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ECUMENISM AND LITURGY: II
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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ECUMENISM AND LITURGY: II

The Second Vatican Council was assembled to put new vigor into Catholic life, to remove obstacles to unity among Christians, and to make the Church more attractive to the whole human family. Renewal in the liturgy was the first of many reforms brought about by the Council.

How far have we moved along the road toward unity among Christians? Where do we stand as individuals, as a community, as a diocesan Church? Are we working and praying with Christ to restore unity to his Church, and to help the whole human race become one in the service of our God?

Bulletin 104 presents some of the papers and discussions from the national meeting of diocesan directors of liturgy, held in Winnipeg in November 1985.

This issue looks at some current needs and challenges in ecumenism and liturgy, both seeing how far we have come and pointing out the way we need to follow in order to move forward with Jesus and his Spirit.
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Ecumenism today

Quietly, gradually, at many levels, it is happening! Slowly, hesitantly in some cases, but surely, major Christian Churches are beginning to move closer together. Dialogues, consultations, developments in worship, theology, scripture studies, social action, and other areas: all are showing the influence of the ecumenical movement. Christ’s Spirit is moving us closer together, back to the unity for which Jesus prayed (Jn. 17: 22-23).

In Canada, these are some of the things that are happening:

- **Praise:** During his visit in 1984, Pope John Paul II praised the unique ways that the Christian Churches have found to work together in social affairs — dialoguing with governments and other bodies, promoting joint projects — in order to move the realities of the social gospel into our daily living.

- **Closer association:** In May 1986 the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops becomes an associate member of the Canadian Council of Churches. After years of joint working groups and cooperative action, the Christian Churches will be able to work together even more closely.

- **Lutheran Churches** in Canada have come together to form the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (see page 203, below).

- **Renewed forms of worship** continue to develop among our Churches: The United Church of Canada has revised its rites for Sunday eucharist and the celebration of marriage (page 201, below); The Anglican Church of Canada has produced an alternative book of services (page 202, below). Roman Catholics are working on renewed forms for Christian initiation and the funeral rites.

At the international level, other initiatives are influencing us too. The dialogue with the Orthodox Churches, the recent exchange of letters on Anglican orders, Rome's closer cooperation with Canterbury and Geneva, the pope's continuing emphasis on the importance of ecumenism for Roman Catholics: all these are touching our lives as Christians today.

* * *

The Spirit is speaking to the Churches. Are we listening? Are we working for renewal in our own Church? Are we praying and working with members of other Churches for closer union among us? Jesus wants us to be one so that the world may believe in him. What are we doing to make this happen?
Reception of the BEM document

Mary M. Schaefer

Dr. Mary M. Schaefer is professor of liturgy at the ecumenical Atlantic School of Theology in Halifax. She has worked in the missions of Western Canada, and prepared the reflections on the liturgy of the word in "Sunday Mass Book." She is chairperson of the National Council for Liturgy, an advisory body to the Episcopal Commission for Liturgy and the National Liturgical Office.

What is meant by reception? We can begin by describing it.

Vatican Council II is still in the process of being received by Roman Catholics, in the theological direction it established as well as in its doctrinal statements and pastoral applications. Vatican II is also in the process of reception by other Christian communions. In some instances persons of other Christian traditions have more fully appropriated Vatican II than have some Christians of the Church of Rome.

Reception is uneven. Some aspects of Vatican II teaching have been more readily and more fully appropriated than others. Principles of the Constitution on the liturgy have been carried forward in our revised books and our burgeoning practice of ministries. A communication model for liturgy and a communion ecclesiology, in which every baptized Christian is recognized as having a gift to share and gifts to receive, have been mandated. Nevertheless, some parishes carry on according to a nineteenth century hierarchical model. Some ministers (including lay ministers) still perform their functions as though liturgy and sacraments worked by magic.

The term reception comes out of the field of law. In theology it designates "the acceptance of a doctrinal statement or a council decision by a local Church or by the universal Church ... , all the phases and aspects of the process by means of which a Church adopts the results of ... a dialogue." In the arena of communal faith, reception is above all a spiritual process in which a community appropriates a spiritual good. The process may take time; but it goes beyond a merely juridical act. The early Churches did not always judge a spiritual good of another Church to be helpful for their own life of faith. Even divergent expressions of the same faith could be tolerated. Examples of reception or nonreception of spiritual goods can be found in liturgical practices, laws, and customs, and in doctrine.


Why bring *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* before liturgists, in the expectation that thus the process of reception might be carried on? The reason is obvious: because BEM is about sacraments, it is about

God's offer of grace
in the act of the Church
which realizes itself as people of God
whose head is Christ,
and invokes God's favor for the individual (baptism)
or for the community (eucharist)
through its representative leadership (ordained ministry).

BEM dialogues with the whole tradition of East and West in light of Protestant concerns and questions about the two 'gospel' sacraments (a Protestant perspective) or the two 'major' sacraments (Congar), or the three 'chief' sacraments (so Peter Damian in the eleventh century). Although its references are to scripture, and 'tradition' is not referred to explicitly, this document engages in dialogue with the tradition of the undivided Church of the first 1200 years.

It is not out of place for a liturgist among liturgists to recall that the Constitution on the liturgy set out as one of the goals of Vatican II "to nurture whatever can contribute to the unity of all who believe in Christ" (no. 1 [1]). In speaking of sacraments BEM does not merely adopt the formulations of an older, abstract theology; rather, it speaks of the *liturgical* shape of God's grace. Liturgical expression is seen as transparency for God's act in Christ. The twofold aspect of the sacramental event — God's gift of grace (God's self-giving) and the human response — is addressed in the language of faith (narrative theology) rather than in that of second-order theological reflection.

We Roman Catholics, who see ourselves as custodians of sacramental understanding, who have carried on a major part of the task of reflecting theologically on the Church's sacramental actions, may be able to learn something from this document which was written primarily (not exclusively) by Protestants for Protestants.

A feature of BEM is its durability. If you live with it, it grows on you. At first reading the main text may appear to be almost totally acceptable within one's own experience of the faith. Conversely, it could seem alien to formulations of the faith received from school theology. A reader's initial temptation may be to nit-pick. And in the commentaries there are several points with which Christians of the Church of Rome will take exception. We Catholics may well judge that some of the differences expressed in the commentaries preclude BEM's serving as an integral expression of the authentic faith.

But this stress on differences and inadequacies is not the approach which BEM invites us to take. The document points beyond itself, and beyond ourselves, toward the recovery of the apostolic faith.

It is not a bilateral agreement between two Churches, or between the theologians of those Churches. It is not even a multilateral agreement. Nor is it the product of an

---

ecumenical council, which makes decisions about the common faith. It is not a consensus statement, but a convergence statement of a hundred theologians, not official representatives of their Churches, who come from an unbelievably wide spectrum of Christian traditions: Eastern and Oriental Orthodoxy, Roman Catholicism, the Old Catholic Church; Anglican and Methodist communions; Lutheran, Reformed, and United Churches; Disciples, Baptist, Adventist, and Pentecostal Churches.

Through the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches, they ask us four questions which we are to answer out of our own faith-experience:

1) The extent to which our Church can recognize in this text the faith of the Church through the ages. This refers to the inaugural faith-experience recorded in the scriptures and expressed in the traditions of the Churches. This question does not ask what my Church thinks vs. what your Church thinks!

2) The consequences our Church can draw from this text for its relations with other Churches;

3) The guidance our Church can take from this text for its own worship and for its educational, ethical, and spiritual life and witness;

4) Suggestions which our Church can make to Faith and Order “toward the common expression of the apostolic faith today.”

Crucial to the process of reception is the response of faith. Therefore we are not simply engaged in passing on decisions of a higher authority. No, the content of these decisions has to be convincing. And this is not simply a matter of assent to objective content, to dogmatic formulations. This doctrinal expression has to be appropriated for the life of faith. If it does not inform our faith life and practice, it is empty, it has not been received. A formulation of faith has to be received in faith.

Ongoing dialogue with the BEM text leads us to development of a shared faith-life with those Christians of other traditions with whom we come in contact, or toward whom we should be making overtures. The Second Vatican Council has led us Roman Catholics out of the impregnable stronghold of an exclusive ecclesiology, in which it was understood that we alone constituted the one true Church, toward an inclusive ecclesiology. This Church, instituted by Christ, constituted and organized as a society in the present world, subsists in the Catholic Church, which is governed by the successor of Peter and by the bishops in communion with him. Nevertheless, many elements of sanctification and of truth are found outside its visible confines. Since these are gifts belonging to the Church of Christ, they are forces impelling toward Catholic unity.

Our new recognition of the “many elements of sanctification and of truth,” that is, of ecclesial elements in other Churches, represents a decisive theological shift.

4 William Lazareth sets out the useful distinction between Tradition, “the gospel itself transmitted from generation to generation in and by the Church,” and traditions, the Churches’ diverse expressions of the one Tradition. See “Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry Update,” in Journal of Ecumenical Studies (Winter 1984): vol. 21, no. 1, page 16.

5 Vatican Council II, Constitution on the Church, no. 8. See also the Decree on ecumenism.
Given the fact that faith can be expressed only within particular cultures and that it is embodied in particular historical situations, we may come to appreciate that there can be legitimate differences in our expression of doctrines and valid differences in the living out of the faith. This is not to invite anarchy. It is rather to revere and respect the manifold expressions that the Spirit inspires as witnessed already in the different communities seen in the New Testament.

What matters is that one Lord be confessed, as we maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all.  

We must be convinced that the Spirit bestows different charisms:

Grace was given to each of us according to the measure of Christ’s gift.

We are likely to recognize those charisms only if we share the life of faith. We can identify areas where the Churches have already begun that sharing: social action and the seeking of justice; the works of mercy; preaching of and witness to the gospel; common public worship; theological inquiry and education. Cardinal Willebrands as president of the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity quotes the statement of John Paul II at Kehrsatz, Switzerland, June 14, 1984:

We must endeavor to do together everything that we can do together. We are called to give the greatest possible measure of witness to the gospel in all fields of life.

Doing the faith together in love should lead us to a longing for community (koinonia) whose model is the triune God and for whose unity Jesus prayed.

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6 Eph. 4: 3-6.
7 Eph. 4: 7.
8 “The Ecumenical Dialogue,” page 7 (see note 1 on page 132, above).
BEM on baptism

J. Frank Henderson

Dr. J. Frank Henderson, a biochemist in cancer research at the University of Alberta in Edmonton, is a member of the Advisory Committee of the International Commission on English in the Liturgy (ICEL), and of the Consultation on Common Texts (CCT). For many years he was a member of Canada's National Council for Liturgy, serving as chairperson from 1979 to 1985.

The Baptism document begins with a brief account of the institution of baptism (part I), and then considers the meaning of baptism (II) in more detail. It then deals with the relation of baptism and faith (III), and concludes with sections on baptismal practice (IV) and on the celebration of baptism (V).

After a summary of scriptural images of baptism, the meaning of baptism is considered under five headings:

(a) participation in Christ's death and resurrection,
(b) conversion, pardoning, and cleansing,
(c) the gift of the Spirit,
(d) incorporation into the Body of Christ, and
(e) the sign of the kingdom.

This summary of baptismal theology is well worth studying.

The Issues

One way to evaluate the Baptism document is to consider the questions it was trying to deal with. That is, what are the historic questions that have divided Christians on this subject, and on which the Faith and Order Commission believes a consensus has now been reached? The most obvious issue concerns the baptism of infants; however, a number of other concerns lie behind that.

Baptism of infants and adults: The document accepts the baptism of adults (often called "believer's baptism" by those who stress this practice), recognizes that it "is the most clearly attested pattern in the New Testament," and sees that it expresses important values. However, the document also fully accepts infant baptism too, viewing this as a legitimate practice that grew up in the Church in the course of time (nos. 11, 12).
Baptism by immersion: Some Churches have also traditionally asserted that immersion is the only valid way of baptizing. The document initially says only that "baptism in administered with water in the name of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit" (no. 17), but then adds: "In the celebration of baptism the symbolic dimension of water should be taken seriously and not minimalized. The act of immersion can vividly express the reality that in baptism the Christian participates in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ" (no. 18). Thus BEM favors immersion, but certainly does not require it.

Authority of scripture: Churches that traditionally baptize only adults and do so only by immersion believe that this is the only pattern of baptism attested in the New Testament, and believe further that they are not free to deviate from this pattern. The BEM document clearly does not accept this view, and accepts practices that developed in the course of history, including the baptism of infants and the use of water in other ways than immersion. Its position, at least implicitly, is that since God guides the Church also in its post-New Testament history, practices that grow up later can also be valid. It is the question of the relative authority of scripture and of the ongoing life of the Church in history, that really divides the Churches; the issues of infant baptism and immersion are only secondary signs of this basic point of division. In the later parts of the document, in fact, the starting place is current liturgical practice, rather than the scriptural origins of baptism.

Gift and response: One of the major factors that favors the baptism of adults (other than its scriptural warrant) is the fact that the adult is able to respond personally to the gift of faith given by God, and expresses this by joining in the community's profession of faith. An infant clearly cannot do this. However, the document also sees a value in emphasizing that faith is God's gift, and that this is shown in infant baptism; it tries to keep these two points in balance. "Baptism is both God's gift and our human response to that gift" (no. 8). "When one who can answer for himself or herself is baptized, a personal confession of faith will be an integral part of the baptismal service. When an infant is baptized, the personal response will be offered at a later moment in life" (no. 12). The baptism of infants also assumes that the "parents or guardians . . . are ready, in and with the Church, to bring up the children in the Christian faith" (no. 11).

Sacrament and ordinance: Finally, some Churches believe that baptism is a sacrament, that is, that something really happens in the course of the celebration of baptism (assuming faith on the part of the individual or the community). Others use the term "ordinance," which indicates that what is really important (the gift and acceptance of faith) has already taken place, and that baptism witnesses to this. BEM clearly takes the sacramental approach, though the subject is never treated explicitly; throughout, the language of the document assumes that something happens in the act of baptism. For example, "baptism is participation in Christ's death and resurrection" (no. 2), and "those baptized are pardoned, cleansed, and sanctified by Christ, and are given as part of their baptismal experience a new ethical orientation" (no. 4).

Holy Spirit: The document clearly attests that baptism is "the gift of the Spirit" (no. 5), and refers to the Holy Spirit frequently. "In God's work of salvation, the paschal mystery of Christ's death and resurrection is inseparably linked with the pentecostal gift of the Holy Spirit. Similarly, participation in Christ's death and resurrection is inseparably linked with the receiving of the Spirit. Baptism in its full
meaning signifies and effects both” (no. 14). This emphasis corrects some views of confirmation, which can tend to diminish the role of the Spirit in baptism in attempts to emphasize the Spirit’s role in confirmation. In addition, others have emphasized the charismatic/pentecostal “baptism in the Spirit” to the detriment of the role of the Spirit in baptism.

BEM goes on to point out that the liturgical expression of the role of the Spirit has taken various forms in different Churches, e.g., in the water rite, in the anointing with chrism and/or imposition of hands, or all three (nos. 14, 19). The document does not take sides on this issue.

Initiation as a whole: As is almost inevitable, the word “baptism” sometimes refers specifically to baptism “in water and the Holy Spirit” (no. 14), and sometimes at least implicitly to the fullness of initiation. It only briefly mentions that “some Churches consider that Christian initiation is not complete without the sealing of the baptism with the gift of the Holy Spirit” (trying to refer to confirmation) “and participation in holy communion” (no. 20). However, it really does not come to grips with either confirmation or the role of the eucharist in initiation.

Some challenges to the Churches: Toward the end of the document, there is an important challenge to the practices of all Churches. “In order to overcome their differences, believer baptists and those who practise infant baptism should reconsider certain aspects of their practices. The first may seek to express more visibly the fact that children are placed under the protection of God’s grace. The latter must guard themselves against the practice of apparently indiscriminate baptism and take more seriously their responsibility for the nurture of baptized children to mature commitment to Christ” (no. 16).

In addition, it is noted that “Churches are increasingly recognizing one another’s baptism,” and that “mutual recognition of baptism is acknowledged as an important sign and means of expressing the baptismal unity given in Christ.” It adds, “Wherever possible, mutual recognition should be expressed explicitly by the Churches” (no. 15).

A Roman Catholic reaction: BEM is compatible both with our long tradition of baptizing infants and with the recently recovered emphasis on the initiation of adults. Immersion is the preferred mode of baptism in the Catholic Church today, and other liturgical aspects mentioned (e.g., anointing, imposition of hands) are practised by us. Its basic theology of baptism is very good, and the document makes a fine teaching tool. It does not say much about confirmation or the role of the eucharist in initiation, and in this way is inadequate by way of omission. Finally, Roman Catholics need to listen very carefully to the challenge posed for us regarding apparently indiscriminate baptism, and insufficient attention given to raising children as real Christian believers; efforts are being made to deal with these problems.

It is evident, however, that this document really fails to meet the concerns of those who insist on the baptism of adults by immersion. The gulf between Churches on scriptural authority, and on the difference between sacrament and ordinance, remains as great as ever. Continued efforts need to be made to dialogue with these Churches.

* * *
Helpful reading:


Other editions of BEM are described in Bulletin 98, pages 70-71.


*National Bulletin on Liturgy*, on Christian Initiation:
*No. 51* Christian Initiation
*No. 64* Christian Initiation: Into Full Communion
*No. 91* Sharing Our Faith
*No. 73* Baptizing Children

Other references on the sacraments of Christian initiation are given in Bulletin 61, page 341; and in no. 101, pages 294-296.


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**ECUMENISM IN PAST ISSUES**

Many articles and references on ecumenism and on Judaism have appeared in past issues of the Bulletin. These are listed in detail in our two *index issues*, Bulletin 61 (1965-1977), and Bulletin 101 (1978-1985):

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See also Bulletin 102, pages 38-40; no. 103, page 112.

These issues may be ordered from CCCB Publications Service, 90 Parent Ave., Ottawa, ON K1N 7B1.

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An analysis of the document on ministry

Mary M. Schaefer

The document on ministry is twice as long as the texts on baptism and eucharist. This indicates the problem, on the theoretical as well as on the practical levels. Ministry is what divides the Christian Churches. From the Protestant side Ministry has been criticized for being too "high Church," too Catholic. From the Catholic side, it is said that its vision of ordained ministry is too functional and too optional.

This section of BEM poses particular problems, even pain, for the Free Churches which have presbyteral-synodical structures of oversight (episkopé). These Churches tend to have a weak understanding of the sacramental nature of ordained ministry even though Calvin allowed that the ordered ministry might be considered sacramental. Consequently they are likely to have unreflective or underdeveloped theologies of ordered ministry when compared to the broader tradition of the old Churches of East and West.

Yet the Free Churches should not be dismissed lightly. They may have lived faith-experience to offer us:

1) In the recognition of Church life, and not just in principle, that ordained ministers and laity form one organism, the Body of Christ;

2) In a developed interrelationship between ordered and lay ministries worked out within governing bodies having real decision-making capabilities;

3) In their determination to achieve consensus as they apply the ancient faith in present circumstances.

Their witness is a splintered one. Yet within the local Church they attempt to embody a degree of collegiality in the practical order which we do not yet dream of.

BEM appears to restore sacramentality to a central place in the discussion of ordained ministry. Without an understanding of ordained ministry as sacramental, Church leadership is in constant danger of comparison with purely functional, secular realities. Where, then, is the place of Christ, Lord of the Church? The query which lies behind BEM's text is this: Should not the depth-dimension of Christian life be also manifested in the Church's leader-animator?

The following analysis will deal with sections I, II, and III, which have to do in a special way with the theology of ministry.
I. The Calling of the Whole People of God

God calls all peoples to be laos, God's people. Jesus' servant-life builds up the community God has called. "The Holy Spirit unites in a single body (the followers of Jesus Christ). . . . Belonging to the Church means living in communion with God through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit" (1). This formula can be read as a Protestant rather than a Catholic ecclesiology. "Church" seems to be equated with an invisible spiritual body rather than a tangible, concrete institution to which, despite its flaws, Christ has bound self. Is this the "Church as sacrament," as a recovery of modern Roman Catholic sacramental theology, in which we encounter Jesus acting to mediate our encounter with God? Or is this a typically Protestant "direct" relationship with the triune God which may circumvent the human institution? Further analysis of the structure of this section shows an argument which parallels that of the leading Roman Catholic theologians of our day. Paragraph 2 treats of Christ, original sacrament of our encounter with God. Then the place of the Spirit who forms the Church to be Body of Christ is addressed (3). This description of Church as the community of the Holy Spirit avoids the Christomonism of the West with its consequent forgetting of the Spirit's role. From this Trinitarian beginning the document then moves to the Church, basic sacrament of Christ in the Spirit (4). The Church proclaims and prefigures the kingdom, the vision and the banquet of heaven. The Spirit bestows charisms on the whole community for building up the Church and for service to the world (5). Part I concludes with reference to the need for order in the life of the Church (6). In this section, then, we are given a sound presentation which is compatible with contemporary Roman Catholic systematic theology.

II. The Church and the Ordained Ministry

First, definitions are given for charism, ministry, ordained ministry, and priest (7). The old antithesis between charism and order no longer has a place here, thanks to recent biblical investigations. The traditional elements of ordained ministry are a charism of the Spirit for this ministry and Church appointment, with the invocation of the Spirit and laying on of hands (7c; cf. section V.B). Paragraph 8 points to the public and continuing responsibility of these persons as focus of unity; their office is an enduring office of representation of Jesus Christ. The text notes that ordination as a rite is very early. It does not claim that it goes back to the historical Jesus (vs. the fundamentalist assumption that Jesus ordained the Twelve as priests at the Last Supper, etc.). But the ministry of authority and responsibility can be traced to the Twelve as holders of one of the differentiated roles in the community (9). The Twelve represent the entire people (laos) of Israel. The connection of the "apostles" with later officers of the Church is seen by means of typology: the apostles prefigure both the Church as a whole and authoritative persons within it (10). The apostles are unique eyewitnesses; the faith of the Church is founded on their faith. Therefore all later ordained officers are different from the apostles, even though their office is founded on that of the apostles.


