SOCIAL JUSTICE
AND LITURGY
National Bulletin on Liturgy

A review published by the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops

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.

Editorial commentary in the Bulletin is the responsibility of the editor.

Editor

REV. PATRICK BYRNE

Editorial Office

NATIONAL LITURGICAL OFFICE
90 Parent Avenue
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 7B1
(613) 236-9461 extension 176

Business Office

PUBLICATIONS SERVICE
90 Parent Avenue
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 7B1

Published five times a year
Appears every two months, except July and August

In Canada:
- Subscription: $8.00 a year
- Price per copy: $2.00, plus 28¢ postage

Outside Canada:
- Subscription: $10.00 a year (U.S. funds);
  $17.00 by airmail (U.S. funds)
- Price per copy: $2.50, plus 35¢ postage (U.S. funds)

Bulk prices for this issue:
For 50 or more copies to one address,
½ off prices given above,
plus 8% for postage and handling

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International Standard Serial Number: ISSN 0084-8425.

Legal deposit: National Library, Ottawa, Canada.

Second Class Mail: Registration Number 2994.
Our life and our prayer have to be in harmony. We cannot pray in comfort or with sincerity when our brothers and sisters are in serious need: God listens to their cries first. What does God want us to do about their needs?

What we say in our liturgical prayer should lead us to serve our brothers and sisters, and to work for justice and peace in the world. Our life and our prayer should reflect and influence each other.

We are to recognize Jesus in our liturgy and in the needy. We are to join him in praying to God and in working and praying for those who need our love and help. Bulletin 96 offers some areas for reflection and self-examination, and some suggestions for practical application in our daily living as Christian individuals, families, and communities of faith.
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INTRODUCTION

A vision of justice

Some Sources

In this article we look at what the scriptures and the liturgy tell us about the work of justice, and about some of the areas it involves in our lives:

In the Hebrew scriptures: Many passages speak of justice. Some which are familiar may be recalled:

- Is. 1: 16-17: To be just, we must:
  - turn from evil
  - and begin to do good:
  - searching for justice
  - helping the oppressed
  - pleading for widows
  - being just to orphans.

- Is. 58: 1-14: In this passage, we are told to:
  - loosen every yoke that binds
  - free the oppressed, including oppressed workers
  - share our food with the hungry
  - bring the homeless into our homes
  - cover those who are naked.

- Tobit 1: 8-9, 16-18; 4: 5-11, 14-16: Tobit speaks of his practice of justice:
  - care for orphans, widows, aliens
  - set aside money for alms
  - give alms generously
  - feed the hungry
  - clothe the naked

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1 This passage is used at the beginning of Lent, as the first reading on the Friday and Saturday after Ash Wednesday (lectionary, nos. 222-223): see Five days of decision, in Bulletin 42, pages 40-41.
bury the dead
do good works
be truthful in word and deed
do not hold back workers' wages
keep the "golden rule" (4: 15; see Mt. 7: 12; Lk. 6: 31).

- *Micah* 6: 8: We are to do what God asks of us:
  - be just in our actions
  - love steadfastly
  - "walk humbly" with our God.

See also Ps. 15 and Ps. 24: 3-6; Is. 56: 1; references to Is. 42 and 61 are covered below, under the New Testament.

**New Testament:** In the gospels, Jesus invites us to look at basic justice in our way of life as God's people; his disciples encourage us to follow Christ in loving God by loving God's people.

- *Lk.* 4: 18-19 (see Is. 61: 1-2): As he begins his public ministry, our Lord tells us what the Spirit of God is sending him to do (see also Mt. 12: 15-21, and Is. 42: 1-4):
  - preach the Good News to the poor and afflicted
  - proclaim release to captives
  - help the blind to recover their sight
  - bring freedom to the oppressed and to captives
  - bind up the broken-hearted
  - comfort those who mourn
  - proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.

- *Mt.* 25: 31-46: Describing the way he will judge our lives, Jesus paints a picture of the last judgment. He will reward or condemn us depending on our actions toward him, living and suffering in those in need:
  - give food to the hungry, and drink to the thirsty
  - clothe the naked
  - visit the sick
  - come to those in prison
  - welcome strangers.

- *Mt.* 5: 3-12: In the beatitudes, given at the beginning of the sermon on the mount in Matthew's gospel (chapters 5-6-7), Jesus summarizes his approach, in deep contrast to that of conventional worldly wisdom. Those who are blessed and truly happy in God's eyes are:
  - the poor in spirit
  - those who mourn
  - the meek
  - those who hunger and thirst for justice
  - those who are merciful

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the pure in heart
peacemakers
those who are persecuted for the sake of justice.

Many other passages in scripture refer to justice, and we will mention some of them in this issue. The ones above give us excellent summaries for our guidance.

**In the liturgy:** Many of our liturgical texts offer suggestions about the place of justice in our life and our prayer. Perhaps the best vision is that offered in preface 51, for the feast of Christ our King:

> As king he proclaims dominion over all creation, that he may present to you, his almighty Father, an eternal and universal kingdom: a kingdom of truth and life, a kingdom of holiness and grace, a kingdom of justice, love, and peace.2

Other texts worth studying include:

- **Sacramentary:** All page references are to the Canadian editions (1974, 1983):

  Mass for progress of peoples page 988
  for peace and justice 989-990
  in time of war or civil disturbance 991-992
  beginning of the civil year 992-993
  blessing of human labor 993-995
  for productive land 995-997
  after the harvest 997-998
  in time of famine 999-1000
  refugees and exiles 1001-1002
  those unjustly deprived of liberty 1002-1003
  prisoners 1003
  for the sick: 1004-1005; and in the 1983 edition, pages 1053-1057:
  anointing of the sick during Mass pages 1005-1006
  for the dying 1007
  earthquake 1007
  for rain 1008
  for fine weather 1008
  to avert storms 1008
  for any need 1009-1010
  for our oppressors 1018

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2 Excerpt from the English translation of *The Roman Missal*, © 1973, International Committee on English in the Liturgy, Inc. (ICEL). All rights reserved.

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Lectionary:

- for persecuted Christians
- for peace and justice
- in time of war and civil disturbances
- beginning of the new civil year
- blessing of human labor
- for productive land
- after the harvest
- for those suffering from famine or hunger
- for refugees and exiles
- for the sick
- for any need

Work of the whole Christian Church: Liturgy and life must always go together. Working for social justice is the task and responsibility of the people of God, the Church on earth. Vatican II gave a clear picture of the extent of this work in its Pastoral constitution on the Church in the modern world: this is a document that needs frequent reading by every mature believer. Promoting human development is also an important part of this work: see Decree on the Church's missionary activity, no. 12. As leaders of the Christian people, bishops are responsible for teaching about social justice: see Decree on the bishops' pastoral office in the Church, no. 12. As co-workers of the bishop, priests are to teach people God's word and its application in the concrete situations of life, and help to keep the eucharist at the heart of every form of apostolate: Decree on the ministry and life of priests, nos. 4-6. The social responsibility of lay people is described in the Decree on the apostolate of the laity, nos. 13-14.

If we are going to listen to Vatican II on liturgical renewal, we must also listen to its teaching on the context of liturgy in life and social justice.

* * *

Helpful reading:


_The Eucharist and Human Liberation_, by Tissa Balasuriya, OM1 (1979, SCM Press, 58 Bloomsbury Street, London WC1): This book covers many areas of social justice, and offers insights by a theologian from Sri Lanka (formerly Ceylon).


Preaching the social gospel, in Bulletin 40, pages 244-251; see also Bulletin 88, pages 57-61; no. 87, pages 34-36, 41-42.


The Social Message of Jesus, by Igino Giordani (1977, St. Paul Editions, 50 St. Paul's Avenue, Boston, MA 02130).


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The Sacraments and Social Progress, by Bertrand de Margerie (1974, Franciscan Herald Press, 1434 West 51st Street, Chicago, IL 60609).

“Theology and the Redistribution of Wealth,” by A. M. C. Waterman, in The Ecumenist (July-August 1984, 545 Island Road, Ramsey, NJ 07446): vol. 22, no. 5, pages 75-78.


Theology for a Nomad Church, by Hugo Assmann (1976, Orbis Books, Maryknoll, NY 10545).


True Freedom and Development in the Caribbean: A Christian Perspective (1982, Antilles Episcopal Conference, Dominica): “to make this world the kind of place Christ wishes it to be, where justice and Christian love prevail.”


A prayer:

Lord Jesus,
give us your vision of the world.
Help us to see every woman as your sister,
and every man as your brother.
Open our hearts to the grace of your Spirit,
and let us embrace all people
with the love you have for them:
deeP, undying, forgiving, sharing, healing love.

Jesus,
hear our prayer
and heal our world. Amen!
SOME AREAS OF CONCERN

Food for the hungry

Other issues of the Bulletin have spoken about the meaning of eating.¹ This article looks at hunger and thirst, and at our obligation to help people who need food and drink.

**Humanly speaking:** Every human person needs adequate food and drink to remain alive and healthy; “adequate” refers both to quantity and quality. When we do not have enough to eat and drink, we quickly become miserable, uncomfortable, angry, and in a few hours, desperate; parents know only too well what children are like when they go past their mealtimes. If we lack sufficient food over a period of time, we suffer from malnutrition, become prey to disease, and cannot work effectively.

Today, in many countries of the world, large numbers of people do not have enough food to eat, or clean water to drink. Portions of Africa have had drought conditions lasting several years.² The claim is often made that the greater portion of the human family goes to sleep each night hungry. There are some countries where getting adequate food supplies to people is a continuing problem; there are others where this is a temporary situation, due to flooding, severe weather conditions, or other disasters or circumstances. Various agencies print pictures of emaciated children, and ask us — especially in North America and Europe — to help to feed them.

Some countries have surpluses of food, and sell it to other nations. At times, however, we read of herds of calves being shot because the market prices are too low, or of fields left fallow because of overproduction. Author-

ities in countries needing help have to do more to prevent spoilage of food stocks, pilfering, and black marketing, and must educate their people in better methods of food production.

Hollywood and show business have glorified drinking and the use of drugs as signs of belonging to the "smart set."

In our century, Alcoholics Anonymous and its affiliated organizations have become a source of true help for victims of alcoholism. Similar approaches have been used to help those addicted to drugs.

In our country, fast food outlets are mushrooming, and organizations are devoted to trimming off excess weight; at the same time, some people are undernourished. Restaurants report on the great amounts of food that are wasted by diners. And while we eat and overeat, others are starving . . . .

**In the word of God:** God created this world for us to live in as our home (Is. 45: 18). While there are some desert areas, there are also flourishing fields of grain, forests filled with wild life, gardens growing with fresh fruit and vegetables, cattle on our farms, fish in the waters (Ps. 8; Ps. 65; Ps. 104; Ps. 145): there is food enough for all. Jesus has given us his commandment of love for one another as his new commandment (Jn. 13: 34-35). He describes this in practical terms in the cosmic scene in Mt. 25: 31-46: we are to recognize him and help him now in those who are hungry and thirsty. If we refuse to help them, we are refusing to help him. We cannot put them off with pious words, but are bound to help them in a practical, immediate, and realistic way (James 2: 14-17; 1: 27).

Our Lord was concerned for people who were hungry after listening to his preaching for several days, and he provided food for them (Mt. 15: 32-38, and parallels). This story of the feeding of the thousands is repeated in all four gospels; in the liturgy, this gospel story is used on a number of occasions during the year, and reminds us both of the eucharist and of the heavenly banquet of which the eucharist is a foretaste and pledge.

Jesus also invites us to *fast:* to cut down on our food and drink — without showing off or advertising ourselves (Mt. 6: 16-18) — and to do this for the sake of righteousness, justice, and God's kingdom (Mt. 5: 6).

In his story of the rich man and Lazarus (Lk. 16: 19-31), Jesus contrasted the wealth and banquets of one person with the poverty, misery, and hunger of the other. In this case, the inequities were to be reversed in the next life. The psalms also reflect on the apparent wealth and sleekness and lack of cares of the wealthy — and their eventual fate (see Ps. 37; Ps. 49; Ps. 73).

The people who need our help are not only those we see close at hand: St. Paul encouraged his people to be generous to the poor in the Church of Jerusalem, and took up collections for them (1 Cor. 16: 1-4; 2 Cor. 8: 1 — 9: 15).
Abundant food and feasting at the messianic banquet are common images of heavenly bliss: see Is. 66: 10-14; 25: 6; 55: 1-2; 12: 3; Mt. 22: 2 and 8: 11; Lk. 1: 53.

