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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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For all Christians, full participation in the liturgy is the primary and indispensable source of the true spirit of the Lord Jesus (Liturgy constitution, no. 14).

This issue of the Bulletin looks at the place, influence, and importance of liturgy in the life of religious communities in today's renewing Church. Men and women who are members of religious communities are called in a special way to be witnesses of the meaning of Christian living. Practical suggestions are offered for better celebration and participation in the liturgy as the primary source of the true Christian spirit.

Bulletin 90 is intended for everyone:

- For religious sisters, brothers, and priests, so that they may grow in their Christian life through a fuller sharing in the richness of the Church's liturgy;
- For other members of the Church, so that they may appreciate God's gifts to his Church in the religious life. Young people may be reminded to pray more fervently about the vocation to which God is calling them.
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INTRODUCTION

Religious life and liturgy

Christian life: By baptism, every believer is called to be perfect, to imitate Jesus Christ, to be a person of prayer and penance, to carry Jesus' cross daily, to offer the sacrifice of praise to the Father. We are all called to die to sin and to live with Christ for God. All Christians are adopted children of the Father, brothers and sisters of Jesus and of one another, and temples of the Holy Spirit. The holy Trinity lives in all who love and serve God (Jn. 14: 23). Jesus sends us forth to be the light of the world, and to build up the kingdom of God by our lives.

Religious life: At the same time that he calls all to God in these ways, our Lord invites some of his followers to imitate him more closely in today's Church.

- **Jesus:** The gospels record Jesus' invitations to some to leave all things (Mt. 19: 16-26; Mk. 10: 24-30), and to remain unmarried for the sake of the kingdom of God (Mt. 19: 3-12). Obedience to the Father's will is a main characteristic in the life of Jesus (see Jn. 4: 34; Heb. 10: 7) and of those who follow him (Jn. 15: 10, 12; Jn. 13: 34-35; Mt. 7: 21).

- **Christian history:** Down through the centuries, individuals accepted Jesus' invitation, and grouped together in communities to follow the Lord's call. Great founders organized and revived and reformed religious life from time to time. As new needs arose in the life of the Church, new charisms and communities were raised by the Spirit to deepen and spread the charity and prayer of the people of God in every age.

- **Vatican II:** In its Decree on the renewal of the religious life (October 28, 1965), the Council invited religious communities to be renewed by following the gospel more closely and by being filled more deeply with the spirit of their founder. In this way they will be able to live as members of today's renewing Church and build up the kingdom of God on earth. This Decree mentions the liturgy in paragraphs 2-3, 6-10, 15 [202-209].

- **Today:** Since the Council, communities and individuals have taken an active part in this work of renewal. The changes have not always been easy in a renewing

1 The numbers in square brackets give the reference to Documents on the Liturgy: 1963-1979, ICEL (1982, The Liturgical Press, Collegeville, MN 56321); see review in Bulletin 89, page 140. This carefully prepared volume contains all the texts referring to liturgy in documents issued by Vatican II, popes, or Roman congregations. Beginning with this issue, these references will be included as a further help to readers of the Bulletin. Further references on liturgy and religious life are given in [210, 3292-3315].
Church, but gradually the Lord Jesus has been shaping his whole Church on earth so that we might carry out his work more effectively.

Renewal: When the Second Vatican Council began to express its deliberations in the form of official documents, it chose to issue the Constitution on the liturgy as its first major statement. The goals of the Council and its reforms were stated in this way:

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

Liturgy constitution, no. 1 [1]

Then the Council Fathers pointed to these purposes as the reasons why the liturgy is to be renewed and promoted (Liturgy constitution, no. 1 [1]).

Source and summit: The Council also showed clearly that full participation in the liturgy of Christ and his Church is the first and indispensable source of the true spirit of Jesus Christ (Liturgy constitution, no. 14 [14]; Bulletin 83, page 83):

- For all the Church: All Christians are to find the fullness of their membership in the Church through participation in the liturgy with the members of the local assembly. The Church is most clearly seen when a local community answers the Father's invitation, and is assembled with Christ to celebrate his praise of the Father (Liturgy constitution, nos. 41-42 [41-42]; GI,2 nos. 74-75 [1464-1465]).

- For religious: As people who are called to be model Christians in their response to God's love in their prayer, work, and life, religious men and women derive their grace and strength from full participation in the liturgy. For them, as for all Christians, full participation in the liturgy — eucharist, sacraments, liturgy of the hours, and other rites — is the first and indispensable source of their sharing in the true spirit of Jesus our Lord.

Renewal of prayer life: All Christians are called to be people of praise and prayer. By their vocation, religious are invited to go even further, and to strive to follow Christ most closely by deeper prayer. Whether by action or by contemplation, they are to be in tune with Jesus and his Spirit. Religious are to be an example to all of total giving of self to God, both in daily life and in the liturgy. Their hearts and lives are to be open to God's word and the action of the Holy Spirit. By encouraging and promoting such attitudes among their members, religious communities help to bring about a renewal of personal and public prayer life in the Church.

Liturgical renewal affects religious life: The renewal of the Church's liturgy is touching the daily life of religious communities and all their members. Morning and evening prayer, eucharist, other sacraments, prayers and devotions, and even the arrangement of their chapels: all have been influenced by the liturgical renewal.

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2 GI: See General Instruction of the Roman Missal. This is a pastoral instruction and explanation of the rites of the Mass, and is contained in the beginning of the sacramentary: see pages 11-54 in the 1974 Canadian edition; a separate booklet with an updated text — as in Documents on the Liturgy (document 208, pages 465-533 [1376-1731]) — is included with the 1983 reprint.

3 Liturgy involves many things in our life: see Some elements in the liturgy, in Bulletin 81, pages 204-205. The diagram there provides an aid to many interesting discussions for groups and classes.
The Church has renewed its liturgy in order to help renew the spiritual life of all its members. This issue of the Bulletin offers help to religious to recognize some of the benefits and joys flowing into the life of the Church and of religious communities through the renewed liturgy.

* * *

Helpful reading:


LITURGICAL APOSTOLATE

Religious communities can influence the liturgy of the greater Church in many ways:

• Priests going out to parishes, communities, schools, and other groups can show the beauty and value of the liturgy by preparing well, by celebrating with reverence and dignity, by preaching positive and challenging homilies.

• Members can continue to grow in their understanding of the liturgy, and participate in it fully, whether in their own house or elsewhere.

• Teachers can share the wealth of the scriptures and the daily liturgy with their students, and invite them to become more familiar with these treasures.

• Religious can share the idea of morning and evening prayer with the Church, and help others to become familiar with its purpose and spirit.

• Religious who are members of parish liturgy committees and other groups can be a source of ideas and prayer, flowing from their own rich liturgical life in the religious community.

• Those who are artists or who have good sense in artistic matters can encourage tasteful and simple decoration, fitting vessels and vestments, and other elements of worship.

• Religious may invite individuals, families, or groups to share in their celebrations on appropriate occasions, and may always invite them to share in their spirit of prayer.

• Religious can also influence their own families and friends by speaking of their community liturgy, by sharing resources (such as various issues of the Bulletin), and by radiating the spirit of the liturgy in their daily living.
Morning and evening prayer

Prayer of the People of God

People of praise and prayer: From all eternity, before time began, our Father called us in Christ to be God's children, the priestly people, the beloved people of praise and prayer (Eph. 1: 3-14). All that we do is to be done for God's honor and glory, giving thanks through Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 10: 31; Col. 3: 16-17; Eph. 5: 20).

Pray always: Jesus was a man of prayer during his life on earth (Heb. 5: 7), and he continues to intercede for us (Heb. 7: 25). By his example as well as his teaching, he told us to pray always (Lk. 18: 1). We are to pray constantly, on every occasion (1 Thess. 5: 16-18; Eph. 6: 18). During its history, the Christian Church has tried to translate this command into action by encouraging prayer at definite times: morning, evening, night, meal times, during the day, in time of need. The liturgy of the hours is a more formal way of responding in community to Jesus' command for us to pray at all times.

The early Church made an effort to follow Jesus' command by encouraging personal prayer at various times of the day, with community prayer in the morning and especially in the evening. Over the centuries, religious communities were established, and the divine office or liturgy of the hours developed (see Bulletin 58, pages 88-95). In its fullest form, it had these times of prayer: matins, lauds, prime, terce, sext, none, vespers, and compline. The full office became the duty of the clergy and of religious in solemn vows, and was prayed or "recited" in Latin. Often it was done with little relationship to the time of day: matins (office of readings) and lauds (morning prayer) could be "anticipated" the night before, and the rest — including compline or night prayer — said early in the morning! For many clergy and religious, other forms of prayer and devotion were more important and satisfying than the liturgy of the hours.

Renewal of the Church's prayer: One of the results of the Second Vatican Council was the reform of the divine office. Once more it was restored to being a prayer related to particular times of the day. The length of the office and the complexity of its celebration were reduced, and it was brought out of Latin into the language of the people who prayed it. All — laity as well as religious and clergy — were invited to take part in celebrating this prayer of the hours (see Liturgy constitution, nos. 83-101 [83-101]).
Call to religious: As part of their move toward renewal, religious communities were invited to return to the liturgy of the hours as their main form of public prayer, and as the source and inspiration of the personal prayer of their members. They moved from little offices and miscellanies of prayers and devotions to the solid nourishment of the liturgy of the hours, especially in its main hours, morning and evening prayer.

The spirit of Christian prayer: We give praise and thanks to the Father, through Jesus Christ the Son, in the Holy Spirit. We bring our petitions to our Father in the name of Jesus, our Lord and our brother. The Spirit guides our prayer, whether we are praying alone or with others. We use the scriptures to voice our praise and petitions, and to inspire our prayerfulness. We pray with faith and confidence, knowing that our heavenly Father listens to beloved children. More on the spirit of Christian prayer is given in GILH,¹ nos. 3-27 [3433-3457]. See also the Bulletin references given at the end of this article, on page 161.

The liturgy of the hours is:
* mainly a prayer of praise and intercession;
* made richer by readings from scripture and Christian tradition;
* it is the prayer of God's people, the Church;
* we pray with Jesus to the Father,
and we pray to the Lord Jesus (see GILH, no. 2 [3432]).

Major Hours of Prayer

Two main hours: The Vatican Council called morning and evening prayer the hinge hours of our daily prayer (Liturgy constitution, no. 89a [89]). The bulk of each day's work and prayer falls in the daylight hours between these two moments of praise and prayer by the community.

Morning prayer: As the daylight begins, we celebrate morning prayer as our first major action of the day. We accept this new day from our loving Father, and we respond by consecrating, offering, dedicating it to God. We celebrate the resurrection of Jesus, and join with him in giving praise to God our Father (see GILH, no. 38 [3468]).

Spirit of morning prayer: This is a time of giving praise and glory to God our Father. With the risen Lord Jesus we offer ourselves and our day's work to the honor and glory of God (in the spirit of 1 Cor. 10: 31; Eph. 5: 19-20; Col. 3: 16-17); this morning offering is made in union with the total self-offering made by Jesus in obeying the Father. We also renew our offering in the eucharist. The third psalm is always one of praise, and the gospel canticle of Zechariah praises the Father for giving us salvation through Jesus Christ.

First main action of the day: Morning prayer is the first main act of the community's day. After washing and dressing, the community members gather for public worship; then they continue their day's work with and for the Lord.


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○ Structure: The arrangement of the elements in morning prayer is simple, and moves us forward in praise, prayer, and reflection:
  - Introductory rites: Verse and response, [invitatory,] hymn
  - Psalmody: Psalm, canticle from the Hebrew scriptures (Old Testament), psalm of praise
  - Word of God: Brief reading, silence, responsory
  - Praise and intercession: Canticle of Zechariah (Lk. 1: 68-79), intercessions, Our Father
  - Concluding rites: Collect, blessing, dismissal.

Evening prayer: As daylight begins to end, before or after supper, we celebrate our prayer together. We thank our Father for the good done in us and through us today. We celebrate our prayer in union with Jesus, who offered himself at the last supper and on the cross (see GILH, no. 39 [3469]). This is our evening sacrifice of praise (see Ps. 141: 2).

○ Spirit of evening prayer: With Jesus and all the Church, we praise and thank our heavenly Father. We are grateful that the work of salvation has progressed this day through what the grace of God has done in us and through us. We rejoice because the Spirit has made the kingdom come a little more fully during this day. The outlook of evening prayer is positive and filled with thanks, rather than negative and sorrowful; our sorrow and regrets for personal failure are expressed in night prayer (see page 158, below). We continue to thank our Father for saving us through Jesus, for letting us share in salvation, and for making us a part of the work of the kingdom.