The call to ordained ministry is from Christ through the Spirit (11). 2 Cor. 5: 19-20 lies behind the explanation: “God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself ..., entrusting to us the ministry of reconciliation. So we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us.” Through their office Christ is present as reconciler, authoritative Head, and shepherd. Paragraph 12 treats of what ordained ministers do for the community:

1) They call to mind God’s initiative and the Church’s dependence on Christ (this is an implicit reference to representation of Christ);

2) Inwardly they build up the community “in Christ”; outwardly they strengthen its witness;

3) In their lives they provide examples of holiness and loving concern. This is the imitatio Christi of the patristic and medieval tradition. The holy Christian imitates Christ. Holding office is not enough; one lives the Christ-life in a ministry of love;

4) Ordered ministry is inextricably linked to the community. There is no apostolic office apart from the community. No Robert Holkot can propose seriously that a mad priest is able to consecrate the loaves in a shop window! This follows the patristic understanding that ecclesiastical office is relational to Christ and the Church, with office a substructure of Church. In technical language, ordained minister is “of” the community, not floating around in or above the community. The final sentence of this paragraph points to the deep human need office-holders have of receiving recognition, support, and encouragement from the community.

In the above presentation we do not find the statement that the priest directly represents Christ when reciting the words of institution. According to this theory, the priest acts “in the person of the Church” when reciting the eucharistic prayer before and after the institution narrative. But this particular theory, which posits a discontinuity in the eucharistic prayer itself, is a peculiarity of the Latin Church. It may be that official Roman Catholic theology claims more here than the tradition will bear. If BEM’s formulation can be judged inadequate from the viewpoint of official Roman Catholic theology, it nevertheless has all the makings of the contemporary systematic presentation, and provides a description in the language of narrative theology which is in keeping with the biblical data.

The office-holder’s chief responsibility is to assemble and build up the Body of Christ (13). We can comment that the apostolic officer is mediator between people (Christ is our only mediator with God). A systematic exposition of the modes of Christ’s presence in the liturgy begins with the faith-assembly.

Especially in the eucharist the “ordained ministry is the visible focus of communion between Christ and the members of his body” (14). In the categories of scholastic sacramental theology and modern analysis of symbol we can diagram this relationship as follows:

level of praxis: sacramentum tantum: binding relationship with already constituted leadership in apostolic succession
laying on of hands with prayer apostolic officer

directly signifies: res et sacramentum: priest acts in persona ecclesiae visible focus of the faith of the Church
Church united in faith and love

ultimately signifies: res tantum: priest acts in persona Christi Christ gathers, teaches, nourishes as president of the assembly, as host of the banquet
anointing of the ordinand with the Spirit of Christ

According to the above analysis, we cannot speak of the priest as directly representing Christ. Such direct representation would have to do with a Greek mystery-religion, not with a sacramental faith. Rather, it can be seen that the apostolic officer acts as transparency for the work of Christ. This is the patristic notion: that Christ is high priest of the Church’s worship, host of the meal, and the one who gives himself with his own hand.

Ordination is said to be the setting apart with invocation for the gift of the Holy Spirit; authority is a gift and not a possession of the office-holder (15). This invocation of the Spirit testifies to the sacramental character of ordination. Now in the Roman Catholic Church, after eight hundred years of forgetfulness, the laying on of hands has been restored to its ancient place as a central rite. (The handing over of the instruments gradually came to symbolize authority as a possession.) Apostolic officers are embedded in the Church; as members of the Church, they do not dominate (16). The ministerial priesthood is derived from the fact that Jesus Christ is Priest and therefore the whole Church is priestly (17). This has been a recovery of modern biblical scholarship. With regard to the ministry of women in the Church, the theological model used to explain no. 14 poses no obstacle to the ordination of women (18).

As we reflect on Parts I and II of this document, we can ask the following:

Q. Is the above too Catholic for Protestants?

A. It certainly does not represent the present position of official Roman Catholic theology of ministry. A shift would be required on the part of both Protestants and Catholics.
Q. What is too Protestant for Catholics?

A. The suggestion that the tripartite ministry of bishop/presbyter/deacon might be optional and not of “divine institution,” and is only recommended, not seen as essential to the structure of Church. Moreover, many Protestants refuse to speak of orders as a sacrament. From the Roman Catholic perspective, apostolic office is understood to be a fundamental sacramental given. Even though it developed gradually and has different nuances, it is Spirit-inspired.

III. Forms of the Ordained Ministry

BEM’s inference that the tripartite ministry of bishop/presbyter/deacon might be optional poses a real problem for Catholics, who have seen it as essential — i.e., of divine institution — to the structure of Church.

What challenges Ministry offers to Roman Catholics:

1) Can we encourage other Churches to “try on” the tripartite ministry, understood as transparency (i.e., sacrament) for Christ’s active presence in the Church, so that they can judge, on the basis of their faith-experience, that this is the work and ordination of the Spirit?4

2) The Dogmatic constitution on the Church (Lumen Gentium) was influenced by an earlier recension of the Faith and Order document. Faith and Order (1982) in turn was influenced by the Constitution on the Church. Can we allow this mutual influence to develop?

3) Can we allow Reformation Churches to move from a popular understanding (although not necessarily their liturgical practice) of ministry as functional (i.e., any ministry can be exercised by anybody) to one which is personal-sacramental as well as functional (the Roman Catholic perspective)?

4) Can we reform our practice such that our ministry has clearly the signs of the apostolic and patristic ages?

5) Can we reform our understanding and practice of the Petrine ministry so that the Bishop of Rome is clearly the servant of unity of all Christendom?

We need to put a question to BEM: What about the “universal Church”? Is universality only a spiritual reality? Ministry (26) indicates that the ordained ministry should be exercised in a personal (cf. bishop), collegial (cf. presbyter), and communal way (cf. the deacon at the service of the bishop for the community). But it makes no reference to the service of unity, oversight of the entire Church, which we know as the office of Peter.5 We might also note that there is a lack of stress on the personal-sacramental component in apostolic succession (34ff.).


5 The document’s reluctance is more understandable if we note certain Canadian descriptions of the pope as “successor of God” — see The Bishop of Rome, by J.M.R. Tillard (1983, Michael Glazier, Wilmington, DE).
Given the above lacunae in BEM, we also have much to do. We can face up to the nonapostolic aspects of office in our tradition and divest ourselves of any elements of ordained ministry having to do with power of domination, of lingering interpretations of the Mass as sacred theater, and of the priest's role as that of impersonation; and any practices which suggest that the whole gathered people are less than the active subjects of the offering. In all this we will need an ecumenical will, patience — and the grace of God.

ECUMENICAL ACTION IN THE PARISH

The liturgy offers a source for practical ecumenical action in the parish. As well as cooperating in the week of prayer for unity among Christians, Catholic parishes can promote these and other ways of practical ecumenism:

- **Advent**: Arrange a seasonal prayer service with members of another congregation.
- **Lenten season**: Join with members of another congregation in prayer and fasting on one weekday, and make a money offering to a worthy cause.
- **Easter season**: How can different congregations share in preparations for celebrating the feast of Pentecost?
- **Autumn**: Clergy from various congregations could meet to share developments in liturgy in their own Church, to display and exchange newly developed worship books and resources, and to begin planning for several ecumenical events during the year.
- **Social justice**: Invite members of another congregation to join in discussing the relationship between Sunday services and daily social conditions in our township, town, or section of the city.
- **Parish organizations** could invite members of a similar organization to share ideas on promoting family prayer and scripture reading in their congregations.
- **Continuing concern**: Clergy and laity can share suggestions for pastoral care of the sick, shut-ins and the elderly in their area, and for celebrating the major seasons and feasts that the Churches have in common.

See *Action we can take now*, in Bulletin 78, pages 87-91.
ECUMENISM AND CELEBRATION

Ecumenical dimensions of Roman Catholic worship

J. Frank Henderson

In these articles (pages 146-194), Dr. Henderson gives us a fairly complete look at ways in which Roman Catholics are to approach ecumenism in the areas of liturgy and prayer.

A. Introduction

Christian worship and ecumenism — the movement toward unity among Christians — are intrinsically related. Both have at their hearts the Word which calls humanity to conversion, and the paschal mystery by which humanity is reconciled to God. Though worship has been a cause of disunity in the past, by God's grace it is a strongly unifying force among the Churches today.

Explicit prayer for unity is an important aspect of Christian worship, and is expressed, for example, not only in the greeting of peace, but also within all eucharistic prayers. We are also called to pray for unity — as part of the prayers for the Church and the world — in our general intercessions or prayers of the faithful.

1 See biographical note on page 136, above.
2 "In the unity of the Holy Spirit," in each eucharistic prayer. In Eucharistic Prayer I, "grant it [the Church] peace and unity throughout the world." In Eucharistic Prayer II, "May all of us who share in the body and blood of Christ be brought together in unity by the Holy Spirit." In Eucharistic Prayer III, "Grant that we, who are nourished by his body and blood, may be filled with his Holy Spirit, and become one body, one spirit in Christ." In Eucharistic Prayer IV there are several such references to unity.
3 One helpful resource is For All God's People (1985, World Council of Churches, Geneva).
The promotion of Christian unity was one of the motives for the Second Vatican Council, as stated in its first document, the Constitution on the liturgy, no. 1 [1]. In addition, the major principles of the liturgical renewal espoused by the Council were ecumenically positive, e.g., greater use of scripture, promotion of the participation of all, use of the vernacular, lay liturgical ministries, simplification of the rites, return to communion from the cup. When Roman Catholic liturgies are celebrated as they are supposed to be, they are ecumenically positive in principle, structure, and content. We can say that good Catholic liturgies promote Christian unity, while poor Catholic liturgies are weakening or harmful from an ecumenical point of view.

Many of the Christian Churches are experiencing liturgical renewal today, and in this renewal they are growing together inasmuch as they all return to common sources, and do much borrowing one from another. This is a rapidly moving area, and in trying to understand other Churches, and in speaking and teaching about them, it is important to keep up to date on the progress of their liturgical renewal and how it brings the Churches closer together.

It may be assumed today, at least in larger communities, that most major Roman Catholic liturgies are ecumenical in that at least a few members of other Churches, or of other faiths, or of no faith, are present. While we are well aware of the ecumenical character of many Catholic weddings and funerals, this is also very often the case at Sunday eucharist and at other times as well. Many Catholics live in ecumenical families, and many pray, at least occasionally, with other Christians. It follows that most liturgies provide ecumenical challenges and at the same time ecumenical opportunities, and we need to learn how to respond to these.

It is the purpose of this article to provide an aid to the celebration of Roman Catholic liturgies in ecumenically sensitive ways, and to help Roman Catholics enter into common prayer with members of other Churches and other faiths. Thus our goal is to help Roman Catholics plan, participate in, and minister in liturgical celebrations in ways that are faithful to the basic principles of the renewed Roman Catholic liturgy, in ways that acknowledge the degree of unity that is now recognized between Roman Catholics and other Christians, and in ways that will further and promote the contemporary movement toward Christian unity.

The material presented here is meant to be practical, and oriented toward the planning and celebration of both official and unofficial liturgies. Thus our concern is primarily with the principles and practice of liturgical celebration; though sacramental discipline and canon law are of course taken into account, they remain secondary. It is reasonably comprehensive, in that the major liturgical occasions and situations are addressed. Finally, it aims to be authoritative, and references are made to official Church documents when possible and appropriate.

Four types of liturgical situations are considered: (a) official Roman Catholic liturgies, (b) the planning and celebration of ecumenical services, (c) the planning and celebration of interfaith liturgies, and (d) Sunday celebrations in ecumenical groups or situations.
While this article is addressed mainly to those responsible for the planning and celebration of Roman Catholic liturgies, it is hoped that the sections on ecumenical and interfaith services will be of wider interest. In addition, it may serve to answer certain questions members of other Churches and other faiths have regarding Roman Catholic liturgies and their ecumenical implications.

Before going further, it is appropriate to define certain key terms. Thus "ecumenism" and "ecumenical" refer to relations among Christians; "inter-Church" is another such term. "Interfaith," however, refers to relations between Christians and non-Christians (or those of no faith). Furthermore, "ecumenical" has two dimensions: one is those aspects of the life of a single Church that foster Christian unity (intra-Church matters); the second refers to activities that two or more Churches carry out together to promote Christian unity (inter-Church matters).

No one can pretend to have all the answers regarding ecumenism and liturgical celebration; individual circumstances vary widely, the theological principles are still being studied and developed. The principles and recommendations presented here, therefore, will have to be applied thoughtfully and with due consideration given to various concrete situations.

* * *

Helpful reading: Other general sourcebooks in the area of ecumenism are the following:

A Bibliography of Inter-Church and Interconfessional Theological Dialogues, by J.F. Pugliisi and S.J. Voicu (1984, Centro Pro Unione, Rome).


In addition, several diocesan or regional guidelines for ecumenical relations have proven very useful:

Ecumenical Guidelines for Priests (1978, Diocese of Providence, Rhode Island).


Guidelines for Ecumenical and Interfaith Action in Ontario (1985, OCCB, 67 Bond St., Suite 304, Toronto, ON M5B 1X5).
B. Official Liturgies

Celebrating official liturgies of the Roman Catholic Church with ecumenical sensitivity will be considered in this section, while ecumenical and interfaith services will be dealt with subsequently.

The term guest will be used throughout to designate persons of one Church or one faith who attend a worship service of another Church or faith; it also may include a person of no faith.

I. Guests at Roman Catholic Liturgies: General Principles

We assume that many public Roman Catholic liturgies are “ecumenical” in that at least a few members of other Churches or of other faiths, or of no faith, are present. A variety of types of such situations can be envisioned:

* Occasional or regular visits by members of inter-Church or interfaith families to Sunday and other liturgies;
* Small numbers of occasional visitors (other than the above) at Sunday eucharistic celebrations;
* Small to medium numbers of regular guests at Sunday or weekday liturgies in Catholic institutions (schools, hospitals, etc.), or at Catholic liturgies in public institutions;
* Small to medium numbers of guests at Sunday or weekday liturgies at retreats, conferences, etc., where the leadership or sponsorship is Catholic;
* Medium to large numbers of guests at weddings and funerals.

While certain general principles apply to all of these situations, each also needs to be considered individually. In addition to such different situations, it also has to be remembered that some of the guests will be active members of other Churches, others will be active members of non-Christian faiths, still others persons of no faith; finally there may be former Catholics, or nonpractising members of the Catholic or other Churches.

Aims: In considering the ecumenical dimensions of Roman Catholic worship from a liturgical and practical point of view, it may be helpful to keep the following aims in mind:

* To make the Roman Catholic liturgy a good human experience for the guest;
* To make the Roman Catholic liturgy a good religious experience;
* To facilitate and enable participation in worship to the greatest extent possible;
* To promote better understanding of the Roman Catholic Church and its liturgies;
* To promote greater appreciation of what Roman Catholics have in common with members of other Churches.

Basic principles: Roman Catholic worshipping communities should apply three basic principles in receiving guests at their liturgical celebrations:
- **A basic unity rooted in baptism:** The first principle, always to be remembered and taken very seriously, is that Christians — Roman Catholics and baptized guests — have much more in common than what divides them; the emphasis in ecumenical relations should start with what unites Christians rather than with what separates them.

- **Hospitality:** The Roman Catholic community which receives guests should be a good host, welcoming and warm. Hospitality is praying attention to and valuing others, while allowing them to be different.

  This principle is based in the first place on God’s hospitality to us, and on the wonderful examples of hospitality set by Jesus; there is also an ancient Christian tradition that Christ is present in the guest. It is also founded simply on the dictates of Christian charity.

  Hospitality may involve inviting guests to come to your church, and perhaps helping them with transportation. In any case, it certainly starts when guests arrive at the door of the church; they should be recognized as guests, introduced to members of the host community, shown to their places, and aided in other appropriate ways, such as answering any questions they may have.

  Hospitality also includes such liturgical basics as making sure that the guest can see and hear what is going on.

  Guests often worry that they will do or say something that is inappropriate. Hospitality therefore includes attempts to alleviate such anxieties about dos and don’ts. On the positive side, they may be encouraged to participate in the ways that are appropriate for them. On the negative side, this may include indicating clearly but gently any limitations on the participation of guests that are called for by Roman Catholic doctrine or discipline.

  Finally, hospitality is respect for the guest, who should never be made to feel uncomfortable or put in a position which will embarrass him or her.

- **Participation:** The Second Vatican Council declared that “full, conscious and active participation in liturgical celebrations . . . is the aim to be considered before all else” in the restoration and promotion of the sacred liturgy (Liturgy constitution, no. 14 [14]). This principle should be applied to guests (especially baptized guests) as well as to Roman Catholics. Such participation includes matters of information and understanding as well as more practical matters.

  At the level of information and understanding, it may be helpful to provide information regarding the structure of the liturgical rites, that is the parts of the liturgy and their names. In addition, if possible it would be well also to provide some information regarding the meaning of the rites and its parts.

  At a more practical level, it would be useful to help guests know when the community will change posture or participate in movement. In addition, the common congregational responses and texts should be provided. Finally, guests should be helped to locate the music that will be used; if some music has been memorized by the local congregation, texts and music should be provided to the guests.

  Printed participation aids or other materials may be necessary.
Host communities need to appreciate and be sensitive to possible limitations and obstacles to full participation that may be brought to the liturgy by guests; for example, unfamiliarity with Roman Catholic liturgy or with the renewed liturgy.

**Participation in ministry:** In addition to the participation of guests within the congregation, guests — lay and ordained — sometimes also participate in particular liturgical ministries. The principles and rules that apply to such ministry are complex, and for the most part are given below in the section on each particular liturgical celebration. A few general remarks may be appropriate here.

From the Roman Catholic point of view, the major sacramental liturgies, and especially the Sunday eucharist, have a special significance. Thus on Sunday, the unity of faith, worship, and community life of the parish is made visible during the celebration of the entire liturgy, and those who perform the various ministries during the eucharist usually do so as members of that community. Normally, therefore, it is inappropriate for other Christians to function in these ministries during the regular Sunday eucharist. Exceptions may be made, however, for good cause.

On other occasions it may be desirable to signify visibly the degree of unity we already possess by asking guests to carry out certain liturgical ministries.

**Orthodox guests:** Guests who are members of the Eastern Churches, from the point of view of Roman Catholic theology, have a status that is different from guests from other Christian Churches. Thus while the Roman Catholic Church and the Eastern Churches are not in full communion with one another, there are very few differences on the level of faith; however, there remain many cultural and historical differences in the expression of the one faith.

Eastern Christians may participate in the sacramental and other liturgies of the Roman Catholic Church, if they have sufficient reason to do so. They need not ask permission for this, nor are they to be questioned in this regard.

The Eastern Churches themselves, however, do not favor this, and in general Eastern authorities will not give their own members permission to participate in Roman Catholic liturgies.

If Eastern Christians do participate in Roman Catholic sacramental celebrations, therefore, it should be at their own initiative, and there should be no appearance of proselytism; Roman Catholics should be aware that this perturbs their relations with Eastern Church communities.

More information regarding the participation of Eastern guests is given below, when individual liturgies are considered.

**Anglican and Protestant guests** are most cordially welcome to participate in Roman Catholic liturgical celebrations. However, because of the differences that still

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5 There is a difficult problem of nomenclature here. Often the term “Orthodox” is used here, but this does not encompass the whole range of Eastern Churches separated from the Roman Catholic Church: official Catholic documents use “Eastern” or “separated Eastern.” On the other hand, “Eastern” could also include the many Eastern Catholic Churches; to spell out all the distinctions that should be made would be very cumbersome. For present purposes, therefore, the term *Eastern* will be used consistently to refer to those Orthodox and Oriental Churches that are separated from Rome; Eastern Catholic Churches will be included under the heading of Roman Catholic.
separate the Roman Catholic Church from Anglican and Protestant communions, the participation of Anglican and Protestant guests is restricted in certain respects. In particular, they are not permitted to celebrate the sacraments of the Catholic Church unless certain conditions are fulfilled; this matter is considered in detail below, under "Eucharistic sharing."

Non-Christian guests: Persons who are active members of other faiths (for example, Jews, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists), or who are members of no faith may also become guests of Roman Catholic worshipping communities. They should be received hospitably and helped to participate to the extent that they are able to do so and wish to do so; naturally this will vary from person to person.

Non-Catholic spouses and children in an inter-Church family: As discussed below in the section on "Marriage" (pages 166-173), Catholic clergy and communities are called upon to minister to and care for all members of inter-Church families, not just the Catholic members. It may be that the non-Catholic spouse and children never accompany the Catholic partner to church, or do so occasionally or even regularly. In all cases, they should be acknowledged as having a special relationship with the Church community, a relationship that may grow very close the more the wife or husband participates in worship with the rest of the community.

II. The Eucharist

Roman Catholic eucharistic celebrations: At this point we will deal only with the eucharistic liturgy in general; the special question of eucharistic sharing is considered in section III on pages 154-160, below.

Hospitality and participation in general: Different situations need to be distinguished, including (a) the Sunday eucharist in a parish, (b) weekday eucharists in a parish, (c) Sunday or weekday eucharists in institutions, (d) eucharistic celebrations at public special events, (e) eucharistic celebrations at retreats, conferences, etc., (f) eucharistic celebrations in the contexts of marriages, funerals, baptisms, ordinations, etc.

These situations may also differ in the type and number of guests, for example, (a) the number of guests that might be expected, (b) the relative number of laity and clergy among the guests, (c) the relationship of the guests to the host congregation, and (d) the ability and willingness of the guests to participate, and the extent to which they are able to participate.

The general principles of hospitality and participation considered in the previous section apply to eucharistic celebrations, taking the different situations and types and numbers of guests that are involved.

Beyond this, the major questions that arise concern the participation of guests in liturgical ministries.

