OUR PARISH LITURGY
National Bulletin on Liturgy

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

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

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"What should our parish liturgy be like? How do we know if we are doing well enough? What else should we be doing? Are we strong enough in some things, but weak in others?"

These and similar questions occur to the members of the liturgy committee in parishes and other communities that are trying to do their best to celebrate the Church's liturgy.

Bulletin 99 presents both ideas and practical help for parishes and communities to evaluate their Sunday celebrations.

Conscientious communities may use this issue both as a way of measuring their present progress and as a springboard leading to even better celebrations of worship.
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INTRODUCTION

Liturgy in our parish

Diocese: The Second Vatican Council describes the local Church as the community of believers gathered around the diocesan bishop. When he is surrounded by people, ministers, and clergy, especially in the celebration of the eucharist, we are able to see the Church present among us most clearly (Liturgy constitution, no. 41 [41]; GI, no. 74 [1464]).

Parish: In order to promote the work of Christ in all parts of the diocesan family, the bishop sets up parishes. A pastor represents the bishop, and continues to work in his name in that area. Again, the Church is most visible to others when the parishioners gather around the pastor to celebrate the liturgy, especially the eucharist on the Lord's day (Liturgy constitution, no. 42 [42]; GI, no. 75 [1465]).

A parish is much more than a sociological grouping: it is a family based on faith and love. Both are God's gift, as is our response to these gifts. God loves us first, and invites us to respond by loving our neighbor (1 Jn. 4: 10-12).

• Other communities: Religious communities and other groupings of the Catholic people are united to the local Church through the bishop, and — according to varying circumstances — also through the parish community. When their eucharist is celebrated in union with the bishop, they are part of the body of Christ in this community of faith and love.


2 GI: General Instruction of the Roman Missal. This is a pastoral introduction and explanation of the rites of the Mass, and is contained in the beginning of the sacramentary; see pages 11-54 in the 1974 Canadian edition. New Introductions to the Sacramentary and Lectionary (1983, CCCB, Ottawa) is available with the 1983 reprint of the sacramentary or as a separate book; this edition contains the same text as in Documents on the Liturgy, document 208, pages 463-533 [1376-1731].
Families: Each Christian family is a "little Church" (Constitution on the Church, no. 11 [141]). They take part in the Church's work of praising God, praying for the world, and working for its salvation by living their own life of faith and by actively sharing in the work and worship of the parish community.

Under the leadership of the bishop, who is the high priest of the diocese, Jesus and his Spirit guide the local Church to grow in love and to share more fully in the saving work of the body of Christ here and around the world.

Liturgy: The liturgy is the public worship offered by the whole Christ, head and members. By baptism, we share in the priesthood of Jesus Christ, and have the right and the responsibility of joining in the worship he offers to the Father (Liturgy constitution, no. 14 [14]). For us the liturgy is celebrated in the eucharist, the sacraments, the liturgy of the hours, funerals, blessings, and other rites. It is the public worship of the Church, the people of God on earth. (See Liturgy constitution, no. 7 [7].)

Benefits of liturgy: Through the celebration of the liturgy, we are called forth from ourselves and our narrow interests, into the wider concerns of Christ and his Church around the world. Good celebrations express and deepen our faith, and we return to our daily lives enriched with God's word and encouraged by our fellow believers. Our personal life and prayer are a preparation through the week for Sunday's liturgy, which in turn leads us to live more fully for Christ in the week to come. In the eucharist each Sunday, we are invited to renew our baptismal covenant (Liturgy constitution, no. 9 [9]), to promise that this week we will die with Christ to sin, and live with him for God.

At the heart of parish life: The Second Vatican Council is emphatic in describing the eucharist as the center of the life of the parish and of every Christian community. The eucharist is the sacrament of Christ's abiding love for us and for the whole human race, for in it we obey Christ's command and actively remember his saving death and resurrection; God's love for us (Jn. 3: 16) continues to be manifested in a real but sacramental way; and we are drawn into Christ's life-saving stream of grace and strength.

In a parish, all that we do in our life becomes the gift we bring on Sunday; we go forth from the eucharist with Christ's help to live a new week in God's service, building up the kingdom as we live, work, pray, suffer, and rejoice with Christ during a new week. While we are working for him, Jesus is preparing us as the gift to the Father (eucharistic prayer III).

Each week we are invited to renew our baptismal covenant — our promise to die with Christ to sin and to live with him for God — as we come together around the table of God's word and the eucharist.

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3 See Decree on the ministry and life of priests, nos. 5-6 [260-261]; Liturgy constitution, no. 10 [10].

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In the light of our calling to be the body of Christ in our world of today, we have to weigh and reconsider the proportion of time and energy we spend in our parish community on entertainment and frivolous matters. Occasional recreation is fine, but is it the duty of our believing community to be seen by many as the source of entertainment instead of as the community of God's believing and serving people?

Source and summit: The liturgy is not our only activity, but it is both the source of the God-given grace we receive and the summit to which our daily activities lead (Liturgy constitution, no. 10 [10]). The ways in which the liturgy does this are described in more detail in the rest of this issue.

* * *

Evaluation: At the end of most articles in this bulletin, there are several questions on a topic. We invite you to discuss these questions with your priests, deacons, pastoral assistants, ministers, worship committee members, and other interested parishioners.

After discussion, agree on an answer that applies to your parish situation, and add other questions as well, if you wish.

After answering all the questions, evaluate your responses and see where your parish stands. The strong points show you where you can deepen your strengths; the weak spots indicate areas for serious work, and any blank ones point out areas for present and future concern and activity.

Use your overall picture to help your liturgy committee plan the next year's work. At the end of the year, do the questions again, and see where you've made progress, and where you still need to work harder.

That is an unending process, one that can go on until you are interrupted by the last trumpet.

* * *

A prayer for our parish:

Jesus,
as members of the parish community of N.
we praise you for your love.

Help us to join you
in giving glory to God our Father
and in working with you to save the world.
Fill us with your Holy Spirit.
Teach us to honor our God
in our work, our play, our prayer, and our worship.

Lord Jesus,
we love you now and always and for ever. Amen!
People of prayer

Our God has chosen us from all eternity, chosen us in Christ to be a beloved family. Our lives are dedicated by God to praise and prayer, offered with and through Christ. We are people of prayer: see This is the Church, in Bulletin 73, pages 51-52. The Holy Spirit has been given to us to teach us to pray in a way that is pleasing to our heavenly Father.

Our spirituality is based on our baptism into Christ. By our baptism we begin to share in Jesus' priesthood, and join with him in giving praise to God, in praying for the world, and in working to build God's kingdom (Liturgy constitution, no. 14 [14]). Our prayer, our public worship, our eucharist, our reconciliation, our vocation in life: all flow from that fact that we became members of Christ's body in baptism. See Baptism: basis of our spirituality, in Bulletin 62, pages 4-8.

Sense of being Church: A nation cannot be great, cannot realize its potential, cannot carry out its destiny or mission until it begins to develop a sense of who it is. Often an outstanding ruler or leader or writer captures — and is captured by — an insight into his or her country's gifts, is able to express these in a way that excites others and sparks their imagination, and begins to lead the nation to its potential and its place in the world and in history. When a nation loses this insight, this spark, it sputters to a stop, stands still, and seems to mark time until history sweeps it into the attic of faded greats.

If the people of God were only a human organization, the same would be true. But our faith tells us that the Spirit of Jesus is alive in the Church, and is prodding us, nudging us, even propelling us to remain alive, to come back to life, to live on and grow in Christ. Our liturgy continues to renew this life, this sense of who we are, as long as we are open to its vision and its invitation.

○ Who are we? We are the body of Christ. We are the beloved adopted children of God our Father, brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ and of one another, temples of the Holy Spirit. We are God's family on earth,
the people of praise and prayer. We are the ones called by Christ, entrusted by Jesus to carry on his mission of giving glory to God and bringing salvation to all.

- **A larger context:** We are the Church here in this place, but we are members of the larger Church throughout the world, and in communion with the Church in eternity. The Church is visible and active and praying where we are, especially when we are gathered in eucharist (Gl, nos. 74-75 [1464-1465]). Wherever two or three of us gather together in Jesus' name, he is present among us (Mt. 18: 20).

**People of loving action:** As Church, we are invited by Jesus to follow him in loving and serving and forgiving others. We are here to bring his love — summed up in his total obedience and self-offering to the Father — into the lives of others. We are here to love in deed, rather than by words (1 Jn. 3: 17-18; James 1: 27; 2: 15-17; see Deeds, not words alone, in Bulletin 96, pages 298-301). This love is not a now-and-then thing, a temporary activity for the days before Christmas and Easter: it is for day in and day out, for the lovable and unlovable, for the deserving and the manifestly undeserving. Can the world recognize us as followers of Jesus by our love?

**People of worship:** We are invited to worship God in our total lives, by loving deed, understanding word, listening ear, helpful hand; by prayer, intercession, praise; by individual activity and group action. We are here to be part of the unceasing chorus of thanks and praise and glory offered to God through, with, and in Jesus Christ, our brother and our Lord. We honor our God in our liturgies and in the lives that lead to and flow from our worship. We praise our God by our doxologies on Sundays and our deeds on weekdays. One without the other is incomplete, one-sided, defective. Together, informing and completing each other, worship and action in love offer our praise to our God.

**People of personal prayer:** In baptism, each of us is dedicated as a temple of the Spirit of Jesus, as a sharer in the priesthood of Jesus, as a fellow worshipper with Christ. Guided by the Spirit, we offer praise and intercession with him to the Father, and are offered by him and with him. Our personal praise, offered in this same spirit and flowing from our liturgy and our daily living, becomes a more intimate sharing with Christ, a personal commitment to his ideals, his example, his own dedication to our God.

Both as a community and as individuals, we are mediators with Christ, people who pray with him for all creation and in its name.

**Too busy for prayer?** Brief prayers are commended by Christ (Mt. 6: 7-8), but perfunctory prayer is an insult to God. The Western world is a busy place, and we are often led to believe that we are too busy to pray. We have allowed the pace of life to become so hectic that we lack the calmness and the slowing down that true prayer requires. How can we make some time for prayer in our lives each day?
Some questions: Can people offer prayerful liturgy when regular prayer is not a part of their daily rhythm of life? Can liturgy be alive and pleasing to God if it is not offered by prayerful people?

Do we approach God as forgiven and beloved children, with attitudes of thanks and praise, seeing God's love in creation and in the events of our life? (See pages 153-162, below.)

How much help in prayer is offered to the people of our parish each year? Are we helping them to learn to pray as adults, or to begin praying again? Are we helping parents to pray and to teach their children to pray? Are we sharing the riches of our Church's tradition of prayer with the adults and teenagers of today? Do people know how to use the scriptures in their prayer?

Are we helping people in our parishes to pray in harmony with the liturgy of our Church? Do they know the traditional times for prayer, and how Christians pray at these times?

As members of our parish family, how can we deepen our sense of being the body of Christ as we pray and work with the Lord? How can we show this understanding in our daily life?

Beyond eucharist, what other opportunities do we offer for community prayer? Do we encourage bible celebrations, morning and evening prayer, popular devotions in accord with the spirit of the liturgy?

What further challenges does the Lord Jesus want to offer us as his people of prayer in this part of the world?

* * *

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
  * No. 85 Advent in Our Home
  * No. 86 Lent in Our Home.

Visits should be restored, Bulletin 44, page 163; no. 69, page 127.
Evaluation

After most articles in this issue, we offer some questions for consideration in each parish, community, or family. These can be used by groups — a pastoral team, the liturgy committee, family members — to take the pulse of God's people in this area of concern.

It is suggested that all read one article, reflect on it and discuss it together, and then answer the questions at the end of the article.

Each participant can suggest a number that would gauge his or her estimate of the truth of the statement as it appears to this parish, community, or family. When all agree on a suitable figure, the appropriate box may be checked in pencil:

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1. In our parish, (or community, family), we recognize that we are God's beloved people, the Church:

After doing the assessment for one article, discuss some practical ways of helping people to recognize the situation and to improve on it in the next year.

Evaluation on prayer:

In our parish [community, family]:

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1. We recognize that we are God's beloved people, the Church:

2. Baptism is at the heart of our spirituality:

3. Our prayer flows from our recognition of our status as God's beloved family:

4. Our loving actions are done to share God's love with others:

5. At regular intervals we encourage personal and family prayer:

6. We are making a variety of workshops, resources, and occasions for prayer readily available and attractive:
7. We are working to deepen our prayer life in harmony with the spirit of the Church's liturgy:

8. [If desired, add another question on this topic.]

**Working for improvement:** We discuss some practical ways of helping the members of our community to recognize the situation and to improve on it in the next twelve months.

* * *

**More helpful reading:** The following titles are useful for all interested in strong parish life:


Nourished by God’s word

God speaks to us: We have heard God speaking to us in many ways through the prophets and other teachers sent by God, and especially through Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh (Jn. 1: 14; Heb. 1: 1-2). Some of the messages of God have been handed down from generation to generation, and finally recorded in the Hebrew scriptures and in the New Testament, which together form our bible. As the Word of God, our Lord continues to be present among us in many ways (see Liturgy constitution, no. 7 [7]), and to speak to us through the Spirit and in the Church.

Importance of the scriptures: The scriptures are the books read to the people of God during worship: prophets, evangelists, and apostles continue to bring us God’s word through the written texts which the Church has lovingly protected and handed down from one age to another. The word of God helps us to understand the meaning of our life and of our liturgy. The symbols used in our sacramental celebrations are explained and given meaning by the word of God; the readings are a most important part of our celebrations, and form God’s people so that we may participate fully and fruitfully in the rites which follow. Our prayer texts echo the scriptures, and use many images from them. (See Liturgy constitution, no. 24 [24].) How much help have our people received in becoming familiar with God’s word as the source and explanation of our worship?

