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 for all who are involved in preparing and celebrating the community liturgy.

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Good liturgy is the result of faith and hard work by all concerned. Magic formulas or instant gimmicks can never create good liturgy.

The various steps discussed in this Bulletin are actions that need to be involved in every good celebration of community worship. Because they are so normal, we often tend to presume that they are present and working.

Even more important are the attitudes of prayer, praise, reverence, and love that lie behind these actions and are expressed by them.

Bulletin 83 offers a simple means by which each parish and community may assess its Sunday worship, and see how it can continue to work for and celebrate better liturgy and offer greater praise to God.
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*A Book of Blessings*                         | 96   |
Working for better liturgy

No parish or religious community should ever say, “Our Sunday liturgy is good enough.” We should always be trying to worship God to the best of our ability. With his grace and our efforts, our ability to worship well should continue to increase.

Good community worship involves both external actions and internal attitudes:

- **The actions and rites** we carry out both express and influence our faith. Done well, they build up our faith and love for God; done poorly and carelessly, they weaken our faith and our commitment to God’s service.

- **Our internal attitudes** need to be guided by our faith, and should grow. Our spirit of prayer, our willingness to let God’s word direct our lives, and our devotion need to be stimulated regularly. We need to grow in our understanding of the meaning of our liturgy and its actions, in order that we may enter more fully into them.

**Remedy for tired liturgies:** Most parishes have honestly tried to renew their liturgical celebrations. They have a variety of ministries, singing, good sound systems, and yet nothing special seems to happen. What is wrong? There are several possible answers:

- **False expectations:** Sometimes priests and people expect the renewed liturgy to do their work for them. A parish community must pray and worship well, but it has to back up its liturgy by good pastoral care, by social involvement and concern, and by continuing efforts at sharing the Christian message with others.

- **Misunderstanding the renewal:** Sometimes a community has mistakenly thought that full participation demands constant talking or singing. Some communities are doing the new rites with old attitudes. Some have latched onto one or two ideas, and have overemphasized them to the detriment of the total celebration.

- **Too much seeking for novelty:** Occasionally a community or its ministers may have come to think that Sunday liturgy is to be a fresh spectacular each week. They fail to understand that ritual involves a repetition of many familiar rites, gestures, and prayers, but with a continuing effort to praise God anew for saving us in Christ.

**Relax!** Many liturgy committees will look at the various steps described in this issue, and say, “But we are already doing that!” Then they should go on to ask further questions: “How well are we celebrating these rites? How well do our people understand them? How are they living the meaning of these rites in their lives during the week?”

*These are the questions that will lead us to better liturgy.*
SUNDAY EUCHARIST

The eucharist which is celebrated in each community on the Lord's day is the heart and center of the liturgical action of the Church on earth. Good celebration of the Sunday Mass in each parish and community is our primary area of concern in these pages.

In communities which are unable to have a priest preside over the Sunday liturgy, a lay leader may preside over a service of God's word, as described in Bulletin 79. Many of the suggestions in Bulletin 83 may be adapted to this situation.

Preparation and follow-up

1. Making the Mass more prayerful: One of the complaints made by people during the first years of change in the liturgy was: "I can't pray at Mass any more." Gradually, we had to learn to pray the Mass instead of using it as a mere background for private prayer.

The renewed celebration of the Mass promotes personal prayer in tune with the action of the Mass. We are encouraged to pray in silence (see nos. 12 and 19); to listen in faith; to join in the singing, and in the prayers and responses.

Planners, ministers, and celebrating priests should take particular care to promote prayerfulness in the Mass, and should continue to help people to pray better both at home and in the liturgy.

• Reference: See Making the Mass more prayerful, in Bulletin 44, pages 135-142.
2. Concern for improving our celebration: Everyone in the parish should want to make the Sunday celebration of the liturgy better, so that their community worship is truly the best they are able to offer to God at this time. It is the particular responsibility of the priest and the liturgy committee to feel this concern and to work together to bring about gradual and continuing development.

- **Knowing what better liturgy is:** Do members of the liturgy committee know what the Sunday eucharist should be? It would be good for them to do some serious reading about the Mass. Some useful resources are listed on pages 84-85, below.

- **Learning the requirements of the liturgy:** If we are to be able to celebrate well, we have to become familiar with what the liturgy demands: ministers, processions, music, texts, gestures, postures, movement, books, lights, incense, color. We devalue our liturgy and cripple its ability to form us when we curtail its actions, drop periods of silence, or try to streamline its progress. Good liturgy begins with a careful study of the liturgical books involved, including their pastoral introductions.

- **Seeing the defects in our own celebrations:** How can we see where our celebrations need improvement? Look at the points made in Bulletin 35, pages 207-213, and at the various steps discussed in this present Bulletin. Ask someone who knows liturgy to observe your Sunday celebrations and give you a frank appraisal.

- **Annual review:** Priests and liturgy committee members could read over the General Instruction of the Roman Missal and the rubrics of the order of Mass in the sacramentary once a year, and see if they need to adjust their way of celebrating to be fully in tune with the renewing Catholic Church.

- **Challenge:** Each worshipping community should remember that well celebrated liturgy is the primary source of the true spirit of Jesus Christ (see page 83, below), and therefore should keep trying to do its best with and for the Lord.

- **Resources:** A useful resource is *The Eucharist: Essence, Form, Celebration,* by Johannes Emminghaus (1978, The Liturgical Press, Collegeville, MN 56321): see review in Bulletin 70, page 189. Bulletins 71 and 77 also provide a full picture of the way the Sunday eucharist should be celebrated.

3. Working for better music and singing: Music is an important part of the community's Sunday liturgy. The liturgy committee should consider these points:

- **Important times:** Singing should be done at the most important moments of the Mass: entrance procession; responsorial psalm; gospel acclamation; three acclamations during the eucharistic prayer; and communion procession. After the community is used to singing at these times, song and music may be added at other moments. Detailed help is offered in Guidelines for Music in the Mass, in CBW II, choir edition, nos. 80-103.

- **Balance and variety:** Those responsible for music in the parish community should always work for a balance in the amount of singing in each celebration, and for variety, with both new and familiar psalms and hymns. (See Bulletin 72, pages

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1 The *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* is the pastoral introduction to the renewed celebration of the eucharist. This document is given at the beginning of the sacramentary (in the Canadian edition, on pages 11-54). The abbreviation GI is used throughout this Bulletin to refer to its paragraphs.
A community should not limit itself to only one kind of music (such as folk or traditional) or to one composer, but should rather seek a good variety for God's glory and for their own enrichment.

- **Further training for musicians:** If a community wants to grow in its musical praise, serious efforts should be made each year to help musicians develop their talents and skills through training, courses, reading, conferences, meetings, and workshops. A day of recollection on the spiritual aspects of music and the musicians' role is also desirable: see nos. 5-6, below.

- **Budget:** A reasonable sum of money should be available each year to help choirs purchase music, maintain instruments, replace guitar strings, and take part in conferences and workshops.

- **Building the community repertoire:** Each year the musicians and liturgy committee should plan their musical program so that the community's repertoire will be gradually enlarged. Mass parts, psalms, and seasonal music provide areas for growth. (See Bulletin 72, pages 12-13, no. 16.)

- **Quality is our standard:** We should always seek quality in our musicians, music, books, instruments, and singing. By doing our best and by working for improvement and growth, we offer better worship and show our love for God. (See *Excellence for the Lord*, in Bulletin 33, page 99.)

- **Copyright honesty:** All who are responsible for music in the community should always make sure that copyright laws are respected and that permission is obtained before any copies are made. God is not praised by dishonesty. (See Bulletin 72, page 15, no. 21.)

- **CBW II:** Canada's national hymnal has been prepared as a suitable instrument for choirs and people. It provides adequate music and guidance for music in the eucharist, the sacraments, funerals, the liturgy of the hours, and in other celebrations during the Church year. Fuller details are given in Bulletin 72, *Music in Our Liturgy*.

Good liturgy needs good music. Good music — coming from the heart and soul of the people of God in this community — leads to better worship and growth in God's love.

4. **Use strong symbols well:** Our Sunday celebration of the eucharist needs to go beyond words. Strong symbols express and deepen our worship of God. Many of these symbols are described in this Bulletin:

- **Silence** provides time for personal prayer: See nos. 12 and 19, below.

- **Respectable books:** See no. 18.

- **A variety of ministries** represents God's people at prayer: See no. 17.

- **Music and singing** express and deepen our worship, joy, and devotion: See nos. 3, 31, 37, 40, and 43.

- **Bread and wine:** See nos. 27-28.

- **Communion under both forms:** See no. 38.
• Gestures and actions: We are people who have bodies. We need to express our worship, our feelings, and our attitudes by our physical gestures and actions, as well as by our songs, words, and silence. At times we tend to suppress or minimize our actions (processions, signs of the cross, bows, kiss of peace) and symbols (flowing water, aromatic incense, good bread and wine, flowers, lights, sounds, colorful vestments, good art); the result is dry, heavy, and wordy affairs.

Good liturgy needs frequent gestures, actions, and symbols which involve all members of the community. These do not need to be tacked on to the liturgy: they are already provided for in the liturgical books.

See also Worship Without Words (1979, CCCB, Ottawa); another useful reference is Understanding Symbolism in the Liturgy, by Michael Sequeira: see the review in Bulletin 81, page 238.

5. Hold a day of renewal for ministers each year: In a parish or community which is alive, there are people involved in a variety of ministries. Some of these are mainly liturgical, and some are primarily involved in the daily life of the community, but all ministers should draw their spirit of service from the eucharist.

• Annual opportunity for renewal and stimulation: All ministers need a chance to spend a day reflecting on the word of God, to renew their understanding of their ministry, to see once again the privilege and importance of their call to service, to be challenged by their ministry, and to be helped to pray more deeply. Depending on local circumstances, this day can be held for all the ministers in one parish or community, or for all the members in one form of ministry in a larger area. Where possible, it would seem better for all the readers from several parishes to come together in prayer and reflection.

Working for improvements in the skills of ministry is discussed in no. 6, below.

• Resources: See Bulletin 53, Ministries and Liturgy; no. 56, Training Readers.

6. Help ministers to review and improve their skills: As well as providing a time of renewal (no. 5, above), the community should seek to help ministers grow in their skills during the year:

• Providing useful resources: The parish or community which the ministers serve should make sure that they have adequate resources to carry out their role, and others which challenge them to do better:

□ Resources for their role: Readers can benefit greatly from having a study edition of the Sunday lectionary at home. Choir members need a personal copy of the choir edition of Catholic Book of Worship II. Ministers to the sick would benefit from having their own copy of Pastoral Care of the Sick and Rite of Anointing.

□ Resources to challenge and stimulate them: Ministers would benefit from the opportunity of reading issues of the National Bulletin on Liturgy. Particular issues (Bulletin 56 for readers, no. 57 for ministers of the sick, nos. 35 and 66 for liturgy committee members, and no. 72 for musicians) could be distributed to all; other issues would be available for those who wish to borrow them and read them.
• Outside workshops and conferences: In larger centers, there are more opportunities for parish ministers to take part in courses and workshops. Diocesan liturgy commissions should try to make such events available to ministers in smaller or more distant communities (see Bulletin 66, page 287). Sometimes a parish may be able to send a minister to take part in a course or conference held in a regional or national center.

• Occasional meetings of ministers: In each parish or community, the ministers should meet occasionally with one another, and with the priests and the liturgy committee. They may share common concerns, discuss ways of improving their service in the community, and suggest names of persons who might be interested in sharing in one of the ministries. These meetings would also provide a few moments for prayer together, and for relaxation.

7. Promote Christian living by a strong parish bulletin: The Sunday bulletin can make a solid contribution to the growth of parishioners in Christian attitudes. Through the bulletin, the pastor and those who work with him on the pastoral team can continue to share the message of Christ.

