerful use of the prayer after communion in the present order of Mass.

Since 1974 the Sacramentary has been available in English translation, and has been in use throughout countries where English is spoken. A general functional familiarity — how to use the book properly — has now given way to a consideration of its content. The number of recent articles which discuss the content of the book is a good indication of a deeper interest in the sacramentary as a liturgical source.

One small part of the total liturgical book that merits careful study and consideration is the group of prayers after communion, which close the communion rite within Mass. This article describes some aspects of this set of liturgical prayers: their function, structure, and number, as well as their pastoral use.

A Presidential Prayer

The prayer after communion is a presidential prayer, like the other collects and the eucharistic prayer — the presidential prayer par excellence — which appear in the sacramentary. Referring to these prayers, the General Instruction of the Roman Missal notes that they are called presidential prayers because the priest, who presides in the person of the Lord Jesus, addresses them to the Father “in the name of the entire assembly of God’s people,” and of all who are present for this liturgy (GI, no. 10). It follows that the priest should pray them in a manner that enables all present to hear them and to be attentive to their meaning (see no. 12).

The prayer after communion receives its name from the function or purpose it enjoys within the structure of the eucharistic rite. Like the opening prayer which concludes the introductory rites, or the prayer over the gifts which brings to a close the rites for the preparation of the altar and gifts, so the prayer after communion terminates the communion rite. It is from this position within the total eucharistic rite that this prayer receives its name: post communionem, “after communion.”

“Prayer after communion” was the title already given to this oration in the seventh-century Gelasian Sacramentary. The ninth-century Gregorian Sacramentary, as well as the first Ordo Romanus, refer to this final oration as “ad complementum.” Obviously, this title has fallen into disuse since the 1970 sacramentary extended the possibility of using the prayer over the people and the solemn blessings beyond those occasions allowed by the missal of Pius V (1570), which restricted the prayer over the people to the weekdays of Lent. When the new blessings are used — always a possibility left to the pastoral discretion of the individual president — they constitute the final or “ulterior” oration, to use the ninth-century language of Amalar of Metz.

1 Born in Antigo, Wise., Father Krosnicki joined the Society of the Divine Word, and was ordained a presbyter in 1966. After writing his doctoral dissertation on the prayer after communion in the Roman rite, he earned his doctoral degree at Sant'Anselmo in Rome in 1971. He served as associate director of the Bishops' Committee on Liturgy from 1972 to 1978, and has been chairman of the subcommittee for translation and revision of texts for the International Commission for English in the Liturgy since 1976.
Structure

A study of the prayers after communion in the revised sacramentary, both those which have been taken over from the former *Roman Missal* as well as those which have been selected from other liturgical texts or which are of recent composition, clearly shows that for the most part, they continue to follow the classical structure of orations. Basically, such a prayer contains three segments:

- the address form: an invocation to God the Father;
- the petition on behalf of the faithful; and
- the scope or reason for the request.

It should be pointed out that, as with the other prayers within the eucharist, the prayer after communion is always addressed to the Father—not to Christ, Mary, or the saints. Even in the fourth century we find the Council of Carthage insisting upon this practice: *At the altar, prayer is always directed to the Father.* In the revised sacramentary of 1970, the virtual disappearance of postcommunion prayers addressed to Christ is a sign of the liturgical renewal with its conscious attempt to bring the orations in line with theological understanding of the “orationes.”

The normal conclusion, however, is made “through Christ our Lord,” indicating the mediatorship of Christ emphasized since apostolic times: *Through Jesus, we are to offer a continual sacrifice of praise to the Father* (see Heb. 13: 15). This short “end-form” is indicative of the post-apologetic age: the divinity of Christ, the equality of the divine persons, or the mediatorial role of the second person of the Trinity are no longer being questioned.

The communal response *Amen* makes the oration the community’s—adding, as it were, its consent to what has just been proclaimed in its name (GI, no. 56k).

Function

An analysis of the content of the prayers after communion clearly indicates that the prayer is intended to be a prayer of petition and not a thanksgiving—correcting the thanksgiving emphasis given to the prayers by such earlier authors as Jungmann, Dix, and, to some extent, Fortescue. Thus, the General Instruction reminds us that the priest asks in this prayer for the effects of the mystery which has just been celebrated (no. 56k). It cannot be stressed too vigorously that the eucharistic prayer itself is the prayer of thanksgiving within the celebration.

Once the function of the prayer after communion as a prayer of petition is established as a working principle, several sub-principles come into play:

1. The prayer should contain some reference to the mystery celebrated (i.e., almost invariably to the eucharist itself);
2. The petition should be made in relation to the eucharist received;
3. The petition is not made through the intercession of the saint whose feast may actually be celebrated on that particular day.
Selection and Number

The revised sacramentary of Paul VI contains 414 prayers after communion, of which only 39 are complete duplicates. The greater number (236) appears in the temporal and sanctoral cycles; the remaining 178 are scattered throughout subsequent sections of the sacramentary. Significantly, the temporal cycle is principally composed of orations taken from the major Roman sacramentaries — the Veronese, Gelasian, and Gregorian. The sanctoral cycle, on the other hand, is striking in its ponderous dependence on the eighteenth-century Parisian Missal of de Ventimille. The remainder of the postcommunion prayers in the new sacramentary represents texts from an array of sources. Of special interest are 98 prayers which are new compositions: in structure, they maintain the classical Roman lines, but in content they are refreshingly contemporary.

In many of the prayers, the original source was used as is; others underwent emendation, accomodation, or textual restoration. Regardless of their sources, the texts found in the revised sacramentary were selected, revised, or composed according to clear working principles. That is to say, the prayers were to be:

- functionally precise (see above);
- theologically contemporary;
- stylistically sound;
- historically accurate; and
- textually correct.

Like the liturgy in general, the postcommunion prayers serve both as a locus theologicus and a fons spiritualis. As the former, these prayers are "indisputably one of the sources from which theology can draw the principles which will enable it to elaborate a systematic and scientific exposition of the Christian faith." As the latter, they are a fine example of the spirituality embodied in the eucharistic liturgy, which brings about a "eucharistization" of the participants — a transformational school of Christian holiness.

Pastoral Application

Because the prayers after communion are relatively brief and because they are used at the conclusion of the eucharistic action, there is danger that proper attention is not given to them.

The prayer is addressed to the Father from the altar or the chair by the one who presides at the eucharist. The use of the chair is, in my opinion, the better solution, as the chair is clearly the place of the presiding priest when he need not be occupied at the altar. Of course, the sacramentary would be carried to the chair and held for the prayer. This also is good since it involves others in their proper ministry.

It is highly recommended that all spend some time in silent prayer after communion. At this point a hymn, psalm, or other song of praise may be sung by the entire congregation (see GI, no. 56j). After the invitation "Let us pray," there is no period of silence. (Only when there was no period of silent prayer after communion is there silence after the invitation.)

Notice that the song should be selected because it is one of praise and not thanksgiving. The great song of thanksgiving is the eucharistic prayer, and it cannot be improved upon; certainly no attempt should be made to duplicate it, as if it were not adequate. For the same reason, a spontaneous "litany of thanksgiving" is out of place in this part of the eucharistic liturgy. To introduce such a prayer betrays a lack of understanding of what the eucharistic prayer is all about! The same is true of the prayer after communion. It is not a prayer of thanksgiving, as popular interpretations would have one believe. As already stated, from an analysis of the prayer texts it is clear that this is a prayer of petition.

It is important that the prayer after communion be prayed in a manner that is audible and with proper interpretation. The introduction of so-called "sense lines" has proven to be a visual aid in this regard. Because the prayers tend to be brief, the invitation to prayer is an important device for focusing the assembly's attention. Only then will the participants be able to grasp the content of the prayer and affirm it as their own.

A final practical point must be raised. On weekdays of ordinary time, when there is no celebration of an obligatory memorial, feast, or solemnity, the prayers (opening, over the gifts, after communion) may be chosen from any of the thirty-four Sundays in ordinary time. Thus, the sacramentary provides a variety of texts and serves as a source book for liturgical celebration. In selecting the prayers, consideration should be given to the assigned lectionary readings of the day, as well as to the particular needs of the celebrating community.

Finally, it is possible that the prayer after communion, so brief and succinct, yet rich in thought, could serve (in whole or in part) as a Christian mantra for the course of the day or week. It should not be difficult to commit to memory such a prayer after communion as this:

Lord,
by our sharing in the mystery of this eucharist,
let your saving love grow within us.

(Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time)

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**SURVEY ON FAMILY PRAYER**

The National Council for Liturgy wishes to express its thanks to the communities and individuals who took the trouble to distribute, complete, and return the forms provided in Bulletin 63, pages 90-94.

While we had planned on including a brief of the survey in Bulletin 65, it has now been decided that the importance of this survey requires a fuller treatment. As a result, the March-April 1979 issue, Bulletin 68, will be on Family Prayer. The survey results and conclusions drawn from them will be printed in detail, along with further helps for families who wish to pray.
In this letter, written to the editor during Easter week of 1978, Father Joseph McCabe, MM, describes the final weeks of the catechumenate and the Easter vigil.

30 March 1978
Kanisa la Moyo Safi wa Maria
S.L.P. 143
Shinyanga, TANZANIA

Now that I’m more or less settled, I would like to fill you in on what I’m doing here, and also wish you a belated “Happy Easter season.” I had intended to spend this whole week after Easter writing to everyone individually, but on Easter Monday, I came down with a bad attack of malaria. I tried to hold up through a party for my students that afternoon but by 7:00 p.m. the pain was so bad I was taken to a clinic where I got the needed shots, and then slept for 28 hours! I’m back on my feet more or less, drinking Geritol, but still very tired.

Lent here is a very busy period for us. Throughout the country the rains have been coming, and they are plentiful this year. Our region of Shinyanga has been ravaged with floods, washouts, mudslides, and lots of damage to homes. Our own house has weathered all this fairly well, but we have had to replace gutters, drainage pipes, and underground piping which rotted. Travel has been tough. My VW Beetle has been a great help, but even that can’t get me through rivers at times. I’ve had to push it out of mud holes a couple of times, and the ruts in the roads have done in my shocks.

Christian Initiation

Nonetheless Lent is also a time of great work, when we call in all the catechumens who will be baptized at Easter. This year we had a potential group of 120 persons — men, women and teenagers. They were all called in on Ash Wednesday for five days of intensive examination. Fr. Randy Madonna (another Maryknoller working with me) and I had to examine the candidates individually and collectively on their faith, understanding of the scriptures, and their own conversion. At the end of these five days, in consultation with local Christian leaders, we chose those ready to be baptized. We ended up with 86, and they were “elected” publicly by the community on the first Sunday in Lent. Then they returned home for three more weeks of local preparation.