As the sun is setting, we join in prayer with Jesus Christ, the light of the world, and with all the Church, also called to be light. Our lives are to continue God’s light in the world, and we pray for strength to live with Christ for God, for the grace to keep our baptismal promises.

○ Structure: The arrangement is similar to that of morning prayer:
  - Introductory rites: Verse and response, hymn
  - Psalmody: Two psalms, New Testament canticle
  - Word of God: Brief reading, silence, responsory
  - Praise and intercession: Canticle of Mary (Lk. 1: 46-55), intercessions, Our Father
  - Concluding rites: Collect, blessing, dismissal.

Prayer in the name of the Church: When we come together to celebrate morning and evening prayer, we are gathered by the Father as part of the Church living in this place: we are the chosen people of praise and prayer, lifting our hearts and voices with Christ to the Father. The Spirit in our hearts gives strength and meaning to our prayer. We are praying in the name of the Church, of all humanity, of all creation. We voice the praise of all the universe, and offer it through Christ — through whom and with whom all things were made — to the Father of all.

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Celebrating Our Prayer Well

Every religious community may wish to look at each of these points and see if there is room for gradual expansion or improvement:

**Creativity:** The basic forms of morning and evening prayer are given to us, and we are invited to celebrate them well, and with a clear understanding of their nature. We are not called to reinvent the wheel. The liturgy of the hours is *already quite creative* in using the scriptures in community prayer, distributing psalms, canticles, and readings over the various days of the week and seasons of the year. While many areas for creative celebration are suggested within this article, our main task is to understand and celebrate the office well, and to explore the riches it presents to us in its present form.

**Stability and variety:** The liturgy of the hours has a fixed structure for morning and evening prayer, as outlined above, but within this framework leaves us much room for creative celebration. The shape remains constant and familiar, but the contents may vary somewhat. Some creative possibilities are described below.

**Music:** Every part of the office may be sung. It should be normal to have some singing in each celebration of morning and evening prayer, with more on special days. Psalms, canticles, hymns, responsories, and greetings are particularly made to be sung. The celebration should be a pleasure as we celebrate God’s praise. Further suggestions for music in the office are discussed in GILH, nos. 267-284 [3697-3714], and in the following notes.

**Postures and gestures:** Liturgical prayer is much more than words and songs. It involves our whole body in our prayer: we stand in praise, ready to hear the gospel and to pray for all (GILH, no. 263 [3693]); we sit as we listen to the reading, and as we reflect in silence (nos. 264-265 [3694-3695]). We make the large sign of the cross at the opening versicle, and at the beginning of the gospel canticle (no. 266 [3696]).

People who are sick or feeble are to use good judgment, and may remain seated throughout the celebration.

- **Bow:** It would seem appropriate to retain the ancient practice of a bow of the head during the first part of the *Glory to the Father* at the beginning of each hour and at the end of each psalm (compare GI, no. 234a [1624]). While GILH makes no mention of a bow during the doxology, this action would not seem out of order as a means of expressing and deepening our faith and adoration. (See also GILH, no. 123 [3553]; Bulletin 58, pages 98-99; Bulletin 75, page 164; Bulletin 72, page 43.)

**Ministries:** All parts of morning and evening prayer are sung or said, but all are not necessarily done by everyone. As in any liturgy, different people are called to do different actions in the name of the community (Liturgy constitution, no. 28 [28]).

- **In a full celebration,** there are distinct ministries to be carried out:
  
  - **Presider:** This person sings or says the opening versicle, may pray the psalm prayers, introduces the intercessions, and sings or says the final collect and blessing (see GILH, no. 258 [3688]).

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1) When morning prayer begins with the invitatory psalm, we use the versicle, *Lord, + open our lips* (see Ps. 51: 15), and make the small sign of the cross on our lips (GILH, no. 266b [3696]).
Leader of song, or cantor: This person begins the psalms, and leads the community in singing. Several people, a choir, or an instrumentalist may take this role: see GILH, no. 260 [3690].

Reader: The scripture reading is proclaimed from a special place by a reader who stands while carrying out this office; in chapel, it would seem best to use the lectern as at Mass (GILH, no. 259 [3689]).

Intercessions: The petitions may be read by one of the above ministers, or by another person. All may sing or say the response, or simply respond by silent prayer (GILH, no. 193 [3623].

This would be the normal form of celebration of morning and evening prayer in the average religious community.

In a small group: Even when there are only two persons praying together, one should lead the celebration, and the other act as reader (and perhaps make the intercessions). Both share in alternating the psalms and responses. Where there are more people, the ministries can be shared as in a full celebration.

In a parish, community, or place where two or more religious (priests, brothers, sisters, oblates, novices, postulants, or others) can come together — even if only occasionally — they should try to pray the liturgy of the hours as well, as solemnly, and as often as possible, for it is a community prayer more than an individual obligation.

Bishop, presbyter, or deacon: A member of the clergy may be invited to preside at morning and evening prayer, especially on solemn occasions. Guidelines for presiding are given in GILH, nos. 253-257 [3683-3687].

A prayer of time: The liturgy of the hours is a prayer of time: we receive the gifts of life and time from God, and use them in the service of the kingdom. We need always to be careful to avoid the temptation of rushing our prayer, combining it with other activities, or taking shortcuts. A simple celebration of morning or evening prayer takes at least 15 to 20 minutes, and we should leave lots of room for this in our schedules.

Pauses: A pause of one full minute after the doxology in each psalm and after the reading will help all to make this a personal prayer as well. (See GILH, nos. 201-203 [3631-3633].) Liturgy without moments of silence can become oppressive and begin to lose its spirit of prayerfulness and joy.

Punctuality: Prayer should always begin on time, and all members of the community need to make sure they are in their places early enough for a moment of personal reflection and calm before the celebration begins.

Preparation: Good celebration is based on careful preparation. The liturgy committee or leader of song needs to pick suitable and familiar hymns, psalm tones, responsories, and other music, and to work on increasing the community's repertoire gradually. The hymn number or page could be posted on the hymn board to avoid an unnecessary announcement. The reader has to check the reading beforehand, look up its context in the bible, and see if a longer form of the text is better. The person or group responsible for the intercessions needs to prepare the text ahead of time; others should feel free to suggest further intentions sometime before the celebration.
**Participation:** We participate in liturgy by listening; by joining in psalms, songs, and prayers; by responding; by our postures, gestures, and actions; and by our times of silence (Liturgy constitution, no. 30 [30]). Other ways of participating include preparing, watching, interceding, thanking, offering, ministering, receiving, and accepting. (The eleven ways of *Taking part in the eucharist*, in Bulletin 62, pages 31-39, can easily be adapted to the liturgy of the hours.) To participate fully in liturgy, we have to understand and join in the spirit of what we are doing; we do not need to say or read every word of the text.

**Place:** Usually these hours are prayed in the chapel. It is appropriate to light the candles (and the Easter candle during the Easter season): this helps all to recognize that the eucharist and the hours are intimately connected (GILH, no. 12 [3442]).

If the community is outdoors for a picnic supper, it would not be out of order to have a simplified celebration of the hours as part of the event (see CBW II, nos. 62-71; the ministers would use the choir edition).

**Solemnity:** This may vary according to the Sunday, feast, or weekday being celebrated, the size of the group, the number of people able to sing, and other factors. A “progressive solemnity,” adapted according to the circumstances, is suggested in GILH, no. 273 [3703].

**Resources:** There are two editions of the liturgy of the hours that are approved for public prayer in Canada:

- *Liturgy of the Hours* (1975-1976, Catholic Book, New York): This four-volume set is used by clergy and by some communities which celebrate the full office. It also makes a fine resource for a community that wishes to celebrate certain offices more fully.

- *Christian Prayer:* This is the one-volume edition, containing morning and evening prayer, and certain other offices. Editions were prepared by Catholic Book Publishing, Daughters of Saint Paul, Helicon Press, and The Liturgical Press. A detailed review of these books is given in Bulletin 58, pages 117-120. Communities are advised to use only those editions that contain music.

**Suggestions for Good Celebration**

**Introductory rites:**

- *Gathering:* Ordinarily individuals come to their places before the celebration begins. For special feasts, the community could assemble in another place, sing the opening versicle and response, and then enter the church in procession while singing the hymn. On other special occasions, the ministers and presider could enter in procession through the gathered community (see CBW II, choir edition, no. 62).

- *Versicle:* This may be sung. In community prayer, the plural form may be used.

- *Invitatory:* This call to worship makes a good beginning for morning prayer. One of four psalms may be chosen (Ps. 95, Ps. 24, Ps. 67, Ps. 100); it is good to vary these. The refrain alone or the whole psalm may be sung, especially on solemn occasions.
Hymn: The ones indicated in the book are merely appropriate suggestions. The community may sing any suitable hymn: praise, seasonal, or related to the time of day. Over the year some attempts should be made to expand the community's repertoire gradually. As well as the hymns in Christian Prayer, many others are given in CBW II: see the choir edition, liturgical index, nos. 757, 809, and other seasonal or topical references. (Those with the necessary talent may compose a new hymn text, or a new tune for familiar words.)

Psalmody: The psalms are the heart of the community's praise, and should be sung and prayed with care:

- Spirit of the psalms: The psalms are seen as the prayers of Christ and his Church. Each community and individual needs to grow in understanding the psalms. (See Liturgy constitution, no. 90 [90]; GILH, nos. 100-109 [3530-3539]; Bulletin 75, Praying the Psalms; Bulletin 58, pages 96-100.)
- Ways of praying the psalms: Our tradition is to pray the psalms in these three ways: all sing or say the whole psalm together; two groups alternate paragraphs (strophes); or the group may continue to repeat the refrain after each strophe while a cantor sings or reads the text — as in the responsorial psalm at Mass (GILH, no. 122 [3552]).
- Singing the psalms: The psalms are songs, and are intended to be sung. Communities which are presently saying them should try to sing at least one in each celebration, using a simple psalm tone: see Bulletin 75, pages 181-182.
- Silence: A more prayerful celebration results when each psalm is followed by a full minute of silence after the Glory to the Father. Then the presider may complete this silent prayer by a psalm prayer. (The psalm prayers given in the book are suggestions and models; presiders may develop others, and compose one for the canticle included in the day's psalmody.)
- Substitution: On Sundays, solemnities, and during the strong seasons (Advent and Christmas season, Lent and Easter season), we are asked to use the psalms given (GILH, nos. 247 and 252 [3677 and 3682]). In ordinary time, it is possible to substitute another psalm for one of the ones in the office. Since most communities are celebrating only the hours of morning and evening prayer in common, it would seem possible at times to use some the psalms from the other hours: e.g., Ps. 23, which is usually assigned to the daytime hours. Care should be taken: always substitute like for like, a psalm for a psalm, a canticle for a canticle, a scripture reading for a scripture reading.
- Working toward a new psalter: For the past few years, ICEL (the International Commission for English in the Liturgy) has been working to develop a poetic psalter which is designed for singing; it also avoids discriminatory language.

Word of God: God speaks to us when the scriptures are read in our assembly.

- Reading: In morning and evening prayer the reading is brief, and is deliberately chosen from a book other than one of the four gospels. The reader stands at the lectern or other suitable place for the reading (GILH, no. 259 [3689]). A longer form of this text may be proclaimed from the bible, or — outside Sundays and the strong seasons — another suitable scripture text may be read (GILH, nos. 45-46 [3475-3476]). It is best for all to close their books and listen to the reading.
God is speaking to them in this reading, through the ministry of this reader. All members of the community need to listen with faith, and let the word penetrate their hearts.

- **Silence**: It is wise to have a full minute of silence after this reading. Time is needed to reflect on the text and to let the Spirit in our hearts speak to each of us (GILH, no. 48 [3478]).

- **Homily**: On occasion, a brief homily or reflection may follow the reading. In this case, the silence may come after the reading or the homily — or even after each of them (GILH, nos. 47-48 [3477-3478]).

- **Responsory**: This is intended to be sung as a response to the word of God (GILH, nos. 281, 49 [3711, 3479]). Music for daily and seasonal responsories is given in *Christian Prayer*. On occasion, another acclamation or doxology could be sung by all. When the responsory is sung, it would seem better for all to stand.

**Praise and intercession**: We respond to God's word by giving further praise and by praying for the needs of the Church and the world.