• Teaching people about Christ: Since their childhood days when they studied children's catechisms, most of our adult parishioners have not heard much about Jesus Christ. Through the bulletin, they can learn to know him better, and be helped to reflect on his role in our lives. Even a few well written paragraphs every two or three weeks would be an asset over the period of a year or so.

• Promoting Christian attitudes: Our Lord's attitudes on creation, life, service, worship, prayer, and love are taught in the gospels, and are continued in the Church's tradition. Today people are bombarded by secular values through the media. The parish bulletin can present Christian values week after week, in company with the readings and the homily, in order to help parishioners to have in them the mind of Christ (1 Cor. 2: 16).

• Helping people to pray better: Good community liturgy is prayer, and must always rest on the prayer life of the community and its individual members. To promote better liturgy we need to encourage people to grow in their prayer life. Each issue of the bulletin could contain a prayer, a reason to pray, an intention for prayer, or helps for families who want to pray.

• Inviting parishioners to take part in Christian activities: The bulletin can remind parishioners of their responsibilities as believers, and invite them to take part in Christian activities: support of the missions, work for community benefits, social improvements, help for those whose rights are being violated or ignored, workshops, days of prayer, visits to the sick. The list of needs and activities is almost unlimited. When inviting people to take part in these things, it would be good to remind them in the bulletin of the value of these actions both to the community and to the persons who take part in them.

• Helping people to celebrate the liturgy better: Many of the points discussed throughout this issue of the Bulletin could provide topics for a paragraph or two in the Sunday bulletin.
• **Effort:** It takes work to make the parish bulletin work well, but the results are worth the efforts. A good parish bulletin helps people to listen to Christ's voice in their homes during the week. Through the bulletin, the worship and Christian living of the parishioners can be built up week after week. (See the fourteen references listed in Bulletin 61, page 334.)

8. **Saying thank you once in a while:** Priests, parish council, and liturgy committee members should make an effort to express the thanks of the whole community to those who serve in various liturgical ministries.

- **Personal thanks:** Most people who serve do not wish to be thanked by name in public. Once a year, however, they would appreciate a sincere, personal note of thanks for their efforts. The priest, council president, or liturgy committee chairman could write such a letter on each minister's birthday, or on some other suitable date.

- **Public gratitude:** At different times during the year, those who fill a particular ministry could be thanked publicly. This could be done on the occasion of an annual renewal, or when new members are being installed in this ministry. In some parishes, the names of the ministers could be listed in the bulletin, with an additional word of thanks.

- **Care should be taken:** In a community, every special celebration need not be the occasion for listing all those who helped. Liturgy does not need a list of credits at the end, as in a movie or TV show. It is primarily an occasion for giving thanks to God, not to his people.

9. **Avoid shortcuts and short circuits:** Time spent in personal and public prayer is part of our gift of ourselves to God. We gain nothing by using this time poorly, by rushing, or by trying to trim it down.

- **Omitting texts:** Liturgical texts have been selected and prepared with care by the Church. Those involved in preparing and celebrating liturgy are encouraged to be creative in many ways, but not by cutting the rites to the bone. To reduce the celebration of reconciliation to the prayer of absolution, to drop the Old Testament reading or homily on Sunday, or to drop rites, ceremonies, gestures, songs, or processions betrays a spirit of minimalism which is not in keeping with the renewed liturgy.

- **Reading too fast:** Rarely does a reader go too slowly. More often, the person who reads says the words too quickly (usually through nervousness), and does not leave sufficient pauses at the end of sentences and major breaks. The Canadian Sunday lectionary and the sacramentary are printed in senselines to help readers and other ministers to grasp the thought more readily and to make natural pauses. Practice and helpful criticism from the priests and others will enable each minister to proclaim the word of God and the prayer of the Church as well as possible.

Shortcuts tend to weaken liturgy and make it dry and intellectual. Liturgy is intended to have moments of reflection — pauses where we leave ourselves room for the action of the Holy Spirit. More involvement of our bodies by gestures, postures, singing, processions, and symbolic actions will enable us to participate in our worship with our whole being.

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10. Use a good checklist before and after each Mass: Confusion and errors can be avoided and smoother moments will result before, during, and after Sunday Mass and special celebrations when a simple checklist is used by all ministers.

- **Before Mass:** The checklist lists various articles that should be prepared in the sacristy, placed on the credence table, or laid out elsewhere. Servers and ministers use the list to make sure that these things are prepared. Some lists also mention what is to be done in the final five minutes before the celebration begins, such as lighting candles and incense, and turning on lights and the sound system.

- **After Mass:** In many parishes, servers and ministers tend to leave immediately after the celebration ends. They should be encouraged to spend a moment in silent prayer, and then to put things away, or to prepare them for the Mass which follows. A checklist can help them to do this more easily.

- **Special occasions:** For weddings, funerals, confirmation, Holy Week, and other celebrations, a special list of preparations should be drawn up beforehand, revised after the rite, and kept for the next time. Gradual experience will enable the community to prepare and celebrate the liturgy more effectively on these occasions.

- **Reference:** See Bulletin 77, pages 43-44.

**CREATIVITY**

Priest, ministers, and liturgy committees are encouraged to be more creative in preparing celebrations to meet the specific needs of their worshipping community within the body of the universal Church. This may be done by:

- Adapting or composing texts of introductions, greetings, and instructions;
- Choosing alternatives and options when available; choosing other scripture readings when permitted;
- Selecting appropriate music for the celebration;
- Taking advantage of all nine eucharistic prayers, and the alternatives within each one;
- Relating the homily to various actions and prayers during the celebration;
- Preparing the general intercessions for this community’s worship.

Creativity does not mean tampering with the eucharistic prayer texts or making up new ones. It is always exercised within the guidelines given by the Church.

Today the Church is encouraging liturgists to explore the fullness of the liturgy and to use it more effectively in the service of the Lord and his people.
Introductory rites

The introductory rites of the Mass form a brief beginning of the celebration. They help the members of the community to become one in a spirit of prayer and worship, and lead the assembled worshippers into the service of the word and the liturgy of the eucharist.

11. Make the entrance procession a strong act of faith: The procession can be an act of faith only when the ministers and the people they serve are men and women of faith.

- Ministers: The priests and liturgy committee should help the ministers to appreciate the importance of the entrance procession. When ministers understand this part of their role, they will be more willing to come in time, to be suitably dressed, to take part in the procession, and — when appropriate — to carry symbols of their office.

- Symbols: Those who serve carry the cross and candles; in the Easter season, the paschal candle may also be carried in the entrance procession. The deacon or one of the readers carries the book of the word (see Bulletin 46, pages 310-312). Choir members carrying their hymnals may join in the procession also.

- Route: The procession comes through the assembled community. All are able to see the ministers and the symbols of our faith, and to feel more a part of the celebration which is beginning.

- Start it on time: Beginning a celebration on time is a courtesy — and a sign that the ministers respect the community of God's people. When a parish has the practice of starting on time, every time, all the time, people will learn to come on time. Encouraging parishioners to arrive five or ten minutes ahead of time for prayer is also a positive practice.

- Act of faith: Done well, the processional entrance is a sign of the faith of the Church, held strongly by the ministers and the people of God in this community. A good procession will also help to deepen the faith of all who take part in the celebration, and will begin the liturgy on an appropriate note of festivity.

- Other rites: Outside Sunday Mass, other celebrations have their own type of entrance procession: for example, baptism of children, funerals, morning or evening prayer, weddings. In each case, the liturgy books contain suggestions for an appropriate entrance rite. At a weekday Mass, a hymn may accompany the entrance of the priest, reader, and servers.

12. Promote adequate times of silence: There are two occasions in the introductory rites which call for silence:

- Penitential rite: This rite begins by a moment of reflection. The presiding priest invites us to remember that we are God's chosen people, called to live holy lives as his Church. Then we have a moment to reflect on our shortcomings, our lack of fervor, and our need for God's continuing help. Then, after a suitable pause, the community continues to pray for God's help and forgiveness.

- Opening prayer: With "Let us pray," the priest invites us to pray. In response to his invitation we should do just that: pray. We need time here — not merely a few seconds, but a minute or more to pray for ourselves, the community, and the world: the General Instruction suggests "some moments" (GI, no. 32). This time of silence is needed to help our celebration to be truly prayerful.

Constant failure to provide adequate time for silence at these points of the Mass will gradually teach people that these rites are to be considered meaningless. In this way, community members will be deprived of frequent and regular opportunities to grow in faith. On the other hand, adequate times of silence will help parishioners to enter more fully into these rites, and grow in the spirit of the liturgy.

The liturgy committee and the presiding priest should make sure that these times of silence are not gradually eroded, or considered as wasted time; on the contrary, they are among the most precious moments of the celebration, when individuals can pour themselves fully into the worship of the Church and of Christ.

- References: See Silence is necessary! in Bulletin 71, pages 204-205.

13. Penitential rite and its alternatives: These rites have different purposes:

- First penitential rite: This rite is penitential in nature, and continues the spirit of the confiteor. The period of silence after the invitation is most important (no. 12, above). After all make the general admission of sinfulliness, the priest prays that God will free us from sin, and the rite concludes with the Lord, have mercy.

The purpose of this rite is to help us to remember that we always stand in need of God's help and forgiveness.

- Second penitential rite: This is similar in spirit to the first rite, but is much briefer. Again, the moment of silence is the most important element (no. 12).

- Third penitential rite: Perhaps the most surprising fact about this rite is that it is not penitential in the usual sense: rather than looking at our repentance, it simply presents acclamations of Christ's power and goodness, and our humble cry for his mercy and forgiveness. Communities are encouraged to be creative here within the framework of the models given in the sacramentary.

- Blessing water: On Sunday, the priest may bless water and go through the church to sprinkle the people with it. This is done as a reminder of our baptism into Christ, when we began to share in the priesthood of Christ and to take part with him in liturgy (Liturgy constitution, no. 14). This rite replaces the penitential rite, since our repentance is a renewal of our baptismal conversion (see Rite of Penance, no. 2).
• **Liturgy of the hours**: When one of the liturgical hours is celebrated at the beginning of Mass, the penitential rite is omitted (GILH,¹ no. 95). Combining Mass and an hour of the office is to be considered as an exception rather than a regular practice (GILH, no. 93).

14. **Proclaim the collect well**: The collect or opening prayer is the conclusion of the introductory rites. It is a presidential prayer, said by the presiding priest in the name of all the assembly and of the Church on earth.

• **Invitation to pray**: The priest should say the invitation clearly, and look at the people as he asks them to pray. Expanded invitations are given for the alternative opening prayer as an example of how the priest may adapt the invitation.

• **Silent prayer**: This time should be long enough for all to pray: see no. 12.

• **Collect**: The collect is a brief prayer, and has to be proclaimed carefully or it will be over before priest and people know what has happened. The text is given in senselines, and needs to be proclaimed slowly and with meaning. (Looking over the text ahead of time will help the priest to proclaim it better.) The alternative opening prayer is given in the sacramentary as a longer form for use by the priest.

• **Conclusion**: Like the collect, the ending should not be said too quickly. The conclusion shows that we are presenting our prayer to the Father, through Christ his Son, in the unity of the Holy Spirit. The two endings, “We ask this” and “Grant this,” are varied throughout the sacramentary, but the priest is always free to substitute one for the other.

• **Acclamation of the people**: The people’s Amen! is their signature of approval for what the priest has said to God in their name. Their acclamation should be enthusiastic, and not routine. This is best achieved when the prayer and its acclamation are sung.

• **Education**: The parish bulletin could explain the purpose of the collect and its time for personal prayer several times in the year.

15. **Keep the introductory rites uncluttered**: The introductory rites are intended to be a short beginning of the Mass, and not the heart of the celebration. They should be kept as brief and lean as possible.

• **Temptations**: It is a constant temptation to add more rites, expand the present ones, use a lot of words, or do too much singing during the introductory rites.

• **Important rites**: The entrance procession with singing and the opening prayer after the time of silent prayer are the two most important acts of the introductory rites. These should always stand out. The other rites should be kept in proportion.