The elect came back here 12 days before Easter. Those days were very exciting, and tiring. We conducted these days as a retreat with morning and evening prayer, bible discussions, reflections, stations of the cross, and sacramental preparations. It

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Rev. Joseph V. McCabe, MM, who is from Garden City, New York, spent two years in Tanzania as a seminarian in his training for the Maryknoll Fathers. He was ordained a presbyter in 1977, and graduated that same year with an M.A. in Liturgical Research at Notre Dame University. In the fall of 1977 he returned to missionary work in the Diocese of Shinyanga, Tanzania, where he currently is diocesan director of liturgy.
was also the time we celebrated the scrutinies. The continual rains made it all the more difficult, but the catechumens went through all this without complaint. Toward the end of Holy Week they were given their Christian names, and were anointed with the oil of catechumens on Holy Saturday morning at the completion of their prebaptismal instructions and retreat. On Saturday evening, during the vigil service, they became full members of the Church through the sacraments of initiation — baptism, confirmation, and eucharist.

Dance of the candle: The baptismal liturgy of the Easter vigil was magnificent. Though it was drizzling through most of the ceremony, nothing could dampen the spirits of those who gathered to celebrate the initiation of new members. The catechumens and their godparents were seated in one section of the church.

The ceremony began at 8:30 p.m. with the blessing of the new fire, and then the procession of the Easter candle. At the door of the cathedral, I held the candle up, and sang Light of Christ in Swahili. After all answered, Thanks be to God! the procession began. Here the procession is literally a dance, accompanied by many drums and other instruments — a boisterous, moving, rhythmic dance through the church behind the candle. As we came in, the people's candles were lighted row by row, until the entire church (except the section with our 86 elect) was bright. I sang the Exsultet (solemn Easter proclamation) in Swahili, which is very difficult. Somehow my voice managed to make it to the end.

Then we began the lengthy liturgy of the word with readings, psalms, and songs. This lasted nearly an hour and a half. Following the homily by the bishop of the diocese, the candidates were called around the altar for the blessing of the font, the litany, the renunciations, and the profession of faith. Finally, one by one, the catechumens were led by their godparents to the font, where the three priests baptized them.

Throughout the time that they were being baptized, the church was resounding with the singing and drumming of the community, as they sang hymns which date back to the establishment of Christianity in the diocese more than 75 years ago.

When all were baptized, we blessed their white garments, and they processed (danced) out of the church to change clothes, again accompanied by drums, singing, and shouts of joy. Both the people in the church and the newly baptized continued to sing psalms which were adapted to local rhythms. As the tempo of the singing built up, the newly baptized returned in procession into the church, all dressed in bright new white robes, shirts, and dresses. The sight of the 86 people in white was very moving.

Their godparents accompanied them back to the altar, where they received their baptismal candles from the bishop and the priests, and were confirmed by the bishop. The Mass continued, and the newly baptized received communion under both forms. By the time they danced out of the church it was 12:30 a.m., four hours after we began.

But the celebration didn't end there. The Young Christian Students organization in town hosted a reception for the newly baptized, while the rest of the community stood outside, singing and dancing into the night. The songs were very old, and brought to mind memories of past celebrations of initiation.
With the dawn the newly baptized joined the rest of the community at the Mass of dawn, and the celebrations went on until afternoon. Then they finally began returning to their homes, where they were welcomed as new members into the local Christian community.

Nearly every parish in the diocese baptized more than 50 adults this year. In three weeks, we will be meeting with the catechumens who are completing their second year, and who will be presented for baptism next year.

All in all it was a very memorable Easter — but the fatigue caused the malaria, which comes with the job.

Other Work

My other work is centered mainly on the youth apostolate here in Shinyanga. As you might remember, as a seminarian I started the Young Christian Students organization here. I am back with that now, and it’s going very well. The work involves teaching religion to Junior and Senior high schoolers, being chaplain to the high school YCS, teaching conversational English to Juniors and Seniors, and running a Vocation Club for them. Then there is the Commercial Institute — a two-year economic school (which is equivalent of a junior college in the States), and secretarial school. There I teach Christian Ethics, and Modern Christian Philosophy. I am also chaplain to their YCS, which is very spirited. There are also a few from that school who are applying for the priesthood and religious life — all the more surprising, because only two years ago the school had a reputation of being a bed of non-believers. These young men and women are tireless in their work here. They literally ran most of the Holy Week ceremonies, kept the church spotless, served, read, sang, etc. Their spirit is an inspiration to all of us here.

As a result of my degree from Notre Dame in liturgical studies, I also have a number of diocesan and national jobs. Our main problem is operating without a budget. Our diocese is nearly broke, and so each priest must depend on his own finances to continue his work. I'm scraping my own resources so that I can get some programs off the ground. I'm also to be the keynote speaker at the National Bishops' meeting in June. I was amazed at that invitation. It means a lot of work in the next eight weeks. The topic is "Adult Initiation," and I'm to deliver four papers and coordinate the group discussions with all the bishops. Fortunately all my textbooks finally arrived so I have something to work with — though I'd rather fly in others for this.

My daily routine here is a little more difficult than before. Due to the rains, we have tremendous shortages. In the last two months we have had sugar only two days, and we were limited to one kilo per house. Other staples such as flour and rice are hard to get.

The roads are in awful condition. Any trip over 10 miles is a painful one. My car is holding out well, but I've had to order two complete sets of heavy-duty shocks. The cholera epidemic, which you might have read about, is still going. It hasn't reached our area yet. We've tried to clean up the area here but again the rain makes it difficult. Our yard is like a swamp. We have all been reinoculated, but now there is no more vaccine in the area. Travel is severely restricted in hopes of quarantining the cholera. This has literally isolated us in the Lake Region.
My youth work has become so large that I had to begin looking for office space. Luckily I came upon a cement house with tin roof only a block or two from the church. The rent was right ($450 a month), and it has enough room for a small bookstore we hope to open as a self-help project, and storage rooms for supplies. It has a large veranda in the back for meetings. I've been busy having the house reconditioned, refloored, getting electricity, and ordering some $1500 worth of furniture for the house. Once all this is ready we will have a center for the youth in town. If funds hold out I hope to buy recreational equipment also.

On the home front I'm taking up herb gardening (anything to improve the blandness of the diet here). I brought some seeds in with me, but somehow forgot to get some necessities such as sage, rosemary, thyme, and bay. We are also trying to clean out our swampy backyard and put in a rock garden — once the rains cease. We did get an outdoor bathroom built, so we don't worry about water.

You are in my prayers daily. Please keep me in yours.

Fraternally,

Joe

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**UNEXPLORED TREASURES**

Two far-reaching documents issued by Rome in the past few years have not been explored by many people. Both have important and fascinating implications for liturgy.

- **Directory on the Pastoral Ministry of Bishops**, by the Congregation for Bishops (February 22, 1973). Translated and published in 1974 by the Canadian Catholic Conference, Ottawa, 116 pages, $2.00, plus 10% for postage. (Also available in French at the same price.)

- **Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary**, apostolic exhortation *Marialis cultus* of Paul VI (February 2, 1974). This 46-page booklet was published by the CCC, Ottawa, 60c, plus 10% for postage. (Also available in French at the same price.) Bulletin 62 notes: “After the Christian Initiation of Adults, this is perhaps the most unrecognized and explosive document of the past decade. It lays down biblical, liturgical, ecumenical, and anthropological guidelines for true devotion to Mary, which has to be seen together with our relationship to Christ and in his Church. It recalls the Church to a gospel image of Mary, and strongly rejects activism, credulity, and sentimentality as substitutes for devotion. Devotions have to be in harmony with liturgy, and not merge with it” (pages 50-51).

Copies may be ordered from Publications Service, 90 Parent Avenue, Ottawa, Ontario K1N 7B1. Orders prepaid by cheque or money order are handled first.
MINISTRY: INSIGHTS FROM THE NEW ORDINAL

In this article, Bishop J.L. Doyle1 of Peterborough, Ontario, shares some insights on the meaning of ministry, based on the texts of the rite of ordination.

A constant in the spiritual lectures of my seminary days was the content of the spiritual classic, *Lex Levitarn*, by Gregory the Great.2 This chagrinned many of us who did not see ourselves as “shallow and half-trained youths.” Our venerable spiritual director, Monsignor L.M. Forristal, felt that Bishop Hedley's essential thesis was correct: if one can understand the ordinal of the Church, one would understand the ministry.

Since Vatican II, our rites for ordination and installation have been completely revised according to the directives of the Constitution on the liturgy. Within the Church there is much discussion on new ministries, and indeed on the whole concept of ministry. Perhaps a new “Hedley” is needed — to explore the full meaning of these new rites, and from them to clarify what they teach the Church on ministry to God’s people. Such a study would aid us in our efforts to determine the basics of both new and traditional ministries.

Nourished by the Word of God

As we survey the new rites, we see that one of the prevailing themes is the word of God. This theme speaks both to the community life of the Church as well as to the personal life of the minister. In the ceremony of admission to candidacy, the first step to ordained ministry, the suggested homily concludes: “Day by day they will learn to live the life of the Gospel and deepen their faith, hope, and love.”

The instruction for the institution of readers admonishes: “In proclaiming God’s word to others, accept it yourselves in obedience to the Holy Spirit. Meditate on it constantly, so that each day you will have a deeper love of the Scriptures, and in all you say and do show forth to the world our Savior, Jesus Christ.” The prayer of this service reads:

“Grant that as they meditate constantly on your word they may grow in its wisdom and faithfully proclaim it to your people.”

The same theme is underlined in the ordination of deacons: “Never turn away from the hope which the Gospel offers,” the bishop says to the candidates, “Now you must listen to God’s word and also preach it . . . . Express in action what you proclaim by word of mouth.” As he is handed the book of the gospels, the deacon is told:

“Receive the Gospel of Christ, whose herald you now are. Believe what you read,

1 Most Rev. James Leonard Doyle, DD, was born in Chatham, Ontario. He studied at St. Peter’s Seminary, London, and was ordained presbyter in 1954. His pastoral experience includes several appointments as assistant and as pastor, lecturer at Teachers’ College in London and Windsor, and principal of a Catholic high school. Ordained Bishop of Peterborough, Ontario, in 1976, he is a member of the national episcopal commission for liturgy.

2 See *Lex Levitarn* or *Preparation for the Cure of Souls*. With the *Regula Pastoralis* of St. Gregory the Great, by John Cuthbert Hedley (1906, Benziger, New York).
teach what you believe,
and practise what you teach.”

Candidates for the priesthood promise “to exercise the ministry of the word worthily and wisely.”