Encouraging scripture reading: A parish which is serious in its desire to grow closer to God in Christ will encourage use of the scriptures in every way: regular reading at home by individuals and families; use of the bible in personal and family prayer; bible days, especially for introducing the bible to families for prayer; bible groups to study and reflect on the scriptures. Many parishes print the references for next Sunday’s readings in the bulletin, and invite people to read them and pray about them during the week. After weekday Masses and at other convenient times, a few moments could be spent on using the scriptures in prayer, perhaps using a psalm or reading from the day’s lectionary.

There are many responsible versions of the scriptures available in a variety of editions. Parishes could encourage families to have copies of the gospels or New Testaments or psalters or complete bibles for all their mem-
bers according to their age and ability. (Some suggestions are offered in *A book for God's people*, in Bulletin 63, pages 79-85; *Resources on the psalms*, no. 75, pages 187-188; *A family bookshelf*, no. 80, pages 188-189.)

- **Emphasis on prayer:** As well as reading the word for deepening our understanding of God's love and will (see Rom. 12: 1-2), we can use the scriptures as a rich source of prayer. We can pray the psalms and canticles; we can reflect on the gospels and other writings, and be open to the Spirit's action as we seek to deepen our prayer in response to God's word. (See *Some books on family prayer*, in Bulletin 68, pages 89-90.)

**Proclaiming our faith:** Week after week, we teach our people to love and revere the scriptures by the way they are respected and proclaimed in the Sunday liturgy:

- **Well prepared readers:** Those who proclaim the word must be well formed and trained in order that they may read well and with faith to people who listen with faith. Readers need to prepare well by prayer and study so that the full meaning of the passage may be conveyed. The parish community offers continuing help for readers, with resource books available to them, an annual refresher course, and a day of recollection for readers or for all ministers each year. Parishes that care for good reading will make sure that each reader has a personal copy of the study edition of the Sunday lectionary at home.

- **A book worthy of respect:** The book from which the readers proclaim should be a large bible or a full-sized lectionary. It is carried in procession, held up so that all may see and revere the book of God's word. The book is accompanied by candles and incensed at the gospel. Some parishes have decorated the lectionary with a rich cloth or metal cover. Outside the time for liturgy in many parishes, the lectionary or a large bible is enthroned with reverence near or at the lectern: see Bulletin 34, page 135.

- **A place reserved for God's word:** The lectern should be reserved for God's word in the readings and in the homily. It is not the best place for the priest to preside over the introductory and concluding rites, nor for a minister to make announcements and proclaim hymn numbers.

- **Adequate pauses for silent reflection:** After each reading and after the homily, there is a full minute of silence for personal reflection and prayer. The liturgy of the word is not rushed, but is punctuated with spaces for the Spirit to speak to us in silence (GI, no. 23 [1413]).

- **Two readers:** Where possible, it is desirable to have two readers on Sundays, one for each of the two readings (see GI, no. 71 [1461]). This allows a greater sharing in the ministry, more time for personal preparation of the text to be proclaimed, and a pleasing variety of voices. Many parishes use a woman for one reading and a man for the other.
Homily: The homily is based on the scriptures being proclaimed and the liturgy being celebrated. It is an unfolding of the mystery of God's loving action among us in Christ, and an invitation to respond in praise, thanks, love, and action.

* * *

Helpful reading:


* * *

Evaluation on the use of God's word:

In our parish [community, family]:

9. We recognize the scriptures as God's loving words to us:

10. We allow God to speak to us frequently through the scriptures:

11. Our readers are well prepared by prayer, study, and practice:

12. Our lectionary is a respectable book, and is handled at all times with proper reverence:

13. The lectern is reserved for proclaiming and unfolding God's word:

14. We observe good periods of silence in the liturgy of the word:

15. The homily moves from today's readings and liturgy and leads us to praise and action:
16. A study day on the ministry of readers is held at least once a year: [ ] true [ ] false

17. A day of recollection is provided each year for readers and other ministers: [ ] true [ ] false

18. The members of the community have an opportunity once a year to take part in a bible day or workshop on reading and praying God's word: [ ] true [ ] false

19. We invite people to prepare each week for next Sunday's readings: [ ] true [ ] false

20. We encourage families to pray with God's word in their homes: [ ] true [ ] false

21. We encourage people to take part in a study group on God's word: [ ] true [ ] false

22. Different versions of the scriptures and other helpful resources on the bible are available to the people through the parish or other local agency: [ ] true [ ] false

23. [If desired, add another question on this topic.]

Working for improvement: We discuss some practical ways of helping the readers and the members of our community to recognize the situation and to improve on it in the next twelve months.

OUR NEXT ISSUE

The September issue of the Bulletin is a celebration to mark our one hundredth issue since it began in April 1965. Since the beginning, 5,102 pages of notes and ideas, challenges and questions, rites and prayers, have been offered to our readers.

The Bulletin is described in this way on the inside front cover: “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.”

Our next issue continues this aim with a number of articles that invite us to explore different aspects of the liturgy, and to remain open to growth and development in our community celebrations of prayer and worship.

Bulletin 100 offers ideas for discussion and further thought, as we prepare to enter our second “century” of issues.
Sunday
and the
liturgical year

Sunday is the day of the Lord Jesus, the day when our God gathers us together in worship so that we may recognize our God and recognize ourselves as God's people. The liturgical year and other feasts form a background pattern against which Sunday stands out as the original and principal feast day.

Sunday: Our Greatest Feast

Our original feast: Sunday, the Lord's day, is the original and primary Christian feast. It is the day of Jesus' resurrection (Lk. 24: 1-9), of his first appearance to the apostles (Jn. 20: 1-29), of sending the Spirit on the apostles. Sunday is also mentioned in the New Testament in 1 Cor. 16: 2; Acts 20: 7; and Rev. 1: 10. The second century also knew Sunday as the day on which the work of creation began (Justin the martyr, Rome, around 150; see Gen. 1: 5). In the earliest years of the Church's life, Sunday was the weekly feast day, and the only feast day. Other celebrations came to be added gradually to form the calendar as we know it in our time. (See Liturgy constitution, no. 106 [106].)

Our greatest feast: In its origins and meaning, Sunday is the greatest feast of the Church's year of praise and prayer. Every Sunday is celebrated as the day of the paschal mystery of Christ, for Jesus died and was raised to bring us from death to life. Easter is the greatest Sunday of the year.

Day of celebration: The Lord's day is a day when Christians celebrate and rejoice. We recognize what God has done for us in Christ, and we give our praise and thanks. We see God's saving love active in Jesus, and we give thanks for such mercy and goodness. Sunday is a day of joy, of peace, of love; a day of rest, of good works, of prayer. Sunday is the day when God our Father gathers us together for liturgy: to offer praise and glory, to see ourselves as God's family gathered in this community around this table of the word and of the eucharist (Liturgy constitution, nos. 41-42 [41-42]; GL, nos. 74-75 [1464-1465]).
Renewing the covenant: Each Sunday we are invited by our God to renew our baptismal covenant (Liturgy constitution, no. 10 [10]). We are to die once more to sin, and put its ways out of our life; we are to profess our faith with all God's people, and give ourselves to God, to live with Jesus for the Father. This is the gift we bring each week as our contribution to the worship of God, as our gift for the sacrifice. This renewal is the only offering that God wants from us, for with God's grace it is the only one we can bring.

Some problems: The Church of today faces a number of problems concerning the celebration of Sunday. Though the Council called for first place for Sunday, the reform of the calendar was not as complete as it could have been, and now a number of other celebrations are allowed to overshadow the Sunday. Even in the few years since 1963, we have been seeing further celebrations eclipsing Sundays, and people at all levels imposing extraneous topics for celebration or preaching that are beginning to erode the place of Sunday.

* * *

Helpful reading: Many useful references for further reading are given throughout this issue: see pages 136, 138, 141, 146, 150, 160, 164, 168-169, 174-175.

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Evaluation on the celebration of Sunday:

In our parish [community, family]:

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24. We celebrate Sunday as the greatest feast of each week:

25. We share positive ideas on making this a day of greater joy and celebration:

26. Our Sunday liturgy and our prayer reflect the Easter spirit of Christ's resurrection:

27. We help and encourage our members to renew their baptismal covenant each week on the Lord's day:

28. We avoid scheduling anything that takes away from the celebration of the Lord's day:

29. [If desired, add another question on this topic.]

Working for improvement: We discuss some practical ways of helping the members of our community to recognize the situation and to improve on it in the next twelve months.
Moving Through the Year

The celebration of the Lord's day is given new splendor and value by the ever-changing seasons of the liturgical year.

**Overview of the liturgical year:** The whole year and all its seasons celebrate the paschal mystery of Jesus Christ: his dying and rising, and our sharing in this mystery through baptism and eucharist and life. Each of the seasons helps us to enter into the mystery (more than the history) of God's loving care for us in Jesus Christ. In the order followed by the liturgical calendar, the year flows in this way:

- **Christmas cycle:**
  - Advent: Preparation
    \[\text{We prepare for the coming of Jesus, who is here and yet to come.}\]
  - Christmas: Celebration
    \[\text{We celebrate the gift of our Father's love: Jesus is our brother and our Lord.}\]
  - Epiphany-Baptism: Reflection
    \[\text{We celebrate the love of God, who joins heaven and earth in Christ.}\]

- **Ordinary time begins:**
  - **With Jesus**
    \[\text{we share in the work of his body, the Church.}\]

- **Easter cycle:**
  - Lent: Preparation
    \[\text{In our daily life and prayer we die with Christ to sin, and live for God.}\]
  - Triduum: Celebration
    \[\text{We celebrate Jesus' dying and rising and our sharing with him through baptism.}\]
  - Easter season: Reflection
    \[\text{Sharing in the new life of Christ, we are filled with his Spirit.}\]

- **Ordinary time continues:**
  - **Guided by the Spirit of Jesus**
    \[\text{we build the kingdom of God by our lives.}\]
Emphasis on Sunday: During the strong seasons (Advent-Christmas and Lent-Easter) and ordinary time, Sunday takes first place in the calendar. The Sunday readings affect the spirit of the whole week, and provide guidance and reflection for God’s people. Weekday texts and celebrations lead to and from the Sunday eucharist.

Celebrating with the saints: Throughout the year, the Church observes the feasts of angels and saints. We praise Christ, who has won his paschal victory in their lives. We join with them in offering our praise and thanks to God, as we so often proclaim in the preface. We ask them to be our patrons, and to pray to Christ for us, and we can model our lives on theirs. See Those who follow Christ, in Bulletin 62, pages 52-54.

Focus on renewal: Throughout the year, on Sundays and feastdays and weekdays, we are invited to live up to our baptismal promises. Lent is baptismal in its thrust as we prepare to renew our promises at the Easter vigil. The Easter season is a continuation of this renewal. In Advent and Christmastime, we are making straight the way of the Lord in our lives, welcoming the Lord Jesus, and working with him for renewal in our lives. In ordinary time we are invited to renew our promises of baptism each Sunday and indeed each time we celebrate eucharist. The whole liturgical year is centered on our dying with Christ to sin and living with him for God.

Helpful reading:


National Bulletin on Liturgy:
- On history: Bulletin 47; on spirituality, no. 70; on planning, no. 67; on liturgical preaching, no. 69; on Sunday, nos. 43, 67, 70.
- On Advent-Christmas: see Bulletins 36, 41, 55, 85; on Lent-Easter, nos. 37, 42, 86, 97.

Liturgical leaflets: Those on the liturgical year include:
- Our Year of Prayer
- Sunday is the Lord’s Day
- Celebrating Sunday Mass
- Advent: Joy and Hope
- Living Lent
- Holy Week
- Easter Season
- Keeping Friday

* * *
Evaluation on celebrating the liturgical year:

In our parish [community, family]:

30. We live and pray in harmony with the liturgical seasons:
   
31. We provide resources to the musicians, readers, other ministers, and people to help them enter more fruitfully into the spirit of a new season:
   
32. Our preaching is in tune with the current liturgical season:
   
33. We encourage family prayer in the spirit of each season:
   
34. We invite people to renew their baptismal promises in the spirit of each season:
   
35. We avoid activities that are in conflict with the spirit and the celebrations of the season (St. Patrick's dances in Lent), or that anticipate the next one (Christmas parties and songs in Advent):
   
36. [If desired, add another question on this topic.]

Working for improvement: We discuss some practical ways of helping the members of our community to recognize the situation and to improve on it in the next twelve months.

WORKING TOGETHER

_The right hand washes the left,
the left hand washes the right,
that both may be clean._

_It is natural and right to help one another._

— Nigerian proverb

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1 From a poster issued by Quaker Peace and Service, Friends House, Easton Road, London, NW1 2BJ.
A space for worship

The space in which we are gathered to worship God is influenced by our theology of Church and liturgy, and at the same time forms our attitudes toward God, one another, and the world. When we see ourselves as special people — beloved children of the Father, brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ and of one another, temples of the living Spirit, people who are cleansed and forgiven and called to sing the praises of God in daily life and in prayer — then our worship will be joyful, community-centered, and offered with Christ who is present among us.

A worshipping community: The first purpose of a church building is to provide a place for the Church, God's people, to assemble. It is the house of the Church (see Bulletin 74). A good arrangement makes it easier to have good worship, while a poor space adds further obstacles.

- Spectators? By their arrangement, some churches suggest that we are a passive audience of mere spectators, while all the real action takes place around the altar, and is done by the ministers on stage. This type of church building reflects a theology of Church that is pre-Vatican II, and that makes liturgy the preserve of the clergy rather than of the whole community: people are placed in rigid rows of seats like spectators facing the stage in a theater.

- Or active participants? Other churches are more expressive of the truth by their design. By baptism we are all chosen by God, made sharers in the priesthood of Jesus, and called to offer ourselves and the Church's worship with him and with one another. The liturgy belongs to the whole Church, the whole priestly people. The clergy, who are part of the Church, are chosen to serve the community as leaders of worship. With the other ministers, they are servants of the whole people of God. An assembly space which reflects this image of Church tends to surround three sides of the altar and be close to it. People are welcomed to take full part in the eucharist and other celebrations in this home of God's holy people.