¹ 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.
Liturgy of the word

In the liturgy of the word, God speaks to his people, stirring up their faith and inviting them to grow in their love of God and neighbor. Everything in the service of the word should help the community to listen well and in a spirit of faith.

16. A place reserved for the word of God: The lectern from which God's word is proclaimed should be used for no other purposes.

- God's word is proclaimed to his people in the readings and in the homily. The place for this proclamation is the lectern.
- Other texts and rites should be done elsewhere: the introductory and concluding rites by the priest at the chair, or — if necessary — at the altar; the acclamations in the third penitential rite, the responsorial psalm, and any necessary announcements (no. 41) from another microphone; this is also used by the person who leads the people in the singing.

Reserving one place for God's word emphasizes its importance in our liturgy and in our lives. Using the same lectern for reading God's word, for announcing the number of the hymn, and for proclaiming the winner of the turkey raffle trivializes the word of the Lord, and lessens its importance in the minds and faith of all.

- References: See Ministry of reading, in Bulletin 71, pages 215-218; Place of the word, in no. 74, pages 128-131.

17. A reader for each reading: This is the ideal toward which the Church invites us to move:

- A reader for the first reading: One person is chosen to proclaim the first reading. At the end, he or she pauses, invites the people to respond Thanks be to God, and then stands at the lectern in silent prayer and reflection for a moment. If possible, another person leads the singing of the responsorial psalm (GI, nos. 36, 67, 90).

- Another reader for the second reading: it is considered better to have a second reader to proclaim the second reading (GI, no. 71). The variety of voices adds to the celebration. In many communities, a man reads one of the first two readings and a woman reads the other. After the reading, a pause for silence precedes the gospel acclamation.
A deacon or priest to read the gospel: The presiding priest listens to the gospel with the rest of the community: it is only as a last resort — when no other deacon or priest is available — that he proclaims the gospel to the people. The proper minister is a deacon; if he is not available, another priest reads the gospel. (See GI, nos. 34-35.) It is not correct for the presiding priest to read the gospel as a "warm-up" for the homily whenever a deacon or another priest is available to proclaim the text.

The one who proclaims the gospel texts says a prayer for help (based in part on Is. 6: 5-7) before beginning to read; at the end of the reading, a moment of silence is observed before the homily begins. (See GI, no. 23.)

18. Books that proclaim our faith: The books that the priests and ministers use in the liturgy should proclaim to all that what we are doing is beautiful, noble, and in honor of God.

Worthy books: The lectionary and sacramentary are the official books used in the celebration of the eucharist. A chair book or smaller edition of the sacramentary may be used by the priest for the texts proclaimed at the chair (see review in Bulletin 60, page 256). These books should be in good condition, and handled with respect. Some liturgy committees cover the lectionary with a rich ornamental covering to protect the book as it is carried and to make its appearance more splendid. Liturgical books are signs of our faith and reverence.

Unworthy instruments: The use of a pamphlet, leaflet, booklet, sheet or scrap of paper to proclaim God's word or to read the Church's liturgical texts is not fitting or conducive to good celebration. By our actions we are saying that the liturgy and God's word are not too important for us, and that our faith is not strong.

Handling the lectionary with faith: Our way of handling the lectionary with reverence expresses and deepens our faith in and respect for God's word. The deacon or reader carries the book solemnly in the procession at the beginning and end of the Mass. The gospel reader incenses it and kisses it; the homilist preaches on the word from the open book. The book is never plunked on the floor or shoved aside. All our actions speak volumes about our attitudes and our faith.

Ritual books: In other celebrations, the presiding priest should make sure that he uses official liturgical books (rather than leaflets or participation aids), and that readers proclaim God's word from the lectionary.

Reference: See Bulletin 74, page 129.

19. Adequate periods of silent prayer: The liturgy of the word provides for distinct moments of silence for reflection by all on God's word.

After each reading the reader remains in place, with head bowed. During this period of silent prayer, all may reflect on the word, and let the Spirit speak in the silence to their hearts. This period of silence is expected after each reading, including the gospel (GI, no. 23).
• After the homily, the priest may sit, and the rest of the community remains seated. For a few minutes all reflect on what they have heard, and let the Spirit stir up his graces within them (G1, no. 23).

• Necessary: These moments of silence need to be provided and used well. Without them, the liturgy of the word will be heavy and oppressive, leaving the people with the feeling that they have not had time to pray and reflect. With adequate periods of silent prayer, the service of the word will be effective, and will help the members of the community to prepare to enter fully into the liturgy of the eucharist in this Mass.

20. Understanding the Sunday lectionary: There are two distinct designs involved in the Sunday lectionary texts: the plan within each Sunday's readings, and the arrangement of all the Sundays of the year. Those who preach need to understand both of these designs clearly.

• Each Sunday's texts: The chief reading is the gospel. The first reading is selected to reflect it or contrast with it, and the responsorial psalm is a meditation on the first reading; the proper gospel acclamation is usually related to the gospel which it introduces. The second reading is different: in the strong seasons (Advent-Christmas, Lent-Easter), it is related to the gospel and the season; during ordinary time, the text is not directly related to the others, and usually shows us how the first generations of Christians tried to follow Christ.

• Three-year lectionary: There are three complete cycles of readings, so that we may have a richer variety of God's word presented to us (Liturgy constitution, nos. 51, 35: 1). Year A (1983-1984) is the year of Matthew, B (1981-1982) the year of Mark, and C (1982-1983) the year of Luke: each year follows the theology and insights of one of the first three evangelists. (This is explained in more detail in The Church's catechism, in Bulletin 56, pages 293-295; see also Systematic preaching from the lectionary, in no. 60, pages 221-233.)

21. A good gospel procession: The gospel is the most important of the three readings, and is surrounded with greater ceremonial:

• Special reader: See no. 17.

• Procession with symbols: When a special book is used for the gospel, it is carried in procession to the lectern; when the one lectionary is used for all three readings, it remains on the lectern for the gospel. Servers with candles and the thurifer with incense go before the minister. The candles are held on either side of the book, and the deacon or priest incenses the word of God. All stand for the gospel reading, and respond at the end. Then the minister kisses the book. All these signs of respect are addressed to Christ, who speaks to us when the gospel is proclaimed in the liturgy (G1, no. 9).

• Processional song: The gospel acclamation is sung while the gospel procession is moving to the lectern. The chant is a greeting to Christ by the people of this community. The cantor or choir sings the Alleluia, and all repeat it; the cantor or
choir sings the verse, and all repeat the Alleluia (CBW II, nos. 351-358). During Lent, Alleluia is always replaced by a special chant or greeting to Christ: see CBW II, nos. 359-364.

The gospel acclamation is intended to be sung; on those occasions when it cannot be sung, it may be omitted, but it is better to work so that all may sing it.

- **Route:** The procession should be a movement of people from one distinct place to another, from the altar and chair to the lectern. Where the area near the altar is quite small, the direct route could end up being only a few meters or yards in length. In such a case, the liturgy committee may want to work out a longer route: perhaps a movement completely around the altar to the lectern. Each church works out the most suitable route; then servers and ministers should practise the movement until any difficulties are ironed out and the flow of the procession is smooth.

- **After the gospel:** The gospel book or lectionary is left open on the reading stand. The procession may return directly to the altar, and then the ministers go to their places.

22. **Preaching the word of God:** The homily is an integral and important part of the celebration, for it helps to join the liturgy of the word and the liturgy of the eucharist into one celebration.

- **Sources:** The homily is based on the scripture readings or on the other parts of the liturgy (Liturgy constitution, nos. 52, 35: 2; GI, no. 41). The readings, especially the gospel, provide the usual basis for the homily; other parts of the liturgy (changing or stable texts, rites, gestures) may also be used. As well, the one who preaches is to be aware of the spirit of the season or feast being celebrated, and the pastoral needs of this community of God’s people (GI, no. 41).

- **Preparation:** The priest or deacon who preaches the homily must prepare by prayer, by careful study of the texts, and by prayerful reflection on their meaning in the lives of the members of this community. He needs to consider the scriptural context of the excerpts, and read a good commentary or two in order to grasp the message of the scriptures. Many hours should be spent during the week in study and prayer. In some areas, priests supplement their personal preparation by meeting to pray together and discuss the Sunday readings and homily; some meet with ministers of other Churches which share our lectionary; and some meet with a few parishioners to discuss the readings and to see how these sections of the word of God touch their lives. The least that could be expected is that the priests who preach in one community should meet and share their prayers and reflections on the word and on the spiritual situation and needs of the parish.

- **Who gives the homily?** The presiding priest is normally the one who preaches the homily (GI, no. 42). Sometimes one of the concelebrating priests or a deacon preaches. A “pop-in” preacher — someone who is not involved in the rest of the celebration — has no place in today's liturgy.

- **Preaching from the open lectionary:** When the preacher arrives at the lectern and closes the lectionary, one wonders if he is going to preach from the word of God; the impression created by closing the book is one of getting rid of God's word in
order to make room for ours. When the preacher preaches with the open book before him, and lets his eyes drop to the text occasionally, the members of the community feel that he is preaching to them from the word that was proclaimed to them.

- **Leading into this eucharist**: The homily leads the community to conversion of heart, and helps them to prepare to celebrate the liturgy of the eucharist. Purified and encouraged by God's word, they are ready to take part in offering their sacrifice during the eucharistic prayer, to be nourished by the bread of life and the cup of salvation in communion, and to go back into their daily lives with this added help.

- **Resources**: See Bulletin 60, Liturgical Preaching; no. 71, pages 224-226; series of articles on the homily in Bulletins 34 to 40; Posture and preaching, in no. 65, pages 202-206; other references are given in Bulletin 61, pages 298-299. At the request of the episcopal commission on liturgy, the National Office has prepared Resources for Sunday Homilies: the issues for year A, the year of Matthew, and for year B, the year of Mark, are already available from CCCB Publications Service, and the issue for year C will be available in the fall of 1982.

23. **Celebrating the prayer of the faithful**: The general intercessions are prayers of petition made by this community to God the Father or to Jesus Christ in response to the word of God proclaimed in this celebration.

- **Purpose**: This prayer provides this gathering of God's people with a public opportunity to exercise their priesthood in Christ by praying for the Church and the world (see 1 Tim. 2: 1-4).

- **Structure and ministries**: The prayer of the faithful has a carefully designed format. For good celebration, the structure and various steps of this prayer need to be understood and followed. Different persons carry out their ministries during the prayer of the faithful.

  □ Invitation: The priest invites all to join in prayer for the Church and the world. This invitation is addressed to the people, and not to God. There is no greeting. [The words, The Lord be with you, are no longer included at this point in the order of Mass.]

  □ Petitions: The deacon or another minister says each petition. This should be brief and uncomplicated, so that the people will know what they are asked to pray for. The petitions are intentions which involve the whole Church and world as well as this local community of faith:

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

In special celebrations (such as confirmation, weddings, or funerals), the order of intentions may more closely reflect the particular circumstances of the occasion, without losing sight of the fact that this community is also part of the universal Church.
Response: The people may respond by silent prayer or by a common acclamation (which may be sung: CBW II, no. 89). Some communities combine both silence and common response.

Concluding prayer: The priest summarizes the requests of the community in a brief prayer, asking the Father [or Jesus, if the petitions were addressed to him] to accept the prayers of this assembly of his people.

- Preparation: The prayer of the faithful may be prepared by the liturgy committee, priests, or other persons in tune with the pastoral life of the parish or community. Looking at the standard list of intentions in the light of the Sunday readings, and the liturgical season, they prepare petitions that reflect these needs and circumstances. From five to seven petitions would seem to be sufficient. Then the invitation and concluding prayer may be composed, or these may be left to the creativity of the presiding priest.

- Weekdays: It is desirable to have a brief prayer of the faithful in every celebration. About three petitions would be satisfactory on weekdays. These may be based on the standard list and on the readings of the day or seasonal concerns.

