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Guidelines on Sacraments
National Bulletin on Liturgy

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

Editor
REV. PATRICK BYRNE

Editorial Office
NATIONAL LITURGICAL OFFICE
90 Parent Avenue
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 7B1
(613) 236-9511 extension 176

Business Office
PUBLICATIONS SERVICE
90 Parent Avenue
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 7B1

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GUIDELINES ON SACRAMENTS

In the early centuries, the Church developed practical guidelines for the sacraments. Gradually these became part of our tradition. With different conditions and new theological positions, rules changed and have continued to do so.

During the 1950s, much of our Church's sacramental discipline was governed by the 1917 Code of Canon Law. The rubrics in the ritual books were seen mainly as rules to guide ceremonial actions.

The Second Vatican Council brought us back to the spirit of the early Church. Liturgical books now contain strong pastoral introductions. These explain the scriptural, traditional, and theological foundations for the particular sacrament in the life of the Church, and offer sound, practical guidelines for good celebration. These guidelines are primarily pastoral, and go far beyond the minimum of what is valid and licit.

The 1983 Code of Canon Law contains some more rules for sacraments. What does this compilation of laws mean for our life of worship?
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Introduction</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian attitudes toward law</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Exploring the New Code</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outline of the code</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Means of sanctification</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some general notes</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sacraments of initiation</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Catechumenate</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Baptism</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Confirmation</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Eucharist</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other sacraments</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Reconciliation</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Anointing of the sick</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ministries and ordination</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Marriage</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An early evaluation</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Synod Interventions</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sacramental reconciliation: theological aspects</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complementarity of the three forms</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other Notes</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brief book reviews</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Next issue</strong></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulletins for this year</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courses in pastoral liturgy</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Christian attitudes toward law

Human attitudes: Men and women, boys and girls: we have many attitudes toward law, laws, rules, conventions, and other guidelines or restrictions on our conduct and way of life. We might illustrate this variety in this way:

Which way is best? Which way do you follow?
In the Hebrew scriptures, our Old Testament, we find examples of different attitudes toward law. The Pentateuch (the first five books of the bible) lays down many laws of various kinds: civil, moral, ceremonial, cultic. The psalms praise the place of God's law or will in our life (see Ps. 19: 7-14; Ps. 119), and tell us that God wants a sacrifice of thanksgiving rather than fair words and wicked deeds (Ps. 50); God is always ready to hear our prayer of sorrow and to grant us forgiveness (Psalms 6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, 143). The prophets condemned those who thought they could trick God by their external behavior, by lip service without service coming from the heart (Is. 29: 13; Mk. 7: 6-8). Jeremiah told us that God's law would be written in our hearts (Jer. 31: 31-34).

Jesus: Our Lord came as a bar mitzvah, a humble son of the law of God, a servant who came to do God's will (Jn. 4: 34; Heb. 10: 7; Ps. 40: 7-8). His parents had him circumcised, and presented him in the temple in accordance with God's law (Lk. 2: 21-24; see Lev. 12: 1-8; Exod. 13: 1-2, 11-15). Jesus grew up in obedience (Lk. 2: 51; see also Heb. 5: 8-9). He proclaimed that he had come to fulfill the law of God, and not to destroy it (Mt. 5: 17-20). Jesus paid the temple tax for himself and Peter (Mt. 17: 24-27), and encouraged people to take care of their civil and religious responsibilities, to honor their duties both to Caesar and to God (Mt. 22: 21).

Some people thought they could succeed by praising God without obedience and good deeds to back up their words; our Lord was quick to warn them (Mt. 7: 21-23). He echoed the prophets in demanding service from the heart and in condemning lip service (Mt. 15: 7-9); he avoided some either-or situations by suggesting that both were required (Lk. 11: 42). Jesus condemned the Pharisees and doctors of the law in very strong terms for manipulating the law in their own favor (Mt. 23: 1-36).

- Lord of the Sabbath: The law of observing the Sabbath as a day of rest and worship was given by God (Deut. 5: 14-15; Exod. 23: 12; Exod. 20: 8-11); it was the touchstone of Jewish fidelity (Exod. 31: 12-17). Yet Jesus took it upon himself to reverse this God-given law, and to state that human needs were more important: we were not made for the Sabbath day, but rather it was made for us. In doing this, he startled and angered those who opposed him (Mk. 2: 23-28; Mt. 12: 1-8; Lk. 6: 1-5).

- God's will: Jesus came to do the will of the Father (Jn. 4: 34). He taught us by his obedience (Mk. 14: 16), and invited us to pray that the Father's will would be done on earth (Mt. 6: 10). Those who follow Jesus are to walk in the same spirit of love and obedience.

New Testament: A few illustrations from the other books of the New Testament help us to deepen our appreciation of Christian attitudes toward law:
• **Council of Jerusalem:** Because of different approaches to the rules, there was need to call a council to settle the differences between Christians coming from a Jewish background and those coming from a pagan milieu. The council decreed that pagans didn't need to be circumcised and become followers of Judaism in order to become Christians: we are saved by the name of Jesus (Acts 15: 11). The solution recorded in Acts 15: 28-29 sought to avoid burdening anyone with anything beyond what is necessary, but today we would consider three of the four requirements as nonessentials; only one of them — avoiding unchastity or fornication — would be involved in our Christian living today, and we have added many other rules for day-to-day living. [It is good to remember that human laws are always shaped by the culture and time in which they are made. Witness the notice posted in most motel and hotel rooms about parking your horse.]

• **Need of rules and laws:** Any human organization or group needs some rules, regulations, and laws. The local Churches of the early Christians had to develop laws and discipline to meet current needs and problems (some of these are reflected in Mt. 18: 15-17, for example). In some cases, the law of God was applied to specific situations (1 Cor. 5-6-7-8); in others, Paul made appropriate rules (see 1 Cor. 7: 12). As in any group, the “barn door principle” is always at work. At the same time, it is recognized that law is needed to govern the lawless and disobedient ones (see 1 Tim. 1: 8-11).

• **Obedience of Jesus:** The willingness of Jesus to submit to the Father's will and to die for our salvation is held up as the model for all (Phil. 2: 1-13).

**Among the early Christians:** During the first two centuries of the Church's life, we find many local Churches developing decrees and legislation, often based on the model of their civil society, in order to meet many situations, circumstances, and conflicts. Even a brief survey of early writings — the Didache, the letter attributed to Clement, Ignatius of Antioch, Justin, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Hippolytus — shows how different practices were developing, and how rules were being made to cover cases and problems as they arose.¹

**In the succeeding centuries:** Councils, synods, bishops, popes, and emperors continued to make laws to meet new situations and to combat abuses or errors. Gradually, a large body of laws and decrees developed. The following article looks at the birth and growth of “canon law” or Church law.

* * *

¹ The same practice continues in every human organization: bishops write letters to the clergy, religious, and laity of the diocese; school principals issue circular letters to their staff; large businesses and government offices provide a constant stream of directives and guidelines; sports leagues need to keep adjusting the rulebooks. All are trying to make the rules keep up with the shifting realities of daily life in a rapidly changing world.
See *Formation of conscience*, a statement of the Canadian bishops, dated December 1, 1973. It is given in full in Bulletin 52, pages 40-50. This statement speaks of what leads us to a mature conscience, and of its relationship with law. On the occasion of the issuing of the new code, we may all benefit from reading this statement once again.

* * *

**Helpful reading:**


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**NEXT ISSUE**

Canada is preparing for a papal visit in September of this year. Bulletin 93, our next issue, offers some positive help in our spiritual preparation.

Entitled *John Paul II: Worship and Prayer*, this issue provides reflections on some of his talks and writings about the meaning and place of worship and prayer in our life, and on Christian unity. Bulletin 93 may be used by families, schools, religious communities, and parishes as they seek to grow in the spirit of the liturgy.

Bulk orders of 50 or more copies to one address are available: see the inside front cover for details.

This issue will be in the mail early in March. Make sure that you have renewed your subscription for 1984: see page 11 for further information.
EXPLORING THE NEW CODE

Outline of the code

A little history: In the early Church, practices and customs were handed down from one generation to another, sometimes changing little by little, and even at times gradually reversing their meaning. Experts tried to use the decrees and condemnations of local, regional, and ecumenical councils as a source of guidance (somewhat as we have been using Vatican II documents for the past twenty years). There were no printed books, and all manuscripts had to be copied laboriously by hand; as a result they were both rare and expensive. Many private collections of local decrees and even forged summaries of papal legislation were gathered and circulated.

Around 1140 in Bologna, Gratian tried to bring some order into this chaos. He compiled all the bits of legislation he could find, reconciling differences, harmonizing, and drawing conclusions. By a flowing commentary, he welded these diverse elements into a system that could serve practical needs at every level of the Church's activity. His Decree became the watershed in canonical history. Several other private collections followed his, and soon official ones as well. As a result of his work, "Bologna, the nursery of canonists,"1 and other centers formed faculties of canon law distinct from those of theology.

By the beginning of the twentieth century, the accumulated mass of laws, customs, and practices had become so extensive that no one could grasp the whole. In the spring of 1904, Pope Pius X ordered the compilation of all these sources into one practical book. This was achieved after thirteen years of hard work. Benedict XV promulgated the Code of Canon Law on Pentecost Sunday in 1917, and it went into effect on the following Pentecost, May 19, 1918.

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A canon law commission was established in Rome to give official interpretations. Subsequent dispensations, changes, and new or extended legislation were gathered and studied assiduously. To be an up-to-date canonist, one had to know all these resources and so keep up with the constantly changing scene. By the 1950s, the whole thing was becoming unmanageable once again.

John XXIII startled the world on January 25, 1959, when he called for an ecumenical Council and for a new codification of canon law.

When the Second Vatican Council was celebrated from 1962 to 1965, it stated its goals clearly:

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

(Liturgy constitution, no. 1 [1])

The Council set out to change attitudes and practices in the Church, changes which reflected a new and more vibrant theology based on the realities of daily life in our times and on the living word of God in the scriptures, in the liturgy, and in the tradition of the Church.

Preparations for the Council took three and a half years, and it was completed in four sessions, from 1962 to 1965. Since then, its principles, decrees, and directives — its vision and spirit — have been trickling gradually through the Church. Its impact has been felt in liturgy, in ministries, in education, and in every sphere of the life of believers, both in the Catholic Church and in the other Christian Churches.

Moving slowly and consulting broadly, those involved in the preparation of the new code have gradually completed their work. Many suggestions, though not all, made by the Canadian bishops and their consultants have been incorporated in the text. The new code was promulgated (made public)

How the Code Is Divided

Former arrangement: The 1917 code contained five main sections or books, with 2,414 canons:

1. General norms (canons 1-86)
2. Persons (canons 87-725)
3. Things (canons 726-1551)
4. Processes (canons 1552-2194)
5. Crimes and penalties (canons 2195-2414).

These “canons” are concise statements of the law, generally expressed in the words of the document from which they were derived.

In the 1917 arrangement, the sacraments and other areas involved in the Church’s office of sanctifying were lumped in book three as things.

New arrangement: The 1983 Code of Canon Law contains seven main sections or books, with 1,752 canons or laws:

1. General norms (canons 1-203)
2. The people of God (canons 204-746)
3. The Church’s office of teaching (canons 747-833)
4. The Church’s office of sanctifying (canons 834-1253)
5. The temporal goods of the Church (canons 1254-1310)
6. Sanctions in the Church (canons 1311-1399)

Law reflects theology: The laws contained in the 1917 code reflected the theologies of the centuries between the Council of Trent (1545-1563) and Benedict XV (1914-1922), when the Church was seen juridically as a perfect society, based on the model of civil society. In popular thinking the

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4 The Code of Canon Law in English Translation (1983, Collins/CCCB Publications Service, 90 Parent Avenue, Ottawa, Ontario K1N 7B1). This translation has been approved by the episcopal conferences of Australia, Canada, England and Wales, India, Ireland, New Zealand, and South Africa. A French translation is expected to be available in the spring of 1984.


6 Sanctions are decrees that bind, or the principles or authority that make them bind; they may be the reward for keeping the law or the penalty for breaking it. In the code, sanctions are penal (canon 1311).

Church was the hierarchy and the religious; the liturgy was the clergy's work, which the people heard and watched.

- *Vatican II:* The Council urged us to see the Church once more in the images of the scriptures.⁸ The Church is the people of God, the body of Christ, the living vine, the flock of Jesus. The Church on earth is always in need of reform.⁹ The Council gave us a fresh theology of Christ (Christology), the human race (anthropology), and the Church (ecclesiology) by leading us back to the scriptures, to the liturgy, and to the faith and practices of the early Christians.

**What ecclesiology underlies the 1983 code?** What theology of the Church is at the basis of the laws? Is it the old or new theology, or some of both? This will show as we look at the laws governing membership in the Church, clergy and laity, ministries, and other such areas. Do these laws reflect the spirit and mind of Vatican II? What models of the Church do they echo? Are the directions and tendencies of the Council widened or narrowed?

The articles on the various parts of book four of the new code will examine the canons with these questions in mind.

* * *

**Helpful reading:**


* "Gratian, Decretum of," in vol. 6, pages 706-709
* "Canon Law," in vol. 3, pages 29-34
* "Canon Law, History of," in vol. 3, pages 34-50


⁹ See Constitution on the Church, no. 8; Decree on ecumenism, nos. 3, 4, and 6 [184-185]; and *Rite of Penance,* no. 3 [3068].
Five Hundred Years of Printing, by S. H. Steinburg (third edition, 1974, Penguin, Harmondsworth, Mdx.).


Ongoing Reform of the Church, edited by Alois Mueller and Norbert Greinacher: Concilium 73 (1972, Herder and Herder, as above).


