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CHILDREN LEARN TO CELEBRATE
National Bulletin on Liturgy

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

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CHILDREN LEARN TO CELEBRATE

Helping children to prepare for liturgy begins from their earliest years. Family life, attitudes, values, and celebrations predispose children to be able to take an active part in community celebrations and liturgy. The family has the most important role in forming the basic values that shape children's lives and prepare them to participate in community worship as they grow.

• Human values: These are part of every person's life. The way we are formed in them influences our ability to live well and to share in the liturgy of God's people.

• Gospel values: Some of the basic principles of Jesus' teaching need to become part of our living from our earliest years.

The believing community is called to help families to impart these basic values to their children, and so help them to prepare for living and worshipping as Christians.
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INTRODUCTION

Values for Christians

Our heavenly Father calls us to live and work for the glory of God. Each of us is a unique individual, and each of us answers in a way shaped by grace and our personal choice. Our family upbringing, our early experiences, and our personal choices influence the way we are able to share in liturgy as children and as adults.

The *Directory for Masses with Children*1 points out that basic values are to be learned — absorbed, caught more than taught — in our early years. These values affect our ability to take part in worship and Christian living. If they are left undernourished in the early years of a child's life, they will be harder to develop later, and the effects will be felt in the person's response to worship and life, both as a child and as an adult. If we leave these values to be formed mainly by television and the standards of our society, we are indeed maiming our children's approach to life and worship with Jesus and his Church.

**Human values:** In the education of each child, we try to share our ideals, attitudes, ways of action, behavior, and practices. Together these enshrine the basic values that we feel are part of each person's life in our culture. These values are at the foundation of our civilization, and need to be inculcated from the earliest years of a child's life. Most of these are shared with the child by the family, while other institutions and agencies — such as television, schools, Church, youth groups, peers — reinforce them, modify them, or contradict them.

**Gospel values:** These are the values promoted by the example and teaching of Jesus. The sermon on the mount (Matthew's gospel, chapters 5-7) is a mirror in which we may view our ways in the light of Christ's teaching. His values are based on human values, but go beyond them. Our Lord invites us to follow him with generous hearts, and to lead our children by our love and our example. In adopting these gospel values, we are sharing more fully in Jesus' dying and rising, his paschal mystery.

**Responsibility of the believing community:** Members of the parish community are to help families to understand and accept these human and Christian values, and to share them with their children. Parishioners can support and encourage families by prayer, example, and friendship. Those responsible for the community liturgy can make sure that it is built on these values and reinforces them. With such support from the Christian community, parents and families can help their children to live as Christians and learn to celebrate with the believing community.

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1. *Directory for Masses with Children*, issued by the Congregation for Divine Worship on November 1, 1973. The paragraphs on values are nos. 9-10; see also Bulletin 63, pages 71-72 and 113; no. 73, page 89. The *Directory* is contained in the introductory pages of the sacramentary, and a commentary is given in Bulletin 63, pages 111-123.
Many of our human and Christian values are described in this issue. The first two articles are longer, and show many ways in which we can look at these topics in the liturgy and in family life. The other articles are briefer in order to cover a larger variety of values. If desired, a family or parish may explore any of these in the same detail as the initial articles.

BEING ABLE TO CELEBRATE

Celebration Is a Human Value

Being able to celebrate is a human value. We learn it by doing it as we grow up. Celebration is part of a normal family’s activities and reaction to life.

Meaning: Celebration means putting our ordinary affairs aside and taking time to mark an important event or occasion by special ceremonies or merrymaking. When we celebrate, we are happy, joyful, elated. We go to a certain joyful excess in expressing our wishes. We are often extravagant (the word means ‘going beyond the limits’). We invite others to join us: we want to share our joy, have a party, rejoice, make noise, let everyone know the reasons for our celebration.

What do we celebrate? We can celebrate any thing or event that is good or happy, whether it is great or small; usually it is something important in the life of our family, or of a friend or neighbor. We celebrate the coming of spring, the birth of a baby, graduation, winning a sports event, publishing a book, building or buying a house, moving, going on a journey, a safe return, getting a new job or a promotion. We celebrate birthdays and anniversaries in our life or in the life of our community or country. We welcome new neighbors or celebrate with those who are retiring or moving away. A celebration is a way of recognizing a special person or event in our lives.

When do we celebrate? Normally we celebrate when something special has happened or is happening, or on its anniversary, or at a convenient moment near these times, when people are able to gather. Celebrations take place at particular times: they are high points in the flow of daily living. As such, they have to be spaced and not occur too often, so that there is some ‘ordinary time’ in between celebrations.

Who joins our celebration? With whom do we celebrate? We celebrate first of all with our immediate family, and often with our extended family. We also invite friends and neighbors to share in this event. The size of the gathering will vary according to the nature and importance of the event (compare a 25th anniversary and a 22nd), and on the wishes of the family.
Family celebrations: In the average family these include birthdays, anniversaries, graduations, getting a new job or promotion. Feasts like Christmas and Easter pick up some of the natural zest of midwinter and spring festivals, and are customary times for family gatherings.

Elements of our celebration: Some of the things we do when we celebrate:

- **Gathering:** We gather together with family, friends, neighbors. One does not celebrate alone, but in a group of family, friends, and like-minded people.

- **Remembering:** We share memories about ourselves, about the people present or absent, about those who have died. We relive happy, sad, and funny events from the past, events which have touched us or shaped us in some way. And we recall the irrelevant moments too: “Do you remember the time Uncle Louie got stuck in the bathtub?”

- **Rejoicing:** We are happy, and we let happiness put aside our problems, cares, and sorrows for a little while. We want to share our joy with others. Joy becomes infectious and is easily shared.

- **Thanking:** We are grateful, and express our gratitude to and for individuals and groups: for parents, for the ones in whose honor this celebration is being held; we express our thanks to those who planned and worked to make the celebration successful. Most people thank God first of all for these benefits and gifts.

- **Eating and drinking:** We usually have a meal, refreshments, or at least a snack as part of the celebration. Often the remembering is done while we are eating together. There is usually lots of food, and special delicacies and dishes are prepared for this occasion.

- **Having fun together:** Laughter, fun, games, and conversations are part of our activities during a celebration.

- **Singing, dancing, making music:** Celebrations usually involve singing by all or some, dancing, and music played by members of the gathering or by hired musicians. As a minimum, some people play records or tapes as background music.

- **Symbolic actions:** These may include cutting a special cake, or toasting the person or persons for whom the celebration is being held. Speeches usually accompany the actions and explain or elaborate their meaning.

- **Sharing gifts:** During a celebration, gifts may be brought to the person or persons at the center of the event; or guests may share gifts with one another.

- **Dressing up:** The expression ‘party clothes’ is accepted in our language. When we go to a party or a celebration, we prepare for it by getting washed and dressed up in special clothes. We decorate the table, and use the best tablecloth and silver.

- **Some exuberance and joyful excess:** We prepare and eat too much food, stay up late, burn candles, set off fireworks, use fancy wrappings on our gifts, decorate the place where the party is held, blow up balloons.

- **Planning and preparation:** For a celebration to be a success, it needs to be planned carefully. Some people have to work to make preparations so that the celebration will go smoothly and almost seem to be spontaneous.
Spoiling a celebration: Everyone present contributes to the celebration by sharing in the rejoicing and the activities. Popular language has some descriptive expressions for individuals who spoil a celebration by not participating: wet blanket, party-pooper, wall flower. These persons dampen everybody's spirits by remaining aloof for one reason or another, by refusing to take part in the activities and fun, and by failing to enter the spirit of the celebration. Most people wonder why such individuals come to a party.

Celebration Is a Gospel Value

Many of the points mentioned above are also reflected in the gospels and other parts of the New Testament. Being able to share in a celebration of rejoicing is part of being Christian. Angels describe Jesus' birth as glad tidings, and invite the shepherds to rejoice by giving glory to God (Lk. 2: 10-14). Joy is a fruit of the Spirit of God (Gal. 5: 22). The angels in heaven rejoice over the return of a sinner (Lk. 15: 10, 7). Luke provides us with three lost-and-found parables (lost sheep, Lk. 15: 4-7; lost money, 15: 8-10; and lost son, 15: 11-32): each of them ends with an invitation to a celebration. Party clothes or festive robes are mentioned in Mt. 22: 11-12; in Lk. 15: 22; and — in a paradoxical way — in Lk. 23: 11 and Jn. 19: 2, 5, 23-24. Eating and drinking are part of the celebration: see Jn. 2: 10; Lk. 15: 23-24; and even Mk. 2: 15-17. Jesus reminds the apostles that they will rejoice (Jn. 16: 20-22). The kingdom of heaven is portrayed as a banquet of plenty (Mt. 22: 2; see also Ps. 23: 5-6).

Jesus is the celebrating Word: Jesus is the Son of God, the incarnate Word. He is our Lord and our brother. As the eternal high priest of humanity, he offers unending praise and glory to the Father. Our feeble praise is swept up into his eternal song of glory; like a few drops of water in a mighty river, our efforts at offering praise and glory take on strength by being incorporated into the song of praise being sung by our Lord. The early centuries of the Church1 saw Jesus as the celebrating Word, and heard his voice in the psalms. The Lord Jesus, present and active in his body the Church, continues to offer this praise and glory to God through us: we were baptized into the Lord's body and made sharers of his priestly praise to the Father (Liturgy constitution, no. 14). Through us and through Christ, all creation offers glory, honor, worship, and praise to the Father of all. Jesus is the singer of God's praise, and he is the song of praise being sung. All our celebration comes to the Father, with Jesus Christ the Word, in the Holy Spirit. In baptism we are chosen in Christ and set aside by the Father and sealed by the Spirit, so that we might sing praise and glory to the Trinity by our life, our love, our words, our worship (Eph. 1: 3-14). In this vocation we are united now with Christ, and in heaven we will continue to be one with him, the celebrating Word of God. (See General Instruction of the Liturgy of the Hours, nos. 3, 15-16.)

We are a celebrating people: God our Father has chosen us in Christ from all eternity to sing praise and glory (Eph. 1: 3-14). We are an alleluia people, redeemed by Jesus and led by the Spirit. God has made us to give glory and praise, and to build up the kingdom of light on earth. We have already begun to share in the risen life and victory of Jesus, our Lord and our brother, and with him we sing glory to the Father.

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Celebration in the Liturgy

Many of the ideas described in “Celebration is a human value” (pages 100-102, above) are the basis of the way we celebrate in the liturgy.

What do we celebrate? In the liturgy we celebrate the mystery of God’s love for us and all the world, shown in a vivid way through the incarnation, and the death and rising of Jesus as an obedient sacrifice; as well, we celebrate our involvement — ourselves and our community — in Christ’s saving action.

Called to celebrate: It is in our baptism that we are made sharers in the priesthood of Jesus Christ, and are given both the right and the duty — the privilege and the responsibility — of taking part in the liturgy (Constitution on the liturgy, no. 14). This worship is offered by Jesus and by his body the Church. When we are baptized into the Church, we are made temples of the Spirit, and are called to share with the whole Christ, head and body, in celebrating God’s praise in the liturgy.

When do we celebrate? We celebrate each day, each week, and each year as part of our worship toward God:

• Sunday: On the first day of the week we recall the creative work of the Father (creation is described as beginning on the first day in Gen. 1: 3-5); the saving work of Jesus, who was raised from the dead on the first day of the week; and the sanctifying work of the Spirit, who was given to the Church on a Sunday (Easter Sunday evening, Jn. 20: 21-22; Pentecost Sunday morning, Acts 2: 1-4). These events are included in the hymn, “On this day, the first of days” (see Catholic Book of Worship II, no. 590).

For Christians, the Lord’s day is a day of joy, of celebration, of rejoicing, because God our Father has saved us in Jesus. Each Sunday, God gathers us together in our communities to celebrate the eucharist. The greatest Sunday of the year is Easter.

• Seasons: Like the civil year, the Church’s year of prayer has a rhythm of changing seasons. The year begins with the Christmas cycle (preparation in Advent, celebration at Christmas, continuation in Epiphany and the Baptism of the Lord). A brief quiet period of ordinary time intervenes, and then the Easter cycle begins (preparation in Lent, celebration in the Easter triduum, and continuation during the Easter season to Pentecost). Ordinary time resumes, and follows the teaching of one of the evangelists (Matthew, Mark, or Luke) until the feast of Christ the King. A week later, a new liturgical year begins and the rhythm continues with a new Advent.

• Days: In the liturgy of the hours, the daily rhythm is celebrated: in the morning the sun rises and daylight returns; we honor the risen Christ, and join with him in offering this new day and its work to God our Father. During the day we renew this offering to do all for God's glory (1 Cor. 10: 31; Eph. 5: 20; 1 Thess. 5: 16-18), and pray for help. In the evening, as the sun is setting, we remember Christ's evening sacrifice of praise on the cross. Night prayer is the final prayer of the day, when we repent of our day's shortcomings, remind ourselves of our death, and entrust ourselves with Christ into the hands of our Father.
Feasts: Throughout the year we celebrate feasts of Jesus, Mary, and the saints. Saints' days are of varying degrees of solemnity, and celebrate the victory of Jesus in their lives (Liturgy constitution, nos. 103-104). In the same way, our Lord wants to achieve his paschal victory over sin and death in our life too. In these celebrations, the word 'feast' is used to describe both the day and a celebrating meal.

Sacramental events: The community also celebrates different steps in its life and in the life of its members by baptism, confirmation, and eucharist; by marriage and ordination; by reconciliation, anointing, and viaticum; by religious professions, and by funerals. Each of these celebrations is another step in our growth as individuals and as a believing community into the full stature willed for us by Christ (see Eph. 4: 11-16).