The open book of the gospel is rested on the head of the one being ordained bishop, and it remains there during the prayer of consecration. Then the consecrator admonishes: “Receive the Gospel and preach the word of God with unfailing patience and sound teaching.”

This recurring emphasis on the word of God in all the rites indicates how much the scriptures must be a part of the formation of all ministers, how much all those who serve the Church in ministry must root their personal lives in the gospels, and how deeply the word of God must vivify their proclamation and their apostolate. After synods on evangelization (1974) and on catechetics (1977), after the Holy Father’s Evangelii nuntiandi, it is not surprising to find the rites beautifully anticipating these efforts. All those involved in formation of ministers for the community of the Church must strive to give the people of God servants eager to have the word of God live for their brothers and sisters in ardent catechesis and vibrant witness.

The instruction to those requesting candidacy notes that they are to “build up by word and sacrament the Christian communities to which they will be sent.”

Sharing in the Eucharist

Sacrament, the great word of faith, is a recurring notion in the present rites for ministry. In the same rite of candidacy, the prayer asks that they will become ministers of the Church, and gather their brothers and sisters to share the eucharist.

The reader is exhorted to “instruct children and adults in the faith and prepare them to receive the sacraments worthily.” The acolyte is commanded: “Because you are specially called to this ministry, you should strive to live more fully by the Lord’s sacrifice and to be molded more perfectly in its likeness.” The bishop hands the new acolyte bread and wine for the celebration of the eucharist:

“Make your life worthy of your service at the table of the Lord and of his Church.”

This sacramental aspect of the ministry is expressed in greater detail for the deacons: “As ministers of the altar they will proclaim the Gospel, prepare the sacrifice, and give the Lord’s body to the community of believers. It will also be their duty, at the bishop’s discretion, to bring God’s word to believer and unbeliever alike, to preside over public prayer, to baptize, to assist at marriages and bless them, to give viaticum to the dying, and to lead the rites of burial.”

This notion of liturgical ministry is intensified in the priestly ordination: “When you baptize, you will bring men and women into the people of God. In the sacrament of penance, you will forgive sins in the name of Christ and the Church. With holy oil you will relieve and console the sick. You will celebrate the liturgy and

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offer thanks and praise to God throughout the day, praying not only for the people of God but for the whole world. Remember that you are chosen from among God's people and appointed to act for them in relation to God. Do your part in the work of Christ the Priest with genuine joy and love, and attend to the concerns of Christ before your own."

The implications of all this is that the liturgy of the Church, its understanding and worthy celebration, is at the very core of ministry. This offering is something that all accept, yet we still must ask these questions: Is it a reality in the daily life of the Church and indeed in the preparation of ministers? Are our sacramental and liturgical celebrations of such caliber that they truly sign the saving presence of Jesus with his people, sign his power reaching out to redeem our universe, touching all creation and every creature with resurrected life?

Certainly no one is seeking a formalized, cultic ministry. But God's people do want and badly need a pastoral, liturgical ministry which can celebrate and consecrate the whole of human life and the glory of God's creation. The rites of ordination make clear that every minister in the Church should be ready and eager to share in shaping such a worship.

**Called to Serve**

*Word, sacrament, service:* these three form the triumvirate theme of the new ordinal. Indeed word and sacrament draw their relevance in the Church only when seen in the context of service to the community of believers.

The theme of service occurs frequently in the rites. The candidacy celebration reads: "When the time comes, they will be given a part in our ministry of service to the Church, and build up by word and sacrament the Christian communities to which they are sent." The candidates are asked: "Are you resolved to prepare yourselves in mind and spirit to give faithful service to Christ the Lord and his body, the Church?"

The reader is admonished: "You will . . . take on a special office within the Christian community; you will be given a responsibility in the service of the faith . . . ." The acolyte is given a more concise charge: "Show a sincere love for Christ's Mystical Body, God's holy people, and especially for the weak and the sick. Be obedient to the commandment which the Lord gave to his apostles at the Last Supper: 'Love one another as I also have loved you.'" Again he is urged:

"Make your life worthy of your service at the table of the Lord and of his Church."

The ritual of the diaconate, as one would expect, elaborates most beautifully this concept of *diakonia*, service. "They will make themselves servants to all . . . . From the way they go about these duties, may you recognize them as disciples of Jesus, who came to serve, not to be served." The bishop reminds them: "As deacons you will serve Jesus Christ, who was known among his disciples as the one who served others . . . . Serve God and mankind in love and joy."

In his instruction to those embracing celibacy, the bishop says: "By this consecration you will adhere more easily to Christ with an undivided heart; you will be more freely at the service of God and mankind . . . . By your life and character you
will give witness to your brothers and sisters in faith that God must be loved above all else, and that it is he whom you serve in others.”

Those being ordained priests are asked: “Are you resolved to consecrate your life to God for the salvation of his people, and to unite yourself more closely every day to Christ the High Priest, who offered himself for us to the Father as a perfect sacrifice?” Again they are told: “Model your life on the mystery of the Lord’s cross.”

The man to be ordained bishop is given this counsel: “The title of bishop is one not of honor but of function, and therefore a bishop should strive to serve rather than to rule. Such is the counsel of the Master: the greater should behave as if he were the least, and the leader as if he were the one who serves.” The candidate is questioned: “Are you resolved to show kindness and compassion in the name of the Lord to the poor and to strangers and to all who are in need?”

In presenting the bishop’s ring, the consecrator says:

“Take this ring, the seal of your fidelity.
With faith and love
    protect the bride of God, his holy Church.”

The pastoral staff is presented with these words:

“Take this staff as a sign of your pastoral office:
    keep watch over the whole flock
in which the Holy Spirit has appointed you
    to shepherd the Church of God.”

The rites teach us that a synonym for the word minister in the Church is servant. Perhaps the Latin word servus, “slave,” would be closer to the meaning of the ordinal. Like the Lord Jesus, his minister must come to serve, indeed to slave for his people — not to be waited on or ministered to by others.

Many other ideas of ministry can be traced through these rites. What a fruitful study for the Church would a comprehensive view of them be!

* * *

In 1972 the Diocese of Providence defined the purpose of that diocesan Church. This sums up extremely well these ideas on ministry:

• In the power of the Spirit to announce the love of God for the world in Jesus Christ his Son, and to call all men to conversion and the openness of new life in God;
• To bring men together in community, to share in faith, hope, and love and in worship of the Father;
• From the experience of Christian community to go in service to the needs of society and its members.

4 This statement of purpose was defined at the beginning of the diocesan goal-setting program in the fall of 1972, and is quoted from Bishop Louis E. Gelineau's pastoral letter, "A Renewed, Vibrant Life of Faith." Quoted here with permission. This letter was reprinted in Origins (USCC, 1312 Massachusetts Avenue N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005): vol. 4, no. 44 (April 24, 1975): page 689ff.
MEN AND WOMEN OF PRAYER

People who are aged or disabled can make many contributions to the work of the people of God. Rev. Terence Tully outlines a word service for instituting "laudators"—men and women of praise, Christians who use their time to give praise to God.

This article provides a sound example of wise creativity, moving to meet current needs within the realm of traditional liturgical forms.

A New Ministry

A laudator is an aged or disabled person who ministers to the Church by his or her prayers. The idea for this ministry comes from the New Testament (I Tim. 5: 5) and from Hippolytus’ *Apostolic Tradition*, which notes that widows are *instituted for prayer*. (If widows, why not widowers, aged persons, and others cut off from the mainstream of activities by illness and handicap?)

The word *laudator* is in the dictionary, and is pronounced with the accent on the second syllable: loud-DAY-ter. Before choosing it, I considered some Anglo-Saxon words such as praiser, thanksgiver, even pray-er, but they did not sound right.

The thinking behind all this is that medical science has prolonged life in an uneven way: in many cases elderly persons are unable to move about on their own, and are confined to their own home, a nursing home, or the home of a son or daughter. Our culture tends to give up on such persons and to deprive them of dignity and responsibility, with resulting waste of the energy, gifts, and ideas that these persons could contribute to the world.

The Church can make a bold move to correct this by calling some of these persons to a more or less intensive *ministry of praise* that might give better tone to the whole Church. And of course individual laudators will benefit from their new status and responsibility. In some cases, disabled persons will become able again as they find a new interest in life.

Role: I visualize the laudators as spiritual helpers of the bishop, especially because their ties with a parish are often weak, and they may be required to move from their own home to a nursing home without much choice of what parish they will land in.

Laudators will have ideas about the institution rite and about fostering prayer in themselves and in the houses where they live. They will need some guidance, of course, because their handicaps may impair their judgments. It would be wonderful if each laudator had a spiritual director to advise about the prayer commitment he or she could make; the director could also help them to modify this as their physical condition improves or deteriorates, or to withdraw from the ministry if it becomes too much of a burden for them.

Laudators should also be of some assistance to priests who offer Mass, or to acolytes or auxiliary ministers who give communion in their place of residence, at least by making the responses to the liturgical prayers.

Rite of institution: The ceremonies in this article are based on the rite for instituting readers, since neither reader nor laudator is directly involved in ministering the eucharist.

○ Minister: Who should preside at this rite? I want the laudator to have a strong status in the Church, and the danger of clericalism seems remote. I hesitate to impose another chore upon the bishop. The authority to institute could be given even to a qualified laudator, but I much prefer it to be in the hands of a cleric, preferably one mandated by the bishop for this work. A retired priest who decides to join the ranks of the laudators could be considered for the role of presiding at this celebration.

1 Father Terence Tully was ordained a priest of the Diocese of Spokane, Washington, in 1942. He has served in parishes since then, as well as being editor of *The Inland Register* from 1942 to 1967, and diocesan Scout chaplain. In 1977, he graduated in the M.A. program in liturgical studies at Notre Dame University, Indiana. At present Father Tully is pastor of Holy Rosary Church, Rosalia, Wash., and two missions.
It is best to let the functions of this ministry develop before making strict rules about what the form of institution should be, or the rank of the institutor, or the complete job description of the laudators.

- **Place**: The institution liturgy is held in church, in a hospital ward, in a nursing home, or any other place where the candidates can be assembled without undue discomfort.

For the sake of brevity and to show the non-eucharistic character of this ministry, Mass is not included with the rite.

**Word Service for Instituting Laudators**

*These rites should be adapted according to local needs and traditions.*

**Introductory rites:**

- **Opening hymn**: Ps. 141 with antiphon may be used. The president, candidates, and others present may be incensed as they sing.

- **Greeting**: The one who presides welcomes the candidates and their friends, and then declares that the action to be carried out in this rite is important for the Church.

