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liturgy

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68

FAMILY PRAYER
Strong and fervent prayer by individuals and by families is necessary for good public worship and prayer.

Last year, we invited families to tell us about their prayer life. The results of this survey, included in this issue, are eye-opening.

This Bulletin is about praying. It is written for families who want help in their prayer, and for clergy, catechists, and others who want to lead God's people into deeper prayer.

Bulletin 68 provides useful guidance about praying, but it will not be able to help families until they become acquainted with its contents.

May God grant us a deep renewal in the prayer life of individuals and families.
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EDITORIAL

“TWO OR THREE TOGETHER”

Since the early days of the Church, the words of Jesus in Mt. 18: 20 have been applied to family life and prayer. Our Lord is present with his Church when it assembles for solemn liturgy on his day, but he is also with each Christian couple and family as they come together to work or pray in his name: *I am there, with them.*

**Recognizing his presence:** For a long time, Catholics placed most of their emphasis on the presence of Christ in the eucharist, almost to the point of neglecting the various other ways in which he is present among us. In 1963, the Second Vatican Council called us to a more balanced faith, and invited us to recognize Christ’s presence in his Church, in its liturgical celebrations, in its ministers, in the eucharist, in the sacraments, in his word, in his people (Liturgy constitution, no. 7). He is always present in those in need (Mt. 25: 31-46).

**Importance of family prayer:** The prayer life of the family is the foundation for the liturgy of the parish community. People do not suddenly begin to pray at Sunday worship if they have not been praying regularly during the week. Children do not develop a spirit of reverence and worship merely by attending Sunday Mass: their sharing in community prayer depends almost entirely on the prayer life to which they are exposed and invited at home each day.

**Increased pressures:** In our day, many pressures and stresses have been placed on family living. Increasing demands of more and more activities are lessening the peace in our homes, and are building up to an ever more demanding pace of life. In these conditions, family prayer has suffered greatly: “There is no time! There is no calm or peace!”

**Encouraging family prayer:** In every diocese, parish, and religious community, one of the most important responsibilities facing us today is that of encouraging families in their efforts to pray. We need to help them to want to pray; to give them guidance in their praying; to share resources with them; and to lead them to enjoy the mutual benefits of family prayer and community liturgy.

*Heavenly Father,*
*we bless you and give you thanks*
*for your love and kindness.*

*Look on us with love*
*as we come together in Jesus’ name.*
*Bless us all: mother and father,*
*Katie and Gregory, Andrew and Pauline.*
*Help us to love you,*
*teach us to be good,*
*and help us to help other people.*

*Father,*
*we pray to you through Jesus our Lord. Amen!*

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Background: The National Council for Liturgy is an advisory body to the episcopal commission for liturgy (English sector) and to the National Liturgical Office. The continuing concern of Council members about the level of family prayer in Canada led to the designing of a survey on family prayer. This was published in Bulletin 63 (March-April 1978), pages 90-94.

Distribution: An invitation was given in Bulletin 63 to all — diocesan liturgy commissions, parishes, individual families — to respond to the questionnaire, and to share the results with us. No attempt was made to get a scientific sampling.

Results: The original intention was to publish the results of the survey in Bulletin 65 (September-October 1978). As the answers were studied, however, it was decided that the importance of the survey required a fuller treatment. Bulletin 68 describes the survey results and ways of working for improved prayer in families.

How to read the results: Though only a small number of questionnaires was returned (249), each one offers a frank view of one family's prayer life. In many ways, reading a paper can be compared to a pastor's visit to a family: the family speaks honestly and openly about its praying and its difficulties in prayer, about its resources and its needs. The next five articles summarize these results (pages 53-64), and offer some observations (page 65). Further action depends on diocesan commissions, parish liturgy committees, pastors, catechists, and — most of all — on parents.

Using our survey: There are two ways of using this survey:

- Consider the results described in these pages, and see how they apply to families in your believing community. What should you be doing in your parish to help families to begin, improve, or deepen their prayer life?

- Do your own survey: If you wish to use the questionnaire given in Bulletin 63 for your own community, copyright permission should be obtained from Publications Service, 90 Parent Ave., Ottawa, Ontario KIN 7B1. Or you may wish to design your own survey. (In either case, we would be pleased to have a summary of your findings, if you wish to send it to the National Liturgical Office.)

After you do your survey, consider: what should you be doing to help families to grow in their prayer life? Some suggestions are offered on pages 66-90.

Corroboration from the neighbors: After the survey had been prepared for Bulletin 63, we were able to read the results of a similar, but larger, survey in the United Church of Canada.¹

¹ See “Prayer in the United Church,” in The United Church Observer (February 1978), pages 20-24. Individual copies may be obtained for 50¢ (plus postage) from The Observer, 85 St. Clair Ave. East, Toronto, Ontario M4T 1M8.

See also Fêtes et Saisons: no. 326, “Quand vous priez...” (juin-juillet 1978); no. 327, “Prier, c'est vivre” (août-septembre 1978): 29 Bd. La Tour Maubourg, 75340 Paris Cedex 07, France; in Canada and U.S.A., Service de Documentation Pastorale, 312 est, rue Sherbrooke, Montréal 18, Québec.
WHEN DO YOU PRAY?

Questions 1-7 discuss the frequency and regularity of family prayer. Further occasions of prayer are discussed in questions 23-52, pages 58-60.

1. Does your family gather to pray regularly?
Yes: 116  No: 24
Occasionally: 90  No answer: 19

2. How often each day?
Once: 58  Twice: 32
Three: 22  One to three: 6
Four or more: 9  None: 14
No answer: 108

3. How often each week?
Once: 29  Twice: 2
Three times: 2  Four times: 3
Seven times: 16  Seven to 14 times: 30
More often: 9  None: 6
No answer: 152

4. How often each month?
Once: 3  Three times: 1
Four times: 13  Six times: 1
20-30 times: 17  30-50 times: 9
More often: 13  None: 5
No answer: 187

5. Please list the special seasons of the year when you gather to pray:
Advent: 49  Christmas: 98
Lent: 74  Ash Wednesday: 1
Passion Sunday: 1  Holy Week: 4
Holy Thursday: 1  Good Friday: 3
Easter: 87  Ascension: 1
Pentecost: 1  Our Lady's feasts: 1
May and October: 12  June: 1
November 2: 1  Thanksgiving: 28
New Year's: 2  Year round: 1
Mass on Sunday, special days: 1  No answer: 80

6. Please list other occasions when you pray as a family:
- Family events:
  Births: 6  Birthdays: 12
  Anniversaries: 5  Happy events: 2
  Exams: 2  Feast days: 1
  Graduation: 2  Family reunions: 1
  Times of celebration or achievement in family: 2
  When we gather at grandpa's house: 1
  When a member of the family comes home: 1
  When visiting: 1

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• Celebrating sacraments:
  Baptisms: 7
  First communion: 7
  Special celebration of eucharist: 1
  First confession: 2
  Sacraments: 2

• In time of need:
  For good crops: 1
  For a job: 1
  In time of need: 10
  In hospital: 1
  For the aged: 1
  Death (family or friends): 21
  At funerals: 21
  Memorial days: 2
  Special work to be done: 1
  Special intentions: 1
  Illness (family or friends): 28
  In time of sadness: 2
  When lonely: 1
  Masses for departed: 1
  Disasters or accidents: 2

• Travel:
  Travel: 7
  In the car: 1
  On holidays: 1
  Before and after a trip: 1
  Rosary in car: 1

• Other occasions:
  First Friday: 2
  Rosary: 2
  Remembrance day: 2
  Mother's day: 3
  Forty hours: 1
  Benediction: 1
  Valentine's day: 1
  Father's day: 3

• Ways of gathering for prayer:
  At Mass: 14
  In prayer group: 1
  When there is no Mass: 1
  Together at church on Sunday: 6
  With other families: 1
  No answer: 95

7. At what times of day do you gather for family prayer?

• Meal times:
  Meal times: 69
  Evening meal: 33
  Breakfast: 5
  After supper: 1

• During the day:
  Morning: 43
  Noon: 7
  Afternoon: 1
  Morning offering: 2
  Angelus: 1

• Evening:
  Evening: 62
  Bedtime: 17
  Evening rosary: 2
  Children's bedtime: 2

• Other times:
  At church: 1
  Occasional weekday Mass: 1
  Never: 1
  No answer: 67
DESCRIBING OUR FAMILY'S PRAYER

Questions 8-13 discuss the way the family prays; nos. 14-22 look at the books used by the family in prayer.

How Our Family Prays

8. Do you use the bible or New Testament for readings?
   Yes: 68
   Sometimes: 3
   Once a month: 1
   Rarely: 1
   No: 79
   No answer: 97

9. Do you use the bible for praying a psalm?
   Yes: 36
   No: 97
   No answer: 116

10. Do you have singing?
    Yes: 55
    Sometimes: 5
    No: 93
    No answer: 96

11. Please note the types of music you sing:
    Hymns: 52
    Antiphons: 10
    Folk songs: 41
    Psalms: 13
    Songs: 24
    Traditional songs: 25
    Others: 13
    No answer: 124

12. Which member of your family leads the prayer?
    Mother: 39
    Father: 36
    Father and mother: 4
    Father or mother: 2
    Husband: 1
    Children: 4
    Mother, if it is formal prayer: 1
    Father begins, a child continues: 1
    Each in turn: 31
    Whoever is chosen: 1
    All together: 2
    Depends on occasion: 1
    Take turns, at special seasons: 1
    Oneself: 1
    No answer: 125

13. Do you have spontaneous prayer?
    Yes: 112
    Occasionally: 1
    Share: 1
    No: 44
    No answer: 91
# Books for Prayer

_Please list the books which you find helpful in your family prayer:_

14. Bible:

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<tr>
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<th>Yes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bible</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>139</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

- **Preferred editions:**
  - Jerusalem: 29
  - New English: 1
  - Today's English Version: 7

- **Other versions:**
  - Living Bible: 1
  - Douay: 1
  - Confraternity: 1
  - The Way: 2
  - Picture bible: 1
  - King James: 1
  - Revised Standard: 4
  - New American: 22
  - New English: 1
  - Today's English Version: 12

15. New Testament:

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
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<tr>
<td>New Testament</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>177</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

- **Preferred editions:**
  - Jerusalem: 15
  - Revised Standard: 4
  - Today's English Version: 12

- **Other versions:**
  - King James: 1
  - Revised Standard: 4
  - New American: 9
  - New English: 1
  - Today's English Version (Good News for Modern Man): 12
  - Douay-Challoner: 1
  - Book of Good News: 1
  - Old Marian bible: 1
  - Children's bible: 2

16. Sunday Mass Book:

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
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<tr>
<td>Sunday Mass Book</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>131</td>
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</table>

17. Other book for Mass:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
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<td>Other book for Mass</td>
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<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>181</td>
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18. A form of the liturgy of the hours or divine office:

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Yes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A form of the liturgy of the hours or divine office</td>
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<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
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_If so, give title:_