Vatican II documents and later documents are collected in:


BULLETINS FOR THIS YEAR

After consultation with the Episcopal Commission for Liturgy and the National Council for Liturgy, these topics have been chosen for the National Bulletin on Liturgy for 1984:

* No. 92 January Guidelines on Sacraments
* No. 93 March John Paul II: Worship and Prayer
* No. 94 May Gestures and Symbols
* No. 95 September Culture and Liturgy
* No. 96 November Social Justice and Liturgy

Each issue contains 64 pages. Subscriptions for 1984, from January to December (nos. 92-96), are $8.00 in Canada; $10.00 (U.S. funds) outside Canada; by airmail, outside Canada, $7.00 extra (U.S. funds). Send your cheque or money order to Publications Service, 90 Parent Avenue, Ottawa, Ontario K1N 7B1 Canada.
The "means of sanctification" are the ways that God makes us holy. It is God's plan that we become holy, and God's grace that makes us holy. This article looks at the manner in which God carries out this plan.

How God makes us holy: Our loving God has called us from all eternity to be children of God with Jesus Christ, to be holy and sinless before our God, to give glory by our lives of love (Eph. 1: 3-14). God has given us the Lord Jesus as our brother and our savior, so that we might become holy through his dying and his rising. We are the children of grace. Our God has loved us and forgiven us without any merit or right on our part.

Our loving Father makes us holy by the life we lead, by our love, by our faith — all gifts to us from God. We are made holy by our obedience (Rom. 13: 8-10), our prayer, our work, our suffering, our daily carrying of the cross, and by doing the duties of our state in life. God does this in us, gives us the grace to do these good works. It is God who makes us holy.

God also makes us holy through the liturgy, the sacraments, and the actions of the body of Christ, the people of God. With God's grace, we have to co-operate in faith and love, preparing ourselves to celebrate, celebrating well, and continuing to live in the spirit of the liturgy.

Jesus calls us to be holy as the Father is holy (Mt. 5: 48; Lk. 6: 36; see Lev. 19: 2; Lev. 11: 45; 1 Pet. 2: 9). The New Testament calls us "saints" (Rom. 1: 7; Rom. 8: 27). God can make us holy in the ways mentioned above, and in any other way pleasing to God. Our God is infinite, and is not limited to the standard ways, or restricted by human laws; the Spirit moves freely in the work of sanctifying the people on earth.

• Liturgical texts often proclaim what we believe. See, for example, the prayers over the gifts for the fifteenth and seventeenth Sundays in ordinary time:

*May this eucharist help us grow in holiness and faith.*

*May these mysteries make us holy and lead us to eternal joy.*
Means of sanctification listed in book four: The Church continues its work of helping us to become holy through the liturgy (canon 834) and through other means (839); see also 1234: 1. The code mentions these ways for our sanctification: ecumenical relations; seven sacraments (along with Mass stipends and indulgences); blessings and other sacramentals; liturgy of the hours; funerals; veneration of saints, images, and relics; vows and oaths; sacred places, including churches, oratories, private chapels, shrines, altars, and cemeteries; sacred times, including feast days and days of penance, fast, and abstinence.

The word of God, mentioned in passing in canon 836 as being most important, is covered more fully in book three (office of teaching): canons 756-761 on the ministry of God's word, and canons 762-772 on preaching it.

Church law and Church reform: The Second Vatican Council reminded us that we are a Church always in need of reform (see note 9 on page 10, above). Let us not forget:

- **Squabbles in the early Church:** Even in the New Testament we find disputes over questions that were important at that time:
  - Paul told Peter off for his hypocritical behavior in Gal. 1: 11-21 (despite Acts 10: 34-35, 43).
  - The Council of Jerusalem: See page 5, above.

- **Fourth Lateran Council:** If we need to remember that laws are conditioned by time and by many other circumstances — not always noble — we can remember the Fourth Lateran Council, held in 1215 under Innocent III.¹ This is the Council that gave us the law, still in effect, of annual confession (constitution 21). It also gave us these charming rules:
  - The Council moved slightly against torture, one of the evils of their day, by forbidding the clergy to bless or consecrate the hot or cold water or red-hot irons (constitution 17).
  - Continuing the laws of the Third Lateran Council against Jews and Saracens (canon 26 in 1179), the Fourth Lateran Council commanded them to wear distinctive clothes so that they could be readily identified as such. Jews were not to move about in public on “days of lamentation” and of the Lord’s passion, lest Christians attack them (constitution 68). Jews and pagans were not to hold public office (constitution 69).

  [As we read the decrees against people who are Jewish, we must not forget that this is part of the background that would eventually lead to the

¹ See Conciliorum Oecumenicorum Decreta, edited by Joseph Alberigo et al. (1962, Herder, Basel); for the Fourth Lateran Council, introduction and document, see pages 203-247.
The Council condemned the pride of the Greeks for separating from Rome in 1054, as if this were a one-sided thing (see Bulletin 78, pages 57-59), but called for unity, meaning a return to obedience to Rome (constitution 4).

Clergy are to avoid inebriation and dice games, and are not to engage in hunting or bird-catching, nor are they to have dogs or birds for this purpose (constitution 15).

Clergy are to wear an outer garment that does not attract attention because it is too long or too short. They are not to wear red or green clothing, shoes with curved toes, capes with long sleeves; they are not to have gilded saddles, bridles, or spurs. They are not to wear rings, or buckles or shoe-fastenings of gold or silver (constitution 16).

Crusade: The Council called for a three-year crusade to regain the Holy Land for Christians (constitution 71).

Second Vatican Council (1962-1965): In the past, most Councils tended to hurl anathemas at the adversaries: “If anyone says . . . , let him or her be anathema: anathema sit!” Pope John XXIII brought a new and more Christlike approach. We were not to condemn others, but reform ourselves; we were to seek and reinforce the good qualities in the Church and in other people; to emphasize the areas where we are united rather than those that divide us; to be children of light and hope rather than prophets of doom. As a result, the Council documents are filled with the spirit of reconciliation, peace, and pilgrimage.

1983 code: This new compilation of laws brings many of the positive teachings and reforms of Vatican II into the structures of the Church, and

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2 See the detailed study of the controversy given in And Taking Bread . . . Caerularius and the Azyne Controversy of 1054, by Mahlon H. Smith III (1978, Editions Beauchesne, Paris). The conditions leading to the break were complex, and built up over several centuries. They include: “liturgical differences, divergent theological positions, different credal formulas, festering political situations, cultural variances, different understandings of history and traditions, and clashing personalities. The center of the argument is not the use of leavened bread (artos) or unleavened bread (azyme): rather, this became the focus of all the other pressures and differences.” [This quotation is taken from a review of this book by Patrick Byrne, in Église et Théologie, vol. 10, no. 1, page 94 (1979, St. Paul University, 223 Main Street, Ottawa, Ontario K1S 1C4).]


4 Anathema: Paul uses this word in Rom. 9: 3 and 1 Cor. 16: 22 to describe someone who is cursed or separated from the believing community or from Christ. Councils have used this expression to condemn or repudiate teachings or practices which are unacceptable or heretical.
for this we are to be grateful. But there are times when one feels that the prophets of doom were maneuvering while the children of light were sleeping, in order to close the window that John XXIII opened. Some of these areas are discussed in the following pages. The code has many good things, but also parts made of clay.

* * *

It is always important to remember that God is not bound or restricted by canons 834-1253, or by canons 1-1752. We may be, but God isn't! Laws alone do not save us. We have to maintain the balance of love in action suggested in the first epistle of St. John, a practical commentary on the meaning of Christian love.

**Christians and Jews:** Antagonism is reported in the New Testament between Christians and Jews, and continued for many centuries; the record is not one of which we can be proud. In the past two decades, however, Christians have begun to be more aware of their Jewish roots. John XXIII welcomed Jewish visitors with the words of Gen. 45: 4: “I am your brother Joseph.” On October 28, 1965, the Second Vatican Council issued its Declaration on the relationship of the Church to non-Christian religions, and condemned any persecution of Jews. Ten years later, the Secretariat for Christian Unity gave guidelines for better relationships; in particular, concrete suggestions were included for liturgy, preaching, translations, and prayers.

Christians — followers of a Jew named Jesus — have a serious responsibility to think and act fairly toward Jewish people and all others. We are called to be peacemakers with Jesus, who died to reconcile Jews and Gentiles in the blood of his cross (Eph. 2: 11-22).

* * *

**Helpful reading:**


Some general notes

In canons 834-848, we find a number of definitions, descriptions, and other general notes that apply to all the sacraments. It is important to understand this section as we move ahead in the ways of sanctification among the Christian people.

Office of sanctifying: Who has the duty to help others to become holy? Canon 835 lists bishops, priests, deacons, and other members of the faithful. Most importantly, it points out that parents exercise this duty in a special way by living their married life in a Christian spirit and by working for the Christian education of their family.

Liturgy: The liturgy is described in 834: 1, using words from the Liturgy constitution, no. 7 [7]. The importance of faith is the subject of canon 836. Liturgy and its celebrations are public, not private (837). Liturgy is under the authority of the Apostolic See and the bishop of the diocese (838). Liturgical books are discussed in 838 and 846.

Other ways of sanctifying (canon 839): As well as the liturgy, we have other means of becoming holy: prayer, works of love and penance (see Constitution on the Church, no. 10 [140], and pages 12-13, above. Prayers and devotional practices are to be in harmony with the spirit of the liturgy (Constitution on the liturgy, nos. 13 and 17 [13, 17] and therefore of the Church's laws.

Sacraments in general: The Second Vatican Council helped us to understand the seven sacraments better by giving us their context in salvation history: Jesus Christ is the original sacrament or sign of God's love for us, and the Church is an abiding sign or sacrament of this love (Constitution on the Church, no. 1). The seven sacraments are signs which signify and cause the Church to be the abiding community of love in Christ. Through the sacraments, Christ builds up to faith community and makes it one: he enables the Church to be the light of the nations. The sacraments are for the people of God, so that we will be the true abiding sacrament to the human race, a sign and light for all (see Bulletin 52, pages 14-15).

The sacraments are defined in canon 840. It is interesting to compare the similarities and the differences in this canon and in the Liturgy constitution,
nos. 59 and 61 [59, 61]. The rights and responsibilities of the Apostolic See, 
bishops' conferences, and the diocesan bishop are indicated in canon 841.

**Other general notes** discuss:

- *Baptism* is needed before we can receive the other sacraments (canon 842: 1).

- *Sacraments of initiation:* Full initiation as a Christian requires the 
  celebration of three sacraments: baptism, confirmation, and eucharist 
  (842: 2, and 866).

- *People who are ready for the sacraments:* Their dispositions and the 
  responsibilities of ministers are described in 836 and 843. The gospel is to 
  be preached to them, and they are to be given adequate instruction. See also 
  Constitution on the liturgy, no. 9 [9].

- *Character:* The sacraments of baptism, confirmation, and order 
  cannot be given again (canon 845).

- *Oils:* The oils blessed for use in sacramental celebrations are to come 
  from olives or other plants. They are blessed by the bishop in the chrism 
  Mass (847); in the celebration of the anointing of the sick, a priest may 
  bless oil (999: 2). Proper care of the oils is mentioned in canons 847: 2 and 
  1000: 3. (See also page 36, below.)

- *Offerings:* See canon 848, and page 29, below.

- *Catechesis for the sacraments* is discussed in canons 777, 773-774, 
  836, and 843.

**Ecumenical Aspects**

Ecumenism is easy to talk about in theory, but often quite difficult 
in practice. Canon 844 grasps the nettle, and begins to spell out the principles 
given in earlier Roman directories:

**General principles:**

- *Catholic ministers* minister the sacraments to Catholics who are 
  properly disposed (canons 843 and 844: 1).

- *Catholics* receive the sacraments from Catholic ministers (844: 1).

- *Exceptions* are discussed in 844: 2-4, and 861: 2 (see the next two 
  pages).

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Council II*, The Conciliar and Postconciliar Documents, edited by Austin Flannery, OP (1975, The 
Liturgical Press, Collegeville, MN 56321); document 37, pages 483-501; see also documents 38, pages 
502-507; 43-44, pages 554-563. In *Documents on the Liturgy*, see documents 144-167 (pages 315-356); 
especially in the 1967 directory [963-1017]; see also [1019-1033, 1042-1050, 1052-1063, 1074-1077, 1093].
Three sacraments involved: The sacraments of eucharist, reconciliation, and anointing of the sick are involved in these ecumenical situations (canon 844: 2).

Two distinct situations: The following notes on canon 844 involve two distinct cases: in need or spiritual benefit (844: 2-3); and in danger of death, or in serious and urgent need (844: 4).

When Catholics may approach another minister: Some particular circumstances permit a Catholic to receive these three sacraments (canon 844: 2):

- **Reasons:** Need or a true spiritual benefit;
- **Avoiding** misleading people or causing them to be indifferent (i.e., thinking that all religions are the same);
- **Absence:** When it is impossible to go to a Catholic minister (this may be a physical impossibility, such as long distance, weather, poor health, imprisonment; or moral impossibility: the priest is related to me, or similar individual or subjective pressures).

In these or similar circumstances, Catholics may receive these sacraments from non-Catholic ministers of Churches where our Roman Catholic Church recognizes the validity of these sacraments.²

When Catholic ministers may celebrate these sacraments with other Christians (canon 844: 3):

- **Members of the Orthodox Churches:** If they freely ask for these sacraments and are ready to receive them;

- **Other Christians** belonging to Churches which Rome considers to be in possession of these three sacraments. At this moment, to our knowledge, no such list exists publicly. Obviously it is important to see what the principles are for judging such validity, and to see what Churches are involved in these cases. Much practical work remains to be done in each country and region to solve these questions.