**Liturgy of the word:**

- **First reading**: Rev. 8: 3-4 may be used (lectionary, no. 702: 2). It tells about the prayers of God's holy ones rising like clouds of incense before him.

- **Responsorial psalm**: Ps. 30: 3-6 may be used. It calls upon the faithful to praise God. Verse 12b makes a fitting antiphon.

- **Gospel**: Lk. 2: 36-38 is appropriate (see lectionary, no. 204): Anna the prophetess worshipped God day and night.

- **Homily and instruction**: The presiding priest or qualified laudator speaks to the community. He or she may conclude in these or similar words:

  Anna, 84 years old, was probably not obliged or able to keep house, hold a job, or engage in social activities. But she was free to come on the scene at the right moment, to give thanks to God, and to talk about the child Jesus to all who looked forward in hope to the deliverance of Jerusalem.

  She is a saint whom laudators try to imitate. They too are freer than most people to devote much time to praising God and interceding for the Church and the world.

  In their training they learn about many methods of prayer, and they select those they are able to use. Some laudators chant or pray all or part of the liturgy of the hours together; others say some or all of the hours privately.

  Other laudators have become expert in charismatic prayer, reflective and prayerful reading, collective meditation on the scripture, the Jesus prayer, or in other ways of glorifying God and asking his favor. Because of this variety of forms of prayer, each laudator receives a different instrument of prayer in the rite of institution. But all receive the Alleluia medallion, because all laudators praise the Lord. Alleluia is a Hebrew word meaning “praise the Lord.”

  In the few years since the laudator ministry was first instituted, our bishop has come to lean heavily upon the prayers of the laudators. Some relatives and friends of laudators join them on occasion in their prayer sessions, and have learned from them the ways of prayer. Laudator Jane Doe has written a popular booklet, The Pathway of Praise.

    In the name of our bishop,
    I welcome these candidates
    into this ministry of praise and prayer.

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Rite of institution:

- Calling the candidates: After the homily or instruction, the president faces the candidates or stands among them, and reads their names aloud. Then he asks them:

  Friends,
  are you willing to be people of constant prayer,
  and to serve God's Church in the ministry of laudator?

  Candidates: I am.

  (If any candidate is unable to speak because of infirmity, the priest may suggest ahead of time that he or she may nod or make another sign to indicate willingness to serve.)

- Instruction: The one who presides may give an instruction to the candidates in these or similar words:

  Our Lord Jesus Christ never tired of praising God his Father, and sometimes spent the whole night in prayer. He taught us to say: "Our Father, ... hallowed be thy name." He reminded us that the first and greatest commandment of the law is to love God with our whole heart, with all our soul, with all our mind, and with all our strength.

  As laudators you will have a continuing and important role in this work of loving and praising God. You are taking on an important office within the Church, and are being dedicated today in a special way to serve the Christian faith, which is nourished and expressed in prayer.

  It will be your privilege and responsibility to keep the chorus of praise rising to God. You and your brother and sister laudators in many places will take turns in praising the Lord. May your ministry spread in the Church until the chorus of praise is strong and steady everywhere and always.

  Each of you will pray according to your strength. Some of you can take part in Mass and in other public prayers of the Church. Others pray in groups or as individuals in the places where you live. Some of you will offer your sufferings as your praise to the Lord.

  No matter how much you are kept out of the bustle of human activities, you are in the front line of the Church's prayer. Even those who cannot be physically present when Mass is celebrated know that they can unite in spirit with eucharistic congregations everywhere, one in prayer with the Church on earth and with the Church in eternity.

  Be grateful for this opportunity to share in the prayer of the Christian people, and be a leaven of prayer in this secular age in the history of the world.

- Invitation to prayer: The president invites the community to stand for prayer; the laudators stand if they are able.

  My brothers and sisters, let us pray that God our Father will bless these people whom he has chosen for the ministry of laudator.

  (All pause for silent prayer.)

- Prayer:

  Loving Father, creator of heaven and earth, you sent your Son to teach us how to give you glory. In your kindness bless our brothers and sisters who are chosen for the ministry of laudator.

  Make known to them the wonder of your works.

  Let them carefully perform the task entrusted to them, and praise you each day on behalf of your people.

  Listen to their prayers for the Church and the world, and give them the strength to praise you each day.
Father,
we ask this grace through Christ our Lord.  

All: Amen!

• **Institution**: The president goes to each candidate, and places the *Alleluia* medallion and chain around the person's neck. Then he presents a sign or instrument of the type of prayer which the person has promised to offer. Suitable instruments include the bible, *Liturgy of the Hours, Christian Prayer,* rosary, and the formula for the *Jesus* prayer.

N., receive this *Alleluia* medallion
as a sign of your promise to praise God daily.
Take this ——— as your chosen instrument for prayer.
On behalf of the Church, I thank you.

• **General intercessions**: The president introduces the intercessions by inviting all to pray. The new laudators may each contribute a petition to this prayer as a way of exercising their office. At the end, the one who presides concludes the intercessions with a collect.

**Concluding rites:**

• **Blessing**: The president may ask for God's blessing in this way:

May almighty God bless us in his love,
and keep us in his grace
now and for ever.

All: Amen!

• **Final hymn**: The song leader may announce the hymn in these or similar words:

We close this liturgy with the Latin hymn, *Salve Regina,* for two reasons: it gives honor to the Blessed Virgin Mary, whose gospel canticle is a model of praise for us all; furthermore, some reputable scholars believe that the *Salve Regina* was composed in the eleventh century by a holy man in Germany, named Hermannus Contractus or Herman the Cripple.

He was born physically helpless and remained so during the 41 years of his life. Nevertheless, he became an expert spiritual director, as well as becoming skilled in several languages, sciences, arts, and in writing.

[If the people in attendance cannot sing the *Salve Regina,* they may sing “Hail, holy queen enthroned above” (CBW, no. 312).]

**Further Notes**

*Editor's note*: Fostering growth in the prayer life of the people of God has been one of the concerns of the National Bulletin on Liturgy in the past seven years. A list of articles on prayer and prayers is given in Bulletin 61, pages 336-340. Further articles on prayer have appeared in the first three issues of 1978 (nos. 62-64).

• **Special role in parish life**: In June 1972, Bulletin 33 (pages 72-73) contained these thoughts, prepared by the National Liturgical Office for a Respect for Life Day on the aged:

The sick and the aged can contribute much to the spiritual vitality of the community, and the wise parish council will want to enlist their help in the primary work of the parish: giving praise to God in Christ, and sharing his love with others.

They should be invited to share in parish concerns, and in a special way, to devote themselves to prayer. What would it mean in the life of a parish if its older members became men and women of prayer in the service of the Church? We should be inviting them to devote their prayer, their suffering, their ill-health and infirmities to important and urgent causes: peace in the world, conversion of sinners, vocations, increased fervor, Christian unity.

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3 *Christian Prayer* is a one-volume edition of *Liturgy of the Hours,* and contains morning and evening prayer for every day of the year. See the reviews of various editions in Bulletin 58, pages 117-120.


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Parishes with hospitals or old people’s homes are particularly blessed, for these can become power houses of prayer. People of prayer giving witness to the meaning of suffering for Christ can be his missionaries to our community (see Bulletin 35, page 222).

By inviting these people to have a real, faith-filled sharing in the spiritual life of the community, the parish council can promote the work of the Lord and help the aged to feel they have an important, though quiet, role in their parish.

The ministry of laudator, described in Bulletin 65, provides a way in which these people can contribute to the prayer life of the parish.

- **Preparation**: In helping people to prepare for the ministry of laudator, no formal course is needed. An hour or so of discussion, perhaps spaced over two or three visits, could cover all that is necessary:

  - **Scriptural foundation**: We are the people of God, chosen in Christ from all eternity to sing the Father’s praises by our prayer and by our lives (Eph. 1: 3-14). We come to God through Jesus Christ (Jn. 14: 6) and in his name (Jn. 14: 13-14). Jesus and his apostles teach us to pray always (Lk. 11: 5-13). Our Lord has given us his Spirit to help us and teach us to pray (Rom. 8: 26-27).

  - Our prayer includes both praise (Eph. 1: 6) and petition (1 Tim. 2: 1-4). We are to give constant thanks to God through Jesus (Col. 3: 17). Prayer for the Church of God is important (Eph. 6: 18-19).5

  - **Forms of prayer**: Part of the candidate’s formation would include becoming familiar with some of the various prayer forms used by Christians. These would include praying from the scriptures (particularly the psalms and the gospels), formal prayers; silent prayer; meditative prayer; singing as prayer; sharing in the liturgy of the hours, eucharist, sacraments, blessings, and other liturgical prayers; popular devotions; individual and group prayer.

  The minister should try to help the candidates to continue with prayer forms with which they are comfortable, and at the same time, try to widen their horizons a little.

  Many different forms of prayer are part of the Christian tradition. See, for example, the many traditional forms explored in *Sunday Mass Book* pages 1286-1335.

  - **Instruments of prayer**: Among the aids which the minister can recommend for laudators are large-print bibles, psalm books (see Bulletin 58, pages 96-100), books of prayer. Suggested intercessions are given in *Sunday Mass Book*, page 1335, and in Bulletin 58, page 128. The Lord’s prayer is always a good prayer for meditation. Prayers of praise are suggested in *SMB*, page 1291; many other references are given there.

  - **Prayer of suffering**: One personal form of prayer which the laudators may offer is that of suffering and helplessness. By accepting this as God’s will for them, they can join with Christ in his paschal mystery, and offer their sufferings for his body, the Church (Col. 1: 24). With Christ they can say to the Father: *I have come to do your will* (Heb. 10: 7; Ps. 40: 7-8); *Not my will, Father, but your will be done* (Lk. 22: 42). God sees what they offer in secret (see Mt. 6: 6), and helps them to be light in his world (Mt. 5: 14-16). In their time of suffering and prayer, they can rely on Christ to help them with this burden (Mt. 11: 28-30), their daily cross carried in love (Lk. 9: 23).

  - **Offered with Christ**: Our Lord is seated in glory with the Father, living and making constant intercession for us; it is he who brings our prayers to the Father. Now we can approach the Father with confidence. (See Heb. 7: 24-25; 1 Tim. 2: 5; Heb. 4: 16.)

  In preparing a person to become a laudator, the minister should build on the person’s present prayer life and practices, and encourage him or her to accept the crosses chosen by God as the best way to the Lord.


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5 Further scriptural references are given in Bulletin 58; see Jesus — man of prayer, pages 73-74; *Prayer in the New Testament*, pages 75-78.