Little Office of the BVM

Book of Prayer

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<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>No answer</th>
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<tr>
<td>19. Catholic Book of Worship</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Sunday lectionary — study edition</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Weekday lectionary — study edition</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Other books:</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>142</td>
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*If so, give title:*

- Change My Heart
- Dear Father in Heaven
- A Book of Lenten Prayer
- Prayers for Boys and Girls
- Family Advent Customs
- Mary My Hope
- This Could Be Your Day
- Everyman's Way of the Cross
- Old missals
- Proclaiming the New Lectionary
- Following of Christ: 2
- Good News
- Meditative books: 2
- Living with Christ: 2
- My Daily Bread: 3
- Daily Word
- My Changeless Friend
- Praise Him! 2
- Family Prayer
- Someone Cares
- Books of Jubilee (Elliot)
- Psalms for Modern Man
- Children's Bible Stories
- Night Prayer (USCC)
- Thomas Merton
- Teach Us to Pray: 4
- Christ Among Us
- My Mass Book
- John Powell
- A Treasury of Prayers
- Lives of the saints: 2
- On Being Human (Powell)
- Catholic Register
- On Being Alive (Powell)
- Marian Year Missal
- Meditations — St. Paul
- My Catholic Faith
- Letters of St. Paul
- Your Faith
- Prayers for Family
- Saint for the day
- Daily Prayers
- Saints for Young People
- Children's Story
- The Saints
- Our Lady of Fatima
- Epilogues and Prayers (Barclay)
- Prayers (Quoist)
- Family Advent/Lent prayer books (Nelson diocese)
- Three Minutes a Day (Christophers)
- Lord, Teach Us to Pray (Sudbury RCSS: RE Department)
- Pope's Family Prayer Book: 3
- My Other Self (Clarence Enzler)
- Magnificent Promises (St. Bridget)
- In the Presence of God (Enzler)
- Why Am I Afraid to Say I Love You? (Powell)
- Children's Basic Old Testament (Barclay)
- Daily Bible Study (Barclay)
- Speak, Lord, Your Servant Is Listening (Barclay)
- Prayer: A Personal Response to God's Presence (Nigro)
NEW RESOURCES REQUESTED

Questions 23-52 asked about elements that would be useful in a book for celebrating prayer in a family:

Daily and Weekly Prayer

23. Morning Prayer:
Yes: 118
No answer: 112

24. Evening prayer:
Yes: 138
No: 13
No answer: 98

25. Mealtime prayers:
Yes: 142
No: 16
No answer: 91

26. Preparation for Sunday Mass:
Yes: 60
No: 25
No answer: 164

27. Prayers for use on Sunday, the Lord's day:
Yes: 111
No: 14
No answer: 124

Seasonal Prayer

28. Prayers for use in Advent:
Yes: 133
No: 12
No answer: 104

29. In Christmas season:
Yes: 146
No: 8
No answer: 95

50. In ordinary time:
Yes: 93
No: 17
No answer: 139

31. In Lent:
Yes: 160
No: 5
No answer: 84

32. In Holy Week:
Yes: 137
No: 7
No answer: 105

33. In Easter season:
Yes: 135
No: 4
No answer: 110
Special Occasions

34. On special feast days: As well as the occasions mentioned in nos. 23-52, the following were mentioned:

- **Feasts:**
  - Corpus Christi: 1
  - Trinity Sunday: 1
  - First Friday: 1
  - Pentecost: 3
  - Sacred Heart: 7
  - Ascension: 1

- **Marian celebrations:**
  - Assumption: 2
  - Holy name: 1
  - Feasts of Mary: 8
  - Immaculate conception: 2
  - First Saturday: 1
  - Immaculate heart: 1

- **Other saints:**
  - All saints: 1
  - St. Anthony: 1
  - St. Francis: 1
  - St. Jude: 2
  - St. Monica: 1
  - St. Theresa: 1
  - St. Anne: 1
  - St. Augustine: 1
  - St. Joseph: 7
  - St. Maria Goretti: 1
  - St. Patrick: 2
  - November 2: 1

- **Other answers:**
  - All contained above [in nos. 23-34]: 1
  - Name days: 1

All these occasions (nos. 34-52) are good, but if you could just help people to listen to themselves inside and pray the prayer there. [See Rom. 8: 26-27.]

No answer: 198

35. Waiting for the birth of a child:
- Yes: 104
- No: 21
- No answer: 124

36. After a new member is born into the family:
- Yes: 91
- No: 23
- No answer: 135

37. Birthdays:
- Yes: 104
- No: 27
- No answer: 118

38. Anniversary of baptism:
- Yes: 85
- No: 21
- No answer: 143

39. Engagement:
- Yes: 62
- No: 25
- No answer: 162
40. Wedding anniversary:
Yes: 112  No: 19
No answer: 118

41. Sickness of a member of the family:
Yes: 161  No: 4
No answer: 84

42. Return to health of a member of the family:
Yes: 152  No: 7
No answer: 90

43. Family reunions:
Yes: 88  No: 25
No answer: 136

44. When visitors are present:
Yes: 55  No: 46
No answer: 148

45. When someone leaves home:
Yes: 97  No: 20
No answer: 132

46. Prayers for a person who is dying:
Yes: 158  No: 6
No answer: 85

47. Prayers for the dead:
Yes: 145  No: 7
No answer: 97

48. Other anniversaries:
Yes: 67  No: 28
No answer: 154

49. Times of reconciliation:
Yes: 98  No: 16
No answer: 135

50. Beginning and end of school year:
Yes: 91  No: 20
No answer: 138

51. Beginning and end of holiday periods:
Yes: 83  No: 21
No answer: 145

52. Graduation:
Yes: 97  No: 10
No answer: 142
SOME PRAYING FAMILIES

Questions 53-56 asked some information about the family who filled in the survey form:

53. Who lives at your home?
   One person: 4  Two: 31
   Three: 21  Four: 42
   Five: 53  Six: 35
   Seven: 25  Eight: 6
   Nine: 4  Ten: 3
   Fourteen: 1  No answer: 23

54. Do you have a place in your home (room, corner, shrine) where you usually gather for prayer?
   Yes: 70  No: 81
   No answer: 98

55. We live in:
   City: 47  Suburbs: 5
   Town: 96  Village: 10
   Country: 37  No answer: 54

56. Province:
   Alberta: 17  Ontario: 147
   Saskatchewan: 80  No answer: 5

Other Elements

Questions 57-65 asked: Please list other elements you would want in a book for celebrating prayer in your family:

As well as the intentions listed in questions 35-52, those who answered suggested the following:

• Prayers for family intentions:
   In times of stress in family (financial, relationships): 1
   In time of family problems: 1
   For parents: 2  New home or apartment: 1
   For children: 1  Help in schoolwork: 1
   For peace and love in our family: 1
   To obtain work: 1  For relatives: 2
   Help for parents in guiding their children: 2
   For faith: 1  For hope: 1
   Help in doing duties for others, community, world: 1

• For personal intentions:
   For patience: 1  Reception of confirmation: 1
   For use by parents of adolescents: 1  For use by teenagers: 2
   To know one's talents: 1  For choice of vocation: 1
   For myself when I am angry, afraid, selfish: 1
   Examining conscience re areas of failure, weakness: 1
• Sacraments:
  Daily communion: 1  Before and after communion: 1
  Before and after confession: 1  Examination of conscience: 1

• Praise and thanksgiving:
  Praise: 1  Thanksgiving: 4
  Thankfulness for the day: 1

• Particular petitions:
  For peace: 2  For vocations: 1
  Charity and sacrifice: 1
  For the sick (self, others): 2
  For those with a long-lasting disease: 1
  For accepting physical and mental suffering: 1
  For those with handicaps: 1
  For missions and missionaries: 2
  For priests and sisters: 3
  For those in authority — Church or civil leaders: 2
  Against evil (e.g., abortion): 1
  For a special intention (room to insert it): 1
  For a return to family prayer: 1
  For friends: 2  For other people
  For boys: 1  For girls: 1
  For the Church: 1  For husbands and wives: 1
  For families: 1  For our country: 1
  For teachers: 1  For conversions: 1
  For the elderly: 1  For the poor: 1

• Specific devotions and prayers:
  To Sacred Heart: 1  Way of the cross: 3
  To Mary: 2  Rosary: 5
  Novenas: 1  To guardian angel: 1
  To saints for specific needs: 1
  Short, simple prayers for everyday circumstances: 3
  Hail, holy queen: 1  Confiteor: 1
  Creed: 1  Litanies: 1
  Acts of faith, hope, charity, contrition: 1

• Other notes:
  Beatitudes: 1  Ten commandments: 1
  Works of mercy: 1  Capital vices: 1
  Songs: 1  Children's songs: 1
  Games of spiritual significance for families: 1
  Thought for the day (simple): 1
  Meditations on the saints: 1
  Shared prayer and bible study: 1
  Short version of the gospels: 1
  Book about the saints — simple enough for children: 1
  Anything that would help: 1
  No answer: 199
Other Comments on Family Prayer

Question 66 asked for other comments on family prayer:

- **Comments on prayer books:**
  We use rote prayers plus some from Christopher books.
  Reflections on nature of prayer.
  The two books I like and use are: *God at Eventide* (A.J. Russell), and *Upper Room* (Nashville, Tenn.).
  Perhaps the book is less important than ways to foster the practice of family prayer. We like the *Pope's Family Prayer Book* and like many of the prayers, but we do not pray together any more often because of it.
  I don't think we would use a book for family prayer, although books about prayer are always helpful.
  Difficult, rush, etc. Maybe we could use a book with short meaningful prayers for daily use; these could be used when there isn't much time and still have an impact. (Forcing a family to say the daily rosary turns them off!)
  Direct words of our Lord, such as “Ask and you will receive.” Thoughts on the Holy Spirit's gifts; the intercession of God’s friends, the saints.
  If a book were prepared, the words should be simple so that children and old people can easily read and understand. Also short and meaningful prayers as opposed to pages and pages for each prayer.
  Just got married; received a bible as a gift. We look through it in our spare time, which is limited at present, but will certainly be using it more in the future.
  A book which has prayers in it for every day of the year. With some meditation in it. A prayer book similar to that which a sister or a priest would use.
  Less emphasis on book and more on spontaneous prayer.
  *Pope's Family Prayer Book* is excellent.
  Our prayers are very informal. Too often prayer is memorized and recited rather than spoken with feeling and thought. I don't feel a book on prayer is necessary; express what is in your heart. Your prayer can be different every day.
  We do not use any books for family prayer. We use spontaneous prayer or we use our rosary or a few simple prayers.