Community events: Other happenings in the life of the community are also celebrated at times: founding a new parish or diocese, dedicating a church, celebrating blessings, appointing a new pastor or bishop, installing new members in various ministries. In each of these events we praise God for continuing to affect our life by daily loving care.

Personal events: Although the liturgy is primarily a community celebration, each of us has a particular way of sharing in it. In the sacrament of reconciliation, we celebrate God's forgiving love in our personal life as well as in the life of all. In celebrating each of the sacraments, we profess our personal faith, and take an intimate and individual part in the community's worship; in this way we contribute to the fullness of the celebration.

Who celebrates with us? When we celebrate liturgy, we must remember that it is more than the celebration of this group of people assembled in this church or chapel. When we celebrate liturgy, it is first of all Jesus Christ who is celebrating, and joining us with the worship he offers. By right of baptism, all Christians on earth are part of our Christian worship: ourselves, the members of this assembly, the Christian people — the body of Christ — around the world. We all worship in Jesus, and each of us worships in him. Every one of us can say: "In the liturgy, we praise God, and I praise God."

We are not limited to this world in our celebration. As we so often hear sung in the preface, our praise is joined to that of the angels and saints in heaven, so that all creation offers its paean of praise through Jesus Christ to the Father.

Remembering who is celebrating with us should encourage us to sing even greater praise, and help us to avoid being small-minded, provincial, or petty in our praise and petitions.

Some elements of our celebration: On page 101 above, twelve elements of our human celebrations are listed:

- gathering
- remembering
- rejoicing
- thanking
- eating and drinking
- having fun together
- singing, dancing, making music
- symbolic actions
- sharing gifts
- dressing up
- some exuberance and joyful excess
- planning and preparation
These elements are also involved, in one way or another, in each celebration of the liturgy. It would be worthwhile for a liturgy committee or a group to spend more time together discussing one or more of these elements as they are found in our liturgical celebrations. When we understand the way they influence our worship, we will be able to use them more fully to improve our community’s celebration of the liturgy.

* * *

All our actions in celebrating the liturgy should deepen the impact in our lives of the gospel and its values. Is this true of the liturgical celebrations in our community? Where should we be working to improve our liturgical celebrations?

Celebration in Family Life

How does a family help children grow in their ability to celebrate? Some of the ways are suggested briefly, and may be elaborated from experience and by discussion:

By celebrating: No one learns to swim by reading a book on the shore. We may learn swimming by going into the water with someone to show us how, but we learn to swim by swimming. “Learning by doing” is the only way to learn to celebrate too. Children learn to celebrate by taking part in family celebrations first — birthdays, family events, home celebrations of civic holidays and religious feasts, school or neighborhood events. Celebrations can be simple and spontaneous (“let’s celebrate because we saw our first robin today”) or planned and more organized. Children learn from adults and other children to recognize occasions for celebrations. Adults have to be relaxed enough to let children have room to grow in their spirit of celebration; we have to accept their natural exuberance, and ignore the occasional mistakes and spilt milk. Children learn to be able to celebrate when they don’t have to fear being scolded or mocked for their attempts to celebrate, and when they grow up in an atmosphere of celebration.

By encouraging attitudes of celebration: Some of the attitudes involved in any celebration — family or liturgical — are wonder, thanks, praise, and joy. By helping and encouraging children to express these attitudes freely, we are providing them with a good foundation for a happy life. As always, they will learn more from our example than from our words alone.

By gestures and actions: When little children feel happy, they smile, laugh, jump, dance, somersault, clap, squeal, or shout for joy. Later, this natural expressiveness tends to become somewhat inhibited. Families should feel free to indulge in parades and processions around the table or around the house, and be ready to sing, dance, and clap to show their joy. Smiles and happy facial expressions are part of our spirit of celebration. Our society rightly recoils at the thought of binding an infant’s feet; should we hobble our children even more by encouraging them to repress their feelings instead of showing them and celebrating with them?

By symbolic actions: The language of symbolism is poetry. A family which lives by prose alone will not be in tune with the liturgy, which is filled with images,
symbolic actions, and gestures. Music, storytelling, dressing up, fantasies, and symbols are an important part of each family's living. Life without this would be like a birthday without gifts, songs, party, cake, candles, or greetings. Symbolic actions say what we cannot express, or what we would like to say but feel too shy to do so.

By singing and music: Singing is a natural way of expressing our joy and sorrow. Children are usually ready to sing and join in singing. When song is part of their family experience, they will be able to enjoy singing and to share in it with others in singsongs and other gatherings. In an age where music surrounds us, it is good to teach children to appreciate good music, and — for those who have the talent — to learn to read music and play an instrument.

By relating life and liturgy: Parents can relate what they do at home to what is going on in the liturgy. At home they can point out that the candles on the birthday cake, the music and singing, the lights, the decorations, the parades, and the gifts are similar to what we do in church. During and after the liturgy, activities in the church can be related to those at home. The connection of celebration in the liturgy and in life will be made easily, and each will influence the other in the life of each child and of the family.

There are many more ways in which a family can celebrate. The ideas suggested here are but a beginning. How can your parish or community help families and their children to be able to celebrate more readily? (See pages 138-139, below.)

Helpful reading:


Festivity, an article based on this book, in Bulletin 47, pages 5-7.


NEXT ISSUE

Men and women who are members of religious communities are called in a special way to be witnesses of the meaning of Christian living.

Bulletin 90 is entitled Religious Communities Celebrate Liturgy. This issue looks at the place, influence, and importance of the liturgy in the life of religious communities in today's renewing Church. Practical suggestions are offered for better celebration and participation in the liturgy as the primary source of the true Christian spirit.

Bulletin 90 will be ready for mailing early in September.
KEEPING SILENT AND LISTENING

These two values work together. We stop making noise and keep silent; during this time of quiet, we listen actively.

Human Values

Benefit of silence: In our noisy world, silence brings several benefits into our lives:

- **Escape from pressures:** Making space for silence in our life allows us to get away from the pressures of business and family problems. Researchers tell us that loud noises or a constant level of loud noise can wear us down and make us more irritable. Some sensitive people feel oppressed by a lot of noise or by noisy people. Noise pollution is being recognized as a modern social problem.

- **Relaxation:** Getting away from noise and being silent gives us time to relax.

- **Reflection:** Silence allows us time to reflect about ourselves, our family, other people, our work, our values — in the past, the present, and the future.

- **Regain strength:** Silent moments can enable us to regain our strength and courage to go ahead with our task of living in our particular circumstances.

- **Time to listen:** A period of silence, even a brief one, allows us time to listen.

Keeping silent: To achieve silence we need to take several steps:

- **Background noise:** We have to get rid of background music, noise, distractions. Sometimes we are afraid to lose this camouflage and face ourselves.

- **Talking:** As a second step, we have to stop talking and conversing for a time.

- **Becoming comfortable with silence:** We need to learn to enjoy the peace and tranquility that silence can bring into our lives. Silence is not emptiness or absence: it is a positive part of life.

- **Knowing what to do** when we are silent: We can relax, blank out our thinking, let our worries go by for a moment. We can rest, we can make general plans. One of the things we can do is listen, as described below.

Listening: Our listening can be passive or active. We can simply hear all the noises that surround us, or we can listen carefully, select, and hear what is important:

- **What are we listening to?** If we are selective in our listening, it is not to tune out those in need or those to whom we should be listening. Rather we try to rid ourselves of distracting noises and competing voices in order to listen better. We listen to ourselves, to our conscience, to those who guide our life (parents, teachers, leaders, prophets). We listen to those who are hurting and in pain, and who come to us for help.

- **Sense of wonder:** We also listen to beauty: the simple words of a little child, the love in a mother’s voice, the song of the birds, good music, the trickle of a brook, the roar of a waterfall, the sighing of the wind, the rustling of leaves, the buzz of
a bee. We listen, and are able to penetrate a little more into the mystery of the universe. (Listen to the words of “For the beauty of the earth,” CBW II, no. 624.)

**Benefits of listening:** When we listen to others and take time to reflect on what they say, we have the faint beginnings of wisdom. From listening to older people we may share in the wisdom and insights they have gleaned through years of suffering and experience. By listening carefully to others, we may be able to discern the true needs and cares that lie behind their words, especially when said in a time of anger or upset. The one who listens carefully and ponders on what has been heard is on the way of truth.

**Learning to listen:** It is not always easy to listen. We want to rush in with our experience and our answers. Often the problem a person brings is not revealed at first: he or she talks about something else, assessing the listener for sympathy and understanding; then, gradually, the real needs are brought forth and discussed. To learn to listen, we have to admit that the other person is worth listening to. We have to accept this person’s personal integrity and value, and be willing to learn from his or her experience, insights, and values. Learning to listen is a slow process, yet it is one that we can put into practice each time we are in conversation with others.

**Gospel Values**

Our Lord Jesus was sociable, and enjoyed dining with a variety of people, including the outcasts of the religious society of his time. The gospels also tell us that he withdrew from others to spend time in prayer and silence. The fruits of his meditation may be seen in the vibrant imagery of the parables and stories he told. His teachings are filled with the spirit and ideas of the Hebrew scriptures, and show us how deeply he must have reflected on them.

Jesus encouraged his apostles and those who heard him to listen. Those who had ears were to use them to hear God speaking to them in nature, in other people, in the scriptures, in the events of life. He encouraged his listeners to read and understand the signs of the times (Lk. 12: 54-56).

When he was on trial for his life, his silence before his accusers reflected that of the suffering servant (see Is. 53: 7; Mt. 26: 63; 1 Pet. 2: 21-25).

**Silence** is necessary for a follower of Christ in order to find time and space, to distance ourselves from the roar and distractions and noisy prophets of this world. Then we can listen to the quiet voice of God (see 1 Kings 19: 9-13). God asks us to be still and listen (Ps. 37: 7; Ps. 46: 10). It is in listening to the voice of the Spirit that we are led to proclaim God as our Father (Rom. 8: 15) and Jesus as Lord (1 Cor. 12: 3; Rom. 10: 9).

We need to keep silence if we are to be able to reflect on God’s deeds and words. Like Mary, we need to ponder over the marvellous deeds of God, and so be able to recognize what our heavenly Father is still doing for us and among us (Lk. 2: 19 and 51).

Jesus invites us to listen to God’s word and to put it into practice. Our listening should lead us to good action: we are not to be forgetful listeners (James 1: 22-25).

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The Catholic Church recognizes silence and listening as human and Christian values, and encourages them in its public worship. By our action in the liturgy, we can reinforce and deepen the gospel values of silence in our lives.

Silence: In the liturgy we have built-in moments of silence.

- **Times for keeping silent:** In the eucharist, silence is called for at the penitential rite, in the opening prayer, after each reading and the homily, after communion (see General Instruction of the Roman Missal, no. 23). In the liturgy of the hours, silence is desirable after each psalm and after the reading from scripture; in night prayer, a moment of silent reflection and examination of conscience begins the celebration (see General Instruction of the Liturgy of the Hours, nos. 201-203).

- **Purpose of silence:** In the liturgy, silence serves different purposes. In the penitential rite and at the beginning of night prayer, we recall our faults, our weakness, and our need of God’s loving mercy. When the presbyter or leader invites us to pray during liturgy, we pause to remember that we are in the presence of our God, and to make our personal petitions. After a reading or the homily, we reflect on what God has said to us, and let the Spirit continue to speak with us. After communion, we praise God for his love and goodness.

- **Obstacles:** A variety of circumstances can prevent us from benefitting from these times of silence. Sometimes the priest or leader or choir director doesn’t understand the value of silence, resulting in a rushed or oppressive rite. On other occasions, the community hasn’t learned how to relax and pray in this time of silence.

Listening: When God’s word is proclaimed with faith, when the prayers are prepared and said well, and when moments of silence are observed with care, the people in this community are able to listen to God in the liturgy.

- **Listening to God:** God is speaking to us in the word proclaimed in the liturgy. The Spirit speaks to us in the proclamation and in moments of silence. The rites and ceremonies, the devotion of the community members, the mood of the season and the celebration: in all this God is speaking. Are we listening?

- **Listening in prayers and hymns:** The words and music also bring us God’s message, and reinforce our faith. Are we listening?

- **Listening with faith and love:** God is speaking to us in many ways in the liturgy, just as Christ is present in many ways (Liturgy constitution, no. 7). We need to listen with faith — in itself a gift from our God — and with love for God and the people of God. Are we listening?

- **Learning to listen:** To ‘listen’ to others, we need to be open to their needs. We have to be sensitive to special concerns, to their feelings, inhibitions, problems. We pray for them, both in the prayer of the faithful and in our personal and family prayer. We reach out to them in love, without trying to dominate them, simply offering to serve them as Jesus wants.

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1 See *Silence is necessary*! in Bulletin 71, pages 204-205, and other references given there. See also Bulletin 83, page 60, no. 12; and Bulletin 77, page 32.
Community effort: If we are to be able to benefit from the moments of silence and listening in the liturgy, our community must make some efforts to help us all. This may be done by helping all members of the assembly to understand the purpose and value of silence; by encouraging us to grow in our ability to pray silently in the liturgy and at other times as well; by training readers, musicians, ushers, presiders, and other ministers to respect the moments of silence and not be busy or distracting during them. We may begin with 20 seconds of silence, and gradually move over a year to a longer period.

Where are we in our community use of silence? What steps can we take to move forward in our listening?

Silence and Listening in Family Life

Parents and children have to work together to bring some silence and listening into their lives. Here are some suggestions which each family may wish to think about and discuss:

- **Background noise:** Our society seems to promote constant noise: how can we work for silence? In our home, is it necessary for radios, television sets, and musical instruments to be so loud? How can each member of the family contribute both to a lessening of noise and to a positive provision of moments of silence?

- **Benefits of quiet:** Adults have to learn to enjoy the benefits of silence, and to share this wisdom with their children, gradually teaching them to be happy with more moments of quiet.