- **Gospel canticle**: We stand for this canticle as we stand for the gospel at Mass. If possible, the canticle is sung. In some solemn celebrations, the altar may be incensed during the canticle (GILH, no. 261 [3691]). No substitutes are to be made for the gospel canticles, which form the climax of the celebration of morning and evening prayer.

- **Intercessions**: The forms in the book are examples, models, samples. They may and should be adapted to include other concerns of the praying community (e.g., for our religious order or congregation here and throughout the world, for an increase in vocations to all ministries in the Church, for the needs of this diocesan Church, for the missions, for a coming chapter). Many suggestions for deepening these intercessions are given in GILH, nos. 179-193 [3609-3623]: the liturgy committee of the community or province would do well to review these ideas occasionally.

At evening prayer, the final petition is always for the dead (GILH, no. 186 [3616]); other added petitions come before this.

In general, it may be suggested that the intercessions provide an area where local communities need to do some creative work within the guidelines and according to the nature of the liturgy of the hours. As Christians and as religious, we give voice to the needs, sufferings, and pleadings of the whole Church, of all humanity, and of the universe.

Models of short intercessions in a litany form are provided for evening prayer in the appendix to the four-volume *Liturgy of the Hours* (see, for example, vol. 1, pages 1644-1647).

- **Lord's prayer**: The Church sees this prayer both as an example of prayer and as a good model for further development. From the earliest days it has been traditional to pray it solemnly three times each day (as early as 100 AD: see *Didache* 8). In our days, the Lord's prayer is prayed by all in morning prayer, during the eucharist, and in evening prayer (GILH, nos. 194-196 [3624-3626]).

The prayer is a community prayer, and is sung or said by all. The presider may introduce it with one of the sample invitations given in the ordinary of the office, or
briefly in his or her own words. The *Our Father* should be prayed by all with care and without any haste, for this is the Lord's own prayer. He has entrusted this prayer of reconciliation to us, his brothers and sisters, and we pray it with him and with all God's family.

**Concluding rites:** At this point the members of the community may close their books, and let the presider lead them in the final moments. These rites may be sung:

- **Collect:** On weekdays in ordinary time, this prayer usually refers to the spirit of the time of day. When a proper collect is given for the eucharist, it is usually assigned to the office as well, helping us to unite these major moments of praise and prayer in our day. The presider invites all to pray by saying *Let us pray* (or similar words); all pause in silence; then the presider alone says the prayer, while all listen in silence, and then conclude it by their acclamation, *Amen!* (Further details are given in GILH, nos. 197-200 [3627-3630].)

- **Blessing:** The presider asks for God's blessing on this community, and all make the sign of the cross and answer *Amen!* This makes a strong ending when sung: see CBW II, choir edition, nos. 71 and 79.

- **Dismissal:** When a bishop, presbyter, or deacon is presiding, he adds the dismissal, and all respond, *Thanks be to God.* (If the community is not leaving the chapel at this time, but is remaining for another exercise, the dismissal is omitted.)

- **Kiss of peace:** On special occasions it may be desirable to conclude with a simple and informal kiss of peace: see CBW II, choir edition, nos. 71 and 79.

- **Recessional:** No further song is needed. An instrumental recessional may be appropriate on Sundays and special feasts.

**Some Final Notes**

**Other hours of prayer:** Communities which celebrate morning and evening prayer are praying the main hours of this great prayer of the universal Church. As well as morning and evening prayer, the full office includes the office of readings, day hours, and night prayer. Clerics and some religious communities are called to celebrate all these (see GILH, nos. 28-32 [3458-3462]).

- **Night prayer:** This is the last prayer of the Christian's day, and is offered just before going to bed. A serious examination of conscience is included at the beginning of the prayer. The gospel canticle is that of Simeon (Lk. 2: 29-32). This hour tends to be celebrated by small groups or individuals; if prayed in common as the last prayer, just before all go to bed, it is celebrated with the same forms as morning and evening prayer: singing, ministries, gestures, postures, moments of silent reflection.

A community celebration of night prayer could be appropriate on Holy Thursday at the end of the evening of adoration, and on Good Friday night. Further notes are given in GILH, nos. 84-92 [3514-3522].

- **Day hours:** Early Christians paused in the midst of their day's work to pray briefly; contemplative communities still do this by praying the day hours. The Church encourages all to continue this custom where possible — at least during retreats or days of recollection, and at pastoral meetings (GILH, no. 76[3506]) — by giving us forms for prayer at midmorning, midday, and midafternoon. Some forms
are given in the *Liturgy of the Hours*, and further ideas and suggestions are offered in *GILH*, nos. 74-83 [3504-3513].

- **Office of readings:** This is a reflective office, consisting of psalms, a longer reading from scripture (continuously from one book of scripture over a period of time), and a reading from the Church's tradition (early homilies, patristic writings, reflections, essays, papal talks or letters, Council documents, or other similar texts). This office also provides material for reflection by those involved in preparing and celebrating special feasts. Further notes are given in *GILH*, nos. 55-69 [3485-3499].

- **Vigil hour:** Before Sundays, solemnities, and feasts, a particular form of this hour may be celebrated as a vigil, including the office of readings, a canticle, the gospel of the resurrection or of a solemnity, and a homily. This may be an appropriate celebration before the feast of the founder or another particular celebration in the community. Further notes are given in *GILH*, nos. 70-73 [3500-3503], and in the appendix in each volume of the *Liturgy of the Hours* (see, for example, vol. I, pages 1613-1643). See also Bulletin 58, page 120.

**Some problems to avoid:** These problems are described here in order to help avoid deterioration or frustration in the community's prayer life in the years to come:

- **Paper chases:** By the nature of the office, the reading, intercessions, antiphons, and psalm prayers may differ in some detail from those given in the book. It is recommended that members of the community who are not fulfilling a particular ministry refrain from chasing after particular antiphons, but simply close their eyes and listen prayerfully.

- **Barnacles:** Already some communities have carried over prayer practices from the past and have glued them on to the beginning or end of morning or evening prayer. Examples could include such prayers as the *Angelus*, petitions for benefactors, visits to the blessed sacrament, and anthems.4 The office of morning and evening prayer and the eucharist are to be the highest points in the day's worship and prayer; community devotions are to share in the spirit of the liturgy, but are not necessarily to be joined with it. Pope Paul VI told us: "There are those who, without wholesome liturgical and pastoral criteria, mix practices of piety and liturgical acts in hybrid celebrations . . . . For those who act in this way we wish to recall the rule laid down by the Council prescribing that exercises of piety should be harmonized with the liturgy, not merged into it."5

A better solution is to include the petitions for benefactors, for vocations, or for deceased members in the intercessions at evening prayer; and to say other community

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4 The example of Cluny stands forth as a lesson for all. In their generous devotion, the monks gradually added the office of the blessed virgin Mary and the office of the dead to the regular office. As a result, they had to celebrate in community each of the eight hours (matins, lauds, prime, terce, sext, none, vespers, and compline) three times — an unbearable load of 24 offices every day! We have to think of the long-range effect on future generations when we are tempted to add to morning and evening prayer the favorite prayer of one of our members, or a litany for June, or the *Hail, Mary* three times for the beatification of our founder. There are other times and places for these devotions.


5 *Apostolic Exhortation “Mariae Cultus,”* by Paul VI, on devotion to Mary (1974, CCC, Ottawa); see paragraph 31, page 21. The Council reference in this quotation is to the Liturgy constitution, no. 13 [13].
prayers at other times (perhaps after meals). In these first years of renewal, it takes
time to recognize and reform our particular customs in the true spirit of the liturgy.

○ Taking a holiday on Sunday: The Lord's day should be the day of our
greatest celebration of the community's liturgy of the hours; in practice, however, it
seems to be the opposite: some communities have members working in various
parishes; others take Sunday as a quiet day. The Second Vatican Council calls us to a
greater celebration on the Lord's day (Liturgy constitution, nos. 41-42, 106 [41-42,
106]), including the eucharist in the midst of its setting of morning and evening
prayer. Communities should become aware of this need, and begin to look at their
own practices. How can these reflect more faithfully the spirit and practices of the
Church's renewed liturgy? (If a 'day off' from prayer is required — and this seems
strange for any Christian — perhaps the Saturday morning celebration could be
quieter, in contrast to the greater celebrations on Saturday evening and on Sunday.)

○ Joining eucharist and office regularly: Once in a while this may be a good
idea, and there are ways of doing it gracefully, without duplication (see GILH, nos.
94-99 [3524-3529]). But a strong caution is given in no. 93 [3523]: this is not a
desirable practice. The Episcopal Commission for Liturgy in English-speaking
Canada is also concerned about the long-range effects in communities which join
Mass and office regularly: these should normally be celebrated as separate events in
the day's worship.

○ Other problems? Are there other problems in your community's prayer that
need to be looked at? If so, this should be done in a spirit of faith, love, and concern
for the greater honor of God.

Particular community celebrations: The liturgy of the hours makes room for
particular celebrations at times:

○ Community feasts: On the feasts of saints proper to the community, on
anniversaries of founding, and on a few other special days, the day's office may
reflect the event. Special hymns, scripture readings, particular intercessions, and the
solemnity of the celebration (more singing, more ministers, incense, with bishop or
chaplain presiding) contribute to the special nature of this day's celebration. Some­
times a second and non-scriptural reading (a letter from the founder, a section from
the rule, constitution, or other appropriate document) may follow the silence after
the scripture reading in morning or evening prayer; a homily may also be given.

○ Office of the dead: When a member of this community of religious dies, it is
appropriate for the others to celebrate the office of the dead in place of regular
morning and evening prayer. The texts are given in the back of Christian Prayer. On
Sundays and solemnities, the office of the day is celebrated, and the office of the dead
may be offered the following day. A community celebration of the office of the dead
may take place sometime before the funeral, as one form of the wake.

Rhythm of our prayer: The prayer of the hours is alive with the life of the
Church: each day we are dying and rising with the Lord Jesus, being renewed by the
Spirit living in our hearts. We pray the psalms with Christ and the people of God,
praising and pleading, giving glory and asking help. We pray in our own name, but
we are also the voice of Jesus and his Church, and of all humanity and all creation.
Jesus is praying in us, and we pray to the Father through him. Each day brings us a
fresh opportunity to continue the song of praise, to extend the work of salvation, to
build up the kingdom of God, to deepen our love for one another, to ask grace and forgiveness for sinners, to pray for peace and salvation for ourselves and for all the people on earth.

Helpful reading:

*Liturgy of the Hours* (1975-1976, Catholic Book Publishing, New York): each community could use a set of these volumes as a resource for extra prayers, readings, and ideas for prayer.


*National Bulletin on Liturgy* (CCCB, Ottawa):
- No 44, *People of Prayer*
- No. 58, *Day by Day We Give Him Praise* (on the liturgy of the hours): refers to many other books and articles for further reading and study.
- No. 72, *Music in Our Liturgy*: describes music for the liturgy of the hours, especially for parish celebrations.
- No. 75, *Praying the Psalms*
- No. 80, *Helping Families to Pray* (on bringing the riches and spirit of liturgical prayer into personal and family prayer).
- No. 62, *Liturgy and Devotion*


See *Origins* (USCC, 1312 Massachusetts Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20005): vol. 13, no. 8, July 7, 1983, pages 129-146, on the role and life of religious orders in the U.S.A.


*Study Text VII: The Liturgy of the Hours*: See the book review on page 190.
Celebrating eucharist

The celebration of the eucharist is at the heart of the life of every Christian community. Since the eucharist has many aspects, it is discussed here and in several other articles in this Bulletin.

Sunday Eucharist

Meaning of Sunday: The meaning of the Lord’s day — the primary feast day for Christians — is mentioned below on page 183.

Sunday eucharist: Some thoughts for community reflection:

○ Sign of the Church: When we obey the Father’s invitation to gather for eucharist on Sunday, we are the pre-eminent manifestation or expression or sign of the presence of the Church, here and now. We are a sign to one another and to the world that God loves all and wants all to be saved through the dying and rising of Jesus Christ, our Lord and brother. The greatest sign is given when the bishop is surrounded by presbyters, ministers, and people in the celebration of the Sunday eucharist. Other such signs are the parish assembly and other groupings, such as a religious community. Any community which gathers with the bishop’s approval to celebrate eucharist, represents the worldwide Church. (See Liturgy constitution, nos. 41-42 [41-42]; G1, nos. 74-75 [1464-1465].)

