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71

SUNDAY EUCHARIST
A review published by the
Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops

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

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The liturgy of the word is the first major part of the Mass; the introductory rites lead into this. Bulletin 71 presents a picture of how these parts should be celebrated, using all the ministries fully and exploring all the options presently available.

This issue brings together suggestions and requirements described in the General Instruction, the order of Mass, and other official documents.

The purpose of Bulletin 71 is to help liturgy committees, priests, and other ministers to prepare the Sunday celebration as well as possible. In the next year or so, a second Bulletin will look at the rest of the Mass in a similar way.

When celebrated well, the Sunday Mass is the strongest builder of faith among the people of God, for full participation in the Church’s liturgy is the primary and indispensable source of the true Christian spirit.
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INTRODUCTION

SOURCE AND SUMMIT OF CHRISTIAN PRAYER

This article on the Sunday eucharist was prepared by Dr. J. Frank Henderson of Edmonton; it is based on a talk given at a retreat. He is a member of the National Council for Liturgy, and of the Advisory Committee of the International Commission for English in the Liturgy. Dr. Henderson has written articles in Bulletins 60, 65, 66, and 69.

Sunday is the Lord's Day. It is the day of the Lord's supper — or eucharist or Mass or holy communion. Sunday is just one day out of seven, yet it is a special day for Christians.

The eucharist is only one form of prayer among many, yet we know that it is very special.

Most of the time that we spend in prayer is spent in various forms of private or group prayer, or in those forms of active witness or service that are prayer too. Yet, even though the eucharist occupies us for a relatively short period of time, Christian tradition calls it the source and summit of all our prayer.

Source and summit: What does it mean for the eucharist to be source and summit?

• We should be concerned that in our own lives the eucharist really be prayer; not just prayers, or just something we do, or listening to someone else's prayers, but really prayer for us.

• Each of us should make serious efforts to improve the quality of our own eucharistic prayer. How often, for example, do we meditate on the texts of the eucharistic liturgy? How often do we meditate on the scripture texts of next Sunday's eucharist?

• We should be concerned that our everyday prayer leads up to and flows from the Sunday eucharist; indeed, our whole lives should be eucharistic.

Sunday Eucharist

What kind of prayer is the Sunday eucharist?

• It is a prayer of thanksgiving for what God has done for us and all humanity in Jesus Christ.

• It is a prayer in which we enter into the death and resurrection of Jesus, through doing what he did the night before he died.

• It is a prayer in which we become united more closely with Christ and with one another.
Many facets: The prayer of the eucharist has many aspects:

○ It is the prayer of Christ himself, the head of the Church. Christ is present in the whole worshipping community, present in his word, present in the eucharistic bread and wine, present in the ministers of the Church.

○ It is a prayer of great intimacy with Christ, with whom we become more united. It is also a prayer of great intimacy with one another — because we become more one with all those who worship with us as well.

○ It is also a prayer of great mystery. We sense the mystery — the otherness — of Christ and of the Father to whom we pray. We also sense the mystery of each of the other persons with whom we worship.

Prayer of the Church: The prayer of the eucharist is also the prayer of the Church, the body of Christ.

○ It is the prayer of all the Church, not just the priest and other ministers. Each of us is called to participate fully, actively, and consciously. The entire eucharist must be prayer for us all (though, of course, there are special roles for some to take within the community).

○ It is a prayer which describes Church and which forms Church, for both the eucharist and the Church are the body of Christ.

Memorial prayer: The prayer of the eucharist is a memorial prayer, in which we look back to the last supper of Jesus, and to his death, resurrection, and ascension. But we do not just look back as in an ordinary memory; rather, we look back in order that the paschal mystery may be a present reality for us today.

The eucharist is a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving for all God's love, and especially for the loving gift of his Son.

Prayer and action: The eucharist is not just prayers, and it is not just a prayer that we do in our heads.

It is first and foremost an action, in which we come together to take, bless, break, and eat — as Jesus did — and then to go out again in mission and witness. All these are actions, which are accompanied and interpreted by words.

It is a meal, though a symbolic one. We eat and drink, but only a bite, only a sip; it never satisfies our hunger.

It is prayer in which bread and wine and Christian people are the main elements, again with words to interpret their meaning.

Prayer of the whole person: More than any other kind of prayer, the eucharist is a prayer of our whole persons.

For our heads and our hearts there are the words of the texts and the songs.

For our eyes there are bread and wine and candles and banners and God's own people.

For our ears there are words and bells and music.

For our voices there are songs and acclamations and responses and greetings.
For our sense of smell there are — if we are fortunate — incense and scented candles.

For our touch there are bread and cup and other people.

For our bones and muscles there are movement and different postures.

**Community Celebration**

The eucharist is bigger, deeper, richer, and more diverse than other forms of prayer.

**Coming together:** The prayer that is the eucharist is composed of different parts and elements, and these reflect and express different forms of prayer within the whole.

First, we gather together. Parking the car, greeting the ushers, taking off coats, finding a pew, looking around, smiling at neighbors, and getting settled: these are not just physical necessities, they are also prayer.

In these actions we re-establish relationships with the Church, and as Church. We confirm our identities as God's own people and as Christ's own body.

In the first part of the eucharist we are also called to realize that no matter how high or low we are on the social or economic scales of our society during the rest of the week, here at the Sunday eucharist we are all simply brothers and sisters, and all somewhat less than perfect.

**Word of the Lord:** And then we listen and respond to God's word. No matter how much we read and study and meditate upon the bible during the week — whether alone or with others — and no matter how much we are graced by this, the Sunday eucharist still is the privileged place to hear God's word in scripture.

Here we are gathered as God's people to hear him speak to us and about us; here we are gathered as Christ's body to hear him speak to us, his disciples, his brothers and sisters.

We must listen; we must hear — really hear — the word. To help us, the homily attempts to show us how the ancient words of the bible apply to us today.

And we must respond, both individually and corporately, to this word. That is the function of the psalm, the creed, the prayers for others; and we hope, of much silence also.

We must firmly believe in the present reality of the biblical word of God. If it was healing, or comforting, or chastising, or challenging when originally spoken, so it is here today in this eucharistic assembly.

Nothing was said in scripture that has not been accomplished in and through the death and resurrection of Christ, and this is what we enter into when we celebrate the eucharist. The word of God explains the eucharist; the eucharist completes and accomplishes the word of God. They are a unity.

(It has to be admitted that sometimes in the eucharistic celebration we do not try very hard to hear God's word, or to respond to it. And sometimes the way in
which the liturgy of the word is carried out does not let us hear the word or respond to it. We should do what we can to overcome these problems.)

Eucharistic prayer: The core — the heart — of the eucharist is the great prayer of thanksgiving, in, with, and through the risen Christ.

But first we bring our gifts of bread and wine — and money, too. They are symbols of creation, and symbols also of ourselves. We give them — and ourselves — to be transformed into Christ.

We give thanks for creation, recalling that all that God has made is good.

We give thanks for redemption, for what God does for us in Jesus Christ, and for the presence of the Spirit.

We give thanks for all our brothers and sisters in Christ: those worshipping here with us, those around the world, those who have died; and those yet unborn.

Communion: And then we enter into the prayer of sharing in the body and blood of Christ.

To show part of the meaning of communion, we greet those around us, and wish them peace — and thank them for wishing peace for us.

This is not just a “hi, there” or “good morning.” Instead, this is a word and a gesture — a prayer — of concern, of relationship, of commitment toward those we greet.

A loaf of bread is then broken into many pieces. This is not only a practical matter of getting ready for communion, but also a prayer that we will remember — that we will learn — that we are not just a gathering of individuals, but that we are also a unity, one with one another in Christ, the bread of life.

And then we eat and drink the eucharistic body and blood of our Lord and our brother, and become ever more one with him.

We also become ever more one with all our sisters and brothers who receive communion with us.

Concluding rite: Then we go forth, after having been nourished and strengthened in so many ways.

Again, putting on coats, chatting quietly in the aisle, receiving a bulletin, waiting in the parking lot: these are not just practical matters, they are also prayer.

We are not just going home, as if something were completely finished. Instead, we go to witness to that paschal mystery into which we have once again entered. We go to serve Christ and to be Christ in the world today. We go to live eucharistically.
Source and Summit

What does it mean for the eucharist to be both the source and the summit of all Christian prayer?

Praise and thanks: Daily prayers of praise and thanksgiving look back to the Sunday eucharist when, gathered as Church, we thank God most profoundly for all creation and for all redemption.

We enter most fully into the universal and communal praise and thanksgiving of the eucharist, however, if daily as individuals we have praised and thanked God for those particular aspects of creation and redemption with which he has touched us.

If we were never to pray in praise and thanksgiving during the week, we would have difficulty appreciating and entering into the eucharistic prayer. It would perhaps also mean that we did not really make the previous Sunday’s eucharist our own prayer, or understand what it was all about.

Confession of our sins: Daily prayers of confession show our realization that in the Sunday eucharist we became united ever more closely to Christ and to our neighbors, and that in daily living this unity has been broken and loosened to some degree.

Our daily prayers of confession also lead us to greater praise and thanksgiving when at the Sunday eucharist, we are once again refreshed and renewed by entering into Christ’s paschal mystery.

Petition: Daily prayers of concern and petition also flow from our weekly memorial experience that God loved us so much as to send his own Son, and that he continues to love us in and through our sharing in his Son’s life.

Our daily prayers of concern and petition also lead us to greater thanksgiving and praise when at the Sunday eucharist God’s love in Jesus Christ is made especially manifest and experienced.

Meal prayers: Our daily meal prayers also echo the blessing prayers of the meal that is the eucharist, and make us thankful for God’s creation from which our food has come, and for the true bread of life which alone truly satisfies us.

If we never thank God at our daily meals it would seem difficult to know what the eucharist is all about, difficult to enter into it as meal and as action.

Scriptures: Daily reading and prayer arising out of scripture are also based on the Sunday eucharist, because it is there that the Church, as Church, hears and responds to God’s word in scripture. Our individual daily experiences of scripture are encouraged and strengthened and helped by the corporate liturgy of the word.

In addition, the eucharist is itself a very biblical prayer, and at one level at least, it can be prayed and entered into only to the extent that we are a bible people; our own daily bible reading and prayer help us to understand and pray the eucharist. Especially does it help us to come to the proclamation of the scripture readings with an appreciation that the biblical word is a present reality.

Daily work and prayer: Our daily work of reconciliation and the promotion of unity among people also is related to the Sunday eucharist. Whether we do this in
our family, or neighborhood, or workplace, or other level of society, the eucharist
gives us example and experience of the great work of reconciliation and unification
between us and God and between us and our neighbors that is God's plan; it gives us
a memorial of Christ's own reconciling death and resurrection.

All our prayerful actions that are service and witness find their source and
summit in the eucharistic memorial celebration of God's love and of Christ's serving
and witnessing, and passing over from death to new life. Every time we love our
neighbors, we die and rise again.

We are Church: The eucharist draws us out of ourselves as individuals to see
ourselves also as Church. The eucharist is not primarily a prayer of individuals, but of
God's people, the Church. Our eucharistic lives also are not just lives as individuals,
but also lives as Church, as community.

Church is not only on Sunday, of course, but is formed and expressed whenever
two or three gather in the Lord's name. Families, prayer groups, parish councils
and committees and commissions — all sorts of Christian communities, whether
permanent or occasional — are forms of Church, and they should all be eucharistic.

The Sunday eucharist in turn always comprises a community of smaller com-
munities, and the parish celebration is subsumed in the eucharistic celebration of
that community which is the universal Church.

To pray — both daily and on Sunday — as Church is both comforting and
challenging. It is challenging in that we cannot hide: our call and our response are
public, our actions and lives affect not only ourselves but all the people of God. It is
comforting in that we are not alone: God's love and his Son's reconciling death and
resurrection are with us not only in the depth of our hearts, but also in those com-
munities of two or three or a dozen or hundreds or thousands which form and
express Church, both on Sunday and during the week.

The eucharist is source and summit of Christian prayer, and source and sum-
mit of eucharistic life.
PREPARING FOR SUNDAY

EVERYONE PREPARES TO CELEBRATE

If our Sunday celebration is to be true community worship, then all the members have to prepare themselves to take full part in it.

Preparation by the Congregation

All the members of the worshipping community may prepare themselves in many ways for Sunday worship. Individuals and families may prepare by asking for forgiveness, by prayer, by proper attitudes of mind and heart, by reading over the texts and prayers of the Mass, by preparing their bodies, and by coming in good time. These areas of preparation are discussed in more detail in Bulletin 62, pages 31-33.