In danger of death (or in “grave and pressing need”): In these circumstances (canon 844: 4), Catholic ministers may celebrate the sacraments

² The Orthodox Churches are certainly included among these groups (Vatican II, Decree on ecumenism, no. 15 [187]. Because of our entrenched position, some other Churches have made the effort to have valid bishops ordain their bishops. Our emphasis on this one point has put us in the position where we will have to accept the validity of orders in other Churches — on our own ground rules! The years ahead promise great strides forward toward reconciliation and reunion if we are big enough to listen to Jesus and his Spirit, and to open our arms to our sisters and brothers in Christ.

In the coming years, we hope that canonists will demand a clear spelling out of which Churches celebrate valid sacraments, but without descending to mechanistic solutions. As our Churches dialogue together, a gradual opening of minds and hearts will lead us to a greater harmonization and sharing of attitudes, practices, liturgical rites, prayers, and theologies. Gradually, we are moving toward the unity which Jesus desires among his followers (reread John 17, especially verse 21). How can we dare to move in any other direction?
for other Christians, when they cannot have their own minister and freely ask for the sacraments from the Catholic Church. Proper dispositions (faith, love, repentance) are always necessary, of course (see Constitution on the liturgy, no. 9 [9]; canons 836 and 843: 1).

**Other ecumenical questions** are mentioned in canons 868: 2 and 869 (baptism); 874: 2 (sponsors); 908 (not concelebrating with clergy of separated Churches); 933 (conditions for celebrating eucharist in another Church's churches); 755 (ecumenical movement); 1183: 3 (funerals); 1170 (sacramentals). We no longer use sprinkling in baptism (854: see page 23, below). See also the helpful reading on page 24, below; and *Documents on the Liturgy*, documents 144-167 [956-1093].

**General tenor:** The code shows some positive sensitivity to local feelings, needs, and approaches between our Church and others. Given the nature of the Church as a body living in each community, it is only natural that different cultures and communities will approach liturgy and ecumenism in varying ways. (See also Bulletin 95, *Culture and Liturgy*.)


* * *

**An early evaluation of canons 834-848:** These introductory canons to book four are generally positive in their approach. As we study the current approach to sacraments, liturgy, rites, and symbolism, we begin to understand how impoverishing the old ways were. As we let ourselves be open to the power and feeling of the new approach to the full liturgy of the Church, we begin to be open to the ways in which Jesus and his Spirit are touching us in our day.

* * *

**Helpful reading:** Those who think that the sacraments are still where they were in the days of the Baltimore catechism (when souls were pictured as milk bottles full of grace) need to do much reading in modern sacramental theology. Some current and helpful resources are listed here:

*Introduction* to the celebration of each of the sacraments: These are contained in the rites, and are collected in *Documents on the Liturgy*: 1963-1979.

Bulletin 78, *Ecumenism and Liturgy*


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


Future issues of the Bulletin will continue to review or mention useful publications about the sacraments and about ecumenism.

A PRAYER

Loving God,
look with kindness on all couples and their families.
Bless them as they seek to follow Jesus,
and give them confidence when they need your help.

Father, hear our prayer
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen!

20
Sacraments of initiation

There is no section of book four by this title. The sacraments of initiation are baptism, confirmation, and eucharist (canons 866 and 842: 2; it would seem better if nos. 1 and 2 were reversed in their order). Although the code treats these three sacraments independently (849-958), we need to remember that they are all part of the process of Christian initiation.

Breakdown of the sacraments of initiation: From the simple celebration of the sacraments of initiation in one unbroken rite, a number of extraneous developments led to the distortion and shattering of the unity of Christian initiation. Over the centuries, six steps can be identified:

1. Confirmation is separated from initiation
2. Communion is separated from initiation
3. Baptism is celebrated soon after birth
4. Confirmation is further separated from baptism
5. Reconciliation is inserted between sacraments of initiation.
6. Confirmation and communion are reversed.

• Helpful reading: See Disintegration: Decline and fall, in Bulletin 51, pages 286-290.

The Second Vatican Council began the gradual work of restoring the unity of the rites of initiation, and this is continued in the renewed liturgical books and in the code.
Catechumenate

The process of initiation through the catechumenate is mentioned briefly (canon 788). Canons on catechumens include: their special situation in the Church (206); funerals (1183: 1); and blessings (1170). No specific mention is made of their weddings in the canons on marriage.

Adult baptism as part of this process is discussed in canons on the catechumenate (851: 1°); on the process for children who have reached the use of reason (852: 1); the intention required for the baptism of an adult (865); the need for celebrating all three sacraments of initiation together (866). Other canons refer to the adult process in passing.

A much fuller picture of the process of initiation in the catechumenate with its various stages is given in the Rite.

Helpful reading:

Vatican II: Constitution on the liturgy, no. 64 [64]; Decree on the missionary activity of the Church, no. 17 [249].

* General Introduction on Christian Initiation: contained in Bulletin 29, pages 64-69; at the beginning of the Rite of Baptism for Children; in Documents on the Liturgy [2250-2284]. This important introduction, which outlines the principles of the sacraments and rites of initiation, needs to be read occasionally.

Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults: Introduction, nos. 1-67 [2328-2394]; other notes [2395-2488]; reflections [2489-2498].

National Bulletin on Liturgy:

* No. 91: Sharing Our Faith; includes many other references
* No. 51: Christian Initiation
* No. 64: Christian Initiation: Into Full Communion.

Baptism

Some sources: As well as those mentioned on page 22, these are helpful references:

* Vatican II, Constitution on the liturgy, nos. 67-70 [67-70].
* General Introduction on Christian Initiation, and Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults: see page 22.
* Documents on the Liturgy (see footnote 3 on page 8, above): documents 292-302 [2248-2498].
* Code of Canon Law, canons 849-878; (1917 code, canons 737-779).

Baptism is the first of the sacraments of Christian initiation. The baptism of adults at the end of the long catechumenate, and their immediate celebration of confirmation and eucharist, is the model and norm for the baptism of children. The code provides notes on the baptism of adults before it goes on to describe the baptism of children.

Introduction (canon 849): The first canon describes the sacrament in fairly positive terms. The faith and preparation needed are discussed later, and in canons 836 and 843. By baptism and confirmation, we are all called ("deputed") to take part in the Church's apostolate (225: 1).

Celebration (canons 850-860): These eleven canons are positive, and cover a number of important points about preparation, celebration, time, and place; they need careful study. It is to be noted that Catholics now baptize only by immersion or pouring (854); baptism by sprinkling (1917 code, canon 758) is no longer accepted. What implications does this change have for our acceptance of baptism in Churches that use sprinkling? (See also page 19, above.)

Minister (canons 861-863): Bishops, presbyters, and deacons are the ordinary ministers of this sacrament. The local ordinary (see 134: 2) may permit a catechist or another person to baptize. In cases of necessity, any person may baptize, as long as he or she intends to do what the Church wishes in the celebration of baptism.

Candidates (canon 864-871): These canons speak of the preparation and intention needed for the baptism of adults; the requirements for the baptism of infants; foundlings and living fetuses. In some countries, those who practise canon 868: 2 might find themselves in difficulty with a civil lawsuit, given the attitudes of today's society.
Sponsors (canons 872-874): The purpose and task of sponsors are described. Each person may have one or two sponsors. Specific requirements for sponsors are given in 874.

Registering baptism: See canons 875-878.

Some comments:

- **Sharing:** The section on baptism does not remind us that it is through our baptism that we are made sharers in the priesthood of Christ (but see canon 204: 1), and so are given the privilege and responsibility of sharing in the Church’s liturgy (see Liturgy constitution, no. 14 [14]).

- **Vocabulary:** Book four of the code uses a variety of terms: “administering, conferring, celebrating” sacraments. In the renewed liturgy, we *celebrate* sacraments and other liturgical rites. (It would seem preferable to reserve the term “administration” for money, property, and first aid.)

* * *

Helpful reading:


* National Bulletin on Liturgy, no. 73, *Baptizing*; see also Bulletins 51, 64, and 91.
Confirmation

Some sources:

* Vatican II, Constitution on the liturgy, no. 71 [71].
* General Introduction on Christian Initiation, no. 2 [2251].
* Documents on the Liturgy: (see note 3 on page 8, above): documents 303-308 [2499-2532].
* Code of Canon Law, canons 879-896; (1917 code, canons 780-800).

Introduction (canon 879): The opening canon describes the sacrament well, and brings together various elements described in the ritual books. The desire of the Council, to show the intimate connection between confirmation and the whole process of Christian initiation, is helped by the canons on confirmation.

Celebration (canons 880-881): Basic details of the celebration and of the time and place are mentioned. It is preferable to celebrate the sacrament during Mass, in order to show the close connection between confirmation and eucharist as sacraments of initiation.

Minister (canons 882-888): Bishops are the ordinary ministers of this sacrament. The law delegates this faculty to some priests, and the bishop may associate others with him in the celebration. When a priest baptizes adults (anyone over 14 — see canon 863), he is to confirm them (866; 883: 2°).

Candidates (canons 889-891): They are to be instructed well (in the full spirit of the Rite for Christian Initiation of Adults, no. 19 [2346] — see Bulletin 91), so that they may receive the sacrament with faith and proper dispositions (Liturgy constitution, no. 9 [9]; canons 836; 843: 2).

Sponsors (canons 892-893): The biggest change today is that the sponsor in baptism is invited, if possible, to continue the work of sponsoring in confirmation (see Rite of Confirmation, Introduction, no. 5 [2514]).

Registering confirmation: See canons 894-896.

Comment: This section is probably the best of all those on sacraments. The Lord Jesus and his Holy Spirit are mentioned once, in canon 879.

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Helpful reading:


Eucharist

Some sources:

* Vatican II: Constitution on the liturgy, nos. 47-58 [47-58]; Constitution on the Church, nos. 3, 7, 11 [137, 139, 141], and elsewhere; Decree on the ministry and life of priests, no. 5 [260]; Constitution on the Church in the modern world, nos. 3, 6-7; many other references are given in Documents on the Liturgy (see note 3 on page 8, above): [137-275].

* General Instruction on the Roman Missal [1376-1731]; and 1981 Introduction to the lectionary: these are reprinted in New Introductions to the Sacramentary and Lectionary (1983, CCCB, Ottawa).

* Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist Outside Mass: documents 279 and 265-266 [2193-2226, 2089-2103]; portions of this document were included in Bulletin 69.

* Documents on the Liturgy: documents 174-287 [1141-2238].

* Code of Canon Law, canons 897-958; (1917 code, canons 801-869).

Introduction (canons 897-898): The introductory canons speak of the place of the eucharist in the life and worship of the Church. Unfortunately, no reference is made to the eucharist as the source of unity (see John Paul II, homily in Istanbul, November 29, 1979 [1093]; Constitution on the Church, no. 3 [137]). The English edition (page 165) has an error in translation near the end of canon 897: it should read as “all the apostolic works of the Church” (and not “of Christ”).

Celebrating the Eucharist

The first major section on the eucharist is on celebrating Mass. The opening canon (899) summarizes our tradition concerning the action of Christ and the Church, the assembly under the leadership of bishop or presbyter, and participation by all.

Minister (canons 900-911): Only a bishop or a presbyter may preside at the celebration of Mass. The presider is to pray before and after the celebration (909), and may not concelebrate the eucharist with the clergy of Churches separated from us (908). We must remember, however, that common celebration of the eucharist is the goal of ecumenism, and that we are to work hard for this purpose (Decree on ecumenism, nos. 4-5).

• Ministers of communion (canons 910-911): Bishops, presbyters, and deacons are the ordinary ministers of communion; acolytes and others may be chosen as special ministers (see also 230: 3, and 231: 1). In English, special is a better word than “extraordinary” to describe these ministers.
Viaticum: The code shows startling ignorance concerning viaticum. Canon 921 is correct, but in 911 and 922, viaticum is described as being for "the sick." Viaticum is for the dying! A similar confusion is seen in 530: 3° — pastors are to give viaticum, anointing of the sick, and the apostolic blessing; see also 566: 1. In reality, anointing of the sick comes first; when a person is dying, then viaticum and the apostolic blessing are given. (See also "Ecumenical aspects," on pages 18-19: viaticum is covered in canon 844:4.)

Participation in the eucharist (canons 912-923): This section speaks of participation mainly as receiving communion,\(^1\) losing sight of the other ways described in the liturgy constitution, no. 30 [30]. Modified fasting rules are given in canon 919, and the precept of annual communion, preferably during the Easter season, changes the old rules on the time for "Easter duty." (A more general rule is given for the yearly confession of serious sins in 989.) Active participation in the liturgy is spoken of in 837, and participation by lay ministers in 230 and 231: 1.

Liturgy of the word: The ministry of God's word, including preaching, is discussed in detail in book three, canons 756-772. Canons 760 and 836 are particularly important. We need to keep remembering that God's word remains at work within us who believe (see 1 Thess. 2: 13).

Rites and ceremonies (canons 924-930): These canons speak of bread and wine, communion under both forms, languages, vesture, and presbyters who are sick or who have a handicap. (It would seem that canon 925 would fit better after 927.)

How is one supposed to reconcile canon 927 and the General Instruction on the Roman Missal, no. 286 [1679]?

The rites are given in the sacramentary and its General Instruction in much greater detail, and with more attention to the spirit of good celebration. The code seems to lack the vision given by John Paul II when speaking of the mystery of the eucharist: "This is the basis for the obligation of the most reverential fulfillment of liturgical rules and of all those things that express the community's offering of worship to God" (see Redemptor Hominis, no. 20 [1330]).

Time and place: See canons 931-933.