Participation in liturgical ministries: The Ecumenical Directory of 1967 is the applicable official Roman Catholic document. It considers only the ministries of reading scripture and of preaching, and for these it distinguishes eucharistic services.
from all others. Thus according to its directives, Catholics and other Christians may read the scriptures and preach at one another’s noneucharistic services, even liturgical ones, and at those services which are not the principal Sunday services of other congregations. This may be done with the permission of the local bishop, given either for individual instances or more generally. However, according to the Directory, “Within the celebration of the eucharist the office of reader of sacred scripture or of preacher must not be given to a Christian separated from us; the same holds for a Catholic in the celebration of the Lord’s Supper or of a major liturgical service of the word held by separated Christians” (no. 56 [1010]). Exceptions to this restriction may of course be made by permission of the diocesan bishop.

The general principle, stated above, that ministry normally should be carried out by members of a particular community, clearly is very sound. However, exceptions are made for almost any kind of special situation or good reason, and it is this type of situation that needs to be considered. Though the matter certainly is one deserving of episcopal oversight, in many places there has been so much experience with such exceptions and special circumstances that it would seem that the norms of the 1967 Directory no longer have to be followed blindly or rigidly, but in the light of that experience. It is in the light both of the principle and the very considerable practice of exceptions, that the following considerations are presented. In addition, liturgical ministers other than those discussed by the Directory also need to be considered.

- Participation of lay persons in liturgical ministries: Normally, it is inappropriate for other Christians to function in liturgical ministries at regular Sunday and weekday eucharistic celebrations.

Exceptions often are made for musicians and other artists. In such cases they should feel a responsibility to be faithful to Roman Catholic norms for music and art, and the local Roman Catholic community should feel a responsibility to help them acquire the necessary information and spirit.

Quasi-membership in a local Roman Catholic community sometimes is acquired by spouses in an inter-Church marriage. In such cases, it would not be inappropriate for both spouses to carry out the ministry of hospitality, if this is done by families. In addition, it would not be inappropriate for such persons occasionally to act as reader.

Quasi-membership is sometimes also acquired by other Christians who regularly participate in weekday eucharistic celebrations; this frequently happens, for example, in hospitals, schools, and other Catholic institutions. Again, it would not be inappropriate for such persons occasionally to act as reader.

There may be occasions when a prominent Christian lay man or woman is present, or a designated representative from another Church; in such cases they may be asked to read a scripture reading.

It does seem inappropriate for other Christians to act as gift bearer, acolyte, or communion minister at these regular Roman Catholic eucharistic celebrations, as they usually will not be permitted to share the eucharist.

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• Participation by clergy: Ministers of other Christian Churches ordinarily do not carry out liturgical ministries in regular Sunday and weekday eucharistic celebrations.

However, if a minister has accepted an invitation to be present, he or she should be given a proper place in the sanctuary, welcomed at the introduction, and mentioned in the homily and prayers of the faithful.

If there is a special reason, such ministers may read scripture and/or preach. Such reasons may include the ecumenical relationship which exists between the congregations, close or historical relations between the clergy involved, and the prominence of the minister. (This requires the general or particular permission of the bishop.)

It is to be noted that eucharistic celebrations held at retreats, in homes or in other small groups, and similar special situations, often constitute occasions when exceptions to the general norms suggested above may be appropriate. Local experiences and regulations need to be consulted.

III. Eucharistic Sharing

The question of eucharistic sharing is one of the most difficult and most divisive issues in the whole area of liturgy and ecumenism. It is also not a simple matter, and its complexities need to be appreciated. The official position of the Roman Catholic Church is not widely known, even by Catholics, and practice in some places lags far behind, while in others it goes beyond this official position.

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Helpful resources:


The two basic official Roman Catholic documents come from the Secretariat for Christian Unity:

* Instruction on special instances of admitting other Christians to eucharistic communion in the Catholic Church, June 1, 1972: in Documents on the Liturgy [1042-1050]; also published in Ecumenical Trends (1973), vol. 2, pages 9-12; in One in Christ (1972), vol. 8, pages 393-397; and in Flannery, Vatican Council II, document 43, pages 554-559.


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The relevant section of canon law is canon 844:

1: Catholic ministers may lawfully administer the sacraments only to Catholic members of Christ’s faithful, who equally may lawfully receive them only from Catholic ministers, except as provided in nos. 2, 3, and 4 of this canon and in can. 861: 2.7

2: Whenever necessity requires or a genuine spiritual advantage commends it, and provided the danger of error or indifferentism is avoided, Christ’s faithful for whom it is physically or morally impossible to approach a Catholic minister, may lawfully receive the sacraments of penance, the eucharist, and anointing of the sick from non-Catholic ministers in whose Churches these sacraments are valid.

3: Catholic ministers may lawfully administer the sacraments of penance, the eucharist, and anointing of the sick to members of the Eastern Churches not in full communion with the Catholic Church, if they spontaneously ask for them and are properly disposed. The same applies to members of other Churches which the Apostolic See judges to be in the same position as the aforesaid Eastern Churches so far as the sacraments are concerned.

4: If there is a danger of death or if, in the judgment of the diocesan bishop or of the episcopal conference, there is some other grave and pressing need, Catholic ministers may lawfully administer these same sacraments to other Christians not in full communion with the Catholic Church, who cannot approach a minister of their own community and who spontaneously ask for them, provided that they demonstrate the Catholic faith in respect of these sacraments and are properly disposed.

5: In respect of the cases dealt with in nos. 2, 3 and 4, the diocesan bishop or the episcopal conference is not to issue general norms except after consultation with the competent authority, at least at the local level, of the non-Catholic Church or community concerned.

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Terminology: First, several terms relating to this subject need to be defined and differentiated:

- **Open communion** refers to the invitation of all Christians to receive communion; this is not permitted in the Roman Catholic Church.

- **Intercommunion**, strictly speaking, refers to the reciprocal and mutual sharing in communion among two or more different Christian Churches; this is permitted by the Roman Catholic Church only with Eastern Christians (but disapproved of by the Eastern Churches themselves).

- **Eucharistic sharing or eucharistic hospitality** refers to the admission to communion of individuals who request it, under specified conditions; this is permitted by the Roman Catholic Church, and is the subject of the present discussion.

General Principles: The Roman Catholic Church holds that there is a very close bond between the eucharist and the Church; both, in their distinct ways, are the “Body of Christ.” Thus the celebration of the eucharist is an act of the worshipping community (a local Church) in and through which the community signifies its own unity in faith and life, as well as in worship. The relevant official document states that nothing must obscure the fact that “of its very nature the eucharist signifies the fullness

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of profession of faith and the fullness of ecclesial communion." In the common faith expressed by the celebrating community and in the unity of the eucharistic ministry, the eucharist signifies the visible unity Christ gives his Church. And as the liturgy itself shows by mentioning the pope and the local bishop by name, a particular eucharist is the expression not only of unity in a local (e.g., parish) church, but also at the diocesan and universal level.

This position, taken by itself, would lead to the conclusion that eucharistic sharing between Catholics and other Christians could not be possible, because the required degree of unity in faith, life, and worship does not yet exist among us.

The Eastern Churches stop here, as did the Roman Catholic Church prior to the Second Vatican Council. The former insist that "unity in faith and the active life of the community is a necessary precondition to sharing in the sacraments of the Orthodox Church. Holy Communion will not . . . be offered to those who do not yet confess the Orthodox Church as their mother."9

In contrast, the Roman Catholic Church today admits another dimension to the question, namely that the eucharist is a "means of grace," that is, it is spiritual nourishment whose effect is to join the Christian with Jesus Christ; it is nourishment, furthermore, which is necessary to every Christian.10 It is to be emphasized that within a single Church (or when all the Churches will be united), there is to be no opposition between the communal and the individual aspects of the eucharist. "Simultaneously and inseparably it is the sign of the Church's unity and the means of grace to the individual; and because it is means of grace to the individual, it is thereby the means of his or her growth into the mystery of the Church as the body of Christ."11

This individual dimension — as means of grace — does, however, in the view of the Catholic Church, open the door to a limited degree of eucharistic sharing. Thus it is concluded that "the integrity of these two principles [discussed above] will be maintained if admission to holy communion is restricted to particular cases."12 Thus while there is a general rule, there are also exceptions.

Two other matters of principle might also be mentioned briefly. First, lack of eucharistic sharing clearly is a sign of our present disunity, and the painful experiences of our inability either to invite other Christians to share our eucharist or to share theirs, should be a strong and constant stimulus to work and pray diligently for Christian unity.

Second, although Roman Catholics sometimes say that eucharistic sharing is not (or cannot be used as) a means of unity, it is important to note that what the Second Vatican Council actually said was that "sharing in liturgical worship [including communion] is not to be used as a means to be used indiscriminately for the

8 Instruction of June 1, 1972, no. 4a [1048].
9 Guidelines for Orthodox Christians in Ecumenical Relations (1973, Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in America): quoted in the Syracuse guidelines (see note 11, below), page 5.
10 Instruction of June 1, 1972, no. 3 [1047].
12 Instruction of June 1, 1972, no. 4b [1048].
restoration of unity among Christians”¹³ (emphasis added). This therefore does not rule out eucharistic sharing carried out with appropriate discretion.

Conditions for eucharistic sharing: The Roman Catholic Church has enunciated six criteria to be met for admission of a baptized Anglican or Protestant to communion in a Catholic eucharistic celebration.¹⁴ These are:

(a) that the person be baptized;
(b) that he or she experience a serious spiritual need;
(c) that the person be unable to have recourse to a minister of his or her own community for a significant time;
(d) that he or she spontaneously and freely express a desire to receive the eucharist;
(e) that the person manifest a faith in the eucharist in conformity with that of the Roman Catholic Church; and
(f) that he or she have proper dispositions and lead a life worthy of a Christian.

How these criteria or conditions are to be interpreted is of course crucial. The language used is that of technical theology and canon law, and an “everyday” approach may fail to appreciate the complexities and nuances involved. The local bishop is to decide local cases, and hence is the authentic interpreter at the diocesan level. Thus in some dioceses the local bishop personally handles such cases, and in others decisions are made by the diocesan chancellor together with advisors from the diocesan liturgical and ecumenical commissions; in still other places the bishop has authorized each priest to assess individual cases.¹⁵

Two of the important questions of interpretation are (a) what constitutes a “serious spiritual need,” and (b) is “prolonged period” to be interpreted strictly in a chronological sense or in a moral sense? In what follows the excellent discussion of Norman R. Bauer is followed; he lists and discusses the criteria applied by several diocesan bishops who have published guidelines and directives regarding eucharistic sharing.¹⁶ He writes:

“Bishop George A. Hammes of Superior, Wisconsin, has determined the following particular cases in which eucharistic sharing can take place:¹⁷

“(i) A non-Roman Catholic Christian who is confined in a hospital or a rest home;
“(ii) A non-Roman Catholic Christian who attends the funeral of a relative in a Roman Catholic church;

¹³ Decree on ecumenism, no. 8 [186].
¹⁴ Instruction of June 1, 1972, no. 4b [1048].
¹⁵ Summarized in Bauer, "Intercommunion." See page 154, above.
¹⁶ See the resources listed on pages 154-155, above.
¹⁷ Pastoral letter of the Bishop of Superior, Wisconsin: in Ecumenical Trends (1973), vol. 2, pages 5-8; in One in Christ (1973), vol. 9, pages 401-404; and in Sharing Communion (see page 154, above).
“(iii) A non-Roman Catholic Christian spouse in a ‘mixed’ marriage at the
wedding liturgy;

“(iv) The non-Roman Catholic Christian parent who has taken an active part in
the preparation of his or her child for the reception of the child’s first holy communion,
on the occasion of the child’s first communion;

“(v) The non-Roman Catholic Christian parent on the occasion of the baptism
of his or her child when baptism is administered during the Mass.

“All other conditions stated in the Instruction must also be met. Each special
instance must be treated in itself. Great care should be taken to protect the faith of the
Roman Catholic community. The bishop still reserves to himself for decision all other
cases not covered by the five general cases listed above.”

The Archdiocese of Louisville, Kentucky, also has published guidelines.
“Regarding the terms ‘serious spiritual need’ and ‘prolonged period,’ these guidelines
state:

“The ecumenical make-up of interfaith families points to the fact that any period
might be judged unduly ‘prolonged’ by reason of great spiritual necessity and with no
chance of recourse to their own community. For example . . . , ‘great trouble’ or
‘expense’ would be adequate reasons for intercommunion in cases where other Chris­
tians are geographically scattered in heavily Catholic communities.”

“Regarding what constitutes a serious spiritual need, the guidelines [of the
Archdiocese of Newark, New Jersey] also say that ‘obviously, it is the person in
question who experiences the need who is in the best possible position to evaluate the
seriousness of his or her own spiritual need.’18 The guidelines also remark that ‘the
obstacle to such recourse to one’s own minister may be physical or psychological.’ It
may involve a long-term situation or even the context of a particular event. The
Newark guidelines also add the word ‘reason’ to the condition of ‘prolonged time.’ In
other words these guidelines are stating that necessity is not always to be determined or
judged on the basis of time; rather, provision is made for a determination on the basis
of ‘reason’ as well.”

“Bishop Elchinger of the Diocese of Strasbourg, France (a diocese heavily popu­
lated with Lutherans) has issued a set of pastoral directives entitled ‘Eucharistic
Hospitality in the Case of Mixed Marriages.’19 Realizing that ‘certain mixed mar­
rriages live their conjugal fidelity to a spiritual level that a certain unity in eucharistic
life becomes a joint necessity for their love of Christ and for their union,’ and that ‘to
oppose such mixed marriages with a refusal to share the eucharist would convey the
impression that they are penalized for having deepened their faith together,’ the bishop
has set forth conditions when, in exceptional cases, the non-Roman Catholic member

18 Guidelines on fostering spiritual ecumenism: D, Guidelines for eucharistic hospitality extended to
individual Anglican and Protestant Christians (October 1, 1977, Archdiocese of Newark): this may be found
in Origins (February 9, 1978, USCC, 1312 Massachusetts Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20005): vol. 7, pages

19 “L’hospitalité eucharistique pour les foyers mixtes: Directives de Mgr Elchinger aux fidèles du diocese de
“Eucharistic hospitality for inter-Church marriages,” is in One in Christ (1973): vol. 9, pages 371-387; and in
Sharing Communion (see page 154, above).
in a 'mixed' marriage may receive the Roman Catholic eucharist. These conditions are as follows:

"(i) The non-Roman Catholic must sufficiently understand the eucharistic faith of the Roman Catholic church and express his or her fundamental agreement;

"(ii) He or she must have real ties with the life of the Roman Catholic Church (e.g., through spouse or children);

"(iii) He or she must express a sincere spiritual need to communicate with the spouse;

"(iv) The bishop must agree that all necessary conditions have been fulfilled."

"Regarding 'what constitutes a serious spiritual need,' the Instruction itself says that 'any baptized person has a spiritual need for the eucharist.' It is a need for deeper involvement in the mystery of the Church and for a spiritual food uniting a Christian to Christ and to his or her Christian brothers and sisters. However, as the guidelines of Newark add, the seriousness of the spiritual need is best evaluated by the person who experiences that need.

"Regarding the interpretation of a 'prolonged period,' the guidelines of the Archdiocese of Louisville imply that it may be interpreted on the principle of 'grave spiritual necessity' and not just on the basis of chronology. Further the Archdiocese of Newark's guidelines specifically add the word 'reason' in order to point out more emphatically that this condition depends on the reason for which as well as the time during which a non-Roman Catholic does not have recourse to his or her own minister."

More recently, both guidelines and accompanying commentary have also been issued by the Diocese of Syracuse, New York. They too expand the conditions to include 'reason' as well as 'time' with respect to the question of recourse to one's own minister. The commentary states that "any baptized person has a need for the eucharist. Obviously, it is the person in question who experiences and is in the best position to evaluate the seriousness of his or her own spiritual need.

"In our time there are significant events in the lives of individual Christians and their families when spontaneous requests to receive the eucharist are foreseeable. If we consider the high frequency of marriages between Roman Catholics and Anglicans or Protestant Christians, the fact that many of our people are well informed, the extensive sacramental preparation programs which require the participation of parents, and the increasingly favorable ecumenical climate in our diocese, it is very likely that such requests might be forthcoming on a variety of occasions, for example, when a baptized Anglican or Protestant Christian is the parent of a child baptized within the context of a Mass; is the parent of a child receiving first communion within the context of a Mass; is the parent of a child receiving first communion or confirmation and has taken part in the child's preparation for the sacraments; is partner to a mixed marriage celebrated with a nuptial Mass; attends the funeral of a relative in a Catholic church; is confined to a health care facility; is subject to some form of institutional confinement." It adds, "each particular request must be evaluated on an individual basis."

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20 Syracuse guidelines: see note 11, on page 156, above.
Finally, "the authorizing and ministering priest has a serious pastoral responsibility to see that the administration of holy communion to other Christians does not cause scandal or undue confusion among the Catholic faithful." 21

Another practical question concerns the condition that the person "manifest a faith in the eucharist in conformity with that of the Roman Catholic Church." First, one should not expect the person who requests eucharistic sharing to be a trained theologian, or even to have done formal studies in theology; nor more should be asked or expected than from an "ordinary" lay Catholic. Second, it is to be assumed that the person holds the eucharistic beliefs of his or her Church, whether or not he or she is able fully to enunciate these. It is one of the blessings of our day that ecumenical dialogue, including the now well known statement on *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* of the World Council of Churches Faith and Order Commission, 22 has shown that in very many cases there is quite considerable theological agreement among Churches with respect to eucharistic doctrine.

Guidelines recently published for the Catholic dioceses of the Province of Ontario 23 state, first, that "according to the general law of the Catholic Church, priests and eucharistic ministers may administer the eucharist to all Christians in whom the criteria are found if there is danger of death" (no. 79).

Other situations of possible "serious spiritual need," given as examples, include "confinement in health care or other institutions," and "in situations of sparsely settled rural areas." These guidelines add that "a serious spiritual need is always discerned on the level of faith and is not to be confused with human sentiment or socio-cultural pressures" (no. 80).

Finally, although canon 844 is couched in quite cautious language (see page 155, above), a recent commentator on this canon has viewed it in the light of the 1973 Instruction and the various diocesan interpretations considered above, and would seem to accept these interpretations as still legitimate. 24

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This food is called eucharist with us, and only those are allowed to partake who believe in the truth of our teaching, and have received the washing for the remission of sins and for regeneration; and who live in accordance with the directions of Christ. 25

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21 Syracuse guidelines, pages 3-4: see note 11, above.
23 See the Ontario Guidelines, nos. 72-84.
24 "Eucharistic sharing from the perspective of Roman Catholic law. With special attention to Anglican-Roman Catholic relations," by J.H. Provost, in *Food for the Journey*, pages 64-78 (see page 154, above).
IV. Sacraments of initiation

Roman Catholic liturgical celebrations:

• Hospitality and participation: Baptism, confirmation, and first eucharist constitute the sacraments of initiation. With infants and children, these usually are celebrated separately, over a span of years. Adults usually celebrate them within the context of the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*, and in a single liturgical service, which often is the Easter vigil.

The baptism of children may be celebrated either within the context of a Sunday eucharist (this is preferred), or at a separate service, often held on Saturday or Sunday afternoon. When first eucharist is a public occasion, it too usually is on Sunday. Confirmation is celebrated during a eucharist presided over by the bishop, usually on a weekday evening, or during a liturgy of the word.

At all of these celebrations guests from other Christian Churches or of other faiths — usually friends of the family — are most welcome. The basic principles of hospitality and participation, enunciated on pages 149-152 above, are applicable in these cases.

• Participation in ministry: Eastern Christians may be godparents for the baptism of a Catholic infant or adult; there should, however, be one Roman Catholic godparent as well.2

At baptisms of children or adults, Anglicans and Protestants may act as “Christian witnesses.” Because the godparents and/or sponsors act in part as representatives of the Church community, however, it is inappropriate for them to assume the latter roles.3 Thus there may be one or two godparents plus one or two Christian witnesses, and the latter should be identified as “Christian witnesses” in the baptismal register.4 Finally, pastors should explain the meaning of the role of Christian witness to all concerned, and may encourage such persons to share in the godparents’ responsibilities.5 Because of the special responsibilities of sponsors for the initiation of adults and for confirmation, it is necessary that they be Catholics.6

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1 The 1967 Ecumenical Directory, no. 57 [1011], refers to “godparents” for both baptism and confirmation. The General Introduction on Christian Initiation (nos. 7-10 [2256-2259]) and the *Rite of Baptism for Children* (no. 6[2290]), however, speak only of “godparents,” while the *Rite of Confirmation* refers only to a “sponsor,” who may or may not be a baptismal godparent (nos. 5-6 [2514-2515]). The *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* speaks of both “sponsors” and “godparents” (nos. 42-43 [2369-2370]); these have separate roles, but may or may not be the same persons. The new *Code of Canon Law* uses only the term “sponsors” (canons 872-874 for baptism, and canons 892-893 for confirmation).

2 Ecumenical Directory, no. 48 [1002].

3 Ecumenical Directory, no. 57 [1011]: “The office of godparent at baptism or confirmation, in its liturgical and canonical sense, cannot be fulfilled by [an Anglican or Protestant] Christian . . . . For it is not simply as a relative or friend of the one to be baptized or confirmed that the godparent has responsibility for the Christian upbringing of the recipient; in acting as the guarantor of the faith of the candidate, the godparent also is the representative of the community of faith . . . . However, for reasons of kinship or friendship, a Christian of another Communion, having a convinced faith in Christ, can be admitted along with the Catholic godparent as a Christian witness to a baptism.” See also canon 874: 2.