Participation: The people of God are called by Christ to participate in the liturgy of his body, the Church. In baptism we share in his priesthood, and thus receive the privilege and responsibility of participating in Christian worship (Liturgy constitution, no. 14). Various ways of participation are mentioned by the Council (Liturgy constitution, no. 30); these are discussed and expanded in Taking part in the eucharist, in Bulletin 62, pages 31-39.

Helping people to prepare: There are many ways in which the parish may help families and individuals to prepare: regularly encouraging and teaching them how to read the bible in a prayerful manner; providing the references for next Sunday's readings; helping people to grow in their prayer life (see Bulletin 35, pages 194-196; no. 44, pages 168-175; no. 66, pages 262-265); helping people to understand the meaning and message of each liturgical season and celebration during the year (see Bulletins 67 and 70); suggesting appropriate prayers or prayer themes for each season in the parish bulletin (see Bulletin 67); referring to readings, prayers, and notes in Sunday Mass Book for each Sunday and season. When people are aware of the spirit and practices of a liturgical season, they will be more ready to take an active part in living this season. During Advent and Lent, and on other particular occasions, penance celebrations provide an opportunity for personal prayer, reflection, and conversion.1

Ministers Prepare for Sunday

As members of the believing and worshipping community, all ministers prepare themselves for Sunday worship in the many ways described above for the congregation.

All ministers: In a particular way, all ministers need to prepare for each Sunday's celebration by prayerful reflection (both individually and with other ministers) on the spirit of the current liturgical season (see Bulletins 67 and 70), and on the scripture texts of the current Sunday (see lectionary, and Sunday Mass Book notes). In addition, each minister should reflect on and pray about the particular require-

1 Penance celebrations for Advent are given in past issues of the Bulletin: see nos. 36, 41, 46, 51, 55, 61, 66; see also page 235 in this issue. For lenten celebrations, see nos. 32, 37, 42, 47, 52, 56, 62, and 67.
ments of his or her ministry to the community (such as musician, singer, cantor, usher, reader, distributor of communion, commentator, presiding priest). Ministers must do their technical preparation (how to pronounce the proper names in this reading), and then go on to their essential preparation (what is God saying to his people of this community in this excerpt from his word?).

A full understanding of ministry has to go beyond the liturgical aspects of a particular ministry: see Bulletin 53, Ministries and Liturgy; also Ministries of the Laity, by J. Frank Henderson (described in Bulletin 69, page 126).

Planning: There can be no substitute for prayer, study, and pastoral action each week by the community's ministers of worship. Their goal should be to plan the best celebration that this community is capable of at this time. Their planning relates both to the season and to the particular Sunday (see Bulletin 67, Planning Our Year of Worship). Music planning with the choir leader and organist is also important (see Bulletin 67, pages 12-17). The liturgical calendar, Guidelines for Pastoral Liturgy, provides much useful information for planners.

Some communities use a planning sheet to record their choices of hymns, rites, and prayers, and to inform others of these. There should be no surprises for any of the ministers during Mass.

A separate celebration of the introductory rites and the liturgy of the word may be held with children. Then they return to the church for the liturgy of the eucharist with the rest of the community (Directory for Masses with Children, no. 17): see page 234 of this Bulletin.

Immediate preparations: Before each celebration, prayer by each minister is important. In some parishes, a checklist of things to be done by various persons before and after Mass helps people to take care of lights, sound systems, and articles on the credence table and in the sacristy.

**Preparation by the Presiding Priest**

The priest who presides at the Sunday celebration is both a member of the worshipping community and its leader in prayer. As a member of the community, he is to be as prepared as are the congregation and its other ministers; as the leader or president of the community's public worship, however, he is to prepare himself in a particular way.

**Scriptures:** Going far beyond the "message" of this week's readings, the priest has to be steeped in the scriptures: their spirit has to direct his life, prayer, and ministry. His approach and attitudes toward God, his people, and the world have to flow from the scripture: God's word — and not current political, sociological, or humanitarian views — must be the source and criterion of his thoughts, words, actions, and prayers.

**Liturgy:** As leader of the community in worship and prayer, the priest has to be filled with the spirit of the Lord's day and the particular liturgical season being celebrated (see Bulletins 43 and 67). His personal prayer life needs to be inspired by and reflect the Church's liturgy of the hours. In the intercessions of morning prayer, he should thank God for the gifts he is bestowing on this community, and should ask for further gifts for the building up of the body of Christ on earth; in evening prayer,
the priest should continue to plead for the needs of the Church — around the world, in our country, and particularly in this community. Such prayer by a priest must always flow from his continuing pastoral care of the people entrusted to his care by the living Church.

A Place Is Prepared

During his final days on earth, Jesus took care that the celebration of his last supper with his disciples would be properly prepared (see Mt. 26: 17-19, and parallels). The meaning of the church building as the house of the Church is discussed at greater length in Bulletin 74 (May-June 1980).

In a positive way, the church building should reflect the attitudes and spirit of Jesus and his people: love for all; a welcome for sinners, the outcasts, and those who exist at the fringes of our civic society; cleanliness and order should symbolize the dignity of the kingdom of God in its appearance on earth. All symbols and signs should be able to express the truth of God's love and our salvation without a great number of words.

Altar: The altar is a table of sacrifice and a banquet table for the people of God. It is one of the major focal points in the church building. At the beginning of Mass, only the cross and candles are on or near the altar (GI, nos. 269-270). The altar should never be used as a resting place for hymn books, prayer cards, booklets or assistants' papers: litter has no place in liturgy. The chalice is on the credence table, and the sacramentary (and bookstand, if needed) is there or near the chair.

Cleanliness: A clean and tidy sacristy, with adequate storage space, helps to keep a church looking proper. Vestments and linens are clean, and stored carefully. No litter is left around the areas used by the choir, ministers, or servers. Liturgical books are arranged on shelves or are stored in a cupboard.

The church is swept frequently and the floors are washed and polished as often as needed. Dead flies and old bulletins — two clear signs of lack of care — are nowhere to be seen.

A clean church helps people to have a greater respect for what takes place in it, and leads them to a better celebration in honor of God.

Before and after Mass: Parishes which still have "buying and selling in the temple" should consider what sort of image they are projecting.

A community of believers which prepares carefully for each Sunday's celebration contributes greatly to the praise it offers to the Father. Filled with faith and love, and responding to the graces of the Holy Spirit, members of the community seek to join with Christ in offering thanks and in giving themselves to God. Such a community gives glory to God by its life and worship, and lets the light of Christ shine through it on all who see it.

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2 See Worship Without Words (1979, CCCB, Ottawa); also Environment and Art in Catholic Worship (1978, NCCB, Washington).

SILENCE IS NECESSARY!

Silence is an important way of participation in the liturgy (see Liturgy constitution, no. 30; GI,1 no. 23).

Value of silence: The present Roman Mass contains a lot of words. Poor celebration tends to add even more words through unprepared or unnecessary announcements, interjections, and elaborations. In the midst of public prayer, silent periods are needed for reflection and silent prayer: we need to listen to the Spirit as he speaks to us (see GILH,2 no. 202). By silent prayer we can welcome the word of God and make it our own.

Times for silence: The present order of Mass calls for silence at these moments:

- **Penitential rite:** We all pause to remember that we are sinners, and that we need God’s help to grow in his love.
- **Opening prayer:** After “Let us pray,” we make our personal petitions in silence.
- **After each reading and the homily:** We reflect on God’s word and apply it to our own lives and to our plans for living this week in his service.
- **Preparation of the gifts:** We may reflect quietly as the community prepares for the high point of the celebration.
- **Eucharistic prayer:** This prayer, which is the center of the Mass, has moments of dialogue and acclamation, and times of silence. We listen as the priest proclaims the prayer in our name; in our silence, we offer ourselves to the Father through his Son Jesus.
- **After communion:** We reflect on God’s great love for us, and thank him. We pray also to Jesus who has given himself to us as our food.

(Silent periods are also needed in the liturgy of the hours: see GILH, nos. 201-203.)

Failure to provide adequate time for reflection and personal prayer during the public liturgy leads to poor celebration and dissatisfied participants. Ministers who shun silent times tend to overwhelm and oppress people with words, words, words. People rightfully sense the imbalance, and complain that the liturgy leaves them no time to pray. Unless we have times of silence, we cannot participate fully in the liturgy.

Starting to use silence: If you do not have the required silent moments in your celebration, you can introduce them by explaining their importance, by encouraging people to pray during these moments, and by giving them adequate time for personal prayer: see Guidelines for Pastoral Liturgy — 1979-1980 Liturgical Calendar, pastoral note 8c, page 17.

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1. GI: General Instruction of the Roman Missal is a pastoral introduction and explanation of the rites of the Mass. It is found at the beginning of the sacramentary (pages 11-54 in the Canadian edition).
2. GILH: The General Instruction of the Liturgy of the Hours is a pastoral introduction and explanation of the office today. It is found at the beginning of Liturgy of the Hours (1975, Catholic Book, New York), vol. 1, pages 21-98.
Continuing help: An occasional note in the parish bulletin on the meaning, value, and importance of silence during the Sunday liturgy will help the members of the community to grasp more fully the urgency of moments of silent reflection during liturgical celebrations.

Today, many people seem afraid of silence in their lives. They are surrounded and bombarded by constant noise. By encouraging some moments of silence in our public worship, we can help people to make the liturgy a deeper experience of prayer.

* * *

Helpful reading: Several articles in past issues of the Bulletin have touched on silence: see no. 37, page 14; no. 40, page 201 (paragraph 18); no. 50, pages 252-253; no. 58, page 106. See also GILH, nos. 201-203; GI, no. 23.

* * *

Father,
* teach us to be silent:
to listen to your Spirit,
to hear your voice and heed it,
to have time to reflect.

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

NEXT ISSUE

Bulletin 72, Music in Our Liturgy, sets out to accomplish three main goals:
* To discuss the role of music in our liturgy, especially on the Lord's day;
* To introduce Catholic Book of Worship II to the Church in Canada, and
* To give special attention to the importance and celebration of morning and evening prayer by the people of God.

This issue will contain 48 pages, and will be ready for mailing in late January. For information on the other issues for 1980 and for subscriptions, see page 208.
The introductory rites provide a brief beginning for the community celebration of the eucharist. They are intended to be a simple introduction, and are to prepare the community for the much more important actions, the liturgy of the word and the liturgy of the eucharist (GI, no. 24).

Outline: The introductory rites consist of an entrance procession with song, a miscellaneous set of prayers, and the collect or opening prayer.

History: The history and development of the various introductory rites in our present Sunday celebration are described in more detail in Bulletin 54, Story of the Mass, pages 132-139.

Proportion: The most important elements of these rites are the procession with singing and the opening prayer. They should stand out as much more important than the other rites in between them.

Good celebration of the introductory rites requires good taste, liturgical awareness, and adequate planning. The collection of rites between the procession and the opening prayer should not overwhelm the entrance rite, or make it seem more important than the liturgy of the word; rather, these rites should prepare the community to listen with faith to God’s word as it is proclaimed in this celebration.

ENTRANCE PROCESSION

Coming together: As people answer God’s call and come together to give him worship on Sunday, they begin to experience the presence of the risen Lord in others. The ushers have an important ministry of hospitality as they meet people at the door, welcome them, and lead them to their seats (see GI, no. 68b). There are many ways in which Jesus is present to us in the liturgy (Constitution on the liturgy, no. 7), but we must be open to his presence among us as we gather in his name (Mt. 18: 20).

Purpose: The entrance procession and song mark the beginning of the celebration, help to make the people present into a more united assembly, and lead all into the mystery or feast that is being celebrated. The music accompanies the procession of the priest and ministers. (See GI, no. 25.)

Present rites: It is desirable that the procession move through the assembled community to the altar (see GI, no. 162), when this is possible. It is good to vary the route according to the solemnity of the celebration. In many parishes and communities, a simple form and route may be used on weekdays, and a more solemn procession on Sundays and special occasions.

Who takes part in the procession? The procession is led by the thurifer with smoking incense (GI, no. 82), followed by those carrying the cross and candles, members of the choir, servers, ministers, a reader or deacon carrying the book of God’s word (see Bulletin 46, pages 310-312), and the celebrating priest. Sometimes
members of the congregation take part in the procession, especially on Feb. 2 and Passion Sunday. In Masses with children, the entire group may enter with the priest (Directory for Masses with Children, no. 34; see also Bulletin 63, page 118).

Music: The procession should begin when the people start to sing the entrance hymn. Only on Good Friday does the liturgy call for a silent entrance. On Sundays, all sing the entrance song as the entrance procession comes through the community. Instead of unison singing, there may be a hymn or psalm in which the choir or cantor sings the verses and the people the refrain. It is wise to sing familiar music for the entrance procession: trying to sing a new hymn may lead to a poor beginning of the celebration.