The Hebrew qahal, the Greek ekklesia and synagogue, and the English word Church refer first of all to the people God has gathered and chosen as the people of God (see Eph. 1: 3-14). It is God who chooses us and gathers us into one family by making a covenant with us. Our building, church with a small c, takes its name from the Church, the people who gather and are gathered there for worship.

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Even before the celebration begins, people are made to feel welcome by the ministers of hospitality, the men and women who serve as ushers. The introductory or gathering rites serve to gather all members of the community into one family which worships here.

**Cleansed and cleansing:** In baptism, we are cleansed from our sins, and this is continued in the eucharist and the sacrament of reconciliation (see *Rite of Penance*, Introduction, no. 2 [3067]). The design, placement, and importance of the baptismal font speaks volumes about our reverence for baptism and its meaning for us. A large font with flowing water, designed for immersion of adults and children, placed near the entrance of the church, and on a direct axis with the altar: such a font expresses the modern Church's faith. When the room for reconciliation is a dignified place near the font, its relationship with baptism and entrance back into the eucharistic community is expressed in a welcoming way.

We continue the baptismal vision by blessing water on some Sundays at the beginning of Mass, by using blessed water generously in our rites, by placing containers for blessed water (rather than wet sponges) at all entrances, by encouraging people to use blessed water at home, and by teaching them to renew their baptismal promises each time they use blessed water.

**Guided and fed by God's word:** The place of God's word in our liturgy and our life is discussed in *Nourished by God's word*, on pages 139-142, above. Is there room for improving the place of God's word in our church, in our celebrations of liturgy, and in our personal and family lives?

**Nourished with Christ's food:** The most important liturgical celebration that takes place in our church is the Sunday eucharist. The church building therefore has to be designed first of all for the community's participation in the eucharist each week, with adequate space for the procession of the gifts and the communion procession of the whole community, as all come forward to eat the bread of life and drink from the cup of life. In recognition of the fact that the elements for communion are to be consecrated in each Mass, the place of reservation is best located in a chapel which encourages visits and personal prayer. Reservation is first of all for the sick, the dying, and the absent, and then for the devotion of the people of God.

**Morning and evening prayer:** The space for the assembly must also be capable of a good celebration of morning and evening prayer: room for the people, cantor, musicians, reader, and the person who presides. The people are usually divided into two equal groups, and alternate the singing and saying of psalms and prayers.

**Other celebrations:** The church building must also be adaptable for a variety of other celebrations, some during the eucharist and some at other times: baptism, confirmation, ordinations, anointing of the sick; funerals; blessings, bible services, and penance celebrations; weekday eucharist; and...
devotional services. As well, consideration needs to be given to personal prayer and visits by individual believers.

**Beauty and simplicity:** The Church of today recognizes that good liturgy is built on simplicity and openness rather than complication or sham. Simple, unencumbered liturgies are our model: see Liturgy constitution, no. 34 [34]. "Soberness and sense" characterize the best celebrations of the English-speaking world. The space in which God's people worship should reflect this spirit, and be simple and beautiful. The taste for good art, especially religious art, is to be encouraged among families and individuals. Symbols in the liturgy need to be used well.

**Image of God's people in this place:** The church building is the house of God's people, the Church. It should present an image of the humble servant people, followers of Jesus, who live and worship in this locality. It should reflect their local culture rather than imitating a building somewhere in a European country in a past century or era. It should proclaim to today's world that here is where God's people gather in this community, as a family, together to honor God and to serve their brothers and sisters. The body of Christ, always ready to share God's love for all, should be recognized not only in our loving action (see Jn. 13: 35) but also in our bricks and mortar.

**Problems:** In the past quarter century, the Church's image of itself has evolved radically, returning a little closer to the models recognized in the scriptures and in the patristic age. Many of our older buildings were designed for a more passive audience of spectators, where all the significant action took place "on the stage" or in the sanctuary. How can these buildings be rearranged so that their good qualities and artistic value may be retained without at the same time losing sight of their primary purpose of helping us to worship God in our time? Each parish and community has to look at its own building, its own circumstances, and then — with expert guidance and advice — move slowly and wisely toward improvements that are reasonably possible in this situation.

**Helpful reading:**


Bulletin 74, *House of the Church*: this issue includes many other references to helpful books and articles; also no. 69, *Eucharistic Devotions*.


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Evaluation of our space for worship:

In our parish [community]:

37. Our seating space proclaims we are all God's people, gathered here to worship as one family of Christ's brothers and sisters:

38. The area around the altar says that clergy and ministers are servants of the people they lead in worship:

39. Our baptismal space is worthy, with flowing water, a clear relationship between entrance and altar, and open to immersion of adults and children.

40. Our community uses blessed water well at church and at home:

41. The room for reconciliation is related to the font and the altar:

42. This room is worthy in design, adequate in space and arrangements, provides people with a choice between anonymous and face-to-face confession, and encourages good celebration:

43. Everything in our church contributes to good celebration of the Sunday eucharist, and nothing makes this difficult:

44. There is room for good processions of the people, including the gifts and at communion time:

45. The space can be used comfortably for large and small celebrations of daily prayer:

46. Our church works well for celebrating sacraments and blessings, bible services, funerals, weekday eucharists, and other rites:

47. There is provision for personal prayer and small group devotions in our church:

48. Our church building is simple and beautiful inside and out, uncluttered, and contributing to a sense of peace, beauty, and dignity:

49. Our church is a good image of what we are and try to be in the service of Jesus and the people of God:

50. The building reflects our culture, our era, and our spirit of serving with faith in today's world.
51. We are looking carefully at any problems in our church’s design, furnishings, and use:

52. We are encouraging families to appreciate and have good art, including religious art, in their homes:

53. We encourage families to set aside a space in their homes for prayer, devotion, and reflection:

54. [If desired, add another question on this topic.]

Working for improvement: We discuss some practical ways of helping the members of our community to recognize the situation and to improve on it in the next twelve months.

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YOUTH

At its meeting in November 1984, the Episcopal Commission for Liturgy discussed the International Year of Youth, and made the following recommendations to diocesan commissions and others:

- To invite young people (high school, college, early 20s) into some of the parish ministries (liturgy, social ministry). A period of preparation should precede their designation in these ministries. The relationship of these ministries with the eucharist should be clearly appreciated.

- To encourage young people to have an appreciation of both the words and the music they sing or listen to both in religious hymns and in secular society.

- To involve youth in the process and formation of candidates for confirmation (e.g., prayer companion, personal catechist, witness of faith in personal life style).

- To have parish councils and organizations develop a reflection process “to” and “from” youth (e.g., on sickness), leading to an invitation to prayer and ministry.

Parishes may wish to continue working on these suggestions in the years to come, and develop them further according to local circumstances.
Good attitudes in liturgy

What attitudes should we have as we celebrate our liturgy? What attitudes should mark us as people who worship our God? Some of these are described briefly in the first part of this article; suggestions for personal and family prayer are included in the second part.

In Our Liturgy

Thanks and praise: Christians have inherited from Jesus and from Judaism the practice of giving thanks and praise to God for all the good that is and for all the gifts we receive. We praise God who is good and powerful, and we give thanks for the gifts showered on us and on others. We offer this praise on our own behalf and in the name of all the human race and indeed of all the universe.

In our liturgy, the basic thrust is thanks and praise. The meaning of “eucharist” is thanksgiving: we join with Christ, the rest of the people of God in heaven and on earth, and with all creation to thank God for all the gifts of nature and of redemption in Christ.

Familiar reverence: Christian prayer is born out of respectful love and loving respect. We adore our God, and love our God as our Father. We are God’s adopted children, brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ, temples of the Spirit. Our intimacy with our God is in response to God’s own invitation, but must never become flippant, or move to the other extreme of craven fear. We stand before our God as beloved children, but also as forgiven members of the family. We give thanks to our God, who has chosen us and invites us to stand with Christ as we give our service of love and praise.

Truthful, sincere, without sham: Our worship is offered to God in the nakedness of truth. By ourselves, we are nothing and have nothing. All that we are and have comes to us from God, and we make our offering of praise for the gifts we have received. We do not boast, for we have nothing to boast about. We cannot put on a facade that will deceive God, and we must not try to do so to others. In our churches, we no longer paint wood and pretend it is marble. Our prayers are not to be bloated with big words and
meaningless flourishes (see Mt. 6: 7). Our symbols are straightforward but
deep (see Bulletin 97, page 53). Honorific titles and the language of royal
courts have no place in our worship. We seek to worship our God in Spirit
and in truth (Jn. 4: 14).

**Love and concern for others:** Our liturgy is offered with the whole
family of Christ's brothers and sisters, sharing with Jesus in his concern for
the needs of other people. Our praise and thanks must flow from hearts that
are filled with love for others and lifted up to God. Jesus has given us his new
commandment of love to be our guide in life; it must also be at the heart of
our worship. The hands we raise in prayer must also be stretched out to all
in need, and work for their benefit. Our petitions in the prayer of the faithful
have to be backed up by our community works and activities, and by the way
we spend our parish assets. Further reflections on the works of mercy at the
heart of our liturgy are given in Bulletin 96, pages 259-261.

**Concern for justice:** As Messiah, Jesus came to change our world into
God's kingdom of justice, love, and peace (see preface 51). We who are the
body of Christ by our baptism are called to carry on his work of justice. Our
prayers are not heard by God if we have closed our ears to the cries of those
in need. In his talks both in Canada and elsewhere, John Paul II has been
strong in his appeals for justice for all people: this is our concern too, and it
cannot be put aside or ignored. (See also Bulletin 96, *Social Justice and
Liturgy*, for many of the implications of justice in our community and in
family life and prayer.)

**Repentance and renewal:** Christians need to maintain a balance here:
we are not hopeless wretches, nor are we spotless angels. We have been
snatched from darkness by God's mighty love, and brought through baptism
into the kingdom of light. Though we have all deliberately turned away from
God by sin, Jesus has invited us back, and has forgiven us. Each Sunday,
each Advent, each Lent, Jesus invites us to turn back, to repent, to renew
our baptismal promises of dying with him to sin, and of living with him for
God. He has given us three sacraments of reconciliation: baptism, eucharist,
and penance (see *Rite of Penance*, Introduction, no. 2 [3067]). Repentance
is part of our Christian living and our liturgy, and continuing renewal is our
task.¹ Bulletin 88 speaks about *Reconciliation in Our Life*.

**Cross and crown:** Jesus saved us by his obedience, dying and rising
to free us from sin and give us a share in his everlasting life. We are brought
into his paschal mystery in our baptism, and continue to share in it as long
as we are faithful to him. As Church, as a community, and as individuals, we

¹ The Second Vatican Council reminds us that we are a Church always in need of reform: see 1 Jn. 1: 8;
Constitution on the Church, no. 8; Decree on ecumenism, nos. 3, 4, and 6 [185]; *Rite of Penance*, Intro-
duction, no. 3 [3068]. The same is true of us as individual believers.
have to learn the wisdom of the cross: we must suffer with Jesus in order to win a share in his glory. We must go through Good Friday in order to reach Easter, accepting the cross on the way to the crown. There are no shortcuts to glory; instant happiness or success is an illusion.

When we share willingly in Christ's sufferings, carrying our daily cross with him (Lk. 9: 23), we know that we are walking with Christ and in his Spirit. This is the path which Jesus trod, the path along which his Church must walk, and by which he leads us to him.

Our baptism is our first entry into the paschal mystery of Jesus. We continue to renew our sharing in it each time we celebrate eucharist, each time we accept our penances and crosses, each time we seek to die with Christ to sin and live with him for God. Our final entry into the fullness of his Easter mystery will be at the moment of our death, when he knocks and invites us to enter into the glory of our Lord.

Silence: Good liturgy involves moments of silence. As well as speaking to God, we listen to the Spirit, and spend some time in reflecting on God's word and in gathering our prayer intentions. Public prayer without periods of silence can become oppressive and actually lead to less personal prayer on the part of the community members. Silent times are built into every liturgy when we are invited to join in prayer (“Let us pray”), to remember our weaknesses and sinfulness, and to reflect after hearing readings and preaching from God's word (GI, no. 23 [1413]).

Respect for our bodies and all creation: The scriptures describe God as the artist who made all things to be very good (Gen. 1: 31; Eph. 2: 10). As embodied spirits we are made in God's image and likeness (Gen. 1: 26-27). Scriptural references to the corruption or evil of the flesh are not references to our bodies as much as to the unspiritual attitude which is against God's ways among us (see Rom. 8: 1-17). Our human bodies enable us to carry out our good actions as well as our sins, and will be raised in glory at the end of time if we are faithful with the help of God's grace (1 Cor. 15: 42-57). Our bodies are intended for good actions, for giving glory to God; our bodies are members of Christ and temples of the Spirit (see 1 Cor. 6: 13-20). We may offer our bodies, our works, and our lives as living sacrifices which please our God (Rom. 12: 1).

Our liturgies show our respect for all creation: we use material gifts — water, bread, wine, oil, lights, incense, vesture, books — as part of our celebrations, and we bless these gifts in recognition of God's goodness in giving them to us for our use.²

In the liturgy, we show respect by the way we use our bodies: we stand, bow, kneel, prostrate, sit; we make signs of the cross, and raise or join our hands. We share the sign of peace, we lay on hands, we anoint. See Bulletins 89 and 94 for further development of these ideas.

Seeing God's hand in creation: As Christians we believe in a God who loves us, and who has made all creation for our benefit. We need to remain open to God's presence in created things: in the beauty of a sunset and a spring day, in the joy of a child's laugh and a mother's smile, in the tiny hand of a newborn babe and the gnarled, weary fingers of a grandparent. We know God is with us, and that our brother Jesus is among us, present in many ways (see Mt. 18: 20; 25: 31-46; Liturgy constitution, no. 7 [7]). Our liturgy should celebrate God's loving presence, and help us to become ever more aware of the all-embracing love being shown for us as beloved members of God's own family. Do we share these insights adequately in our homilies, parish bulletins, prayers, catechetical gatherings, and on other occasions?