**In the liturgy:** The liturgy offers us a number of opportunities to reflect on our responsibilities to provide food for the hungry and drink for the thirsty. Our prayers and our actions must reflect and influence one another if we are to be sincere followers of the Lord Jesus.

- **Eucharist:** The eucharistic prayer contains words of thanksgiving and praise over the bread and wine; the actions of the eucharistic celebration are centered on the sacrificial meal. We eat and drink in memory of Jesus, whose body was broken for us, whose blood was shed to free us from our slavery to sin. As we recognize Jesus in the breaking of the bread (see Lk. 24: 31, 35), we are invited to recognize him in his brothers and sisters (Mt. 25: 31-46). In the early decades of Christianity, St. Paul had to remind the people of Corinth to recognize in the eucharist their obligation to feed the hungry (see 1 Cor. 11: 17-22).

In the eucharist today, we have to learn to recognize Jesus in two ways: both as *bread* ("This is my body . . . . Do this in memory of me") and as *breadless* ("I was hungry . . . and you gave me food").

In the eucharist, Jesus offers himself to us as our food, renewing our love for him and for one another. He wants this love to be shown in the way we come to the aid of our brothers and sisters in need.

Near the end of the second century, St. Irenaeus was reminding Christians that Jesus chose bread and wine from the gifts of creation, and declared them his body and blood in the eucharist. We take God’s gifts of bread and wine, and offer them to God as a sacrifice of praise in the eucharist. Material gifts become the means of our salvation.

Continuing efforts by liturgists to work for more breadlike bread (see Bulletin 69, page 128) and for use of the cup in every eucharist are not irrelevant. The sooner we have eucharistic bread that looks and tastes like bread, and offer the cup to all communicants, the sooner we will begin to hear what the symbols of bread and wine are telling us.

- **Fasting and almsgiving:** The liturgy invites us to listen to the gospel’s call to fast and to give alms. By fasting, we cut down on the quality and the quantity of our food, freely sharing in the cross of Jesus (see Mt. 9: 14-15; 6: 16-18; Lk. 9: 23). In almsgiving, we take the money we have saved by our fasting and other acts of frugality, and freely give it to others in need. The scriptures tell us how to give cheerfully (Tob. 4: 7-11, 16; 12: 8-10; Mt. 6: 2-4; 267

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2 Cor. 8: 1 — 9: 15). The liturgy encourages fasting and almsgiving all year, but especially during the season of Lent, with the most important time being the paschal fast on Good Friday and Holy Saturday; Ash Wednesday is also a universal day of fast. All Fridays are days on which we are invited to do penance and acts of charity in union with our crucified savior.

- **Prayers over our food:** The liturgy provides us with opportunities to give praise to God over our food. Blessings of food echo the spirit of the eucharist, and our food is blessed as we praise and thank God over it. Meal prayers — grace before and after meals — are also encouraged, and again are reminiscent of the eucharistic blessing.

- **Intercessions:** Our prayer of the faithful in Sunday and weekday Masses should intercede for those in need of food and drink, and pray for good crops to share with all. In the intercessions at morning and evening prayer, these same intentions can be used regularly or at appropriate seasons.

- **Liturgical texts:**

  - **Masses:**
    - Blessing of human labor: pages 993-995, nos. 846-850
    - For productive land: 995-997, 851-855
    - After the harvest: 997-998, 856-860
    - In time of famine: 999, 861-865
    - Famine victims' prayers: 1000, 861-865

  - **Liturgy of the hours:**
    - Office of readings, Monday of week 17, sermon by St. Caesarius of Arles: vol. 3, pages 547-548
    - Office of readings, Tuesday of week 17, sermon on charity by St. Basil the Great: vol. 3, pages 551-552

  - **Blessings of food,** in *A Book of Blessings:*
    - Bread: page 156, June 13, Holy Saturday, Easter season
    - Festive food: 229-230
    - Festive meal: 69
    - Family reunion: 69
    - Food: 156
    - Water and water systems: 157
    - Meal prayers: 177-186
    - Sunday or feast day: 178
    - Friday: 179
    - Penitential day: 180
In our family and community life: Today's advertising continues to bombard us with the message: "Buy more! Get everything that is bigger and better and automatic. Eat more convenience foods." We are invited to cater to ourselves and pamper our tastes to the point where we forget that others have serious needs. Buy, buy, buy, and fuel the economy! Feed yourself, and forget others.

Jesus however, invites us to look at our brothers and sisters in need. When we see how others are starving, we ought to learn the true meaning of fasting: we deprive ourselves of food — both in quantity and in quality — in order to save money which we give to help those in need. Our mite boxes and alms bottles need to be used every weekday, and not just in Lent.

Meal prayers should be more than pious formulas. As we thank God for the food we have, we also have to be willing to share it with others who are hungry or starving.

Families can be encouraged to grow their own food and to preserve fresh food, and use the money they save as a further gift to feed the hungry.

What can each family do on a regular basis to give food to the hungry? How can we simplify our tastes and help others to eat adequately?

Further ideas are proposed in Bulletin 53, page 115: "Working for better standards of food preparation, storage, handling, labelling, marketing, advertising; promoting sound guidance on nutrition to parents and students; working against gimmicks and contests that raise food prices for consumers; discouraging junk foods in schools; working to prevent food wastage; working with others to increase crops and agricultural knowhow in other countries."

• In our parish, have we considered ways of working with others to provide food for the hungry? Are people in our community in need? Are there ways in which we can help those who are hungry or undernourished? Can we contribute money, food, volunteer labor to other community groups that are running soup kitchens? How active are we in responding to appeals for disaster victims? How much is the kitchen in our parish hall used to feed the well-fed instead of the hungry?

Should our liturgy committee meet with the social action committee, and bring these concerns to the parish council for further consideration?

* * *
Helpful reading:


*Sharing Daily Bread:* Labor Day Message (1974, CCC, Ottawa); also available in French: *Le Partage du Pain Quotidien.*


*Meal prayers,* in Bulletin 80, pages 160-164.


* * *

A prayer:

*Jesus,*
when your brothers are hungry
or when your sisters are thirsty,
you are longing for our loving help.
Open our eyes of faith,
and let us see you suffering in others.
Open our hearts,
and let us reach out to you with food
as readily as we come to you for our own needs.

*Jesus,*
*hear our prayer.* Amen!
Clothing for the naked

Humanly speaking: We wear clothes for protection against the elements, for comfort, and sometimes for show. The meaning of clothing is discussed in Bulletin 94, page 176.

Human nature does not seem content with simple and functional garments. We want to add frills and colors. Nowadays, many people are swept along by the constantly changing whims of fashion, and add expensive new pieces to their wardrobe because some designer has decreed that older styles and colors are passé. As a result, many homes have closets filled with good clothing that is not being used. Some recycling of clothing is done through rummage sales, clothing drives, thrift shops, and clothing depots, as well as by hand-me-downs in children's clothes to relatives and neighbors.

In other parts of the world, people have only the clothes they are wearing, and sometimes a few extras to wear while their clothes are being washed.

In the word of God: From the fig leaves in Genesis to the white robes in the book of Revelation, human clothing is often mentioned in the scriptures. As well as being protection against the elements, clothing is described metaphorically: Elijah's cloak is passed on to Elisha as a sign that he inherits Elijah's prophetic spirit (2 Kings 2: 13-15). In Israel, it was customary to tear one's clothes and wear sackcloth as a sign of penance or mourning (1 Kings 21: 27; 2 Kings 19: 1). God is described as being clothed in truth (Ps. 89: 8), in light, power, and majesty (Ps. 104: 1-2).

Providing clothing for those in need is one of the works of mercy (Is. 58: 7; Tobit 1: 17; 4: 16; Mt. 25: 36). It is wrong to keep a poor man's garment overnight, for this is his only cover (Exod. 22: 26-27). The Pharisees are condemned for their attention to large phylacteries instead of the things that count (Mt. 23: 5).

Jesus teaches us not to worry too much about our food or clothing, for our bodies are more important: read his teaching on the lilies of the field in the sermon on the mount (Mt. 6: 25-34; Lk. 12: 22-31). Our concerns should be for God's kingdom, and our riches should be stored in heaven (Lk. 12: 32-34).
We must not judge people by their clothes and jewels (James 2: 1-4). We are to give practical help to those who need clothing now (James 2: 14-17).

The metaphor of putting on Christ as a description of the new life of the baptized (Gal. 3: 27; Rom. 13: 14) is discussed briefly in Bulletin 94, page 176. In baptism we strip off our old nature and its ways, and are vested in the light and life of Jesus Christ (Rom. 13: 12-14; Eph. 4: 22-25; Col. 3: 9-10).

In the liturgy: The present renewed liturgy continues the use of vesting as a sign of rights or offices, as in the white robe in baptism, and the vestments in ordination rites. At the end of Vatican II, Pope Paul VI gave the bishops a simpler form of pastoral ring.

In the middle ages, a dramatic rite of degradation or dismissal from orders included removal of the vestments, one by one, and scraping away of the oil to signify loss of office.

In our family and community life: Some positive steps can be taken in parishes to encourage people to provide adequate clothing for those who need it:

- **Education:** Helping people to see through the fallacies presented by the fashion world, which urge men, women, and even children to have the latest styles, colors, and models. People can be helped to develop a more Christian attitude toward clothing needs.

- **Seeing local needs:** Are there people in the area who are in need of clothing? Can the social action committee of the parish council or a St. Vincent de Paul society organize a clothing depot?

- **Contributing clothing:** When there is a clothing drive, do we contribute articles that still have some life in them? Are there still clothes in our closets that we haven't worn in years? Why are we keeping them instead of giving them to others who could use them now?

- **No more fashion shows:** Occasionally one hears of a parish organization sponsoring a fashion show. Is this what Christians should be about in today's world?

- **Clergy and religious** should be models of Christian attitudes toward clothing and styles. How do they obey the spirit of our Lord's injunction in Mt. 10: 8-10?

- **Church building:** Reminding us of our obligation to feed, clothe, and shelter the poor, naked, and cold Christ, St. John Chrysostom (c. 349-

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407) tells us that our brothers and sisters should be helped before we adorn the church building, for our fellow Christians are the most precious temple.2

Some further thoughts are given in Bulletin 53, page 115.

* * *

Helpful reading:


On trying not to accumulate possessions, see Bulletin 42, pages 29-30.

"Mary's Magnificat and Recent Study," by Robert J. Karris, OFM, in *Review for Religious* (November-December 1983, 3601 Lindell Blvd., St. Louis, MO 63108): vol. 42, no. 6, pages 903-908. The author points to Mary as the model for ordinary people (as opposed to the bejewelled); God is putting down the proud, reversing world values, and achieving justice when we love and forgive in this world.

* * *

A prayer:

Lord Jesus,
king of the universe,
wrapped in glory and light,
yet clothed in our flesh:
we are your brothers and sisters,
and we give you praise.

Help us to recognize you
when our brothers or sisters need adequate clothing.
Help us to empty our closets for those in need,
and to control our desires to gather more possessions.

Clothe us with your love,
and keep us faithful to you,
for you are our Lord and our brother
for ever and ever. Amen!

Shelter for the homeless

**Humanly speaking:** A spirit of hospitality is considered a good trait in our society. Children learn in their families to welcome relatives, friends, and visitors, and to help them “to feel at home.” Communities too try to develop a friendly image so that visitors and newcomers will feel welcome.

In our country, governments at all levels work to make decent housing reasonably available for those who want it; their efforts however usually fall far short of their goal. Legislation governs building standards, mortgages, sewage, roads, and other requirements.

When fire, flood, storm, or other disaster strikes, people come together to help those in greatest need. Community groups share their resources to help rebuild and refurnish homes. When people are forced to leave their homeland because of war or persecution, they become refugees; our country has allowed many to enter, and local communities and groups have worked to help them settle into a new life among us.

After several centuries, an awareness of the justice of aboriginal land claims has finally entered our public consciousness, and now people are becoming more sensitive to the many issues involved.

**In the word of God:** The Hebrews are to remember that they were strangers in the land of Egypt, and are to love — and never harm — those who live among them (Lev. 19: 33-34). Strangers are to be accepted, and are to be given the Sabbath rest (Exod. 20: 10). They may also be accepted into the covenant by circumcision (Exod. 12: 49).