\(^{1}\) Robert Taft, SJ, also reminds us of the importance of the attitude of receiving in his article, "Receiving Communion — A Forgotten Symbol?" in Worship (September 1983. The Liturgical Press. Collegeville, MN 56321): vol. 57, no. 5: pages 412-418.
Reservation and Devotion

Purpose: This section of the code does not mention the purpose of reservation: to provide communion for the dying, for the sick, and for others who cannot come to Mass; and to provide an opportunity for community and individual prayer and devotion.² Prayer is mentioned in canons 937-938, and the “needs of believers” in 939.

Reservation (canon 934): Cathedrals, parish churches, and religious houses must reserve the eucharist; other places may have reservation, with permission.

Area for reservation: The code has moved away from the most recent norms for reservation, which called for a separate chapel, if possible: see General Instruction of the Roman Missal, nos. 276-277 [1666-1667]; Dedication of a Church and an Altar (1978, CCCB, Ottawa), page 11, no. 3, and “Inauguration of the Blessed Sacrament Chapel,” pages 54-55, no. 37; Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist Outside Mass, nos. 6, 9-11 [2198, 2201-2203] — see also Bulletin 69, pages 100-101. These points seem to get lost in canon 938: 1-2.

• Open for prayer each day: See canon 937.

Other notes (canons 934-944):

• Tabernacle: Only one tabernacle is to be in a church (938), with a lamp burning all the time (940). No mention is made of a tabernacle veil (see Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist Outside Mass, no. 11 [2203]; Bulletin 69, page 101).

• No private custody: See canon 935.

• Responsibility and renewal: See canons 934: 2; 938: 5; and 939.

• Exposition: Exposition, benediction, solemn annual exposition, and outdoor processions are mentioned in canons 941-944. No mention is made of eucharistic congresses (see Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist Outside Mass, nos. 109-112 [2223-2226]).

² Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist Outside Mass, decree and no. 5 [2089, 2197], reprinted in Bulletin 69, pages 99-100.

28
Mass offerings (canons 945-958): The code continues the practice of allowing a priest to “accept an offering to apply the Mass for a specific intention” (945: 1).

- **Name:** The code has dropped the former title of stipend (which could mean “tax, salary, pay”), and chooses the Latin *stips* (meaning “a gift, donation, alms, contribution, given in small coin; tax, penalty”). It is interesting that the final meaning given is Pliny's use of this term for the money paid to prostitutes.³

- **A suggested reform:** Wouldn't it be simpler and less distasteful if the Church got out of the whole business of money offerings for the sacraments? (See canons 848, 945-958, 531, 1264: 2° and 1181.) Let people ask for the celebration of Mass for particular intentions, and let the priest celebrate it; if they wish to make an offering to the parish or to the missions, let them do so. But let the presbyter not receive anything for celebrating the liturgy. Reserved Masses should be as out of order as reserved seats (see Liturgy constitution, no. 32 [32]).

**Helpful reading:**


**Documents on the Liturgy** (see note 3 on page 8, above): documents 280-287 [2227-2238].

**Sacrifice and banquet:** The Vatican Council reminded us that the Mass is *both* a sacrifice and a banquet (Liturgy constitution, no. 47 [47]). This was emphasized again in 1967: “In the Mass, therefore, the sacrifice and sacred meal form part of the same mystery in such a way that the closest bond conjoins one with the other.”⁴ This statement was made even stronger in 1969: “The eucharistic sacrifice and the sacred meal form part of the same mystery in such a way that the closest theological and sacra-

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⁴ *Instruction on the worship of the eucharistic mystery*, by the Congregation of Rites, May 25, 1967, no. 3 [1232]; see Bulletin 17, pages 187-190; Bulletin 19, official commentary on the instruction, pages 254-256.
mental bond joins one with the other." The General Instruction on the Roman Missal also refers to this in numbers 48, 56, 62, 259, and 263 [1438, 1446, 1452, 1649, 1658]. John Paul II reminds us: "The eucharist is at once sacrament and sacrifice, sacrament and communion, sacrament and presence." 6

- **Liturgical texts** proclaim this faith: See the prayer over the gifts for Epiphany; preface for the Mass of the dedication of a church (1983 Canadian sacramentary, page 1098); O sacrum convivium ("O holy banquet"), by St. Thomas Aquinas; the third eucharistic prayer for Masses with children refers to "this sacred meal."

- **Apparent lack of balance:** In the light of these references, therefore, it seems strange to find the Mass called a "sacrifice" nine times in canons 897-958, with "spiritual nourishment" and "food" mentioned only in 899 and 913-914; the term banquet is not used here at all. This seems to be a one-sided emphasis. Should one be tempted to suspect that some mandarins had axes to grind, or windows to close?

**Some observations:** As well as the remarks on individual canons or sections in the notes above, we might add:

- **Christian unity:** The broad vision of the eucharistic celebration as expressing and bringing about "the unity of all believers who form one body in Christ" (Constitution on the Church, no. 3 [139]) is not conveyed by the canons on the eucharist.

- **Main changes:** The Vatican Council brought about seven main changes in the celebration of Mass so that it "may become pastorally effective to the utmost degree" (Liturgy constitution, no. 49; see also no. 1 [49, 1]). These changes are mentioned below. How well is the code open to them?

  - Renewed rites (Liturgy constitution, no. 50 [50]): As well as the general rule of canon 2, the code speaks about liturgical laws (canon 925; 930: 1), approved liturgical books (846: 1, 928, 930: 2), and rubrics (929). A strong affirmation of the renewed books and rites following from Vatican II would have been desirable, especially since there are still Tridentine Mass fans in various parts of the world.

  - God's word (Liturgy constitution, nos. 51 and 35: 1 [51, 35]): This is covered well in canons 756-780.

  - Homily (Liturgy constitution, nos. 52 and 35: 2 [52, 35]): See canons 762-772. Canon 767: 2 is stronger than the General Instruction of the Roman Missal, no. 42 [1432], on the obligation to have a homily: this is good! The homily is "the most important form of preaching," but is reserved to priests

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5 *Instruction on Masses with special groups*, by the Congregation for Divine Worship. May 15. 1969. no. 5a [2126]: italics added.

and deacons (canon 767: 1; and presumably bishops, 763). When lay persons preach with permission (766), what are they supposed to give if not a homily?

- Prayer of the faithful (Liturgy constitution, no. 53 [53]): Not mentioned in these canons.

- Vernacular (Liturgy constitution, nos. 54, 36 [54, 36]): See the simple reference in canon 928: permitted, but no enthusiasm is shown to match the rapid acceptance of the vernacular around the world.7

- Communion from this Mass (Liturgy constitution, no. 55 [55]): The Vatican Council "strongly endorsed" the practice of receiving communion from elements consecrated in this Mass. Canon 918 recommends that communion be received during Mass but misses the opportunity of promoting communion from the elements of this celebration.

- Communion under both forms (Liturgy constitution, no. 55 [55]): See canon 925.

- Grape juice (canon 924: 1): Priests undergoing treatment for alcoholism may receive an indult to use grape juice. See New Introductions to the Sacramentary and Lectionary (1983, CCCB, Ottawa): page 50, note R-2 to no. 284 [1674] of the General Instruction of the Roman Missal. (A slightly different indult is available in the United States: see Documents on the Liturgy, page 522, note R-50.) The grape juice has to retain the ability of becoming wine; if it has been pasteurized, it is not considered valid matter.

Helpful reading: Many books on the eucharist are listed in Bulletin 76, pages 216-217; no. 87, page 10; no. 90, page 167. The following books are particularly helpful:


National Bulletin on Liturgy: no. 54 (history of the Mass); nos. 71, 77, and 83 (good celebration); nos. 76 and 82 (ecumenical conferences on the eucharist); no. 62, pages 31-46 (eucharistic devotion); other issues have many articles on celebrating the eucharist.

Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry: See references on page 24, above.

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


7 To the end of 1978, some 343 languages were approved for liturgical use! Detailed lists are given in Notitiae, vol. 15 (1979), pages 385-520. A survey conducted by the Congregation for the Sacraments and Divine Worship in 1980 shows that Latin is disappearing as a liturgical language, and that 83.82% of the responses show that no requests are received for Latin Masses. See Notitiae, vol. 17 (1981), pages 589-611.
Other sacraments

Sacrament of Reconciliation

Some sources: These references help us to understand the past and present positions of the Church concerning this sacrament:

* Mk. 2: 1-12; Lk. 13: 6-9; Lk. 15: 1-32; Lk. 18: 9-14; Mt. 18: 12-35; Jn. 8: 1-11; Jn. 20: 19-23; Ps. 51.

* Constitution on the liturgy, no. 72 [72].

* Documents on the Liturgy (see footnote 3 on page 8, above): Documents 358-382 [3017-3151].


* Code of Canon Law, canons 959-991; (1917 code, canons 870-910).

A brief history: Over the centuries, this sacrament has developed in many different directions and with varying emphases in the life of the Church. Some notes describing these changes are included in Twenty centuries of development, in Bulletin 52, pages 4-13.

It appears that we are now entering a new major stage in the history and celebration of this sacrament: see the reference to Father Orsy's important book, The Evolving Church and the Sacrament of Penance, on page 35, below. We must continue to be open to the movement of the Spirit in the life of the Church.

Introduction (canon 959): It takes six lines, with six commas, to describe what happens in this sacrament. In a statement even more complicated than the current formula of absolution (see Rite of Penance, no. 46), neither Christ nor the Spirit are mentioned. The generous mercy and loving care of Father, Son, and Spirit are not described in this part of the Church's sanctifying office (compare Rite, nos. 1-2 [3066-3067]).

A time of change: We are presently at another major point of change in the life of the Church, especially concerning the sacrament of reconciliation. Some interesting developments have been taking place in recent years:

* In 1972, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (formerly the Holy Office, and — from 1542 to 1908 — the Congregation of the Universal Inquisition), issued pastoral norms concerning the administration of general sacramental absolution (June 16, 1972).
On August 25, 1972, the bishops of Ontario responded by issuing a statement on sacramental absolution.

- **Canada's bishops:** On October 13, 1972, the bishops in plenary session issued a statement on the administration of general sacramental absolution (CCC *Official Document*, no. 309). This statement is printed in Bulletin 38, pages 96-98. On February 14 and May 2, 1973, the Congregation insisted on minor amendments to this statement. The amended paragraph is in Bulletin 40, page 216.

All this took place before we saw the new *Rite of Penance*, or had any specific thoughts about general absolution in normal pastoral practice. Barn doors were being carefully shut before the horse knew what was coming.

- **On February 7, 1974,** the new *Rite of Penance* was released to the world in Latin. An explanatory note from the Secretary of State gave positive descriptions of the doctrinal and pastoral bases of the book, and included general absolution calmly among the other two forms.

- **In 1974 and 1975,** the white book edition of the English translation was prepared and issued by ICEL, the International Commission on English in the Liturgy. The Canadian edition of the *Rite* was issued in 1975. In these editions, the third rite is included as one of the three ways of celebrating the sacrament.

- **In the years since,** the use of general absolution has varied across the country, but it has been found to be pastorally beneficial and desirable in many cases.

- **Continuing studies** on this sacrament included Bulletins 52 and 88, and a sincere effort to explain and celebrate this sacrament well. In many places, the reticence of some priests and people made it difficult to have new openings.

**Synod 1983:** This Synod was on *Reconciliation and Penance in the Life of the Church.*

- **In 1981 and 1982,** the Episcopal Commission for Liturgy and the National Council for Liturgy studied the broad question of reconciliation. Some of this is included in Bulletin 88.

- **Prayer and study:** After a long time of prayerful preparation, consultation, and study, the Canadian bishops approved their delegates' interventions and recommendations.

- **At the Synod in Rome,** the Canadian bishops made major interventions: The problem of sin and signs of hope; the various ways in which the sacrament of reconciliation is celebrated in Canada; the theology of sacramental reconciliation; and reconciliation between men and women in the Church. They also included nine positive recommendations to bring
about an improvement in our approach to reconciliation in all its meanings, and added other useful points from our country's pastoral experience.

One Canadian intervention, given by Bishop Marcel Gervais on October 5, 1983, emphasized that the one sacrament is being celebrated in three ways, according to the varying circumstances and pastoral needs of people, time and place (see pages 55-58, below). Strong support for more liberal use of general absolution — under conditions determined by a particular episcopal conference — was given by bishops from Canada, Africa, and some third world countries.

Celebration of the sacrament (canons 960-964): In reading these canons, one is tempted to sense a fear of general absolution: individual confession is promoted strongly in canon 960, and three canons (961-964) are used to keep general absolution under control. Strong pastoral notes on good celebration with individuals are included in the Rite, nos. 15-21 [3080-3086], and for community celebration in nos. 22-35 [3087-3100].

• Place of celebration: The place for celebrating with individual penitents is discussed in canon 964. The episcopal conference is to issue further regulations as needed.

The use of reconciliation rooms or chapels is gradually developing in North America, and it seems wise to let it continue to grow. The basic concern of the code seems to be — and rightly so — that the penitent is free to choose to confess anonymously if he or she wishes.

There is a general need for increasing the beauty of the reconciliation room by art and by tasteful furnishings, and for helping penitents and confessors to grow in their reverence both toward God's word and toward the action of the Spirit working in each person's life.

Helpful reading:
Rite of Penance, no. 12 [3077]
Bulletin 52, pages 55-59; no. 74, pages 137 and 121; no. 88, page 89

Minister of the sacrament (canons 965-986): As the chief liturgist and high priest of the diocese, the bishop regulates the discipline of this sacrament (see Rite, no. 39 [3104]. A priest has to have the faculty (permission) to be able to give absolution; the general rule of canon 967: 2 provides a reasonable solution to pastoral needs and realities. Besides the technical canons on granting and losing faculties, a pastoral tone on celebration is included in 976, 978-981, and 983. Further advice to the confessor is contained in the Introduction to the Rite, nos. 1-40 [3066-3105].