Time as a gift: Our life, our time is a gift we receive from God with grateful hearts. Our liturgy celebrates time: the daily rhythm in the liturgy of the hours; the weekly cycle, especially by observing Sundays and Fridays; the movement of the seasons, both natural and liturgical, is marked by feasts and fasts, by ferial days and solemnities (see pages 143-147, above). When we celebrate our worship, we enter in a special way into sacred time, and are in contact with eternal truths in a life-giving way. Good liturgy takes a lot of time for planning, and must not be rushed in its celebration. Liturgy celebrates God's gift of time to us, and is a foretaste of the eternal celebrations of heaven (Liturgy constitution, no. 8 [8]).

Petition and intercession: As well as praise and thanks, the liturgy encourages us to pray for ourselves and for others. As Christ's body, the Church on earth, we are the ones who join with him in making intercession for all people and for all the universe. We are his people of prayer, offering our requests with Jesus to the Father of all. If we grow tired in our prayers for others, if we are negligent, the work remains undone. Christ wishes us to be fervent in our pleas, generous in the scope of our prayers for all. This broader horizon of prayer is to be reflected in the prayer of the faithful in each Mass (both Sundays and weekdays), in the intercessions of morning and evening prayer, and in every other liturgical celebration or gathering in our community.

Ecumenism: Vatican II committed the Catholic Church to work for unity among Christians, until we are able to celebrate the eucharist together around one altar. Pope John Paul II continues to emphasize the importance of this task, and to encourage parishes, communities, and every baptized individual to be involved in ecumenism (see Some steps along the way, in Bulletin 96, pages 314-315). As well as taking part in the Week of Prayer for Unity in January, we need to pray often in our liturgies for unity; to continue working to renew our own liturgies and way of life; to meet with members
of neighboring congregations, and share with them in prayer, discussion, education, and work for social justice. Many positive suggestions are offered in Bulletin 78, *Ecumenism and Liturgy*, and in no. 98, *Sacraments and Ministry*. In many areas of our country, especially in the cities, a growing non-Christian population will mean that the teachings of Vatican II, Declaration on the relationship of the Church to non-Christian religions, need to be understood and put into practice as well.

**Spirituality:** Our spirituality has to be rooted in our baptism (see page 134, above), and in the paschal mystery of Jesus (see "Cross and crown" on pages 154-155).

### In Our Personal and Family Prayer

**Thanks and praise:** We can learn to use the Jewish *berakah* or blessing prayer in our personal and family prayer. In its simplest form, it praises God's goodness and generosity. A simple prayer could be:

*Blessed are you, Lord our God:
you are the maker of all things
and ruler of the universe.*

Or the prayer can continue by expressing thanks for a particular gift:

*You have made this beautiful day for us.*

If we wish, we may add a petition:

*Help us to be your holy people today.*

Then we may conclude with a simple blessing once more:

*Blessed are you, Lord our God, for ever. Amen!*

St. Paul reminds us to give thanks to God in all circumstances (1 Cor. 10: 31; Col. 3: 17; 1 Thess. 5: 18). Every prayer of thanks we offer puts us in tune with the liturgy, for the eucharistic (thanksgiving) prayer is a developed form of *berakah*.

Further notes on praying the *berakah* prayer are given in Bulletin 80, page 176; and no. 68, pages 73-74.

**Familiar reverence:** By their own attitudes and example, parents help their children to come close to God as loving Father, to know Jesus as Lord and brother, and to accept the presence of the Spirit who lives in each of us. We are members of God's own family, and Jesus has taught us to call God *Abba*, our loving Father (see Bulletin 58, page 74).

**Truthful and sincere:** We come to our God in straightforward prayer, not seeking to make a good impression by using fancy language. Simple
words, unvarnished and sincere, express our praise and our pleas. We accept the teaching of our Lord about the language we are to use in our prayer (see Mt. 6: 7). We come to God as we are, not pretending to be someone else or to be different or better than what we are in God's sight.

Love and concern for others: Parents teach their children concern for others by their daily love and care at home, and by the way they reach out to relatives, neighbors, and friends in need, in suffering, or in distress. This is reflected in an attitude of welcome to all who come to their home, and by their continuing readiness to take part in activities contributing to the common good. Family prayers also reflect their love and care for others, especially in their times of need. Prayer for other people is one way of reaching out to help, and it is to be backed up by kind words and helpful actions.

Concern for justice: Along with love, our concern for justice must be reflected in both our prayers and our actions. Parents need to become more attuned to the demands of Christian justice, take part in the parish projects in this area of life, and share these concerns with their children. Simple and helpful prayers about justice are included throughout Bulletin 96.

Repentance and renewal: Learning to forgive and to say we are sorry is part of every person's life. Parents give their children constant examples of forgiveness and repentance in daily living, and help them to form their conscience as they grow. God's total forgiving love is embodied for their children in their willingness to reach out, to forgive, to restore harmony, to lift up and heal. A simple expression of sorrow and forgiveness should be part of each day's living and praying. God's readiness to forgive us in Christ means that no one has to live under a cloud of guilt for past sin and failure. A good start at home will help children to move into adult life with a sense of self-worth, and a balance between the realities of sin and forgiveness.

Jesus has taught us to pray for forgiveness, and to forgive others as we are forgiven (Mt. 6: 12, 14-15). This prayer is important for personal and for public prayer.

Cross and crown: Children learn to accept sorrows and joys, to recognize that results cost efforts, and that we need to work if we are to reach our goals: they learn this from the teaching and example of their parents. Parents who love their children will guide them and help them to carry their little crosses with Jesus, preparing them for greater ones in the years to come. Simple penances and offerings to the Lord will become part of their daily efforts with Christ for God. Especially on Fridays and during Lent, these efforts can be part of this family's sharing with the whole Church in the cross

3 See Directory for Masses with Children, by the Congregation for Divine Worship (November 1, 1973), nos. 9-10 [2142-2143]; and Forgiving and asking forgiveness, in Bulletin 89, page 112.

of Jesus. See *The top ten* penances in Bulletin 42, pages 20-33; and the liturgical leaflets, *Living Lent* (1979, CCCB, Ottawa), and *Keeping Friday* (1985).

**Silence:** Parents teach their children to speak, but also need to lead them to appreciate the value of silence at times. We need quiet moments to find peace, to reflect, to listen to ourselves and others, to rest from the hustle of daily cares, and to relax. In a world where music is piped into many public areas, we need to learn to turn off radios and TV, to cut out some of our chattering and babbling, and simply be silent.

Silence is good in our family and personal prayer, as it is in liturgy. We need moments to gather ourselves together in God's presence, to listen to the Spirit of Jesus, to reflect on God's goodness in our lives this day. Silence in our prayer should never be embarrassing, but rather a refreshing pause. See *Keeping silent and listening*, in Bulletin 89, pages 107-110; liturgical leaflet, *Moments of Silence* (1983, CCCB, Ottawa).

**Respect for our bodies and all creation:** Children pick up their parents' attitudes toward their bodies and all creation. If their parents seem to feel that bodies are wicked, or that the power of evil is lurking in matter, this will come across to the children. If, however, parents see creation as God's handiwork, and their bodies as gifts of a loving creator, they will share a more positive approach with their children.

Thanks for God's gifts, blessings over meals and the ordinary things used in daily life, blessings of children before they go to bed or go off to school: practices like these will be helpful in teaching children respect for their own bodies and for all created gifts. Some of the blessings and many of the prayers in *A Book of Blessings* (1981, CCCB, Ottawa) may be used by parents in their homes.

**Seeing God's hand in creation:** When they learn to recognize that God is always with them, parents are able to share this great sign of love with their children. They can help their little ones to say thanks for beautiful things, for joyful moments. In times of little disappointments, parents can hug their children and help them to see things in a more hopeful light. As children learn to see God's hand everywhere, they can be encouraged to respond in brief prayers of gratitude. Families can ask their parish community to help them to recognize God's presence, and to know how to respond to this love in prayer and action.

**Time as a gift:** Families can grow in their spiritual life by moving in tune with the Church's liturgy: morning and evening prayer, Sundays as days of joy, Fridays as days of penance, liturgical seasons, feasts. The patron saints of family members can be celebrated on their feast days. Parents'
example in making good use of their time — in work and play as well as
prayer — will be shared with their children.

**Petition and intercession:** Children can be invited to pray for others in
their daily prayers, remembering those close to them and those in special
need. As they grow older, they can be encouraged to take on world problems
— peace, justice, disarmament, victims of wars and disasters — in their
prayer. Some families say a brief prayer for all involved in an emergency
when they hear a siren on the streets. What other ways can the parish teach
families to pray? Helpful publications include *Family Book of Prayer* (1983,
CCCB, Ottawa), and Bulletin 80, *Helping Families to Pray.*

**Ecumenism:** Most Christian parents are men and women of sound
principles and high ideals. Though we belong to different denominations, we
share many things in common. By working together, practising Christian
families can help one another in the task of raising their children to be true
followers of Jesus. We can share moments of prayer, and pray for one
another. We can learn to respect others' forms of devotion and prayer, and
give praise to our God, whose goodness is reflected in so many people.

Parishes can help parents to respect the ideals of other world religions,
and to build on solid foundations wherever they find them. Family prayers
can mention all neighbors, including those of other Christian Churches and
of other faiths, and pray that God may bless and guide them all. Prayers for
unity among Christians and for all people of good will are according to the
mind of Christ.

**Spirituality:** Families need to grow in understanding baptism as the
root of their Christian spirituality, for it was in baptism that Jesus brought
us from darkness to light, and made us members of his body, the Church. As
God's beloved children we have the responsibility of working with Christ
and with one another to build up God's rule on earth, inviting others by our
example and prayer to join us in loving God and neighbor. As sharers in
Jesus' dying and rising, we have the opportunity of working with Jesus to
turn evil to good, to overcome obstacles and make them stepping stones to
victory in Christ. Parishes can encourage families to see their life in a positive
and hope-filled way, and to realize that Jesus is with them, transforming them
through their difficulties and efforts. Christians need to be people of hope,
for Jesus has overcome the power of sin, and shares his victory with us
through our faith.

* * *

**Helpful reading:**

* National Bulletin on Liturgy:
  - No. 89 *Children Learn to Celebrate*
  - No. 94 *Gestures and Symbols.*
Evaluation on our attitudes in liturgy:

In our parish [community, family]:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>quite true</th>
<th>barely true</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>55.</td>
<td>We encourage an attitude of praise and thanks to God in our liturgies and prayers:</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9</td>
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<tr>
<td>56.</td>
<td>We promote a spirit of familiar reverence for God and the things of God:</td>
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<td>57.</td>
<td>Our worship and our activities are truthful, sincere, and without sham:</td>
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<td>58.</td>
<td>Love for others and concern for justice are part of our worship and our daily living:</td>
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<td>59.</td>
<td>We keep a balanced attitude toward repentance and renewal, showing forgiveness with the generosity of Christ, and encouraging all to keep turning back to God:</td>
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<tr>
<td>60.</td>
<td>We help people to recognize that Christ's paschal mystery involves them in suffering now and in his glory later; he will help us to work with him and share in his victory:</td>
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<tr>
<td>61.</td>
<td>Silence is an important element in our prayer, and is encouraged in a positive way in our liturgies and life:</td>
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<tr>
<td>62.</td>
<td>In all our activities, celebrations, and teachings, we encourage respect for our human bodies and for all creation:</td>
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<tr>
<td>63.</td>
<td>We encourage all to recognize God's hand in creation, events, and other persons:</td>
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<tr>
<td>64.</td>
<td>We take adequate time for our liturgies and for our prayer:</td>
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<tr>
<td>65.</td>
<td>We encourage the proper celebration of Sundays in our liturgies, in our homes, and in all our activities:</td>
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<td>66.</td>
<td>We promote sound attitudes and practices on Fridays:</td>
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<td>67.</td>
<td>We have some celebrations of morning and evening prayer, and offer positive models and ideas for family prayer:</td>
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<tr>
<td>68.</td>
<td>By the example of our liturgies and by our teaching, we invite our people to extend the horizons of their prayer and to pray for all in need:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>69.</td>
<td>We promote sound ecumenical attitudes and activities throughout the year:</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

161
70. By our teaching and activities, we help our people to share the Church’s positive attitudes toward non-Christian religions:

71. We encourage all Christians to recognize the importance of baptism in their lives:

72. We offer positive Christian guidance to all who are finding it hard to recognize or cope with crosses in their daily living:

73. [If desired, add another question on this topic.]

Working for improvement: We discuss some practical ways of helping the members of our community to recognize the situation and to improve on it in the next twelve months.

How good is our liturgy?

It may surprise you to recognize that most of the articles in this issue are mainly about the basis and background and setting for liturgy. Along with the ministers, these are essential if we are to have good liturgies in our parishes and communities.

This issue provides 116 questions for your self-analysis. Space prevents us from providing further questions, but a future Bulletin will continue the process.

Liturgy committees in parishes and communities, and diocesan commissions as well, may wish to develop further points for discussion on Sunday Mass, liturgy of the hours, weekday eucharist, each of the sacraments, eucharistic devotions, funerals, blessings, and other devotions.

Using this issue: Suggestions for using the evaluations on different topics are given on page 137 above. If the liturgy committee studies an article and its evaluation every month or two, it will be able to see what needs to be done about the community’s worship, and to move ahead gradually.

Experience shows that better progress can be made when each member has a copy of the Bulletin; extra copies are available from Publications Service at the address on the inside front cover of this issue.
Our liturgy and our life

Our worship and our life have to be closely related, and affect each other. Our daily life of love and service to God and neighbor must lead to our eucharistic offering on the Lord's day, and our liturgy must lead us back into our daily living. The liturgy is the "summit and source" of our life (Liturgy constitution, no. 10 [10]).