○ In the community chapel or with the parish? There is no simple answer to this question: it depends on varying circumstances. In a large community, it is appropriate for the brothers and sisters to celebrate Mass in their own chapel. When two or three religious are living together, it would seem better for them to gather with the larger community — with other members of their own religious community or with the parish community. Some members of communities are involved in parish ministry, and their normal place on Sunday would be with the parishioners as they worship.

Religious communities might consider the value of having all their scattered members gather for Sunday eucharist and office several times each year, and arrange this in good time so that their members may keep their calendars free for these important events.

○ Greatest celebration of the week: Sunday is the main Christian day for celebration, and both eucharist and office should reflect this by their solemnity. Careful planning, music and song, decorations, and other differences should mark the Sunday celebration as the highlight of the week’s worship: see pages 164-165.

○ In your community: Is Sunday the greatest celebration of your week of living, praying, serving, and worshipping? What improvements can you make in this coming year?
Weekday Eucharist

In our tradition: St. Augustine mentioned that in his time there were three different customs in celebrating eucharist: some communities celebrated only on Sunday; some on Saturday and Sunday; and some daily. In our living memory, we grew up with the practice of daily eucharist as the norm, but in most cases without the liturgy of morning and evening prayer. Frequent and daily communion returned gradually to the modern Western Church only after Pius X encouraged this strongly at the beginning of the twentieth century.

Weekday eucharist: For religious, daily celebration of the eucharist is a daily renewal of the promises of baptism and of their extension in religious profession. Individually each member is invited to offer his or her personal love, sacrifice, and efforts to follow Christ. This gift is taken by our Lord and offered by him as part of his total gift to the Father; in this way he is making us his gift to the Father (see eucharistic prayer III). Our continuing sharing in this offering is God's way of saving the world and extending the kingdom. This offering is always made by the whole assembled community (see GI, no. 55f [1445]).

Ministries: In every community Mass, whether on Sunday or a weekday, members of the community are to fulfill the ministry of reader, and may also read the petitions in the prayer of the faithful, and act as communion ministers as needed. A variety of ministries helping the community in worship is a sign of the serving Church to which we all belong.

Preparation: Communities and individual members have to work hard to keep their celebration alive and helpful. The reader has to prepare the daily reading well so that he or she can proclaim it well. The presiding presbyter has to prepare the homily so that it may be brief but truly nourishing for the Christian life of community members. Petitions in the prayer of the faithful should reflect the needs of the Church and of the world as well as those of this community. Communion under both forms should be normal in each celebration. Some singing is desirable — at least the responsorial psalm, the gospel acclamation, and the three acclamations in the eucharistic prayer. Some moments of silence — at the penitential rite, before the collect or opening prayer, after each reading and the homily, after communion — are important if members are to be able to join their personal prayer with the spirit of the communal celebration (see GI, no. 23 [1413]; also Liturgy constitution, no. 30 [30]).

Degrees of solemnity: Care must be taken to keep a balance. The Sunday celebration of the eucharist should be the high point of the week's worship and prayer and life. Weekday Masses should reflect the Sunday celebration, but in a simpler way. Singing may be simpler, the homily brief, the petitions in the prayer of the faithful fewer. Different places for song may be chosen during the week. On solemnities, feasts, and special days for the local Church or for the community, the celebration may be more solemn, more like a Sunday celebration. (We may compare this to the "progressive solemnity" mentioned in GILH, no. 273 [3703].)

Problems: When daily Mass — silent, in Latin, with no vernacular readings — was celebrated by the priest with his back to the people, and "heard" or "attended" by religious and laity, it became a time for personal prayer and devotions, and was not too demanding. The Sunday celebration became a big weekday Mass, with perhaps some singing by the choir. Today, however, the Sunday celebration is seen as primary
(Liturgy constitution, no. 106 [106]), and weekday Masses are important but lesser in solemnity.

The modern eucharistic liturgy makes great demands on all participants: presbyters, ministers, religious, and laity. The readings are in our own language, and through them the Spirit is reaching out to stir us, shake us, move us forward in building the kingdom. The homily is challenging us to be converted, to continue turning back to Jesus, to die with him to sin and live with him for God. The intercessions remind us of our priestly obligation to pray for all, and to back our prayers with our works. The eucharistic prayer is our prayer of thanks and praise to the Father, offered with Christ and all his Church. Our communion is a participation in the death as well as the rising of the Lord: it is a call for us to be transformed into Christ, to reach out with him to all who suffer, to share in their cross by our serving love.

- Eucharist every day? The problem is a modern one: those who take liturgy seriously — who accept that it is truly the primary and indispensable source of Christ’s spirit (Liturgy constitution, no. 14 [14]) — are coming to realize that we cannot be on a high note all the time. How do we find a balance? Is it in frequency, or in degree of participation, or in our seriousness? Can English-speaking people just shrug it off, like some other cultures seem to be able to do? Can we just take the problem less seriously, or let ourselves accept a lower standard of participation? Are we to be less dedicated or serious than we are now?

There is no simple solution to these questions. Here we can only raise the question, and invite religious communities to include it in their continuing struggle to be faithful to the Church’s tradition in the midst of a demanding world.1 What is needed is not an entrenched position as much as an openness to the way the Spirit is moving the Church and moving in the Church today.

- Multiplication of Masses: At its meeting in September 1981, the Episcopal Commission for Liturgy for English-speaking Canada expressed its concern about the multiplication of Masses in individual religious communities. Is it wise to break into small groups for liturgy each day and come together only on Sundays? Each community needs to look at its current practices and see what is happening: Is community being built or weakened?

Working for a Good Celebration

- Sunday eucharist: Some thoughts for consideration by the community’s liturgy committee:

It is better to have two readers, one for each of the readings; another minister may read the general intercessions. Music and singing at the proper times will enable all to participate more fully. Adequate moments of silence are important so that all may deepen their spirit of prayer. A good homily on the scriptures should help to nourish the spiritual life of the communion, and call all to continuing conversion in Jesus Christ. Communion under both forms (eating and drinking, not “dunking”) is the way Jesus gave us this sacrament, and this should be normal in all community Masses. At least once a month, it is good to use the rite of blessing and sprinkling water in the introductory rites.

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Adequate time should be scheduled for a good, leisurely celebration, probably lasting 45-50 minutes or longer, depending on the number of communicants and ministers of communion. Mass should be unhurried and never rushed: this is the most important hour of the week, and should be enjoyed to the fullest.

**Weekday eucharist:** The celebration of weekday Mass is more subdued than the Sunday eucharist, but includes: some singing (varying the elements from day to day), a brief homily (2-3 minutes, on one point), a short prayer of the faithful (2-3 petitions, perhaps drawn from the readings), communion under both forms, times of silence. The celebration should not be rushed, and care needs to be taken not to schedule it too tightly. When both morning prayer and eucharist are celebrated in the morning, a brief pause is needed between them. It is better not to combine morning and evening prayer with eucharist: see page 160, above.

Many varieties, options, and alternatives are permitted and encouraged in the Mass. These are outlined in *Guidelines for Pastoral Liturgy — Liturgical Calendar, 1982-1983 and 1983-1984 editions, pastoral notes, nos. 5-11*. The community's liturgy committee should study these well and apply them.

Where the daily celebrations do not seem to be contributing to deeper devotion and holiness, all members of the community need to work actively to find out why, and to work for improvement in themselves and — if need be — in the presiding priest.

**Avoiding poor celebrations:** The enemies of good celebration include haste, poor preparation or none, minimalism, solemn celebrations or bland ones every day, too many celebrations in one day. Are any of these to be found in your community liturgies?

### Personal Involvement

Good liturgy always requires personal involvement of all the participants. When this is absent or begins to be weakened, the liturgical celebration is in danger of becoming the type of ritualism and lip service condemned by Jesus (Mk. 7: 5-8).

**Participation:** This word means *sharing* or *taking part.*

- **Many ways:** There are many ways in which each member of the religious community — and each faithful member of the Church — can participate in the liturgy. These include:

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

- **Self-offering:** In the eucharist, Jesus makes his own sacrifice present. The heart of his self-offering is his total obedience to the will of the Father, even to the point of dying on the cross. The Church — all the people of God — is offering itself.

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2 These are described more fully in *Taking part in the eucharist*, in Bulletin 62, pages 31-39. See also Liturgy constitution, no. 30 [30]; and *Participation in the eucharistic prayer*, by J. Frank Henderson, in Bulletin 65, pages 207-215.
with its Lord as a living sacrifice, a gift of total obedience, the obedience of faith (Rom. 16: 26), and Jesus is making us his gift to the Father (see eucharistic prayer III). The Spirit of God continues to transform the body of Christ, to make us holy (see G1, no. 55 [1445]).

During the eucharistic offering each day, religious can present their continuing gift of obedience, their efforts to keep this vow in the spirit of Jesus' complete obedience to the Father.

- **Postures and gestures:** These are also part of our participation. By our bodily actions we express and deepen what it is in our hearts. When we do these together with other people, we help one another and reinforce those who are weak or shy.

**Eucharistic fast:** The new code of canon law has simplified this (canon 919: 1, 3). On the first Sunday in Advent, 1983, the rule becomes:

- **Normal rules:** The general eucharistic fast is one hour from solid food and from beverages. Water does not break the fast.

- **For the dying:** No eucharistic fast is necessary.

- **For the sick** (at home or in hospital, even if not confined to bed); **for the elderly; and for those who care for them:** water and medicine at any time; these people may receive communion even if they have had something to eat or drink within the previous hour.

This is also described in *Guidelines for Pastoral Liturgy — 1983-1984 Liturgical Calendar*, pastoral note 12a.

In the early Church, the eucharist was seen as the first food of the day. With Masses being celebrated at all hours now, we see the fast as an hour during which we begin to prepare by action, reflection, and prayer for our participation in the eucharist.

**Problems:** When we — individuals or a community — lessen our degree of involvement and participation in the eucharist, we will find our celebrations becoming routine, boring, or even tedious. The answer to this is not novelty-seeking but rather a more serious entering into the mystery of Christ's dying and rising in our daily life. We also have to enter into the eucharistic mystery by fuller and more sincere participation in the ways described above. Our life has to lead us to liturgy, and our liturgy into life.

**Some Areas for Concern**

**Half-strength chaplains:** Religious communities should be dynamic centers of vitality in each diocese. Religious are trying to live a life totally dedicated to God and the people of God. They need a strong liturgy as the source and summit of their good works (Liturgy constitution, no. 10 [10]). It is not fair to them or to the Church at any level to give them a chaplain who is not moving with the renewing Church. The chaplain should not be eccentric, resistant to change and development, a speed artist, feeble, on his last legs, or unable to preside and preach well at good liturgies. Sisters and brothers need the finest chaplains available, not the worst or the least able. If this is a problem locally, some straightforward dialogue is needed between major superiors and bishops, with an open look at the problems from both points of view.
**Timetable:** The schedule of morning and evening prayer, of Sunday and weekday Masses, and of other community celebrations should be realistic and not too squeezed. There needs to be adequate time for celebration without haste, and for time between celebrations (e.g., between morning prayer and eucharist). We must avoid the minimalist attitude that looks for "two for the price of one."

**Stipends:** Though the new code of canon law has changed the name to "money offerings" (canon 945: 1), the practice of giving and accepting stipends remains a concern for liturgists and many others. There are no simple answers yet in this touchy area, but there are many questions and concerns.³

Each religious community needs to see if these or other concerns are to be found in their situation. If so, what can be done to begin working for improvement?

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**Helpful reading:**

*Documents on the Liturgy* (see note 1 on page 147, above): documents 174-287, pages 375-707 [1141-2238]. This resource book belongs in the library of each provincial house and other large communities. See review in Bulletin 89, page 140.

*New Introductions to the Sacramentary and Lectionary* (1983, CCCB, Ottawa). This 96-page book contains the 1975 edition of the General Introduction of the Roman Missal, and the 1981 enlargement of the introduction to the lectionary. It is included with the 1983 revision of the sacramentary, and is also available as a separate publication. Liturgy committees will find it most useful to have one or more copies available for guidance, study, and discussion.


*The Eucharist and Human Liberation,* by Tissa Balasuriya, OM1 (1979, SCM Press, 58 Bloomsbury Street, London WC1).


*Communion* (1983, CCCB, Ottawa): an illustrated four-color booklet explaining the rite of communion in simple terms. This booklet makes an excellent resource for personal meditation or community discussion. Inexpensive and priced for wide distribution.