34
**Penitent** (canons 987-991): Continuing the spirit of canons 836 and 843, the code reminds us that penitents need to be properly prepared for the celebration. The details in 988-991 are similar to those before the Council. The *Rite* offers positive helps to the penitent and priest in nos. 1-11 [3066-3076].

**Ecumenical aspects:** See pages 17-19, above.

**Further notes:** No mention is made of penance celebrations (see *Rite*, nos. 36-37, and 40 [3101-3102, 3105]); nor of time or vesture (nos. 13-14 [3078-3079]); nor of the role the community (no. 8 [3073]). It needs to be remembered that the sacrament of reconciliation is *not* a sacrament of Christian initiation. Reconciliation leads us to renew the graces of baptism, and reunites us with God's people at the Lord's table (see *Rite*, no. 2 [3067]).

- **Vocabulary:** In this section, the code uses the scriptural word "reconcile" only twice (canons 959-960), and sticks to younger, pre-Council terminology. The shift from an emphasis on 'confession' to one on *reconciliation* with God and the Church is barely noticed in the code.

**Helpful reading:**

*Rite of Penance* (1975, CCC, Ottawa): especially the pastoral introduction, nos. 1-40 [3066-3105].


See also Bulletin 52, *Reconciliation and Forgiveness*; and no. 88, *Reconciliation in Our Life*. Many other references are given in these two issues; references to past articles are in Bulletin 61, pages 344-345.

*Bulletin National de Liturgie*: see nos. 70-74, and 77.

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**Indulgences** (canons 992-997): Five hundred years after the birth of Luther, the code still talks about these! Chaucer's pardoner would be delighted, and still in business. Have we learned so little from 1517? The bride of Christ is richly nourished and adorned by the word of God, the sacraments of the Lord Jesus, and the presence of the Spirit: surely tawdry costume jewelry is not needed! Thanks be to God that the liturgy has nothing to do with indulgences.

- See *Documents on the Liturgy*, nos. 383-390 [3152-3228]; 1917 code, canons 911-936.
Anointing of the Sick

Some sources: The following references provide us with some sources for the Church’s past and present positions concerning the anointing of the sick:

* Mk. 6: 13; Mk. 16: 18; Lk. 4: 40; James 5: 13-16
* Constitution on the liturgy, nos. 73-75 [73-75]
* Documents on the Liturgy (see note 3 on page 8, above): Documents 407-412 [3314-3365]; also [141, 360, 1104, 3365].
* Apostolic constitution of Paul VI, November 30, 1972: Document 408 [3315-3319]; in Pastoral Care, pages 5-9.
* Code of Canon Law, canons 998-1007 (1917 code, canons 937-947).

A brief history of the varied developments in this sacrament — from the letter of James to anointing by laypersons, from deathbed anointings to the present renewal — is given in Bulletin 57, pages 16-22.

Outline of the treatment: The code treats this sacrament in the following order:

• Introduction (canon 998): The sacrament is considered as merely commending to Jesus the ones being anointed, “so that he might support and save them” (see James 5: 13-16). No mention is made of the prayer of faith, which saves us, according to James (see Pastoral Care, Introduction, no. 7 [3327]); nor of the laying on of hands (no. 5 [3325]). The desire to have a tidy description of the sacrament, limiting it to one action and words, provides a rather sterile picture. Throughout this entire section, there seems to be little sense of the caring Church, of the local community of faith, of the love of Jesus for the sick. (Contrast the Constitution on the Church, no. 11 [141].)

• Celebration of the sacrament:

  □ Oil (canon 999): While the code speaks simply of oil here, it must be remembered that canon 847: 1 states that the oil comes from olives or other plants. (See page 17, above; the question of oil is discussed more fully in Pastoral Care, nos. 20-22 [3340-3342].)
Anointings: (canon 1000): How does the minister anoint "accurately"? Carefully, reverently, worthily, generously — these would be better terms. ("Accurately" almost seems to suggest: "Anoint along the dotted line.") No mention is made of the possibility of anointing another part of the body outside a case of necessity (see Pastoral Care, nos. 24 [3344], 107, 124 rubric), or of the wider interpretation given in the Apostolic constitution (see Pastoral Care, page 8 [3318]).

Time for celebration (canon 1001): Pastors and others who are closely involved with the sick are to make sure they are helped by celebrating this sacrament "in good time." This is stated more effectively and positively in Pastoral Care, no. 13 [3333].

Communal celebration (canon 1002): As chief liturgist, the diocesan bishop is to make sure that communal celebrations of this sacrament are done well. The sick are to be prepared properly to receive this sacrament with faith. (See also Pastoral Care, chapter 4, nos. 108-110, and the note on music, pages 78-79; and nos. 132-133, page 103.)

Minister (canon 1003): This canon limits the celebration of this sacrament to ordained presbyters. They may carry the oil of the sick with them, so that they will be equipped to celebrate in cases of emergency. (This is an area that needs some further exploration if we are to celebrate with faith.) The English translation ("holy oil") is misleading; the Latin says "blessed oil." The term holy oil refers to the oil of the catechumens. As noted in canon 999, the priest may also bless the oil when celebrating the sacrament.

The code is repeating the Council of Trent concerning presbyters; see also Apostolic constitution (in Pastoral Care, page 7 [3316]). A fuller treatment is contained in the rite's Introduction, nos. 16-19 and 40-41 [3336-3339, 3360-3361].

Those to be anointed (canons 1004-1117): A fuller and generally better treatment is given in the Introduction to Pastoral Care, nos. 8-15 [3328-3335].

Sick (canon 1004: 1): In both the French- and English-speaking nations of the world, the Holy See approved revised editions of the rite which state clearly that the sacrament is for those who are seriously sick.¹ This distinction is ignored in the code. Here is a good example of a situation where canon 2 prevails, and where the code gives the appearance of being used to keep things locked up.

¹ See Pastoral Care of the Sick: Rites of Anointing and Vaticum (1983, CCCB, Ottawa): Introduction, no. 8 [3328], and footnote (*) on page 13. Also Sacrements pour les Malades (1977, Chalet-Tardy, France): no. 54, page 32: "une maladie sérieuse."

See also Paul VI, homily, October 5, 1975: "The revision's intent was to make the overall purposes of the rite clearer and to lead to a wider availability of the sacrament and to extend it — within reasonable limits — even beyond cases of mortal illness" [3365].
There is some effort made in the rite (and none in the code) to reflect the developing thinking of the Church in North America concerning the possibility of anointing the mentally ill, people who are seriously disturbed, or those shattered by traumatic events. As this article was being written, a newly ordained priest asked: “If I can baptize a child who is seriously sick, why can’t I anoint a Christian child in this condition?” There is room for further exploration in this field.

- Repetition (canon 1004: 2): This follows the Introduction of Pastoral Care, no. 9 [3329; see also 3318]. The old rule of thumb — of anointing at set times persons who are chronically ill or weak — is no longer given in the rite or in the code; pastoral judgment is to be used.

- Doubt (canon 1005): This is the only improvement offered in the section on anointing of the sick. The text speaks of doubts concerning the use of reason (no. 12 [3332]), the seriousness of the sickness (no. 8 [3328]), and whether the person has died (nos. 15 [3335] and 269). In all these cases, the sacrament is to be celebrated; no mention is made of conditional celebration in the code. It is to be emphasized, however, that we do not anoint those who are certainly dead: we pray for them and for their family; prayers for the dead are provided in Pastoral Care, pages 182-198 and 355-357.

- Other notes (canons 1006-1007): Under certain conditions, those who are unconscious are to be anointed: this is stronger than the text in Pastoral Care, no. 14 [3334]. Canon 1007, not mentioned in the ritual, makes a rather negative ending to this section of the code.

Ecumenical aspects: Anointing of the sick is one of three sacraments that Catholics may receive from certain non-Catholic ministers, or that may be given by Catholic presbyters to some other Christians. See more detailed notes on canon 844, on pages 17-19, above. (Some earlier notes and references are given in Bulletin 57, pages 30-32.)

Vocabulary: While the code avoids the old name, “extreme unction” (see Liturgy constitution, no. 73 [73]), its compilers would seem to retain such a spirit. In canons 998-1007, the sacrament is “administered” seven times (“Vocabulary,” on page 24, above), “conferred” or “celebrated” twice, and the rites are “carried out” once; the formula is also “recited.” The distinction between the sacraments for the sick (reconciliation, anointing, and communion) and the sacraments for the dying is totally confused: anointing is restricted to those who are “dangerously ill” (canon 998), while viaticum is given to the sick (canon 992)! See also page 27, above.

New information: The code does add some information: priests may carry the oil of the sick (canon 1003: 3), and may, for a serious reason, use

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2 “Recite” — While this word can mean telling a story or narrating an account, it can sometimes be felt as reeling off memorized words, without much thought or feeling. In describing the renewed liturgy, it is better to use words like proclaim the opening prayer, and pray or celebrate the liturgy of the hours.
an instrument to anoint (canon 1000: 2); the solution for doubts is succinct and in one place (canon 1005). These are issued as simple additions to the Introduction of *Pastoral Care*.

**Summary:** This section of the code provides an incomplete picture, without a full pastoral context of the people of God sharing in Christ's loving care of the sick and the aged. It has little of Pope Paul's vision of "this chosen portion of the Church, the sick" [3365].

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**Helpful reading:** As well as the sources listed above on page 36, the following are useful resources:

- **Bulletin 57, *Rites for the Sick and the Dying***
  - *Pastoral care of the sick,* in Bulletin 43, pages 114-125

- See the index of articles (1965-1977) in Bulletin 61, pages 346-347

- Bulletin national de Liturgie, no. 33: *Onction des malades* (1972, CCC, Ottawa)

- **Helping the Sick and the Dying:** Liturgical leaflet (1983, CCCB, Ottawa).

- **Le Sacrement des Malades** (1971, CCC, Ottawa): leaflet for the sick and their families.


Ministries and Ordination

Jesus came to be the servant of all, the Lord who showed his love by washing his apostles' feet and by laying down his life for his friends. He did this in order that we too would go forth and serve others in the same spirit. Each Christian, every Christian, the Christian Church: we are all called to serve with Jesus. By baptism and confirmation we are chosen and dedicated to serve (canon 225: 1); in the eucharist we are given the strength of Jesus, the food for our journey of service during another week.

The Spirit of God has given us talents and gifts, and invites us to minister to others. This spirit of ministry is the privilege and responsibility of all members of the body of Christ, the Church, the family and people of God.

Some ministries are general, some specific. These are described below. From among the people of God, some members are called to ordination, so that they may serve the rest of the Church in a particular way: see pages 42-43, below.

All ministers, all Christians must be mindful of the example of Jesus, and of his words in Lk. 17: 10. We are not to lord it over one another, but serve humbly (Mk. 10: 42-45). We are brothers and sisters, servants of one another and of God.

Ministries

Some sources:

* Vatican II: Dogmatic constitution on the Church; Pastoral constitution on the Church in the modern world; Constitution on the liturgy; Decree on the bishops' pastoral office in the Church; Decree on the appropriate renewal of the religious life; Decree on the apostolate of the laity; Decree on the ministry and life of priests; and other Council documents.

* Documents on the Liturgy (see note 3 on page 8 above): documents 336-346 [2917-2966]. Some very important documents are included in these references.

* Code of Canon Law: See notes below.

* See also “Helpful reading,” on page 41.

Introduction: All who are baptized share in the mission and work of Christ, who is prophet, priest, and king (canon 204: 1). The Council speaks of the ministry of bishops and presbyters as the offices of teaching, leading in prayer, and governing (or “shepherding”). Teaching God’s word is the first duty: “Of all their principal duties this one is pre-eminent” (Decree on
the pastoral office of bishops, nos. 11-12 [191-192]; see also the Decree on
the ministry and life of priests, nos. 4-6 [259-261].

The code, however, puts governing first, and makes sure that we know who is who in book one (title 8 on the “power of governance,” canons 129-144; and title 9, “ecclesiastical offices,” 145-196), and in book two (“clerics,” 232-293; “personal prelatures,” 294-297; “the hierarchical con­stitution of the Church,” 330-572). Only then do we move on to the people of God (book two), the office of teaching (book three), and the office of sanctifying (book four).

Ministries in the code: Other than the canons on clergy (232-297) and
on ordination (below), there are only scattered references to ministries in
the code. Some notes are given on general service to the world and the
Church in 204-231.

Among the lay ministries that have been growing recently are readers,
communion ministers, catechists, helpers of the sick, and parish assistants.
Does canon 230: 2-3 treat this important development adequately?

The Second Vatican Council revised its approach in the Constitution
on the Church to speak of the people of God first (chapter 2, nos. 9-17
[140-144]) before moving on to the hierarchy, laity, and religious (chapters
3-4 and 6); all Christians are called to holiness (chapter 5). It would have
been good if the code had kept this perspective in its arrangement.

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Helpful reading:

Bulletin 53, Ministries and Liturgy (originally issued in March-April 1976; second
dition, 1982): see Many possibilities of service, pages 115-119; further resources are listed
on page 120 of the second edition.


The Plurality of Ministries, edited by Hans Kueng and Walter Kasper: Concilium 74
(1972, Herder and Herder, 232 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016).

Office and Ministry in the Church, edited by Bos van Iersel and Roland Murphy: Concilium 80 (1972, Herder and Herder, 1221 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10020).


and 545 Island Road, Ramsey, NJ 07446): see review in Bulletin 88, page 91.

Some celebrations for installing ministers, a retirement ceremony, and other prayers
for ministers are given in A Book of Blessings (1981, CCCB, Ottawa): see pages 79-95, 293-
295, 304, and 281.
Ordination

Some sources:

* The New Testament does not describe the full hierarchy (bishop, presbyters, and deacons) in any single book or letter.