4 Ontario Guidelines, no. 66.

5 Ecumenical Directory, no. 57 [1011]; Ontario Guidelines. no. 66.

6 Ecumenical Directory, nos. 57 and 48 [1011, 1002]; canon 874: 1, 3.

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Child of an inter-Church or interfaith family: The sacraments of initiation —baptism, confirmation, or first eucharist — of a child of an inter-Church or interfaith family, whether during a Sunday eucharist or at a separate service, may bring some non-Catholic or non-Christian guests; the need for hospitality and to promote participation will therefore increase accordingly. Extra ministers of hospitality may be needed, special participation aids such as bulletins may be helpful, and care needs to be taken in the choice and leadership of music. Both the Catholic priest involved and the entire Roman Catholic worshipping community should be especially gracious and outgoing in their hospitality to the family, the non-Catholic spouse and his or her relatives, and to other guests.

It is possible that the guests will include non-Catholic clergy, such as the pastor of the non-Catholic spouse. He or she may be invited to vest, and to sit in the sanctuary; he or she should be introduced, and may speak briefly at an appropriate time.

The “ecumenical celebration of baptism” — Even though a child needs to be baptized into a specific, concrete Christian community, he or she is also baptized into the Christian faith which encompasses all the Christian Churches. As such the baptism of a child of an inter-Church family is an event of special significance with respect to Christian unity, and includes forming a bond with the Orthodox, Anglican, or Protestant Church of which the non-Catholic parent is a member, as well as with the Roman Catholic Church.

The question arises, therefore, how to celebrate this liturgically, and in response some Roman Catholic communities have celebrated or are experimenting with ways of celebrating the Roman Catholic rite of baptism more ecumenically. The inspiration for such attempts is the way in which inter-Church marriages may be celebrated, that is, in a Roman Catholic church, using the regular Catholic liturgy, with a Catholic priest presiding, but with a significant role played by the non-Catholic minister. This would presuppose that the parents and godparents, as well as both Catholic and non-Catholic local Church communities, had been adequately prepared; there would also be an implicit commitment to continued pastoral care of the child and the family by the two communities. Such a baptism could be inscribed in the baptismal registers of both local churches.

The respective roles of the host Roman Catholic minister and the guest minister would be mutually planned by them in advance. The guest minister would take a serious and substantial role in the liturgical celebration, and not simply a nominal part. He or she would be seated in the sanctuary, invited to wear his or her customary liturgical vestments, and be introduced to the worshipping community by the Catholic priest or another appropriate person.

As with the liturgy of marriage, possible roles for the guest minister might include words of greeting or exhortation, prayers and additional blessings, leading the general intercessions, reading scripture, and preaching (instead of or in addition to that of the Catholic priest).

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The Roman Catholic priest would perform the actual baptism and the postbap-
tismal anointing with chrism.

It should be made clear that such “ecumenical celebrations of baptism” have not
yet been approved officially by the Roman Catholic Church; they are being done
experimentally in some places, however, and are a development that clearly lies on the
ecumenical horizon.

V. Reception into full communion

When a baptized Eastern, Anglican, or Protestant Christian becomes a member
of the Roman Catholic Church, this is celebrated using a liturgical rite called the “Rite
of Reception of Baptized Christians into Full Communion with the Catholic
Church.”¹ (In a revision to be published in 1986 or 1987, the title will be changed to
“Rite of Reception of Baptized Christians into the Full Communion of the Catholic
Church.”)

Liturgy of reception: Reception takes place within the eucharistic celebration
(on Sunday or another day), after the homily. It consists of (a) the profession of faith,
using the Nicene creed, by the person being received together with the entire commu-
nity, (b) a declaration of reception by the bishop or priest, (c) the sacrament of
confirmation (unless the person has already been confirmed), (d) general interces-
sions, (e) the sign of peace, and (f) the liturgy of the eucharist, in which the per-
son receives communion for the first time as a member of the Catholic community. If
for a serious reason the reception into full communion takes place outside Mass, a lit-
urgy of the word should be celebrated. The Introduction to the rite of reception² is
very valuable, and well worth reading carefully.

There sometimes is a temptation to make the declaration of reception by the
priest or bishop the focus of the rite of reception; theologically and liturgically,
however, the true high point is the reception of eucharistic communion.

For the purpose of the rite of reception, only Eastern Christians are considered
to have already been confirmed. As confirmation in the Eastern Churches is always
conferred together with baptism, even if this is not documented, all Eastern Christians
may be assumed to have been confirmed.³

This apparent selective regard for confirmation in the Eastern Churches should
not be taken as disparaging confirmation in the Anglican and many Protestant
Churches. There it often is a very important moment in a person’s Christian growth,
requires extensive preparation, and involves a very significant liturgical celebration.
However, these Churches do not regard it as a sacrament, in contrast to the Roman
Catholic and Eastern traditions, and Churches differ widely in their understanding
of confirmation.

Ecumenical sensitivity: The change of membership of a Christian from one
Church to another obviously has implications for ecumenical relations among

¹ It is published as an appendix to the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (1974, CCC, Ottawa), as well
as separately. See also Bulletin 64, pages 178-183.

² This may be found in Documents on the Liturgy [2476-2488], as well as in Bulletin 64, pages 178-179.

³ Ecumenical Directory, no. 12 [966]; Cleveland Guidelines, no 3b; Providence Guidelines, page 1.
Churches and needs to be handled with some delicacy and sensitivity. Although the individual's new Church community naturally rejoices for its new member, this change of membership should be seen as resulting more from the mysterious movement of God's grace in the person's heart rather than from either the pressures of proselytism or any triumphalistic feeling that "our Church obviously is superior to any other." Thus the rite of reception should not be an occasion of denigrating or disparaging any other Church.4,5

**Recognition and respect for baptism:** The second — and greater — challenge is to recognize and respect the fact that the new member is baptized and hence already a Christian; in this regard the rite of reception shows great sensitivity.

Thus the person to be received is not to be called a "convert," as this term properly refers to one who comes from unbelief to Christian belief; the concept of Christian conversion really refers to Christian initiation — through baptism, confirmation, and first eucharist — rather than to a subsequent change of Christian communions.6

There is also great insistence that the sacrament of baptism is not to be repeated, and baptism previously received in other Churches is to be presumed valid.7 Certainly if an Eastern Christian wishes to be received into the Roman Catholic Church it is to be accepted that his or her baptism (and confirmation) are valid, and they are not to be repeated, even conditionally. In addition, the baptisms of the Anglican and many Protestant Churches are to be accepted; in 1975 the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops resolved to recognize "the validity of baptisms conferred with flowing water, by pouring, sprinkling, or immersion accompanied by the Trinitarian formula, according to the established norms of the Christian Church in question."8

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4 "The rite . . . is arranged so that no greater burden than necessary is demanded for reception into communion and unity" (rite of reception, no. 1 [2476]. "Anything that has the appearance of triumphalism should be carefully avoided and the manner of celebrating this Mass should be precisely defined. Both the ecumenical implications and the bond between the candidate and the parish community should be considered. Often it will be more appropriate to celebrate the Mass with only a few relatives and friends . . . . The person to be received into full communion should be consulted about the form of reception" (no. 3b [2478]). "No abjuration of heresy is required of one born and baptized outside the visible communion of the Catholic Church, but only the profession of faith" (no. 6 [2481]).

5 "Catholic ministers must avoid language which might be offensive to non-Catholic Christians present at the celebration. It is a great consolation to everyone if the Catholic minister points out that the person being received is not abandoning or rejecting anything of value already received in his or her Christian community, but is adding to what has already been given" (Ontario Guidelines, no. 68).


7 Rite of reception, no. 7 [2482]. This point is also dealt with at greater length in the Ecumenical Directory, nos. 9-18 [963-972].

8 Canadian Catholic Conference, plenary meeting, April 1975, CCC minutes 150, no. 17: The "following Churches in Canada mutually recognize the sacrament of baptism: the Anglican Communion, the Lutheran Church, the Presbyterian Church, the Catholic Church, and The United Church of Canada. In addition, Catholics recognize the baptism conferred in some other Churches" (Ontario Guidelines, no. 62). On the possibilities of a common certificate of Christian initiation, see Bulletin 73, pages 92-93.

(Editor's note: No one, however, seems to have noticed that the Catholic Church no longer lists sprinkling among the approved ways of baptism; only immersion (preferred) and pouring are acceptable. See the General Instruction on Christian Initiation (1969), no. 22 [2271]; this is picked up in the 1983 code, canon 854, which replaces the 1917 canon 758.)
Only if, after serious investigation, there is reasonable doubt that the person ever was baptized, or reasonable doubt about the validity of his or her baptism, is conditional baptism permitted. In such cases the “minister should explain beforehand the reasons why baptism is conferred conditionally in this instance,” and the conditional baptism should be celebrated privately.  

Reception and the catechumenate: One of the major problems with respect to the rite of reception lies in its possible confusion with the catechumenate and the whole process of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA). The Introduction to the rite of reception states flatly, “Any treatment of the candidates as though they were catechumens is to be absolutely avoided”; however this is not always done, nor is it always easy to do, even with good intentions. The fact is that in many parish “RCIA programs” in Canada and the United States, there are significant numbers (sometimes a majority) of persons who have been baptized, as well as those who are moving toward baptism; furthermore, pastoral practice has shown that the former as well as the latter benefit from an “RCIA-like” process. Sometimes the two groups are combined, with no distinctions being made; in other case they share substantially the same process, but some attempt is made to make clear, at least to the participants, that there is a difference. Rarely are there really separate programs for the two groups. How to respect the baptized character of many participants in “RCIA-like” programs is still being discussed and debated and experimented with; the important thing at this stage of the Church’s experience is to be conscious of the issue, to understand the theology involved, and to try in practice to make the distinctions that are clearly called for in the rite of reception and the RCIA themselves.

The RCIA in its totality is a liturgical rite, within which are individual liturgical celebrations marking the major stages of the initiatory journey: entrance into the catechumenate, election, and initiation, as well as liturgies within the periods of the catechumenate and illumination. It is quite inappropriate — and certainly unintended by the RCIA itself — for baptized persons following an “RCIA-like” process to celebrate these liturgies; they are for persons preparing for baptism. Attempts have been made, however, to adapt the various RCIA liturgies for use by baptized persons, or to have them celebrate distinct rites but at similar times during the process. One such proposal is to celebrate a “rite of welcome and statement of intention” in parallel to the rite of becoming catechumens, and to celebrate “the call to lenten conversion” in parallel to the rite of election. Approaches such as these are worthy of serious consideration; their pastoral “success” remains to be evaluated. One

9 Rite of reception, no. 7 [2482]; Ontario Guidelines, no. 69.
10 “Mere scruple or the inconvenience involved in investigating the baptism in question is not a sufficient basis for conditional baptism, nor is the pious desire of the new communicant” (Ontario Guidelines, no. 69).
11 Rite of reception, no. 5 [2480].
12 A lively discussion of this question has recently been published in the Forum of the North American Forum on the Catechumenate (Spring and Summer 1985, NAFC, 3017 Fourth St. NE, Washington, DC 20017); vol. 2, nos. 2-3. It is also sensitively addressed in Initiation: Rite of Reception of Baptized Christians: Guidelines and Celebrations (1984, Office of Sacred Worship, Box 4004, La Crosse, WI 54602-4004): see review in Bulletin 98, page 122.
13 See the publication from La Crosse, Wisconsin, mentioned in note 12. Other proposals are mentioned in the issues of Forum described in note 12. See also Bulletin 64.
of the challenges is, of course, to involve the entire local Church community in the celebration of these rites, while neither confusing the congregation as to the identity of the persons involved, nor overburdening them with excessively long liturgies.

The final question is whether the rite of reception should be celebrated during the Easter vigil, and if so, how might this best be done. The theological issue again is that of respecting the baptized status of those to be received; the liturgical issue is how to maintain that distinction in the midst of an already long and complex rite.

The two extremes are to fail to maintain the appropriate distinctions during full initiation at the Easter vigil, and to forbid completely the celebration of reception at the vigil; both practices are found in some parts of North America. If appropriately prepared persons are not received at the vigil, however, when else might this be done? One solution is on the First Sunday in Lent, so they may complete the lenten experience as full members of the local Church community. A second solution is to receive them on Holy Thursday, at or just before the evening liturgy. A third approach is to have the profession of faith and declaration of reception during the day on Holy Saturday, perhaps in conjunction with those preparatory rites of the RCIA (anointing with the oil of catechumens, etc.) which may also be celebrated at this time; confirmation and first eucharist would then follow at the vigil.

Finally, reception might be celebrated during the Easter vigil, but in such a way as to maintain the appropriate distinction between baptized persons who are being received and unbaptized persons who are receiving all the sacraments of initiation. Various adaptations of the vigil liturgy have been proposed, and the whole matter is receiving vigorous discussion and debate. During 1986 a new edition of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults will appear, and in an appendix a suggested combined rite of reception and of initiation will appear; while an improvement over some attempts, it is not totally satisfactory either.

VI. Marriage

Roman Catholic marriage celebrations:

- *Liturgy of marriage:* The liturgical celebration of marriage in the Catholic Church includes the word of God, with two or (preferably) three scripture readings which shed light on the covenantal union between man and woman in marriage, together with preaching to particularize the scriptural message for the couple and the community here and now. The marriage itself focuses on the public expression of mutual commitment through the vows or consent; in addition there is an exchange of rings and a public acknowledgement that the marriage has taken place, given by the ordained minister. Finally, there is the nuptial blessing which embodies prayers of praise, thanksgiving, intercession, and benediction of the couple. This basic liturgy of marriage may or may not take place within the context of the celebration of the eucharist.

The official liturgical books for use in Canada are *Marriage: Ritual and Pastoral Notes,*¹ and *Rituel du Mariage,*² together with the appropriate lectionary. Three

¹ *Marriage: Ritual and Pastoral Notes* (1979, CCCB, Ottawa).
separate liturgical rites are provided, (a) the rite of celebrating marriage during Mass; (b) rite for celebrating marriage outside Mass; and (c) rite for celebrating marriage between a Catholic and an unbaptized person. (In addition, a new marriage liturgy has recently been published by the Consultation on Common Texts, a North American ecumenical and liturgical group on which the Roman Catholic Church has representation. It is called "A Christian Celebration of Marriage: an Ecumenical Liturgy," and will come into use in at least some of the Churches in Canada in the next year or two.)

The liturgy of marriage requires careful planning, which should be undertaken by the couple in consultation with the officiating ministers; in this regard, the introductions and notes in the official books contain valuable information and guidance.

- **Hospitality and participation:** The idea that the marriage liturgy is an act of worship celebrated not only by the priest and the couple, but also by the entire Church community and its guests, imposes great demands with respect to the principles of hospitality and participation.

  First, the congregation present for the wedding should include members of the local Church community — the more the better. Second, every effort should be made to bring guests from outside the local Church community "into" the worshipping assembly to the extent that is possible; they should not be left as spectators standing around the edges. Although having many guests from outside the parish is wonderful and a blessing of its own kind, it also presents greater challenges; it increasingly needs to be recognized as well that some guests may not be practising Christians. The marriage rites themselves urge priests to "show special consideration to those who take part in liturgical celebrations or hear the gospel only on the occasion of a wedding, either because they are not Catholics, or because they are Catholics who rarely, if ever, take part in the eucharist or seem to have abandoned the practice of their faith."

Guests must therefore be received and greeted graciously; an adequate number of ministers of hospitality should be involved. To the extent that is possible, the guests should be introduced to members of the local Church community and seated with them. (The older custom of seating the bride's and groom's friends in separate sections has nothing whatsoever to recommend it.) Likewise, the principle of participation means that special efforts may have to be made to help guests to understand what is going on, and to participate to the greatest extent possible. Special participation aids, such as bulletins and explanations by presider or other minister, may be necessary or at least useful.

Music is a special challenge. Congregational singing is an expectation of all liturgical celebrations today, and this sometimes is difficult enough to achieve when all are members of a single religious community. With many guests, it is even more difficult — but not impossible. The choice of music should take the mixed nature of the congregation into account, and the music to be used should be clearly presented in hymnals or bulletins; good leadership should encourage all to participate in the

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4 Introduction to the *Rite of Marriage*, no. 9, cited in *Marriage: Ritual and Pastoral Notes*, page 12; *Documents on the Liturgy* [2977].
singing. Service music that may be well known to the host congregation should not be taken for granted, but written out or otherwise identified for guests.

- Participation of lay persons in ministry: Eastern, Anglican, and Protestant Christians, persons of other faiths, and persons of no faith, may act as witnesses and members of the wedding party at marriages in the Roman Catholic Church. 5

The scriptures may also be read by others; however, it seems inappropriate for non-Christians to be readers, as this implies assent to the texts they would read.

Finally, if there is to be a eucharist, it seems inappropriate for Anglicans, Protestants, and non-Christians to be gift bearers, acolytes, and communion ministers, as they probably will not be permitted to receive communion.

- Inter-Church and interfaith marriages — Introduction: Although the general term “mixed marriage” is often used in Church circles (and always in official Roman Catholic documents), it is recognized that in fact there are several different realities and relationships that are being referred to. 6 In particular, the Roman Catholic Church recognizes differences among marriages of Catholics with Eastern Christians, with Anglicans and Protestants, and with nonbaptized persons; 7 the first two situations may be termed inter-Church or ecumenical marriages, while the third is called an interfaith marriage. In addition, the marriage of a Catholic to a person of no faith, or to a person who considers himself or herself to be a Christian but who is not baptized, also needs to be considered. Therefore, “it will surprise no one that the canonical discipline regarding mixed marriage cannot be uniform and must be adjusted to meet the different circumstances of individual cases. This applies to the canonical form of marriage, the liturgical celebration, the pastoral care to be provided to the spouses and their children.” 8

5 Ecumenical Directory, nos. 49 and 58 [1003, 1012]; Definitive Norms II, no. 21 (see note 6 for this reference); Marriage: Ritual and Pastoral Notes, page 32.

6 The basic post-Vatican II document that deals with mixed marriages is Paul VI’s Motu proprio Matrimonia mixta (March 31, 1970) [2999-3012]. It required adaptation and implementation by the bishops of individual countries; in Canada, the relevant document is “Mixed Marriage Legislation for Canada,” passed by the Canadian Catholic Conference in September 1971 (CCC Official document 275). This excellent but little known document has never been published, but simply circulated among and by the Canadian bishops; portions are to be found in Bulletin 59, pages 162-165, and in Marriage: Ritual and Pastoral Notes, pages 30-34. [This is not to be confused with a previous provisional document, superseded by the 1971 norms, published under the title “Mixed Marriages: Particular Norms for Canada,” in Canon Law Digest, edited by James I. O’Connor, SJ (1975, Canon Law Digest, Chicago, IL): vol. 7, pages 718-725.]


In the 1983 code, canons 1055-1165 deal with marriage; canons 1124-1129 are on mixed marriage.

7 Paul VI, Matrimonia mixta [3001].

8 Matrimonia mixta [3004]. See also Marriage: Ritual and Pastoral Notes, page 32, where another classification of mixed marriages is described: a) marriages in which neither spouse is a convinced or practising Christian; b) marriages in which one of the spouses is firmly attached to his or her Church while the other is indifferent or nonpractising; and c) marriages in which both spouses are convinced, practising members, desirous of staying faithful to their own Churches.
From a liturgical point of view, the marriage preparation process for an inter-Church or interfaith marriage should include efforts to inform the non-Catholic spouse regarding the meaning and form of the marriage liturgy. Catholic priests and others involved in marriage preparation should also be especially hospitable to the non-Catholics involved. Finally, it should be recognized that there is a special need for hospitality and assistance regarding participation for the non-Catholic spouse and his or her family and friends during the marriage liturgy. All this should be taken into account during the planning of the wedding.

It may be mentioned that according to Roman Catholic theology, inter-Church (but not interfaith) marriages are considered to be sacramental. Furthermore, the "real" ministers of the marriage are the spouses themselves; the ordained minister acts as presider and official witness. The Roman Catholic Church requires that there be only one liturgical celebration when a Roman Catholic marries a person of another Church or another faith; separate or simultaneous rites of each Church or community are not permitted.

Ordinarily, there is an expectation that a Roman Catholic will be married in a Roman Catholic church with a Roman Catholic priest (or other authorized minister) presiding and being official witness to the marriage; technically, this is referred to as "canonical form." However, for good reason, diocesan bishops may dispense from canonical form and thereby permit the wedding to take place in an Eastern, Anglican, or Protestant church; in this case the liturgy of that Church is used, and the wedding is presided over and witnessed by an official minister of that Church. Such dispensation may be given to avoid family alienation, to obtain parental agreement, to achieve family harmony, etc. The interpretation of conditions varies from place to place.

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9 Canon 1055: 2.
10 Canons 1108-1112; Marriage: Ritual and Pastoral Notes, page 22.
11 Matrimonia mixta [3010]; Definitive Norms II, nos. 15-16; canon 1127: 3; Marriage: Ritual and Pastoral Notes, page 32.
12 Matrimonia mixta [3006, 3008]; Definitive Norms II, no. 9; canons 1108-1119; Marriage: Ritual and Pastoral Notes, page 32.
13 Definitive Norms II, no. 13; Marriage: Ritual and Pastoral Notes, page 33.
14 Matrimonia mixta [3007]: "When serious problems stand in the way of observing the canonical form, local Ordinaries have the right to dispense from canonical form in a mixed marriage." This is picked up in the 1983 code, canon 1127: 2.

Definitive Norms I, nos. 14-15: "This authority to dispense makes it possible to consider the good of the couple as a primary pastoral concern. The Church stands before them, not as a legal institution, but as a friend to assist them in the very beginning of their married life. There is a breadth of understanding that encompasses religious, traditional, cultural, and familial ties that surpass the logic of law alone and are rooted in a total humanity" (no. 15). Definitive Norms II, nos. 10-12: "Reasons for granting dispensations from canonical form should concern in some important way the good of the parties, especially their spiritual well-being, the tranquility and peace of their personal or family relationships, or be based on some special relationship to a non-Catholic minister or place of worship" (no. 11). This is quoted in Marriage: Ritual and Pastoral Notes, page 32.