- Wrong approaches: The prayer of the faithful is not a series of thanksgivings but rather a set of petitions. They are addressed to the Father or to Jesus, and never to Mary or the saints. A community which simply reads out petitions prepared by some central publisher is proclaiming its poverty of liturgical spirit.


24. Check the sound system once a year: Many parishes tend to take their public address system for granted when it has been in operation for a time. Once a year, or as soon as any sign of trouble arises, it would be good to check it thoroughly.

- Physical check: A competent technician should make sure that all the components of the system are clean and in good working order. Any complaints about the system should be discussed with the technician. When plans are made for extending the system, even temporarily, a competent person should make sure that any changes or additional equipment will be compatible with the system and its capabilities.

- Needs of the community: The liturgy committee should be concerned that everyone in the church is able to hear all the ministers clearly. Any "dead spots" should be located and carefully eliminated. The committee should also make sure that adequate provision is made for extra microphones needed at special celebrations.

- Guidance for those who use microphones: An annual review on how to use the microphone correctly, including suggestions for avoiding common errors, would benefit the whole community. (See Bulletin 71, page 218.)
• **Cordless microphone:** Would a cordless mike provide a positive improvement in your celebrations by freeing the presiding priest from wires and a variety of microphones? The liturgy committee could look at what is being done elsewhere, and discuss this question with someone who knows the field.

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**CORRESPONDENCE COURSES IN SCRIPTURE**

The Divine Word Center in London, Ontario, continues to offer JOURNEY, its guided study program in the scriptures:

- Lessons 1-20 deal with the Old Testament.
- Lessons 21-40 are on the gospels and other principal writings of the New Testament.

For further information and application forms, contact:

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Guided Study Programs  
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Ramsey, NJ 07446  
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**WAYS OF USING THIS BULLETIN**

There are many ways of using Bulletin 83 in your parish or community:

- *An aid to discussion:* The liturgy committee may use this issue to promote discussion on the state of the Sunday liturgy in the community. Others may be invited to read this Bulletin and point out areas needing improvement.

- *A source of positive ideas* for celebrating priests, deacons, musicians, ministers of communion, other ministers, and seminarians.

- *A checklist* that will help all to work for better celebration and for elimination of errors or careless ways.

Liturgy of the Eucharist

Nourished and challenged by hearing God’s word, the members of the community are prepared to offer Christ’s sacrifice and themselves in union with Jesus to the Father of all.

I. Preparation of the Gifts

This part of the celebration is brief and relatively quiet, a valley of peace between the strong liturgy of the word and the stronger eucharistic prayer.

25. Celebrating with a clean altar:

- **Altar in focus:** The altar is the center of attention for the worshipping community during the liturgy of the eucharist; it should not be used during the rest of the celebration. (It is better for the priest to lead the introductory and concluding rites at the altar.)

- **Clean altar:** The altar is not to be considered as a depository or shelf for holding articles. While the cross and candles may be placed on the altar, it is preferred by many liturgists that they be nearby (GI, nos. 269-270; Bulletin 77, page 6). When the deacon is to proclaim the gospel, he carries the gospel book in the opening procession, and then lays the book of the word on the altar; otherwise, nothing but the altar cloth is there from the beginning of the celebration.

- **From the credence** (GI, no. 80c): The corporal, cup (chalice), paten, pall (when needed), and sacramentary are brought to the altar at the beginning of the liturgy of the eucharist. It is not desirable to have any of these items on the altar from the beginning. The dish and towel for the washing of the hands are never left on the altar.

- **From the people:** The bread and wine are brought forward by members of the community, given to the deacon or priest, and placed on the altar (no. 29, below). The collection may be placed near the altar, but not on it (see no. 26).

- **References:** See GI, nos. 80, 49, and 100; also *No litter in our liturgy*, in Bulletin 77, page 11.

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1. It is better to do without a bookstand for the sacramentary: see Bulletin 77, page 6, note 5.

2. Where there is frequently no server, both the priest and the community should try to find a person able to serve. The cup and cruets should be placed on a small table near the altar. It is never desirable to use the altar as a credence table.
26. The collection is a part of our public worship: Giving to the collection is an important part of our celebration of the eucharist, and is not merely a way of paying the bills.

- **Meaning of giving:** When we give gifts of money to the Church, we are giving the fruit of our labor and the gift of ourselves to God: our money represents the time and effort we expended to earn it. We share this gift with the poor and with the people of God. Ordinarily we express this gift with our money; on occasion, we may bring gifts of food and other items to be given to those who need them.

- **A pause:** It is better to take up the collection at the end of the liturgy of the word, rather than during the preparation of the gifts. All sit after the general intercessions, and the ushers move through the church. Unnecessary delays may be avoided by increasing the number of collectors.

- **Music:** During the collection, quiet music may be played, the choir may sing a brief anthem, or all may remain silent. This is not the time to sing the hymn for the preparation of the gifts: see no. 29, below.

- **Education:** The work of educating the community is ongoing. Much can be done by the signs we use: the time and method of collecting, the use of special collections of food for the needy on particular occasions. The annual financial report of the parish reveals how much is actually used for the poor and for the Church. Several times a year the parish bulletin can speak of the spiritual meaning of our gifts. Pastors and parish council members could benefit from reflecting on the strong words of St. John Chrysostom (see “References,” below).

- **Second collection?** Parish liturgy committees and councils should discuss the problem of second collections where they exist. There seems to be no good place for a second collection during the eucharist. To hold it after the first collection delays the preparation of the gifts, or continues on into the eucharistic prayer; to have it after communion disturbs the time of silent prayer or public praise. The only effective method seems to be to move to a one-collection-for-everything system, or to have a basket at each door after Mass for donations to the specific cause.

- **References:** See Bulletin 54, pages 152-153; no. 75, page 107; no. 77, pages 4-5; CBW II, choir edition, no. 90. Some blunt words by St. John Chrysostom are included in *Liturgy of the Hours*, vol. IV, pages 182-183 (Saturday, twenty-first week).

27. Bread that looks and tastes like bread: The symbols used in our liturgical rites should need little explaining (Liturgy constitution, no. 34). One of the primary elements used in the Mass is bread.

- **Our tradition:** The last supper was celebrated in a Passover setting, and hence unleavened bread would be used (see Mk. 14: 1, 12). Christian celebrations for the next centuries just speak of bread, and it was normal for people to bring ordinary leavened bread as part of their gift; from this, enough bread was selected for use in the eucharist. Unleavened bread and then wafers came into use in the Western Church around the ninth century, at a time when people rarely received communion.
• **Unresolved problem:** Within the Latin rite, we are still faced with the problem of what is suitable bread for the eucharist. On the one hand, the General Instruction requires that bread should look like actual food, be made in a loaf that can be broken for distribution, and be unspoiled (GI, no. 283); it should also be of the *color, taste, and texture* of bread, and not unpleasant. (See Bulletin 69, pages 129-130.) On the other hand, current legislation restricts the matter for the eucharist to bread made from water and wheat flour; additives to make the bread palatable or more like bread are forbidden.

• **Recent discussions:** In the past few years, dissatisfaction has been felt by many over the type of "plastic" wafers used in our celebrations, and efforts were made to find better bread that is more like bread. Many recipes have been tried in an attempt for more authentic symbolism.

• **Roman decision:** In April 1980, the Congregation for the Sacraments issued a document on liturgical developments, and in this Instruction restricted bread in the Roman rite to that made only from wheat flour and water: see *A Commentary on the Instruction*, in Bulletin 76, page 223, no. 8.

• **Further developments:** In Canada, the National Liturgical Offices of the French and English sectors have begun discussions with Canadian makers of bread for the eucharist in order to see if it is possible to make more authentic bread within the limits of the Roman requirements.

• **References:** See *Communion bread: significance or expediency?* in Bulletin 65, pages 216-221; *Eucharistic bread*, in no. 69, pages 128-143; no. 77, pages 7-8.

28. **Elements for communion in this Mass:** It is the Church’s desire that we receive communion in each celebration from elements consecrated in this Mass (Liturgy constitution, no. 55; GI, nos. 49-50, 56h). Several practical measures are necessary in order to achieve this goal:

• **Understanding its meaning:** The gifts of bread and wine express the people's offering of themselves to God with Christ. Their own gift is accepted by the Father and is given back to them in communion: they accept the gift of life and use it to give greater glory to God in their daily living. Communion from the tabernacle during Mass is not in keeping with the spirit of the renewed liturgy (see Bulletin 69, pages 100-101).

• **Preparations:** Before Mass, a sufficient number of breads and an adequate supply of wine is prepared. Experience will show the correct amount needed for each celebration.

• **References:** See Bulletin 77, pages 8-9; no. 54, pages 174-175.
29. **Procession with the gifts:** When we plan and celebrate this part of the liturgy with care, we can deepen our spirit of self-offering and of involvement of our lives in the liturgy.

* **Meaning:** The meaning of bread and wine and of our gifts of money and other goods is discussed in nos. 26 and 28, above. The procession with the gifts proclaims this meaning by our actions.

* **Procession:** A family may serve to represent the whole community in bringing the gifts of bread and wine, money, and sometimes other gifts for the poor, to the priest. Servers and ushers may accompany them according to local needs and customs. The procession comes up through the community, usually by the main aisle, to the area near the altar. The representatives hand the gifts to the deacon and priest, who pass them to the servers.

* **Whole congregation:** On special occasions, the whole congregation may take part in the procession of the gifts. This is particularly appropriate when food and gifts are being offered for a family or community in need.

* **Music:** Suggestions for music and singing are given in CBW II, choir edition, no. 90.

**II. The Eucharistic Prayer**

The eucharistic prayer is the heart of the celebration, and should be offered as well as possible. The whole community takes part in it when each member carries out his or her role with full faith and vigor.

30. **Proclaim the eucharistic prayer as well as possible:** The eucharistic prayer is the Church's solemn act of faith. Its worthy proclamation demands effort on the part of the people as well as by the priest.

* **Proclaiming the prayer well:** At least once a year, each priest would do well to have another priest listen as he proclaims the eucharistic prayer during Mass. Care needs to be taken in pronunciation, pauses, speed, volume, and accent. Does the presiding priest take advantage of the choice of prayers, and of the options within each one? The microphone used by the priest at the altar should be adjusted to carry his voice easily. In concelebrations, the other priests should make sure that the voice of the presiding priest is heard and understood clearly by the people (GI, no. 170).

* **Using authentic texts:** The eucharistic prayer is a proclamation of the faith of the whole Church. In the Roman Catholic Church at present, the priest must use one of the officially approved texts. The use of other texts is strongly forbidden (see Bulletin 40, page 198, no. 6; Bulletin 76, pages 222-223, no. 5).

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3 There are nine approved eucharistic prayers in general use at present in the Roman Catholic Church: Eucharistic prayers I, II, III, and IV, as printed in the sacramentary; three prayers for use in Masses with children; and two for Masses of reconciliation. In French-speaking areas of Canada the Swiss Prière eucharistique pour des rassemblements is also permitted.
31. Sing the three acclamations: There are three acclamations in each eucharistic prayer: *Holy, holy, holy Lord* at the end of the preface, the memorial acclamation, and the great *Amen*. These are intended to be sung by all, especially in each Sunday celebration. Singing them is a strong form of participation by the community in the action of the eucharistic prayer.

Merely saying the three acclamations leaves a feeling of incompleteness and inadequate sharing in the celebration, and sometimes makes people feel a need to join in by saying the doxology (“Through him . . .”), a part reserved to the celebrating priest.

- **Music:** See CBW II, choir edition, nos. 93-95;
  - Ten settings for *Holy, holy* are listed in the index, no. 803;
  - Settings for the four memorial acclamations: nos. 370-383;
  - Settings for the great *Amen*: nos. 71, 384-395.
- **References:** See GI, nos. 55b, e, h; 108.

32. Teaching people to participate fully: One of the responsibilities of the priest is that of teaching community members how to participate more fully in the eucharistic prayer.