On arrival in the sanctuary, the members of the procession bow to the altar (usually in pairs), and go to their places. The deacon lays the gospel book on the altar (or the reader places the lectionary on the lectern). The priest may incense the altar as a further sign of respect. Singing continues until the priest arrives at the chair for the rest of the introductory rites. Any concelebrating priests go to their seats, and remain there until after the prayer over the gifts (Gl, no. 167). They take part with the people in the responses and singing. They do not replace the readers or other ministers (see GI, no. 66).

Some questions:

• Should the priest and the other ministers carry hymn books in the procession? Those who are already carrying something (reader, acolytes, crossbearer, thurifer) should not try to hold a hymn book as well. Those whose hands are free may carry a hymnal to help them to take part in the singing, especially if they are not able to sing the entrance hymn from memory.

• Should an introduction to the Mass be made before the entrance hymn? This may be done, replacing the one after the greeting. It is better to reserve the lectern for the word of God, and read the introduction from another stand (see GI, no. 68a).

Overcoming problems: When a community and its ministers recognize that the entrance procession is a liturgical act (see GI, no. 22), with an important role to fulfill in the celebration, they will make more effort to improve the procession:

• Beginning: The procession begins when the singing — rather than the music — begins: this makes it possible for the singing to coincide with the actual procession.

• Lectionary: The book of God’s word is carried with reverence: see Bulletin 46, page 310; no. 56, pages 288-289. (The sacramentary is not carried in the procession: it is placed at the credence or chair — never on the floor — before the celebration begins.)

• Ministers and servers need to learn to walk at a processional rate. It helps them to have some practice in doing this before they take part in Sunday celebrations.

• Starting on time: The procession should start exactly on time. People will know that Mass is always on time, and will be encouraged to be punctual; gradually,
they may be invited to come ahead of time and prepare more fully by prayer and reflection (see Bulletin 62, pages 31-33). Parishes in which Mass regularly starts late show little respect for the people of God.

○ Many ministers: A good processional entrance on Sunday requires a good number of ministers (see page 233) and a reasonably long route. A five-meter walk with two servers is hardly an adequate entrance procession.

* * *

A worthy processional begins the celebration well. It is a strong symbol that proclaims to all: we are here to do something important and beautiful for God.

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BULLETINS FOR 1980

Volume 13 of the National Bulletin on Liturgy, January-December 1980, will look at several topics in a practical and pastoral way. These subjects have been chosen in consultation with the National Council for Liturgy.

○ No. 72: Music in Our Liturgy: This issue discusses the role of music in the Sunday liturgy, introduces Catholic Book of Worship II to the Church in Canada, and gives special attention to the importance and celebration of morning and evening prayer by the people of God.

○ No. 73: Baptizing Children: The baptism of adults comes when they have developed their faith during a long process of formation, prayer, catechesis, and apostolic living. When a baby is baptized, however, it is the faith of the parents and the community that is involved; baptism is the beginning of the process of the child's initiation as a Christian. Bulletin 73 looks at community involvement in preparing for baptism, in celebrating it with faith, and in helping parents during the first five years of the child's life.

○ No. 74: House of the Church: A church building is important because it is where the Church — the people of God — assembles for worship. In this issue we look at church buildings in Christian tradition, see the important elements needed by the renewed liturgy, and offer points for local discussion of church buildings today.

○ No. 75: Praying the Psalms: Jews and Christians use the psalms in personal, family, and public prayer. Bulletin 75 looks at the psalms themselves, and at the way Christians may pray them today. This issue is intended to help us to grow in our enjoyment of the psalms as we pray them.

○ No. 76: Worship '80: This symposium of the Canadian Liturgical Society will take place in London, Ontario, in May 1980. The topic is Eucharist, and the main speaker will be Edward Schillebeeckx, OP. Bulletin 76 will contain the papers given at the symposium.

Each issue will contain 48 pages. Subscriptions for 1980, from January to December (nos. 72-76), are $6.00 in Canada, and $8.00 outside Canada; by airmail outside Canada, $4.00 extra. Send your cheque or money order to Publications Service, 90 Parent Avenue, Ottawa, Ontario K1N 7B1, Canada.
A VARIETY OF RITES

Beginning of the Celebration

The celebration begins with the entrance song and procession by the priest and ministers to the altar.

Sign of the cross: After the priest has shown reverence to the altar (bow, incense) and come to the chair, he makes the sign of the cross, and all answer *Amen*. This gesture should be made with care and respect. It would seem better not to sing this, since the entrance song has just concluded.

Greeting: The liturgical greeting is a reminder to all that Christ is present among us. Three forms are provided, with an additional one that a bishop may use. This first dialogue between priest and people should be strong and sincere. It would seem better not to sing this, since it is too close to the singing during the entrance procession.

Introduction: The priest or another minister (deacon, commentator) may make a brief introduction to the celebration. In a few sentences, he or she may say a word on the season or the Mass of this day. This introduction needs to be carefully prepared, so that it does not become too wordy. It is not to be a mini-homily or a commentary on the weather. Some parishes find it better to type the text ahead of time, after carefully revising its wording, and have it read by the commentator just before the entrance procession begins. In this case, another introduction is not made after the greeting.

Penitential Rite

Purpose: God has chosen us to be his holy people, living blameless lives in his sight: in this way we will give him praise before all. We have not always lived up to the call of Christ to follow him in love. We now admit our sinfulness, and place our trust in God's mercy.

Structure: The rite consists of an invitation, silent reflection, a common prayer, and a concluding prayer by the priest.

Invitation to reflect: The priest invites the community to pause for a period of silent reflection. We need to acknowledge that we are sinners, and admit our need of God's mercy. This invitation should be as brief as those in the sacramentary.

- *Silence*: This is the first moment of silence in the Mass. It is important that the people be given adequate time for their reflection at this point.

Three forms: Three distinct forms are provided for the community prayer. Each of these includes a plea to Christ for mercy.

- *First form*: The “I confess” is a direct descendant of the medieval apologies for sin. We admit to all that we are sinners, and we ask the help of the Church in heaven and on earth to pray for us. We strike our breast as a sign of our sorrow.

- *Second form*: This brief form does not seem to be in common use. The first and third forms are much stronger and more helpful to the community.
Third form: This form takes a slightly different approach: it uses three acclamations addressed to the Lord Jesus. We do not accuse ourselves of sin, but rather refer to our Lord's mercy and help for us who are sinners. We praise his glory and ask for his mercy. Another minister (deacon, commentator, reader) may sing or read the acclamations, which may be composed for this particular celebration. Several models are given in the sacramentary (with music on page 1063), and communities are encouraged to develop their own. (This rite thus provides an opportunity for good creativity.)

"Absolution" — The priest says that God will forgive us our sins. Though the rubric entitles this "absolution," it is not to be confused with the sacrament of penance. The sign of the cross is not made during this prayer.

The Lord, have mercy which is included in the penitential rite is addressed only to Christ; it is not addressed to the Trinity.

Music: In all forms, the Lord, have mercy may be sung to a simple setting.

Alternative rites: The sacramentary provides two other choices to replace the penitential rite:

○ Blessing and sprinkling of water: By this rite we recall our baptism. As we renew our covenant with God in this eucharist (see Liturgy constitution, no. 10), we are helped to return to the attitudes needed in baptism — faith and repentance for sin. (See also Rite of Penance, no. 2.) This rite should be used frequently on Sundays as a reminder of our baptism, in which we are made one, and in which we first received the privilege and responsibility of sharing in the liturgy of Christ and his Church (Liturgy constitution, no. 14).

○ Liturgy of the hours: It is permitted to combine one hour with the eucharist. Detailed rules for doing this are contained in GILH, nos. 93-98. It is to be noted, however, that this is not encouraged on a regular basis, since it may be detrimental to the prayer life of the community (see GILH, no. 93).

Glory to God in the Highest

This joyful hymn of praise is sung on Sundays, solemnities, and days of special local celebration. We omit it during the penitential season of Lent; during Advent, we do not use it so that we may sing it with greater joy and renewed fervor at Christmas. It is primarily a hymn, intended to be sung. Whether or not it should be sung in a particular Sunday Mass is a question of balance: the singing during the introductory rites must not outweigh the singing during the far more important liturgy of the word, nor weary the people before the Mass has really begun.

In general, a brief musical setting is desired for the Glory to God, although on occasion, a longer one may be helpful. Florid or operatic forms are out of order: the Gloria is not a concert piece. All remain standing as they sing or say this prayer: we do not sit during the introductory rites.

In parish celebrations of morning prayer, this hymn may be used as the canticle of praise (see Catholic Book of Worship II, no. 77).

1 Experience shows that it is better for the person reading the acclamations of the third penitential rite to clip the prepared text into a book, rather than holding a loose sheet of paper at this time.
Add No More Frills!

Our present introductory rites contain a miscellaneous collection sandwiched between the entrance procession and the opening prayer. Celebrated well, they can form a unity and get the Mass to a good start; celebrated poorly, they lead into a drab performance.

Sometimes we are tempted to add more to this part of the Mass: a particular case is the lighting of the Advent wreath.

The wreath may be blessed on the first Sunday in Advent after the homily — the usual place for blessings in the renewed Mass. During the rest of Advent, the wreath may be lighted before Mass, without ceremony, as we do with the Easter candle during the paschal season. To incorporate a lighting ceremony into the introductory rites overloads this part of the Mass, and slows down our progress toward the first important part, the liturgy of the word; moreover, Paul VI reminds us, it is bad liturgy:

“There are those who, without wholesome liturgical and pastoral criteria, mix practices of piety and liturgical acts in hybrid celebrations. It sometimes happens that novenas or similar practices of piety are inserted into the very celebration of the eucharistic sacrifice. This creates the danger that the Lord’s memorial rite, instead of being the culmination of the meeting of the Christian community, becomes the occasion, as it were, for devotional practices. For those who act in this way we wish to recall the rule laid down by the Council prescribing that exercises of piety should be harmonized with the liturgy, not merged into it.”


GUIDELINES FOR PASTORAL LITURGY


This 240-page book gives full information on the Mass and liturgy of the hours for each day, and provides pastoral suggestions for celebrating many events within the liturgy. It is the key to each day’s liturgical celebrations, and enables the community to make more fruitful use of the rich options available.

Extensive pastoral notes provide an up-to-date picture of current liturgical standards and regulations, as well as challenging each Christian community to continue to improve its worship and prayer life.

The calendar covers the period from the beginning of Advent 1979 to the Saturday after the celebration of Christ the King in 1980.
OPENING PRAYER

The entrance procession and the opening prayer are the two essential and most important of the introductory rites. The prayer or collect concludes these rites, and we are ready to begin the liturgy of the word.

The opening prayer seems to date back to the time of Leo the Great (440-461), and was used to conclude the entrance procession (see Bulletin 54, pages 138-139). Only one collect is prayed: it is always proclaimed by the presiding priest, for it is one of the presidential prayers (see GI, no. 10).

Structure: The collect is prayed in this way:

- **Invitation:** The presiding priest invites all to pray. He may do this with the simple “Let us pray,” or may expand it slightly. Examples of an expanded invitation are included in the sacramentary for Sundays. [He does not say “The Lord be with you” at this time: this is replaced by the earlier greeting.]

- **Pause:** The whole community pauses for a time of silent prayer. During this, they remember that they are in God's presence, and may make some personal petitions. The sacramentary recommends “some moments of silence” (GI, no. 32). This is the second time in the Mass for silent prayer, and it should not be neglected or hurried (see pages 204-205).

- **Prayer:** The priest collects or gathers up the petitions of the community, and in their name he offers a prayer to God. This prayer is addressed to the Father, through the Son, and in the Spirit. (The structure of this prayer is described in Bulletin 68, page 74.) The collect contains biblical reflections (see Liturgy constitution, no. 24); usually it is not directly related to the readings or gospel of the day.

— An alternative formula for the opening prayer is given in the sacramentaries in use in Canada, the United States, and the 24 other English-speaking episcopal conferences around the world using the ICEL translations. These alternative opening prayers provide a first step toward creative adaptation of the Roman collect format. Their use should not be neglected.

- **Acclamation of the people:** All respond to the prayer and make it their own by acclaiming *Amen!* (“So be it! Yes, we agree!”) This Jewish form of assent to prayer was adopted by the first Christians. We find it in the New Testament, and in the *Didache*. In 150, Justin explained its meaning to the Roman emperor in his description of the Sunday liturgy.