Those who are without shelter are to be welcomed into our homes (Is. 58: 7). Orphans and widows — the symbol of all people needing our help — are to be cared for (Tobit 1: 8; James 1: 27).

Jesus tells us that we are helping him when we help the homeless (Mt. 25: 35-40), and that we are refusing to help him when we refuse to help them (Mt. 25: 43-45). Those who welcome Jesus’ apostles are welcoming Jesus and the Father (Mt. 10: 40-42; Jn. 13: 20). Our Lord told his apostles to accept the hospitality offered to them when they were travelling in order to preach the kingdom (Lk. 10: 1-9).
The early Church pictured Jesus as standing outside the door, seeking to come in and eat with those who welcome him (Rev. 3: 20). A curse was pronounced on towns that refused to receive his followers (Lk. 10: 10-15).

Gentiles who become Christians are no longer strangers among God's people, but are now members of the family (Eph. 2: 19). We are all pilgrims in this world (1 Pet. 2: 11), having no permanent home here (Heb. 13: 14).

We are to continue to be hospitable to strangers (Heb. 13: 2; 3 Jn. 5; 1 Tim. 5: 10). When we share what we have with others, our sacrifice is pleasing to God (Heb. 13: 16).

In the liturgy: True hospitality is an extension of our love for one another. The spirit of Christian hospitality and of reaching out in love is celebrated — although not always recognized — in the liturgy:

- Ministry of hospitality: When the Christian community gathers for liturgy, especially for Sunday eucharist, the Christian Church is most clearly seen to be present (Liturgy constitution, nos. 41-42 [41-42]; G1, nos. 74-75 [1464-1465]). All members of the assembly need help in recognizing that Christ is present among them, and in seeing him in others. The community shows its ministry of welcoming and hospitality in many ways:

  - Ushers are men and women chosen from the community to welcome people as they come into the assembly. They also help visitors to find a suitable seat, take up the collection, and assist in processions (G1, no. 68bc [1458]). A rite for installing ushers is given in A Book of Blessings (1981, CCCB, Ottawa): see pages 80-81, 91. How welcome do ushers make people feel in your church?

  - Clergy are to make the whole assembly feel welcome when they gather for liturgy. Especially at weddings and funerals, when strangers, people who do not come to church often, and the unchurched may gather, the clergy are to welcome them and share the word of God with them (see Rite of Marriage, no. 9 [2977], Canadian ritual, page 12; Rite of Funerals, no. 18 [3390], Canadian ritual, page 8).

  - All members of the community are responsible for welcoming visitors, and should not hesitate to introduce themselves, or offer their assistance when needed. A friendly smile instead of a stony stare helps strangers to feel more welcome. At the kiss of peace, a sincere greeting of peace (but not an introduction or “How-do-you-do?” — see Bulletin 48, pages 122-124) will make them realize they are in a Christian community of worship and love.

This spirit of welcoming should be extended through signs outside the church giving times of services, in the parish bulletin, and — in holiday areas — through timetables distributed to motels, resorts, and other public places. The parish hall should be reasonably available to community groups as a sign of the Church’s love for all.
Welcoming rites: The introductory rites of the Mass and of other liturgical celebrations are intended to help the individuals present become part of one assembled community, get ready to hear the word of God, and take a full part in the celebration (see GI, no. 24 [1414]).

In the eucharist, these rites are already somewhat cluttered, and care needs to be taken to make sure that we do not add more to them, or do them in too much haste. A simpler format is provided for Masses celebrated with children (see Directory for Masses with children, no. 40 [2173]).

The liturgies for baptism and for funerals offer the presider an opportunity to welcome the family informally and briefly. In all liturgical celebrations, the introductory rites should help to welcome the assembly and strengthen its family feeling of God’s people called together for prayer and worship. As well, they begin to recognize the presence of Christ in their assembly (Mt. 18: 20; Liturgy constitution, no. 7 [7]).

Blessing of homes: “People define places by their relationship to them. A house becomes a home, a little church, the place where children first learn their faith, a place of love” (see A Book of Blessings, page 96). These blessings are for the building and particularly for those who live in it. We may pray that they will have a sense of Christian hospitality, welcoming others as being images of Christ.1 Blessings are provided both for family homes and for public homes:

A Book of Blessings

- Home and family
  - Cottage or vacation home
  - Prayer space at home
  - Library at home
  - Convent or rectory
  - Home for the aged
  - Home for special care

Church buildings: Churches too are dedicated or blessed, and are to be places where God’s people gather in worship and prayer. The church building, which is the house of the Church, the people of God, is “a visible sign of the living Church, God’s building, which is formed of the people

1 St. Benedict’s rule says: “All guests who present themselves are to be welcomed as Christ, for he himself will say: I was a stranger and you welcomed me (Mt. 25: 35). Proper honor must be shown to all, especially to those who share our faith (Gal. 6: 10) and to pilgrims. Once a guest has been announced, the superior and the brothers are to meet him with all the courtesy of love. First of all, they are to pray together and thus be united in peace, but prayer must always precede the kiss of peace . . . .” See The Rule of St. Benedict in English, edited by Timothy Fry, OSB (1982, The Liturgical Press, Collegeville, MN 56321): chapter 53, nos. 1-5, page 73.

“A guest in the house is God in the house” — Polish proverb.
themselves." Church buildings should be easily accessible to people with physical handicaps: see pages 291-293, below. All people should feel at home in this “house of prayer for all nations” (see Is. 56: 7; Mk. 11: 17).

- **Refugees:** The liturgical texts include a Mass for refugees and exiles: see sacramentary, pages 1001-1002, and lectionary, nos. 866-870.

The spirit of Christian concern for political and economic refugees is expressed well in the lines engraved on the base on the Statue of Liberty in New York:

> Give me your tired, your poor,
> your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
> the wretched refuse of your teeming shore.  

- **Intercessions:** Both in the eucharist and in morning and evening prayer, our intercessions should frequently include people who are homeless, and ask God to give us the spirit of mercy toward our brothers and sisters in need.

In our family and community life: Families, religious communities, and parishes can deepen their spirit of hospitality and generosity toward those who are homeless by welcoming them in various ways:

- **Needs:** Is there need of a community shelter for families who are homeless? for battered wives and children? for itinerants? What contributions in volunteer labor, food, equipment, furniture, and money can the parish make on a regular basis?

- **Parish hall:** Is this open to benefit others in the community? Is it capable of being used as an emergency shelter? What contingency plans have been developed for this? (See also pages 300-301, below.)

- **Refugees:** What has been the record of the parish and the community in helping refugees during the past decade? Are plans being made now to help the next group?

Some further ideas are discussed in Bulletin 53, pages 115-116.

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2 See *Dedication of a Church and an Altar:* Study Edition (1979, CCCB, Ottawa): page 1, no. 1; see also 1 Cor. 3: 9; Constitution on the Church, no. 6 [138]. See also Bulletin 74, *House of the Church,* pages 138-140.

3 Lines by Emma Lazarus, quoted in *Discover* (July 1984, 3435 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90010); vol. 5, no. 7, page 19.
Helpful reading:

*Decent Housing for All: Pastoral Message on the Occasion of Habitat '76* (1976, CCC, Ottawa).


*A prayer:*

Lord Jesus,
you told us that you had nowhere to lay your head.  
Help us to open our homes to you in all who visit us,  
and to work with others  
to provide shelter for all who need it.

Jesus,  
open our hearts  
to our sisters and brothers in need,  
and help us to see you and serve you in them.  
Amen!
Care for the sick and dying

**Humanly speaking:** It is a concern of our society to provide good health care for all our citizens. Research continues into the causes and prevention of disease and injuries. New techniques, equipment, and medicines are developed, and allow new types of operations to take place. Human organs are transplanted, and artificial ones are being developed. Despite widespread medical plans and advanced facilities, however, there are many people who do not take care of their health, who have poor diets, who abuse their bodies by smoking, excessive drinking, or improper use of drugs.

Gradually the understanding is growing that we have to treat the whole person — body, mind, and spirit — and not just the body alone.

Concern for the dying is slowly increasing: there are hospices beginning to be established, where people can prepare calmly for death. A few doctors encourage a dying person to spend the final days at home with family and close friends. To allow a person to die in dignity and peace is considered a goal to work for.

As family homes get smaller, there has been a growing trend to provide a number of homes for the aged.

**In the word of God:** The scriptures contain stories of healing: Naaman’s leprosy (2 Kings 5: 1-15) and Tobit’s blindness (Tobit 11: 7-15) come quickly to mind. The agony of the sick and dying are echoed in Psalms 38, 41, and 88; Is. 38: 10-20 describes graphically the feelings of Hezekiah after his recovery from serious sickness (Is. 38: 1-9).

Jesus is described in the gospels as having great compassion for the sick (Mt. 14: 14). He healed those who came to him with faith. Well known examples are the woman with the hemorrhage (Lk. 8: 43-48), the centurion’s servant (Mt. 8: 5-13), Peter’s mother-in-law (Mt. 8: 14-17); the ten lepers (Lk. 17: 12-19), the man born blind (Jn. 9: 1-41), the blind man outside Jericho (Mk. 10: 46-52); the paralytic (Mk. 2: 3-12), and the man who had been sick for 38 years (Jn. 5: 2-9). Jesus told the story of the good Samaritan’s care for the wounded traveller (Lk. 10: 30-37), and reminded us that care for the sick is given — or refused — to himself (Mt. 25: 36-40, 43-45).
Jesus’ description of his work given to the disciples of John the Baptist (Lk. 7: 20-23; Mt. 11: 2-5) echoes the prophecies of Isaiah (Is. 29: 18-19; 35: 5-6; 61: 1).

The apostles were sent by Jesus to look after the sick and anoint them with oil (Mk. 6: 7-13), and continued this concern: see Acts 3: 1-16; 4: 7-22; 4: 30; 5: 15-16; 14: 8-10; 19: 11-12. James speaks of calling in the elders (presbyters) of the Church to pray over the sick and anoint them (James 5: 14-15).

Throughout the centuries of Christian history, Christians have established and maintained hospitals and other places of healing. Many religious orders and devoted lay people have spent their years in looking after the sick and the dying in obedience to Christ’s command.

**In the liturgy:** The Catholic liturgy involves a number of ministries for the sick and the dying. Every Christian is called in virtue of Mt. 25: 31-46 to come to the aid of the sick by prayer, visits, and in any other way that help may be given. Those who are designated as ministers to the sick visit them in the name of the parish community, and pray with them. Communion ministers bring them communion. (It is desirable, where possible, to bring communion to the sick each week directly from the Sunday eucharist.) Viaticum is communion brought to someone who is dying. Priests are called to celebrate the sacraments of reconciliation and anointing of the sick with the sick and the dying.

- **Rituals:** The ritual book, *Pastoral Care of the Sick*, contains a wealth of prayers, readings, and services for celebrations with the sick and the dying. The pastoral notes are extensive, and encourage all to exercise their ministry toward the sick. The Canadian edition (1983, CCCB, Ottawa) contains an additional 38 pages of prayers and blessings. Many prayers are also contained in *A Book of Blessings* (1981, CCCB, Ottawa): see the index under “sick” and “dying.” As well, there are blessings for hospitals, clinics, and homes for special care.

- **Other texts:** Masses for the sick and the dying:

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**In our family and community life:** Some ways of extending our ministries to the sick:
• Families may undertake their own Christian ministry to the sick in their neighborhood, visiting the sick and the aged and the shut-ins, and offering to pray with them; they can visit them, read for them, bring them treats, and chat about neighborhood news (not gossip). Where there is someone at home who is chronically ill, or shut-in and unable to come to church regularly, a member of the family or a close neighbor may be formed as a communion minister, and may bring communion home each Sunday from the parish Mass. All families should learn to pray with the scriptures and to develop and lead simple prayer services for many occasions. They should be able to turn to their parish for help in these areas of need.

Every member of the parish should be aware of when a person is to be anointed (when seriously ill), and when viaticum is to be given (when a person is dying). These states are to be interpreted generously, so that a person is able to receive these sacraments when in a conscious and receptive mood, and able to participate fully.

Prayers for commending a dying person to God are given in Pastoral Care, pages 165-181; Sunday Mass Book (1976, CCC, Ottawa), pages 1151-1154, 1323; see also A Book of Blessings (1981, CCCB, Ottawa), pages 310-314; and Family Book of Prayer (1983, CCCB, Ottawa), page 20.