- **Spontaneous and charismatic prayer:**
  We have been active members of a charismatic community for some time. This has revolutionized our attitude and response to prayer in the family. We turn to the Lord in all times of joy and difficulties.
  When a member of the family has received hurts in his daily life, parents or other members of the family, at the time for family prayer, should help that person to open up about things that are bothering him; then the family should lay hands on him and ask our Lord to heal those hurts with his love.
  If more people would join charismatic prayer groups as a family, it certainly would help. Religious instructors went off on a tangent over the last years about spontaneous prayer, and threw out all those old prayers that we used to pray; I think that is the biggest reason so many people have stopped praying altogether.
Would appreciate some guidelines to help conduct an effective prayer meeting in our home. Some daily prayer pertaining to our needs — at our level and that of our family — which we could use as an aid. We owe our renewal of prayer in our home to the charismatic movement.

- **Short and simple prayers:**
  
  Prayer must be fitting, in the language of today (no *thee, thou*, etc.). It must be straightforward, asking for help. Not so much syrupy goo as some were of old.
  
  It's nice to pray together, but the prayers usually have to be short, because everyone is usually in a hurry.
  
  I would be in favor of a simplified version of the prayers.

- **Prayer with children:**

  Include children when they are young.

  Don't really pray together except for grace before meals (sometimes) and to help children with night prayers (occasionally).

  Family prayer would mean more if there were more prayer at church during Lent, etc., such as rosary, way of cross, benediction. There is only Mass, and children have a hard time paying attention. They are not familiar with the rosary or benediction.

  I think it is very important. It should begin very early with children.

  It is hard for me to answer these questions because my husband is a converted Catholic, and his ideas of prayer — especially rosary, and so on — are different from mine. We pray separately. I'm starting prayers with my little three-year old, however: at meal times (with my husband also) and at bedtime.

- **Other notes:**

  Help will be appreciated.

  Husband and wife study scripture after night prayer.

  We should have more prayer as a family.

  Shift worker: only one person home at a time. Organized prayer is skimpy.

  Easy to pray one decade of the rosary, but not 15!

  Problem of two religions in family.

  For the sake of peace, I have to tolerate my wife's indifference.

  Rosary for dead: daily for parents, weekly for sister, uncle.

  My question is this: In the 1971 census, 44.6% of Canadians are of British origin. Whom do you want to reach? Do you think you are reaching the young, up to grades 8-10, who have limited knowledge of the English language? older people, who also have a limited knowledge of the language? or just the highly educated ones?

  We need some unity among Christians.

  We need variety: we feel our prayers are much too repetitious. Something that will help to lead to much more spontaneous prayer.

  Could something be set up to encourage fathers to lead their family in prayer, instead of leaving this role to the mothers?

  No mention of rosary.

  Prayer keeps us in tune with one another: 2

  A wonderful time to give thanks to the Lord for a united family.

*No answer:* 120
WHAT THIS SURVEY CAN TEACH US

Now that we have listened to these families speaking frankly about their prayer, it is time to ask ourselves — in parishes and dioceses especially — what we are doing to help people to pray better today.

Frequency of prayer (questions 1-7): Instead of being lulled by the positive answers, look at all who answer no, or who give no answer. What do these negative responses tell us?

How we pray (nos. 8-13): The positive answers are good, but again the thundering silence of the no and no answer should wake us up.

Books for prayer (nos. 14-22): The scriptures are being used by slightly more than half of the families answering. That is good news indeed, but there are still many who are not using God’s word as the basis of their prayer. The liturgy of the hours (no. 18) is obviously not a part of our people’s prayer life: much work remains here!

Resources requested: The questions on daily and weekly prayer (nos. 23-27) and seasonal prayer (nos. 28-33) reflect the concerns of the universal Church since Vatican II’s reforms. When no and no answer are put together, can we be sure that our people are applying the principles of the reform in their personal prayer?

Special occasions (nos. 34-52): The positive answers reflect our need to pray on these occasions, but the large percentage of negative answers is disturbing.

A place for prayer (no. 54): Almost 36% report that they have a place in their home where they usually gather for prayer. This is encouraging.

Other elements (nos. 57-65): Many good intentions are listed, but these come from only one-fifth of those who answer the questionnaire.

Other comments (no. 66): We have grouped these under general headings, but have printed them as received.

Further Observations

Is anybody helping families to pray? What is your parish doing? Is the teaching of prayer left to the elementary schools? What are religious communities doing to share their spirit of prayer? What is your diocese doing to teach people to pray?

Do Christians find their spirituality in the liturgy? Is the liturgy a summit and a source of prayer for all? Who is using the liturgy as a model of prayer?

What are you doing to help people read and understand and pray the word of God? Do they have copies of the scriptures? Do they know how to find a scripture passage by using references? Are you encouraging people to read the Sunday readings ahead of time? Are you making useful references on prayer available to families in your community? Are you encouraging devotions in accord with the spirit of the liturgy? Do you celebrate morning and evening prayer in your parish?

Is it time for your parish liturgy committee to consider its responsibility for the prayer life of the community?
The Christian Church is not here to save a soul, but rather the whole person: God calls us so that our whole being may share in life here and in his heavenly kingdom. This is the victory won by the risen Christ, and given to us through the Spirit. (See Pastoral constitution on the Church in the modern world, no. 18.)

It is with our whole embodied being that we give praise and worship to the Father, through his incarnate and risen Son, in the Holy Spirit. Common postures, gestures, and actions are important in liturgical celebrations, both to express unity in the praying community and to deepen the intention and spirit of those who are taking part in the celebration (see GI, nos. 20-22).

Similarly, gestures can be valuable in individual and family prayer, helping us to express more fully our interior faith and feelings, and at the same time reinforcing and deepening our attitudes of faith and reverence in our prayer. Our prayer can both prepare us for liturgy and help us to live what we celebrate with the community.

Whether we are eating or drinking, or whatever we are doing, we should be doing it for the glory and honor of God (see 1 Cor. 10: 31).

**Standing** is a basic attitude of praise, of prayer, of worship, of readiness to hear and obey. We stand at the gospel, and the priest stands during the eucharistic prayer. (Someday, God willing, we shall all do so regularly.) We thank God that he has made us worthy to stand in his presence and serve him (see eucharistic prayer II).

In personal prayer, we may stand in various ways: listening to the gospel or to prayers (1); praising God (2); asking his forgiveness (3a-3c); in humble petition for our needs and those of the world (4); while proclaiming God's glory in a doxology, we may wish to bow (3b), or stand on tiptoe with Clement of Alexandria (5). Early Christian art often depicted the Church as a woman in prayer, with her arms in the orans (praying) position (6); a similar gesture is still used by the presiding priest during the presidential prayers.

Standing for any length of time is easier if the feet are kept in the "at ease" position (7) or in the "present arms" position (8). Slouching or leaning may denote and promote sloppy internal attitudes (9).

**Sitting:** When we are seated, we are relaxed, yet attentive. We sit to listen to God's word, to reflect on his love and our need of his mercy, and for moments of
quiet worship and praise. In public worship, seats have long been provided for the president, and benches for some or all of the ministers. While benches along the walls were available for the aged, feeble, and infirm, pews or seats for the general congregation came into use only in fifteenth century Europe. (See Standing and kneeling, in Bulletin 65, pages 247-249.)

In public prayer, ministers or people who are seated should be respectful (10); the attitudes shown in (11) and (12) are hardly conducive to good prayer or worship. In personal or family prayer, several seated positions are possible (13-17). In (15), a sloping stone or chock of wood under the heels provides surprising comfort.¹

Bowing: Bows express reverence and adoration (3a-3c) as during the doxology of a hymn or psalm, or when a blessing is being given at the end of a celebration. We may also use a deeper bow in personal prayer to express adoration, sorrow, or humility (18).

Kneeling: This position, which our generation considers usual both for personal and public prayer, is not really a posture for public Christian worship in the tradition of the Church. The Council of Nicaea (in the year 325: canon 20) pointed out that Christians should stand — not kneel — on Sundays and throughout the fifty days of the Easter season. As early as the year 200, Turtullian is encouraging believers to stand in prayer on Sundays; on weekdays, they should kneel in personal prayer; especially during morning prayer, they should prostrate themselves before God.

When invited to kneel in public prayer today, Christians should kneel respectfully (19), and avoid slouching (20). In personal prayer, however, they may kneel as shown in (19) and (21). At times, they may prostrate themselves as a profound gesture of adoration, (see Rev. 7: 11-12), sorrow, humility, or pleading (22-23). In the liturgy, the prostration (23) is still used on Good Friday, and during the litany in ordinations.

A genuflection (24) is a medieval court gesture of respect which was introduced into the Roman liturgy; many feel that the profound bow of the Eastern Churches (18) is more graceful and respectful.

Arms may be raised in adoration, blessing (Lk. 24: 50-51), or petition (25-26), crossed (27), or held as shown in (4-6) and (22a). At times, we reach out to others in the kiss of peace (which may be a kiss, hug, formal abrazo, or handshake), or to give and receive the body and blood of the Lord. The deacon or reader may hold the book of the Lord on high during the entrance procession and recessional (28-29); when the deacon states that this is the Lord's gospel after proclaiming it to the people, he may hold the opened book on high (30). In the second eucharistic prayer, the Lord Jesus is described as saving us by opening his arms on the cross, in a gesture of loving obedience to God's will (31).

Hands are most expressive of our internal feelings and attitudes. In liturgy, we use them to make the sign of the cross on ourselves (gospel, final blessing), and on others (baptismal signing — see no. 39). In receiving communion, we hold one or both hands open (32); the "pincers" gesture is minimalistic, and is usually undesirable in liturgy (33). The laying on of hands is a biblical gesture of blessing (see Mt. 19: 13-15), conferring an office, or giving the Spirit (34).

In personal prayer, our hands may be joined (35), clasped (36), open for God's gifts (32 or 37), or extended (38 and 6). Parents may sign their children with the cross as a form of blessing (39-40).

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2 It is said that the shape of the pretzel is derived from the way arms were crossed in prayer.


4 Notes on family blessings are contained in Bulletin 49, Blessed Be God and His Creation, and in no. 63, Children and Liturgy; further references from past issues are given in no. 61, pages 288 and 291.
Many other gestures and symbols: As well as the gestures discussed in this article, many others are possible: kissing the book of God's word, striking one's breast in sorrow, walking in procession, dancing, singing, clapping, playing a musical instrument, or carrying a banner in procession.

- *The head* may be bowed, raised, uplifted, moving, or still.
- *Eyes* may be open (raised, downcast, looking ahead or around, focusing on a candle or other object), or they may be closed.
- *The mouth* may be open in word or song, or closed in silence.

"Smells and bells" — Catholicism accepts the fact that God's creation is good (Gen. 1: 31), and uses material goods in public worship. As well as our own bodies, we employ many material signs: water, bread, wine, oil, light, voices, music, color, incense, perfume, vesture, movement, and gesture. We use these generously, and let them speak for themselves, without embroidering or embellishing them.

Families who wish to pray well should consider how these and similar elements may help them to pray better and to give God greater honor and glory.

Helpful reading: As well as the books listed on pages 89-90, see also:


*Choros Newsletter*, c/o Mr. Grant Kerr, Room 321, 85 St. Clair Ave. East, Toronto, Ontario M4T 1M8.