* The Didache (around 100 AD) mentions that travelling prophets are gradually being replaced by local overseers and teachers.

* Ignatius of Antioch (around 110) describes the full hierarchy of bishop, presbyters, and deacons in most of the Churches to which he writes.

* In his Apostolic Tradition (around 215), Hippolytus describes the Roman practice of accepting a man as a presbyter — without the laying on of hands — if he has suffered for the faith; others are ordained in a way we would recognize today.

* Vatican II: Liturgy constitution, nos. 76, 15-18 [76, 15-18]; Constitution on the Church, nos. 21, 26-29 [145-149]; Decree on the pastoral office of bishops, nos. 11-12, 14-15, 30, 38 [191-194, 196, 199]; Decree on the ministry and life of priests, nos. 2-8 [257-263].


* Documents on the Liturgy (see footnote 3 on page 8 above): Documents 309-335 [2433-2916].

* Directory on the Pastoral Ministry of Bishops, by the Congregation for Bishops (1974, CCC, Ottawa).

* Code of Canon Law, canons 1008-1054; (1917 code, canons 948-1011).

Concern: The Church’s concern for the quality of the clergy, especially evident since the reforms of the Council of Trent (1545-1563), continues to be shown in these detailed canons.

Introduction (canons 1008-1009): The sacrament of order is described from a structural point of view. The clergy are chosen from among the members of the Church, but their ministry is not described in terms of the overall ministry of the Church and all its members. Vocation, the call by the Spirit of Jesus to serve God and the people of God, is mentioned in canons 233 and 791. No mention is made in this section of the spirit of brothers and servants, as discussed in Vatican II.
Celebration (canons 1010-1011): Since ordinations affect the whole local Church, they are best celebrated on Sundays, in the cathedral, with a large number of people. Various exceptions are listed. No mention of consulting the people is made anywhere in the canons on ordination.

Minister (canons 1012-1023): A bishop is the one who ordains. (It would seem that diocesan clergy would be preferable to the term “secular clergy,” used in canon 1016 and elsewhere, since these priests belong to a diocese.)

Candidates (canons 1024-1052): The code covers current legislation:

- Requirements (canons 1024-1039): These are laid out in detail.
- Impediments, permanent or temporary, are discussed in canons 1040-1049.
- Investigation and documents before ordination: canons 1050-1052.

Registering of ordinations: See canons 1053-1054.

Summary: The code gives the rules governing the ordination of bishops, presbyters, and deacons. The Second Vatican Council reminds us that the “ultimate goal” of bishops is to help all people to live in “all goodness, justice, and truth” (Eph. 5: 9; see also Micah 6: 8; Decree on the bishops' pastoral office in the Church, no. 11, at the end).

Helpful reading:


Priest and Bishop: Biblical Reflections, by Raymond E. Brown, SS (1970, Paulist Press, now New York; and 545 Island Road, Ramsey, NJ 07446).


Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry: See reference on page 24, above.


The Deacon: Minister of Word and Sacrament — Study Text VI (1979, USCC, 1312 Massachusetts Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20005): see review in Bulletin 74, page 141.
Marriage

Some sources:

* Vatican II: Constitution on the liturgy, nos. 77-78 [77-78]; Pastoral constitution on the Church in the modern world, nos. 48-49, 52 [271-273].
* Marriage: Ritual and Pastoral Notes (1979, CCCB, Ottawa).
* Documents on the Liturgy (see note 3 on page 8, above): documents 347-357 [2967-3016].
* Code of Canon Law, canons 226, 1055-1165; (1917 code, canons 1012-1143).

**Introduction** (canons 1055-1065): In canon 1055: 1, the description follows the lines of the renewal presented by Vatican II. Canon 1055: 2 still maintains the teaching that every valid marriage between two baptized persons is a sacrament. Some theologians, canonists, liturgists, and pastors wonder about the relevance of this when the couples concerned have no personal faith, even after the urgings of canons 836, 843, and 1063. What about those who have formally left the Church (see 1117, 1124)?

**Preparing for the celebration** (canons 1063-1072): Canon 1063 is one of the best in the code. The parish community is responsible for helping people to live their Christian marriage in love and to become holy. This help is given by preaching and catechesis, by personal preparation before marriage, by a good celebration of the liturgy of marriage, and by help given to those who have married. The local ordinary (134: 2) is to see that this type of help is properly organized (1064).

**Impediments:** See canons 1073-1094, 1066, and 1068-1069. A “diriment” (invalidating) impediment makes a person unable to marry validly (1079).

**Consent:** See canons 1095-1107. The Church continues the principle of Roman civil law that consent makes a marriage, and makes sure that it will be free and based on the truth (see also 219).

**Form of celebration** (canons 1108-1123): Catholics have to celebrate marriage before a bishop, priest, or deacon (with the necessary faculty), and two witnesses (1108). A lay person may be delegated to assist at a marriage when there are no clergy available, with permission and preparation (1112); as a conference, the Canadian bishops approved of this in September 1983. There are new canons excepting people who have formally retired from the Catholic Church (1117, 1124). A local rite may be prepared in each episcopal conference (1119-1120). Registration is discussed in 1121-1123.
**Mixed marriages** (canons 1124-1129): Permission is required for a marriage between a Catholic and a baptized member of another Church (1124). The promises are discussed in 1125-1126. Only one religious celebration is held (1127: 3). Pastors continue to be responsible for helping couples and their children to grow in faith and love (1128, 1063). Canon 1129 speaks of marriage between a baptized and an unbaptized person ("disparity of cult"), and gives other cross-references.

**Other notes:**

- *Secret celebration of marriage:* See canons 1130-1133.
- *Effects of marriage:* See canons 1134-1140.
- *Separation:* See canons 1141-1155.
- *Validation of marriage:* See canons 1156-1165.
- *Marriage tribunals:* See canons 1671-1716.

**Comments:** Amid its technical regulations, the code shows pastoral concern for the couple and their family (226). Only careful preparation and a mature approach to this sacrament will enable couples to live their marriage well; in this way, the destructive breakdowns and divorces and tribunal cases can become fewer.

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**Helpful reading:**


Bulletin 59, *Celebrating Marriage.*


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In November 1983, the Episcopal Commission for Liturgy and the National Council for Liturgy discussed the liturgical aspects of marriage preparation. It was recommended that the priest or deacon speak to couples about the liturgical celebration at their first meeting, and try to help them to understand some of the liturgical principles involved. Several preparation booklets on the market do try to help couples to prepare for their wedding liturgy.
FURTHER NOTES

An early evaluation

The new Code of Canon Law was issued in Latin at the end of January 1983, and in English in September 1983. Bishops and pastors and experts in various fields are just beginning to find out what is in this compilation. Years of exploration and study lie ahead, with queries and explanations and dissertations galore. This article offers some liturgical questions and points for discussion to help this continuing study in the life of the people of God.¹

Underlying Principles of the Code

1967 Synod: The first major concern at this Synod was the revision of the Church’s canon law, as promised by Pope John XXIII on January 25, 1959. After the Council, much activity took place in renewing the liturgical rites, languages, and books; in reforming structures and attitudes in the Church; in moving into new fields of theology. Those involved in producing a new codification of the Church’s law had to take Vatican II and all the subsequent movements and thinking into consideration.

In the autumn of 1967, the Synod accepted these ten principles:

1. A totally new code, not merely an edited or updated version of the 1917 code.

2. Attitudes of the code: It is to express justice and love, to be in a juridical form but with a pastoral mentality.

3. Distinct codes for the Eastern and Western (Latin) Churches: It was felt that we were not ready yet for one overall code. Two codifications of law respect the variety and cultural differences (see Liturgy constitution, no. 4 [4]).

¹ Bulletin 92, including this article, is written in the spirit of canon 218.
4. **Subsidiarity or decentralization:** Pope John encouraged the principle of subsidiarity, on having things decided or done at the level where they are best handled. This power of discretion is to be respected.

5. **Faculties of bishops and others** are to be included in the code rather than being given by special grant for a five-year period (see Decree on the bishops’ pastoral office, no. 8).

6. **Personal rights:** The basic equality of all Christians flows from baptism. The rights of each believer are to be protected. Power must not be used arbitrarily.

7. **Legal procedures** in Church courts (tribunals): These are to be changed radically to provide more power to local courts (with local variations as needed), and to avoid long delays, especially in the Church’s matrimonial courts. Every Catholic retains the right to appeal his or her case to Rome.

8. **Penal law:** Few penalties; medicinal (leading to reform) rather than punitive, and few — if any — automatic (*latae sententiae*) penalties.

9. **Wide consultation:** Experts from various fields are to be involved in writing the texts of the new canons; these drafts are to be sent through the episcopal conferences to every bishop.

10. **Avoiding extremes:** The process of revising the code is to avoid too much haste or too much delay. Enough time is to be taken in order to provide the Church with a system of law that is both clear and strong.

Does the 1983 code live up to these principles?

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- **Helpful reading:**

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  _Argumenta de Quibus Discpectabitur in Primo Generali Coetu Synodi Episcoporum_ (1967, Vatican Polyglot Press, Roma): pages 7-16. This is the document presented to the Synod for discussion.


- **Promulgation:** On January 25, 1983, Pope John Paul II promulgated the new code, to go into effect on November 27, 1983. A solemn “presentation” took place in Rome on February 3.

- **Texts:** The various texts are given in _L'Osservatore Romano_: Weekly edition in English (February 14, 1983): no. 7 (771); and in _Origins_ (February 3, 1983, USCC, 1312 Massachusetts Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20005): vol. 12, no. 34, pages 537, 539-544. These texts help us to understand the intentions of the Holy See in giving us the new code, as they seek to explain and explore the role of laws in the Church.
Canon Law and the Spirit of Vatican II

Progress: The code incorporates many of the advances proposed by the Second Vatican Council, including setting up councils at every level. New terms are introduced to the code. In the area of liturgy, many of the developments promoted by the Council are incorporated in the canons. A better understanding of liturgy and ecumenism is reflected in the code.

Retrogression: Sometimes the code uses new terms but speaks with the old mentality. Some sacraments — especially anointing of the sick — are discussed mostly from the clerical, "administering" point of view. While some canons valiantly try to present a new spirit (such as 879 and 1063), all too often they are buried in a mass of technical details. The canons on stipends (by whatever appellation), indulgences, and relics are still in the mentality of the middle ages.

Do all the canons reflect the Second Vatican Council's fresh theologies of Christ, the human race, and the Church? The Council invites us to go beyond “the mere observance of the laws governing valid and lawful celebration” (Liturgy constitution, no. 11 [11]).

Amendments: In the spring of 1983, the Congregation for the Sacraments and Divine Worship called together a group of renowned experts to discuss the effects of the code on the revised liturgical books. As a result, some 76 amendments were made to the pastoral introductions and rubrics of 14 liturgical books.2 The pastoral introductions of the revised liturgical books, their principal rubrics, and the major documents of the liturgical renewal form the body of liturgical laws to which canon 2 refers. These remain in force, and these are the documents to which one continues to go for guidance in liturgical matters.

Gospel and law: In the New Testament we find Jesus inviting us to obey the will of God rather than follow the literal interpretation of legal texts. We are invited to do our best, to give all we have, to go far beyond the minimum, to keep the spirit of the law rather than its letter. (See Rom. 2: 29; 7: 6; 2 Cor. 3: 6. In each of these texts, RSV translates “letter of the law” as the written code.) There are moments in the new code where we can hear these noble sentiments. All too often, however, one is at the lowest common denominator, in the spirit of minimalism.

Is there any hope? Yes, there is! The code is attempting to do the impossible, and we may as well accept this fact. The attempts to gather up the constantly changing legislation (see notes 2 and 3 on page 8) show us the difficulty of relying on texts alone.

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2 See Variationes in Libros Liturgicos ad Normam Codicis Iuris Canonici Nuper Promulgati Introducendae (1983, Vatican Polyglot Press, Roma). The title means: Variations to be brought into the liturgical books according to the requirements of the recently promulgated Code of Canon Law. This material is also printed in Notitiae, no. 206 (September 1983): vol. 20, pages 540-555; a commentary by Pierre-M. Gy, OP, is given on pages 556-561.
A positive solution: In the field of liturgy, why not work to develop a simple set of basic principles, and their meaning in the life of Christians and their Church? The details, which may vary widely in different cultures and ages, can be developed locally, according to the principle of subsidiarity.

- **Simplification:** The liturgical content of canons 840-1165 could be summarized in this way: “The renewed liturgical books provide positive and adequate guidance to Christians who are preparing, celebrating, and living the sacraments.”

- **Helpful reading** on the sacraments: See pages 19-20, above.

**Spirit of the liturgy:** Some points for our reflection and prayer:

- **Participation of the community:** Vatican II has opened us to new and deeper participation by all in the liturgy, beginning with our basic privilege of sharing in the priesthood of Christ through baptism (Liturgy constitution, nos. 14, 28-31 [14, 28-31]). Now all are celebrants of the liturgy. Many ministries are being recognized, and the spirit of ministry is growing, both in the liturgy and in daily living.

- **Presiding:** This is seen as a form of ministry to the community. The presbyter or other presider leads and serves the people of the community in this celebration, and at other times by helping them to prepare in faith and love or to live according to the spirit of the liturgy.

- **Presence of Jesus:** The Council helped us to recognize Jesus as our high priest and our brother. He is present and presiding in every celebration, and allows us to share in the praise and prayer he offers to our Father (Liturgy constitution, nos. 7, 14 [7, 14]).