• Parishes can form people to become ministers to the sick at home and in the hospital. Their role would be to pray with the sick and their families, to bring communion to them, and to extend the loving presence of Christ to them in their time of need. These ministers will need guidance in developing and leading simple prayer services, and must be people of prayer themselves. See Ministering to the sick and aged, in Bulletin 53, pages 111-114.

• Retreat houses and religious communities could reach out in a special way to people who work in the fields of medicine and healing, helping them to see the value of their caring work for the people in need; to families of the chronically ill; to families of children who are seriously sick or injured or dying.

* * *

Helpful reading:

Pastoral Care of the Sick (1983, CCCB, Ottawa).

Pope John Paul II speaks to the sick often, and always during his pastoral trips abroad: see Anointing of the sick, in Bulletin 93, pages 99-106.


New Hope in Christ: A Pastoral Message on Sickness and Healing (1983, CCCB, Ottawa): Also available in French.


Readings in Sickness, compiled by Norman Autton (1976, SPCK, Marylebone Road, London NW1 4DU): each page contains a paragraph from a modern writer, and a paragraph from the scriptures.


Bulletin 57, Rites for the Sick and the Dying.


* * *

A prayer:

When my sister or brother is sick or in pain,
Lord, it is you.
When someone is dying,
Lord, you are reaching out
for my hand, my help, my time, my love.
Jesus,
make me more caring for you in your suffering,
more generous to you in your pain,
more loving to you in your need.
Jesus,
help me to show my love for you
by loving you and helping you
in all who are sick or dying. Amen!
Comfort for all who mourn

**Humanly speaking:** The usual meaning of mourning in our society refers to grieving for the dead. When a person dies, the family members and close friends — the mourners — may spend a certain amount of time in grief, and then they are expected to take their place in society once again. Friends and neighbors reach out to the family at the time of death and the funeral, but then tend to neglect them rather quickly. When a person in public life dies, the city or country may observe a number of days of mourning, and flags are flown at half-mast.

A similar process of grief may be experienced by an individual on losing a job, on contracting an incurable disease, or on losing a limb or an important organ. Society sometimes reaches out to these people through organizations of people who have had similar experiences.

**In the word of God:** Mourning for someone who has died is described often in the scriptures: Jacob mourned when he thought his son Joseph had been killed (Gen. 37: 34). All Egypt mourned when Jacob died (Gen. 50: 3), and Israel for Jeroboam's child (1 Kings 14: 18). Ezra mourned over the sins of God's people (Ezra 10: 6). People mourned over the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple (Ps. 79), and over the exile (Ps. 137). Even children played mourning games (Lk. 7: 32).

Jesus wept with Martha and Mary over the death of his friend Lazarus (Jn. 11: 33, 38), and declared that those who mourn will be given comfort (Mt. 5: 4); if we have faith, God will turn our mourning into dancing (Ps. 30: 11), for we do not mourn as those who have no hope (1 Thess. 4: 13). Comfort to those who mourn is promised in Is. 61: 3. It is given to mourners by fellow believers (2 Cor. 1: 3-7).

Fasting by the apostles in later years is to be one sign of their “mourning” as they await Jesus’ return at the end of time (Mt. 9: 15).

**In the liturgy:** Drawing on its human and spiritual experience of two thousand years, the Christian community provides rites and texts that combine prayer for the dead and comfort for the living. Baptized into Jesus’ death and rising, we see physical death as the final entry into the paschal mystery of Christ: our life is changed, not ended (preface 77). As Christ has
risen, so too will we rise, we who are nourished with the bread of life and the cup of eternal salvation (see Jn. 6: 54, 58).

These rites may include prayers at the moment of death; one or more celebrations between death and the funeral (wake, bible vigil, liturgy of the hours, informal prayer services); a funeral celebration, often with the eucharist; a burial service; other celebrations after the funeral may include Masses and prayer services, and Masses on anniversaries of death and burial.

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○ Ritual:

Catholic Funeral Rite: Ritual and Pastoral Notes (1973, CCC, Ottawa).

Rite for a Catholic Wake (1973, CCC, Ottawa).

○ Office for the dead: in each volume of The Liturgy of the Hours and Christian Prayer, at the end of the commons.

○ Pastoral Care of the Sick (1983, CCCB, Ottawa): see pages 182-188, 189-198, and 355-357.


○ Catholic Book of Worship II (1980, CCCB, Ottawa): see nos. 48-60; further references are given in the choir edition and in its liturgical index.

In our family and community life: Families need to encourage all their members to reach out in true sympathy to others who are mourning. We can help in many practical ways when a person is dying or has died: helping to take care of babies, cooking, laundry, shopping, errands; calling in other neighbors to help; sitting with the bereaved family, and just listening to them; weeping with them (see Rom. 12: 15); praying with them and for them. This

¹ Some additional scripture references have been suggested in the Canadian edition of the lectionary to provide a greater variety of texts to meet the pastoral circumstances.
help ought to continue for a little while after the funeral, for it is then that others tend to forget the mourning family.

Suggestions for developing a ministry to mourners in each parish are discussed in *Ministries to the bereaved family*, in Bulletin 84, pages 134-136, and in no. 53, page 116.

* * *

**Helpful reading:** As well as the books and articles mentioned above, the following are helpful:


Bulletin 84, *Funeral Liturgies*. Many other helpful references are given in this issue.

* * *

**A prayer:**

*Jesus,*
you wept when your friend Lazarus died,
and raised him to life again.
You had compassion when the widow wept,
and raised her son from death.
Your own tears were accepted by the Father,
and you were raised to unending life in glory.

*Lord Jesus,*
help us in our time of sorrow.
Help us to share your comforting words with one another,
and come to you with all our burdens.
Through our love and compassion,
wipe away the tears of all who mourn.

*Lord,*
we praise you always and for ever. *Amen!*
Freedom for captives and the oppressed

Humanly speaking: In our society, personal freedom is a highly regarded value. Generations of our ancestors have labored, fought, lived, and voted to earn the privileges we enjoy today. Many other countries do not have the freedom of speech, assembly, press, ballot box, and religion that we take for granted.

When individuals commit crimes and are considered dangerous to society, they are put into prisons. These places of confinement are supposed to punish criminals, deter others from crime, and contribute to the rehabilitation of prisoners, but all too often teach them more about crime.

Many people are oppressed by ill health, poor living conditions, unemployment, lack of education, economic pressures; by slavery to drugs, alcohol, or gambling; by poor attitudes; by racial prejudice or other forms of discrimination. Society tries to help people avoid these problems or get out of them, but cannot force people to change.

In the word of God: The scriptures picture God as the one who rescues us from the clutches of our foes (Ps. 70: 1-5; Ps. 142: 6-7; Ps. 143: 9), who frees the weak from the strong, and the poor from their oppressors (Ps. 35: 10; 2 Tim. 4: 18). God hears the groans of prisoners (Ps. 79: 11; Ps. 102: 20). The people of God were rescued from slavery in Egypt (Ps. 106: 7-12) and from exile (Ps. 126).

Our Lord tells us to visit prisoners and to recognize him in them (Mt. 25: 36-40, 43-45). John the Baptist was imprisoned because he preached God's law to Herod (Mt. 14: 3-5). Jesus warns us that his followers will be imprisoned because of their faith in him (Lk. 21: 12). Peter (Acts 12: 1-11) and Paul (2 Cor. 11: 23) were imprisoned for their work for Christ, but were not deterred from continuing to preach the Christian Way; on one occasion, Paul went on to convert his jailer (Acts 16: 29-34). Several of the epistles are known as "captivity letters" because they depict Paul as writing them from his prison. The letter to the Hebrews reminds us to help fellow Christians in prison (Heb. 10: 34; 13: 3).
Jesus also spoke harshly of those who imposed heavy legalistic burdens on others in the name of religion, while refusing to lift their finger to help them (Mt. 23: 1-36).

**Other forms of oppression:** In our modern world, oppression is found in a variety of forms:

- **Discrimination** against individuals or groups because of their race, color, language, religion, gender, age, or disabilities. Prejudice against others causes various forms of hatred and oppression, even leading to physical repression, concentration camps, *apartheid*, laws against interracial marriage. The Holocaust, in which the Nazis killed six million Jews, is one horrifying example of extreme oppression. In all these cases, we have to see and recognize Christ in his oppressed brothers and sisters.

Vatican II reminds us that the Church repudiates and condemns all forms of persecution. We cannot pray to God as our Father if we refuse to accept all other people as our brothers and sisters, and act toward them accordingly (see 1 Jn. 4: 11-12, 20-21). Discrimination is against the mind of Jesus Christ. (See Decree on the relationship of the Church to non-Christian religions, nos. 4-5.)

- **Extreme nationalism:** Any narrow form of nationalism which rejects others or considers them inferior is also a form of rejection and oppression. Contemporary Christians should seek a responsible view of the world and its people, while accepting and loving their homeland as part of the family of nations. This broader approach will welcome refugees and immigrants as brothers and sisters in Christ, and will try to benefit from the cultural richness brought by newcomers to their land (see Bulletin 95, *Culture and Liturgy*).

We must always remember that Jesus calls all people — from every tribe, race, and tongue — to enter into the unity of the body of Christ now and the eternal joy of heaven later.

- **Sin:** Old-fashioned as this may sound, sin is a form of slavery (see Jn. 8: 34), and Jesus has come to free us from it (Jn. 8: 36). Every fad or custom that encourages the breakdown of morality, self-discipline, and concern for others is a step toward greater bondage and a threat to true human freedom. God calls on us to work with Christ to bring release and freedom to all captives of sin, beginning with ourselves (see Lk. 4: 18; Is. 58: 6, 9).

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1. See the positive points in *Working with people with handicaps*, on pages 291-293, below.

In the liturgy: Ministers of religion have access to prisoners at any reasonable time, and when prisoners request a visit from clergy, the authorities are usually prompt in calling. Larger prisons have a chapel, and chaplains who provide church services and counselling.

Prayer: As God's priestly people, we are called to pray often and regularly for all in need. Prayer for those who are oppressed by any cause is one of the intentions always included in the general intercessions or prayer of the faithful (Liturgy constitution, no. 53 [53]; G I, no. 46c [1436]). The oppressed may also be remembered in the intercessions in morning and evening prayer.

Texts concerning Jewish people: Despite the positive attitudes concerning the Jewish people to be found in the New Testament (see Rom. 9: 1 — 11: 36; Eph. 2: 11-22), there are also some texts written in a spirit of antagonism. Some of these are found in the gospel according to John. Since the time of John XXIII and Vatican II, the Roman liturgy has revised some of its prayer texts, but there are still some which some people could misuse to promote anti-Semitism. Care needs to be taken in liturgical celebration, especially during Holy Week, to avoid any misunderstandings. It would seem better to choose the option of omitting the "reproaches" on Good Friday. A note on guarding against transmitting prejudice or false interpretations is now included in Guidelines for Pastoral Liturgy — Liturgical Calendar (see Passion Sunday, note 7).

Prayers: The sacramentary offers these prayers:

- For those unjustly deprived of liberty  
  For prisoners  
  For our oppressors (see Mt. 5: 44)  
- For forgiving sin: Jesus came to heal and to forgive, to save sinners and to bring back the lost sheep to God's love, to give us a share of God's love (see Mk. 2: 10-12, 17; Mk. 10: 45; Lk. 15: 1-32; Jn. 3: 16-17; Jn. 10: 9-11, 17-18). He sent the Church, the people of God, with his powers so that we might have his forgiving love and share it with others (Jn. 20: 21-23). He shed his blood to save us all from sin, and gives us the eucharist to continue in his memory (Mt. 26: 28; 1 Cor. 11: 23-26).

The Church works to bring this forgiveness to all in a variety of ways: by praying for sinners and for forgiveness; by inviting people to receive forgiveness in many ways (see Bulletin 88, pages 80-82), including the sacrament of reconciliation; by inviting us to do works of penance, especially on Fridays and during Lent, for our own sins and those of others; by encouraging us to be faithful to our baptismal promises of dying to sin and living for God; by inviting us to renew this covenant frequently, and even every Sunday as we celebrate the eucharist (Liturgy constitution, no. 10 [10]). In all these ways we share in the redeeming cross of Christ and build up his body the Church (see Col. 1: 24).
In our family and community life: There are many ways in which families, religious communities, parishes, and other groupings can encourage and help those who are oppressed or imprisoned:

- **Attitudes:** Develop Christian attitudes toward other people and their race, language, rights, property, and the type of work they do. What are our present attitudes toward foreigners, refugees, former prisoners? What are our attitudes toward law? (See Bulletin 92, pages 3-6.)