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SINGING THE PSALMS TODAY

At certain Sunday Masses in my parish, when there is no music, I ask the reader to lead the people after communion in the spoken recitation of a hymn. And so we all read in quasi-choral recitation,

Let all mortal flesh keep silence,  
and with fear and trembling stand;

or else:

O God of loveliness, O Lord of heaven above,  
How worthy to possess my heart’s devoted love!

And I ask you, why not read hymns? After all, we read the responsorial psalm every Sunday, and people do not object to its not being sung. Both psalm and hymn are lyrics in the true sense (a short poem expressing personal emotion). Both are also “lyric” in the sense of “suitable for singing.” Yet we usually sing hymns, but say psalms. Why this inconsistency? If both are lyric songs, why are both not sung?

Try this stanza from Psalm 47, which we use on Ascension Day. Try it three ways: first, in simple speech; second, in a loud cry; and third, singing it. Improvise a melody if you can, or at least sing it on a single medium high note.

All peoples, clap your hands,  
cry to God with shouts of joy!  
For the Lord, the Most High, we must fear,  
great king over all the earth.  
A great king over all the earth (Ps. 47: 2-3): that was a cry of praise. Did you really do it three times aloud as I asked you? Or did you content yourself with simply imagining how it would sound? Granted, one needs a little privacy or a soundproof location. But it’s a great feeling to let go on the psalms. A darkened, empty church is a great place to do it. I have done it many a time.

Suppose the psalm is a lament. Try these four lines from Psalm 13: 2-3, again in 1) speech, 2) crying out, and 3) singing:

How long, O Lord, will you forget me?  
How long will you hide your face?  
How long must I bear grief in my soul,  
This sorrow in my heart day and night?

If you have just discovered terminal cancer, or your spouse has walked out, or everything is going wrong at the office, you may choke or break down on these words, and be unable to finish. Personal emotion can be too painful to express. A cantor in such a state would have to steel himself. (Maybe the cantor is precisely the one who expresses religious emotions on behalf of the rest of us. That is quite a calling.)

Perhaps the personal emotion is guilt, the most private of all. So let us borrow a quatrain from Psalm 51: 3-4 and say/cry/sing it in order. The cry will be more a groan, and the song will be slower in dark minor modes:

---

1 Father Stephen Somerville was born in London, England, and grew up in Toronto, where he attended St. Michael’s Choir School. He has been organist, choir director, composer, and editor of various music publications. Ordained a priest in 1956, he presently serves as pastor of Good Shepherd parish, Ottawa, and as director of the archdiocesan office of liturgy, English sector.

2 Psalm references in this Bulletin are to the Hebrew numbers, as in The Jerusalem Bible.

Have mercy on me, God, in your kindness.
In your compassion blot out my offence.
O wash me more and more from my guilt
and cleanse me from my sin.

In these days of social action, the emotion of indignation at public injustice is very much
to the fore. Here are some burning lines from Psalm 72: 13-14 that proclaim a new ruler who
will right all the wrongs. Let's say — shout — sing:

He will have pity on the weak
and save the lives of the poor.
From oppression he will rescue their lives,
to him their blood is dear.

Finally, let's take an example of warm and tender love. Not the human love of affection
or friendship, great and moving as they are. But rather the love of charity for God with all
one's heart and soul and strength. With Psalm 27: 4 to help us, let us say, and cry out, and
sing:

There is one thing I ask of the Lord,
for this I long,
to live in the house of the Lord,
all the days of my life,
to savor the sweetness of the Lord,
to behold his temple.

These are only five sample emotions. We have not considered revenge, fear of death,
anger at God, and many more. The psalms can oblige, for they are surely the world's greatest
outpouring of authentic human emotion and faith. They are superb lyric poetry. They ought
to be shouted and screamed and crooned, growled and barked and howled, sobbed and
chanted and carolled. But getting back down to earth and to sober liturgy, they should at very
least be sung.

Just how then, do you sing a psalm?

Let's take a look at the psalmody of our day. Psalmody means the art and practice of
singing psalms for the liturgy. We will confine our attention to the simpler kinds of psalmody,
accessible to ordinary religious communities, parish cantors, choirs, and congregations.

We shall find that psalmody comes in three basic types:

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Where shall we look for psalmody? We find it in ordinary available hymnals. Let's take
three contemporary Canadian hymnbooks. What psalmody do they propose? How do they
invite us to sing the psalms?

The Presbyterian tradition favors type 3 of psalmody, the metrical psalm tunes. This
type requires the psalm to be rewritten, with any necessary paraphrase, into a regular rhythm,
just like a traditional hymn. Then a tune is composed or found to fit it. An example is:

All people that on earth do dwell,
Sing to the Lord with cheerful voice;
Him serve with mirth, his praise forth tell,
Come ye before him and rejoice.
As exemplified here, rhyme is usually added to the regular rhythm. Thus, dwell-tell, and voice-rejoice. The rhythm is iambic (alternate weak-strong syllables throughout) and each line has 8 syllables. Each stanza has four lines. This particular pattern is described as 8888, and has the traditional name of “long meter” (LM). Any long-meter tune (8888) would match it, though the melody style would not necessarily suit it. The usual tune for this hymn or psalm is called Old Hundredth, and the words are actually Psalm 100. This hymn is probably the world’s best known tune: it is no. 42 in the Presbyterian hymnal, nos. 343-344 in Catholic Book of Worship, and occurs in most hymnals.

How different is this text from an ordinary or literal translation of the same psalm? Here is a version, for comparison:

Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the lands!
Serve the Lord with gladness!
Come into his presence with singing! (RSV)

As you can see, the metrical version had to reword it and pad it a bit, so as to “come out right.” The question can fairly be asked. Is it still psalm 100? Is it still the word of God? Father Joseph Gélineau raises this question. He finds three difficulties with the metrical or lied psalm:

1) It cannot possibly translate the word of God faithfully, and paraphrasing is inevitable. Authentic liturgical worship requires God’s word in its integrity, not in paraphrase.

2) The hymn form is only one form of song. The psalms appear in many sung forms in Christian liturgical tradition and in the bible. These forms must not be neglected. Moreover, the hymn form tends to subordinate the text to the tune, which is hardly acceptable for the word of God.

3) To sacrifice the recitative form to metrical hymn psalms would be a liturgical and musical loss. Psalmody and hymnody are complementary, such as scripture and preaching are. We need both.

I might add that metrical psalms are heavier and take longer to sing than the other kinds of psalmody. They could prove tedious.

What then do the Presbyterians do? Judging by their official hymnal in Canada, The Book of Praise (1972), they like metrical psalms, for the first 68 numbers are precisely such. The priority is clear. However, at nos. 618-669 they present 52 “responsive readings,” which are nothing less than straight psalms, with no musical indications at all. They are apparently intended for spoken recitation, which is a kind of “psalmody-by-default.” (We Roman Catholics do the same at most of our Masses.)

Type 2 of psalmody is what is called sprung rhythm. This kind is almost synonymous with the French Jesuit scholar and musician, Fr. Joseph Gélineau. His settings pioneered the restoration of this form. It consists of picking out a regular number of principal tonic accents in each line, usually three (sometimes two or four) according to a supposed similar pattern in the original Hebrew. After each of these tonic accents is a varying number of lesser syllables (from zero to three) and the lines are sung with a very regular, equally-spaced beat on the tonic syllables.

Here is an example (from Psalm 8). Read it rhythmically by tapping with your hand on the capitalized syllables. The speed of these tonic or “sprung” syllables is approximately that of the left foot of a marching soldier striking the ground regularly.

| Your on the you have found to | Majesty is LIPS of PRAISE to SI-lence the | PRAISED above the CHILdren and of FOIL your FOE and the | HEavens; BABES EN-e-my, RE-bel. |

---

For the music of this setting, see no. 226 in *Catholic Book of Worship* (1972, CCC, Ottawa). This hymnal contains eighteen of these Gelineau psalms in sprung rhythm. It does not occur in any other Canadian hymnal to my knowledge.

Sprung rhythm psalmody is more difficult than the other kinds. This difficulty arises from the constantly varying number of syllables between the tonic beats. It becomes difficult, too, for a choir (and impossible for a congregation) to remain exactly together when executing the text. We simply don't know exactly how the ancient Hebrews sang their psalms. Even if it was in fact by sprung rhythm, somewhat as in Gelineau, this is not necessarily the best rhythm for other languages many centuries later. We Christians have made our own distinctive use of the psalms throughout our tradition, and in over nineteen centuries, there seems to have been little recourse in sprung rhythm.

Can any translation be sung in sprung rhythm? No. The translation must be designed in this rhythm. The Grail in England has done this. Only the Grail translation can be used with the Gelineau psalm tones. For comparison, here is another translation of the same passage in Psalm 8 given above. It has adopted no particular rhythm:

Thou whose glory above the heavens is chanted by the mouth of babes and infants, thou hast founded a bulwark because of thy foes, to still the enemy and the avenger

(RSV)

This brings us back to the first kind of psalmody, which we call *recitative*. It is the commonest and oldest kind. It exists in an endless number of forms and variants. The best known examples are the Gregorian or plainsong psalm tones, and Anglican chant. In all these recitative forms, the basic elements are a *reciting-note* (one or several) and *cadences* (two or more). Each line of the psalm is sung "recto tono" on the constant pitch of the reciting note until the last few syllables. These are then rendered in a particular pattern of a few notes called a cadence. A cadence is the equivalent of a comma, semicolon, or full stop in writing. It is musical punctuation. Here is an example of recitative psalmody:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Give thanks to the Lord for} & \quad \text{he is good,} \\
\text{for his mercy endures for - ever.} & \quad \text{(Ps. 135: 1, NAB)}
\end{align*}
\]

This particular psalm tone is Mode 5 in the Gregorian series, but modified here for the English language by Dom Gregory Murray, OSB, an English musician. The while note (Bb in this case) is the reciting note. The figure of 3 black notes G-Bb-C is the mediant cadence. It is called mediant because it occurs in the middle of the verse, a verse being typically two lines. The last figure G-F-Eb is the final cadence.

A possible addition to a recitative formula is an *intonation*, which is a melodic fragment at the beginning of a line.

An important question is: How do you determine the cadence? At the risk of oversimplifying, let us explain that cadences in recitative are either tonic or cursive or both. *Tonic* cadences are based on *accented* syllables (usually the last one or two in the line). To illustrate
from the above example, the cadences shown are both tonic and cursive, in that they end on the last accent of the line (tonic quality) with two preparatory syllables (cursive aspect).

Cadences can vary from a simple one-note inflection on the last syllable:

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

to a complex figure of five or more notes. If the words are not all written out directly under the corresponding note, they usually need to be pointed, that is, marked with accents or slashes or arrows or boldface letters to indicate where the singer exactly executes the cadence. Pointing is exemplified in the above example by underlining the first preparatory syllable and accenting (ê) the tonic syllable.