National Bulletin on Liturgy: As well as the references given in this article, the following issues are particularly helpful:

- No. 83: *Steps to Better Liturgy*: This useful review of the Sunday liturgy points out many areas for creativity within the Church's guidelines for renewal.
- No. 87, *Twenty Good Years*: Interesting and useful notes on the liturgical changes, and on what still remains to be done.
- No. 53, *Ministries and Liturgy*: A revised edition of this review of the theology and practice of ministries; it lays the groundwork for continuing renewal.

The National Bulletin on Liturgy continues to review new titles and resources as they are received, and points out useful books old and new.

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**HOW MUCH IS ENOUGH?**

Jesus gave himself totally to the Father. His complete obedience to his Father's will is the price Jesus paid to save us.

Our Lord has given us his Spirit of love, poured into our hearts (Rom. 5: 5). The Spirit leads us, guides us, strengthens us, and gives us the light and courage to follow Jesus wholeheartedly.

A Christian does not look for the lowest common denominator. A true follower of Jesus doesn't give only the minimum. In life, in love, in liturgy, we try to imitate Jesus and do our best with him for our Father.

If we do all he commands us, we are still unprofitable servants (Lk. 17: 10).

*How much is enough?* Jesus asks us to imitate him: to love others, forgive them, serve them as he did, and to offer this gift of ourselves to the Father. In the liturgy of the eucharist and in the liturgy of the hours, Jesus accepts our sacrifice of praise and love, and joins it to his own perfect gift to our Father in heaven.
Eucharistic devotions

Background: As early as the year 150 in Rome, we read about the practice of taking communion from the Sunday celebration to the sick and those who were absent. By 215 it was customary for lay people to bring the eucharist home on Sunday and receive it during the week as their first food of each day. Travellers carried the consecrated eucharist with them both for communion and for protection from harm. From these practices the theology behind devotion to the reserved eucharist developed. During the centuries, we have witnessed both the heights of devotion and the depths of superstition or poor taste. In the years before Vatican II, Catholic devotion to the reserved sacrament was marked by benediction, frequent visits, Mass celebrated at times in the presence of the exposed sacrament, Forty Hours, holy hours, and other similar practices of faith and piety. Communion was often given from the reserved sacrament. Catholics tended to have greater participation in these devotions than in the Mass, and were more aware of the presence of Christ in the sacred species than in their assembled brothers and sisters.

Renewal flowing from Vatican II: The Council restored the celebration of the eucharist — the Mass — to the center of Catholic piety, with the use of the vernacular, and renewed and simplified rites; as well, a greater variety of scripture, a restoration of preaching, intercessions, communion from the same celebration, and communion under both forms (Liturgy constitution, nos. 34, 50-55 [34, 50-55].) As participation in the Mass grew in importance, less emphasis seemed to be placed on other forms of eucharistic devotions.

Purposes of reservation: In 1973, these were seen to be: to give viaticum to the dying and communion to the sick; to give communion to others; and adoration of Jesus present in this sacrament. (See Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist Outside Mass, no. 5 [2197].) The place of reservation is discussed briefly in “Chapels and churches,” on page 184, below.

- Communion outside Mass? Under normal circumstances, it is always preferable to receive communion during Mass. When it is given outside Mass, it is to be within a service of the word (see Holy Communion, nos. 26, 42).

The Episcopal Commission for Liturgy is concerned about reports that some religious are taking or giving communion privately, without any ceremony or service of the word. It is an abuse and a lack of reverence to give or take communion privately without this celebration of the word. The tabernacle is not a refrigerator for spiritual snacking!

Eucharistic devotions: In the renewing Church, these devotions are to flow from the Mass and lead us more deeply into its spirit. They provide an opportunity for individuals and communities to share in public prayer with the Lord Jesus. A variety of forms is now possible: exposition, always with a time of public and
individual prayer, and concluded by reposition or benediction; holy hours, in the form of a liturgy of the word or bible service; solemn annual exposition.

When no priest or deacon is present, a religious may, with permission of the local ordinary, expose and repose the sacrament, but may not give benediction (see Holy Communion, no. 91).

**Personal visits:** Long or short, these offer each Catholic a time for adoration, self-offering, listening to God, praising, interceding. With the help of the Spirit, we try to have in us the mind of Christ, and join him in his constant praise and in his prayer to the Father for the world.

**Where are we?** As community and as individuals, we need to look at our present practices. Are we emphasizing only the Mass, or do we have a broad and balanced eucharistic piety? Do we encourage times of personal prayer? Is there need of a study day in our community or with others on the Church's eucharistic devotions?

**Helpful reading:**

*Eucharistic Reservation in the Western Church,* by Archdale A. King (1965, Sheed and Ward, New York).


*Other eucharistic devotions,* in Bulletin 62, pages 40-46.


*Visits should be restored,* in Bulletin 69, page 127.


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**ACADEMY REPORTS**

The North American Academy of Liturgy brings together many liturgists in the United States and Canada to share their work and projects. Some of the many papers from the 1983 meeting in Douglastown, NY, are published in the July 1983 issue of *Worship,* vol. 57, no. 4 (Collegeville, MN 56321).

These reports are helpful because they show us current trends, emphases, and concerns among liturgical scholars in various Christian Churches. We recommend them for your careful study and discussion.
Reconciliation

Based on our baptism: When we were baptized into the dying and rising of Jesus Christ, we were reconciled by him to the Father. There are three sacraments of reconciliation in the Church today: baptism, eucharist, and penance (see Rite of Penance, no. 2 [3067]). The Lord Jesus continues to call every individual Christian to live out his or her baptismal promise of dying to sin and living with Christ for God.

Process of reconciliation: We don't turn sin on and off like an electric light switch. We move away from God gradually, by carelessness, lack of prayer, and venial sins; God's Spirit usually attracts us gradually to come to our senses, to turn back, to amend our ways, to pick up our religious duties once more, and to be reconciled with God and the Church. It is our Catholic tradition that there are Many ways of repentance (see Bulletin 88, pages 80-82).

A spirit of reconciliation is needed by every believer. We must forgive our brothers and sisters before we can be forgiven (Mt. 18: 21-35; 6: 12, 14-15). The Spirit of Jesus invites us to work for peace and harmony at all times; those who harbor grudges or who make life difficult for others by their moodiness, idiosyncrasies, or obstinacy are not living in the spirit of the gospel. We should seek to do our best for God at all times, to do as much as we can rather than the minimum (see page 168), to go the extra kilometer or two.

A spirit of penance: Every Christian is a follower of Jesus, who invited us to carry our cross with him each day (see Lk. 9: 23). Religious are invited to share more fully in the spirit of Christian penance and to be living examples of Christian living. Many ways of doing penance are suggested in The top ten, in Bulletin 42, pages 20-33, and in the liturgical leaflet, Living Lent (1979, CCCB, Ottawa). Trying to live our state of life as fully as possible for love of God is sometimes our greatest form of doing penance. We can offer all our penances in union with Christ's offering of himself to the Father as we celebrate morning prayer and eucharist. How does the community (and its individual members) observe Fridays outside the Easter season? How about Lent? Are we keeping the paschal fast on Good Friday and Holy Saturday?

Penance celebrations: In a penance service, God's people come together to hear God's word, to listen to God's invitation to turn back, to renew their lives, and to be freed from sin by the dying and rising of Jesus (see Rite of Penance, nos. 36-37 [3101-3102]). These celebrations help us to prepare for the celebration of the sacrament, and also deepen our understanding of God's forgiving love. The National Liturgical Office has prepared a useful book of celebrations, with guidelines, suggested rites, and prayers: see Penance Celebrations, under “Helpful reading” on page 173; see also Bulletin 88, pages 70-71.

• Examination of our Christian living: There are fifteen examinations of conscience in Penance Celebrations. These may be adapted to the circumstances and needs of religious communities, or new ones may be developed by the liturgy committee. A challenge to do our best with Jesus is always needed in order to counteract the minimalism of our age and culture.
Some questions: How often does the community celebrate or take part in a penance celebration? Such celebrations could be appropriate during Lent and Advent, at times of retreat, before important feasts, near the beginning or end of the program year (September to June), before a chapter. Are there other possibilities in your community? Anyone may lead such a celebration, after due preparation.

Sacrament of reconciliation or penance: All through the history of the Catholic Church, this sacrament has been developing in its forms, attitudes, approaches (see Twenty centuries of development, in Bulletin 52, pages 4-13). The present discipline of the Church, since December 1973, provides for three rites: celebration with an individual; communal celebration, with individual absolution; communal celebration, with general absolution. Full details are provided in the Rite of Penance; see also Bulletins 52 and 88.

In religious communities, the first two rites will be more common. What is being done to help members prepare for and celebrate these meetings with the merciful Lord Jesus? Is there need of a study day, a day of recollection, or other helps?

How often? There is no simple or universal answer. The sacrament should be celebrated as often as necessary to challenge each individual to grow in faith and love. The celebration will have greater effect when it is the culmination of a process of personal repentance, prayer, penance celebrations, scripture reading, and other acts of preparation and follow-up. (See also Bulletin 46, pages 306-307; Bulletin 88, pages 87-88.)

A room for reconciliation: Is this room still a makeshift location, or has some serious effort been taken to provide a proper and beautiful place for this celebration? Some helpful references are given in Bulletin 52, pages 52-59, and in Bulletin 88, page 89.

Spiritual direction: There was a time when spiritual director and confessor were almost synonymous. Now some religious and laypersons are qualified and competent spiritual directors. What is the situation in your community? Does each member have a spiritual director, and keep in regular contact with him or her? Should some members of the community be trained in the art of spiritual direction? Are there some further needs in your area?

Solidarity with sinners: One important aspect of reconciliation may perhaps be forgotten at times by religious communities and by parishes: we are all weak, we are all sinners. Everyone is burdened with sin, and is always in need of God's loving mercy and forgiveness. God makes this forgiveness available in many ways, particularly in the eucharist, and sends the Spirit of Jesus to open our hearts to grace and mercy.

Members of religious communities are invited to remember their own fragility, and to pray often and do penance for all sinners in the world. This is a sharing in the saving work of Jesus, and will be rewarded by him, for he came to save God's people from their sins (Mt. 1: 21).
Helpful reading: Many references are given in the reading lists throughout Bulletin 88.


* Documents on the Liturgy (see footnote 1 on page 147, above): See documents 358-382 [3017-3151], pages 935-991.


* National Bulletin on Liturgy:
  * No. 46, pages 290-309
  * No. 52, Reconciliation and Forgiveness
  * No. 88, Reconciliation in Our Life
  * See also Bulletin 61, pages 344-345.

Forgiveness and Reconciliation: Liturgical leaflet (1983, CCCB, Ottawa): a helpful way of sharing our Christian faith and practice in this important area of life.

BULLETINS FOR THIS YEAR

You can still subscribe to the 1983 issues of the National Bulletin on Liturgy. Bulletins 87-91 look at these practical topics in a pastoral way:

* No. 87: Twenty Good Years
* No. 88: Reconciliation in Our Life
* No. 89: Children Learn to Celebrate
* No. 90: Religious Communities Celebrate Liturgy
* No. 91: Sharing Our Faith.

Subscriptions for 1983, for nos. 87-91, are $6.00 in Canada, and $8.00 (U.S. funds) in other countries; airmail to other countries, $7.00 (U.S. funds) extra. Ask for a 1983 subscription, and send your cheque or money order to Publications Service, 90 Parent Avenue, Ottawa, Ontario K1N 7B1, Canada.
Sick, aged, and dying members

Caring for the Sick and the Aged

Experience and sickness: When our health is good, we tend to take it for granted: we ought to bless God for this sign of love for us, perhaps with the opening prayer of the thirty-second Sunday in ordinary time. When we are sick, however, we are reminded of our weakness and our mortality. In the experience of sickness we have to face our own fragility, and depend on others. Further reflections on the meaning of this experience are given in Bulletin 57, pages 3-15.

Aging: Like Jesus, we should always be growing in wisdom, age, and grace before God and other people (see Lk. 2: 40 and 52). Today the Church and the world are changing fast, even at a bewildering rate. Older members have to be flexible, and try to understand the new trends, directions, and attitudes in the life of the Church and the community; younger members need to be patient with seniors, and try to understand how they have been formed.

Some older members may be upset by retirement from their life's work. Many prepare for this moment by developing skills in other areas. After retiring, a teacher may be free to visit the sick, or to work in parish ministry, or to do many other useful forms of ministry.

Community responsibilities: Each congregation needs to make sure that its members are being prepared for useful and happy retirement. Love and concern for all members, in sickness and in health, should be a mark of their vocation as Christians. Members should be helped to realize that all have a ministry to the sick and aged. All can learn how to exercise this ministry by prayer and action. St. Benedict offers wise advice in chapter 36 of his rule for monasteries.