- **A corner for silence and prayer:** See Bulletin 63, page 86; Bulletin 73, pages 95-96.

- **Listening to God's word:** A sentence or a paragraph from the scriptures can be read each day or several times a week; the gospel reading for next Sunday can be read on Saturday or earlier in the week.

- **Silent prayer:** All family members can be encouraged to spend a moment in silence in their personal prayer. A brief silence can be part of family prayers, such as at mealtime.

- **Personal reflection:** Each member of the family can be invited to reflect once a day on God's gifts, on the good things we have received from our God, on our weaknesses and our need for help.

**Helpful reading:**

*The Mystery of the Ordinary*, by Charles Cummings (1982, Harper & Row, 10 East 53rd St., New York, NY 10022; in Canada, Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 150 Lesmill, Toronto, Ontario M3B 2T5): the author explores hearing, seeing, walking, resting, standing, eating and drinking, and hurting. Our bodies are wonderful creations, and God speaks to us through both the scriptures and our experiences in daily life.

A prayer for silence is given in *A Book of Blessings* (1981, CCCB, Ottawa): see page 280.


Reflect on Ps. 95: 7-8.
EXPRESSING OUR THANKS

A human value: From our earliest days our parents teach us to say thanks for what others do for us. While they are growing up, children need to be reminded and encouraged to be grateful and to show this by saying “thank you.” As we mature we are able to express our gratitude for the glories of nature, for friends, for gifts. A sincere word of thanks to those who helped to prepare and serve a meal makes all their efforts seem worthwhile. We can show our thanks both by our words and by the way we use the gifts we receive. No one likes an ungrateful person, or one who takes gifts and kindnesses for granted.

We can repeat our thanks on several occasions, privately or publicly. At times we can remember gifts we have received (“counting our blessings”), and renew our gratitude. Civil society expresses gratitude to heroes by special festivities, holidays, and by naming buildings and streets after them.

A gospel value: Giving thanks to God for the gifts richly bestowed on us is part of our Christian living. Jesus himself gave thanks to the Father: see Mt. 11: 25-26; Lk. 10: 21; Jn. 11: 41-42. He was aware of the ingratitude of the nine lepers, and complimented the one who did return to thank God (Lk. 17: 11-19). The epistles of the New Testament include acts of thanks and praise (see Eph. 1: 3-10), and encourage us to give praise and thanks to God in Christ for all things and at all times: read and reflect on Eph. 5: 18b-20; Col. 3: 15-17; 1 Cor. 10: 31.

Thanks in the liturgy: At evening prayer we are invited to thank our Father for all the good done in us by God’s grace during this day (see General Introduction of the Liturgy of the Hours, no. 39; Is. 26: 12).

“Eucharist” means thanksgiving, a name given to the Mass in the early centuries and coming back to more common use in our day. As God’s chosen people, we express the thanks of ourselves, the Church, and all creation to our heavenly Father. We say thank you by remembering God’s work in creating and ruling the universe, in giving us Jesus as our savior, in giving us grace and love. We offer our praise and thanks by bringing the gift of ourselves to this celebration. Our Lord offers our gift of love and obedience in union with his perfect self-offering to the Father. As we remember God’s gifts and make our offering, we ask for help for ourselves and for all the world. Our great Amen! seals and concludes our prayer of thanks.

Thanks in our family life: We need to be aware of how much others do for us, and to express our gratitude to them often and in many ways. We can remember to thank our heavenly Father each day for the many gifts we receive; evening prayer is the best time for this. We can sing an occasional hymn of thanks: see CBW II, nos. 674-680, including two simple rounds. Psalm 136 may be prayed or adapted as a prayer of thanksgiving. We may simply say “Thank you, Lord” at any time, or we may wish to develop a prayer in the form of a doxology, berakah, or haiku (see Exploring our prayer forms, in Bulletin 80, pages 176-180).

When we say “Thanks be to God” (see Rom. 6: 17), we are united with Jesus and all the people of God in heaven and on earth in giving praise through our Lord to the Father.


Human values: Being able to forgive others what they have done — whether it is an unintentional act or a deliberate hurt — is a sign of graciousness. By holding grudges or refusing to forgive others, we are showing that we are petty, self-centered, and lacking in kindness toward others. A generous, forgiving heart is a sign of a balanced and caring person.

To ask another person to forgive us can be very difficult: no one likes to apologize or admit failure or error. If we are willing to admit that we have made a mistake, others are able to pardon us more readily.

Gospel values: Jesus teaches us to go beyond common values and love our enemies (Mt. 5: 44). In the sermon on the mount, he reminds us that God forgives us just as we forgive — or refuse to forgive — others (Mt. 6: 12, 14-15). We are to ask or grant forgiveness before our sacrifice can be pleasing to God (Mt. 5: 23-24). Peter's question about forgiving a brother (seventy times seven!) and the parable of the unforgiving servant (Mt. 18: 21-35) also teach us about the importance of forgiveness. Jesus tells us that those who are merciful are indeed blessed (Mt. 5: 7). On the cross, he prays for forgiveness of his persecutors (Lk. 23: 34), and forgives the thief who asks him (Lk. 23: 42-43; compare Lk. 11: 13). Ps. 103 is a prayer of thanks for forgiveness.

Forgiveness in the liturgy: In the eucharist, the penitential rite begins the celebration by admitting our sinfulness and God's forgiving love, and by asking Christ for mercy. In the eucharistic prayer, we ask our Father to forgive the people of the world, for Jesus has shed his blood to save us. The communion rite continues to ask for mercy and forgiveness for sinners (see Bulletin 88, page 79).

We may begin night prayer by examining our conscience or by using the penitential rite as at Mass. The sacrament of reconciliation has been renewed since Vatican II, and communal celebrations are frequent. In all forms of the rite, God's word is proclaimed to call us to repentance.

Forgiveness in family life: The daily example of parents teaches forgiveness in a most concrete manner: they forgive their children (see Bulletin 88, page 61), each other, and other people. Older brothers and sisters may help younger ones in the same way.

Family prayer: The Our Father is the Church's prayer of forgiveness (see Mt. 6: 12). In night prayer, family members may pause to remember their own faults, to ask God's forgiveness, and to forgive one another. Some of the penitential psalms may be prayed on occasion (Psalms 6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, 143). Many other ways of obtaining forgiveness are described in Bulletin 88, pages 80-82.

Helpful reading:

Bulletin 88: Reconciliation in Our Life; no. 52, Reconciliation and Forgiveness.


GREETING AND WELCOMING OTHERS

Human values: A pleasant greeting is a sign of our interest in another person, especially a friend. A surly person is not appreciated by anyone. Hospitality welcomes others into our home, our organizations, our activities. We invite them to "feel at home," and we serve refreshments or a meal; some are even welcomed to be our overnight guests. The ways in which we express our greetings and hospitality will vary according to our culture, from rubbing noses to shaking hands: Abraham expressed the hospitality of the desert nomad in Gen. 18: 1-8. What is normal in our culture?

We help our children to develop these values by encouraging them to speak pleasantly and listen to others, and to welcome their friends in our home.

Gospel values: Missionaries are warned against excessive greetings along the way (Lk. 10: 4). Our Lord called Judas "friend" when he was greeted with the traitor's kiss (Mt. 27: 50). Disciples are to wish peace on those who are hospitable toward them (Mt. 10: 11-13). Jesus taught us to welcome him by welcoming children (Mt. 18: 5), disciples (Mk. 9: 41), and prophets (Mt. 10: 40-41), and reminded us that he is present and to be welcomed in the person of all who are in need (Mt. 25: 31-46). Jesus pointed out that he was not given the usual welcoming courtesies in Lk. 7: 44-46. Greetings are mentioned at the end of some of the epistles: see Rom. 16: 3-16; and 1 Thess. 5: 26.

In the liturgy: Hospitality is to be shown by every member of the assembly for all Jesus' brothers and sisters. Ushers are called to exercise this ministry in a particular way. The whole community is invited to recognize the Lord Jesus in his many presences among us (Liturgy constitution, no. 7). The presiding priest greets the community at the beginning of the liturgical celebration and several times during it, and sends them home with a blessing to live for the Lord.

Visitors and strangers should be helped to feel at home in the community's celebration; some families may be invited to reach out to them in the name of the parish.

In family life: Parents and older members help younger children by giving daily example of friendliness and respect for all. By being ready to listen, they are open to one another, and ready to sympathize and overcome little hurts. A cheerful and friendly greeting should be the normal way to begin each encounter. A family may welcome others to join them in prayer (see Bulletin 63, page 86). Christ is present in this family home, or whenever two or three gather in his name (Mt. 18: 19-20), or when the gospel is read: all should recognize his presence among them and welcome him. Jesus is always present when they see him and help him in those in need (Mt. 25: 31-46).

A prayer:

Lord Jesus,
help us to recognize you
whenever you are among us.
Let your Holy Spirit fill us with love
and help us to love everyone.

Jesus,
we love you and praise you for ever. Amen!
TAKING PART IN A GROUP ACTIVITY

A human value: Learning to play and work and get along with others is an important part of growing up. From an early age we learn to abide by the rules of the game, to take the less enjoyable parts sometimes so that all can benefit or have fun. By contributing to the group’s activity even when we don’t seem to get as much back, or when others are not doing their full share, we are working for the common good. When we take our part in an activity, we are making it possible for the group to enjoy it. Children of school age gain many of the benefits of group activities by being active members of the Scouting or Guiding movements.

Our society puts too much emphasis on competition, and at too young an age, tending to encourage winning or dominating at any price. Non-competitive games give all — and not only the experts — a chance to gain and enjoy. All too often, we are tempted to get ahead by knocking others down.

A gospel value: Not much is said in the gospel about taking part in group activities. Our Lord spoke of the Church as a flock, with himself as our shepherd (Jn. 10: 14-18); he is the vine, and we are his branches (Jn. 15: 1-11). He trained a group of twelve apostles, and a larger group as disciples, and sent them two by two ahead of him. Co-operation, generosity, and common and personal prayer for others are recommended in the epistles.

In the liturgy: The liturgy is a community activity — of the whole Christ, head and members — in which individuals take part (Liturgy constitution, no. 7). Communal celebrations are much more important than private ones (nos. 26-27). By our baptism we receive the privilege and the responsibility of taking part in the worship of Christ and his Church (no. 14).

We may take part (or “participate”) in the liturgy in a variety of ways. Our sharing in worship must come from our heart and flow from our life. We show what is within us by our external actions: singing or saying responses, singing hymns and psalms, moving in procession, gestures, bodily positions, times of silent reflection (no. 30). In these we seek to be together with the community. Different members of the assembly carry out different ministries, but these work together for the benefit of all (no. 28). Each community needs to keep its perspective: its Sunday eucharist is a sign of the Church’s presence in this place, and is united through the bishop to the Church celebrating around the world and in heaven (nos. 42-43, 8).

In the family: Each member takes part in the life of the family by sharing in responsibilities and jobs according to his or her age and ability. All members should be willing to share good things with one another. In family prayer, it is good to share by taking turns at leading, reading, or other ministries; all can contribute to the intercessions by suggesting intentions for the family’s prayer. Similarly, all can share in preparing for participation in the community’s Sunday celebration.

Helpful reading:


General Instruction of the Roman Missal, nos. 20-23, 74-75.

SHARING IN A FRIENDLY MEAL

A human value: When we think of happy times, we usually remember eating and drinking at family events, picnics, parties, and celebrations (see page 101, above). A meal has deep meaning — it is much more than refuelling our bodies. A meal is a joyful and relaxed gathering with family or friends, where we can share our friendship, love, ideals, achievements, disappointments, hopes. Meals are not a time for scolding, correcting, arguing, or complaining, but rather a time for relaxing, enjoying, being at peace.

While our society marks special occasions by banquets and barbecues, we also find too many opportunities for eating alone or without spiritual meaning: take-out stands, instant meals, eating at a shelf while facing a wall, eating and running.

A gospel value: One of the accusations made against Jesus shows how human he chose to be: he was accused of enjoying food and drink (Mt. 11: 19) and of eating and drinking with social outcasts (Lk. 15: 2). The story of feeding thousands with only a few loaves and fishes is told in all four gospels (Mk. 6: 30-44). At the last supper, on the night before he died, Jesus celebrated the Passover with his apostles, and told them to remember him by doing this (Lk. 22: 14-20; 1 Cor. 11: 23-26). After his resurrection, Jesus appeared to his apostles and ate with them (Lk. 24: 13-43; Jn. 21: 1-14; Acts 10: 41).

Our Lord mentions banquets as ways of celebrating our joy (Lk. 15: 6, 9, 23, 32), and describes heaven in terms of a banquet or wedding feast (Lk. 14: 15-24).

In the liturgy: The first generation of Christians called the eucharist the breaking of bread (Acts 2: 42) and the Lord's supper (1 Cor. 11: 20). Before long the eucharist was being celebrated apart from a meal setting, but continued to be seen as a holy meal in itself. In our day, we have seen the return to the fuller sign of the eucharist by having the people share the cup and by using bread that looks and tastes like real food. When celebrated well, the communion rite is filled with sound teaching about the meaning of eating the bread of life and drinking the cup of salvation.

In the family: Jesus is with us whenever we gather in his name (Mt. 18: 19-20). We should recognize him as the unseen guest at each meal, waiting for us to invite him to join us (see Rev. 3: 20). By our eating and drinking we can give glory to our God (1 Cor. 10: 31). We begin and end our meal with grace, a prayer of praise and thanks: this is indeed a reminder of our community's celebration of the eucharist on the Lord's day and of the heavenly banquet to which we are all called.

At least once a week, each family should make sure that all members can gather for a happy family celebration, without haste or pressure, and with joy, remembering, and even singing.