- **Many ways of participating in the liturgy:** These include:

  Preparing
  Singing
  Saying prayers together
  Listening
  Reflection and silent prayer
  Movement and gestures
  Watching
  Interceding
  Thanking
  Offering
  Receiving and accepting.

  These are described in detail in Bulletin 62, pages 31-39.

- **Learning to listen:** The eucharistic prayers used in the liturgy today are brief and concise. As the priest is proclaiming the prayer, the people need to learn how to listen carefully. This is best done by putting down any participation aids and by watching the priest as he prays and gestures. People should be watching, not bowing, during the narrative of institution and the elevation of the consecrated elements; bowing the head or lowering one’s eyes is better done as the priest genuflects.

- **References:** See Liturgy constitution, no. 30; *Taking part in the eucharist*, in Bulletin 62, pages 31-39; *Participation in the eucharistic prayer*, in no. 65, pages 207-215; see also Bulletins 71 and 77.
33. Connecting liturgy and life: Our worship cannot be separated from our life. The way we live affects the way we worship, and our praise and prayer should flow from our daily life and affect it for the better.

- **Daily living leads to eucharist:** Each day we try to do our best for the Lord. We seek to give him honor and glory in everything we do, even our ordinary tasks (1 Cor. 10: 31). This attitude of loving praise and thanks reflects that of Jesus, who came to obey his Father and to live entirely for him (see Jn. 4: 34; Heb. 10: 7). We do God’s will and build up his kingdom on earth by daily life for him: carrying out the duties of our state or vocation in life, doing our best for our Father, looking for ways to love and serve others. Most of us are called to praise God in the ordinary events of our daily living. This day-by-day effort to serve God is the offering we bring to the Father in the Sunday eucharist (see no. 32, above).

- **Eucharist leads us back to daily living:** In the eucharist, God gives us the guidance and grace to go on living for him. The liturgy of the word brings us his teaching and encouragement in the readings, the psalm, and the homily. In communion, we are given the bread of life and the cup of salvation to be our food for the journey, our daily bread for the needs of daily living.

- **Some questions we need to ask ourselves:**
  - How often do we think about the connection between the eucharist we celebrate and the life we live?
  - Are there contradictions between our life and our public worship?
  - Where does God want us to change and improve?

III. Communion Rite

The community prepares to take part in this eucharist by communion: our communion is with Christ and with all his people, especially the community gathered for this celebration.

34. The Lord’s prayer: Coming as it does right after the great *Amen* of the eucharistic prayer, the Lord’s prayer needs to be celebrated well as the first stage in the communion rite.

- **Breathing space:** The presiding priest should wait until everyone is standing quietly, and then begin the introduction to the prayer.

- **Our communion prayer:** The Lord’s prayer is the main prayer of preparation for communion. When we pray it during the Mass, we understand its request for daily bread as referring particularly to the eucharistic food we are about to receive.

- **Prayer for forgiveness:** In the *Our Father*, we have a strong request for forgiveness. We ask our heavenly Father to forgive us our sins in the same way that we forgive others (see Mt. 6: 14-15), and to protect us from evil.

- **Prayer of the people:** In the renewed liturgy, this prayer has been restored to the people: everyone present says the prayer. It is improper for a group of singers to usurp this prayer by singing a version unfamiliar to the community.
The Didache suggested some nineteen centuries ago that we pray this prayer three times a day. This practice has been adopted for public prayer by the General Instruction of the Liturgy of the Hours (no. 193), where we are reminded that the liturgy prays the Our Father solemnly each day in morning prayer, the eucharist, and in evening prayer.

• **Introduction**: The introduction is a simple invitation to the people to join in this prayer. Four examples are given in the sacramentary: these may be adapted, or new ones of similar spirit and length may be prepared.

• **Sing or say?** This prayer may be sung or said by all. While it is not one of the first elements for singing, it is one which may be sung with benefit on certain occasions. Directions for singing are given in Guidelines for Music in the Mass, in CBW II, choir edition, no. 96, and many settings are given in the hymnal.

• **Continuation of this prayer**: After the people have finished saying the prayer, the priest continues with a prayer extending the final petition. The people conclude this with an acclamation, which is stronger when it is sung.

• **Reflecting on the Lord’s prayer**: It is good for each individual and community to reflect occasionally on the meaning of the prayers we use. This is certainly true of the Our Father. Reference may be made to it now and then in the homily. A bible service could be another effective means of looking at this prayer as an important part of our Christian heritage. Some useful resources are suggested below.

• **Hands extended?** In recent years, some groups have returned to the traditional practice of the early Church of praying with hands extended [the orans (praying) position: see 1 Tim. 2: 8, and Bulletin 68, page 66, figure 6]. This is becoming more common among those who celebrate morning or evening prayer. The practice could be introduced in Masses for small groups, and gradually become part of our experience once more.

• **References**:

  * Meditation on the Lord’s prayer, in Bulletin 44, pages 154-159; no. 77, pages 23-24; no. 54, pages 170-171; further references are given in Bulletin 61, page 322.

  Helpful excerpts from commentaries by the Fathers of the Church are contained in the office of readings in Liturgy of the Hours: see, for example, Cyprian, in vol. III, week 11; Augustine, in vol. IV, weeks 28-29.

35. **Encourage a positive understanding of the peace rite**: The kiss or greeting of peace is a sharing of peace and love among the family of God. It is a moment for expressing joy and peace with those nearby. It is not a time for introducing ourselves or for enquiring about others' health.

• **Annual checkup**: Once a year the liturgy committee should review the situation at all the Sunday Masses, and recommend any needed improvements. These may be shared through the parish bulletin.
• References: The following articles in past issues of the Bulletin are helpful: 


From the Sunday greeting of peace to daily life, in no. 66, pages 280-282.


Other references are given in Bulletin 61, page 322.

See also Worship Without Words: liturgical leaflet (1979, CCCB, Ottawa).

36. Breaking the bread for communion: After meeting the risen Lord Jesus on the road to Emmaus, the two amazed disciples reported to the apostles, “We recognized him in the breaking of the bread” (see Lk. 24: 30-31, 35). The breaking of the bread is the name used in Acts 2: 42 and 46 for the eucharist. St. Paul speaks of the symbolism of the one loaf and the one body in 1 Cor. 10: 16-17.

• Meaning of the rite: In the renewed order of Mass, the rite of breaking bread has been moved closer to communion. It takes place as the Lamb of God is being sung, and is seen as the immediate preparation for distributing communion. [In Churches which use unleavened wafers instead of a loaf of bread, there is little symbolism or meaning to the actual rite. But even here it is suggested that the priest break the eucharistic bread and share it with some of the communicants (GI, no. 283).]

• Commingling: This action does not seem to have any particular meaning in the Roman rite at present.

• Silent prayer: The brief prayer during the commingling and the private prayer of the priest before communion are not public, and are not to be proclaimed aloud or mumbled through a microphone. The Latin text of the sacramentary uses the word secreto: these prayers are said silently, for they are personal, and not presidential, prayers: see GI, nos. 13, 56f, 113, 116.

• Showing the eucharist to the people: The priest raises the eucharistic bread and shows it to the people as he leads them in a brief prayer of humility, developed from Mt. 8: 8. The words of the invitation may be adapted: see Bulletin 40, pages 200-201, nos. 14 and 17.

Sometimes one sees a priest raise both bread and cup. While this is going beyond the rubrics, it is certainly in accord with the spirit of the celebration when communion is being distributed under both forms (see no. 38, below).

• References: GI, nos. 13, 56 c-g, 113, 116, 283. See also Bulletin 54, pages 171-173; no. 77, pages 28-30.
37. Communion procession — another sign of our faith: The communion procession provides an opportunity for everyone in the assembled community to take part in this act of faith:

- **Movement:** The procession is a reminder that we are God’s pilgrim people, nourished by the bread of life and the cup of salvation as we move forward on our way to the promised land of heaven. All who are receiving communion move together from their places to the area near the altar. After receiving, they move back in procession to their places.

- **Singing** accompanies the communion procession. The song expresses and increases the spirit of unity and joy among Christ’s brothers and sisters as they come to eat and drink from the Lord’s table. Use of a familiar hymn or of a psalm or hymn with a simple refrain will encourage participation and will avoid any need to carry books in the procession.

The time of singing after communion (see no. 40, below) should never be considered as a replacement for the communion song. This additional time of song is better understood as a further opportunity to sing God’s praises.

- **Ministry of the ushers:** One of the ushers’ responsibilities is to direct processions (GI, no. 68b). They may indicate the right time to begin the procession, and then discreetly keep it moving at a suitable pace. At the same time, people should not feel pressured or conspicuous if they choose not to receive communion at a particular Mass.

- **References:** See GI, nos. 22, 56i; Bulletin 77, pages 30-31, mentions a number of further points for discussion.

38. Communion under both forms: The Second Vatican Council began the slow work of moving the Church closer to its ideals. One area of renewal that has been moving gradually is the restoration of communion under both forms: this is the fuller sign, the norm for all celebrations of the eucharist (Liturgy constitution, no. 55).

In the past two decades, we have seen a gradual growth in the use of the chalice. As parishes and communities develop more experience with communion from the cup in weekday celebrations, they are ready to move to this practice on Sunday as well.

For a good celebration, an adequate number of ministers is needed. Experience will show how many ministers are required for each celebration, and where they should stand.

- **Purifications** may be done after the celebration is over. This provides more time for reflection (see GI, nos. 120, 138, 204, 237-239; Bulletin 77, page 32).

- **References:** See detailed references in Bulletin 76, pages 223-226; in no. 77, pages 30-31; also GI, nos. 56h, 240.
39. **What about the tabernacle?** It seems to take a long time to understand the implications of receiving communion from elements of bread and wine consecrated in each Mass (Liturgy constitution, no. 55; GI, no. 56h): we do not need to have a tabernacle full of consecrated breads.

Communion should always be seen as the fruit of the Mass being celebrated. The tabernacle is not intended to be a source of communion elements for use during Mass. The sacrament is reserved primarily for the sick and the dying; other reasons for reservation are communion outside Mass and eucharistic adoration. The tabernacle is not a storehouse for communion of the healthy during Mass.

- **References:** See no. 28, on page 72, above; also *Holy Communion and the Worship of the Eucharist Outside Mass*, quoted in Bulletin 69, pages 100-101, nos. 5-7; also *Eucharistic reservation*, in Bulletin 74, pages 135-136; no. 77, page 31; *Communion bread: significance or expedience?* in Bulletin 65, pages 216-218.

40. **A period of silence, song, and prayer:** The moments after communion are a prayerful time. Each celebrating community needs to make sure that outside pressures are not infringing upon this time of prayer.

- **Silence:** After the song during the communion procession, a time of silent prayer is welcome (GI, no. 23): it allows individuals to pray to and with Jesus according to their personal desires and needs. This time of silent reflection and prayer enables members of the community to join more fully in the spirit of the celebration.

- **Song of praise:** A hymn of praise or a psalm may be sung by all after this time of silent prayer:
  - This is a song of praise: see *The prayer after communion*, in Bulletin 65, pages 222-225. The note of community thanksgiving is primarily celebrated in the eucharistic prayer, and not after communion.
  - This song of praise does not replace the processional song; rather, it is sung after the processional hymn and the time of silence.

- **No interruptions:** Two unwarranted interruptions are sometimes thrust upon communities at this point: a litany or prayer of petition or thanks, or announcements. Announcements, if needed, follow the prayer after communion (see no. 41, below); petitions belong in the prayer of the faithful (no. 23, above); thanksgiving is offered during the eucharistic prayer.

- **Prayer after communion:** This is the presidential prayer which concludes the liturgy of the eucharist. It is not a prayer of thanks after communion, but rather one of asking that we will receive the benefits of this eucharistic celebration. All stand and listen as the priest says or sings this prayer, and respond to it by their Amen.