Visiting the sick: When we visit the sick, we are visiting Jesus Christ (see Mt. 25: 35-40, 43-45). We should try to be friendly and positive. Sometimes they are lonely, or feel unwanted or unclean because they are sick. Often they need someone to listen to them without talking back. We may offer to do things for them, or read to them, or simply sit quietly with them. We can pray with them if they wish, and pray for them at any time. The new ritual, Pastoral Care (see “Helpful reading,” on page 176), provides good pastoral notes and a variety of prayers and readings for anyone to use when visiting sick people.

Prayer: We may pray for the sick and for those who take care of them in the intercessions of morning and evening prayer and in the prayer of the faithful at Mass. Individuals can pray for the sick at any time, but especially when a sick person is discouraged or in particular need, during a crisis, or during surgery or special treatment. Our love for the sick person will prompt us to pray frequently for him or her.
Prayers and blessings for the sick are included in *Pastoral Care* and in *A Book of Blessings* (1981, CCCB, Ottawa). Any Christian may celebrate some of these with the sick.

**Sacraments:** In each community, the chaplain or a minister of communion may bring the eucharist to sick members. Daily communion is encouraged, but the sick person has to be free not to receive if he or she so wishes. Opportunities for the sacrament of reconciliation — or at least a visit by a confessor — should be made easily available.

**Anointing of the sick:** This sacrament is for those who are seriously sick, or weak due to old age. The Church wants it celebrated early in the illness, so that the sick person is able to participate in it as fully as possible, and to benefit more from its effects throughout the sickness. This celebration should involve at least some members of the community, if not all. A communal celebration of anointing for all who are seriously sick or weak from age may be planned and held in the chapel or other suitable place from time to time.

**Caring for the Dying**

**Experience of dying:** For any human, death is fearful, for it means pain and loss and an end to life as we know it. For a Christian, however, there is hope, for we know that our death is the final step in our sharing in the paschal mystery of Christ: if we have been faithful by God’s grace, we will enter into the joy of the Lord Jesus. Our life is *changed, not ended* (preface 77). Further notes on the experience of dying and the Church’s response are given in Bulletin 57, pages 38-60.

**Community responsibilities:** Our culture tries to deny the stark reality of death in many ways. Believers, and especially religious, need to give witness to Christ’s values. We must be careful that we are not led away from Christian attitudes and practices by society’s whims or fears. When someone is dying, we must accept this fact and seek to support him or her by our friendship, our kind actions, our presence, our love, our thanks, our prayers. We provide a sympathetic ear to one who wants to talk, or affirming presence for one who wishes to remain silent.

**Prayer:** Dying members should be remembered daily in the intercessions of the Mass and of morning and evening prayer. Individual members can pray with the dying person, or for him or her at any time. Prayers for the commendation of the dying to God’s mercy are given in *Pastoral Care*; in *A Book of Blessings*; and in *Sunday Mass Book* (1976, CCC, Ottawa: see pages 1151-1155, 1323-1324): anyone may lead or say these prayers at any time.

**Sacraments:** The primary sacrament of the dying is *viaticum*, which may be given daily by the chaplain or a communion minister. It is appropriate to give communion under both forms, and during Mass if possible. The dying person renews his or her baptismal promises during the rite. The sacrament of reconciliation should be made available to the one who is dying. For those who suddenly come into danger of death (accident, heart attack), there is a “continuous rite” of anointing and viaticum.

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Preparing the community: Since many of the older members grew up in a period when the sacrament for the sick was called *extreme unction* ("last anointing"), and was given only to those in danger of death, it may be desirable to have a study day on the new attitudes, and on the possibilities of the renewed rites for the sick and the dying. With a growing number of older members, all could benefit from the opportunity to learn about ways of praying for and ministering to the sick and the dying. Do some communities need to have members trained in spiritual ministry to the sick?

Helpful reading: The first three titles below are available from CCCB Publications Service.

*Pastoral Care of the Sick: Rites of Anointing and Viaticum* (1983, CCCB, Ottawa): A copy of this book could be in each house of religious.


*Helping the Sick and the Dying*: Liturgical leaflet (1983, CCCB, Ottawa). A copy could be given to each member of the community during a workshop or study day.


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**PAPAL VISIT IN 1984**

Pope John Paul II has accepted the invitation of the Canadian bishops, and will visit parts of Canada from coast to coast. This pastoral visit will take place between September 9 and 19, 1984.

All Catholics are invited to pray in preparation for the papal visit. This prayer may be used by individuals and groups outside liturgical celebrations; in the liturgy, a petition in the prayer of the faithful or in the intercessions would be appropriate.

Lord, our God,
look upon the people of Canada with love
as we prepare for the pastoral visit
of Pope John Paul.

Renew our hearts by your Holy Spirit
and help us to follow your Son Jesus
in love and service for all.

We ask this grace
through Christ our Lord. Amen!
Wakes and funerals

Easter spirit: The Vatican Council called us to renew our attitudes about Christian death by seeing it in the light of the dying and rising of Jesus (Liturgy constitution, nos. 81-82 [81-82]). We first share in his paschal mystery in our baptism (Rom. 6: 3-11), and spend the rest of our lives trying to live out our promises to die with Christ to sin and to live with him for God. For Christians, death is the call of Jesus to enter into his joy.

The spirit of the resurrection is shown in our funeral rites by the use of white vestments, the Easter candle, the white pall, and by the prayers and hymns, including the use of Alleluia! Gone are the black vestments and the bleak funereal atmosphere of the past.

Three stages: The full Catholic rite follows three stages:

• Wake: The vigil or watching — the time between death and the celebration of the funeral — is a time when members of the community come to help the grieving family by prayer and by practical charity. In a religious community, there is natural grief over the death of a brother or sister, but there is also peace, since this person has been taken from the cares of this life into the freedom of heaven. The community may gather for prayers in the form of bible celebrations or services of the word (sometimes called wakes), for a celebration of the liturgy of the hours, or for a rosary or other forms of prayer. These possibilities are discussed in Bulletin 84, pages 119-124, and in the funeral ritual.

• Funeral: The Christian community brings the body of the deceased brother or sister to the church, where we celebrated the sacraments and offered worship together. We gather now to celebrate the eucharist: to give praise and thanks to God, to pray for the one who has died, and to pray for us who are still on pilgrimage. We offer our solemn farewell to our brother or sister who has entered into the fullness of Jesus' paschal mystery, and wait until we meet again in the glory of the kingdom (see Bulletin 84, pages 125-129).

• Burial: We lay the body of our brother or sister in the earth, where it will be dissolved into the elements of creation. Even as we entrust this temple of the Spirit to the soil, we know that God will one day raise us and our brother or sister, just as Christ was raised into glory. Hope and expectancy, the spirit of the resurrection of Jesus, permeate all our funeral rites (see Bulletin 84, pages 130-133).

Death of community members: When one of our brothers or sisters is called by the Lord Jesus into eternal life, we are both sad and happy. We are happy because our friend is now in the presence of the Lord: death is like graduation, a moving from a time of learning and testing to the full and mature living of life. At the same time, we are sad because we are parted from our friend; even Jesus wept at the death of his friend Lazarus (Jn. 11: 33-35).
Deaths of others: The deaths of other people also affect the members of religious communities in various degrees: family, especially parents, sisters, and brothers; former members; employees and associates of the community; pupils; and benefactors and friends. In each case religious communities reach out to the bereaved families in prayer and concern according to their need and the closeness of the bond of love and friendship.

Office of the dead: See page 160, above.

Community customs: All our customs surrounding the death of a member should reflect the Easter spirit of death in Christ. In your community, are there still some preconciliar practices that are no longer suitable?

Helpful reading: Canada's liturgical books include:

• Catholic Funeral Rite: Ritual and Pastoral Notes (1973, CCC, Ottawa)
• Rite for a Catholic Wake (1973, CCC, Ottawa)
• Catholic Book of Worship (1980, CCCB, Ottawa): choir edition, nos. 48-60, and liturgical index; the people's parts and melody lines are in the pew edition.

Documents on the Liturgy (see note 1 on page 147, above): see documents 413-418 [3366-3399], pages 1065-1075.


On Mass stipends, see the discussion on page 167, above.

Many other references are given in “Helpful reading,” and in footnotes in Bulletin 84, Funeral Liturgies.

NEXT ISSUE

The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults points out that adult candidates for baptism are to be formed fully in four ways which are carried on together:

• Teaching or catechesis,
• Growth in the Christian way of life and prayer,
• Liturgical celebrations, and
• Apostolic activity. (See Rite, no. 19.)

Bulletin 91, Sharing Our Faith, looks at this way of formation, and offers practical suggestions to help communities wishing to share their Christian faith and love with others.

These ideas may also be adapted for the formation of baptized persons moving toward full communion with the Catholic Church, and of Catholics who wish to return to their faith or to grow more deeply in its practice.

Bulletin 91 will be in the mail early in November.
Celebrating profession

**Meaning of religious profession:** When men and women are led by the Spirit to accept our Lord's invitation to follow him in a special way (Mk. 3: 13-14), they may come together with others in a religious community dedicated to the same goals and means.

- **Flowing from baptism:** By baptism, these believers have already made their basic commitment to Christ. They seek to go further, beyond what is required, and to entrust their lives totally to Christ in the work of the kingdom.

**Profession:** Religious profession consists essentially in a person's total gift of self to God for the sake of the kingdom. This offering is made in answer to a call, to the grace of the Holy Spirit, in union with Christ's offering of himself and of his life to the Father for the salvation of all people.

- **Religious vows:** The religious vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience involve the sacrifice of real goods and are in some sense the necessary consequence of the offering to God of one's entire life and one's whole self.

The vows are much more than a personal involvement; they have both an *individual* and a *community* dimension. In religious life, they are lived out in a community context. For the religious community, the vows of each member strengthen the community, so that all members are able to encourage others and be encouraged by them; the vows are like family ties, which enable them to stay and work together despite adversity and problems.

For the Church, the people of God, religious are, by their vows, reminders or witnesses — *martyres* in Greek — to the life of the kingdom here and in heaven; their lives call us all to look beyond present trials to eternal values, the values of Jesus.

Vows are not limited to renunciation of earthly goods. They are also seen as a *positive choice* in favor of Jesus' values, the values of the kingdom. They express the individual's trust in God's grace and in the support of the members of the community; these two sources of strength will enable the religious to persevere in these vows until death.

**Liturgical celebration:** The celebration of religious profession — of publicly taking vows of obedience, chastity, and poverty (and in some communities another vow, such as *stability* for Benedictines) — is made during Mass (Liturgy constitution, no. 80 [80]): our Lord unites this total self-offering to his own offering to our heavenly Father.
The basic *Rite of Religious Profession* was issued in Latin in 1970, and in definitive English translation in 1974.¹ This is a general book, and is to be adapted by each religious family according to its own spirit and character (see *Rite*, no. 14).

The act of profession is to take place after the gospel, in line with the other renewed rites.

**Liturgical texts:** The importance of religious profession and its meaning may be found by meditating on the liturgical texts which surround this rite:

- *Sacramentary:* In 1974, the Canadian sacramentary provided texts for:
  - Consecration to virginity, pages 897-899
  - First religious profession, page 900
  - Perpetual profession (two Masses), pages 901-905
  - Renewal of vows, page 906.

  The preface is no. 75, religious profession.

  The 1983 revision of the sacramentary has added new texts:
  - Jubilee of religious profession, page 1080
  - Blessing of an abbot or abbess, pages 1058-1059.

- *Lectionary:* See nos. 784-788, and 779-783.

- *Pontifical:* The first volume of the pontifical² contains rites for:
  - Blessing of an abbot, pages 257-270
  - Blessing of an abbess, pages 271-280
  - Consecration to a life of virginity, pages 281-325.

- *A Book of Blessings:* A prayer for the anniversary of religious profession is given on page 303.


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**BLESSINGS FOR RELIGIOUS**

Several blessings and prayers for religious are given in *A Book of Blessings* (1981, CCCB, Ottawa): a blessing for the anniversary of religious profession (page 303), a blessing of a convent or religious house (pages 102-103), a petition for religious in this diocese (page 332).