*Dramatic Dance with Children in Education and Worship*, by Margaret Fisk Taylor (1976, The Sharing Co., P.O. Box 190, North Aurora, Ill. 60542).


*Creative Movement: Steps Toward Understanding*, by Margaret Fisk Taylor (1976, The Sharing Co., P.O. Box 190, North Aurora, Ill. 60542).

*Dance in the Schools: A New Movement in Education*, by Gene C. Wenner (no date, publisher, or place!).


"God can speak today through liturgical dance," by Kateri Hellman, OSU, in *Prairie Messenger*, vol. 53, no. 36 (Mar. 28, 1976), Muenster, Sask.


A TEACHER OF PRAYER

The role of the priest as president of the liturgical assembly has been the subject of much writing in the past decade. This article glances at the priest's responsibility of teaching people to pray at other times.

Today there seems to be a growing hunger among the people of God for a deepening in the life of prayer. People are turning to their priests to help them grow in prayer.

While not the only one who can teach others to pray, the priest in a parish has many opportunities to discuss prayer and its practice. Some ways in which this subject may be explored are outlined below. In future issues, we will develop them further.

Areas to explore:

- The priest should encourage his people to want to grow in prayer. “Lord, teach us to pray” should be his approach. (See Bulletin 44, People of Prayer.)
- The role of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8: 26-27) should be explored in individual, family, and parish prayer.
- Positive spiritual direction about prayer needs to be given in the sacrament of penance. An encouraging approach often brings out the person's deep desire to grow in prayer. (See Bulletin 52, Reconciliation and Forgiveness.)
- The parish bulletin may be used as an instrument of instruction in prayer (see Bulletin 39, page 134; no. 44, page 183).
- Parents and teachers want help in guiding children in their early prayer life. (See Bulletin 63, Children and Liturgy.)
- Prayer should be based on and close to scripture. How do we learn to use the gospels or the psalms, for example, in our prayer? (See “Growing in prayer” in Sunday Mass Book, pages 1286-1335.)
- Lent is a time for more ardent prayer. What plans is your parish council making now to help your community of believers grow in prayer? (See Bulletin 37, Taking Lent Seriously; no. 42, Call to Penance.)
- To be a teacher of prayer, a priest needs more time and energy to study, to discuss, to learn about prayer. What is your parish council doing to make sure your priests can concentrate on spiritual duties, and not have to dissipate energy and time on finances and maintenance?
- Instruction on prayer in their home should be part of the preparation for young couples preparing for marriage and family life. They should be encouraged to pray together each day of their wedded life. What part does prayer have in their life now? (See Bulletin 59, Celebrating Marriage.)

1 This article was originally published in June 1972, in Bulletin 33, pages 65-66. Since this issue is now out of print, we reprint this article as a service to our readers.

2 Other references on the priest as teacher of prayer are found in Bulletin 35, pages 194-196; no. 39, page 140; no. 44, pages 164-165, 168-175; no. 45, pages 209-211.
• A series of instructions on prayer should be part of the spiritual formation offered in each parish during the year (see Bulletin 44, pages 168-175). These could be incorporated sometimes into a bible service on prayer. (See also Bulletin 60, Liturgical Preaching.)

• Does anybody take seriously the Council's invitation to pastors? (See Liturgy constitution, no. 100.) The chief hours of the liturgy of the hours, especially evening prayer, should be celebrated in common in church on Sundays and major feasts. The laity are encouraged to celebrate the liturgy of the hours with priests, or among themselves, or individually. Can we just continue to ignore this appeal? (See Bulletin 58, Day by Day We Give Him Praise; Morning and evening prayer, in no. 63, pages 87-89.)

• Are members of the parish invited to pray and suffer for particular needs and intentions? (See Men and women of prayer, in Bulletin 65, pages 234-238.)

• Do the members of the parish see themselves as a praying, believing community of God's people, called by him to praise him and give witness to the community at large? Or are they just a bunch of people who happen to live in a certain geographic area? (See Role of the parish, in Bulletin 35, pages 177-180; Praise and prayer, in no. 44, pages 132-133; Role of the parish community, in no. 63, pages 95-102.)

Council teaching: The documents of the Second Vatican Council give much attention to the life of prayer among God's people, and mention here and there the work of the priest in helping people to grow in their life of prayer. (See Constitution on the Church; Constitution on revelation; Constitution on the liturgy; Decree on the bishops' pastoral office in the Church; Decree on the ministry and life of priests.)

A prayerful reading of the Council teaching on these points will help us all to realize how the priest is called to teach people to pray: as leader of worship, he is also a teacher of prayer.

* * *

Helpful reading:


Many references in past Bulletins on “Prayer” and “Prayers” are found in Bulletin 61, pages 336-340.

See also Bulletin 62, Liturgy and Devotion; no. 63, Children and Liturgy.

SOME MODELS FOR OUR PRAYER

Christians are a remembering people. Our tradition — our family story — provides many prayer forms and approaches that previous generations have used. We need to be open to the action of the Spirit both in the past and in the present, and to discern wisely what can be of help to us in our prayer life today. Traditional prayer forms have much to teach us.

Attitudes in Our Prayer

Attitudes: Our attitudes toward the world and its people are positive: see Attitudes toward creation, in Bulletin 50, pages 262-264. Wholesome attitudes are also needed toward God (see page 82), the Church (light of the world, and yet always in need of reform), and Christians as individuals (saved, and yet weak and prone to sin): see Preparing the Christian community, in Bulletin 59, pages 148-155. Liturgical celebrations and texts today provide reasonably positive models for sound Christian attitudes, but we need to be vigilant and to discern carefully with the aid of the Holy Spirit.

We are incarnate: As human beings, we are embodied. We can express our thoughts, feelings, or needs to other humans only through gestures, signs, or words. We are weak and helpless as we enter this life, and many become so once more as they prepare for their entrance into eternal life (see Bulletin 57, Rites for the Sick and the Dying). As participants in a particular culture, in this specific time and place in the history of salvation, we are influenced in our spiritual life, our prayer, and our worship. The language we speak shapes our thoughts, our prayers, and our expressions of worship, of love, of mercy. We do not pray as “Christians in general,” but as believers living in this period, in this place in this country, in this language, at this particular point in our personal, civic, and religious history.

Special times for prayer: Christians are called to pray always and at all times (Lk. 18: 1; 21: 36; see Bulletin 58, pages 73-78). In practice, believers have tried to obey this command by praying at specific times. Particular moments for prayer are morning and evening, at meals, and in times of special need (see page 83; Bulletin 63, page 69; no. 58, pages 79-87.)

Scriptural Models for Our Prayer

We are temples of the Holy Spirit. He dwells within us, and teaches us to pray (Rom. 8: 26-27). As well as listening to him in our hearts, we are able to share in the inspired words of the scriptures. Many models for our prayers are to be found in the bible.

Psalms and canticles: The book of psalms provides us with the Church’s prayerbook. Many human needs and emotions are reflected in the psalms. Christ taught the apostles and the Church to pray them in a Christian way (see Bulletin 58, pages 96-100). The liturgy of the hours uses most of the psalms in prayer, and also canticles from both the Old and New Testaments.

Lord’s prayer: Jesus gave us the Our Father as a model for our prayer (see Mt. 6: 9-13; Lk. 11: 2-4). It has been used in the liturgy and in personal prayer in all ages.
(see Didache 8: 2 as an early example). A meditation on this prayer is included in Bulletin 44, pages 154-159. The Church continues to pray the Our Father solemnly three times a day — in morning prayer, in the eucharist, and in evening prayer.

**Berakah:** This Old Testament form of prayer was also used by Jesus and the apostles. The berakah is discussed in more detail below.

**Doxologies:** These prayers of praise may be used to conclude a berakah or other prayer. The Glory to God in the highest used to be called the great doxology, and the Glory to the Father was known as the little one (see Bulletin 54, page 138). The little doxology is still used to conclude a psalm in the liturgy of the hours (see Bulletin 58, page 98) and a decade of the rosary. Further thoughts and examples are offered in Sunday Mass Book, page 1291.

**Prayer for the Church**, for people in need, for sinners: see “Intercessions,” on pages 74-75.

### Models from the Liturgy

Three of the many prayer forms in our tradition are described here. They may be used and adapted in personal, family, and community prayer.

**Berakah:** The Jewish people gradually developed a form of prayer known as the berakah or blessing. Its simple form is a spontaneous acclamation, such as this:

_Blessed are you, Lord our God:_

_you have given us this beautiful sunset._

A more developed form may include an initial blessing; a remembering of God’s saving acts in the past; a petition or series of intercessions; and a concluding blessing to seal the prayer. The most important model of this formula is the eucharistic prayer; briefer ones are now used during the preparation of the gifts.

The progress of a developed berakah may be described in these four words:

- **Glory:** The prayer begins by blessing (praising) God.
- **Story:** In a spirit of faith, we recall the great things God has done for his people in the past.
- **Worry:** In our trust, we ask God for our needs and for those of the world and Church.
- **Glory:** The prayer ends by blessing God.

An example of this prayer shows these four steps:

_Blessed are you, loving Father, ruler of the universe:_

_You have given us your Son as our leader, and have made us temples of your Holy Spirit._

_Fill our family with your light and peace. Have mercy on all who suffer, and bring us to everlasting joy with you._

_Father, we bless your name for ever and ever. Amen!_
Helps for developing prayers in the berakah format are given in Bulletin 49, pages 152-153, 164-168, and in Sunday Mass Book, page 1318. Many examples have been printed in the Bulletin since 1975: a list is included in no. 61, pages 288-289 and 338-340, and others have appeared in more recent issues.¹

Collect: In the present order of Mass, the collect or oration format is used for the opening prayer, prayer over the gifts, and prayer after communion (see GI,² nos. 32, 53, 56k; Bulletin 65, pages 222-225).

The collect stands within a distinct structure: an invitation to pray, with a pause for silent prayer; the collect; and an acclamation (Amen!), by which the community gives its assent to the prayer said in their name.

The central thrust of the collect may be summarized in four words:

- **You:** It is addressed to the Father, using one of many titles or attributes.
- **Who:** We recall some of the wonderful works that God has done for our ancestors in the faith and for us.
- **Do:** We ask him to continue to carry out his works of salvation for us in our time.
- **Through:** We offer our prayer through Jesus Christ, who is our brother, our savior, our Lord, our mediator, our only way to the Father.

An example of the collect:

*Loving Father, ruler of the universe,*
*you have given us your Son as our leader,*
*and have made us temples of your Holy Spirit.*
*Fill our family with your light and peace.*
*Have mercy on all who suffer,*
*and bring us to everlasting joy with you.*

*We ask this grace through Christ our Lord. Amen!*

**Intercessions:** The scriptures tell us to pray to God for our needs and for those of the Church and the world. The prayer of the faithful (general intercessions) has had a varied history in the eucharist (see Bulletin 54, pages 146-148) and in the liturgy of the hours (see no. 58, pages 101-103).