Music: The collect may be sung by the priest, and all answer *Amen*. Music for this prayer is provided at the back of the sacramentary (in Canada, pages 1064-1065).

Creativity: The priest may vary the introduction, as described above. On Sundays, either form of the opening prayer may be chosen. Any of the prayer endings may normally be used. On weekdays in ordinary time, various choices are possible (see GI, no. 323).

Participation: The people participate by silent prayer of petition and by reflection on the presence of God during the moments of silence, by listening to the prayer as the priest proclaims it, and by affirming it with their enthusiastic *Amen*!
Problems: All too often the priest fails to give the people enough time to pray. The collect is a brief prayer, and therefore has to be prepared and proclaimed with care, so that all may hear and understand it. If the priest does not pause slightly between the prayer and its conclusion, the community will be less able to follow the prayer intelligently.

* * *

When the opening prayer is prayed well, with sufficient time for silent prayer, a clear invitation and proclamation, and a strong acclamation, it makes a definitive conclusion for the introductory rites. Then the community is ready to sit and listen attentively to the word of God.

REFERENCES ON THE INTRODUCTORY RITES

The following books and articles provide excellent background for understanding and celebrating the introductory rites of the Mass:

Constitution on the liturgy, nos. 21, 23, 26-34, 48-50.

Sacramentary: GI, nos. 8, 24-32, 82-88, 128-130, 143-144, 148-149, 161-163; Order of Mass (Canadian edition, pages 415-421); Directory for Masses with Children, nos. 34, 38, 40 (in the sacramentary, pages 55-64).


Some general references:


LITURGY OF THE WORD

The liturgy of the word is the first of the two major and closely related parts of the Mass. The word service prepares the community for the liturgy of the eucharist. A good celebration of the word leads the assembled Christians into a fuller and more fruitful participation in the eucharist.

Outline: The readings and the homily proclaim God's word to his people, and they respond to it in silence, song, and prayer. The elements of the Sunday liturgy of the word are celebrated in this sequence:

- **First reading**, silent prayer, responsorial psalm;
- **Second reading**, silent prayer; (on Easter and Pentecost Sundays, a sequence is sung;)
- **Gospel acclamation**, leading to the third reading;
- **Gospel**, silent prayer;
- **Homily**, silent prayer;
- **Profession of faith** (Nicene creed; in Canada and many other countries, the apostles' creed may be used);
- **General intercessions** (prayer of the faithful).

History: We have inherited the word service from the synagogue service (see Lk. 4: 16-30, and Acts 13: 14-41). Around 150, Justin speaks of the service of the word in the Sunday eucharist at Rome: writings of the prophets (Old Testament) and the memoirs of the apostles are read for as long a period as is available or suitable. Then the bishop preaches on the word of God, urging all to live up to its teaching. The liturgy of the word concludes with petitions (general intercessions) and the kiss of peace. The gifts for the poor seem to have been given after the celebration. Further notes on the liturgy of the word are given in Bulletin 54, pages 140-148; see also Bulletins 50 (lectionary), 56 (readers), 60 (preaching).

Proportion: The most important elements are the readings and the homily, when God is speaking directly to his people. The times of silent prayer, and the peoples' response in prayer and song, reinforce their faith in his word and their acceptance of his guidance for their lives.

Good celebration of the liturgy of the word requires a clear understanding of the rites and their interrelationship. Nothing should be allowed to distract the members of the community from hearing the word in faith and responding to it vigorously. Positive suggestions for good celebration are included in the following articles.
MINISTRY OF READING

Reading God's word during the liturgy is more than an art: it is an act of faith by reader and community. When the readers are proclaiming the texts, we hear their voices, but it is God himself who is speaking through them to the members of this community of faith and love.

God Is Present and Speaking to Us

A deeper dimension: The dynamics of proclaiming God's word in faith to his assembled people go far beyond the rules for good public reading. In the eucharist and in other liturgical celebrations, the reading becomes an appearance of God (a theophany) among his people. He is present, and he is speaking to them — to this particular group at the ten o'clock Mass in this town, as well as to each individual congregation and community around the world. It is not just a general message to all: in his infinite wisdom, the Spirit is ready to guide those who are open, so that the message has a personal as well as community impact.

To be able to experience this powerful intervention of the Holy Spirit in the lives of all, the community has to learn how to listen in faith, and readers have to learn how to proclaim in faith.

• Listening in faith: Everyone in the baptized community is called to hear God's word with faith: the ephphetha rite over the ears during our baptism symbolizes our privilege and responsibility of hearing God's word. When the writer was inspired to set down the passages being read, the Spirit of God knew that they would be proclaimed on this day to this particular assembly. He invites us to open our hearts to the fullness of his teaching: we have prayed the introductory rites; we now sit in silence and let the word of God flow over us, washing into the depths of our being. We allow the Spirit to enlighten our darkness, to cool our uncontrolled desires, to warm our coldness, to bend our rigid ways.

We do not need books to follow as the reader proclaims the word: we listen. "Speak to us, Lord: your servants are listening attentively, in faith and love. We are ready to do your will." This is the spirit of Jesus as he came into this world (see Heb. 10: 7 and Ps. 40: 6-8).

During the previous week, it is good for us to read over, discuss, and pray about next Sunday's readings, especially the gospel. On Sunday, we can sit back, relaxed and open, and let God speak to us as individuals, as families, and as members of this community he has gathered to give him praise.

In our lives, God speaks to us in many ways and at many times, directly or through others, clearly or ambiguously: we have to discern his message carefully, and make sure it is his voice. When the sacred scriptures are proclaimed in the liturgy, however, we can give our full attention in faith, for we know that God is truly speaking to all who are listening.

• Proclaiming in faith: The entire assembly — congregation, ministers, readers, deacon, presiding priest — is called to listen to the word. Some members of the community are also invited to share in the great responsibility of proclaiming the
word so that all may listen to it with faith: the readers who proclaim the first two readings, the deacon [or priest] who reads the gospel, and the presiding priest who preaches the homily.

These persons are called to be the voice of God in this celebration. They indeed read the words of scripture and give the homily, but always in such a way that God's voice comes through to those who listen: the voice may be the voice of Jacob or Ms. Jacob, but the message is the message of God.

A Ministry of Reading

Thus it can readily be seen that the ministry of reading God's word to his assembled people is truly a serious responsibility. Care and prayer must go into the community's selection, formation, continuing development, and eventual retirement of those who are invited to read the word to the people of God:

Selection: An adequate number of readers is to be chosen from among the adults of the parish community. They are to be men and women of faith — persons who try to be good Christians as they live their daily lives. They should be people who pray daily, and who will be respected by the community which they serve by reading. [St. Benedict's rule for choosing readers in the refectory is useful: only those who can uplift the others should serve as readers (Rule, chapter 38). See also Bulletin 56, page 280.]

Formation: Readers are to be helped to understand the nature of the Church they serve, and the ministry they are performing. They need help to appreciate the way God speaks to his people through their reading; they must not hinder this message by personal idiosyncracies or quirks.

They require instruction in the art of reading well, and in the way to carry the book and move in procession. Some discussion should take place on the standard of dress that is deemed suitable in this community at various times of the year.

Readers are to be personally responsible for the reading assigned to them. If a serious reason prevents their being there, they must obtain another reader in good time to let this other person prepare the reading well. Last-minute switches are unfair to the whole community.

Installation: After a time of preparation, new readers may take their turn reading both on weekdays and on Sundays. This gives them a chance to develop their skills, and to see if they are suited to this ministry. When they are considered ready to be added formally to the group of readers, they should be installed during Mass. A brief rite for use after the homily consists of a call, a prayer, and the conferring of an appropriate symbol of office — the lectionary. An example of such a rite is given in Bulletin 53, pages 90-92; no. 56, pages 298-299.

One reader for each reading is the ideal proposed in GI, no. 71; thus, two readers are needed for each Sunday Mass. In a smaller parish, these readers could work as a team each three or four Sundays. This arrangement will give them time to prepare well for their proclamation, and sufficient opportunity to sit with their families at Mass when they are not reading.

When other priests are present or concelebrating, they do not replace lay readers for either of the first two readings: see GI, no. 66.
• Continuing development: Each year the parish should encourage every reader to make a retreat; if possible, the parish covers the expenses or contributes toward them. An annual day of recollection for the readers would also be helpful. Another yearly need is a workshop for readers to deepen their skills in reading and their understanding of the liturgy of the word: this could be a diocesan or regional event.

• Examination of conscience: During the annual day of recollection, or while on retreat, each reader should ask himself or herself these six questions:

  Am I reading for God's glory?
  Do I prepare well?
  Do I pray about the readings?
  Am I faithful to my appointed times?
  Are my daily prayer life and my daily living worthy of a reader?
  Where is there room for improvement?

  These questions and the decision of what to do about their answers should lead the reader to improvement or retirement.

• Retirement: Various reasons may suggest or even demand that a reader retire: a sufficient length of time in this ministry, a desire to move to another form of service; inability to read well, failure to prepare properly, missing appointments; poor attendance at Mass and the sacraments, failure to live a good Christian life. No matter what the reason, the reader who retires should be thanked gracefully for his or her service to the community. A brief rite is outlined in Bulletin 56, pages 299-300.

Resources

Some useful books for readers who want to prepare and understand their text:

  Lectionary for Mass: Sundays and Solemnities — study edition (1978, CCCB, Ottawa): This book provides the readings exactly as they are in the large Sunday lectionary, page for page, and in two colors. A pronunciation guide to proper names is also included. Each reader should have a personal copy at home for study and prayer. (Available from CCCB Publications, 90 Parent Avenue, Ottawa, Ontario K1N 7B1.)

  The Jerusalem Bible (1966, Doubleday, Garden City, NY): Available in several editions, it provides good introductions to the books of the bible, footnotes on many texts, and many cross-references. The reader is able to see the context of the reading, and thus will be able to understand it and proclaim it better. This would make a good Christmas gift for the parish to give each reader.


  A Reader's Guide to Proclamation, by Jerome J. DuCharme (1974, 1975, 1976, Franciscan Herald Press, 1434 West 51st Street, Chicago, IL 60609): See reviews in Bulletin 48, page 143 (year A); no. 53, page 123 (year B); and no. 56, page 317 (year C). A separate book of about 140 pages is available for each of the three years. Brief notes on each reading help the reader to prepare his or her reading in the context of the three passages chosen for each Sunday. Each reader will benefit from having a set of these useful books.


  The Liturgical Year, by Adrian Nocent, OSB (1977, The Liturgical Press, Collegeville, MN 56321): Four volumes describe the seasons and feasts of the year. Each reading is discussed for each Sunday. It would be useful to have a set of these books available for readers and liturgy planners.

  Discover the Bible (Bible Center, 2000 Sherbrooke St. West, Montréal, P.Q. H3H 1G4): For 16 years, this series of weekly leaflets has been explaining the Sunday readings from September to June. One or more sets would be helpful in each parish: bulk orders are available.
Scripture in Church (Dominican Publications, Upper Dorset Street, Dublin 1, Ireland): Issued four times a year, this booklet provides commentaries on the readings, notes and helps for planners, and other informative articles. A subscription would be beneficial for any parish or community.


Other references on the liturgy of the word are given on page 231.

Further Notes

Two other points strongly affect the effectiveness of the liturgy of the word, one in a practical way, and the other from the level of symbolism.

Sound system: Unless a church is rather small, a good sound system is necessary for an effective celebration of the liturgy of the word. An adequate number of microphones and of places to plug them in, a cordless mike (if possible) for the presiding priest, and high quality speakers are important.

As well, those who use the system need to be trained in its proper use. Microphones should be tested by voice. [Let's try "Praise to the Lord!" instead of the tired "Testing: one, two, three . . . ."] Testing should be done before the people arrive. Only amateurs blow into mikes or tap them to see if they are alive.

When new arrangements are made for special occasions, these should be installed and tested hours before they are needed: scurrying technicians and shrill feedback do not contribute to the atmosphere of quiet prayer that should prevail in the moments before the celebration begins.

Place of the word: It is highly desirable that the lectern be reserved for the proclamation of the word of God in the three readings and the homily.

The responsorial psalm is also the word, and may be led from the lectern; when it is sung by the cantor, it would seem better for this to be done from the place used for leading the community in song. The petitions in the prayer of the faithful (see pages 229-231) and the acclamations in the third penitential rite (pages 209-210) should be done from another place — probably that used by the cantor. The best place for the priest to lead the creed and the general intercessions is at the chair.

Positive approaches to the place for proclaiming the word are discussed more fully in Bulletin 74, House of the Church (May-June 1980).