- **Groups:** Contact the John Howard and Elizabeth Fry Societies to see in what ways your parish or group can be of help to people as they return to society from prison life. In some areas, parish prayer groups have made arrangements for regular monthly visits and prayer services with prisoners. Some further ideas are given in Bulletin 53, page 115.

- **Reform:** Work for enlightened laws concerning prison reform, simplification of court procedures, reduction of delays in due process; work for positive ways in which those convicted of crime can repay society and help victims of their crimes.

- **Work with youth:** Take some positive steps to promote good citizenship by working with youth groups, such as the Scout and Guide movements, 4-H Clubs, and other similar groups.

- **Prayer:** Pray for victims of crime, for political prisoners; for all involved in law enforcement and in the prison system in our country; for the victims of persecution — religious, racial, other — and for their persecutors (Mt. 5: 44). Pray and work for those who are enslaved by alcohol, drugs, and gambling, and make parish facilities and encouragement available to groups like AA and Al-Anon.

- **Avoid** all racial jokes, slurs, stories, rumors, nicknames, and other things that keep racial prejudice festering. Get to know people of other nationalities and languages, and invite them to share some aspects of their culture with the parish or larger community: ideas, wisdom, proverbs, folk tales, songs, musical instruments, forms of clothing, national dishes.

- **Prayer:** See the alternative opening prayer for the twentieth Sunday in ordinary time in the sacramentary.

* * *

**Helpful reading:**


* * *

A prayer:

Jesus,
you came to save all people,
not just the “nice” ones.
Help us to approach all people as you did:
loving, serving, forgiving,
ever counting the cost.

Let us show our love for you, Jesus,
by helping those who are oppressed
and by being open to their needs,
for they are your needs, Lord.

Jesus,
we love you and we give you our praise
for ever and ever. Amen!
Working with people with handicaps

**Humanly speaking:** Our society has begun to realize its responsibilities toward all citizens, including those who have physical or mental handicaps. Gradually a positive attitude is being encouraged, emphasizing the things we can do instead of those we cannot. No longer do we try to hide people away: integration rather than segregation is the approach, and people with handicaps are now accepted much more in the workplace. Public buildings are made accessible to people in wheelchairs, and larger cities have special vehicles for them in the public transportation system.

Terry Fox began to run across Canada with his artificial leg, and showed the nation what courage means.

**In the word of God:** The disciples’ question in Jn. 9: 2 reflects the popular thinking of their time: a handicap was considered as a punishment from God. Jesus completely rejected this attitude, and saw the blindness in this case as an opportunity for showing forth God’s work among us (Jn. 9: 3). Our Lord declared that his actions — his healing of the blind, the lame, the deaf, the mute, the lepers; his raising of the dead; and his preaching of the gospel to the poor — were signs that he was the one being sent by God (see Mt. 11: 3-6; Is. 35: 5-6; Is. 61: 1-2; Lk. 4: 18-19; Mt. 15: 30-31; Mk. 7: 37). Jesus reached out to restore people to the society of their day, and to return them to the public worship of the community. The repercussions of his followers’ cure of a lame man are described in Acts 3: 1 — 4: 31; 5: 17-42.

Each person on earth is given particular gifts by God; for us as Christians, our gifts are to be developed and used for building up the body of Christ on earth (see 1 Cor. 12: 4-7, 11, 27). When one member of the body of Christ suffers or rejoices, we all do (1 Cor. 12: 26).

**In the liturgy:** As our community worships God, we must make sure that we are not excluding some people through our neglect or thoughtlessness:

- **Access for all:** Can a person in a wheelchair enter our church, from parking lot to pew, without meeting steps or steep slopes? Are elderly or crippled people forced to climb long flights of steps? Are railings provided for all stairs? Churches, like other public buildings, are beginning to provide ramps or elevators, and restrooms with wide doors. Does your church build-
ing welcome or reject people with handicaps? Are you able to display the international blue sign of access for all with handicaps?

- **Sacraments:** How many children and adults with handicaps live in your parish community? Are you reaching out to them? Are they being welcomed to the liturgy and its sacramental celebrations? Are there unspoken barriers — prejudice, ignorance, mistaken judgments — that hold them back from participating freely?

- **Vocabulary:** In some 27 passages in the scriptures, the term “dumb” is used by JB, RSV, and older versions to refer to a person who cannot speak. NAB is more sensitive in these passages, using “mute” instead. Readers would do well to substitute *mute* as the more acceptable term today whenever these passages occur (e.g., Mt. 12: 22; 15: 30-31). “Dumb” should also be changed to “mute” in the *Rite of Baptism for Children*, prayer over ears and mouth (nos. 65, 101), and anywhere else it occurs.

The parish liturgy committee would do well to discuss these and other points in the context of your community, and see if there is room for further improvement.

- **In our family and community life:** How many parishioners have handicaps? How many others in the parish territory? How can families and the parish community become more sensitive to the needs of those with handicaps? Are there opportunities for the parish to contribute volunteers and resources to local agencies and groups? Can the parish facilities be used for activities for a group, at least occasionally?

- **A ministry:** Those who have handicaps have a special ministry that they can exercise toward the rest of the parish and community. They can be examples of patience in sharing with Jesus in his cross, and accept their sufferings and disabilities for the benefit of the people of God (Col. 1: 24). They can help others to see the positive values in life, and encourage them to go beyond surface appearances, to see what is inside a person, as God does (1 Sam. 16: 8). People with handicaps can be examples of living the advice of 1 Cor. 10: 31; Col. 3: 17; and 1 Thess. 5: 18.

* * *

**Helpful reading:**


Mainstreaming Handicapped Persons, a study paper prepared by the Art and Architecture Committee of the Diocesan Liturgical Commission (Office of Worship, 100 South Elmwood Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14202): reviewed in Bulletin 70, page 192.


Obstacles: Report of the Special Committee on the Disabled and the Handicapped, David Smith, Chairman (1981, Minister of Supply and Services, Canada, Ottawa): “The purpose of this Report is to identify the key obstacles faced by disabled persons in Canada, and to outline practical actions which will help to overcome these obstacles” (page 1).


Access for all, in Bulletin 74, page 121; also no. 87, page 37.

* * *

A prayer:

Jesus, our brother,
you have given us our bodies and our minds
to love and work and rejoice with.
Teach us to accept the gifts God has given us.
Help us to use the talents and abilities we have,
continue to develop them more fully,
and use them with you for God’s glory.

Give us your Spirit of love,
and open our hearts to all your brothers and sisters.

Jesus,
we praise you,
for you are our Lord for ever and ever. Amen!
Humanly speaking: Peace — universal, global, local, family, personal peace — is an ideal for which most people long. We live today in an age of anxiety, under the ever-present threat of nuclear destruction of our planet. There are groups working for disarmament, and for peaceful use of the atom. At the same time, there are arms merchants and terrorists; there are groups and nations actively spreading discontent and violence. While some countries are working to spread development and peace, others are working to expand war, and to colonize and conquer others.

In our homes, peace seems fragile, elusive, hard to find. The fierce spirit of competition is everywhere, in business, in school, even in our recreation. Peace, serenity, security, calm, time to reflect: these seem to be ideals that we cannot achieve, despite the best efforts of many.

In the word of God: The Hebrew and Christian scriptures were written against a background of constant war, conquest, expanding empires, and persecution. Images of peace and war, both as ideals and as realities, are part of the fabric of our sacred writings.

Isaiah speaks of a messianic time of peace (Is. 11: 1-9). He gives us a vision of peace, when the tools of war will become the tools of peace (Is. 2: 4; Micah 4: 3), while Joel speaks of the opposite (Joel 3: 10). Justice and peace are praised in Ps. 85, and God speaks to us of peace.

We see Jesus as the promised prince of peace (Is. 9: 6). He himself is our peace (Eph. 2: 14), uniting Jews and Gentiles into one family (Eph. 2: 13-22). Peace is the gift Jesus gives us (Jn. 14: 27; 16: 53), with forgiveness and freedom from the slavery of sin (Jn. 20: 19-23). His gospel is the Good News of peace (Acts 10: 36). God's kingdom is one of peace, and we are to work for peace (Rom. 14: 17-19). As God's children, we are to be at peace with all people (Heb. 12: 14; 13: 3). Our God is God of peace (Rom. 15: 33; 1 Thess. 5: 23). Jesus tells us that those who work for peace are truly happy (Mt. 5: 9).

Peace is used in blessings (Num. 6: 26) and in greetings (see Judges 6: 23; Ps. 122; Jn. 20: 19; 1 Pet. 5: 14). Many other references to peace are given in the scriptures, and provide a profitable source for our reflection and prayer.
In the liturgy: As people called to peace, we let this ideal influence our public worship:

• **In the eucharist:** We praise God who brings peace to us and to the world through our worship (eucharistic prayer III). We pray in the communion rite that peace and freedom from all anxiety may be ours, and offer one another a sign of peace in Christ (see *Kiss of peace*, in Bulletin 48, pages 122-124; no. 77, pages 24-28). Each Mass ends with a formal dismissal, inviting the people to go forth in the peace of Christ, in order to continue loving and serving God. All other liturgical celebrations may end in this way.

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<th>□ Mass texts:</th>
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<tr>
<td>For peace and justice</td>
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<td>In time of war or civil disturbance</td>
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During the 1984 papal visit to Canada, a Mass for peace was celebrated in Ottawa, and one for the progress of peoples in Edmonton.¹

• **In other rites:** A special greeting of peace is appropriate in other rites as well, as in the rite of ordination. It is suitable to conclude morning and evening prayer with a sign of peace: see CBW II, nos. 71, 79.

The sacrament of reconciliation is a sacrament of peace, helping individuals to be restored to the peace of Christ (see Jn. 20: 19-23). This element of peace may also be part of a penance celebration.

In all liturgical celebrations, the prayer of the faithful may always include a petition for peace. This is true also of the intercessions in morning and evening prayer.

In our family and community life: Peace has to begin at home, in our heart and in our daily living. Peace rests on our attitudes toward God, self, others, and the world. If we stand with Jesus, ready to love, serve, and forgive, we will have peace in our hearts, and with him we will be peacemakers.

• **Prayer:** Our parish should encourage people to pray and work for peace. Petitions for peace should be a regular part of our general intercessions on Sundays and on weekdays. Perhaps a monthly Mass for peace may be offered on a convenient weekday, with all invited to take part (see Bulletin 37, page 62). Prayer for peace should also be a firm part of each family’s prayer.

¹ For the texts of the Mass in Edmonton, see *Sacramentary*: Excerpts for the Visit of Pope John Paul II in English-speaking Canada (1984, CCCB, Ottawa): pages 155-172; the Ottawa Mass is in *Livre de Célébrations* (1984, CCCB, Ottawa): pages 199-225. During the visit, the pope spoke of many of the topics which are mentioned in this Bulletin.
Many suggestions on praying for peace are given in *Guidelines for Pastoral Liturgy — Liturgical Calendar*: see notes on January 1, first Friday in March, July 1, August 6 and 9, November 11, and December 31.

- **Development and peace:** During Lent, the Church encourages us to share our alms with those who can benefit from our help. In each parish, a collection is taken up for the work of the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace during this season.

- **Games:** Christian parents should give serious consideration to avoiding war games, games of violence, toy guns, and military uniforms for their children, especially at Christmas, the season of peace: see *Toys and games*, in Bulletin 89, page 137.

Families and community groups might also encourage noncompetitive games and activities, so that both children and adults may enjoy fun without the constant presence and pressure of competition (see Bulletin 89, page 114).

* * *

**Helpful reading:**

On promoting peace and a community of nations, see Vatican II, Pastoral constitution on the Church in the modern world, chapter 4, nos. 77-90.


*Christians and Nonviolence in the Nuclear Age:* Scripture, the Arms Race, and You, by Gerard A. Vanderhaar (1982, Twenty-Third Publications, Box 180, Mystic, CT 06355): reviewed in Bulletin 86, page 239.


A bible service for peace and justice is outlined in Bulletin 33, pages 94-96.

Working for peace and love, in Bulletin 89, pages 132-133.


A prayer:

Jesus, prince of peace,
bring your Spirit of peace into our hearts.
Teach us to share your peace with all
by loving and serving and forgiving them.
Help us to be peacemakers with you
all the days of our life.