Life leads to liturgy: The good that we do — our prayer, penances, suffering, good works for others — becomes part of the gift we bring to God in our Sunday eucharist. We give our life and our efforts to walk with Jesus, to do God's will, to live our love. We bring these efforts as a sign of our devotion, our dedication to the kingdom. When we lift up our hearts, they are filled with the love we have shown all week by God's grace.

In a similar way, we bring the work we have done today to God in our evening prayer, and thank God for what we have received or accomplished with grace. We offer our day's work as part of Christ's sacrifice of praise (GILH,1 no. 39 [3469]).

Liturgy leads to life: In the eucharist we are strengthened by God's word in the readings and the homily, and we are nourished by eating the bread of life and drinking the cup of salvation. Thus prepared, we are sent forth from the celebration to live as Christians. In each eucharist we renew our baptismal covenant (Liturgy constitution, no. 10 [10]), promising once more that we will die this week with Christ to sin, and live with him for God. We are renewed and sent by God as workers in the vineyard, to use our gifts and talents — so generously given to us by the Spirit of Jesus — for the building up of God's kingdom. We are sent to share our faith and love with all, inviting them by our attitudes, actions, and prayer to join with us in being Christ's body in this community.

In morning prayer each day, we consecrate our day to God, and join with the risen Christ in serving God and God's people (GILH, no. 38 [3468]).

Dedicated to good works: The New Testament describes the people of God as chosen in Jesus Christ to live holy and sinless lives (Eph. 1: 4). Jesus has purified us, and made us his people who are eager to do good deeds (Titus 2: 14; 3: 8). Does this describe the image we have of ourselves?

Ministries to all in need: In our parish, do we reach out to love, to serve, to forgive as Jesus did, as he has done for us? Where are we in our ministry to the marginal people in our society? (See Are we a Church that reconciles? in Bulletin 88, pages 55-61.)

Do we reach out to parents and to single parent families? to parents preparing for childbirth? to unwed mothers? to newlyweds and those who are preparing for marriage? What efforts are we making to aid people whose marriage is going on the rocks? to help children in broken homes?

Are we reaching out to those who have turned away from the Church for one reason or another? What about those who think they cannot be forgiven? or those whose sins oppress them and blind them to God’s mercy? Do they feel Christ’s forgiving love in our words and gestures and prayers? What about the sick and the dying? the shut-ins? the people in our community with handicaps?

Meeting needs: If these needs exist in our parish — and we know they do — then we will also have people with the gifts who can help to minister to these needs.

Our task as parish is to encourage people to recognize both the needs of others and their own God-given gifts. We have to strengthen these persons in our liturgies, and encourage them to reach out and share their love, their gifts, and themselves with others. We need to inspire them to come to others’ help in their daily lives as members of the community and also — when this is appropriate — as ministers of the local Church.

Each parish should be a ministering community in a society that encourages selfishness and “me-first” attitudes. Jesus came to be a servant to all who needed him. Now it is we, his baptized brothers and sisters, who are to carry on his work.

Are we listening to Jesus and his call?

* * *

Helpful reading:

Bulletin 53, Ministries and Liturgy.

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Evaluation on liturgy and life:  
In our parish [community, family]:

74. We keep liturgy and life closely related:  

75. We help people to prepare for Sunday eucharist by teaching them to offer their good deeds of the week to God:  

76. We encourage all to begin each day with prayer, dedicating themselves to God's work:  

77. We help people to end each day with prayer, thanking God for the good accomplished in them and through them that day:  

78. By homilies and other forms of teaching, we encourage people to recognize their call to good works with Christ:  

79. As a community we try to live out the liturgy by reaching out to all in need:  

80. We try to help all in our area who are sick, dying, shut-in, or handicapped:  

81. We reach out to all families with their varying needs and pains:  

82. We reach out to any who are alienated from the Church, no matter for what reason:  

83. We offer prayer, consolation, forgiveness and encouragement to people who feel they are trapped in their sins:  

84. We encourage community members to recognize the needs of their neighbors:  

85. We encourage our members to recognize their own God-given talents, and challenge them to use these gifts for God's people:  

86. We are trying to become a ministering community in the spirit of Jesus, the servant of all who suffer:  

87. In our liturgies we pray for all in any need, and challenge community members to live out the love they profess by putting it into action each week:  

88. [If desired, add another question on this topic.]

Working for improvement: We discuss some practical ways of helping the members of our community to recognize the situation and to improve on it in the next twelve months.
EVALUATING OUR LITURGY

Striving for excellence

Generosity in love: God loves us with a deep love, and has sent the Son to save us and bring us unending life (Jn. 3: 16-17). The Son of God has loved us so much, and took our flesh and became one of us: Jesus Christ, our brother and our Lord. Jesus pointed out that the greatest love we can show is to lay down our life for our friends (Jn. 15: 13); then he showed his own deep love for us by dying to save us from the power of darkness.

Challenging our love: In John's gospel, Jesus follows the last supper by a long discourse with his disciples (chapters 13-17). He gives us the commandment of love: we are to love one another as he has loved us (Jn. 13: 34). He tells us that the world will know we are his followers by the way we love one another (Jn. 13: 35). What does the world say when it sees our love?

Jesus, who has given himself totally for us, challenges us to do better than we are doing. If we are doing only what we ought to do, then we are unprofitable servants (Lk. 17: 10). He calls us to go further, to go all the way, to put our total trust in him: he invited the rich young man, who kept the commandments, to sell all his goods and come and follow him (Mk. 10: 21; see page 178, below).

Doing our best for Jesus: In every aspect of our life — work, study, recreation, health, education, cleanliness, prayer, good deeds, worship — we are invited to live our life with Christ. He invites us to become as loving and generous as he was in the days of his flesh. How open are we to his challenge?

Today too many people are operating on low standards of service. They want to do as little as possible, to do the minimum required, to get by with little effort. All too many don't want to do a good job. Simple honesty and justice demand that we do a fair job in return for a fair salary.

A Christian who is sensitive to the mind and will of Christ cannot be satisfied with just getting by. We are called to do our best in everything, as
Jesus did. We are to show our love for others by doing our work well. We are to pray as well as we can, to give the best worship that is in us, to reach out and help others as much as we can (see Bulletin 94, page 136, note 2). We are not to grow weary of doing good with Christ (Gal. 6: 9; 2 Thess. 3: 13).

A person who truly cares about what Christ wants will have to care for people — for whom Jesus died — and for proper worship offered to God. Caring involves self-respect, and respect for God, for God's people, and for the things of God. We have to see ourselves and others as God's beloved, forgiven, faltering children, people who are willing but weak (Mk. 14: 38), true but tempted. At the same time, we need to learn a lesson from the scriptures: the externals of worship can never replace a lack of love and mercy in our hearts and in our deeds (see Hos. 6: 6 and 8: 12-13; 1 Sam. 15: 22; Amos 5: 21-24; Mt. 9: 13 and 12: 7).

Working for Excellence in Our Liturgy

Excellence in our liturgy involves a variety of steps:

**Remembering who we are:** As God's holy people, we share in the priesthood of Christ, and are given the privilege and responsibility in baptism of taking part in his worship (Liturgy constitution, no. 14 [14]). This assembly of the baptized is the Church in this place (Liturgy constitution, nos. 41-42 [41-42]): see page 131, above.

**Understanding what we are doing:** In the liturgy, we are doing Christ's work. To be effective, our minds and hearts have to be in tune with his: offering our thanks, our love, our daily service, our self-surrender to God's will. We have to be in tune with the renewed liturgy of the Church, seeing it as Christ's work today, and not merely seeking to revivify dead forms or reproduce past rites. We do today in our modern liturgy what every generation has done: remembering Christ's dying and rising, joining with him in giving praise and thanks, being one with him in praying for the Church and the world.

**Full celebration:** When we join with Jesus in our worship, we have to do so generously, with all our heart and strength. Shortcuts, speedy performances, dropping of the time for silent reflection, leaving out prayers, readings, homily, rites, or texts, or doing several parts of the celebration simultaneously: in such goings on we are fooling no one but ourselves, and are depriving the members of this assembly of the proper celebration which is their right: we are insulting rather than worshipping our God, offering shoddy wares instead of wholehearted self-offering with Christ.

**Formation of the people:** Members of the parish or community need to be formed and educated in their spirit and sense of liturgy; we can never know or understand enough about our worship (see pages 173-174, below).
○ **Good celebration:** The first and most important method of formation is by good celebration of every liturgy. By celebrating well people gradually enter more fully into Christ's worship, and grow in their realization of what it means to be his holy people joined with him in prayer. Rites are best explained by doing them well: the meaning of the kiss or greeting of peace is best understood when we do it well, letting the electric feeling of being sisters and brothers of Jesus and of one another run through our assembly. Careful planning is also part of good celebration: see pages 170-176, below.

○ **Ordinary means of teaching:** We can share our understanding for different parts and rites of the Mass and other liturgical celebrations by unfolding them occasionally in the homily, especially when a reading involves the basis for what we do (Liturgy constitution, no. 24 [24]). On Ash Wednesday, rather than explaining the meaning of ashes in great detail, we can celebrate their meaning by carrying out the Church's rites well, by proclaiming the meaning and spirit of penance (as in the day's gospel), and by encouraging this spirit throughout the season of Lent. Our parish bulletin can explain parts of the liturgy occasionally, and bulletin inserts¹ may be included from time to time.

○ **Special events:** Parishes and communities can make the effort to provide a workshop, day of reflection, or evening session on the liturgy, Mass, sacraments, liturgical year, particular season, rites, or other topics on worship. This could be a yearly event, carried out in the parish (perhaps with help or guidance from the diocesan liturgy commission or office), or by a group of neighboring communities. Some dioceses provide diocesan or deanery workshops every year or two.

○ **Resources:** Suitable resources for people who wish to know more about the liturgy and prayer can be made available, perhaps through a parish library. Some parishes have a subscription for several copies of the Bulletin, and share its articles with interested persons.

* * *

**Helpful reading:**


○ **On silence:** see Bulletin 62, page 35; no. 71, pages 204-205; no. 72, pages 13-14.

¹ The National Liturgical Office has prepared a series of liturgical leaflets which are 8½ by 11 inches (21.5 by 28 cm), folded in three. These cover a variety of liturgical topics — seasons, days, rites, sacraments, penances, attitudes — and may be inserted in Sunday bulletins or distributed separately. Some communities and parishes use them for small group instructions or discussions. A complete list is available in *Publications in English — 1985 Catalogue*, which lists current publications of the CCCB: write to Publications Service, 90 Parent Avenue, Ottawa, Ontario K1N 7B1.
Evaluation on striving for excellence:

In our parish [community, family]:

89. We encourage people to be challenged to greater generosity and love both in daily life and in liturgy:

90. The spirit of always doing our best with Christ penetrates our thoughts, actions, prayers, and liturgies:

91. We try to follow Christ both by caring for his brothers and sisters and by offering good worship in our liturgy:

92. We encourage people to remember their baptismal sharing in the priesthood of Jesus, and to let it penetrate their prayer, worship, and life:

93. We provide full celebrations, avoiding all shortcuts or slovenliness, and offering worship with dignity and with loving concern for God and God's people in this community:

94. We work to form people by good celebration in every liturgy:

95. We instruct people about the liturgy in preaching, bulletins, and other ordinary ways of teaching:

96. At least once a year we make a special liturgical workshop or learning event available to the people of our community:

97. We make helpful resources on liturgy available to interested people, and encourage our people to read and talk more about liturgy:

98. [If desired, add another question on this topic.]

Working for improvement: We discuss some practical ways of helping the members of our community to recognize the situation and to improve on it in the next twelve months.
Good liturgy requires careful planning and preparation by all concerned. We may consider some of the areas of planning and preparing good liturgies, and see where we have need of further effort in our parish or community worship. In each parish, religious house, school, hospital, or other community, the liturgy committee may review its practices and needs in the following areas:

**Planning Our Liturgies**

**Planning:** By this term we may include choice of calendar, texts, forms of celebration, and music; selection of ministries to be involved; ways of celebrating seasons and feasts.

**Not starting from the beginning:** We need to remember that we do not have to do a total job of planning for each liturgy: *some of the work has already been done.* Our task is to continue the planning so that our liturgies will become the best that our celebrating assembly can offer at this time.

**Calendar:** The international and national levels of the Church have established a calendar of celebrations, with Sundays, seasons, and major feasts already set. Our diocesan calendar includes anniversaries of the bishop's episcopal ordination or transfer to the diocese; patronal feast of the diocese; and anniversary of the dedication of our cathedral. These are indicated at the proper dates in the current edition of *Guidelines for Pastoral Liturgy — Liturgical Calendar* for Canada. Parish celebrations include the titular feast and anniversary of the dedication of the church; details of these are given in the liturgical calendar (see pastoral notes 24d and 24e, page 43; and no. 25b, page 45, in the 1984-1985 edition). Religious communities may have particular saints and anniversary dates in their calendar.

Each year, the parish or community liturgy committee should go through the calendar, and make note of particular celebrations that need their attention. The diocesan liturgy commission could also offer helps for all to observe the diocesan calendar and other special events.
Texts: In the eucharist, we have the opportunity to choose a number of texts, and in some cases we may choose to prepare our own. We can decide on which texts we will select for the greeting, penitential rite, opening prayer (on Sundays), preface (most of the time), eucharistic prayer and its memorial acclamation, final blessing, and dismissal. We can decide to prepare our own texts for introductions and invitations (penitential rite, opening prayer, prayer of the faithful, eucharistic prayer, Lord's prayer, invitation to communion, invitation to the final blessing).

In the liturgy of the hours, we may choose to prepare further introductions for the intercessions, and choose or prepare the invitation to the Our Father. We may select the psalm prayers given in the book, or prepare our own after the two psalms and the canticle.