Statement of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, no. 10: "Where there are serious difficulties in observing the Catholic canonical form in a mixed marriage, the local Ordinary of the Catholic party . . . may dispense the Catholic from the observance of the form for a just pastoral cause. An exhaustive list is impossible, but the following are the types of reasons: to achieve family harmony or to avoid family alienation, to obtain parental agreement to the marriage, to recognize the significant claims of relationship or special friendship with a non-Catholic minister, to permit the marriage in a church that has particular importance to the non-Catholic." See also Ontario Guidelines, no. 44.
The Eastern Churches consider that only a marriage performed and blessed by an Eastern priest is valid for a member of those Churches. Roman Catholics therefore may apply for and be granted dispensation from canonical form if they are marrying such a person; in this way both parties of the marriage can remain in good faith and status with their Churches. This situation needs to be handled with great sensitivity, and may be especially difficult when members of Eastern Catholic Churches are involved.

- **Inter-Church marriage in a Roman Catholic church:** The need to extend gracious hospitality and to promote participation has already been dealt with, as has the question of the ministry of lay persons in the wedding liturgy.

**Participation of Anglican and Protestant clergy:** One further matter for consideration is the participation of a minister of the non-Catholic spouse's Church in the wedding liturgy in the Roman Catholic Church. This participation (as well as such participation in premarriage preparation and postmarriage pastoral care) is strongly encouraged by the Roman Catholic Church. It should therefore be sought out by the couple and the Catholic priest involved, and every courtesy and hospitality should be extended to the Anglican or Protestant minister; in some cases, of course, the minister may not wish to participate.

The respective roles of the host Roman Catholic minister and the guest Anglican or Protestant minister should be mutually planned by them in advance. The guest minister should take a serious and substantial role in the liturgical celebration, and not simply a nominal part. The guest minister should be seated in the sanctuary, invited to wear his or her customary liturgical vestments, and be introduced to the assembly by the Catholic priest or another person.

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15 This is what is meant by the highly technical language of canon 1127: 1: “If, however, the Catholic party contracts marriage with a non-Catholic party of Oriental rite, the canonical form of celebration is to be observed for lawfulness only; for validity, however, the intervention of a sacred minister is required, while observing the other requirements of law.” This is essentially a quote from the Second Vatican Council's Decree on the Eastern Catholic Churches, no. 18 (172), which is repeated in Cresecens matrimoniorum, a decree of the Congregation of Eastern Churches, February 22, 1967 [2993-2997], on mixed marriages between Catholics and non-Catholic Eastern Christians. The latter document adds: “The reasons for the concession are: to prevent invalid marriages between Latin rite Catholics and non-Catholic Christians of the Eastern rites; to provide for the stability and sanctity of marriage; to increase charity between the Catholic faithful and the Eastern faithful separated from us.”

16 Definitive Norms II, nos. 1, 14, 25: “The ministers of both parties should seek to cooperate in exercising this responsibility [of preparing to enter marriage], both ministers where possible jointly undertaking the spiritual preparation of the couple, guiding them in the preparation of their marriage ceremony and preparing them for their future life as an interfaith couple” (no. 1). “It is desirable that the non-Catholic minister be invited to take an active part in the Catholic ceremony, for example, by reading a scripture lesson, by giving an address, or by offering prayer” (no. 14). “Pastors . . . shall assist the couple in strengthening the unity of their conjugal and family life which, for Christians, is based also on their baptism. To this end, pastors should establish with ministers of other religions relationships of straightforward sincerity and judicious confidence” (no. 25). See also Marriage: Ritual and Pastoral Notes, page 31.

“When the mixed marriage is celebrated, as it is for the most part, in a Catholic church, and when the non-Catholic party expresses the desire to have his or her own minister present, the Catholic minister should issue an invitation and give a cordial reception” (Ontario Guidelines, no. 96).
Possible roles for the guest minister include adding words or greeting or exhortation, prayers and additional blessings, reading the gospel, leading the general intercessions, and preaching (instead of or in addition to that of the Catholic priest).17

The Roman Catholic priest should always receive the vows (or consent) 18 and give the regular nuptial blessing of the Catholic liturgy; usually he also blesses and gives the rings and announces the marriage.19

Celebration of the eucharist: A final consideration is the decision whether or not to celebrate the wedding in the context of a eucharistic liturgy. The Roman Catholic position is that preferably the eucharist should not be celebrated for an inter-Church wedding; however, it is not absolutely prohibited, and it remains a matter to be decided in individual cases by the priest and the couple. In Canada the priest makes the final decision.20

The preference against having eucharist is based on sensitivity to the non-Catholic spouse and his or her family and friends, inasmuch as they ordinarily cannot fully participate in it because of the Roman Catholic reluctance to permit eucharistic sharing. As discussed above, inter-Church weddings sometimes are considered to be occasions when the non-Catholic spouse is permitted to receive communion; however, this would rarely be extended to his or her family and friends.

The rather common desire of many inter-Church couples to celebrate their marriage with a eucharist may be based on a number of factors. There may be

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17 Definitive Norms II, no. 14; Marriage: Ritual and Pastoral Notes, page 33; “Guidelines for Marriage Between Roman Catholics and Episcopalians,” in Ecumenical Trends (May 1981), vol. 10, pages 73-77; “Louisiana Guidelines for Episcopal-R.C. Marriages,” in Ecumenical Trends (June 1984), vol. 10, pages 93-96. “The visiting minister should be invited to act as reader, leader of the prayer of the faithful, and/or preach and give his or her benediction” (Ontario Guidelines, no. 97).

18 Canon 1108.

19 See footnote 17, above.

20 Matrimonia mixta [3008]: “In a marriage between a Catholic and a baptized non-Catholic, it is permissible in particular cases, with the consent of the local Ordinary, to use the rites for celebrating a marriage within Mass; the general law regarding eucharistic communion, however, must be observed.”

Definitive Norms II, no. 19: “The marriage may, in some circumstances, take place during Mass and, in other circumstances, should be accompanied by a celebration of the word. In each case, it will be the priest’s responsibility, after discussion with the parties, to decide which sacred rites should accompany the exchange of consent.” See also Marriage: Ritual and Pastoral Notes, page 33.

Statement of the National Council of Catholic Bishops, no. 17: “To the extent that eucharistic sharing is not permitted by the general discipline of the Church..., this is to be considered when plans are being made to have the mixed marriage at Mass or not.”

Providence Guidelines, page 9: “As a rule mixed marriages in the Catholic Church are to be celebrated outside Mass. . . . However, at the request of the couple, the marriage may be celebrated during Mass. . . . If the exclusion from Catholic communion is going to be a problem, the priest might prudently suggest that the nuptial Mass be omitted. He should leave the final decision concerning a nuptial Mass to the couple. In this way, the eucharist as a sign of unity will not become an occasion of misunderstanding and possible disunity.”

Cleveland Guidelines, no. 3c: “Mixed marriages . . . may be celebrated . . . with either the nuptial Mass or the simple rite of mixed marriage (sic). The couple’s choice is to be honored.”

Ontario Guidelines, no. 97: “As a general rule, mixed marriages should be celebrated without the eucharist. Sometimes a celebration of the eucharist for the couple and the Catholic family prior to the wedding can both express and strengthen the desire for a full communion of faith. Yet, a full sharing in the liturgy of the word at the wedding itself well expresses the common faith celebrated in the marriage.”
unconscious insensitivity to non-Catholics on the part of the Catholic spouse (or his or her parents), lack of knowledge of the official Catholic position on eucharistic sharing and its basis, and the fact that the eucharist is "the Catholic thing to do." In addition, couples understandably want a serious wedding celebration of significant length, and may feel that without the eucharist the liturgy may be unduly short and lack dignity, color, and sufficient music. It is also the only type of liturgical celebration known to most Catholics, and they may have little or no experience of good alternatives.

These considerations bring considerable pressure to bear on the Catholic priest involved. Eucharistic celebrations really should be discouraged, but with this position there goes a corresponding responsibility to provide a very good alternative form of liturgical celebration.

(It should be pointed out to Catholics that having the eucharist at weddings is also valued and preferred by some [but not all] Anglicans and Protestants, and that this practice is being promoted within a number of Churches at the present time.)

- **Inter-Church marriages in a non-Catholic church:** As mentioned above, Roman Catholic authorities may, under certain conditions, give permission for Catholics to be married in an Eastern, Anglican, or Protestant Church, in which case the liturgical rite of that Church is to be used, and the presiding minister and official witness of the marriage will be a minister of that Church.

The Roman Catholic Church very much hopes that the Catholic priest who has been involved in preparing the couple for marriage will be invited to participate in such marriage liturgies, and that he will accept such an invitation. The role he might have would be similar to that described above for a guest non-Catholic minister when the wedding is in a Catholic church.

Lay Catholics may be witnesses or members of the wedding party, and may read the scripture lessons and other prayers if invited to do so. If the wedding takes place in the context of an Anglican or Protestant eucharist, it would seem inappropriate for Catholics to serve as gift bearers, acolytes, or ministers of communion. The section on eucharistic sharing should also be consulted if there is to be a eucharistic celebration (see pages 154-160, above).

To avoid possible misunderstanding, the Catholic party may wish to make it known that his or her bishop has given permission for the wedding to take place in another Church community. This might be announced orally at the wedding itself; alternatively, a written note could accompany the wedding invitations, or be placed in the bulletin used for the wedding. The presence or participation of a Catholic priest would undoubtedly communicate the same message.

- **An interfaith marriage:** Though the marriage of a Catholic to a member of another faith, or to a person of no faith, was quite rare and not explicitly considered by the 1971 mixed marriage legislation in Canada, its frequency is slowly increasing.

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22 Ecumenical Directory, nos. 49 and 58 [1003, 1012]; Providence Guidelines, page 8; Cleveland Guidelines, nos. 3c, 8; Ontario Guidelines, no. 108.

As mentioned above, the Roman Catholic Church has a special liturgical rite for interfaith marriages, called the rite of celebrating marriage between a Catholic and an unbaptized person. This type of marriage, though taken very seriously, is not considered sacramental, and the canonical discipline which deals with it differs somewhat from that regarding inter-Church marriages. Finally, it is quite inappropriate to celebrate an interfaith marriage in the context of the eucharist, though this still is not absolutely prohibited.

The need to extend gracious hospitality and to promote participation, as well as the question of ministry of lay persons, have already considered. The need for preparation, planning, and hospitality is even greater when a spouse, his or her family and friends, and a number of guests, are not Christian, than in inter-Church marriages.

"Pastors must attempt to attune themselves to the sensitivities . . . of non-Christians. Because of their training and immersion in Western culture, pastors must realize that this does not come naturally. What might normally appear as an accepted practice or mode of expression can be offensive to non-Christians. While not compromising Catholic doctrine, pastors are reminded that a wedding is an occasion for emphasizing unity, not separation."  

As considered above for inter-Church marriages, a minister of the non-Christian communion may be invited to participate in the Catholic marriage service by giving additional prayers, blessings, words of greeting or exhortation, etc.

Again, bishops may dispense from canonical form to permit the wedding to take place before a rabbi or another minister; though there usually is an expectation of a religious service, in particular circumstances permission may be given for a civil ceremony instead. Finally, permission may be given for the wedding to be celebrated in a place other than a church. In all these circumstances, the Catholic priest may participate, as already discussed.

24 Canons 1086, 1129.
25 Marriage: Ritual and Pastoral Notes, page 34.
26 This is not considered in the Canadian Definitive Norms, but is mentioned in the Statement of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, no. 11. The United States has considerably more experience than Canada with interfaith marriages. See also Cleveland, Providence, and Ontario Guidelines, and canon 1127: 2.
27 See note 26, above; Statement of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, no. 19; and canon 1118.
Roman Catholic funeral liturgies:

Funeral liturgy: The official liturgical book for funerals in English Canada is Catholic Funeral Rites. Recently the funeral liturgies have been extensively revised for the English-speaking nations, and the new Order of Christian Funerals (1985, ICEL, Washington, DC) has been approved by the Canadian bishops; it is presently awaiting confirmation by Rome. When this new ritual is introduced in the next year, the basic structure and orientation of the funeral rites will remain the same.

The funeral liturgy consists of three main parts. The vigil (or wake) is the least formal, and may take place in the home, or mortuary, or the church; its content and structure are not fixed, though official rites and texts are provided as suggestions and models. The funeral liturgy proper takes place in the church; it may or may not be celebrated in the context of a eucharist. Finally, there is a service at the place of committal, that is, the cemetery or wherever the ashes are to be interred. There is considerable flexibility both within and among these rites, and only the third service (at the place of committal) is absolutely necessary. There are parallel sets of liturgies for adults and for children. Any individual — guest or member of the local Church community — might attend only one or two, or all three parts of the complete liturgy.

The funeral liturgy requires careful planning, which should if possible be undertaken by the family of the deceased together with the officiating minister. The pastoral notes with which the official liturgical rites are introduced are very valuable in this regard.

Hospitality and Participation: Funerals are acts of worship to be celebrated by the entire Church community. Inasmuch as there often are guests from other Christian Churches, from other faiths, and of no faith, the demands for hospitality and the promotion of participation are as great — and often as difficult — as for weddings.

The Catholic Church also urges priests to “take into special account those who are present at a liturgical celebration or hear the Gospel only because of the funeral. These may be non-Catholics or Catholics who never or rarely share in the eucharist or who have apparently lost the faith. Priests are, after all, ministers of Christ’s Gospel for all people.”

Thus guests should be received and greeted graciously; there should be sufficient ministers of hospitality. To the extent that is possible, guests should be introduced to members of the local Church community and seated with them.

Special efforts may have to be made to help guests understand the structure and meaning of the funeral liturgy and its several parts, and to participate to the greatest extent possible. Special participation aids, such as bulletins and explanations by the presider or another minister, may be helpful.

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1 Catholic Funeral Rite: Ritual and Pastoral Notes (1973, CCC, Ottawa). The wake services from this ritual are included in the people's booklet, Rite for a Catholic Wake (1973, CCC, Ottawa).
2 See note 1. Funeral Liturgies is also the subject of Bulletin 84 (May-June 1982).
3 General Instruction of the Roman Missal, no. 314 [1731]; also Introduction to the Rite of Funerals, no. 18 [3390].

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Music plays an important role in the funeral liturgy, and the presence of guests presents a challenge in this regard. The choice of music should take into account the anticipated number and background of the guests, and all the music to be used (words and music) should be clearly presented in hymnals or bulletins; good leadership should encourage the participation of all.

- **Participation of non-Catholics in ministry:** Eastern, Anglican, or Protestant Christians, members of other faiths, or persons of no faith, may act as pallbearers.4

Clergy of other Churches who may be present because of friendship or other association with a deceased Catholic, may be invited to wear their liturgical vestments and to sit in the sanctuary.

If it seems appropriate, lay Christians of other Churches may read scripture lessons; however, it seems inappropriate for non-Christians to be readers, as this implies assent to the texts they would read.

If there is to be a eucharistic liturgy, it seems inappropriate for Anglicans, Protestants, or non-Christians to be gift bearers, acolytes, and communion ministers, as they usually will not be permitted to receive communion.

Within the three parts of the funeral liturgy, there is more opportunity for non-Catholics to play special ministerial roles at the vigil or wake service than in the other rites.

- **Catholic in an inter-Church or interfaith marriage:** At the funeral of a Catholic spouse in an inter-Church or interfaith marriage there may well be more non-Catholic guests — clergy as well as lay persons — than otherwise, and it may be more appropriate to invite non-Catholics to participate in ministerial roles. The principles and suggestions made above should be applied with special sensitivity in these cases.

This situation is one in which some bishops permit the non-Catholic spouse to share eucharistic communion; consult the section on eucharistic sharing, above.

- **Other Christians buried with our funeral rites:** Funerals of Eastern, Anglican, and Protestant Christians — baptized members of another Christian Church — may be celebrated in Roman Catholic churches, presided over by Catholic priests, and using the regular Roman Catholic liturgical rite; the funeral liturgy proper (in the church) usually will not include the eucharist, though in particular cases this may be permitted. Such a practice is appropriate, of course, only if the family of the deceased request it, and if it would be consistent with the known dispositions of the deceased. There is a further requirement that the regular minister of the deceased non-Catholic not be available; this may involve either physical or moral absence.3 See canon 1183: 3.

The burial of a non-Catholic spouse in an inter-Church marriage could be one case in which this type of liturgy might be requested.

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4 Detroit Guidelines, page 12.

3 "At the discretion of the local Ordinary, the Church's funeral rites may be celebrated for a baptized member of another Church or ecclesial community provided this would not be contrary to the wishes of the deceased person and provided the minister of the Church or ecclesial community in which the deceased person was a regular member or communicant is unavailable" (General Introduction to the Order of Christian Funerals, no. 18). See also canon 1183: 3.
• Other funeral services for non-Catholics: "Occasionally a priest is asked to conduct the prayers at the wake or funeral of a person who is not a Catholic. This may occur in an area where there is no clergyman of the deceased person's faith, or because of friendship and respect between the priest and the deceased person or his family.

"In preparing these services, the priest should see his role as one of gathering the friends and relatives of the deceased person to lead them in prayer at this time of sorrow, and to bring them God's consolation in their need. He will exemplify the concern of God and his Church for all.

"The service might be twofold: one part in the home or funeral home, the other in the cemetery." If the Catholic funeral service is not to be used (see preceding section), it may still serve as a model. "The priest should encourage the family to work with him in choosing readings and prayers for this service.

"The question of vestments should be discussed with the family and friends while preparing the service. Some may prefer the priest to wear a suit, others may wish him to wear stole and surplice or alb."6

Even less commonly, Roman Catholic priests may be asked to conduct the funeral of a deceased non-Christian. If this be deemed appropriate, the regular liturgical rites of the Roman Catholic Church are not used, but may serve as models for such services. Such funerals usually involve only wake and committal services — sometimes only the latter — and they tend to be carried out relatively privately.

• Celebrating eucharist for a deceased non-Catholic: Mass may be celebrated without publicity for a deceased person of another Communion. Public Masses may be offered if they are requested by relatives or friends, or when the deceased served the whole civic community. In these cases the name of the dead person is mentioned in the prayer of the faithful rather than in the eucharistic prayer.7

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6 Catholic Funeral Rite. Pastoral note, no. 15; emphasis in the original.
7 "Celebration of the Eucharist for Deceased Non-Catholic Christians," Decree of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, June 11, 1976 [1074-1077]. This interim legislation would seem to have been simplified by canon 901 in 1983.
VIII. Other Liturgical Celebrations

- **Liturgy of the hours and liturgies of the word:** Members of other Churches are welcome to participate fully in the Roman Catholic liturgy of the hours and in liturgies of the word.

- **Liturgies for the sick and dying:** Roman Catholic priests and lay ministers, while visiting the sick and dying, should not hesitate to comfort and pray with those of other Churches. The same conditions apply to eucharistic sharing for the sick as on other occasions; see the appropriate discussion above, on pages 154-160.

  "In hospitals and other similar institutions conducted by Catholics, the administrators should see to it that the ministers of separated Communions are advised in good time of the presence of their faithful and that the ministers have the opportunity for visiting the sick and offering them spiritual and sacramental help." This should also be applied to non-Christian faiths. Visiting clergy and lay ministers should be accorded every possible aid and courtesy.

  The sacrament of anointing of the sick is ordinarily celebrated with Catholics who are seriously sick. In exceptional circumstances, this sacrament may be celebrated with other Christians. The same conditions apply as for eucharistic hospitality: see pages 154-160, above, and canon 844: 3-4.

  Viaticum (eucharistic communion of the dying) is ordinarily celebrated with Catholics in danger of death. In exceptional circumstances, this sacrament may also be celebrated with other Christians. The danger of death is one of the circumstances in which such eucharistic sharing may be considered; in addition, the other conditions described for eucharistic hospitality also apply (see canon 844: 4).

- **Liturgies of penance and reconciliation:** The sacrament of penance or reconciliation is ordinarily celebrated with Catholics. In exceptional circumstances, it may be celebrated with other Christians. The same conditions apply as for eucharistic hospitality; see also canon 844: 3-4.

  If requested, priests should pray with and counsel other Christians who may approach them regarding sin and reconciliation.

  Other Christians are welcome to participate in nonsacramental Roman Catholic penitential services, and in services of the word which may accompany or be part of the celebration of the sacrament of penance.

- **Ordinations and installations:** Christians of other Churches may be invited to attend the celebration of the sacrament of holy orders and the installation of pastors and bishops.

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1 This section draws upon the Providence, Cleveland, and Ontario Guidelines.

2 Ecumenical Directory, no. 63 [1017].

3 As with the eucharist, the Catholic Church is open to celebrating this sacrament with Eastern Christians (see canon 844: 3-4), but this is generally not permitted by Eastern Church authorities.

4 See note 3, above.

5 See note 3, above.
If they are clergy, they may be given a special place of honor, and although they may not participate in the imposition of hands at ordinations, they may be invited to give and to receive a benediction.

- **Sacramentals:** The sacramentals of the Church (blessings, ashes, blessed palms, etc.) should be given to members of other Churches, if they ask to receive them.²

² Canon 1170.

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**OUR NEXT ISSUE**

Two years ago, in Bulletin 95, we looked at how our liturgy and our culture are intertwined, and at how some nations are beginning to adapt their worship to the spirit and needs of their cultures.

Bulletin 105 is entitled *Culture and Liturgy: II.* It invites us to look at our own culture, and see what is being done and what remains ahead. This issue poses challenges still to be faced by us, the Church in our country.

Our next issue will be ready for mailing in September.

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**INDEX ISSUES**

In our first 21 years of publication, 101 issues of the *National Bulletin on Liturgy* have contained 5,230 pages of information, ideas, prayers, and challenges.

The key to these treasures is to be found in our two complete index issues:


- *Bulletin 101* covers the next eight volumes, nos. 62-101 (1978-1985), and includes references back into the topics in Bulletin 61.

Together, Bulletins 61 and 101 provide a valuable resource, and help our readers to benefit from all their issues of the Bulletin.