Does recitative psalmody occur in Canadian hymnals? Very much so.
The Presbyterian hymnal cited above contains only a trace. It presents the three gospel canticles (of Zechariah, Mary, and Simeon) in Anglican chant. (Canticles are equivalent to psalms.)

The Anglican-United Church hymnal (1971, entitled The Hymn Book) contains many more Anglican chants, a total of 48. They start in the book's liturgical appendix at no. 514. It also includes a couple of plainsong tones. Various canticles and other psalmlike texts are provided for singing to them.

Catholic Book of Worship (1972) contains a great many recitative psalm tones. The largest number, 34, are by George Black, but these include many duplications. Dom Gregory Murray, OSB, has contributed 12, again with duplications. All these formulas are provided for use with the major responsorial psalms in the lectionary. Unfortunately they have been misapplied, in that a cadence is given only every second line. Father Murray has based his formulas on the Gregorian plainsong tones, with substantial modifications to suit them to the English language. They are simple and quite singable. The Black formulas too are modal, and quite simple. Some seem pitched rather too low for effective declamation. Here is a sample of Black psalmody (CBW, no. 181):

Notes PQ and ST are the reciting notes. They are doubled because of the CBW practice of singing two lines, not one, before each cadence. Perhaps Mr. Black intended this for some reason. Note R is the mediant cadence, a simple upward inflection on the last accent of the line. Notes UV are two preparatory syllables to note W, the final accent of that line. This final cadence is exactly the same kind as Murray uses. Here is a sample verse (Ps. 18: 22-23):

(P) The stone which the builders rejected
(Q) has become the (R) corner stone.
(S) This is the work of the Lord,
(T) A marvel (UV) in our (W) eyes.

Catholic Book of Worship also presents some recitative psalmody by the present writer. It publishes six psalms from his Psalms for Singing, Book One. For example, "The Lord is my shepherd" (Ps. 23) and "Let all the earth cry out to the Lord with joy" (Ps. 100). These are a more elaborate and melodious kind of recitative, designed for psalms in iambic metre; in fact each is designed for that one given psalm.
Of greater general utility is the so-called “Two-three psalmody,” presented in four places in CBW: nos. 36, 202, 203, and 208. Let’s take a moment to study this psalmody, because it seems to be the easiest kind of all. This writer did not claim credit for two-three psalmody in CBW, but in fact he is the originator of it. He developed it around 1969 at St. Michael’s Cathedral in Toronto for the responsorial psalms of the new Roman lectionary which had just appeared. Two-three psalmody is so called because the cadence always begins on the second or third last syllable of the line, whichever is more accented. This psalmody is so simple that ordinary people can sing it after two minutes of practice in a group, even without pointing to the syllables. Pointing is desirable, however, because an occasional difficult or special line may occur. Here is an example of two-three psalmody (Ps. 138: 1-2):

1. I thank you, Lord, with all my heart,
2. In the presence of the angels I will bless you.

1. you have heard the words of my mouth.
2. I will adore before your holy temple.

The beginning syllable of the cadence has here been underlined. Notice that it is always the second or third last. And now, to demonstrate the ease of this psalmody, sing the next couple of verses below to the same formula above:

I thank you for your faithfulness and love which excel all we ever knew of you,
On the day I called, you answered;
you increased the strength of my soul.

(Ps. 138: 2-3)

Two-three psalmody is not only easy but flexible. It can be sung to any translation of the psalms and canticles. It can be composed in four-line formulas, as well as two-line formulas. Here is a sample tone in four lines, which give greater musical interest:

Try this formula now with the verses of Ps. 138 above or with any four-line stanza. (If a stanza has five lines, you simply group two convenient lines into one, with a pause in the middle.)

The responsorial psalm of the Roman rite Mass is so named because the people respond to each stanza with a refrain. This refrain is typically set to a short melody. Consequently the psalm tone of the verses must match the mode and key of this melody. All the Black and Murray and two-three psalm tones can be constructed in any mode or key. It is most convenient when the hymnal provides the right psalm tone alongside the refrain, as does CBW (complete edition). Many is the psalm that does not get sung simply because the psalm tone

notation was not given on the spot but had to be searched for in some obscure appendix or in a different book. It is all very well to have freedom of choice, but at least a suggested psalm tone should always be provided with every psalm and every psalm refrain.

This essay on psalmody would not be complete without reference to the great tradition of Anglican psalm tones. These tones originated by a choral development of the plainsong or Gregorian formulas. SATB harmony was added with cadences of increasing melodic interest. Here is a simple example from the Anglican-United hymnal, *The Hymn Book*, at no. 522:

```
\begin{music}
\begin{staff}
\begin{measures}0\end{measures}
\end{staff}
\end{music}
```