Helpful reading:


Meal prayers, in Bulletin 80, pages 160-164; further examples of prayers are given in Sunday Mass Book (1976, CCC, Ottawa), pages 1328-1330; and in A Book of Blessings (1981, CCCB, Ottawa), pages 171-186.

Human values: When children are in their infancy, they instinctively try to get everything they need. As they grow, we try to teach them to think of others, to be considerate, thoughtful, unselfish. When an adult is selfish or self-centered, we consider him or her to be acting like a child. A mature adult is one who is continuing to be generous, to share, to give time, talents, and self to others or to a worthy cause. We try to recognize and develop the talents we have been given, and share their benefits with other people.

When gift-giving is sincere, it says: “I am giving some of myself, my time, and my life to you because you are worthy of it.” The same is true of a worthwhile cause, service to others, or other similar forms of activity.

Children learn to be generous and ready to share when they are surrounded by adults who act in this way. The example of parents, teachers, relatives, and other adults important in their life teaches children that this is indeed the way to live and be happy.

Gospel values: Our Christian life is one of responding generously to the generous gifts given to us by God in Christ. Our Lord gave himself to others when he had compassion on the crowd (Mk. 6: 34) or took time to teach the woman at the well and the people of Sychar, even though he was weary (Jn. 4: 6-30, 39-42). Jesus gave himself totally for us, laying down his life freely to save us (Jn. 10: 9, 17-18; Jn. 15: 13). Our Lord poured himself out for us (Phil. 2: 1-7), and made himself poor in order to make us rich (2 Cor. 8: 9). He teaches us the golden rule to guide our lives (Mt. 7: 12). Jesus is the perfect model of the love that God pours into our hearts (Rom. 5: 5). To all of us God can say: you have received these gifts from my great love; share them freely with others (see Mt. 10: 8). Our God rewards our generosity (Ps. 37: 21; Lk. 6: 38).

In the liturgy: The eucharist is an act of sharing: Christ shares himself with us, and we share ourselves with one another. By taking a full and active part in the liturgy through praying, singing, and action, we are contributing to the community’s public worship. This is especially true when we are tired and don’t feel like giving. Generosity is also displayed when we carry out one of many ministries for the love of all. The gifts brought to the altar in the name of all represent our individual and community offering of ourselves to God in response to the gifts we have received in Christ. The eucharistic prayer is a solemn prayer of thanks to our Father for all the gifts of creation, redemption, and our continuing salvation history.

As we prepare and celebrate liturgy, we need to remind ourselves often to be thankful for what God is giving us (see page 111, above). Through the grace received in the liturgy, we are strengthened to go forth and continue to give glory to God by giving ourselves to others in loving service.

In the family: Parents can encourage children to grow in their generosity and willingness to share by their own example and by making opportunities for these values. Talents and abilities given by God are to be developed — and this requires work, dedication, and even pain. Children need help to see beyond the gift to its symbolic meaning: the giver is giving or sharing himself or herself with this child. Children also need to be encouraged to remain open to God’s generous gifts of grace,
and to express their thanks by using these gifts well. We need to encourage children both to receive and to give gifts gracefully and without embarrassment.

**Helpful reading:**

_The Eucharist and Human Liberation_, by Tissa Balasuriya, OMI (1979, SCM Press, 58 Bloomsbury Street, London WC1).

**A prayer:**  
Lord Jesus,  
help us to be generous to others  
as you have been to us. Amen!

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**EXPERIENCING SYMBOLIC ACTIONS**

**A human value:** Using symbols is part of our everyday life. While we usually take symbols for granted, it is good for us to reflect on them occasionally, and on the way we use them. Certain actions or things mean much more than what appears on the surface. Eating is much more than refuelling our energy needs: it is also a ritual action speaking of life and its meaning (see page 101, above). Some things are symbolic in the life of a nation: its flag, national anthem, certain colors, slogans, places, heroes, dates. Families accept these symbols, and some from their own family backgrounds, and make them their own. Symbols affect us emotionally as well as intellectually. “They are playing _our song_” indicates that the particular piece of music has special significance for this couple or family.

We have grown up with symbols. When a new symbol becomes part of our life, we may be more conscious of it at first, but gradually we incorporate it into the rest of our symbolic system and become unaware of it.

**A gospel value:** Jesus himself is the symbol, the image of God our Father (Col. 1: 15; Heb. 1: 3). Our Lord is called the Word in the introduction to John's gospel (Jn. 1: 1). He uses traditional symbols or images to describe his place in God's plan of salvation: Jesus is the good shepherd (compare Jn. 10: 11-16 and Ps. 23); he is the living vine (Jn. 15: 1-10 and Ps. 80). He continues the use of symbolic actions: washing in baptism (Jn. 3: 5-8; Mt. 28: 19-20), a memorial meal (Mt. 26: 18; 1 Cor. 11: 24-25), healing with oil (Mk. 6: 13). He applies the symbolic value of the Jerusalem temple to his own body (Jn. 2: 21).

In one area of symbolism, however, Jesus does not seem to have much success among his followers: avoiding the use of titles and ranks as symbols of power. He teaches us that we are children of the Father; we are brothers and sisters of Jesus and of all God's children. Titles (Lk. 24: 25), as well as clothing (Mt. 6: 25-33) and possessions (Mt. 6: 19-21), do not make us better than others. The disciples seemed always to be squabbling over first place (Mk. 9: 33-37), even at the last supper (Lk. 22: 24-27). Among Christians, the greater are to be servants of all (Mk. 10: 42-45). [Before we condemn the disciples too harshly, we might ask ourselves if we are doing any better today in obeying Jesus.]
In the liturgy: Symbolism is a strong part of the liturgy (see Bulletin 83, pages 54-55). The main symbols are people (we are the Church, the sacrament or sign of God’s love in Christ for humanity) and the actions of bathing (baptismal washing) and eating and drinking (eucharistic meal). The various ministries are called forth to serve the community in the spirit of Jesus’ loving service. The book of God’s word is a worthy volume, carried and incensed and proclaimed with faith and reverence, for God is speaking to us. By singing and dancing, posture and gesture, we express our response to God’s love. The Church year has seasons and dates which are filled with symbolism. Vesture, candles, and incense have some symbolic meaning, although less now than in past centuries. Silence is returning to modern liturgy as a strong symbol.

In the family: It is in our daily family living that we come into contact with symbolism. Warm hugs and kisses from our parents, parental blessings, gestures of love: these are part of our introduction into the world of symbols. The use of candles and decorations for special days (see page 101, above) is also symbolic. When the family stays in tune with the Church’s year of prayer and celebration, and lets its prayers and actions reflect the changing seasons, symbols speak to us both at home and in church. When parents share with their children their own love for story and poetry, for singing and dancing, and for acting out our deepest ideals, they are passing on to their children a strong gift for symbolism.

Helpful reading:


The Book of Sacramental Basics, by Tad Guzie (1981, Paulist Press, 545 Island Road, Ramsey, NJ 07446).

A PRAYER FOR FAMILIES

Lord Jesus,
we praise you for loving us
and for saving us by your dying and rising.
Look with love on the parents of our community
and help them to form their children in your values.
Teach our young people your ideals,
and lead them to you by our example.

Lord Jesus, have mercy on us,
for we are your chosen people. Amen!
BEING A FRIEND

A human value: Friendship and friendliness are values respected by all. Friendship flows from mutual esteem and respect. Friends like one another, enjoy being together in discussion and activities, and are ready to be of help in time of need. To be a friend, we have to accept others as they are (page 123, below), to look for their good points, to share their interests. A friend is approachable, even at awkward or difficult moments. Friendships need to be strengthened and cultivated by activities together or by maintaining contact through visits, phone calls, or letters.

• Being friendly: A friendly attitude toward others — strangers, acquaintances, family members, fellow workers or students — comes from a relaxed and comfortable attitude toward them. A genuine openness to the concerns and needs of others is sincere, and responds to them without looking for gain or advantage.

A gospel value: As well as giving the golden rule (Mt. 7: 12), a teaching common to the great religions, Jesus teaches us to go beyond human norms by loving our enemies as well as our friends (Mt. 5: 43-47). He is described as a friend of social outcasts and sinners (Mt. 11: 19). He calls his apostles his friends (Jn. 15: 14-15). Everyone who loves him and obeys him is his friend (Jn. 14: 21; 15: 14), for Jesus has made us God’s friends (Rom. 5: 10-11). Jesus gives us his great commandment, to love others as he has loved us (Jn. 13: 34). Our love will be the sign to the world that we are Jesus’ followers (Jn. 13: 35). The greatest degree of love is to lay down our life for our friends (Jn. 15: 13) — as Jesus was ready to do for us (Jn. 10: 11, 15, 17-18; 1 Jn. 3: 16). Our Lord put these teachings into practice by his kindness toward sinners and the sick, and invites us to recognize him in all those in need (Mt. 25: 31-46).

In the liturgy: We are the Church, God’s people. We are most visible when we assemble for the liturgy, especially on the Lord’s day (Liturgy constitution, nos. 41-42). Our assembly is a gathering of those whom Jesus calls friends: each of us has been befriended by Jesus, washed, anointed, nourished and forgiven by him. We need to love one another as Jesus has loved us (Jn. 13: 34). This shared friendship with Jesus and with one another is shown in several ways during the liturgy: welcoming by the ushers or ministers of hospitality; greetings by the presiding priest; sharing of the kiss of peace; moving together in the communion procession; taking part together in prayer, song, gesture, posture, and silence. During the intercessions, we show this love by fervent prayer for all in need. Ministers show this love by carrying out their roles as servants of the community, with a friendly attitude toward all rather than an air of self-importance.

In the family: Love and friendship at home are the basis for these qualities in our community life and liturgy. By example and teaching, parents encourage their children to be friendly and open to all, to see good in others, and to be willing to help others. Children need to learn to be kind and friendly to all, but especially to their own family and classmates. Cruelty toward other children — especially those with handicaps or from another racial, language, or religious group — is contrary to Jesus’ command of love for all. Parents who encourage their children to make friends, and then welcome these friends into the family home, are helping their children to learn by their good example. By working, playing, and praying together, in small activities and major projects, children learn to be friends and to grow in the spirit of Jesus’ love for all his brothers and sisters.
BEING MODERATE IN ALL THINGS

A human value: When we are moderate, we control ourselves, maintain a balance, and avoid extremes. Moderation applies to all our activities: eating and drinking, playing and recreation, working and studying. We need to keep a balance between our concern for the world and our responsibility for our neighborhood, between our work for the community and our care for our family. A balanced person knows when to work and when to play.

In our society today, there are many excesses that need to be faced and eliminated: spending for arms when nations are starving; closing our hearts to those in need in our own country and elsewhere; a proliferation of entertainments and spectator sports; changing fashions and keeping in style, instead of making do with what we have; a constant bombardment of advertising, urging us to buy more, to have more, and thus be "better" because of our possessions. These are immoderate pressures: do we recognize them and cope with them? Or are they seducing us?

A gospel value: Jesus taught us moderation in our prayer: we are not to try to impress God by long-winded prayers (Mt. 6: 7-8). Our prayer is to be simple, and Jesus has given us the Our Father as our model for good prayer (Mt. 6: 9-13). We are to avoid showing off in our prayer, fasting, and almsgiving — in all our religious activities (Mt. 6: 5-6, 16-18, 2-4, 1). Jesus ate and drank normally (Mt. 11: 19). The only 'excess' he encouraged was in love (Jn. 13: 34) and in forgiveness (Mt. 18: 21-22). By letting the Spirit guide our lives, we can be moderate in all things (Gal. 5: 16-26). When eating, drinking, or doing anything, we do it in the name of Jesus, with thanksgiving, for God's glory (1 Cor. 10: 31; see Col. 3: 17; Eph. 5: 20). Love must control all our virtues and actions (Col. 3: 12-15).

In the liturgy: The Roman liturgy is moderate, filled with "soberness and sense" (see Bulletin 62, page 46). Bursts of poetic excess are rare: the "light of Christ" and the Easter proclamation (Exsultet) are two examples from the Easter vigil. We balance praise with petition, thanksgiving with pleas for mercy. Our rites are to have "noble simplicity" (Liturgy constitution, no. 34): short, simple, and sincere, not requiring a lot of explanation. The length of our liturgy (and its punctuality) will vary in different cultures. Our renewed liturgy calls for a balance of words, actions, gestures, postures, music, singing, silence: the liturgy is to be addressed to the whole person, and not just to our head.

In the family: Parents need to help children to understand what is a reasonable balance in all things: eating, playing, TV time, other activities. Children have to learn that work as well as play is a part of their lives. In an age where self-restraint is not common, Christian parents need to help their children grow gradually in the traditional practices of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. Lent, Fridays, and other days of prayer and penance are important in the homes of believers.

Helpful reading:

Bulletin 42, Call to Penance.


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HAVING A SENSE OF SELF-RESPECT

A human value: Each of us needs a sense of our own worth. It is hard to put up with someone who has little self-respect: such a person seems to apologize for living, considering that everything he or she does is of little value. On the other hand, people who respect themselves receive the respect of others.

Every human person is of tremendous value, a unique reflection of humanity, with particular talents and gifts to build up the world in our time. Self-respect is not built upon a false view, but on a realistic picture of ourselves. Self-respect has to be instilled in us from our childhood. If parents, teachers, or peers treat us as being of little value, or stupid or ugly or bad, we are sure that we are of little worth and will have little self-respect. If we are treated positively, and great things are expected of us, we can develop a sound sense of self-respect and have a positive outlook on life.