- **References:** See GI, nos. 56j, 56k, 121-122; Bulletin 77, page 32; no. 65, pages 222-225.
Concluding rites

The Roman Mass ends rather quickly. As soon as the liturgy of the eucharist is concluded by the prayer after communion, the priest invites the assembly to move from prayer to life.

41. Announcements used with care: This is an area where carelessness or lack of thought can undermine the celebration, and cause it to end poorly.

- Is this announcement necessary? Every time we are asked or tempted to make an announcement during the Mass, we should question its value and need. Most of the time, it can be avoided by inserting it in the bulletin or by placing a notice on the bulletin board at the doors.

- Time for making necessary announcements: The rite provides a place for announcements which are necessary: these may be made after the prayer after communion has concluded the liturgy of the eucharist, and before the concluding rites. It is out of order and insensitive to the meaning of the liturgy to make such announcements before praying the prayer after communion.

- Some thoughts: Sometimes announcements are a positive way of building up the community. Often, however, they sound like a commercial, “a word from our sponsor.” Necessary announcements should be carefully worded, and honed to a minimum of words; ad-libbing tends to an excess of words and a confusion of details. Occasionally the liturgy committee should look at the local situation, and see if improvements are needed.

42. Use a creative variety of blessings: The present Order of Mass provides much scope for creativity in the blessing at the end of the Mass. In place of the ordinary blessing, the priest may use the solemn blessing (20 choices) or the prayer over the people (26 choices).

- Prayer over the people: We bow our heads, showing that we are ready to welcome God’s blessing on us. The priest says a prayer over the assembly, asking God to shower his gifts and graces on us all, and then concludes with the short blessing.

- Solemn blessing: This form of the blessing invites us all to bow our heads as the priest says one, two, or three invocations over us; to each, we answer Amen. Then he concludes with the short blessing. The solemn blessing is suitable on the Lord’s day, and in special celebrations, but may be used in any celebration of the Mass or in other rites.
• Ordinary blessing: This is always appropriate for ferial days (ordinary weekdays), and whenever one of the other forms is not selected.

The people's *Amen* during the blessings is an acclamation of agreement: we are open to God's help, and welcome the effects of his grace in our lives.

Once or twice a year, it would be good to remind people through the bulletin of the meaning of the blessing, and to encourage them to receive it with love and gratitude.

43. Recessional — a fitting conclusion: The Sunday Mass should not fizzle out. It should end as it begins, with a procession that is a strong act of faith.

• **Sign of our faith:** The presence of the ministers and the symbols of faith should be as strong as at the beginning of the celebration (see no. 11, above).

• **Route:** Like the opening procession, the recessional goes through the community. On particular occasions, another route may be chosen.

• **Music:** Neither the General Instruction nor the Order of Mass requires music or singing for the recessional, but on most occasions it seems appropriate. This may be a hymn or psalm sung by all, by the choir, or by the congregation and choir or cantor; or instrumental music may be played.

• **Taking adequate time:** The recessional is not a quick burst by a short route. Normally it goes through the assembled community as at the beginning. It is the final act of faith by the people of God in this gathering, and should not be spoiled by unseemly haste.


44. Meeting people after Mass: A good celebration ends with members of the community lifted by their worship, and ready to continue serving God throughout the week which is just beginning.

• **Opportunity to mingle:** Where possible, it is good to provide people with a chance to linger after Mass and to mingle. This provides time for people and ministers to continue sharing the good experience of the celebration. Sometimes coffee may be available after Mass.

• **A place to meet:** Parishes should consider the value of a place where people can gather and linger before and after the liturgy. Further ideas on this type of space are discussed in the references given below:

• **References:** See Bulletin 77, page 36; no. 74, pages 114 and 126. Also *Environment and Art in Catholic Worship* (1978, NCCB, 1312 Massachusetts Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20005): nos. 11 and 54, and photograph 38; this book was reviewed in Bulletin 67, page 44.
Celebrating eucharist on weekdays

The previous pages have examined the celebration of the community or parish Masses on Sunday. What should we be doing on weekdays?

45. **Weekday eucharist:** Some thoughts on celebrating Mass on weekdays are offered here for discussion by the parish or community liturgy committee:

- **Contrast with Sunday:** The celebrations of the eucharist on the Lord's day should be the greatest liturgies of the week. Except on special occasions, weekday Masses are quieter, and active participation places more emphasis on such elements as silent reflection, offering, and listening.

- **Simple celebration:** On weekdays, the Order of Mass follows the same basic outline as on Sunday, except that there are only two readings. Some ways of celebrating a more reflective liturgy, yet with some singing, are outlined here:

  - Introductory rites: These are intended to be simple in any celebration. The procession is usually shorter than on Sundays. Perhaps a brief opening hymn may be sung, or the *Lord, have mercy*. On greater feasts, the *Glory to God* may be sung.

  - Liturgy of the word: When two readings are proclaimed, either the psalm or the gospel acclamation may follow the first reading: both are not required (G1, no. 38). One of these could be sung, at least on occasion. More time may be left for silent prayer after the reading and the homily. The homily may be brief, and may sometimes involve a dialogue with the community (see Bulletin 39, pages 188-190). The prayer of the faithful could be brief, with some petitions offered by members of the assembly.

  - Liturgy of the eucharist: Except on special feasts, the procession with the gifts need not take place, or be elaborate. There are many prefaces, four eucharistic prayers, as well as two prayers for Masses of reconciliation, allowing adequate variety. At least one of the three acclamations may be sung during the eucharistic prayer. During and after communion, silence may be longer than in the Sunday Mass.
□ Concluding rites: The recessional may be in silence, or accompanied by music or song.

• *Special occasions:* Some weekdays stand out from the others: solemnities, feasts of saints close to this community, special patrons, times of particular celebration or need. On these occasions, the Mass may be more like a Sunday celebration.

• *Balance:* Those responsible for liturgy in the community should make sure that they keep a balance between the needs of the whole community and those of individuals. Experience and good judgment will help to maintain an equilibrium between song and silence, movement and gesture, strong celebration and low profile.

• *Time for growth:* Weekday liturgies can also be a precious time for growth in prayer and understanding of the liturgy. Those who come to Mass frequently have the opportunity of hearing more of the scriptures read and explained; of contributing to the prayer of the faithful; of reflecting more on the prayers and rites of the Mass. In communities which do not yet give communion from the chalice, this practice may begin on weekdays and gradually become part of the community’s liturgy (see no. 38, above).

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**MANY AREAS OF GROWTH**

There are many other areas of liturgical growth that a community needs to study. Bulletin 83 has concentrated on celebrating the Sunday eucharist. Other areas for discussion will be covered in another Bulletin in a year or two, and include:

Sacraments: How well do we prepare for them in the spirit of the liturgy? How well do we celebrate them?

Liturgy of the hours: Are we praying morning and evening prayer, at least on special occasions? Have we investigated the possibilities of using the simple format in CBW II, nos. 61-79?

Other rites: Is there room for our community to grow in its celebration of eucharistic devotions, funerals, bible celebrations, and blessings?

Liturgical year: How well do we all understand the spirituality of each season? How can we nourish our faith from the richness of the seasons and feasts during the year?

Word of God: What are we doing to promote the reading, understanding, and praying of God’s word by all members of our parish or community?

Family prayer: What helps are we offering to people to deepen their personal and family prayer life?
Primary source of Christ’s spirit

As we are taking our steps toward better liturgy in our community, it is good for us to reflect on the true meaning of our liturgical worship. The Second Vatican Council reminds us of several important truths in paragraph 14 of its Constitution on the liturgy:

**Participation flows from our baptism:** We are God’s holy, chosen, royal, priestly people (see 1 Pet. 2: 4-5, 9). Baptism is the foundation of all our Christian living (see *Baptism: Basis of our spirituality*, in Bulletin 62, pages 4-8). We are called as God’s people to share fully with Christ in his worship of the Father: when we are baptized, Jesus gives us the right and the duty to take an active part in his Church’s liturgy.

**Source of Christ’s spirit:** The renewed liturgy promotes this full participation by all the baptized, for our complete and active sharing in the liturgy is “the primary and indispensable source” of the “true Christian spirit.”

(In paragraph 10, the Council notes that the liturgy is the goal of all the Church’s actions and the source of all its strength; in the Decree on the ministry and life of priests, no. 5, the Council states that sharing in the eucharist is “the very heartbeat of the congregation.”)

**Pastoral goal:** In order to achieve this participation and sharing in the spirit of Jesus by the community, priests who are responsible for pastoral care have to work with zeal and energy to instruct and form their people in the spirit of the liturgy.

**Spirit of the liturgy in the clergy:** Pastors are to let the *spirit* of the liturgy and its *power* penetrate their lives and work. They have to understand the liturgy, and grasp what Christ is doing in and with and through his people when he calls them together to celebrate his liturgy and theirs.

The Constitution on the liturgy goes on in paragraphs 15-20 to explain how seminarians, clergy, and people are to be helped to grow in the liturgy.

* * *

These truths are the foundation of our sharing in the liturgy. It is good for us to think about them and discuss them occasionally. Why not take a half hour to reflect on the contents of paragraph 14 of the Constitution on the liturgy at your next liturgy committee meeting or gathering of ministers?

* * *
There are many books on the subject of the eucharist, and more are being published each year. Here are some which are useful and practical for liturgy committees in parishes and religious communities:

*General Instruction of the Roman Missal:* This instruction describes the spirit and gives practical directives for the celebration of the eucharist today. The text is found at the beginning of the sacramentary; in the Canadian edition, see pages 11-54.


*Study Texts,* by the Bishops' Committee on Liturgy (USCC, 1312 Massachusetts Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20005):


Books by Eugene Walsh (Pastoral Arts Associates, now of Old Hickory, TN 37138):

* A Theology of Celebration* (1977): reviewed in Bulletin 68, page 93


Talking with Adults (1980): see review in Bulletin 81, page 284


Liturgical leaflets (1979, edited by the National Liturgical Office, CCCB, 90 Parent Avenue, Ottawa, Ontario K1N 7B1):

Sunday is the Lord's Day
* The Eucharistic Prayer
* Worship Without Words

National Bulletin on Liturgy (90 Parent Avenue, Ottawa, Ontario K1N 7B1):

* No. 76: Worship '80: Eucharist
* No. 82: Eucharist: Worship '81
* No. 71: Sunday Eucharist: I
* No. 77: Sunday Eucharist: II
* No. 54: Story of the Mass; also no. 55, pages 241-253
* No. 76: A selected bibliography, pages 216-217
* No. 61 gives many other references on pages 315-324.

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* No. 61 gives many other references on pages 315-324.

Liturgy: The Rites of Gathering and Sending Forth: see review on page 92, below.


NEXT ISSUE

Bulletin 84 is on Funeral Liturgies. In the light of our tradition of 2,000 years of Christian faith and practice, we look at the liturgies we celebrate after a believer dies. We consider what our liturgies express today about our beliefs and about our attitudes toward life and death. Our faith is shaped by our liturgy, and in turn our faith is expressed in the rites and texts of our worship.

This issue will look at the story of our Catholic funeral rites, and at the meaning and celebration of our reformed rites today.

Bulletin 84 will be ready for mailing early in May.
Letter
to priests

At their plenary meeting at the end of October 1981, the bishops of Canada approved the text of this letter from the conference president to all priests in Canada.

Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops
Conférence des évêques catholiques du Canada

October 28, 1981

Dear fellow priests:

The bishops of Canada have just completed their annual plenary meeting. Once again we were called upon to discuss and make decisions about a variety of issues affecting the inner life of our Church as well as its relationship to Canadian society. As we did so, you, the priests of Canada, were very much in our minds. Our thoughts were above all those of recognition and gratitude.

The last fifteen years have not always been easy. The wide-ranging changes initiated by Vatican II’s summons to renewal were reinforced in our own country by dramatic developments of a social and cultural nature. Although these varied from region to region, the overall effect has been very much the same. The Church and world in which we exercise our ministry today are markedly different from those in which many of us were ordained twenty or more years ago. That we, as a community of faith, have been able to respond as well as we have to the challenges of our recent history is due in large part to your fidelity and effort.