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A reader's prayer is given on page 223. See also Rules for readers on page 237.
PROCLAIMING THE WORD OF GOD

This article suggests some practical ideas for a good proclamation of the readings during the Sunday eucharist.

First Two Readings

Introduction: The presiding priest may give a brief introduction to the day's readings. This is particularly beneficial when one of the readings seems difficult before its context is understood. A note in the preceding Sunday's bulletin may be adequate in most cases. [The liturgy of the word already contains a lot of talking; care must always be taken that it doesn't become the liturgy of the words through needless interjections and rambling talks.]

First reading: During the Easter season, the first reading is taken from the Acts of the Apostles, and reflects the life of the first Christians (see Bulletin 50, page 218). For the rest of the year, the first reading is selected from the Old Testament, a sign that Christ is the Lord and savior of all: see Vatican II, Dogmatic constitution on divine revelation, nos. 14-16. The first reading is chosen in relation to the gospel passage and is therefore best understood when seen in the light of the Sunday gospel.

Some thoughts for the person who proclaims the first reading:

• Going to the lectern: As the people are sitting down after the collect, the reader moves quietly to the lectern. (The readers should always sit near the lectern so that they do not have to cross the sanctuary.) On arrival, the reader waits for all to settle down; if the priest makes a brief introduction to the readings at this point, the reader listens with the rest of the community. Then he or she may bow slightly to the presiding priest, face the people, and begin to read.

• Reading from the lectionary: Each reader should proclaim the word of God from the lectionary. To read it from a leaflet or a loose sheet of paper is to state openly that this community has little respect for God's word.

• Title: The reader reads what is printed in black in the lectionary: "A reading from the book of Exodus." There is no need for added words or information: title, scripture references, summary line, or "Our first reading today is taken from . . ." simply add verbal diarrhea to an already overloaded rite.

• Reading: The text is read as given in the lectionary or bible. When longer and shorter passages are provided, the decision on which is to be used depends on the circumstances of the celebration and the community's ability to benefit from the passage chosen. This decision should be made long in advance by the presiding priest, after discussion with the liturgy committee or planning group. The reader should be aware of this decision before preparing the text.

Difficult words should be checked in advance. The pronunciation guide in the study edition of Lectionary for Mass — Sundays and Solemnities provides an

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1 See G1, no. 11; Letter on eucharistic prayers, April 27, 1973, by the Congregation for Divine Worship. This letter is contained in Bulletin 40, pages 197-203, and in Vatican II — Conciliar and Postconciliar Documents, edited by Austin Flannery, OP (1975, The Liturgical Press, Collegeville, MN 56321): see document no. 18, pages 233-240. This letter contains many positive suggestions on good creativity during the eucharistic celebration.
acceptable form for all the proper names in the Sunday readings. Readers should make sure they are comfortable with both the meaning and the pronunciation of all the words in the title and the reading. [Please: no more letters to the Philippines!]

The reader needs to control the speed of the reading: nervousness will cause a person to read too quickly. Volume should be suitable for this gathering, and should not cause the community to strain to hear, nor blast their ears: a volume which allows all to listen in comfort is desirable.

- **Senselines:** The Canadian Sunday lectionary (*Lectionary for Mass — Sundays and Solemnities*) is printed in senselines so that the reader may proclaim God’s word more intelligibly and the people may grasp its meaning more readily. At times, the text of *The Jerusalem Bible* is not easy to proclaim or listen to, and therefore the reader has to make sure that he or she understands the text first and proclaims it clearly. This requires some effort, but the reader has undertaken this ministry to the people of God.

- **End of the reading:** All too often the reader rushes through “This is the word of the Lord” as though it were a sigh of relief. This sort of nervous behavior torpedoes the proclamation, and undoes the value of the acclamation by the people.

On coming to the end of the reading, the reader should stop, look the people in the eye, pause, and then proclaim: *This is the word of the Lord!* When the reader says this well, the people will respond with a firm acclamation, *Thanks be to God!*

- **Nervous habits** — including clearing one’s throat into the microphone, coughing, fidgeting, drumming or twisting fingers, keeping hands in pockets — should be uprooted quickly, since these distract the people and make it harder for them to listen freely to God’s word.

**Pause for silent prayer:** When God’s word has been proclaimed, the General Instruction calls for a period of silent reflection (GI, no. 23), so that the Spirit may speak to each of us (see *Silence is necessary!* on pages 204-205). Particularly in today’s liturgy of the word, silence is needed if the scriptures are to penetrate more deeply into our hearts and our lives.

After the people’s response to the reading, the reader remains standing at the lectern, facing the people with head bowed: this will be a sign for all to pause for silent reflection and prayer. We may think about some action, advice, or phrase in the reading, or simply ask the Spirit to open our hearts to his grace-filled action. Or we may echo Christ’s response, and simply pray: *Here I am, Father: I am ready to do your will* (see Heb. 10: 7 and Ps. 40: 7-8).

It is important that we understand the thrust both of the liturgy of the word and of the Christian life: God takes the initiative, and we respond in faith and love. In the first reading, our heavenly Father has spoken to us — to his Church on earth, to this particular community of faith, and to individual children of his love. We respond first of all by silent reflection and acceptance, and then as a community in the responsorial psalm. During the rest of the week, we will respond by our way of life.

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• *Introducing the time of silent prayer:* In parishes where this silent pause has not been observed, the priest and liturgy committee may introduce it gradually. Notes in the parish bulletin may explain the meaning and need of silence in the Mass. Suggestions for introducing silent prayer after the first reading are given in *Guidelines for Pastoral Liturgy — 1979-1980 Liturgical Calendar*, pastoral note 8c. Perhaps a 20-second pause will be adequate as a beginning; in the months to come, as the community learns to pray in silence, this may be increased gradually. In a community of religious, a one-minute silence should be an acceptable pause to start with.

  **Responsorial psalm:** See pages 227-228.

  **Second reading:** The second reading is always from the New Testament writings. In ordinary time, it is an independent reflection of the way in which the first Christian communities tried to understand and live the gospel of our Lord; there is no attempt to relate this reading to this Sunday's gospel and first reading. During the strong seasons (Lent-Easter and Advent-Christmas), the second reading is more closely related to the gospel and to the theme of the Sunday and season.

  • *A second reader:* Where possible, another reader should proclaim the second reading: this is considered better than having one person read both lessons and the psalm (see GI, no. 71). A variety of well-prepared readers leads to a much better proclamation of the word. (Where both husband and wife are trained readers, they could be appointed to read at the same Mass, and each proclaim one reading; they could prepare them together, and help each other and their family to understand both readings more fully.)

  • *Method:* The notes on the first reading (pages 219-220) apply also to the second reading.

  • *Silence:* At the end of the second reading, a pause for silent prayer is needed (GI, no. 23).

  • If the deacon is to read the gospel from a special book of the gospels (which is on the altar), the reader takes the lectionary to the credence after the *Alleluia* begins.

**Proclaiming the Gospel**

  **Gospel acclamation:** After the pause for silent prayer which follows the second reading, the whole atmosphere changes. We have been listening to the Father as he speaks to us. Now, with the gospel acclamation, we are preparing to listen to Jesus Christ, our brother, whom the Father has sent to speak to us directly (see GI, nos. 9, 33). Several distinct elements are involved in this rite:

  • *Posture:* We stand as a community to show that we are ready to greet Jesus and hear him speaking to us (GI, nos. 35, 21).

  • *Acclamation:* The acclamation is addressed to Christ, as are the responses before and after the gospel reading.

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3 See Bulletin 67, pages 30-32; no. 70, pages 173-176. See also *Planning Sunday Liturgy in Ordinary Time*, by Patrick Byrne: cassette no. S77-2 (1977, Time Consultants, P.O. Box 652, Severna Park, MD 21146).
Outside Lent, the acclamation is *Alleluia*, which means "Praise to the Lord!" Music is contained in CBW I, nos. 201-207, and in CBW II.

During Lent and Holy Week, the *Alleluia* is not sung, and is replaced by another acclamation of praise, such as "Praise to you, Lord, King of eternal glory." (See lectionary introduction, no. 9; CBW I, no. 208; CBW II.)

- *Alleluia is for singing*: The gospel acclamation is intended to be sung by the whole community: it is our greeting and welcome — a standing ovation, as it were — to the Lord Jesus, who speaks to all in the gospel.

The cantor sings the *Alleluia* (or another acclamation during Lent and Holy Week), and all repeat it. The cantor sings the verse, and all repeat the acclamation. [Communities which sing "alleloolya" are mispronouncing the word.]

- When it is not possible to sing the acclamation, it is permitted — in fact, it is better — to omit it (GI, no. 39). *Alleluia* is meant to be sung; this acclamation cannot be *said* with full meaning. The verse is never said by the community: it is to be sung by cantor or choir.

**Gospel reading**: Since the gospel text is the most important of the three readings proclaimed, it is read by a special minister, after a special procession (GI, no. 35):

- *Procession*: The gospel acclamation is a greeting addressed to Jesus Christ. It is sung as the deacon carries the gospel book in procession to the place of the word, where the gospel is proclaimed with solemnity. The procession should be a real procession, with candles and incense, and involving true movement from one place to another.

- *Special minister to proclaim*: In our Christian tradition, it is the deacon — a person set aside to assist the bishop and to serve the sick, the poor, and the needy — who proclaims the gospel reading to the believing community. When no deacon is present, a presbyter reads the gospel to the assembly. Only when no other deacon or presbyter is present does the presiding priest proclaim the gospel.4 [Even though this may be common in one-presbyter parishes, it is to be seen as an exception: *the norm is the proclamation of the gospel by the deacon*. This should give parishes and diocesan liturgy commissions some food for further thought on the ministry and number of deacons in each parish community.]

- *Signs of respect* (see GI, no. 35): Acolytes carry lighted candles, and the thurifer carries burning incense to show the importance of the gospel. We mark the sign of the cross on our forehead, lips, and heart as we prepare to listen to Jesus. The deacon incenses the gospel book, which is a symbol of the presence of Christ among us. At the end of the reading, the deacon may hold the book up for all to see as he declares that this is indeed the Lord's gospel. Then he kisses the book as a further sign of respect for our savior. Some communities follow the Eastern tradition of decorating the gospel book; some repeat the singing of the acclamation (the *Alleluia* or the lenten form, without the verse) as the deacon holds up the book.

- *Place of proclamation*: The gospel is proclaimed from the same lectern as the first two readings. The deacon (or priest) who reads the gospel always uses the lectionary to show the community's reverence for the word of Christ.

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4 The priest says the prayer, *Almighty God, cleanse my heart*, in silence ("secreto," GI, no. 93).
**Homily:** After the gospel has been proclaimed to the entire assembly, the presiding priest gives the homily: see pages 224-226.

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**Further notes:** A few minor problems lead to distractions and poor proclamation during the Sunday celebration:

- **Latecomers:** People who arrive late cause many distractions to the reader and to the listening community. In some parishes, ushers ask those who are late to wait until the end of a reading before moving to a seat. People who are habitually late need to examine both their conscience and their way of life.

- **"Licker" control:** Readers who lick their fingers before turning the page in the lectionary should be helped to reform, or else be retired immediately (see page 217). This childish habit damages the lectionary, and is not to be tolerated in any adult community.

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**A READER'S PRAYER**

This is a prayer that a reader may wish to use several times during the week, and on Sunday before he or she proclaims the word of God.

_Praise to you, Lord God,_  
_king of the universe,_  
_and all glory to your name._  
_I praise you and thank you for calling me_  
_to proclaim your word to your beloved people._

_Open the hearts of all who worship with us,_  
_so that they may hear your voice when I read._  
_Let nothing in my life or manner disturb your people_  
_or close their hearts to the action of your Spirit._

_Cleanse my heart and mind,_  
_and open my lips so that I may proclaim your glory._

_All praise to you, heavenly Father,_  
_through the Lord Jesus_  
_in the Holy Spirit,_  
_now and for ever. Amen!_
The gospels frequently present Jesus as the one who teaches the people and his disciples by preaching on various occasions. In Lk. 4: 16-30, we see him in the synagogue, where he preaches on the fulfillment of Is. 61: 1-2. Timothy is encouraged to preach in season and out (2 Tim. 4: 1-5).

**History:** Around the year 150, Justin of Rome described the Sunday homily by the presiding bishop, who encouraged the people to follow the teaching and example of the prophets and apostles. Preaching remained an integral part of the eucharist for many centuries, and then it fell into disuse. Preaching was later revived, but it took place outside Mass. Even in the 1940s, when the sermon took place during the Mass, some priests could be seen removing maniple and chasuble before preaching. The history of Christian preaching is described in Bulletin 60, pages 196-206.