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Ecumenical services

J. Frank Henderson

Ecumenical Services

An "ecumenical" liturgical service is one that is not a regular or official liturgy of any Church, but one designed especially to be celebrated by Christians from various Churches. This type of common prayer is officially encouraged by the Roman Catholic Church. Thus the Ecumenical Directory states: "It is most desirable that Catholics join with Christians separated from us in prayer for any common concern in which they can and should cooperate, for example, to promote peace, social justice, mutual charity among all people, the dignity of the family, and similar matters. To be considered in the same way are those occasions when a nation or community wishes to offer a general thanksgiving to God or beg his help, as on national holidays, in time of disaster or national mourning, on a day of memorial for those who have died for their country. Such common prayer, insofar as it is possible, is also recommended when there is a meeting of Christians for study or action."

"But common prayer services should be concerned above all with the restoration of unity among Christians. For a celebration of this kind examples of possible themes are: the mystery of the Church and its unity; baptism as the sacramental, though incomplete, bond of unity; the reforming of life, both personal and social, as a necessary way to achieve unity . . . ."¹

Two types of ecumenical service are commonly encountered. Both are legitimate, and both may be used to celebrate and foster Christian unity. There are important differences between the two, however, and both planners and participants should be clear as to which category a particular service belongs.

- A Catholic service with guests, a service sponsored and hosted by Roman Catholics, to which guests from other Churches are invited: This first type of service typically would be planned entirely or mostly by the Roman Catholic host community, though there may be input from others as well. In addition, it probably would be presided over by a Catholic (ordained or lay), and some other ministries (such as music, hospitality) probably would be carried out by Catholics. Guests, however, may well be invited to share in ministry, e.g., reading, leading prayers, blessing. Guest clergy may be invited to vest, and be seated prominently (see below). Finally, the structure and content of the service (prayers, songs, etc.) would most likely come from the Roman Catholic tradition, though every attempt should be made to be hospitable and foster the full participation of the guests.

¹ Ecumenical Directory, nos. 33-34 [987-988]; see also nos. 35-37 [989-991] for concrete suggestions.
An inter-Church service, sponsored and hosted by members of more than one Church: In this situation, all the Christian communities represented would share in planning and in ministry, and the structure and content would reflect all the participating traditions.

In the section that follows, we would like to make suggestions and raise questions that will help in the planning and celebration of ecumenical liturgies of either type.

Planning process: Thought should be given to who should be involved in planning the process. As just mentioned, an inter-Church service should involve representatives from all the participating Churches from the very beginning, whereas a Roman Catholic service to which guests are invited obviously need involve only Catholics.

General considerations for planning: The following questions need to be considered:

(a) Who will participate in the service: are only two Churches involved, or more? This has not only to do with who participates in the planning process, but the range of backgrounds, experiences, theological views, and expectations that the planning process has to wrestle with.

(b) What do the groups involved have in common? Do people know one another, or do they have to be introduced? Have the congregations worked or studied or worshipped together in the past? This will influence the type and extent of liturgical hospitality that is appropriate, and what is needed to promote maximum participation.

(c) What is the occasion? This, of course, is a normal question for liturgical planning; it influences the theme and orientation of the service, as well as who is involved.

(d) What is the place? Is it the place of worship of one of the Churches involved, or some other place? Is it basically suitable for the worship service planned, or does it need to be rearranged or redecorated?

(e) How can this service foster Christian unity? This should be a conscious motivation of the planning group, and not just assumed.

(f) How can this service be hospitable with respect to fellowship in general and to the prayer of all? Great care needs to be taken not to ignore the presence of particular groups, or the sensibilities of anyone present.

(g) Are there any customs or courtesies that need to be observed? The planning group should check this point out.

(h) Will more than one language be used? How can this be done hospitably? This might be relevant if an ethnic congregation is involved, or Eastern Church parishes.

(i) How do the Churches and clergy involved wish to be named or addressed? Do not assume that how you call a particular Church or address its clergy are what they would prefer to be called; check it out.

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(j) Is there anything that might be particularly offensive to anyone or any Church, and hence best avoided? It goes without saying that the planning group will be sensitive to this point.

**Overall structure of the service:** Inasmuch as the service will not be an official or regular service of any particular Church, its basic structure is a matter for conscious decision and planning. This could be innovative and quite different from what all the participants are used to, or could be something everyone is fairly familiar with.

The Churches represented in the planning group may have quite different customary ways of beginning and ending services. Thus although Roman Catholics are used to a scriptural greeting at the beginning of the eucharist, and a verse and response at the beginning of the liturgy of the hours, some other traditions start services with a short passage from scripture, read by the minister, with no congregational response. Likewise, some traditions have more of a structured and outward-directed conclusion (dismissal, commission) at the end of the service than is usually the case in Roman Catholic liturgies. All these practices are quite valid, but choices will have to be made.

The core or body of the service quite often follows, closely or otherwise, the pattern of the liturgy of word used by Roman Catholics as well as other Christians. Thus one or more scripture readings followed by preaching would be the basic framework of the service, with musical and other responses and accompanying elements.

Other models or basic patterns are also possible, such as the liturgy of the hours (with psalms and canticles as the framework). Many of these patterns are outlined in Bulletin 102, pages 14-28. Alternatively, some action or nonverbal element such as footwashing could be used, or some relatively unstructured approach such as extensive shared prayer.

Deciding what basic model to use will be one of the main responsibilities of the planning group. Because each Church is used to certain structures for Sunday services, it sometimes is assumed that this basic model will be used for other occasions; this, however, is a matter for the group to decide.

**Verbal content of the service:** Having decided upon a basic structure for the service, this framework needs to be filled out with verbal elements, musical elements, and nonverbal elements.

- **Readings:** Most Christian services will include the proclamation of one or more passages from scripture. Here it needs to be decided how many readings there will be, whether from the New Testament or Hebrew bible (Old Testament) or both, and exactly what passages they will be. Roman Catholics need to remember that Anglicans and Protestants generally do not accept as inspired scripture certain books of the Old Testament (the deuterocanonical books).

Other decisions to make include what translation(s) of scripture to use (some Churches are more used to one than another), and whether to read from a lectionary or a whole bible (again, different Churches prefer one or the other).

The psalms often are used in ecumenical as well as regular services, but the planning group needs to be aware that these are used in different ways by various
Churches. Some customarily read selections, while others read the entire psalm or at least large sections. Whether they are simply read, sung or chanted, or sung by a cantor with a congregational antiphon, or used in other ways, varies widely. Decisions have to be made regarding these points.

Finally, whether or not to use nonscriptural readings will have to be decided upon. Again, this practice is more common in some Churches than others, and there is greater freedom to do this in ecumenical services than in the Sunday liturgy.

- **Reflection**: The proclamation of scripture usually is followed by some kind of reflection on the passages read. Decisions regarding preaching include the style or approach taken (which may vary among Churches), length, orientation or theme, the number of preachers, and who they are. In most traditions preachers are ordained ministers, but in ecumenical services this need not be the case.

- **Silent prayer** is strongly encouraged. The planning group should decide how often and when this should occur, and approximately how long the periods of silence are. Silent prayer is more common in some traditions that others.

- **Spoken prayers** also usually constitute an important part of ecumenical as well as regular Sunday services. Here there is great flexibility, and hence a number of decisions to be made.

First, there are different genres or types of verbal prayers to be considered, including intercessions, creeds, litanies, prayers of praise, thanks, petition, and confession. In general it is well to use a variety of types.

The source of these prayers might be the service books or traditional liturgical materials of the various Churches involved, or they might be composed for the occasion, or they might be improvised. While Roman Catholics might be more used to prayers already composed and found in their liturgical books, ministers of some other traditions may prefer to compose their own prayers for the occasion, and ministers of still other Churches would be much more comfortable improvising them. The planning group cannot take such matters for granted.

Finally, decisions will have to be made about who will say such verbal prayers: the presiding minister, another minister, the congregation, responsively between minister and congregation, or in some other way.

**Music** is an extremely important part of ecumenical as well as regular Sunday liturgical celebrations, and planners will have to make a number of decisions in this regard.

First, the choice of the music itself. This may be dependent on what hymnals are available in the particular church or other place where the worship is to be conducted. Alternatively, other books will have to be brought, or the music to be used will have to be included in a bulletin or some sort of handout.

Secondly, it should be music that many of the people who will be present already know, and which can be taught or picked up relatively easily by the others. Thus it should be somewhat familiar, and not too difficult. Remember that different Churches

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2 Copyright permission should of course be obtained ahead of time for any music that is reprinted.
have different musical traditions, and that some tend to use the hymn style while others are more familiar with through-composed music.

Who will do the individual musical selections: congregation, choir, soloists, cantor and congregation, instrumentalists, or others?

**Ministry:** It is especially appropriate in an ecumenical service that ministry be shared.

One or a small number of persons will have to be chosen to preside over the service. If there is more than one presider (something that is quite acceptable, though Roman Catholics are not used to it), they should be from different Churches.

Clergy other than those who preside may provide at least visual leadership and representation of their Churches by being seated “up front.” A decision should be made regarding their vesture; they may wish to wear their customary liturgical garb (if they use this), even though this probably will result in a variety of costumes — this is quite acceptable. Alternatively, they may choose to wear street dress.

As already indicated, one or more preachers should be chosen; the preacher may or may not be one of the presiding ministers.

The reading of scripture is another ministry that could be shared. Churches differ in whether some or all scripture is read by lay persons or by clergy, and in such ecumenical services complete freedom on this point is possible; it must be decided ahead of time, however. Readers should if possible represent several Church communities.

Ministers of hospitality (which have a variety of names in different Churches) are especially important in ecumenical services. “Greeters” and “ushers” should be chosen, and again should if possible represent different Churches.

If possible and appropriate, artists and perhaps dancers might also be involved in the worship service.

Finally, the ministers of music are extremely important. Instrumentalists, soloists, choir(s), cantor(s), and leaders of congregational singing might all be needed. If possible, they also should represent different Churches, though this is not always practical or possible.

**Nonverbal elements:** A common temptation in liturgy planning of any kind is to make the service too verbal; texts are only part of the great tradition of Christian worship. The importance of silent prayer has already been mentioned. Other nonverbal elements should also be considered by the planning group, though what can be done will be heavily dependent on the place chosen for the service (as it will already contain important nonverbal elements).

Consider the architecture as well; does the congregational seating promote community or is it divisive; in the latter case, can it be changed and improved? Where will the various ministers sit and stand and, perhaps, move about? Where will the musicians be located? What special furniture will be required, if any? What freedom is there to move furniture that is already present? Can everyone see and hear well?
What signs and symbols will be prominent, such as a cross or crucifix, candles, water?

Will there be any congregational movement, or the greeting of peace?

**Congregational participation:** Finally, planners should be sure that the service involves everyone present, and not just the ministers (whether clergy or laity). There should be a good balance of "proclamation" (from the front) and "response" (from the pews).

This participation may require printed materials of some kind; bulletins of some kind often are used. Planners should be aware that some traditions tend to print all materials in these, whether said or sung by ministers, congregation, or musicians; others print only texts used by the congregation, plus minimal directions and context.

### Sunday Worship in Ecumenical Groups

More and more frequently, Sunday finds Christians of several traditions together at ecumenical gatherings of various kinds: retreats, marriage encounters, study weekends, and action group meetings. The question then arises: "What kind of worship service should we have on the Lord's day?" Whether the answer be a regular Sunday service of one (or more than one) Church, some other type of service, or no common worship at all, some tension usually arises, and our present disunity may well be accentuated. In fact, members of different Churches feel this tension to greater or lesser degrees because there are diverse expectations about having one's "own" regular worship service as well as familiar types of preaching, music, and ritual. Some expect a full eucharistic service every Sunday, and others do not. There are different traditions, regulations, and feelings about inviting members of other Churches to receive holy communion and about responding to such invitations.

Decisions regarding Sunday worship in ecumenical gatherings need to be guided not only by Church law or the feelings of the individuals present or by expediency, but also by liturgical principles based on an understanding of who is worshipping and what is the nature of Christian Sunday worship. Fortunately, the modern liturgical movement is very much an ecumenical enterprise, and these basics would be shared today by liturgists of at least several different traditions. Who is it who worships? In the case of ecumenical gatherings a group of Christians, members of different Churches, have come together for some common purpose and activity. If the group has gathered in the Lord's name, this meeting is not some random gathering of strangers but rather a manifestation and expression of Church. It is a kind of local Church, even if it is in existence only transiently or periodically. There is a consciousness that this is a gathering of the people of God and that as a local Church it is endowed by the Spirit of God with gifts for ministry. This ecumenical Church expresses in a concrete and visible way the desire and the need to grow toward true and permanent unity. In doing so it is a proleptic sign or type of anticipation of this goal.

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(though no one is under the illusion that this goal already has been attained). The
diversity in the background of those present also announces that the whole, integral
Church of Jesus Christ is not only greater than the individual local Churches to which
its members belong, but it is also greater than any one Church tradition or structure.

Principles of Christian Sunday worship that are important to consider in this
context include the concept that worship expresses the nature of the Church and serves
to build it up. Worship should be an authentic human experience in which all
participate to the fullest extent possible. Sunday worship is especially important to
Christians because the Lord’s day is the special time when they memorialize Jesus
Christ’s death and resurrection. Hence, the preeminent liturgical memorial, word and
eucharist together, is the norm of Sunday worship. Applying these principles to
ecumencial Sunday gatherings produces difficulties, because, at the present time, two
major principles cannot fully be reconciled. One of these principles is the normative
nature of Sunday eucharistic worship. The other principle is the need that Sunday
worship should express the nature and faith of this ecumenical local Church, build it
up as Church and proleptic sign of future unity, and provide an opportunity for the
fullest participation of each person present. The difficulty which arises, however, is
that eucharistic liturgies are the “property” of individual denominations and, in
particular, of the denomination represented by the minister or priest who presides at
worship. Members of one Church may or may not be able to participate fully in the
eucharistic liturgy of other Churches. Hence, exclusive emphasis on the principle of
eucharistic worship on Sunday may also create division within the ecumenical local
Church.

Nonetheless, the “eucharistic principle” may still be implemented in a variety of
ways. There might be separate eucharistic services for the members of each Church
represented. This option presupposes the presence of sufficient clergy and space for
simultaneous services. Alternatively, the schedule of the gathering might be arranged
so that people could leave the meeting and go to local parishes for their regular Sunday
services before returning to the meeting. Another way would be for the meeting to end
in time for participants to attend services in their individual churches. Finally, the
eucharistic liturgy of only one Church might be used. Through gracious hospitality
and sensitive leadership, members of other Churches would be made to feel welcome
and able to participate in the service to the fullest extent possible. This seems to be a
common practice when most of the laity and/or the clergy are from one Church.

Alternatively, the principle of unity and full participation may lead to a decision
to have a noneucharistic service. In such a case, the word of God should, of course, be
proclaimed, responded to, and applied to the life of the particular community. The
ministries found useful for such services should be shared, and there should be
opportunity for the full participation of all. The service may still be “eucharistic,” at
least in the sense that praise and thanksgiving could be an important part. In a
concrete situation, a choice has to be made between these two types of Sunday
worship. Wrestling with this decision, it is hoped, will increase our sensitivity to those
who do not wish or who do not feel able to participate fully in the regular Sunday
service of another Church. It may also cause anxiety regarding the possible setting
aside of our own worship traditions. There may be apprehension about planning and
leading a type of service that is uncommon or unfamiliar. For some, tradition and
Church law regarding eucharistic hospitality, attendance at one’s own service, and
emphasis on eucharistic worship may also be sources of tension.
Several criteria or guidelines may be suggested which will aid in considering the decisions that have to be made. How theologically informed are the people involved? What are their feelings about ecumenism and ecumenical worship in general? What are their feelings about Sunday worship in their home communities? How many different Church traditions are represented in the group? What are their relative numbers? What are their traditions regarding Sunday worship? How conscious are the people of the ecclesial nature of their gathering? What degree of unity is perceived? How important is worship in the entire group experience? How comfortable are the people with new forms of worship? Would an ecumenical service be perceived as being second-class or having a low priority? What would the quality of worship be in the several alternative situations with respect to leadership, planning, resources, music, and general prayerfulness?

In the end, it will be necessary to make a prudential decision or judgment, and this decision will involve not only basic principles but also concrete circumstances. There is room here for differences of opinion and judgment, for making mistakes, and for learning from them. Persons outside the group in question may provide help in making such decisions and may legitimately ask why a particular decision was made. They may justifiably point out factors that appear to have been ignored or slighted and which, if considered, might have led to a different decision. Outsiders, however, should not try to keep groups from making such decisions and should not try to "protect" them from the reflection and struggles that such decision-making involves. Though not an easy question, the matter of Sunday worship in ecumenical groups is arising more and more often, and this itself is a sign of growth in the movement toward Christian unity. Sensitive and prayerful discernment is needed to make best use of the several possible approaches to this question.

**BULLETINS FOR THIS YEAR**

After consultation with the Episcopal Commission for Liturgy and the National Council for Liturgy, these topics have been chosen for the National Bulletin on Liturgy for 1986:

* No. 102  January  Celebrating God’s Word  
* No. 103  March  Easter Season in Our Home  
* No. 104  May  Ecumenism and Liturgy: II  
* No. 105  September  Culture and Liturgy: II  
* No. 106  November  Youth and Liturgy

Subscriptions for 1986, from January to December (nos. 102-106), are still available at $8.00 in Canada; $10.00 (U.S. funds) outside Canada; by airmail, outside Canada, $25.00 (U.S. funds). Individual copies may be ordered at the prices on the inside front cover. Send your cheque or money order to Publications Service, 90 Parent Ave., Ottawa, ON K1N 7B1.
Interfaith services

J. Frank Henderson

General Principles

Interfaith services are similar to ecumenical ones except that they refer to the sharing of prayer celebrated by Christians with non-Christians. For many Christians this is a rather new concept and experience, and it has to be approached with serious thought and careful planning. What follows should be considered as only a tentative introduction to this complex subject.

Common prayer among different faiths presupposes that these traditions have something — religiously and theologically — in common. Prior to the Second Vatican Council, the Roman Catholic Church did not feel that there was enough in common with non-Christians (in fact, even with other Christians) to permit common prayer with theological integrity. The Council, however, stated quite clearly that there were definite religious values in Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, and other world religions, and that these were recognized and appreciated by the Catholic Church;¹ this has been repeatedly emphasized by popes and Vatican offices since that time. ²

Exactly how this commonality is to be understood theologically is still being worked out by theologians,³ and some Christian Churches and schools of theological thought view these developments with grave misgivings.⁴

If the first large step in interfaith relations has been to recognize significant religious values in various non-Christian religions, it is still another large step to move to common prayer with members of other faiths. This has in fact been cautiously

¹ Vatican Council II, Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions, sometimes referred to by its opening words in Latin, Nostra Aetate.

² For example, Guidelines and Suggestions for Implementing the Conciliar Declaration "Nostra Aetate," by the Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews (1975).


The Attitude of the Church Toward the Followers of Other Religions, Reflections and Orientations for Dialogue and Mission, by the Secretariat for Non-Christians (1985, CCCB, Ottawa).


encouraged by the Roman Catholic Church. Thus the Vatican Secretariat for non-Christian Religions has raised the question of prayer in the context of Christian-Muslim dialogue:

"Some people ask if we can pray with Muslims. Although it is evident that we must not take part actively in the cult of another religion, we can be associated with spontaneous prayer. Nevertheless, apart from special and very rare occasions, when certain prayers drawn from one or other religious heritage could be said in common, it would seem preferable to compose, or better still to get others to compose, special prayers, which can express the religious sentiment of all those taking part, whether Christian or Muslim, prayers based on common beliefs. Certain psalms carefully chosen, or some of the texts from Muslim mystics, can express these things very well."5

In addition, the Vatican Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews has included prayer in its recommendations for Catholic-Jewish dialogue:

"In whatever circumstances as shall prove possible and mutually acceptable, one might encourage a common meeting in the presence of God, in prayer and silent meditation, a highly efficacious way of finding that humility, that openness of heart and mind, necessary prerequisites for a deep knowledge of oneself and of others. In particular, that will be done in connection with great causes such as the struggle for peace and justice."6

Christians and non-Christians share a common humanity, many shared ethical concerns, and a recognition of the Transcendent, however this is named and understood. Christians and Jews share common roots and the Hebrew bible; Islam has a high regard for Jesus as a prophet.

In thinking about common prayer, there should be an emphasis on what the two (or more) faiths have in common, while what divides them should not predominate; thus there necessarily will be tension between sensitivity to the other faith involved, and integrity to one's own tradition. Such selectivity is liturgically legitimate, as in no service even of one's own Church can everything be said; choices are always being made. The greatest participation of all present is to be fostered and encouraged; however, deliberate ambiguity, blurred meanings, and theological inconsistency are to be avoided.

It is not suggested that common prayer between Christians and non-Christians be a regular event in the lives of individuals or local communities. At the present time, at least, it is something for special events, especially those where deepened relationships bring people closer together than usual. Such events might include weddings and funerals, services in hospitals and other institutions, services that commemorate special moments in civic affairs and schools, and those having to do with social justice concerns (peace, nuclear disarmament, civil unrest, discrimination, etc.).

As with ecumenical services, considered above (see page 179), interfaith services can be of two types: (a) a service sponsored and hosted by Roman Catholics.

5 Guidelines for a Dialog Between Muslims and Christians: see note 2, above.
6 Guidelines and Suggestions for Implementing the Conciliar Declaration "Nostra Aetate" — see note 2, above.
which guests from other faiths are invited; and (b) a truly interfaith service, sponsored by members or communities of more than one faith. In addition, of course, members of one faith community can simply attend a worship service of another faith to learn more about their neighbors and their faith.

Because of the special relationship between Jews and Christians, and because there has been more experience in North America of common prayer among Christians and Jews than of other interfaith worship, Christian-Jewish services will be considered first.