It is good from time to time to pause and take stock of all that has been accomplished. The liturgical renewal, to take the most obvious example, has been on the whole a positive experience in our country. The vernacular, the new rituals, the development of lay ministries, the rediscovered sense of the ecclesial dimension of baptism and confirmation: all these have deepened our appreciation of the liturgy as involving the active participation of the whole community. What has been experienced in the liturgical assembly has spilled over into other areas of Church life. On parochial, diocesan and national levels, the laity are more involved than ever before.
Beyond these and other changes that have transformed our experience of the inner life of the Church, the recent past has witnessed a marked shift in the way we relate to the world around us. Our entry into the ecumenical movement has already borne considerable fruit. It will continue to be one of our priorities. In the area of social justice, too, we have together begun the difficult but essential task of communicating to our people something of the Gospel challenge to reach out in a special way to the poor and the oppressed, both here and around the world.

For us bishops to recall all this is to be reminded how grateful we ought to be to you for the unique contribution you have made toward its achievement.

Priesthood and community are all but inseparable. As we think about the life of the Church in our land, we cannot help but think of you and of your role in that life. Conversely, when we think of you, the community — within which and for which you exercise your ministry — is never far from our minds.

In the priesthood, as in so much else in the Church, there is much that is old and much that is new, much that is constant and much that changes. Now as always, to be a priest means to accept a ministry or service of leadership within the community of faith, a ministry of word and sacrament, of example and pastoral care. To be a priest today in our country does not change that. It simply demands a concrete form of priestly ministry, reflecting and responding to our own situation.

The agenda in the coming decade for our Church, and therefore to a large degree for your ministry, will be deeply influenced by our continuing efforts to implement Vatican II’s vision of what the Church is and ought to be. It will also necessarily reflect our struggles to be creatively present to the life experience of our people. As we try to do both, there will inevitably be tension and conflict. For you, as for us, St. Paul’s reference to a “ministry of reconciliation” will take on new meaning.

Of the many specific issues that one could evoke, I would like to mention only one, lay involvement. Here is something that will, I think, have a considerable impact on our Church in the years ahead. The shortage of the clergy, but even more Vatican II’s sense of the Church as the People of God and Body of Christ, is leading to a remarkable awakening among many people of a desire to exercise genuine Christian ministry both in the world and in the Church. We are beginning once again to understand the New Testament teaching about the one Spirit and the many gifts.

Here is scope for a new emphasis in priestly ministry. Priests should be among their people as those who inspire, call forth, coordinate, and sustain their multiple and varied gifts. All signs indicate that it is in this direction that the Spirit of Christ is at
present calling the Church. To put one's priesthood at the service of that call will enhance the vitality of our communities. It will also be a source of great personal satisfaction.

Let me end with a simple expression of my prayer and my hope for you, a prayer and hope in which all the bishops of Canada join with me. May you become ever more deeply convinced of the unique worth for the Church and for the world of your priestly ministry. May your own prayer and reflection, your liturgical Celebrations and pastoral involvements enlighten and deepen your commitment. May we all continue to serve and to build up the Body of Christ.

Fraternally yours in Christ,

[Signature]

†Joseph N. MacNeil
Archbishop of Edmonton
President
Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops

A SPIRIT OF EXPLORATION

God has given humans a spirit of exploration and a thirst for knowledge. This prayer may be used to thank him for this gift which leads us to explore and admire the universe he has made for us and for his glory. A similar prayer is given in A Book of Blessings (1981, CCCB, Ottawa), page 120.

Heavenly Father,
God of wisdom and light,
we praise you for your glory.
We thank you for giving us the thirst for knowledge
and the urge to explore your universe.
Let the Spirit of your Son
continue to stir our hearts
and lead us to greater understanding.

Father,
we ask this grace
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen!
Brief book reviews


Fr. Bausch is a pastor who has served people as a priest for more than 25 years. He wants to emphasize the importance of strong territorial parishes in the life of the believers and of the whole Church.

After surveying the present situation of religion in the U.S.A., he describes four areas that are the foundation of any living parish: ministry, spirituality, a wide scope or outlook, and social justice. He goes on to suggest many practical ways of making these a creative part of the life of the local community. Throughout the book, the liturgy is woven into the life and work of the parish. Recommended for clergy, parish councils, and parish organizations.


An article by Fr. Hatchett on eucharistic renewal appears in Bulletin 82, pages 29-42. He writes this manual as a member of the standing commission on Church music in the Episcopal Church in the U.S.A. He brings liturgical expertise, musical understanding, and pastoral concern to this work.

The manual has four main parts: musical ministries, music used in church, educating and inspiring people, and planning music for the rites of the Book of Common Prayer. Appendix I, by James H. Litton, describes the canticles as liturgical music. Appendix II gives useful checklists for planning services, and the final appendix lists some available settings for eucharistic rite two. While written primarily for the Episcopal Church, this book may be a useful resource and study book for serious musicians in other Churches and countries. Recommended.


A favorable review of the two-volume edition of this work appeared a year ago in Bulletin 78, page 92. In this revised study edition, some changes have been made: the table of contents is more detailed, ways of using the book for courses and studies are described on pages 1195-1196, and discussion questions for each of the 30 chapters are contained on pages 1197-1236. Modifications and improvements have been made here and there in the text to increase its balance and clarity. As before, reading lists, a glossary, and indexes of names and subjects make the book a valuable resource.

Catholicism is an excellent book that seeks to be a bridge between the Church before Vatican II and the Church of the present, with emphasis on both tradition and growth. Recommended to clergy, students of theology, and all adults who want to grow in their understanding and love of the Catholic faith.


This is a touching book about Jesus and his brothers and sisters. L'Arche — the ark — is a home set up by Jean Vanier in 1964 for mentally handicapped persons. His work has grown, and by 1980 there were 50 homes in various countries, including some 20 in North America. Jean Vanier is a Canadian who lives and works in France. In this book he is joined by 17 men and women to describe what God is doing to them and to others through their love and suffering, their dying and rising, their openness and their Christian service. Recommended for all who want to follow Jesus more closely.

1 Prices for U.S. publications are given in U.S. dollars, unless otherwise noted.
Great Things Are Happening! Celebrations for Grades 4-8, by Patricia Coady, Deborah Griffin, and Theresa Jette (1981, Novalis, PO Box 9700, Terminal, Ottawa, Ontario K1G 4B4): paper, 8½ by 11 inches, illustrations, 32 pages. $4.95.

Three teachers in Ottawa Catholic schools have prepared this set of 13 varied celebrations for use with children in grades 4-8. Celebrations mark different points of the liturgical year, the school year, and other events. Songs, readings, prayers, gestures, and activities are suggested, with a good variety of alternatives. The photos and artwork help to present the spirit and message of the book.

Recommended as a useful resource for catechists, teachers, clergy, and parish councils, and for parents for use with their own children.


This glossy booklet is square in shape but not in its approach to the family today. Based on a theme of Christian faith and hope, it invites families to explore Christian marriage and to come to understand it more. The graphics are clear and striking, while the texts are brief, varied, and pointed. This booklet is also available in French: La foi, ca se vit d'abord en famille.

Recommended for families, couples planning marriage, high school students, catechists, clergy, and for all who have an interest in Christian marriage.


On a small island off the northeast coast of England, a Christian monastery was founded around the year 635. Some sixty years later, the monk Eadfrith wrote out the four gospels in a magnificently illuminated manuscript book for liturgical use: a worthy symbol of the importance of the word of God in the life and liturgy of the Lindisfarne community.

In this detailed study of the Lindisfarne manuscript, the author provides us with glimpses into the lives and work of the men who copied, illuminated, bound, and decorated this gospel book. She describes their script and their tools, and gives us many colored reproductions of details and pages from the lavish manuscript. Their book is compared with similar manuscripts and other art forms of that age. We are able to follow the history of this manuscript through Viking raids, flights into safety, and other dangers until the present.

As we reflect on the efforts made by our ancestors in the faith to provide a worthy instrument for the liturgy, we have much to learn from them: may we be inspired to follow their faith and example! We recommend this book highly to diocesan liturgical commissions, parish liturgy committees, students of liturgy, clergy, and libraries, and to all who want to come to know their Christian heritage more fully.

Celebrating Liturgy (1981, Liturgy Training Publications, 155 East Superior Street, Chicago, IL 60611): paper, 8½ by 11 inches, x, 139 pages. $6.50 (bulk prices available for five or more copies).

An annual version of this book has been coming out for more than 15 years: see the favorable review in Bulletin 78, page 94. Each Sunday has a page containing the three readings (in both JB and NAB translations), and a page of notes for readers, liturgy team, presiders, and homilists. Each season has an introduction and a seasonal psalm. Introductory notes, a pronunciation guide (reprinted from Canada’s Study Edition of the Sunday lectionary), and a dated table of contents complete this book.

It may serve as a practical workbook for better preparation of the liturgy of the word, but cannot replace the personal prayer and effort required by all who handle the word for God's people. Recommended to all who are involved in the ministry of the word: readers, cantors, preachers. Now is the time to order your copies for year C.

Each two-page opening in this booklet provides the three readings for one Sunday and a series of reflective statements on these texts. The scriptures are taken from The Jerusalem Bible, but the responsorial psalm is omitted. The page of reflections may be used by a family, a small study group, or an individual. Liturgy committees, readers, homilists, and teachers may also benefit from these points. A favorable review of last year's book was printed in Bulletin 78, page 94.


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Father Walsh has the ability to outline things clearly and in a few words. In this booklet he helps us to understand who and what should be involved in planning parish or community liturgies: the people, principles, policies, and procedures. A diagram on page 9 describes the order and dynamic of the Mass.

This booklet is intended for wide distribution, and has space for personal notes. It is a practical handout for courses and conferences, and will be useful for study groups, liturgy committees, students of liturgy, clergy, and all who are involved in planning and celebrating community eucharists. Recommended.

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Addressed to the adult members of the Sunday gathering, this booklet invites all the people to take on their full role in the liturgical celebration. The action of the Mass is described in these main stages: the assembly gathers, listens, responds, and goes out to continue its mission. When community members are in harmony with these actions, they will be able to enter into the celebrations more effectively.

Recommended for all members of parishes and communities, as well as for their liturgy committees and leaders.

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Parish councils which have been at work for several years will appreciate the topics discussed by Fr. Rademacher. He opens with chapters on the history, theology, and future of the parish in the Church's ministry, and then goes on to 13 sections about practical matters that face councils. The answers he proposes are useful, and will provide much help to councils in all types of parishes. Recommended for council members, parish workers, and clergy.

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Growing as a Catechist, edited by Gwen Costello and Carol Clark (1981, Twenty-Third Publications, PO Box 180, Mystic, CT 06355): paper, 8½ by 11 inches, illustrations, 80 pages. $4.95.

Under one cover the publishers have reprinted 39 brief articles from Religious Teacher's Journal. They are intended to help catechists to continue growing in spirit, awareness, and skill. This book may be used by catechists individually or in a group, or as part of a program of formation for new catechists.

Recommended for parish councils, catechists, teachers, clergy, and parents who want to take an active part in their children's catechetical formation.

“Universa laus” means universal praise. It is the title of an international study group for liturgical music, founded in 1966. The Bulletin has been available in French for some years, and in English since 1979. The two issues sent to us for review are nos. 29 and 30, from 1980. No. 29 has 12 pages: two pages describe the 1979 study days in Italy, and four summarize talks on the psalms by Joseph Gelineau and Helmut Hucke; the rest give membership information. Bulletin 30 has 16 pages, with a thicker cover, and prints the organization’s guidelines on the music of Christian ritual: these describe the current understanding and principles of music by concerned and dedicated musicians. Further information on these issues and on membership in Universa Laus may be obtained from the address above.