** Renewal:** The Second Vatican Council restored preaching from the scriptures as an important and integral part of the liturgy of the word in the Mass, sacraments, and other liturgical rites.

**Purpose:** The primary purpose of preaching during the liturgy of the word is the *continuing conversion* of the people who hear the word. The homily is not exegesis, but is based on it. It is not so much instruction as reflection. It is a sharing of the priest's prayerful reflection on the word and on the life of the Spirit in this worshipping community.

Who is sent to preach? The normal practice in the Catholic Church today is that the presiding bishop or priest preaches the homily; in a concelebration, one of the concelebrating priests may preach; in particular circumstances, a deacon or another person may be authorized to give the homily during the eucharist. It is the responsibility of the bishops — who alone are appointed to shepherd the Church under Christ — to send or commission each person who preaches God's word to his people; no one else can take this responsibility upon himself or herself.

**Abuses:** It is not in keeping with the spirit of the renewed liturgy to have a "hit-and-run" homilist who pops in, preaches, and pops out: the one who preaches should participate fully in the entire celebration, preferably as presider, as noted above. Similarly, the former practice of assigning one preacher to all Masses is no longer fitting: each priest should preach at the eucharist over which he presides.

Who is speaking? When a duly authorized preacher proclaims God's word in the homily, it is God who is speaking to his people. Through the words and life of the preacher, our heavenly Father is reaching out to touch the hearts and minds of his people, in order to lead them to a fuller love of him. Through the homilist, the Father is drawing his people back to the fervor of baptismal renewal.

**Homily and readings:** The homily is based principally on the scriptures and on the actions and texts of the liturgy (Liturgy constitution, nos. 52 and 35: 2). In the homily, the bishop or priest proclaims God's wonderful works in the history of salvation, and the principles which guide the lives of Christians (Liturgy constitu-

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1 See GII, nos. 41-42, 165; Rite of baptism of children, nos. 137-138; Instruction on the proper implementation of the Constitution on the liturgy (Congregation of Rites, September 26, 1964), no. 37 (in Flannery, *Vatican II*, pages 52-53); Directory for Masses with Children, no. 24. These occasions are described in Bulletin 60, pages 212-213.
tion, no. 52). The preacher shows God's people how the mystery of Christ continues to be present and active among us. By exploring some aspect of the scripture readings or of a text from the ordinary or proper of the day's Mass, the priest is able to help this gathered community of God's people to benefit more fully from the richness of his word and his other gifts in creation and in grace.

**Homily and eucharist:** It is the homily which helps to unite the service of the word and the service of the eucharist. As an integral part of the liturgy of the word, the homily is normally given by the one who presides over both the liturgy of the word and the liturgy of the eucharist. The homily should lead the members of the community from their reflection and their acceptance of conversion into full self-offering during the eucharistic prayer, into unity in the Spirit, and into full communion in the body and blood of the Lord Jesus.

**Homily and life:** Through leading people to conversion and to self-offering, the homily prepares people to live their lives more in the spirit of the gospel message. With the rest of the assembled community, the presider listens to the word, and then shares his prayerful reflections on what has been proclaimed. If he is in tune with the pastoral circumstances and needs of the people of this parish, he is able to help them to understand their way of life in the light of the gospel: people today listen "more willingly to witnesses than to teachers." Through his life and preaching, the priest leads his people to Christ, who calls them to follow him more closely.

**Other Notes on the Homily**

**Begins directly:** After the gospel has been proclaimed by the deacon or another priest, all may sit for a moment of silent reflection (see GI, no. 23). Then the presider goes to the lectern or remains at the chair for the homily. No words should interrupt the flow between the gospel and the homily.

- **No sign of the cross** is to be made before or after the homily: this practice comes from a time when preaching was done outside Mass. Making the sign of the cross is now seen as an interruption of the action at this point.

- **No interjections:** If made at all, announcements come in the dismissal rite at the end of Mass, following the prayer after communion (GI, no. 123); prayers for particular needs belong to the general intercessions. No interruption should come between the gospel and the homily.

**Preaching from the lectionary:** One of the most significant reforms of Vatican II was the restoring of a greater richness from the scriptures to the eucharistic celebration (see Liturgy constitution, nos. 51, 35: 1). During ordinary time, the gospel readings are chosen from one of the three synoptics: year A is the year of Matthew, year B is the year of Mark, and year C is the year of Luke. Each year, one of the evangelists leads us to Christ in a particular way (see *The Church's catechism*, in Bulletin 56, pages 293-295; and *Systematic preaching from the lectionary*, in no. 60, 2)


3 See GI, no. 97; also *Posture and preaching*, by J. Frank Henderson, in Bulletin 65, pages 202-206.

A homilist who is sensitive to the Church’s leadership will share the treasures of the scriptures from the lectionary with his people.

**Preaching from the open lectionary:** Sometimes one sees a priest come to the lectern, close the lectionary, and then begin to preach. It is more desirable to preach the word from the open book as a clear sign that it is the Lord’s word which is being shared in the homily: such a sign speaks loudly.

**Length and depth:** Current Catholic practice in North America is moving toward homilies of seven to ten minutes on Sunday, and perhaps three or four minutes on weekdays. Preachers would do well to speak in language as clear, concrete, and simple as that recorded in the gospels. Many communities would be blessed if their preachers spoke as simply as Jesus did.

**Problems:** Those who seek to follow the lectionary in their preaching often find a series of obstacles laid upon them from above: theme Sundays, feasts, special collections, and other passing events should not exclude the Sunday readings and a good homily on them. (See Bulletin 60, pages 218-219.) Official insistence on peripheral issues gradually leads to a disintegration of the lectionary and its carefully planned catechesis. In 1969, Paul VI described the purpose of the readings in the revised lectionary: “Sacred scripture will then be a perfect source of spiritual life, the chief instrument for handing down Christian doctrine, and the center of all theological study.” Spiritual leaders have to become more aware of the long-range values in the lectionary.

- **Reading a homily?** Sometimes — especially at more formal occasions — one sees a priest who reads a homily. Is this a good practice? (One is tempted to think: If he cannot remember it as he gives it, how does he expect me to remember it and be nourished by it all week?) This problem seems compounded when the preacher closes the lectionary and replaces it with his notes. A discussion of this question is given in Bulletin 37, pages 54-56, and in no. 40, page 225.

**Resources:** The primary resource for the homily is the Lectionary and the Sacramentary; other resources are listed on pages 217-218, 231 of this issue. See also Bulletin 60, Liturgical Preaching; the homily series in Bulletins 34-40; other articles are listed in no. 61, pages 298-299; see also no. 65, pages 202-206. Bulletins 67 and 70 provide insights into the liturgical year and the flow of the Sunday scripture readings.

*A preacher’s prayer* is given on page 236.

The homily, based on the readings and other liturgical texts and actions, is the way in which the presiding bishop or priest tries to bridge the gap between the living scriptures and the lives of today’s people. The Spirit who inspired the biblical writings continues to be active in the community. The one who gives the homily must be open to the action of the Spirit, and co-operate with him to bring God’s loving word into the hearts and lives of his people today.

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5 Apostolic constitution promulgating the Roman Missal [including both sacramentary and lectionary], April 3, 1969; the text is included in the Canadian edition of the sacramentary, pages 7-9. Italics added.
RESPONSES IN SONG AND PRAYER

During the liturgy of the word, the people of God respond to the word of God in various ways:

- **In silence:** See pages 204-205;
- **In song:** The responsorial psalm (pages 227-228) and the gospel acclamation (pages 221-222);
- **In prayer:** The general intercessions or prayer of the faithful (pages 229-231); the creed (pages 228-229).

They also respond by their action during the eucharistic prayer and in their daily living.

**Responsorial Psalm**

Reader, singers, and people remain in silent reflection for a moment after the first reading. After this time of personal prayer, we continue our response to God's action by praying the responsorial psalm.

The psalm and its refrain have been carefully chosen to reflect and respond to the first reading, which in turn is closely related to this Sunday's gospel. The refrain is a prayer on which all may reflect during the entire week.

**Working toward the ideal:** The Church encourages us to sing the psalms. In the eucharist, the responsorial psalm should be sung whenever possible:

- **Sing it:** the best and proper approach to the psalm is to sing it. CBW II provides a sung refrain, an appropriate psalm tone, and a pointed text for each Sunday's psalm in the choir edition; the pew edition includes the music for the refrain and the words of the psalm; CBW I contains a variety of seasonal psalms in nos. 172-200.

The psalm is sung in this way: the cantor (choir) sings the refrain, and all repeat it; the cantor (choir) sings the verse, and all repeat the refrain. This is continued until the last verse is sung and the refrain is repeated.

- **Second best:** The Church wants the people to sing the responsorial psalm. When they are unable to use the psalm of the day, they may sing one of the common or seasonal psalms (see *Lectionary for Mass*, nos. 174-175; CBW I, nos. 172-200; and CBW II). With as few as seven psalms in its repertoire, a community could sing an appropriate response to the reading each Sunday; with practice, this minimum number may be gradually increased.

- **Third choice:** If a congregation is truly destitute and unable to find a cantor to sing the psalm text, the community may sing the seasonal refrain, with someone (probably the first reader) reading the verses of the seasonal psalm.

- **Fourth choice:** The least developed form is the one which is still used in many churches: one person (usually the reader) says the refrain, and all repeat it. He or she reads the verse, and all repeat the refrain. This dialogue continues until the last verse and the refrain are read. This method is the minimum; each congregation should be working to do better than this on the Lord's day.
Unacceptable methods: Here and there one finds communities which do not understand the traditions and practices of the Roman rite, and which choose to do their own thing, perhaps from mistaken notions of 'efficiency.' Among these communities are those who have all the congregation read the psalm together; who replace the psalm with a hymn by all or a motet by the choir; or who 'simplify' the rite by having all read the refrain with the reader before plunging into the psalm.

Moving toward the ideal: Now is the time for all communities to start working toward singing the responsorial psalm as the Church requests. At whatever level we may find ourselves now, we should be aiming for the first and most acceptable way of singing the responsorial psalm.

Profession of Faith

This is not a prayer of praise or petition, but rather a declaration of our faith.1 The creed first of all belongs to the rites of adult initiation: the candidate makes his or her profession of faith and is immersed in the baptismal bath; then the new Christian is admitted to the eucharist. Each year at the Easter vigil, believers renew their baptismal promises and their profession of faith.

History: The Nicene creed comes to us from the first two ecumenical Councils, Nicea in 325 and Constantinople in 381. This text was slightly altered by the Franks around 800 — an action unthinkable in the Christian East, and one of the many factors involved in the schism of 1054.2 The Franks used the creed in the eucharist, and one of their emperors imposed this practice on Rome in 1014. Since that time, the profession of faith has been part of the Roman order of Mass on Sundays and solemnities. According to present rubrics, the creed is omitted only when it is replaced by a profession of faith (Easter vigil; renewal of baptismal promises on Easter Sunday; baptism of children during Mass).

Two forms: In the past decade, Canada and many other countries have received permission to use the apostle's creed as an alternative to the Nicene creed. The apostles' creed may also be used in Masses with children (see Directory, nos. 49, 39; Bulletin 63, page 121).

Purpose: The purpose of the creed in the reformed Sunday eucharist is not at all clear. It is the eucharistic prayer which is the primary proclamation or profession of the community's faith, and the renewal of the baptismal covenant (see Liturgy constitution, no. 10). Many liturgists consider that the creed has no place in the Sunday eucharist, and that it should be dropped in future reforms. (In bible services, however, the creed may serve as an excellent community response to the readings from God's word: see Creative creed, in Bulletin 38, pages 102-103.)

In practice: It should not be necessary to invite the community to stand after the silent reflection following the homily: they should stand when the presiding priest does. The creed is generally not sung, although a simple setting is provided in CBW

1 For a positive and thought-provoking essay on the creed in the life of the Church today, see “Do Short Formulas Dilute the Faith?” by Wolfgang Beinert, in Theology Digest, vol. 22, no. 3 (Autumn 1974), pages 253-260.

II. A bow is made in the Nicene creed during the mention of our Lord's incarnation. The two forms of the creed should be varied in each community so that everyone will be familiar with both; in Canada, the liturgical calendar recommends some six days when Catholics are encouraged to use the Nicene creed for ecumenical reasons.

Problems: On March 25 and December 25, the order of Mass requires a genuflection by all in the Nicene creed during the clause about the incarnation: this awkward gesture — to be made while all are saying the words — inserts a distraction into the flow of the liturgy of the word.

When the general intercessions were reintroduced to the Roman Mass after the Council, they were placed immediately after the creed. It would seem more desirable to have the creed omitted, with the intercessions flowing from the homily, as in the time of Justin and Hippolytus.