Lord Jesus,
give us your peace now,
and let us share in the peace of God with you
for ever and ever. Amen!

PRAYER FOR THE POPE

All praise and glory are yours, Lord Jesus:
you have made us your body, your Church,
and help us to bear fruit for our heavenly Father.

You chose St. Peter as the rock,
and sent him to feed your flock
and to strengthen his brothers and sisters.

Continue to help our Church
through the guidance of our pope,
and keep us faithful in your service.

Jesus, our brother,
you are Lord for ever and ever. Amen!
SOME WAYS OF ACTION

Deeds, not words alone

When our brothers and sisters are in need, it is Jesus whom we help or neglect (Mt. 25: 31-46). Jesus has reminded us that it is those who do the Father's will, and not just talk about it, who are saved (Mt. 7: 21). Our Lord condemns those who will not lift a finger to help others (Mt. 23: 4), and invites those who are burdened to come to him for rest (Mt. 11: 28-30). James reminds us that our love is to be shown in practical ways (James 2: 15-17).

The help that we give one another is our sacrifice of praise to God (Heb. 13: 16), and God will reward this love (Heb. 6: 9-12). The scope of our Christian love is described in 1 Cor. 13: 4-7. The first letter of John provides us with a meditation on the practical ways of our love, relating love of God and of neighbor in Jesus Christ.

Works of Mercy

There are many ways of following Jesus, the one who came among us to serve (Lk. 22: 27; Mk. 10: 45). One traditional way of meeting such areas of ministry and service has been in doing the works of mercy. The corporal and spiritual works of mercy summarize the ways Christians may show love to their neighbors. These works are also signs of the Church's apostolic life, means by which we spread the message of the gospel and build up the body of Christ, the Church (see Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, no. 19: 4 [2346]). We would do well to remember the description of true religion in James 1: 27.

These notes are based on Many possibilities of service, in Bulletin 53, pages 115-116. A fuller description of the works of mercy is given in Bulletin 42, pages 23-25, where some new ones are suggested for our day. These works of mercy are positive ways of expressing our love for our neighbor, and are also a traditional form of Christian penance.
Corporal works of mercy: Derived from the gospel story of Mt. 25: 31-46, these are the criteria by which Christ will judge the sincerity of our love. Some modern ways of expressing these works are suggested in the articles above. Some of these will involve organizing with others, but many can be done by individuals and families.

- giving food to the hungry
- giving drink to the thirsty
- clothing the naked
- visiting those in prison
- sheltering the homeless
- visiting the sick
- burying the dead.

Spiritual works of mercy: These works of love are generally listed in this way:

- admonishing the sinner
- instructing the ignorant
- counselling the doubtful
- comforting the sorrowful
- bearing wrongs patiently
- forgiving all injuries
- praying for the living and the dead.

Further works of love for our modern world are suggested in Bulletin 42, pages 24-25:

- leading the leaderless
- reassuring the confused
- widening horizons
- inspiring the young
- pioneering in deep waters.

To these we might add:

- working for justice and peace.

The parish council could take these lists, and begin to discuss ways in which the parish could deepen its practice of these actions of Christian love.

A prayer:

Give us your Spirit of compassion, Lord Jesus,
and open our hearts to all in need.
Let us show your love
by giving practical help to your brothers and sisters.

Jesus, our brother,
hear our prayer,
and let us love you
for ever and ever. Amen!
In Times of Disaster

When disaster strikes, it comes without much warning, if any at all. Suddenly, many people are in serious need. As Christians, we must be prepared to react in a compassionate and efficient manner.

In the stricken community: After suffering loss of life or severe property damage through flood, earthquake, windstorm, or widespread fire, a community may pause and turn to God for help, consolation, and strength.

An outline of a service in time of community disaster is given in *A Book of Blessings*, page 275; other prayers are given there on pages 69-71.

After this service of prayer, the community continues its work of helping victims and restoring order amid the damage.

In other communities: Parishes, religious communities, and families should offer money, food, clothing, resources, shelter, and the services of volunteers to help those in need. As well, they can join in praying for the victims and the survivors.

Preparation for disaster: Some positive suggestions are given in *When disaster strikes*, in Bulletin 39, pages 136-138, and in *Liturgy — and disaster*, in no. 48, page 139.

Mass texts:  

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How ready is your parish to bring help to those in need?

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Helpful reading:


CONGRESS IN ROME ON MARRIAGE

The Pontifical Liturgical Institute of Sant’Anselmo will be holding its Second International Liturgical Congress in Rome, May 27-31, 1985. The topic will be “The Christian celebration of marriage: Its symbols and texts.”

Speakers will include Kurt Hruby, France; Elie Milia, Georgian Orthodox Church, France; Basil Studer, Switzerland; Jordi Pinell, Spain; Adrien Nocent, Belgium; Pierre-Marie Gy, France; Anscar Chupungco, The Philippines; and Alois Mueller, Switzerland.

Marriage in the Jewish and patristic tradition will be considered, along with its celebration in the Hispanic liturgy and in the medieval period. There will be a theological and liturgical analysis of the symbols and texts of the 1969 Roman rite of celebrating marriage as well as a consideration of the possibilities of cultural adaptation. The question of a liturgical theology of marriage will also be examined.

In a series of short communications, consideration will be given to the symbols and texts in the Christian celebration of marriage in rites other than the Roman. The tradition of celebration in Hinduism and in African religions will also be presented.

All who are involved in serious study and work in the field of liturgy are invited to attend this Congress. Further information may be obtained by writing to:

Segretaria del Congresso 1985 PIL
Pontificio Istituto Liturgico
Piazza Cavalieri di Malta, 5
00153 ROMA, Italy.
By the "social gospel" we mean the social dimensions or aspects of the gospel teaching, and how these affect our relationships with one another in our daily living.

What is the social gospel? Stated briefly, this teaching includes these points:

- **We are one family:** All people are brothers and sisters, members of the one human family, and children of one loving Father.

- **Love one another:** All have the duty of loving others as they love themselves. This love is to be shown in practical service. Justice is rooted in love.¹

- **Forgiveness:** We are to forgive others as generously as God has forgiven us.

- **Help:** We are to come to the aid of our brothers and sisters in need.

- **Peace and justice:** Working for justice and peace in the world is pleasing to God.

- **Social structures:** The way we structure our society causes suffering for some. We need to be involved in changing these structures to avoid this suffering.

- **Social sin:** "The social structures and attitudes which keep people poor, hungry, and powerless throughout the world are prime examples of social sin today."²

- **Money and property:** We must remember our social obligation to use what we own in a way that takes others' rights and needs into account. God never approves of self-centeredness or selfishness.

- **Clothing:** We must see that all have adequate clothing. What we wear does not make us better or more important than others. Food, clothing,


² *Witness to Justice*, page 12.
shelter, and education: these are the basic needs we must have in order to live a full human life.

- **Workers' wages**: Our society needs to work for jobs for all, with honest work and honest wages; safe working conditions and adequate social security benefits are necessary for all.

- **Helpless people**: The poor, widows, orphans, and others who are weak and powerless are in God's special care. God is their defender against any who oppress them, and blesses those who help them.\(^3\)

- **Social and moral responsibility**: Those who are in any kind of authority over others are to be servants, not masters. They are accountable to the Lord Jesus, who came to serve all, to give his life to save us all, and to lead us in building the kingdom of justice, peace, and love.

- **Light and hope**: By our life and our work, we are to bring Jesus' Good News to all, and to share his strength and encouragement.

All these points may be summarized in Jesus' commandment of loving one another as he has loved us (Jn. 13: 34).

**Is this social gospel being preached?** Are these basic points of the gospel's social teaching being proclaimed regularly in our parish? Priests, pastoral workers, parish council, liturgy committee, ministers, and parishioners should look over the points mentioned above, and ask about each one: Is this being preached in the homilies? Is it being preached in the way we are living?

- **In the homilies**: Are these points being brought out in the Sunday homilies? Or are they being passed over for other less important things? Are homilies given only on Sundays, or also in weekday celebrations?

Are we keeping our priests and deacons too busy with other things so that they do not have time to study, reflect, and pray over the gospel teaching? Where are our parish priorities in these matters?

- **In our life**: Are these basic truths being reflected in the life and attitudes of our parish community? Are we saying one thing, but doing another?

Is our parish council conscious of the social aspects of the gospel? Does it let the gospel bring light to all its discussions and decisions? Is the gospel of Jesus the governing presence behind all parish activities?

**Are we open to hearing the social gospel?** Are our hearts open to Jesus when he speaks his gospel to us?

- **What kind of soil are we?** Have we prepared good soil to welcome God's word? Or do we let the demands of worldly business and the attraction

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\(^3\) See *Witness to Justice*, page 10.
of riches choke God's word and prevent it from bearing fruit in our lives? (See Mt. 13: 22.)

- **Afraid to commit ourselves?** Are we willing to run with God's word, and to put it into practice at all costs? Or do we hold back, fearful of trusting ourselves to God's hands, afraid of facing what God may ask of us? We need the Spirit of Christ to give us strength and courage. *Lord, into your hands I entrust my spirit* (see Lk. 23: 46; Ps. 31: 5).

- **Afraid to get involved?** Putting the social gospel into practice involves time and effort. It means we have to care for our brothers and sisters, some of whom we may consider below our dignity or station in life. We may have to get our hands dirty or calloused. We may have to go to some bother, to make plans and preparations to feed or clothe or shelter these people — they should be taking care of themselves, as we do . . . . If these are our thoughts or worries, are they in accord with the mind and heart of Christ?

**Applying the gospel in today's world:** How can we read the signs of our times? How does the gospel apply to modern conditions and problems? How can we discern what Christ would have us do in our world today?

- **A continuing responsibility:** Every Christian has the responsibility to avoid being conformed to the modern world. On the contrary, we are to be renewed and transformed in our thinking, and become able to judge what God's will is in modern circumstances (see Rom. 12: 2). To do this, we need to be listening to God's word regularly and carefully, praying daily, and seeking to discern the way the Spirit is leading us and all God's Church.

- **Christ's Church:** Guided by the Spirit of Jesus, the Church of Christ — God's people in the world today — has to examine modern situations and questions in the light of the gospel teaching and the Christian tradition, and attempt to make some reasonable decisions. The early Church did this, and developed some answers in the four gospels and other books of the New Testament.4

Down through the centuries, the bishops have exercised the teaching office of Jesus, applying his gospel to contemporary needs and situations. In the past century, the popes have given greater attention to the social gospel. The social encyclicals of Leo XIII, Pius XI, Pius XII, John XXIII, and Paul VI have contributed greatly to the Church's social teaching. The Second Vatican Council issued a Pastoral constitution on the Church in the modern world. Our present pope, John Paul II, has issued important letters, and has given many talks on social matters: see Bulletin 93, pages 71-74. During his visit to Canada in September 1984, the pope elaborated on many social themes. In Canada, the bishops' conference and their social affairs commission have issued a number of social statements. Regional conferences of bishops have also prepared a number of statements and other documents.

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4 See Vatican II. Dogmatic constitution on divine revelation, nos. 8, 19-20 [221].
• **Studying the Church's social teaching:** The Church's teaching on social affairs has developed gradually and with the help of many experts around the world. As ordinary Christians, we have to take advantage of this guidance, and become familiar with this teaching. As moral leaders in parish communities, priests and other pastoral workers have to know the Church's social teaching, study its documents carefully, and share it with the people. Is this happening in our parish?

• **Action at national and international levels:** In co-operation with the Holy See and with one another, episcopal conferences are working at the international level to promote application of the social gospel in modern circumstances. In Canada, the major Christian Churches work together in many committees and coalitions to keep on top of evolving social justice concerns, and to promote dialogue with the Canadian government in these matters. Areas of concern are *Perspectives in faith and justice, Justice in Canada,* and *Justice in the third world.*

• **Action at the local level:** After considering current problems in the light of the social gospel, what action should our diocese and parish be taking?

**Are we living the social gospel?** Looking at the vision of social justice presented on pages 259-264, above, and in the subsequent articles, can we say that we are living the social dimensions of the gospel of Jesus Christ?

* * *

**Helpful reading:**

☐ Papal statements:

  John Paul II, talks and homilies given during his pastoral visit to Canada in September 1984.
  John XXIII: *Pacem in Terris; Mater et Magistra*.

☐ 1971 Synod of Bishops: *Justice in the World*.