- **With the Church in heaven:** Our pilgrim liturgy now is a foretaste of the praise that we shall celebrate in heaven. We join the angels and saints in the thanks and glory they give to God through Jesus Christ (Liturgy constitution, no. 8 [8]).

We can rejoice, for the liturgical spirit is growing among the people of God; good liturgies are being celebrated, and many are making greater efforts toward better celebration. These good things are not touched by the code.

**Nature of the code:** In the area of liturgy, as in other fields, the code presents both traditional laws and the new structures brought in by Vatican II. The code tends not to move into many of the areas being explored by modern theologians. It does not see or explore the frontier territory beyond its traditional fences. “Where we’ve been recently” rather than “where we could go” sets the perimeters of its scope. The code is more comfortable with settled people and definitive structures than with wandering pilgrims who travel light.
Progress continues: The code does not prevent or hamper further progress and development; rather its presence and its limitations should encourage us to keep moving ahead, so that our lives and our liturgies will continue to give greater honor to God through Jesus Christ in the Spirit and in the Church.

* * *

Some questions we must ask ourselves of each chapter, title, or section of book four of the code:

- How does this reflect the love of God for all? the teaching and example of Jesus? the meaning of this sacrament or rite?
- Does it build up the kingdom of God on earth? Does it lead us closer to Christ and to one another in love?
- Does this help Christians to unite as Jesus wants us to unite?
- Does this give us a positive approach to living the Christian life? Does it help us to live and offer our daily life with Christ for God?

Generosity: Jesus taught us to be generous, as generous as God is with us. Our Lord and our brother taught us to go beyond the minimum, to walk the extra kilometer, to go all the way with him, even to lay down our lives for others and for him. He taught us to go to excess in love and in forgiveness. Can legislation be Christian if it is minimalistic, if it does not exhort us to walk the narrow path with Jesus?

* * *

Helpful reading:


“The Church’s New Laws,” by Ladislas Orsy, in The Tablet (7 and 14 May 1983, 48 Great Peter Street, London SW1P 2HB): vol. 237, nos. 7452-7453, pages 422-424, 446-447. He compares the codes of 1917 and 1983, examines the meaning of changes in certain important areas, and considers how the Christian community should respond to the code.

“Newness in Fidelity:” by Richard P. McBrien, in Notre Dame Magazine (May 1983, Box M, Notre Dame, IN 46556): vol. 12, no. 2, pages 39-41. “The new Code of Canon Law will not produce a new Church. It is the renewed Church of Vatican II and of Paul VI which has produced the new code.”


Synod Interventions

The Synod of Bishops is discussed in the code in canons 342-348. The Canadian delegation made a number of well prepared and timely interventions. Two of these, approved by the Canadian bishops in September 1983, are given here in full. They are useful resources for reflection and discussions on reconciliation.

Sacramental reconciliation: theological aspects

Most Rev. Bertrand Blanchet, Bishop of Gaspé, addressed the Synod on October 5, 1983.

I. The Church as Sacrament

1. One can speak of sacramental reconciliation only within the framework of the Church as a whole, considered as a sacrament of salvation. This is the perspective taken in the Dogmatic constitution on the Church, no. 1: “The Church is, in Christ, a type of sacrament: that is to say, the sign and instrument of intimate union with God and the unity of the entire human race.” The seven major acts specifically named sacraments are, therefore, realities within this vast sacramental economy as particular realizations and applications of this wider sacramentality.

2. This is the case with the sacrament traditionally called “the sacrament of penance,” which the new ritual also calls the sacrament of reconciliation, so as better to express the central and properly sacramental import of the penitential act. The Christian salvation of which the Church is sacrament, can in fact, be summed up as: a reconciliation (intimate union
with God) springing from the absolutely free love of God and bearing fruit in a reconciled humanity (“the unity of the entire human race”).

II. The Mystery and Ministry of Reconciliation

3. Furthermore, St. Paul says of the work of salvation accomplished in Jesus Christ: “Everything comes from God, who has reconciled us to himself through Christ and has entrusted to us the ministry of reconciliation” (2 Cor. 5: 18). These words speak at one and the same time of the mystery of reconciliation and what the ministry of this mystery, as Church, must be.

4. The apostle forcefully stresses the fact that the initiative of reconciliation comes, not from humans but from God. God reconciles; he grants reconciliation to the world, as a free gift. This change in the situation of the human race before God, which is accomplished in the death of Jesus, precedes all changes in our personal dispositions: “While we were still enemies of God, we were reconciled with him by the death of his Son” (Rom. 5: 10). Nevertheless, Paul invites everyone to “let oneself be reconciled with God,” appealing for a response on our part, to render effective this reconciliation which has already been given. This response of conversion (metanoia) and penance is necessary, but it always follows, in response to the divine initiative. This is the mystery.

5. The ministry of reconciliation must be in harmony with this mystery and accentuate its two great co-ordinates. In the first place, there is the total gratuity. This we emphasize by first proclaiming, not the human action, the call to penance, but the Good News of salvation freely given in Jesus Christ. This ministry must, in the second place, emphasize the demand for a human response, for there is no reconciliation without encounter. Pardon and repentance must go together. The sacramental ministry of reconciliation must, in our day, recapture and express in the very forms in which it is conducted both God’s free and loving initiative and the human response of those who have experienced pardon. It is only in this way that the Church will be the true sacrament of the mystery.

III. Forms of Celebration of the Sacrament

6. Since the promulgation of the new ritual by the Latin Church in 1973, it seems that there are three forms of celebration which fulfill the requirements of this mystery.

7. There is, first of all, the personal form, which the ritual calls Ordo ad reconciliandos singullos paenitentes. This form gives privilege to the encounter between priest and penitent. This is not, in the format given in the ritual, a revival, pure and simple, of “confession” as we have known
it since the twelfth century and practised it since the 1614 ritual. Priest and penitent now exchange greetings, listen together to the word of God, proclaim his love in the very confessing of sin, and pray together to receive God's pardon (signified by absolution), and be able to give witness to this pardon (satisfaction or "act of penance"), and finally, give thanks. This form of ministry thus allows for a more detailed expression of the human response to God's initiative, a more complete expression of the penitent's activity in conversion (metanoia). It witnesses to the fact that God's pardon comes to each man or woman on his or her most personal level, speaking his word to him or her this very day. Similarly, the "act of penance," suggested and accepted in dialogue, can be the beginning of a new life in a more concrete manner. This form is thus irreplaceable.

8. The second form, called *Ordo ad reconciliandos plures paenitentes cum confessione et absolutione singulari*, is theologically related to the first. Since confession and absolution occur within an individual encounter of priest and penitent, this form of the sacrament preserves an unchanged theological structure. We will not discuss it here so as to emphasize the third form, which constitutes a truly new form of administering the sacrament.

9. This form, which the ritual calls *Ordo ad reconciliandos paenitentes cum confessione et absolutione generali*, emphasizes the communal dimension of reconciliation and is conducted as a true celebration; the communal dimension is highlighted in the Constitution on the liturgy, no. 27. It has the advantage of promoting a collective awareness of sin and its social and political dimensions. It gathers together the people whom God re-creates in their baptismal calling. It allows them to come together and accept one another as a people of pardoned sinners, to renew strained or broken bonds, to live out together with others the mystery of reconciliation — in brief, to experience the very nature of what the Church is.

10. Until now, official Church documents have been reticent about this form of celebrating the sacrament. Nevertheless, we believe that the present Church discipline on general confession and absolution must be re-evaluated, for the following reasons.

11. 1) History, which reveals the existence throughout the ages of three forms of penance in the Church, gives ample evidence that this sacrament, in its manner of celebration, is in the hands of the Church. The Church has received the sacraments originating in Christ, but it has always been keenly aware that the particular manner in which they are carried out has been confided to its own responsibility. It is therefore up to the Church to define and adapt the forms of the sacrament according to the times and the needs of the people of God. The Church can therefore confidently turn to a new form of celebration of penance without sacrificing anything of the sacramental ministry of reconciliation. On the contrary, the very newness of this ministry would be the expression of its fidelity to the mystery.
12. 2) It must also be remembered that the Oriental Churches, which also lay claim to apostolic traditions, have both communal and individual forms of this sacrament. Whereas in the Byzantine Church the penitential discipline requires the specific confession of sins in the private form, the Churches of Egypt and Syria began to use the individual form only in the twelfth century; and the Nestorian Church employs only the communal form. We would also add that, in many Churches, especially in the medieval period, individual confession did not always have the same importance as the communal celebrations, and that the complete confession of sins as well as the juridical obligation to confess grave sins was never as clearly determined as in the West. And it is a well known fact that the Catholic Church recognizes the validity of the sacraments in the Oriental Churches.

13. 3) This leads us to say that the difficulties experienced in the Latin Church are tied in to the declarations of the Council of Trent, which declares the necessity of a detailed confession of all grave sins as a requirement of divine law. The canons of the Council of Trent have to be interpreted in the context of the Protestant Reformation which challenged the private form of the sacrament. The Council of Trent cannot be cited as an authority to impede the realization of a form of penance with general confession and absolution.

14. 4) This form, which includes all the elements necessary for the sacrament (metanoia and its expression in the confession of sins — although general and collective, absolution, and satisfaction), should not be preached and presented in opposition to the personal form which we consider irreplaceable. The communal form is complementary to the individual form, and it has its own strengths and advantages. In point of fact, these celebrations allow a large number of the faithful to discover the free nature of God's gifts and to proclaim and celebrate, in this feast of pardon, his unconditional love. The mystery proclaimed by the gospel is that God doesn't measure things out, but loves us freely.

From a theological viewpoint, these reasons are so cogent that we present the following recommendation:

• That the bases of the present discipline of the Church regarding general confession and absolution be studied with a view toward broadening this discipline.
Complementarity of the three forms

On October 5, Most Rev. Marcel Gervais, Auxiliary Bishop of London, spoke to the members of the Synod on the complementarity of the three forms of the sacrament of reconciliation:

1. The publication of the *Ordo Paenitentiae* and our pastoral experience with its new forms offer real and promising signs of a renewal of the sacramental ministry of reconciliation.

I. Confession of Individuals

2. Experience has made clear that the traditional private form of confession corresponds less and less to the religious sensitivities of our people, young and old alike. The *Ordo Paenitentiae* is very promising in presenting the private form in a much revised format. This new form for the individual penitent corresponds very well to the aspirations of the faithful who are rediscovering a Christian quality of life in contemporary spiritual and apostolic movements. While the numbers of those who use this form is not large, the more available it becomes, the more it is chosen in preference to the traditional form.

3. When celebrated as intended by the new ritual, this form incorporates powerful, positive values: the setting of dialogue and openness between priest and penitent, the light shed by the word of God, the atmosphere of prayer, and the search for real signs of conversion; these make for a fruitful personal encounter in which penitents can discover the truth about themselves. It is especially effective for those living their Christian lives in complicated situations. This form, therefore, is the privileged way of personal conversion. It follows that every effort must be made to promote it and to provide suitable places and ample time for its celebration.

4. Its privileged character and the spiritual values which it fosters place new demands on priest and penitent, and pose new pastoral challenges: it requires more time; it demands that the priests be specially trained to celebrate it properly, and that they be willing to set aside sufficient time for its celebration. (In some of our dioceses, parishes have set aside entire days exclusively for the celebration of the sacrament for individual penitents. When this is properly publicized, hundreds have availed themselves of the sacrament.)
5. However, given the shortage of priests in most dioceses, and the length of time required for a proper celebration of the new form for the individual penitent, it is doubtful that it could become the only form of the sacrament used to meet all the needs of the faithful in their journey of conversion.

6. In order to provide for the diverse spiritual needs of the people, and in order to make more time available for priests to care for those most in need of individual attention in the sacrament, we must foster the other means of conversion and reconciliation.

II. Communal Celebrations

7. The communal forms of celebration reveal the ecclesial dimension of the sacrament. They lend themselves readily to an awareness of God's love for his people and to a consciousness of the social aspects of sin. They can also foster a more authentic penitential spirit in those who are confused as to the nature and gravity of certain sins and who are uncertain whether to confess them.

III. Communal Celebrations with Individual Confession and Absolution

8. Communal celebrations with individual confession and absolution are held in the great majority of Canadian churches. They are especially beneficial in limited groups or when all the participants have set no limit on the time needed for a truly personal encounter between the priest and penitent. (Various movements for youth and several for adults include in their programs on retreats or on weekends several hours for these celebrations. They are deeply appreciated and are occasions for profound conversions.)

9. Nevertheless, this form of communal penance poses a serious problem when it cuts short the encounter between priest and penitent. Regretfully, this is most often the case. Because it is permitted, it becomes entrenched at the expense of the individual form, without providing the penitents the help which true conversion demands and which the new ritual for individual confession provides.
IV. Communal Celebrations with General Confession and Absolution

10. Certain dioceses occasionally have communal penance services with general confession and absolution. Drawing on their experience, the following observations can be made:

11. This form has several specific advantages:

- It expresses clearly and powerfully the merciful initiative of God and the generosity of the Church in dispensing his mercy;
- It provides the beginning of a return for those who have distanced themselves from sacramental practices;
- It allows many of the faithful to rediscover the true meaning of the sacrament and leads some to resume the practice of individual confession;
- It gives positive correction to painful and even traumatic experiences of confession by creating an atmosphere of peace and confidence in the Lord's generous forgiveness;
- It offers those who are not in situations of grave sin the opportunity of being challenged by the word of God and gives them assurance of forgiveness.

12. However, if these celebrations fail to make clear the intimate link between the free gift of forgiveness and the personal effort of conversion, the use of this third form will encourage the abuse of the mercy of God. Furthermore, the indiscriminate use of communal absolution is as open to the accusation of being magical as is the cursory use of the traditional form of individual confession.