Religious may use many of the prayers and blessings given throughout this 375-page book. Each convent or religious house could benefit from having a copy. Further details are given in Bulletin 83, page 96.
God’s word

Vatican II and God’s word: The Council presented all its teachings by seeing them as flowing from the scriptures and the living faith of God's people. The Dogmatic constitution on revelation gives us the current approach to revelation, inspiration, and the gradual development of the gospel texts. The liturgy is strongly influenced by the scriptures: see the Liturgy constitution, no. 24; and nos. 35, 51, 78, 92a, 121 [24, 35, 51, 78, 92, 121].

Importance of the word: Catholics are beginning to return to God’s word as the source of guidance for daily living in the spirit of Jesus. In the liturgy, we show our respect for God’s word by having a special book, the lectionary, and by treating it with honor. The word is read from a special place, the lectern, which is to be reserved for proclaiming God’s word. A special person, the reader, is chosen and prepared to proclaim each selection (see Bulletin 71, pages 214-231; no. 83, pages 62-68).

Liturgy of the word: The liturgy of the word is now seen as the first of the two important parts of the eucharistic celebration (Liturgy constitution, no. 56 [56]). Every sacrament is celebrated within a word service, and the liturgy of the hours is a developed form of a service of the word. Other celebrations — such as funerals and blessings — take place within a liturgy of the word. Readings are provided in the lectionary for each day of the year, with semi-continuous readings during the 34 weeks of ordinary time. (Many other references are given in Bulletin 87, page 21; see also Bulletins 71, 83, 50, and 56.)

Bible celebrations: The Council encouraged us to use bible celebrations or services of the word (Liturgy constitution, no. 35: 4 [35]). These celebrations help us to listen to God speaking to us, to reflect on our lives, our values, and our world in the light of God’s word, and to turn back to the ways of our God. Penance celebrations are bible services too: see pages 171-172, above. Some suggestions for designing bible celebrations are given in Bulletin 81, pages 226-229.

Some questions: What place does God’s word have in the life of:

- Your religious community? Are you a community listening carefully to Jesus in the gospels? Are you making opportunities for hearing and proclaiming the word? Are some members being trained in the scriptures so that they may share more fully with the rest? Are you working on the psalms as Christian prayer? Does your community library have adequate and modern books and tapes about the scriptures? Do you subscribe to The Bible Today (The Liturgical Press, Collegeville, MN 56321)?

- Each member? Is each member of your community growing in the understanding and praying of the scriptures? What helps can be made available to all members, and to those who want to develop their love of God's word? Are all comfortable in using the scriptures in personal and community prayer?

- The people you work with? How is the community sharing its love of the scriptures and biblical prayer with the students, teachers, patients, hospital staff, or other people with whom and for whom you work?
The liturgy’s purpose is worship of God. But it does teach us by its symbols, actions, words, and attitudes. Some of these influences are outlined in this article.

**Formation and Education**

**Importance:** Good liturgy, well celebrated, has a strong influence on the faith, prayer, and apostolic works of the community and its members. Poor celebrations weaken their faith and cool their fervor. All members need to be helped to grow in the spirit of the liturgy as the primary and indispensable source of Christ’s Spirit (Liturgy constitution, no. 14).

- **New members:** During the years of their formation, new members need to learn about the liturgy: its meaning and value, its power, its rites, the liturgical year, the meaning and ways of participation. Theory and practice, prayer and celebration, use and adaptation: all blend together to deepen their sharing in the Church’s liturgical life.

- **Continuing formation:** As well as good celebration in each liturgy, all religious need opportunities for instruction in the spirit and practice of the liturgy, so that they may deepen their understanding and love of the Christian way of worshipping our God. This formation may be done by workshops, in-house formation, guided reading, and study programs. Religious communities may send one or more members to summer school or all-year courses in pastoral liturgy, so that they may share their learning with the whole community: a list of schools is given in Bulletin 87, page 48.

Members of religious communities are formed to live together in loving communion, in order that they may give greater glory to God by their worship and apostolic service. The liturgy is the source of their zeal and the goal toward which they direct their efforts (Liturgy constitution, no. 10). Like all Christians, they need help to be able to recognize the treasures in the liturgy, and to benefit from the scriptures proclaimed, from the prayers and celebrations, and from the music and hymns. These are part of the Church’s living tradition. By regular daily celebration of the Church’s liturgy (and not of our own concoctions: see Against theme Masses, in Bulletin 54, pages 190-192), we are nourished and formed gradually and slowly under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

**Helpful reading:** An outline of a reading course in liturgy was given in Bulletin 45, Learning About Liturgy. Later issues of the Bulletin provide many other references on all these topics, including the “Helpful reading” sections at the end of articles in this issue.

Liturgical Year

**Purpose:** The liturgical year celebrates the paschal mystery of Christ, the dying and rising of the Lord Jesus and our sharing in his victory through the liturgy and our daily living for God (see Liturgy constitution, nos. 102-111 [102-111]).

**Sunday** is the primary feast for Christians, and should not be displaced by other celebrations (no. 106 [106]). When we celebrate the Sunday eucharist, we proclaim to the world that we are the Church of God in this place (see nos. 41-42 [41-42]; GI, nos. 74-75 [1464-1465]). Sunday is the Lord's day, and our greatest celebrations of the eucharist, surrounded by morning and evening prayer, are to take place on this privileged day of praise. See Bulletins 43, 67, and 70 for further reading.

**Easter cycle:** We celebrate our salvation through the dying and rising of Jesus. We prepare during Lent by baptismal renewal and penance, both personal and communal. During the Easter triduum, we celebrate the paschal mystery of Christ. In the 50 days of the Easter season, we prolong our celebration and reflect on God's great love for us in Jesus Christ. See Bulletins 37, 42, 67, 70, and 86.

**Christmas cycle:** We celebrate the incarnation of Jesus: God loves us, and sends the Son to become our brother, our savior, our Lord. We celebrate this great love as we observe Advent, Christmas, and the time after Christmas. Jesus has become one of us in order to help us to love and serve God in our daily life, liturgy, service, love, and suffering. See Bulletins 36, 41, 55, 67, 70, and 85.

**Ordinary time:** This includes 33 or 34 weeks — two-thirds of the year, the "green Sundays" — outside the strong times, the Easter and Christmas cycles. We cannot be 'high' all the time: as a relatively quiet season, ordinary time allows us to reflect on the meaning of daily life lived in love and unassuming service. Sunday celebrations follow the thrust of one of the synoptic gospels (1984, year of Matthew; 1985, year of Mark; 1986, year of Luke), and are the high points of each week's prayer and worship. See Bulletin 70, pages 173-176; no. 67, pages 30-32.

**Saints:** When we celebrate feasts of Mary and the saints, we are celebrating Christ's victory over sin and death. By his obedient suffering, death, and resurrection, he has overcome the power of Satan and sin, of darkness and death in the saints. We rejoice over the victory of our faith, and open our lives to God's powerful Spirit. Saints are signs of Christ's triumph, models for our praying and living, and intercessors for us who are the Church on earth. See Bulletins 62 and 70.

Some saints are recognized in the universal Church; others are celebrated locally, or in particular countries or religious communities (Liturgy constitution, nos. 103-104, 108, 111 [103-104, 108, 111]).


**Chapels and Churches**

A church or chapel is a place where God’s people assemble to listen to the word and to celebrate God’s praise in the liturgy. Individuals and small groups may also come there for personal or group prayer at other times. A church is to be a reflection of God’s people, the Church: humble, serving, a pilgrim people.

**Beauty and art:** Everything in the church — furnishings, vessels, vestments — should be tasteful, beautiful, and artistic. In North America, it would seem more fitting to use native materials, artefacts, and art instead of importing them from other cultures.

**Eucharistic reservation:** The eucharist is reserved primarily for the sick and the dying, and also so that Catholics may give reverence to the Lord Jesus. The preferred place of reservation is in a chapel distinct from the main church, in a secure tabernacle covered with a veil and indicated by a burning lamp. Communion is ordinarily to be given from the elements consecrated in each Mass. (The least desirable place for the tabernacle is on or behind the altar where Mass is celebrated.)

The Episcopal Commission for Liturgy has expressed concern about the casual way in which some religious, living in apartments or houses, keep the eucharist. Religious superiors, bishops, and pastors might wish to see where greater respect is called for in eucharistic reservation.

**Helpful reading:**

- Constitution on the liturgy, nos. 122-129 [122-129]
- G1, nos. 253-280 [1643-1670]
- Dedication of a Church and an Altar (1978, CCCB, Ottawa)
- Bulletin 74, House of the Church: further references are given throughout this issue.

**Personal Prayer and Community Devotions**

**Spirit of liturgical prayer:** Guided by the Spirit, the people of God have developed the liturgy as public prayer. The spirit of liturgical prayer may be summarized as listening, thanking, and asking. We *listen* to God’s word and we recognize God’s presence and action in creation and in the grace offered to all people. We *give thanks and praise* to our God for creation and grace, and especially for calling us to be Church in this time and place. We *ask* God for ourselves and for others (petitions and intercessions), indeed, for all the world’s people. Sorrow and repentance are part of our public and personal prayer, but they do not take the dominant place given to them in the middle ages.

**In harmony with the liturgy:** The Roman liturgy tends to be simple, practical, sober, self-controlled, dignified, and sensible (see “Soberness and sense,” in Bulletin 62, page 46), with few flights of poetry and emotion. Our devotions and prayers are to reflect the thrust and spirit of the liturgy, and to be in harmony with it (Liturgy constitution, nos. 13, 17 [13, 17]. In Advent, for example, our devotions should be guided by the movement of the season, and be centered on the Church’s openness.
to the coming of Christ in many ways; bible celebrations, penance services, and other seasonal celebrations should have priority over "perpetual novenas" to St. Eucalyp­
tus. Our personal prayer reflects this same spirit. Devotions are to lead us to the liturgy, and are to flow from its riches. Each community needs to ask: Are our devotions and practices in harmony with the spirit of the Church's renewed liturgy?

**Balance in a time of change:** While freedom is given to individuals in their personal prayer life, the community should be careful not to impose outdated or lopsided devotions on all. The dedication of months to particular devotions may be fine, but was not recognized — in fact, it was totally ignored — when the liturgical year was renewed in 1969;¹ these devotions come from a time when the liturgical year was not recognized as a strong source of Christian spirituality.

The rosary is a good prayer for those who appreciate it, and may lead into a deeper love of scripture. Some helpful notes are given in *Sunday Mass Book* (1976, CCC, Ottawa), pages 1295-1298.

The Church has always been wary about private revelations, and all Catholics — particularly religious — should continue to share this reticence.

**Helpful reading:**

_Apostolic Exhortation “Marialis Cultus,”_ by Paul VI, on devotion to Mary (1974, CCC, Ottawa); see also page 159, above. This document suggests that devotion to Mary should be in harmony with biblical, liturgical, ecumenical, and anthropological guidelines (nos. 29-39); and reminds us that there are trinitarian, christological, and ecclesial aspects of this devotion (nos. 25-28).


_The Bible Prayer Book_: All the prayers, songs, hymns, canticles, psalms, and blessings in the bible, compiled and edited by Eugene S. Geissler (1981, Ave Maria Press, Notre Dame, IN 46556).


**Ending Discrimination**

_Vatican II:_ The Second Vatican Council quoted Gal. 3: 28 (see also Col. 3: 11), and stated that in Christ and in the Church there is no inequality on the basis of race, nationality, social condition, or gender (Constitution on the Church, no. 32). Among the broader desires of humanity, the Council mentions that women are claiming equality with men both in law and in fact (Church in the modern world, no. 9). All social or cultural discrimination — because of gender, color, race, language, or religion — is to be eliminated because it is contrary to God's will (Church in the modern world, no. 29). See also the Declaration on the relationship of the Church to non-Christian religions, nos. 4-5.

¹ See _The Roman Calendar: Text and Commentary_ (1975, ICEL, 1330 Massachusetts Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20005; the Apostolic Letter of Paul VI, approving these changes, and the "General Norms for the Liturgical Year and the Calendar" are contained in the sacramentary (Canadian editions, 1974, 1983, pages 65-66, and 67-75 [3754-3766, and 3767-3827]).
Two areas of concern: The Church in North America is developing its awareness of discrimination in ministry and in language, and is beginning to move strongly to begin to improve the situation. These matters are discussed in some detail in Bulletin 87, pages 35-36 and 41-42; see also Bulletin 76, pages 226-227. At present this concern will continue to be a sign and a voice of prophetic ministry here, since the Roman Congregations seem to consider these questions as nonproblems.