Today's liturgy offers us several forms of intercessions: the ones concluding the liturgy of the word in the Mass (see Liturgy constitution, no. 53; GI, nos. 45-47), and the intercessions used in morning and evening prayer. An extended form is used on Good Friday. We also have the litany of the saints, with petitions addressed to the Father, Christ the Lord, and the saints.

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¹ See also *La Liturgie Familiale:* Histoire, Théologie, Pastorale, by Pierre Dufresne (1973, Fides, 245 est, boulevard Dorchester, Montréal).

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; in the Canadian edition, it is given on pages 11-54.
Other models are also available for our personal, family, and community prayer:

- Before the recent renewal, a series of collects was used at the end of the litany of the saints during the forty hours devotion. A suggested form for solemn intercessions was described in Bulletin 48, pages 130-133.


Our liturgy guides us: The Church's public prayer offers us many sound guidelines for our personal and family prayer:

- Flowing from the word of God: The scriptures are God's word. Our prayer and good action are our response to what God has done and is doing in our lives. The important role of the Lord's word in our prayer and worship is brought out by the Vatican Council's teaching: see Liturgy constitution, nos. 24; 35: 1, 4; 51; 90; 121; Constitution on revelation, nos. 24-26. What place does God's word have in our prayer?

- Paschal mystery: Christians are to be optimistic, since the Lord Jesus has already overcome evil. His work will not be complete in each of us until we enter fully into his victory when he calls us to him in death. Each day we have to work with him to fulfill our baptismal promise of dying to sin and living with him for God. This spirit has to inspire our prayers and be reflected in them.

- Community and individual: Good liturgy and good prayer seek a balance between individualism and communitarianism: each person has to be a unique individual, but one who is part of a living community. Have you ever thought about the ways in which a good Sunday liturgy invites people to moments of personal reflection, petition, praise, thanks, and offering? What elements of the community's life form part of your personal prayer?

- Praise and intercession: Christian prayer follows the example of the liturgy. After hearing God's word and reflecting on his mighty actions among us, we give him praise and ask him to help us, all his Church, and the entire world.

- Short, simple, and sincere: The Council called for noble simplicity in the renewed rites (Liturgy constitution, no. 34). This echoes our Lord's warning in the sermon on the mount: see Mt. 6: 7-8 about wordy prayers.

Other liturgical models for prayer include the versicle and response, and the litany.

WORSHIP '80

The fifth symposium of the Canadian Liturgical Society is planned for London, Ontario, on May 20-22, 1980. Eucharist is the subject of the meeting, and keynote speaker will be Edward Schillebeeckx, OP. He will give three talks during the symposium. Other speakers will emphasize the pastoral and liturgical aspects of the eucharist. The proceedings of Worship '77 are reviewed on page 92.

As it becomes available, further information will be included in the Bulletin.
Spontaneous prayer may be described as one response to the constant prompting of the Holy Spirit: the eternal teacher of prayer (Rom. 8: 26-27) encourages us — his living temples — to respond in prayer to some knowledge, event, or situation which touches our life.

In the beginning: The early centuries of the Church’s life — and a year was as long for them as it is for us — saw Christians using scriptural forms of prayer in their personal and liturgical life. Prominent among these forms were the berakah, doxology, hymn, psalm, canticle, and intercessions. People seemed ready to stand up and pour out their prayer (see, for example, Acts 4: 23-31). These early centuries are good evidence of the action of the Spirit, who guides us in life and teaches us to pray (see Rom. 8).

In the liturgy: The Church's living liturgy moved gradually from freely composed prayers based on well-known prayer forms (such as the berakah), through the use of standard models (as in Hippolytus, AD 215), to fixed texts (Roman canon, between the fourth and sixth centuries). Today, since the Second Vatican Council, we are beginning to become more free about preparing prayers and introductions in “these or similar words.” (See Bulletin 40, pages 197-203.)

In family life today: Christian families are gradually learning to pray spontaneously. Individuals are more ready to base their prayer on scriptural and liturgical models (see pages 72-76), and are slowly becoming open to the possibilities of a much freer form of prayer as well.

Growing in Spontaneous Prayer

There are several steps we may take in learning to pray spontaneously. They are all important, and several may be taking place on any particular day.

1. Pray to the Holy Spirit: He is the teacher of prayer. Ask him to help you to grow in prayer as you continue to follow Jesus as closely as possible in your daily living. (P.S. Praying in your own words is already a form of spontaneous prayer!)

2. Read the scriptures: How often? Each day. How long? As long as possible. A quarter of an hour of prayerful reading of the gospel, the epistles, or the psalms, for example, will help you to become more familiar and comfortable with the mind and heart of Christ.

3. Take an active part in the liturgy: Participate fully in the eucharist and the liturgy of the hours; when possible, take part in other liturgical celebrations. Full participation in the liturgy is the primary and indispensable source of the true spirit of Christ (Liturgy constitution, no. 14). The liturgy is an excellent model for our personal prayers of praise and petition.

4. Become familiar with various models of prayer: Learn how a collect, a litany, a berakah, and other traditional prayer forms are built (see pages 72-76), and use them. You may have to begin by using others’ prayers, and then move to writing out your own. With practice it will become easier to use these models as frameworks for prayers you compose.
5. Ask the Holy Spirit for strength to remain open to his inspirations, and to see his finger in the prayer traditions of the Church. Ask him also to help you to respond by prayer to many situations. Then go ahead and pray in your own words, spontaneously.

6. Keep repeating steps 1-5.

Keeping Our Balance

It is easy — but foolish — to take extreme positions in the matter of spontaneous prayer. There are always some who want to retain only the old (i.e., the written or traditional) prayer forms of the Church; others may want to throw out all the old forms, and use only spontaneous prayer.

In personal prayer, we are free to follow either way, but we would be wise to consider the example of the renewed liturgy, where the Church is leading us in a more balanced direction:

- Retain the traditional structures and forms;
- Vary them within their framework;
- Use a variety of choices;
- Leave room for some creativity;
- Make sure that prayer, and not novelty, is your goal.

OVERCOMING DIFFICULTIES

In 1974, Pope Paul VI wrote about family prayer. He noted that today's changing conditions make it harder for families to gather together for prayer. But he also added that Christians are “not to succumb but to make an effort. Families which want to live in full measure the vocation and spirituality proper to the Christian family must therefore devote all their energies to overcoming the pressures that hinder family gatherings and prayer in common.”

1 Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary. no. 54 (see footnote 5 on page 84 of this issue).
A FAMILY CALENDAR OF CELEBRATIONS

Every family has a series of special celebrations: these include birthdays, wedding anniversaries, and dates of death of family members and close relatives. Some families observe other days of importance in their history.

This article suggests a way in which a family may develop its own calendar of celebrations. These special days are occasions for prayer and thanks to God, as well as festivity.

Family Celebrations

Each family has its own unique story, a unique place in the history of salvation, and may wish to mark the special milestones in its life story.

Calendar of dates: Some preliminary work is needed if a family wishes to draw up a list of dates for each member, old and young:

• Baptism: When was each person in the family washed in the waters of baptism?
• Confirmation: When did each family member feel the imposition of the bishop's hands, and receive the anointing of the Spirit with chrism?
• First communion: On what date was each member of the family first nourished with the body and blood of the Lord Jesus?
• Marriage: Adult members of the family list the date of their marriage in Christ.
• Ordination or religious profession: These dates are included in the list of family anniversaries.
• Births and deaths: The date of birth of various family members may be listed, along with the anniversary of death for those who have died.
• Other celebrations: The dates of particular family events — graduation; moving to this home, patron saints of their country of origin — may be added to the calendar of dates.

How to find dates: There are several ways of finding out dates for a family calendar of prayer:

• List all dates you can remember: Dates of birth of present family members, wedding days, date of death, other days.
• Ask older relatives: They may remember dates, or be able to locate certificates and other papers.
• Check documents and certificates already in the family. Look at the family bible.
• Obtain certificates from parishes for baptism, confirmation, first communion. (Normally an offering of $2.00 for each certificate is made to cover office expenses, time taken for the search, and mailing costs.)
• **Preserve certificates**: Some families may want to frame documents, or preserve them in an album.

• **Record dates from now on** in the bible, as well as in a family calendar of days for special prayer.

**Using a Family Calendar**

**Designing a calendar**: After these dates have been collected, a calendar of family celebrations may be drawn up. It may be a simple typed page, a larger sheet on the family bulletin board, or a simple one-year diary. One sample is outlined here; another is given in *Family Prayer*, pages 125-130 (see review on page 91 of this Bulletin).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>JANUARY</th>
<th>FEBRUARY</th>
<th>MARCH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>16</strong> Bill born (1973)</td>
<td><strong>5</strong> Mom and Dad married (1972)</td>
<td><strong>16</strong> We moved here (1977)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>APRIL</strong></td>
<td><strong>MAY</strong></td>
<td><strong>JUNE</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>15</strong> Sally born (1975)</td>
<td><strong>23</strong> Mom's first communion (1954)</td>
<td><strong>10</strong> Mom born (1947)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>29</strong> Dad's first communion (1955)</td>
<td><strong>22</strong> Mom baptized (1947)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>JULY</strong></td>
<td><strong>AUGUST</strong></td>
<td><strong>SEPTEMBER</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>20</strong> Cousin Joe Jones ordained priest (1969)</td>
<td><strong>16</strong> Terry born (1978)</td>
<td><strong>20</strong> Dad born (1948)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>19</strong> Uncle John saved from drowning (1972)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>OCTOBER</strong></td>
<td><strong>NOVEMBER</strong></td>
<td><strong>DECEMBER</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2</strong> Dad baptized (1948)</td>
<td><strong>29</strong> Grampa Jones died (1970)</td>
<td><strong>5</strong> Father O'Connell becomes our pastor (1976)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>16</strong> Pope John Paul II elected (1978)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To these dates should be added the important dates in the current liturgical year, the feasts of family patron saints, and important days in the civil year. (Suggestions for family prayer on these occasions are discussed in Bulletin 67, pages 6-10, 22-32; see also *Prayer through the year*, in no. 44, pages 160-162.)
Using the calendar in prayer: The calendar of family celebrations needs to be incorporated into the larger and more important calendar of the universal Church. Uncle Charlie's birthday does not overshadow Ash Wednesday, and Aunt Susie's wedding anniversary is not more important than the Lord's day.

While observing the calendar of the Church, a family remembers its special events by including one or two special intercessions for the person or intention in family prayer, and in small group liturgies on weekdays. Celebrations of liturgical seasons may also include a prayer for family members with an anniversary occurring during the season.

If the calendar or datebook is kept in the corner or room used for family prayer, it will be easier to remember to pray for particular intentions.

Many ideas and references on family prayer during the year are contained in Year of praise and prayer, in Bulletin 63, pages 103-110. The Jewish custom of having the youngest child ask about the meaning of the Passover rites, and ways of adapting this to Christian celebrations throughout the year, are described in Bulletin 63, pages 109-110.