Our attitudes toward Church and liturgy are formed by the approach taken in our generation by law and legislation. After a brief survey of the history of Christian worship and its regulation, Fr. Richstatter analyzes Pius XII’s Mediator Dei of 1947, and then discusses gradual developments in liturgical law up to 1960. He follows the preparation and progress of the Second Vatican Council, and moves into the first years of carrying out the conciliar reform of liturgy.

Along with Kevin Seasoltz’ New Liturgy, New Laws (see Bulletin 75, page 191), this book helps us to see how far we have come in the past generation. Changes in our understanding of liturgy have been strengthened by a new style and spirit in liturgical laws: we need to remain faithful to this new spirit and style as we face the current efforts at codifying liturgical laws. Recommended.


Earlier issues of this journal were reviewed favorably in Bulletin 77, page 47, and in no. 81, page 235. This issue suggests that we be open to children and to their spirit of prayer and celebration, rather than providing prepackaged rites for local use. The authors help us to enter this world of childhood: “It takes a long time to become young,” says Picasso (page 44). Movement, storytelling, play, scripture, music: all lead us to plan liturgies that will help us to be celebrating with children. Recommended for catechists, liturgy committees, clergy, and parents.


That liturgies have beginnings and endings is a fact, but we need to be open to the importance and impact of these brief moments. Fourteen articles help us to explore them, and to reflect on their meaning in our worship and life. Two articles on children and prayer and one on Benedictines for peace conclude this issue. Recommended as a helpful resource for liturgy committees, musicians, and clergy.


This book is a collection of 16 articles printed in Pastoral Music between 1976 and 1979. They are on the ministry of music, music and our prayer, music in the liturgy, and tools and texts. Authors include composers, musicians, liturgists, priests, and an archbishop. The articles are practical, well written, and helpful for all who are involved in good music in Christian worship. Recommended for study and enjoyment by musicians, liturgy committees, and clergy.

Dr. Miller, who teaches at Conrad Grebel College, Waterloo, Ontario, offers a beginner's guide to 36 parables from the synoptic gospels, helping us to grasp their meaning in Jesus' time and in ours. Through careful study of text and context, the author tries to take us back to the meaning of the parables when first told by Jesus. Parallel texts from the synoptics and from the apocryphal gospel of Thomas help the student to study similarities and differences, and arrive at a better understanding of each parable's meaning. Recommended for preachers and for all who want to grow in their understanding of the parables as an important form of Jesus' teaching.

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Inviting the Mystic, Supporting the Prophet: An Introduction to Spiritual Direction, by Katherine Marie Dyckman, SNJM, and L. Patrick Carroll, SJ (1981, Paulist Press, New York, and 545 Island Road, Ramsey, NJ 07446): paper, selected bibliography, xiii, 92 pages. $4.95.

In writing this book, the authors are inviting lay people, religious men and women, and clergy to take up the work of spiritual direction for others. As well, they show how social justice and our culture are involved in each individual's response to God. Better spiritual direction in contemporary spirituality is the goal of this book, and it discusses some presuppositions we bring to direction and to prayer. A careful reading of this book will be profitable to those who direct others or who may feel called to do so.

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The author takes the secular art and process of planning, and adapts it for use in Christian communities and parishes. He provides a simple but practical resource book for planners. Each chapter may be read by itself or in conjunction with other parts of the book. Committees, parish councils, and other groups may use it as a helpful resource to better planning and more effective meetings. Recommended.

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I Meet Jesus, by Jean Vanier (1981, Paulist Press, 545 Island Road, Ramsey, NJ 07446): paper, approximately 11 by 8 inches, four posters in color, many black and white illustrations, 208 pages. $6.95.

The subtitle of this book is: "He tells me, 'I love you.' Story of the love of God through the Bible." The text is by Vanier and his friends of L'Arche (see page 89, above), and the drawings by a little sister of Jesus. The book is published by Anne Sigier of Lac Beauport, Québec.

Who is the audience? The reflections on each page are simple, but many seem aimed more at older children and adults than for little children, for whom the format seems designed (hand printing, drawings to color). May serve as a useful resource for parents and catechists.

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Based on ten years of formation programs for catechists in Los Angeles, this book offers a workbook for catechists. The first part presents information on our Catholic faith: an unfolding of God's plan in the scriptures, the development of the assembly of faith, the Church as God's people, sacraments. Liturgy is described as public worship, with a proclamation of God's word and perceptible rites in which all participate. Emphasis is on the catechist's personal faith, and on experiencing what is being taught. A chapter on growing in personal prayer and its relationship with public worship would have been a desirable addition. Part two turns to the catechist as teacher, with practical guidance on developing lessons, the situation in which learning is to take place, and some processes for learning. Throughout the whole book, each chapter has several questions for personal reflection.

This book will be useful for those already working as catechists, those responsible for training catechists, for parents who want to grow in their faith, and for the clergy. Recommended.

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Proclaiming the Passion B — Mark, with notes by George R. Szews (n.d., Office of Sacred Worship, Box 69, La Crosse, WI 54601): paper, 8½ by 11 inches, typescript, 14 pages. $2.50.

This booklet, one of a series, provides the New American Bible text for the passion narrative from Mark, as used on Passion Sunday in year B. Fr. Szews has prepared notes on Mark’s gospel and his story of Jesus’ sufferings and death for us.

The text (pages 8-14) is organized for three or six readers. Narrative and spoken words are combined so that one person reads a paragraph at a time, rather than flipflopping between narrator and various speakers. Five interludes are suggested for silence, song, or music during the proclamation.

Parish liturgy committees may find it useful to use this booklet and its ideas in their preparation of the Passion Sunday liturgy.

Pray All Ways, by Edward Hays (1981, Forest of Peace Books, Route One, Box 247, Easton, KS 66020): paper, illustrations, 164 pages. $5.95 (discount for ten or more).

Several books by Fr. Hays have been reviewed in past issues of the Bulletin. In this one, he speaks simply and quietly about natural spirituality. We can use our senses and our tears, our play and our travelling, our napping and our feasting as ways of prayer. The title of the book is a play on our Lord’s words in Lk. 18: 1.

Many of the ideas of using our bodies in worship are also basic to good liturgy. All who are interested in growing in personal prayer and in sharing with others could benefit from this book. Recommended.


As part of his work on the diaconate, Fr. Barnett becomes involved of necessity in the meaning of Church and the place of the lay and ordained ministries — beginning with the priestly laos — at various stages of our history. The last 80 pages of the text discuss the renewal of the diaconate in today’s Church.

As he goes through each reference to the diaconate in the early centuries, he tries to describe the circumstances of the time and place. The author’s main thesis is that there was a radical transformation of the Church’s understanding of the diaconate in the fourth century because of a change in the role and meaning of the ministries of bishop and presbyter. Recognition of this fact will help us to solve problems facing the Church today.

The notes on his sources are compressed, but he does give a clear picture of the gradual development and decline of the order of deacon, and of its current renewal, especially in the Roman Catholic and Anglican Churches. Recommended for diocesan commissions, deacons, liturgy students, and theologians.

Eucharist for a New World: A Selection of Homilies, Addresses, and Conferences from the 42nd International Eucharistic Congress, Lourdes 1981, edited by Sean Swayne (1981, Irish Institute of Pastoral Liturgy, Carlow Street, Carlow, Ireland): paper, vii, 125 pages. £4.90 (plus 50p postage and handling), or $8.00 plus $1.00 in U.S. funds.

The 1981 Eucharistic Congress marked the centennial of these gatherings of the nations. This congress had as its theme, “Jesus Christ, Bread Broken for a New World.” In this book, 22 important papers are brought together in English by Fr. Swayne, director of the Irish Institute of Pastoral Liturgy. Talks are by John Paul II, and bishops and theologians from various cultures. The papers challenge us to go much further in our understanding of the eucharist and its relationship with justice and renewal in the world — even to the point of our being broken as Jesus was. Recommended for every priest and bishop, for religious communities, and for liturgy committees and students of liturgy.
Cathedral: The Story of Its Construction, by David Macaulay (1973, Houghton Mifflin Co., 2 Park Street, Boston, MA 02107; available in Canada through Thomas Allen and Son, 250 Steelcase Road East, Markham, Ontario L3R 2S3): paper, 8 1/4 by 12 inches, many illustrations, glossary, 80 pages. $7.95 in Canada.

The story of a community's efforts over a period of 86 years to build a monument of its faith: this is one way of describing Cathedral. The author takes us into a French town in the thirteenth century, and literally invites us to clamber with him along the tops of the walls and roof as the Gothic building gradually takes shape. The text is brief and well researched, and the clear line drawings help the reader to experience the slow but careful progress of the building. With this book, we can have a better respect for the builders of the great cathedrals of medieval Europe. Recommended for diocesan liturgy commissions, parish liturgy committees, school libraries, and families.


Fr. Simons is director of the Office of Worship in the Diocese of Saginaw, Michigan. He has been interested in the field of blessings for some years. In this book, he provides an interesting study of blessings in the scriptures and in Christian tradition. He describes Vatican II's return to early values, affirming the goodness of creation: in a blessing, we remember God's great works and gifts, and give him praise in the name of all creation. In chapter 6, the author invites us to reflect on the pastoral value of blessings today.

Eight models of blessings are given on pages 101-141. These are: for an organ (Congregation for the Sacraments and Divine Worship); a sick person (India); two blessings for a home (Canada: see Bulletin 49, pages 185-180); an engagement (Germany); family blessing at the beginning of the school year (United States); the author has added three of his own.

This book is a book for study rather than for use in celebrating. It provides a welcome study of the meaning and value of blessings in our life. Recommended for study by parish liturgy committees and clergy. [For a Canadian book on celebrating blessings, see the description of A Book of Blessings, on page 96, below.]


Fr. Moynahan offers 12 dramas that illustrate the gospel message in modern idiom. Notes on props and presentation, as well as study questions are included with each story. These brief playlets will be useful for catechetics classes and study groups. While the images are clever and clear, the text is often wordy. At times the language tries too hard to be modern and "relevant," and will be dated quickly.

Recommended as a useful resource for religious educators. We do not recommend the use of these plays during the eucharist.


Welcome to another publication in the field of Church life and ministry! The first issue appeared in November 1981, and sets out to provide honest reviews by pastoral and professional people. Books and cassettes are reviewed under various categories, including preaching, adult education, ministries, religious education, worship, and spirituality. Ratings are given, from "not recommended" to "exceptional." Spanish books are reviewed in Spanish, and supplements provide thought-provoking material. The first issue reviews 30 items. Recommended for libraries, diocesan liturgy commissions, clergy, and professors and students of Church and ministry today.

Correction: The correct name of one of the authors of Goal Setting for Liturgy Committees, reviewed in Bulletin 81, page 236, is Marty Meyer.

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In preparation since 1974, this valuable book contains the blessings and prayers that are needed and used in parishes, schools, and families.

Contents include three introductory articles, 37 blessings of people (adults, families, children, installing in ministries); 18 blessings of places (homes, public buildings, areas); 36 blessings of things (animals, plants, vehicles, other things, devotional articles); 19 prayers for meals and meetings; 37 prayers and blessings for use throughout the year; eucharistic exposition and benediction; 95 other forms of prayers and blessings for many pastoral occasions.

Blessings are flexible, and contain scripture references, prayers, alternatives, ideas for development and celebration. Detailed contents (10 pages) and index (13 pages) provide keys to this useful resource book.

Intended for use by priests, deacons, parish ministers, lay leaders, liturgy planners, catechists, this book will be helpful for many Catholic, ecumenical, and civic occasions. *A Book of Blessings* is in keeping with the spirit of Vatican II and the renewed liturgy, and was developed by the National Liturgical Office at the request of the Episcopal Commission for Liturgy and the National Council for Liturgy.

*A Book of Blessings* contains 375 pages, 5¼ by 7¼ inches (13.5 by 19.5 cm — same size as pew edition of CBW II), hard cover, head and tail bands. Price per copy, $8.00, plus postage and handling.

Orders may be sent to CCCB Publications Service, 90 Parent Avenue, Ottawa, Ontario K1N 7B1.