A gospel value: The scriptures assure us that we are worthwhile: God loves us, even though we are sinners (1 Jn. 4: 9-10, 19). We are not worthless but important in God's sight (Ps. 8). God has loved us deeply and sent the Son to save us and give us eternal life (Jn. 3: 16-17). From all eternity God has chosen each of us to belong to the Church and to be members of the people of praise (Eph. 1: 3-10). We are brothers and sisters of Jesus, who died to save us.

Yet great as we are in God's sight, we can also echo the phrases of Ps. 22: 6; Ps. 144: 3-4; and Mt. 8: 8. We are always in need of God's mercy, and totally dependent on God's grace. Still, each of us can say that Jesus loved me and died to save me (Gal. 2: 20). God loves us, and has freed us by the sacrifice of Jesus (1 Pet. 1: 18-21). We are indeed chosen sons and daughters of God our Father!

In the liturgy: In the Church's liturgy of the hours, Leo the Great tells us to remember our dignity as Christians. When we assemble for liturgy, we are a gathering of God's chosen, redeemed people. We must not be like the Pharisee who looked down upon others (Lk. 18: 9-14). We respect all who are there because God loves them all; all respect me, because God loves me. Each of us has to respect himself or herself, because "Jesus has loved me!" Ministers of the community should lead in giving respect to all, for everyone in the assembly is loved and valued by Jesus.

In the family: A child who is loved and treated with respect will gradually develop a sense of self-worth and self-respect. By encouraging a child to do his or her best with and for Jesus, parents give their child a good ideal; by helping the child to accept failure and sinfulness too, they guide their son or daughter to an experience of being forgiven and welcomed once more by our loving Lord. Children grow best when they are given a happy and positive outlook on life. As they learn to forgive others their foibles and faults, they can learn to seek forgiveness and to forgive themselves. A moment of each day's prayer could be reserved for thanking God for all the good things done through us, and for all the gifts and talents we have received from our loving Father, who loves us with a special love.

A prayer: Loving God,
I thank you for making me in your love.
Help me to respect your handiwork. Amen!

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A human value: Work has a value and a dignity, for it is the giving of a person's time, talents, and effort to achieve a task. Working for a living is the normal thing for adults. Donating time and work for a cause and giving service for the benefit of others are ways of giving ourselves and our life to make this a better world. When we work together with others, we should do our best, a fair share of what is being done. With others we can work for a common goal that we could not reach individually. Each person should do an honest day's work, and not seek to avoid it or cheat by being lazy, working to rule, doing as little as possible, feather-bedding, or other dishonest practices. Employers have corresponding responsibilities toward their workers. A co-operative approach would seem to be a better one than an antagonistic one. Unemployment attacks the dignity of those without work, and of their families. A wise community will make serious efforts to make adequate employment available for all.

A gospel value: In everything we do, Jesus taught us to seek God's kingdom first (Mt. 6: 33). All our activities can be done in thanksgiving through Christ, and so be offered for God's glory (Col. 3: 17; Eph. 5: 20; 1 Cor. 10: 31). Each of us is given gifts and talents to use in building up the Church, the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12: 4-11; 14: 12; Lk. 19: 11-26). We are invited to work hard for the Lord (Col. 3: 23; Rom. 12: 11), for the Lord will reward the good work we do (Eph. 6: 8; Col. 3: 24). We are to do our work in love (1 Cor. 16: 14). When we are weary from our work, Jesus invites us to come to him for refreshment (Mt. 11: 28-30). In today's world, Christians have to work to make the world become "a kingdom of justice, love, and peace" (see preface 51), so that this earth will be the kind of world Jesus wants it to be. Our work for the Lord Jesus is never wasted (1 Cor. 15: 58).

In the liturgy: Good liturgy requires adequate preparation. All members of the assembly work together to participate and to make it a good celebration. Those who serve as ministers in the liturgical celebrations contribute their efforts so that each celebration will be the best that this community is able to offer at this time. During the eucharistic prayer we all offer our total gift — our life, our work, our prayer, our suffering, our obedience, our love — to the Father in union with Jesus' complete self-offering.

In the family: Some of the qualities each family should encourage in their children include: respect for each individual's talents and gifts; acceptance of the dignity of human work; willingness to work hard with others; taking part in projects and activities leading to community improvement. Each member of the family should be encouraged to persevere at any task undertaken: by sticking at the job, the person can bring it to a successful conclusion.

Helpful reading: Several pertinent statements of the Canadian bishops relating to the topic of work are still available from CCCB Publications, 90 Parent Avenue, Ottawa, Ontario K1N 7B1:

- Sharing Daily Bread (1974)
- From Words to Action (1976)
- A Society to Be Transformed (1977)
- Unemployment: The Human Costs (1980)

Laborem Exercens: Encyclical letter on work in our life, by John Paul II (1981. CCCB, Ottawa).
SHOWING CONCERN FOR OTHER PEOPLE

A human value: Our concern for people flows from our respect for their human dignity as persons, and even from our love for them. There are many ways in which we can show this concern: by sensitivity to their feelings and needs; by politeness and courtesy; by being punctual and not delaying others or making them wait for us; by keeping our promises and doing things on time; by our patience, trust, respect for other people. We need to learn to let other people be themselves, even though we do not agree with their goals or approve of their approach to life. The only effective way we can teach other adults is by the example of our own way of life.

A gospel value: Jesus invites us to come to him and learn from him to be gentle and humble (Mt. 11: 28-30). Paul invites his listeners to imitate him as he is imitating Jesus (1 Cor. 11: 1). Our faith is to be shown in our works, which are to help others in need (James 1: 27; 2: 14-17; 2: 3-4). By obeying Jesus' command to love others (Jn. 13: 34), we show the world we are indeed his friends (Jn. 15: 14) and his followers (Jn. 13: 35). The first letter of John explains this commandment of love in greater detail.

In the liturgy: The Christian liturgy is not a stage show put on by a few for the benefit of an idle audience (Liturgy constitution, no. 48); rather it is the celebration of the whole assembly, led by the ministers with full participation by all. This participation is our right and our duty by baptism (no. 14). The ministers, especially the presbyter or bishop who presides, are to have a sincere concern for all present, and seek to make their sharing in the rite as effective and pleasant as possible. Ministers need to pray and work to make sure that their attitude is one of serving the people as Jesus came to serve (Mk. 10: 42-45). All members of the assembly should seek to be sensitive to the needs of others, and to be patient and understanding. In some communities, punctuality needs to be worked on by ministers or people. What is needed in your community?

In the family: Parents teach their children this concern for others by word and example. They help their sons and daughters to respect others by showing this kind of respect themselves. Learning to be patient and understanding toward others is difficult, but adults have to encourage this; they might also check on how patient and understanding they themselves are. As children get older and want to reform the world instantly, they need to be reminded that the only thing they can do is self-reform: this comes first. Then they can lead others by their example, dedication, and prayer. (On the ministry of children to the community, see Bulletin 53, page 118.)

A prayer: Jesus, our brother, help us to be patient and understanding toward all your people. Teach us to love and serve them as you have loved and served us.

Lord Jesus, we praise you, for you are our Lord for ever and ever. Amen!
BEING HONEST AND KEEPING OUR WORD

Human values: Honesty involves telling the truth, avoiding lies, not being hypocritical. A truthful person is trusted and respected by all. We are honest because we have self-respect and because we have respect for others too.

We keep our word when we do what we have promised, even though it may cause us effort or inconvenience. An honorable person is one who is truthful, straightforward, and who keeps his or her word at all times.

In our society we find too many examples of untruthfulness, deceit, dishonesty, perjury, sleazy goods, false advertising, promises made lightly. Those who are upright avoid things of this type, and are open and truthful.

Gospel values: Jesus has told us to say yes when we mean yes, and no when we mean no (Mt. 5: 37; James 5: 12). Our Lord himself is the great human yes to God’s promises (2 Cor. 1: 19-20), and is called “the Amen, the faithful and true witness” in Rev. 3: 14. He condemns hypocrisy in prayer, fasting, and almsgiving, and urges us to be honest before God (Mt. 6: 1-6, 16-18). Jesus came to teach truth and to be the light of the world (Jn. 8: 12, 45-47). He has come to teach us the truth and make us free (Jn. 8: 31-32). He is the way, truth, and life for us (Jn. 14: 6), and gives us the Spirit of truth to guide us (Jn. 14: 16). We are to be obedient to truth (1 Pet. 1: 22-23). Ps. 15 is an early prayer about honesty; see also Ps. 17.

God’s covenant with us in Jesus is the most solemn promise: Jesus has been sent to assure us of the reality of God’s promises, and is the beginning of their fulfillment.

In the liturgy: Sincerity, not sham, is the spirit of the liturgy. In church buildings, wood is no longer painted to look like marble, but is allowed to look and feel like wood. Bread is supposed to look, taste, and smell like bread (General Instruction of the Roman Missal, no. 283). Our greetings to one another are to be sincere. Our prayer and worship are to flow from good daily living in order to be pleasing to God our Father, who judges what is in our hearts. Each culture is invited to express itself in the liturgy (Liturgy constitution, nos. 37-40), including language, vestments, vessels, music, church architecture, decor, postures, and gestures.

In the family: The best way to teach honesty, truthfulness, the keeping of promises, and frankness to children is by constant adult example of keeping these values. Parents and other grownups must make sure that they are not operating on a double standard: children pick up their deception immediately. Adults need to encourage children to follow Jesus’ example as they do, and to seek and speak the truth. By prayer and personal effort, all may develop an atmosphere of truthfulness in the home.

A prayer: 
Holy Jesus, lover of truth,
help us to be honest and truthful.
Let your Spirit of truth guide us today.

We ask your grace, Lord Jesus,
for you are our savior for ever. Amen!
USING OUR TIME WELL

A human value: When you rent an airplane or a computer by the hour, you make sure that the time is well used. Time wasted in confusion or idling, or in doing planning that should have been done ahead of time, is expensive. The lifetime we have is given to us once: we should use it well, for we will not pass by this way again. Each of us may regret time wasted in the past, and can make up by using this valuable resource wisely in working, in sharing our time with others, and in relaxing. Our time is measured in moments that we can use well now.

A gospel value: God sent Jesus to us when the time of salvation was ready (Heb. 1: 1-2). Our Lord grew gradually, in age, strength, wisdom, and grace before God and people (Lk. 2: 40, 52). He began preaching about the urgency of the time for repenting and believing, since the kingdom was near (Mk. 1: 15). Our life is short (Ps. 90; 2 Pet. 3: 8-9); Jesus told the parable of the rich fool (Lk. 12: 13-21), and urged us to store up riches in heaven (Mt. 6: 19-21). It is of no value for us to gain great possessions and to lose our eternal life (Mk. 8: 36).

We are pilgrims on earth (1 Pet. 2: 11). This life is but a tent sheltering us on the way to our eternal home (2 Cor. 5: 1; Is. 38: 12). Now is a time of patience for us (James 5: 7-8) and for the Lord (2 Pet. 3: 9). The end and judgment are near (1 Pet. 4: 7), coming like a thief in the night (2 Pet. 3: 10-15). Our suffering will turn to glory (1 Pet. 5: 10). Now we should be spending the rest of our life giving worship to God (1 Pet. 1: 17). In the end, Jesus will hand over the kingdom to his Father (1 Cor. 15: 24-28). Now is the time for us to work for our salvation (2 Cor. 6: 2).

In the liturgy: When we celebrate liturgy we are using our time for God and for the people of God. It takes time to plan, prepare, celebrate well, and evaluate. In the liturgy we celebrate the various natural cycles of time: the day in the liturgy of the hours, the week revolving around the eucharist on the Lord's day, the seasons and the feasts of the year with Easter at the center (see Liturgy of time, in Bulletin 70, page 147). In each community, we may ask ourselves: Do we allow adequate time for Sunday Masses, or are they too close together for good celebration? Are we punctual, beginning each celebration on time? We need to look at the way we celebrate liturgy in our community: Are we using our time well for the Lord?

In the family: Parents need to make time for their children, to listen to them, to show their loving concern. By their example and their teaching, they can help their children to learn to use their time well. Children need to learn to be punctual, avoiding dawdling or wasting of time. They need a balance between study and recreation, between work and play. Gradually they learn to move to the rhythm of ordinary working days and holidays. In prayers and activities, the family may enter into a closer union with the Church's liturgical year, sharing the spirit and mood of the seasons and feasts. Families may also help children to appreciate the value of their own time and efforts by helping in community activities and parish liturgies with adults and children. Time is God's gift for us to use well.

A prayer: Loving Father, help us to use our time well, and to work with Jesus and his Spirit in making your kingdom come among us.

We praise you through Christ our Lord. Amen!

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DEVELOPING AND USING OUR TALENTS

A human value: In every community we recognize that certain people are particularly talented: artists, musicians, speakers, writers, teachers, leaders. One of the tasks in each community is to see that these gifts are recognized early, and that those who have them learn to cultivate them and develop them for the benefit of the community as well as of themselves. Constant practice, study, and honing of our gifts demands generous perseverance, time — even years of preparation — and often money. To let talent go to waste is a shame. As well, we realize that every individual, no matter how plain or ordinary, has some gifts or talents that need to be recognized and encouraged by others.

A gospel value: Our Lord grew in wisdom as he grew in age (Lk. 2: 40, 52), and was a man of talent: as a teacher and a healer, he shared his gifts with all who were open to him, especially those who came with faith in him (Mk. 6: 5-6, and Mt. 8: 10). He told the parable of the talents (Mt. 25: 14-30), and encourages us to develop ours rather than bury them. Paul describes our talents as gifts given us by the Spirit for the building up of the body of Christ, the Church (1 Cor. 12: 4-11, 27-30). We may seek higher gifts, but especially the gift of love (1 Cor. 12: 31—13: 13). As believers, we recognize that God has given us the greatest gift, Jesus, and the Spirit of Jesus to be with us. We ought to use all our gifts to give thanks and praise to God (Col. 3: 17; Eph. 5: 20; 1 Cor. 10: 31) as we work to build up the body of Christ and advance the kingdom of God.