* * *

A calendar is but a reminder. When a family wants to improve its prayer life by making special remembrances on particular days, the calendar can be useful. But the real initiative comes from the Spirit, who is always ready to help us. Are we trying to be open to his inspirations?

NEXT ISSUE

Eucharistic Devotions is the title of the next issue of the Bulletin. This issue will contain sections of the 1973 Roman document on worship of the eucharist outside Mass. Added resources will help parishes and communities to celebrate eucharistic devotions well.

Also included in this issue is an important study on the bread used for the eucharist.

This issue is to be ready for mailing early in May.
SOME PRAYERS FOR CHILDREN

Two distinct ways of thinking seem to dominate the field of preschool children's prayer today: either repeating memorized but half-understood prayers, or composing spontaneous prayers on each occasion:

- **Spontaneous prayers:** Many people — assisted by the Spirit who prays within us (Rom. 8: 26-27) — are able to pray often in their own words (see pages 76-77). Children need guidance, example, and encouragement to pray freely.

- **Models:** Humans learn by imitating. We begin by repeating and doing what others say and do, until we learn to do these things by ourselves. In prayer, we can learn from the traditional forms used by the Christian people over the centuries. Some of these forms are discussed in pages 72-75.

  *May we suggest that the truth lies in the middle?*

  * * *

The brief prayers below reflect traditional modes, but they are simple enough for a child to use them to say what he or she wants to say in prayer.

**Some models:**

Blessed be God.

Father, I love you.

All praise to you, Lord Jesus.

Glory to you, Lord Jesus.

Jesus, I love you.

Help me to be good today.

Jesus, Jimmy is sick.

Please help him to get better.

Holy Mary, pray for me.

Saint N., pray to Jesus for me.

Saint N., pray for us.
Many elements affect our family prayer. Parish liturgy committees and families should discuss them at greater length.

Heart of our devotion: Our Christian devotion and prayer involve four central or basic elements:

- Contemplation: We are aware of God's presence in many ways. We listen to his word. We see his beauty, wisdom, and power in his creation.

- Praise: We respond to God's presence by giving him our praise and thanks in song, prayer, gesture, and daily living.

- Intercession: As God's people of prayer, we join with the Lord Jesus in prayer for all the world as well as for the Church. Our constant prayer for peace and harmony on earth and our pleading for all in need is part of God's saving plan for the building of his kingdom.

- Communion: Our prayer and our living are offered in union with God's people on earth, and with all persons of good will. We join them in working and praying for the coming of God's kingdom.

Public worship continues to keep a balance among these elements; in our personal and family prayer, we need to keep a similar equilibrium.

Attitudes toward God: Christian worship is offered to the Father, through the Son, in the Holy Spirit. We must continue to see Jesus Christ as Son of God and Son of Man. Our attitudes toward ourselves are to reflect our approach to God: we are his forgiven sons and daughters, brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ and of one another, temples of the Holy Spirit. Taken out of context, a “Lord, I am not worthy” approach can lead to a distorted view of our human dignity as the redeemed people of God.

Scriptures: Our attitudes toward God and ourselves are based on the teaching of the prophets and the apostles. God acts out of love, and we respond to this love. The scriptures provide his light for our pathways in life. As we learn to read the word of God, to meditate on it, and to pray with it, we let the Spirit guide our prayer and our life.

Word and action: As we rediscover our bodies as temples of the Holy Spirit, we are becoming more accustomed to using a variety of gestures, movements, postures, and actions in our worship (see pages 66-69). Gradually we are beginning to grasp the importance of atmosphere and symbols, of light and sound and smell, of a place

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See also Bulletin 62, page 21, footnote 8, on St. Ignatius of Antioch.
set aside for prayer. The need and value of good Christian art in our homes is slowly being felt. We are learning to pray well with words — our own, the words of others, texts from our tradition, and most of all, with the words of scripture. We are learning too to pray spontaneously, to let the Spirit teach us to pray (see pages 76-77).

Privileged moments for prayer: In our Christian and Jewish traditions, important times for prayer — personal, family, and community — are the beginning and ending of the day, mealtimes, and at moments of special need. Our habit of respectful prayer at these times forms a sound foundation for our public worship.

Penitential discipline: We need to rediscover the relationship of personal penance and the carrying of our daily cross with the paschal mystery of the Lord Jesus. For most, both the baptismal and the penitential character of Lent is lost; Friday is no longer seen as a day of special prayer. (See The top ten, in Bulletin 42, pages 20-33.)

Devotion to Mary and the saints: Today, Mary is presented as a model for the whole Church as well as for each Christian. She gives us an example of faith in God and of perfect obedience to his will. The saints too have been raised up by the Father as models of faith and obedience. As they lived their daily lives for God in the circumstances of their own time and place, so we should be living for him today, as his Church in the modern world.

Basic Christian vocation: Our Christian spirituality is based on our baptism. When we are initiated into the Church, we share in the adoption of our Lord Jesus Christ: with him, we are the children of God and heirs of the kingdom. We share in Jesus' priesthood, in his vocation of worship and intercession, and of work for the advancement of the kingdom of God. We are to love God by loving others, to serve by serving as Christ did. We are all called to be ministers.2

Music and singing: These need to be part of our family prayer. Psalms, hymns, doxologies, refrains, acclamations, Amen and Alleluia, and other chants can help us to express our praise more fully.3 A family which sings in prayer several times during the week will be able to express deeper praise in Sunday worship.

Sense of celebration: Each family needs to seek to recognize and welcome the presence and action of God in our midst. A sense of celebration develops as we observe different family events and anniversaries, civic festivities, seasons of the year, and times from the Church's calendar. We celebrate because we recognize in each event or time a further sign of the Father's love for this particular family that has gathered before him in prayer and worship. (See A family calendar of celebrations, pages 78-80.)

Liturgical year: Sunday is the primary feast day for Christians, the heart of the year. Lent leads to Easter and the Easter season; Advent brings us to Christmas and its season. Ordinary time is a quieter and more reflective period in the Church's year. How does our family prayer echo and celebrate these days and seasons? (See Prayer through the year, in Bulletin 44, pages 160-162; also Bulletins 63, 67, and 70.)

2 See Ministries of the Laity, by J. Frank Henderson (1978, CCCB, Ottawa). This 33-page booklet provides many insights into all ministries. Available for 75¢ (plus postage) from Publications Service at the address on the inside front cover.

3 Catholic Book of Worship I (1972) and CBW II (1979) provide many useful resources for family prayer, and are valuable additions to the room or place used for family devotion and worship.
Human and Christian values: The 1973 Directory for Masses with Children, nos. 9-10, pointed out various values that are the basis for Christian living and celebration. These need to be developed and inculcated in the home. Some further values are suggested in Bulletin 63, pages 71-72, 113.

Eucharist at the center: The eucharist is the center of all Christian life, prayer, and action. We offer all that we do and are in the eucharistic action. Everything we do as individuals, families, and communities should flow from the eucharist and lead us to its next celebration.

* * *

Role of the local community: In the past year, what has our parish done to teach people to pray and to grow in their devotion? Many positive ideas are outlined in Role of the parish community, in Bulletin 63, pages 95-102. See also no. 62, Liturgy and Devotion.

Aids to devotion: These include music, books, art, banners, posture, scripture reading, time to reflect, time to pray; many other elements could be added. What are you doing to improve the condition of your personal and family prayer life?

Helpful reading: See pages 69 and 89-90.

Eight Criteria for Devotion

In 1974, Pope Paul VI issued a document on devotion to Mary. This booklet offers many sound ideas on Christian devotion. The pope offered these criteria for renewal of devotion to Mary; what he says applies to all facets of Christian devotion today.

a) Aspects of devotion: Devotion must be related to the Trinity, to Christ, to the Holy Spirit, and to the Church:

- **Trinity:** All Christian worship is offered to God, Father, Son, and Spirit. In the scriptures and in the liturgy, we offer all honor and glory to the Father, through the Son, in the Holy Spirit. Doxologies — including the one which concludes the eucharistic prayer (Through him, with him . . .), hymns, and psalms — are an appropriate element in the prayer of Christian families: see page 73.

- **Christ:** All devotion should reflect God’s plan for saving us in Christ. In this way we will be led to know Jesus Christ, and become perfect and mature with his fullness (see Eph. 4: 13). We should be led to give Jesus greater honor, and with him, offer glory to the Father in the Spirit.

- **Holy Spirit:** All holiness in humans is attributed to the working of the Holy Spirit, who is poured into our hearts (Rom. 5: 5). The Spirit formed and guided the saints, and led them to respond fully to Christ’s invitation to follow and imitate him.

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4 The Directory for Masses with Children is contained in the sacramentary (Canadian edition, pages 55-64), and in Masses with Children/Masses of Reconciliation (1975, CCC, Ottawa: pages 11-20). A practical commentary is contained in Bulletin 63, pages 111-123.

It was the Spirit of Christ who called them to share in the Lord's suffering and resurrection. Our devotions must be guided by the Spirit, working for the building up of the body of Christ, the Church, and lead us in holiness to Christ, his Church, and the liturgical worship of the people of God.

- **Church**: Devotion to the saints is based on our belief that they are part of the Church in heaven, and that they join us in praising God: we proclaim in the preface of the Mass that we are joining the angels and saints in our song and prayer. Mary is seen as a model for the Church in her faith, obedience to God's will, listening to his word, and in giving him praise. She is also an example of what we will be when we reign with Christ in heaven. (See Liturgy constitution, no. 103; Constitution on the Church, nos. 52-69.) All devotions must build up the community of faith, and contribute to its unity and holiness; divisiveness does not come from the Spirit of unity.

  b) **Further guidelines**: Christian devotion is not based on "passing emotion" or "vain credulity," but comes from *true faith* (Constitution on the Church, no. 67). Some characteristics of this devotion are described by Pope Paul VI:

- **Biblical**: "Today it is recognized as a general need of Christian piety that every form of worship should have a biblical imprint." The bible is our *basic prayer-book*. We should both listen to God's word in faith and respond to it by prayers and hymns which echo the words and ideas of the scriptures. Enlightened thus by God's word, Christians will be encouraged to respond further by living their lives according to the will of Christ. (See Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, no. 30; Constitution on revelation, no. 24; Constitution on the liturgy, nos. 24, 121.)

- **Liturgical**: Devotions are to be in harmony with the liturgy and its seasons, are to be inspired by the liturgy, and are to lead people to better liturgical worship. Liturgy and devotions are not to be merged: we should not insert devotional practices such as novenas into our celebration of the Mass. [Does this apply also to a variety of practices with Advent wreaths and Jesse trees in the midst of the already overburdened introductory rites of the Mass?] See Constitution on the liturgy, no. 13; Devotion . . . , no. 31.