**Christian-Jewish Services**

The special relationship that exists between Christianity and Judaism was recalled and emphasized by the Second Vatican Council in its Decree on the relationship of the Church to non-Christian religions (*Nostra Aetate*). The Council also wished to foster mutual understanding and respect between Roman Catholics and Jews. The liturgical side of this furthering of good relationships has a number of dimensions, including the following:

1. Serious efforts have been made to remove anti-Semitic texts from the Roman Catholic liturgy.

2. Any kind of anti-Semitism in preaching is strongly condemned.

3. Many psalms and a substantial portion of the rest of the Hebrew bible (Old Testament) are used regularly in Catholic worship, and are the subject of preaching.

4. The roots of Roman Catholic liturgy in Jewish worship are being much better understood and appreciated, both in general and with respect to specific texts and genres.

5. Contemporary Judaism and its worship are becoming better understood and appreciated, for example through attendance of Christians at synagogue liturgies.

6. Many Christians have — in one setting or another — experienced the Jewish Passover Seder, leading to greater appreciation both of contemporary Judaism and of some of the Jewish roots of Christian worship.

7. In some places Jews and Christians come together annually to commemorate the Holocaust liturgically.

8. Some Jews and Christians have also experienced other occasions of joint worship.

Additional comments will be made regarding three of these topics.

**Christians and the Passover Seder:** Without question, the best way for Christians to celebrate the Seder and come to be initiated into its richness is in a Jewish home which celebrates it well and in which members of the family can provide appropriate commentary and explanation. Alternatively, a rabbi or another knowledgeable Jew may lead a Seder for a predominately Christian group. The Christians involved may wish to “make connections” to their own tradition through reading, study, and discussion.
Christians also may properly and profitably celebrate the Jewish Seder liturgy by themselves; however certain criteria should be employed. (a) The texts and rites used should be authentically Jewish. Although it is legitimate to comment on implications of various aspects of the Seder for Christians, the texts and rites should not be distorted by being “Christianized.” (b) The leader should know what he or she is doing, that is, should have knowledge and preferably, experience of the Seder in its basic Jewish setting. (c) It should be remembered that the Seder is a liturgical celebration, and not simply a classroom exercise. (d) The Seder should not be used as a substitute for the Christian eucharist, nor usually should the eucharist be celebrated — in “regular” or modified form — in the context of the Seder; Seder and eucharist are distinct liturgies. (e) It is inappropriate to celebrate the Seder as the principal parish liturgy on Holy Thursday. Today the Roman Catholic liturgy views the “Evening Mass of the Lord’s Supper” as the first phase of the three-day celebration of Easter, and not simply a way of historicizing the tradition that identifies the last supper of Jesus and the Passover Seder; this equation, incidently, is controverted among scholars, and certainly is impossible to prove.

**Liturgical commemoration of the Holocaust:** Yom Hashoah is the name given to the day in the spring (five days after the completion of the Passover — May 5 in 1986) when many Jews remember in prayer the horror and trauma of the Nazi Holocaust. Small but increasing numbers of Christians are also holding such services, often with Jewish guests and preachers, and in some places Jews and Christians are jointly celebrating these liturgies.

The liturgies of Yom Hashoah, as celebrated by Christians or by Jews and Christians jointly, take a variety of shapes, and allow room for the creativity and sensitivity of the planners. The following summarizes a number of such services that have been studied.

The general orientation of such services varies widely. Thus one only looked back at the horror of the Holocaust, while another stressed confession: we share the guilt. One combined confession with prayers for the peace of the dead, keeping their memory alive, and working against tyranny. Another combined confession with remembering not only the suffering, but also the courage and hope exhibited during the Holocaust. One remembered the past lest it happen again, called the participants to face the darkness in themselves, the Church, and the world, and called the participants to respond. Another remembered the dead, asked that the witness of the dead influence us today, and called participants to dedicate themselves to justice. Finally, one service referred to the Holocaust as a Christian tragedy, in that it happened in traditionally Christian nations and that it grew out of a darkness within the Christian

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7 A variety of such materials for use by Christians has been published; almost all have shortened the original quite lengthy Jewish rite. The authenticity of one of these is denoted by being published jointly by Jewish and Catholic agencies: The Passover Celebration, edited by Rabbi Leon Klenicki, with an introduction by Gabe Huck (1980, The Anti-Defamation League of B’nai B’rith, New York; and Liturgy Training Program, Chicago). See note 2 in Bulletin 97, page 34.

8 Materials for one such service have been published: From Death to Hope: Liturgical Reflections on the Holocaust, by E.J. Fisher and L. Klenicki (available from The Anti-Defamation League of B’nai B’rith, the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., and the U.S. Bishops’ Secretariat for Catholic-Jewish Relations); see review in Bulletin 94, page 187. Many other services exist in less formal presentations; especially fine are those prepared over the years by The Christian-Jewish Dialogue of Toronto (49 Front St. E., Toronto, ON M5E 1D3).
tradition; it was also mentioned that Christians died too. One service mentioned the "righteous gentiles."

The services studied followed two overall patterns or models. In one case the core was scripture, usually with two readings and a psalm or other music between them. This was followed by preaching, and the readings were preceded by an opening hymn and a confession. The sermon could be followed by a longer or shorter section containing additional prayers, testimonies from Holocaust victims and/or survivors, the lighting of candles, additional prayers and a closing.

The core of the second type consisted of the reading of testimonies from Holocaust victims or survivors, and between the readings there was silence, prayers, and preaching. The leader might provide transitional prayers and other texts between these parts.

The following were among the scripture passages that were used: Cain and Abel (Genesis 4); Lamentations 3; The Shema (Deuteronomy 5); the suffering servant (Isaiah); the sheep and the goats (Matthew 25); You shall not kill (Matthew 5). Among the psalms used were 2, 60, 77, and 88.

In several services prayers from the Jewish liturgy were used; these included the Mourners' Kaddish, and El Moleh Rachamin, a prayer for the dead.

While some of these liturgies contained no nonverbal element (and in fact were quite didactic in nature), in others candles were lit. Sometimes there were 11 or 12 candles, for the 11 or 12 million killed (Jews and others); in other cases six candles were used, for the six million Jews killed. In some cases the congregation also had candles; in one case they were urged to choose the light and stand together against the dark powers of the world and to resolve to follow the righteous gentiles. In another service the congregational candles were lit from the paschal candle, the sign of death and resurrection; they were in memory of those who were killed, and in dedication to righteousness and justice.

Christian congregations are urged to increase their sensitivity to the Holocaust, and their contacts with their Jewish neighbors, by joining in the movement toward the liturgical commemoration of Yom Hashoah. (See Guidelines for Pastoral Liturgy — Liturgical Calendar 1985-1986, pages 48 and 165.)

Other common prayer of Christians and Jews: A discussion of this subject normally presupposes that the individuals or communities who consider coming together for common worship have already established good mutual relations through common study, dialogue, social contact, or working together for some common goal. Further, it is usually presumed that such common worship — as already mentioned in the case of interfaith prayer in general — is an occasional rather than frequent experience; it is for special occasions. Under such conditions, two approaches to common worship have been suggested; each is appropriate depending on the circumstances.

The first approach has been described by an agency of the Lutheran Churches. In the course of friendly relations and constructive conversations or dialogues, a

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synagogue community and a church community may wish to share in religious celebration of their common gifts, hopes, and commitments in society. Such occasions lie on the frontier of our life of faith and should be prepared for with great care and sensitivity, in openness to the Holy Spirit, working through the new experience, in faithfulness to one's own tradition, and with respect for each other. When common celebrations of this sort are deemed appropriate, the following principle should be observed.

"(a) The pastor and rabbi together should prepare the liturgy to be used, keeping in mind the following: (i) Scripture readings should be selected which permit each community to express its faith. (ii) If the service is in a Christian congregation, psalms may be used instead of hymns. (b) The respective rabbi/pastor should be in sole charge of the service. (c) If the service is in a Christian congregation the pastor may welcome the Jewish participants before the service and explain the liturgy; the rabbi may address the congregation after the service. In a Jewish congregation the reverse is done. (d) The pastor and rabbi should not participate officially in the liturgy of the other community. (e) Appropriate seasons when this type of common celebration might be held would be the Pentecost season (Jewish Succoth) or the Jewish New Year (Rosh ha-Shanah)."

The Lutheran Church in America also suggests another category of service, which "includes occasions in public and civic life when Jews and Christians are together in moments of worship. On these special occasions the controlling factors should be our common humanity, our responsibility to each other and to society, and the awareness that we are confessing our Christian faith and conducting ourselves as Christians in the midst of fellow citizens of various faiths and commitments. Such events can be God-pleasing opportunities for witnessing to our own faith and for joining our faith with that of others in worshipping him.

"Examples of such occasions are (a) national holidays . . . , (b) community events; services of recognition, support and concern; high school baccalaureate and graduation ceremonies, recognition of community leaders and achievement, prayers at public events, elections, inaugurations, political conventions; military and prison chaplaincies; prayers for civil rights and social justice, safety in time of danger, and peace under threat of war; and (c) family celebrations (interfaith marriages, funerals)." No suggestions are made as to the structure, content or forms of ministry of such services.

A different approach to joint worship has been taken by the Union of American Hebrew Congregations in conjunction with the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A.10 Assuming that such worship "proceeds from a community of people who are already, to some degree, known to one another," it recommends that "those who plan joint services should proceed boldly, assured that those who attend them know that Judaism and Christianity are distinct religious faiths, each possessing its own integrity. We dare to come together as Jews and Christians not because we are of the same religious faith, but because we share a sacred scripture, worship the same God, and live in the same community."

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Principles on which such services would be based include: (a) "Joint worship is, first of all, corporate worship. In such worship, we, the participants, stand together to offer to God and to one another a pledge of what we believe, what we mean, and what we intend to do. (b) All prayers, readings, homilies — every aspect of the service — should use language which is inclusive of both religious traditions. (c) The emphasis should be on that which points us to our common heritage in God and to our mutual desire for peace and a just society."

Specific suggestions include the following: “(a) It is generally preferable to set the worship service in the ‘sacred space’ of a synagogue or church; it is assumed that worshippers are prepared to accept the physical integrity of the house of worship in which the service takes place. The planning group should be aware that Jews cannot be expected to use a cross or crucifix in a synagogue. Jews should be prepared, however, to accept these symbols in a Christian place of worship as part of Christian architecture and liturgical art.

“(b) Worshippers have every right to be participants, not mere auditors. Opportunities for singing, responsive readings, and other acts of worship should be provided for all assembled. (c) Music should be planned for maximum participation; hymns should be sung by the congregation, and many Christian and Jewish hymns are suitable for this purpose. Choose hymns whose texts deal with such universal themes as peace, the human family, and, of course, the special occasion of the service. (d) Prayers should be addressed to God alone, and should not be in the name of Jesus or of the Trinity. Again, the language of prayer should include all present — Christian and Jew, male and female. (e) Fitting prayers of praise, petition, and penitence might be written for the occasion, or might be extracted from our various prayer books. Use of the Lord’s prayer, however, is inadvisable — not because of the text itself, but because of its strong historical identification with the Church alone. (f) Corporate or responsive prayer can be an especially appropriate way to begin the service. Such prayer should affirm the uniqueness, integrity, and validity of each of our faith communities, and should express clearly the fact that we come together before God not because we are or should be one body, but because the oneness of the God we worship at once includes and transcends even our honest differences. (g) Use of Jewish and Christian scripture is fully in accord with the intent of the service. The principle to be observed is to emphasize that which unites, and not to point up that which divides. The nonpolemical use of Jesus’ name and teachings in readings from Christian scripture or in homilies is perfectly in accord with this principle.”

Other Interfaith Services

Common prayer involving Christians and members of faiths other than Judaism may also be considered. There has been more experience in England than in Canada with this type of service, and the following brief discussion is based on some experiences there.11

Three approaches to planning interfaith services have been suggested. In the first each faith group does in turn from its tradition what it deems appropriate for the

occasion; there may or may not be a common theme, but each group proceeds relatively independently. In the second there is a greater structural unity and order in the service, based on preliminary common planning; the service is filled out using traditional prayers and music from each tradition. The third is similar, except that new prayers and materials are prepared for the occasion by representatives of the faith traditions involved.

Other considerations that have been found to be important include the place of the service; often a "neutral" location has been found preferable to a regular place of worship of the one of the faiths involved. Silence has also been found to be important, being a uniting factor even when speech is not so unifying. Finally, simple and commonly appreciated nonverbal elements, such as candles and flowers, are also important.

Finally, what is essential in interfaith worship is great sensitivity to all those involved, together with respect for the integrity of one's own faith.

LUTHERAN WORSHIP CONFERENCE

*World in Motion, Spirit in Touch:* This is the theme of an international Lutheran worship conference being held at Vancouver School of Theology, August 8-12, 1986.

This conference is for worship leaders, musicians, artists, and pastors. Resource people include Neil Alexander, professor of worship and spirituality at Waterloo Lutheran Seminary, and Jerry Evenrud, director of music and the arts for the American Lutheran Church.

For more information, write to:

Karen Lefsrud, Registrar
Worship Conference '86
20097 — 72nd Ave.
Langley, BC
V3A 4R3
Liturgical renewal in other Churches

Patrick Byrne

A priest of the Diocese of Peterborough in Ontario, Patrick Byrne has been editor of the Bulletin and assistant director of the National Liturgical Office since 1971.

During the past twenty years, we have been quite busy in Roman Catholic circles, deeply occupied with the work of renewal in our liturgy, both in our public worship and in its influence on our personal and family attitudes and prayer. For many of us in our parishes and dioceses, we have been too busy with our liturgy committees and new books and intercessions and bible celebrations to spend much time noticing what other Christian Churches have been doing.

How many of us have noticed that other Churches are also being led by the Holy Spirit of Jesus to continue the same work of liturgical renewal and reform? This article provides a look at what the Spirit has been doing lately among our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Influence of Vatican II

Work of the Spirit of Jesus: Slowly, gradually, we have become aware of the impact of these words:

Zeal for the promotion and restoration of the liturgy
is rightly held to be a sign
of the providential dispositions of God in our time,
a movement of the Holy Spirit in his Church.
Today it is a distinguishing mark of the Church's life,
indeed of the whole tenor of contemporary religious thought and action.¹

These words are not limited to the Roman Catholic Church. They are proving true of all major Christian Churches in our time.

Purpose of Vatican II: It is helpful for us to remember what the Council set out to do:

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

(Liturgy constitution, no. 1 [1])

Catholic renewal: For Catholics, these goals of Vatican II have been achieved in many ways. Let us recall how they have influenced our liturgy and so touched our lives and our faith:

Vatican II has led us to focus on what is central in our Christian living: the Trinity, the paschal mystery of Jesus, the Church as the priestly people of God, Sunday as the Lord's day, baptism as the foundation of our spirituality and unity. The renewal has called us to greater balance: a balance between word and sacrament, between prayer and action, between sound and silence, between stability and variety, between individual and community, between ministry and ministries. We have been invited to recognize the presence of Jesus among us in many ways, especially in our assemblies. We are encouraged to let the scriptures be proclaimed and heard with faith, using a richer variety of readings in our celebrations, letting the word be the foundation of our preaching and singing, and celebrating God's word in many forms of bible service.

We are invited once more to celebrate the fullness of our ways of worship in the eucharist, in the sacraments, in the liturgy of the hours, and in blessings, funerals, and other rites. Our liturgical year has been renewed so that we may celebrate the Easter mystery of Christ: his dying and rising for our salvation, and our sharing in this mystery through sacrament and life.

We are challenged to adapt our liturgy to modern needs while remaining faithful to the tradition of the people of God around the world and across the centuries; for most of us, using the vernacular, our native language, in our worship has been the first step toward cultural adaptation of the liturgy, letting our culture enrich our worship and our faith enrich our culture.

The Council has called us to be the Church of God in our modern world, fervent and vigorous in our faith. We are challenged to change what can be changed in order to deepen our attraction to all people, and especially to lead all Christians together into one family, united in communion at one altar. The Council and the renewal it began are returning us to our rich roots in the Jewish and early Christian traditions.

Moving Toward Liturgical Renewal

Sound liturgical renewal has been part of the history of Christian worship from the beginning, and is a sign of continuing vitality and strength.

Renewal in the sixteenth century: The Protestant Reformation, which began in 1517, is based in many ways on liturgical renewal leading to a renewal of faith and life. Some of the primary liturgical goals of the Reformation are these:
• **Simplification** of the Sunday eucharist, so that all may participate more fully; liturgy is to be restored to the vigor it had in the early days of the undivided Christian Church;

• **A richer diet of God's word**, so that all may benefit more fully from the scripture readings;

• **Preaching in the liturgy**, especially on the Lord's day;

• **Intercessions and prayers by the people** for the Church and for the world;

• **Use of the vernacular**, our mother language, in our worship;

• **Communion under both forms** in each celebration of the eucharist.²

Do these sound familiar? They should, for these six points became the major ones in the renewal of our Sunday eucharist: read the Constitution on the liturgy, nos. 50-55 [50-55]. It just took us 450 years longer to catch up!

**Worship books as focus:** Modern liturgical history shows us that when a new Church is formed or an older one reformed, the reform is focussed and expressed and made concrete in its book or books of worship. This has been true, for example, in the various liturgical writings produced by Luther; in the editions of the *Book of Common Prayer*, beginning in 1549 and 1552; in the worship book and hymnal produced by the newly formed United Church of Canada after its union in 1925. This is true of the reforms of Vatican II in our Roman Catholic Church, and it is true of United Methodists and Presbyterians in the United States. The reform of liturgy is also carried out by Churches when they feel the need of updating and renewal, as in The United Church of Canada in 1969, and the various Lutheran bodies in Canada and the U.S. in 1978, and The Anglican Church of Canada in 1985. The joint renewal of books has also led closer to union, as the 1978 *Lutheran Book of Worship* has encouraged the development of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada beginning on January 1, 1986.

• **A lengthy process:** Generally speaking, the reform of liturgical rites and the books that contain their texts and guide their use and celebration takes a long time. Twenty years is a short enough time to stand back, to evaluate, to tune in to the tradition and its modern expressions, to refine, to recast, to renew. Even the slightest changes affect emotional values as well as the expression of the Christian faith, and can easily cause distress or misunderstanding.

• **Involving many people at many levels:** The way in which renewal takes place says a lot about our theology of Church:

  □ The Roman Catholic Church began its post-Vatican II renewal of liturgical books from the top down, on an international basis, with some international consultation; a little room was left for national and local adaptation, and some countries, including our own, took advantage of this place for creativity. This in turn has led to the beginnings of consciousness of the local Church in its liturgy as the truest image of the Church (see Liturgy constitution, nos. 41-42, [41-42]). Our reform of the

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liturgical books has been vast, the widest in Christian history, and is ongoing in its need of understanding and proper use and education and continuing renewal.

Other Christian Churches have tended to balance international guidelines and trends with national and regional traditions and needs. Decisions to move toward reform generally move from the local congregation to the national council or synod level, then to committee work with wide consultation, to test drafts and projects, to final texts with necessary compromises, and then on to education and use and deepening of understanding until, one day, the need begins to be felt for new forms and reforms.

- *Awareness of ecumenical impact:* Until recently, one Christian Church could renew its worship and its books without consulting other Churches or paying any attention to what they were doing. Now, suddenly, we can no longer be so carefree: now we must be aware of the impact that we are all having on one another. Now we are studying the same liturgical and scriptural and theological experts. We are sharing ideas and texts and projects back and forth, learning from one another. We have all been going back to the same sources and resources in our Christian history, and we are coming up with similar results: look at the eucharistic prayers in many Churches, including our own eucharistic prayer II, that are based on the prayer of Hippolytus of Rome in the early third century. Until recently, people from another denomination would visit our parish church for a service, and would comment on how different it was from their form of worship; now people frequently comment: “You do it the same way we do it at home.”

**What Is Happening in Other Churches**

Let us look at some general trends, and then zero in on what is currently taking place in four major Christian bodies in Canada:

**Some general trends:** There are many areas of liturgy where all major Christian Churches in North America seem to be developing, some more than others. Fifteen of these trends are indicated here:

- *Return to the sources:* Churches are examining their origins more closely, and are seeking to return to the spirit of Jesus, the gospels, the early Church, and the Jewish community from which Christianity came forth. Churches are going back to their founders and reformers and greater leaders, and are seeking a new sense of who we are, who we are called to be.

- *Sunday:* The Lord’s day is seen as a day of worship and of joy. It is the primary Christian feast, the day for gathering in community worship, especially for eucharist. It is a day for rejoicing and for service, a day for pleasant relaxation; it is not a day of gloom.

- *Paschal mystery:* We thank our God for loving us and for saving us by the suffering, dying, and rising of Jesus, our Lord and our brother. The paschal mystery is central to our understanding of the redemption. We share in the Lord’s Easter mystery by our baptism into his dying and rising; by eucharist, where we renew our covenant; by our suffering, our work, our prayer, our worship, our daily life. Without losing our awareness of the reality of sin, we are becoming more positive and hopeful in the ways our prayers are expressed.
• **Baptism:** Baptism is seen as the source of our Christian unity, as the basis of our spirituality. Strong differences still exist about baptizing children before they are able to answer for themselves. The BEM document has helped Churches to look at these and other questions more calmly and perhaps more fruitfully.

• **Eucharist:** Many Churches are returning to the celebration of eucharist each Sunday. The theology of the eucharist is broadening to include liturgical categories. Liturgical scholars now agree on the basic content of the eucharistic prayer.

• **A balance among ministries:** Every Christian is called to ministry with Christ: we are all priests, all servants with him. At the same time, lay ministry and ordained ministry are seen as complementary rather than in competition. The primary minister in each liturgy is Jesus; with him the whole community celebrates. Participation of all is most important, both in the life and in the liturgy of the Church.

• **LiturICAL year and lectionary:** At the time of the Reformation, some Churches retained a simplified liturgical calendar (Anglicans and Lutherans, for example), while others rejected this approach and emphasized Sunday alone. Twentieth-century North America has seen the proliferation of secular observances — from National Pickle Week to Beekeeping Sunday — and this move has affected Christian communities too. Now the development of the Roman calendar and lectionary in 1969 and the new ecumenical *Common Lectionary* in 1983 has brought the major Churches in Canada and the U.S.A. much closer as they celebrate the strong seasons (Lent, Easter, Advent, and Christmas seasons) together. More and more, preaching in all Churches is based on the day's scripture readings rather than on extraneous events. Still needed, however, is a good translation of the scriptures which avoids exclusive language and which can be proclaimed well.