Challenge: All religious are invited to become more aware of the developing theologies of the Church and its many ministries. Religious who are theologians may wish to help move the frontiers further, and to share these developments with all who care. All Christians need to become more concerned about discriminatory or exclusive language, particularly in liturgical texts, and to let this concern be heard until improvements are made.

The Canadian Church continues to work quietly, not stridently, for a gentle revolution. The local Church has to contribute much here to help all to become more sensitive; otherwise, these reforms will be of little avail.

Helpful reading:


Catholicism: Study Edition, by Richard P. McBrien (1981, Winston Press, 430 Oak Grove, Minneapolis, MN 55403; in Canada, available in two editions through Novalis, PO Box 9700, Terminal, Ottawa, Ontario K1G 4B4); see chapter 23, on Women in the Church, pages 848-854. (This book was reviewed in Bulletin 83, page 89; see also no. 78, page 92.)


Guidelines for Inclusive Language (1981, United Church of Canada, 85 St. Clair Avenue East, Toronto, Ontario M4T 1M8).

T HIS IS BUT THE BEGINNING

Not all questions about religious communities and liturgy are answered in this Bulletin. Rather, some questions are raised in order to help communities and individual members explore some areas of their worship life more fully.

How can you and your community take advantage of this issue?
In a religious community, the liturgy or worship committee helps all the members to grow in faith and love through deeper prayer and better worship. A larger community will select members for this task, while in a small house it could consist of all who live there.

Committee members learn to understand the Church’s liturgy, and the theology on which it is based (see Bulletin 66, pages 260-265). They try to keep informed of developments in the liturgy, and to be aware of the way in which the Church in our country is moving. The meaning of the elements which are involved in the liturgy is described in Bulletin 81, pages 204-205.

They try to grow in the spirit of the liturgy, and become more and more convinced that the primary and indispensable source of the true spirit of Jesus is full participation in the liturgy of Christ and his Church (see Liturgy constitution, no. 14 [14]).

Task: The committee is concerned about the worship and prayer life of the religious community within the wider Church. The committee’s job is to promote better liturgy, helping the community to make its worship the best it can offer to God at this time. This involves learning about liturgy, planning for liturgical events and seasons during the year, improving the celebration of the eucharist, both daily and Sunday, and of the hours of morning and evening prayer, and promoting better personal and community prayer.

Resources: The main resources for this work are the official liturgical books (lectionary, sacramentary, liturgy of the hours, ritual books) and their pastoral introductions. Then the liturgical calendar, Guidelines for Pastoral Liturgy (the 1983-1984 edition of the calendar is now available from CCCB Publications Service). Educational material on the liturgy and its celebration, on the seasons, and on other aspects can be found in the National Bulletin on Liturgy, especially in the issues listed below.

Helpful reading:

Two issues of the Bulletin discuss the work of the liturgy committee in detail. These issues can easily be adapted for religious communities:

* No. 35, Parish Liturgy Committees: now available in a second, revised edition;
* No. 66, Diocesan Commissions and Parish Committees;

See also Worship committee in a religious community, in Bulletin 66, page 283; and Liturgy in the religious community, in no. 34, pages 160-169.

Many other references are given in Bulletin 61, pages 312-314.

Issues of the Bulletin give many other references in “Helpful reading” after most articles, and review many books which are useful to committee members and to others.

The author has provided a basic theology of Christ for adult believers. Written in clear English, the book has three main sections: background information, the message of Jesus, and his death and resurrection, with their consequences down to our time in preaching and faith. Helpful examples put the reader into contact with the scriptures and with Jesus as our brother and as the Lord of history. Recommended for adult study groups, catechists, and preachers.


This book is an updated version of the history and development of the Book of Common Prayer in England. After a survey of early and medieval liturgies, the authors help us to understand Archbishop Cranmer as he prepares the 1549 and 1552 editions. They analyze the contents of the BCP, follow its various developments in England and around the English-speaking world, and bring us into England's Alternative Service Book of 1980. As Christian Churches continue to converge in their celebration of the liturgy and to share sources, rites, and texts, this study provides a helpful resource for all interested in English-language liturgies.


The author allows the liturgical passages from the prophets to speak out clearly, and relates them to major themes in the psalms. God comes as victor and savior, and speaks to the people of the covenant. There is a dialogue between God and the congregation, and visions of David's rule. We are helped to understand how the prophetic ministry continues both in Hebrew and Christian liturgy, and can appreciate more clearly many of the texts used in our liturgies. Recommended for preachers, catechists, and students of liturgy.


A careful and readable study of the language and theologies of eucharistic prayers is presented in this book, one of the Alcuin Club series. Dr. Buxton shows how different ages have approached the meaning of consecration and the eucharistic sacrifice, and judges that the whole canon as consecratory is the Latin rite's tradition. Recommended for clergy and students of liturgy, theology, and ecumenism.

¹ Prices for U.S. publications are given in U.S. dollars, unless otherwise noted.

This book offers pastoral advice on helping alcoholics by confronting them, and encourages families to seek professional help. Useful for clergy and for families with an alcoholic member.


This is the twelfth printing of a book first published in 1932. It provides the historical background on Jewish and Christian worship, and the history of the Book of Common Prayer between 1549 and 1662, and revisions to 1932. The sources of the various services and their meaning are described, and supplementary essays study another twelve topics of interest. This book was the main reference book for Anglican students for many years, and is now being reprinted in its original form to provide a useful and lasting resource.

As Roman Catholics and Anglicans begin to move closer together, it is helpful for us to understand the elements of prayer, ritual, and calendar that have shaped the prayer life of the Anglican Churches for four and a half centuries. Recommended for students of liturgy, and for libraries.


The Bulletin welcomes Hosanna to the North American scene. Volume one, number one (January 1983), on "Prayer of Penance," is pleasantly arranged. Ten articles by competent liturgists and scripture experts present a good variety of aspects on penance, the sacrament of reconciliation, the penitential rite in the Mass, Lent, and the challenge of penance today. An interview with an active liturgist and a review of the ICEL psalter project complete this interesting issue.

We recommend Hosanna to our readers, and encourage them to benefit from its resources.

Celebrating Reconciliation, by Eugene O'Sullivan, OP (1982, Zealandia, PO Box 845, Auckland 1, New Zealand): softbound, illustrations, 72 pages. $5.00 (New Zealand), discount to bookstores.

This helpful book explores the theology, spirituality, and renewed rites of the sacrament of reconciliation. The author looks at sin, offers five examples of homilies, and some discussion questions on first confession. The texts of the penitent's prayer (act of contrition) and of the pastoral introduction to the Rite of Penance are also included. Prepared in the light of the 1983 Synod, this book will remain useful in future years. Recommended for parishes, clergy, catechists, and parents.


Since its founding in Paris in 1833, 150 years ago, the St. Vincent de Paul Society has extended its works of charity to many countries. It is a society of lay men and women, and works with the poor and needy in the spirit of Mt. 25: 31-46. This booklet gives many examples of what dedicated laypersons are doing. Recommended for every parish council.
The Immanuel: Patterns for a Do-it-yourself Wheel Calendar for Advent, by Deborah A. Smith and Ade Bethune (1982, Saint Leo League, 117 Washington Street, Newport, RI 02840): paper 8½ by 11 inches, illustrations, 32 pages.

The book provides a pattern for making a calendar, 42 by 42 inches, with scriptural images covering the four weeks of Advent. The patterns are inspired by early Christian mosaics and fresco paintings, Eastern icons, and medieval images. They can be cut out of colored paper or cloth. The images are simple and pleasing, and can be explained by story as in the Jesse tree. Recommended for catechetical classes and for families.

* * *


This booklet is addressed first of all to bishops and priests, and presents a clear picture of what a homily is to be in the Sunday assembly. Good preaching demands faith, prayer, study, hard work, and careful preparation. Preachers are encouraged to invite parishioners to share with them in the work of preparing for the Sunday homily. Although preachers are urged to have a variety of resource books (page 12), no contemporary list or bibliography is included. Recommended for all clergy as a challenge, and for laity who want better preaching on the Lord's day.

* * *


Earlier Study Texts have been reviewed favorably in the Bulletin. This one provides a useful book for use by communities and individuals who celebrate the liturgy of the hours. It gives Pope Paul's 1970 letter introducing the new format, and then a brief history of the way the office developed gradually. Three chapters cover the theology, structure, and celebration of the liturgy of the hours. An appendix contains further useful references. Recommended as a helpful and practical resource for each religious community and rectory, and for individuals who pray the hours.

* * *


Following the revised edition of the pastoral introduction to the Lectionary for Mass, this study guide gives us a theology of God's word, describes the ministries and books involved in the proclamation of the word, and helps us to understand the lectionary's structure and content. Helps for celebrating the word well are also included, along with a five-page study guide for local use. Intended for all members of the Sunday assembly, this resource is particularly recommended for readers, liturgy committee members, and clergy.

* * *


This booklet is intended for study groups, and for distribution to parishioners. It presents the meaning of Vatican II, and shows how this influences the Sunday assembly, where people have their main experience of what it means to be Church. Clearly written, this booklet is useful for individual or group study at adult and high school levels.

Fifty days of celebrating the Easter season are too much for one parish or community alone, but on a regional, diocesan, and ecumenical basis, the season can become a festival of Christian joy. The author offers many suggestions within and outside the liturgy to help in planning and celebrating the fifty days in homes, churches, and communities. This positive and practical publication is recommended for parish liturgy committees and diocesan commissions.

* * *


Father Walsh's practical approach to Sunday liturgy comes through in these pages of good ideas for better celebration. Planning for music is important, and helps are offered to choose times of music and musical selections. Useful for liturgy committees and music planners.

* * *


Intended for men or women who have lost their spouse by death, this booklet offers many suggestions to help widows and widowers to accept and work through their grief. Spiritual and emotional help lead the survivor to grow in faith, to experience healing, and gradually to move toward new horizons. This is a useful resource booklet that parishes could keep on hand for the widowed. It may also be used by those who minister to the bereaved. Recommended.

* * *


The author seeks to show "the Christian dimension of married life and to foster its enrichment" (page 3). He focuses on its sacramental aspects, and does so in simple language. Each of the seven chapters consists of a number of short reflections, developed from the scriptures and examples from ordinary life, and concludes with questions for further thought and discussion. Liturgy and life are kept together throughout. Recommended for married couples, marriage preparation or enrichment sessions, and for marriage courses.

* * *


IMPACT stands for "integrated methods of parent assessment and communication training." The authors, who are psychiatrists, offer twelve chapters to help parents become more effective and successful in communicating with their children. Simple exercises make them more aware of their children's psychological needs, and let them develop specific skills as parents. Useful as a study guide for groups of parents.

* * *

The authors, two doctors from Winnipeg, share their insights on sexuality in marriage. They blend human realities and view them with Christian faith. Helpful for married couples of any age.


When first published in 1977, this book presented a fresh view of sacraments in our Christian life and worship. The author described the signs well, and helped readers to move toward a more generous use and appreciation of symbols. This revised edition has added marriage and orders, and continues to show us the richness waiting to be explored in our sacramental system. Recommended for liturgy committees, clergy, catechists, and adults who wish to grow in their faith.


These three books, translated and adapted from Prières des Dimanches, may be used in various ways. They are sources of reflection, examples of creativity in the eucharist, in personal and family prayers, in Sunday celebrations led by laity (see Bulletin 79), and in other celebrations. The prayers are based on the Sunday liturgy of the word, and additional prayers and reflections from the Fathers, other liturgies, and other religions. Between three and five pages are given for each Sunday and for other special celebrations. Helpful resource for liturgy committees and religious communities, and for families and individuals who want to expand their prayer life.


One and many: the mystery of sharing one faith and expressing it, living it, and celebrating it in many ways! This tenth issue of Liturgy explores the beautiful variety of pluriformity in Christianity: though many, we are one! Our Church is seen in rural America, in ethnic groups, among the Blacks, in our liturgical books, in Africa and Ecuador, in our music. The fourteen articles in this issue open our minds and hearts to the riches of our cultures and to the need of celebrating them in our worship. Recommended.


A mother reflects on five of Jesus' healing miracles as she prays the rosary in time of sickness, and shares her reflections with us.
Acclaimed in many countries for its practical and broad scope, the Bulletin offers concise yet thorough treatment of all aspects of liturgical questions. It is written for those who are involved in planning and celebrating liturgy. Many past issues are still in print: these are listed below. Act now to complete your set, or to order one or more copies of issues on topics of particular interest. You will find the Bulletin useful for personal reading, discussion groups, classes, workshops, conferences, seminars, and for introducing new aspects of the renewal.

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