- **Ecumenical**: Devotion to the saints is related to the life and concerns of the Church, and hence has an ecumenical perspective also. Orthodox and Anglicans already have a well developed devotion to Mary and the saints. Catholics could ask the saints to intercede for unity among all Christians; we must avoid any exaggerations or incorrect practices in our devotions. All devotions must lead us to Christ, our Lord and savior, our one mediator with the Father. Jesus himself is the source of our unity with one another and with the Trinity. (See Devotion . . . , nos. 32-33.)

- **Anthropological**: As human sciences change our perspectives, we have to be able to see that holiness does not lie in particular living conditions but in hearing God's word, reflecting on it, and doing his will in a spirit of love and service (Lk. 11: 27). Today's ideas need to be seen and examined in the light of the gospels. Legendary or false material is to be rejected in our devotions.

  All devotion to Mary and the saints is to lead Christians to Christ, and to obedience to his will. (See Devotion . . . , nos. 34-39; Mt. 7: 21; Jn. 15: 14.)

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6 Devotion . . . (see footnote 5), no. 30.
WORKSHOP ON FAMILY PRAYER

These two pages present some ideas on a workshop on family prayer that can be put on in any parish.

Purpose: To help our families grow in their experience of prayer.

Description: A three-hour practical session on family prayer, for parents. It may take place on a Saturday afternoon or another convenient time in a parish hall or other suitable place.

Balance: There needs to be a balance among presentation, experience, and prayer.

Who comes? The workshop will be more helpful if 15 to 25 couples take part in it. If more apply, it could be better to hold two workshops; if these are held simultaneously in one place, consideration should be given to sharing common facilities for coffee breaks and some other events. Smaller communities may wish to have the workshop with fewer couples, or invite others from neighboring churches. The community should not forget about widows/widowers and single-parent families.

Resources: See Bulletins 63, 49, 44, 68; Sunday Mass Book; Sunday Lectionary — study edition. All these should be on display, and one or more copies could be available for sale or distribution. (These may be ordered from Publications Service, at the address on the inside front cover of this issue.)

Suggested Three-Hour Program

1:30 Registration. Displays, handouts.

2:00 Opening presentation: What is family prayer?

2:20 Discussion by each couple: What is happening in our home? (Facts, not excuses.) Reference: see Bulletin 63, page 69.

(The people who plan the course may wish to prepare a brief tick-off form for each couple’s use (to be kept, and not to be handed in), with questions on the frequency, type, and place of prayer; on participation, styles, gestures, resources used.)

2:30 Demonstration: A simple meal prayer.

(References: Bulletin 49, pages 165-166, 195-197; no. 50: 272; Sunday Mass Book, pages 1328-1330.

2:35 Discussion by each couple: What do we do at mealtime?

2:45 Presentation: Morning and evening prayer at home.

(Tradition, purpose; basic content: listening, praise, intercession.)

3:00 Discussion by several couples: What is happening in our homes? (Pressures, not knowing what to do . . . .)

3:15 Coffee break
3:25 Discussion by each couple: *What can we do about praying at meals? About prayer in the morning? in the evening?*

3:40 Sharing (if desired)
Some resources (handout)
General discussion

4:00 **Evening prayer**: by all.

**Other Notes**

**Handouts:** A useful handout is Bulletin 63, *Children and Liturgy*: it contains many articles which suggest positive action in answer to the points mentioned above.

**Items for sale:** Those conducting the workshop may wish to have some aids to family prayer available. Helpful issues of the National Bulletin on Liturgy include nos. 44, 49, 63, and 68. Other useful books are listed on pages 69 and 89-90 of this issue.

**Workshop fees** need to be realistic. *Costs* should include rent and caretaker (unless the parish is covering this); speakers, travel, cost of handouts. *Income* could include registration fees, sales of books and other resources, subsidies or grants by the parish council and other local organizations, as well as the donated time and effort of many willing helpers. While no one is looking to make a profit (each should rather seek to be a prophet), it does help when events do not go too far into the hole.

**Further workshops:** After families have had time to benefit from the basic workshop on family prayer, they may wish to take part in further sessions:

- Using the bible (or: New Testament) in prayer;
- Spontaneous prayer;
- Liturgical year (see Bulletin 70);
- A prayer room for our family (see no. 63, page 86).

*What can you do in your parish community?*

**PARENTS' PRAYER**

*All praise to you, Lord Jesus, lover of children:
bless our family,
and help us to lead our children to you.*

*Give us light and strength,
and courage when our task is difficult.
Let your Spirit fill us with love and peace,
so that we may help our children to love you.*

*All glory and praise are yours, Lord Jesus,
for ever and ever. Amen!*

87
A big difference can exist between praying and saying prayers.

- Saying prayers — at its worst — can mean the mindless repeating of formulas, whether they make sense or not, whether they reflect what we mean or intend. No one condones such a practice.

- Praying can mean the response of the whole person to God's love, and is done by involving oneself totally in attention and praise and intercession. Praying may be done alone or with others.

In practice, we may make some more positive distinctions:

- Traditional structures and forms of prayer: When we use these well, we share in the wisdom and experience of many generations of believers. Used with faith and love, these prayers may help us to grow in our prayer life. The experience of the Church — of many generations of God's people guided by the Spirit — helps us to pray better.

- Memorizing prayers? Long a favorite practice of generations past, this is questioned by many teachers today.

Perhaps a balance may be struck between a positive familiarity with a prayer and a rote commitment of syllables and sounds to memory. The Our Father need not be read from a book each time we pray it — nor should it be rattled off in a mindless sequence of sounds without meaning. It needs to be prayed carefully and from the heart.

Spontaneous prayer: We can develop our own prayers, aided by the Spirit: see pages 76-77.

Some models for our prayer: The bible and the Church's liturgical texts provide us with many excellent models for our personal and family prayer: see pages 72-75.

Teaching children to pray: Young Christians need to be initiated into the way Christ's followers pray. There is no simple or automatic way of doing this. See Bulletin 63, pages 70-74.

* * *

A need for balance: True prayer must always come from the heart, in response to the Spirit's prompting and guidance. Sometimes we pray better in the words of scripture, sometimes with a traditional formula, sometimes in our own words, sometimes by listening to another pray in our name. We should make grateful use of all these ways.
SOME BOOKS ON FAMILY PRAYER

As well as the bible, some of the following titles may prove useful to families in
their prayer. Further references are given on page 69.

Prayers from the Bible for Everyone, translated and compiled by Laurence

and Stoughton, London and Toronto).

Praying with the Bible: the biblical bases of great Christian prayers, by Jean de

Biblical Prayers, by Lucien Deiss (1976, World Library, 2145 Central Parkway,
Cincinnati, Ohio 45214).

Sunday Lectionary — study edition (1978, CCCB, 90 Parent Ave., Ottawa,
Ontario K1N 7B1): scripture readings, responsorial psalms, and gospel acclamations
provide guidance and models for our prayer.

see especially “Growing in Prayer,” pages 1286-1335.

Catholic Book of Worship I (1972, CCC, 90 Parent Ave., Ottawa, Ontario
K1N 7B1): hymns and psalms that may be used in family prayer.

Come Aside and Rest Awhile: a book of family prayer, edited by Joseph G.
Kelly, illustrated by Colleen Kelly Spellecy (1977, Emmaus Books/Paulist, New

Praying Together, collected by Philip Caraman, SJ (1976, CTS and SPCK,

Morning Praise and Evensong: a liturgy of the hours in musical setting, edited
and arranged by William G. Storey, DMS, Frank C. Quinn, OP, and David F.
Wright, OP (1973, Fides, Notre Dame, Indiana 46556).

Praise Him! A prayerbook for today’s Christian, edited by William G. Storey
(1973, Ave Maria Press, Notre Dame, Ind. 46556).

Bless the Lord! A prayerbook for Advent, Christmas, Lent, and Eastertide,
46556).

Day by Day, the Notre Dame prayerbook for students, edited by Thomas
McNally, CSC, and William G. Storey, DMS (1975, Ave Maria Press, Notre Dame,
Ind. 46556).

Lord, Hear Our Prayer, compiled by Thomas McNally, CSC, and William G.
Storey, DMS (1978, Ave Maria Press, Notre Dame, Ind. 46556): reviewed on page
91 of this issue.

The Catholic Liturgy Book, the people’s complete service book (1975, Helicon,


Night Prayer, containing night prayer for each day of the week, optional prayers, commentary on psalms (1976, USCC, 1312 Massachusetts Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005).

Family Prayer, by Dolores Curran (1978, Twenty-third Publications, P.O. Box 180, West Mystic, Ct. 06388): reviewed on page 91 of this issue.

Prayers at Mealtime, by Sister Mary Teresa, OP (1972, Paulist, New York, Paramus, and Toronto).


Prayers for Children: a prayer card published for the Church Assembly's Children's Council (1967, Church Information Office, Church House, Westminster, SW1).


"VOCATIONS ARE EVERYBODY'S BUSINESS"

This slogan appeared on envelopes mailed recently from the head office of the Knights of Columbus in New Haven, Ct.

We should be asking the Father to send many more workers into his harvest (see Mt. 9: 36-38). What is your parish or community doing to encourage everyone to pray and work for vocations to all ministries? (A prayer for this intention is included in Bulletin 60, page 251.)

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OTHER NOTES

BRIEF BOOK REVIEWS


This book provides commonly known prayers and prayers for various needs; a simple form of morning, midday, and evening prayer for each day of the week; night prayers; prayers for the liturgical seasons; litanies; prayers for reconciliation; meditative prayer; and other prayers and devotions. Texts are taken from the scriptures, liturgical sources, and the writings of many saints.

Made to fit in pocket or purse, this book is recommended for individuals, families, and groups who want to pray with the resources of 2,000 years of Christian devotion.


A combination of ideas about prayer, suggestions for teaching and encouraging prayer, and many practical examples make this a realistic book for families. Simply written by a mother of three, it is a most useful aid to prayer in the home. Helpful examples encourage family celebrations and prayer.

Highly recommended for families, teachers, and for parishes that want to encourage family prayer throughout the year.


This series of rhymed prayers thanks God for making us, and for giving us different 'parts' — heart, mind, hands, feet, hair, sleep, and so on. The age group of the users is described only as "young children." It would seem that these prayers are intended for parents to read (and teach?) to preschoolers.

Teachers and families may wish to use this as a now-and-again resource book, but should find Family Prayer (above) a much more useful book for helping children to learn how to pray.


An honest attempt at helping children to understand the Mass is presented in a 'comic book' format, with room for the child in the early grades of school to draw pictures. While various ministries are presented positively, the book has too many words. It considers thanksgiving as an action after communion rather than during the eucharistic prayer. All parts of the Mass seem to be equal in value. A good pound of commas has been omitted after words in apposition.

We hope a second edition can eliminate the weaknesses and emphasize the strong points in this booklet.


The subtitle talks about the causes of failure, but the chapter headings give positive approaches. The book is a good contribution to Christian families who want to become happier. The author shares her experiences and understanding of family life, and encourages families to work toward these in their daily living and praying.