Forms of celebration: On some Sundays we can choose to bless water during the introductory rites (this replaces the penitential rite). Incense and candles may add greater solemnity to the proclamation of the gospel. We may give communion under both forms. In morning and evening prayer, some communities bow during the Glory to the Father; some add a silent greeting of peace (see CBW II, nos. 71, 79).

Music: Planning of music includes the choice of which parts of the Mass, liturgy of the hours, or other celebration will be sung by the presider, other ministers, choir, cantor, and people. Suitable times for singing are to be chosen, according to the nature of the rite. Plans are to be made each year for a gradual growth in the repertoire of the people, cantors, and choir, setting reasonable goals that can be worked on and achieved during the year.

- Help for planners and musicians is offered in the choir edition of CBW II, with extensive notes on music in the Mass, seasons, sacraments, and other rites. See also Bulletin 72, Music in Our Liturgy.

Ministries: Planners should work to have all appropriate ministries in action in each Sunday celebration.

Seasons and feasts: Planning also includes ways of celebrating seasons and feastdays: how the parish can celebrate Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter seasons; how the community can observe its patronal and diocesan feasts; how we can keep Fridays during the year.

Goal: In liturgical planning, our goal is to see how we can celebrate the liturgy during the coming season and year in order that we may grow as a worshipping family, rendering better worship to God with Christ, growing in faith, love, and spirit of service, and deepening our Christian Way of life.

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2 A list of occasions approved in Canada is given in Bulletin 76, pages 224-225.
Preaching Our Liturgies

To achieve this goal, it is obvious that much preparation and work is required by all members of the assembly. Some thoughts are outlined below, and may serve local planners as springboards for further exploration and development.

**Our range of celebrations:** Looking back over the past twelve months, what is the range of our celebrations? Most parishes can report that they have celebrated baptism (some during the Sunday eucharist?); perhaps confirmation; Sunday and weekday eucharist; individual reconciliation, and penance celebrations in Advent and Lent, and maybe at other times; anointing of the sick, viaticum; weddings and funerals; blessing of candles, throats, ashes, and palms. Religious communities would add daily morning and evening prayer.

- **Broader horizons:** Some parishes invite people to join in morning or evening prayer once a week, or more often in Lent and Advent. Some have an annual celebration of the anointing of the sick in the church. Some make an effort to have penance celebrations at the beginning as well as at the end of Lent, and perhaps at the start and end of the school year. Parishes where the catechumenate is established celebrate the various rites at appropriate times of the year, and invite all community members to take part (see Bulletin 91, page 244). What areas of liturgy need expanding in your parish or community?

**Sunday Mass:** The primary celebration in the community is the Sunday eucharist. Most of the liturgy committee’s energies will be spent on the Sunday celebrations. (See Bulletins 71, 77, and 83.)

**Seasonal liturgies:** Each of the liturgical seasons has a special purpose, mood, and relationship with the paschal mystery of Jesus Christ (see pages 143-147, above). People, ministers, and planners need to enter fully into the spirit of the season by reflection and prayer. Liturgy committees need to make sure that the liturgies of the season are well prepared and celebrated, that an adequate variety of rites is offered in the community, and that all are helped to take part in them fully. In this way, our community will be more open to Christ’s invitation to conversion and renewal in our lives.

**Special feastdays:** The feasts of Mary and the saints which touch the devotion of the people in a particular way should be developed and celebrated well. A balance needs to be maintained so that the Lord’s day is always seen as the pre-eminent Christian feastday, and saints’ days seen as celebrating the Lord’s victory in their lives. A reasonable number of feasts may be chosen from the many in the calendar (perhaps once a quarter or once a month, depending on community resources), and a special effort may be made to observe them with fuller liturgies than the average weekday celebration usually has. What days are most appropriate for such celebration in our community?
Weekday liturgies: Most parishes celebrate daily eucharist with a few people; religious communities have morning prayer, eucharist, and evening prayer each day. These are generally low key celebrations, in proper contrast to the strong celebrations of Sunday. Looking at our usual weekday celebrations, can we see ways in which we can help them to grow a little?

- Some possibilities: We may wish to include one or two of these in the Mass, varying them from time to time: singing of the Lord, have mercy, gospel acclamation, Holy, holy, holy, Lord, memorial acclamation (four choices), or great Amen; communion from the cup. All the silent moments could be observed. As well, a brief homily and prayer of the faithful are always desirable. One or two suitable hymns may be sung.

In the liturgy of the hours, one or two of the following may be sung: responsory; invitatory psalm, or at least its refrain; the Lord's prayer. Moments of silence (see page 155) are important for good prayer. Further suggestions for morning and evening prayer are offered in Bulletin 58 and 72.

Sacraments: How well do we help people to prepare to celebrate the sacraments? Do we follow the guidelines for preparation offered in the pastoral introductions of the various rites? Are we sharing the attitudes, teaching, and practices of the Church in our preparation, celebration, and follow-up? Looking at our celebration of each sacrament in turn, what do we find in our community?

Other rites: How well do we help our people to celebrate funerals, with all their stages? (See Bulletin 84, Funeral Liturgies.) How frequently do we encourage the celebration of blessings? Many positive suggestions are included in A Book of Blessings (1981, CCCB, Ottawa), and in Bulletin 49. Do we encourage families to celebrate blessings? Are there other sacramentals that we could restore to renewed vigor in our community? (See Liturgy constitution, nos. 60-61 [60-61].)

Preparing with Our Community of Faith

Liturgy is celebrated by a community, under the leadership of a duly appointed presider, and in union with the Christian Church in the diocese and around the world. To some degree, preparation involves all the people in the community, congregation as well as ministers. Liturgy should be prepared with people instead of merely for them.

Members of the community: Involving the people of the community in preparing for liturgical celebrations requires some efforts and a strong concern for the assembly on the part of the liturgy committee and the ministers. It is sometimes tempting to be “efficient” and simply give people what we think is good for them. People can be involved in both passive and active ways: we can share the meaning of a feast with them by various ways of formation (see pages 167-168, above); we can invite people to join in prepar-
ing by prayer, discussion, study, working with some of the ministers, and home activities with their families. As people begin to feel involved in a season, feast, or celebration, they will take on a greater responsibility for its good celebration, and can be more involved in what it means for their life and that of the faith community.

○ Parish bulletin: By good use of our Sunday bulletin, we can help people to enter into the spirit of a new season or special occasion in our community life. The bulletin can be a useful way of teaching people week after week about the liturgy and the Church year. Bulletin inserts such as liturgical leaflets are a good form of catechesis. We may offer ideas for prayer and reflection in tune with our worship. By encouraging people to recognize Christ's ideals and to develop attitudes in harmony with the liturgy, we can challenge them to grow.

Liturgy committee: Members of the liturgy committee carry out a specific ministry to the people of their community. They are dedicated to providing better opportunities for good worship, and make many efforts to help all to understand and celebrate the liturgy as well as possible. In what way can your committee help the people, ministers, and presiders to deepen their sense and practice of worship? Helpful reading on the work of the liturgy committee is given in Bulletins 35 and 66.

* * *

Helpful reading: As well as the references given in this article, the following are useful for those involved in planning and preparing community liturgies:

National Bulletin on Liturgy:
- No. 67 Planning Our Year of Worship
- No. 70 Liturgical Year and Spirituality
- No. 35 Parish Liturgy Committees
- No. 66 Diocesan Commissions and Parish Committees
- No. 84 Funeral Liturgies

○ Liturgical seasons: See page 146, above.


Liturgy Planning: Cycle A — Year 1; Cycle B — Year 2; Cycle C — Feasts and Special Celebrations (Worship Office, 100 East Eighth Street, Cincinnati, OH 45202): Simple and practical helps.


* * *

Evaluation on planning and preparing:

In our parish [community, family]:

| 99. Each year we prepare a calendar of special days and events that we will observe with special liturgical celebrations: |
| 100. In our celebrations, we regularly take advantage of the variety of choices, alternatives, and options in rites and texts: |
| 101. We use a variety of rites in our celebrations: |
| 102. The music in our celebrations is well planned, and not beyond the capability of our musicians and people: |
| 103. We continue to expand our community repertoire, and set a goal for specific new pieces each year: |
| 104. Our planners use the choir edition of CBW II when planning celebrations: |
| 105. We try to improve the level of our celebrations each season and each year: |

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106. In the coming year we plan to expand our range of celebrations:

107. We intend to improve our celebrations by making at least one particular improvement in each season:

108. We intend to improve the quality of our celebrations of major feasts of Mary and the saints in the year ahead:

109. We will try to make at least one improvement in our weekday celebrations each three months:

110. We will review our ways of preparing for each of the sacraments, and work for some development and improvement:

111. We will review our celebrations of wakes, funerals, and burials, and see in what ways we can improve these liturgies:

112. We invite families to take part in the planning and celebration of funerals:

113. We encourage parents to bless their children, and offer them guidance in celebrating other blessings in their homes:

114. We will increase the number of opportunities for celebrating blessings during this year:

115. We encourage and help the people of our community to enter into the spirit of each season and celebration, and show them how to bring the liturgy into their prayer life:

116. [If desired, add another question on this topic.]

Working for improvement: We discuss some practical ways of helping the members of our community to recognize the situation and to improve on it in the next twelve months.

* * *

How good is our liturgy? See page 162, above.
A letter to youth

At the beginning of the International Year of Youth, Most Rev. James L. Doyle, Bishop of Peterborough and chairperson of the Episcopal Commission for Liturgy, addressed this lenten letter to the young people of the diocese. We reprint it here with permission in order to share its thoughts with a wider audience.

My beloved young people of our diocesan family:

In this International Year of Youth (1985) I have decided to address the lenten letter in a special way to you, our young people who are the hope of our diocesan Church.

Decision time: In a recent survey, senior high school students were asked what troubled them most. Their concerns, in order of frequency were boredom, loneliness, and concern for the future. Whether you agree or not, there is one important fact you share with all youth. It is that this is decision time in your life.
Each day you own your life more. Parents or teachers still may play an important part in deciding things in your life, but in a very real sense you now have the power and responsibility to direct your own life. Whom you choose for friends, how hard you work at your studies or in your career, the kind of relationship you have with Christ, what you do with drugs or alcohol, with the gift of love and your sexual component, with your talents and charisms, these matters are now up to you. Parents and others can direct and guide, admonish and correct, but they do not have the power to force you to change your attitudes, your values, or your will.

A true story of decision: This story deals with a person of your age coming to grips with these kind of decisions:

Jesus was setting out on a journey when a man ran up, knelt before him and put this question to him, “Good master, what must I do to inherit eternal life?”

Jesus said to him, “Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. You know the commandments: You must not kill; You must not commit adultery; You must not steal; You must not bring false witness; You must not defraud; Honor your father and mother.”

And he said to him, “Master, I have kept all these from my earliest days.”

Jesus looked steadily at him and loved him, and he said, “There is one thing you lack. Go and sell everything you own and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.”

But his face fell at these words and he went away sad, for he was a man of great wealth.

This gospel account is called “The story of the rich young man,” and is often quoted as an example of Jesus’ attitude toward riches. But there is more to it than that. The riches are symbolic of anything which can entrap us, preventing us from entrusting ourselves to Jesus.

The young man in the gospel story is searching. Although rich and law-abiding, he felt something lacking in his life. Maybe he was bored, despite, or because of his riches. Since he came to Jesus and departed “alone,” he may have been lonely. Clearly he was concerned about his future. In other words, he was wrestling like many of you with the question, “What is life really all about?”

Jesus’ answer: Most of us gulp a little when we hear Jesus’ answer. Jesus asks the young man to sell everything so that he could follow him. Jesus was not just talking money. Jesus was urging him and us to let go of false values and phoney hopes that entrap us. He is challenging the worldly idea of happiness or being saved. The world equates happiness with wealth, power, influence, popularity, the good life. Jesus tells us that happiness,
“being saved,” means loving service of others, rather than dominance of
them, giving of self rather than seeking for self. St. Paul puts this beautifully
for us:

In your minds you must be the same as Christ Jesus:

   His state was divine,
   yet he did not cling
to his equality with God
but emptied himself
to assume the condition of a slave,
and became as men are;
and being as all men are,
he was humbler yet,
even to accepting death,
death on a cross.

   But God raised him high
and gave him the name
which is above all other names
so that all beings
in the heavens, on earth and in the underworld,
should bend the knee at the name of Jesus
and that every tongue should acclaim
Jesus Christ as Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

Jesus is saying that if we really want to come to terms with what bothers
us, if we really want to become whole, to become the wonderful persons we
each can be, if we really want to discover the meaning of our existence, then
we must look to him, we must follow him. We must put our trust in him, our
God, our brother, our savior, and we must let go of the “false gods” we
cling to.

What about you? Now the big question! What about yourself? Are you
restless? Beginning to wonder what real purpose and meaning your own life
has? Beginning to think that there has to be more to life than parties, great
weekends, good times, a nice car, more money? One thing is clear: there are
a lot of people your age who are. The fact that so many of your peer group
identity boredom, loneliness, and worry over their futures as their chief
concerns is no accident.

More than anything else people want three things. First they want some
sense of meaning, purpose, self-worth, or value to their existence. Nobody
wants to be a faceless number in a crowd, one who goes through life’s motion
with no feeling of having contributed or made a difference. Boredom is
emptiness, it is life without meaning or significance.

Secondly, everyone wants and needs some sense of belonging, of having
roots, of having a place in the hearts of others, a sense of being loved; in

2 Phil. 2: 5-11 (JB text).
other words, all of us, even the most retiring and self-reliant, long for some form of community. Loneliness is the opposite of that sense of belonging somewhere.

Thirdly, all of us, sooner or later, ask what lies beyond this life, beyond that event that we all face — death. It is true that when young people express concern for the future, they are normally thinking of the immediate future: the survival of our planet, their career choices, the attainment of success, etc. All of us, however, in our more serious moments, do wonder what awaits us in the future beyond this life. The realization of this prompted the answer Jesus gave when the young man in the gospel sought his advice. Jesus knew that what the youth he loved was looking for could never be found in money, or in any other false god to which we cling for fulfillment. He tells him “Come, follow me”; that if we want eternal life, ultimately we must turn to Christ in faith, to that which is outside us, outside all human power, outside all created things. We must let go; to be saved we must trust Jesus.