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5 On September 14, 1984, in a dialogue with other Church leaders in Toronto, Pope John Paul praised this way of working in coalitions and groups, and called it “ecumenism of the hand.”

6 See *Witness to Justice,* which has a chapter for each of these areas.
□ Canadian bishops’ statements: Others are given in the helpful reading sections of other articles in this issue.


*Northern Development*: At What Cost (1975, CCC, Ottawa).


□ Social Affairs Commission, CCCB:


□ Regional documents: Some examples of teaching by regional conferences of bishops in Canada:


Other Québec documents include *The First Nations in Québec; Les Femmes et l’Égalité, 1984; Les Fermatures d’Usines, 1981; and Les Luttes des Travailleurs en Temps de Crise, 1982.*


□ Other references:


*Preaching the social gospel,* in Bulletin 40, pages 244-251.

* * *
A prayer:

People are in need of our help, Jesus,
and you are calling us to help them.
Give us the love to care for them,
the generosity to share what we have,
and the perseverance to continue in this work.

When things look dark, Lord, be our light.
When we feel weak, be our strength.
When we are weary, refresh us,
and help us to keep reaching out to you
in your brothers and sisters.

Jesus, our brother and our Lord,
we praise God with you
always and for ever. Amen!

BULLETINS FOR 1985

After consultation with the Episcopal Commission for Liturgy and the National Council for Liturgy, these topics are planned for volume 18 of the National Bulletin on Liturgy in 1985:

Holy Week and Triduum: Bulletin 97, January. From Passion Sunday to Easter, we are in the greatest week of the Church’s year of prayer, celebrating the paschal mystery of Jesus Christ. This issue offers help to parishes, religious communities, families, and individuals who want to prepare for Holy Week and celebrate it well.

Sacraments and Ministry: Bulletin 98, March. We explore Faith and Order paper 111, Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry, and the possibilities it opens for all Christian Churches today.

Our Parish Liturgy: Bulletin 99, May. This issue presents both ideals and practical help for parishes and communities to evaluate their Sunday celebrations.

Essays in Liturgy: III: Bulletin 100, September. A celebration of articles to mark our 100th issue: compare Bulletins 65 and 81.


Each issue contains 64 pages. Subscriptions for 1985, from January to December (nos. 97-101), 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.
Ecumenical co-operation

As followers of Jesus Christ, we are to be eager to do good works (Titus 2:14). With Christ, we have to be concerned about justice and peace for all (see Lk. 4:18-19).

Areas of common concern: As a Christian community, we must share the compassion of the Lord Jesus for all who are in need (Mt. 25:31-46). Many of these people and situations are present in our community: how can we get together with other Christians to meet these needs now?

- People in need: The aged and shut-ins; victims of addiction; the unemployed; those with handicaps; immigrants and refugees; the poor; victims of disaster; lonely or disturbed persons; talented children being bored, numbed, and unchallenged by some local school systems.

- Situations needing attention: Safety hazards; poor housing; manipulation by various forms of advertising; antilife programs. Are community centers needed for various situations?

- Other areas of concern: Get together with other Christians and share your concerns. Then decide what you can do to face these and solve some of them.

- Simple activities can be shared: A community census by all area churches (including taking notice of families needing special help); this could be kept up to date each year; bees for working, building, maintaining, cleaning up, quilting, sewing, with people from various congregations working together for one another and on community projects; planning and working with one another to overcome negative situations and to promote and improve positive ones in the town or neighborhood.

As well as working with other Christians, we should be prepared to co-operate with members of non-Christian religions and with all people of good will, working together to make the community and the world a better place for all.

Helpful reading:

Vatican II: Decree on ecumenism, no. 12; Declaration on the relationship of the Church to non-Christian religions, no. 5; Pastoral constitution on the Church in the modern world, nos. 26, 29, 31, 43, 52, 60, 72, 75, 88, 91-93.

We are the body of Christ, the family of God's children living in the world today. Jesus our Lord is sending us out to build up his kingdom of justice, peace, and love (see page 261, above). All that we do can build up this kingdom or impede its progress: are we with Christ, or against him? Are we gathering with him, or scattering? (See Lk. 11: 23; Mk. 9: 40; Mt. 12: 30.)

Praying: We have been chosen to be God's people of prayer, voicing the praise and the pleas of the whole human race and indeed of the entire universe. We are called to pray as individuals, as families, and as communities, both in personal prayer and in public worship. How seriously do we take our responsibility?

- **Pray constantly:** Jesus tells us to keep knocking, seeking, asking (Lk. 11: 9-10). We are to pray always (Lk. 18: 1) and constantly (1 Thess. 5: 17). Even though our heavenly Father knows our needs ahead of time, Jesus tells us to keep presenting them, but without heaping up a lot of words (Mt. 6: 8). The Lord's prayer, with its universal praise and petition, is the model of our prayer (Mt. 6: 9-13; Lk. 11: 1-4). A meditation on the Lord's prayer is given in Bulletin 44, pages 154-159.

Prayers for justice and for the coming of God's kingdom among us should be part of each believer's daily prayer, and of every family's prayer; otherwise, we are not taking an adequate part in the work of the people of God on earth. In our celebrations of liturgy, the prayer of the faithful or intercessions should always include a petition for the oppressed and others in need of help.

- **Pray with confidence:** The Lord Jesus is at the Father's right hand, praying for us (Heb. 7: 25) and offering our prayers to God (1 Tim. 2: 5). Jesus has assured us that whatever several of us agree on (Mt. 18: 19-20) and ask in his name (Jn. 14: 13-14; 15: 7, 16; 16: 23-25, 26) will be granted.

Are we listening to Jesus? Are we praying seriously for the coming of God's kingdom among us?

Working: How can we work to build up God's kingdom of justice, peace, and love?
By remaining in Christ's love: Read Jesus' description of the vine and branches (Jn. 15: 1-10), and pray about it. This is our Lord's description of our work with him. By keeping his commandments, especially his new commandment of loving others (Jn. 13: 34), we remain in his love, and so are able to bear everlasting fruit for the Father. If we are separated from the love of Jesus, our lives are fruitless, and we reap no harvest for God. Our love for God is inextricably bound up with our love for others (1 Jn. 4: 16, 19-21; Mt. 25: 31-46). Only by loving and serving others can we remain in Christ's love and bear fruit for God.

By working as a community of faith: Our parish should help us to love and work and bear fruit for God the Father. What is our parish really about? What are we here to do? What are our priorities? Looking back over the past year, where did we — or at least, some of us — spend our parish time and energies and money?

- Liturgy and prayer
- Social justice
- Education and formation
- Recreation and fun
- Maintenance
- Bearing fruit for God

By doing the work of Christ: We might summarize Christ's work on earth as giving praise to the Father, obeying God and keeping the commandments of love, helping and serving and forgiving others, and praying for the world. How well are we sharing in Jesus' work? (See Jn. 14: 12.)

We must persist in our work — we and the generations which follow us — until justice triumphs (see Mt. 12: 20), until Christ is accepted as king of all creation, king of every heart. Then he can hand over the kingdom to the Father, and God will be all in all (1 Cor. 15: 24, 28).

Our work is to be accomplished now, and where we are: in our personal life, in our family, in our workshops and schools and places of recreation; in our associations and parishes; in our public worship; in our civic life. Each one who draws back is scattering the work of Christ, but each one who works with Christ is helping to build the kingdom of God among us.

* * *

Helpful reading:


National Bulletin on Liturgy:
* No. 44: People of Prayer
* No. 68: Family Prayer
* No. 75: Praying the Psalms
* No. 80: Helping Families to Pray.

* * *

A prayer:

Blessed are you, heavenly Father,
maker of the universe and lover of all people:
we praise you and give you thanks.

Bless us and all your people,
and send your Spirit into our hearts.
Look upon us as we work with Christ
to bring glory to you in all we do,
to keep your commandments,
to love and serve all your children.

Loving Father,
we ask your strength
in Jesus’ name. Amen!
Lessons for our parish liturgy

From September 9 to 20, 1984, many Canadians spent long hours watching Pope John Paul II on television as he made his pastoral visit across our country. In each place he visited, many thousands were there to see and hear him in person.

The liturgies celebrated during the papal visit were of high quality. What lessons are there for us to learn from the celebrations over which the pope presided? How can we learn from them, and improve our parish or community liturgy?

Some points about which we can think in our parish:

**Benefits of planning:** A year of planning went into each of the major celebrations. While most parishes are not going to plan ahead that much, there is need for more planning, especially for major celebrations and for the seasons of Advent-Christmas and Lent-Easter.

**Ministries:** The importance of readers, communion ministers, ushers, musicians, and servers was brought out clearly. These people were well trained, carefully prepared, present ahead of time when they were needed. They carried out their ministries reverently for God and the people of God.

**Music:** Throughout the celebrations, music had a prominent part, helping the liturgy to move forward, and encouraging participation. There was a balance between people and choir parts, and between classical and folk music. Careful work went into selection of the pieces, the practising of the singers and instrumentalists, and the preparation of participation aids for the people. Music is vital for good liturgy, particularly for Sundays and special celebrations.

**Listening to the word:** Readers read clearly and slowly; they had prepared carefully, and understood the texts they proclaimed. The commu-
nity listened in faith to God’s word, attentively, for God was speaking to them. People present were able to hear the word because of the sound systems.

**Good preaching:** The Holy Father preached the message of Jesus, based on the readings and the liturgical texts, and challenged his listeners to live the gospel in their everyday affairs. The homilies were interesting and compelling, and showed how much preparation and prayer went into them.

**Importance of prayer:** During the silent moments of the celebration, it was evident that the pope and the people were praying. Moments of silence after the readings, however, could have been longer in most cases.

**Creativity:** Positive creativity was also part of the liturgies because of adequate planning. Prayers of blessing, penitential rites, introductions, and intercessions were developed to suit the specific celebration. Parishes are invited to be creative in the many areas where this is desirable in the liturgy.

**Respect for culture:** In his homilies and talks, the pope showed his understanding of the Canadian situation, and his respect for our culture as it develops gradually out of many roots: European, Amerindian, Inuit, Asian, and others from the Americas and from Africa. He encouraged us to share in the richness of our own culture and in the cultures of those who have come to this part of the world. By his participation in native rites, he encouraged us to be open to this part of our culture as well, and to benefit from the deep spirituality of the native peoples of our land. By helping us to see that culture is from the hand of God, he guides us to a balanced view of cultural adaptation in our worship and in Church structures.

**Christian unity:** The pope reminded us of the urgency of praying and working for unity among Christians. More prayer and changing of attitudes are needed at every level, and no Christian is exempt from this cause which is dear to Christ our Lord.

**Shared faith and enthusiasm:** During the papal visit, people were not ashamed to stand up and tell others that they were followers of Christ, and members of a particular Church. They shared their enthusiasm with others, and helped one another to grow in faith and love.

* * *

In each parish, we need to bring these lessons home, so that we can continue to grow in our faith. Each of us can do our best to pray, to take part in Sunday Mass and in other liturgies as well as we can, and to live our faith more joyfully each day of the week.
Some steps along the way

The work of ecumenism is not restricted to international and national and local leaders of Churches and other religious bodies. It is the work of every baptized Christian.

Among the works we may do are these:

○ Prayer: We have to pray with Christ that all Christians will be moved to work toward unity, by eliminating obstacles that keep us apart and by emphasizing what unites us. We need to pray individually, with our families and congregations and other groups, and also in union with members of other Christian Churches.

Jesus has promised us that whatever we ask of the Father in his name will be granted (Jn. 15: 16; 16: 23-24). Jesus has given us his promise: do we trust him? How serious are we in praying for unity among all Christians?

Beyond the week of prayer for unity among Christians, how often do we share with others in prayer for unity among Christians? Are we looking for ways of sharing prayer in Lent or Advent or at Pentecost? Do we pray for unity in the prayer of the faithful at Mass and in the intercessions in morning and evening prayer? Do those of us who are pastors or teachers try to help others to recognize the need of praying with Jesus and all his people for unity among his sisters and brothers?

○ Self-reform: Vatican II pointed out that the real work of ecumenism is to be achieved by self-reform first — always under the influence and guidance of the Holy Spirit. Christian Churches have to reform themselves, not others. This reform includes the deeper attention to the teaching and spirit of the gospel; a growth in prayer, love, and service; a deepening of the spirit and celebration of public worship.