In the liturgy: All members of the assembly are called to take part in the Church's liturgical celebrations to the best of their ability. People who are gifted with talents such as music or public reading may offer their services as ministers or in other ways. The presbyter is the person who is to encourage people to share their God-given talents for the good of the community. Individuals and communities need to keep growing in their ability to offer themselves with Christ, to sing and use music in worship, to use graceful movements in their celebrations, and to have a spirit of prayerfulness. How can individual ministers improve their reading, preaching, preparation, or celebration in your community?

In the family: Parents have to recognize their children's incipient talents, and encourage them to develop them by study and practice. The idea of using our gifts and talents for others should be part of the family's approach to life.

An occasional prayer of thanks to God for our talents is always appropriate.

A prayer: Loving Father,
we thank you for the gifts
you have given to our family.
Help us to follow your Spirit's guidance
and serve all people with Jesus.

Father,
we offer this prayer
through Christ our Lord. Amen!
SINGING, DANCING, AND MAKING MUSIC

A human value: It is natural for little children to express themselves in singing and rhythmic motion. As they grow, they channel this ability, but too often it becomes restrained, repressed, or even stunted. Similarly, they have an aptitude for celebrating (see pages 100-106, above). It is desirable to help children develop their talents for song and music, and share this pleasure with others.

A gospel value: The psalms are filled with references to singing (Ps. 95, Ps. 96) and to praising God with music (Ps. 149, Ps. 150). God changed the people's mourning into dancing (Ps. 30: 11), and they celebrated with joyful processions (Ps. 118: 26-27). Singing the psalms was a part of Jewish worship in the time of Jesus. He mentions children's use of song and music in Mt. 11: 16-17, and tells us to dance for joy when we are persecuted for his sake (Lk. 6: 23). In the epistles, we are advised to join in singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual canticles of praise and thanksgiving (Eph. 5: 19-20; Col. 3: 16-17). Quotations from hymns are given in some of these letters (see Phil. 2: 6-11; 2 Tim. 2: 11-13; Eph. 5: 14). The book of Revelation is filled with scenes describing heaven in terms of singing (see Rev. 4: 8; and 5: 9-10, 11, 13).

In the liturgy: The renewed liturgy has made a larger place for music and song (Liturgy constitution, nos. 30, 39, 112-121). The choir and singers are now seen as part of the assembled community, ministers of music who make the celebration more beautiful and help the rest of the assembly to participate more fully. The responsorial psalm and gospel acclamation have been restored to each Mass, and are intended to be sung, as are the three acclamations during the eucharistic prayer (the Holy, holy, holy Lord, memorial acclamation, and great Amen — these are to be sung by all). Many musical instruments may be used now, as long as they are played well and beautifully. Liturgical dancing, when appropriate and well done, may also add beauty to the celebration or occasion.

In the family: Parents can encourage their children to sing, dance, and make music. By their encouragement, they may help their children to persevere through lessons and studies, and to share their talents and skills with others. They may also help their children to listen to good music, and not merely the current fad or hit parade: this can begin while the child is still in the womb. Use of hymns with family prayer will be appropriate on many occasions, as will the practice of singing grace at special meals and parties. A musical home helps children to grow in their love of music, and will encourage them to share their skills with the believing and worshipping community.

Helpful reading:

Catholic Book of Worship II (1980, CCCB, Ottawa). Families may be encouraged to own a copy of the pew edition. For those with more talents, the choir edition provides greater resources.

Bulletin 72, Music in Our Liturgy.

A prayer: Lord Jesus, our brother,
help us to sing for joy in your service.
We praise our heavenly Father with you,
and join with your Spirit and all your people
in singing praise and thanks
for ever and ever. Amen!

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BEING TOLERANT AND UNPREJUDICED

A human value: The history of the human race has been one of intolerance and prejudice of all kinds. In the past few decades, closer communications with one another and space travel have helped us to become more aware of the fact that the world is one village, one family. We are becoming aware of the injustice of prejudices against people because of their race, nationality, color, creed, language, occupation, or gender. We are also being made more aware of the feelings and needs of people with handicaps, and of their place in our society. Public opinion is gradually turning against discrimination and is recognizing the basic equality before law of each human person.

We are not perfect yet. Individuals, families, organizations — even religious bodies — retain prejudices, but gradually we are growing a little more tolerant. There is still room for more openness and fairness in laws, and in physical facilities permitting access to all. Where is our civic community in its attitudes? Where is our family? Where am I?

A gospel value: Jesus died and rose to save all people — every individual human person. He died for all (2 Cor. 5: 14-15), and he died for each of us (Gal. 2: 20): Jesus is the Lord of all people (Acts 10: 36). Everyone is a child of God, and our brother or sister. Christianity made a radical move against prejudice by seeing our equality in the eyes of God, and by pointing out that differences of race or gender or social status or possessions do not matter: read Rom. 10: 12; Acts 10: 34-35; 1 Cor. 12: 13; Gal. 3: 28; Col. 3: 11; James 2: 1-4. The vision of heaven in the final book of the New Testament involves people chosen by God from every race, country, and language (Rev. 7: 9).

In the liturgy: In the last few years, we have become more sensitive to the importance of permitting access for all in our church buildings (see Bulletin 74, page 121); while some parishes have made improvements, there are still many more that do not permit easy access for people in wheelchairs or on crutches. Each parish has to make sure that ministries are open to people from all races and classes. In the matter of discriminatory language, the problem is now being recognized by some, and some first steps are being taken, but many changes are needed in the language used in prayers, preaching, and in scripture translations. Most ministries are open to women, but some are still closed to them. No scriptural or theological reasons can be found to back up such restrictions!

In the family: Prejudices are usually learned at home and in the community. Parents have to be as open as Jesus to all, and to share this broad outlook with their children. Prejudice and intolerance are contrary to the love that Jesus asks us to have for all (Jn. 13: 34). By learning about the culture of others — their songs, dances, celebrations, holidays, food, gestures, practices, clothing, proverbs, language, poetry, ideas — we can begin to see more clearly that they too are God's beloved children and our brothers and sisters.

Helpful reading:

Vatican II: Dogmatic constitution on the Church, no. 32; Pastoral constitution on the Church in the modern world, nos. 9 and 29; Declaration on the relationship of the Church to non-Christian religions, nos. 4-5.


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REMEMBERING

A human value: Our memory enables us to recall the past, and to experience again the joy or sorrow, happiness or pain, pride or shame of past events in the present moment. We can remember the good we have received from parents, relatives, teachers, leaders, and friends, and be grateful to them. With the memory of past mistakes or errors, we can correct ourselves and do better. Community memories include national and local heroes, folk wisdom in proverbs, our national, tribal, or ancestral myths. Family and community memories help us to have solid roots in our culture, situate us, and help to identify or define us.

A gospel value: The scriptures are books of memories of God’s actions among the beloved and chosen people (Ps. 126, Ps. 77, Ps. 78). The Old Testament or Hebrew scriptures share many memories of God’s saving work in delivering the Hebrew people out of the land of slavery and bringing them into the promised land (see Deut. 36: 4-10). God does not let the chosen people forget what has been done for them (Ps. 111: 4). We pray that God will remember the covenant (Ps. 74: 20), the mercy and love shown constantly to the chosen people, and continue it (Ps. 25: 6-7). We ask God to remember us in our need (Ps. 74: 2), and not to remember our sins (Ps. 51: 1, 9). Because we remember God’s loving kindness for us (Ps. 136), we are able to place our trust and hope in our rock and fortress of salvation (Ps. 31: 2).

Jesus blessed, praised, and thanked the Father by remembering the great things done for us by God (Mt. 11: 25-26; Jn. 11: 41). The night before he died, our Lord celebrated the Passover meal with his disciples, and invited us to “do these things in my memory” (I Cor. 11: 23-26; Lk. 22: 19-20). Jesus placed his life in his Father’s hands, remembering God’s loving care for all who believe (Lk. 23: 46; Ps. 31: 5). The New Testament writers continued the practice of combining remembrance and praise (Eph. 1: 3-14; Phil. 2: 6-11; Rev. 11: 17-18).

In the liturgy: We remember God’s saving actions in many ways during the liturgy: in the scriptures proclaimed in our midst, in the prayers which recall God’s deeds, in full and generous ritual actions (thus, baptism by immersion recalls our being buried and raised with Christ: Rom. 6: 3-11). We thank God as we remember as we give our gifts as we pray for ourselves and for all. As presiders continue growing in their understanding of liturgy and in the skills of adaptation and spontaneity, they will be able to follow the basic structures of Christian prayer forms, and create new prayers within our traditions of worship.

In the family: Remembering our family background and history is part of our life. The family photograph album, the heirlooms, the memories help us to see ourselves as a particular family. In our prayer at the end of each day, we would do well to remember the good things God has done for us and through us during the day, and to give thanks.

St. Cyprian, writing in the 250s as Bishop of Carthage, suggests that the Lord’s prayer and a few basic gospel statements (Jn. 17: 3; Mt. 22: 37-40, and Mk. 12: 29-31; Mt. 7: 12) will help us to remember Jesus’ teachings.


KEEPING CLEAN IN GOD’S SIGHT

A human value: Decency is a human quality that is respected by all. No one looks up to a person with a filthy mind or mouth, and no one would leave a child in the hands of someone who is perverted or obsessed with unclean goals. We need to have proper respect for our own sexuality and for that of others, and to use it in accord with right thinking and the best standards of the community. The proverb, “Cleanliness is next to godliness,” is not limited to physical cleanliness, but extends to all matters of thought, speech, and action. “Clean in thought, word, and deed” is a standard for all to follow.

A gospel value: Clean hands and a pure heart are symbols of the purity we must have before God (Ps. 24: 4; Ps. 18: 20, 24). Jesus tells us that those who are pure of heart will see God (Mt. 5: 8). We are to honor God with our hearts and our actions, and not just our lips (Mk. 7: 6), for God sees what is in our heart. Our words and actions flow from what is in our heart (Lk. 6: 43-45): if our heart is filled with lust and wickedness, we will do evil and indecent things which make us unclean (Mk. 7: 20-23). Even thoughts and desires against purity are wrong (Mt. 5: 28; 1 Cor. 10: 6): we are to let our light lead others to give glory to God our Father (Mt. 5: 16). Immorality is against the temples of the Spirit of God (1 Cor. 6: 15-20; 3: 16-17). Those who lead children astray deserve special punishment (Mt. 18: 6-7). The epistles are filled with reminders that sins against chastity exclude us from the kingdom of heaven (see Rom. 1: 24-32; 1 Cor. 6: 9-10; Gal. 5: 19-21; Rev. 21: 27; 22: 15). Marriage is proper and holy (Heb. 13: 4; 1 Cor. 7: 3-5). Sexual abuses are wrong (1 Cor. 1: 26-32), and immorality is to be rejected by Christians (1 Thess. 4: 1-8). We are to be filled with and led by the Spirit (Rom. 8: 1-17), and so reap a good harvest (Gal. 6: 7-8). We are not to associate with those who are immoral (1 Cor. 5: 11). We are to be pure, as Jesus is pure (1 Jn. 3: 3). The book of Revelation reminds us of the reward given to those who have remained pure in the service of Jesus (see Rev. 14: 3-5).

In the liturgy: This value of cleanliness and purity is celebrated in the liturgy somewhat indirectly. We are to be in the state of loving God in order to participate in the eucharist; anyone in any state of good or evil may take part in bible services and penance celebrations as a step toward asking for forgiveness and greater love of God. In the eucharist the priest washes his hands as a reminder of the purity of heart we should all have, using the words of Ps. 51: 2. If we are to make a pleasing offering of ourselves to God, we have to be pure in mind and heart; we must give up all sinning, including deliberate sins against chastity, and seek God’s loving forgiveness. Those saints who have dedicated their life as virgins are remembered on their feasts, and appropriate prayers and readings are given in the liturgical books, including preface 68. Mary, the virgin mother of Jesus, has first place among the saints who follow Jesus.

In the family: Christian parents want to help their children to grow to their full stature in Jesus (Eph. 4: 13). By their prayers and example, they will help their family to be modest in words, dress, and actions. They will teach them Christ’s principles, and encourage them not to go along with the world’s standards (Rom. 12: 2). Care needs to be taken about the type of companions, readings, and entertainment their children seek. By prayer, penance, and love, we can keep coming back to Jesus, and seek the strength of his love to help us remain faithful temples of the
Spirit, and strong in the ways of Christ. Children can be encouraged to have greater devotion to Jesus, who was weak and tempted as we are, but who did not sin (Heb. 4: 15); and to Mary, who was obedient and faithful to God.

A prayer: Lord Jesus,
fill my heart with the love and strength of your Spirit,
and keep me pure in your service.
Help me to be clean of heart,
and bring me to see God for ever and ever. Amen!

DEVELOPING SELF-DISCIPLINE

A human value: From our earliest years, we are taught to control ourselves in every way. It is hard for us to develop this, but gradually we learn to discipline ourselves: we control our tempers, urges, and desires, and learn to think of others as well as ourselves. Great discipline is needed to master a subject or develop a skill or talent. Through years of schooling we are taught to conform to the ways of our society, to avoid outbursts, to contribute to the common good.

Discipline has to come from within; otherwise, it will fall apart the moment no one is watching or guarding us. We begin by learning it from others, but it is achieved only when we control and discipline ourselves.