G.J. Elvey, 1816-93

The cadences are tonic, and the asterisks indicate where the accented syllables fall. Here is a sample text from Psalm 100. Try it with a quartet!

```
O be joyful in the Lord, / all ye / lands:
Serve the Lord with gladness, and come
before his / presence / with a song.
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See *The Hymn Book*, no. 522

It is important to sing the cadences NOT in ponderous four-four time, but in a light and strong way at the speed of recitative, like the preceding syllables. (Otherwise you get so-called “Anglican thump.”)

It is curious to note that this translation of Psalm 100 averages 26% more syllables per line than the more terse version from the Grail in CBW, nos. 189 or 238. That exemplifies one of the style differences among psalters.

**Conclusions**

What conclusions can be drawn from this psalmody survey of recent Canadian hymnals?

1. All the hymnals take psalmody seriously.
2. The Presbyterian favors metric psalm tunes, with a provision for spoken psalms also.
3. The Anglican-United and the Roman Catholic hymnals group the metric psalms with the other hymns, and give more space to recitative psalmody.
4. The Anglican-United stresses Anglican psalm tones for part-singing by choirs.
5. The Roman Catholic stresses simpler unison psalm tones for singing by solo cantor, with the refrain sung by the people.

*Catholic Book of Worship* is in process of revision at this time (1978), and the revisers tell us that psalmody will be even more emphasized in CBW II. Music will be given for every Sunday psalm refrain, along with a psalm tone for the verses. The refrain will be in either ICEL or Grail translation according to the best music available, and the other translation will be included as well.

Returning now to the opening thought of this essay, why is the psalm in fact so seldom sung in our Catholic Masses? Why are we so content to speak it? I think there are two reasons. First, some modest vocal training and technical know-how are needed to sing a psalm, even in
simple recitative. This training and know-how may well be undeveloped in a parish using amateur volunteers to lead its music ministry. We need to discern the gifted people for psalm-singing, and also develop centers or methods for training them.

Secondly, cantors need conversion. The psalms are a serious business: they are the word of God. They are no frothy, secular, or sentimental meandering. In vivid and powerful and mysterious language, they hit the point of God-and-us. They are not always easy to take. To stand before the people and not say but sing these words is a holy challenge. It is also a challenge to listen and respond. Are we ready? The training of cantors should include spiritual training as well as technical. (The same is true of all our ministers.) We need to learn to enjoy the word of God, to take time for it, and to develop its lyric and emotional scope in singing. Perhaps this essay will have answered some of the questions and problems associated with liturgical psalm singing. Maybe the psalm can now be sung more easily, more often. Maybe a start can be made.

Sing a psalm to the Lord
for he has done glorious deeds,
make them known to all the earth!
People of Sion, sing and shout for joy
for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel.

Isaiah 12: 5-6
(5th psalm, Easter Vigil)
STANDING AND KNEELING

Father Brian Magee, CM, writes about the meaning of standing and kneeling in Christian worship during the twenty centuries of our tradition.

Dear Mrs. Jones:

Sorry I couldn't give you a ride yesterday when I passed you at the bus stop. I realize you were in a hurry too: you were standing looking down the road searching anxiously for that bus to come. You were so intent in looking for a sign of its coming that I doubt if you actually saw me passing! It would be interesting to work out just how much of our lifetime is spent in watching and waiting — sometimes in joyful anticipation, other times in anxious dread, and, I'm afraid, just standing there in patience a lot of times. But have you noticed when there is some excitement in the waiting, whether it's in anticipation or because of delay, how the inclination is to stand up and move around? Children particularly can be seen doing this in airports and bus stations.

I guess this came to my mind because I recalled your complaining to me that you find it hard to accept all this standing at Mass, especially at times when instinctively you feel like kneeling.

Our Lord told us we were to be always watching and waiting, like the virgins at the wedding feast, having our lamps ready. No matter how long it takes the bridegroom to come, there is no sitting down and going to sleep: we are to be up and ready. You know the early Christians took this quite seriously: they waited on the coming of the Lord again with such expectation that some gave up their jobs as being a distraction from the main thing in life. St. Paul had to tell off these people who were living on other people's earnings. As time went on, of course, they began to realize that the Coming was not going to be so soon, and perhaps a lot of us have forgotten about it. But the way you think about this does make a difference in the way you live as a Christian.

This looking forward of the Christian is a joyful thing, a sense that it is a better thing to be with the Lord, a realization that we are pilgrims on a journey looking forward to the goal: living in tents at present, but getting a permanent dwelling in the end. It's not a depressing thought — like life being so miserable here that anything would be better. That's hardly a Christian attitude to one of God's good gifts. Perhaps the realization of sin might make us feel that it would be good to be in a sinless situation; if we don't get to heaven soon we might not get there at all.

So if we come together as a people on the move, the Christian family, living in joyful hope, maybe a good sign of that is our standing to pray and sing. The Church teachers seem to think so anyway: the rules for Mass published in 1969 talk about the people's bodily posture at Mass. When everyone is standing or kneeling at the same time, there is a feeling of unity and community. A common posture helps people to experience and express what they are doing in worship.

The priest, deacon, or another minister directs the people when needed. The normal rules for Sunday Mass are these:

- **Stand** from the beginning of the procession to the end of the opening prayer.
- **Sit** for the first two readings and psalm.

---

1 Rev. Brian Magee, born in County Armagh, Ireland, is a member of the Vincentian Fathers. Ordained a priest in 1953, he has served in high school education, in retreat work, and in liturgical renewal. He has an M.A. degree in catechetics (Catholic University of America, 1970), and in liturgical studies (University of Notre Dame, 1977). At present he is teaching in Dublin's Mater Dei Institute for Religious Education, is visiting lecturer for the diocesan seminary and All Hallows Seminary, and edits liturgical books for Veritas Publications in Dublin.

2 See General Instruction of the Roman Missal, nos. 20-21.
• **Stand** for the gospel acclamation and gospel.
• **Sit** for the homily.
• **Stand** for the creed and general intercessions (prayer of the faithful).
• **Sit** for the preparation of the gifts.
• **Stand** for the prayer over the gifts, the preface, and *Holy, holy, holy Lord.*
• **Kneel** at the consecration, unless a reasonable cause prevents this.
• **Stand** for the rest of the Mass: all may sit if there is a period of silent prayer after communion.

It goes on to say that local bishops can adapt this ruling to suit the sensibilities of their peoples, which is what our bishops in Ireland have done. This may seem a change of rules to us, but in many parts of the world this has always been the situation. Pilgrims to Rome, and tourists in Europe, have always been startled to find in the great churches no provision for kneeling, or indeed for sitting sometimes, which was a nuisance when the sermon was long! I remember one year standing all through the Holy Thursday liturgy in St. Paul's Outside the Walls with Pope John celebrating — there is no provision there for kneeling or sitting.

These ancient places always take us back to thinking of what our forefathers in the faith did. If you look at the bible you will see that the position for prayer there is a standing one. Our Lord was a good Jew and would have prayed this way himself. We see Moses and all the people, especially the priests, standing to pray (Exod. 33: 8, 10; Sir. 50: 12, 13), the mother of Samuel standing before the house of the Lord in her need (1 Sam. 1: 26), and those who pray in the temple at night are described as standing there (Ps. 134: 2). Our Lord chastised the Pharisees for standing at street corners to pray (Mt. 6: 5), but told his disciples, “Whenever you stand praying forgive, if you have anything against anyone” (Mk. 11: 25). Standing was a sign of respect on the part of these people; just as we still stand for personages that we wish to show signs of respect to. You remember how children were always taught to stand up to greet guests, and for teacher in school — a lot of things went when that stopped!

The early Christians had no questions about standing to pray since they had our Lord’s example. But they had added reasons to confirm them in the rightness of what they were doing. They were conscious of the great dignity that was theirs through baptism, they saw themselves freed from slavery and sin, they had the liberty of the children of God. How St. Paul kept reminding them of this! They were able to approach God as a child approaches its loving father using familiar language. Certainly Christians had every right to stand before their Father.

But, of course, the big event of Christians is the resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is the resurrection that gives meaning to our lives. And we are to be risen with Christ. The connection between being risen and standing is clear in the minds of all the preachers in the early years of the Church. And every Sunday was a special day for celebrating the resurrection: they had Easter every week before they got round to fixing it as an annual event. The idea of a Christian not standing when he prayed on Sundays was unheard of. As time went by, though, we find this idea weakens and then the preachers and writers have to sound off about it. Tertullian, around the year 200, told some solders that we count kneeling in worship on the Lord’s day unlawful, and the same applies all during Eastertide on weekdays. Which is still the rule you follow for the *Angelus* or *Regina Coeli* today. But the people still were a problem on this, so that we find the First Council of Nicaea, in 325, makes it a law of the Church not to kneel on Sundays and during Eastertide. St. Jerome, at the end of the fourth century, said that the practice of standing for worship on Sundays is a tradition that has become law. And later St. Augustine says that in praying we stand upright because it is an emblem of the resurrection.

It was the influence of the early monks, perhaps, that brought in the idea of kneeling. These were men of great penitence, whose lives were dedicated to prayer and fasting in the
desert. They saw kneeling as a sign of penitence and mourning in their lives, but Abbot Cassian who instructed them reminded them that still out of reverence for the Lord’s resurrection we stand. The penitential discipline of the Church later on showed this attitude in a public way. In gatherings of Christians you took your place according to your state of soul, and the penitents were the ones to be found kneeling. There were the standers and the kneelers — which indeed you sometimes find nowadays, but for different reasons.

In the first centuries of the Mass we find the people being very actively involved. It was an act of public worship, and certainly standing all together was a good sign of this. But by the middle ages this active participation was disappearing. The omission of the offering, the growing rareness of communions, the multiplication of private Masses, the complication of the musical chants, and the closing off of the choir resulted in the people being ignored by the liturgical books. And the whole sense of penance and unworthiness also developed. As a result people got on with their private praying, which was of a penitential nature very often, and their instinct was to kneel.

Pews came into some churches in Europe in the fifteenth century. By the time of the Council of Trent (1545-1563), the attitude toward standing at public prayer was different from that of the early Church.

Today when we are giving a lot of thought to what people’s participation in the public worship ought to be, we have to think a lot about how the whole person is involved — body as well as soul! That means bodily attitudes. For I think it should be clear to you that whether I sit or stand or even kneel when I’m talking to you says a lot about my attitude to you.

Of course, you will feel it more congenial to kneel when you make your private visit to the Blessed Sacrament. Though I notice that you sit up a lot more than you used to. And that’s not because the years are going by and you feel less able to kneel, but sitting having a chat with an old friend is what it is all about. By the way, the old and stiff-at-the-joints find standing for communion now such a help.

Perhaps priests don’t understand why people are disturbed at standing all through Mass, for we priests have always stood right through Mass; really we find the change in having to sit at certain times.

So every time you proclaim that Christ has died, is risen, and will come again, you will, I hope, recognize that your standing position reflects the joyful hope contained in that exclamation. And even when you are standing at the bus stop you can think about waiting with expectation. If you are down on your knees lost in your private thoughts, the bus might pass by — but then I might stop in sympathy if I were passing again!

KEEPING UP TO DATE

How can you keep up to date in liturgy?

Subscribe to the National Bulletin on Liturgy, and read it regularly. Look up the many articles it suggests from past issues, and read some of the books it recommends in reviews and references.

Subscription information is given on the inside front cover of this issue of the Bulletin.
How can a parish help its people to appreciate more fully the sacraments and other aspects of the liturgy? One parish in Halifax, Nova Scotia, held a “mini-congress” or exhibition as one way of meeting this need. Rev. Bernard O’Neill and Mr. Eric Duggan report on this event in the life of St. Agnes’ parish.

Origins

St. Agnes’ parish is an urban grouping of some 900 families in the City of Halifax. It includes many professionals. Within the parish, there is a consciousness of the value of family life and a deep respect for the family unit. The more committed members are very responsive, and realize that the welfare of the parish depends on their dedication.

The religious education of the children is provided through the Halifax public school system at St. Agnes’ School. The liturgical celebrations of the Canadian catechetical program are highlighted as community celebrations, and take place within the context of the parish liturgical services.

In the fall of 1976 the religious education committee of the parish council focused its concerns on two main thrusts: integrating the school program into parish life; and developing opportunities for parishioners to transform the objective truths of our faith to a subjective reality. Involved was the task of encouraging parishioners to “own” their worship experiences and to identify God’s presence in these experiences.

Method

The religious education committee recognized a need, and through a series of meetings and discussions formulated a method of response: promotion of a family-oriented catechetics project which would encourage the parish community to assume more personal responsibility for deepening one’s knowledge and love of God. The goal envisaged revolved around gathering parishioners together. These gatherings were to be more than exchanges of information. What was emphasized was the need to cultivate one’s desire to know more about the faith. It was hoped that joyful, happy gatherings of people with similar concerns would whet the appetites of the participants for future educational experiences.

The religious education committee recognized the richness and role of the sacraments in the life of the worshipping community; consequently, they became the focal point around which the project developed. Emphasized as reference points were:

1. The catechetical dimension of sacramental celebrations.
2. Emphasis on the power of the Spirit and the presence of Jesus in the sacraments, a presence that invites a personal response. It was felt that for many, the liveliness of God’s presence in the sacraments was asleep.
3. The sacraments are not only the primary source that channels God’s grace to us, providing us with new life, but they are also the life-bestowing activity of the Church that makes us one family, responsible to and for one another.
4. As community celebrations, sacraments remind us that a strong community is essential for developing one’s relationship to the Lord.