One of the noticeable aspects of this reformation has been the liturgical convergence taking place over the past few years: the Spirit of God has truly been at work among us (Liturgy constitution, no. 43).¹

○ Good works: At every level, from neighborhood and parish to national and international, Christian Churches and groups are invited to work together for good causes: peace, justice, prayer, reconciliation; help for

¹ See Eucharistic convergence, by W. Morrison Kelly, in Bulletin 76, pages 203-215. Other helpful articles are included in Bulletins 76, 78, and 82.
people who need food, shelter, medical care, or basic education; working for various positive causes.

These works need to be carried out in a friendly and trusting spirit, with mutual respect and co-operation, with openness and a recognition of the work of the Spirit in one another's traditions and daily lives.

• **Dialogue:** While official dialogues are carried on by appointed representatives at various levels, ordinary Christians — pastors and laity — can carry on friendly and informal dialogue at the local parish or congregational level. This can be a simple sharing: This is how we believe, how we pray, how we worship, how we share our faith with our children. Worship books, hymnals, prayer books, catechisms, and other resources can be shared for study. Praying can be done, formally or informally; all can learn from others' heritages of prayer. The scriptures can be read and studied together. Churches can share information about their lectionaries and calendars. Preachers can work together in preparing for homilies on feasts and seasons that they share.

• **A spirit of love:** Above all, and permeating all our activities, Christians need a spirit of love. Jesus has come because of the Father's love for us (Jn. 3: 16-17). Jesus has died for us because of love for us (Jn. 10: 17-18; 15: 13), and invites us to live by his commandment of love: this is the sign to the world that we are his true followers (Jn. 13: 34-35).

In all ecumenical contacts and relations, we have to work for love, not power. We have to share and serve, not dominate. Instead of being right we are working to become right.

* * *

**Lord Jesus,**

send the Spirit of your love and unity
into our hearts and our lives.
Help us to work together for the glory of your Father,
and make us one in your love.

**Lord Jesus,**

we bless you for ever and ever. *Amen!*

"Holy places are evocative; they declare the shape of our lives and the meaning of our actions. In the widest sense, holy places are where we live, where the shining of God's self illumines our lives" (page 5). In sixteen articles, the authors open the mysteries of holy places and our deep relationships with them in beauty, prayer, and caring. Recommended as joyful reading for everyone involved in worship.

This Is the Word of the Lord: Readings of the Liturgy Arranged in Dialogue Form for Presentation by Three Readers, arranged by William J. Freburger (1984, Ave Maria Press, Notre Dame, IN 46556): spiral bound, 175 pages. $6.95.

A revised and expanded edition of a 1974 publication, this book contains adaptations of readings for the passion and for 85 other occasions, mostly Sundays. Some of the presentations violate basic principles of the lectionary (all readings are to lead up to the gospel; distinct readings for each year's cycle; different readings for distinct Masses; readings are to be separate, not combined; use of the responsorial psalm after the first reading). While these adaptations might be fine for occasional use in word services, they are not approved for use in the eucharist in Canada.


By letting the liturgical texts and rites of Lent, Holy Week and the Triduum, and the Easter season speak for themselves, this book allows the parish to share in and celebrate the mission program of this time. The riches of the seasonal liturgies are able to shine forth clearly. A simple form of evening prayer and questions for meditation and reflection are included. Recommended for pastors, parish workers, families, catechists, religious communities. Order your 1985 copy now.


Dr. Barnes explores our human sense of wonder in the presence of mystery, and provides an interesting study of religions and faiths from primitive to modern times. Chapter ten is on ritual and symbol as living images of the traditions. The book provides a general survey of the religiousness to be found among humans.


While this book has been written first of all as a seminary and college text for evangelical Christians, it will prove helpful to other Protestants as well (page 73). The scriptural bases, the structures, and the elements of worship are clearly described. The reforms proposed by the author are similar in form and spirit to those taking place in most Christian Churches today. Many practical resources are mentioned. A helpful combination of history and theology in a practical book.

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

Philo was versed in both the Jewish traditions and Greek philosophy, and lived between 25/20 BCE and about 41 CE. He was able to serve as a bridge between these two areas of thought and study. In this translation of La doctrine eucharistique chez Philo d'Alexandrie, published in 1972, Dr. LaPorte studies expressions of thanksgiving, and shows how eucharistia is involved in liturgy, cosmic religion, and the interior life. The fullness of this term as used frequently by Philo is explored, and we are helped to enter into the deep concepts of thanksgiving which flourished both in the temple at Jerusalem and in Greek philosophy at the time of Christ. Recommended as a valuable background study for the early history of Christian liturgy.


This handy booklet contains original prayers, scriptural prayers, some psalms, traditional prayers, and helps for meditating. Recommended as a useful help for adults and high school students who want to pray.


The first edition of this helpful book was reviewed in Bulletin 81, page 237. Now revised and enlarged, it contains an introduction, order of service, prayers, five thanksgivings, seasonal prayers, and suggested acclamations from CBW II. Good models are given throughout, and adaptation is encouraged. Recommended as a valuable resource for all who lead celebrations in hospitals, retirement homes, and parishes without priests.

A Sunday Liturgy for Optional Use in The United Church of Canada (1984, UCC, 85 St. Clair Avenue East, Toronto, Ontario M4T 1M8): paper, red and black print, 48 pages. $2.30.

This is issued by the Working Unit on Worship and Liturgy as a supplement to the 1969 Service Book, and takes into account the ecumenical convergence in the field of liturgy. The outline of a Sunday liturgy is based on the classical Christian liturgies, with emphasis on two focal points, under the word and around the table. Brief gathering rites and a sending forth complete the celebrations. Seasonal prayers and prefaces (for eucharistic prayer I), and seven eucharistic prayers are included. These are derived from ancient and contemporary sources. Prayer VII "is intended to introduce to children the basic elements of The Great Thanksgiving prayer" (page 35). A rite for communion of the sick, guidelines for celebrating the Sunday liturgy, and a list of resources complete the book. Recommended as a positive resource for students of liturgy and for people interested in ecumenical developments.


A. Adult Faith Education, by Mary Malone. 40 pages. $1.75.

B. Children's Word Liturgy, by Marjorie Moffatt, SNJM. 36 pages. $1.75.

C. Hospitality, by Bernadette Gasslein. 40 pages. $1.75.

D. Separation and Divorce Ministry, by Bill More, SCJ. 44 pages. $2.00.

E. Youth, by Cathy Driscoll. 32 pages. $1.50.

The first ten booklets in series I were reviewed in Bulletin 86, page 239. These continue its practical approach, covering one ministry in each booklet, and offering useful suggestions and resources. Recommended as a useful aid to clergy and ministers.

Contributing to the quiet reform of sacraments and worship in North American Protestant Churches today, Dr. White offers insights and methods leading us toward greater unity. The basis of the Christian sacraments is seen as God’s self giving (page 13), and this is explored in the celebrations of the believing community. After exploring baptism and eucharist, apostolic and natural sacraments, and sacraments and justice, he encourages practical and far-reaching reforms in sacramental practice. Throughout, his method follows “the liturgical circle,” going from what the Church does and says in its celebrations, to reflection, to reform in liturgical practices. In the final chapter, Fr. Kilmartin reflects on the coming together of Catholic and Protestant theologies and practices in the liturgies of the Churches today, and the enriching of the ecumenical dialogue. Recommended for all interested in pastoral liturgy and in ecumenism.


After a careful study of the New Testament texts concerning the eucharist, the author — editor of The Scottish Journal of Theology — looks at the ways Catholics and Reformed Christians have interpreted it in their celebrations and in their theology. He proposes a number of reconsiderations on Christ the sacrament, on his presence, and on his sacrifice and ours. As the subtitle states, Heron is working toward an ecumenical understanding and convergence of views on the eucharist today. This careful study is recommended for students of liturgy and ecumenism.


Five booklets are in this series on reaching out: Lutherans, Episcopalians (Anglicans), Presbyterians and the Reformed Churches, Methodists, and Baptists. Each booklet looks with respect at the history, faith, liturgy, and practices of one of these Churches, and encourages further dialogue and common action in a spirit of love. Recommended for parish discussion groups and ecumenical groups.


Msgr. George Higgins spent nearly 40 years in the American and international scenes, working for ecumenism, Jewish-Christian dialogue, workers’ rights, peace, human rights, and an end to discrimination. Working with the U.S. episcopal conference, he placed strong emphasis on the relationship between social action and the liturgy. Told in the words of his many newspaper columns and of people interviewed for this book, this story is a reminder of what one person of faith can do to build up the work of Christ in the community. Recommended.


The four major talks given at the 1983 meeting of the Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions are gathered in this short but lively book. Mark Searle, Tad Guzie, Patrick Regan, and Kathleen Hughes explore Sunday, what we remember in the liturgical year, the year as the source of our spirituality, and as both conflict and challenge. The talks are simple and carefully crafted, and open our minds to broader horizons. Recommended reading for clergy, catechists, and liturgists.

Jesus told us to become like little children. This quiet, thoughtful booklet explores some of the gospel truths that children can teach us. Recommended for parents and teachers.


Some of the stories of the Hebrew scriptures are retold simply and with faith, presenting God as the one who loves us and is always with us. The illustrations by Kathryn Boswell are pleasing. Recommended for parents and teachers.


Writing for people preparing for marriage and for newlyweds, the author explores the psychology of love and its meaning for faith. Simply written, this book is easily read, and may lead to helpful discussion and discovery.


After a brief survey on the origins and liturgical attitudes of Congregational Churches from 1550 to the present, the author studies the shape of their eucharistic liturgy — word and sacrament — between 1645 and 1980. "It is in fact a story of the tension between the demand for freedom in worship, and the search for an order that will keep that freedom in the faith without stifling it" (page 263). Ecumenical convergences are noted, and the benefits of liturgical diversity are discussed. Recommended for students of liturgy and ecumenism.


This is the eighth book in the Stimulus series of Studies in Judaism and Christianity: the first seven were reviewed in Bulletin 94, pages 187, 190-191. Thirty-four topics (such as "afterlife, covenant, faith, Messiah, mission, prayer, sin, tradition," and many others) are explained from a Jewish and from a Christian viewpoint. Past difficulties (see "antisemitism, Jewish-Christian dialogue") are faced frankly, and the positive aspects of contemporary dialogues and prayer are encouraged. Recommended for all concerned with growth in faith and practice.


The author is a pastor who introduces us to story (narrative theology), and tells us nearly a hundred brief stories along the way. We are helped to recognize scripture as story and Jesus as a master storyteller. Our own personal story and spirituality are also part of the Church’s story today. Recommended for liturgists, catechists, pastors, and parents.


We are invited to join the author in prayerful reflection as we discover the many ways in which Jesus is present among us. A table of presences on page 20 reveals how our Lord is among us in our human experience, in the Jesus of history, and in the Christ of faith. Recommended as a helpful book for reflection and prayer for high school students, parents, teachers, ministers, and clergy.

The children's book and parent guide were reviewed in Bulletin 94, page 192. This book provides resource materials and ideas for pastors and catechists to adapt the program to local needs and diocesan guidelines. "Preparing a child for the eucharist is not mainly teaching things about the sacrament. It is initiating that child into a Christian way of living and worshipping in a community. It is leading that child to discover the joy of living in communion with Jesus and with others" (page 3). A helpful book.


Twelve of Jesus' parables are opened and explored in simple, penetrating dramas. Helps on presenting them and exploring their meaning are also given. Through explaining parables by other parables, the author leads us to enter into the spirit of our Lord's use of them. Recommended.

The January 1985 issue of the Bulletin is entitled Holy Week and Triduum.

Holy Week — extending from Passion Sunday to Easter Sunday — is celebrated each year as the greatest week in the Church's year of praise. It is much more than a historical re-enactment of past events, more than a passion play or a religious pageant. During Holy Week, we celebrate the paschal mystery of Jesus Christ: his dying and rising in obedience to the Father's will. We also celebrate our sharing in this life-giving mystery through the sacraments of initiation.

Holy Week encompasses the end of Lent and the Easter triduum. It is a time when we are in tune with centuries of Christian tradition. All the people of God are being called to conversion, to turn back to the Lord Jesus. This week provides a graphic remembering of God's love for us in Jesus, of Jesus' total giving of himself for us in his dying and rising into glory. Holy Week is a blending of history and mystery.

Bulletin 97 contains 64 pages, and will be ready for mailing in late January. Information on subscriptions for 1985 is given on page 307, above.