A gospel value: As Christians we are invited to control ourselves by imitating Jesus. He made obedience to the Father’s will the principle of his own self-control: the source of his life and strength — his “food and drink” — was to do his Father’s will (Jn. 4: 34). He taught us to pray, in the Our Father, that God’s will would be done (Mt. 6: 10). In the garden, when tempted to avoid the cross, he prayed: “Not my will, Father, but your will be done” (Lk. 22: 42; Mt. 26: 39). It is through his obedience to the Father that Jesus saved us. We are to continue to strive for our salvation, to train ourselves as athletes do, and to finish the race for an eternal prize (1 Cor. 9: 23-27; Phil. 3: 12-15). Our self-control comes from our efforts in cooperation with the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5: 22-26). Jesus will change our weak bodies into glorious ones at the end of our trials (Phil. 3: 21).

In the liturgy: A certain amount of self-control is required if we are to take part in liturgical celebrations. We have to stay together with others in our words, singing, and postures so that we do not draw unnecessary attention to ourselves and distract other members of the assembly. Ministers need to make sure of their motives (working for God’s people and not for show, in the spirit of Mk. 10: 42-45), and of their actions (moving discreetly and quietly, avoiding needless words and actions).

Liturgy is an area where North American English-speaking Catholics may be too self-disciplined. We find it hard to sing out with gusto, to move in processions, to clap our hands in church. The only part of the eucharist where we seem to wake up is at the kiss of peace. There is room for more enthusiasm in our acclamations: they need to be sung out boldly instead of merely being said. We should learn to sing or say our Amen as though it had an exclamation mark. Alleluia is to be sung as a joyful shout of praise to our God.
In the family: Self-discipline is learned slowly and painfully over a period of years: it is part of our daily sharing in the cross of Jesus (Lk. 9: 23). Parents' teaching and example will be a strong factor in passing on this quality, as they encourage their children to face problems and overcome them, to keep their word, to persevere at what they begin, to pray faithfully, to do penance with the Church, and to carry their cross daily with Jesus our brother.

A prayer: Jesus, our brother and our Lord,
help us to do everything for you.
Teach us to control ourselves in all things
and to grow in your love by serving others.

Jesus,
we praise your name
today and for ever. Amen!

WORKING FOR PEACE AND LOVE

A human value: The history of the human race is filled with wars, battles, skirmishes, invasions, rebellions, revolutions; with hatred, anger, envy, violence, killing. Even the times of peace are troubled, and hatred seems to attack love everywhere. Peace on earth is an ideal to long for, a goal to seek. Men and women who work for peace are honored even while arms races continue: Nobel Peace Prizes are esteemed around the world. The United Nations Organization was founded in 1945 to bring about peace by human efforts: its story so far has been one of some positive steps forward.

The meaning of love in our society is confused: we talk of love of parents and children, love of food or fashions, pets or cars, music or books. Western society confuses love with the use of sex, and often plays down the importance of marriage, chastity, and responsible use of our sexuality.

A gospel value: Peace on earth to people of good will is proclaimed at the birth of Jesus (Lk. 2: 14), the prince of peace. He has told us that those who work for peace will be called God's children (Mt. 5: 9). Jesus gave us peace as our inheritance (Jn. 14: 27). After rising from the dead, he greeted his friends with peace, and gave them the Spirit of peace and forgiveness (Jn. 20: 21-23). Even in the midst of our continuing war with sin and Satan, Jesus has won the victory by his cross, and allows us to share in it by our faith (1 Jn. 5: 3-5). We have peace when we are united with Jesus (Jn. 16: 33), for his gospel is one of peace (Acts 10: 36). In God's kingdom we must always work for peace (Rom. 14: 17-19). We are to be men and women of peace (Ps. 37: 37). Jesus gave us the new commandment of love, by which the world would recognize us as his followers (Jn. 13: 34-35). The first letter of John gives us a penetrating reflection on the meaning of God's love for us, and our love for God and for others.

In the liturgy: The eucharist contains prayers for peace in the world, and includes a kiss or greeting of peace as part of our preparation for communion. In some other Christian Churches today, this rite comes as part of the introductory
ceremonies or after the end of the liturgy of the word. Prayers for peace may also be included in the prayer of the faithful, and in the intercessions at morning and evening prayer. We speak of Jesus' kingdom as one of “justice, love, and peace” in preface 51. A votive Mass for peace may be celebrated by the believing community at appropriate times.

God's love for us and all the world is celebrated in the eucharistic prayer: in Jesus we have the visible sign of this love (Jn. 3: 16-17). Our communion procession and song unite us in love. Celebrations of the saints reflect on the way Jesus has extended his victory in their life and love. As God's people, we are to be the continuing sign of God's love in the world today (Constitution on the Church, no. 1).

In the family: Parents are kept busy at times restoring harmony, peace, and love among their children and their children's friends. Example, teaching, patience, and prayer will gradually help to instill these values into their children's lives. By encouraging them to be peacemakers, to work for good causes, to belong to organizations that work for peace and love (such as Red Cross, Scouting, Guiding), and to pray for peace, parents are giving their children a good foundation toward making a positive and lasting contribution to peace and love in this world.

A prayer:  

Lord Jesus, prince of peace,  
let your Spirit bring peace into our hearts.  
Help us to work together with others in love,  
and lead all people to give glory to your Father.  

Lord Jesus,  
hear our prayer,  
and give us your peace for ever and ever. Amen!

WAYS OF USING THIS BULLETIN

There are several ways of using Bulletin 89 in your parish or community:

- An aid to discussion for clergy, liturgy committee, education committee, catechists, teachers;
- A book to present to parents on special occasions: birth or baptism of their child, first communion, entering school, moving into the parish;
- A resource for high school religion classes;
- A background book for catechumens and those working with them.
- A source of discussion points in the parish bulletin or with groups of interested people in the community.

Extra copies of Bulletin 89 may be ordered now from CCCB Publications Service, 90 Parent Avenue, Ottawa, Ontario K1N 7B1.
NEEDING A FRESH START

A human value: It is natural for us to feel the need for a fresh start in our lives, turning over a new leaf, beginning anew. Spring cleaning and New Year’s resolutions are a reflection of this need. Organizations need new executives and new projects every few years. We feel the surge of energy that can come from a new season, a new job, a new format. “Under new management” makes us hope for changes and improvements. Even baseball teams and other sports organizations expect to do better when they shuffle or trade players and present a new lineup.

A gospel value: God is always calling us back (Is. 55: 6-7). Jesus has come to offer us a completely new beginning: with him we die to sin in baptism, and are raised to new life for God (Rom. 6: 3-11). It is a new birth (Jn. 3: 3-8), a new creation (2 Cor. 5: 17). Our Lord is our brother, and is able to feel our human weakness with us (Heb. 4: 15). He came to save sinners (Mk. 9: 13), for we were lost in our sins (1 Cor. 15: 17). Jesus invites us to recognize our sinfulness as Peter did (Lk. 5: 8), to turn from our sins (Mk. 1: 15; Acts 2: 38), and have them washed away (2 Pet. 1: 9). He seeks us out (Mt. 9: 13; Ps. 119: 176), and is ready to welcome us back at any moment: now is the time of our forgiveness and our salvation (2 Cor. 5: 20—6: 2). With Jesus at our side we can continue to grow in grace (2 Pet. 3: 18).

In the liturgy: This work of renewal and reconciliation is continued today in the liturgy. In the sacraments of Christian initiation — baptism, confirmation, and eucharist — adults are brought into the body of Christ; infants are baptized into this new life, and are helped to begin to live it as they grow. All the baptized are called to conversion and renewal throughout their lives.

During the liturgical year, the season of Lent is the time when the whole Church is called to conversion, to renew our baptismal promises of dying to sin and living for God. At the Easter vigil, the season of renewal comes to its climax, and we continue to live our faith at a deeper level. Advent calls us to make straight the way of the Lord in our hearts and in our lives. Each Sunday we are invited to renew our baptismal covenant as we celebrate the eucharist (Liturgy constitution, no. 10).

In the sacrament of reconciliation, we are called back to our baptismal purity, in order that we might once more live for the Lord in all we do. The penitential rite in the Mass is a reminder of our weakness and of our constant need for Christ’s mercy in our lives.

In the family: Parents can provide a number of ways for all members of the family to start anew: New Year’s, Lent, Advent, birthdays, and other occasions. When praying before going to bed, each member can pause to reflect on the day, and to express personal sorrow to Jesus for sins and faults.

No one is perfect or without sin, but we have Jesus as our friend. He is always ready to forgive us and to lead us to new love.

A prayer: Jesus, forgive us our sins, and help us to make a fresh start with you.

Hear our prayer, Jesus, for you are our Lord now and for ever. Amen!
OTHER VALUES

As well as the values described in this issue of the Bulletin, there are others which could be treated in a similar way. These include:

- **Having a sense of responsibility:** Taking care of our resources, and using both human talents and this world's goods carefully and wisely. Conservation and ecology come under this heading.

- **Having respect for law and order:** We respect the civil and ecclesial system, and yet we remain alert to injustice and lack of concern for the poor and the weak.

- **Knowing when and how to relax:** As well as working hard (page 122), we know that relaxation, leisure, and vacations are necessary at times if we are to continue to do our best for God.

- **Having ideals:** Able to be idealistic, to aim at high goals, to look beyond the limits of our horizons, to have a vision. Jesus issued a challenge to the rich young man to follow him — but it was not accepted (Mt. 19: 16-22). Are we open to ideals and challenges?

- **Having a positive attitude toward our bodies:** Our bodies are God's design and creation, temples of the Spirit, marvellous instruments for doing good. We understand and respect our sexuality, and use all God's gifts for God's glory, for a better world, and for our salvation.

- **Having a balanced attitude toward possessions:** All creation is good (Gen. 1: 31). We need to make sure that our possessions do not become an obstacle to seeking higher values. See Mt. 6: 24-34; Mt. 6: 19-21; Col. 3: 1-4.

- **Able to undergo testing and temptation:** Our Lord is like us, tested and tried in all things, but remaining sinless (Heb. 4: 15). Though we are severely tried by the war within us (Rom. 7: 14-20; Gal. 5: 17), Jesus is ready to help us to overcome all temptations and trials, and share in his victory over sin (Heb. 4: 16; 1 Cor. 10: 12-13).

- **Being cheerful**
- **Working for justice for all**
- **Being creative and constructive**
- **Being loyal and trustworthy.**

**Many gospel values** are given in the four gospels, and are summarized in the sermon on the mount (Matthew, chapters 5-6-7; see also Lk. 6: 17-49). Like Jesus, each of us has to grow in age, strength, wisdom, and grace (Lk. 2: 40, 52), until we reach our full stature in Christ (Eph. 4: 13).

**A prayer:**  
*Jesus, Son of God and our brother,*  
*help us to follow you in all things,*  
*living our life wisely for you*  
*and for all God's people.*

*Lord Jesus,*  
*we ask this prayer*  
*in your holy name. Amen!*

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The Second Vatican Council has taught us to recognize that the works and triumphs of our human race are part of God's plan for the world; the Spirit is active among us all (Pastoral constitution on the Church in the modern world, nos. 34, 38). Many people have high ideals, and live good lives, humanly speaking, even when they do not know Jesus as Lord. God's help, earned by Jesus' death for all people, leads them quietly to follow what their conscience tells them is right or proper. One of the advances of Vatican II was to recognize the action of the Spirit and the true values to be found in other religions (Declaration on the relationship of the Church to non-Christian religions, no. 2).

Throughout this issue of the Bulletin, we have looked at human values which are good in themselves, and at the way the Christian teaching builds on and expands them. Grace builds on nature is an old saying that expresses this truth clearly. If we are to be good Christians, we have to develop our human values first.

Grace is a free gift of God to us: we cannot demand it. Jesus has died freely to save us, and to bring God's grace to us. We must learn to be thankful at all times (Gal. 3: 16-17; Eph. 5: 19-20), and to use all creation and do everything for God in love (1 Cor. 10: 31).

St. Paul recognized God's grace at work in the world and in himself (1 Cor. 15: 10). He was weak, but knew that God was helping him to be strong (2 Cor. 12: 9-10). By God's grace he overcame many obstacles (1 Cor. 10: 13) and became a more mature and holy person. With Christ we can do all things (Phil. 4: 13). But Paul was always aware that those who depend on themselves instead of God will collapse and fall (1 Cor. 10: 12).

Grace, God's loving gift to us, is a mystery. We cannot understand how God gives us the help to do freely what we cannot do without grace. We cannot grasp the mystery of evil, how we can freely reject God's grace-filled invitation to love and to serve with Jesus.

With God's help, we can pray for grace, and — moved by grace — continue to die with Christ to sin and live with him for God (see Jude 24-25). God has given us Christ as the sign of love for all, and calls us to use the grace and mercy we are offered so that we too may be the sign of God's love and light and unity for all the world.
Helpful reading:


Directory for Masses with Children, nos. 9-10 (see footnote 1, on page 99, above).

Bulletin 63, pages 71-72, 113; no. 73, page 89; no. 53, page 118.

A prayer:

Loving Father,
we praise you for calling us to be your children.
Help us to live each day
according to your law of love and service,
walking with Jesus by the light of his Spirit.

Father,
we ask this grace
through Jesus, our Lord and our brother,
in the love of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever. Amen!

TOYS AND GAMES

The Social Affairs Commission of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops issued the following statement in December 1982. Its message applies throughout the year.

It is a sad paradox that games of violence are being promoted and accepted as Christmas gifts. What a terrible way to celebrate the feast of the Prince of Peace! We encourage parents and others to resist the pressures of advertising that make games of violence popular. Instead, let us share gifts that symbolize peace.

Now, perhaps as never before, we need to build a world in which people learn to work for peace, to build a society in which peace is possible. Children have a central place in such a project. They are the ones who will carry on the building of the future.

Toys and games affect how they will develop as persons. If their games lead them to believe that aggression and destruction are acceptable, they will have all the more difficulty in seeing the importance, or even the possibility of working for peace.