13. The celebration of this form must include not only the explanation of the obligation of personal confession for those who require it, but should also include the announcement of the times (preferably the entire days) which have been set aside for individual confessions.

14. It is clear that many who participate in these communal services would profit greatly from a subsequent private confession even though they are not obliged to it. Those whose lives are in serious contradiction to the gospel and the teaching of the Church have a special need for the private encounter to help them identify more clearly the causes of their sins and to clarify and deepen the new direction of their lives. There is, we believe, a need to make known more clearly the intimate relationship between these two forms of the sacrament and to develop more effective ways of expressing it.
V. Recommendations

15. Since the situation envisioned by the Roman Ritual (no. 31, where the number of penitents is greater than the available confessors can handle properly in a suitable time) arises in most of our large Canadian parishes with total predictability at certain times every year;

Since our pastoral experience indicates that the majority of the penitents at these services are not in serious sin;

Since ways must be found to make more time available for individual confession for those in need of it;

Since communal celebrations with general confession and absolution need to be carefully prepared well in advance;

The Canadian bishops:

1) Hope for the utilization of the communal form with general confession and absolution on special occasions and during the liturgical seasons which best lend themselves to conversion (Advent and Lent);

2) Request a restudy and reformulation in pastoral terms of the obligation of individual confession after a general absolution, bringing out the complementarity of the two forms and the importance of a human and personal encounter between priest and penitent.

16. Since the ministry of reconciliation is broader than the sacrament, the Canadian bishops:

1) Hope for a greater fostering among the Christian people of the ordinary means of conversion: in the first place, the eucharist, then the observance of Lent culminating in the paschal renewal of one's baptismal promises, the word of God, prayer, mutual forgiveness, et cetera;

2) Recommend the training of qualified persons in spiritual direction among the laity as well as the clergy.
Brief book reviews

Why Go to Confession? by Joseph M. Champlin (1982, Franciscan Communications, 1229 S. Santee, Los Angeles, CA 90015): paper, self-cover, 31 pages, illustrations. Bulk prices between $1.00 and $2.00, plus postage. [For a sample copy, send $1.00 in U.S. funds to Parish Life and Worship Office, 240 E. Onondaga Street, Syracuse, NY 13202.]

In a series of simple answers, a pastor responds to questions about celebrating the sacrament of reconciliation. He explains why we confess our sins in this sacrament, and how to do this. Prepared for wide distribution to parishioners, this booklet is also recommended for catechists, high school students, and clergy.


A pastor prepares a book to help the lay readers of the parish to enter their ministry seriously and joyfully. He helps them to recognize and develop their gifts, and to understand the design of the lectionary, the liturgical year, and the place of God's word in the eucharist. Ten things to do and ten to avoid survey practical situations, and a pronunciation guide covers difficult words in the Sunday readings. A certificate of commissioning is at the front of the book. Chapter 9, "Cleanse My Heart and My Lips," leads readers to deepen their prayer life. Recommended for readers, clergy, and also for catechists.


The Christian way of life is by its nature involved in the social field. We are not merely individuals, but persons chosen to be saints in the midst of others, sent to become the leaven and the light of the world. Fr. Haering looks at the ways Christians can bring the social dimensions of their faith into our daily living. A practical and uplifting book for every Christian who wants to radiate Christ in his or her world.


While working in the poor areas of a large city, Sister Ruth wrote these prayers. Some are in dialogue form, some reflect scriptural texts, others are written for particular occasions. Composed in free verse, these may be helpful for individuals and groups, but they are not for use in liturgical celebrations.


As musician and theologian, the author invites us to use our imagination in liturgy, to enter its power of mystery, and to experience the holy in our celebrations. The reform of the liturgical books is but the first step in the renewal. Now we have to penetrate the liturgy and enter into its true spirit. By nourishing our imaginations on the symbols, the metaphors, the poetry of scripture and liturgy, we can grow in prayer and in Christian living. Recommended for clergy, liturgy committees, catechists, and students of liturgy.

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


When compared to members of other Christian Churches, Catholics are often low in the amounts they give in the Sunday collection. This book offers a simple program, based on sound spiritual motives, for increasing collections so that a larger amount may be given to the world's poor. Sacrificial giving is giving to the Lord from the gifts God gives us; it is giving until it hurts; it reaches out to aid those truly in need. The manual offers many practical examples, and reports on a 47% increase in one diocese. The leaflet summarizes the principles of the program, and is for distribution to individuals and families. Pastors and parish councils may wish to look into this program as a practical benefit to the spirituality of their community.


The Consultation on Common Texts brings together members from Roman Catholic, Anglican, and mainline Protestant Churches in the United States and Canada, to help in the work of renewing liturgical texts. This booklet provides three services, morning prayer, a brief service for use during the day, and evening prayer. Based on the tradition of the liturgy of the hours, these are intended for use when Christians of different denominations meet and celebrate worship together. A good variety of psalms and hymns and a list of other useful texts make this a helpful resource for ecumenical groups, conferences, and for parishes wishing to design or stimulate the celebration of the liturgy of the hours. Recommended.


Written for adults, this book provides a clear and interesting picture of Palestine in the time of Jesus. The author, a scripture scholar with intimate knowledge of the Holy Land, shares his insights into the political, cultural, religious, social, and economic background of our Lord's day. Recommended for catechists, clergy, readers, and all adult Christians.


This booklet offers an extensive list of books and publications under 25 major headings and a variety of subheadings, indicating both professional and popular levels. Issues of the Bulletin are mentioned a number of times. Unfortunately, books on death and dying are listed under anointing of the sick, instead of a separate heading. Recommended as a useful aid for pastoral teams, liturgy students, and diocesan offices.


The author offers professional advice on management, planning, and making decisions, and helps parish leaders to apply these ideas to their work. Organization, invitations to volunteers, the demands of time, and leadership styles are discussed, and practical examples are offered to show these in practice. This book is helpful for all parishes and congregations, and can enable the leaders to spend more time and energy on their real pastoral tasks. Recommended.

Why do Christians sing? Eleven authors from varied disciplines share their reflections on the singing of hymns and psalms. This issue of Liturgy helps us to see the place of music in our Christian liturgy today, and shows us how we can grow in our worship. Recommended for musicians, liturgy committees, and clergy.


On the cover are printed the corporal works of mercy, and their opposite: “The works of war: Destroy crops and land, seize food supplies, destroy homes, scatter families, contaminate water, imprison dissenters, inflict wounds and burns, kill the living.” The author describes five important areas which concern faith and justice: the scriptures tell us of God's desire for justice; poverty in the United States; extreme poverty in Latin America; the challenge of basic Christian communities; and the social teaching of the popes. Recommended for liturgy and social action committees, catechists, clergy, and all Christians concerned about social justice.

Prayer Services for Parish Meetings, by Debra Hintz (1983, Twenty-Third Publications, Box 180, Mystic, CT 06355): softbound, illustrations, 8½ by 11 inches, 87 pages. $9.95.

Forty brief prayer services, one to two pages in length, are provided as resources for parish leaders to develop for all types of meetings. These services are related to morning and evening, to seasons, and to various moods. Practical suggestions for developing services are given, and room is left for music and spontaneous prayer. Recommended as a helpful resource for parish organizations, liturgy committees, and catechists.

Bibliography: The Mystery of Faith (1983, FDLC, Box 816, Ben Franklin Station, Washington, DC 20044): softbound, typescript, iii, 83 pages. $5.00, plus $1.50 handling.

The Mystery of Faith was a study of the elements involved in the structure of the Mass as we know it today: see review in Bulletin 80, page 190. Now, two years later, the FDLC has provided us with an extensive bibliography for each of the rites and prayers in the Order of Mass. Under each portion of the Mass are listed books and articles that refer to it. The Bulletin is mentioned a number of times. Recommended for students of liturgy and diocesan commissions as a valuable guide to further resources and studies.


The Sunday liturgy must be both a joyful celebration and a call to conversion if we are to be the Church Jesus wants us to be in our time. Parish Celebrations is addressed to people who are leaders in parish liturgies. Many years of practical experience in different settings are shared with us, and we are helped to reflect and to ask ourselves some questions about our attitudes, our liturgies, and the way we plan and celebrate. Our commitment to social justice is reflected in and nourished by the liturgies we celebrate. Recommended for clergy, readers, committee members, ushers, sacristans, communion ministers, musicians, liturgy planners.


This practical booklet speaks directly to communion ministers. After reviewing the theological basis of their ministry, the author describes the importance of being and of giving the body of Christ. Communion within the eucharistic assembly, for the sick, and outside Mass are discussed,
with practical suggestions and clear photographs. A final page provides an act of personal recommitment for use by communion ministers, based on their commissioning rite. Each minister will benefit from having a personal copy. Recommended for communion ministers, clergy, and liturgy committees.


Written by a musician for all ministers of music, this booklet offers both theoretical and practical ideas for better music in our liturgical celebrations. Brief chapters on music in history and in contemporary worship lead us to understand and enjoy the place of music within our celebrations. Every musician could benefit from having a copy. Recommended for composers, music leaders, choirs, cantors, instrumentalists, and liturgy committees.


A carefully prepared ecumenical study of the way Christians in Minnesota believe and practise their faith. Faith and Ferment presents the results of a study of current attitudes as seen from the standpoint of anthropology, psychology, sociology, and theology. Some 2,000 members of various Churches answered detailed questionnaires, and some 1,000 took part in long interviews. Their efforts at incarnating their faith and their attempts to face new questions with traditional values and beliefs invite us to explore our own beliefs and practices today. For liturgy, questions need to be asked about preaching and worship, and their relationship with daily living. Recommended as an important document for each parish community to explore and to use as a touchstone for their own faith and life.


Thirty years of practical experience are gathered in this book. After exploring what catechesis is, the authors look at its contents, including liturgy. In the final eleven chapters, they offer many ways in which catechists can become creative without resorting to gimmicks. Helpful resources are mentioned, and some questions for reflection enable catechists to maintain a good balance. Written primarily for catechists, this book is also recommended as potentially helpful for liturgical committees.


The author sets out “to examine the anthropological, biblical, traditional, and historico-theological base upon which an integral sacramental theology can be constructed” (pages xiii-xiv). He leads us through human use of symbols and God’s plan for saving us in Christ, and helps us to understand the sacraments as proclamation. They are made real in our life as believers; today, the Church follows a new sacramental model, celebration. Flowing from the teaching of Vatican II and subsequent developments, this book is recommended for students, clergy, and those who want to grow in their understanding of the Church’s sacramental system.


Those who plan parish liturgies are invited by this book to take a broad look at each season, and to base their planning on the flow of the seasonal liturgies. The readings are the main element given to planners, but the author suggests many other liturgical texts which may be selected.
Based on a careful study of the themes and texts of the Sunday Masses, this book opens new doors for those involved in planning, presiding, preaching, and ministering for the community of faith. Recommended for every parish and religious community.

**Preaching and the Non-Ordained: An Interdisciplinary Study**

The importance of preaching in the renewed liturgy has given rise to a strong demand for excellent preaching. This book contains the papers given at a symposium in October 1982, on the topic of preaching by those who are not ordained as bishop, presbyter, or deacon. Scriptural, theological, and canonical aspects are explored, as well as the baptismal roots of the ministry of preaching. The notes at the end of each talk provide many references for further reading and study. Recommended for lay preachers, religious, clergy, diocesan commissions, and parish liturgy committees.

**The Year of the Lord's Favor: Preaching the Three-Year Lectionary**

Since the Roman *Lectionary for Mass* was issued in 1969 in response to Vatican II, other major Churches in North America have adapted the Sunday readings for their own use. (A new consensus, the *Common Lectionary*, will be reviewed in Bulletin 93.) In *The Year*, Dean Johnson explains the nature of the lectionary as a systematic presentation of the scriptures, and leads us through the liturgical year, with its strong seasons and its ordinary time. The index of scripture references enables the reader to locate particular passages within the book. Prepared for clergy and seminarians of all the major Christian Churches, this book provides a helpful background resource for reading and preaching. Recommended.

**Jesus in Focus: A Life in Its Setting**

Working with the different viewpoints of the four evangelists and Paul, Fr. Sloyan has woven a fascinating and reverent retelling of the story of Jesus. He helps us to penetrate the familiar message by letting its truths stand out with a fresh clarity. In 25 brief chapters, he lets us see Christ as did both his contemporaries and his followers in faith. The final chapter shows us Jesus as presented in the Qu'ran (Koran). Recommended as reflective reading for every believing Christian adult.

**Religious Cults Today: A Challenge to Christian Families**

A serious and balanced look at cults, their good and bad points, and ways of coping with them are contained in this booklet. Helpful for families and clergy.

**Dear God, I Have This Terrible Problem . . . A Housewife's Secret Letters**

Brief humorous letters and simple replies make pleasant reading, and teach some practical lessons in living as Christians in our everyday situations.

**RCIA: The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults: What It Is, How It Works**

The author presents a simple description of the process of adult initiation, based on ten years of experience in Baltimore parishes. This book is intended to be a further guide for those who are familiar with the *Rite*, and not a replacement for it. One shortcoming is the suggestion that the catechumenate runs from October to Pentecost, ignoring the tradition of "several years." Two certificates are provided for duplication.
COURSES IN PASTORAL LITURGY

Good courses in liturgy are being offered in North America. Some of these are given during the summer, some during the school year, and some in shorter institutes. Further information may be obtained by writing to the following:

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

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

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

- The Georgetown Center
  for Liturgy, Spirituality and the Arts
  3514 “O” Street, NW
  Washington, DC 20007

- Aquinas Institute
  3642 Lindell Boulevard
  St. Louis, MO 63108
  U.S.A.

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

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

- Liturgical Studies
  The Graduate School
  Drew University
  Madison, NJ 07940

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

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