Saved from what? What did Jesus have in mind when he spoke to the rich young man? This young man was already sincere, religious, and devout in his following of the Jewish faith. He did not need then to be “saved” from a wild, sinful life. Jesus rather, was calling him to become whole, to reach his full potential as a human being and as a child of God.

The word “saved” comes from the Latin words “salus” and “salvus.” It means to be healthy, to be whole, to be full of life. When one is whole and full of life, one is “safe” or “saved.” Jesus then was calling the young man from a good life to a full life. Jesus was trying to show the young man what he must do in order to fill the void, to fill the empty place in his life, to become whole and holy.

Sometimes for the individual, “saved” includes, and must do so, a movement away from sin, if that happens to be how the person is living. The goal however is the same fullness of life.

To be saved or full of life means to replace boredom with a sense of worth, a sense of purpose, loneliness with membership in the authentic, loving community of Christ. It means to replace the fear of the future with the security of eternal life. All of us human beings look for this kind of salvation. We differ a lot though in how we seek to aquire it

Wrong answers: Some escape boredom temporarily by looking for kicks, partying, drinking, using drugs, etc. Some deal with loneliness by playing at love, joining clubs or gangs, by going “the being popular” route. Some seek a secure future by working for good grades, so they can enter university or college and later a lucrative career or profession. Others strive to earn as much money as they can right now. Some place themselves on an “emotional hold,” trying not to think, not to get involved, not to concern themselves with the future. They try to stay “cool” and intentionally avoid thinking beyond the immediate, beyond the weekend.
There is indeed nothing wrong with a good time or belonging to a club, with being popular or dating, with being successful in school or in work. It is just that sooner or later we must realize that these are not enough. In the long run these things can never fulfill our deeper needs. In brief they can never save us, never make us fulfilled and holy persons.

**The only answer — Jesus:** Some fail to take Jesus seriously when he promises us fullness of life, when he tells us this is the free gift of his love. We fail to understand that we cannot earn, buy, steal, or make our own salvation, our own fullness. Fullness of life (purpose, community, immortality) is indeed God's free gift to us. If we think we can find it in any other way but in Jesus, we are trapped in a form of idolatry. We have been tricked by some false god in our life.

**Your decision:** Today you are the rich young man or young woman, standing before Jesus. You are rich in many ways. If you dared to ask Jesus what you must do to gain eternal life, fullness of life, salvation, this is how he would answer you: “Enter fully into fellowship with my life and with my Church, the community of the saved. Let go of your false idols, escape from whatever enslaves you. Come, follow me in trust, be my disciple!”

In this International Year of Youth, in this Lent of 1985, make the decision to take Christ seriously. Become his follower. Make his life and his way, his grace and his truth yours. Do not be another rich young person who leaves the Lord saddened. Come, follow Jesus! For he alone is “the way, the truth, and the life.”

_James Dope_

Bishop of Peterborough

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**Editor's note:** Recommendations from the Episcopal Commission for Liturgy on the International Year of Youth are given on page 152, above.

**Papal letter:** As this Bulletin is going to press, the CCCB is publishing the *Apostolic Letter of Pope John Paul II to the Youth of the World* (March 31, 1985), on the occasion of the International Year of Youth. Available in English or French, at $1.25 plus postage and handling, from Publications Service, at the address on the inside front cover of this issue.
Blessing and using water

This article provides a brief look at the meaning of blessed water, and some of the ways we use it in our liturgy and in our homes.

Background Notes

Natural symbolism of water: We see water as cleansing, refreshing (for drinking, being near, looking at, swimming in, and boating on), life-giving, cooling. At times we are awed by its destructive powers when rivers overflow their banks or fierce storms rage: when waters are calm and tranquil, we feel at peace. Anyone who has lived in or passed through a desert — particularly on foot — will appreciate what the absence of water means. A great river or large body of water has the impressiveness and soul-stirring qualities of a mighty mountain.

Word of God: Composed in lands where water is precious, the scriptures take water with its deep natural symbolism, and present it under many aspects, all deeply involved in daily life. They see the waters of destruction and judgment, water of cleansing and purification, water to drink, water of fruitfulness, and water of refreshment. Water is described symbolically from the moment of creation (Gen. 1: 2) to the river of the water of life in heaven (Rev. 22: 1-2). Jesus promised to give living water, the Holy Spirit, to those who thirst (see Jn. 4: 10; 7: 37-39).

Liturgy: Blessed water is used in the liturgy of Christian initiation, when we are baptized; immersion is much more evocative of baptismal symbolism than is pouring alone. Blessed water is also sprinkled on God's people as a reminder of their baptism (Easter vigil, Sunday) and of their renewal of the covenant during the eucharist (see Liturgy constitution, no. 10 [10]). Blessed water is also used for sprinkling the casket in the funeral rites, a final remembrance of the baptismal bond that links all who believe in Christ. We use blessed water for sprinkling objects when they are being blessed for our use: ashes, palms, and candles. Ordinary water is used for the washing of feet on Holy Thursday evening, and when the priest washes his hands after receiving the people's gifts in each Mass.
Blessing Water

**Baptismal water:** In the blessing of baptismal water during the Easter vigil, the prayer evokes many scriptural references to water as “a rich symbol of the grace” which the Father gives us in our baptism:

*The Spirit and the waters at the dawn of creation*
*The flood: end of sin, new beginning of goodness*
*Through the waters God’s people are set free*
*In the Jordan Jesus is baptized, and anointed by the Spirit*
*Water and blood flow from Christ’s pierced side*
*Christ sends his followers to baptize those who believe.*

A simpler prayer is used to bless water at the Easter vigil when baptismal water is not being prepared. Another scriptural image (Ezek. 47: 1-2, 9) is given in the chant sung while the people are being sprinkled with the Easter water at the vigil. (Further references to the symbolism of water are given in the blessing of water at the beginning of the Sunday Mass.)

- **Outside the Easter season,** three forms of blessing are available: the one used during the vigil celebration, and two others in the form of a litany. Some of the same imagery is included in these prayers.

**Blessing of water on Sunday:** The rite for blessing and sprinkling water at the beginning of Sunday Mass speaks of God’s “gift of water” that “brings life and freshness to the earth.” Other terms include “living water” (see Ps. 23: 2; Jn. 4: 1; 7: 38), “fountain of salvation, refreshment, cleansing.” We pray to the Father:

*As we use it in faith,*
*forgive us our sins*
*and save us from all illness*
*and the power of evil.*

The prayer used in the Easter season echoes the blessing of baptismal water at the vigil service.

- **Contrast:** The present rite is much more positive and baptismal than the former blessing (see *Rituale Romanum*, title IX, chapter II). Both salt and water were exorcised and then blessed. The main purpose for this blessed water seemed to be to “brace us against the envious foe” and to make “devilish infection cease.” All the emphasis is on banishing demons and the snares of Satan. There is no reference to baptism in the former rite!

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Water for use in homes: The water blessed in church is intended to be used by the Christian people in their homes in times of blessing and prayer. When water is blessed on Sundays, it would be preferable to bless a generous amount (rather than a little silver potful), and encourage people to take some home. The frequent blessing and generous use of water in the church will provide a positive approach to its use in homes. Some parishes bless water each month on the Sunday when baptisms are celebrated.

- Blessing water in homes: In connection with the blessing of a home or another blessing celebrated there, water may be blessed as part of the celebration. The following prayer may be used:

  Father,
  you have chosen us to be your holy people
  and have made us your beloved children in baptism.
  Bless + this water,
  and let it be a reminder of our baptism.
  Help us to live as people of light,
  and to be blameless and worthy in your sight.
  We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen!

Other occasions: If there are other occasions for blessing water in a separate rite, it should be done with suitable readings from scripture, time for silent reflection, some sharing on the meaning of water in our lives, a blessing prayer as given above, generous use of the water (sprinkling; or all place their hands in it, and make the sign of the cross on themselves or on others' foreheads), singing of the Lord's prayer, and a sharing of the sign of peace. A baptismal song such as “You have put on Christ” (CBW II, no. 15) may be sung as part of the celebration, perhaps while all are being touched with the water in memory of their baptism.

Catechesis

Older members of the parish community grew up in a time when holy water was mainly (if not exclusively) a sign and source of protection (e.g., against Satan or lightning). Younger members in turn seem to have grown up without much use of blessed water in their homes.

Catechesis: Today we have need of a sound catechesis on the meaning and use of blessed water in our liturgy and in our homes. This catechesis would include the natural and scriptural symbolism of water, and its liturgical use. People also need to learn to some of the ways we may use blessed water in our homes in the present age (sign of the cross, use during family prayer, other times or occasions). The current liturgical prayers provide many positive thoughts for this catechesis.

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Good celebration provides the best form of catechesis. When people see and experience the blessing of water on Sundays, when they are able to see and feel generous amounts of water during rites, they will begin to understand its meaning. When the font is prominent in size and location, with plenty of water, preferably flowing (at least during the Lord's day celebrations), they will sense the importance of baptism in their lives. Some priests and deacons use a small evergreen branch when sprinkling blessed water.

**Name:** Should we call it “holy” water any longer? The former title of this rite was *Ordo ad faciendam aquam benedictam* (the rite for making blessed water). In English this was translated as “The blessing of holy water.” This was perhaps a poor choice of words, since the title makes it sound as though we were blessing water that was already holy. (We still retain the same fault in the present title, “Blessing and sprinkling of holy water.”) Does the term “holy” water suggest residual sacredness? Does this seem to give it an innate power rather than relying on the faith and prayer of the Church and of those who use this water in memory of their baptism?

It could be suggested that blessed water and the blessing and sprinkling of water would be better terms. We need not make a big scene over this, but simple begin using the term blessed water in speech and catechesis.

**Summary:** The generous use of blessed water, especially in baptism, is one of our primary symbols (see Bulletin 97, page 53). Its rich symbolism challenges us in our parishes and communities, and is available to help us grow in our prayer life and in our appreciation of God's loving goodness toward the members of the body of Christ and all creation.

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**Helpful reading:** The following references provide useful information on this topic:

*Documents on the Liturgy:* on baptismal water, see [70, 2270, 2355-2356, 2425; 2267, 2269]; on holy water, see [472, 3382, 4254].

*A Book of Blessings* (1981, CCCB, Ottawa): These prayers and blessings may be explored: see pages 98, 130, 157, 160, 171, 224, 225.


*The Bible and the Liturgy,* by Jean Daniélou, SJ (1956, University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame, IN 46556): see chapters 4-6, pages 70-113, on the types of baptism: creation and the deluge, the crossing of the Red Sea, and Elijah and the Jordan.


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**Gospel books:** Two books have been issued recently, intended for use by the deacon or a second priest when proclaiming the gospel:


The Catholic Book edition has gold edges. The cover is heavy, in red, decorated in gold and white on front and back. The text used is New American Bible, one of the versions approved for proclamation in Canada. All the Sundays, Ash Wednesday, and Triduum are included in order for year A, and then for B and C. The last 100 pages give the gospels for solemnities, feasts of the Lord, and major ritual Masses. The texts are printed in large clear type, and normally begin at the top of a new page. Long and short forms are printed separately, rather than combined. Rubrics are in red, clearly indicating alternatives, and a large red letter begins each gospel. The only unfortunate shortcut is that of limiting the gospels for the sick and dying (4), marriage (4), and the dead (5).

The Chapman/Collins edition is green with green edges, a heavy cover, decorated front and back in gold. The text is Jerusalem Bible. This edition offers all the gospels from the *Lectionary for Mass* for Sundays, solemnities, feasts, ritual Masses, occasional and votive Masses. The type is large, with rubrics in red, and the texts are not crammed. Year A is complete, followed by B and C in order. A sturdy case is provided for the book when it is stored on the shelf between celebrations.

Every cathedral, and each parish or community with a deacon or second priest, could use one of these books of the gospels to add solemnity to the proclamation of the gospel, especially on the Lord’s day. They are approved by the Episcopal Commission for Liturgy for use in Canada.

**Still Proclaiming Your Wonders:** Homilies for the Eighties, by Walter J. Burghardt, SJ (1984, Paulist Press, New York; and 545 Island Road, Ramsey, NJ 07446): softbound, illustrations, ix, 246 pages. $9.95.

The author offers a selection of 34 homily texts preached on different occasions: Sundays, feasts, special celebrations. They are carefully crafted, and show the care needed in unfolding the scriptures and the liturgical rites. Most valuable is the introductory essay, “The Word Forms the Preacher” (pages 5-16), inviting homilists to let the word of God shape their lives and so mold their preaching. Helpful for all who preach.


After looking at all the trends that have influenced our understanding of sin today, the author discusses the original sin in Genesis 2-3, and leads us toward a Christian understanding of sin. He shares insights from the Hebrew scriptures, the New Testament, and the liturgy, and helps us to maintain a balance amid conflicting claims. Helpful for clergy and for teachers in college and high school.

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1 Prices for U.S. publications are given in U.S. dollars, unless otherwise noted. For all publications, postage and handling are usually extra.

Ten black bishops write to their black brothers and sisters on the call to evangelize. Written as a specific follow-up of Paul VI's 1975 letter on evangelization, this document looks at the values and gifts that American black culture has now and in its African roots. Adaptations of the process of Christian initiation and of the liturgy are part of God's call to people in the African-American tradition. Recommended as a strong invitation to let the Good News of Jesus be proclaimed clearly “in the idiom and expression” (page 34) of black people today.

Images of God: Finding the Lord in Ordinary Objects and Everyday Events, by Leo Holland (1984, Ave Maria Press, Notre Dame, IN 46556; available in Canada from B. Broughton, 2105 Danforth Avenue, Toronto, Ontario M4C 1K1): softbound, illustrations, 110 pages. $6.95 (Canadian).