In the area of saints, some of the modern calendars have shown signs both of ecumenism and creativity.

• **Signs and symbols:** The Churches of the Reformation have recovered much of Christianity's traditional use of symbols, and we Catholics are coming back to using our symbols in more than a perfunctory manner. The generous use of water, oil, light, darkness, touch, and all the other senses is brought into our worship, and once more we are able to experience fully the richness of our liturgy. Catholics are restoring the use of the cup at communion, but still have a long way to go in having bread that has any meaning to people in our culture. (See Bulletin 94, *Gestures and Symbols*; and *Generous use of symbols*, in Bulletin 100, pages 197-204.)

• **Common language:** During the 1970s, most Churches in North America adopted the ICET common wording for the *Lord, have mercy*, creeds, *Holy, holy, holy Lord*, and other texts. At the same time, the Elizabethan "thee and thou" dropped out of common use in public worship. Today, Churches are concerned about improving the poetic quality of their language, about avoiding wordiness and discriminatory language, and about encouraging suitable creativity by ministers.

3 ICET is the International Consultation on English Texts, which has produced common texts for use by Christian Churches in their liturgies. Catholics in Canada and the U.S.A. have been represented by ICEL in these meetings, and in later developments with CCT (Consultation on Common Texts, in North America) and ELLC (English Language Liturgical Consultation, for all English-speaking countries).
Music and song: The Reformation Churches give full scope to music, with strong singing by people and choir in all their celebrations. A study of current Anglican and Protestant hymnals shows four-part music for the people, and much more singing in services than we have. Since Vatican II, however, Roman Catholics have begun to recover this aspect of our heritage, and a large body of new music is being developed and shared by all Churches.

Traditional shapes: The services in modern worship books are coming to resemble one another much more closely as all Churches — Protestant, Anglican and Roman Catholic — return to the forms of worship used in the early Church. The liturgy of the word leading to the eucharist, with brief introductory and concluding rites, is now common. Forms of morning and evening prayer, alone or combined with eucharist, and sacraments and other pastoral rites celebrated in a context of God's word, are now common to all. The BEM document on eucharist gives a detailed description in no. 27 of the commonly accepted shape of the Sunday eucharist today, with room for local variations (see Bulletin 98, pages 110-113).

Social justice and liturgy: Today in different Churches we find social justice and liturgy meeting in different ways. Some Churches have had a strong social justice approach, and now are discovering how this relates to liturgy; other Churches are beginning to realize that true worship needs to be based on living justly and working for justice and peace for all. One concern shared by most Churches at present, for example, is that of equality of women; in liturgy, this shows up in questions of language and ministry.

Liturgy and life: Worship and daily life cannot be separated: liturgy flows into life, and life leads to liturgy. The gift we bring to the eucharist and to our sacrifice of praise is built on the joys and sorrows, hopes and disappointments, efforts for justice and prayers for others in our daily living. All Churches are concerned about strengthening this connection between worship and life, helping individual members and families to bring the gift of themselves to the liturgy, to renew their baptismal covenant with God in each Sunday's eucharist.

Liturgical studies: In most areas of liturgical studies, Christian liturgical scholars are united. Many of the major scholars in North America have come to know one another as friends in the North American Academy of Liturgy, and now are meeting with European scholars and liturgists through membership in the Societas Liturgica. The field of liturgical studies is moving steadily ahead, a large number of good books comes out each year, and new contributions from the areas of art and science are increasing the richness of our worship life. Students of liturgy, including seminarians, are usually learning in an ecumenical setting from professors of other Churches, and are becoming familiar with our common sources and the vast variety of ways in which different Churches are adapting these sources today.

Participation: One way of summing up all that is happening is to point out the common concern for full participation in the liturgy by all baptized members of the worshipping community. Participation goes beyond sharing in prayer and song and gesture and symbol, to the deeper sharing in one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one Spirit, one God and Father of all.

These changes are taking place in the major Churches at present; in some communities, however, these may not yet be evident in the style and type of celebration.
Some Recent Liturgical Developments

The 1981 census in Canada shows that the five largest Christian Churches in our country are:\footnote{From the 1981 Canadian census, as reported in Annuaire/Directory 1986 (1986, CCCB, Ottawa): see pages 92-95.}

* Roman Catholic Church 11,402,605 members
* United Church 3,758,015
* Anglican Church 2,436,375
* Presbyterian Church 812,110
* Lutheran Churches 702,905

**United Church:** Formed in 1925 as a union of Methodists, Congregationalists, and Presbyterians, and later of Evangelical United Brethren, The United Church of Canada is Canada's largest Protestant denomination. It issued its most recent books of worship in 1969: the *Service Book* for use by ministers, and a companion book for use by the people. In 1971, the United and Anglican Churches joined together in publishing their joint hymnal, *The Hymn Book*. A supplement is planned for 1987 release.

Recent developments include studies on Christian initiation; *As Often As You Do This*: Toward More Frequent Celebration of the Lord's Supper in The United Church of Canada, by David Newman (1981: see review in Bulletin 84, page 139); and a supplement to the *Service Book* in 1984, entitled *A Sunday Liturgy* for Optional Use in The United Church of Canada (see review in Bulletin 96, page 317). In January 1986, an optional rite, *The Celebration of Marriage* (reviewed in Bulletin 103, page 122), and an 8-page booklet, on vestments and their colors, were issued. The funeral rite is presently being revised.

- **Purpose:** The book, *A Sunday Liturgy*, states its purpose in words from the 1969 *Service Book*: “One concern is to emphasize the unity of word and sacrament. Implicit here is acceptance of the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper as the basic Christian service and as such normative for Christian worship.”

- **Shape of the liturgy:** The Sunday liturgy has these divisions:

  - gathering
  - meeting under the word
  - meeting around the table
  - sending forth

- **Contents:** In the booklet on the optional form of Sunday liturgy, we find an introduction, the Sunday liturgy (both eucharistic and noneucharistic forms), seasonal prayers, seven eucharistic prayers, communion to the sick and the homebound, guidelines for celebrating liturgy well, and a list of helpful resources.

- **Assessment:** See the brief review in Bulletin 96, page 317, which concludes: “Recommended as a positive resource for students of liturgy and for people interested in ecumenical developments.”
Anglican Church: The most recent book of worship published in The Anglican Church of Canada is the Book of Alternative Services, issued in the fall of 1985. The Book of Common Prayer of 1962 remains as the official book, and is not replaced but supplemented by the new publication.

- **Purpose:** The new book, which has been in the planning since 1971, provides for greater flexibility and more alternatives, expressed in modern English. During the 1970s and the early 1980s, a series of new rites was developed; after trial, evaluation, and modification, they have been included in the new book. This new book is seen as "a moment in the process of reformation" (page 10).

- **Shape of the liturgy:** The Sunday celebration of the holy eucharist follows this order:

  - entrance rite: gathering of the community
  - proclamation of the word, concluding with a sign of peace
  - celebration of the eucharist: preparation of the gifts
    - great thanksgiving: six eucharistic prayers
    - communion rite
  - dismissal

- **Contents:** The book includes an introduction, calendar, the divine office, baptism and reconciliation, eucharist, propers for the Church year, pastoral and episcopal rites, parish thanksgiving and prayers, the complete psalter, and some music (see also pages 12-13).

- **Assessment:** Music is encouraged in all rites. Throughout the book introductory notes help us to understand the background and purpose of each celebration. Inclusive language and ecumenical sensitivity characterize this book. "We recommend that each of our readers obtain at least one copy as soon as possible: the Book of Alternative Services provides a fine model for renewed liturgy, a good resource for all involved in designing and leading liturgies, and a source of encouragement as the Lord Jesus moves us closer to the unity he desires" (review in Bulletin 102, page 61).

Presbyterian Church: Both in Canada and in the United States, Presbyterians are working at the renewal of their liturgical books. In The Presbyterian Church in Canada, the current books are The Book of Common Order (1964) and The Book of Praise (hymnal); in 1984, Living Faith: A Statement of Christian Belief, was issued as a reverent statement of faith (see review in Bulletin 98, page 122).

- **Renewal in Canada:** Canadian Presbyterians are looking at extending communion to baptized children. They are committed to renewing their worship book, and are presently working on all their rites. New forms for baptism and eucharist are expected to be ready for testing in selected parishes by 1987, and other rites are being prepared.

- **Renewal in the United States:** The Northern and Southern groups, separated for more than a century, have united, and are working on a joint worship book. Rites already published include baptism (see review in Bulletin 101, page 307), and eucha-

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5 See *Children of the Covenant*: Towards a Re-thinking of the Place of Children at the Lord's Table (1984, The Presbyterian Church in Canada, 50 Wynford Dr., Don Mills, ON M3C 1J7); prepared by the Subcommittee on Covenant of Grace, of the Committee on Church Doctrine.
rist. They are currently working on marriages, funeral rites, daily prayer, and other pastoral offices.

**Lutheran Churches:** The Lutherans came to North America from Germany and various Scandinavian countries, and at first formed independent ethnic Churches here. Gradually they came to worship in English, and began working together in various areas of Christian life, including liturgy. The *Lutheran Book of Worship* was developed by the Inter-Lutheran Commission on Worship of four major Lutheran bodies in our two countries, and was issued in 1978 after a development period of thirteen years. Churches of the Missouri Synod, which had cooperated in the formation and birth of LBW, then issued their own book, *Lutheran Worship*, in 1982.

In Canada, two bodies have now merged to form the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, beginning on January 1, 1986. This Church will continue to use LBW. The Missouri Synod Churches will remain distinct, and will use LW.

These two liturgical books are described in more detail below, and deserve further study:

- **Purpose:** LBW states its purposes thus: “to restore to Holy Baptism the liturgical rank and dignity implied by Lutheran theology, and to draw out the baptismal motifs in such acts as the confession of sin and the burial of the dead; to continue to move into the larger ecumenical heritage of liturgy while, at the same time, enhancing Lutheran convictions about the Gospel; to involve lay persons as assisting ministers who share the leadership of corporate worship; to bring the language of prayer and praise into conformity with the best current usage; to offer a variety of musical styles” (page 8).

LBW "seeks to carry forward the great heritage and add something new, . . . so that altogether *Lutheran Worship* provides orders of service with a faithfulness to the Lutheran tradition and understanding of worship in the widest range of orders of service for English-speaking Lutherans” (page 6).

- **Shape of the service:**
  - LBW has three musical settings of the Holy Communion, following this order:
    - preparatory rite
    - entrance rite
    - liturgy of the word of God
    - liturgy of the eucharistic meal: offertory
      - great thanksgiving
      - communion
    - dismissal

It also provides a chorale service of Holy Communion, where hymns as metrical paraphrases replace parts of the liturgy. This is in the tradition of Luther’s German Mass.
LW provides three settings for the Divine Service. The more traditional form (I) follows this order:

- preparation
- service of the word
- offertory
- service of Holy Communion
- distribution
- benediction

Form II repeats two of the settings from LBW, as described above, and III is the chorale service.

- Contents: Both LBW and LW come in several editions. The people's book contains texts with music, the psalter with psalm tones, and a complete hymnal (LBW, 520 hymns; LW, 569 hymns).

Both books give an introduction, calendar, prayers and readings for Sundays and festivals, forms for intercession, baptism, daily prayer, corporate and individual confession and forgiveness. LBW also includes a brief order for confession and forgiveness that may be inserted into the Sunday eucharist, four settings of holy communion, affirmation of baptism, marriage and funeral rites. LW includes settings of the divine service, emergency baptism, confirmation, daily devotions for family and individual use, and Luther's Small Catechism.

- Assessment: Both books are well prepared, and are pleasing to look at and handle. Music is quite evidently a priority, since the Lutherans are known as a singing Church. LW places the music line before each psalm, and both books point the text for singing. Liturgists and musicians of other denominations could benefit from a study of the Lutheran rites, calendars, and music, particularly of the settings for the psalms and canticles.

Helpful reading: The March 1986 issue of Ecumenism (1986, Canadian Centre for Ecumenism, 2065 Sherbrooke St. W., Montréal, PQ H3H 1G6; no. 81, is entitled “The Lutherans,” and contains a variety of excellent articles of current interest.

Moving Toward Greater Unity

In the brief period since the end of Vatican II, we are beginning to see these steps already under way:

Convergence: In our worship we are coming closer together in the spirit of the liturgy, the shapes of our rites, the wording of our prayers, and in the attitudes we express.

Disappearance: As we come to know one another better, some of the former prejudices and kinds of blindness are lessening. There is much less of the “Hatfields and McCoys” about our relationships, thank God. On the positive side, many close friendships and forms of cooperation are developing among individuals and communities.
Cross-fertilization: In North America today, the liturgies of the major Christian Churches are influencing one another in many ways, including texts, language, studies, progress, new developments, conferences, books, music, art, vesture, symbols, sources, and resources. The general shape of the eucharist described in BEM (document on eucharist, no. 27: see Bulletin 98, pages 110-113) is recognized by all both in theory and in practice.

Liturgy as source: More and more, Churches are recognizing that their liturgy is an important source of their theology and spirituality. In dialogues and conferences, the liturgy is recognized and cited as a witness of the Church's faith, prayer, and life, in the present as in the past.

A growing sensitivity for ecumenical concerns and feelings is noted at meetings and conferences at all levels of the Churches.

Liturgy and life: Though we may use different terms to describe it, all Churches agree that liturgy and life have to affect each other, and that our liturgy has to grow out of a life of personal love and sacrifice. Liturgy is more than books and external rites: it flows from the hearts of baptized believers who gather in love, united in Christ and animated by his Holy Spirit to give glory to God our Father. This is the same thrust that lies at the heart of ecumenism.

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Moving toward greater unity: Our God has already moved us a long way forward on the road to unity. We need to help congregations to recognize the degrees of unity already achieved. We need to continue to celebrate our own liturgies as well as we can, and to deepen our own personal and community faith and love.

Four steps: These may be the next four steps — our work at this moment — in our pilgrimage toward the unity Jesus desires us to have:

- Good celebration: We need to become more aware of the richness of our Church's liturgy, and to celebrate it as well as possible each time we gather. This demands good preparation, prayer, formation of ministers and congregation.

- Praying seriously for unity: We need to pray each day for Christian unity, with a special effort on Sundays. We can do this in personal, family, and community prayer, in the prayer of the faithful, and in the intercessions of morning and evening prayer. We can pray with members of our own community and with members of other Christian Churches.

- Live as Christians: Jesus' commandment of love and service and forgiveness has to penetrate our hearts, and be shown in our daily living: this is the way the world will recognize us as the followers of Jesus (Jn. 13: 35). Our life must influence our liturgy, and our liturgy must lead into our life.

- Share with other Christians: The time has come to increase our day-to-day contacts with other Christians in prayer, worship, and social action, so that together we can witness to Christ's love and put our worship into our daily living.

What can you begin to do in your community?

In this dissertation, the author combines his insights as painter and priest to help us grasp the main elements involved in sacred space. He shares his understanding of aesthetics, sacred space, and liturgical time to show how a church building can enhance or distort our worship. The influences of various periods on church architecture are demonstrated by descriptions of 15 actual buildings. Archetypes, atmosphere, and furnishings are analyzed, but the place of the font seems neglected. An interesting and helpful study for all who wish to grow in their appreciation of church buildings and liturgical space. Fuzzy illustrations.


The growth of devotion to the Spirit in the United States is traced in the teaching of a variety of spiritual leaders after the Civil War. From the writings of Cardinal Manning and Isaac Hecker, devotion to the Holy Spirit in the Church and in individuals developed and was nourished. Devotions, pastoral practices, and current events in civil and Church life are explored. After five chapters of history and synthesis, two major texts — a sodality manual and a series of nine sermons — are given as concrete examples of this devotion. Helpful for all interested in ecclesiology and in the history and growth of this devotion.


This book contains an introduction, and the five papers presented to an interdisciplinary symposium on Christian marriage, which was held in Edmonton in March 1983. Speakers are Michael Sheehan, CSB, Lyle E. Larson, Francis G. Morrissey, OMI, John J. Snyder, and John C. Gallagher, CSB, who reflect on historical, sociological, juridical, philosophical, and theological aspects of marriage among Christians. Recommended for all concerned about Christian marriage in our North American society today.


In a series of careful and balanced studies, we are helped to understand the meaning of liberation theology among today's Christian people, and to appreciate its implications in theology and life. An appendix, "Restraints on Violence," treats this as an ethical issue. Helpful for those involved in theological studies.

The Continuing Conversation, by Robert F. Griffin, CSC (1985, OSV, 200 Noll Plaza, Huntington, IN 46750; available in Canada from B. Broughton, 2105 Danforth Ave., Toronto, ON M4C 1K1): softbound, 198 pages. $10.90 (Canadian).

Day-to-day spirituality is the subject of this collection of popular columns. Writing with a light touch, the author invites us to reflect on the meaning of life.

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

Coleridge was the first Anglican Bishop of Barbados, working there from 1824 to 1842. To his pastorate he brought a strong pastoral sense, a concern for good worship, a care for education, and a realism in political affairs. This book describes his leadership as he helped the islands to accept and benefit from the emancipation of slaves in 1834. Bishop Coleridge's story, clearly told, provides a fascinating insight into the life of the Caribbean Church.

The Organizer: An Instructor's Guide to Successful Training and In-House Educational Programs, by Herman E. Zaccarelli, CSC (1985, Purdue University; Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN 47907): spiral bound, 8½ x 11 inches, 23 pages. $14.95.

In today's world, adults need to continue learning throughout their lives. Adult education has some principles which are distinct from children's learning. These are outlined in this manual, along with various notes on planning, presenting, and evaluating training courses and forms of adult learning. May be helpful to those involved in community educational programs.


A reissue of a book first printed in England ten years ago, this readable book continues to challenge believing readers to examine their faith more closely. Now that we recognize that the paschal mystery is at the heart of our liturgy, we can appreciate this approach, and seek to deepen our grasp of God's great love for us in Christ. Recommended as helpful for lay leaders, liturgy committees, catechists, clergy, and college classes.


Directed to Roman Catholics, this book suggests seven positive steps to help us to work for unity in the midst of Christian diversity. This approach, which is fully in tune with that of Vatican II and Pope John Paul II, offers encouragement to Catholics working for unity among Christians and to those who would like a helpful introduction to practical ecumenism. Recommended for parish groups, senior high school and college classes, clergy, and all adult members of the Catholic community.

Marriage Homilies (95 pages) and Funeral Homilies (90 pages), each edited by Liam Swords (1985, Paulist Press, New York; and 997 Macarthur Blvd., Mahwah, NJ 97340): softbound. $2.95 each.

These two books provide a refreshing selection of personal homilies that can be good models to preachers. Many different types of occasions for weddings and funerals are mentioned. Brief (usually one page) and well prepared, they sparkle with the Irish way with words. The one on funerals also suggests alternative readings for different occasions. Helpful for homilists.


A theologian gives us a careful study of marriage in the scriptures, and its varying developments in practice down through the Christian centuries. The ongoing exploration of the nature and theology of marriage, along with the question of divorce and remarriage, form the body of the book. Each chapter has a few questions for reflection and discussion. Recommended as a helpful book for clergy, teachers, college groups, and others involved in Christian marriage movements.

The liturgy, architecture, and structures of the Episcopalian (Anglican) Church are simply but clearly described and defined in this book. References are given to rites in the 1979 Book of Common Prayer (U.S.A.). Helpful for Anglicans and for others who wish to know more about their liturgy and practices.


Canadian-born Rabbi Hoffman describes the long and gradual process by which the synagogue services came to be canonized or fixed in definitive forms. This process was promoted by the religious leaders (geonim) in Babylonia, outside Palestine, beginning during the eighth century CE. By the eleventh century, these texts and rites began to be accepted elsewhere. The book contains a detailed study of the calendar, festivals, and prayers belonging to the Jewish liturgy. First issued in 1976, this classic now appears in soft cover, and is recommended to all students of Judaism and of liturgical development.


In the past few decades, liturgical studies have broadened our understanding of the development of our modern liturgical year. Dr. Talley shares the work of many years as he explores the ways in which the Easter, Christmas, and lenten celebrations grew. This book invites the reader to see the year's growth with fresh eyes. Recommended as a helpful book for students of liturgy and for clergy.


This book has been written "to aid adult believers in the celebration of the Easter season" (page 8). Week by week, the author invites us to let the seasonal liturgies lead us to conversion. Helpful scripture texts, ideas for reflection and discussion, and a prayer service are suggested as part of each week's growth. Simply and clearly written, this book is recommended for those working with catechumens and neophytes, for liturgy committees, clergy, and all who wish to grow in the spirit of the Easter season.

The Days of the Martyrs, by C. Bernard Ruffin (1985, OSV, 200 Noll Plaza, Huntington, IN 46750; available in Canada from B. Broughton, 2105 Danforth Ave., Toronto, ON M4C 1K1): softbound, index, 232 pages. $11.55 (Canadian).

This is a "history of the persecutions from apostolic times to the time of Constantine" (subtitle). Clearly and simply written, this is helpful for high school and college religious courses, catechists, and those who wish to know more about this part of the Church's history.

Come and Celebrate: More Center Celebrations, by Dick Hilliard and Beverly Valenti-Hilliard (1985, Ave Maria Press, Notre Dame, IN 46556; available in Canada from B. Broughton, 2105 Danforth Ave., Toronto, ON M4C 1K1): softbound, 8½ by 11 inches, illustrations, 181 pages. $14.50 (Canadian).

Six 'centers' or stages (greeting, word, praise, creation, sharing, witness) are developed in each of 26 celebrations for use with children between kindergarten and grade 5. A practical approach to a variety of situations will prove helpful for catechists.