General Intercessions

The Second Vatican Council returned to an ancient and important practice when it restored the prayer of the faithful to the celebration of the liturgy of the word (Liturgy constitution, nos. 53-54).

People of prayer: In our baptism, the Lord Jesus makes us sharers in his priesthood, and calls us to be people of praise and prayer. We are called to pray for the needs of all creation, and for all people. The prayer of the faithful in the Sunday eucharist is a public expression of our duty to make intercession for all.

History: The necessity of intercession is mentioned in 1 Tim. 2: 1-4, 8. Around 150, Justin mentions these prayers at Rome, as does Hippolytus in 215. In Rome they became elaborated (as in our present Good Friday liturgy), and eventually were reduced to a brief Lord, have mercy. In the East, the prayers took on the form of frequent litanies. (See Bulletin 54, pages 146-148.)

Purpose: The present general intercessions help us to live up to our calling as people of prayer. After hearing God's holy word in the readings and the homily, we respond by praying to him for all the world.

Structure and roles: This prayer has a clear structure, and different members of the community have specific roles to carry out during it:

- The priest invites all to pray. (This is a brief invitation to prayer, not a mini-homily or a review of the nature of the feast.)
- The deacon or another minister, even the reader, announces the intention for which everyone is praying. Each intention should be clear, and not too involved or complicated in form.
- The people respond by silent prayer or by a sung or said response; in 1964 the Canadian bishops recommended that the response should be sung, and that it should not be varied too often.

3 In the present order of Mass, the priest no longer greets the people at this point with The Lord be with you. He begins at once with the invitation to prayer.

4 See Liturgical Renewal (1964, CCC, Ottawa), Practical Norms, (December 21, 1964), no. 20b, page 145.
Further petitions are mentioned, and the people respond.

The priest concludes the general intercessions by a brief collect, asking God to hear the prayers of this community of his people.

*It is distinctly incorrect and undesirable for the priest to take over all these ministries.*

**Series of intentions:** The Constitution on the liturgy (no. 53) and the sacramentary (GI, no. 46) suggest these basic intentions:

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

Other intentions may be added according to local needs and the nature of the celebration.

**Good preparation:** The intercessions should represent the prayers of this gathered community living in harmony with the Church around the world. The intentions should be prepared by the people of each community. “Canned” intentions prepared by central or commercial organizations may be consulted, but the final choice of intercessions and their wording belongs to each community. (See Bulletin 33, page 59.) People involved in recent catastrophes — storms, earthquakes, floods, explosions, major accidents — should be included in Sunday’s intentions.

**Other notes:** The prayer is one of intercession, not of praise or thanksgiving. Intercessions should be consistent in one celebration, written in either the second or third person, and addressed either to the Father or the Son. Intentions should not be too long or convoluted. Good sample intercessions are included in an appendix of the sacramentary (Canadian edition, pages 1040-1052).

**Place:** The priest stands at the chair for the intercessions. The person who reads the intentions may use the lectern, but it would seem better to use another place, reserving the lectern for the word of God.

**Problems:** Among the ways of lessening a good celebration, we may list the following:

- Using a loose sheet of paper for the introduction or intentions. It is preferable to prepare these carefully ahead of time, and to include the page in a book that looks respectable. If the priest needs written formulas for the introduction and concluding prayer, he may clip his page into the chair book or sacramentary.
- Long, wordy, scolding, or complicated formulas that lose the people who are supposed to pray for these intentions.
- Failure to prepare intentions which are concerned both with the needs of the wider Church and the world, and with the needs of the local community.
- In smaller groups, as at a retreat or home Mass, it can be a problem when individuals mention intentions in a low voice. As a general rule, people involved in
small groups should be taking part in the large parish group on the Lord's day; if
they celebrate eucharist as a group during the week, they would be wise to give their
particular intentions to the person who will read them in their name.

- In Masses with children, it is desirable to have as many as possible involved
  (Directory, no. 22). Sometimes individuals read intentions from slips of paper; often
  the rest of the community cannot hear the petitions for which they are asked to pray.
  It would seem wiser to have the children come to a microphone (already adjusted to
  their height), and read the intention. If no microphone is available, it would seem
  better to have one competent person read the intentions aloud.

  **Living it:** The prayer of the faithful has to flow from the life of the community.
  If the parish is one which is concerned about the needs of all, one which works for
  people and supports community endeavors, and which is working for the missions,
  its prayer will reflect its wide concerns for others. Its prayer life is based on and
  nourishes its apostolic works.

  On **weekdays**, a brief form of the general intercessions may also be included
  after the gospel and homily. This is particularly desirable during Lent and Advent
  and on special days.

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**FURTHER REFERENCES ON THE LITURGY OF THE WORD**

The following provide a solid background for understanding and celebrating
the liturgy of the word during the Sunday eucharist:

- Constitution on the liturgy, nos. 24, 29-30, 35, 48, 51-54; Constitution on
  revelation, nos. 21-26.

- *Sacramentary*: GI, nos. 33-47, 66-73, 89-99, 272, 318-320; Order of Mass
  (Canadian edition, pages 421-423); Directory for Masses with Children, especially
  nos. 41-49 (in Canadian sacramentary, pages 55-64).

- *Lectionary*: Introduction.

- *National Bulletin on Liturgy*: no. 50, *Reading God's Word: The Lectionary*; see
  also *Ministries of reader and acolyte*, in no. 53, pages 86-93; no. 56, *Training
  Readers*; no. 60, *Liturgical Preaching*; no. 63, pages 120-121, on the liturgy of the
  word in Masses with children; other references on the liturgy of the word are listed in

- *Guidelines for Pastoral Liturgy — 1979-1980 Liturgical Calendar*, pastoral
  note 8, pages 15-22.

- *Bulletin National de Liturgie*:
  * no. 45: Le lectionnaire du dimanche
  * no. 49: La liturgie de la parole, 1
  * no. 59: La liturgie de la parole, 2

Other references on the liturgy of the word are described on pages 217-218.
This article offers some general notes to help each community to avoid common errors and to move toward even better celebration of the Sunday eucharist.

Word and eucharist: By proclamation and response, the liturgy of the word prepares this community of God's people to take part more fully in the liturgy of the eucharist. As we come to the end of the service of the word, our faith is stronger, and we stand ready with Christ and his people to offer total worship and love to the Father. We recognize Christ in our midst, and we are open to the action of his Spirit in our lives.

Working for Better Celebration

Many elements contribute to a better celebration of the liturgy of the word. Some of these are discussed briefly here. These points would be useful topics for discussion by liturgy committees.

Slow down: We need to learn to go more slowly in liturgy, and not to rush. Nervousness or uncertainty will often push a person to carry out his or her responsibilities too quickly. Ministers in a procession or moving about the sanctuary frequently go too fast. The pressure of the situation often leads the reader to act or speak hurriedly. Instead of being the minister of the word and of reflection, a reader sometimes seems to become a means of getting the liturgy of the word over with, or done, or through as soon as possible.

Remedies for this problem include better preparation by readers, more practice, and adequate time for silent prayer by the whole community after each reading and the homily (GI, no. 23). As readers become more aware that it is God who is speaking through them to his people, they will want to make sure that they proclaim his words as clearly and deliberately as possible.

- Opening prayer: This prayer is quite brief. The presiding priest needs to introduce it clearly, leave sufficient time for silent prayer, and proclaim the prayer distinctly so that all may hear what he is saying to God in their name.

Use alternatives and options well: The renewed order of Mass provides us with many choices in prayers and rites, thus enabling us to adapt the celebration in accord with the needs and circumstances of this community on this occasion:

- Introductory rites: We have a choice of three greetings; of blessing water or using the penitential rite; if we use the penitential rite, three forms are available; if we choose the third rite, we may prepare our own texts; two forms of the opening prayer are given in the sacramentary. As well, we may choose to sing some of the introductory rites. The words of introduction at the beginning and the invitations in the penitential rite and at the opening prayer are further areas of choice.

- Liturgy of the word: Some of the choices during this part of the Sunday Mass include the priest's introduction before the liturgy of the word; the length of the periods of silence after each reading and the homily; the choice of the responsorial
psalm (proper or seasonal) and of the music for singing it; the form and solemnity of
the gospel procession; the content and style of the homily; the choice of one of two
creeds; the intercessions.

Within the stable framework of the Roman order of Mass, adequate oppor­
tunity is provided for creativity, variety, and adaptation.

Make clear and adequate gestures: Simple gestures add to the reverence of our
worship, and help to reinforce our sense of praise and prayer (see GI, nos. 20-22):

○ Introductory rites: We stand as the entrance song and procession begin. All
in the procession make a deep bow before the altar, and the priest greets it with a
kiss. We make the sign of the cross with the presiding priest. During the first peniten­
tial rite, we strike our breast as a sign of repentance; when water is blessed, we may
make the sign of the cross as we are sprinkled.

○ Liturgy of the word: Priest and people sit to listen attentively as the first
reader proclaims God’s word. All remain seated until the end of the silent prayer
after the second reading, and then stand for the gospel acclamation. The gospel
procession moves to the lectern where the final reading is proclaimed. As this read­
ing is begun, we make a small sign of the cross on our forehead, mouth, and heart,
showing that we are ready to keep Christ’s word in our mind, heart, and speech. We
sit for the homily, and rise for the creed and intercessions. During the Nicene creed,
we bow as we refer to our Lord’s coming among us as one of us.

Have enough ministers: A full Sunday celebration of the eucharist requires a
good number of ministers: a reader for each of the first two readings (GI, no. 71); a
cantor for the responsorial psalm and the gospel acclamation; ministers to carry the
processional cross, candles, and incense; singers, musicians, and choir leader to carry
out the ministry of music; ushers to welcome the people, direct the processions, and
take up the collection (GI, no. 68bc); ministers of communion, including ministers of
the cup; a presiding priest; if possible, a deacon to proclaim the gospel, announce the
intentions for the prayer of the faithful, and assist the priest during the liturgy of the
eucharist. Each of these persons contributes to the community’s worship by carrying
out his or her responsibilities in harmony with all the other ministers.

The Church is seen most clearly when bishop, priest, ministers, and people of
God are gathered around the altar to celebrate the liturgy (Liturgy constitution, nos.
41-42; GI, nos. 74-75). Each Sunday celebration is a manifestation of the Church,
whose people are graced with many gifts of the Spirit for the building up of the body
of Christ on earth. Each member of the community is called to do all that he or she
should be doing in the liturgy, without taking over someone else’s role (see Liturgy
constitution, no. 28).

Appoint ministers in advance: For a good celebration, a community needs to
make sure that all ministers are appointed in plenty of time so that they may prepare
fully for their role. Preparation always includes prayer. Last-minute appointments
are unfair both to the community and to the ministers involved. Some parishes avoid
this by preparing a schedule for a month or two in advance; copies are sent to each of
the readers. When phone numbers are included, it is simpler to obtain a replacement
in good time.

Signs and symbols: The community shows reverence for the Lord, who is
present when they gather in his name. They show respect for his word by having a
worthy book for the proclamation of the scriptures, and by carrying it reverently in
the processions and the beginning and end of Mass, as well as in the gospel proces-
sion. Lights and incense add to the procession. The prayer of the faithful is not read
from scraps of paper. Nothing is placed on the altar during the introductory rites and
the liturgy of the word, other than the gospel book laid there with reverence by the
deacon. The place of the word is reserved for God's word, and is not made unim-
portant or trivial by using it for all other purposes.

Preparations: Everything needed for the liturgy is prepared well in advance.
Ministers do no last-minute scurrying about the sanctuary. Everyone comes ahead of
time, so that the entrance procession may begin at the exact moment.

Evaluation: Occasionally, it is good to evaluate the Sunday celebration by
reviewing the questions posed by Checklist for Sunday liturgy, in Bulletin 35, pages
207-213. (This issue is now available in a revised, updated second edition.)

Liturgy of the word for children: At one or more Sunday Masses, a parish
which is seriously concerned about people and liturgy will make an effort to provide
a separate liturgy of the word for children; a larger or more enterprising parish
community may provide these for the various age groups, such as kindergarten and
grade 1, grades 2-3, and older children in grades 4-6. These would provide simplified
word services related to the adult service, along with appropriate activities and
prayers. At the end of the liturgy of the word, the children return to their families in
the church. This practice is in accord with the Directory for Masses with Children.¹

A good Sunday celebration is the result of co-operation by many people doing
their best for God and for his people. This takes much effort by everyone involved,
but the results are indeed worthwhile. Good celebrations express our faith and
deepen it, and lead us to even better Sunday worship in the weeks to come.