Of particular concern are some of the new video games for both adults and children. Some combine violence, destruction, and captivating space fantasies. Others add racism and pornography to this. Violence is violence no matter what fantasies are built around it. We create a dangerous situation for all of us when we make violence fun and mask it with attractive colors and music. We have social responsibilities as well as individual freedoms.

When purchasing Christmas gifts, think about the meaning of the feast we celebrate, think about the meaning of the gift to the receiver, think about the lesson the gift will teach. Peace is everyone's responsibility.
The family is the place where children are prepared by teaching, celebration, prayer, and practice to take a full part in the life of the Church as the priestly and servant people of the Lord. Parents are living up to their sharing by baptism in the priesthood of Jesus when they teach their children to praise God by their lives and to pray for the world.

With the pressures that today's world exerts on family life, values, and timetables, many parents find their task increasingly difficult. How can they lead their children to Christ when the world is trying to distract them? How can they give their children a taste for Christian love, worship, and service when the world is enticing them by allurements, entertainments, gaudy baubles?

**Parents need help:** Great statements from above or sympathetic cluckings from others are not enough. Parents need *practical help* from people of their own community, from parents whose children have grown, from catechists, religious, and clergy. This type of help is available in each parish community, but usually is unharnessed, unchannelled, untapped. Unless concerned leaders in the community try to organize this expertise and generous concern, it will evaporate and do no good for parents who are seeking help.

Parents, priests, and the parish council's liturgy or education committees can try to share the creative energies that are in the parish. As well as this Bulletin, a few resources are suggested below. A day of finding out more about prayer can be organized by and for parents, and ideas can be shared on using the word of God, family events, the liturgical seasons, civil feasts, and other occasions in their prayer life. Practical ways of finding time for family prayer, of teaching spontaneous prayer, of encouraging family blessings, and other similar concerns can also be discussed and shared. Other forms of religious education for all adults and good celebration of the Sunday liturgy will also help the parish community to grow to its full stature in Christ (Eph. 4: 13). These forms should be based on the spirit of the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* (see Bulletin 64, pages 131-132, and Bulletin 91).

If the future generations are to be able to take part with meaning in the liturgy of the parish community, they need to be prepared now, in the years of their childhood and youth. A parish community that is concerned about the quality of praise and prayer offered in the liturgy will make sure that the spirit of liturgical prayer is begun and deepened in the families who make up the community.

*What can your parish do* now and in the next few years to help children grow into the liturgical life of the Church?
Helpful resources:


Bulletin 80, Helping Families to Pray: no. 63, Children and Liturgy; no. 75, Praying the Psalms.


“Values: Where Do Children Learn Them?” by Tim Bentley, in The Observer (June 1982, 85 St. Clair Avenue East, Toronto M4T 1M8): pages 27-32; see also pages 32-34.


TEACHING

Teach love by loving.
Teach respect by trusting.
Teach obedience by obeying.
Teach prayer by praying.

Teach faith by believing.
Teach hope by hoping.
Teach generosity by giving.
Teach life by living.

By your example,
lead your children to Jesus:
he alone can meet and exceed their ideals,
and challenge them to grow to their full stature
before God and the people of God.
Brief book reviews


Everything about this book is practical and amazing: its scope, its plan, its contents, its ease of use, its practical nature, its sturdiness and quality. Documents provides us with English copies or excerpts of 554 official documents issued in this important period of 17 years on the renewal of the liturgy. These texts are grouped under seven main departments: general principles, eucharist, other sacraments and sacramentals, liturgy of the hours, liturgical year, music, and art and furnishings. Well known and obscure documents alike are included. The appendix includes various lists (dates, incipits, classifications), and 54 pages of detailed general index.

This excellent reference book is based on the work of Fr. Gaston Fontaine (formerly of Canada’s Office national de Liturgie and the Congregation of Divine Worship), and has been translated and edited by Thomas C. O’Brien. The book has been prepared by ICEL (International Commission on English in the Liturgy) as a service to the English-speaking nations and conferences.

The type is clear, the detailed references and footnotes are easy to follow. The documents are numbered, and each paragraph in them is given a sequential number (from 1 to 4543). These references may be used in future as simpler ways of referring to these resources: we will follow this practice in the National Bulletin on Liturgy, beginning with the next issue, no. 90.

Council documents on the liturgy, pastoral introductions to the rites, decrees, decisions, clarifications, replies: these and many more references are included in this remarkable treasury of liturgical guidelines.

This book is the most comprehensive liturgical resource available at this time, particularly in English. We recommend it as a valuable and necessary tool for bishops, chanceries, liturgical offices, libraries, students of liturgy, pastors, and all who want to study the growth of liturgy and its current practice in the Western Catholic Church today. Recommended without hesitation: order it today, and begin to move into a deeper understanding of liturgy.


This is an excerpt from Talking with Adults, reviewed in Bulletin 81, page 234. Father Walsh offers some clear points for serious discussion by adults, and opens doors for mature exploration of sin and reconciliation, especially in this year of the Synod. Writing in a clear and simple style, the author leads us to a better understanding, experience, and celebration of forgiveness and reconciliation. Recommended for parish liturgy and education committees, catechists, clergy, and concerned adults.


This book offers 50 brief prayer services for Christian groups. Both scripture and modern texts are offered, along with practical suggestions for good praying. An effort has been made to avoid discriminatory language. Recommended as a practical resource for liturgy committees, catechists, religious communities, and prayer groups. Families too may wish to use this on occasion.

1 Prices for U.S. publications are given in U.S. dollars, unless otherwise noted.
Religion Teachers, the Classroom and Parish Sunday Mass, by Eugene A. Walsh, SS, and Don F. Onley (1982, Pastoral Arts Associates, Old Hickory, TN 37138; available in Canada from B. Broughton Co., 123 Queen Street East, Toronto, Ontario M5C 1S1): paper, 88 pages. $5.50 in Canada.

Since the Vatican Council led us to renewal at every level, we have experienced great changes in both liturgy and catechetics. The author shows how these come together in the parish through the principles of the catechumenate. We are called to conversion each time we celebrate the Sunday eucharist well. A vision of the Church and of the way we can celebrate the Mass with deeper meaning offers positive hope for every parish. Recommended for parish liturgy committees, catechists, and clergy.

* * *


Many years of personal experience and insight into the nature and spirit of the Roman liturgy lie behind this book. Concise rules and statements are given and then elaborated. The usages and rules of language and liturgy are often compared. Every parish liturgy committee, cleric, and student of liturgy will find this book both a source of self-examination and a resource for working on better celebration in the spirit of our liturgy. Recommended.

* * *


The author of this book, which is a companion volume to the one above, is Dean of Seabury-Western Theological Seminary in Evanston, near Chicago. He offers a detailed system for preparing a homily based on the Sunday gospel. Catholic bishops, presbyters, and deacons are invited to enter this method by prayer, study, reflection, and work. Recommended as serious reading for all clergy: each of us has much to learn if we are to be faithful to our vocation and responsible to our people.

* * *


This book offers hundreds of simple line drawings for use in parish bulletins, announcements, and in church and school publications. Most are based on the Sunday scriptures, and bring to mind the reading for that day. Other areas include modern ministries, saints, and seasonal themes and readings. The illustrations are printed boldly and on one side of the page, so that they may be cut out for reproduction. Suggestions are included for using these drawings effectively.

When the book is sold, the publisher grants permission to parishes and schools “to reproduce any of these drawings in their publications that are distributed free.” Recommended as a most useful resource for parishes and schools.

This book is intended as a helpful resource for parish building committees, pastors, architects, and artists. It helps us to consider what is needed in our environment for worship. Fr. Vosko leads us through the meaning of entrance areas; font, altar table, place of the word, seating arrangements, and particular places. He helps us to appreciate images, art, flexible spaces, sights, and sounds. Recommended for every parish liturgy committee, clergy, and all concerned with good worship space in our church buildings.

* * *


Sixteen pleasant little stories for children are like parables: they are stories in themselves, and they keep ticking away in your mind. Recommended for catechists, parents, and clergy.

* * *


The author's imagination brings us twelve interesting stories. They may be read for themselves or used — as suggested in the index — as we prepare for or discuss seasons or sacraments. Helpful for catechists and parents.

* * *

Blessings for God's People: A Book of Blessings for All Occasions, by Thomas G. Simons (1983, Ave Maria Press, Notre Dame, IN 46556; available in Canada from B. Broughton Co., 123 Queen Street East, Toronto, Ontario M5C 1S1): softbound, illustrations, 112 pages. $7.95 in Canada.

Thirty-eight short blessings for use at home and school are presented in this book. They are models intended for adaptation by those who use them. Meal blessings and blessings for different times of the year are included. Presentation and layout are pleasant to the eye. Useful for families, catechists, and parish clergy. An earlier book is reviewed in Bulletin 83, page 95.

* * *


This essay is on the need for strong leadership toward faith, and on ways in which seminaries may contribute more fully to the development of strong religious leaders in North America.

* * *


For more than 40 years The Liturgical Conference has been sharing the benefits of the liturgy with the people of North America. This issue of its quarterly invites us into the values and joys of the Easter season. We are helped to understand its liturgies and to live them in our daily life. Recommended for liturgy committees, catechists, and for Christian homes, including convents and rectories.

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The World Council of Churches brought together more than 100 theologians from many major traditions: Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Old Catholic, Lutheran, Anglican, Reformed, Methodist, United, Disciples, Baptist, Adventist, and Pentecostal. Together they have crafted three statements: on baptism (23 paragraphs), eucharist (33 paragraphs), and ministry (55 paragraphs); accompanying the texts are brief commentaries on some of the paragraphs. This document is sometimes called the Lima statement, since it was developed at this meeting in Peru, based on a half a century of prayer and dialogue around the world.

Within this brief format, the WCC has presented the Christian world with an outstanding tool for working in practical ways toward the unity that Jesus wants us to have. The document is intended to be studied and commented on at the ordinary parish level; further study texts are suggested on page 33. Tough problems are faced in context and with calm, and ways out of apparent impasses are suggested in a reverent and prayerful manner. The Spirit is speaking to the Churches in this book.

Every liturgy committee, ecumenism committee, parish council, diocese, and every presbyter and bishop should consider this document urgent reading, and seek to share it with all who are concerned about working toward real unity among Christians in our time.


This statement was first issued in 1972, and has had a strong and positive influence on the development of music in the liturgy since then. In order to mark the twentieth anniversary of the Constitution on the liturgy, a slightly revised edition has been prepared. It is a booklet that should be in the hands of musicians, liturgy committees, clergy, seminarians, and catechists.


The author provides a simple guide to the moral teaching of the scriptures and of Christian tradition, ancient and modern. He describes the basic principles of following Christ, and outlines how we are to love God and neighbor. Many of the brief chapters reflect on the place of the liturgy in our Christian living. Recommended as a helpful resource for clergy, high school catechists, parents of teenagers, and other concerned adults.

Church and Ministry: Chosen Race, Royal Priesthood, Holy Nation, God's Own People; Occasional Papers of the Institute of Liturgical Studies, no. 2, edited by Daniel C. Brockopp, Brian L. Hooge, and David G. Truemper (1982, Institute of Liturgical Studies, Valparaiso, IN 46383): paper, typescript, 137 pages. $6.00 (send payment with order).

Six strong papers on Christian ministry and ministries are included in this book of proceedings of the 1981 institute; the papers from 1980, on Christian initiation, were reviewed in Bulletin 84, page 140. The situation of the early Church as reflected in the Christian scriptures and developments of ministries in the following centuries have given us a varied approach to ministry in different Churches. Insights of Catholic and Lutheran traditions are shared, and openings for the future are explored. A helpful resource for clergy, liturgists, ecumenists, and all interested in the Church's ministry in the modern world.

This is vol. 6 of the "Message of the Sacraments" series being edited by Monika K. Heliwig; two earlier volumes were reviewed in Bulletin 85, pages 188-189. This book explores the sacrament of order in Christian history and in our theology. Christian ministry has had several patterns, and we need to be careful not to lose sight of other possibilities. Writing clearly and suggesting useful books for further readings, the author helps us to explore these developments and see how the Church of our time can be free to explore new options for men and women in the ministry to the world of today. Recommended reading for clergy, seminarians, and students of liturgy or ministry.


Sickness, aging, and dying are part of our human life. In this seventh volume of the "Message of the Sacraments" series, we are helped to see these processes as part of our incarnate Christian pilgrimage. Throughout its history, the Church has tried to share healing and consolation by its prayers and rites for the sick and the dying. Today, we also see that sickness and old age are a particular part of our Christian vocation. This reverent treatment is recommended for clergy, those concerned with the sick and the dying, and for all educated Christians.

In the Center: The Story of a Retreat, by Barbara J. Rogers (1983, Ave Maria Press, Notre Dame, IN 46556; available in Canada from B. Broughton, 123 Queen Street East, Toronto, Ontario M5C 1S1): softbound, 157 pages. $6.75 in Canada.

The personal stories of nine persons on retreat are described clearly, and the novelist helps us to enter into their lives as they are called by God to rebirth and renewal. These chapters are based on actual journals of retreatants. Helpful spiritual reading.


This booklet contains 78 hymns and seasonal psalms by many modern composers, and illustrations for choreography of the Lord's prayer. An accompaniment edition and demonstration cassettes are also available.


Scholars from England, France, Germany, and the United States, representing the Methodist, Anglican, and Roman Catholic traditions, have contributed to this book of 14 essays on modern liturgical renewal. The book is offered as a tribute — a Festschrift — to Geoffrey Cuming, an Anglican liturgical scholar and pastor, on his 65th birthday. The articles are broad in range, and help us to deepen our understanding and appreciation of our history and of the current reforms in our ways of worship. Recommended as helpful reading for clergy, seminarians, students of liturgy, and ecumenists.