Recommended for families, clergy, and all who work to encourage better family life.

As well as providing many ideas for moving and dancing to Christmas carols, this book will inspire similar reactions to psalms and hymns in all the seasons of the Church's liturgical year. It may be adapted for choir members, schools, and families.

Recommended for catechists, choirs, and families.

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The Canadian Liturgical Society sponsored its fourth symposium, Worship '77, as a means of sharing common Christian understandings about the process and sacraments of initiation. Representing Roman Catholic, Baptist, Russian Orthodox, Episcopal, and Lutheran points of view, the five speakers bring scriptural, traditional, and modern approaches together, and help all Christians to see their common heritage more clearly. (An earlier symposium, Celebrating the Word, was reviewed in Bulletin 63, pages 125-126; it is available at the address above.)

Recommended for pastors, liturgy committees, and all involved in preparing people for the celebration of baptism.

* * *


Concelebration is a sign of the Church's unity. It is not limited to the eucharist, or to the simultaneous pronouncing of the words of the eucharistic prayer. This book, written in clear language, provides a brief introduction to the practice of concelebration in our tradition and at present, and looks at current effects and possible developments in the future. Guidelines for good concelebration provide practical help to priests and bishops.

Recommended for priests, seminarians, priests' senates, and diocesan liturgical commissions.

* * *


This booklet provides useful notes for ministers of communion, and for priests and liturgy committees who are beginning to establish this ministry in the parish. The combination of typed and typeset material is distracting, but the content is good.

Recommended for liturgy committees, priests, deacons, and ministers of communion.

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This brief booklet is a translation of Assemblées dominicales en l'absence du prêtre. The preface to the English edition is a reflection on the meaning of the Lord's day in our Christian tradition.

The material for the celebrations is taken mainly from the sacramentary. Guidelines help the community to live the meaning of Sunday and to remain in touch with the liturgy of the universal Church. Community preparation and full participation are encouraged.

The services follow a simple and clear structure: introductory rites, liturgy of the word, communion service (using previously consecrated altar breads), and concluding rite.

Recommended for diocesan liturgical commissions, and for communities which may have to be without a priest on a Sunday.

* * *
Preparation for and Thanksgiving after Mass for Priests, prepared by Joseph Campbell (n.d., Shanway Publications, N. Ireland). Two colors, vinyl cover, 5 by 7¼ inches, 71 pages. £2.00. (May be ordered from Parochial House, 546 Saintfield Road, Belfast BT8 8EU, Northern Ireland.)

This booklet provides a simple set of prayers and reflections for each day of the week. Looking at Sunday, for example, we find these texts, centered on the resurrection:

- **Preparation for Mass:** Ps. 118, a collect for renewal by the Spirit, a reading (Jn. 6: 54-56), an eleventh century prayer before Mass by John of Fecamp (3 pages).
- **Thanksgiving after Mass:** Ps. 23, prayer, five one-liners for reflection, prayers to Jesus, brief reading (Rom. 8: 10-11), prayers to the Spirit and to Jesus (3 pages).

Thirteen pages of additional prayers complete the book.

Recommended for priests who want to pray with the Church before and after Mass. (See Bulletin 46, page 319.)

Quiet Places with Jesus: 40 Guided Imagery Meditations for Personal Prayer, by Isaias Powers, CP (1978, Twenty-Third Publications, P.O. Box 180, West Mystic, CT 06388). Paper, illustrations, 127 pages. $3.50.

The gospel readings for the 40 weekdays between Ash Wednesday and the Easter vigil are the basis for these meditations. In two pages, the author provides brief reflections and meditations to help us begin praying about Jesus and his message. The author relies on our memory and imagination as strong aids in our prayer. This book may be used during Lent or at any time of the year.

Recommended for all who want to grow in their prayer life.


The author is sincere about trying to follow the Directory for Masses with children, and offers many positive suggestions for such celebrations; at times, however, one is not sure whether he means Masses with adults, with children, or with adults and some children present.

If used with care, the book can be helpful for catechists, parents, and priests involved in celebrations with (rather than 'for') children.


The author explains the ministry of music, and offers practical advice for musicians. He outlines the structures of the Mass, and the various times when music is required or appropriate. In his presentation he relies on official documents and other good sources. The writing is clear and uncomplicated. Frequent headings make it easy to find a particular point for quick reference.

Recommended for musicians and parish liturgy committees.


Father Walsh has been active in the liturgical movement for a long time. In this book, he shares the insights of 40 years of ministry. What is wrong with so many Sunday celebrations? He points out that a new theology of the sacraments (actions, not things) and of celebration (all are celebrants) requires a fresh approach. In this and in two other books (see the next two reviews, page 94), he offers many practical ways of making Sunday Mass a good experience of worship and prayer.

Recommended as required reading for priests, bishops, deacons, and members of liturgy committees and diocesan commissions.

This book is a follow-up of The Theology of Celebration (see page 93), and puts it into practice. Fr. Walsh prefers “celebrating community” as a more positive and active term than “congregation.” He describes the community’s ministry of hospitality, and offers many practical suggestions for developing a good experience in our Sunday worship.

Recommended for priests, deacons, and parish liturgy communities.

* * *


In this third book (see two previous reviews, above), Fr. Walsh offers sound and practical suggestions for better Sunday celebrations. He first looks at the space and place for parish worship, and shares many useful ideas for local communities to discuss.

Speaking of ministries in parish worship, he considers the community, the priest-celebrant, concelebrants, readers, servers, ministers of music, eucharistic ministers, leader, and ushers. In each section, positive ideas for developing better celebration will help each parish to improve its own worship.

Recommended for priests, deacons, parish ministers, and liturgy committees.

We suggest that each parish community should obtain five or six copies of these three books, and start working on renewal in the Sunday celebration.

* * *


Christians are slowly becoming aware again of our deep roots in Judaism. Since Vatican II, Catholics have been more aware of words and practices that tend to foster anti-Semitism, and are gradually weeding these out of our worship, liturgical texts, and publications.

The passion play of Oberammergau is studied carefully in the first part of this publication (pages 1-20; German text of the study, pages 23-49), and positive suggestions are made for improving the play, especially where it is not faithful to the gospel account. While doing this, Swidler and Sloyan point out the Church’s current teaching on our relationships with the Jewish people.

Three other articles are included as appendices: “Catholic Statements on Jews — A Revolution in Progress,” by Leonard Swidler (pages 53-61); “Jesus in Israeli School Books,” by Pinchas E. Lapide (pages 63-79); and “The Image of Jesus in Modern Judaism,” by Shalom Ben-Chorin (pages 81-110).

This publication makes a positive contribution to Jewish-Catholic relations, and is recommended for priests and all who are interested in knowing more of our heritage and in working positively for better mutual understanding.

* * *


The new rite of Christian Initiation of Adults has been described as “revolutionary,” a monumental leap forward in the life of the Catholic Church. This book serves to temper not the enthusiasm of future-oriented Christians for the rite, but the frustrations of pastors and educators who might feel it is too “far out” to be practical. This book explains that the implementation of the new rite is not only possible, but imperative. And it gives directions on how to do it.

Becoming a Catholic Christian is the result of an international symposium held in June 1978 at the Abbey of Senanque, France, attended by 32 catechists, liturgists, pastors, and scholars from the United States, France, and Africa. This symposium is described by Sadlier’s president as “a step into the future.”

From the first sentence (“It would be dangerous to consider the catechumenate as a reality independent of the Church”), the book shows how the Church is taking this step, and how we might keep in step with it.
The book explains the fortunes of the catechumenate in history and their implications today. It is scholarly, yet eminently readable and practical: the very titles of the papers it contains attest to this fact. In various ways and from varying points of view, this book shows how all Catholics indeed are in the process of "Becoming a Catholic Christian." What is called for today is a rediscovery of the symbolic mode of the transmission of life: initiation.

How is this to be done? Father Gelineau, in the last paper, answers: "Try it, and you will be surprised."

COURSES IN PASTORAL LITURGY

There are now a number of good courses in liturgy being offered in North America. Some of these are given during the summer, some during the school year, and some in shorter institutes.

Further information may be obtained by writing to the following:

- Program of Liturgical Studies
  Department of Theology
  University of Notre Dame
  Notre Dame, Indiana 46556
  U.S.A.

- The Graduate School
  St. John's University
  Collegeville, Minn. 56321
  U.S.A.

- School of Religious Studies
  The Catholic University of America
  Washington, D.C. 20064
  U.S.A.

- Program of Church Music and Liturgy
  St. Joseph's College
  Rensselaer, Indiana 47978
  U.S.A.

- Aquinas Institute
  2570 Asbury Road
  Dubuque, Iowa 52001
  U.S.A.

- The Center for Pastoral Liturgy
  The Catholic University of America
  Washington, D.C. 20064
  U.S.A.

- Irish Institute for Pastoral Liturgy, approved by the Irish hierarchy: A one-year program, commencing each September. Four areas of specialization: Church at prayer, eucharist, sacraments, theology of liturgy. The curriculum includes lectures in scripture, theology, human sciences, music, art, and architecture.

Applications should be made early to Rev. S. Swayne, Director, Irish Institute of Pastoral Liturgy, College St., Carlow, Ireland.

WHERE SHALL WE PRAY?

The advantages of a room or a corner reserved for prayer were discussed in *A place for prayer at home*, in Bulletin 63, page 86.

Have you discussed the idea in your family?
Christians are called to be people of prayer. How can you encourage prayer in your parish or community?

Everyone can pray: Every Christian is called to be a man or woman of prayer. We share with Christ in giving praise and in making intercession to the Father for the needs of all the world.

Special invitation: In each parish or community there are elderly people, shut-ins, people with handicaps, and other generous people who would be willing to spend extra time in prayer for special intentions and needs. The priest is to be a leader of prayer (see pages 70-71). He is to encourage and help others to enter the ministry of prayer.

Think how the Church could be transformed if each pastor were to persuade his parishioners to spend five additional minutes a day in prayer! In most parishes, there are many people who are already praying. Priests could recommend needs of the community and of the Church for which they could pray in a particular way.

Intercessions: What could they pray about? In every civil community there are people who are sick and dying. There are adults and youths who are addicts or criminals. People are in prison, in hospitals; many are sick in mind or heart. Parents are unable to cope with their family responsibilities; children are frightened or shattered by the evil in the world, or are attracted by it. On a broader scale, there is the need for peace, for food for the hungry. The list is endless.

Further intentions are suggested in Sunday Mass Book, page 1335; in Bulletin 58, page 128; and in the intercessions for morning and evening prayer in Liturgy of the Hours and Christian Prayer.

How can you begin? See Men and women of prayer, in Bulletin 65, pages 234-238; see also no. 33, pages 72-73; no. 35, page 222.

ACADEMY REPORTS

The North American Academy of Liturgy brings together many liturgists in the United States and Canada to share their work and projects. A summary of the work group reports from the 1979 meeting is to be published in the July issue of Worship.

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