¹ See Directory for Masses with Children, no. 17. The Directory suggests many ways in which children
can be helped to enjoy the celebration and take part in it more fully. The text is contained in the sacra-
mentary (Canadian edition, pages 55-64), and in Masses with Children/Masses of Reconciliation (1975,
CCC, Ottawa). A commentary on the Directory is included in Bulletin 63, Children and Liturgy, pages
111-122.

ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS

Many articles on the seasons of Advent and Christmas are contained in past
issues of the Bulletin. These references are listed in the index in Bulletin 61, pages
305-307.

Three issues, nos. 36, 41, and 55, have concentrated on Advent and Christmas,
and include many practical helps for their preparation and celebration. A second and
updated edition of Bulletin 36 was issued in 1977. The spirituality of these seasons is
discussed in Bulletin 70, and planning for them in no. 67.

Notes on an Advent penance celebration are given on page 235.
NOTES ON AN ADVENT PENANCE CELEBRATION

This page gives some suggestions that your community's liturgy committee may use to develop its own penance celebration for Advent.

For a good celebration: Many ministers should be involved: priests, deacons, readers, musicians, servers, congregation. Ceremonies and gestures should express our faith with reverence. Adequate pauses for silent prayer and reflection are essential. It is recommended that the sacrament of reconciliation be celebrated after the penance service ends. Further ideas are discussed in Bulletin 66, pages 313-320.

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

Resources: Outlines, prayers, and developed examples of an examination of conscience appear in past issues of the Bulletin: for Advent, see nos. 36, 41, 46, 51, 55, 61, and 66; for Lent, see nos. 32, 37, 42, 47, 52, 56, 62, and 67. Another form is included in Sunday Mass Book, pages 1108-1112.

Outline: This is a helpful outline for developing a community penance celebration, on the theme, “Called to pray for the world.”

- Entrance rite
  1. Song
  2. Enthroning the word of God
  3. Greeting
  4. Opening prayer
- Liturgy of the word
  5. Reading from the word of God: The first reading may be chosen from I Tim. 2: 1-8 (lectionary, no. 136); Eph. 5: 15-20 (no. 120); 1 Thess. 3: 12 — 4: 2 (no. 3).
  6. Meditative silence
  7. Psalm or hymn
  8. Second reading (from those in no. 5, or from the Advent lectionary).
  9. Gospel reading: Mt. 5: 13-16 (lectionary, no. 74); Mt. 5: 38-48 (no. 80); or Lk. 6: 27-38 (no. 82).
  10. Homily
  11. Prayer for sinners
  12. Hymn, if desired
- Examination of our Christian living
  13. Examination of conscience
  14. Silent prayer: about five minutes
  15. Community act of sorrow
  16. Acclamation: hymn or brief form of the general intercessions
- Conclusion of the rite
  17. Lord's prayer
  18. Sacred action: kiss of peace
  19. Invitation to the sacrament
  20. Blessing
  21. Concluding hymn
- Sacrament of penance.
SOME ATTITUDES IN CHRISTIAN PRAYER

God is our loving Father;
we are his beloved children.
*May his name be praised!*

Our Father loves us so much
that he has sent his only Son to be one of us.
*All praise to God on high!*

Our heavenly Father has given us his Holy Spirit
to live within our hearts,
to guide us in prayer,
to make us his temples.
*Glory to God in the highest!*

In loving obedience,
the Lord Jesus submitted to his Father's will,
and stretched out his arms on the cross for us.
*Praise and thanks to Jesus for ever!*

In loving faithfulness, our Father raised Jesus to glory.
*Blessed be God for ever and ever!*

Our Father has called us in Christ to be his people of praise;
he has forgiven us, and cleansed us from evil;
he has made us his people of praise for ever:

*Glory and praise are yours, Father,
through your Son Jesus Christ,
in the love of your Holy Spirit,
one God for ever and ever. Amen!*

A PREACHER'S PRAYER

*Blessed are you, Lord God,
king of the universe:
you have sent your Word to become one of us,
Jesus Christ, our brother and savior.*

*Through his words you give us your life,
through his example you teach us love,
through his death and rising
you give us eternal life.*

*Father, send your Spirit into my heart
to guide me as I prepare to preach,
and to help me to speak your word to your people.
Open their hearts to hear your word,
and let me lead them to you
through Christ our Lord. Amen!*

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RULES FOR READERS

Prepare your text by reading it over carefully several times, along with the other readings of the Mass. What is God saying to his people in this celebration? Practise your text. Consult a commentary, and discuss your reading with others during the week before you are to read.

Pray that God will open the hearts of his people to listen to his word in a spirit of faith. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you proclaim God’s word as well as you can.

Carry the lectionary in the procession at the beginning and end of Mass. Hold it up so that all may see the book. By your bearing and appearance, be a sign of the respect God’s people should have for his holy word.

Proclaim the word of the Lord to his people with dignity. Read slowly, with adequate volume. The lectionary text is divided into senselines to help you proclaim well. Remember that the Lord is speaking to his people through you.

Live what you proclaim. Strive to put into practice what you read to the community. Pray for deeper faith and stronger love. The Lord is heard more clearly when your reading is verified by the way you follow him in your daily life.

“MY WAY”

“I did it my way” may express the attitude of a Hollywood star, but it is quite out of place in the liturgy. The liturgy is not “our thing” — instead, it belongs to Christ and his Church.

It is tempting at times to tinker with the liturgy, to ignore the rubrics, to take shortcuts, to think we know better. What most fail to realize, however, is the impact of this constant erosion. The sad history of the “offertory” rites is catalogued by Jungmann (see also Bulletin 54, pages 150-156). Ignorance of our tradition often lies behind those who avoid or disdain the liturgical books, or who design new rites, homemade Holy Weeks, or new scriptures.

Liturgy is much more than rubrics, but rubrics have an important role: they protect our liturgy, and help individuals and communities to remain in union with the prayer of the whole Church.

In the eucharist, we offer ourselves in union with Jesus, who gave himself in total obedience to the Father. How can we say that we are joining our Lord in his offering when we hold back or refuse to obey, or do it our way?

Let’s keep celebrating the liturgy by doing it the way that the Lord and his Church want us to celebrate.

The author selects 24 important passages from the gospel according to Luke, and helps us to grasp the meaning of our Lord's teachings today. Each passage is followed by reflective notes and by a pair of penetrating questions which the reader must face.

While appropriate at any time, this book is most beneficial to all as we move once more into year C, the year of Luke. (See Bulletin 56, pages 293-295; no. 60, pages 221-233.)

Recommended for all who are involved in liturgy and Christian living.

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Fr. Vaillancourt, who teaches at the University of Sherbrooke in Québec, has written an excellent book on the theology of the sacraments today.

When the Second Vatican Council prepared and issued its decrees, it was doing much more than legislating changes in rites and prayers: it was reflecting and enfleshing some dramatic changes in the theology of Church (ecclesiology), of Christ (Christology), and of humanity (anthropology). These changes affect the way we celebrate sacraments, and are part of the continuing renewal in catechesis and pastoral action at every level.

This book has been ably translated from the French by Matthew J. O'Connell. While compact, the text is not difficult to read. This book is recommended for priests, students of liturgy, and for all who want to grow in their understanding of the Church's evolving theology of the sacraments.

* * *


In 18 brief chapters (mostly two pages in length), Fr. Dallen explains the rites of baptism of children, their relationship to adult initiation, and their importance for the community as well as for the family. A strong emphasis on the faith of the parents and congregation helps us to appreciate infant baptism as the beginning of a journey of growing into faith.

This book is recommended for liturgy committees, baptismal preparation groups, clergy, and parents as they get ready to celebrate the baptism of their child.

* * *


This helpful booklet describes the best ways of celebrating the Sunday eucharist, and discusses good ways of performing the various rites and of avoiding common errors. A sensitive pastor, Fr. Walsh tries to help the ordinary parish liturgy team prepare and carry out its work as well as possible.

This booklet is the fourth in a series: the earlier three were reviewed in Bulletin 68, pages 93-94. While it wanders slightly from the General Instruction in minor points, it is a useful guide for planning celebrations. Recommended for priests, liturgy committees, and musicians.

* * *


Fr. Champlin has prepared a helpful book that may be used by anyone when visiting the sick and the dying. Brief chapters explain the meaning of sickness and the various stages of dying, and help the visitor to be more able to comfort the sick person.
Prayers, psalms, and scripture readings are provided for use when visiting the sick. Further prayers are included for a dying person, and for use at the moment of death. Most of these texts are chosen from the renewed rites for the pastoral care of the sick and the dying.

Recommended for those visiting the sick and dying, or working with them. Hospitals and community infirmaries would do well to have copies available for visitors.

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A sensible and sensitive guide to planning the best possible celebrations for this important time in the liturgical year, this book is filled with practical advice based on experience. Fr. Hartgen points out several times that the lectionary and sacramentary are the starting point for planning and creativity. Although a few minor wanderings are suggested, for the most part the book helps the liturgy planning team to work for excellent celebrations.

Recommended for liturgy committees, planning teams, musicians, and clergy.

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The author shares his 12 years' experience and his deep concern for better folk music that will support prayer and strengthen faith in the community. After a brief history of the folk movement, he shows many practical ways in which the parish and its musicians can work together in planning and celebrating good liturgy. Support for musicians is discussed, and emphasis is placed on the quality of their skills, and on the quality of the words and music used in worship. Fr. Schoenbachler calls for professionalism: "Music is too important to the sacramental life of the community to be left in the hands of the incompetent or uncaring" (page 34). Church musicians must also be people of prayer.

An outline of the times for music and the varying importance of these moments is included. Despite the author's suggestions to the contrary, there is no place for music in the Roman rite during the kiss of peace; and the Lamb of God is the music to be sung during the breaking of bread (pages 39-41).

Recommended for folk musicians, parish liturgy committees, schools, and parish clergy.

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This book will make a positive contribution to the life of any Christian family that wants to grow in prayer. Brief essays precede each of the twelve main sections. Most prayers are one page in length, and are based on attitudes of praise and thanks. Typical family situations are commemorated, and adaptation is encouraged. Throughout the texts, Fr. Hays makes good suggestions for sacred gestures, and encourages personal and family reflection.

Five prayers to Mary as mother of God, a prayer of dedication of a sacred image, and ideas for a hermitage in every home are also helpful. This book helps us to pray always, and pray all ways, in the spirit of 1 Cor. 10: 31. While the book includes a page of personal prayer and reflection for each morning and evening of the week, no family form of daily prayer is included: this would be a good addition in future editions.

Well printed and illustrated, this book is recommended to praying families, catechists, and clergy.

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The Holy Spirit is moving Christians to deeper prayer in our day. The author of this booklet, who is a priest in India, points out that mature Christians should be able to move from vocal and meditative
prayer (which he compares to primary and secondary schools) to contemplative prayer, where we are open to the presence and action of the Trinity within us. We are encouraged to practise this form of prayer because it is the prayer of Jesus and of Mary, and because it strengthens both our personal prayer and that of the community. The second half of the booklet is on how to practise contemplative prayer.

Recommended to all who want to grow in their personal prayer life, to members of prayer groups, and to priests, religious, and spiritual directors.


This book begins with a realistic prayer for a teacher to use before class, and closes with two pages of brief meditations in which teachers may reflect on some of the qualities of Jesus.

The body of the book contains 100 brief ideas that will serve to stimulate reflection, discussion, activity, and prayer by students. These may be adapted for various circumstances, and for age groups from lower grades to adults. Some of the ideas could also help a homilist to make his preaching more lively, especially with young people. Recommended for catechists and clergy.


A pilgrim on the way to God shares his deepest thoughts with his fellow pilgrims, and touches what is deep — and sometimes unrecognized — in our own personal experience. In 21 brief poems addressed to God, Fr. Moynahan prays to the “God of gentle whisperings” (page 43), who is there in others, and sneaking out in constant unexpected revelations.

Through his prayerful reflections, the author begins to see the “paschal pattern” (31) at work in our lives and in all human history.

Recommended for all who want to reflect on and pray about their humanness and God’s wonderful action in their life.

WAYS OF USING THIS BULLETIN

There are many ways of using Bulletin 71 in your parish or community:

- An aid to discussion for the liturgy committee;

- A source of ideas for celebrating priests, deacons, readers, musicians, seminarians;

- A checklist helping all to work for better celebration and to avoid common errors.

Bulletin 71 may also be used to promote discussion at regional or diocesan meetings of priests, deacons, or other ministers.

Extra copies may be ordered from Publications Service at the address on the inside front cover, adding 10% for postage.

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