5. Through sacramental celebrations, God strengthens us and sends us forth to witness about his mighty deeds and to share in the tasking of building up his kingdom.

Rev. Bernard O’Neill was born in Old Perligan, Newfoundland, and was ordained in 1969 for the Archdiocese of Halifax. He is presently stationed in St. Michael’s parish, Halifax.

Mr. Eric Duggan works as an assistant to the treasurer-general of the Sisters of Charity of Halifax. Father of eleven children, he is a candidate in the program for the permanent diaconate.
Since it was important that family life be reinforced, it was decided that the project would be developed according to participation by family units. Lead couples were selected and requested to contact other couples. Each “cluster” became responsible for a display on one sacrament. Each group was asked to meet, not only as couples, but also with all their children. Families were encouraged to discuss how the sacramental life of the Church influenced their family life. It was hoped that carrying out this project would provide concrete opportunities for family members to share with one another at home their appreciation of what the sacraments mean. Children were requested to be responsible for written and visual presentations on how young people “see” the sacraments. Some 300 persons, of all age groups, were involved in the preparation.

The religious education committee met twice with the lead couples. It was evident that a sense of community was developing among those participating. People were enjoying coming together and discussing what the sacraments mean to each of them. The sessions were interesting and each participant was strengthened by the presence and interest of others.

Long before the date of the displays, a major goal of the religious education committee had been realized: the participants had experienced religious education as joy-filled; their appreciation of one another as members of a worshipping community had increased; God’s presence in the sacraments was becoming more evident as was his personal love and invitation to be close to him. Further, a spirit of co-operation, mutual support, and genuine interest in the work of others was evident. Relationships emerged as being just as important as the artistic value of the displays. More than 52 couples and their children were drawn into a special bond because of their shared concern to offer to the parish a good display on the sacraments.

Mrs. Joan Currie, one of the contact persons, commented: “It is quite supportive to realize how many other people are concerned about their own religious development, along with that of their children.”

“People are finding their task a joyful experience, and at the same time are finding that God is alive and very much involved in their lives,” reported Eric Duggan, chairman of the parish religious education committee. “There is a tremendous response to the challenge of personal responsibility in understanding their faith. The knowledge that Christ brings peace and hope is a consoling thought to us all in this age of uncertainty and searching,” he added.

Outline of the Congress

The following notes summarize briefly the displays, the materials used, and explain how the display was developed for each of the eight booths. Comments are provided by the cluster group which worked on the display.

Baptism:

- **Screening room:** 16 mm film, *The Sacrament of Belonging* filmstrip, *Children of Light*.
- **Booth:** slides, posters, banners, books, artifacts.
- **Handouts:** Mimeographed sheet — remember your baptism day; folder — renewal of baptismal vows; leaflet on baptism.
- **Comments:** “We used the baptistry for our display area. Through posters we showed the various ‘moments’ of the new rite of baptism for children. All the articles used by the priest during the celebration of baptism were on display, with a large printed explanation of the symbolism of each item. Parishioners had donated slides of actual baptisms that had taken place in St. Agnes’ Church and in other parishes. It was a personal touch that heightened interest in the whole display. We showed slides of actual baptisms, water scenes, happy occasions, belonging. We used banners, a collage with the theme, *Carry on baptism*, and children’s art work from the school.”
Confirmation:

- **Intent:** Our intent was to tie together the following concepts: 1) the activity of the Holy Spirit in the sacrament of confirmation; 2) Commitment of those being confirmed to work in their parish and community. Our secondary goals were: a) Elaboration of the history and present ritual of the sacrament; and b) Examples of people carrying out their commitment.

- **Description of display:** The major component was a single white panel, 12 by 8 feet, decorated on the left with red-orange tongues of fire, cut from polyfoam sheets, to give a strong depth and texture effect. On the same side, at the top, in the same color and raised material, was the form of a bird, symbolic of the Spirit. On the right, a large, raised letter “C,” of the same color and material, enclosed a 16 by 24 inch sheet of frosted mylar film, upon which slides were projected from the rear. The slides were candid shots of St. Agnes’ parishioners witnessing their commitment to parish and community life. Films showing the historical development of the sacrament and its present ritualization and purposes were shown in another area.

  Overhanding the central panel was a single, ceiling-suspended panel (4 by 8 feet), canted at 45°. Covered with white bristol board, this panel was ruled into a random angular pattern, suggesting a modern stained glass window. Within each small window was crayoned a word beginning with “C” (community, commitment, catechumen, etc.), with a contrasting color crayoned into the rest of the window.

  A table at the booth was decorated with a poster showing a stained-glass bird in flight — the Spirit. The table contained descriptive handouts, describing the purposes and living out of the sacrament, a sample of materials used in confirmation preparation in the diocese, and a tape recording of singing by the parish youth group as an example of commitment to parish life.

Eucharist:

- **Booth:** Displays — altar, first communion, auxiliary ministers, vestments, books, artifacts.

- **Handouts:** Prayer card, leaflets, notes on terms, vestments, auxiliary ministers, and family participation.

- **Comments:** “At the first group meeting it was decided that several areas relating to the eucharist would be developed. Each couple was assigned a subject. Two subsequent meetings tied everything together.”

Penance:

- **Booth:** Three-area backdrop (black, mauve, white), with special lighting and symbols on backdrop; screening room: CBC videotape on the sacrament of reconciliation.

- **Handouts:** Notes on celebrating the sacrament with the new ritual.

- **Comments:** “Through meetings of the whole group, reading, and discussion, we decided what concepts should be presented. We stressed the community aspect, that is how our sins and our being reconciled affect the whole body of Christ. Also, that the sacrament can be a true encounter with the Lord instead of just a telling of sins.”

Matrimony:

- **Booth:** Large ‘Matrimony’ sign (4 by 16 feet); slide presentation from Family Life office; books on marriage in general, and on Marriage Encounter; question concerning renewal of marriage vows.

- **Handouts:** Leaflets on marriage preparation, Marriage Encounter, prayers for the couple, reflections on love and on Mt. 19: 5-6.

- **Comments:** “Five meetings were held at the homes of the couples involved. A drawing of the display was made, and each couple took on different aspects as their responsibility.
It all came together well on the Friday night. The marvel of the venture was that five couples could meet, plan, and work in perfect harmony on a Church project. The community aspect of the whole congress brought about the good feelings.”

Holy orders:
- **Booth:** Slide presentation from Office of Religious Education; pictorial displays; scrapbooks of recent ordinations; banners; mannequin, fully vested; books, artifacts; children’s art and prayers; screening room: filmstrip, *A Servant People*.
- **Handouts:** “Why I became a priest,” by local priests; activities of the priest in serving the community — to be listed in order of importance; notes on fostering religious vocations in the home.
- **Comments:** “We decided the theme of the display from the beginning, and from there the ideas of the group developed and changed to meet the practical aspects of time, space, and cost. We wanted the children’s involvement and included them in our meetings. We depicted mainly what the sacrament of orders means to us, the Church; the many factors involved in the recognition of a true vocation; and the relationship of holy orders to the other sacraments.”

Anointing of the sick:
- **Booth:** Banners, posters, children’s drawings, display of table for sick room; books and reading list, artifacts, slide presentation on community celebration of the sacrament.
- **Screening room:** Audio tape, *Life-Death*; filmstrip, *The Healing Ministry of Christ*.
- **Handouts:** Leaflets on the sacrament; questionnaire; a prayer for healing.
- **Comments:** “From three meetings of our group came the two main themes, healing and resurrection, without overemphasizing the death aspect, but zeroing in on healing and eternal life. Our posters, banners, and work details in general followed these themes as well as the slide presentation. Information gleaned from books rounded out the program. Life on earth is borrowed and our aim is resurrection. The sacrament of anointing the sick heals physically and spiritually.”

Scripture and prayer:
- **Booth:** Banners, bibles, books, posters, children’s prayers.
- **Handouts:** List of books and records for sale in these categories: children, Church teaching, general interest, prayer, sacraments, scripture, spirituality, youth.
- **Comments:** “Through our group discussions we decided to concentrate on praying with scripture, and with simplicity. Our display emphasized these two aspects of our spiritual life.”

Administration
In mid-November a core group of the religious education committee met twice with representatives of the diocesan offices for Religious Education and for Family Life. As a result, the goals of the program were determined:
- To develop an awareness among the parish members of the need of continuing education;
- To whet the appetites of the parish members for future educational programs;
- To stress the community aspects of parish life; and
- To ensure that the event is a joyful, community happening.

The general thrust of the method of preparation, using the sacraments as the focal point, and the use of family clusters, was adopted at this time.

In mid-December, a session was held with all lead couples. At this time a general outline of the purpose, methodology, listing of duties in general form, and the schedule of dates to be
used as checkpoints were circulated, along with a listing of possible resource persons. At this session it was suggested and agreed that a display on scripture and prayer should be included to stress the main source of the revelation of Christ.

Other groups: Orientation sessions were also held with the parish council, the liturgical committee, and the family life committee.

Various groups in the parish were contacted or formed to provide backup services: hospitality — CWL; liturgical celebrations — liturgical committee; integration with the school program — school teachers; publicity — family clusters.

A questionnaire on needs and equipment was developed and circulated to facilitate the work of the follow up meeting.

Mid-January: The first follow up session was held with the lead couples, with the following results:

a) "Jesus Christ is in the sacraments" was adopted as the theme of the congress.

b) A professional designer volunteered to prepare a major display for the church.

c) An architect was asked to volunteer to prepare the layout space for the displays in the parish auditorium.

d) Quantities for supplies and handouts were determined, and deadlines were set for printing and for using the parish facilities.

e) The use of screening rooms for audio-visual programs was accepted.

f) It was agreed to extend invitations to the clergy and the liturgy and education committees in the city parishes.

The core group assumed responsibility for the action necessary as a result of these decisions, and for developing a way to obtain feedback from the participants and to evaluate the congress.

February:

• Early in the month a second follow up meeting of the lead couples was held.

• Ten days before the congress, a schedule of set up, viewing times, and dismantling of the displays was circulated to the lead couples, along with pertinent information. A form was circulated, asking for an overall report and evaluation by the groups.

• On Friday, the day before the congress opened, supplies arrived at the church: dividers, projectors, backdrops, tape recorders. The highlight was the arrival of a mannequin (male) for the display on holy orders.

• On Friday evening, all members of the groups took part in setting up the displays. It was a partylike atmosphere, with a lot of sharing and lending in evidence.

• Sunday evening: A post-congress reception held by the parish clergy gave all an opportunity to become still better acquainted, to share their experiences, and to view the slides depicting the development and implementation of the displays. At the reception it was remarked that many of the participants were sad to see the mini-congress concluded.

Animation

Goal: The goal of the animation aspect of the congress was twofold: to stimulate interest among the parishioners and so encourage their attendance; and to use the animation process as a teaching tool.

Parish bulletin: For some eight weeks during the development of the congress the parish bulletins were largely devoted to the project. Each issue carried an incremental item on the development of the program and on the significance of the sacraments in the spiritual and community life of the parish.
Flyer: Two weeks before the congress, a flyer was distributed with the bulletin. In keeping with the joyful celebration theme, a bright color was chosen, and very few words were used. The flyer highlighted the community aspects of the sacraments by using sketches of people to depict each sacrament.

Program: On the Sunday before the congress a program was distributed with the parish bulletin. In addition to routine information, the program included a schedule of audio-visual presentations and a sketch of the layout of the physical facilities.

During the week before the congress, another colorful flyer, again highlighting people, was distributed by the school children, through the co-operation of the school.

Theme: During the developmental phase and on the weekend of the congress, the sacramental theme, “Jesus Christ is in the sacraments” was a major part of the homilies at the eucharist and other liturgical celebrations. The liturgical committee made a special effort to ensure that week’s celebrations carried through the theme. This included the use of specially prepared banners, the general intercessions, and the provision of selected music.

Inviting the neighbors: As indicated, part way through the planning of the congress the decision was made to issue an invitation to neighboring parishes. Letters were forwarded to parish priests and to chairmen of parish councils, stressing the importance of the project to liturgical and education committee members.

Newspaper coverage: An article was prepared for inclusion on the religion page of the local paper on the weekend of the congress.

Results: The energies expended were successful. Between 1600 to 1700 people visited the displays on Saturday (3:00 to 9:00 p.m.) and on Sunday (11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.).

Observation: For future events of this sort, it would be important to have a greater period of time available for viewing and studying the exhibits.

Summary

The reason the congress was so successful stems from the fact that it was the right thing at the right time. People were responsive to it because they want to become more involved; they want to know their fellow parishioners; they want to know more about the faith.

The spirit of the mini-congress cannot be captured in reports. It was a happening, an experience of living out what it is to be Church. In this regard, it is important to note that the participants enjoyed themselves. Religious education need not be boring, and church gatherings, even meetings, can be fun-filled moments. The hidden pearl of the whole event was the spirit of enthusiastic co-operation among the participants.

Were another parish to do this project, we would recommend that the displays remain available for more than a weekend. There was so much to see and read and learn about that there were many who wished they could return several times.

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An outline of the display locations is given on page 256.
DISPLAY LOCATIONS

1. Church
2. Audio/Visual (Nursery)
3. Audio/Visual (St. Agnes)
4. Prayer Room
5. Registration
6. Baptism
7. Eucharist
8. Confirmation
9. Book Display/Store
10. Scripture/Prayer
11. Holy Orders
12. Matrimony
13. Sacrament of Reconciliation
14. Sacrament of the Sick
15. Coffee Station