Prepared as a series of lenten meditations, this book invites us to see God at work in our lives. Ordinary, everyday objects and events, like parables, lead us to insights about God's constant presence and love. A simple prayer flows from each image. Helpful as spiritual reading for all adult Christians.

The Awakening Call: Fostering Intimacy with God, by James Finley (1984, Ave Maria Press, Notre Dame, IN 46556; available in Canada from B. Broughton, 2105 Danforth Avenue, Toronto, Ontario M4C 1K1): softbound, 155 pages. $6.95 (Canadian).

The author spent six years as a monk in Gethsemani Abbey, where Thomas Merton was his teacher and guide in the spirit. Contemplative prayer is described, and we are helped to determine if we are called to this; further chapters are for those who are called. Helpful for religious communities and for lay persons seeking greater intimacy for God.


Realizing that teaching the renewed liturgy needs a renewed approach, an Irish priest and a Bavarian sister in Australia propose that we use the liturgy as prayer. Through experience, reflection, and prayer, they invite us to enter into participation, prayer, eucharist, and the liturgy of the hours. They lead us into the world of symbol, speak about ministering in the eucharist, and offer suggestions on planning and evaluating celebrations. Recommended as a positive help for all interested in praying the liturgy, for clergy, seminarians, religious, and liturgical educators.


Devotion to Mary was given a new direction by the Second Vatican Council and by Pope Paul VI. This book contains more than 150 entries, arranged in alphabetical order, giving teaching, history, theology, liturgy, prayers, devotions, and other aspects of Marian devotion. Contributions are made by 29 scholars from Europe and North America. A guide for systematic reading is provided, and eight appendixes offer useful information on liturgical readings and historical events. Recommended for all who wish to deepen their understanding of Mary's place in our devotion and prayer.


A page for each weekday in Lent provides a simple message: we reflect on the gospel reading, and are led into a brief prayer. Helpful for personal and family prayer.
Facing the needs of today's world, the English sector of the Church in Montréal developed a Christian Training Program, leading to ordination in the permanent diaconate or to installation of men and women in the Order of Service. The text is interesting and easy to read. The theology of ministry and a description of the steps taken to establish the program fill the first part of the book. The appendix gives forms, course outlines, and texts for installation services. Recommended for each diocesan liturgy commission and others involved in the preparation of ministers.


Continuing its excellent series of study guides, the Secretariat of the Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy provides a simple yet comprehensive study of the Church's year: its history, problems, renewal, and emphases. Many suggestions are offered for parish celebrations, along with helpful reading and a study guide. Every liturgy committee could benefit from having and using this book. Recommended.


The importance of the catechumenate and its approach continues to be recognized. In this study text, the rite — its history, periods, roles, and rites — is carefully analyzed. Positive helps are offered for those involved with catechumens. Helpful reading and discussion questions follow each chapter. Recommended for each parish with a catechumenate, or planning to begin it.

Hymns by Willard F. Jabusch (1984, Musica Pacis, 4848 North Clark Street, Chicago, IL 60640): paper. These five books are now available:

- **Bread of Life**: 22 songs and hymns, 44 pages. $8.95.
- **Songs for Eucharist and Other Hymns**: 27 hymns, 36 pages. $8.95.
- **Songs of Good News**: 15 songs and hymns, 32 pages. $6.95.
- **Hispanic Hymns for Gringo Christians**: 14 hymns, 32 pages. $6.95.
- **Glory to God**: 16 hymns, 32 pages. $6.95.

Some of the music in these five collections is original, a few by other composers, and some from folk songs of various nations. In most the words are based on the scriptures. The books offer music for Masses, different seasons of the year, and many other occasions. The words and accompaniment are clearly printed, and inclusive language is used throughout, sometimes updating earlier versions. Recommended for choirs and for schools.


A reverent blend of traditional and modern forms of the stations of the cross is offered in this book. Designed for personal or group use, it provides a scripture passage, reflection, responsory, and prayer, with two periods of silence. The photographs are a meditation on wood. Helpful for all who wish to practice this devotion in the spirit of the paschal mystery.


In these brief poems we are invited to continue our journey, seeing God at work in the routine events of life and nature.

When extending communion from the cup to Sunday celebrations, the bishops of the United States had this fine directory prepared. It brings together directives from various official documents, and provides a helpful outline for catechesis, preparation, and celebration. Recommended.

The Passion Narratives of the Synoptic Gospels, by Herman Hendrickx (1984, Geoffrey Chapman, London; available in Canada from Claude Primeau, 1037 North Service Road, Oakville, Ontario L6H 1A6): softbound, bibliography, v, 192 pages. $12.95 (Canadian).

Pointing out that these narratives serve the general theological thrust of the three evangelists, the author leads us through the various stages of the story of Christ’s arrest, trials, crucifixion, death, and burial. He helps us to see the deeper meanings intended by the writers, and concludes by helping us to grasp the theological and pastoral perspectives of the passion narratives. Recommended for clergy, religious, and catechists, and as lenten reading for all devoted Christians.

Four Gospels: An Account of How the Good News Came to Be, by John C. Meagher (1983, Winston Press, 430 Oak Grove, Minneapolis, MN 55403; available in Canada from Claude Primeau, 1037 North Service Road, Oakville, Ontario L6H 1A6): softbound, 312 pages. $16.95 (Canadian).

The author, who teaches at St. Michael’s College in Toronto, seeks to reconstruct the way the Good News developed. He postulates five stages (“gospels”): the teaching of John the Baptist, Jesus, and the apostles; the teaching of Demetrius (see 3 Jn. 12); and “the gospel of the ultimate” as a movement associated with John’s gospel. As a historian, Meagher offers “challenges” and “novel suggestions” (page 6) to scholars and serious readers.

Jean-Paul II au Canada: Tous les Discours, introduced by Benoit Lacroix, OP (1984, Les Éditions Paulines, 3965, boul. Henri-Bourassa est, Montréal, Québec H1H 1L1): softbound, photographs, 287 pages. $6.50.

Following a good 15-page introduction, the texts of the Holy Father’s talks are given in French, including his improvised remarks not in the original texts. Outlines of eight of the twelve eucharistic homilies are also included before the texts. Clearly printed, this book will be helpful to all who read French, and for those who wish to have the original text of the parts spoken in French.


The editor has compiled a wonderful collection of quotations, psalms, prayers, hymns, poems, and readings from liturgies and authors of different centuries and countries. A companion to A Triduum Sourcebook (reviewed in Bulletin 91, page 251), this book offers reflections on the season and the feasts between Christmas and the Baptism of the Lord. Tastefully laid out, it gives full sources for all its texts. This would make a perfect gift for next Christmas. Recommended for families, catechists, religious communities, and clergy.


In this revised edition, we have the latest texts of nine basic documents on renewal in the liturgy, gathered in one handy book. As the subtitle suggests, this book is a basic resource for liturgy committees, clergy, and others working in the parish for good celebration. A thorough topical index helps the reader to find all the references on a particular point. Recommended as a most useful resource book.

This is the first book in a new series, The Liturgical Seasons. The author looks at the texts of the sacramentary, lectionary, and liturgy of the hours for the weekdays and Sundays between Ash Wednesday and the Wednesday of Holy Week. Themes and rites are explored, and positive suggestions are made for good celebrations and for a wide use of alternatives. Recommended for all who wish to explore and celebrate the treasures of Lent, especially clergy, religious communities, and catechists.

The House of the Soul, and Concerning the Inner Life, by Evelyn Underhill (1984? The Seabury Press, 430 Oak Grove, Minneapolis, MN 55403; available in Canada from Claude Primeau, 1037 North Service Road, Oakville, Ontario L6H 1A6): softbound, 151 pages. $10.95 (Canadian).

Why reprint books from 1929 and 1926? Because they are classics that deserve new readers today. In House, the author compares life to a two-storey home and reminds us of the way virtues and prayer and daily life interact. In Inner Life she speaks to priests of personal spiritual life, theirs as well as that of the laity. Recommended as simple books for personal renewal in Christian living.

Images of Christ: An Introduction to Christology, by Glenn F. Chestnut (1984, The Seabury Press, 430 Oak Grove, Minneapolis, MN 55403; available in Canada from Claude Primeau, 1037 North Service Road, Oakville, Ontario L6H 1A6): softbound, index, xiv, 172 pages. $11.95 (Canadian).

Written for laity, this book presents a series of images of Christ: sacrifice, Messiah, Word of God, revealer of God; human and divine, head of new humanity, conqueror of death. Scripture and history are explored, helping us to understand the context in which these teachings are developed. Deep theology is handled in language that any serious reader can grasp. A balanced presentation.

Our Growing Child: The First Two Years Together, by Judith Maloney Boyle and Mary Jane Hahn Saia (1985, Twenty-Third Publications, Box 180, Mystic, CT 06355): softbound, 8½ x 11 inches, illustrations, two colors, 120 pages. $5.95.

Prepared as an album, this book offers a month-by-month opportunity for parents to record the growth and development of their child. Positive notes on physical, emotional, and spiritual development, and helpful reading suggestions make this a useful book during the child's first two years, and a memorable book for the rest of his or her life. Recommended for families about to give birth.


Brief reflections on one reading, usually the gospel, for each Sunday and major feast of the three cycles bring a fresh look at the scriptures and their implications for our Christian life today. The book offers help to readers, preachers, planners, catechists, and families who want to be challenged each week by God's word. Recommended.


School children use their own words to retell the stories of eight saints, with a down-to-earth realism and clarity. Stories, prayers, and illustrations by children speak of holiness in a practical way. Helpful for parents and catechists.


The author writes as an understanding adult, sharing some basic thoughts and ideals of Jesus with teens. Four of the short chapters deal with liturgy, eucharist, marriage, and Mary. Well written for the audience. Helpful for teens and parents.

Reflections flowing from the weekday readings in the seasons of Lent and Easter are gathered in this book. The meditations are brief, but help us to relate the scriptures and liturgical actions to prayer and to our daily life. This is the first of five volumes. We hope that the later books will be translated to avoid the exclusive language (especially “man, mankind”) used throughout this volume. Helpful for religious communities, clergy and prayer groups.


Each Sunday and weekday provides questions and insights on the readings, and invites us “to stop and abide in God’s presence” (page 4). The author shares his expertise in the scriptures and helps us to penetrate the texts for reflection and prayer. Recommended for all who wish to meditate and pray with the daily readings, including religious, clergy, catechists, preachers, and families.


A widely experienced cantor shares his feelings and insights about the importance of this ministry at the parish level, and offers practical advice. Recommended for parish worship committees, choir directors, and cantors.


After reviewing the history of the diaconate and the close connection between social duties and the liturgy, the booklet looks at the main liturgical celebrations in which the deacon assists or presides. Practical suggestions and helpful reading make this a useful book for all deacons. Recommended.

And the Master Answered . . ., by Flor McCarthy, SDB (1985, Ave Maria Press, Notre Dame, IN 46556; available in Canada from B. Broughton, 2105 Danforth Avenue, Toronto, Ontario M4C 1K1): softbound, illustrations, 134 pages. $6.95 (Canadian).

The title page adds a descriptive subtitle: “An Irish storyteller spins stories that pierce the haze of everyday reality to illuminate the universal truths within.” In seventeen gentle stories, the author leads us to reflect. Helpful for teachers and preachers.


Sensible advice is offered, one day at a time, for thirty days. Positive and practical in its approach.
**Four Other Gospels: Shadows on the Contours of Canon**, by John Dominic Crossan (1985, Winston Press, 430 Oak Grove, Minneapolis, MN 55403; available in Canada from Claude Primeau, 1037 North Service Road, Oakville, Ontario L6H 1A6): hardcover, bibliography, indexes, 208 pages. $20.95 (Canadian).

Crossan studies four of the apocryphal gospels (gospel of Thomas, Egerton Papyrus 2, secret gospel of Mark, and gospel of Peter). In seven case studies, he speculates about the relationships among these texts and the four canonical gospels. Of interest to scripture scholars more than pastors or liturgists.


These are stories reflecting truths from the scriptures. Some are suggested for use in bible celebrations.


Parents are invited to use this booklet to help them teach their children to pray the rosary. Each mystery gives a brief quote from scripture and four lines of reflection.

**The Sermon on the Mount**, by Herman Hendrickx (1985, Geoffrey Chapman, London; available from Claude Primeau, 1037 North Service Road, Oakville, Ontario L6H 1A6): softbound, bibliography, x, 210 pages. $12.95 (Canadian).

This is one of the author's four studies in the synoptic gospels. In the sermon on the mount, Jesus proclaims his ideals, his way of life, as a challenge to us: we too can live in this way, but only with his help and strength. Clearly written, with adequate commentaries on texts and their background. Recommended for every Christian, and especially for clergy, religious, and catechists.


Pope John XXIII announced in 1959 that Vatican II would be held, and that a new code of canon law would be developed. The new code came out in 1983, and this book is the first full-length commentary in English. Each of the seven books in the code has a detailed introduction, with adequate background information and references. The official U.S. text of each canon is followed by balanced commentary, done by 24 experts. The writing is clear, and the presentation pleasing to the eye. The commentary is written for all involved professionally in the life and structure of the Church.

The liturgical areas of the code are treated quite well, with an outstanding introduction to book 4 by Frederick McManus. The abiding place of liturgical law (as in the pastoral introductions of the revised rites) and the unity of the sacraments of initiation are emphasized, while the important things that the code says — and deletes or omits — are drawn out carefully. Throughout the whole publication, comparisons with the former law and quotations from sources help to clarify the thrust of the present code.

Liturgists will benefit from having a copy of this fine commentary: it will prove beneficial in keeping the special place of liturgical law (canon 2) clearly visible, and in helping them to avoid confusion from canons which state only part of the Church's will in the field of liturgy and worship. Recommended without hesitation for parishes, libraries, offices, religious communities, and clergy.